



# **A “Triangle” of Conflict between Duque’s Government of Colombia and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional – 2018-2020**

Author: Natalie Mattsson

**Supervisor: Wayne S. Coetzee**

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**International Programme in Politics and Economics (IPPE)**

**School of Business, Economics & IT, University West**

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**University West**

**School of Business, Economics & IT**

**SE-461 86 Trollhättan**

**Phone +46 520 22 30 00   Fax +46 520 22 30 99**

**[www.hv.se](http://www.hv.se)**

## **Abstract**

This thesis is conducted as a descriptive qualitative single case study to establish empirical knowledge of the ongoing internal armed conflict between the government of Colombia and the guerrilla Ejército de Liberación Nacional. The ontological foundation orienting from social constructivism and Galtung's theoretical concepts of attitude, behaviour, and contradiction along with the three aspects of violence: direct, cultural, and structural. Based on the application of the textual discourse analysis method, 96 different discourses were analysed. The result of the analysis shows that the perception the actors have towards each other strongly is negative. The government and the guerrilla accuse each other of contributing to the social injustice in Colombia, where perception towards the 'other', ideology and police violence against social protests are three main subjects found contributing to the conflict. The result indicates an interrelation in Galtung's theory between the conflict triangle (T1) and the violence triangle (T2). The concept of contradiction from the conflict triangle, in this analysis, could only be distinguished within the three approaches of violence (T2). This study confirms several claims and arguments from previous research within the academic fields of peace and conflict in Colombia. Subsequently, I aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of the ongoing conflict.

**Keywords:** Colombia, Ejército de Liberación, Iván Duque, Internal armed conflict, Discourse analysis

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## List of abbreviations

ELN	Ejército Liberación Nacional <i>National Liberation Army</i>
FARC-EP	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia Ejército del Pueblo <i>Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army</i>
M-19	Movimiento 19 de Abril <i>19 April Movement</i>
EPL	Ejército Popular de Liberación <i>Popular Liberation Army</i>
CRS	Corriente de Renovación Socialista <i>Socialist Renovation Current</i>
UN	The United Nation



# **1. Introduction: A study of contemporary conflict discourse; the case of President Duque and ELN**

This introductory chapter elaborates on the motivating research problem, identifies the core aims and the main research question, summarises the theoretical and methodological approaches taken, and sets out the main argument to be developed in the study as a whole.

## **1.1 Research puzzle and Problem definition**

Colombian citizens have witnessed protracted armed rebellions for over 56 years. More than 220 000 people have lost their lives during this period, and over eight million people have been displaced, injured, or suffered other abuses, according to official reports (CNMH, 2018; HRW, 2020; MSB, 2016). Like so many countries where political legitimacy is challenged and/or maintained at the end of the barrel of a gun, Colombia reflects a society of prolonged violence, social injustice, and political irreconcilability. At the time of writing (April 2021), the violence and the social protests against the Colombian government, and specifically against the Colombian president Iván Duque, shows little signs of slowing down. The latter is reflected by, among other things, the hashtag #SOSColombia, speeches, images, videos, and several other forms of discourse flourishing on social media of the violent social protests on Colombian streets, in over 500 Colombian cities. The most prominent actor opposing the government of Colombia's legitimacy is the guerrilla group Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN), *The National Liberation Army*. ELN encourages the citizens of Colombia through written texts and images to continue the social protests against the government of Colombia.

As this study will detail, language and expression are powerful tools that influence the way people think and act, especially in an environment of conflicts. As Adam Hodges states in *Discourses of War and Peace*:

Humans never engage in war without the mediating force of discourse. From the rhetorical sabre rattling that precedes conflict through the diplomatic overtures that sue for peace, discourse plays an integral role in the outbreak, conduct and disputation of armed political conflict around the world (Hodges 2013: 1).

This quotation above underlines the essential role of discourse in social relations, and most importantly, the practice of conflict as an expressed struggle between actors. Hodges states that

every conflict, irrespective of its dynamics, is assisted and shaped by specific discursive processes. Interestingly, studying the discourse of conflict is still, to a large extent, unpopular in multidisciplinary research on various types of conflicts. The study of discourse in relation to conflict is challenging, because like most social phenomena, conflicts are complex, puzzling and in flux, and this reflects in the discourse. It is difficult to identify language as a significant cause of conflict. By acknowledging the latter, this thesis resists the temptation to search for language's broader role in conflict. Instead, this study takes its conceptual departure point from the social scientific puzzle of how discourse reflects contributing factors for conflict between two actors involved in the conflict, which helps to frame the empirical research questions guiding the investigation (more on this below).

*What are the contributing factors of the ongoing conflict between the government of Colombia and ELN observed from their discourse?*

Conducting research circling around the themes of conflict and discourse makes an empirical contribution to political science, particularly the field of conflict studies. To be more specific, this study is scientifically interesting because the conflict under investigation interrelates with broader, political science relevant themes, e.g., internal armed conflicts, asymmetric conflicts, and civilians in conflicts. Interestingly, this research further is a case of development and conflict in Latin America. According to the United Nations and the international committee of the Red Cross, Latin America reflects the relation between less developed countries and conflicts, and the legacies of violent confrontation (Rettberg, 2016; ICRC, 2008). Angelika Rettberg (2016) writes on behalf of the UN the following: “these legacies include the atrophy of crucial social institutions, weak democratic regimes, corrupt practices in the distribution of natural resources, the ongoing circulation of weapons and the transformation or proliferation of crime”. This interrelations to other broader themes, the ongoing intensifying conflict, and the essential role of discourse in social relations motivate why this specific investigation is scientifically interesting. The outcome of this research is of importance for the conflict field because the results illustrating current details concerning the ongoing conflict and illustrating a conflicted version of reality that differs from the perceived “peaceful” contemporary Colombia and will speak to the extant literature regarding conflict dynamics (broadly defined). The findings also reflect trends of continuity over how the discourse evolves by unpacking dynamics to show what brings on some of the destructive moves between the actors, which may offer notable answers to the contributing factors of the ongoing conflict.

The overarching aim of this study is to investigate how the discourse by the actors involved in the conflict illustrates contributing factors for the rivalry. My overall argument is that a deeper understanding of the sociological foundations of violence in Colombia through the lens of Johan Galtung's conflict theory and the discourse analysis method will provide interesting and needed insights into the contributing factors underlying the conflict between ELN and the government of Colombia.

## **1.2 Disposition of thesis**

This thesis is structured around eight main sections. The next chapter presents a background to the conflict. Thereafter, the literature review will detail previous scholarly work that is relevant to the current investigation. To that end, the literature review covers work on conflicts in Colombia, contributing factors for conflict, and respectively previous studies of Colombia using discourse analysis method. In the fourth chapter, the concepts and theory guiding the study are described, and here I outline why I opt for Galtung's theory as the most suitable to employ in this type of investigation. In the fifth chapter, the aim of this study will be specified together with the research questions, followed by the methodology chapter where I present the qualitative single case study design, the discourse analysis, limitations of the study and ethics in research. Chapter seven presents the analysis of the data collection as well as the result and answer to the research questions. The final chapter recapitulates the overall argument of the thesis and reflects on how far the thesis has realised its aims. It also provides a retrospective consideration of the research process and considers the methodological and theoretical strengths and weaknesses of the approaches adopted and applied in this study. By considering the wider possible implications that follow from the case study findings, suggestions for future research are also considered.

## 2. Background to the conflict

Historically, Colombia's political system was dominated by two main parties: The Liberals and the Conservatives. In essence, these two main parties held strongly opposing ideas of how to govern Colombia, which strengthened disputes and created a highly charged political environment. As if the tense environment was not enough, the liberal party leader was murdered in 1948, and the murder provoked mass rioting across the capital. These riots eventually led to a civil war, today known as the period "La Violencia" (LTG, 2018). This internal armed conflict led to the deaths of approximately 220 000 people, and around 5 700 000 people (equal to around 15 per cent of the total population) internally displaced. In 1958, to end the fighting, the Liberals and the Conservatives signed an agreement. That agreement, however, ensured the exclusion of all other political parties from the political system. With this in mind, and in the context of "La Violencia", ordinary farmers began to organise themselves in self-protected areas. These farmers would lay the foundation for what would come to be the guerrilla group Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia—Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP). A few years later, a group of students influenced by the Cuban revolution, the Marxism-Lenin ideology and the Catholic church formed the guerrilla group Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN). The emergence of guerrilla groups in the 1960s directly responded to the deep-rooted social and political conflict and social injustice in Colombia (Felter & Renwick, 2017). To this day, despite huge natural wealth, 30 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line in urban areas, and 65 per cent lives below the poverty line in the rural regions of Colombia (World bank, 2020; Colombia reports, 2021).

In 2016, former president Juan Manuel Santos was given the Nobel prize for the peace agreement signed with, at that time, the biggest guerrilla group FARC-EP (Nobel prize, 2016). This peace agreement would represent (it was suggested) a new area of peace and security in Colombia. The former president Santos announced that the war was over, and citizens celebrated on the streets, singing "viva la Paz" (en. *long live peace*). The world celebrated the peace with the Colombian citizens, the United Nations Secretary expressed hope, proclaiming that Colombia will "come together at this time to move the peace process forward" (Ki-moon, 2016). With the peace agreement signed, considerable reconstruction, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping attempts started in Colombia – including substantial economic and military assistance from the United States, the United Nations, the European Union, and several non-governmental organisations.

The historical peace agreement is often overlooked because it was rejected by a slight majority in a public referendum held on 2 October 2016. In the referendum, 50.2 per cent voted against the peace agreement with FARC-EP, while 49.8 per cent voted in favour (ICG, 2017). The current president Iván Duque, as a congressman and member of the opposition party - Democratic Centre, was one of the main figures that promoted the “No” vote to the peace agreement in the 2016 plebiscite. Throughout Duque’s presidential campaign, he promised legal reforms to the laws that introduced the peace agreement of his predecessor with the FARC-EP (Carreño-Ordóñez, 2020). In short, today, Colombia has a president, not in favour of the peace agreement. It should be noted that Duque, now having served more than half of his term as Colombia's president, has seen his popularity decline as it became apparent that he did not want to share power or cooperate with other political factions, along with his refusal to implement any measures benefitting poor communities such as aid for rural development. His stance stems from the fact that he wants to avoid helping and/or protecting former members of FARC-EP at any cost (New internationalist, 2020).

ELN, on the other hand, has not agreed to sign a peace agreement with the government. Today ELN is the most prominent actor against the government of Duque, advocating for a democracy built on the ‘Junta de Acción Comunal’, a non-profit civic corporation with union groups who advocate equality between everyone, men, and women, guerrilleros and the people. A society where health, education and housing are for everyone, not only the elites (The Center for International Policy, 2007).

## **2.1 Conceptualising of concepts**

The conflict between the government of Colombia and ELN is not technically speaking a civil war. It is rather an internal armed conflict between two sets of actors regarding the legitimacy of governance. This means that the conflict is state-based and concerns armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state. Essentially, this conflict should be viewed as an asymmetric conflict. The government of Colombia has an advantage over ELN in power resources, with 295.000 active military personnel (GFP, 2020), while ELN has approximately 2500 members (Torrado, 2020). ELN would never be able to fight the government in symmetric conflict (e.g., on a conventional battlefield). On the other hand, asymmetric conflicts need innovation and creativity, which ELN finds in its guerrilla war strategy (Sudhir, 2008).

### **3. Literature review: Studies in contexts of conflicts**

This chapter provides an overview of previous literature that is relevant to the current investigation. My study draws upon and seeks to contribute to several different, albeit often connected literature. The literature review was conducted by searching for keywords such as ‘conflicts in Colombia’ ‘ELN’ ‘guerrilla groups’ ‘Ivan Duque’ and ‘discourse and conflict’. The literature was collected from University West, Uppsala University and Gothenburg University’s libraries, Google scholar, and SAGE journals and books. Below, an overview of the most relevant literature will be presented, followed by more explicit statements of this study’s contribution. The order of the discussion is as follows: I will start by presenting an overview of the research of conflicts in Colombia and contributing factors for conflict. The discussion then transitions to previous literature studying Colombia with the discourse analysis method. Lastly, I will spell out the literature gap I aim to fill with my study's contributions.

#### **3.1 Conflicts in Colombia**

A large body of literature from different academic fields exists regarding the topic of conflicts in Colombia, especially in relation to the influence that the guerrilla or terrorist movements have in the fighting, and the correlations between geopolitical factors and conflicts, such as the narco-wars (Björnehed, 2006; Naef, 2018); coffee and conflict (Bergquist, 1986); oil and conflict (Dunning & Wirpsa 2010); land conflicts (Sánchez, López-Urbe & Fazio, 2010); and environmental crime and social conflicts (Brisman, South & White, 2017). The diversity of conflicts in Colombia are extensive, but the literature most relevant for my investigation is the conflicts between guerrilla groups and the government of Colombia.

##### *3.1.1 Guerrilla conflicts in Colombia*

Guerrilla groups in Colombia have been studied by several scholars, and especially the demobilisation of previous guerrilla groups, such as the Ejército Popular de Liberación (EPL), *Popular Liberation Army*, the Movimiento 19 de Abril (M-19), *19 April Movement*, and the Corriente de Renovación Socialista (CRS), *Socialist Renovation Current* during the period of the 1980s and 1990s. Many scholars (see e.g., Ribetti, 2007; Florez-Morris, 2007; O’Conner & Meer, 2020) argued that the motivation for Colombian citizens to join these previous guerrilla groups had its roots in the socioeconomic injustice and inequality in Colombia. The goals of these insurgency groups were “to hurt the state the most” and keep a strong presence in many of the urban centres in Colombia (O’Conner & Meer, 2020:128). This existing literature of

demobilised guerrilla groups in Colombia speaks to my research since this thesis aims to investigate a guerrilla group in Colombia in contemporary time.

Hitherto most existing literature examining guerrilla groups in Colombia has focused primarily on FARC-EP in different contexts since FARC-EP was Colombia's biggest guerrilla group until 2016. FARC-EP shared the same Marxism-Leninism ideology as the guerrilla group I intend to investigate i.e., ELN (Stanford, 2019). Hence, the most relevant literature for my study regards literature examining the conflict between the government of Colombia and FARC-EP, and the attitudes and behaviours these two actors held within the conflict. Regarding attitudes and behaviours within the conflict between the former main actors, previous research (see e.g., Cano-Holguín and Osorio 2020, Prior 2015 and Vargas 2017) arguing that the conflict escalated when the actors lost mutual respect against each other. This led to that the actors involved in the conflict started to dehumanise each other, and the violence increased. This body of scholarship further points out that the peace agreement signed in 2016 between the government and FARC-EP increased the hostility between the government and other illegal groups, such as ELN, instead of taking the reverse approach for peace. These previous scholars provide valuable insights into armed conflict and escalations between the previous government and the former biggest guerrilla. That said, the more specific empirical focus of those studies is not relevant for my investigation because I aim to examine the contemporary main actors.

Previous literature concerning ELN has primarily focused on the different peace negotiations and attempts to peace agreements between former presidents and ELN (see Prior 2015, Beltán and Camila 2018, Valencia 2019, Demerest 2020 and Nussio 2020). Interestingly, previous scholar's findings point to that ELN, throughout the peace negotiations and peace dialogues used these formal meetings to improve relations with third parties with former governments. Specifically, to strengthen the relationship with Venezuela instead of actively participating in the peace process. Beltán and Camila (2018) and Valencia (2019) assert that the attempts for internationalisation instead of actively participating in the peace dialogues are the main reason for the absence of a peace agreement between the former governments of Colombia and ELN. What further is interesting, contemporary research (see Valencia 2019, Demerest 2020 and Nussio 2020) argues that ELN has extended its activities from the border of Colombia into Venezuelan territory, "where they act like a pro-government militia" (Nussio, 2020: 3). This benefited the Maduro regime since ELN acted as a "safeguard" to Venezuela from Colombia's military operations. Valencia (2019) and Demerest (2020) argue that most of ELN's lines of

communication lead into and through Venezuela. These findings are valuable for my investigation of ELN.

A large body of scholarships has investigated conflicts in Colombia in different contexts and through different time frames. Previous literature provides relevant empirical findings speaking to my investigation, with a clear focus on conflicts in Colombia. Especially interesting for this research are conflicts between guerrilla movements and previous presidents. However, the lion's share of these studies focuses on previous Colombian administrations and guerrillas, which have already demobilised and signed the peace agreement with the government. The current government of Colombia and ELN are only mentioned in passing in much of the analysis. Although bringing much-needed attention to the subject under investigation, contemporary research has not succeeded in sufficiently filling the literature gap about the ongoing conflict, both in empirical and conceptual terms. Previous scholarships have focused on the geopolitical and economic impacts of the different guerrilla-related conflicts, but few have specifically discussed this conflict. This leaves a clear gap in the literature in that regard. While my study does not aim to fill such a substantial gap in its entirety, it does seek to provide insights into the conflict between the contemporary main actors.

### *3.1.2 Contributing factors for conflict*

Contributing factors for conflict is a broadly investigated theme and a wide multidisciplinary research topic. Commonly agreed upon among most existing scholars is that conflicts often arise from multiple (interrelated) factors, such as military governments and militaristic cultures; ethnicity and religion; inequality and poverty; greed/opportunity/feasibility; the struggle for controlling natural resources (Dunne, 2012); public health issues (Garry & Checchi, 2019); various economic incentives (Lopez & Wodon, 2005); and environmental degradation (Levy, 2019) to mention a few.

Contributing factors for conflict are examined by several previous scholars (see e.g., Zoller et al., 2003; Felbab-Brown, 2005; Dunning & Wirpsa 2010; and Angrist & Kugler, 2005). The previous findings of contributing factors for conflicts in Colombia have circled around one theme, namely, economic impacts. The economic income from illegal drug trafficking funding the insurgency group's operations and weapons acquisitions. In short, the economic income from drug trafficking contributes to armed conflicts in Colombia. Interestingly, findings within previous literature point toward that ELN is involved in more than 70-75 percent of coca grown



in Colombia. This helps ELN economically to optimise their strategy and aim to remove the ruling government.

With that said, already existing literature on contributing factors for conflict provides conceptual relevant findings. However, these scholars have not focused on contributing factors for conflicts in contemporary Colombia nor analysed the ongoing conflict in general. This left a literature gap of factors contributing to conflict in Colombia in the present time.

### **3.2 Studies focusing on Colombia using a discourse analysis method**

A large body of literature from different academic fields is currently available on discourse analysis concerning violence and conflicts. These include, inter alia, *Discourse of War and Peace* (Hodges, 2013); The rearticulation of 'peace' in Japan's China discourse (Hagström & Hansson, 2016); Talking peace - going to war (Gavriely-Nuri, 2014); 'New Wars' Discourse in Germany (Brzoska, 2004); and Language and Discourse in Conflict and Conflict Resolution (Smith, 1997) to mention a few.

Most of the previous literature examining Colombia with a discourse method primarily focusing on women and the participation of Colombian women in politics and peace processes (see e.g., Särnhult, 2014; Rijlaarsdam, 2020). Previous scholars conceptualise valuable insight into discourse methods concerning Colombia, yet the empirical findings of those studies are not relevant for this investigation. However, one previous investigation (Carreño-Oróñez, 2020) has examined Duque's discourse through his political campaign speeches and his expression of "peace with legality". This investigation is interesting for my research, specifically, the different expressions within Duque's speeches, where he is advocating that those accountable for crimes against humanity should not participate in politics. However, these scholars have not focused on discourse about contributing factors for conflict in Colombia nor analysed the ongoing conflict. This left a literature gap of discourse analysis concerning this specific contemporary conflict.

### **3.3 Contributions**

The discussion above has detailed empirical gaps in previous literature. Empirically, there are several intertwined themes of Duque and ELN which are relevant for my investigation. However, as shown in the literature review, most scholars focus on peace and the different

peace processes between guerrilla groups and other Colombian presidents over time. More specifically, previous scholars have not focused on the conflict between Duque's government and the ELN. While my study does not aim to fill such a substantial gap in its entirety, it does seek to provide insights into this ongoing conflict by focusing on the "actors" discourse. In doing so, my study not only contributes to the academic field of political science, but more specifically, the field of conflict studies. This literature gap within conflict studies is essential to contribute to in regard to the failed peace agreement in 2016 and the increasing contemporary violence between Colombian citizens, guerrillas and the government. Essentially, previous literature on interrelated topics, e.g., conflicts in Colombia, contributing factors for conflicts, guerrilla groups, and terrorism literature, has contributed to the field of conflict studies with important and relevant findings. The reason for conducting additional research on this topic is motivated by the interchange of actors. The previous, well-analysed President, Juan Manuel Santos was Colombian's president for eight years, and before 2016 FARC-EP was the main opposing actor against the government since the 1960s. Santos and the contemporary president Duque are not sharing the same political ideology or political goals. As written in the background chapter (see chapter 2), Duque is against Santos's peace agreement with FARC-EP. Thereby, to understand the ongoing intensifying conflict and the actors involved in the conflict, the existing literature needs to be modernised. To fill this literature gap is of academic importance because it provides the field of conflict studies with an increased understanding of internal armed conflicts in South America and, more specifically, Colombia at present. Supplementary concerning the broader theme of political science, increased awareness of how two diverse actors use discourse to influence their audience ideologies and norms within conflicts or alternative situations.

## **4. Theoretical Framework: Constructivism meets Galtung**

This chapter provides a theoretical grounding of the thesis. In consideration of the identified literature gap, the theory to help explain the puzzle behind this study draws on Johan Galtung's conflict theory. The organisation of the discussion proceeds from the general to the specific; that is, it first considers the broader ontological orientation of my study, which is constructivism, and then transitions to the more immediate conceptual lens of my approach. In what follows, I detail the core assumptions of my theoretical perspective, as well as the accompanying analytical framework that will guide the empirical investigation in order to answer the research questions.

### **4.1 Meta Theory: Constructivism**

The ontological foundation of this thesis orient from constructivism as the meta-theory (also called grand theory). The characteristic of a meta-theory is a "theory that will explain all the observed uniformities of social behaviours, social organisation, and social change" (Halperin & Heath, 2017:119). Scholars associated with constructivism provide insight into the creation of how norms, identity, and culture shape patterns of peace, war, and conflicts and seeks to demonstrate how these core aspects within international relations are socially constructed (Kratochwil, 1993; Barnett, 2016). In similarity to other meta-theories, constructivism exists in various forms, such as information-processing constructivism, trivial constructivism, radical constructivism, and social constructivism (Ernest, 1994). The ontological foundation of this research origin from social constructivism.

#### *4.1.1 Social constructivism*

Social constructivism emerged in line with the emergence of different alternative approaches to studying humans as social animals. These approaches, such as 'discourse analysis', 'critical psychology' and 'poststructuralism', mention a few, underpinning today's broader theoretical orientation of social constructivism. Social constructivism argues that our ways of understanding the world do not come from objective reality but other people, both past and present (Burr, 2015). The core observation within social constructivism is the social construction of reality, including perception, identities, and interests (Barnett, 2016). In short, the world is constructed by humans, and social interactions of all kinds, especially language, are of great interest to social constructionists. Social constructionism sees language as one of the principal means by which we construct our social and psychological world. Language is

more than simply a way of expression. Language constructs the world by how people talk, write, and interact with each other. In other words, the use of language in social constructivism is a form of actions with consequences, restrictions, and obligations (Burr, 2015). The language itself is constructed by humans and formed by the constructed norms and rules. Social constructivism state that each sentence within language conveys at least one unfolding thought, and every sentence has a topic no matter what the sentence is about (Onouf, 2012). Language is further regarded as the shaper of an individual's minds, e.g., manipulation occurs in a social context of meaning and is mediated by language (Ernest, 1994). With that said, the words humans choose to use, their thoughts, choices and actions following the constructed rules and the constructed institutions, structure the world around us (Onouf, 2012).

## **4.2 Middle-Range: Galtung's Conflict Theory**

Galtung's conflict theory serves as a middle-range theory in this thesis and will ultimately act as a guiding lens for my investigation (Halperin & Heath, 2017). Conflicts are often complex and in flux, and one needs a theory that can explain or understand these complexities and changes. The strength of a mid-range theory is that it generates mid-range claims (the ability to merge theory and empirical observation) that can provide valuable insights regarding conflict dynamics in connection to the collection of discourse.

The motivation behind the choice of Galtung's conflict theory, in consideration to the complexity of the ongoing conflict in Colombia and the aim of analysing discourse, is based on that this theory assumes that violence is not only "physical", but there are essential sociological aspects, underlying violence as well. Galtung's theory emerges from the constructivist ontology, which offers more profound insights into societal structures, actor's behaviours, and attitudes. Strictly speaking, Galtung's theory provides a lens that helps me, the researcher, analyse President Duque's and ELN's attitudes, behaviours, and contradictions within the conflict. This guiding lens is relevant because it assists in identifying how the actors perceive themselves and each other throughout the ongoing conflict analysis. Moreover, Galtung's theory helps this investigation to distinguish whether the perception the actors in this conflict hold towards each other is positive or negative. In short, Galtung's theory applied to this investigation provides the analysis with the possibility to focus on the sociological factors contributing to the conflict. On the other hand, it is essential to mention what Galtung's theory overlooks. Concerning this research of two conflict actor's discourse, Galtung's theory does

not provide scope for seeing how e.g., gender and ethnicity interrelate within the conflict. In essence, the theoretical discussion below draws primarily on the following works by Galtung: “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research” (1969); “Structural and Direct Violence” (1971); “Cultural Violence” (1990); and “Peace by Peaceful Means” (1996).

Galtung’s conflict theory includes both symmetric and asymmetric conflicts. The difference between the former is relevant to highlight because symmetric and asymmetric conflicts take diverse approaches. In a symmetric conflict, the actors in the conflict are in a relatively similar or equal position and/or have similar or equal power resources. They also enter into a conflict due to diverging interests (Ramsbotham, 2016). On the other hand, asymmetric conflicts relate to power resources and the nature of the conflict. For example, asymmetric conflicts involve access to legitimate political representation and different actor’s political agenda and political goals. Within an asymmetric conflict, a group or several groups within the system find themselves excluded from access and/or influence of the political system. This is often deliberate because states have the power to construct and structure notions of legitimacy and enforce legitimacy through dominant discourses and political and legal processes (McAuley, McGlynn & Tonge, 2008). According to Ramsbotham (2016), asymmetric conflicts are occurring between the majority and a minority, for example, between a government and a rebel group or between an employer and his employees. With that said, the foundation in this investigation is drawn from Galtung’s conflict theory and particularly from the two triangles; (T1) *attitude, behaviour, contradiction*; and (T2) *direct, cultural, and structural violence*.

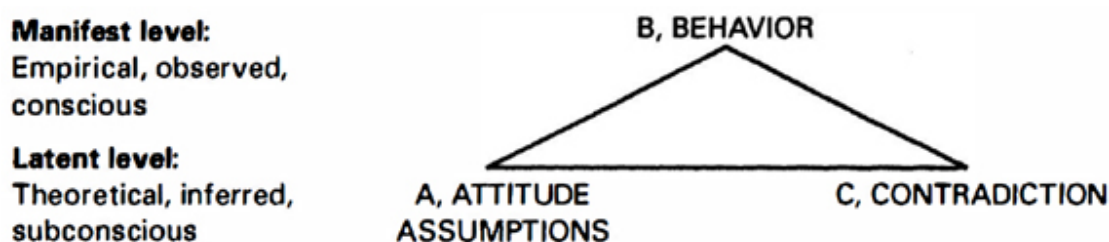
#### **4.2.1 (T1) Attitude, Behaviour and Contradiction**

The first triangle (T1) attitude, behaviour, and contradiction are described as the ABC triangle and the conflict triangle. Galtung describes this triangle as; attitude + behaviour + contradiction, where A + B (Attitude + behaviour) are meta-conflicts, while C (contradiction) is the root of the conflict (Galtung, 1969). More specifically, (A) stands for attitudes and includes the perception and non-perception of the actors about themselves and each other – the perception of others can be positive or negative. Within violent conflicts, the perception is strongly negative since parties develop humiliating stereotypes about each other (Galtung, 1969). Attitude is also connected to emotions, such as blaming, anger, fear, and hatred (Pruitt & Kim, 2004). Behaviour (B) involves how the actors behave against each other and involves cooperation, coercion, and hostility. In violent conflicts, the behaviour could exist of coercion

or destructive attacks against the other. Contradiction (C) is described as an incompatibility of real or perceived goals between actors, for example, over territory (Galtung, 1969). In symmetrical conflicts, the contradiction is defined by the parties, their interests, and conflicts of interests. In asymmetric conflicts, the parties define the contradiction, the relationship between them, and the conflict within the relationship (Ramsbotham, 2016).

The ABC triangle is also connected to a life cycle, including a manifest and a latent side to the conflict. The manifest side being identified with behaviour (B) and the latent aspect with attitude (A) and contradiction (C). At the manifest, empirical and observed level, conflict participants can only experience and observe behaviour (B). While (A) and (C) are at the latent, theoretical, and inferred level, and together these three forms the conflict triangle (Galtung, 1996) as illustrated in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Conflict Triangle



(Galtung, 1996:3)

According to Galtung, the triangle in Table 1 can be used to trace and identify approaches to conflicts in all directions. These conflict approaches can start in all corners, A, B or C. For example, a conflict escalation could occur in (A), grounded in a negative attitude or hostile attitude that can have transmissions through ideology or tradition. The actor will seek and find a conflict, some injustice or outside threat to justify the negative attitude. We can keep in mind that attitude (A) is connected to cultural violence in the next triangle (T2). Behaviour, on the other hand, is connected to direct violence in (T2). Negative behaviour can be explained as; someone doing something that the other interprets as intentionally negative and where the other reacts with hostility. The hostility then develops, and the aggressive behaviour increases until the escalation of conflict is a fact. Contradiction (C) escalate the conflict when the

incompatibility between two actor's goals increases or when the goals are blocked by the 'other'. When incompatibility between actors arise, attitudes are assumed to become more aggressive, and an aggressive attitude leads to aggressive behaviour. In other words, the triangle is built on an escalating spiral, possible to start in any of the triangle's corners. The ABC triangles theory and concepts work on all levels, between individuals, groups, and states, and the psychology behind conflicts is very similar at the micro and macro level (LFF, 2021; Galtung, 1969).

#### 4.2.2 (T2) Direct, cultural, and structural violence

Galtung's second triangle (T2) distinguishes between direct, cultural, and structural violence. As shown above, these three approaches of violence are closely related to the ABC triangle (T1). The assumption is that cultural violence can be ended by changing the hostile attitudes to become more friendly and positive. On the other hand, direct violence can be ended by changing the actor's behaviour from aggressive and hostile to kind and calm; and structural violence can end by changing contradictions and diminishing the incompatibility between actors (Ramsbotham, 2016). These three approaches of violence and the formation of violence can be divided into visible and non-visible violence, where direct violence is visible, and cultural and structural violence is non-visible (i.e., not directly observable). Similar to the ABC triangle (T1), there exists a violence-triangle of (T2) (see table 2 below) within Galtung's conflict theory (Galtung; 1969; Galtung, 1990).

Table 2: Violence triangle



(Galtung, 2004)

Within the violence-triangle (T2) exists a difference in time relation of the three approaches of violence. Galtung explains direct violence as an event within the time. With this, he means that direct violence does not constantly exist, instead direct violence occurs in certain events of the

time. In contrast, cultural violence is explained as an invariant or permanence within time. Cultural violence is the foundation of the legitimatizing of direct and structural violence and is unchanged and remains constant over time. Structural violence is a process with ups and downs, where the cultural violence and the society's constructions affect structural violence to increase or decrease. The logic of the violence triangle base on the interaction to be found between these three types of violence and their temporal dynamics. (Galtung, 1969; Galtung, 1990).

#### *4.2.2.1 Direct violence*

Direct violence is what we can observe with our eyes or what we can physically feel, or alternatively hear. For example, torture, shooting, rape, or verbal force such as humiliation. In connection to the ABC triangle, direct violence is connected to the actor's behaviours (B). Galtung describes direct violence as physically manifested, related to discernible events involving a perpetrator and a purpose. In short, direct violence is *intentional*. Direct violence is a cause of the invisible structural and cultural violence, where actors revolt against the structures, using culture to legitimize their use of violence as an instrument (Galtung, 1969; Galtung 2004).

#### *4.2.2.2 Cultural violence*

Cultural violence is defined “as any aspect of culture that can be used to legitimise violence in its direct or structural form” (Galtung, 1990: 291). Cultural violence can be *intentional* or *unintentional*. Galtung’s conflict theory lists several pertinent cultural domains such as religion, ideology, and language. Galtung assumes that these domains can be used to legitimise direct or structural violence. The first domain listed, religion, legitimise direct or structural violence through ‘God’ and ‘Satan’, where God *chose* the ones most in his image and leaves the *unchosen*, the ‘other’ to Satan, see table 3 (1990).

The third domain in cultural violence is language. Galtung argues that language can be used to diminish others. One example given is by describing American slavery and racist ideas as “discrimination” and “prejudice” (Heilker, 2014). Language is also connected to social status and directly influences, for example, the nature of the discourse, attitudes and relationship building. Language's social status is determined mostly by political and economic forces because any shift in the political and economic spectrum of a language changes the social status (Rafi-Siddiq, 2016).



#### 4.2.2.3 Structural violence

The third form within the triangle of violence is structural violence, also referred to as social injustice (Galtung, 1969). Structural violence is an invisible form of violence and offers a nuanced analysis of the cultural, social, economic, political, and historical approach that shape inequality and suffering. Structural violence helps explain the multiple forces that create and perpetuate inequality on multiple levels, both for individuals and communities. Racism, homophobia, poverty, and sexism are all examples of structural violence (Lewis, 2021), as well as unjust laws or misleading information (UCTV, 2011). Galtung defines structural violence as “avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs or, to put it in more general terms, the impairment of human life, which lowers the actual degree to which someone is able to meet their needs below that which would otherwise be possible” (1993: 106). Structural violence is indirect violence constructed within the structure of society. Structural violence exists without a need for an actor, perpetrator, or purpose (1969). Hence, the attitudes and behaviours within structural violence can be considered *unintended*.

### 4.3 Constructivism meets Galtung’s theory

The motivation behind social constructivism and Galtung’s theory as this investigation theoretical orientation relates to the searching for a deeper understanding of the sociological foundations of violence in Colombia. The sociological ontology generates a deeper explanation of how humans construct the world and the role of language in the constructed world. The constructivism approach connected to Galtung’s sociological theory of conflict and violence possesses the ability to find contributing factors for conflict from discourses by both actors involved in the conflict. In short, the social constructivism ontology and Galtung’s theory as the guiding lens was chosen as the most suitable theories regarding the methodology and, above all, the aim of this thesis.

### 4.4 Analytical Framework

The analytical framework for this investigation is based on Galtung’s conflict theory with key concepts drawn from the two triangles: (T1) *attitude, behaviour, contradiction* and (T2) *direct, cultural, and structural violence*. These concepts will be applied deductively in the investigation, in connection to the methodology in chapter 6, and particularly the discourse analysis method, with predetermined codes. The analytical framework illustrated below indicates that the two triangles (T1) and (T2) are connected to each other. As illustrated in table

3, the first triangle (T1) is placed within the vertical (left) row since attitude, behaviours, and contradiction exist in all three violence approaches. The second triangle (T2) is applied horizontally. This creates an analytical framework where we can see how the correlation between the two triangles operates in the analysis.

Table 3. Analytical framework

	<b>Direct violence:</b>	<b>Cultural violence:</b>	<b>Structural violence:</b>
<b>Attitudes:</b>	Discourse that portrays hostile attitude	Discourse that portrays dehumanization against the ‘other’	Discourse that portrays unintentional social injustice
<b>Behaviour:</b>	Discourse that portrays <i>intentional</i> physical and/or oral violence (military actions, humiliating)	Discourse that portrays <i>intentional</i> or <i>unintentional</i> justify direct and/or structural violence (Parables and diminish of ‘others’)	Discourse that portrays <i>unintentional</i> advocating structural violence (promoting unjust structural changes)
<b>Contradiction:</b>	Discourse that portrays incompatibility in militarily and territory goals	Discourse that portrays incompatibility in language and ideological goals	Discourse that portrays incompatibility in social and structural goals

## 5. Specified aim and research question

To engage with the overall research puzzle of what the underlining factors contributing to the conflict between the government of Colombia and ELN are, this thesis aims to establish an empirical in-depth knowledge of the conflict, focusing on the discourses from both “actors”, with attention to Galtung’s theoretical concepts of attitudes, behaviours, and contradictions, as well as the three aspects of violence in connection to the ongoing conflict. It is important to note that this thesis does not aim to present an answer to all the contributing factors for this conflict, but rather seek to empirically identify the contributing factors for the ongoing conflict by observing discourse. Such an aim helps to frame the overarching research question of the thesis: *What are the contributing factors of the ongoing conflict between the government of Colombia and ELN observed from their discourse?*

To elaborate on the main research question in the thesis, the first step is to identify the attitudes, behaviours, and contradictions within the conflict. This leads the study to frame the first subsidiary research question: *What type of attitudes, behaviours and contradictions can be observed within the discourse from the government of Colombia and ELN?*

The second step is to assess how each of these played out in the case study and to ascertain how they interrelated and affected one another, which leads the study to frame the second subsidiary research question: *How are the attitudes, behaviours and contradictions reflecting direct, structural, and cultural violence within the ongoing conflict based on the discourse?*

## **6. Methodology: A single case study with discourse analysis**

This investigation analysed discourse from both main actors in the contemporary conflict. The aim of this chapter in relation to the other chapters of this thesis is to explain the research design, why I used certain research methods to collect empirical evidence, and how the data have been analysed. The chapter builds on the analytical framework set out previously presented in chapter 4.3, that is, a framework in which to assess the conflict between ELN and the Colombian government. Chronologically, the chapter starts with a presentation of the research design, and thereafter the methods for gathering data and the discussion of how the materials that I used in the analysis were collected and the reasons for choosing the specific empirical material. Followed by a discussion of data analysis. The chapter will conclude with an explanation of how the analytical framework presented in one of the previous chapters has been applied in the analysis.

### **6.1 Research design: A single case study**

The research design refers to the overall strategy that the researcher chooses to integrate the different components of the study coherently and logically. The research design constitutes the blueprint for collecting data, methodology, and data analysis (De Vaus, 2001). The single case study design was applied to this thesis and selected as the most suitable choice because this research design allowed me to do a careful in-depth analysis of the content of the collected data and answer the research questions. In doing so, the single case design elevates this investigation's internal validity due to the rigorous and careful analysis of the data. An extra factor involved in the decision of the research design were conflicts. Conflicts such as this in Colombia are usually complex and in flux and thus require a research design where the researcher can systematically analyse complexity and understand the more profound complexity of a social phenomenon (Yin, 2009). Of importance, this investigation possesses the possibility for comparative elements, e.g., compare the discourse by the government of Colombia and ELN. This knowledge was considered, and despite this observation, this investigation possesses a "true" single case study without comparative elements. The choice of conducting a study without comparative characteristics is motivated firstly by this thesis guiding aim and the in-depth knowledge of how the government of Colombia and ELN interrelate rather than how the actors differ. Secondly, by the separation throughout the analysis (see chapter 7). The analysis is conducted by separating the actor's discourse. Duque's discourse

is analysed first in each section, followed by ELN's. I argue that adding a comparative element into this research would not change the result. The analysis carries out a separation searching for the interrelation between the two actors rather than a comparison. This separation provides the analysis with the possibility to observe how the actors individually recognise the conflict since the conflict is asymmetric and possesses the eventuality that the actors hold different views of the hostility. With that being said, a comparative element would change the research questions, but not necessarily the research as a whole.

Consequently, the weaknesses of the single case study design are fundamental to present. The single case study design possesses a low external validity. Due to that, the conclusions and findings are often more difficult to generalise from. This implies that my findings from the conflict analysis might not be applicable to other conflicts since each conflict is unique. However, the single case study of a significant conflict or event "can generate in-depth knowledge and provide a better general understanding of analytical propositions" (Coetzee, 2020: 67). Other limitations of the single case study design are concerned to research subjectivity and reliability. This means that this research could have replicability limitations concerns since interpretative research always is affected by human factors. To be more specific, different researchers may understand the discourse from the government of Colombia and ELN differently based on the researcher's understanding of the world. This is a problem I have considered when conducting the research. However, this limitation is difficult to avoid when performing an interpretive study (Halperin & Heath, 2017). The limitation of replicability could additionally be affected by ELN's channels for discourse. ELN is an insurgent group, this means that ELN's channels are settled down by governmental force ever so often. This could limit the replicability of this investigation. Still, my very aim was to conduct a deductive study from a set framework possible to replicate. By consistently applying this framework in the analysis of the discourse, I have limited the human factor effect of this study to a certain extent.

As an alternative, the limitations of the external validity could be lower in another research design. Such as a research design of a more comparative nature over time (longitudinal design) while examining the conflict between the government of Colombia and ELN and their discourse. The motivation for not choosing another research design for this investigation is the timeline of the Colombian presidency and the elections. Following the literature review in chapter 3, former Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos has already been examined in previous literature in various ways and ELN context. The interest of this study was to

investigate the conflict dyad through Iván Duque's presidency. The in-depth knowledge I aimed to obtain was how the discourse of each actor reflects contributing factors for the ongoing conflict. Hence, the single case study design was the most suitable for this investigation.

## 6.2 Methods for gathering data

For this investigation, I collected different data from four different sources. The motivation behind using several sources with different data is to increase the validation of the collection of data through cross verification from more than two sources (Denzin, 1973). The collection of data and the quantity is illustrated in table 4 below:

Table 4: Summary of data collection

Data	Quantity	Type of source
Political proposal	1	Official PDF
Duque speeches	22	Official Speeches
ELN interviews	2	NGO Interviews
ELN insurrecciones/revolts	71	Website
Total:	96	4

When examining the data collection, I found that ELN's website was not accessible for a couple of weeks in April. When ELN relaunched the website, several of the insurrecciones were removed. The aim from the beginning was to analyse a total of 156 insurrecciones (revolt documents), while the outcome resulted in a total of 71 insurrecciones. The motivation behind choosing the data above was the in-depth knowledge I searched to determine how discourse reflects contributing factors for the ongoing conflict. More specific, in-depth knowledge about the president of Colombia and ELN's aims, attitudes, behaviours, and the choice of words (and speech acts) and possible repetitions and expressions. Duque's speeches and political proposal contribute to his own opinions and possess only his and his political colleague's personal bias. ELN was more difficult to find first-hand sources from. Since ELN is an insurgent group, their data is not as accessible as when searching for official discourse. After a few weeks of searching, I succeeded in founding their website (<http://eln-voces.net>). On this website, ELN provides updates on the political situation in Colombia, about who they are, and above all, they post insurrecciones, which means revolts. Each insurrección consists of well-written documents/magazines of around 40 pages each, where ELN argues in textual language and

through images what they found are ‘wrong’ or corrupt in Colombia. This website claims to be “Sitio oficial del Ejército de Liberación Nacional de Colombia” (en. *Official site of the National Liberation Army of Colombia*). However, I should stress that this is an insurgency group, who’s behind this website are not 100 percent verifiable. The website has a contact panel. Unfortunately, I did not receive a response. To proceed, ELN’s insurrecciones are additionally uploaded at the website <https://issuu.com> under the account “Voces de Colombia” (en. *voices from Colombia*). The motivation behind choosing the insurrecciones is due to the content, reflecting ELN’s political and general opinions. This motivation for data collection regards the final data sources and material as well, the non-governmental organization Fundación Paz y Reconciliación two visual interviews with ELN.

The discourse was collected during a specific period of 1 January 2018 until 31 December 2020, the motivation behind this time frame regards that the first months of 2018 reflects Duque’s political campaigns, and the justification behind not choosing the period 2021 is due to the covid-19 pandemic and the ‘stalemate’ of the conflict (Insight crime, 2020). The data collection was provided as transparently as possible, conducted as a purposive sampling (sampling done with the researcher’s aims in mind). All samples founded within the chosen time frame, for each source, have been analysed within the investigation. Regarding the process of the collection of the data, President Duque’s political proposals, 203 Propuestas (en. *203 proposals*), were retrieved from his website (Ivanduque.com). Duque’s official speeches were collected from the official website of the government of Colombia. The government of Colombia divided speeches into different ‘themes’ on the website. Within this investigation, four different themes of speeches are sampled: 1) Paz con legalidad (en. *peace with legality*) two samples, 2) Seguridad (en. *security*) fifteen samples, 3) Justicia (en. *justice*) two samples, and 4) Legalidad (en. *legality*) three samples. As will be noticed, these speeches are numbered in the analysis and the appendix after theme; 1,2,3,4 and a letter separate the speeches within each theme. Let me demonstrate, a security speech will be named #2, and to separate the security speeches from each other, I added a letter, e.g., #2a.

The data from ELN is, as written above, supposed to be collected from the website <http://eln-voces.net>. Due to that this website was not accessible for a couple of weeks, the insurrecciones were retrieved from ELN’s account on the website <https://issuu.com>. ELN numbered each insurrección, I will keep this numbering throughout the analysis and in the appendix. For example, insurrección 645. Discourse from ELN is additionally retrieved from the non-

governmental organisation Fundación Paz y Reconciliación two filmed interviews with ELN in 2019 and held by Andrea Aldana. As noticeable, these interviews are secondary sources. However, the bias from Aldana seems low since everything is visually filmed and the members of ELN can speak freely in their environment.

As should be clear from the above, the data used for this study can be collected by other researchers because it is easily accessible. Further, the use of both primary and secondary sources and a mix of different source materials increases the validity of the final result and limits the researcher's bias. Within social scientific investigations, researcher bias is largely unavoidable. However, conducting an investigation with multiple sources of evidence and developing a holistic description through an iterative process limits the researcher's bias (Easton, 2010). Further, using more than one method or source of data within the investigation enables triangulation, and triangulation works as a cross-checking process of findings (Bryman, 2016).

### **6.3 Methods for analysing data: Qualitative discourse analysis**

In consideration of the single case study design, the method for gathering data was employed with qualitative discourse analysis. This method provided a systematic analysis of the collection of data. The qualitative approach and the choice of discourse analysis were collected as the most sufficient concerning the aim of this investigation and the collection of data, consisting of oral and written language, images, and expressions. Discourse analysis is underpinned by social constructivism and is a much-favoured textual analysis method among constructivist scholars in international relations, interested in the impact of identity, meaning, and discourse on world politics.

At this juncture, I want to point out that I am aware of other, well working textual analysis methods, e.g., content analysis. The motivation behind discourse analysis was based on the fact that this textual method considers the circumstances around the discourse. For example, when analysing a speech held by Duque, I analysed the environment around him and his expressions regarding the ongoing conflict. Supplementary to this advantage, the use of discourse analysis method provided the investigation with the ability to take the government of Colombia's and ELN's values, ideologies and beliefs into account when analysing the collection of data, and how the collected data correlate to the relationship of power and authority and, above all, the



factors for the conflict (Wood and Kroger, 2000). In short, I chose the discourse analysis method as the most suitable in regard to the analytical framework, the theoretical approach, and the empirical data.

What is worth clarifying, there is not a single method of discourse analysis or theory. A wide range of scholars employs discourse analytical tools in various ways and from different theoretical approaches, running from Fairclough; Van Dijk; Wodak; Hopf; to Foucault, for mentioning a few. In this thesis, discourse analysis is used as a method rather than a theory to understand the conflict dyad and data collection better. Following the theoretical framework presented in chapter 4, this research possesses an interpretative constructivist approach to discourse analysis. This means, a discourse analysis that analyses and identifies shared meaning structures in specific contexts, in this investigation, the context between the actor's discourse and factors for the ongoing conflict (Aydın-Düzgit & Rumelili, 2018). Consequently, since discourse analysis is largely a qualitative method, the weakness of this method regards the reliability and validity of the analysis. A researcher cannot ascertain the reliability and validity in the same way as in quantitative approaches. This weakness can be limited by using different types of data (triangulation of data) and being very meticulous regarding the analytical framework and pre-determined codes throughout the full analysis. While essential, the decoding process is also risky, involving multiple moments of interpretation and translation, as third-party facilitators encourage the conflict parties to perceive the shadow of the roots of conflict. Still, the quantitative method would not allow me to carry out a deeper analysis of the discourse, and it requires a larger number of collected discourse.

#### *6.3.1 How the analytical framework will be applied*

In consideration to the qualitative discourse analysis, the focus in this investigation were on different components of discourse. In this investigation, two components have been applied: intentionality and strategies. Intentionality refers to what the actors intend through their text, images, speeches, or expression. Strategies refer to interactional strategies that accomplish a communicative goal. The different concepts within the two triangles (T1) and (T2) have been textually coded to connect this with the analytical framework presenter in chapter 4.3. Codes are labels that assign symbolic meaning to the textual information. Since the foundation of this investigation is deductive with empirical data and not aim to test a theory, closed coding was a sufficient method for this investigation. Closed coding (also called prior codes) is pre-determined codes linked to the analytical framework (Halperin & Heath, 2017). Pre-determined

codes possess inter-coder reliability. This means that if another researcher would replicate this investigation, it will be more possible to replicate similar results. This increases the transparency of the investigation (Mayring, 2004).

To be more specific, the data collection consists of different types of data, written and oral/visual, images and expressions. I analysed the written data and the images through pre-determined words/ “indicators” as codes, and I analysed the oral/visual/expressions through predetermined “rhetorical device” in line with the analytical framework. To clarify, even if I analysed the written and oral data with different predetermined codes and the data collection possessed different types of discourse, the aim was to find contributing factors for the conflict throughout the analysis. What will be presented below, the pre-determined words/ “indicators” from the analytical framework were a total of 12, where each of these words has been searched for in Duque’s political proposals and ELN’s insurrecciones and applied to images within the written discourse. The predetermined words/ “indicators” were searched for in the Spanish language since the political proposal and the insurrecciones are written in Spanish. The written data and images are analysed following three rules: 1) inflexions of words have been taken into the investigation. For example, protestaban instead of protesta (en. *protest*, *protesting*); 2) words/indicators applied to historical events or historical persons have not been applied to this investigation; 3) words/indicators applied to other countries have not been applied into this investigation. The translation of the words to English are presented after the Spanish:

**Direct violence** (in interrelation with attitude + behaviour + contradiction) consists of the following words/indicators; Agresión, Violencia, Fuerza, Miedo (en. *Aggression, Violence, Force, Fear*)

**Cultural violence** (in interrelation with attitude + behaviour + contradiction consists of the following words/indicators; Élite, Clase, Ideología, Protesta (en. *Elite, Class, Ideology, Protest*)

**Structural violence** (in interrelation with attitude + behaviour + contradiction) consists of the following words/indicators; Justicia, Discriminación, Seguridad, Participación (en. *Justice, Discrimination, Security, Participation*)

Duque’s speeches and the interviews with ELN was analysed throughout the following four predetermined “rhetorical devices” codes;

**Negation** (negative language) = language/expressions of aggressive/hostile words, hateful expressions, expressions of fear, expression of dehumanization of others, expression of threat or harm, language/expression advocating unjust structural changes.

**Repetition** = language/expression of repeating words or parables.

**Request** = Language/expressions that present a demand, appeal or call to action.

**Solution proposals** = language/expression of solutions/proposals to problems.

Within coding exists methods of using computer programs for computer-assisted coding. I used the manual approach throughout this analysis. The selected data and the pre-determined codes have been read and checked several times during the analyses process to ensure accuracy. This is recommended by the authors of the book *Political Research* (Halperin & Heath, 2017).

## 6.4 Limitations of the research

Possible limitations within this research regard firstly, the language. The Spanish language is not my first language, making me possibly overlook certain subtleties of the language in the discourse that I analysed, translated, and interpreted. The Spanish language in Colombia is unique and contains its “own” proverbs and expressions. Secondly, the researcher is affected by its context, background, and surrounding discourses. Even though I have the knowledge and a personal connection to Colombia as a country, I am raised in Sweden. This means that I have other starting positions than the actors and phenomena I study in Colombia. In short, this means that I cannot in any way represent the country and its specific discourses.

## 6.5 Ethics in Research

This thesis follows the ethical guidelines and recommendations regarding the Swedish Research Council and University West (cf. the European Code of Integrity for Research, ALLEA 2017). The theoretical, analytical, and methodological aspects were conducted following the parameters established by the referred authorities. To be more specific, this thesis does not use personal information or put anyone in danger. This thesis follows professional codes and norms, such as conveying information truthfully and honouring commitments, reporting findings precisely, using resources wisely, letting the facts speak for themselves, and avoiding improper bias (Steneck, 2007; SRC, 2017; University West, 2021).

## 7. Analysis: Discourse from an internal armed conflict

The analysis carried out in this chapter of 96 written and oral discourses, images, and expressions from the government of Colombia and ELN help to answer the research questions by explaining the attitudes, behaviours, and contradictions related to direct, cultural, and structural violence. Based on the analytical framework presented in chapter 4.3, the chapter proceeds as follow: The first section examines direct violence in relation to attitude, behaviour, and contradiction and draws on the theoretical concepts of hostile attitude and intentional acts. Section two discusses cultural violence in relation to attitude, behaviour, and contradiction. To be more specific, how ideology and the use of language justify intentional or unintentional direct and/or structural violence. Section three examines the structural violence in relation to attitude, behaviour, and contradictions. Essential to repeat, structural violence is social injustice. What will be noticed, each section first analyses the discourse by Duque and then discourse by ELN. The motivation behind separating the actor's discourse and analysing one at a time is to identify how the actors and the different concepts from triangle (T1) and (T2) are interrelated, the analysis is not comparative. This chapter's fourth and final section presents the analysis results and answers to the three research questions.

### 7.1 Direct violence in relation to attitude, behaviour, and contradiction

#### 7.1.1 *The government of Duque*

What follows below is Duque's discourse of direct violence in relation to attitude, behaviour, and contradiction. The discourse presents empirical evidence from the analysis. Following this analysis interpretation, Duque's discourse frames hostile attitudes and call for violent actions against ELN. The hostile attitudes and behaviours appear in written and oral language. This interpretation is motivated by Duque's use of condescending, disdainful wording when he talks or writes about ELN. In contrast, an alternative understanding of these expressions could be emotions and attitudes of fear. Empirical excerpts follow:

“the neutralisation of the dangerous and criminal terrorist alias 'Uriel', of the ELN”<sup>1</sup> (Duque, 2020 #2n), “these narco-terrorist”<sup>2</sup> (Duque, 2020 #2g), “these criminals”<sup>3</sup> (Duque, 2020 #2h), “these criminals are extremely dangerous”<sup>4</sup> (Duque, 2020 #2i), “in this operation

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<sup>1</sup> La neutralización del peligroso y criminal terrorista alias 'Uriel', del ELN.

<sup>2</sup> Estos narcoterroristas

<sup>3</sup> Estos criminales

<sup>4</sup> Estos criminales son extremadamente peligrosos

fell a dangerous criminal”<sup>5</sup> (Duque, 2020 #2m), and “terrorist groups like ELN speak of peace in their speeches, but they are in the territories planting anti-personnel mines”<sup>6</sup> (Duque, 2020 #4a). Noticeable, the word “dangerous” is repeated several times in different speeches. This repetition could be understood as Duque perceives ELN as dangerous, or alternatively that Duque wants to influence his audience to believe and think in this manner. This interpretation becomes precisely clear in speeches held after two social leaders were killed in January 2020. Duque charge ELN for the homicides “we will be giving more details on this matter during the day. But we reject those facts, and at this moment, we have information, where the ELN is presumably behind the murder of these two Colombian heroes”<sup>7</sup> (Duque, 2020 #2g). This deceleration by Duque and this analysis interpretation further connect to how Duque promises Colombian citizens that his government will act against ELN. Following the theoretical framework, the empirical data supporting this understanding identifies calls for violent actions and intentional violent behaviour. As Galtung’s theory states, deliberate violent actions with a clear purpose are a behaviour of direct violence. Empirically this is presented below through three excerpts, and corresponding phrases can be found in the following speeches #2a; #2i; and #3a:

We will also continue to confront the leaders of the ELN <sup>8</sup> (Duque, 2020 #1b).

We have zero-tolerance, and we must move forward with great clarity and with great forcefulness <sup>9</sup> (Duque, 2020 #2b).

We will modernize the task forces for in-depth territorial control, to face the existing asymmetric threats, such as the ELN [...]. Presence of the Public Force, Strengthening of the Rural Police and Environmental Police and the Armed Forces to guarantee the safety <sup>10</sup> (Duque, 2018:4).

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<sup>5</sup> En esta operación cayó un peligroso criminal

<sup>6</sup> Grupos terroristas como el ELN hablan de paz en sus discursos, pero están en los territorios plantando minas antipersonal

<sup>7</sup> Daremos más detalles sobre este asunto durante el día. Pero rechazamos esos hechos, y en este momento tenemos información, donde presuntamente el ELN está detrás del asesinato de estos dos héroes colombianos.

<sup>8</sup> También seguiremos enfrentando a los líderes del ELN

<sup>9</sup> Tenemos tolerancia cero, y tenemos que avanzar con mucha claridad y con mucha contundencia.

<sup>10</sup> Modernizaremos las fuerzas de tarea para el control territorial en profundidad, para enfrentar las amenazas asimétricas existentes, como el ELN [...]. Presencia de Fuerza Pública, Fortalecimiento de la Policía Rural y Policía Ambiental y de las FFMM para garantizar la seguridad de los pobladores rurales.

In the following speeches held after the homicide, Duque continues to argue that he will act against ELN, that “these events will not go unpunished, and we will continue to confront these criminal structures with all determination”<sup>11</sup> (Duque, 2020 #2g). The understanding of this statements is that Duque seems very eager to tell his audience that, this time, the government of Colombia fight back with force against ELN, without impunity. Since in previous speeches, Duque has stated that “impunity generates violence”<sup>12</sup> (Duque, 2020 #1b) and “impunity constantly generates new violence”<sup>13</sup> (Duque, 2020 #1b). The interpretation that Duque wishing to confront ELN is further motivated by security speeches #2d and #2m:

Today I have given very clear instructions to the National Police to move forward with speed and, also, to move forward quickly in assessing all the circumstances of these events <sup>14</sup> (Duque, 2020 #2d).

We must keep doing it, especially when we understand that the murder of social leaders is marked by the halo of the ELN terrorists [...]. And today we reject them and tell them that we are not going to rest <sup>15</sup> (Duque, 2020 #2m).

As noticed, the wording Duque use is resolute. This motivates the understanding that Duque seeks to approach ELN. This interpretation is additionally motivated by Duque’s eagerness to find the specific commanders of ELN responsible for the homicide manifested in the same speeches, where he calls out for ELN commanders. Duque offers to pay 25 million pesos for each commander of ELN to be given information leading to prosecution: “I want to refer to aliases ‘Arturo’, aliases ‘El Pescado’ and aliases ‘Morocho’, and a reward of 25 million pesos is offered for each of these bandits”<sup>16</sup> (Duque, 2020 #2g). For transparency, an alternative understanding in contrast to that Duque wish to confront ELN, could be that Duque only declares his desire to capture and increase the military force against ELN. With the motivation to “frighten” ELN and/or improve the Colombian citizen’s relationship and trust in him as the

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<sup>11</sup> Estos hechos no quedarán impunes y seguiremos enfrentando estas estructuras criminales con toda determinación.

<sup>12</sup> La impunidad genera violencia.

<sup>13</sup> la impunidad genera constantemente nuevas violencias.

<sup>14</sup> Hoy he dado instrucciones muy claras a la Policía Nacional para que avance con celeridad y, también, que avance con rapidez en la valoración de todas las circunstancias de estos hechos.

<sup>15</sup> tenemos que seguir haciéndolo, sobre todo cuando entendemos que el asesinato de líderes sociales está marcado por el halo de los terroristas del ELN [...]. Y hoy los rechazamos y les decimos que no vamos a descansar

<sup>16</sup> Quiero referirme a los alias 'Arturo', alias 'El Pescado' y alias 'Morocho', y se ofrece una recompensa de 25 millones de pesos por cada uno de estos bandidos.

President. In other words, Duque “only” use the discourse as a channel rather than realise his statements. This alternative interpretation is interesting, yet not as likely as the belief that Duque realises his declarations since the ongoing conflict demonstrably is violent from both sides.

Contemporary with this statement above and the homicides, Duque held another speech outside in the region of Arauca (see Appendix #2a). In the background of Duque stands a car with one person holding the back door open throughout the whole speech. The first interpretation of this appearance is that the person holding the door is prepared for an assassination attempt towards Duque and the persons around him. The surrounding gives the impression of insecurity. Alternative interpretations could be that this situation reveals that Duque just left the car and walked forward to the microphone. A third explanation, the person holding the door forgot to close the door. Concerning that the car was moving in the middle of the speech and the person kept holding the back door open, these alternative understandings seem less likely than the first. In addition to this observation, two specific speeches stand out from the remaining (see Appendix #2d and #2e). The rhetorical technique changes quite evident in these speeches. As noticed, the majority of Duque’s speeches consist of wording and expression containing hostility vis-à-vis ELN. In contrast, these speeches possess a language of what is understood as compassion and condolence when talking about ELN and direct violence:

I also want to refer to the events that we saw yesterday where several people lost their lives and it hurts us, those six victims hurt us, these acts of violence hurt us, the more than 110 injured police officers also hurt us <sup>17</sup> (Duque, 2020 #2d).

They hurt us [...] The loss of these lives hurts us, and we can reject the violence, vandalism, and attacks that were observed in front of the Public Force and many of the facilities that the Strength must protect citizens <sup>18</sup> (Duque, 2020 #2d).

Duque’s change of rhetorical approach is interesting, and specifically the repetition of “they hurt us”, this expression is recurrence in speech #2e, “I also want to make a special reference

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<sup>17</sup> También quiero referirme a los hechos que vimos ayer donde varias personas perdieron la vida y nos duele, esas seis víctimas nos lastimaron, estos hechos de violencia nos lastimaron, los más de 110 policías heridos también nos lastimaron.

<sup>18</sup> Nos duelen [...] La pérdida de estas vidas nos duele, nosotros también podemos rechazar claramente la violencia, el vandalismo y los ataques que se observaron frente a la Fuerza Pública y muchas de las instalaciones que la Fortaleza debe proteger a los ciudadanos.

to the fact that these acts of violence hurt us. We are hurt by people who have lost their lives”<sup>19</sup> (Duque, 2020 #2e). This repetition could be understood in various ways. This analysis interprets the repeated expression as a reveal of Duque’s identification of ELN and what he seeks to mediate to Colombian citizens. As evident from this analysis perspective, Duque’s discourse consists of both hostile attitude and behaviour, yet contradiction concerning direct violence is shown more as an effect of attitude and behaviour. Strictly speaking, the analysis of solely Duque's discourse distinguishes no clear answer to this conflict dyad's contradiction.

### 7.1.2 *Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN)*

Presented below is ELN’s discourse of direct violence in relation to attitude, behaviour, and contradiction. First of all, this investigation perceives that ELN’s discourse point towards hostile and negative attitude vis-à-vis Duque. This interpretation is motivated by Galtung’s theory, stating that the perception of the ‘other’ is strongly negative in violent conflicts. ELN’s strongly negative attitude against Duque can be shown in expressions, e.g., “Duque's government is a disgrace for Colombia”<sup>20</sup> (Insurrección 678:13), “with Duque, we will return to the international policy of shock, bravado and gunmen”<sup>21</sup> (Insurrección 626:6), and “President Duque boasts of leading two wars and turns the armed forces into cannon meat”<sup>22</sup> (Insurrección 677:21). An alternative understanding of these expressions could be that ELN employs this kind of statements to affect the citizen’s opinion of the Colombian President. What further is interesting, expressions for violent actions against the government perceive within ELN’s discourse. Expressions or calls for violent acts are intentional violent behaviour of direct violence following the theoretical approach. Empirically, ELN’s calls for actions are presented below, and almost identical excerpts appear in insurrecciones 617, 622, 626, and within the interview “Cara a Cara con el ELN”:

We must go out to the streets to defend the right to peace <sup>23</sup> (Insurrección, 678:13)

If the country model and those policies continue to be, we are going to continue the war  
<sup>24</sup> (Interview, 2019b: 17:08)

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<sup>19</sup> También quiero hacer especial referencia al hecho de que estos actos de violencia nos lastiman. Nos lastiman las personas que han perdido la vida.

<sup>20</sup> El gobierno de Duque es una vergüenza para Colombia

<sup>21</sup> Con Duque, volveremos a la política internacional de conmoción, bravuconería y pistoleros

<sup>22</sup> El presidente Duque se jacta de liderar dos guerras y convierte a las fuerzas armadas en carne de cañón

<sup>23</sup> Debemos salir a la calle para defender el derecho a la paz.

<sup>24</sup> Si el modelo de país y esas políticas continúan siendo, vamos a continuar la guerra



To defend peace, we must confront the regime in its entirety: the regret is bloody. However, the resistance and unity of the Colombian people are growing <sup>25</sup> (Insurrección, 687:9).

This analyse understand the wording ELN uses as hostile. The interpretation identifies ELN's discourse as appeals to violence, i.e., to take actions against the government. To be more specific, the interpret regard that ELN has a purpose within their discourse and calls for violent acts against the Colombian government. ELN identifies Duque's government as the perpetrator, contributing to direct violence by denying peace actions and carrying out violent actions against Colombian civilians. The motivation for this understanding is supported by ELN's argument concerning that the government increases the armed force against civilian citizens to increase the "good" results in statistics - the government kills innocent citizens and argue that these innocent citizens belonged to insurgency groups. On an interesting note, in the previous section, Duque identified ELN as the perpetrator of the violence within Colombia. The two conflict actors demonstrate empirically, from this analysis understanding, that the perception of each other regards that the 'other' is the perpetrator of direct violence. In other words, the empirical evidence demonstrates the same hostile attitudes and behaviours in ELN and Duque's discourses. This hostile attitude brings forth an excuse and legitimate to act in a hurtful manner against the 'other'. Empirical evidence of ELN's hostile attitude towards the government and Duque are presented below:

Likewise, he has encouraged and contributed, with direct action, to sabotage, to the action of armed gangs and paramilitaries <sup>26</sup> (Insurrección, 626:6).

Denying the right to peace is an aberration [...] is sought is to erase the most beautiful human desire only to drive away the feeling of fear of the truth by politicians that exercises power from violence <sup>27</sup> (Insurrección, 678:13).

The custom in the armed forces is to force the soldiers to hand over more and more corpses - even if they are not guerrillas - to demonstrate "good results" in the fight against

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<sup>25</sup> Para defender la paz hay que enfrentar al régimen en su totalidad: la arremetida es cruenta, sin embargo la resistencia y unidad del pueblo colombiano crece.

<sup>26</sup> Asimismo, ha alentado y contribuido, con acción directa, al sabotaje, a la acción de bandas armadas y paramilitares por la desestabilización de Venezuela.

<sup>27</sup> Negar el derecho a la paz es una aberración [...] se busca es borrar el más bello deseo humano solo para ahuyentar el miedo a la verdad que siente una casta política que ejerce el poder desde la violencia.

insurgents. Of this demand, innocent civilians are dressed in guerrilla uniforms and presented as killed in combat; In this way, the Ministry of Defense paid thousands of cash bonuses to those who perpetrated these crimes against humanity <sup>28</sup> (Insurrección, 678:9).

Alternative interpretations of the excerpts above could regard that ELN wants to scare the Colombian citizens concerning being killed by the government and to increase the picture of the government as dangerous and hostile. What further is interesting, this analysis interprets that ELN holds the government of Duque responsible for scaring Colombian citizens with Chavism (sp. Chavismo), which is a left-wing political ideology associated with the former Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez. ELN write: “castrochavismo is the way to scare people”<sup>29</sup> (Insurrección 639:35) and “it is true that the right-wing did very badly: they reproduced the demonising scheme that apparently worked for them with the plebiscite (the Castro-Chavista ghost and the fear of Venezuelanization)”<sup>30</sup> (Insurrección 632:7). The understanding of the empirical data indicates that ELN identify that the government of Duque undermine the Marxism-Lenin ideology (which ELN advocates) and intentionally scaring citizens not to want nor to vote for the left politics. An alternative understanding is that ELN wants to increase the interest in left-winged politics and use Duque’s government in this context as a “marketing tool” for their politics. This alternative interpretation is interesting. However, the first understanding seems more likely since the majority of ELN’s discourse perceive hostility against Duque’s government rather than a tool for marketing. To proceed, in compliance with the theoretical approach, intentionally “scaring” others should be recognised as oral violence. As stated above, ELN and Duque’s discourse both reflects hostile attitudes and behaviours towards each other. Throughout the analysis of direct violence in relation to attitude, behaviour and contradiction point the result for that the contradiction in this context concerns the perception these actors hold towards each other, where both see each other as the perpetrator and the contributing force for the ongoing violence. This negative perception (contradiction) provides a route for justifying hostile attitudes and behaviour.

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<sup>28</sup> Los costumbre en las FFAA es obligar a los soldados a entregar cada vez más cadavers – así no sean de guerrilleros – para demostrar “buenos resultados” en la lucha contra insurgente. De esta exigencia civiles inocentes, les colocan uniforme de guerrilleros y los presentan como dado de baja en combate; de esta forma el Ministerio de Defensa pagó miles de bonificaciones en dinero a quienes perpetraron estos crímenes de lesa humanidad.

<sup>29</sup> El castrochavismo es la forma de asustar a la gente

<sup>30</sup> Es cierto que la derecha lo hizo muy mal: reprodujeron el esquema demonizador que aparentemente les funcionó con el plebiscito (el fantasma castro-chavista y el miedo a la venezolanización)

## 7.2 Cultural violence in relation to attitude, behaviour, and contradiction

### 7.2.1 *The government of Duque*

As claimed by the theoretical orientation, ideology is central to cultural violence. This is quite evident when reading Duque's speeches and political proposal. Duque argues that the truth and the justice have no ideological biases and that no ideological or political cause should justify violence. On an interesting note, this argument of Duque (from a broader ontological perspective) is based on his own preferences, norms, and ideology. Nevertheless, Duque's argument is empirically presented by excerpts below:

Some have tried to justify actions against human rights for alleged ideological and political orientations, for alleged wrongly called revolutionary causes because the first thing we have to say as a society is that neither exists nor cause or ideology that justifies murder, kidnapping or extortion<sup>31</sup> (Duque, 2020 #1b).

There is no political or ideological cause that justifies a violation of human rights. And that is a call that I also want to make to you, to the new generations [...] enough is enough! No more! <sup>32</sup> (Duque, 2020 #1b).

The construction of peace has no ideology, the construction of peace can never fall into politics <sup>33</sup> (Duque, 2020 #3a).

Regarding these statements, this analysis interprets that Duque argues that the left-wing politics and the ideology ELN advocates provide the guerrilla group to justify direct violence intentionally or unintentionally against the government and the Colombian habitants. In the same vein, Duque argues that ELN "are the ones who assassinate social leaders, these are the ones who assassinate many people when they seek to intimidate them"<sup>34</sup> (Duque, 2020 #2a). Following the theoretical approach, cultural violence justifies direct and structural violence. What further is noticed in Duque's and the government of Colombia's discourse concerning

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<sup>31</sup> algunos han tratado de justificar acciones contra los derechos humanos por supuestas orientaciones ideológicas y políticas, por supuestas causas mal llamadas revolucionarias, porque lo primero que tenemos que decir como sociedad es que no existe ni causa ni ideología que justifique el asesinato, el secuestro, y la extorsión

<sup>32</sup> No existe una causa política o ideológica que justifique una violación de los derechos humanos. Y esa es una llamada que también quiero hacerte a ti, a las nuevas generaciones [...] ¡ya es suficiente! ¡No más!

<sup>33</sup> La construcción de la paz no tiene ideología, la construcción de la paz nunca puede caer en la política.

<sup>34</sup> Estos son los que asesinan a los líderes sociales, y estos son los que asesinan a muchas personas cuando buscan intimidarlos.

cultural violence is one diminishing and dehumanising expression within the security speech #2m:

This subject, the subject alias 'Uriel', was linked to the urban terrorist structures that were ravaging...<sup>35</sup> (Duque, 2020 #2m).

Uriel was a front figure for ELN and active on social media. The Colombian governmental forces killed Uriel in 2020. The understanding from the quotation is that the government of Colombia identifies the commander of ELN as a subject rather than a human being. This understanding is motivated by the expression of “subject”, which only is used when discussing a killed ELN combatant and is not a common expression within the discourse from the government. In addition, this interpretation is motivated by the theoretical approach stating that a negative attitude within direct violence justifies hurtful actions, in the same manners, diminishing the ‘other’ justifying dehumanisation. The discourse reflects dehumanising attitudes and behaviour, where the contradiction points towards ideology and the negative perception of the ‘other’.

### *7.2.2 Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN)*

What follows below is ELN’s discourse of cultural violence in relation to attitude, behaviour, and contradiction. ELN’s discourse consists of empirical evidence reflecting cultural violence. First, in almost every insurrección written by ELN, Duque and the politicians in the government of Colombia are referred to as “the dominant class”, “the ruling class”, “elites”, and “the dominant elites”. When describing Duque’s government, ELN's constant wording points toward that the social status is not equal. This interpretation is motivated by the theoretical approach, stating that language and wording are connected to social status, relationships, and cultural violence. The unequal social status is further shown empirically through three excerpts below, where ELN “blaming” the government for being the perpetrator (unintentionally or intentionally) for the socioeconomic injustice:

Violence has been the recurrent form of management of this country by Colombian elites, who, in addition to direct murder, generate conditions of poverty, inequality and lack of

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<sup>35</sup> Que este sujeto, el sujeto alias 'Uriel', estaba vinculado con las estructuras de terrorismo urbano que estaban asolando..

access to education, which are behind many of the violence women face on a daily basis<sup>36</sup> (Insurrección, 641:33).

The ruling elite allocates less and less in the national budget [...] the ruling classes drunk with military triumphs, now go to a stage of madness with the aggression against Venezuela and perpetuating the internal war<sup>37</sup> (Insurrección, 654:7).

President Duque [...] raises taxes on the middle and lower class, excepting for the businessmen and the upper class; it is the way Duque pays those who placed him and keep him in power<sup>38</sup> (Insurrección, 648:14).

The understanding of the expressions above point towards that ELN's attitude reflects dissatisfaction with the government of Duque's ruling of Colombia. To be more specific, this dissatisfaction appears in the discourse regarding socioeconomic injustice and social protests in Colombia. E.g., ELN state that Duque's government using the military and police force to terminate the social protests against his government "Due to war due to social protest, the public force caused dozens of deaths and injuries" (Insurrección 618:19). This expression supports the interpretation that ELN is dissatisfied with the Colombian government and ELN's arguments that Duque's government is behind the killing of Colombian citizens protesting and is the perpetrator behind social leaders' being killed. Interestingly, within Duque's discourse, ELN is perceived as the perpetrator of killing social leaders and justifying violence through their ideology. In ELN's discourse, the understanding is reverse. Empirical findings from ELN's discourse are presented below, and similar excerpts could be found in insurrección 630, 671 and 681:

The Colombian regime has symptoms of a governance crisis for "destroying peace", for the warlike treatment of social protest<sup>39</sup> (Insurrección, 681:13).

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<sup>36</sup> La violencia ha sido la forma recurrente de administrar de este país por parte de las élites colombianas, quienes, además del asesinato directo, generan condiciones de pobreza, desigualdad y falta de acceso a la educación, que están detrás de muchas de las violencias que enfrentan las mujeres a diario.

<sup>37</sup> Pero es claro que, por todo esto, la élite gobernante destina cada vez menos en el presupuesto nacional [...] las clases dominantes embriagadas de triunfos militares, pasan ahora a una etapa de locura con la agresión contra Venezuela y perpetuando la guerra interna

<sup>38</sup> presidente Duque, es subir los impuestos a la clase media y baja, exceptuando de ellos a los empresarios y la clase alta; es la forma en que Duque paga a quienes lo colocaron y lo mantienen en el poder.

<sup>39</sup> El régimen colombiano tiene síntomas de una crisis de gobernabilidad por "destruir la paz", por el trato bélico de la protesta social

Above all, treating social protest with respect is not treating it as a war <sup>40</sup> (Insurrección, 655:8).

These actions show once again that social protest is given a war treatment, regardless of who is exercising this sacred constitutional right <sup>41</sup> (Insurrección, 634:33).

The empirical data concerning ELN's attitude, behaviour and contradiction regarding cultural violence is in the overall picture understood as hostile with demonstrable dissatisfaction against the Colombian government. This interpretation is further motivated by that ELN refers to Uribe (the President of Colombia 2002-2010 and Duque's supervisor) instead of the official president Duque, e.g., "At the beginning of the third government of Uribe Vélez 2018-2022" <sup>42</sup> (Insurrección, 642:41). The reason behind ELN referring to the previous president possess different explanations. One valid answer could be that ELN thinks that Uribe is the one governing Colombia today, not Duque. This interpretation is motivated by painted images in ELN's insurrecciones. In insurrección 686 one image consists of Donald Trump, Colombia's current vice president Marta Lucía Ramírez, Uribe and Duque. The understanding of the picture regards that Ramírez and Uribe seem very happy with Trump's presence. Ramírez text-bubble phrase, "My president!" (sp. *I mi presidente!*). At the same time, Duque is painted as an infant with question-marks in his text bubble (see image 1). This interpretation of Uribe and Duque can be understood as ELN view Uribe as the one in charge, influenced by Trump, while Duque is painted as incapable of being in control. Similar images can be found in insurrección 692 and 689:

Image 1: Trump, Ramírez, Uribe and Duque (Insurrección 686:3).



<sup>40</sup> Sobre todo, tratar la protesta social con respeto no es tratarla como una guerra

<sup>41</sup> Estas acciones demuestran una vez más que la protesta social tiene un tratamiento de guerra, independientemente de quién esté ejerciendo este sagrado derecho constitucional.

<sup>42</sup> Al inicio de un Tercer Gobierno de Uribe Vélez (2018-2022).

As Galtung's theory states, cultural violent attitudes and behaviour are connected to diminishing and dehumanising the 'other'. Diminishing Duque's position should be seen as a dehumanising behaviour of ELN. Contradiction in connection to the discussion above illustrates ideology and the perception of the 'others' ideology as the main incompatibility. Both actors accuse each other of legitimising violence against Colombian citizens and social leaders through ideology.

## **7.3 Structural violence in relation to attitude, behaviour, and contradiction**

### *7.3.1 The government of Duque*

Structural violence is indirect violence without a need for a perpetrator or a purpose regarding the theoretical approach. Despite this knowledge, this analysis discerns that Duque accuses ELN of drug trafficking in Colombia and arguing that drug trafficking is the factor contributing to social injustice and structural violence. More specific, this perception is motivated by Duque's statement: "The greatest threat to human rights in Colombia is drug trafficking, it is micro-trafficking, and it is all the criminal chains that feed off this criminal activity"<sup>43</sup> (Duque, 2020 #1a). More theoretically, if ELN contributes to the drug trafficking in Colombia, ELN is not aware (or do not care or understand) that drug trafficking contributes to social injustice in Colombia. The interpretation of the empirical data is that Duque points out that ELN and drug trafficking are the main problems to solve social injustice. Duque state that "drug trafficking continues to be the mother and spawn of all forms of violence"<sup>44</sup> (Duque, 2020 #1b) and "Let us not be fooled, the ELN [...] seek to equip drug trafficking and seek to intimidate different places of the territory activity"<sup>45</sup> (Duque, 2020 #1a). Three additional empirical excerpts from Duque concerning this matter are presented below:

We must recognize that the more coca the less peace. And that these groups are the ones behind the massacres, the collective homicides, the ones behind the murder of many social leaders, and they are the ones behind many intimidations of the population<sup>46</sup> (Duque, #1b).

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<sup>43</sup> La mayor amenaza a los derechos humanos en Colombia es el narcotráfico, es el microtráfico, y son todas las cadenas criminales las que se alimentan de esta actividad delictiva.

<sup>44</sup> También creo que es muy importante reflexionar hoy y tiene que ver con el narcotráfico, que sigue siendo madre y engendro de todas las formas de violencia.

<sup>45</sup> No nos engañemos, el ELN [...] buscan equipar al narcotráfico y buscan intimidar diferentes lugares de la actividad del territorio.

<sup>46</sup> Debemos reconocer que cuanta más coca menos paz. Y que estos grupos son los que están detrás de las masacres, los homicidios colectivos, los que están detrás del asesinato de muchos líderes sociales, y son los que están detrás de muchas intimidaciones a la población.

Drug trafficking is an enemy of peace. Drug trafficking is an enemy of coexistence. It is an enemy of children, of youth; it is an enemy of the institutional order in any country where it has a presence <sup>47</sup> (Duque #2o).

Interestingly, the understanding in the previous section was that ELN argues that Duque's government legitimise the police force to end social protests in Colombia and kill and hurt social leaders and protesters. Within Duque's speeches, this analysis perceives that he "recognises" the structural violence by the Colombian police force against Colombian citizens. On a side note, the motivation behind dividing police violence into cultural and structural violence stance from the actor's different conflict perspectives. ELN's perspective is more in line with cultural violence, Duque and his government unintentionally or intentionally justifying both direct and structural violence in the aspect of police force against social protests. While Duque "recognises" the police violence, but from his perspective, the violence against social protests is not "his" fault. Duque state that the foundation of the problem is a lack of transparency and the behaviour of the armed force. This view is more in line with structural violence in relation to attitude, behaviours, and contradiction. I present two quotations from Duque's speech #2f below:

The issues that have to do with transparency in the use of force, transparency in the development of the competencies of the service and of course, also, continue to strengthen throughout the territory what has to do with the development of protocols related to complaints citizens, that have to do with the behaviour of the Public Force, which are administered every day and are also processed within the force. <sup>48</sup>

And we will also be doing exhaustively, with our National Police, a review on what has been the use of firearms, in such a way that as there is traceability in each of these uses, we know precisely if they have any concatenation with some other facts. <sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> El narcotráfico es enemigo de la paz. El narcotráfico es enemigo de la convivencia. Es enemigo de los niños, de la juventud es enemigo del orden institucional en cualquier país donde tiene presencia

<sup>48</sup> Los temas que tienen que ver con la transparencia en el uso de la fuerza, la transparencia en el desarrollo de las competencias del servicio y por supuesto, también, continúan fortaleciendo en todo el territorio lo que tiene que ver con el desarrollo de protocolos relacionados con las denuncias ciudadanas, que tienen que ver con el comportamiento de la Fuerza Pública, que se administran todos los días y también se procesan dentro de la fuerza.

<sup>49</sup> Y también estaremos haciendo de forma exhaustiva, con nuestra Policía Nacional, un repaso sobre lo que ha sido el uso de armas de fuego, de tal manera que como hay trazabilidad en cada uno de estos usos, sepamos precisamente si tienen alguna concatenación con algún otro hechos.



The understanding regards that Duque state that the Colombian police force should be investigated and developed one year ago. This is an interesting statement concerning the situation in Colombia at the time of writing, with Colombian citizens killed by Colombian police forces when protesting against the government. Back to the topic, it is noticed that Duque's discourse consists of attitudes and behaviour that promoting "unintentionally" unjust social structures. The most prominent finding in Duque's discourse point towards that Duque argues that ELN is responsible for drug trafficking in Colombia and that drug trafficking is the main reason for social injustice.

### *7.3.2 Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN)*

What follows below is ELN's discourse of structural violence in relation to attitude, behaviour, and contradiction. The discourse presents empirical evidence from the analysis, and most prominent, concerning this interpretation is discourse framing Duque for the social injustice and the structural violence. ELN is arguing that citizens of Colombia are exposed to structural violence by the capitalist and the "elite" structures within Colombia. Theoretically, these are structural changes Duque "unintentional" promoting. The understanding regards that ELN with a different political ideology seeing these changes as structural violence against the Colombian citizens. Empirically this is shown by two excerpt, and identical quotations could be found in several insurrecciones: 617, 623, 633, 655:

For Colombians of the middle and lower class, nothing good awaits us, only more taxes, an increase in murders, displacements, persecution, and prosecution, among others. The option that remains for us is unity, resistance, and struggle <sup>50</sup> (Insurrección, 652:27).

A poor person in Colombia who manages to stay alive would need 333 years (11 complete generations) to get out of exclusion. In other words, when a poor man or woman dies in Colombia, they owe more than two centuries of work to life to dream of living differently. This is the brutal structural violence that, combined with direct violence, makes the country an unviable project unless it takes the peace processes very seriously <sup>51</sup> (Insurrección, 645:34).

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<sup>50</sup> Para los colombianos de clase media y baja no nos espera nada bueno, solo más impuestos, aumento de asesinatos, desplazamientos, persecuciones y enjuiciamientos, entre otros. La opción que nos queda es la unidad, la resistencia y la lucha.

<sup>51</sup> Según este estudio, una persona pobre en Colombia que logra sobrevivir necesitaría 333 años (11 generaciones completas) para salir de la exclusión. Es decir, cuando un pobre o una pobre muere en Colombia, le deben más de dos siglos de trabajo a la vida para soñar con vivir de otra manera. Esta es la brutal violencia estructural que,

As noticed, the findings are understood as ELN accuses the government of being responsible for the structural violence in Colombia by advocating for a political ideology, and “capitalist” structures were “nothing good” awaits the middle and lower class in Colombia. In essence, the contradiction concerning structural violence regards that none of the actors recognises their participation in social violence. Duque accuses ELN of being the contributing force for social injustice and visa-versa. Per contra, specific attitudes and behaviours relating to structural violence are more diverse to perceive. The identified attitude and behaviours regarding the “accusation” of the ‘other’.

## **7.4 Results of the discourse analysis**

Several results become apparent when summarising this qualitative discourse analysis of 96 discourses, conducted with Galtung’s theory, the method of discourse analysis and pre-determined codes. Two of the predetermined codes were not identified in the collection of data and throughout the analysis - discrimination and solution proposal. In contrast, violence, force, and justice were the most prominent codes distinguished in the analysis. Concerning the theoretical concepts applied to the investigation, negative attitudes and behaviours related to direct violence were the most identified and appeared in the majority of the discourse. The theoretical concepts of cultural and structural violence both were found in the analysis and portrayed interesting. The actors accused each other of justifying direct and structural violence and contributing to social injustice in Colombia. Supplementary, I noticed the environmental differences in connection to the oral discourse. ELN’s interviews are held outside in the middle of a forest. Commanders of ELN covering their faces with black and red scarves with “ELN” written on the front. Interestingly, the only ‘white’ person perceived is the women holding the interviews from the non-governmental organisation. Contrastively, Duque hold his speeches in assembly halls, at airports or in the city centre. Duque and the people surrounding him dress in formal wear, and the majority of people around Duque are ‘white’. The focus in the analysis has been on verbal and written language, images and expressions.

Although power relations and highlighting power relations between those in powerful positions and those in less powerful positions were not an overarching aim of this study, it is evident

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combinada con la violencia directa, convierte al país en un proyecto inviable si no se toma muy en serio los procesos de paz.

when analysing sociological events, such as the conflict in Colombia, that power relations play a role. This is something the discourse analysis helped me to see empirically in the collection of discourse. In short, Duque and the government possess a more powerful position than ELN, influencing the Colombian citizens and possessing the primary control of Colombia. Concerning the research questions, I will provide an answer to them in the following sections. Observe that the order of the research questions changes from chapter 5. I will answer the sub-research questions first and the main research question in the last section 7.4.3.

#### *7.4.1 What type of attitudes, behaviours, and contradictions can be observed within the discourse from the government of Colombia and ELN?*

This section aims to answer the first sub-question concerning attitude, behaviour and contradiction perceived in the discourse. In essence, I found all three aspects of attitude, behaviour, and contradiction within the discourse from the government of Colombia and ELN. Most prominent and straightforward to observe was the theoretical concept of attitude and behaviour. These concepts could be observed in each actor's discourse separately, e.g., Duque's attitude could be perceived by only analysing his discourse, and I could identify Duque's attitude without the other two concepts: behaviour and contradiction. This example above regards the concept of behaviour and ELN's discourse as well. In contrast, I only perceived the contradiction combined with the two other concepts attitude and behaviour. In point of fact, the concept of contradiction apprehends most evident in relation to the violence triangle (T2) and the concepts of direct, cultural, and structural violence. To be more specific, within the analysis attitudes and behaviours framing the following viewpoints: negativity, hostility, verbal violence, calls for physical violence, negative perception of the 'other', diminishing, dehumanising, accusations, and dissatisfaction.

#### *7.4.2 How are the attitudes, behaviours and contradictions reflect direct, structural, and cultural violence within the ongoing conflict based on the discourse?*

This section aims to answer the second sub-question concerning attitude, behaviour, and contradiction in relation to direct, cultural, and structural violence perceived in the discourse. Essentially, when connecting triangle (T1) with (T2), the findings within the discourse become coherent and explicit. Firstly, concerning direct violence in relation to attitude, behaviour, and contradiction, hostile and negative attitudes were reflected in most of the discourse from both actors and calls for violent actions and expressions. Empirically this was presented through excerpts, e.g., "these narco-terrorists" and "we must go out to the streets to defend the right to

peace” (see section 7.1.1 and 7.1.2). In the context of direct violence, the contradiction regards who’s the perpetrator and the contributing force for the violence in Colombia. Duque and ELN accuse each other of contributing to violence. Yet, both actors have their own “purpose” justifying violent actions towards each other. In contrast, cultural violence in relation to the triangle of attitudes, behaviours, and contradictions reflected attitudes and behaviours of dehumanisation and diminishing against the ‘other’. The contradiction in relation to cultural violence points towards Duque’s and ELN’s perception of each other. Duque’s government stated that commanders of ELN were more of “subjects” than human beings. In the same line, ELN sees politicians in the government of Colombia as “elites”. This diversity in perception justifies dehumanisation. The third approach of violence was the most difficult to observe and identify, namely, structural violence (social injustice). Attitudes and behaviours concerning structural violence reflect unawareness and ignorance. The actor’s accusing each other of being the main force behind structural violence and the social injustice flourishing in Colombia. This interrelates with the concept of contradiction, where the incompatibility in the contradiction between these actors reflects the accusation of the ‘other’. Duque argues that ELN through drug trafficking contributes to the most dangerous threat against human rights and social injustice. In contrast, ELN blaming the “elite” and the capitalist system for the social injustice and the social violence in Colombia.

Although this study's overarching aim was not to test a theory, it is evident when analysing the conflict and the discourse that the two triangles (T1) and (T2) in Galtung’s theory interrelate with each other. To be more specific, attitude, behaviour, and contradiction in interrelation to direct, cultural, and structural violence. Empirical this is presented in the search for contradiction in the discourse. The contradiction only could be found in relation to one of the three violence approaches and not alone.

#### *7.4.3 What are the contributing factors of the ongoing conflict between the government of Colombia and ELN observed from their discourse?*

This section aims to answer the main research question within this thesis. After several weeks of studying Spanish speeches, political proposal, interviews and insurrecciones, I aspire to share my answer to this specific main question, stating: *What are the contributing factors of the ongoing conflict between the government of Colombia and ELN observed from their discourse?*

Empirically, the analysis manifests a variety of contributing factors for conflict. The answer to the main research question and the contributing factor for the ongoing conflict is interpreted as the following issues: hostile and negative attitude; aggressive and violent behaviour; call for violent actions; verbal violence; dehumanisation of the 'other'; diminishing of the 'other'; capitalist structures; police violence; ideological bias; social leaders being killed; and drug trafficking. Each and every issue is found within both actor's discourse. This discovery points towards that the government of Colombia and ELN both use their discourse channels to influence Colombian citizens and the environment outside Colombia. Throughout the discourse, these actors painting up the picture of each other as the perpetrator for, inter alia, social injustice, the killing of social leaders, killing policies and protesters, and being the main force contributing to the internal armed conflict. The government and ELN attempt to influence their ideology, norms, and values through the discourse to receive the Colombians sympathy and support, which drives the conflict even further. In short, the discourse single-handed is one contributing factor for the ongoing conflict, influencing all the issues above, e.g., hostile attitudes and diminishing each other. The general discourse and the identified contributing factors for conflict contributing to the "escalating spiral" in theoretical terms. The "escalating spiral" take form and start in any corner of the conflict triangle (T1), in attitudes, behaviours, or contradiction. This spiral influence the conflict to proceed from the sociological conflict approach from Galtung's theory.

## 8. Conclusions

This final chapter will include the following parts. Firstly, the overall argument of the thesis, secondly a focus on the retrospective consideration of the research process where the methodological and theoretical strengths and weaknesses of the approaches in this thesis are briefly discussed. Thirdly, through this research reaffirming this research contribution to the knowledge considering wider possible implications that follow from the case study. Fourthly, avenues for future research on this topic.

This study aimed to examine the discourse surrounding the contemporary conflict in Colombia from the two main actors in the conflict – the government of Colombia and the guerrilla ELN. By implementing the textual discourse analysis method, the goal was to develop a better, in-depth understanding of contributing factors for this conflict are. The main research question reflects this aim; *What are the contributing factors of the ongoing conflict between the government of Colombia and ELN observed from their discourse?*

As written, language and expressions are powerful tools that influence the way people think and act, especially in an environment of conflicts (Hodges, 2013). This research originated from the conceptual departure point of the social scientific puzzle of how discourse reflects contributing factors for conflict. Empirically, the analysed discourse presents several contributing factors for conflict and most of the discourse perceive negative and hostile attitudes and behaviours. Yet the most interesting contributing factor for conflict drawn upon the broader perspective of that the discourse applied by the government of Colombia respectively ELN interrelate and contributes to the conflict independently. The use of discourse creates a “competition” between the actors regarding who influences and receive support from the Colombian citizens. As a result of meticulous analysis and functional theoretical and methodical approaches applied, this research empirically explains how discourse from respective actor presents contributing factors for conflict. This investigation empirically confirms several claims and ideas from previous scholarships. Such as Prior (2015), Vargas (2017), and Cano-Holguín and Osorio (2020) finding concerning the conflict escalation when the actors involved in the conflict lost mutual respect, this was explained by an escalation spiral and could relate to Galtung’s explanation that conflicts escalate in either the corner of attitude, behaviour, or contradiction. The motivation for this statement is that lost mutual respect interrelates with the actor's attitude and behaviour towards the ‘other’. This investigation further

confirms Vargas-Velásquez (2003) and Felbab-Brown (2005) statement that drug trafficking is one contributing factor for conflict in Colombia. Within Duque's discourse several excerpt regarding drug trafficking in relation to ELN could be observed, e.g., "Drug trafficking is an enemy of peace. Drug trafficking is an enemy of coexistence"<sup>52</sup> (Duque #20). After all, each one of the prominent scholars within the fields of conflicts and contributing factors for conflicts in Colombia, and the analytical framework has allowed this investigation to gain a more structured, in-depth understanding of contributing factors for the contemporary conflict in Colombia. Throughout this investigation, more questions regarding the conflict have been raised. E.g., why is Duque not working actively for peace with ELN? What needs to be done for ELN to stop their violence? Will Colombia ever be a peaceful country?

Theoretically, employing the constructivism ontology and Galtung's theory was useful when writing this thesis and investigate factors for the conflict. The sociological foundation of constructivism, respectively Galtung's concepts, settled a helpful base for "conflict analysis". Concerning the analysis, this theoretical orientation possesses the ability to study the context around the discourse to understand better the hostility, e.g., to explore the context of a speech, expression, or wording regarding the ongoing conflict. Important to mention, there are weaknesses within Galtung's theory which is essential to take into consideration for further investigations. Firstly, it is challenging to separate cultural and structural violence because these two concepts are very abstract. Secondly, the concept of "contradiction" could not be found without any concept of violence. Shifting the focus to the methodology, choosing a single case study design and discourse analysis method resulted as an appropriate choice to apply to this investigation. The choice of methods allowed me to carefully investigate the discourse and context around the discourse and search and find relation and contrasts between the different discourses related to the contemporary conflict. Essentially, the weakness of this investigation methodology is the application of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is often more difficult to replicate because of the researcher's bias when performing an interpretive study.

On a broader and more general note, my conviction is that the investigation conducted in this project has engendered findings that set a foundation for further investigations of this topic. This study may fertilise the interest in analysing the Colombian government and President Duque, despite the theoretical and methodological weaknesses. Not only within the different

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<sup>52</sup> El narcotráfico es enemigo de la paz. El narcotráfico es enemigo de la convivencia.

levels of conflict but also from a peace and human rights perspective. For future studies, with the background in the ongoing violent events today and with the hostile findings, continuing studying Colombia in relation to discourse, protest, and human rights is essential. I do recognise, however, that the model utilised here might need some fine-tuning to suit further empirical investigation of the violence in Colombia properly. In addition, the avenue for future research on this theme employs a lot of conceptually, analytical, and methodologically possibilities. What I would find most interesting within future research on this theme is field studies within Colombia regarding the incompatibility between the government of Colombia and ELN, providing first-hand interviews. Supplemental alternatives for further investigation concerning Colombia and conflict follows: analysing discourse concerning the social protests against the government; the Colombian's citizen's approach to ELN; how different political magazines in Colombia frame the conflict between Duque and ELN; investigate the National armed force's structures and laws; or analysing the United States role in the ongoing conflict. The option for further research possesses several possibilities.



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## 10. Appendix

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### 10.1 The president of Colombia Speeches

#### 10.1.1 Justicia

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## 10.4 Image

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