Pedagogy & Prevarication

The Role of the Mass Media in the 2012-2016 Colombian Peace Process

Benjamin Cave
Faculty of Humanities
University of Leiden

Contents

"Elections are won on television"

Peter Radunski, 1977[1]

1. Introduction

Conflict and communication are two of the most essential and primal features with regards to how humans interact with each other and organise themselves socially. In each individual, there exists an innate need to survive and a consistent demand for resources. These characteristics have manifested themselves over time to create the politically organised societies that we have today.

In societies, in order to maintain power and acceptance in the court of public opinion, there is a need for any political institution or actor to achieve legitimacy. Historically this has been achieved through a variety of resources, such as customs, traditions, charisma and rationality, that mediate between those in power and those in a position of subordination.[2] The modern era, and the exponential expansion of information technology, has allowed for forms of mass communication to be utilised by those in positions of political power to achieve the necessary legitimacy. Any political actor involved in a democratic process must strive for it in order to achieve the desired result. This is no truer than during peace processes and the resolution of conflicts. In the case of the 2012-2016 Colombian peace process, a referendum was chosen by the main combatants to determine the legitimacy of a peace deal between the actors involved in the conflict.

November 24, 2016, Christopher Columbus Theatre, Bogota, Colombia - The President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos, and the leader of the FARC rebel group, Rodrigo Londono, better known as Timochenko, shake hands as 800 people rise to their feet and chant *"Si, se pudo"* (Yes, we could). Using a pen fashioned from a bullet, the two men have just signed a deal that, once ratified by the nation's Congress, will bring an end to the Colombian Civil War. A war that has lasted over five decades, killed more than 260,000 people and left millions more displaced.[3] The path to this point had been treacherous and fraught with

---

[1] Radunski, P. (1980). 77. Wahlkampfentscheidung im Fernsehen. Sonde, 1:51-74. Wahlkaempfe. Moderne Wahlkampffuehrung als politische Kommunikation. Munich and Vienna: Olzog.

[2] Weber, M. (1978). Economy and society: An outline of interpretive sociology (Vol. 1). Univ of California Press.

[3] BBC (2016). "Colombia signs new peace deal with FARC." *BBC, 24 November 2016*, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-38096179 [Retrieved April 10, 2020]

obstacles, blood and anguish for a country fatigued by one of the enduring conflicts of modern times. Many attempts at peace had been made prior to this one; none had succeeded. The most recent attempt had, in fact, taken place earlier that same year when the same two men signed a previous deal in front of 2500 people in the Caribbean coastal city of Cartagena. Large swathes of the nation celebrated what appeared to finally be the end of the conflict. All that was left was for the agreement to be endorsed by way of a peace plebiscite.

"Do you support the final agreement to end the conflict and build a stable and lasting peace?" This was the question that was put to Colombian voters as they entered the ballot boxes on October 2, 2016.[4] The vast majority of the political actors in Colombia were in support of the agreement, as were all of the parties; except for one. The Democratic Centre party, headed by arguably the most influential figure in Colombian politics, former president Álvaro Uribe (2002-2010), was the most vocal and staunch advocate of the 'No' campaign. Despite Uribe's influence, all the major polls had predicted a comfortable victory for 'Yes'. The perfect end to Santos' campaign for peace, however, was not to be, as in a shock result, the agreement was rejected by a margin of just 0.44%.[5] The result surprised observers and international organisations that considered the vote "for peace" to be the obvious choice. In the wake of the result, many observers sought to find a reason for the failure of the plebiscite to pass. For many, the role of the mass media was decisive in this surprise outcome. The following sections attempt to describe how this came to be and to what extent the mass media was the cause of the 2016 Colombian peace agreement referendum result.

2. Research Design

The purpose of this research is to fill a gap in the literature and expand on the concepts of peace processes to consider how the role of the media has changed in the era of social networks with regards to conflict resolution. To achieve this, I will critically analyse the role of the media during the 2012-2016 Colombian peace process, and, ultimately, the result of the 2016 peace plebiscite. The peace process officially began in early 2012, when the

---

[4] El Tiempo (2016) "Oficial: esta es la pregunta para el plebiscito por la paz". *El Tiempo (in Spanish), August 30, 2016.* [Retrieved April 10, 2020]

[5] Sanabria, A. (2017) "Post-Truth vs Law in Colombia: An Unstoppable Force and an Immovable Object?". *Oxford Human Rights Hub, 30th May 2017,* https://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk/post-truth-vs-law-in-colombia-an-unstoppable-force-and-an-immoveable-object/ [Retrieved April 12, 2020]

negotiations began and the referendum took place in October of 2012. This period will represent the timeframe for the research. Primary analysis of sources from a range of traditional and new media will begin in 2012 and continue until shortly after the conclusion of the peace process in November 2016.

Primary source analysis includes a selection of videos, images and messages uploaded to popular social networking services such as Twitter, YouTube and Facebook. The main subjects of this analysis will be the most prominent figures supporting the peace process, such as the President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2018) and Rodrigo Londoño, aka Timochenko, commander of the FARC guerrilla group, and the most prominent who were advocating against it, including Álvaro Uribe, Alejandro Ordonez and Francisco Santos of the Democratic Centre Party. A wide selection of primary source material has been taken from the news coverage and articles of Colombian media outlets at the time including *El Tiempo, El Pais, El Espectador, La Republica* among others. This will be supplemented with a selection of articles from international news and media agencies such as *BBC News, ABC International* and more.

As well as primary source material, I will engage with a variety of secondary sources in the form of quantitative and qualitative analyses of mass media, peacebuilding and Colombia. This combination of primary and secondary sources and qualitative and quantitative analyses will provide the framework through which the research will take place. From there, I will be able to construct the necessary foundations in order to understand the role of the media in the 2012-16 Colombian peace process.

3. Literature Review

In order to analyse the role of the media in the 2016 Colombian peace plebiscite, it is necessary to provide an overview of the relevant available academic literature. This literature review will consist of an analysis of the concepts of peace processes and the role of the mass media in peacebuilding and legitimacy. Specifically, I will examine the current state of literature in these areas and discuss how the role of media in peace processes has evolved.

3.1. Peace Processes

While the concept of the peace process has been around as long as war itself, the term itself purportedly appeared during the Henry Kissinger-led foreign policy era of the United States. Harold Saunders, part of Kissinger's team in 1974, attributes the gestation of the term to the period when they were undertaking US diplomacy missions in the Middle East. Having first used the phrase 'negotiating process' and found it to be too narrow, the term 'peace process' was coined to encapsulate "the experience of [a] series of mediated peace agreements embedded into a larger political process."[6] In his 1999 work, *A Public Peace Process*, Saunders arrived at the following definition:

The peace process - the operational framework for peacemaking - is a human or political, as well as diplomatic and negotiating process that works simultaneously on multiple levels.[7]

John Darby and Roger Mac Ginty, in their 2008 book *Contemporary peacemaking: conflict, peace processes and post-war reconstruction,* discuss the evolving definition of the term in recent times. Since the 1990's as the number of inter-state conflicts has reduced and the amount of intra-state conflicts has increased, so has the number of peacemaking processes, peace agreements and post-conflict reconstruction programmes. Some of the more notable examples being the move to free elections and majority rule in South Africa, Israel/Palestine and the Oslo Accords, the de-escalation of the conflict in the Basque region of Spain and the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland.[8] As the number of peacebuilding initiatives being undertaken has increased, so too has the complexity in defining the term as more variables have been brought under the umbrella of the 'peace processes'. And so the term has extended beyond simply initial statements of intent and negotiations that involve only the main antagonists. Oftentimes, modern peace processes are likely to be much more significant than just an isolated agreement of peace. They can be informal or formal, public or private, subject to popular endorsement or restricted to an elite-level agreement, sponsored by the UN or any of a myriad of potential external actors. Another definition of the term peace process has been provided by Jan Selby, who described them as "phased processes for negotiating and nurturing peace."[9]

---

[6] Saunders, Harold. A public peace process: Sustained dialogue to transform racial and ethnic conflicts. Springer, 1999. p. xx
[7] Saunders, Harold. A public peace process: Sustained dialogue to transform racial and ethnic conflicts. Springer, 1999. p. xix
[8] Darby, J., Mac Ginty, R., & Mac Ginty, R. (Eds.). (2000). 'Introduction: What Peace? What Process" in The Management of Peace Processes. Springer. p. 2
[9] Selby, J. (2008). The political economy of peace processes. In Whose peace? critical perspectives on the political economy of peacebuilding (pp. 11-29). Palgrave Macmillan, London. p.12

In an earlier work, Darby and Mac Ginty observed that a peace process has four phases; pre-negotiation, process management, peace accords and post accord reconstruction. Pre-negotiation involves bringing the parties together; this could be through secret talks or mediation by external parties. The management of the process is then a key phase as populations in states affected by long-standing conflicts are often beset with mistrust and antipathy towards the main actors in a conflict. This is something that was certainly true in Colombia as, after decades of violence, kidnappings, assassinations and drug-running, large masses of the population had generated a strong animosity towards the FARC in its current state. For a negotiated settlement to be reached, it is crucial that root causes and central grievances are addressed, but in many cases, a lack of agreement can often lead to protracted stalemates. Oftentimes the most disputed issues remain unaddressed in order to bring the physical violence to an end; this, however, can result in a state backsliding into conflict further down the line. The final phase involves the implementation of peace accords and post-conflict reconstruction. This usually includes DDR (demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration), trauma healing, transitional justice, reconciliation and socio-economic development. It should also be noted that these phases do not necessarily take place in chronological order as the "context peculiar to each country accounts for the distinctive sequencing of each process".[10]

Much like the definitions, peace processes themselves can vary wildly from each other, and common themes are not always prevalent. Historically though, something that all peace processes have shared is fragility, which is what leads, more often than not, to their ultimate failure.[11] This is certainly true in the case of pre-2012 Colombia, which, as will be examined in a later section, has undergone several attempts at peace processes; all failing to achieve a lasting peace. Each attempt managed to begin at one or more of the phases outlined above, but none were able to succeed in transitioning into the final phase and constructing a sustainable peace.

Shibashis Chatterjee in the 2005 book Peace Processes and Peace Accords concludes that peace must be understood as a social state independent of the binary of war or conflict, and process refers to the preferring of agency to structure. He goes on to say that "the struggle for peace is much more difficult than the challenge of war." In the case of the Colombian

---

[10] Darby, J., Mac Ginty, R., & Mac Ginty, R. (2003). 'Conclusion: Peace Processes, Present and Future', in Contemporary Peacemaking: Conflict, Violence, and Peace Processes , ed. John Darby and Roger Mac Ginty (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 256– 64.

[11] Darby, J., & Mac Ginty, R. (Eds.). (2008). Contemporary peacemaking: conflict, peace processes and post-war reconstruction. Springer. p. 3

conflict, there can be no doubt that the 2016 peace plebiscite was no more than the centrepiece of a more all-encompassing, complex peace process. Indeed, the negotiations themselves did not simply aim to bring an end to the conflict but also focused on a variety of other issues including political participation, illicit crops, victims, rural development and how the peace agreement would ultimately be implemented.[12] While not attempting to diminish the severity or horror of the conflict itself, it could be argued that the challenge of achieving peace in Colombia has indeed been greater than the challenge of war. Despite over 50 years of conflict and several attempts at peace, the war had endured.

3.2. Mass Media and Peacebuilding

> *"A peace process is complicated; journalists demand simplicity."*
> - *Wolfsfeld, 1997.[13]*
> -

According to Bonilla and Montoya, one of the founding principles of the liberal tradition is that there is a 'fourth estate' (also known as the 'fourth power' in some languages, including Spanish). This 'fourth estate' "emanates from civil society, being essentially non-governmental and autonomous to the extent that it curbs the abuses and excesses of official governmental rule. Some refer to this as the 'public opinion tribunal', the principal forum of which is the mass media."[14]

Mass media can be defined as an umbrella term to cover the dissemination of a variety of enterprises including newspapers, television, radio, magazines, motion pictures, books and, more recently, the internet and social media.[15] Margaret Blanchard notes that there are two sections of mass media; entertainment and information. For the purposes of this research, the term 'mass media' shall refer to the information sector. This includes all sources of intentionally informative news. The involvement of mass media in peacebuilding is, however, a relatively new and understudied discipline. Indeed, it was not until the USSR collapsed, and the cold war ended that the media started to become more involved in the peacebuilding

---

[12] Herbolzheimer, K. (2016). Innovations in the Colombian peace process. NOREF, Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre. p. 284
[13] Wolfsfeld, G. (1997). Promoting peace through the news media: Some initial lessons from the Oslo peace process. Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics, 2(4), 52-70. p.67
[14] Bonilla, J., & Montoya, A. (2008). The Media in Colombia: Beyond Violence and market-driven economy. The Media in Latin America, 78-99. p. 78
[15] Blanchard, M. A. (Ed.). (2013). History of the mass media in the United States: An encyclopedia. Routledge. p. vii

process. Even once the two professions started to become more closely aligned, it took some time for academics to pay much attention to it. Indeed, by the turn of the Century, only a few studies focusing on the relationship between media and peacebuilding had been published. The reason for the lack of attention prescribed to this combination of practices was due, in part, to the disparate branches of study the two disciplines resided in; peace studies being a part of political science and media of sociology. After a variety of interdisciplinary efforts, however, the role of journalism and media in peacebuilding garnered much more attention from scholars of both peace studies and journalism.[16]

One reason for this historical lack of engagement of the media with peace processes is that there is a much more obvious connection between the media and conflict than there is between the media and peace. It's not hard to fathom why reporting on conflict situations is likely to be more exciting, interesting and ultimately profitable than reporting on peace processes. As Gadi Wolfsfeld explains:

> A peace process is complicated; journalists demand simplicity. A peace process takes time to unfold and develop; journalists demand immediate results. Most of a peace process is marked by dull, tedious negotiations; journalists require drama. A successful peace process leads to a reduction in tensions; journalists focus on conflict. Many of the significant developments within a peace process must take place in secret behind closed doors; journalists demand information and access.[17]

Steven Youngblood expands on Wolfsfeld's assertions by pointing out that there is an incongruity between traditional journalism and peacebuilding. He asserts that due to the practices involved in traditional journalism that there is now a need for 'peace journalism'. He argues that ultimately, "traditional journalism has failed in covering peace." [18]

---

[16] Price, M., & Thompson, M. (Eds.) (2002). Forging peace: Intervention, human rights and the management of media space. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.; Wolfsfeld, G. (2004). Media and the path to peace. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.; Cave, B. (2019) The role of social media with regards to peacebuilding and journalism in post-conflict Colombia. University of Leiden: unpublished essay.

[17] Wolfsfeld, G. (1997). Promoting peace through the news media: Some initial lessons from the Oslo peace process. Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics, 2(4), 52-70. p.67

[18] Youngblood, S. (2016). Peace journalism principles and practices: Responsibly reporting conflicts, reconciliation, and solutions. Taylor & Francis. p. 76

When discussing the role of the media in conflict resolution specifically, Ellen Gardner believes there are two factions; the hate media and the peace media. She describes the former as such:

> The hate media can be defined as encouraging violent activities, tension, or hate between race, ethnic or social groups, or countries for political goals and/or to foster conflict by offering a one-sided or biased view or opinion, and/or resorting to deception. Hate media is a good example of how freedom of speech is abused to deliberately worsen existing tensions between or withing countries by whipping up nationalistic and/or ethnic hatred.[19]

Gardner portrays the peace media, however, in the opposite light:

> The peace media could be defined as promoting peaceful conditions of life and resolution of conflict or counter hate media by presenting issues fairly, offering alternative sources of information and broadcasts nullifying or mitigating messages of hate media. Peace media seeks alternate viewpoints that could turn public sentiment toward a peaceful resolution of conflict.[20]

In the case of the most recent Colombian peace process, clear examples of what Garder describes here can be seen. On the one side, there is clear evidence of groups using the mass media, in particular social networks, to advance stories designed to incite hatred, fear and tensions, On the other, there have certainly been some media organisations that have taken it upon themselves to counter the misinformation that became so prevalent in the mass media during the peace process.

3.3 Legitimacy

Since the end of the cold war, negotiated settlements between combatants have become the most common way to terminate conflicts, certainly more common than victories by either side. The task of designing and implementing peace agreements that can be signed,

---

[19] Gardner, E. (2001). The role of media in conflicts. Peacebuilding: A Field Guide, 301-11. p.304
[20] Ibid. p. 306

however, is no easy task, particularly in civil conflicts.[21] Often peace agreements will attempt to involve democratic devices as a means to achieve this end as well as a way of ensuring the involvement of all combatants and, also, international actors.[22] Of course, while peace agreements that utilise these means may be constructed by the elites, the civil population is often inherently involved. The reason for the actors involved using democratic devices is to achieve a sense of legitimacy for the settlement in the eyes of the populace and the international community.

According to Robert Nozik, to be considered legitimate, a state must acquire a unique, special right to operate in the territory. It can achieve this legitimacy , by having its operations consented to by enough residents of its (claimed) territory that it possesses the ''greatest entitlement'' (in that territory) to exact punishment for wrongdoing. Essentially, in order for a state to prove that it has obtained this legitimacy, it must show that it has morally unobjectionable control relations with the population it presides over. [23] With regards to peace settlements, the same is often true. Often a civil population will not accept the outcome of peace negotiations that it has not been able to legitimise by way of a democratic device.

The Lockean view, as defined by Beetham, is that "legitimacy is conferred on authority through actions that publicly express citizens' consent".[24] In modern liberal democracies, this consent is conferred by way of election or at times a public referendum. An election allows the government to choose indirectly democratic policies; ones which are not voted on by the public directly. Referendums, on the other hand, are utilised when a certain issue, or set of issues, is to be voted on by the populace directly; this is a form of direct democracy.

3.3.1. Legitimacy and the Media

Idaly Barreto, Henry Borja, Yeny Serrano, and Wilson López-López discuss the important role the media play in the dissemination of the discourses that legitimise political violence, and therefore in the visibility and relevance that a group can have

---

[21] Collier, P. (2003). Breaking the conflict trap: Civil war and development policy. World Bank Publications.
[22] Matanock, A. M. (2017). Bullets for ballots: Electoral participation provisions and enduring peace after civil conflict. International Security, 41(4), 93-132. p.94
[23] Nozick, R. (1974). Anarchy, state, and utopia (Vol. 5038). New York: Basic Books. p. 108
[24] Beetham, D. (2013). The legitimation of power. Macmillan International Higher Education. p. 95

in society. This is due to its capacity to communicate information and messages to large sections of society. The media also can also play a part in influencing the perception that citizens have of reality. This can be achieved through the use of agenda and framing; the selecting of certain topics to the detriment of others and the use of certain words and images to accompany them. For these reasons, actors in times of conflict and peace processes have a special interest in gaining access to the media in the hope of imposing their own definition of reality. Through this practice, they can project themselves as the victim and their opponents as the victimisers.[25] This can ultimately enable them to win the hearts and minds of the citizens and create a greater sense of legitimacy for their agenda.

3.4. Direct Democracy: Utilising Referendums for Peace

Juan David Cárdenas Ruiz maintains that, when understood in rational, modern terms, legitimacy must, through means of democratic processes of communication and persuasion, be sought by political actors involved in political processes such as negotiation or dialogue if peace is to be achieved within a society.[26]

Section 6.6 of the final agreement between the government of Colombia and the FARC in 2016 declared that the "The new Final Agreement to End the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace must receive public endorsement, in accordance with Item 6 of the agenda for the General Agreement. That public endorsement may be given by means of systems for public participation, such as, inter alia, a plebiscite".[27] The reasons for this were twofold; firstly to offset an elite challenge and, secondly, to add legitimacy to the settlement. [28] With both sides confident a positive result could be secured, the legitimacy of the agreement would have increased substantially, and therefore implementation would likely

[25] Barreto, M. I., Borja, H., Serrano, Y., & López, W. L. (2009). La legitimación como proceso en la violencia política, medios de comunicación y construcción de culturas de paz. Universitas Psychologica, 8(3), 737-748. p. 742

[26] Cárdenas Ruiz, J. D. (2015). Los medios de comunicación como actores (des) legitimadores. Algunas reflexiones acerca del rol de los medios de comunicación sobre la construcción de la opinión pública en torno al Proceso de Paz de la Habana. p. 38

[27] Peace Agreements Database (2016) "Final agreement to end the armed conflict and build a stable and lasting peace", agreement between the National Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP), English Translation. p. 231, Retrieved from https://www.peaceagreements.org/viewmasterdocument/1845 [Retrieved 10/05/2020]

[28] Matanock, A. M., & García-Sánchez, M. (2017). The Colombian paradox: Peace processes, elite divisions & popular plebiscites. Daedalus, 146(4), 152-166. p. 152

receive much less resistance from sections of civil or political society. While the motives and reasonings behind utilising referendums to achieve peace seem credible, it must be noted that due to their recent emergence as a tool for peacebuilding, there is very little literature on the effectiveness of peace plebiscites in conflict-torn states.

According to Thania Paffenholz, peace referendums can be a powerful device to give legitimacy to a peace process. The main advantage and disadvantage of utilising them for those involved in peace negotiations are as such; "A vote in favour of the agreement gives decision-makers a mandate to continue the process and gives them leverage over hardline constituencies in their own camps. A vote against the agreement blocks its implementation and usually puts the process on hold." Katherine Collin states that there have been 31 instances of peacemaking referendums since 1947, with 21 of them taking place after the end of the cold war. Seven of these were either not held or have not yet been held. Of the 24 that remain, 19 were passed on the first attempt, and one was passed on the second attempt. Four were rejected outright. While this may seem like that, in general, peace referendums are likely to be successful, it should be noted that all rejected referendums took place after 1999. As they have become more popular in the 21st Century, the chances of peace referendums passing have decreased inversely. In fact, over 50% of the referendums attempted since 2000 have been blocked or rejected.[29]

One of the largest comprehensive comparative analysis of the effectiveness of democratic devices in peace processes was undertaken by Neophytos Loizides. He understood that in order for policy-makers to make the correct decision with regards to how and when to implement a referendum more studies that compare the designs and outcomes of a variety of peace plebiscites must be completed. Loizides argues that democratic devices can be a vital step during peace processes. He concludes that for a referendum to be successful in achieving the desired legitimacy for the process design, timing and consultation are critical factors; if these steps are undertaken correctly, the likelihood of a positive outcome increases, as could be seen in South Africa in 1992. If the vote is held after the negotiations have concluded it might result in the popularity of the leader having waned therefore not benefitting the result or it is possible it may prevent external incentives from being effective, as was the case in Cyprus in 1992.[30] And now also, Colombia in 2016.

---

[29] Collin, K., 2020. Peacemaking referendums: the use of direct democracy in peace processes. Democratization, 27(5), pp.717-736. p. 722
[30] Loizides, N. (2014). Negotiated settlements and peace referendums. European Journal of Political Research, 53(2), 234-249.

According to Collins, there are four types of peace referendum alongside process initiation, process substitution, agreement conclusion and agreement ratification. A process-initiating referendum asks voters whether they support a peace process without reference to the outcomes of an agreement. The vote would confirm support for the negotiation but not enter into details of a settlement. Agreement concluding referendums are most often held at the conclusion of the implementation of a peace agreement and ask voters to make territorial decisions that negotiators cannot. Process-substitution referendums are organised when states undergo sudden, structural changes that reframe their interests in pursuing peace. Governments mandate these votes apart from any ongoing, formal process of negotiation. In the case of the Colombian peace plebiscite, an agreement ratification referendum was used. Agreement-ratification referendums, initiated through peace talks and asking voters to endorse elite decisions, are held to ratify or enact peace agreements.[31] It should be noted that of the four rejected peace plebiscites since 1947; there were agreement-ratification referendums (Guatemala 1999, Cyprus 2004 & Colombia 2016). Certainly, more studies could be undertaken as to why this is the case and why this method is so popular.

While it is important to analyse how and why a state may implement a referendum in a peace process, it is also, however, important to analyse the utilisation of peace referendums from the perspective of the voters. Landon E. Hancock analysed this topic in his 2011 work on the Good Friday Agreement and prospect theory. Prospect theory starts with the concept of loss aversion and how if an option is framed as a 'potential benefit' there is a high likelihood that an individual will not opt for it. Hancock argues that when applied to the situation of a peace referendum, it can prove why voters may vote against peace. As all individuals make a balance between gains and losses, it is often considered safer to opt for the known status quo than the unknown potential benefits. As losses are considered highly undesirable, and the unknown appears more likely to produce such losses voters may be more willing to avoid loss at any cost as opposed to taking a risk for the chance of any potential future benefits.[32] This is what Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky have labelled the 'certainty effect'; according to this theory, individuals are less likely to choose, or vote for, an option that is only possible than an option that is certain.[33] This is relevant in the case of

---

[31] Collin, K., 2020. Peacemaking referendums: the use of direct democracy in peace processes. Democratization, 27(5), pp.717-736.

[32] Hancock, L. E. (2011). There is no alternative: Prospect theory, the yes campaign and selling the Good Friday agreement. Irish Political Studies, 26(1), 95-116.

[33] Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1992). Advances in prospect theory: Cumulative representation of uncertainty. Journal of Risk and uncertainty, 5(4), 297-323. p.316

Colombia as the propaganda advanced by the 'No' campaign advanced content that was designed to instigate a fear of what would happen should the agreement pass. On the other side, the 'Yes' campaign struggled to fight this rhetoric sufficiently to encourage the population to have faith in the agreement and take a "risk" by voting for potential future benefits.

Throughout this literature review, I have touched on how the theories and analyses put forth by a variety of academics on peace processes, mass media and peacebuilding, legitimacy and peace referendums can be applied to the case of the 2012-16 Colombian peace process. In the next sections, I intend to use these theories and analyses as a framework around which I will use a selection of primary and secondary sources to answer the ensuing question: what was the role of the mass media in Colombian society prior to the 2016 peace plebiscite.

4. Conflict, Mass Media and Peace Processes in Colombia: A Historical Perspective

4.1. The Context of the Conflict

Colombia is a nation whose origin, formation and consolidation have, since its beginnings, been intertwined with the use of violence as a resource. A resource used by a selection of different social and political actors to attain and maintain power. Scholars have pointed to a variety of different elements that have promoted violence at different points in the country's history, such as; exclusion politics, geographic fragmentation, ethnic and cultural diversity and tensions between the urban and rural populations.[34]

With regards to the most recent armed conflict, the one which resulted in the 2012-16 peace process, again scholars can point to a myriad of different factors that could explain what caused it and how it can be contextualised from a historical perspective. According to Alejo Vargas, the roots of the conflict can be traced to political and economic factors as well as the regional and global ideological movements of the time. As the conflict persisted and evolved so did the causes of its perpetuation; drug trafficking and illegal crops became a factor as

---

[34] Cárdenas Ruiz, J. D. (2015). Los medios de comunicación como actores (des) legitimadores. Algunas reflexiones acerca del rol de los medios de comunicación sobre la construcción de la opinión pública en torno al Proceso de Paz de la Habana. p. 40

actors sought different sources of financing.[35] Fals Borda et al. in what is widely considered to be one of the most comprehensive studies on causes of violence in Colombia elaborate further on the hypotheses of causes of the conflict, citing reasons such as; structural cracking and regional demands that manifest as counter-violence against state powers that do not recognise them; objective or structural causes, such as widespread poverty, exploitation, and wealth without social awareness that result in just wars; subjective factors regarding ideology and the revolutionary actions of armed actors; "crises of the state" regarding times where the state may lack legitimacy or a necessary monopoly of violence; an inherent culture of violence; the divide between the political leadership and the military leadership; the absence of civic spaces for conflict resolution; moral crises and generational divisions caused by external forces employing overly aggressive violent tactics, among others.[36] While academics may disagree on the specific causes of the conflict, the vast majority of scholars recognise two truths; there is an existence of deep-rooted socio-historical causes of conflict, and no region of Colombia has been able to escape this sphere of sustained violence.

4.2. The Media in Colombia

In the modern era, the mass media has two prominent functions; it can either be used to assist civil society in exercising its right of freedom of expression and to strive for independence and visibility in the public realm, or it can be used as a tool for governance, a tool that is in the grasp of the political and economic establishment. For much of the world, it is the latter that is proving to be the case, and Colombia is no exception. The country's journalistic and informative practices are entwined with the political and cultural history of the nation; a history that is characterised by three key factors; weak state institutions, an exclusive two-party system, and a strong Catholic inheritance.These factors which have resulted in constant political and social turmoil which, due to the inefficacy of the state institutions, have meant the government has consistently had to resort to force to resolve. Indeed, in the 19th Century alone, the country had to endure 13 civil wars.[37] It is unsurprising

---

[35] Vargas Velásquez, A. (1999). Colombia al final del siglo: entre la guerra y la paz. *Conocimiento y humanismo*, 41-77. p.7

[36] Guzmán, G., Borda, O. F., & Umaña Luna, E. (2019). La violencia en Colombia: estudio de un proceso social (Vol. 10). Ediciones Tercer Mundo. p. 15

[37] Bonilla, J., & Montoya, A. (2008). The Media in Colombia: Beyond Violence and market-driven economy. The Media in Latin America, 78-99. p. 78-9

then that those in power have frequently sought alternative methods to control the populace and legitimise its position.

Ever since the first print publication appeared in Bogota in 1791, the media of Colombia has been closely linked to the changing face of state power.[38] Newspaper spaces quickly became filled with promotions of doctrines and ideologies from various political parties and figures and have remained that way to this day. Colombian politics' close relationship with the media can be evidenced by the fact that the majority of the Presidents since the end of the 19th Century have practised journalism in some form and style themselves as 'men of the press'.[39] Indeed, Juan Manuel Santos, President of Colombia during the peace process, was a former journalist and member of the influential and wealthy Santos family, a family which for almost 100 years (1913 to 2007) were the majority shareholders of Colombia's biggest newspaper, El Tiempo.[40] As a result of this relationship between those in power and those working in the 'fourth estate', many journalists in Colombia have long been subjected to censorship, incarcerations, threats, assassinations and exile at the behest of regional and national figures of influence.[41]

Bonilla and Montoya distinguish four stages of the Colombian press; the colonial press, the revolutionary press, the doctrinarian-partisan press and the current press. The latter of which emerged in the 19th Century. This was when the contemporary, family-run Colombian model of journalism began to appear. A model that was characterised by being politically dogmatic and ideologically doctrinarian. Whatever the prevailing political ideology of the time was, the press would be a staunch advocate for it. As the mass media expanded alongside the widening political divisions in the two-party state both sides played a substantial role in transforming it into "the most important discursive arena of public life that was central to the formation of an electoral and partisan public rather than of a Colombian citizenry".[42]

Since the 1960's the media has undergone another transformational shift that has resulted in the majority of the media organisations leaving behind the family-run structure as they get bought out by financial, economic or multi-media groups. As a result of this, the number of

---

[38] Newspaper Journal of the City of Santa Fe de Bogota; Published 9 February 1791
[39] Santos Calderón, E. (1989). El periodismo en Colombia. 1886-1986. Nueva historia de Colombia, 6, 109-136. p. 118
[40] El Tiempo, (2012). 'Estudio revela que EL TIEMPO cuenta con más lectores diarios', *El Tiempo, 12 May 2012,* https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-11783445 [Retrieved 20/05/2020]
[41] Bonilla, J., & Montoya, A. (2008). The Media in Colombia: Beyond Violence and market-driven economy. The Media in Latin America, 78-99. p. 79
[42] Ibid. p.80

print newspapers reduced from the 167 established in the previous hundred years to only 35 in the 21st Century. Many of those that remain are owned by the same few media conglomerates. The social, economic and political history of the mass media in Colombia offers an insight into how it may have been used by actors during attempts at peace processes.

4.3. Colombian Peace Processes

Prior to the 2016 Peace Agreement, several attempts to found a settlement between the FARC and the government had failed. In 1982, the Belisario Bentacur administration signed an agreement with the FARC and several other leftist groups that would bring them into the parliamentary fold by making them a bona fide political party; 'Union Patriotica' (UP) and a, for a brief moment, a path to peace seemed possible. Shortly thereafter, however, thousands of assassinations of UP members by right-wing paramilitary groups, with plausible connections to the ruling administration, caused the ex-FARC members to return to the jungles and pick up arms. Other leftist and rebel groups that also joined the UP, however, continued as legitimate political parties and signed agreements to that end. In return, the rebels agreed to demobilise, de-arm and forgo violence. The FARC was not involved in these agreements and in 1992 then President Gaviria responded by launching a substantial offensive against the group. Gaviria claimed this would bring an end to the conflict within 18 months, he was incorrect and thus it was the turn of the next administration to try its hand at achieving peace.

Ernesto Samper's party won power on a platform that promised to bring peace but to little avail. The most notable difference of this proposal is that Samper decided to negotiate without first agreeing upon a ceasefire. Even going as far to claim that; "'... as long as the peace process lasts, acts of violence will continue to occur... the day that acts of war cease altogether, peace will have been achieved." The permanent peace he predicted, however, was once again, not forthcoming. Samper was succeeded in 1998 by Andrés Pastrana, who initiated renewed peace talks with the FARC. However, with both sides accusing the other of focusing on increasing their strength on the battlefield the talks, once again broke down and so Colombia's cycle of failed peace talks continued. The next decade would be dominated by the militaristic style of Colombia's latest President, Álvaro Uribe, whose aggressive counterinsurgency tactics would succeed in little more than temporarily weakening the

FARC. The result of which was another wave of violence that would once again envelop Colombia.

5. The Formation of the Fields: 'Yes' & 'No'

Juan Manuel Santos was elected as the 32nd President of Colombia on June 20 2010. Having risen to prominence during the first Administration of President Álvaro Uribe, Santos was appointed as Uribe's Minister of National Defence after his re-election to office. While in this position he defended the security policies of the president and adopted an aggressive position against the FARC and other guerrilla groups. Indeed, when Santos was elected president himself, it was as the protégé of his predecessor, Uribe.[43] And yet, shortly after his election, Santos began distancing himself from his former mentor announcing that the "door of dialogue" was open on the condition that they first renounce violence.[44] His administration then began work to improve relations with Ecuador and Venezuela, which had worsened during Uribe's final years in office. These efforts resulted in Venezuelan leader Hugo Chávez joining the Cuban government and advocating for a negotiated settlement between the Colombian administration and the FARC.[45] With FARC's foreign diplomatic support at a historic low point and the guerrillas isolated in the international community, the opportunity for a new attempt at a peace agreement presented itself. And so, in early 2011 secret exploratory meetings between the two actors began, allegedly near the Colombian-Venezuelan border. Eventually, it was agreed that further meetings would take place in Havana, Cuba.[46]

The peace process formally began in October 2012, and the involvement of the media was apparent from the start. Firstly, Santos chose his brother, Enrique, to be one of the government-appointed senior officials attending the peace talks. Enrique Santos was the former director of *El Tiempo*, the most read and influential newspaper in the country, which

---

[43] Mendoza. B. (2010). 'Santos: 'Presidente Uribe, éste es su triunfo'' *El Mundo, 31 May 2010,* https://www.elmundo.es/america/2010/05/31/colombia/1275269910.html *[Retrieved 10/05/2020]*
[44] BBC News (2010). 'Juan Manuel Santos sworn in as Colombian president' *BBC, 8 August 2010,* https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-10904788 *[Retrieved 10/05/2020]*
[45] El Espectador (2013). 'Chávez, las Farc y el proceso de paz' *El Espectador, 5 Mar 2013,* https://www.elespectador.com/opinion/chavez-las-farc-y-el-proceso-de-paz-columna-408503/ *[Retrieved 10/05/2020]*
[46] FARC-EP International (2012), 'Exploratory meetings', *FARC-EP International, 05 July 2012,* http://farc-epeace.org/index.php/peace-process/news/item/262-exploratory-meetings *[Retrieved 15/05/2020]*

also has the highest circulation.[47] Then, days before the process began the Government and the Guerrilla made their will public through official communiqués driven to a certain extent by leaks from the political opposition spread through social media and traditional media.[48]

From that point onwards and during the three years of negotiations, several significant social and political communication factions emerged as the major actors in the process. Each faction was acting within the framework of a rational, and non-rational, public debate; each working towards convincing their audiences to accept their interpretation of the conflict, its causes and it's solutions, and of the peace process and the likely results of the agreements made. In the context of the peace referendum, these factions aligned to create two separate camps: the 'Yes' camp and the 'No' camp.

5.1. The 'Yes' Camp

5.1.1.The National Government of Colombia

The first political-communication faction, the government of Colombia, appeared to come into the negotiations in good stead. Backed by the support of a coalition of political parties and influential figures and buoyed by an election victory in 2010, and later in 2014, it focused on proposing "remedies" that focused on the post-conflict implementation of the agreement. The privileged position of the government meant that, initially at least it had the support and coverage of the mass media. It was the main advocate for the 'Yes' campaign.[49]

As, by law, the government could not officially campaign on the behalf for the 'Yes' option and so was only able to put out information on the content of the agreement on neutral terms, the strategy of the government was to convince Colombians to learn from the mistakes made by the 'remain' campaigners in the UK and to utilise a campaign of fear regarding what citizens failing to properly engage with the peace

---

[47] El Tiempo, (2012). 'Estudio revela que EL TIEMPO cuenta con más lectores diarios', El Tiempo, 12 May 2012, https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-11783445 [Retrieved 20/05/2020]
[48] Cárdenas Ruiz, J. D. (2015). Los medios de comunicación como actores (des) legitimadores. Algunas reflexiones acerca del rol de los medios de comunicación sobre la construcción de la opinión pública en torno al Proceso de Paz de la Habana. p. 48
[49] Cárdenas Ruiz, J. D. (2015). Los medios de comunicación como actores (des) legitimadores. Algunas reflexiones acerca del rol de los medios de comunicación sobre la construcción de la opinión pública en torno al Proceso de Paz de la Habana. p48

agreement would mean for Colombia.[50] Evidence of this strategy could be seen in a speech Santos gave to a group of young Colombians a few months before the vote:

"We are close to signing a definitive agreement with the FARC. I hope that soon that agreement will be endorsed by Colombians. Have you wondered how you will participate in this decision? By this, I don't mean if you will vote for or against the agreement, but your level of consciousness about the importance of the topic. Look at what just happened in the UK; there they voted to leave the European Union and only after having decided so did the people begin to enquire about it. […] Are we going to learn about the consequences of staying at war after we vote? Are we going to let others decide for us and impose the return of armed conflict?" [51]

It was clear that the government wanted citizens to properly engage with the government's coverage of the peace process. As Humberto de la Calle, chief negotiator for the government in Havana insisted; "we have started what I have called the pedagogical marathon, with the aim of neutrally informing the Colombians on what has been signed so far".[52] In order to do this, they planned to embark on a 'great marathon of pedagogy'. President Santos confirmed this, saying that Colombians "need to be informed and must make a conscious decision on the plebiscite" according to the text." [53] To accomplish this, the negotiation teams in Havana agreed on a shared communication strategy; together they created a (now defunct) website called '*mesa de conversaciones'* (Conversations table) to upload draft agreements as they were made public. On top of this the government had a communication strategy made of three interconnected efforts; a social media strategy for dismantling misinformation, an education strategy for explaining every point of the agreement, and a strategy to promote dialogue between different sectors of Colombian society. Evidently, the government hoped that by consistently and widely

---

[50] Carranza-Franco, F. (2019). Demobilisation and Reintegration in Colombia: Building State and Citizenship. Routledge.

[51] González, M. F. (2017). La «posverdad» en el plebiscito por la paz en Colombia. Nueva sociedad, (269). p. 116

[52] Ibid. p120

[53] Vanguardia (2016). "Gobierno inicia "gran maratón" pedagógica sobre acuerdos con Farc", *Vanguardia, 28 July 2016,* https://www.vanguardia.com/colombia/gobierno-inicia-gran-maraton-pedagogica-sobre-acuerdos-con-farc-KGVL367481 [Retrieved 20/05/2020]

sharing the agreed-upon terms of the agreement in an impartial manner, it would ensure a victory for 'Yes'.[54]

5.1.2. The FARC-EP

The second political-communication bloc, the FARC-EP, focused on their interpretation of the causes of the conflict, the victims, and the perpetrators of the confrontation; opting to provide more a historical and political version of the conflict. The traditional media, in general, portrayed the guerrilla group as principle transgressor of the conflict and so often portrayed them in a more negative light. The strategy of the group was to counter this by implementing their own communication system to spread their messages; this was done through a combination of their own news agency, ANNCOL, alternative media and social networks.[55]

5.1.3. Civil Society and Independent Media

Earlier, we discussed the existence of a 'fourth estate' in liberal democracies and its role in Colombian society. It is my contention that there was a fourth power in the realm of social and political communication with regards to the peace process. With the government hamstrung by the law and therefore unable to officially campaign on behalf of either option, civil society and independent journalism became crucial elements in the active support of the 'Yes' vote. Civil society participation took many forms such as public forums held around the country and visits by victims groups to the negotiations in Havana.[56] In the media, however, some journalists attempted to counter the spread of misinformation and support the peace process by publishing articles intended to educate Colombians about the myths and the realities of the negotiations.

---

[54] Gomez-Suarez, A. (2017). Peace process pedagogy: lessons from the no-vote victory in the Colombian peace referendum. Comparative Education, 53(3), 462-482. p. 466

[55] Ibid. p. 48-9

[56] Carranza-Franco, F. (2019). Demobilisation and Reintegration in Colombia: Building State and Citizenship. Routledge.

5.2. The 'No' Camp

5.2.1. The Democratic Centre Party

The third bloc, the Democratic Centre party, was headed and championed by former president Álvaro Uribe. Uribe formed the party in 2014 as a response to Santos' decision to begin peace talks and reverse his previously aggressive stance against the FARC. This faction focused on espousing the problems of the process itself, the origin of the violence and attempting to delegitimise the demands of the FARC. Uribe, a charismatic figure and a hugely influential one in the world of Colombian politics and society, disseminated his opinions via social media where he had a strong presence and a loyal following. This group was by far the strongest proponent of the 'No' campaign.[57]

The campaigners of the 'No' camp coordinated under the leadership of Uribe and unleashed a media war against the negotiations and the developments of the peace process. Uribe resorted to a variety of scripts to counter the pedagogy of the 'Yes' camp and spread misinformation about the negotiations, simplify the complexity of the agreements, and incite negative emotions towards the government and the FARC. The campaign was spearheaded at three levels: public demonstrations, traditional media and social networks. Through these levels, six narratives were spread with force and repetition: 'gender ideology', 'castrochavismo', ' peace without impunity', 'Santos' surrender of Colombia to the FARC', 'No + Santos', and Civil Resistance'.[58]

It was not until after the referendum, however, that the strategy of the Democratic Centre party and the 'No' campaign was laid bare for all to see. Luis Carlos Vélez, campaign manager for the 'No' camp, declared in an interview with *La Republica* that it had been the "cheapest and most effective campaign ever". He explained, "We discovered the viral power of social networks. For example, on a visit to Antioquia, a councilman passed me an image of Santos and Timochenko with a message saying that the guerillas were going to be given money if the country was in the pot. I published it on Facebook, and last Saturday I had 130,000 shares with a reach of six

---

[57] Ibid. p. 49
[58] Gomez-Suarez, A. (2017). Peace process pedagogy: lessons from the no-vote victory in the Colombian peace referendum. Comparative Education, 53(3), 462-482. p. 467

million people [...] some strategists from Panama and Brazil told us that the strategy was to stop explaining the agreements and to focus on inciting outrage".[59] Of course, a campaign based around manipulation and misinformation is not a new practice by any means, but it has certainly taken on a new dimension since the advent of social media.

5.2.2. The Church

A selection of scholars, as well as the Colombian press, identified the Churches of Colombia as having a major role in the success of the 'No' vote. Of course, with the huge role religion has in Colombian society, it is not a section that should be ignored. With around 13-16% of the population protestant and the vast majority of those Pentecostals, religious leaders in these churches can have immense influence. With regards to Evangelical Protestantism, support for the 'No' vote was advocated by pastors of some of the most powerful Pentecostal megachurches. Usually found in the heart of major urban areas, these megachurches have giant congregations, financial power, vast material infrastructures and an influential mass media presence, which includes the ownership of printing presses, radio stations and television programmes).[60] Alongside the protestant churches representatives from the more conservative sections of the Catholic church came out in support of the 'No' vote. Semana, a prominent Colombian news magazine, reported that the pastors did not believe there was an overarching strategy on the part of the churches, but rather an accumulation of coincidences aligned in support of the 'No' vote.[61] According to Beltrán and Creely, while a large group of religious leaders drew on a variety of arguments to justify their support of the 'No' vote, the main reason for the objection to the peace agreement lay in their perception of the presence of a 'gender ideology' within it.[62] The emergence of this and how it became a prominent section of the 'No' camp will be examined in the next section.

---

[59] Ramírez Prado, J. (2016). 'El No ha sido la campaña más barata y más efectiva de la historia.' L*a República*, *October 4 2016*, https://www.asuntoslegales.com.co/actualidad/el-no-ha-sido-la-campana-mas-barata-y-mas-efectiva-de-la-historia-2427891 [Retrieved 30/05/2020]
[60] Beltrán, W. M., & Creely, S. (2018). Pentecostals, Gender Ideology and the Peace Plebiscite: Colombia 2016. Religions, 9(12), 418. p. 9
[61] Semana (2016), 'Cristianos: ¿el poder decisorio en la política?', Semana, 29 October 2016, https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/religion-inclina-la-balanza-politica-en-colombia/502530 [Retrieved 01/06/2020];
[62] Ibid. p. 2

Of course, there were other social and political-communication actors who gained relevance at various times during the peace process such as foreign governments, international institutions, international economic and political actors, victims of the violence, organised and non-organised citizenship groups, associations of the military and police among others. For the purpose of this research, however, I will be focusing on the factions mentioned above.

Despite the power and influence of Uribe in Colombian politics, parties supportive of the peace process still held majorities in both parties of Congress. Also, the party's candidate in the 2014 presidential election, Oscar Iván Zuluaga, lost to Santos, who gained a second term. Although Zuluaga did gain a higher percentage of the vote in the first round over the incumbent president (29.28% to 25.72%), Santos pushed hard in the second round on a platform of peace, framing the election as a choice for peace or the continuation of an endless war. After doubling down on the issue of the need for peace, Santos won the second round by 6% of the vote.[63] Wolfsfeld argued that "leaders who are unable to mobilise a broad political consensus for their policies will have little success in promoting these policies to the media."[64] For Manuel Santos, however, this was not the case. He had the backing of both houses of Congress and the majority of influential political and social figures and the initial support of the mass media. And yet, the 2016 peace plebiscite failed to pass. In the next few sections, I will be examining some of the key divisive issues that arose during the peace process and the role the media had in covering each one in an attempt to create a better understanding of why Colombia said 'No' to Santos' peace. As it is understood that the 'No' campaign opted to use misinformation to advance its aims I will examine some of the more prominent myths that were peddled to the Colombian public, how they were disseminated and what the government and other actors in support of the 'Yes' campaign did to counter the lies.

6. The Myths and the Media

[63] BBC News (2014). 'Colombia vote: Santos re-elected as president', *BBC News, 16 June 2014,* https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-27862555 [Retrieved 25/05/2020]
[64] Wolfsfeld, G. (2001). The news media and peace processes: The Middle East and Northern Ireland (Vol. 31, No. 37). Diane Publishing Company. p. 42

6.1. "Gender Ideology"

In August 2016, between 40-100,000 people went out onto the streets of Colombia as part of a series of mass protests.[65] A month later similar protests took place in Argentina, Bolivia and Peru. In many of these demonstrations participants were carrying a mixture of pink and blue banners, often inscribed with the logo "*Con mis hijos no te metas*" (Don't mess with my children).[66] The demonstrations in Colombia occurred due to mass objections against a new sex education manual that was going to be introduced in schools called 'Ambientes escolares libres de discriminación' ('School environments free from discrimination'). The manual, which was designed by the Ministry of Education, aimed to "reduce discrimination on the basis of gender and sexual diversity in school environments."[67]

The manual was released just two months before the plebiscite, and religious leaders came out in force to object to it. Ángela Hernández, a regional representative of the Pentecostal church and an MP in Uribe's party, lead one of these protests, claiming that the manual encouraged homosexual behaviours and that the Ministry of Education was attempting to promote a "colonisation" by the LGBTI community in schools.[68] Other highly powerful figures in the church came out to insinuate that this was just one part of a more radical 'gender ideology' that was being forced upon Colombian society. It is important then to identify what is understood by the term 'gender ideology'.

In 1949 Simone de Beauvoir auvoire wrote the famous line "you are not born a woman, you become one". This phrase represented a new area of study known as gender studies. A group of feminist scholars took up the concept and formed gender theory, a theory based on arguing the distinction between sex and gender. The aim of gender theory and gender

[65] Prieto, J. & León, A. (2016), 'El poder de la fe que le apunta al No', La Silla Vacia, 30 September 2016, https://lasillavacia.com/historia/el-poder-de-la-fe-que-le-apunta-al-no-58150 [Retrieved 01/06/2020]

[66] Perú21 (2016). 'Defendamos la familia': Así se desarrolla la marcha del colectivo 'Con Mis Hijos No Te Metas', *Peru21, 15 November 2018,* https://peru21.pe/lima/colectivo-mis-hijos-metas-hara-planton-plaza-san-martin-440460-noticia/ [Retrieved 01/06/2020]

[67] Beltrán, W. M., & Creely, S. (2018). Pentecostals, Gender Ideology and the Peace Plebiscite: Colombia 2016. Religions, 9(12), 418. p. 7

[68] *"Encouraging homosexual behaviours"*, Semana (2016), 'Cristianos: ¿el poder decisorio en la política?', *Semana, 29 October 2016,* https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/religion-inclina-la-balanza-politica-en-colombia/502530 [Retrieved 01/06/2020]; "colonisation by the LGBTI", Prieto, J. & León, A. (2016), 'El poder de la fe que le apunta al No', *La Silla Vacia, 30 September 2016,* https://lasillavacia.com/historia/el-poder-de-la-fe-que-le-apunta-al-no-58150 [Retrieved 01/06/2020]

studies was, like other facets of feminism, to eliminate patriarchy. It was through the work of academics in the field that feminist and LGBT ideas gained international prominence and in Colombia were hugely important in helping improve women's and LGBT rights. One momentous victory occurred in 2006 when the Colombian government decriminalised abortion.[69]

Unsurprisingly, victories such as this for women's and LGBT movements provoked a virulent reaction from some sections of the Catholic and Christian churches. Some religious citizenships began to use the term 'gender ideology' instead of 'gender studies', this change may seem small, but the implication of an 'ideology' implied the involvement of a larger hegemonic power. In the context of the Colombian peace process, 'gender ideology' became an amorphous and ambiguous term that meant a variety of different things. Ultimately it allowed the fears of the religious right to be grouped into one place. Some such beliefs about the strategic objectives of a gender ideology are; the destruction of the family, of any religious belief, of biological gender differences - not just cultural differences - and the destruction of rights of women.[70] Samuel Ángel, director of the Catholic Solidarity movement and member of the mobilisations, spoke of 'gender ideology' and said; "it is an avalanche of the left through the discourse of inclusion, equality, love, to kidnap the minds and hearts of our children." Clearly, the term had the ability to provoke a lot of emotional discourse in Colombian society. A factor that did not go unnoticed by uribistas (supporters of Álvaro Uribe) in the 'No' camp.

6.1.1. 'No' and the Gender Ideology

Prior to the self-proclaimed 'Marches in Defence of the Family' on August 10, the 'gender ideology' did not figure into the 'No' camps arguments at all. It is evident though that the Uribe and the leaders of the 'No' campaign noticed the mobilising power of the 'gender ideology' argument. They saw the potential for hundreds of thousands of votes in the marches and so began to make use of their vast social networks to claim that the peace agreement was "contaminated" by 'gender ideology'. They preyed upon the fears of the religious groups that the agreement would be a threat to the conventional idea of family. For

---

[69] Paula Toro, M., (2019). 'El Fantasma de la ideología de género' *La Silla Vacia, January 29 2019,* *https://lasillavacia.com/silla-llena/red-de-las-mujeres/historia/el-fantasma-de-la-ideologia-de-genero-69742* [Retrieved 02/06/2020]
[70] Ibid.

this campaign, the 'No' camp focused their efforts on the popular video upload platform YouTube.

Just a few weeks after the protests Alejandro Ordóñez, a senior figure in the 'No' camp uploaded a video to YouTube where he claimed that the government of Colombia and the FARC are using the agreement to make gender ideology a" constitutional norm". In the video, uploaded in September 2016, he maintains that the supporters of 'Yes' are trying to "steal the innocence of children."[71] Another prominent figure in support of the 'No' vote was Christian YouTuber Oswaldo Ortiz, on September 5 2016, Ortiz used his social media platforms to share a video of him heavily criticising the peace process. In it, he claims to have read all 297 pages of agreement and concluded that there was indeed a 'gender ideology' incorporated into it. In the video, he states. "... we're in tremendous trouble. We're trapped. I am of the generation of those trapped in this on October 2. We want peace, but we do not want representatives like Humberto [de la Calle] who do not represent us, nor ideologies that we do not believe in ... ". The video today has reached over ¾ of a million views. The video ignored other topics of the debate and focused solely on the issue of 'gender ideology.'[72]

From the churches in the 'No' camp a prominent Pentecostal pastor, Eduardo Cañas, also used the power of social media to share one of his sermons. In it, he claimed that "gender identity, gender perspective and gender ideology are the same" and that "if this [the peace agreement] is approved, much of what we gained in terms of freedom of worship in the past and more will be lost". He concluded by urging his followers to vote 'No' in the peace plebiscite. In another message that was widely shared on WhatsApp, Cañas argued that "In point 82 of the Havana agreements, a commitment was made to establish gender ideology as public policy. These agreements will be elevated to a supra-constitutional norm; that is, they will be irremovable." The message also states that gender ideology is excluded "as a doctrine of the Church" and that no Catholic "can vote for, or support a candidate, or policies that violate Christian morality." He concludes: "Before the plebiscite, which includes this gender ideology, I think it is clear what a Christian and a Catholic should do." A direct call to

---

[71] Beltrán, W. M., & Creely, S. (2018). Pentecostals, Gender Ideology and the Peace Plebiscite: Colombia 2016. Religions, 9(12), 418.; Alejandro Ordóñez Maldonado. (2016, September 23). '"Acuerdo Santos/Timochenko es una imposición de la ideología de género": Alejandro Ordóñez' [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gh3Gd4gv0mM

[72] Oswaldo Ortiz (2016, September 6) '¿Cómo votar el próximo 2 de Octubre? ¿El LobbyGay tiene representante en la Habana? ¿Ideología de Género en los Acuerdos?', [Vídeo]. Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=590317931151021

vote "No". In one of the more direct forms of propaganda buses with a pro-traditional family and anti-transexual messages were even hired by one right-wing Christian group to tour Colombia and other Latin American countries [Figure A].

Figure A: A bus hired by HazteOir, a right-wing Christian group church in Colombia. The message reads: "Boys have a penis. Girls have a vagina. Don't be fooled. If you're a boy, you're a boy. If you're a girl, keep being one." [Source: Seguimento.co][73]

The 'No' camp used social media and a variety of resources at their disposal in order to integrate the 'gender ideology' into the peace agreement. It was an exercise of manipulation that, in just one month, managed to outrage and terrify many Colombians by convincing them that their freedom of worship, the sexual education of their children and the traditional values of Colombian society were all under attack.[74]

6.1.2. 'Yes' and the Gender Ideology

Just a few months before the referendum the 'Marches in Defence of the Family' were a crucial moment for both sides and one that could prove costly for the 'Yes' camp if not met

---

[73] Seguimento (2017) 'Llegó a Colombia el polémico bus que 'lucha contra la ideología de género', *Seguimento, 20 May 2017,* *https://seguimiento.co/colombia/llego-colombia-el-polemico-bus-que-lucha-contra-la-ideologia-de-genero-6169* [Retrieved 02/06/2020]

[74] Gomez-Suarez, A. (2016). El triunfo del No: la paradoja emocional detrás del plebiscito. Ícono. p.66

with an appropriate response. With an estimated 11,000,000 Christians in Colombia who could be decisive in the vote.[75] The day after the protests, President Santos took to TV to announce that the teaching manual that had caused the demonstrations would not be used in schools. He announced that "Neither the Ministry of Education nor the National Government have implemented, promoted or will not promote the so-called gender ideology." The announcement and the U-turn did little to stem the tide of anger from the Christian community nor the misinformation being disseminated by the 'No' campaigners.

Advocates for the 'Yes' campaign also disseminated content and messages to counter the misinformation being shared by the 'No' campaigners. El Tiempo, the nation's largest newspaper, released an article aimed at debunking the myths of the 'gender ideology' claim. Several other media outlets took similar action.[76] In response to fake manuals that had been shared through social media, the ministry of education released a statement on its website denouncing massive manipulation campaigns on a revision of coexistence manuals to deceive parents.[77] And Minister of the Interior, Juan Fernando Cristo, toured to meet with the representatives of the more than 5,800 non-Catholic churches that are registered in the country. In addition to Cristo, delegates from National Planning visited cities to speak with religious leaders.

Ultimately, however, none of the responses from supporters of the 'Yes' campaign were sufficient in slowing the momentum gained by the 'No' camp from the issue of 'gender ideology'. Whether the Christian vote was decisive, however, has proved to be a debated topic among scholars studying the causes of 'No' victory. Beltrán and Creely argue that the role of the churches was indeed decisive because the "'No' vote won by a very slim margin, and in Senatorial elections which took place in 2018, the Evangelical and Pentecostal groups that led the opposition to the peace agreement gained almost half a million votes,

[75] Prieto, J. (2016.) 'Gina le agua el voto cristiano al Gobierno' *La Silla Vacia, August 10 2016,* https://lasillavacia.com/historia/gina-le-agua-el-voto-cristiano-al-gobierno-57489 [Retrieved 02/06/2020]

[76] El Tiempo (2016). 'Verdades y mentiras en el debate sobre las cartillas en los colegios' *El Tiempo, August 9 2016,* https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-16669174 [Retrieved 02/06/2020]

[77] Mineducación (2016). 'Ministerio denuncia campaña de manipulación masiva sobre revisión de manuales de convivencia para engañar a padres de familia' *Ministerio de Educación Naciona, August 8 2016,* https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/portal/micrositios-institucionales/Manuales-de-Convivencia/357802:Ministerio-denuncia-campana-de-manipulacion-masiva-sobre-revision-de-manuales-de-convivencia-para-enganar-a-padres-de-familia [Retrieved 02/06/2020]

using similar arguments to those used to oppose the peace agreement in 2016 in their campaign for the Senate".[78] On the other hand, Basset argues that it is "obviously an exaggeration" to consider it the decisive factor due to the lack of geographical correlation between the Christian vote in the 2014 election and the 'No' vote.[79]

Ultimately, however, whether it was decisive or not in the vote is not is not the most important factor. After the rejection of the peace agreement, several Pentecostal leaders hailed the outcome as a miracle. Santos then met with these leaders several times to hear their concerns. The new agreement took several of these concerns on board, including mentioning the family as a "fundamental nucleus of society".[80] Mentions of gender were also reduced by over 50% in the second iteration and, to many in the LGBTI community, the new agreement was seen as a loss.

6.2. Castrochavismo

Argumentum ad ignorantiam: (appeal to ignorance)
The fallacy that an idea is true simply on the basis that it has not been proved false.

The term 'castrochavismo' is a portmanteau of Castroism and Chavismo, eponymous left-wing political ideologies inspired by Fidel Castro and Hugo Chávez, leaders of Cuba and Venezuela respectively. It is difficult to define what 'castrochavismo' is specifically but, broadly speaking, what people imagine is an alliance between Cuba and Venezuela to install 21st-century socialism in Colombia. It is a fear based on a mixture of conspiracy theories and real events.

The origin of the conspiracy theory is said to be the appearance of the name 'Santiago' on the computer of ex-FARC commander Raúl Reyes. This was believed by some to be an alias of President Santos, despite the fact that during his time as Defence Minister Santos commanded the bombings which killed three other guerrilla commanders in the group. This theory was combined with three real-life events to construct the 'castrochavismo' narrative;

---

[78] Beltrán, W. M., & Creely, S. (2018). Pentecostals, Gender Ideology and the Peace Plebiscite: Colombia 2016. Religions, 9(12), 418. p.2
[79] Basset, Y. (2018). Claves del rechazo del plebiscito para la paz en Colombia. Estudios Políticos, (52), 241-265. p. 258
[80] Beltrán, W. M., & Creely, S. (2018). Pentecostals, Gender Ideology and the Peace Plebiscite: Colombia 2016. Religions, 9(12), 418. p.13

pictures of Santos with Fidel Castro, him referring to Chávez as 'my new best friend', and the left-wing past of his brother Enrique. The combination of these factors was used by uribistas to conclude that the Santos family were, in fact, long term allies of castrochavismo.

According to uribistas, the entry of FARC into the Colombian political system would bring about the end of democracy in Colombia because they would perpetuate themselves in power just as Hugo Chávezdid in Venezuela. The allegation of Castrochavismo towards Santos and the Colombia government, however, was a reference to much larger accusations against the Santos administration; treason and deception.

6.2.1. 'No' and Castrochavismo

One of the main arguments that helped the 'No' camp bring the 'castrochavismo' claims to prominence during the peace process was based on three realities. The first was that Cuba was chosen as the location for the dialogues and Venezuela was chosen as one of the two 'accompanying countries' (along with Chile). As well as this, Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro, the former and current presidents of Venezuela had an important role in convincing the FARC to agree to enter into negotiations. The second factor was that the FARC had never hidden the fact that they agreed with the Bolivarian-Chavista project to bring a 21st Century brand of socialism to power. Indeed, Timochecko acknowledged this fact in a speech he gave in September 2016.[81] Finally, it was also true that the FARC would be allowed to become a genuine political party with ten fixed seats in Congress. These factors were like fuel to the fire for the uribistas, who fanned the flame of 'castrochavismo' as frequently and as forcefully as they could.

On a tour of Europe in July 2016, ex-President Uribe spoke to a selection of media outlets, all of which had similar ideological inclinations to his own. In one interview, whilst discussing the possibility of an uribista candidate coming to power in the next election, he affirmed that "our platform will oppose what Santos has been forging because he hands the country over to the FARC, which is Castrochavismo." This neologism became one of the main buzzwords for the 'No' campaigners during the run-up to the peace referendum. In the same interview. Uribe gave an insight into what the accusation of 'castrochavismo' actually signified when, whilst referring to the peace agreements, he insisted that the Santos government was

---

[81] Prensa Nuestroamericano (2016, September 26) 'Discurso Comandante FARC EP Timochenko firma paz Colombia 26 septiembre 2016', [Video]. Youtube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P8VvMdc_AWA

manipulating Colombians and the international community: "There is no security policy that supports Colombians, everything is given to terrorism and to the socialists, and the country's economic victims are mistreated […] It is a government that manipulates international opinion and the media".[82]

The alleged surrender of the country by the Santos administration to the FARC and its deinstitutionalisation became one of the most important flags the 'No' camp campaigned under. Ex-President Andres Pastrana even went as far as to say that the agreement represented nothing less than a "coup d'etat".[83] Uribe elaborated further, saying "our concern is with the agenda of socialism in 21st Century Venezuela, which is a part of the FARC's agenda and, unfortunately, is present in the Havana agreements. The FARC started in Marxism and Leninism and ended in 'Castrochavismo'.[84] In an attempt to incite outrage and fear among Colombians the 'No' camp once again took to social media, in particular, Twitter.

Figures A & B: *Tweet published by Álvaro Uribe Vélez. Source: Álvaro Uribe Twitter Page[85]*

---

[82] González, M. F. (2017). La «posverdad» en el plebiscito por la paz en Colombia. Nueva sociedad, (269). p. 119

[83] BBC News (2016). 'Colombia peace deal: What are the most contentious points?', *BBC News, September 28 2016,* https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-37457860 [Retrieved 04/06/2020]

[84] Alonso, A. (2016). 'Uribe: "El acuerdo no favorece a la democracia sino que le entrega Colombia a las FARC"' *El Independiente, September 25 2016,* https://www.elindependiente.com/politica/2016/09/25/el-acuerdo-no-favorece-a-la-democracia-sino-que-le-entrega-colombia-a-las-farc/ [Retrieved 04/06/2020]; González, M. F. (2017). La «posverdad» en el plebiscito por la paz en Colombia. Nueva sociedad, (269). p. 120

[85] AlvaroUribeVel (2016, May 30). '#RealidadDelProcesoDeLaHabana Impunidad y abuso del Gobierno en los acuerdos abre el camino hacia el Castrochavismo!' [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/AlvaroUribeVel/status/737408928292712452

Figure A: #RealityoftheHavanaProcess - Impunity and abuse of the Government in the agreements opens the way to Castrochavismo

Figure B: #RealitiesofthePeaceProcess. 20 - A Hit to Democracy. The unlimited powers of the Government, the inhabitant law in the best Chavista style and the supplantation of the Constitution to please terrorism, will constitute a new dictatorship, backed by Congress and endorsed by the rifles and explosives of terrorism.

Colombiacheck dubbed what was to happen next as an 'Intense "war" for the plebiscite on Twitter. Their analysis done over a period of one month demonstrated how the debate had shifted from rationality to passion. The sample for the study included an examination of all the tweets published by Uribe, Santos, Timochenko, as well as a selection of other political and social leaders. They discover that during this 30 day period, Uribe, who has a Twitter following of almost 5 million, published 57 Tweets supporting the rejection of the plebiscite, more than any other person in the study. In one message, which accumulated 1,796 retweets and 1,567 likes, Uribe stated; "Our contradiction is not with those of the Yes, it is with the agreements Gov.-FARC to impose a 21st-century socialist agenda." In another message that received a similar amount of attention, he pushed the agenda of treason by Santos; "How can we trust Pres. Santos, who has always lied? Let's vote No in the plebiscite to defend Colombia!"[86] The evidence of the 'No' campaigns efforts to focus the discourse on fear, war and communism can be seen from the ranking of words most used by leaders in the sample. The most common words being: war, terrorism, impunity, crimes, massacre, drug trafficking, atrocious, rape, chavismo, Venezeula and 'against humanity'.[87]

6.2.2. 'Yes' and Castrochavismo

If the Twitter "war" for the plebiscite were a numbers game, the 'Yes' camp lost heavily. Whereas Uribe published 57 Tweets relating to the plebiscite during the period of the study, Santos published just six, and Timochenko posted none. Other accounts in the 'Yes' camp

---

[86] AlvaroUribeVel (2016, September 18). 'Cómo confiar en el Pte Santos que siempre nos ha mentido? Votemos No en el plebiscito para defender a Colombia!' [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/AlvaroUribeVel/status/777306598339383301

[87] Molinares Dueñas, C. (2016) 'Intensa 'guerra' por el plebiscito en Twitter', *ColombiaCheck, September 26 2016,* https://colombiacheck.com/investigaciones/intensa-guerra-por-el-plebiscito-en-twitter [Retrieved 04/06/2020]

such as the Government Peace Team and the FARC Peace Dialogues published one and zero respectively.[88] It's possible that the government wanted to avoid giving credibility to the discourse by becoming involved in an online Twitter spat. Commendable as this notion may be, it appears that as a strategy, it was a weak and ineffective one. As Humberto de la Calle explained after the referendum:

> "But we didn't take them seriously either. The 'castrochavismo' thing seemed like a joke. To say that Santos or myself are 'Castrochavistas' was something so absurd that it did not seem worth taking seriously. The word doesn't mean anything. But maybe that's why it caught on, and after that, I saw it remain there. They are slogans that, just through repetition, are creating a problem."[89]

De la Calle made the government's mistrust and possible disdain for social networks clear in the seam interview when he claimed that "extremist sectors of the opposition have appeared that use the tragic method of using social networks to share lies and slander".[90] Where Uribe and the 'No' campaigners used messages that appealed to people's emotions, the government stuck with their pedagogical tack and tried to appeal more to reason. One Tweet [Figure C] published by Santos that did, in fact, go viral, for example, said "With the signing of a decree to call the plebiscite just days away bringing us a step closer to peace. The question is clear and simple. Do you support the final settlement of a stable and lasting peace?"[91] The tweet received over 1,100 retweets and 1,400 likes, but the study by ColombiaCheck found that the discourse it provoked in the comments was more a mixture of "insults and mockery than an in-depth analysis of the plebiscite question".[92]

---

[88] Ibid.

[89] Gabriel Vásquez, J. (2016) "Ingreso de Farc en política exigirá más a los partidos': De la Calle', *El Tiempo, August 22 2016, https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-16680496* [Retrieved 04/06/2020]

[90] Ibid.

[91] JuanManSantos (2016, August 30). 'With the signing of a decree to call the plebiscite just days away bringing us a step closer to peace. The question is clear and simple.' [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/JuanManSantos/status/770620654068563968/photo/1

[92] Molinares Dueñas, C. (2016) 'Intensa 'guerra' por el plebiscito en Twitter', ColombiaCheck, September 26 2016, "https://colombiacheck.com/investigaciones/intensa-guerra-por-el-plebiscito-en-twitter [Retrieved 04/06/2020]

Figure C: Tweet published by Juan Manuel Santos. Source: Juan Manual Santos Twitter Page

The online reaction to this Tweet proved that Santos di have the power to use social media to his own gain. Indeed, he was not lacking in followers either, Santos currently has half a million more followers than Uribe.However, as evidenced by the ColombiaCheck analysis, the 'Yes' camp chose not to use these platforms to counter the assaults of the 'No' campaign. A decision that in hindsight appears to have been an unwise one. With regards to the FARC, it is unsurprising they chose not to weigh in in the 'Castrochavismo' discourse because of their stated ideologies. The rest of the 'Yes' campaign however, once again relied on a campaign of pedagogy.

The 'Yes' camp was supported by media outlets such as *La Silla Vacia*, an organisation whose name is a reference to the failed peace process of President Pastrana in 1999 and vows to do "good journalism", who continued to fact-check any messages shared to them by Colombian citizens and also produced a series of articles aiming to disprove any myths perpetuated by the 'No' campaign. The series, titled "The fear of No" included an article on Castrochavismo which explained the origin of the term and why it has gained ground in Colombia. They then set out to debunk the myth using a variety of facts and credible

sources, offering nine solid reasons as to why the claims are unfounded. The article ended quite succinctly with the line: "Colombians have spent years seeing how Castro-Chavismo has led to the collapse of the Venezuelan economy. The images of hordes of Venezuelan moms crossing the border to buy milk and diapers in Cúcuta is not exactly a billboard for 21st-century socialism. That is why, for the Farc, it will not be so easy to sell a populist project made in the image and likeness of the Venezuelan."[93] A strong argument that makes any claims of an upcoming Venezuela-inspired socialist revolution seems more than unlikely. *El Tiempo* also published an article before the referendum with a similar aim entitled "What is true and what is the myth about 'Castrochavismo'?"[94]

It must be noted, however, that in the run-up to 2018 presidential elections, when 'castrochavismo' was still a hot topic, a large variety of media outlets ran articles intending to debunk the myths surrounding the term. This included some of the biggest news organisations in Colombia, such as *El Espectador* and *El Diario,* among others.[95] The combined readership of these newspapers alone would make up a large percentage of the Colombian electorate. As well as this some international news organisations even produced articles to the same end such as *ABC International*.[96] All of these media groups demonstrated their willingness to disprove the myths of 'Castrochavismo' in 2018, had they done the same in 2016, perhaps the result of the plebiscite would have been different.

Of course, we now know that the response from the 'Yes' camp was not sufficient, but perhaps they are not solely to blame with regards to the topic of 'castrochavismo'. After all, one of the key components of the term was that it's meaning was difficult to define, and it's claims were even harder to disprove. As has been found across by many political actors in

---

[93] León, J. (2016). 'Los temores del No: 4. El castrochavismo', *La Silla Vacia, Sepetember 29 2016,* https://lasillavacia.com/historia/los-temores-del-no-4-el-castrochavismo-58133 [Retrieved 05/06/2020]

[94] El Tiempo (2016). ¿Qué es cierto y qué es mito sobre el 'castrochavismo'? *El Tiempo, October 1 2016, https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/significado-del-castrochavismo-31515* [Retrieved 05/06/2020]

[95] El Diario (2016). 'El castrochavismo es embuste y teoría tonta": Gaviria', *El Diario, February 3 2018* http://www.eldiario.com.co/seccion/POL%C3%8DTICA/el-castrochavismo-es-embuste-y-teor-a-tonta-gaviria1802.html [Retrieved 05/06/2020]; El Espectador (2018). 'Las falacias lógicas y el 'castrochavismo', *El Espectador, February 13 2018, https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/opinion/las-falacias-logicas-y-el-castrochavismo-columna-858555/* [Retrieved 05/06/2020]

[96] Martinez, P. (2018) 'El fantasma del «castrochavismo» polariza las elecciones en Colombia' *ABC International, February 03 2018, https://www.abc.es/internacional/abci-fantasma-castrochavismo-polariza-elecciones-colombia-201803090337_noticia.html?ref=https:%2F%2Fes.wikipedia.org%2F* [Retrieved 05/06/2020]

democracies in recent years trying to fight an '*Argumentum ad Ignorantiam*' can be nigh on impossible.

6.3. The Issue of Impunity

The fifth chapter of the first peace agreement presented by the government and the FARC to the Colombian public concerned the victims of the conflict and the topic of 'Transitional Justice'. This turned out to be one of the most crucial and controversial chapters in the entirety of the agreement and one that provoked much emotional discourse in the realm of Colombian debate. Before analysing this discourse, it is important to understand the concept of 'transitional justice' and how the issue came to be so important in the build-up to the plebiscite.

The International Centre for Transitional Justice defines it as "a response to systematic or widespread violations of human rights. It seeks recognition for victims and promotion of possibilities for peace, reconciliation and democracy. Transitional justice is not a special form of justice, but justice adapted to societies transforming themselves after a period of pervasive human rights abuse".[97] Measures to implement transitional justice may include "criminal prosecutions, reparations programs, and various kinds of institutional reforms".[98] In chapter five of the final agreement of the Colombian peace process, this manifested itself as the creation of the "Comprehensive System for   Truth,   Justice,   Reparations   and Non-Recurrence".

In the framework of the negotiations, this became part of what is known as an 'imperfect peace', as it was termed by the government. In this model of 'transitional justice' alternative penalties were allowed for atrocious crimes. This was established in line with international treaties such as the Treaty of Rome. To that end, Santos confirmed that "the top officials will not be sanctioned with 60 years in prison (…) But there will be sanctions, and there will be

---

[97] International Centre for Transitional Justice (2009). 'What is Transitional Justice?', *International Centre for Transitional Justice, 2009,* https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Global-Transitional-Justice-2009-English.pdf [Retrieved 10/06/2020]

[98] International Centre for Transitional Justice (2020). 'What is Transitional Justice?', *International Centre for Transitional Justice, 2020,* https://www.ictj.org/about/transitional-justice [Retrieved 10/06/2020]

justice, and there will be no impunity".[99] According to Humberto de la Calle, both sides compromised to a certain extent on the issues relating to transitional justice. With regards to the administration, imprisoning any FARC members was not a course of action that would be agreed on by the guerrilla commanders. The FARC also compromised on their initial stance, which demanded unconditional amnesty and accepted that those who committed the most serious crimes and international crimes would not be granted such reprieves.[100] The 'No' camp seized on these issues quickly and used them to pressurise the government and build momentum for their campaign.

6.3.1. 'No' and The Issue of Impunity

"The government has granted all the requests of the FARC. They have given them impunity, the non-extradition of their bosses, the protection of their fortune, constitutional functions and the ability to govern in the places where they have their crops."[101] These were the words of Alejandro Ordóñez, one of the most critical voices towards the peace process. The 'No' camp had been laying the foundations for these allegations for most of the peace process. After a string of attacks in 2014 by the FARC in the department of Cauca in the Southwest of the country, Uribe published a tweet stating that President Santos had handed over not just Cauca, but almost all of Colombia to the Marxist guerrillas.[102]

One of the key mottoes for the 'No' camp was *'Paz sin impunidad'* (peace without impunity), this was the foundation of a narrative designed to attack the moral foundations of transitional justice.[103] They argued that no concessions should be given to the FARC and that they should be punished for their crimes under any circumstances. They pushed this slogan and this message intensely throughout the peace process. One strategy, initiated by Francisco Santos who had been vice president under Uribe, involved the use of billboards across the

---

[99] González, M. F. (2017). La «posverdad» en el plebiscito por la paz en Colombia. Nueva sociedad, (269). p. 124

[100] Gabriel Vásquez, J. (2016) ''Ingreso de Farc en política exigirá más a los partidos': De la Calle', El Tiempo, August 22 2016, https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-16680496 [Retrieved 04/06/2020]

[101] Goyo G.M. (2016). 'Alejandro Ordóñez: 'No hay que cantar victoria, las farc aún pueden volver a atentar', *La Razón, June 23 2016.* https://www.larazon.es/internacional/alejandro-ordonez-no-hay-que-cantar-victoria-las-farc-aun-pueden-volver-a-atentar-DC12984263/ [Retrieved 06/06/2020]

[102] AlvaroUribeVel (2014, November 13). 'Presidente Santos no le ha entregado el Cauca a las Farc, le ha entregado casi toda Colombia: Álvaro Hernán Prada!' [Tweet]. from https://twitter.com/AlvaroUribeVel/status/532869681078882304

[103] Gomez-Suarez, A. (2017). Peace process pedagogy: lessons from the no-vote victory in the Colombian peace referendum. Comparative Education, 53(3), 462-482. p. 468

country; designed to incite an emotional response, these advertisements were placed in areas that had historically suffered at the hands of the FARC. The impact of fences located across the nation was not enough to ensure the Democratic Centre party came to power; however, these images contributed to consolidating the emotional frame of reference of adversity towards the peace process.[104]

[Figure C: The image shows the faces of Pablo Escobar and Iván Márquez, a FARC commander, with the tagline 'Guess who killed more police. We want peace without impunity, Francisco Santos.' The billboard was displayed in Escobar's hometown of Medellín. Source: El País[105]]

---

[104] Gomez-Suarez, A. (2016). El triunfo del No: la paradoja emocional detrás del plebiscito. Ícono. P. 46

[105] El País (2013). 'CNE dice que vallas de Francisco Santos no son propaganda electoral', *El País May 1 2013,* https://www.elpais.com.co/colombia/cne-dice-que-vallas-de-francisco-santos-no-son-propaganda-electoral.html [Retrieved 12/06/2020]

[Figure D: A billboard with the image of Iván Márquez with the text "Are you going to allow a recruiter of minors to be your president?". The billboard was displayed in Caldas, Antioquia, a region with a history of FARC violence. Source: El Colombiano[106]]

As well as billboards the 'No' camp utilised public demonstrations and a double-headed media strategy that involved both social and traditional media. Images, such as the photos of the billboards in figures C & D, along with politically and emotionally driven messages (including audio recordings of some seemingly trustworthy voice that warned of the dangers of voting "Yes") that objected to peace agreements iteration of transitional justice from the 'No' campaign found a lot of traction on the popular messaging service, WhatsApp.[107]

WhatsApp is the most popular form of social media in Colombia, with a 67% market share according to the latest estimates by statista.com.[108] The conventional conclusion was that the plebiscite was lost here. In light of this, a survey was conducted in 2018 by Carlos Cortés and José Luis Peñarredonda designed to understand the role of the service with regards to misinformation and the "spread of political chains" in the country. They found that, among those surveyed, 69% had received political or electoral content or 'chain' messages (messages which are circulated through a variety of social networks) in the previous month.

---

[106] El Colombiano (2013). 'CNE dice que vallas de Francisco Santos no son propaganda electoral', *El País June 22 2013,*
https://www.elcolombiano.com/historico/otra_valla_para_el_proceso_de_paz-IBEC_247852
[Retrieved 12/06/2020]
[107] Uribe, PM (2018). In Colombia, a WhatsApp Campaign against Posverdad. The Wilson Quarterly , 42 (1).
[108]Gabriel Navarro, J. (2020) 'Colombia: user share of leading social networks 2018' *Statista, April 29 2020,* https://www.statista.com/statistics/754482/colombia-penetration-social-networks/ [Retrieved 12/06/2020]

[109] Due to the nature of WhatsApp, as a closed messaging service, it is impossible to understand the extent to which it is used to spread political content, but three independent news organisations, Colombiacheck, La Silla Vacía and El Poder de Elegir (The Power to Choose) conducted investigations into the prevalence of political Whatsapp chains. All three reported incredibly high levels of misinformation being spread on a large scale in a very short timeframe.[110] Andrei Gómez- Suárez, for example, said that "WhatsApp and Facebook became spaces for promoting rage, fear, deceit and uncertainty, through [the dissemination of] uncontrolled lies […] that circulated in silence and whose origin was impossible to determine."[111] According to Cortés and Peñarredonda, "the messages that circulated during the plebiscite campaign fed a political strategy that unjustifiably simplified the complexity of the agreements and emotionally manipulated the public. It is very difficult to find evidence of both the strategy and the impact of this phenomenon."[112] For those studying the role of WhatsApp in the peace process, it is almost impossible to understand the extent of its influence, but an examination of all the data and information available suggests that the conclusion it caused the 'No' victory, is potentially an accurate one.

6.3.2. 'Yes' and The Issue of Impunity

Members of the Santos administration had, from the start, insisted that the agreement would result in an 'imperfect peace'. They were, however, adamant in their belief that an 'imperfect peace' was better than no peace at all. Santos himself regularly assured Colombians that no peace process is perfect as by definition it must consist of an exchange of opposing views and therefore compromise. As we have seen though, these assurances did little to prevent the political onslaught of the 'No' campaign' and the 'Yes' camp, once again had to fend off a multitude of accusations. A prime example of this can be seen at an event in Riohacha, Guajira. The event was to mark the inauguration of a campaign that would improve educational processes for 2.3 million students across Colombia; not an event that appeared to have any relation to the issue of transitional justice. And yet Santos felt it necessary to

---

[109] Cortés, C. & Peñarredonda, J.L. (2018). 'Politics (on WhatsApp) is Dynamic, Disinformation and the spread of political 'chains' in Colombia', Linterna Verde p. 4
[110] Ibid. p. 5
[111] Gomez-Suarez, A. (2017). Peace process pedagogy: lessons from the no-vote victory in the Colombian peace referendum. Comparative Education, 53(3), 462-482. p. 467
[112] Cortés, C. & Peñarredonda, J.L. (2018). 'Politics (on WhatsApp) is Dynamic, Disinformation and the spread of political 'chains' in Colombia', Linterna Verde p. 5; Cave, B. (2019) The role of social media with regards to peacebuilding and journalism in post-conflict Colombia. University of Leiden: unpublished essay.

respond to the billboards and media campaigns of the 'No' camp, coming out in defence of the peace agreements, he said: "We have never mentioned peace with impunity, we have always said that we want a dignified, convenient peace, where we are not violating any of the five principles of our democracy, of our rule of law".[113] What we can understand from this is that once again, the 'No' camp was controlling the narrative, and the 'Yes' camp was being forced to repeatedly defend their positions against a barrage of misinformation both visible on platforms such as the traditional media, Facebook and Twitter and that which spread under the radar, such as through WhatsApp. It appears that in the run-up to the plebiscite, however, the 'Yes' camp was either unaware of the misinformation being shared through WhatsApp by 'No' campaigners or simply powerless to prevent it.

We can see evidence of how important the supporters of the peace process realised WhatsApp had become though as shortly after the result of the referendum some independent news organisations created projects designed to tackle the spread of misinformation through the popular messaging service. Pablo Uribe (no relation to the former president, Álvaro Uribe) titled one of these projects 'a WhatsApp campaign against *posverdad (post-truth)'*. Juanita Vélez, a reporter for La Silla Vacia, was instrumental in the creation of the "WhatsApp Lie Detector", a project designed to fact-check false information spread via virtual platforms.[114] This project would allow users to share viral messages with the organisation. Vélez and her team would then fact-check the content they received and disseminate their findings on several public platforms that were openly available to the public. It appears projects such as this one may be beginning to have an effect in Colombia as by the time Cortés and Peñarredonda undertook their study on WhatsApp in 2018, 78% of Colombians said they tried to confirm the validity of information they receive in message 'chains'.[115] It would appear that, once again, it was a case of too little, too late for the 'Yes' camp. Had any of these initiatives been undertaken prior to 2016, there is a good chance the result may have been different.

---

[113] La Patria (2013). 'Habrá paz sin impunidad: Santos', *La Patria, May 4 2013,* https://www.lapatria.com/nacional/habra-paz-sin-impunidad-santos-32773 [Retrieved 03/06/2020]
[114] La Silla Vacia, "Detector de mentiras, El Filtro de la Posverdad", https://lasillavacia.com/detector-mentiras [accessed 01/06/2020]; Uribe, P. M. (2018). In Colombia, a WhatsApp Campaign against Posverdad. The Wilson Quarterly, 42(1).; Cave, B. (2019) The role of social media with regards to peacebuilding and journalism in post-conflict Colombia. University of Leiden: unpublished essay.
[115] Cortés, C. & Peñarredonda, J.L. (2018). 'Politics (on WhatsApp) is Dynamic, Disinformation and the spread of political 'chains' in Colombia', Linterna Verde p. 18; Cave, B. (2019) The role of social media with regards to peacebuilding and journalism in post-conflict Colombia. University of Leiden: unpublished essay.

7. Summary of Observations

At the start of this research, I set out to create an understanding of the role of the media in the Colombian peace process. Of course, the term media has expanded recently to include social networks and the internet; a place where anyone can create, disseminate and share content and messages. For these reasons, it has become harder to define and understand the role in the media in our societies as a whole as we cannot pinpoint singular actors, figures or organisations anymore. However, with regards to the Colombian peace process, it is my contention that the role of the media can be classified into two different sections, traditional and social:

1) While some small sections of the traditional media may have devoted their resources to tackling the growing problem of misinformation, the vast majority allowed its platforms to be used as a vehicle for the 'No' camp. As well as this, they consistently put the allegations and misinformation created by Uribe's team to members of the government and other prominent figures of the 'Yes' camp. This allowed the 'No' camp to control the narrative while the 'Yes' teams had to continuously deny the copious amount of false information being spread which surely resulted in a huge waste of their time and resources.

2) As they did in the UK and the US earlier in the year, social networking sites such as Twitter, WhatsApp and Facebook became entrenched with false narratives. Facts and reason were overwhelmed by the emotional and the passionate. Deception, fear and outrage spread quickly and relentlessly as images, videos and messages circulated virulently throughout the nation.

Ultimately, whether it was intentional or otherwise, the media in Colombia did much more for the 'No' campaign than it ever could have done for the 'Yes'. And if the final battle of the Colombian Civil War was between Santos' pedagogy and Uribe's prevarications, the result was indisputable. Steven Youngblood ascertained that "traditional journalism has failed peace". In the case of Colombia, it appears that new media almost played a role in preventing it..

8. Concluding Remarks: From London to Washington to Bogotá

In July of 2016 Santos, urged a group of young Colombians to learn from the result of the European Union membership referendum in the UK. He encouraged them to make sure they engage with the peace process in a meaningful and conscious manner before the peace plebiscite. It seems, however, that Santos and the 'Yes' camp had also failed to learn from the Brexit vote and the election of Donald Trump in the US. All three elections involved a battle for the hearts and minds of the public. In each one, there was a side who targeted the heart and a side who targeted the minds. In each one, those who targeted the hearts were victorious, a victory they had achieved by using the modern cultural phenomenon of social media.

In the case of Colombia, the 'No' campaigners strategy was similar to those that Uribe himself had been using for the majority of his career. As María Fernanda González, political scientist and researcher at the Institut des Amériques de Paris, who has dedicated herself to making quantitative analyses of the speeches of political leaders, explained; "When you talk to the people who have studied him, [...] they tell us that Uribe's strategy is always the same: always repeat the same thing so that the message arrives specifically".[116] This strategy was evident in the cases of 'gender ideology' and 'castrochavismo', and in the case of transitional justice. In 2012, González analysed the political discourse of speeches given by Santos and Uribe. Whereas Santos' lexicon focused his speech on a very specific audience, his own 'U' party, Uribe's vocabulary targeted the Colombian public in general and was designed to incite insecurity and despair. The most used words in his speech were 'FARC'. "Terrorist", "impunity" , "crime" and "violence". [117]Four years later, González's analysis of the 'No' campaign yielded the same semantic results; 'terrorism', 'crimes', 'rape', 'recruitment', 'drug terrorists', 'crimes' and 'against humanity' were the most frequent words of choice for the uribistas.[118]

Uribe and the 'No' camp used all of their experience to build an arsenal of rhetoric that perfectly equipped for the lengthy plebiscite campaign. Following the rupture between Santos and Uribe that occurred after the former was elected to president, they committed

---

[116] Rivera,A. & Botero Echeverri, M.(2016). 'Lo que revelan los discursos' *Uniandes, October 28 2016* https://cerosetenta.uniandes.edu.co/lo-que-revelan-los-discursos/ [Retrieved 12/06/2020]
[117] González, M. F. (2012).'Uribismo versus Santismo: rivalidad, ruptura e imitación', *La Razon Publica, Novermer 19 2012,* https://razonpublica.com/uribismo-versus-santismo-rivalidad-ruptura-e-imitacion/ [Retrieved 12/06/2020]
[118] González, M. F. (2016).'La contienda entre el Sí y el No: estrategias de campaña para 2018', La Razon Publica, October 10 2016, https://razonpublica.com/la-contienda-entre-el-si-y-el-no-estrategias-de-campana-para-2018/

their resources to developing various strategies; consolidating various rhetorical devices that intimidated, radicalised and outraged Colombians, and perfecting their management of Social networks, in particular WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter. The hour of revenge for the uribistas had arrived, and they were very well prepared. [119]

The 'Yes' campaign, on the other hand, however, opted for a campaign of pedagogy and attempting to appeal to reason. Their framing of the referendum as a choice between peace and a return to conflict could have been a viable way to appeal more to the hearts of the Colombian public, but a lack of any discernible strategy or coordination proved to be a major factor in their demise. Through Colombiacheck's data-mining exercise that examined the Twitter accounts of the major political actors in Colombia, we saw the massive imbalance between the importance given to social media by the 'Yes' camp and the 'No' camp. It must be concluded that if the 'Yes' camp saw little value in Twitter, it put very little weight in the importance of social media in general. Of course, after the referendum, some observers tried to frame the loss as a result of other factors. One of which was Hurricane Matthew which had hit the Caribbean coasts of the country, an area considered to be one of the bastions for Santista's, and may have prevented people from voting. Others argued that the vote was a vote against the government in general, as the administration was entering the sixth year of a mandate already in decline. All of these arguments fell apart, however, once Luis Carlos Vélez gave his much-cited and hugely controversial interview to *La Republica* where he explained how the 'No' camp discovered the power of viral networks. This was not a discovery made by 'Yes' camp who, overall, it appears massively underestimated the significance of the 'fourth power' in general. In 1977 Peter Radunski, a German politician and scholar of political communications in election campaigns, said that elections are won on television. In 2016, they were won on smartphones.

The difficulty for peacebuilders now is to understand how this new social phenomenon can be utilized to assist conflict resolution, or how the misinformation spread through it can be countered. In one of the most in-depth and oft-cited works on the Colombian peace plebiscite, Andrei Gomez-Suarez argued that the lesson that should be taken from the referendum is the need for greater 'Peace Process Pedagogy'. He argues that this process should focus on the "challenges posed by transitional contexts in a post-truth era, in which it is necessary to dismantle the misinformation spread through the spheres of rapid

---

[119] Gomez-Suarez, A. (2016). El triunfo del No: la paradoja emocional detrás del plebiscito. Ícono. p66-7

communication engendered by globalisation that create emotional anti-peace mindsets." Gomez-Suarez maintains that in order to achieve this, scholars and pedagogues should work to create strategies that deal with the biggest challenges presented to peacebuilding actors in the modern era.

While it is not my inclination to disagree with the suggestions of Gomez-Suarez as increased pedagogical efforts will only assist the efforts of peacebuilders in the future it is my contention that more assertive and top-down efforts need to be undertaken as well. The task of dismantling the processes that lead to misinformation being widely shared cannot be left to the public and systems of education alone. Authorities and the companies responsible for these vehicles of false narratives need to be assertive and proactive in their efforts to prevent them. We have seen some examples of this in recent times as Twitter introduced a fact-checking addition to its platform, much to the vexation of US president, Donald Trump, an individual who has been aided by misinformation more than most. WhatsApp has also taken the first of many necessary steps by limiting the number of groups a message can be forward to simultaneously. Other platforms such as Facebook, however, have vocalised their belief that misinformation is not their problem to solve. Gomez-Suarez is correct that greater peace process pedagogy needs to occur, but unfortunately, the age of post-truth is already upon us and hyper-partisanship, echo-chambers and polarisation are pervasive. In 2016, prevarication triumphed over pedagogy, but the responsibility to reverse this trend lies as much with those in power as it does with the individual.

8.1. Suggestions for Potential Future Research

In the world of academia, the study of the role of media and peacebuilding is practically in its infancy. And yet, already the media's role has begun to change drastically due to the advent of social networks and information technology. There have been very few peace processes and even fewer peace referendums in this period, and so there are very few cases which scholarly attention can be applied to. There is, however, also a lack of literature available on the role of the media in peace processes prior to the ending of the Cold war and, in the case of Colombia, in the decade after it. In order to guide future policy-makers and peacebuilders operating in situations of conflict resolution, there needs to be a greater understanding of how the role of the media has changed and as such more comparative analyses between

historical and recent peace processes would be a welcome expansion to the literature available.

9. Bibliography

AlvaroUribeVel (2014, November 13). 'Presidente Santos no le ha entregado el Cauca a las Farc, le ha entregado casi toda Colombia: Álvaro Hernán Prada!' [Tweet]. from https://twitter.com/AlvaroUribeVel/status/532869681078882304

AlvaroUribeVel (2016, May 30). '#RealidadDelProcesoDeLaHabana Impunidad y abuso del Gobierno en los acuerdos abre el camino hacia el Castrochavismo!' [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/AlvaroUribeVel/status/737408928292712452

AlvaroUribeVel (2016, September 18). 'Cómo confiar en el Pte Santos que siempre nos ha mentido? Votemos No en el plebiscito para defender a Colombia!' [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/AlvaroUribeVel/status/777306598339383301

Basset, Yann. (2018). Keys to the rejection of the plebiscite for peace in Colombia. Political Studies (University of Antioquia), 52, pp. 241-265.

BBC News (2010). 'Juan Manuel Santos sworn in as Colombian president' BBC, 8 August 2010, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-10904788 [Retrieved 10/05/2020]

BBC News (2016). "Colombia signs new peace deal with FARC." *BBC, 24 November 2016*, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-38096179 [Retrieved April 10, 2020]

BBC News (2014). 'Colombia vote: Santos re-elected as president', *BBC News, 16 June 2014,* https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-27862555 [Retrieved 25/05/2020]

BBC News (2016). "Colombia referendum: Voters reject Farc peace deal." *BBC, 3 October, 2016*, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-37537252 [Retrieved April 10, 2020]

Beetham, D. (2013). The legitimation of power. Macmillan International Higher Education

Beltrán, W. M., & Creely, S. (2018). Pentecostals, Gender Ideology and the Peace Plebiscite: Colombia 2016. Religions, 9(12), 418.

Blanchard, M. A. (Ed.). (2013). *History of the mass media in the United States: An encyclopedia*. Routledge.

Bonilla, J., & Montoya, A. (2008). The Media in Colombia: Beyond Violence and market-driven economy. The Media in Latin America, 78-99.

Boudon, L. (1996). Guerrillas and the state: The role of the state in the Colombian peace process. *Journal of Latin American Studies*, *28*(2), 279-297.

Cave, B. (2019) The role of social media with regards to peacebuilding and journalism in post-conflict Colombia. University of Leiden: unpublished essay.

Carranza-Franco, F. (2019). Demobilisation and Reintegration in Colombia: Building State and Citizenship. Routledge.

Chatterjee, S. (2005). Theorizing Peace; Introduction, Das, & Das, Samir Kumar. (2005). *Peace Processes and Peace Accords* (South Asian peace studies ; vol. 2). New Delhi [etc.]: Sage.

Collier, P. (2003). Breaking the conflict trap: Civil war and development policy. World Bank Publications.

Collin, K., 2020. Peacemaking referendums: the use of direct democracy in peace processes. Democratization, 27(5), pp.717-736.

Darby, J., & Mac Ginty, R. (Eds.). (2008). Contemporary peacemaking: conflict, peace processes and post-war reconstruction. Springer.

Darby, J., Mac Ginty, R., & Mac Ginty, R. (Eds.). (2000). The management of peace processes. Springer.

Dudley, S. (2004). Walking ghosts: murder and guerrilla politics in Colombia. Routledge.

El Diario (2016). 'El castrochavismo es embuste y teoría tonta": Gaviria', *El Diario, February 3 2018*

http://www.eldiario.com.co/seccion/POL%C3%8DTICA/el-castrochavismo-es-embuste-y-teor-a-tonta-gaviria1802.html [Retrieved 05/06/2020]

El Espectador (2018). 'Las falacias lógicas y el 'castrochavismo', El Espectador, February 13 2018,

https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/opinion/las-falacias-logicas-y-el-castrochavismo-columna-858555/ [Retrieved 05/06/2020]

El Tiempo, (2012). 'Estudio revela que EL TIEMPO cuenta con más lectores diarios', *El Tiempo, 12 May 2012,* https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-11783445 [Retrieved 20/05/2020]

El Tiempo (2016). 'Verdades y mentiras en el debate sobre las cartillas en los colegios' *El Tiempo, August 9 2016,* https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-16669174 [Retrieved 02/06/2020]

El Tiempo (2016) "Oficial: esta es la pregunta para el plebiscito por la paz". *El Tiempo (in Spanish), August 30, 2016*. [Retrieved April 10, 2020]

El Tiempo (2016). ¿Qué es cierto y qué es mito sobre el 'castrochavismo'? El Tiempo, October 1 2016, https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/significado-del-castrochavismo-31515 [Retrieved 05/06/2020]

Gabriel Vásquez, J. (2016) "Ingreso de Farc en política exigirá más a los partidos': De la Calle', El Tiempo, August 22 2016, https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-16680496 [Retrieved 04/06/2020]

Gardner, E. (2001). The role of media in conflicts. Peacebuilding: A Field Guide, 301-11.

Gomez-Suarez, A. (2016). El triunfo del No: la paradoja emocional detrás del plebiscito. Ícono.

Gomez-Suarez, A. (2017). Peace process pedagogy: lessons from the no-vote victory in the Colombian peace referendum. Comparative Education, 53(3), 462-482.

González, M. F. (2012).'Uribismo versus Santismo: rivalidad, ruptura e imitación', *La Razon Publica, Novemer 19 2012,*
https://razonpublica.com/uribismo-versus-santismo-rivalidad-ruptura-e-imitacion/ [Retrieved 12/06/2020]

González, M. F. (2017). La «posverdad» en el plebiscito por la paz en Colombia. Nueva sociedad, (269).

Hancock, L. E. (2011). There is no alternative: Prospect theory, the yes campaign and selling the Good Friday agreement. Irish Political Studies, 26(1), 95-116.

Herbolzheimer, K. (2016). Innovations in the Colombian peace process. NOREF, Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre.

International Centre for Transitional Justice (2009). 'What is Transitional Justice?', *International Centre for Transitional Justice, 2009,*
https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Global-Transitional-Justice-2009-English.pdf *{Retrieved 10/06/2020}*

La Silla Vacia, "Detector de mentiras, El Filtro de la Posverdad",
https://lasillavacia.com/detector-mentiras [accessed 01/06/2020]

León, J. (2016). 'Los temores del No: 4. El castrochavismo', La Silla Vacia, Sepetember 29 2016, https://lasillavacia.com/historia/los-temores-del-no-4-el-castrochavismo-58133 [Retrieved 05/06/2020]

Loizides, N. (2014). Negotiated settlements and peace referendums. *European Journal of Political Research*, *53*(2), 234-249.

Martinez, P. (2018) 'El fantasma del «castrochavismo» polariza las elecciones en Colombia' ABC International, February 03 2018,

https://www.abc.es/internacional/abci-fantasma-castrochavismo-polariza-elecciones-colombia-201803090337_noticia.html?ref=https:%2F%2Fes.wikipedia.org%2F [Retrieved 05/06/2020]

Matanock, A. M. (2017). Bullets for ballots: Electoral participation provisions and enduring peace after civil conflict. International Security, 41(4)

Mendoza. B. (2010) 'Santos: 'Presidente Uribe, éste es su triunfo'' El Mundo 31 May 2010, https://www.elmundo.es/america/2010/05/31/colombia/1275269910.html [Retrieved 10/05/2020]

Molinares Dueñas, C. (2016) 'Intensa 'guerra' por el plebiscito en Twitter', ColombiaCheck, September 26 2016, https://colombiacheck.com/investigaciones/intensa-guerra-por-el-plebiscito-en-twitter [Retrieved 04/06/2020]

Nozick, R. (1974). Anarchy, state, and utopia (Vol. 5038). New York: Basic Books.

Oswaldo Ortiz (2016, September 6) '¿Cómo votar el próximo 2 de Octubre? ¿El LobbyGay tiene representante en la Habana? ¿Ideología de Género en los Acuerdos?', [Video]. Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=590317931151021

Oxford University Press (2020). "Word of the Year 2016" *Oxford Languages* *https://languages.oup.com/word-of-the-year/2016/* [Retrieved April 10, 2020]

Paffenholz, T. (2014). Civil society and peace negotiations: beyond the inclusion–exclusion dichotomy. Negotiation Journal, 30(1), 69-91.

Paula Toro, M., (2019). 'El Fantasma de la ideología de género' *La Silla Vacia, January 29 2019,* *https://lasillavacia.com/silla-llena/red-de-las-mujeres/historia/el-fantasma-de-la-ideologia-de-genero-69742* [Retrieved 02/06/2020]

Peace Agreements Database (2016) "Final agreement to end the armed conflict and build a stable and lasting peace", agreement between the National Government of Colombia and

the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP), English Translation. Retrieved from https://www.peaceagreements.org/viewmasterdocument/1845 [Retrieved 10/05/2020]

Prensa Nuestroamericano (2016, September 26) 'Discurso Comandante FARC EP Timochenko firma paz Colombia 26 septiembre 2016', [Video]. Youtube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P8VvMdc_AWA

Price, M., & Thompson, M. (Eds.) (2002). Forging peace: Intervention, human rights and the management of media space. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Ramírez Prado, J. (2016). 'El No ha sido la campaña más barata y más efectiva de la historia.' L*a República*, *October 4 2016,* https://www.asuntoslegales.com.co/actualidad/el-no-ha-sido-la-campana-mas-barata-y-mas-efectiva-de-la-historia-2427891 [Retrieved 30/05/2020]

Radunski, P. (1980). 77. Wahlkampfentscheidung im Fernsehen. Sonde, 1:51-74. Wahlkaempfe. Moderne Wahlkampffuehrung als politische Kommunikation. Munich and Vienna: Olzog.

Rivera,A. & Botero Echeverri, M.(2016). 'Lo que revelan los discursos' *Uniandes, October 28 2016* https://cerosetenta.uniandes.edu.co/lo-que-revelan-los-discursos/ [Retrieved 12/06/2020]

Semana (2016), 'Cristianos: ¿el poder decisorio en la política?', *Semana, 29 October 2016,* https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/religion-inclina-la-balanza-politica-en-colombia/502530 [Retrieved 01/06/2020]

Sanabria, A. (2017) "Post-Truth vs Law in Colombia: An Unstoppable Force and an Immovable Object?". Oxford Human Rights Hub, 30th May 2017, https://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk/post-truth-vs-law-in-colombia-an-unstoppable-force-and-an-immovable-object/ [Retrieved April 12, 2020]

Santos Calderón, E. (1989). El periodismo en Colombia. 1886-1986. Nueva historia de Colombia, 6, 109-136.

Saunders, H. (1999). A public peace process: Sustained dialogue to transform racial and ethnic conflicts. Springer, 1999.

Seguimento (2017) 'Llegó a Colombia el polémico bus que 'lucha contra la ideología de género', *Seguimento, 20 May 2017,* https://seguimiento.co/colombia/llego-colombia-el-polemico-bus-que-lucha-contra-la-ideologia-de-genero-6169 [Retrieved 02/06/2020]

Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1992). Advances in prospect theory: Cumulative representation of uncertainty. Journal of Risk and uncertainty, 5(4), 297-323

Uribe, P. M. (2018). In Colombia, a WhatsApp Campaign against Posverdad. *The Wilson Quarterly*, *42*(1).

Vanguardia (2016). "Gobierno inicia "gran maratón" pedagógica sobre acuerdos con Farc", *Vanguardia, 28 July 2016,* https://www.vanguardia.com/colombia/gobierno-inicia-gran-maraton-pedagogica-sobre-acuerdos-con-farc-KGVL367481 [Retrieved 20/05/2020]

Weber, M. (1978). Economy and society: An outline of interpretive sociology (Vol. 1). Univ of California Press.
Wolfsfeld, G. (1997). Promoting peace through the news media: Some initial lessons from the Oslo peace process. Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics, 2(4), 52-70.

Wolfsfeld, G. (2001). The news media and peace processes: The Middle East and Northern Ireland (Vol. 31, No. 37). Diane Publishing Company.

Wolfsfeld, G. (2004). Media and the path to peace. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Youngblood, S. (2016). Peace journalism principles and practices: Responsibly reporting conflicts, reconciliation, and solutions. Taylor & Francis.