Artículos

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF SYMBOLIC SPACE AT COLOMBIAN - FARC PEACE PROCESS

LA RECONSTRUCCIÓN DEL ESPACIO SIMBÓLICO EN EL PROCESO DE PAZ COLOMBIANO-FARC

RECONSTRUÇÃO DO ESPAÇO SÍMBOLICO NO PROCESSO DE PAZ COLOMBIANO-FARC

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Abstract: Although long-armed conflicts between the Colombian government and the FARC organization have witnessed the occasional peace talks, it could evolve in peace after 2012. The peace process, which was announced to the public in 2016 with an official agreement, was a process consisting of many strategic steps, thus making it mandatory to regulate many areas. One of these areas is the symbolic area. In this study, which discusses the argument that the symbolic space must be regulated and renewed in peace processes, it is discussed how the peace of Colombia is read through symbolism and how the conflictual sides transform and reframe the symbolic space. As a result, it has been observed that the efforts of the parties (in this peace process) in transforming the symbolic area have a very important place for the lasting peace, so the symbols are not only superficial units put into the secondary plan, but on the contrary, they have been used actively and effectively from the beginning of the process.

Keywords: Symbolic Space, Peace, Peace Process, Colombia, FARC.

Resumen: Aunque los conflictos armados de larga data entre el gobierno colombiano y la organización de las FARC han sido testigo de conversaciones de paz ocasionales, se abrió una ventana de posibilidad para la paz después de 2012. El proceso de paz, que se anunció al público en 2016 con un acuerdo oficial, es un proceso amplio en el que se han venido abordando múltiples aspectos del conflicto. Uno de estos es la cuestión simbólica. En este estudio, que desarrolla el argumento de que el espacio simbólico debe ser regulado y renovado en los procesos de paz, se discute cómo se lee la paz de Colombia a través del simbolismo y cómo las partes del conflicto transforman y replantean el espacio simbólico. Como resultado, se ha observado que los esfuerzos de las partes en la transformación de la cuestión simbólica son importantes para la paz duradera, y no solo unidades superficiales puestas en el plano secundario; pues, se ha utilizado de forma activa y eficaz desde el inicio del proceso.

Palabras clave: Espacio simbólico, Paz, Proceso de paz, Colombia, FARC.

Resumo: Embora os conflitos armados de longa data entre o governo colombiano e a organização das FARC tenham testemunhado conversações de paz ocasionais, abriu-se uma janela de oportunidade para a paz após 2012. O processo de paz, que foi anunciado ao público em 2016 com um acordo oficial, é um processo abrangente que vem tratando de múltiplos aspectos do conflito. Um destes é a questão simbólica. Este estudo, que desenvolve o argumento de que o espaço simbólico deve ser regulado e renovado nos processos de paz, discute como a paz na Colômbia é lida através do simbolismo e como as partes em conflito se transformam e repensam o espaço simbólico. Como resultado, observou-se que os esforços das partes na transformação da questão simbólica são importantes para uma paz duradoura, e não apenas unidades superficiais colocadas em um nível secundário; assim, ela tem sido utilizada ativa e efetivamente desde o início do processo.

Palavras-chave: Espaço Simbólico, Paz, Processo de paz, Colômbia, FARC.

1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary peace studies and conflict resolution began to be recognized as a discipline after the Second World War. In the early years, studies in this discipline approached the peace as an opponent of the war, and discussions were based on the topic of anti-war. However, especially after the 1960s, the focus of the concept of peace changed to be defined by the existence or absence of violence, and even discussions began to be centered directly on the existence of peace itself after the 2000s. This new ground not only freed the debate of peace from being overshadowed by the war but also provided an opportunity to organize alternative - and potentially peaceful - transformations during the determination of new politics. One of these areas is the symbolic area where cultural violence can appear the most concrete and legitimize structural violence. As a matter of fact, when looking at the solution of the international conflicts that increased in the 1990s, as in many examples from Northern Ireland to Israel Palestine, Bosnia and Herzegovina to South Africa (an agreement was made or not), the symbolic area should be arranged as much as the military and political area. Colombia, which had a peace agreement in 2016, is also a remarkable example to be examined in the context of the reorganization and construction of the symbolic area.

Armed clashes that started in about 1948 in Colombia had been one of the longest armed clashes in Latin America. The government, having been trying to reconcile with various organizations and paramilitaries in the country from 1980 to 2012, started a peace process three times with Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)[1] (Leech, 2011: VIII) which has the region's largest and most influential guerrilla organization. However, all three processes which were between 1984-1985 (Belisario Betancur Ceasefire), 1991-1992 (Caracas and Tlaxcala Peace Negotiation with the administration of César Gaviria) and 1998-2002 (Caguan Peace Negotiations with the management of Andres Pastrana) (Democratic Progress Institute [DIP], 2013: 31-34). failed. Due to the negative experiences in the past,

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the president of the period Juan Manuel Santos, who announced that a new peace process began between the organization and the government in August 2012, emphasized that the mistakes in the past peace negotiations would not be repeated (Beittel, 2015:17). After this long-armed conflict, which had serious financial and emotional costs, and three failed negotiations full of uncertainties, the official and final peace agreement was signed between the Colombian government and the FARC for the first time in 2016. In the 52-year of long conflict period, civilianization, disarmament, reintegration of members of paramilitary groups, and preparation of legal texts have been, of course, considered as important and the primary issues in peacebuilding. However, researching the making of peace and its permanence in Colombia is more than discussing the structuring of technically and strategically valuable areas. Because reaching peace requires a long reconciliation process that touches everyday life for a region like Colombia that has been subjected to long and violent conflict. In this ongoing process, of course, the complex and intersectional nature of the conflict hinders the continuity of peace, so there is a need for parallel progress in different areas. There have been important steps to be taken not only in the social, political, and military sphere but also in the cultural and symbolic area to them. In the symbolic area; on the one hand, the symbolic space that reminds or represents the conflict should be rearranged, and on the other hand, new ties that enable sustainable peace and coexistence should be created. The arrangements in the symbolic field of the Colombian peace process will be discussed in this study, which argues that the construction and arrangement of the symbolic space in peace processes is very important for the continuity of peace. Therefore, a framework will first be drawn on the origin and character of the Colombian conflict, and then the Colombia-FARC peace process will be elaborated in the context of symbolism.

2. METHODOLOGY

When generating information about how the symbolic space should be designed in peace processes, it is very important to look at the symbolic universes of the conflicting parties and to understand where the transformation started. For this purpose, secondary sources written about the Colombian government and the FARC, the official website of the government and written documents such as interviews, political statements, reports and columns were examined and the symbolic universe in question was clarified. After determining the symbolic universe belonging to the Colombian government and the FARC, it was seen that the most remarkable symbol in the peace process was Baligrafo. Using discourse analysis -which is one of the qualitative research methods- related to the symbolic field, especially Baligrafo, it has been tried to contribute to the literature on the political use of symbols in peace processes. For this purpose, the written documents related to the process (videos, pictures, articles, interviews, reports, political statements, newspaper articles, news, etc.) were analyzed and the meaning of the symbols produced or transformed was questioned in depth. Discourse analysis is methodologically based not only on texts but also on symbols, language, traditions, norms, etc. It is a comprehensive method that makes it possible to focus and thus develop or contribute to theory (Çelik and Ekşi, 2008: 100). The discourse that builds meaning also emphasizes the importance of the use of symbols created by the accumulation of meaning. Also, this method makes interpretation possible. By the way, all videos, pictures and news about the campaign of the Ministry of Education and Mccan Colombia Company's website have been analyzed in order to understand who, why and how Baligrafo was created. Again, the value and politicization of the symbol attributed to this symbol by the Colombian government has been followed from the relevant news and document analyzes. By discussing who gave meaning to this symbol, how the given meaning became widespread and gained a political character, the possible contributions of the arrangement of the symbolic area to the Colombian peace process were determined.

One of the methods of the study is archaeological excavation. Historically, information was given about the process by going back to the Colombian conflict. Thus, a comparison was made about why it is important to regulate peace and symbolic space in peace processes.

3. THE POLITICAL USE OF SYMBOLS IN PEACEBUILDING

For many years, the symbols were pushed into the background and treated as superficial cultural units in both social sciences and peace studies and conflict solution researches; it is perceived as either a meaningful and hermeneutical social representation unit that provides indirect expression of reality, or a cover that hides the truth. In fact, these two conception ways are not mutually exclusive; they even show how effective symbols can be in social life. The symbols, which have a very meaningful and ambiguous construction, can convert meaning into a mysterious state and can turn into a storage device used to cover some other realities. In politics, symbols and symbolic elements are generally used in forming a mysterious discourse. Governments frequently consult on this function to preserve, reinforce or aggrandize of their power (Ateş Durç, 2020: 378). However, the use of symbols as just a mysterious cover and sometimes an imitation of reality corresponds to a problematic reading. Because symbols are very important tangible and mental fictions that both make solidarity and association possible and work up the conflict. They are also effective units of sense. So they are not the imitation of reality but the basic cultural units that establish (Cassirer, 2011: 62) or determine it indirectly.

Symbols that shape the political space, embody, represent, and code the political can be very effective in holding groups together, and can become a cause of tension by increasing the nationalist feelings of the conflict parties. Therefore, symbolism is an important area that should be organized and kept under control during periods of conflict. David Kertzer (1988) emphasizes that symbols and rituals can be easily used for constructive and destructive political purposes. Sometimes, when a symbol capable of harming negative emotions is introduced into the political arena, large groups may experience violent conflicts that last for days, or the same groups may become embraced by the introduction of a symbol of hope that raises positive emotions. According to Lisa Schirch, who has been one of the witnesses of such experiences and who has worked at the UN conciliation committee for many years and on different countries, the symbol and symbolic actions should be well organized as they have the potential to change people's perspective and transform relationships. In this way, the parties can become the parties that try to listen and understand each other (Schirch, 2005: 1). In other words, to restrain and harmonize the imagination, feelings, and interests of people, those who are interested in peacebuilding need to take the arrangement of the symbolic space seriously. Especially in deeply divided countries, if the strong relationship between cultural elements and conflict and peace is not read correctly, a permanent conflict solution becomes almost impossible. Permanent peace needs not only negative peace, which can be defined as the disappearance of hot conflict, but also positive peace, which means the socialization and continuity of peace (Galtung, 1969: 183-184). Peace loving professionals can facilitate the peaceful transformation of violent conflicts when they manage the symbolic space that activates people's emotions, desires, and knowledge from a peace perspective. During this change and transformation, people's worldviews, identities, and relationships with each other transform and harmonize (Schirch, 2005: 3-4).

In addition, the symbols act as auxiliary units in making peace more easily in public support. However, those who want to continue the conflict also want to apply to the power of these units for the same purpose. Therefore, symbols tend to be manipulated in politics, and conflict and peace processes. What makes the symbols manipulable is their polyphonic, polysemantic and ambiguous structures. According to David Kertzer (1988: 1) this last feature has an important place in establishing political solidarity when there is no consensus. Ambiguity and having multiple meanings makes the symbol an effective element in defining and coding power relations, as well as easily realizing solidarity and unification within the group. Victor

73

Safiye Ates Burç. THE RECONSTRUCTION OF SYMBOLIC SPACE AT COLOMBIAN - FARC PEACE PROCESS

Turner (1969: 96-97) was also influenced by Emile Durkheim's idea that social solidarity is a function of symbolic logic systems that connect people, and he considered symbols as the survival mechanisms of social and political unity. This intellectual practice also acknowledges the thesis that symbols are valuable units for overcoming conflicts and thus realizing social solidarity (i.e. communitas). Social and political space is established, re-established, and legitimized through these units.

One of the things that make symbols effective in the processes of conflict and peace is their impressive role in their communication activity. Especially political symbols are the main objects of both the visible and invisible dialogue of the government with group members. These are also cultural meaning units that enable the establishment of both communication and allegiance between the population and the state or members and group managers. Political power produces various symbols and applies them to the cultural and political arena in order not to succumb to distances and to eliminate the importence given by the distance, so that every individual in the community actually "looks and obeys governing" whenever he/she looks at that symbol (Sennett, 2014: 77). In other words, the prepared position of the government is provided everywhere. People who hold power thus attain both their retrospective recollectedness and prospective eternity goals (Assmann, 2001: 73). Since those who want to take power, that is the powerless, also make every effort to reach symbolic resources, and they use the resources available to them against the symbolic universe of power, to think that only those who hold power want to have symbolic capital would be problematic both epistemologically and practically. In short, the symbols both enable individuals to talk to each other on the horizontal plane and mediate individuals to communicate with the state and similar organizations on the vertical plane.

Finally, the issue of ownership of symbolic resources is also very important because symbolic capital determines the political and cultural boundaries of societies. It is the symbolic resources they have, which make up the main differences between political beings. Symbolic capital is particularly valuable for political legitimacy. Indeed, according to Pierre Bourdieu, symbolic capital is at least as important as economic capital for ethnic, political and cultural groups, and one of the main goals of state rulers or political elite is to be able to put this capital under monopoly (Bourdieu, 2014: 198). Therefore, political elites and political structures make great efforts. This effort itself provides the basis for the emergence of the so-called symbolic conflict. Attacking the symbols of the other side, appropriating them, producing new symbols, or throwing existing symbols out of the political field are the most visible actualities in which the conflict, called symbolic conflict , is visible (Harrison, 1995: 255). It can be said that the symbolic area is suitable for use as a conflict area in many conflicts, especially in peace processes where an agreement on the silence of arms is reached. Therefore, in peace processes, the arrangement of the symbolic space with a peaceful perspective -that is, the symbols in which collective expressions and meanings are accumulated, not partisan, are visible in the area and rendered invisible to those who represent the conflict- become more important.

4. THE STRUCTURE OF THE COLOMBIAN CONFLICT

The origin of the Colombia conflict dates back to the first half of the 20th century. The tension between the Liberal Party founded in 1848 and the Conservative Party founded in 1849 peaked before the presidential elections in 1950. The Liberal Party, which advocated land reform, was supported by agricultural workers, and the Conservative Party was supported by the Catholic Church and the large landowners (and even by agricultural workers under the control of the land oligarchy). This tension evolved into a violent clash when the Liberal Party candidate Jorge Eliecer Gaitan, seemed to have a high probability of winning the election and had promised to achieve social justice and land reform, was killed in 1948 in the capital city of Bogota (Leech, 2011:8-9). He has both a symbolic meaning as a leader and the ideas he advocates are the dreams of those who support him. Upon his death, the supporters rebelled and the period of La Violencia, which resulted in the death of many people both in the city centers and in the countryside started (Afat, 2016: 23-24). This period, which lasted until 1958, was very violent and bloody. Again, the fault line created

by this period formed the breaking point of larger and long-lasting conflicts. Finally, a group including Marxist youth[2], who were radicalized at that time and were mostly agricultural workers, established guerrilla organizations in Bogota and Cali in 1964 (Beittel, 2015: 2; Brittain, 2010: 5-7). This organization, whose scope of influence expanded in a short time, took the power completely in some regions. It is known today as FARC and has a symbolic universe separate from the state during the conflict period[3].

In the Colombian conflict, the FARC does not constitute the main axis of the Colombian conflict -because there were other guerrilla organizations that had violent disputes with the government[4]- but it constitutes his biggest leg. Until the 1980s, the conflict occurred only between the state and the organization, but after the 1980s, paramilitary groups allegedly leased by large landowners were included[5]. Vanessa Suelt Cock claims that paramilitary groups called irregular armed groups were created by the state in the second half of the 1960s to assist the national police and the army and fight guerrilla groups (Cock, 2006: 17). However, the state tried, with a legal regulation issued in 2005, to demobilize these armed violence-producing structures, which were initially claimed to be self-created, and later organized by local forces. This demobilization process led to the interference of paramilitaries and civilians (while many paramilitaries were not demobilized, many civilians are known to be included in the system to take advantage of this program) and soon paved the way for the emergence of neo-paramilitaries (Nussio, 2011: 88-90). Apart from the presence of paramilitaries, another factor that causes the conflict in Colombia to be more complex and intersectional is the problems that were caused by the high level of illegal drug production in this geography which is the homeland of the coca plant and placing it on the market (Cook, 2011: 19-23). In essence, complexity and intersectionality are in high level since the conflict has multiple structures. The fact that many different actors clashed at the same time and place, drug trafficking, the struggle for power over the land, and the state's lack in some political area -which is closely related to centralism- made the conflict more complex and multi-structured (Cock, 2006: 19). According to some theorists, the state's invisibility in an important piece of the state territory is one of the primary reasons for this conflict (Naucke, 2017: 458). Because this way, FARC and other guerrilla organizations were able to accommodate in certain regions, and even after their influence increased, they became a basic security factor including being responsible for the public order of those regions. Fernan E. Gonzalez, a prominent academic working on Colombia, also addresses the institutional weakness of the state as the basis for the conflict. However, Gonzalez (2004: 11) states that colonialism is the second important factor in this sense. Rural land ownership, which started with colonialism, concentrated in the hands of certain groups and as a result of the displacement of the poor peasants, the state's presence in certain regions has been imbalanced. This imbalance caused an increase in illegitimate activities. In regions where the state weakened, long-lasting conflicts occurred not only between the state and illegal organizations but also between local wealthy landowners and these organizations (especially in controlling coca plantations and the control of illegal mining enterprises).

In addition to the state's absence in some regions, as previously emphasized the drug issue is an important trigger of the conflict. It is a known fact that not only drug cartels but also many armed organizations in Colombia are related to drug trafficking. For example, FARC did not want to be involved in the drug issue in the first years of its establishment, but later (with the decision taken at the seventh congress in 1982) (Cook, 2011: 22) it actively participated in both its production and distribution. In an interview with Simon Trinidad, one of the commanders of the organization in 1999, Trinidad states that they are not drug traffickers, the drug trafficking group is a small and wealthy minority and they know who they are. He further stated that the state was aware that the people who were exploited and ignored by the state itself were producing drugs illegally (Molano, 2000: 24). However, they could not take this opportunity from these people, who were having a hard time. In another words "FARC only admit that they have a relationship with coca peasants, but they deny having direct links to trafficking organizations" (Micolta, 2009: 83). But, of course, ideological differences between illegal organizations associated with drugs are a matter of concern. To

75

Safiye Ates Burç. THE RECONSTRUCTION OF SYMBOLIC SPACE AT COLOMBIAN - FARC PEACE PROCESS

sum up, drugs, possession/nonpossession of the land, the presence/absence of state power, and ideological separation are the main pillars of the conflict in Colombia.

As stated in The Colombian Peace Talks: Practical Lessons for Negotiators Worldwide report by Havana-based Institute for Integrated Transitions (IFIT) in September 2018, this multi-dimensional and complex conflict has 8.6 million indirect or direct victims. These include around 47,000 forced disappearances, 267,000 killings, internally displaced people from more than 7 million within the country, and more than 32,000 people abducted by different armed groups. "1/3 of the victims are the Afro-Colombians, the largest minority in Colombia, and indigenous people who are the 2% of the population and have been historically discriminated and exploited" (Daşlı et all, 2018: 17-18). In the report prepared by Human Rights Watch on the conflict in Colombia in 2012; both the state, the FARC and ELN, and the paramilitaries who were creating a large number of human rights violations have been explained in detail (Human Rights Watch, 2019). However, the conflict had seriously damaged not only humans but also nature and other living beings. Since a significant proportion of Colombian forests, which are thought to have 10% of the biodiversity in the world forests, are located in the regions where conflicts are intense, they were also damaged much from the conflict. Transformation of forests consisting of deep valleys and steep slopes into agriculture areas and pastures, legal and illegal mining, destruction of forests are just a few of them (Baptist et al, 2017; Lederach, 2017).

Conflict Evolves into Peace

Despite the general view that the conflicts will not end with security obsessive and military methods, these methods had been tried mostly in Colombia until 2010. Even during short- term peace processes, the ceasefire was applied unilaterally or certain regions were tried to be freed from military forces. It is reported in many studies that during the violent clashes and places -even in times of ceasefire- civilians, as well as military units, were severely damaged. Therefore, it is not only the state and organizations that are evolving the conflict into peace in Colombia but also civil society, who is tired of the costs of the conflict. In fact, according to Philipp Naucke (2017: 454-456) who worked at an association in San Jose de Apartado, in peacebuilding, they were non-governmental organizations and local leaders who were more willing and exerting efforts than the state. However, of course, the steps taken by the conflict parties (state and organizations) legally and practically in certain periods have a very important place in the path of peace. For example, the legal steps taken by the Colombian government for the demobilization of paramilitaries correspond to a crucial stage in the peaceful evolution of the Colombian conflict. The most important of these steps is the Peace and Justice Law mentioned above (enacted in 2005) and the regulation that concerns over 37,000 members from 36 paramilitary factions. With this, almost all paramilitaries had been demobilized. As a result, by 2010, the visible subjects of the conflict in Colombia were the government, FARC, and ELN (Institute for Integrated Transitions [IFIT], 2018: 5).

2010 was an important and symbolic year for Colombia-FARC peace. Because after many years with Alvaro Uribe, who had ruled the country and took revenge from FARC[6], a new president would be elected. Uribe was one of the executives who chaired Colombia between 2002 and 2010 and implemented all kinds of security policies to destroy the FARC and ELN. What made him become president was his harsh attitude, which he promised to show against organizations. Besides, the third peace meeting between FARC and the government, which started in 1998, failed in 2002, and the public's hope for peace was a very important factor in the election of Uribe. Nelson Camilo Sanchez, a research coordinator for the Center for Justice and Community Studies in Colombia, who experienced this period, shows his support for this situation with the following statement:

"At the end of the last century, an effort for peace began. The Prime Minister of the time said that after winning the elections, he would start negotiations with the guerrilla and bring peace to the country. However, this attempt also ended badly. Because the state and the guerrilla did not want peace. The negotiations, therefore, went very badly. The only aim was to gain military power. When they were talking about the negotiations, both sides were trying to replenish their weapons and increase their power in the background. The people of Colombia did not want to talk about peace, anymore. The public had enough of this subject. They thought, "let's eliminate the guerrilla problem no matter what" (Askın, 2016: parag. 4).

This environment, in which Alvaro Uribe was elected president, led to the enforcement of policies that paved the way for a serious weakening for FARC. As a result of the introduction of security methods, senior executives and important members of the FARC were killed in the Uribe period (Raul Reyes, the second man of the FARC, was killed in a military operation on the organization's camp in the territory of Ecuador on March 1, 2008. On 28 March 2008, the leader of the organization Manuel Maruanda suffered a heart attack, and many organizers were killed in the attacks.), agents were hiddenly placed inside the organization, and confidential information (for example, notes on alleged interviews with Venezuelan and Ecuador executives) became available (Afat, 2016: 838-840; Beittel, 2015: 5-6). However, Juan Manuel Santos, who was supported by the Conservative Party, became the president in the election held on June 20, 2010 instead of Uribe, who could not be a candidate for the third time, by law. Santos served as defense minister in the second government period (2006-2009) of Alvaro Uribe, who led to the biggest losses of FARC. He continued to fight with military methods in the first years of his presidency and killed two senior commanders of the organization in 2011. In the same year, Timoleon Jimenéz (known as Timochenko), the new leader of the organization, developed a political dialogue with Santos and stated that the organization would no longer detain the state's security forces, and in April 2012, they released 10 military personnel who were in the hands of the organization (Beittel, 2015: 6-7). Thus, the first step was taken to turn a process that was carried on with bullets for many years into peace[7]. Official peace meetings started in Oslo (Norway) in October 2012, and the second leg of the talks took place in Havana (Cuba) (Democratic Progress Institute, 2013: 18). In this process of approximately 30 meetings, Norway and Cuba were the guarantor countries, while Venezuela (on the FARC side) and Chile (on the Colombian government side) were also determined as facilitators[8]. In this process, which has evolved into a long and difficult peace from a long and destructive period of conflict, although many steps were taken and a peace agreement was signed in 2016, the parties still do not fully trust each other. Even recently, there were allegations that the old members of the organization, which were integrated into social life, were killed (BBC, 2019). However, while the same conflict evolves to the same peace, some interventions on the symbolic area remain at a very important place in this difficult reconciliation process. Transforming the symbolic space from a peace perspective is already a very valuable step in permanent peacebuilding.

5. THE ORGANIZATION OF SYMBOLIC SPACE IN COLOMBIAN-FARC PEACE: "Conflict is dramatic, peacebuilding needs to be dramatic too"9

The Colombian peace talks, which started in the first months of 2012 but were announced for the first time in August and ended with the signing of the peace agreement in Havana, Cuba in November 2016, were built on six main axes. These are respectively; land reform, participation in politics, disarmament, a solution to the illicit drug problem, victims' rights, and implementation of the peace agreement ("Final agreement to end", 2016). Each of these issues had been covered in detail for four years, a situation analysis had been done about them, and solutions had been proposed. It was initially agreed on land reform and the others resulted in one by one compromises.

With inclusive land reform, they paid attention to establishing a more strong and fair link between the city and the countryside and developed measures to improve the living conditions of rural Colombians with various supports. Particular attention was, also, paid to the areas most affected by violent armed conflict.

They made efforts to ensure that political participation was fair, to break the link between the bullet and the vote, to strengthen pluralism, and to establish a political system where opposition parties could easily find a place. It was decided to fight against illegal drug barons as a state, alternative products that the public could cultivate were identified and drug harvest, production, sale, smuggling, etc. are defined as organized crime. After the peace agreement was signed, the disarmament phase of the members of the organization was also completed, and the FARC guerrillas left their weapons under the surveillance of the UN in twenty transition zones and eight camps (Hamsici, 2016; International Crisis Group, 2012; IFIT, 2018). In fact, these fundamental issues, which were the primary and comprehensive political issues of peace processes, are more prone to solution as long as there are mutuality and trust between groups despite their challenging character (Nagle, 2014: 469). If there is no consensus, these comprehensive issues; may cause physical or direct violence to reignite or continue where it left off, or lead to new solutions with different perspectives. However, secondary issues such as symbols and rituals are randomly and roughly covered in peace treaties. Conflict is potentially always present, as ignoring or bypassing them will keep the violence hidden in the cultural sphere alive.

Efforts of the conflict parties to make peace bring with a series of agreements and pacts that try to eliminate structural violence. One of the issues with the highest symbolic value and that will serve to eliminate the emotional barriers between groups is about the victims (families of the deceased and their loved ones). The other one is - if one of the parties is the state - the symbols used by both parties in the conflict period are harmonized with each other or pushed out of the political arena if they cannot be harmonized. When dealing with victims and Colombian peace are correlated, it is encountered with a highly transformative environment. Even this shows that cultural and symbolic issues are very political and they facilitate the transformation of peace processes, reducing negative feelings and, ultimately, the possibility of sustainable peace. The first transformative role of the victim issue about Colombian peace emerges in the Victim's Law (IFIT, 2018), which was accepted by the Colombian government in 2011.

One of the elements that concentrate on making sense of peace processes; again, the language, expression, and details (Mac Ginty, 2001: 4). In peace processes, interviews, speeches, statements on newspapers and television, rally speeches, and writings of the political actors and the leaders of the parties who had disagreements, are carefully read and examined. Since parties are always finding a superiority or faults in others, the statements of leaders at sensitive times, such as peace processes, can be important in increasing symbolic conflict or softening the atmosphere of the hardening environment. Indeed, since most leaders are aware of the symbolic power of language, they can manipulate their knowledge and emotion in their communication with the mass, as they wish. In the case of Colombia, it can be said that the language preferred by both the Santos with the government's negotiation team and the FARC leader Tymoshenko with the organization's negotiation team helped build the consensus. For example, Santos repeats that in most of the interviews, violence should disappear, that all parties should live together, they will do their best for peace and they are very sensitive about the victims, and he uses the expression Colombians in their speeches without giving the name of the party, ethnicity or group. Even in 15 Colombian military incidents killed by the raid of FARC guerrillas in 2013, Santos' statements show that they did not change to encourage revenge. In his speech after this attack, he specifically stated that there would be no ceasefire, but peace talks would continue (Euronews, 2014; BBC Turkçe, 2013). In the first agreement signed between the government and the FARC in Havana, chief negotiator representing the Colombian government, Humberto de la Calle said: "The war is over and a new era has begun. This agreement opened the door to a more inclusive society. Colombia won, death lost" (BBC Turkçe, 2016). Again, FARC leader Tymoshenko said at the ceremony that the peace agreement was signed, "I would like to apologize for all the pain we may have caused during this war" (BBC Turkçe, 2016). Such symbolic disabilities are important symbolic steps as they are effective in establishing sympathy between the parties.

The first symbolic intervention made by FARC in the new period was on its name. The name, which was previously the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces, was replaced by the Alternative Revolutionary Force for the People. However, the Spanish acronym for this name found by the organization that wanted to have a new symbolic universe as a new political party was again FARC: Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Comun. In addition, the flag of the party changed, the red rose figure was preferred on a white background, and this flag had been identified as the symbol of the new party (BBC Turkçe, 2017).

Finally, an event that should not be overlooked in the effort to read the Colombian peace through symbolism is the peace agreement signing ceremony. The first signing ceremony, in which everyone who participated was dressed in white, representing peace, was held in the historic city of Cartagena on the Caribbean coast. At the ceremony attended by two thousand five hundred guests, including victims of war, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki- Moon, Cuban President Raul Castro, and other guarantor and facilitator countries and representatives of major states were present. The peace treaty was signed with a specially produced bullet-pen. After the signature, Santos handed the white pigeon badge he removed from his chest to Timochenco, and Timochenco took it and put it on his heart. "Long Live Peace" slogans were accompanied by the music of Beethoven's 9th Symphony from the Praise of Joy (Cumhuriyet, 2016). In other words, from the guests to the representatives of the parties, from the music played to the badge, from the slogan to the signed text, there was a signing ceremony literally decorated with rituals and symbols. This ceremony can also be read as an effective performance promoting peace to both the Colombian people and the international community. Since the meaning of a symbol or ritual has managed to be remembered despite the years, its representation is very valuable. In this sense, certainly, the Colombian signature ceremony performed successfully.

The Most Effective Peace Symbolism Example in Colombian Peace: "El Balígrafo de la paz" (Pen of Peace)

As the Colombian conflict has complex and multiple structures, as previously emphasized, peace has to proceed with different and supportive moves. In this sense, the regulation of the symbolic and cultural sphere was as important as the regulation of the military and political sphere. Indeed, the symbolic sphere of Colombia -at least at the beginning of the peace process- shows the peaceful transformation of the above-mentioned steps taken by both actors. However, introduced to the world as a symbol of Colombian peace, Balígrafo is one of the most influential politico-symbolic steps. The Colombian government and especially President Santos have a big role in creating this symbol, it's political meaning and changing the perception of both society and the world about this conflict zone. Therefore, the symbol's creation story and its role in the promotion of peace are also a good example of the arrangement of the symbolic sphere of Colombia.

The Minister of Education of the country, Gina Parody, asked the advertising company Mccann Colombia to make a campaign that would show that peace is the forerunner of good things in the country and that for the first time in many years, the budget allocated to education in 2016 has passed the budget of national defense. However, the company, now, had a difficult task to do because the symbol to be created must both be related to conflict and show how valuable peace is and what heals society. The campaign's creator, Alejandro Bermudez, expressed the situation with the following: "For more than 50 years Colombia has been in an endless war. A peace agreement was signed between FARC and the government in 2016. Amid the political debate, we had to start talking about the good things that would come with peace and we needed the media and the world to be with us" (Bermudez, 2018: 71). In other words, another means to symbolize peace will be introduced with a powerful symbolic tool like the media, amid all the risks brought by the conflict. This new means would become a symbol of hope, a common to all Colombian people. In the process that started as a part of such a campaign, Balígrafo took over the difficult task by being used in signing the text of peace

79

Safiye Ates Burç. THE RECONSTRUCTION OF SYMBOLIC SPACE AT COLOMBIAN - FARC PEACE PROCESS

agreement. Thus, the pen of peace was put into the political field as a symbol that appealed to the entire Colombian society and announced Colombian peace both inside and outside.

The creation of an object desired by the Ministry of Education and which would emphasize a period that transforms conflict into peace was a challenging process. Because if a long-lasting conflict has been presented to society as the only way of living, it is not easy to show the transformation. As a result of intense efforts, the advertising company decided to turn the elements of war into an educational tool. The Colombian Military Industry (Indumil) donated 500 bullets used in the conflicts to the Ministry of Education by removing the gunpowder inside. In other words, 500 peace items were made in total. For these pens, the bullets of 50 mm diameter were cleaned and their notches were aligned, polishing and washing operations were carried out to give the head of the bullet its original gold color, and lastly, it was filled with ink and the following message was written on it: "Bullets wrote our past, education (will write) our future" (Sosa, 2016). Thus, real bullets fired in battle have been turned into items that can be used by journalists, writers, and academics to rewrite the history of war and violence into a history of education, progress, and reconciliation (Bermudez, 2018: 72).

This project, which the ministry made to the advertising company to shift the perception of the society from war to education, had become a symbol of peace with the effective use of the -then- president Santos. In fact, this symbol for Minister Parodi was one of the means of "changing the face of the war and identifying the approaching peace" (Sosa, 2016: parag. 3). Moreover, an object (bullet) previously involved in deepening the conflict would now write the history of peace. In other words, the aim was to raise awareness of the whole society that the future of the country will be written in educational institutions, not on the battlefields (Sosa, 2016: parag. 8). Santos, however, was able to turn an object that accumulated all the negative meanings of the conflict into a symbol of Colombian peace in a very short period. He did this by giving the Balígrafos to other heads of states at ceremonies, equating him with the peace of Colombia, introducing him to all audiences by signing the peace treaty with this pen, and leaving this item to the Nobel museum (as an indicator of peace) when he won the Nobel peace prize (Bermudez, 2018: 75; Irish Times, 2016; Bal, 2016). At the signing ceremony, where the symbolism of peace was used extensively, the aim was not only to make the moment when the agreement was signed unique; but also to present a new symbol created in the new Colombia of the new period to the political field. Santos shows that people want to see that item as a symbol of peace and that in the country they want pens and education to replace the weapons and violence. As already mentioned above, leaders need to create new symbols, reframe the existing ones, or subtly transform the meaning of some symbols, in the name of sustainable peace.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For sure the most important components of the different common identities formed by the belonging that unite and separate are symbols and symbolic elements. Therefore, groups that step up towards unity and increase the hope of peace should return to symbol stocks and clarify symbols that remind of conflict and peace. Because symbols and symbolic elements can mediate the change of all balances in space and place when they are not aware of it at all.

Johan Galtung (1990: 292), one of the pioneers of peace studies, claims that the cultural violence visible in the symbolic sphere of our existence legitimizes structural violence so that peace cannot be socialized only by direct elimination of violence (ie, the conflict-free status/negative peace). Especially the use of the symbols of the conflict period as they are in peace processes and the fact that they are not transformed into new meaning will keep the conflict alive. Therefore, peace-makers should either change the meanings of favored symbols with a subtle political move or create common symbols for the new period. In other words, it should organize or renew the symbolic sphere as much as possible. When we look at the peace process in Colombia, it is seen that political elites of both sides had made a symbolic transformation that would manipulate both the emotion and the knowledge of the mass, especially at the beginning of the process.

80

REVISTA LATINOAMERICANA, ESTUDIOS DE LA PAZ Y EL CONFLICTO, 2021, 2(3), JANUARY-JUNE, ISSN: 2707-8...

Firstly, the Victim's Law, being enacted just before 2012 when peace talks began, coincides with an important step on the road to the process. Juan Manuel Santos explains in 2017, during talks with Shlomo Ben-Ami, one of Israel's former Foreign Ministers, that the victims had special importance for him: "It was a very long and difficult journey and there were times when I thought of throwing a towel. But I followed the advice of a famous Harvard professor: 'Listen to the victims. They will energize you again'. This thought and talking to them made me keep resisting" (Ben- Ami, 2017) Santos states that in the same interview, the damage suffered by approximately 700 thousand people was eliminated and around 200 thousand hectares of land were distributed to the peasants who were exposed to forced migration (Ben-Ami, 2017: parag. 11).

With this law, regardless of who was the victim of which side and without making any distinction between the parties, all victims were considered victims of conflicts. It has a very effective role in a symbolic sense that all victims who have been wounded in the conflicts have the same value without being subjected to any classification. Because the victims of the parties (some of which are the families of those who died in the conflict) will experience emotional satisfaction and change their grievance, which was read as a traitor before, with a more positive meaning, in this way. In other words, the win-win formula will work among the victims, not the win-lose Roger Mac Ginty (2001: 4) thinks that the parties who have entered the peace path have negative expectations about the peace process, that is, she/he thinks she/he will lose, puts peace on the ground. It is thought that the conflict in the symbolic sphere will continue even if negative peace has been adopted since the construction of peace as a win-lose/zero-sum game will always keep the feelings of revenge and victory alive. Viçenc Fisas (2011:18), who is working on different peace process experiences, emphasizes that it is necessary to make the opposition parties feel that they can establish a dialogue under a mental prism with the idea of making common interests with the scheme' everyone wins, nobody loses', that is, with the scheme 'I win if you win', regardless of the zero sum game approach that one won and the other lost. In other words, it is very meaningful and important to convince all victims that they enter a path that they will win. Legal regulations in Colombia and their reflection practice show that at least such a way has been taken.

Besides, the approval of the Victim's Law corresponds to another political-symbolic step. Contrary to popular belief, the symbolic value of expressions is very decisive in the construction of certain policies: with the official approval of the Victims Law, the Colombian government accepted for the first time the existence of armed conflict in the country (IFIT, 2018: 5). The official acceptance of the existence of a problem, or conflict, is not an ordinary issue, even as a prerequisite for the start of most peace processes. However, one of the most important articles of the six-point temporary agenda created in 2012 is about the "Victims". Identification of human rights violations and Truth Commissions (International Crisis Group, 2012) constitute the most important pillars of this article. Symbolic steps such as erecting monuments with their names in memory of those who died in conflicts, as done in South Africa, will not only save the dead from the component roles as hero-traitor, the memory of those who died with various sculptures will not only save the dead from negative perception but will also satisfy the emotions of the families left behind and save many people from their instinct of vengeance. As mentioned before, feelings of revenge and victory transform peace processes into zero-sum games and put a loser over against every winner.

In peace negotiations, if the parties do not agree on everything, it does not actually agree on anything. As stated above, secondary issues are often not even discussed in peace talks. That is why, even after years of the agreement, in a small political dispute, a flag opened or lit by the demonstrating audience can trigger the conflict and draw the parties into new chaos; as it is occasionally in Northern Ireland (Mac Ginty, 2001). Colombian peace- makers were seriously involved at the beginning of the process, both with the language and expressions they have used and with the clever interventions in concrete political symbols, to organize the symbolic sphere with a peaceful perspective (i.e. the transformation of symbols that would create conflict). While representatives of the Colombian government created a new symbol (Balígrafo / bullet-pen) to represent the peace and introduce it to the international community (that Santos and his team made an

81

Safiye Ateş Burç. THE RECONSTRUCTION OF SYMBOLIC SPACE AT COLOMBIAN - FARC PEACE PROCESS

intense effort to this end), FARC gave up certain symbols that reminded the conflict for the other party and attempted to create new symbols instead.

The effort of FARC to accumulate new common meanings is very important since the new era will revive not the conflict but the new future meanings. Transforming the meaning of old confrontational symbols that create negative emotions and potentially keep the conflict alive or creating new symbols has the capacity to encourage both parties to live together and create a culture of peace. However, the abbreviation of both the old name and the new name is FARC, which undermines this effort. Ultimately, naming itself is political, and what meaning that name reveals in humans have priority, not the long word form of the FARC. In the case of Colombia, for a meaningful crowded, the word FARC refers to conflict, violence, kidnapping, revolution, and opposition, none of which corresponds to an environment of tranquility that is called peace. The idea that the FARC militants were not properly prosecuted, which was suggested as the reason for people to refuse the agreement referendum held in October 2016, supports that a significant part of the public disliked the name FARC.

As emphasized before, the first creative symbol that has been brought to the symbolic sphere and stands out is the pen bullets called Balígrafo produced by the government. The bullets that were used in the clashes, after being carved and cleaned, were filled with ink and put into a pencil and became a symbol of peace in the political field. Thus, a symbol (bullet) that, previously, reminded war and death, was intervened and transformed by equipping it with a completely different meaning. With the construction of Balígrafo, which was created with the intention of being a symbol of peace (hope), the bullet, which is the symbol of war, was turned into a pen, which is the symbol of education, and it was aimed to shift the focus of the society to peace. In addition, studies on victims are important arrangements for the symbolic sphere of Colombian peace. Peace treaty signing ceremonies, together with the objects and expressions used in those ceremonies, that both parties share, show the value given to the symbolic transformation. Besides, FARC has also contributed to this transformation. Many symbols reminiscent of the conflict from the name to the flag have been reworked. In the peace process of Colombia and in signing the text of the agreement, some of the symbols had been transformed or created with a political mastery. When we look at the intensive use of symbols and re-framing many of them in the peacemaking of Colombia, it is understood that symbols and rituals, which are considered as secondary issues, are as important as the primary issues in peacemaking and the symbolic space must be arrengement and reconstruction. However, it is essential to take more permanent steps in the cultural sphere for the socialization and continuity of the peace of Colombia, because there are still serious problems in many different areas and traces of long-term conflict remain.

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83

Safiye Ates Burç. THE RECONSTRUCTION OF SYMBOLIC SPACE AT COLOMBIAN - FARC PEACE PROCESS

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Notes

1. With the Seventh Guerrilla Conference held in 1982, the FARC organization also added the Ejército del Pueblo (People's Army - EP) to its name and thus updated its name as FARC-EP (Leech, 2011: viii). Although the name FARC-EP is used in some studies, the common trend is FARC, as this article also prefers.

2. There are different explanations about the relations between organization's founders and Colombian Communist Party (PCC). For a detailed reading, see Brittain, J.J. (2010). Revolutionary Social Change in Colombia: The Origin and Direction of the FARC-EP, New York, Pluto Press, s.5-7.

3. Patricia H. Micolta claims that FARC is a sub-state actor that we can see it's lots of face. So, it is diffucult to study this organization. FARC is "behaving as an armed resistance movement, a social movement, a political party, a terrorist actor, a pseudo state and as a criminal actor" (Micolta, 2009: 75).

4. The largest guerrilla organization in the country after the FARC is the armed organization called the Ejército de Liberacion Nacional (National Liberation Army - ELN), which was founded by students in 1964 under the influence of the Cuban revolution. ELN has been weakened over the years as it clashed with the government and FARC for certain periods and could not continue to be an influential actor in the Colombian conflict. However, a peace meeting was held several times between the organization and the government, even if it failed. In addition, Ejército Popular de Liberacion (People's Liberation Army (EPL)) established in 1967 and Movimiento 19 de Abril (April 19 Movement-M19) are among the important guerrilla organizations known in Colombia. The organization named M19 and some other small armed organizations left the armed struggle in 1989 and switched to legal politics. For more information, see (Democratic Progress Institute, 2013: 20-32).

5. In the 1980s and 1990s, while they were more dispersed and moving for certain units, they established an umbrella organization in 1997 and started acting as independent units under the name of United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (Colombian United Self-Defense Forces - AUC) (Daşlı et al., 2018: 17).

6. Alvaro Uribe's father (Alberto Uribe) was killed by the FARC in 1983, which deeply affected Alvaro (Colombia Report, 2019).

7. The first peace meetings between the Colombian government and the FARC go back to very old times. The first meeting started in Belisario Betancur's presidency, who served as head of state between 1982-1986. During the negotiations that started in 1984, a ceasefire was declared between the parties, but soon the process ended (in 1985). Then a new process was started in 1991, but it ended a year later. A third peace meeting, which started more seriously and lasted longer than these two failed negotiations, started in 1998 with the leadership of Andrés Pastarana, who won the presidential election accompanied by peace demands in 1997. This process, including different national and international components, collapsed in 2002 (Democratic Progress Institute, 2013: 31-33).

8. Venezuela and Chile are influential actors of the Colombian peace process. As facilitating countries, when problems occurred between the parties, they stepped in and re-included the side in which they were close (Hamsici, 2016).

9. The title of this episode is inspired by Lisa Schirch. In her book Ritual and Symbol in Peacebuilding, Schirch (2005: 1) states that just like conflict, peacebuilding should be a dramatic effort in which people's emotions, relationships, attitudes, and worldviews can be organized so that peace can be permanent.