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The Role of Discursive Behavior in the Colombian Conflict

Úloha diskurzivních jednání v kolumbijském konfliktu

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Abstract: One of the longest conflicts in Latin-American history ended in 2016 when then Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos signed a peace agreement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the largest guerrilla movement in Colombia. His predecessor, the current senator Álvaro Uribe, opposed the peace agreement, believing that an offensive against the guerrillas was the right approach. This article shows how these two Colombian presidents framed guerillas and what strategies and expressions were used in their presidential speeches. The main argument is that the conciliatory discourse of President Santos helped to finally achieve peace. The research paper uses a comparative method and the concept of framing.

Abstrakt: V roce 2016 skončil jeden z nejdelších konfliktů v latinskoamerické historii, když kolumbijský prezident Juan Manuel Santos podepsal mírovou dohodu s Revolučními ozbrojenými silami Kolumbie (FARC), největším guerillovým hnutím. Jeho předchůdce, současný senátor Álvaro Uribe, mírové dohodě oponoval, jelikož se domníval, že pouze ofenzivní přístup k partyzánům je správný. Článek ukazuje, jak dva kolumbijské prezidenty rámovali guerilly, stejně jako jaké strategie a výrazy byly v prezidentských projevech použity. Hlavním argumentem je, že smířlivý diskurz prezidenta Santose adresovaný guerillám nakonec pomohl dosáhnout míru. Výzkumný článek využívá metodu komparace spolu s teoretickým konceptem rámování.

Keywords: Colombia; FARC; Framing Analysis; Guerrilla Movements.

Klíčová slova: Kolumbie; FARC; analýza rámování; partyzánská hnutí.

INTRODUCTION

This article deals with the phenomenon of Latin-American guerrilla movements and their interaction with two Colombian presidents, President Juan Manuel Santos and President Álvaro Uribe.¹

The guerrilla activity itself implies the existence of several negative phenomena². Armed clashes with guerrillas and government departments have led not only to a loss of life but also to infrastructure damage and destruction of private and public property. Drug trafficking is also a major phenomenon in the context of Latin-American guerrillas (and Colombia in general).

Leading an open struggle with guerrillas was a difficult task for government administrations not only because of the guerrillas' tellurian character (the use of the surrounding, rural environment), but also its structure.³

The attitudes of the Colombian administration toward the guerrilla movements have been variable over the last twenty years. Álvaro Uribe's governance was characterized by an open struggle against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the ELN⁴, and he sought to suppress guerrilla activities with all available means. The same trend (in terms of open confrontation) continued with Juan Manuel Santos, who was elected in 2010. However, there was a significant change in attitude when the peace negotiations with FARC were announced in 2014, and a common approach to combating drug trafficking was agreed upon. In the same year, the ELN also joined the negotiations. Discourse analysis, which would contribute to explaining why the peace process was successful, has not yet been conducted.

The ambition of this article is to show how the different ways guerrillas were framed by the Colombian presidents were crucial in eventually helping to reach the peace agreement in 2016.

The primary aim of this article is to explore the way in which the two presidents framed guerrillas and whether and how their framing differs. The examined time period begins in 2004 until 2015, when the peace talks headed to a conclusion in the following year.

1 The analysis is based on: ŠKOLNÍK, Milan. *Analysis of guerrilla movement's activities in the context of relevant actors' behaviour* [online; 2019-10-07]. B.m., 2015. University of Hradec Králové. Available from: <https://theses.cz/id/45d2jx/> Due to the limited range of words in the scientific journal, it is not possible to present the full results of the analysis. Therefore, the author refers to the source above. For the purposes of the readers, the most illustrative presidential frames, that demonstrate the continuity or change in discourse of both presidents, were chosen.

2 SPRINGEROVÁ, Pavlína. „Guerrilla and State Terror in Peru Between 1980 and 2000.“. KIAS Papers. 2008, 3, 78–93.; SPRINGEROVÁ, Pavlína and Lenka ŠPIČANOVÁ. Peruánská guerillová hnutí. Ideové kořeny a vývoj od 60. let 20. století do současnosti. In: Emil SOULEIMANOV. Terorismus. Pokus o porozumění. Praha: Sociologické nakladatelství, 2010, p. 320–340. ISBN 978-80-7419-038-4.

3 BRITTAIN, James J and James PETRAS. *Revolutionary social change in Colombia: The origin and direction of the FARC-EP*. B.m.: Pluto Pr, 2010, p. 27. ISBN 0745328768.

4 The National Liberation Army is the second Colombian guerilla. Although not as large as the FARC, nor has it occupied as much territory as the FARC, it has nevertheless been a significant security threat for many years.

1 THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

1.1 Framing Concept

The framing concept is a tool for researching the cultural dimension of the movement, which tries to explain how the movement shapes their identity, how they frame their demands against their opponents, as well as how they define themselves or their opponents. Framing can be considered a strategic act. If individuals attach some importance to, for example, an events or fact(s), frames then shape and organize experiences and direct action, both individually and collectively⁵.

Framing is an adaptive process that seeks support for itself. This is called the legitimization process, which implies collective action frames that have been described as actions oriented by sets of beliefs and meanings that legitimize the activities of social movements.⁶

The frames indicate who is responsible for an issue, propose solutions (which they interpret to support them), and point to the issue itself as problematic. They are not simply a boundary where thought structures are formed. They also attach political importance to the issue.⁷

1) Diagnostic frames

Diagnostic framing identifies problems and those responsible for them. They characterize an event as a problem that needs monitoring. Diagnostic frames legitimize strategies. In the context of this article, the strategy refers to the position on the guerrillas as interpreted or formulated by the two presidents. These are further developed into prognostic frames.

2) Prognostic frames

Prognostic framing is a strategy for solving problems. It is about presenting different versions of reality.

The concept of framing has been modified for the purposes of this article. Attention is placed on how the two presidents define the issue of guerrillas in political discourse, how they approach them, and how to justify government actions against guerrillas. The presidents are analyzed using social movement theory because the presidents are considered opponents of guerrilla movements.

⁵ SNOW, David A, E Burke ROCHFORD JR, Steven K WORDEN and Robert D BENFORD. Frame alignment processes, micromobilization, and movement participation. *American sociological review*. 1986, **51**(4), 464–481. ISSN 0003-1224.

⁶ SNOW, David A and Robert D BENFORD. Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment. *Annual review of sociology*. 2000, **26**(1), 611–639. ISSN 0360-0572.

⁷ ENTMAN, Robert M. Framing US coverage of international news: Contrasts in narratives of the KAL and Iran Air incidents. *Journal of communication*. 1991, **41**(4), 6–27. ISSN 0021-9916.

This article uses comparative method to capture possible changes (or continuity) in the framing of the guerrillas done by presidents Á. Uribe and J.M. Santos. The milestone is set for 2010 when J.M. Santos succeeded Á. Uribe. The objects of comparison are the frames used by the two Colombian presidents in relation to certain guerrillas.

2 FARC FRAMING BY PRESIDENT ÁLVARO URIBE

2.1 Diagnostic frames

President Uribe identifies the negative effects of guerrilla activity and explains why the guerrilla activity is problematic and why the guerrillas should be held responsible.

2.2 Criminalization of FARC

In both the first and second terms of President Uribe, the FARC was framed as criminals, its harmful activity was highlighted as intolerable in a democratic society, and its activity was blamed for bad conditions within the country. For example, while speaking at a Miraflores military base in December 2004 Uribe said: „Never has a terrorist organization defeated a democratic state... They are also bringing unemployment to the capital city, worsening poverty rates, expelling farmers from the fields, and destroying them, which is a disaster. They are abandoning Colombia, leaving nothing good in Colombia but rather widows, orphans, poverty, bad habits, and dependence on illegal drug trafficking. But we beat them!“⁸.

The President also pointed out the actions that FARC made against its own members. He argued that, if they kill their own members, they have no barriers to killing citizens of Colombia, and consequently, army forces must counteract them. In 2005, the President stated that the guerrilla group is dangerous not only for the Colombian people but also for its own members. Some members were tortured and executed because of unfulfilled orders or suspicion of cooperation with the government. „When General Mario Correa told me that FARC leaders shot several of their own members, I came to the conclusion that the FARC is not only a terrorist group against the Colombian people but a terrorist group against its own members.“⁹

⁸ URIBE, Álvaro. Presidencia de la República 2004 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2004. Available from: http://historico.presidencia.gov.co/prensa_new/sne/2004/diciembre/31/07312004.htm

⁹ URIBE, Álvaro. Presidencia de la República 2005 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2005. Available from: http://historico.presidencia.gov.co/prensa_new/sne/2005/julio/31/05312005.htm

Uribe's labeling of FARC as a terrorist organization (that threatens the security of the Colombian democracy) also occurred in other speeches in which, for example, he asked the public to support his government's offensive policy in the fight against terrorism. In a presidential declaration on July 31, 2006, in response to a FARC bombing attack in Bogota and the death of 15 soldiers in Tibu, Uribe stated: „With sorrow for our dead and wounded, I urge all Colombians to join ranks to defeat them... In this hour of pain, soldiers and police officers of Colombia, judges, and prosecutors – with the help of citizens, we are together in the fight against terrorism.“ Referring to the prospect of conciliation, he added: „These terrorists are as hypocritical as any others at any other time in Colombia's life.“¹⁰

The President therefore diagnosed FARC activity as a serious problem and held it directly responsible for its actions.

Furthermore, he extended the framework to say that not only FARC activity is outlawed, but also any cooperation with it will be considered a criminal act: „Those people who support FARC, even when abroad, should be prosecuted for several crimes.“¹¹

Furthermore, he labeled FARC as a violent and cynical organization that even justifies its crimes. In a presidential statement from February 2008 he said: „FARC members have bombed and killed several natives. Cynically, cynically they issued a press release justifying the murder of the natives. They want to gain political prestige in the liberation of people, while their cynicism covers the streets with blood.“¹² He stressed that these killings were another reason for a more intense government policy against terrorism.

The FARC press release, where its officials justified the murder of the governor of Caquetá, also triggered a similar response from the President: „This narco-terrorist group FARC are murderers and liars. They are cynical, shed blood, and then write press releases defending [their actions]. They shed blood and lie. However, we should not be surprised because they have always lied.“¹³

The offensive approach taken against the FARC is evident in the President's following statement about the achievements of the armed forces in suppressing the guerrillas: „I appeal to the Colombian soldiers against the FARC and all armed groups against these criminal groups. Air force, army, police – keep your strength every day for this fight.“¹⁴

¹⁰ URIBE, Álvaro. Presidencia de la República 2006 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2006. Available from: http://historico.presidencia.gov.co/prensa_new/sne/2006/julio/31/22312006.htm

¹¹ URIBE, Álvaro. Presidencia de la República 2009 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2009. Available from: http://historico.presidencia.gov.co/english/2009/diciembre/02102009_eng.html

¹² URIBE, Álvaro. Presidencia de la República 2008 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2008. Available from: http://historico.presidencia.gov.co/english/2008/sp_20080217_01.html

¹³ URIBE, Álvaro. Presidencia de la República 2010 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2010. Available from: http://historico.presidencia.gov.co/english/2010/enero/01062010_eng.html

¹⁴ URIBE, Álvaro. Presidencia de la República 2010 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2010. Available from: http://historico.presidencia.gov.co/english/2010/febrero/02102010_eng.html

2.3 Prognostic frames

The prognostic frames explain and justify the presidential administration's way of addressing the guerrilla movement and suggest solutions on how to deal with them.

2.4 FARC: not only an unstable partner for negotiation but also a security threat

This frame dominated significantly. On the one hand, it legitimizes the offensive approach of the Uribe administration. On the other hand, it excludes the possibility of a more conciliatory approach or negotiations with the guerrillas.

He pointed out that negotiations with a guerrilla organization are not possible, as they are unable to keep their word or cooperate with the government, based on previous experience. This viewpoint is evident in a part of the President's speech at the UN General Assembly in September 2007, where he mentioned the FARC's request for the creation of demilitarized zones as spaces for releasing those they had kidnapped: „We unilaterally released 177 FARC members, including Rodrigo Grant, a high-ranking member of the organization, at the request of the president of France, Nicolas Sarkozy... The only response of the terrorists was the insidious murder of 11 lawmakers from Valle del Cauca, who were held in captivity more than five years.“¹⁵

In reference to further FARC abductions, Uribe added in press release: „All this suggests that FARC is not interested in providing evidence that the abducted are still alive. Over the past few weeks, their members have murdered 12 candidates for regional elections and have conducted a terrorist attack on the governor of Cauca. No country can tolerate such crimes.“¹⁶

Thus, the President framed the FARC as not interested in peace, and that the actions cannot be tolerated by the government, which is there to guarantee the country's security.

Uribe also used the same argument a day later in response to Venezuela's president Hugo Chavez demand to be a mediator between the Colombian government and the FARC and ELN groups: „You were allowed to meet FARC officials as you requested, you were allowed to meet with ELN officials, but exactly like in the past, FARC members have once again resorted to lies and have failed to keep their word.“¹⁷

Uribe thus emphasized that it is pointless to try to do something because FARC members are liars who are unable to meet their commitments.

¹⁵ URIBE, Álvaro. Presidencia de la República 2007 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2007. Available from: http://historico.presidencia.gov.co/english/2007/sp_20070927_01.html

¹⁶ URIBE, Álvaro. Presidencia de la República 2007 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2007. Available from: http://historico.presidencia.gov.co/english/2007/sp_20071125_02.html

¹⁷ URIBE, Álvaro. Presidencia de la República 2007 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2007. Available from: http://historico.presidencia.gov.co/english/2007/sp_20071125_01.html

In a speech in Bogota at the end of March 2009, Uribe refused the possibility of a peace dialogue with the guerrillas, which he justified using his labeling of the FARC as a terrorist organization that commits violent acts. He explained that the priority of the two periods of his government was primarily the fight against terrorism, and secondly, a dialogue with all those who stand for it. Referring to the partisans, he added: "What kind of dialogue could be conducted with bandits who manifest themselves by placing explosives near schools and along roads where children go to school? Dialogue is with democracy. Dialogue is not with terrorists."¹⁸

Government policy toward guerrillas was aggressive during the presidential term of President Alvaro Uribe (2004-2010). In his speeches and statements, the FARC was framed as an organization that is dangerous, and harmful to society and the state, as well as for democracy itself. In the vast majority of his speeches, he talks about them in connection with terrorism, murders, violence, and immoral acts and excludes its members and actions in general from the legal framework of society. He commonly used sharp rhetoric against FARC. According to Uribe, guerilla activity must be severely suppressed. Concerning the possibility of the government initiating peace negotiations, he unequivocally rejected the possibility, arguing that past negotiations failed because guerillas breached their obligations. The negative discourse against guerillas was thus constant throughout his presidential term.

3 FARC FRAMING BY PRESIDENT JUAN M. SANTOS

3.1 Diagnostic frames

Diagnostic frames are about identifying the problem (guerrilla activity) and the culprit (the guerilla), while observing similarities or differences in framing guerrilla activity between President Santos on the one hand and his predecessor President Uribe on the other.

3.2 The criminalization of FARC

The frames criminalizing FARC by calling it an illegal organization that is dangerous to society were also present in the discourse of President Santos at the beginning of his term. Like Uribe, Santos also labeled FARC as a terrorist organization in his speeches and

¹⁸ URIBE, Álvaro. Presidencia de la República 2009 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2009. Available from: http://historico.presidencia.gov.co/english/2009/marzo/02282009_eng.html

condemned its acts of violence. He addressed a FARC attack in Vegalarga (Huila) with the following words: „When this group has to resort to terrorist acts such as detonating a bomb on a bus full of peasants when it is passing in front of a police station, it means that all our police, our soldiers, at sea and in the air, are doing a good job because they have a desperate enemy.“¹⁹

Similar rhetoric is evident in President Santos's statement regarding the launch of the anti-personnel landmines campaign in March 2011: „It is important to name it [FARC landmine use] as crimes against humanity, just as it is important to identify who is responsible for it. FARC and ELN – they are the ones who lay these mines.“²⁰

He thus emphasized that guerrillas are responsible for the death of innocent people and that everyone must know that this is who they are and what they do.

He blamed FARC for terrorism and persistent violence in another speech in November 2011: „The whole country rejects FARC, rejects terrorist methods, rejects persistent violence.“²¹

Again, he makes explicit the connection between guerrillas, terrorism, and violence in the country.

President Santos also saw drug trafficking as a negative phenomenon of guerrilla activity and a way of financing guerrillas, which should also be addressed. Consequently, he extended his arguments against guerrillas to drugs. He said: „This drug, which is consumed in...the United States or Europe, means funding for these criminal groups to buy the weapons that kill our compatriots...it is the funding of FARC as well as the funding of the ELN.“ In this statement the emphasis was again on the guerrillas' illegal activity. He explicitly claims the FARC is a criminal group whose activities do nothing but kill Colombians.²²

Like President Uribe, Santos emphasized the consequences of FARC activity (such as kidnappings or murders), which both presidents demonstrated with examples. Santos cited the public executions of four Colombians who had been held captive for several years by the guerrillas: „Sergeant José Libio Martínez was in captivity longer than he was free. He was 21 years old when he was kidnapped and 35 years old when he died – 14 long years! He was alive throughout his son Johan Steven's life, but he never had the opportunity to know him. The Colombians know that the only ones responsible for these actions, for the kidnapping, for the murder of these four Colombians are exclusively FARC members. Only the FARC and no one else!“²³

The last time he blamed guerrillas was in June 2015: „The guerrillas, FARC, have been responsible for, what we call today, the Colombian disaster, for many years,“ which he

¹⁹ SANTOS, Juan Manuel. Presidencia de la República 2010 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2010. Available from: http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/Prensa/2010/Noviembre/Paginas/20101130_18.aspx

²⁰ SANTOS, Juan Manuel. Presidencia de la República 2011 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2011. Available from: http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/Prensa/2011/Marzo/Paginas/20110331_02.aspx

²¹ SANTOS, Juan Manuel. Presidencia de la República 2011 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2011. Available from: http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/Prensa/2011/Noviembre/Paginas/20111130_22.aspx

²² SANTOS, Juan Manuel. Presidencia de la República 2011 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2011. Available from: http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/Prensa/2011/Septiembre/Paginas/20110930_18.aspx

²³ SANTOS, Juan Manuel. Presidencia de la República 2011 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2011. Available from: http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/Prensa/2011/Noviembre/Paginas/20111130_24.aspx

said in Rome at the Food and Agriculture Organization's plenary session. In this instance, there is a clear change in framing. Santos talked about FARC's responsibility for problems in the past, but the negative labeling of the guerrillas as „terrorists“ or FARC as a „violent organization“ was not present in this speech.²⁴

3.3 Prognostic frames

Prognostic frames represent strategies for dealing with the guerrillas. For the first two years of his term in office, President Santos used diagnostic frames. Thus, by identifying the guerrillas as a terrorist threat, he chose an offensive strategy (like his predecessor). But in 2012, there was a significant change in the will of both the government and FARC to engage in peace negotiations. Consequently, prognostic frames changed and thus there was a change in the discourse concerning FARC. The guerrilla organization was presented as a stable and responsible partner for negotiations and labels such as „terrorist“ or „violent organization“ no longer appeared in the President's speeches.

3.4 FARC: not only an unstable negotiating partner but also a security threat

Like Uribe, President Santos initially argued that only an offensive approach against the guerrillas was acceptable, and that the crimes and violence committed by the FARC must be strongly opposed.

In a speech on November 30, 2011, he justified the offensive approach: „What is the difference between the FARC's violence last week and the decent behavior of our armed forces? Our soldiers and police know that the use of force goes hand in hand with the constitution and the law, and they know that it gives them legitimacy.“²⁵

He clearly pointed to FARC as the one responsible for violence, that the use of force is necessary against the guerrillas, and that this force is, moreover, legitimate. He further claimed that FARC undermines state security and the government, and that the armed forces have the duty of maintaining order and peace within the country. In essence, he said that the government's responses to the guerrillas were within the boundaries of the law, and therefore the offensive approach was justified.

²⁴ SANTOS, Juan Manuel. Presidencia de la República 2015 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2015. Available from: http://wp.presidencia.gov.co/Noticias/2015/Junio/Paginas/20150613_01-Presidente-Santos-responsabiliza-Farc-ecocidio-pais.aspx

²⁵ SANTOS, Juan Manuel. Presidencia de la República 2011 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2011. Available from: http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/Prensa/2011/Noviembre/Paginas/20111130_23.aspx

This approach was also evident in the President's response to the FARC bomb attack in Villa Rica: „With these actions, they further strengthen the government's commitment to tightening security measures and determination to fight against terrorism.“²⁶

Like Uribe, Santos talked about the guerrillas' violent actions against the people of Colombia, and used the bombing as another example justifying the heavy-handed approach. Above all, he emphasized it was a terrorist act and the need to fight against FARC and terrorism.

Differences between the two administrations can be seen in expressions of both presidents. While Santos justified the offensive approach and pointed out the violence and terrorism, he did not use the terms like „criminal“ or „shedding blood,“ which were all common in President Uribe's speeches.

Even in Santos's speech at the security conference on July 30, 2012, where he advocated an offensive approach, these expressions did not appear: „We cannot change direction; we must persist. There are two kinds of uncertainty that are confronted with different strategies, different procedures, everything is framed around security, but this first phase is against FARC and ELN.“²⁷

In November 2014 peace talks were suspended for an indefinite period. The reason they were suspended was the kidnapping of three individuals, including army general Rubén Darío Alzate. The President responded in the following way: „Tomorrow our peace negotiators are going to travel to Havana for the next round of talks. I will tell the negotiators not to go anywhere, that these negotiations are suspended until the people are released.“

He further said that the „kidnapping was committed by the FARC and such an incident is unacceptable.“²⁸ However, this reaction was not offensive, and there are no harsh words. He merely stated that the incident was unacceptable. Furthermore, the kidnapping was called an „incident“ rather than a criminal or terrorist act.

Two weeks later, the three kidnapped were released on November 30, 2014. On this occasion, Santos said: „Although the FARC act was unlawful, it is clear that this decision has helped to restore the necessary climate to continue the dialogues, demonstrating the maturity of the process.“

He also said: „I reaffirm that the agenda of dealing with the FARC has five points. We have reached a three-point agreement so far and we continue to work to reach the remaining two.“²⁹

Despite the kidnappings, Santos approached the FARC in a conciliatory manner and even judged them positively upon the release of the hostages. In addition, he pointed to

²⁶ SANTOS, Juan Manuel. Presidencia de la República 2012 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2012. Available from: http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/Prensa/2012/Marzo/Paginas/20120326_07.aspx

²⁷ SANTOS, Juan Manuel. Presidencia de la República 2012 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2012. Available from: http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/Prensa/2012/Julio/Paginas/20120730_04.aspx

²⁸ SANTOS, Juan Manuel. Presidencia de la República 2014 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2014. Available from: <http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/En/Paginas/Presidency.aspx>

²⁹ SANTOS, Juan Manuel. Presidencia de la República 2014 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2014. Available from: http://wp.presidencia.gov.co/Noticias/2014/Noviembre/Paginas/20141130_02-Comunicado-de-la-Presidencia-de-la-Republica.aspx

the successes of the negotiations, which, according to the President, should continue, as significant progress had already been made.

3.5 The FARC as a stable partner for negotiations

The fundamental difference in framing with the previous administration was due to the announcement of the opening of preliminary peace talks with the FARC.

In early September 2012, the President stated: „We have been working seriously, and, I must admit, the FARC has as well. So far, what has been agreed to has been followed. If the FARC approaches the next stages with the same seriousness, we have good prospects.“³⁰

The guerrilla organization was suddenly presented by Santos as a constructive partner who keeps its word and fulfills agreements.

This is an obvious break with Uribe, who often noted that dealing with the FARC would be pointless because it is an illegitimate organization that fails to fulfill its obligations and does not keep its word.

On July 1, 2014, a conciliatory approach to negotiating with guerrillas was justified as follows: „The mandate I received from the Colombian people is a message to the FARC and to the ELN in the form of a call for peace...reconciliation is the one I have sought and will continue seeking, and I want to nurture something that comes from the people’s hearts, the ability to forgive.“³¹

Here Santos talked about reconciliation with guerrillas and that his priority was to continue a conciliatory approach that strives for final reconciliation.

However, the negotiations were taking place during an armed conflict, and therefore, in a statement on July 30, 2014, Santos sent a message to FARC: „At the next meeting in Havana, we will point out that attacks against the civilian population are not acceptable or consistent with the dialogues that are being held.“³²

It is clear that, although guerrillas were still committing violent acts against the population, Santos did not condemn them, but on the contrary, assumed further negotiations would continue.

FARC label as a terrorist organization disappeared completely by the end of 2014 and instead were called responsible. In a speech on October 31, 2014, the President noted: „FARC taking responsibility for civilian losses is a major breakthrough.“ He stressed that

³⁰ SANTOS, Juan Manuel. Presidencia de la República 2012 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2012. Available from: http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/Prensa/2012/Septiembre/Paginas/20120904_01.aspx

³¹ SANTOS, Juan Manuel. Presidencia de la República 2014 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2014. Available from: <http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/En/Paginas/Presidency.aspx>

³² SANTOS, Juan Manuel. Presidencia de la República 2014 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2014. Available from: <http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/En/Paginas/Presidency.aspx>

„this is a very important step because we are starting to enter the field of responsibility and justice. What we see is that we are going in the right direction.“³³

He also spoke about the ongoing negotiations with the FARC at a conference in Oslo in June 2015: „Our negotiations with FARC offer a glimpse of hope in a world obscured by war, violence, and terrorism.“ The term terrorism was said in a general sense and did not refer to the organization he labeled as a terrorist group two years prior³⁴. In addition, the President clearly stated that negotiations with FARC were meaningful for the future.

President Juan Manuel Santos began his mandate (in 2010) with the same offensive approach to guerrillas. Framing guerrillas as a violent terrorist organization was similar, but there was a difference in terms of intense expressions, which Santos avoided. Although he initially insisted on the continuity of an offensive approach to guerrillas, a change occurred in the second half of 2012 when preliminary negotiations with the FARC began. Subsequently, in 2014, ELN also joined the negotiation process. By this time, Santos completely changed his rhetoric and approach from offensive to conciliatory, framing the FARC as a responsible negotiating partner. However, it must be taken into account that these negotiations were going on during continued armed conflict and that violent actions by the FARC and ELN (and other counter-government forces) were still commonplace in Colombia, but the transformation of discourse nevertheless remained clear. The President completely omitted rhetoric that criminalized the guerrillas or called them terrorist organizations and instead emphasized their positive behavior during the peace negotiations. Paradoxically, even when violent actions were committed by guerrillas during this period, such as kidnapping, and peace negotiations were put on hiatus, Santos still maintained a conciliatory approach without harshly condemning guerrillas, and he continued to defend the government's approach and the importance of the negotiations for the country.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Diversity in opinion regarding how to deal with FARC can be seen in the differing rhetoric of Juan Manuel Santos and his predecessor Álvaro Uribe.

Uribe offered a recipe to solve a conflict. He took a very offensive approach toward guerrillas that intended to intensely fight against their activities and reconquer the areas they occupied. He refused to negotiate with them, which he justified by arguing they had never met their contractual obligations in the past. Simultaneously, he criticized the nature of the guerrillas, often labeling them as terrorists and criminals who are harmful to the people of Colombia and their whole democratic system. In his speeches he

³³ SANTOS, Juan Manuel. Presidencia de la República 2014 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2014. Available from: http://wp.presidencia.gov.co/Noticias/2014/Octubre/Paginas/20141031_09-Que-las-Farc-asuman-responsabilidades-afectacion-poblacion-civil-es-un-avance-importante-Presidente-Santos.aspx

³⁴ SANTOS, Juan Manuel. Presidencia de la República 2015 [online; 2019-10-07]. 2015. Available from: http://wp.presidencia.gov.co/Noticias/2015/Junio/Paginas/20150616_05-La-guerra-no-es-una-solucion-Presidente-Santos.aspx

mentioned particular cases of violent and criminal behavior by partisans and refused to take any different approach toward guerrillas. His reaction to the FARC press release that followed the killing of the governor of Caquetá is evidence of this refusal.

President Santos began his first two years as President in a similar way. He was, after all, the minister of defense in the Uribe government and took part in the fight against partisans. However, his statements were more moderate, and he avoided strong expressions such as 'shed blood' or labeling guerrillas as liars. A clear change in approach came in the second half of 2012 when both sides of the conflict demonstrated an interest in starting preliminary negotiations, which was mainly due to exhaustion and a decrease in the numbers of FARC members after the intensive fighting led by the previous administration. Santos's later approach was more conciliatory, and partisans were further characterized as reliable and constructive partners interested in negotiating. Furthermore, although the negotiations were interrupted due to guerrilla actions against civilians, the President still showed a willingness to continue the peace talks.

In sum, the presidential framing of guerrillas can be described as constant in the case of President Uribe and varying in the case of President Santos. By 2012 (when preliminary peace negotiations began), President Santos deviated not only from the framing of his predecessor, but also from his previous discourse. Between 2004–2010 with Uribe and 2010–2012 with Santos, an aggressive and negative discourse against guerrillas prevailed. The change from this aggressive, negative discourse to a more conciliatory one began with the 2012 peace negotiations, and President Santos continued this discourse until peace was reached.

These findings can serve further research in the context of conflict resolution, especially as concerns the role of discourse.³⁵ What future research could focus on is how the peace agreement is being implemented. In August 2016, the final results of the negotiations were made public. The final agreement was voted for in a general referendum on October 2, 2016.

The rational assumption was that the Colombians would respond positively to a peace settlement with the main armed guerrilla force in the country and end the violence of the previous decades, with the hope of a stable and secure country for the future, is in the affirmative. However, the outcome of the October referendum shows the opposite. Only 49.8% of voters voted in favor of the peace treaty, while 50.2% were against it. Why the referendum was voted down must still be addressed. Moreover, this was not

35 MEJÍA-CÁCERES, M.A. Representación de Actores Sociales e Ideologías en los discursos del „Acuerdo para la Terminación del Conflicto y la Construcción de la Paz Estable y Duradera en Colombia“. *Discurso y Sociedad*. 2018, **12**(1), 55–89.; GAMBOA, Miguel and James W ZACKRISON. Democratic Discourse and the Conflict in Colombia. *Latin American Perspectives* 2001, **28**(1), 93–109. ISSN 0094-582X.; BOHÓRQUEZ FARFÁN, Ledis, Giovanni BOHÓRQUEZ-PEREIRA y Nelson MOLINA VALENCIA. Análisis de los significados generados por el discurso de dos periódicos regionales sobre niños, niñas y adolescentes afectados por el conflicto armado colombiano. *Estudios sobre el Mensaje Periodístico* 2017, **23**(1), 343–358. ISSN 1988-2696.

the first referendum that was problematic in Colombia. For example, there was a failed anti-corruption referendum just two years later.³⁶

Nevertheless, Santos's cabinet eventually decided that the second version of the treaty would no longer have to go through a general referendum, and the new document was passed by parliament, despite a boycott of the vote by supporters of former president Uribe. Uribists blamed Santos and his government for allowing guerillas to form their own political party and thus have the potential to participate in the country's political life in the future.

It will be interesting to see if the FARC can establish itself within the Colombian political system and become a relevant Latin-American political party like many others.³⁷

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³⁶ HAMAN, Michael. The Colombian Anti-Corruption Referendum: Why It Failed? *Colombia Internacional* 2019 (100), 175–199. ISSN 0121-5612.

³⁷ KOUBA, Karel. Opposition in Nicaragua: Between Pact-Making and Confrontation. *Journal of Ibero-American Studies*. 2009, 1(1), 77–94; KOUBA, Karel. The 2006 Elections in Nicaragua. Does the Sandinista Return to Power Threaten Nicaragua's Democracy? In Pavlína SPRINGEROVÁ, Lenka ŠPIČANOVÁ, Jan NĚMEC. *Election Year 2006: Latin America at the Crossroads*. Praha: Asociace pro mezinárodní otázky, 2009, p. 165-185.; SPRINGEROVÁ, Pavlína. Politické strany v Latinské Americe - možnosti a limity jejich typologií. In: Vlastimil FIALA, Pavlína SPRINGEROVÁ, Maxmilián STRMISKA. *Teoretické a metodologické problémy výzkumu politických stran Afriky, Asie, Latinské Ameriky a Oceánie*. Ústí nad Orlicí: Oftis, 2011, p. 67-91. ISBN 978-80-7405-149-4.; ŠKOLNÍK, Milan. Transformace guerillového hnutí Tupamaros v politickou stranu [online; 2019-10-07]. *E-polis.cz*. ISSN 1801-1438. Available from: <http://www.e-polis.cz/clanek/transformace-guerilloveho-hnuti-tupamaros-v-politickou-stranu.html>.