

Transformative Deliberative Moments Among Ex-Combatants In Colombia

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Abstract

María Clara Jaramillo: Deliberative Transformative Moments Among Ex-combatants in Colombia.
(Under the direction of Jürg Steiner and Marco Steenbergen)

This dissertation presents the concept of Deliberative Transformative Moment and the instrument to identify it, in a further attempt to bridge the gap between deliberation theory and practice. A transformative moment in the deliberative process occurs when the level of deliberation is either lifted from low to high or drops from high to low. In order to identify such a moment, one has to look at the context and dynamics of the group discussion. This broadening of the unit of analysis is a big difference from other existing instruments to measure the level of deliberation, such as the Deliberative Quality Index –DQI, which focuses primarily on the individual speech acts. Consistent with the theoretical framework of consociational and deliberation approaches, the observed discussions took place among two deeply divided groups, Colombian ex-combatants from both the extreme left and the extreme right. Moving beyond a pure Habermasian perspective, this study finds that besides pure rational arguments, there are some contexts in which personal stories, jokes and self-interests, acting as justification of arguments, have either a positive or a negative impact on deliberative transformative moments.

Although this research has a strongly qualitative orientation, reliability tests scored high, giving it strength as a reliable and valid research method that has the advantage of looking at the deliberative process as a whole and

shedding some light on the sort of speech acts that enhance deliberation and those that detract from it.

Keywords: deliberative transformative moment, empirical tests, deliberative process, ex-combatants, Colombia, qualitative analysis.

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Introduction

The dissertation is the second part of analyses of discussion groups of Colombian ex-combatants. Deliberative theory is the basis of both parts of research. In his dissertation, Juan Ugarriza analyzed the data in a quantitative way.¹ Using the same data, I proceed in a qualitative way. My research interest is to identify *transformative moments*² when the level of deliberation either goes up or down. In this Introduction, I will justify why a qualitative approach is most proper for this kind of research. I will also show, however, that qualitative judgments can be submitted to reliability tests. In this sense, there is no fundamental difference between a more quantitative and a more qualitative orientation. Let me first state what I understand by deliberation. In the last few years, deliberative theory has become quite diversified, being less focused on the work of Jürgen Habermas.³

For me the core of the theory is that arguments count, but contrary to Habermas good deliberation does not necessarily have to lead to consensus. In an often quoted passage Habermas postulates “the unforced force of the better argument”, which should lead to consensus.⁴ But there are deliberative theorists like Robert E. Goodin, distinguished professor of philosophy at the Australian National University, who warn that “reasonable disagreement is a fact of life in complex societies ... public deliberation can help us to see others as ‘reasonable’, albeit, in our view wrong.”⁵ In the same direction, James Bohman and Henry S. Richardson, professors of philosophy at Saint

¹ Juan Ugarriza, *Potential for Deliberation Among Ex-Combatants in Colombia*, PhD dissertation, University of Bern 2011.

² I thank Marco Steenbergen for suggesting this concept.

³ Jürg Steiner, *The Foundations of Deliberative Democracy. Empirical Research and Normative Implications*, Cambridge University Press, 2012.

⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996, p. 305.

⁵ Robert E. Goodin, “Talking Politics: Perils and Promise,” *European Journal of Political Research* 45 (2006), 254-5.

Louis University and Georgetown University, respectively, doubt that there are always reasons that all can accept. They argue, “that the idea of deliberative democracy cannot solve the problem of pluralism.”⁶ Italian theorist and professor at the Università di Trieste, Luigi Pellizzoni writes in the very title of his paper of “the myth of the best argument” and argues that “sometimes conflicts are deep-lying; principles and factual descriptions are profoundly different, and uncertainty is radical; the best argument cannot be found.”⁷ Some theorists even see some danger if the emphasis is put on consensus. Thus, Kasper M. Hansen, professor at the University of Copenhagen, warns that consensus may not always be desirable since “it can elude some arguments from the discussion as some participants might be reluctant to voice views that are in conflict with the emerging consensus.”⁸ I agree with these critics of Habermas that good deliberation does not necessarily have to lead to consensus. The crucial point for me is that actors acknowledge that others also have good arguments. One may not agree with these arguments, but one recognizes that these arguments also have merits. In this way, the other side is humanized, which should reduce the risk of mutual violence. Deliberation seen in this perspective is particularly appropriate for the context of ex-combatants coming out of a violent conflict.

A second way in which I deviate from Habermas is in putting less emphasis on the rational justification of arguments. For me, personal stories also can have a value in justifying arguments, in particular among ex-combatants, many of whom have little or no schooling. For Habermas, arguments must be justified in a rational, logical, and elaborate way. Assertions should be critically asserted through “the orderly exchange of information and reasons between parties.”⁹ Habermas explicitly excludes narratives and images as deliberative justification.¹⁰ Theorists like Harvard Professor Jane Mansbridge argue, by contrast, that personal stories also

⁶ James Bohman and Henry S. Richardson, “Liberalism, Deliberative Democracy, and Reasons That All Can Accept,” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 45 (2006), 254.

⁷ Luigi Pellizzoni, “The Myth of the Best Argument: Power, Deliberation, and Reason”, *British Journal of Sociology* 52 (2001), 59.

⁸ Kasper M. Hansen, *Deliberative Democracy and Opinion Formation*, Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2004, p. 103.

⁹ Jürgen Habermas, *Faktizität und Geltung: Beiträge zur Diskurstheorie des Rechts und des demokratischen Rechtsstaates*, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1992, S. 370.

¹⁰ Jürgen Habermas, *Ach Europa*, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2008, S.157.

have the potential to count as justification: “Stories can establish credibility, create empathy, and trigger a sense of injustice, all of which contribute directly or indirectly to justification.”¹¹ Sharon S. Krause, professor of Political Science at Brown University, also sees great merits if stories are used to justify a position since stories “can enrich citizens’ reflection on public issues and thereby improve public deliberation.”¹² I agree in principle with theorists like Mansbridge and Krause that personal stories have a place for deliberative justification of an argument. But I am also aware that not all personal stories have a deliberative character. Krause herself acknowledges this caveat, when she writes “we risk losing the clarifying power of analysis if we define the category (of personal stories) too broadly”.¹³ A purpose of the dissertation will be to identify patterns of deliberative and non-deliberative stories.

For Habermas, arguments need to be justified in terms of the common good, when he postulates the necessity of “overcoming” one’s “egocentric viewpoint.”¹⁴ In the same vein, Bruce Ackerman, Sterling professor of Law and Political Science at Yale, and James S. Fishkin, Director of the Center for Deliberative Democracy at Stanford University, demand that the good citizen should not ask “What’s good for me?” but “What’s good for the country?”¹⁵ By contrast, for Jane Mansbridge self-interest “ought to be part of deliberation (as long as it is) “suitably constrained.”¹⁶ I agree with Mansbridge that self-interest has a place in deliberation. For ex-combatants it is particularly appropriate that we allow self-interests to play a deliberative role, because they have so many personal grievances, in particular with regard to schooling, health care, housing, and employment, so that it is legitimate that they articulate these grievances, without always referring to the common good. As with regard to stories, entirely selfish interests have no place in good

¹¹ Jane Mansbridge, “The Place of Self-Interest and the Role of Power in Deliberative Democracy”, *Journal of Political Philosophy* 18 (2010), p.67.

¹² Sharon R. Krause, *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation*, Princeton University Press, 2008, p. 122.

¹³ Krause, *Civil Passions*, p.119.

¹⁴ Jürgen Habermas, “Morality and Ethical Life: Does Hegel’s Critique of Kant Apply to Discourse Ethics?” *Northwestern University Law Review* 83 (1989), 45.

¹⁵ Bruce Ackerman and James S. Fishkin, “Deliberative Day,” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 10 (2002), 143.

¹⁶ Mansbridge, “The Place of Self-Interest”, 64.

deliberation, and here too, my dissertation should help to distinguish between deliberative and non-deliberative interests.

In one aspect, I differ greatly with Habermas, namely the role of humor in good deliberation. For Habermas, “jokes, fictional representations, irony, games, and so on, rest on intentionally using categorical confusion.”¹⁷

Sammy Basu, from Willamette University in Oregon, criticizes this Habermasian position in seeing positive aspects of humor for good deliberation: “humor can be a social lubricant. It breaks the ice and fills awkward silences.”¹⁸ Australian National University Professor John S. Dryzek also sees a place for humor in deliberation.¹⁹ There are, of course, bad jokes that are inappropriate for deliberation. I will attempt to find patterns of deliberative and non-deliberative humor.

Finally, good deliberation should be spirited, which is also stressed by Habermas. But sometimes, deliberation is too much seen in terms of good manners in being overly polite. For me, it is an essential part of deliberation that arguments of others are vigorously challenged and questioned as long as this is not done in a rude way. In this respect, I follow Professor of the University of Luzern and former student of Professor Jürg Steiner, André Bächtiger, who stresses “questioning, disputing, and insisting as core but frequently overlooked and undervalued elements of a desirable and effective deliberative process.”²⁰

Since in the last few years, the concept of deliberation has been defined quite differently,²¹ it was important for me to say at the outset of my dissertation what I understand by good deliberation.

I describe now the data to which I will apply this concept. Juan Ugarriza has described the data in his dissertation very much in detail, so that I can be relatively brief. Initially, we planned to do the research with university

¹⁷ Quoted in Sammy Basu, “Dialogical Ethics and the Virtue of Humor”, *Journal of Political Philosophy* 7 (1999), 398.

¹⁸ Basu, “Dialogical Ethics and the Virtue of Humor”, 392.

¹⁹ John S. Dryzek, “Democratization as Deliberative Capacity Building”, *Comparative Political Studies* 42 (2009), 1381.

²⁰ André Bächtiger, “On Perfecting the Deliberative Process: Questioning, Disputing, and Insisting as Core Deliberative Values”, Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC, September 2-5, 2010.

²¹ For a good overview of recent developments of the concept of deliberation see Antonio Florida, *La democrazia deliberativa: teorie, processi e sistemi*, Roma: Carocci editore, 2013.

students, which from an organizational perspective would have been relatively easy to do. But we looked for a greater challenge where deliberation is particularly difficult to be achieved and all the more needed. We found this challenge with ex-combatants of the internal armed conflict. It just happened when we began our research that the Colombian government had a program of decommissioning under way. This program applied to combatants of both left guerrillas (in particular FARC, Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia and some smaller guerrilla groups) and the paramilitary forces at the extreme right. Would ex-combatants who a short while ago still were shooting at each other be willing to participate in common deliberative experiments? This was the challenge at the beginning of our research, and it took much patience on our part to ultimately organize 28 experiments with altogether 342 participants.

Let me first describe the situation of the ex-combatants. In order to get a financial stipend, they were required to participate in a program of the Office of the High Commissioner for Reintegration. Psychologists and social workers acted as tutors, and ex-combatants had to attend twice a month small-group sessions with these tutors. We focused our research on the greater Bogota area, where there were about 3,000 ex-combatants participating in the reintegration program. They were mostly men, young and of little education. Initially, we attempted to select a random sample to participate in the experiments. But tutors warned us of security problems since many of the ex-combatants were severely traumatized and therefore violent or otherwise troubled. There was also a motivation problem; in a first research phase many ex-combatants invited to the experiments simply did not show up. The tutors helped us then with a solution that gave to the ex-combatants the necessary incentives to come to the experiments. They could replace the bi-monthly tutorial sessions with participation in a single experiment and still get the full stipend. It also helped that the experiments could take place in the offices of the tutors.

Thanks to the Office of the High Commissioner for Reintegration, we have approximate data about the total population of the 3,000 ex-combatants in the Bogotá area with regard to gender, age, and education. For these

criteria, the 342 ex-combatants participating in the experiments correspond roughly to the total population of ex-combatants in the Bogota area.²² This is comforting although we cannot claim that the ex-combatants whom we studied are a random sample of the total population of ex-combatants. How large were the differences between ex-guerrillas and ex-paramilitaries that volunteered to participate in the experiments? As null hypothesis, we assumed that there were no differences. This hypothesis has certain plausibility because it could be that the ex-combatants were not ideologically driven but were simply looking for a paying job and did not care which side they joined. This would be fatal for the purpose of our experiments since we are interested to investigate political discussions across deep divisions. The null hypothesis can be rejected. The ex-guerrillas were overrepresented in the youngest age group, and they had also more women in their ranks than the ex-paramilitary. With regard to education²³ and social class, the ex-guerrillas had less formal schooling and were poorer than the ex-paramilitary. Of particular importance for the interpretation of the experiments is that politically there were strong differences between the two groups. The ex-guerrillas come much more often from a leftist family background, the ex-paramilitary from a rightist background. Therefore, it was not by random chance on which side the ex-combatants were involved in the internal armed conflict. The clearest indicator for the deep divisions between the two groups comes to light in response to the question about their attitudes towards the combatants still fighting in the jungles. Although the participants in the experiments had left their former comrades, they expressed a more positive attitude towards their own side than to the other side. This was not necessarily to be expected because one could imagine that the ex-combatants left the fighting because they no longer agreed with the cause of their side. Although there were some who left the fighting for this reason, most had still more sympathy for their

²² Of the ex-combatants in our experiments 15 percent were women, compared with 16 percent among all ex-combatants in the Bogota area. 30 percent in the experiments were 18 to 25 years old, 37 percent in the Bogota area. For education we must differentiate between ex-guerrillas and ex-paramilitaries. 60 percent of the ex-guerrillas in the experiments had schooling of eleven years or less, 64 percent of all the ex-guerrillas in the Bogota area. For the ex-paramilitaries the corresponding figures are 41 and 36 percent.

²³ It has to be considered, however, that ex-guerrillas had some informal education during the time when they were in the field.

side than for the other side. They probably came out of the jungles because they had enough of the fighting and were attracted by the benefits of the government program of reconciliation. The conclusion of all these data is that the participants in the experiments formed two distinct groups, not only with regard to demographic characteristics but also in a political sense.

As an ideal research design, each experiment would have had the same number of participants with an equal distribution between ex-guerrillas and ex-paramilitaries. But given all the difficulties with attendance, we were far away from reaching this ideal. This was not a laboratory situation where everything can be held under control. To learn something about ex-combatants this was the best that we could do. In the social sciences the really interesting questions often cannot be studied in a fully controlled situation so that one has to use a less than perfect research design. Before and after the experiments, participants had to fill out questionnaires about demographic characteristics and political and psychological items. Institutionally the research design had variation in the sense that for half of the groups there was no decision to be made at the end of the experiment, whereas the other half of the groups had to decide on a set of recommendations about the future of Colombia to be sent to the High Commissioner for Reintegration. Half of these decisions had to be made by majority vote, the other half by unanimity. These letters were actually sent out to the High Commissioner so that for half of the experiments the discussions had immediate policy relevance, whereas for the other half the discussions had no immediate outside effect.

For the practical organization of the experiments, at the very beginning we stated the following discussion topic: "What are your recommendations so that Colombia can have a future of peace, where people from the political left and the political right, guerrillas and paramilitaries, can live peacefully together." In contrast to other such experiments, in particular Deliberative Polling,²⁴ no briefing material was handed out beforehand on the topic for discussion. Also in contrast to Deliberative Polling, moderators did not intervene to encourage deliberative behavior. It was precisely our research

²⁴ James S. Fishkin and Robert C. Luskin, "Experimenting with a Democratic Ideal: Deliberative Polling and Public Opinion," *Acta Politica* 40 (2005), 284-98.

interest to see to what extent ex-combatants were willing and able to behave in a deliberative way without any outside help. If, for example, participants did not speak up during the entire experiment, we as moderators did not ask them to do so. Or when opinions were expressed without justification, we did not ask why they have such opinions. Therefore, the discussion was free floating within a broadly formulated topic. After about 45 minutes, we brought the discussion to an end.

Having defined what I mean by deliberation and having presented the data to which I apply the concept, I need to justify why for my research question I have chosen a qualitative approach. The concept of a *transformative moment* has to be seen in the context of an entire discussion. One has to understand the dynamic of a discussion to identify the situations when the discourse becomes significantly lower or significantly higher from a deliberative perspective. I distinguish two levels of deliberation, a high level and a low level. Therefore, I speak of a transformative moment when the discussion either drops from a high level to a low one or raises from a low level to a high one. To delimit a high from a low level of deliberation, one could use a quantitative approach, for example with the help of the Discourse Quality Index (DQI).²⁵ One would code the various elements of deliberation such as participation, justification, and respect, and then one would set a particular score above which one would consider the level of deliberation as high. This is a legitimate approach that I do not wish to overly criticize to justify my own qualitative approach. Let me now show why a qualitative approach has some advantages for my particular research question. To accomplish this, I will use an illustration from the discussion in experimental group 2.

Arturo²⁶, an ex-guerrilla, in one of his speech acts uttered only the single word “rehabilitation.” In order to interpret this particular speech act, one has to look at the entire context of what was said before by Arturo himself and also by other participants. In his immediately previous speech act, Arturo said the following:

²⁵ Steiner, *The Foundations of Deliberative Democracy*, Appendix.

²⁶ For privacy reasons, all names are invented.

I have a question for everyone. We all represent different families, different people, different localities, different cities, different identities, and the question here is how we can all –poor and rich people, paramilitaries, guerrillas, demobilized, everybody contribute to live together in peace? For example there is an initiative that seeks to reform article 11 of our Political Constitution– because death penalty is forbidden, to accept the death penalty of rapists and abusers of minors under the age of 14, what do you think about that? What can we do about it? There are some options being discussed, chemical castration and life prison, among them. Which opportunities would you give to those people?

At this point, the discussion was at a high level of deliberation. According to my interpretation, Arturo continued at this high level. He respectfully announces that he has a question for everyone. Before posing the actual question to the forum, he accurately paraphrases the original query of the debate concerning peace in Colombia, adding some specifics such as peoples' very different identities and backgrounds, which is a clear deliberative feature as it makes people realize the complexity of the issue at hand. He then presents as an example of the current debate the constitutional reform of how to punish child abusers and rapists in a harsher way and asks the other participants what they think should be done with such criminals. Although the overall tone and presentation of his statement keeps a high deliberative level, he does not establish a clear causal linkage between building peace in Colombia and hardening of penalties for child abusers and rapists. The other participants, however, were aware that rapes are a great problem in the Colombian internal fighting, so that Arturo may have felt justified to take a shortcut in presenting his argument. Arturo is followed by ex-paramilitary Gustavo, who keeps the discussion at a high level of deliberation:

They will continue to do the same. They will continue to inflict harm. They may not leave a trace but one person that does such things won't change. I am in favor of life prison.

Gustavo continues the discussion in an interactive way, answering the question posed by Arturo and giving a reason of why he is in favor of the life prison option for child abusers and rapists. The level of deliberation stays high, though, just as Arturo, Gustavo does not make an effort to establish a causal linkage between the themes of child abuse and rapists on the one hand and Colombian peace on the other hand. Gustavo is followed by ex-paramilitary Bernardo who continues the discussion at a high level of deliberation:

Family is the nucleus of society. I see Colombia as a big family and if I make a mistake and my brother goes to my father and tells him to beat me, then we are not doing anything. What we have to do is to provide the mechanisms and the means for that person to be able to realize the bad things he is doing and completely change his behavior.

Bernardo not only answers the question presented by Arturo but also offers a hypothetical example, which is a clear sign of a sound and solid deliberation process. From this hypothetical example he concludes that the solution for child abusers and rapists is not more severe punishments but mechanisms to change their behavior.

At this point, as already mentioned, Arturo utters the single word "rehabilitation", I now want to use this speech act to show the advantages of a qualitative approach. If we would code this speech act with the Discourse Quality Index (DQI), we would arrive at a low overall score. It would only be for interactivity that the score would be high, but for none of the other deliberative elements. For me, the research task is to investigate this speech act in the context of the ongoing discussion and to decide whether the level of deliberation stays high or drops to a low level. To accomplish this task, I interpret what Arturo says in the entire context of the preceding discussion.

For this context, one has to consider what Arturo said in this previous speech act. He had introduced the issue of child abusers and rapists and offered three options to punish them, death penalty, chemical castration, and life in prison. Gustavo expressed himself in favor of life in prison. Bernardo offered a softer path, namely behavior modification. What does Arturo mean by reacting to Bernardo with the concept of rehabilitation? I had to listen several times to the tapes to make sense of this utterance. My interpretation is that Arturo, as a respectful gesture, suggested to Bernardo a term to capture the meaning of what the latter proposed. In this way, Arturo acknowledged that the proposal of Bernardo had merits. Arturo, however, did not say whether he had changed his position in turning to the softer position of Bernardo. In later speech acts, he took position, but for the time being, he left matters open, which I consider as very deliberative because he opened spaces for a wide discussion of what should be done with child abusers and rapists. He did not wish to close this discussion prematurely; he wanted things to remain ambivalent and thus allowing the discussion to broaden. Given this interpretation, I come to the conclusion that with his one-word speech act, Arturo kept the discussion at a high level. For this conclusion, I had to look in a qualitative way at the entire context of what Arturo meant by uttering the concept of rehabilitation. Thereby, I tried to put myself into the shoes of the participants and to ask how they were likely to interpret what Arturo said.

This illustration allows me to present of how I proceed in interpreting the individual speech acts. I always have the different elements of the Discourse Quality (DQI) in the back of my mind. Then, I judge what weight to give to the individual speech acts, which depends, of course, on the context. The usage of a bad joke, for example, may be so devastating that by itself it leads to a transformative moment from a high to a low level of deliberation. By the same token, a good personal story may enlighten the discussion so much that the level of deliberation rises from low to high. Sometimes, deliberative elements may have little or no importance. In the four speech acts presented above, none of the actors referred to the common good, which, in my interpretation, did not take away from the high level of deliberation. In other

situations, however, not referring to the common good may be detrimental to the level of deliberation. It all depends on the context.

How do I treat speech acts that are more or less neutral from a deliberative perspective, being neither particularly deliberative nor particularly non-deliberative? For the interpretation of such speech acts it depends whether they are uttered in the context of a high or a low level of deliberation. If the conversation flows at a high level of deliberation, such speech acts are not considered to disrupt the high level of deliberation. If, on the other hand, such speech acts are uttered when the level of deliberation is low, they do not help to raise its level. Therefore, we need a truly deliberative speech act to bring about a transformative moment from a low to a high level of deliberation. In the same vein, we need a truly non-deliberative speech act to cause a transformative moment from a high to a low level of deliberation. Thus, transformative moments are crucial events in the dynamics of a group discussion.

As far as I see, almost nobody has investigated such transformative moments in a systematic way. There is one notable exception, the PhD dissertation of Simon Niemeyer, where he uses the concept of “turning point”, which comes close to my concept of transformative moment²⁷ Niemeyer acknowledges the strong similarities between his concept and my concept of transformative moment and finds working with these concepts still as a “very productive approach.”²⁸

There is, however, a literature in psychology that comes close to the concept of transformative moment. I want to take a look at this literature to see how close the connection is.

First, there is a close connection with the concept of catharsis, as initially presented by Aristotle in his response to Plato’s critics on drama. According to Plato, drama should be closely controlled and/or eliminated as it fostered human passions. Aristotle, in turn, argued that “dramatic catharsis

²⁷ Simon Niemeyer, *Deliberative Monetary Valuation as a Political Economic Methodology: Exploring the Prospect for Value Pluralism with a Case Study on Australian Climate Change Policy*, PhD dissertation, Australian National University, 2011.

²⁸ Personal communication to Jürg Steiner, May 6, 2013.

was necessary, that it purged the audience of pity and terror²⁹” In fact, in his *Poetics*, Aristotle argues that “drama tends to purify the spectators by artistically exciting certain emotions which act as a kind of homeopathic relief from their own selfish passions.³⁰”

The concept of catharsis has significant consequences at both the group and individual levels. At the group level, it is important to mention the work of Aristotle as it took place in the theater, and the work of the Jewish Romanian-born Austrian American Psychiatrist, Psycho-sociologist and Group-Psychotherapy pioneer Jacob L. Moreno, who explains how the concept of catharsis underwent a revolutionary change with the systematic work on psychodrama, that began in Vienna in the 1920. “This change has been exemplified by the movement away from the written (conserved) drama and toward the spontaneous (psycho) drama with the emphasis shifted from the spectators to the actors.”³¹ Moreno’s work has been widely recognized and as it is mainly based on group dynamics, it is indeed closely related to the idea of transformative moment. In fact, through a process of catharsis a change is produced in the participants in the Psychodrama very similar to that originated in the terms of deliberation when a transformative moment appears on the scene.

At the individual level, there has also been quite an interesting development regarding the concept of catharsis, as described by University of Santa Barbara Professor Emeritus and past president of the Emotions Section of the American Sociological Association, Thomas Scheff and professor Don D. Bushnell, Book Editor and Fielding Graduate University’s Founding Dean of Human Organization Development School, and co-founder of the Institute for Social Innovation³², in their article “A theory of Catharsis.”³³ Here they mention in the history of the concept how Freud’s first published book (with Josef Breuer, 1895), *Studies of Hysteria*, presented catharsis (they called it *abreaction*), as a “quick, cheap and effective cure for hysterical

²⁹ Thomas J. Scheff and Don D. Bushnell, “A Theory of Catharsis,” *Journal of Research in Personality* 18 (1984), 238

³⁰ Jacob L. Moreno, “Mental Catharsis and the Psychodrama,” *Sociometry* 3, 3 (1940), 209.

³¹ Moreno, “Mental Catharsis”, 209.

³² Scheff and Bushnell, “A Theory of Catharsis”, 238 -264.

³³ Scheff and Bushnell, “A Theory of Catharsis”, 238 -264.

neurosis.”³⁴ Freud later abandoned the study of catharsis and concentrated on free association, instead. Scheff and Bushnell propose a theory of catharsis that involves three interacting systems: one biological, one psychological and one social that are equally significant. There is a dynamic aspect of catharsis that is comparable to the transformative moment, as change is indeed produced in the individual.

In addition to the psychological literature, there are also some similar thoughts in political science theory, conflict and peace studies, and in education, as well as an increasingly used term in the broader context of the social sciences, as recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization –UNESCO.

For Ian Shapiro, Sterling Professor of Political Science at Yale University, deliberation is not always possible and not even desirable³⁵. He works not at the individual nor at the group level, but at the level of the entire political system. He then asks when a transformative moment to more deliberation should take place. His answer is that deliberation is most needed when weaker groups are involved and when they have no exit position. An example may be doctoral students depending on their professors. They are in a weak position and have no exit possibility but are stuck with their professors. According to Shapiro the university would have an obligation to offer an institutional setting where professors and doctoral students should try to deliberate. According to Shapiro they may fail but it would still be the optimal solution.

In the field of Conflict and Peace Studies there are some concepts that in some ways resemble that of “transformative moment.” John Paul Lederach, Professor of International Peacebuilding at the University of Notre Dame, has been using the term “conflict transformation,” in lieu of the usual “conflict resolution,” as a result of the criticism he received when using the latter in his peace work in Central America during the 80’s. According to Lederach’s Latin colleagues, the term “resolution” implied “a danger of co-optation, an attempt to get rid of conflict when people were raising important and legitimate issues...quick solutions to deep social-political problems usually meant lots of

³⁴ Scheff and Bushnell, “A Theory of Catharsis”, 238.

³⁵ Ian Shapiro, “Optimal Deliberation?,” *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 10, 2 (2002).p 9992.1

good words but no real change.”³⁶The same as with the concept of transformative moments, Lederach acknowledges that positive change “does not always happen.”³⁷ The key to transformation is a “proactive bias toward seeing conflict as a potential catalyst for growth.”³⁸Thus, Lederach’s approach to conflict transformation is focused on the positive and desired changes in a wide variety of levels: personal, relational, structural and cultural. Although, being still in an embryonic stage, the concept of transformative moments will set its focus on both the negative or downward aspects bringing deliberation to a low level, and the upward or positive features that will help deliberation move up to a high level.

Founder of the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo in 1959 and considered by many as the key founding figure in the academic discipline of peace and conflict studies, Professor Johan Galtung, also speaks about conflict transformation. For him, “to transform a conflict is “to transplant it into a new reality”³⁹ Conflict transformation is present when, accepting that conflict is both, a source of creation and a source of destruction, we decide to act in such a way that the creative aspects take control. Galtung’s conflict transformation can happen also in a range of settings, micro (inter-personal), meso (within countries), macro (between nations), and even mega (between regions or civilizations); regardless of the situation or the setting in which conflict takes place, Galtung’s argument –though a little more complex than expressed here, is that a real change- “a new reality,” has to take place. The task of transforming a conflict requires “finding positive goals for all parties, imaginative ways of combining them, and all of this without violence. It is the failure to transform conflicts that lead to violence. Each act of violence can be seen as a monument to that human failure.”⁴⁰

In the field of conflict resolution, there is also a model of mediation known as transformative mediation that comes close to our notion of transformative moment in the deliberation process. Robert A. Baruch Bush,

³⁶ John P. Lederach. *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*. Good Books (2003). p.3

³⁷ Lederach. *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*, 15

³⁸ Lederach. *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*, 15

³⁹ Johan Galtung. *Conflict Transformation By Peaceful Means: A Trainer’s Manual*. United Nations (2000). p. 4

⁴⁰ Galtung. *Conflict Transformation By Peaceful Means: A Trainer’s Manual*, 3.

professor of Alternative dispute Resolution at Hofstra University School of Law and Joseph P. Folger, professor of communication at Temple University, in their 1994 book *The Promise of Mediation*, coined the term transformative mediation in contrast to the widely known problem-solving mediation. According to them, mediators take in problem-solving mediation are often highly directive in their efforts of trying to reach a mutually acceptable agreement. Bush and Folger claimed that mediation should generate much deeper changes in the parties, and through empowerment and mutual recognition, the mediation process should foster their relationship and build the basis and necessary skills for dealing with their issues, not only the ones at hand but those that may arise.

In education, Jack Mezirow, Emeritus Professor of Adult Education at Columbia University's Teachers' College, is widely considered to have been the founder of transformative learning, understood as "the process of effecting change in a frame of reference."⁴¹ Frames of reference, in turn, are the structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences."⁴² Mezirow's thinking is greatly influenced by the work of Brazilian educator, philosopher and theorist of critical pedagogy, Paulo Freire as well as by the work of Jürgen Habermas. Transforming a meaning perspective has a profound impact on an individual's life. It changes the way an individual sees him or herself and it changes the way they continue to learn and construe new meanings about the world.⁴³

Finally, it is important to mention that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – UNESCO, indicates how the term social transformation is being used to describe changes in society and generally indicates a critical stance towards traditional notions of development. This approach does not consider the western model as the one to be followed by all other nations. It acknowledges that current forces of change are producing a crisis for the old industrial nations. "Some scholars consider social transformation research as a field of research that can lead to positive steps

⁴¹ Jack Mezirow. "Transformative Learning: Theory to Practice." *New Directions in Adult and Continuing Education* 74 (1997) p.5

⁴² Mezirow. "Transformative Learning: Theory to Practice." *New Directions in Adult and Continuing Education*, 5.

⁴³ Jack Mezirow. *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*. Jossey-Bass (1991) p.5.

for social and political action to protect local and national communities against negative consequences of global change.”⁴⁴

After having done this connection with the notion of transformation in other disciplines and being able to establish that across the different fields, the notion of change –a significant one, is present, I go back to how I went about to identify the transformative moments in the discussions of Colombian ex-combatants. In doing the interpretations, I did not only rely on the transcripts but listened times and again to the audiotapes, going back and forth in the discussion. A problem is that the discussions were in Spanish and that for my dissertation I do the interpretations in English. Sometimes I will refer to the original Spanish words to clarify what exactly was expressed by these words. Generally speaking, my dissertation has much to do with linguistics. I am very careful to look at the meaning of words in different contexts. I am grateful to Jürg Steiner that as I went along with my dissertation we could continuously discuss my interpretations of what was going on in the discussions. We also made an effort to check the reliability of our interpretations. For group 4 there were altogether 107 speech-acts. Jürg Steiner was so kind to make for this group an independent judgment on the level of deliberation. Reliability was high with an agreement between the two of us in 98 of the 107 speech acts (93 percent).

A final comment about my qualitative approach. According to my view, there is no fundamental difference in the social sciences between quantitative and qualitative methods. Let us take the case of the Discourse Quality Index (DQI). If we code, for example, whether foul language is used or not, interpretation is needed. Using the data in the coded form allows doing sophisticated statistical analyses, which has great advantages, but one should always remember that interpretation is at the basis of the coded data. With my emphasis on qualitative analysis, I am not far removed from quantification. After all, I identify in the discussions of the Colombian ex-combatants the occurrence of transformative moments from high to low levels of deliberation and vice-versa. Therefore, I can claim that I am also doing

⁴⁴ UNESCO. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Social Transformation. [online] Retrieved from: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/social-transformation/>

coding according to these categories. Indeed, in the analysis of the individual groups, I give the codes in numerical form after the name of each speaker for the respective speech act:

- (1) The speech act stays at a high level of deliberation.
- (2) The speech act transforms the level of deliberation from high to low (These speech acts will be set in bold letters.)**
- (3) The speech act stays at a low level of deliberation.
- (4) The speech act transforms the level of deliberation from low to high. (These speech acts will be set in bold letters.)**

What groups will I analyze? For the dissertation it would have been too time consuming to analyze all 28 groups, although I plan to do this in my further research. I have selected six groups that vary with regard to composition and with regard to the end point of the discussion. With regard to composition I select two groups with a majority of ex-guerrillas, two groups with a majority of ex-paramilitary and two groups with a roughly equal distribution. With regard to the end point of the discussion, I made the selection in such a way that of the six groups there were two groups where no decision was required, two groups that had to make a unanimous decision at the end and two groups with a majority decision at the end. When there was more than one group fitting a specific category, I used a random process with the help of the numbers of the groups on pieces of paper to choose the group to be analyzed.

Each chapter will contain the analysis of one group. Bold letters marks transformative moments. After each transformative moment, I will give a tentative explanation why the transformative moment occurred. At the end of each chapter these explanations are summarized and put in a systematic context. In the concluding chapter I will attempt to present pattern in the explanations of the transformative moments in all six groups.

Chapter 1: Transformative moments in group 1

About equal distribution of ex-guerrillas and ex-paramilitary in group composition.

No decision required at end of discussion of this group.

Codes after the name of each speaker for the respective speech act:

(1) The speech act stays at a high level of deliberation.

(2) The speech act transforms the level of deliberation from high to low. (These speech acts will be set in bold letters.)

(3) The speech act stays at a low level of deliberation.

(4) The speech act transforms the level of deliberation from low to high. (These speech acts will be set in bold letters.)

Moderator

What has to happen in Colombia, what do you propose, in order to reach peace in the future?

Alfonso, ex-guerrilla (1)

Well my opinion is ... I believe that the typical governments, successive governments have to invest more in the social class, not in the war. But invest more in dialogue; invest more to support the poor socio economic class, you see? Give them more ... Looking further down, right? Not looking up every time..., look, give a political solution. What does a government benefit by investing in war?... One point of those who want to destroy the guerrillas need to invest in the people. Whoever has the money wins the war.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Alfonso, at a high level of deliberation, makes a proposal that he justifies with a reason: The government should invest more in the poor. He gives as reason that in this way the guerrillas can be destroyed. No explicit linkage, however, is made between reason and conclusion. He also does not refer to the common good or abstract principles. For the situation of ex-combatants, the speech act can still be classified as being high in deliberation.

Beatriz, ex-guerrilla (1)

I think they need to end with poverty. While poverty exists, there will be frustration for the people. The first thing they need to do is finish with the poverty. And we all need to be equal in this country... Like in Cuba...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Beatriz keeps up a high level of deliberation. She is interactive with the first speaker in continuing the discussion on poverty, although not expressing explicit respect. She refers as a reason for investing in the poor to the abstract normative principle of equality. She strengthens her argument in referring to Cuba as a positive example of an egalitarian society. It is also noticeable that she does not use any foul language. Altogether there has been a high level of deliberation for this second speaker.

Alfonso, ex-guerrilla (1)

I don't agree... I have come from a left background, okay? But then I wouldn't agree either that Colombia would become a country like Cuba. You have equality but you have lots of needs as well.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Alfonso continues the discussion at a high level of deliberation. He is interactive in responding to the previous actor. He disagrees with the idea of taking Cuba as an example for Colombia but expresses this disagreement in a respectful way. He gives a reason why he is against taking Cuba as example for Colombia, namely the fact that Cuba has many unfulfilled needs. He reinforces his argument with his personal story

that he comes from the left but still does not wish to take Cuba as example for Colombia. Adding to the high level of respect is the fact that he is not using any foul language.

Beatriz, ex-guerrilla (1)

In equality, but that there is a regime but not like the Cuban...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Beatriz comes back and continues the discussion at a high level of deliberation. She is interactive and responds with respect to the disagreement with the previous speaker. She changes her position, no longer insisting that Cuba should be taken as example for Colombia. She does not acknowledge, however, in an explicit way that she changed her position based on the force of the better argument of the previous speaker. Overall, this speech act still qualifies as high in deliberation. This all the more, since she is not using any foul language.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (2)

I only say one thing, and it is that we are all the same. What happens is that there are some who like studying more than others. And if you don't study, brother, from where?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Clara drops the discussion to a low level of deliberation. What she says is neither related to what previous speakers said nor to the general topic of the future peace in Colombia. On the one hand, she says that we are all the same, and then contradicts herself in stating that some want to study more than others. Although she is deliberative in reacting to previous speakers and not using foul language, what she says is so incoherent that in summary her level of deliberation is low.

Explanation of transformative moment: What could explain that this speaker drops to a low level of deliberation? One possible reason could be that her very low level of education does not allow her to elaborate a more coherent and solid answer. She is likely to disagree with previous speakers but does

not know how exactly to respond. She begins in a forceful way that she wants to say one thing but then does not know what the thing should be. So, the lack of justification for her position leads the conversation to a low level of deliberation. The speech act of Clara is far away from what Jürgen Habermas considers as “argumentation in which those taking part justify their validity claims before an ideally expanded audience.”⁴⁵ Clara, indeed, makes no argument at all. With her speech act, she does not move the discussion forward in any way.

Beatriz, ex-guerrilla(3)

What happens is that in Cuba people don't do anything. Everybody is equal.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Beatriz stays at a low level of deliberation. She refers again to Cuba but is unclear whether she wants to change back to her earlier position to take Cuba as example for Colombia. She again stresses the importance of equality but claims that in Cuba people don't do anything. This latter statement is difficult to interpret. The speaker seems to be confused by the incoherence of what the previous speaker said and does not know how to bring the discussion back to a higher level of deliberation.

Darío, ex-paramilitary (4)

I have... My name is Darío González. I don't get that... I have two points of view, which I think are the most transcendent... First of all, that everybody gets equal chances that inequality is abolished and that social welfare will exist for everybody. The cause... What made me break the law was the lack of opportunities, the social injustice that we live in, the corruption, and many other things... In the social area, if an individual isn't starving, be certain that if I have food for me, for my family, if I would have health for my family, if I would have education for me and my family, if I would have a roof over my head to live in, if I would have a decent work, I wouldn't have the slightest need to be

⁴⁵ Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996) , p. 322.

doing anything... And those are guarantees, which have to... That is the primary point of view. Something very personal: two years ago, after I deserted the organization which I was part of, I'm completely certain that peace can only be achieved through God, through Christ. I am a God fearing person I don't mean to hurt my fellow. And I don't mean to, it's been two years since I don't lie, don't steal, and don't kill... And thanks to God everything has been going well. I'm in the University, have money. Before, the more I stole the more I saw myself broke...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Darío takes for the first time the floor and brings the discussion back to a high level of deliberation. He comes back to what earlier speakers said about equality and social welfare. Using his personal story, he argues that social injustice leads to criminality, so that increasing social justice will reduce crime. Darío uses his personal story in the way postulated by Sharon R. Krause for whom allowing “testimonial types of deliberative expressions, it can enrich citizens’ reflections on public issues and thereby improve public deliberation.”⁴⁶ Also using his personal story, he argues that peace can come only by God. Having become a God fearing person brought him out of crime and allowed him to enroll at the university making some money. How shall we evaluate this part of the speech act from a deliberative perspective? Deliberative theorists tend to be critical about the deliberative quality of religious arguments.⁴⁷ In this particular case, however, the religious story fits a deliberative dialogue. Empirically, it seems possible that fearing God brought Darío out of criminality. His story may then be compared with other stories and even with social science research linking religiosity in a community with its crime rate. Thus, the religious story of Darío is open for further discussion, contrary, for example, to a religious claim that there is an after-life. He is also deliberative in not using foul language. Since in this experiment there is hardly any foul language, for future speakers we omit this aspect except when they actually use foul language.

⁴⁶ Sharon R. Krause, *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiments and Democratic Deliberation* (Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 122.

⁴⁷ See Jürg Steiner, *The Foundations of Deliberative Democracy. Empirical Research and Normative Implications* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 106-107.

Explanation of transformative moment: How can we explain that this actor brought the discussion back to a high level of deliberation? He introduces himself as a fresh voice and brings in with God a completely new aspect. He acknowledges that he does not understand what the two previous speakers said. He is not hesitant to develop his arguments at some lengths, giving a good base for continuing the discussion on a different track. His being at the university gives him the necessary intellectual strength to make such a long speech in a coherent manner. In some way, he acts as a facilitator to bring the discussion back on track. His higher education may have helped him to do so.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (1)

I need a hundred thousand...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: The short remark made by Clara may appear rude asking such a great amount of money from the previous speaker. But the remark is clearly meant in a funny way, and since humor may lubricate deliberation, the discussion stays at a high level of deliberation. Clara uses humor as advocated by Sammy Basu who writes "... humor can be a social lubricant. It breaks the ice and fills awkward silences ... Comedy permits frankness to be less threatening,"⁴⁸ I agree with this position, which contrast with the position taken by Habermas for whom "jokes, fictional representations, irony, games, and so on rest on intentionally using categorical confusions."⁴⁹

Darío, ex-paramilitary (1)

And I know it's the best way out I've had. Because if I am fearful of God, I don't pretend to steal, don't pretend to kill a brother, don't pretend to hurt an individual. Those are the basic things.

⁴⁸ Sammy Basu, "Dialogic Ethics and the Virtue of Humor." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 7 (1999), 385.

⁴⁹ Quoted in Basu, "Dialogic Ethics and the Virtue of Humor," 398.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: After the brief interruption, Darío concludes his speech act summarizing his argument so that the discussion stays at a high level of deliberation.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (2)

You're next? Wake up! No opinion... This man here goes next... He isn't giving his opinion either! Your group... Aren't giving your opinion as well! And you... Neither!

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Clara, who had already previously brought down the discussion to a low level of deliberation, does it here again. In a disrespectful way, she bullies other actors to speak up telling them to wake up. This is not the way to open a deliberative dialogue. This speech act of Clara does not at all correspond to what Amy Gutmann and Dennis F. Thompson understand under mutual respect when they postulate "an effort to appreciate the moral force of the position with which we disagree."⁵⁰ Clara does not even indicate in what sense she disagrees with other participants. She only lashes out in an undifferentiated way at the entire group, showing no respect at all.

Explanation of transformative moment: As the previous time when she brought the level of deliberation down, here again she doesn't know how to handle herself, which may again linked to her low level of education. She certainly does not feel at ease in the discussion.

Unidentified speaker (3)

No, no, no, wait, wait!

Interpretation of level of deliberation: This unidentified actor stays at a low level of deliberation. Obviously upset by the bullying of the previous speaker he only utters exclamations.

⁵⁰ Amy Gutmann and Dennis F. Thompson, "Moral Conflict and Political Consensus," *Ethics* 101 (1990), p. 85.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (3)

Yes, well. As you don't want to give your point of view!

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Clara continues her bullying thus staying at a low level of deliberation

Unidentified speaker (3)

What happens is that this has to be done thinking, and so.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Still an unidentified actor defends himself that first one has to think before one can speak. This is a good point but is unrelated to the topic assigned to the group so that the deliberation remains at a low level.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (3)

My opinion is that "where the rich have money... the poor to the corn field!" There is nothing else to do.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Referring to an old proverb, *Eduardo* is fatalistic that the poor will always remain poor and that nothing can be done about it. This statement is not justified in any way so that the level of deliberation remains low. Although in the situation of these ex-combatants one can sympathize with someone expressing such hopelessness, he is not justifying this feeling.

Fernando, ex-paramilitary (3)

Well my opinion is that Pastrana (Andrés Pastrana, Colombian President between 1998-2002) called several meetings with the FARC, he gave them the demilitarized zone, everything, and the guerrilla never demonstrated what they were going to do. The AUC (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia) demobilized, others kept committing crimes, and each one did what they wanted. Personally, we heard on the radio threats all the time, "no, if they aren't going to negotiate peace then we are going to plan an operation. We

are many". Say, that is, if the law wouldn't be so flexible, as it is, I know that everybody... In the United States they convict to life imprisonment, issued involving death penalty... I'm not going to put in risk myself.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Fernando rambles about threats that he heard on the radio and demands that laws should be less flexible, referring to the United States where laws are less flexible. It remains unclear what should be done, and no justifications are given so that the discussion stays at a low level of deliberation.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (3)

Those who wear a tie... End with the Senate and that the president may do whatever he wants. And if he fucks it up fire that son of a bitch and put another one.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Eduardo remains at a low level of deliberation, using vulgar language. He dislikes those who wear a tie, he wants to dismiss the Senate, wants to give all the power to the president but wants to fire him if he does not do the job. None of all this is justified.

Gloria, ex-paramilitary (4)

I think, I believe, that it's not. For me the basics will be equal rights, while equal rights exist for everybody, there is an opportunity. If there are no opportunities, there is no work, there is nothing. And they have to respect what they say. Let's say we did a pact, in which they would give us a postgraduate education. And we have been fighting, with lawsuits and everything. So they don't respect what they say either.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gloria demands equal rights for all and argues that only in this way opportunities for work will come up. She is aware that her demand has difficulties to be accepted since those in the lower classes do not get respect. In order to support this claim she tells the story that all the lawsuits had no effect. More specifically she asks for a pact where

postgraduate education is offered, which would serve her since she has already 12 years of education. All in all, with this contribution, Gloria rises the level of deliberation in presenting quite clearly where she wants to go. From a deliberative perspective it is also good that she discusses the obstacles to implement her proposals.

Explanation of transformative moment: Gloria picks up from the previous speakers the despair that the lower classes have no say and get no respect. She is able, however, to express this despair and to present at the same time the positive argument that equal rights are crucial. She was probably helped by her high level of education to make this relatively coherent contribution, using legal terms like equal rights and lawsuits.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

There's no law, no law for the poor.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gloria helps Eduardo to put his argument in clearer terms. While in his earlier contributions he rambled with vulgar language, he reacts now concisely to Gloria stating unambiguously that there is no law for the poor. In this way he does not disrupt the discussion, which stays at a high level of deliberation. Eduardo takes a more extreme position than Gloria but does not show disrespect toward the slightly more positive position of Gloria.

Hernando, ex-guerrilla (1)

I believe the biggest problem in Colombia today is that the State is investing too much on war. The State says it has invested a lot in dialogues for peace, to improve Colombia, to have a democratic reform in the country, well, etc., etc. The demobilization program was presented, and well! But what happens then? That they met a few things like my colleagues said, that they promise one thing and when we're already here they don't do what they told us they would, for example myself. I've been demobilized for almost three years... the

military card ...what happened? From there I even appeared in a jail in Picalaña⁵¹ for some crimes I had committed over there.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: After Gloria brought the level of deliberation back to a high level, the discussion becomes quite interactive with Hernando reinforcing the argument that the Colombian leadership does not keep its promises toward the lower classes. This interactivity is all the more remarkable because Hernando as ex-guerrilla agrees with several earlier speakers from the paramilitary. Hernando strengthens his argument with his personal story of having been put to jail. Thus, the discussion remains at a high level of deliberation.

Beatriz, ex-guerrilla (1)

You mean you have not yet been cleared?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: The discussion stays at a high level of deliberation with Beatriz being interactive inquiring about the legal status of Hernando.

Hernando, ex-guerrilla (2)

Well, right now, it took me around the issue of reclusion and I don't know what. I have to go to (...) until you are not (...) they are not going to resolve us.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Hernando is taken aback by the personal question of Beatriz not knowing how to answer and rambling along. It would have been interesting for the group to talk about the jail issue using the example of Hernando, but the answer does not lend itself to such a discussion so that the level of deliberation has become low.

Explanation of transformative moment: As a young person with little education Hernando did not know how to handle this very personal question about his

⁵¹ A prison in Ibagué, Tolima, a city 130 km SW from Bogotá.

being in jail. Being embarrassed by a sensitive personal question, he decreases the level of deliberation.

Beatriz, ex-guerrilla (4)

Okay, I'm next. Look. I'll tell you one thing. Do you think war will end even though there are so many opportunistic people? Because what they are doing with us is, look, let's say, one... yes, it's a business. Because you see: they say you get 480. They will at least steal 20 thousand pesos to each one of us, or even more. Tell me. We are, there are demobilized, that oh my God! Have from three, to four children and are dying of hunger. Why? Because if the government would give us a house things would be different. Because the rent here is expensive. The bills are expensive. And they didn't think of that. What they care about is that people come and come and come. Now, now, put yourself in the shoes of a demobilized that have four or five kids. Not having money, and a job appears, and having your kids starving. You do it or you don't? You do it! Why? Because they are taking advantage of us, what they are doing is taking things away from us. Tell me then when is war going to end with so many opportunist people? Tell me if you want to have more. Ah? To see what a business is and who they are therefore the ones of the business no, the ones who contribute see, tough luck, starving! I really don't agree with that.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: After Beatriz does not get a satisfactory answer from Hernando with regard to his jail situation; she brings the discussion successfully back to a high level of deliberation. She demands in a forceful way that ex-combatants should be better treated, supporting her demands with many good examples. In contrast to some of the previous speakers, she is not only complaining but also making concrete suggestions relevant for everyday life of combatants. This forceful speech act has a high level of deliberation because it is clearly presented with vivid illustrations. As for Darío in a previous speech act, her using of stories is very much in line

with the argument of Sharon R. Krause who advocates that emotions in general and stories in particular must be part of good deliberation⁵²

Explanation of transformative moment: Out of the dynamic of the conversation, Beatriz fears that the level of deliberation could continue to stay at a low level. With the forceful expression “okay, I’m next, look” she indicates that she wants the discussion to move forward.

Hernando, ex-guerrilla (1)

In my case I say that the process of demobilization is very good. But for those who have the power.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Hernando is interactive in listening to the previous speaker supporting her argument that the process of demobilization helps only the powerful. Taken in isolation this short speech act would not qualify as high in deliberation. In the present context, however, the speaker does not interrupt the flow of a high level of deliberation.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (1)

Of course...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: These two words of support also do not interrupt the flow of the deliberative sequence. Clara is interactive supporting what the previous speakers said.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (1)

So look. Our question is big. How do we obtain peace? We’ve been in war for more than a hundred years, since the Thousand Days, the violence, which has been present for more than 44 years, the AUC twenty and they keep on promoting... There won’t be peace, because you said it and we learned it in life that there can’t be because the rich will not give up the power, they won’t, they won’t, and they won’t, by any chance sell the power. We in our blessed

⁵² Sharon R. Krause, *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation* (Princeton University Press, 2008), p.122.

reality, we're at least on this side at this time, how do we build, how do we contribute to peace when the program, which was first made as welfare, because they gave everything...? When I demobilized we received one million 400. But that's what they say over here. Who keeps the money? It was 660 thousand pesos per person, and what remained in for the owners of the shelters. They make a mess... I think that the national government didn't understand, they had no idea, because it's a counter-insurgent program as well. As an individual you don't care, but ask my companion over here who thank God had the opportunity to study and has no way to continue, or to work. All of us, who live in the reality, some have better chances than others but it's purely luck, because of good workers, or because of long term opportunities, for so many things that give one opportunities... Only a few of us have a job opportunity which is sort of stable and has and a projection to study... for 43 thousand demobilized persons and 39 collectives, we are not even one percent...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Iván enters the discussion for the first time and interactively adds some new information to the discussion: the long war period undergone by our country, the unwillingness of rich people to give up some benefits and power in favor of the lower classes and he ends by pointing out some failures of the program itself. Although he does not make specific proposals related to a future of peace for Colombia, he gives valuable information that could help deliberation. This speech act can be seen in the context of truthfulness, which in the deliberative literature is mostly seen in terms of motives of truthfulness. But truthfulness can also be seen in terms of truthful information. In this sense this speaker continues a high level of deliberation.

Hernando, ex-guerrilla (1)

In our case, referring only to us, right? For example in Bogotá. In Bogotá there is a big amount of people... come on, let's pass through the lower income neighborhoods after 10:00 p.m. How can there be people sleeping in the streets. All of us, if we don't stay alert, we would be in that same situation,

because we aren't getting paid every month, and as we have no job guarantees, we have any guarantee at all, well, because education and all that, in other words, that's it...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Hernando joins the discussion for the third time and we certainly feel that he is trying to tell his story. In his first intervention, he started by pointing out that the biggest problem in Colombia was the huge amount of money being invested in war making. He argues that despite the efforts to move ahead with the peace initiatives such the demobilization program, there have been some problems with their implementation citing as an example his own personal case with regard to his judicial status. The second time he speaks, he interactively agrees with a speaker giving reasons why the demobilization program is not working, as it should. He now moves further on and tries to convince the other participants of the dangers that they may face if the government continues to fail its promises. As the previous speakers, Hernando, too, enlarges the information pool in a meaningful way so that the discussion continues to stay at a high level of deliberation.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (2)

It has been deteriorating. There's no motivation on that side. No, sure, you want to live from the State all your life, and then... it's Machiavellian from that sense, that it improves some things and puts pressure on others to... They spend thousands of millions, for you to go...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: This is a confusing statement leading to a low level of deliberation. It is unclear what Machiavellian means in this context. It is also not clear whether or not people should live from the State all their life. It is also not clear whether the State should spend millions or not. All in all it is not a speech act from which conversation can easily continue.

Explanation of transformative moment: When Iván spoke first, he gave hints that he is one of the few ex-combatants who has a job. This may have put

him in an awkward position with regard to the issue of how long the State should support ex-combatants. This awkward personal situation may have easily led to the confusing statement. We have already seen such a situation earlier when Hernando did not know how to answer the question about his jail term. It seems that awkward personal situations may easily lead to a deterioration of the level of deliberation.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (3)

See, Even though I stop you, but look that I always tell my partners “do the course that you would like, because you are going to live from it. Take advantage” Because one cannot be hopeful because he says they spend thousands of millions, so that you will least expect it, when they say, “all gone”, it’s over...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Clara obviously does not know of how to continue the conversation after the confusing statement of Iván. It is unclear who should take advantage of what and to live from it. It is unclear whether she wants to agree or disagree with Iván, so that level of deliberation stays low. .

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (3)

Look, with seven kids...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: The reference to seven kids does not continue the discussion in a meaningful way not being linked to what Iván and Clara said.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (4)

Me for example I am not hopeful, I am, look, besides being worried for work and anxious to learn, because from that is how I will keep on going. We have to take advantage of that. Because look, if one doesn’t get trained... more than one person tells you “you study but be good”, for me that is an honor...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Mentioning education, Clara brings a new element into the discussion. She claims to be anxious to learn, which will keep her going. It is not a contradiction but rather a realistic assessment that she is not hopeful to be successful on this path but at least she will try. She even mentions that it would be an honor to study.

Explanation of transformative moment: While in her previous statement Clara remained unclear in what she wanted to say, here she can develop her ideas in a clearer way. She uses her personal story in an effective way to make a general point. Once again, we have a case supporting the view of scholars like Sharon R. Krause that personal stories have an important part in good deliberation.⁵³

Beatriz, ex-guerrilla (1)

Sure...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Supporting the position of Clara with the expression “sure”, Beatriz keeps deliberation at a high level.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (1)

Those are opportunities, which you have never had and you have to take advantage of them. And then, tomorrow, keep on going. You cannot be hopeful that one already knows that it's done that way, and so one and so one, let's stop it right there and move on.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: After hearing the support of Beatriz, Clara continues at a high level of deliberation reinforcing her point that one should use all the opportunities to get ahead.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (2)

We cannot change this system. Some of us who were in the left we tried it by force. The ones who were in the right, they were defending other

⁵³ Sharon R. Krause, *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation*, Princeton University Press, 2008.

things. And we are here all mixed in one same reality. The reality of wealth, them, well, the paramilitary commanders were sent there, for some reason they were sent there, and they almost lost it, but power is still born here. They kill Ríos⁵⁴, Reyes⁵⁵, the Old Man⁵⁶ dies, and some keep on going because this is a business. Do you think the Army is going to generate peace? That is a business. The United States are interested in peace when they are the ones who sell us more weapons than anybody? It's really unfair. We haven't yet been able to organize ourselves. This is a good initiative because it makes us work and also makes the government see that we are no fools either... Nothing, nothing, own the information we will see that... but let's say we put a, a, to ask, or hell where do we communicate with people...? At one time there was at least a working table and that fought, and we had problems because people thought they were going to negotiate their own, and your 20 million project. No, nothing. It was looking at how the hell you put this up for discussion...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Iván takes a more pessimistic view than Clara arguing that nothing can be changed. But like in his previous intervention, Iván quickly loses the thread of his argument. At one point, he states that the left was not yet able to organize itself. Does he wish to say that if the left would organize itself, things could be changed? If this is what he means, the statement would contradict what he says at the beginning of his intervention. It is also unclear what Iván wants to say when he mentions that the United States is selling more weapons to Colombia than anybody else. Should this statement support the claim that nothing can be changed and what would be the corresponding argument? All in all, Iván, like in his previous intervention, pulls deliberation down to a low level.

⁵⁴ José Juvenal Velandia, *alias* Iván Ríos, was the head of the Central Bloc of FARC-EP and the youngest member of its Central High Command. His own men killed Ríos in MRCH 2008, in order to claim the reward offered by the government.

⁵⁵ Luis Edgar Devia Silva, *alias* Raúl Reyes, was a member of Central High Command of the FARC-EP, who was killed during a military operation in March 2008.

⁵⁶ Meaning Pedro Antonio Marín, *alias* Manuel Marulanda Vélez (nicknamed “Tirofijo” - “Sureshot”) was one of the founders and, for many years, the main leader of the FARC-EP.

Explanation of transformative moment: Since everything in the world is always changing somewhat, it is difficult to argue that nothing will ever change. This seems the problem with this speech act of Iván. While in the first few sentences he is able to present clearly his position that reality cannot be changed, he is hard pressed to justify this position. Perhaps it is easier, as Clara did in her earlier intervention, to argue that things can be changed. At least this is a hypothesis that is worth to be pursued.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (3)

Do you remember that when the Americans came, they were at the offices?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: This question does not contribute to the deliberative quality since it is not related to the general question of peace in Colombia to be discussed.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (3)

They got three bags they had there...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: This is also a piece of information irrelevant for the general topic of discussion to that the level of discussion remains at a low level.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (4)

Wait and see. At last I was called. I was going to say more but they covered my mouth, right away. They told me “look, Beatriz, because you light up and say..., you are not going to say you’re feeling well”. How will the Americans even notice? Ah? Man, since the others committed sin in silence, they were the ones who did not silent me (laughs)...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Clara comes back to her earlier point that one has to have a certain optimism using all the opportunities offered. In a humorous way, she insists that she will continue to say that she feels well. Also in a humorous way, she states that others should not worry about her

good feeling since the Americans will not notice. She gets laughter for her remark that those who sin in silence will not prevent her to be silent about her good feeling. Using humor, she can reaffirm in an efficient way her point that all should not be despair. Already in an earlier speech act, Clara had used humor in an effective way. From the perspective of group dynamics, she takes up the role of using humor in a deliberative way. As the discussion continues, participants tend to take up different roles.

Explanation of transformative moment: As we have already seen earlier in this group discussion, Sammy Basu sees a positive deliberative role for humor, while Jürgen Habermas sees humor as frivolous not belonging to deliberation.⁵⁷ The speech act of Clara is a good example how humor well used can bring a discussion back to a deliberative track.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (1)

The program is good in the sense that it gives one an opportunity to get out of the war, and one is exhausted for whatever reason, everyone went there and left for the same reason. And the government is the one that opens more the opportunity. But brother, we're a political subject, which is, I think, even though one does not have an education one knows why at one point grabbed a gun. For whatever reason, because of lack of opportunity for some ideal. But here too must also capture... The reintegration process is being invented, and we are their guinea pigs. The partner wants a postgraduate, and then gives her a degree. I do not want a graduate course, I want the field...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Iván speaks now for the third time. While the first two times he lacked coherence, this time he is able to keep deliberation at a high level. At first, he clearly explains that he and others left the fighting because they were exhausted. While in the previous interventions he was only negative, this time he applauds the government program of reintegration because it gives the opportunity to leave the fighting, although

⁵⁷ Sammy Basu, "Dialogical Ethics and the Virtue of Humor," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 7 (1999), p. 385.

he still considers himself a guinea pig. He is interactive with Clara saying that in contrast to her he does not wish a postgraduate education but rather a field, presumably to farm.

Gloria, ex-paramilitary (1)

No project, nor money...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gloria speaks for the second time. In her earlier intervention she was quite deliberative in justifying with good reasons that there are no equal rights and therefore no opportunities for those without equal rights. This time, she takes a shortcut exclaiming “no project, no money.” Standing for itself, this short exclamation would not be deliberative, but linked with the earlier statement the shortcut is appropriate from a deliberative perspective. This example illustrates nicely the shortcoming of coding individual speech acts with the DQI, because this short exclamation of Gloria would have been coded as very low on deliberation. Using a qualitative method, by contrast, allows to interpret the individual speech acts in the context of the entire debate, and given this context, Gloria was justified to take a shortcut in the present situation.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

Look what happens is that when I gave up well yes, I did not sign a document that I had to study, and such and ta, ta, ta. But they said, "If you want, insurance, education, housing, and subsidized..."The benefit of the children was lost. Education, a cheap course that ta, ta, ta, ta. We end it, no work ... You... make it finish and they give you the diploma. But when they go to the company “I am a systems technician” and such, “and your high school diploma?” It is a dead boy.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Eduardo tells his story of unfulfilled promises in an efficient way so that the level of deliberation remains high.

Hernando, ex-guerrilla (1)

And is that for example the vast majority of demobilized from left... Seventy percent are farmers, do not know how to move, do not know how to take a bus...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: The discussion continues to be interactive and at a high level of deliberation with Hernando giving additional information about the desperate situation of ex-combatants, especially ex-guerrillas.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (1)

Oh yes! There are many who are...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Clara continues in an interactive and deliberative way supporting the previous speakers. She also seems to add more information, although the end of the sentence is not audible on the tape.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (1)

This city is so harsh (...)

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Iván continues to be interactive and deliberative adding more relevant information.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

Six, seven months without pay...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: The flow of the discussion continues at a high level of deliberation with Eduardo adding more relevant information about the situation of ex-combatants.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (1)

Now, do you think someone is going to come from the “Conchinchina⁵⁸” to pay three years in prison and then come and live as we are now, to pay three years in prison to the government? Better killed! We know that ... I’m telling you, that reinserted who comes now, three years, look...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Clara continues the discussion at a high level of deliberation adding still more information about the desperate situation of ex-combatants.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (1)

Demobilized in our time... all to individual process. Right now, "Karina", all who have been demobilized, Law 975, three years, truth, justice and reparation. How it has changed and has been affecting us.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: As in previous interventions, Iván has difficulties to speak in a coherent way. Standing for itself, according to the DQI this speech act would be low on deliberation. But in the context, it is clear that Iván makes an effort to add information of his own so that he is not disrupting the flow of personal stories about the bad situation of ex-combatants. Therefore, the level of deliberation remains high.

Alfonso, ex-guerrilla (1)

This program, even though it was a political move made by the State, it was a political move, well, for x or y reason, some of us have taking advantage of it, and other haven't. And what happens? This is, practically for Uribe... because he's a very proud person. It's different and I'm going to warn you, and I'm going to ask for help from other countries to finish with the guerrilla, as he may have... The war that Colombia is living no, it's not a war which involves us, it's Uribe's personal war, a personal war...

⁵⁸ Although an actual place, this is a colloquial expression meaning “very far away.”

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Alfonso is the one who was the first to speak up in this experiment, and he did this in a deliberative way. Once again he speaks up in a deliberative way. After several speakers gave personal stories about the desperate situation of ex-combatants, Alfonso addresses a more general question, namely who is responsible for the war. He claims that it is a personal war of president Uribe and as justification he states that Uribe is a very proud man and that in order to defeat the guerrillas, he will not hesitate to get the help from other countries. This is a justification that could open a broad deliberative discussion about the causes of the war.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

I'll tell you all something: we are all mistaken. Look: Uribe has us like his puppet. Pay attention because I'm going to explain to you why, kid. Look: if Venezuela and Colombia go to war, do you know what Uribe would do with us? He would recruit all of us demobilized. "We already gave them a lot, now it's time for them to give back to the country". For what they did to us. You are the ones who are going to fight over there, big sons of bitches! And we'll have to put the rifle once again and go.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Eduardo continues the discussion in an interactive and deliberative way. He picks up the motivation of Uribe from the previous speakers and predicts that in a war between Colombia and Venezuela, Uribe would mobilize the ex-combatants. He reinforces the argument made by several participants earlier in the discussion that ex-combatants are like puppets without any power of their own.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (2)

Well for you men! Because I already did...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Clara does not continue in a meaningful way the conversation about the motives and plans of Uribe. Instead, she makes a sniping remark against the men in the discussion group that it would serve them well to be mobilized by Uribe. In a sarcastic way, she adds that

she as a woman would not be mobilized. This is an utterly disrespectful speech act pulling down deliberation to a very low level.

Explanation of transformative moment: As we have seen earlier, very personal matters may easily lower the level of deliberation. Here, we have the opposite situation in the sense that the two previous speakers tried to speculate at a very high political level about the motives and plans of Uribe. Clara does not feel comfortable to continue this discussion without any solid empirical basis. Instead of saying “shut up”, what she probably means, she makes sniping and sarcastic remarks. As Sharon R. Krause writes, emotions may have a positive deliberative influence.⁵⁹ But as the emotional outburst of Clara shows, emotions may also disrupt the deliberative flow of a conversation, especially if it involves sarcasm against other participants

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (3)

For the conflict! And if Uribe is going to...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Participants are taken a back by the disrespectful remarks of Clara so that for several speech acts, the discussion remains at a low level. Eduardo is not able to finish what he wants to say, being interrupted by Clara.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (3):

I won't get it. So sorry with Uribe! What I am going to get is a knife and cut onions, tomatoes...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Clara continues her sniping and sarcastic remarks. Saying to be sorry for Uribe, she seems to ridicule the analysis offered by Alfonso and Eduardo about the plans and motives of Uribe. In saying that in the future she wants simply to use a knife to cut onions and tomatoes, she seems to give the message that she has enough of all this discussion.

⁵⁹ Sharon R. Krause, *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation*, Princeton University Press, 2008.

Darío, ex-paramilitary (3)

No, you know what? Look...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Dario is interrupted in a non-deliberative way, so that he cannot say anything.

Hernando, ex-guerrilla (3)

I keep on killing, but the chickens...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Hernando continues the story of Clara that he wants to use a knife not to cut tomatoes and onions but to kill chickens. This is obviously meant as humor. As we have seen earlier, humor can sometimes be used in a deliberative sense to relax the atmosphere. But not all humor is deliberative. The humor of Hernando does not seem deliberative because he continues the sarcastic story of Clara and thus does not make headway to relax the atmosphere. The humor of Hernando is also in now way related to the topic under discussion, how to arrive at peace in Colombia.

Beatriz, ex-guerrilla (3)

All right, one by one!

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Beatriz attempts to bring order to the discussion, but is not successful so that the level of deliberation stays low.

Alfonso, ex-guerrilla (3)

I would like... I would like some kind of solution...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Alfonso is also not successful to bring the discussion back to a deliberative level.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (3)

You have to go, brother...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: The level of deliberation stays clearly low with the intervention of Eduardo.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (3)

Shhhhhhhh!

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Clara has obviously enough of the discussion.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (3)

Or you go to jail, or you go...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: The discussion is now clearly out of hand with a very low level of deliberation.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (3)

This is also kind of valid, because why would we lie to ourselves. Many of us when we feel real bored... Ahhh! Why did I come! Why! Ah? We have to learn. What happens is that, we would get everything over there, that wasn't it... Personally I would go and do a job and I would get my money, real easy...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: The discussion continues at a low level of deliberation. Clara now openly acknowledges that she is bored and wonders why she comes here.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (3)

Look, another thing: there are many demobilized persons...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: This information that there are many demobilized persons does not help to raise the level of deliberation.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (3)

Many of us are noble persons. That's what happens. Ah? Because I am grateful anyway, from him, her, or them, I am thankful to the program because I am where I've always wanted to be. I always wanted to learn what I want to do.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Clara repeats what she said before that she is grateful that she gets the chance to learn. But she does not add anything substantive to her previous statements so that she is repetitive, what does not help to raise the level of deliberation.

Beatriz, ex-guerrilla (3)

Uribe has us to get information... He's ending with the FARC...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Also with Beatriz, the discussion meanders without any clear direction so that level of deliberation is still low

Hernando, ex-guerrilla (3)

They'll never make it...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: still at a low level of deliberation

Beatriz, ex-guerrilla (3)

Okay! (claps). Five more minutes! Okay!

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Like Clara, Beatriz becomes impatient with where the discussion is going and wishes that it will soon end.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (3)

(Laughs)

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Clara expresses with her laughter that she is glad that Beatriz is also bored with the discussion. The level of deliberation stays low.

Alfonso, ex-guerrilla (4)

I would say that... a good solution to, maybe get to an agreement and this, it would be for the government to conclude, they would sit with everyone who... with him... in other words, that they would talk in a thematic table and from the distance. But then with an open TV channel, can be RCN, CARACOL⁶⁰, which truly everybody sees. What was happening in the Distention Zone? Over there was the channel of Valle del Cauca, how is it called? That's it... Pacífico⁶¹. What was their idea? The FARC had done... the ten points of the agrarian platform, which were ten points no more than that. Yes? Where the State was not being pretending that, that none, that it was us, or that they were going to... "Mono Jojoy"⁶²... No... He was saying... The points were "give the people more opportunities".

Interpretation of level of deliberation: After the discussion meandered for a long time at a low level of deliberation, Alfonso makes a successful effort to bring it back to a high level. As a solution to move forward the peace process, he proposes that the government should organize a thematic table with open TV cameras, so that everyone can see what is happening. As an urgent matter to be pursued, he mentions agrarian reform. With this speech act, Alfonso lays the groundwork on which the discussion could continue at a high level of deliberation.

Explanation of transformative moment: Alfonso was the first to speak up in the experiment, and this in a deliberative way. Thus he established himself as an early leader. When now the discussion remained at a low level without any

⁶⁰ RCN (Radio Cadena Nacional) and CARACOL are the two biggest private television networks in Colombia.

⁶¹ TELEPACÍFICO is a Colombian regional public television network.

⁶² Víctor Julio Suárez Rojas, *alias* Jorge Briceño or "Mono Jojoy", one of the commanders of the FARC-EP, who was present at the Caguán Negotiations under President Pastrana.

clear direction, he uses his early leadership role to bring it back to a high level.

Beatriz, ex-guerrilla (1)

The farmer, the land...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: With this short interruption Beatriz supports Alfonso that agrarian reform is an urgent matter. Standing for itself, this speech act could not be coded as high on deliberation, but it is highly interactive and fits the high level of deliberation started again by Alfonso.

Alfonso, ex-guerrilla (1)

Brother: look, as they say, where did the big landowners get that money from? In the war during the 50's they seized those lands. Seized. They didn't buy it from a farmer. They killed him, you see? And kept the others... right now they got lots of land, more than 50 thousand hectares, five thousand work, one thousand 500 work and what do the others do? One of the points in the agrarian platform said, "let's divide it"... Well, if a landowner has 50 thousand hectares of land, how many are capable of working? "I have ten thousand" take fifteen thousand and let's divide 35 thousand hectares of land for the people who have none. You see? But that never, never is...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: After the supporting interruption of Beatriz, Alfonso continues to address land reform at a high level of deliberation. After giving valuable information of how the large landowners got her land in the 1950's, he makes a specific proposal of how the land could be divided up.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (1)

The rich don't do that...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Iván interrupts that the rich will never accept such a plan. He is interactive and expresses his disagreement in a respectful way, so that deliberation remains at a high level.

Alfonso, ex-guerrilla (1)

We were never told. The Colombian people never knew...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Alfonso finishes his speech in reminding the other participants that the Colombian people were never told of how the large landowners got their land. His speech with the two interruptions really brought the discussion back to a high level of deliberation.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (2)

What my partner over here said: each side wasted the opportunity of a way out. It's the first point of the political platform of the FARC: a way out to the conflict. And maybe the FARC did not take advantage. They spend two and a half years there. Everybody knows what happened there, today they speculate, but OK. Then, they did not take advantage, because anyway the change of the system, I'm telling you again, does not allow. The FARC also filed an inalienable point: the paramilitary system is over because what comes, the future of the paramilitary system is something tough. And sure, see that is why everything was a lie...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Iván comes back to his interruption of Alfonso and attempts to justify why nothing will ever change. As in most of his previous interventions, he is so incoherent that he pulls down deliberation again to a low level. It is not clear why as an ex-guerrilla he criticizes FARC that it did not take advantage of. Advantage of what? Then he contradicts himself in claiming that the other side, the paramilitary system, is over, but predicts at the same time that in the future the paramilitary system will be tough.

Explanation of transformative moment: Why did Iván not continue at the high level of deliberation that Alfonso had brought back? It is not for lack of trying. But he is a person who has the greatest difficulties to present his ideas in a coherent way. Such cases show the limits of the deliberative model; there are simply persons who simply do not have the intellectual skills to speak in a

coherent way. Iván belongs to this category. He is able to utter a single sentence in a clear way, as he did in interrupting Alfonso. But if it comes to elaborate, he gets lost.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (3)

No, what happened is that with that the whole world was cheated, do you understand?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Following not at the level of Alfonso, but at the level of Iván, Eduardo does not make much sense. It is not clear what he means by the whole world that is cheated. Is it the whole world of ex-combatants, the whole world of Colombia, or the whole world in a literal sense? Eduardo does not say.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (3)

The right, man...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Iván interrupts Eduardo and is in turn interrupted by Eduardo. Sometimes, a quick back and forth of interruptions may be very deliberative if it is clear what everyone says, because such interruptions could signal great mutual interest. This is not the case in the present situation, so that the level of deliberation remains low.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (3)

The AUC are united to them as well, do you understand? To the State. That's why they became snitches. I think that the "Mono" Mancuso⁶³ is another snitch.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: AUC stands for Colombian United Self Defense Forces, the main paramilitary organization. "Mono" (meaning blond) Mancuso was one of the major paramilitary leaders. Eduardo, a para-military himself, criticizes in harsh language his old organization and one of its main

⁶³ Salvatore Mancuso, a paramilitary leader extradited to the U.S. in May 2008.

leaders. It remains unclear why he is doing so, thus the level of deliberation remains low.

Hernando, ex-guerrilla (3)

Yes... a business...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Hernando, coming from the guerrilla side, continues the attack against the paramilitary stating that their close link with the government shows that they are just a business. Since this attack is not justified, the level of deliberation remains low.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (3)

No, no, no, that was a hoax. Forget about it...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Now the discussion takes a strange turn. Eduardo takes back what he said. It was just humor. To be sure, humor can have a useful deliberative function in relaxing the atmosphere, as we have seen earlier in the debate. But here Eduardo makes a strange joke, which is not helping deliberation in any way. Criticizing his own side in harsh words and taking it immediately back is bizarre and certainly not humor in a deliberative sense.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (3)

They said they continued to drive...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Iván is interrupted and can not say what he wants to say, thus the low level of deliberation continues.

Gloria, ex-paramilitary (3)

They kept committing crimes...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: It is unclear whom Gloria means when she says that they keep committing crimes. As an ex-paramilitary, does she

mean the guerrillas, the government or even her old group? With this lack of clarity, deliberation remains at a low level.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (3)

But what we notice in a space in which we go through an investigation, what the reporters did for example was say, sure! The demobilized collective population is very different...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Iván continues in an incoherent way at a low level of deliberation.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (3)

You know what I think? That “Mono” Mancuso and such. That the others sent drugs to the United States, what do you think. In those drugs everyone has a cover, and the ones who get fucked because of too many police, do you know what I mean man? Send a man to jail, motherfucker... Like “H.H” is screwed up with laughter. And he killed some bastards. Do you understand? One did kill a son...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Eduardo comes back to the story of “Mono” Mancuso and utters something incoherent about drugs using very vulgar language not helping to move the discussion forward in a deliberate way.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (3)

That’s what I’m telling you, in our reality, because we are neither commanders nor anything...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: As shortly before, Iván and Eduardo continue to interrupt each other so that neither can say what he wants to say. Although Iván is ex-guerrilla and Eduardo ex-paramilitary, these mutual interruptions do not seem to have anything to do with the deep divide between the right and the left. It just seems a failure of deliberative culture.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (3)

But more than either...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: see above.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (3)

We also (...) brother ... We were part of them, what are you going to say...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: see above.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (3)

We over here behind the scenes...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: see above.

Beatriz, ex-guerrilla (4)

The guerrillas had to... with drug dealers... Because the FARC does not want us to see them... The drug dealing in the FARC...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Beatriz continues the discussion about drugs and claims that FARC had to do with drug dealers, but did not want that this connection became public. Since Beatriz is herself an ex-guerrilla, this is a remarkable open statement, which goes to the heart of the Colombian conflict. With this admission, Beatriz potentially opens the discussion on the controversial issue of the linkage between FARC and drug dealers and in this way raises again the level of deliberation. Procuring relevant information is very much in a deliberative spirit.

Explanation of transformative moment: Together with Alfonso, Beatriz opened the discussion of the experiment, and this also in a deliberative way. Thus, she, too, established herself in a leadership role, which she uses now to bring the discussion back on track from a deliberative perspective.

Alfonso, ex-guerrilla (1)

We are funding the war ourselves. The war is financed by the people, because every day...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Alfonso challenges the information of Beatriz claiming that FARC financed the war by the people. Since both Beatriz and Alfonso are ex-guerrillas, this is a sensitive controversy, but Alfonso presents his different view in respectful terms so that deliberation stays at a high level.

Beatriz, ex-guerrilla (1)

Now we are convinced, and with the forgiveness of all, that we have been converted into snitches of the State...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Beatriz does not insist that her information is correct but speaks of forgiveness, presumably for the drug connection. This is an elegant way not to escalate the controversy with Alfonso. From a deliberative perspective, this seems appropriate because the different views were clearly stated but not unnecessarily repeated, thus not enflaming the atmosphere.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (2)

You think Frank Pearl earns \$500.000 or lives with \$500.000? If the demobilized have to reach \$150,000 ... And we do not live with that, then we have to look around...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Iván attempts to add to the controversy about the drug connection of FARC, but once again he is so incoherent that he pulls back deliberation to a low level.

Explanation of transformative moment: As I wrote before, it is not by bad will that Iván pulls down the level of deliberation, but he is intellectually so weak that he cannot put together several sentences in a coherent way.

Jorge, not identified as ex-guerrilla or ex-paramilitary (3)

Every time I come this here... be patient...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Late in the discussion, Jorge speaks up for the first time, but Beatriz immediately interrupts him so that deliberation stays at a low level.

Beatriz, ex-guerrilla (3)

But I didn't come to...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Beatriz in turn is interrupted so that she cannot say what she wants to say. Level of deliberation stays low.

Jorge, not identified as ex-guerrilla or ex-paramilitary (3)

But one day when I'm there... and said "no, is that you have to keep track of all these people, because suddenly we can get out of hand for safety reasons each one of them." That is what we speak about...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: When finally Jorge can say what he wants to say, it is incoherent so that the level of deliberation remains low.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (3)

Sure! Because you will... And you go there, to the jog place... (Stands up)

Interpretation of level of deliberation: As the discussion comes close to an end, there are increasingly longer periods of low level of deliberation. Here, Eduardo even stands up signaling that he has enough.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (3)

Answering the question, for there can be peace, brother, we... so we can bring peace we need opportunities to study, work...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Iván continues to be an active participant although he has difficulties to express himself. Here he is brief with a single sentence, which makes sense that in order to bring peace one needs opportunities to study and work. But he still does not give justification for his argument so that deliberation remains at a low level, but for him personally this is progress.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (3)

That's why I was saying that...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Iván interrupts Clara so that deliberation stays low.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (3)

And even what my partner says...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Hernando in turn interrupts Iván; deliberation continues to remain low.

Hernando, ex-guerrilla (4)

Pay attention how things are here: they want military service to be mandatory, but democracy is not mandatory. In other words, it is not mandatory to go to school and study, but to go into the military service is mandatory ... So far we can speak of the great problems we have here in Colombia, that is that in Colombia... the state wants to be helped, but they don't want to help us...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Hernando argues against mandatory military service and gives also a reason. For him democracy is not mandatory. As example, he gives schools in Colombia that are not mandatory. From this reasoning he concludes that military service should also not be mandatory in a democracy. This is a nicely developed argument bringing back deliberation to a high level.

Explanation of transformative moment: One would expect that in order to develop such a logical argument, Hernando would have higher education. But with only five years of education, this is not the case. Therefore, one should not a priori exclude that a low level of education does not allow the development of logical arguments. This is an encouraging finding for the participatory nature of deliberative democracy.

Alfonso, ex-guerrilla (1)

They want things to happen as in Nicaragua, begin recruiting these fourteen year old boys...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Alfonso is interactive, supporting the argument of Hernando strengthening his argument with similar developments in Nicaragua.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (2)

And when you turned yourself in, when I turned myself in...

Iván, ex-guerrilla (2)

Careful, careful, they are recording... (stands up)

Clara, ex-guerrilla (2)

Who cares! Who is this? I don't know. Who is this? I don't know. I am the one who is giving in myself. I don't care about anybody's life (she stands). The one who wants to turn in can turn in. And if I want to leave, then I go. Yes or no? But what do I do telling on all these people there? They are offended by one, and then they peel you.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: This speech act by Clara, briefly interrupted by Iván, brings the discussion again to a low level. She tries to tell the story why she turned herself in, that is to say, why she left the ranks of the guerrillas and was de-commissioned. Iván warns her that the tape is on. Then Clara turns to the two moderators and threatens to leave the experiment and

stands up. But she does not actually leave but continues in an incoherent way. She never gives the reasons why she gave herself in.

Explanation of transformative moment: As she did already twice before, Clara brings down the level of deliberation with a negative emotional outburst. It becomes more and more apparent that she is emotionally unstable. Such persons are a problem in a deliberative setting. It should also be noted, however, that in two other situations Clara has used humor in a deliberative way. The role that Clara plays in this group indicates that emotions have an ambivalent nature for deliberation. Whereas rationality hardly ever is detrimental to deliberation, it is much more difficult to determine the relation between emotions and deliberation. Susan Bickford stresses the importance of emotions for deliberation when she argues “knowing about people’s emotions ... is knowing something about how to communicate with them.”⁶⁴ In the case of Clara, it was not easy for other participants to deal with her strong emotions. When she expressed her emotions with humor, she helped to relax the atmosphere, contributing in this way to good deliberation. But when she expressed her emotions in a highly negative way, she took other participants aback freezing up the conversation. Contrary to Bickford, knowing the emotions of others does not always help to communicate with them.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (3)

And then one by the way, if you come in all manners with good faith, then no, they begin to put pressure on you. Hey, look, 40 million, 50 million...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: As several times before, Iván is again incoherent. He seems to brag that he got an unrealistic huge sum to turn himself in. Certainly not in any way a deliberative speech act.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (3)

You can’t believe what they offer me...

⁶⁴ Susan Bickford, “Emotion Talk and Political Judgment,” *Journal of Politics* 73 (2011), p. 1024.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Clara takes her turn to brag how much she was offered to turn herself in. Both Iván and Clara want to use humor, but this kind of humor does not help to move the discussion in a deliberative direction.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (3)

With the certificate or with the “coda” they put pressure on you: "Come, talk, if not you are not a guerrilla"

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Iván continues in an incoherent way to tell a story how he got under pressure.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (3)

After you stand straight, then you get crooked...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Again a statement that does not make much sense from a deliberative perspective.

Alfonso, ex-guerrilla (3)

A colonel or brigadier in Medellin has to terminate 250 rebels and have in jail 250 more. Where do they find these people?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Alfonso changes the topic but remains at a low level of deliberation. As ex-guerrilla, he worries how the army can kill and jail so many rebels in Medellin but does not link this question with the broad question under discussion, how to move forward with the peace in Colombia.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (3)

They take them alive! And then...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Eduardo attempts to continue with the story of Alfonso but is interrupted, so that level of deliberation remains low.

Hernando, ex-guerrilla (3)

Excuse me, but in Colombia...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: again an interruption.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (3)

I don't understand... No, but let me tell you something...

Iván, ex-guerrilla (3) (stands up)

Clara, ex-guerrilla (3)

I always tell my friends from the Sena, "You have to take advantage of this opportunity this is what God has given you...."...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Clara is interrupted by Iván who stands up signaling that he has enough of the discussion. Standing up is a nonverbal intervention that should also be noted. Clara is repetitive saying once again what she said several times before that one should take advantage of opportunities, which does not help to raise the level of deliberation.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (3)

Look, look, look...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: again an interruption.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (3)

This opportunity, why are you going to give more trouble? You do not know what may happen tomorrow ... If Bogota sinks, everybody sinks, and what are we waiting for? Everyone sinks! ...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Now Clara makes a grandiose statement that also does not help to raise the level of deliberation. The

statement that if Bogota sinks, everybody sinks is at such a nebulous level that it is almost meaningless and is certainly not a contribution where the discussion could continue at a high level of deliberation.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (3)

But pay attention, look...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: again an interruption.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (3)

But I cannot get harmed, that because you didn't study I don't study either...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Clara becomes increasingly confusing. It is unclear why she cannot be harmed. While earlier in the discussion, she declared that she wants to study, now she says that if others do not study she will not study either, not giving any reason for this connection.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (3)

Look, do you know why they kill us? Because there is not (...) enough. Do you understand how it is? ...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Eduardo as ex-paramilitary asks the question why they kill us. It is remarkable that he seems to include also the ex-guerrillas. But he does not give any answer so that the level of deliberation remains low.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (3)

You see what I'm saying...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Since Eduardo does not reply to Clara, she wonders now whether others understand what she is saying. She makes no effort to clarify her position so that level of deliberation continues to be low. Moderators become aware that discussion is going nowhere. While as a rule,

they do not intervene; here they attempt to encourage participants to come to some conclusions and to continue the discussion for a few more minutes. One of the moderators puts this encouragement into the following words: So we can keep talking... a pause, a pause... So that we can breathe ... No, the conversation is interesting, is a good conversation. It's good that we sit down again. The discussion is ten more minutes. So for that we listen, let's start closing ... In short, proposals, ideas about what needs to happen in this country, what to do in this country to have peace someday.

Hernando, ex-guerrilla (4)

In Colombia for there to be peace, investment in war has to stop and the investment has to be done to the dialogue...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Hernando formulates a clear conclusion of the discussion that in order to get peace investments in war have to stop and solutions have to be found by dialogue. He brings the discussion back to a high level of deliberation.

Explanation of transformative moment: The encouragement of the moderators to arrive at some conclusions of the discussion seems to have helped to bring the discussion back to a high level.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (1)

The corruption...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Although he is interrupted, Iván manages to add another item to the list of conclusions that corruption has to stop. In the present summary context, adding another item to the list of conclusions is sufficient for deliberation to stay high.

Beatriz, ex-guerrilla (1)

For there to be peace, poverty has to end...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Beatriz adds another conclusion that poverty has to end. Deliberation remains high.

Hernando, ex-guerrilla (1)

Poverty has to stop in society, and invest in dialogue...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: In an interactive way, Hernando support Beatriz that poverty has to stop, and he reinforces his argument that solutions need to be found by dialogue. Deliberation remains high.

Beatriz, ex-guerrilla (1)

In this country there will never be peace. Because the hierarchy of the parties never lose. And it is not convenient for the state that these groups are gone...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Although in her previous statement, Beatriz offered the conclusion that peace is only possible if poverty is gone, she now warns that those high up in the power elites will never give up power. There seems to be a contradiction between the two statements of Beatriz. The two statements, however, express her authentic feelings, on the one hand the longing that poverty ends, on the other hand the realization that this will not happen any time soon. With this complex view, she keeps deliberation at a high level.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (1)

I do believe that the only way to peace is socialism...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Reacting to Beatriz, Iván offers the conclusion that socialism is the only way to peace. He implies that socialism could take care of poverty. In this concluding discussion, Iván offers for the second time in a clear way items to the list of conclusions, while in several of his earlier interventions he was very incoherent. The problem for Iván is that he has great difficulties to put several sentences together in a coherent way,

while he makes sense when he limits himself to a single sentence. Thus, he keeps deliberation at a high level.

Hernando, ex-guerrilla (1)

Look, maybe the State can do it... diminish war, not end it.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Hernando continues at a high level of deliberation in questioning the goal to be pursued in Colombia. In a reasonable way, he wonders whether the realistic goal is not to end war but to diminish it.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (1)

A change in the system! I think it can help a lot to...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: After having suggested a change to socialism before, he reinforces his argument that this would mean a change in the system. Deliberation stays high.

Beatriz, ex-guerrilla (1)

That's it, socialism! Just put another regime...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: The discussion now really flows in an interactive way with Beatriz supporting Iván that an entire change in the system is necessary and that a change to socialism is the solution.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (1)

I believe that Communism did not work either ... I think that socialism helps us because it is always Venezuela, the richest country here, on this side...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Iván no longer gives long speeches but keeps himself short and thus makes sense. Here, he makes the clear argument that communism has failed and that Venezuela with its socialism is rich and therefore should be taken as example. Deliberation stays high.

Fernando, ex-paramilitary (1)

Everyone gets broke, everyone ends up with no money at all...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Fernando continues the discussion in an interactive way and disagrees with Iván that everyone gets broke. The implication is that even socialism as in Venezuela does not work. Fernando expresses his disagreement with respect. Deliberation stays high.

Beatriz, ex-guerrilla (2)

Noooo! See, the poor don't starve. What happens is that the rich, for me, take away from the poor. At least that is what Chavez does. Here whom? Who?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Beatriz, who in her last statement supported a systemic change to socialism, now makes a confusing statement, lowering the level of deliberation. Emphatically, she begins to exclaim "no", but it is unclear with whom she wants to express disagreement. With regard to Venezuela, she says on the one hand that the poor do not starve, but then she claims that under Chavez the rich take away from the poor. And then she refers to Colombia with an incoherent reference to whom and who. From this statement, it remains unclear what kind of socialism Beatriz wants, obviously not the one of Chavez, but which one? She does not say.

Explanation of transformative moment: The discussion now goes over the head of participants. Terms like socialism and communism are mentioned without any definitions. Comparisons with Venezuela become problematic. After all, ex-combatants are not trained in comparative politics. Therefore, it is not surprising that the discussion becomes confusing, certainly in the speech act of Beatriz.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (3)

And now, a while ago you're showing your own self...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Eduardo does not bother to continue the discussion about socialism, communism and comparisons with Venezuela, but attacks Beatriz on a personal level without being specific. A speech act with a very low level of deliberation.

Beatriz, ex-guerrilla (3)

Who gives you a house here?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Beatriz does not reply to the personal attack of Eduardo but brings the housing market into the discussion, but without anything specific. Deliberation remains low.

Fernando, ex-paramilitary (3)

Socialist...

Interpretation of deliberation: Fernando throws in the term socialist, but it remains unclear whether he complains that others in the group are socialists or whether he himself advocates a socialist position. Deliberation stays low.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (3)

I say one thing. I support... if I work a certain time of my day to have two houses, why will a guy be able to say "then... my regimen says you have a lot. I'll take away one of your houses and give it to someone who does not have one?" Of the houses, cars, of the ordinary, of a decent life, and more in a country like Colombia that... But beware! People misunderstand because that's not the idea of socialism. The idea is that everyone, everyone, have a house first. If there is for two? So my brother ... Because there are people that work hard, and studies and works and in the socialism has two homes...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Iván changes back from short interventions to a long one and has the usual problem to articulate his ideas.

He has again many fillers so that it is difficult to follow his thread of thinking. He tries to develop what he means by socialism: When nobody takes a house away from someone else who has two houses, but everybody has a house to begin with or even two houses. This is quite a confusing dream world. The level of deliberation remains low.

Fernando, ex-paramilitary (3)

Something that happened in Venezuela. Ready, Chavez came and took away cattle from the ones who had more.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: The statement of Fernando that Chavez took away cattle from the ones who had more, does not help to bring back the discussion to a high level of deliberation. To evaluate the situation in Venezuela and to draw lessons for Colombia seems a most difficult task.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (3)

The ones on the outside...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Iván is interrupted so that deliberation remains low.

Fernando, ex-paramilitary (3)

What did the people who didn't have anything do? They ate it all and now Venezuela has to export from some other place...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Fernando continues his story of Venezuela but does not succeed to make more sense. He seems to mix up import and export; if people in Venezuela eat up everything themselves, they would have to import more and not to export. This is a good example of how unfamiliarity with technical terms harms deliberation.

Beatriz, ex-guerrilla (3)

But imagine how many Colombians are in Venezuela who have home and that in this country they could not find one?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Beatriz continues comparisons with Venezuela but does not raise the level of deliberation. She claims that many Colombians have less difficulty to find homes in Venezuela than in Colombia. She does not give evidence for his claim. Such cross-country comparisons are only useful from a deliberative perspective if they are supported by evidence.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (3)

I have a friend who has two houses...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Perhaps Clara wants to support Beatriz with her story of a Colombian friend who has two houses in Venezuela, but she does not say where the friend has two houses. Perhaps she is referring back to Iván who stated that with socialism all the people have one or two houses at the outset, but Clara does make an explicit reference to the earlier statement of Iván. Shortcuts are allowed from a deliberative perspective, but it must be clear what shortcuts mean. This is not the case for this statement of Clara.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (3)

But well, anyway the regimes...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: A pattern develops that Iván is often interrupted. Some of the participants seem to have enough of his long incoherent speeches. Iván is certainly deliberative in showing a high level of participation, but if this participation is often incoherent, this is a problem for deliberation.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (3)

Let's not be stupid, stop fucking around! If you work, motherfucker! Not that you... (slaps the table) Obviously!

Interpretation of level of deliberation: This is a statement very low on deliberation. With vulgar language and slapping the table he seems to make the argument that one should work. It is just an emotional outburst of frustration. Emotions can play a role in good deliberation, but they must help to make an argument that moves the discussion forward. Eduardo clearly fails on this account.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (3)

And look what she's telling you, that the... It's better over there...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Clara seems to refer to Venezuela but is not adding anything substantive to the discussion. Deliberation stays low.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (4)

Don't expect that the government to give away homes, work!

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Now in moderate tone, Eduardo repeats his earlier claim that everyone works. He justifies this claim with the argument that one should expect nothing from the government. Although Eduardo utters only a single sentence, he lays the groundwork on which the discussion could continue at a high level of deliberation. Philosophically speaking, he puts forward a very individualistic position.

Explanation of transformative moment: After his previous vulgar intervention, one would not have expected that Eduardo would come up so quickly with a deliberative statement. From the perspective of group dynamic, he was perhaps embarrassed by his earlier intervention and wanted to re-establish his reputation in the group.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (1)

That's what I'm saying, study and move on, stop waiting for someone! That the day you least expected this ends and good luck...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: In an interactive way, Clara supports Eduardo in his individualistic position that one should not wait for the help of others but take care of one's personal fate. Deliberation stays high.

Beatriz, ex-guerrilla (1)

Let's see now, stop...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: It is certainly not deliberative how Jorge interrupts Beatriz. But Jorge is so eager to answer Eduardo and Clara so that the discussion continues to flow in a very interactive way. It should also be noted that Beatriz does not complain to be interrupted so that overall deliberation remains at a high level.

Jorge, not identified as ex-guerrilla or ex-paramilitary (1)

But hear me out partner. How can you say that we have to take advantage and study, when they don't give me where to study. For example I did, I studied maintenance and ensemble of computers, I wanted to keep on studying, and they didn't support me on that. I studied for six month, didn't learn anything. So what I'm I going to take advantage of, partner, of that?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: As just mentioned, Jorge is very interactive. He does not agree at all with Eduardo and Clara, but he expresses his disagreement in a respectful way. With his personal story he argues in an effective way that sometimes all effort to study does not lead anywhere. Philosophically, he takes a counter position to Eduardo and Clara emphasizing the aspect of solidarity that sometimes help from others is necessary

Clara, ex-guerrilla (1)

For example, it's that...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: The interactivity of the discussion picks up with frequent interruptions showing eagerness to react to what others said. From a deliberative perspective such interruptions are appropriate, as long as they are not rude and the interrupted speaker does not complain. Therefore, deliberation remains high.

Gloria, ex-paramilitary (1)

Is there equality? Do you see that there is no equality? They give primary school. They give a high school. Do they give university? No university is given to us ... a postgraduate study...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gloria continues the conversation about the opportunities to study. She acknowledges that at the level of primary and high school such opportunities exist, but she complains that for her with 12 years of education no further opportunities exist. This is a relevant story in the present context so that deliberation stays high.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (1)

I'm telling you today... come and... I'm telling you today... look... you...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Clara is again interrupted, but after a one-word interruption by Gloria she can tell her story. Deliberation stays high.

Gloria, ex-paramilitary (1)

University...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gloria seems intent to continue the story of university education, but does not mind that Clara can now speak. These interruptions are civilized so that deliberation stays high.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (1)

I will hand out food everywhere ... Well, there goes the black girl with her car. She is working in a good restaurant in the hotel Tequendama ... I'm earning like what? Five million pesos a month. Ah! That is my aspiration

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Clara has said many times before that she want to follow an individualistic philosophy finding her own way. Now she goes a step further and tells about her plans to go into the food business. This personal story helps to illustrate her general philosophical argument.

Deliberation stays high.

Eduardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

You can go as bodyguard, there...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Eduardo makes a good-natured joke that does not disrupt the high level of deliberation.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (1)

Oh, no... "husband is what I found"

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Clara responds with an equally good-natured joke. Deliberation stays high.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (1)

The key is education, as I said ... There are times ... One is here studying what is not for you. There where it feels pleasing that is the food, and the taste...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Iván attempts to continue the conversation about education. He gives his personal story that he often realizes that studying is not for him. Half-jokingly, he says that pleasing food is more to his liking than studying. During the entire experiment, Iván had often difficulties to put his arguments in coherent terms. As the experiment

comes to an end, he seems to feel the need to explain that he has difficulties to study. This is a touching story of someone who is aware of his intellectual limits. From a deliberative perspective, telling this story is appropriate.

Gloria, ex-paramilitary (1)

They told me “study at the UNAC”. And I no... about business and there is nothing. There is nothing! I want to study at Santo Tomas Tax Audit, but since it does not belong to the Ministry it does not have.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gloria continues to tell her story to find opportunities for further university education. Deliberation stays high.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (1)

In the ESAP, partner, if it is demobilized is being fought today, for example we find ourselves that the ESAP university has an agreement in which... a decree: “those who demobilize have a scholarship in the ESAP” but that was declared when the M-19, as has not been revoke then we find...”continue to this area”, and the demobilized is from the guerrilla. Then we went with some fellows from the AUC and they did not admit them because... so no, this is excluding, here we are in only one combo. Right now one from AUC was admitted to entry, but to study an undergraduate. They might look towards postgraduate studies. The important thing here is that networks are generated... because ultimately a contribution to peace is from home, within you, and from there on it is very tough. Let’s leave the weapons socialists...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: In his usual rumbling way, Iván also tells his story about the difficulties to find opportunities to study. He ends the speech act with a call for the ex-guerrillas to leave the weapons. From a deliberative perspective, it is a positive sign that Iván speaks up so often, although he has difficulties to express himself. Deliberative theory should not be elitist in evaluating only elegant speech acts in a positive way. People with speech impediments also have a right to speak up.

Clara, ex-guerrilla (1)

Oh no! That is very bad. No, return no!

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Clara, like Iván also an ex-guerrilla, emphatically supports him that they should not return to the fighting. Deliberation stays high.

Iván, ex-guerrilla (1)

An option, because we cannot allow them to continue to abuse us any more...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Ironically, it is inarticulate Iván who has the last word in the experiment showing one last time his eagerness to speak up. He is interactive with Clara reinforcing his position that they should not go back to war. He gives as reason, that they do not wish to be abused anymore by the war situation. So the discussion ends at a high level of deliberation.

Summary explanation of transformative moments

(a) Transformative moments from high to low levels of deliberation

The discussion in this group began at a high level and ended at a high level. In between, there were ten situations where deliberation dropped to a low level. Having given explanations for each of these transformative moments, I now attempt to present these explanations in a summary overview. One situation that can easily lead to a transformative moment from a high to a low level of deliberation is when actors address a question that goes over their heads. This was the case when they attempted to draw lessons from Venezuela to Colombia and brought in also Cuba. The key issues were how to define socialism, to what extent Venezuela had a socialist regime, how well Venezuela is doing, and whether lessons from Venezuela

are applicable to Colombia. These are complex questions that belong to the field of comparative politics. So it is not surprising that the discussion got quickly to a low level of deliberation with conceptual confusion and unsystematic anecdotal evidence.

A drop to a low level of deliberation can also occur for opposite reasons when the issues are very concrete at a personal level. This situation occurred when a participant told his story that he had been put to jail and was then asked by other participants for the reason why he was put to jail. This made him tense and uncomfortable, and he finished his story in an erratic way, thus lowering the level of deliberation. This case shows that personal stories may easily get out of hand, disrupting the flow of a deliberative conversation.

A third reason for a drop in the level of deliberation is when an actor is intellectually incapable to put sentences together in a coherent way. Iván is the extreme case for such situations. It happened five times that he pulled down the level of deliberation in this way. He was one of the most active participants, which gives him a good grade for deliberation since participation is an important element for deliberation. He was also able to make clear one-sentence statements. But when he tried to elaborate and to justify his arguments, he tended to become very incoherent. Other participants were then taken aback not knowing of how to continue the conversation. People like Iván are a real problem for the deliberative model. They are respectful and full of good will but disrupt the flow of the discussion with incoherent statements. The only remedy is better education in rhetorical skills for people like Iván.

A fourth situation where there is a transformative moment from a high to a low level of deliberation is when an actor has all of a sudden an outburst of disrespectful behavior using vulgar language against other participants. There were three such situations all caused by Clara. In none of these cases was the woman provoked by other participants. She acted in an erratic way obviously working out some internal psychological problems. Like intellectually incoherent actors as described above, emotionally unstable persons are also a problem from a deliberative perspective.

(b) Transformative moments from low to high levels of deliberation

An important factor causing a transformative moment from a low to a high level of deliberation is the existence of deliberative leaders. In this group, there were two such leaders who took the floor at the very beginning of the discussion at a high level of deliberation. In this way, they established themselves as deliberative leaders. When later in the discussion, the level of deliberation remained low, meandering without clear direction; these two leaders took several times the initiative to bring back the discussion to a high level of deliberation.

A second important factor helping to raise the level of deliberation is the telling of a personal story. In the previous section, however, we have seen that a story can also cause the level of deliberation to drop. So it depends very much on the kind of story that is told. We have seen that it may be even the same story that has different effects on the level of deliberation, depending of how the story is told. In the previous section, we have discussed a participant who told the story that he was put to jail and continued in an erratic way when asked for the reason, thus lowering the level of deliberation. Now there was a second situation where a participant told the story that he, too, was put to jail. But this time, he told the story in a different way. He did not wait for someone to ask him for the reason that he was put to jail. Immediately, he gave himself the reason, namely that he had no opportunities because of all the corruption and social injustice in the country. In this way, he led the discussion in an efficient way from his personal story to general societal problems, thus raising the level of deliberation. In the deliberative literature, there is a great controversy whether personal stories are compatible with deliberation. The empirical evidence from this group shows that the answer depends on the kind of story and how a story is told.

A third cause for the level of deliberation to rise is the use of humor. Here again, however, it depends on the kind of humor. There was a case of inappropriate humor, when an ex-paramilitary criticized with vulgar language the leaders of his old organization and immediately afterwards said that this

was meant as a hoax and one should forget about it, which was not perceived as funny and did not get any laughs. But there was also a case of appropriate humor from a deliberative perspective, when a woman joked that those who sin in silence should not attempt to silence her when she wants to speak up. She got laughs for this humor, which helped to loosen up the atmosphere for the further conversation. In the deliberative literature it is controversial, whether humor has a place in deliberation. Like for the use of stories, here, too, it depends on the kind of humor and the context in which a particular humor is used.

Although personal stories and humor sometimes helped to rise the level of deliberation, rational arguments sometimes also played a role. A good example is the participant who argued that because in Colombia schools are not mandatory, military service should not be either. He presented this argument in purely rational terms without using personal stories or humor. So deliberative scholars should not go overboard in stressing the importance of stories and humor; the Habermasian argument that rationality is important for good deliberation still keeps its relevance. In this particular case, it is remarkable that the person making the rational argument has only five years of schooling. Therefore, one should go away from the assumption that only actors with high education have the skills to make logical rational arguments.

From the perspective of group dynamics, there was a noteworthy situation leading to a transformative moment from a low to a high level of deliberation. A participant used very vulgar disrespectful language keeping the discussion at a low level of deliberation. Shortly afterwards, he presented his argument in moderate terms changing from wolf to lamb. A plausible explanation for this change is that he was embarrassed and wanted to re-establish his reputation in this group. Therefore, there may be interesting feedback processes among various speech acts of the same actor.

Chapter 2: Transformative moments in group 2

Majority of ex-paramilitaries in group composition.

Unanimous decision required at end of discussion.

Codes after the name of each speaker for the respective speech act:

- (1) The speech act stays at a high level of deliberation.
- (2) The speech act transforms the level of deliberation from high to low. (These speech acts will be set in bold letters.)**
- (3) The speech act stays at a low level of deliberation.
- (4) The speech act transforms the level of deliberation from low to high. (These speech acts will be set in bold letters.)**

Moderator

What has to happen in Colombia, what do you propose, in order to reach peace in the future?

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

Firstly I'd like to identify a priority regarding this fact. I think it is time we have a national general assembly where all economic, social and political groups take part in to reform the constitution to fit it into a real and legal framework in order to get a genuine participatory democracy. That is my first idea. There are many more but that was an opinion I wanted to put forward.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo, at a high level of deliberation answered the question put by the moderators at a high level of deliberation.

He puts a concrete proposal on the table – a national General Assembly- and even mentions what the consequences would be –a more participatory democracy. Another deliberative aspect that is worth noting is his announcing that it is only a first idea that many more can come, foreshadowing an interactive pattern. Arturo, restricting himself to a single idea, is not monopolizing the discussion, offering others the chance to speak.

Bernardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

I think it would be easier if there were equal conditions for everyone. Then, if my thoughts were different from others' ideas regarding any kind of situation, it would be ideal that the opposing party and I would reach an agreement in order to get a better solution.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bernardo's remark is astonishingly deliberative as it not only answers the question posted, but also builds upon Arturo's idea, adding the "equal condition" aspect, which certainly stands at the heart of deliberative theory. He argues that having a quality in the discussion will lead to consensual better solutions, which sounds very Habermasian.

Camilo, ex-paramilitary (1)

There is something, it would be important to take into consideration people from the lower end of the social status, not only people of the higher end. In politics, for example, for official appointments. In lower classes, there are people that also have the knowledge, the capabilities. We also need to take into consideration people from the lower end of the social spectrum. That is why things don't work well.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Camilo clearly stays at a high level of deliberation. It is particularly impressive how he takes up the issue of equality from the previous speaker and elaborating on it. He says that "things" don't work because people at the lower end of the social spectrum are not given the opportunities in politics or as officials in the public administration. If people

would recognize that there is knowledge and capacities in them, “things” would certainly change. Although we can easily guess what Camilo means by “things”, in a purely deliberative scheme, it would have been better if he had explained what exactly he means by it. This slight deficiency doesn’t distract from the fact that overall the speech act remains at the high level.

Diego, ex-paramilitary (1)

One thing that could change is also education. If people could have access to education, things would change.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: The discussion remains at a high level of deliberation, as Diego adds education as another important element for “things” to change. He elaborates more and clearly says that it is access to education the issue that needs to be addressed. Just as the previous speaker he refers to “things” without defining what he means. At first sight we could say that he is not making any effort to define what “things” are, but by not defining it, at this early stage he is keeping the discussion open and not restricting it too prematurely, what seems positive from a deliberative perspective. Second, he is being interactive as he is using the same word “things” used by the previous speaker. This is a clear sign of recognition.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

That is the essence of belligerence and self-destruction of a nation, a country: the lack of education. When I used to fight against government, I remember that power was easier to get in those areas where the institutions were absent, where there was no state. We replaced the state those power figures and became the legitimate authorities. Some of us then played different roles as mayor, lawyers, doctors, transportation officers—we issued mobility permits, etc. I realized that children on those places grew seeing their future will be to follow their parents’ footprints. And what were their parents’ jobs? drug commissioner, drug laboratory worker. Amongst this illegal and poor reality where their parents’ work for traffic dealers and where there were no public services that let them improve their life style although it is well known that

those territories are rich in terms of natural resources. If you don't educate these kids, they will become the same as their parents, and consecutively they will repeat this socio-cultural legacy. But if those children have the opportunities to go to the school, to attend high school and later on, university, they will become real leaders and representatives of their own communities, they will be real engineers, real doctors, they will be able to have access to a public service and to democracy.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo's long speech has undoubtedly no shortcomings with regard to deliberation. It is not only well argued but it has some important deliberative features. His own personal story serves as a vivid illustration of what happens when state is absent in some distant places. He builds upon the issue of education that has been brought up by the previous speaker. In elaborating on the issue of education and opportunities for children, he also offers an emotive description of how children in those far-away areas see no other future but to become involve with drug trafficking related jobs. Arturo does a good job in keeping the level of deliberation high.

Ernesto ex-paramilitary (1)

There is another important point regarding the fact that education it is not only a public issue related to schools; it starts at home. If at home, children are told that they are not capable, that public and high positions are only for the upper and influential classes, kids are deprived of their big aspirations, of the thrive to wish for something better. That's why almost a hundred percent of lower classes- although we shouldn't classify ourselves like that- we are being classified too much. At least two or one percent will succeed in pursuing their dreams by their own enthusiasm; the rest just let society limit them take them, wherever it wants. For example, I liked what he said. He is about to finish his professional career. It shows that it is up to each one to decide, not in what people want you to do. There are few that fight for their dreams. This has progressively eliminated the idea that people who combat in illegal groups are neglected, but that also has happened because we have changed our thinking; we have kicked out the idea of our mind about social rejection and

we started to get more and more involved into the society dynamics because of the education opportunities. However, it cannot be ignored that children do tend to do what they see around. I know of a place where there was a drug-selling place and as kids grow up and see that people make a living out of that, they want to do the same. For example, I remember that a long time ago in my home town there was a powerful drugs trafficker and my younger sister said that she wanted to be like him and she did not want to study because she thought it was necessary to be important. Fortunately now she is going to school and it has just been possible because education starts in home.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: As the previous speaker, he certainly continues at a high level, or even a higher level. In referring in an interactive way to the previous speaker, he broadens the discussion on participation and education. Being himself of a low level of education, he gives a very sophisticated analysis of why people of lower classes stay where they are. Parents of low class children tell them that they have no chance in life. From this analysis he concludes that parents of lower classes must be trained not to tell their children to be in a hopeless situation. He even goes further recommending to parents of lower classes not to tell their children they are in a lower class. As a hopeful sign, he mentions his sister that thanks to her family got out of drug trafficking.

Fernanda, ex-guerrilla (1)

I agree with the opinion given by him. I do think that education is an essential issue, but I do not refer to education as academic instruction, knowledge. I also consider that values are very important. In order for the country to change there should be a kind of human transformation and this is more cultural and personal. There are many people who come from the bottom with a leftist discourse and when they have the chance to do something for their people, for their country, they change. They change for the bad, not for the good. People who come from the bottom change when they come to power.

These past days, I was talking about Lucho Garzón⁶⁵, somebody who came from the bottom, who was a union member; he also had to act as the mayor and exercise authority. He was hard in some public disturbance situations. I don't know whether that is good or bad. But sometimes they forget what they have been. Sometimes it is good to forget. But if somebody comes to power because of a particular discourse, they should keep it. Please don't misinterpret me. I am not saying that it was good that Lucho sent the police to street protesters. For example, Michelle Bachelet, she forgot what she lived during the military regime. When Pinochet died, they paid him military honors in his funeral and she, as president of Chile, had to forget what she had lived through.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Fernanda keeps the discussion at a high level of deliberation as she continues with education and even adds a new aspect of values, as she states that a real change in our country requires more than just academic instruction and knowledge-based learning; that it would need a human and cultural transformation. With this argument, she introduces what I think is the core of her speech: that people in public offices should remember where they come from and why they were elected. She offers two examples to illustrate her point, she says that Lucho Garzon, a former mayor of Bogota, who came from the left and was a well-known union leader, in many occasions forgot his origins. It is worth noting though that she does state this in a very deliberative fashion, as she is capable of understanding of why in his new official role, he sometimes take a different perspective from the values from his leftist origins. With her other example, she even broadens the discussion beyond the national border in discussing in a similar way Michelle Bachelet, who with a left background became president of Chile.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (2)

That is a dignity and you don't lose it. What happens is when we talk with the antithesis of one's ideas, if I come from the extreme right and I

⁶⁵ Luís Eduardo Garzón was a former mayor of Bogotá (2004-2007), a left-wing Colombian political activist and former union leader.

have in front somebody from the extreme left there is a kind of a pattern of conduct that I have identified. One pattern that I have seen is the lack of education. That is the social poison in Colombia right now. That is self-destroying us. But beyond that lack of education, to make that list even bigger is how we are going to search for peace in Colombia, through democracy? First, with that national summit I am talking about. Second, let's make a consensus, a collective sharing of ideas where we can respectfully share our ideas. When we can't reach agreement is when power comes and power destroys everything. When people get to power, they use it for their own benefit. The social pyramid according to Kelsen, an Austrian author, is divided in three groups: the lower or worker class, the middle class and the upper class, which is the minority. Then, how and when can we get to a consensus when people come from very different backgrounds?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Although in his two previous interventions Arturo stayed at the high level of deliberation, this time he lowers the discussion to a low level. He just tries to grasp issues that go over his head. He talks in an incoherent and repetitive way about complex national issues such as the necessity of consensus and power. In this way he is confusing the debate not moving it forward.

Explanation of transformative moment: the two previous speakers, Ernesto and Fernanda, as we have seen, kept the discussion at an unusual high level of deliberation. In keeping up this high level Arturo just overreaches himself. The reference to the social pyramid of Kelsen comes out of nowhere and is not adding to the argument that he tries to make. In this speech act, Arturo seems to have lost himself.

Fernanda, ex-guerrilla (3)

Here in Colombia, everything is stratified absolutely everything is classified. Everywhere you go, in school, in university, even in the groups we used to belong. We were stratified there... I don't feel quite right with it.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: After Arturo has brought down the discussion to a low level of deliberation Fernanda is not able to lift it again to a high level. In her very brief statement, she only repeats what others said before, that Colombian society is strongly stratified and that this should be changed but she does not offer in this statement any ideas how this could be done.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (3)

I can provide an explanation for that. Stratification is an administrative and juridical figure. Because it is not fair that we all pay the same. That is why it is an administrative figure. Socially, it is the discrimination we subjected to. There are neighborhoods in the northern part of Bogota –most affluent one- where the streets are closed. Then I am not a person, I am not a citizen, I am not a human being, I am not Bogotan, though I am not from Bogota, I am Colombian.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo certainly is keeping the level of deliberation low, as he seems to have lost track of the main subject of the discussion. He seems to just want the attention of others. He doesn't let Fernanda finish her intervention and steps in to provide an explanation of what stratification means. As we know, interrupting is contrary to the deliberative spirit and so is the monopolizing of the process. He does refer briefly to the issue of social discrimination that is certainly linked to the recurring theme of stratification, but does it in a way that is not moving the discourse forward.

Ernesto, ex-paramilitary (4)

That is one of the things I used to say when I was young, I said well if I am Colombian, I am able to go everywhere I want. Later, when I started to live the conflict, I realized that there were places where people would tell you “go”, “go away from here, we don't know you”. You knew that you were in danger. When I came to Bogota, I was with a cousin and a

friend of mine in one of the northern and wealthy neighborhoods, we were kind of lost. Then the police came, at first they asked us what we were doing, as my friend couldn't respond, at the end police said they didn't want to see us around anymore as neighbors had called to let them know that there were some strange and suspicious people and they didn't want you here. Stratification, as he says, is indeed something legal, juridical, and it does refer to the fact that some people can't afford to pay the same as others-. What I feel is what you said about stratification is more than levels 1, 2 or 3 of SISBEN⁶⁶, is the discrimination, that is the hard thing.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Ernesto moves the discussion back on track. He interactively and deliberatively picks up just where Arturo left it –at the point that being Colombian, one should have the right to move everywhere, and he introduces his personal story. He states that when he started to feel the Colombian conflict in his day-to day reality, he was struck by the fact that sometimes when people say, “go away, you don't belong here”, they mean it. He offers a personal example of this kind of situation in a recent event in affluent vicinity in Bogotá, when he was approached by the police and explicitly told that neighbors don't want him and his friends around. Based on this story, he nicely continues to make his point that stratification goes beyond the administrative and bureaucratic aspects and touches upon social discrimination.

Explanation of transformative moment: Ernesto's intervention is a clear example of how a personal story sometimes –not always- serves the purpose of moving along the discussion to a more deliberative level. Ernesto tells the story in a way that corresponds to the argument of Sharon R. Krause that well told stories “enrich citizens' reflection on public issues and thereby improve deliberation.”⁶⁷

⁶⁶ SISBEN, Sistema de Identificación de Potenciales Beneficiarios de Programas Sociales. A governmental information system that helps to identify beneficiaries of social programs.

⁶⁷ Sharon R. Krause, *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation*, Princeton University Press, 2008, p. 122.

Bernardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

My case was in Cartagena, in a neighborhood like the north here in Bogotá, where a group of demobilized had been placed, people started to appear in the news, stating they wanted us out because their kids were in danger.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bernardo interactively acknowledges Ernesto's argument about discrimination against demobilized people, and without unnecessarily belaboring on this point he offered his own personal story in Cartagena as a vivid example of it. By doing so, he keeps up the high level of deliberation.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

I have a question for everyone. We all represent different families, different people, different localities, different cities, different identities, and the question here is how we can all –poor and rich people, paramilitaries, guerrillas, demobilized, everybody...- contribute to live together in peace? For example there is an initiative that seeks to reform article 11 of our Political Constitution– because death penalty is forbidden, to accept the death penalty of rapists and abusers of minors under the age of 14, what do you think about that? What can we do about it? There are some options being discussed, chemical castration and life prison, among them. Which opportunities would you give to those people?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo keeps the high level of deliberation by respectfully announcing he has a question for everyone. Before posing the actual question to the forum, he deliberately and accurately paraphrases the original query of the debate concerning peace in Colombia adding some specifics such as peoples' very different identities and backgrounds, which is a clear deliberative feature as it offers some light and makes people realize about the complexity of the issue at hand. He then presents as an example the then current debate around the constitutional

reform being discussed in order to punish child abusers and rapists with harder penalties and also ask people what they think should be done with these criminals. Although the overall tone and presentation of his statement keeps a high deliberative level, his example takes us a little aback as he doesn't establish a clear linkage between the subjects of building peace in Colombia among different identities and his example around the controversy surrounding the hardening of penalties for child abusers and rapists.

Gustavo, ex-paramilitary (1)

They will continue to do the same. They will continue to inflict harm. They may not leave a trace but one person that does such things won't change. I am in favor of life prison.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gustavo continues the discussion in an interactive and way, answering the question posed by Arturo and giving a reason of why he is in favor of the life prison option for child abusers. The overall level stays high though it might be important to note that, just as Arturo, Gustavo doesn't make any effort to establish a linkage between the themes of child abuse and Colombian peace nor does he make an explicit enquiry to try to find it.

Bernardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

Family is the nucleus of society. I see Colombia as a big family and if I make a mistake and my brother goes to my father and tells him to beat me, then we are not doing anything. What we have to do is to provide the mechanisms and the means for that person to be able to realize the bad things he is doing and completely change his behavior.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bernardo keeps the level high as he not only answers the question presented by Arturo but also offers a hypothetical example, which is a clear sign of a sound and solid deliberation process.

Arturo, 37, ex-guerrilla (1)

Rehabilitation.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Here Arturo acknowledges what Bernardo is saying in a very nice way. He offers him a technical word that his speech contains—rehabilitation, and helps the other participants by framing Bernardo’s intervention among the three original options presented –death penalty, life prison, or chemical castration. Needless to say, both features share a deep deliberative nature. Paraphrasing means he is listening and helping others understand and follow the thread of the discussion relates to participation, both essential to the deliberative process.

Fernanda, ex-guerrilla (1)

Those people are sick people. Rehabilitate them is very complicated. If the sickness were very serious, re-socialize them would be almost impossible.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Fernanda keeps the level high as she interactively answers the question and gives a reason for choosing the option presented.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

What opportunity would you give these sick people?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Once again Arturo displays his deliberative nature, as this intervention materializes what Jürg Steiner wrote in the dedication of his book, when he kindly wishes that his grandchildren “may always be curious about what others say.”⁶⁸ In the same way, Arturo is curious what other speakers would offer as opportunities. To be open to what others say is really the key of the deliberative agenda.

⁶⁸ Jürg Steiner. *The Foundations of Deliberative Democracy*. Cambridge University Press (2012).

Fernanda, ex-guerrilla (1)

I am not a psychiatrist or psychologist so I don't know what kind of treatment would be appropriate. But I am not in favor of death penalty or life prison, because the justice system in Colombia is not fair. Prisons are full of innocent people. Here we don't really know whether the right people are condemned. And what if an innocent person is put to death?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Fernanda keeps the high level of the discussion and displays some nice deliberative features. She starts by picking up the point raised by Bernardo about rehabilitation recognizing her limits to make an appropriate decision –not being a psychiatrist or psychologist. As to Arturo's question, she forcefully states that she is against life prison or death penalty and logically articulates and presents her reasons-mainly that Colombian Judicial System doesn't work as it should and therefore prisons are full of innocent people.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

We are not talking here about innocent people. We are talking of convincing proofs. We are assuming that if they find traces of DNA in their sperm. What would you do with someone who backslides for the third time? There are three options: chemical castration, death penalty and life prison.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo interactively responds to Fernanda's concerns acknowledging her point of innocent people being unjustly imprisoned. But he sets the agenda in a narrower sense that he wants to concentrate on rapists, where it is clear that they are guilty. He repeats his three options of dealing with such rapists and in a deliberative way he still leaves open which of these options is the best. We should also acknowledge however that he doesn't enter the merits of the issue of rehabilitation. In narrowing the discussion and setting the agenda, Arturo is evidently avoiding this new thread of rehabilitation. The issue of manners comes to my mind at this time. According to traditional books of manners, you mustn't directly contest something you don't agree with. You just let it pass

by. It is time to ask whether such behavior counts as good deliberation. My personal reading of what good deliberation is rather different. It is not a question of good manners in the traditional sense. Here I am of the opinion of André Bächtiger, who argues against deliberation's classical view as an exchange of arguments in a calm, polite and non-confrontational manner. He forcefully considers *Questioning, disputing, and insisting* as core but frequently overlooked and undervalued elements of a desirable and effective deliberative process. *Questioning* refers to a process of critical interrogation and cross-examination; *disputing* refers to a process of argumentative challenges and counterchallenges; *insisting* refers to a sustained process of questioning and disputing, inducing a thorough and rigid inquiry of the matter under consideration.⁶⁹ The overall level of the discussion remains high.

Fernanda, ex-guerrilla (1)

It all depends. When one hasn't been through that situation, it is easy to say something. Of course, one gets angry and can say, "kill him," "life prison" or "castrate him." That would create an even major problem. If that case happened to me with one of my daughters, or if a father offended because somebody did that to one of his daughters, he, and I, could be capable of killing the guy, before there is even a judicial guilty verdict, and that would generate an even greater problem.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: After Arturo's speech, Fernanda takes a fine turn and avoids a quick and definite answer. She nicely states that it is easy to talk about the issue of rape in abstract terms. Something very different would be to live through that specific situation with, for example, one of her daughters. In such circumstances, it is easy to come to a quick decision of castrating, imprisoning or even killing, without thinking of the consequences that could perfectly be a much greater problem. In this speech act, she shows ambivalence, which in my view is a very deliberative element.

⁶⁹ André Bächtiger, "On Perfecting the Deliberative Process: Questioning, Disputing, and Insisting as Core Deliberative Values," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington D.C., September 2-5, 2010.

In this respect, I am in agreement with Marli Huijer who is critical of “political leaders and citizens [who] prefer clear-cut positions to ambiguity.” Huijer sees ambiguity as a “huge accomplishment” for achieving deliberation.

Bernardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

Talking about an origin to achieving peace in Colombia, apart from this and regardless whether it a rapist, an assassin, a criminal, whatever disorder or wrongdoing might be, it would be important to determine the origin of that misconduct, to see what took him there, what made him do what he did?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bernardo keeps the discussion at a high level. He does an interesting job in establishing a linkage between the subjects of peace in Colombia and the current thread of rapists. He puts forward a specific and rather human minded proposal, when he forcefully argues for the need of taking each case on an independent basis—whether it is an assassin, a criminal, a rapist, and argues that one has to determine the source of each particular misconduct. It is indeed very deliberative, as he not only keeps the conversation open but also opens a new and promising line of debate.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

Whether it was pathological? Or Congenital?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo paraphrases what Bernardo has just said and by so doing he is keeping flowing at the high level of deliberation.

Camilo, ex-paramilitary (1)

There should be a special place for these people, where they could be treated for a while and determine what is exactly what is wrong with them. Yes, a prison, a prison. (In the latter part of his intervention, he is agreeing to an unrecognized voice in the back that mentions the word “jail”).

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Camilo continues the discussion in an interactive way in making a specific proposal that these troubled people should be assembled at a particular place, where they could be treated in a proper manner. This qualifies as a deliberative statement. An unspecified voice challenges him to say what this place should be and suggests that it should be a prison. Camilo continues to be interactive in responding to this unspecified voice agreeing with it. This agreement may have come prematurely as Camilo may not have thought about it so he does not give any reason why a prison should be the best solution for the general suggestion. Despite this weakness from a deliberative perspective the speech act can overall still be qualified as staying at the high level.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

I brought this example (the Garavito case) very objectively. I haven't been a victim, nor my wife or my kids but I brought up the case to make a contribution to the peace discussion in Colombia. I thought of this example because lately there was this huge controversy around the Garavito⁷⁰ case and the possibility that he could be released from prison because of his confession. Pirry⁷¹ recently stated that the moment Garavito was set free he would be massacred.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo keeps the high level of the conversation since he gives quite a detailed explanation of where his example came from. He is also stating that he brought this case up in order to contribute to the peace discussion in Colombia, though it is still not very clear what the linkage is.

Fernanda, ex-guerrilla (1)

In fact, in prison, he wasn't even under his name. It was later on when they realized that he was indeed Garavito.

⁷⁰ A Colombian serial killer who raped and killed 138-300+ young boys.

⁷¹ A well-known Colombian journalist

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Fernanda enters the discussion and offers some extra information about the Garavito case. She keeps the conversation open and stays at a high level of deliberation. Taken in isolation, this speech act may perfectly have been coded low in many respects –level and content of justification of arguments, for example, but when we look at Fernanda’s intervention in context, we can see that she does keep the level high providing useful information regarding the Garavito case, which may eventually lead to the opening of a new and promising line regarding the functioning of the judicial system in Colombia.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

People would say, and even worse those who were victims of parents of the victims, then what’s going to happen? How are we supposed to live in peace with such a subject that has already paid his debt with society? How are we going to accept him back?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo here interactively reacts not only to Fernanda’s actual wording but also to the emotional charge she brings upon, as he immediately connects her speech and presents to the audience what seems to be the core of his whole argument: if someone like Fernanda – an ordinary observer in the Garavito case, reacts like this, what could we expect from the parents of the victims in the Garavito case? In doing so, Arturo is making an important point that in order to speak about the building of peace in Colombia, it is essential to bring the debate down to reality, that there are real people involved, that we are talking about kids being killed, about mothers and families losing their loved ones. That the Colombian conflict is not abstract nor could it be treated only in abstract as it touches deeply into real people’s lives. In bringing in touching stories at the individual level, he adds an essential element to deliberation, a point that Sharon Krause makes from a philosophical perspective as we have already seen in

group 1 and earlier in this group, when she relates stories to “the cultivation of moral sentiment.”⁷²

Fernanda, ex-guerrilla (1)

And who didn't pay what he really had to pay...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Fernanda keeps the debate at a high level as she adds a point regarding the length of Garavito's imprisonment, which she considers to have been very short. Once again, this particular speech act standing alone would not have any deliberative value, but in the context it has.

Hilda, ex-paramilitary (1)

He will continue to commit all kind of crimes since it is a sickness.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Hilda enters the conversation for the first time and keeps the debate open making the point that if Garavito is released from prison, he will continue to commit all kinds of crimes as he is a sick person.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

We are so extremists and yet sometimes we criticize islamists, Hamas or those who kill themselves with a bomb. We systematically eliminated members of Union Patriótica, ever since Jaime Pardo Leal. Because they were the ideologists, the ones who thought, and we have to be afraid more of those who think than of those who carry the gun. We are so irreverent with dissidence and extremists with the opposition. We can't stand ourselves, and we are all Colombians. If you have leftist ideas and I come from the right, there will never be consensus about the need of violence. It is that simple. That is a never-ending subject.

⁷² Sharon R. Krause, *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation*, Princeton University Press, 2008, p. 122.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Here Arturo is able to fully present his argument in the most highly deliberative way. He clearly states the reason to have brought the *Garavito* case as an example, mainly because he wanted to make a strong point regarding the difficulties that achieving peace may involve. Certainly he did this in a highly sophisticated manner, as this story of Garavito is highly emotional and people immediately reacted to it. Phrases as “how are we going to take him back?”, “he had already paid his debt to society”, “even worse the parents of the victims”, and so on, have direct connotations to a reconciliation process in which people will have to learn to live with those who may have deeply hurt themselves or their families. While in some of the previous speech acts although they were sufficiently deliberative, the linkage with peace in Colombia was often sometimes tenuous. Here, however, Arturo brings the question of how to achieve peace in Colombia right back to center stage.

Bernardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

I don't think it is impossible. It is indeed difficult to get Colombian as a whole to live in peace. There is the issue we were talking about, the lack of education.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bernardo keeps the level high as he interactively reacts to the previous intervention and agrees that it would indeed be difficult to reach peace in Colombia. He goes even further from a deliberative perspective and brings some optimism and hope back to the conversation when he asserts that though difficult, it is not impossible.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

Childhood and children integrity in the places we controlled is an issue, as we would look at them as already having their future curtailed. I used to say that in order for those kids to learn their first vowels, they have to get out of here. We have to take them away of this region, of this particular *modus-vivendi*, otherwise they will become the drug-trafficker, etc. If we don't educate those people, it will become cyclical.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: In his previous speech, Arturo seems a little pessimistic as to the Colombian people's ability for reconciliation, since he considers them to be just as extremists as those living bombs you hear of in the Middle East. Here Arturo sees a light of redemption in education as the only means for our poor children in violent and isolated areas to break the vicious cycle they are trapped in. The level of deliberation stays high.

Hilda, ex-paramilitary (1)

The state should deliver the minimal opportunities for that education to exist. Those opportunities are not provided because there is much corruption in Colombia, too much... Colombia is a rich country, here a lot of money is received, and produced, illegal, but... The state corruption makes it impossible to give those people what they really need.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: The overall level of the debate remains high as Hilda is making a point as to the obligation of the state to provide for education. She even goes ahead and mentions corruption as a possible cause why the state is not fulfilling its obligations.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

Why in those areas there are no schools or hospitals? Because of corruption. Violence in Colombia, as well as the future of those kids, comes from the past, back from the early 40's where the National Front was constituted, and 4 years the conservatives and 4 years the liberals. Power was distributed among them.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Interactively and in a high deliberative spirit, paraphrases Hilda and goes back to the areas in Colombia where conflict is mostly felt –particularly the isolated and impoverished ones, and explicitly mentions how the social services -education and health, are the ones most affected by corruption. Needless to say, education and health are those public social services that have a real impact on people's quality of life.

Bernardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

At least there was an agreement... (Every one laughs).

Interpretation of level of deliberation: in the tone that Bernardo says this simple sentence he expresses a feeling of *oh well, Colombians are just Colombians, what can we all do about it*, and gets a loud laughter from everyone. This is a good example of using humor in a deliberative sense as advocated by Sammy Basu for whom, “humor provisionally suspends decorum.”⁷³ After all the heavy talk on rapists, corruption, and other ugly things, everyone in the room seems to be relieved by the tone in which Bernardo refers to Colombia and its history.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

That’s when the self-defense group of Manuel Marulanda was born (FARC). That’s the X-ray of history of violence in Colombia. That X-ray is as clear as the childhood of those kids for their future. It is that simple.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: After Bernardo’s intervention, Arturo comes back and rounds up his point about the linkage between the National Front and the origins of the guerrilla-particularly the FARC, movement. The level of deliberation remains high.

Fernanda, ex-guerrilla (1)

It is not only that they have the opportunity to study and they finish their high school and so. There are things that distract them. Sometimes, they might have schools to educate themselves. But they don’t have anything to eat.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Fernanda picks up the previous thread of education and going even further, she vividly portrays that not only is it important to provide educational opportunities, but also to have the supporting socioeconomic condition, and to avoid the “distractions” Fernanda talks of.

⁷³ Sammy Basu, “Dialogical Ethics and the Virtue of Humor,” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 7 (1999)

Although not expressly reacting to the previous speaker, Fernanda keeps the level high as she is going back to one of the open threads of conversation.

Bernardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

There is lack of opportunities...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bernardo nicely gathers Fernanda's point and frames it as lack of opportunities. In so doing, he keeps the level high. This is another good example where a speech act considered in isolation would be low with regard to the most deliberative elements. Taken in context, however, this speech act smoothly moves deliberation forward.

Fernanda, ex-guerrilla (1)

There are many distractions. There are many people who do want to get a professional education, but they don't have anything to eat, they have to go to school by foot, don't have money for copies. Those things may distract people and obviously they won't do as well in school.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Fernanda preserves the high level and reinforces her point by asserting that in order to do well in school, one has to have an encouraging environment.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

I want to denounce something here. Outside the Service Centers there are employers who come to hire people back into the armed groups. And some of us have flirted and have given positive responses to those invitations.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo takes a thought-provoking turn here, as he implicitly connects in an interesting way the lack of opportunities brought up by Bernardo, the lack of supportive environment mentioned by Fernanda and the fact that people are being hired back into the armed groups. In this way, Arturo opens a stimulating line of argumentation where the limits between causes and consequences of conflict fade, evidencing the

cyclical nature of these social phenomena. The discussion retains its high deliberative level.

Gustavo, ex-paramilitary (1)

In Cordoba, for example, we had psychosocial meetings every two weeks and they would come to hire each time.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gustavo agrees to Arturo's assertion and offers a concrete example, keeping the conversation flowing at a high level of deliberation.

Fernanda, ex-guerrilla (1)

And in Cordoba, they are killing...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Here Fernanda not only agrees to the information that people are going back to the illegal organizations, but also signals some more serious behaviors.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

And that is lack of opportunities... Another point to enlarge the list that it is already huge, almost infinite, of the necessary things to achieve peace in the Colombia we all love. Within the national summit and the consensus, which I talked about, there should be a special ruling regarding the means of production. Which are the means of production? Land, labor and capital, according to Marx. That is a beautiful theory in communism. If you read Marx's Capital, it is very nice how he talks about workers' class, about the means of production. Who should own the means of production? Here in Colombia, they are monopolized in the hands of the great economic groups, Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo, Carlos Ardila Lulle, Julio Mario Santo Domingo, and the Antioquia Entrepreneurial Syndicate... If we re-distribute wealth, then there will be more opportunities, more access to those means of production. There will no longer be a big land-owner class who will own the land, instead there will be lots of land owners that will exploit that land and

there will necessarily be an agrarian reform. Land in Colombia, that agrarian reform that is necessary but has been postpone for a long time.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo remains at a high level, as he makes a concrete proposal for achieving peace in Colombia. He goes back to his original idea of a National Summit and adds that one of the particular rulings it should have, would be that of a re-distribution of the means of production. Thereby, he reaches in a sophisticated way into Marxist literature.

Gustavo, ex-paramilitary (1)

I would like to say something: it is true that the state has a lot of failures but I do think it has tried to help and improve the situation, the problem is that people are not prepared enough; I have seen when people receive resources and benefits and they just take advantage of this and decide not to do anything. So, at the same time that the state helps the people, it has to educate them.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gustavo comes in to note that in spite of the state failures, it does try to help sometimes and people just take advantage of the programs and don't really move forward. He makes a point for more education, so people will really and truly benefit from those programs. The conversation remains open at a surprisingly high level for ex-combatants, and brings in another relevant point referred to the people's attitudes toward state help.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

Yes, here we are talking about education, about opportunities. But there is also corruption. Sometimes the state gives some money but officials take it and that money then goes to their private benefit. That is corruption. Remember the Trujillo massacre, they give at least 200 thousand millions for the moral compensation of the families and for housing, they didn't even built the basic structures of the houses. Then...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo reinforces his former point of education and opportunities and nicely connects it with the issue of corruption and specific actions of the individual public officers. He keeps the high level as he acknowledges Gustavo's point and gives a hands-on example with the money for the Trujillo massacre. Although makes time and again important contributions to a high deliberative level of the conversation, one may begin to wonder whether he is not beginning to monopolize the discussion too much. An important aspect of deliberation is that everyone has an opportunity to speak up. As Dennis F. Thompson puts it: "Equal participation requires that no one person or advantage group completely dominate the reason-giving process, even if deliberators are not strictly equal in power and prestige."⁷⁴ If we look at the overall structure of the discourse, Arturo has certainly spoken a great deal but so far it has not yet been so damaging to pull down the overall level of deliberation, because he is not rudely interrupting others.

Gustavo, ex-paramilitary (1)

There is not need to go that far. I don't remember in what article they were mentioning the large amount of subsidies that are supposed to be for us, for the demobilized. And we go and see that there is not even a 30% that really come into our hands.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gustavo interactively continues the discussion of corruption by providing another example of corruption that is even closer to the participants' realities. He indeed mentions how there could be some misuse of the money originally destined to the demobilization program. The discussion follows at a high level of deliberation, although the linkage to the peace in Colombia is more implicit than explicit. Gustavo could have made it clearer how corruption is hurting the ways to peace, but participants seem to have understood what he means.

⁷⁴ Dennis F. Thompson, "Deliberative Democratic Theory and Empirical Political Science," *Annual Review of Political Science* 11 (2008), 527.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

I have asked, last May 7, the authorities for information about the grants and subsidies promised but I have not anything yet. Whenever Frank Pearl (the person in charge of the program) is interviewed on TV, he talks about grants and scholarships to study abroad but none of us has got them.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo gives valuable information moving the deliberative discussion forward. The information presented is quite deliberative in its content, indeed, his addressing the governmental office directly, shows the other participants that whenever there is something they don't understand, they should go to the source in a direct way, which is essentially deliberative. To always ask for the reason and to always rely on conversation as the main means of relating to others and dealing with misunderstandings or conflicts.

Bernardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

Ever since I came (meaning demobilized, when they came into the program), I have wanted to study, that is what I had in mind. Education is so important. I remember when I was a kid, there might be some people that had many talents, and since they didn't have the chance, they just remained as gang members, drug traffickers. These situations are the ones that should be dealt with through education. Also there is a media issue. Media often portrays a fictional society. They see some situations in which people make some easy money, then those who don't have the impulse to move forward and study, just decide to follow others' ideas and stay like that.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bernardo interactively picks up the thread about the demobilization program and its unfulfilled promises, and forcefully asserts that he had wanted to pursue some studies ever since he joined the program and hasn't been able to. It is still unclear why, as he didn't finish his point. He then talks about education and how it would be the way to avoid children going into being drug traffickers or gang members. Finally, he tries to make a point about the influence media has on kids and on the way it

socializes them into making easy money. The overall level of deliberation remains high although the latter points were presented in a not-so-clear manner.

Hilda, ex-paramilitary (1)

Many of us that although having been part of the conflict, could consider ourselves as victims, also, consider that what they are given is an obligation of the state. Since they are in such low status they don't take advantage of the things and opportunities the state gives them to move forward. They just conform themselves with the little they are given and don't fight to move forward with the tools they receive. It would be very important to try and change people's mentalities to make them try to do something positive, to take advantage. Some are given money and because their condition and low level of education, they don't know how to use it and don't wish to improve their lives.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Hilda Keeps the conversation at a high level of deliberation by broadening the discussion even further when she mentions that although having taken an active role in the Colombian conflict, the ex-combatants may well also consider themselves as its victims. She moves forward and states that there would be important to change people's mentalities as they seem to conform themselves with whatever they may be given and don't strive for a better life.

Bernardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

That is the mentality of the average Colombian. If I earn the minimum wage, I just live with it. I don't try to get more.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bernardo acknowledges Hilda's remark and agreeing with it, he broadens the spectrum and convincingly asserts that it doesn't only apply to the demobilized or lower classes of the social structure, but also to the entire Colombian society. There is a widespread feeling of conformism. The level remains at a high level.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

You just said it. You don't have access. You said you came to ask to join an educational program and nothing. Just as those kids I met. They say they have access but in reality they don't.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Here it is not clear whether Arturo is trying to make a connection between Bernardo's previously raised point about his unfulfilled wish of undertaking studies and the one relating to the Colombian people conformism brought up by Bernardo and Hilda. Ultimately, he seems to agree to the failure of the state to provide real access to opportunities. Notwithstanding this vagueness, the overall level remains high and the conversation remains quite open and inviting to further participation.

Camilo, ex-paramilitary (1)

We are just messed up by ourselves because we are not united. For example when we were in Santa Marta, if we had been more united, we would have been able to get a greater number of votes in the election process.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Camilo presents an intriguing argument relating to the lack of solidarity among members of the demobilized group. It is noteworthy here and it was ever since the very beginning that they consider themselves as part of the same group. There is a sense of identity that is shared among the ex-combatants, which, needless to say, were in opposite sides of the battlefield. He keeps the level of deliberation high. Led by Camilo, they establish as a group of ex-combatants a common life world in the sense of Jürgen Habermas.⁷⁵

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

I always insisted and tried to create a thematic committee for demobilized people but...

⁷⁵ Jürgen Habermas, 1981, *Theorie des Kommunikativen Handelns*, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp. Band 2, S. 208.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo acknowledges Camilo's point and validates it in by mentioning that he was so aware of that lack of solidarity brought up by Camilo that he even tried to create a thematic committee. The conversation stays wide open and the level of deliberation high.

Camilo, ex-paramilitary (1)

But people are afraid... There was a leader in Santa Marta and he was doing fine and one of a sudden he was killed.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Camilo interrupts but this cannot be considered as a lack of deliberation because it is not out of rudeness but out of showing interest for what Arturo said. Camilo vividly shows that he has carefully taken note of Arturo's suggestion as to some need of organization on the part of ex-combatants, when he says that people are just afraid, and offers an actual example. The level of deliberation stays at a high point.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

One gets killed...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Here is again a friendly interruption, not at all disrupting the high level of deliberation. Arturo agrees with Camilo's point of fear, by clearly stating that there is indeed sufficient reason to be afraid, as people do get killed.

Gustavo, ex-paramilitary (1)

In Monteria, for example, we, the demobilized, won a seat at the City Council...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gustavo, by offering an example of how the demobilized have tried to get organized, recognizes and build upon what has been said so far, keeping the level of deliberation high and the discussion flowing at a nice manner.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

The social role and recognition of the demobilized is greatly stigmatized.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo's interactively adds another aspect to the current thread to the role of ex-combatants in society. He keeps the high level of deliberation.

Bernardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

There is need to change that... We need to move this project forward.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bernardo in an optimistic manner recognizes the problems surrounding them as demobilized and sees the possibility for them to do something to improve it, a clear sign that they take responsibility and feel empowered to build their future. Clear continuation of deliberation.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

It is then when we have to go to the legal channels. That was the reason why on May 7, I wrote to the head of the program to ask him about the scholarships to study abroad, about the micro-credit programs, and so on. Today, it is the September 12, 13, and we have not received any answer so far.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo builds upon Bernardo's point and the need to move forward and offers again his example of the legal channels to make the program move. He shows some despair in announcing he has not received any response, which also signals a clear indifferent attitude on the side of the administration that eventually could lead to the failure of the whole program. Deliberation stays high.

Bernardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

If for example according to some decree we were entitled to a certain benefit that is not enough. It is also important that I show that I have the will and am

capable to change, and that I have the guts to go to school to become a better person and really adjust to society. It is not a matter of receiving benefits.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bernardo keeps the high level of deliberation agreeing on Arturo's point regarding the need for administrative support and benefits for the ex-combatants. He interactively adds another important feature, which is the personal motivation of each and every one of the ex-combatants for the program to work. It must be a combination of both, governmental support and people's own personal commitment to move ahead and really adjust back to society.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

There is no greater legacy than education.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo, with this forceful statement, keeps the discussion open and flowing as he does mention education to be one of the most important elements of the governmental program for ex-combatants and that that would make it possible for them to move ahead in life. He clearly keeps the level high of deliberation.

Fernanda, ex-guerrilla (1)

I insist on the issue of value education. Not only in school but also at home. Because look, most people in the government and the political class are very well educated. They may have gone to the best schools and universities, here and abroad, but they lack values. They are the most corrupt. So, I ask, where is the value education they received?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Fernanda keeps the level of deliberation high when she builds upon the element of education and insists on her previous point of value education. She presents her point in a convincing way by illustrating it with the example of the high level governmental officials, who despite having been educated in the most prestigious schools and universities in the world, are the most corrupt.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

Unfortunately this will never end in humanity. When Hitler confronted the workers' union of the Popular Party in Germany, the union leaders showed him the orders and the legal reference, Hitler answered, "you may have the laws but I have the weapons, let's see who wins." Here in Colombia, remember during the Samper Government, the 8000 process, there was a potential witness ("monita retrechera") that was going to declare that his campaign had indeed received USD 8 million from the Cali Cartel. And what happened with this witness?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo shows some despair and makes the point that corruption is something that will hardly have an end in Colombian society. He enlightens his point by giving two powerful examples, one about Hitler's Germany and the other related to a widely known Colombian corruption scandal when former president Ernesto Samper was said to have received the support for his candidacy of one of the Colombian drug cartels. The conversation remains open and the level quite high.

Fernanda, ex-guerrilla (1)

They killed her...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Fernanda answers the question posed by Arturo regarding the fate of the Colombian witness in the presidential campaign scandal and in so doing, she is agreeing to Arturo's point on the difficulties for the world to change. She keeps the conversation open and flowing with a high level of deliberation. This is another good example where the deliberative nature of the speech act can only be interpreted in a meaningful way if one looks at the context of the discussion.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

Yes, they killed her... Here and everywhere. Here, the Russian tsars, the kings of medieval monarchies. They will systematically eliminate those who try to oppose them. And why? Because of power.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo nicely confirms that Fernanda's answer was fine and asks the audience why history is filled up with examples of systematic killings of those who posed some danger. He vehemently responds that it is indeed because of power. The level of deliberation keeps high. It is amazing to see how the conversation continues to flow in a very interactive way. There is no sign of a transformative moment from a high to a low level of deliberation in this long phase of the discussion.

Hilda, ex-paramilitary (1)

And those in power always try to remain there.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Hilda interactively completes Arturo's answer and gives a reason for people in power to have always tried to eliminate opposition, mainly because they want to remain there. This is a clear example of building upon the others' arguments, which is essential to deliberation.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

Why as Colombians did we systematically eliminate people from the UP? Because here in Colombia, it is impossible for a leftist or communist, even democratically elected to come into power. And here in Bogotá, we have Samuel Moreno. Then, it will always exist. Why? Because before being human beings, we are animals, before showing some solidarity, we are animals and animals are bad. You have an instinct. For example you said if somebody raped my daughter, I would cut his head. And anyone would do the same. Why? Because we are bad. We are animals.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo in a nice way brings the discussion back to the Colombian conflict and expressly mentions some concrete examples of how this systematic elimination has also taken place in our history. He proceeds and tries to provide a reason for people in power to have used all means in order to stay. He compellingly states that it is because humans are just bad. We are animals. He keeps the discussion open and flowing at a high level of deliberation, despite his negative view of human nature. It is somewhat paradoxical that Arturo is so deliberative, although he has this Hobbesian view of human nature.

Bernardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

Sometimes we may have some animal behavior, but more than animals we are human beings that think and reason. Then, if we are human beings and we are supposed to be superior to animals, we cannot and we cannot let the animal part rule over the human one.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bernardo takes Arturo's remark about human nature and contests it in a very respectful way. This is all the more noteworthy since Arturo is an ex-guerrilla and Bernardo an ex-paramilitary. Bernardo agrees with the fact that as humans we do share some basic animal features but he stresses the fact that humans also think and reason and should not let the "animal side" rule over the one he calls "human". He keeps the deliberative level high. This is indeed a speech act that fulfills almost in an ideal way key criteria of the deliberative model of democracy.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

Yes, we have two things. But Reyes Echandía already said it, "emotion comes first than reason." Let's try an example: If you found your wife being unfaithful in bed with another man, you won't say, I am going to think, I am going to reason. (People laugh) Why? Because we are animals and animals are bad.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo certainly keeps the high level, as he is not only insisting on his point in the way André Bächtiger has pointed out, but he also illustrates it with a quote from former Supreme Court President Alfonso Reyes Echandía as well as with a humorous hypothetical case, which brings laughs from the audience. He does it in such a way that is far from ridiculing Bernardo.

Bernardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

Ok. You may be right. But at the same time that there might be someone who would react as such and if had a firearm, would kill the other person, there could also be another one who would reflect and reconsider and say “I won’t let that affect me.” And not do something even worse than they did. I cannot go more down than the acts of others. I am going to cite a more explicit example... (Impossible to understand).

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bernardo agrees with Arturo and clearly accepts the emotional reaction as one of the possible venues that someone in the situation presented in the hypothetical case might follow. He also presents an alternative course of action of thinking before reacting, and forcefully makes the point that this kind of response will certainly avoid some more terrible consequences. Here he tells his personal story that apparently goes in this direction. Although it is impossible to understand, from the overall participants’ reaction it clearly seems to have served its original purpose of illustrating his argument. Bernardo is clearly deliberative and keeps the conversation open and flowing at a high level of deliberation.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

Your particular case is a very personal interpretation of an example. What we were originally discussing with her about power and that if someone comes and tries to interfere with your power, you just eliminate him.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo reframes Bernardo’s example as a very personal interpretation and takes the discussion back to its original

topic of people in power trying to retain it at any cost. He uses a respectful tone, which certainly helps in keeping the conversation at a high level of deliberation. This is another example in which context becomes essential in the analysis, as the speech act alone wouldn't give us the full depiction of what is going on in the overall deliberative process.

Bernardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

For example Chávez, what if every time he insults someone, one would say, "let's bring Chávez down." There is something very important: one's own moral standards.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bernardo keeps up with his effort of making his original point of not letting emotion rule over reason, and illustrates it with the example of Hugo Chavez, who is widely known for his tendency to insult everyone around. Bernardo forcefully states that sometimes after listening to Chavez' insults, it would be easy to feel the temptation of "bringing Chavez down", with obvious devastating consequences. This could perfectly be interpreted he doesn't feel listened. Although Arturo acknowledged his point of the importance of not reacting in order to avoid some more serious consequences and Arturo also reacted to his personal story, Arturo failed to fully recognize the depth of Bernardo's point. Despite the lack of full acknowledgment of Bernardo's argument, the level of deliberation remains high and the conversation is still open and flowing.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

One could be irreverent but not stupid. Chávez is stupid. He thinks that because he has oil... I think that the way Chávez handles the international matters is bad.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo picks up Bernardo's example of Chavez and builds on it. He agrees with Bernardo regarding Chavez' poor way of handling international affairs. The level of deliberation remains high.

Fernanda, ex-guerrilla (1)

Like a little child... with tantrums and everything.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Fernanda agrees with the current opinion regarding Chavez and nicely illustrates the point saying that Chavez' way of handling international relations is rather childish. This short sentence is another good example of the importance of context to fully appreciate the level of deliberation of a particular conversation. Fernanda keeps the level of deliberation high.

Bernardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

Speaking about those stupid aspects... For example if in my previous example, I had done something crazy, it would have been a lot worse.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Here Bernardo insists on his previous point of the importance of reasoning before reacting and brings his personal example to illustrate his argument. The level of deliberation remains high.

Moderator

Thank you very much. Now please we proceed to make some proposals over which we all agree. This table's proposals.

Camilo, ex-paramilitary (1)

Education.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Camilo quickly answers that education is one proposal. The level of deliberation remains high.

Bernardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

Education is the most important thing.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bernardo nicely agrees that education is indeed the most important thing. The level of deliberation remains high.

Hilda, ex-paramilitary (1)

Education and fighting corruption, those are the most important things.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Hilda agrees on the education proposal and adds still another proposal, the need to fight corruption as another essential aspect in the road for peace. The level of deliberation remains high and the conversation open and inviting to further participation.

Bernardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

Opportunities for poor people to have access to all these things. And people's interest, because if they lack the interest, there is not much to do.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bernardo stresses the need for opportunities and for access to them. He also makes the point that even though access to opportunities is important, there is also need of people's interest in taking advantage of them. The overall level of deliberation remains quite high.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

The problem is practice. How do we take all this into practice? To stipulate these ideas in a constitutional reform in which the rights and public liberties are recognized, just as we have talked. Fighting corruption. Consciously examining moral transparency and mostly the issue of participation. Where all social classes can have active participation in power, and governmental offices, and especially you: women and minorities: handicapped people, indigenous and black peoples. That everyone will have active participation in democracy.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo makes an argument for the need to bring down to practice these general ideas. He insists on his proposal of a constitutional reform in which there is real assurance that all rights and liberties are fully protected. He mentions the issue of participation and nicely

stresses the need for minorities to actively and effectively participate in the proposed National Summit. The level of deliberation stays high.

Fernanda, ex-guerrilla (1)

But that it really happens... What is most important is for it to really take place.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Fernanda agrees with Arturo's idea of a National Summit and just hopes that it does take place. The level of deliberation stays high.

Ernesto, ex-paramilitary (1)

What happens is that for example I have seen that sometimes they have taken indigenous peoples to the city council, for example, but I think that the real reason behind this is to please the people that have asked for it. But you see that the actual participation of these peoples is not so great. They just put them there but their participation is very limited.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Ernesto reacts to Arturo's proposal of a National Summit in a rather thoughtful manner. Since Arturo has pointed out the need for participation of minority groups such as women, indigenous and black peoples, Ernesto states that although people from these population segments have already been elected to public office, their actual role has been very limited. The level of deliberation stays high.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

It is because in Colombia, politics is pathetic. The Constitution of 1991 in its article 35 re-established the extradition of nationals and when Samper was elected in 1994, he received 100 million dollars for his campaign on the condition that he would promote the abolishment of extradition. Then, in Colombia, corruption and politics alternate the game with the guerrilla.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo reinforces his point about the need for a National Summit as he considers politics in Colombia to be pathetic. He offers as an example the renowned scandal of the presidential campaign of former president Ernesto Samper. This persuasive illustration does strengthen his argument, keeping the conversation at a high level of deliberation.

Gustavo, ex-paramilitary (1)

Politics in Colombia is an even greater business than drug trafficking. It doubles it. Politics is the most profitable business, by far.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gustavo agrees with Arturo and makes a forceful statement about the distorted manner that politics functions in Colombia and compares it with the business of drug trafficking. This can be interpreted as a clear sign of support of Arturo's idea of the National Summit. The level of deliberation stays high and the discussion remains open.

Bernardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

Narco-politics...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bernardo agrees with the previous statements by uttering the powerful word of "narco-politics." The level of deliberation is high. This is once again a good example where a single word is able to keep up a high level of deliberation because with this single word Bernardo reacts in an interactive way to the previous speakers letting the discussion flowing.

Fernanda, ex-guerrilla (1)

Colombia is a country with no-memory. It is a conformist country. There is a great deal of short-term attitude. It conforms itself with whatever it is given. People don't care if they don't have access to education, if they don't have jobs. What matters to people nowadays is security. If Uribe would run for office once more, he would certainly win. Because Uribe is giving people what

they want. People elected him for that. If someone else comes and offers something else – access to education, or whatever wonderful things, then people will conform to whatever they are offered.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Fernanda makes the point of the widespread conformism of Colombian people. They adapt to whatever the prevailing trend might be. With Uribe it is security. If someone else comes and offers something different, they just follow and agree to whatever they are given. The conversation remains at a high level of deliberation as Fernanda's intervention is directly connected to the need of having more educated people, one of the points everyone seems to be reaching consensus on. This is a good example of the argument of Jürgen Habermas that good deliberation can lead to consensus.⁷⁶ Participants in this group stressed times and again that education is crucial for the peaceful development of Colombia so that a high consensus emerged about the key importance of education.

Ernesto, ex-paramilitary (1)

It is true that Uribe has made some progress with the Democratic Security Policy, but the privatization of education...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Ernesto builds upon the current thread of education and by explicitly asserting that Uribe's security policy might have been successful, he also implies that his strategies toward privatizing education were negative. The conversation stays at a high level of deliberation.

Fernanda, ex-guerrilla (1)

And people have not cared about that, because what people want is to be safe and be able to travel around the country. That is what people think is welfare.

⁷⁶ Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996, p. 305.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Fernanda agrees with Ernesto and offers a nice frame to understand how under the current events in Colombia, the welfare notion has been reduced to the issue of security. The level of deliberation is high.

Gustavo, ex-paramilitary (1)

It is because people prefer to be safe and not to be in the situation that we had the country in before. We had the country in a very bad situation. It is not because I like Uribe, but he has done for our country.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gustavo picks up the security issue and makes a forceful statement that under the circumstances in which they had placed the country as armed actors of the conflict, security was indeed a highly desirable element. The level of deliberation remains high.

Arturo, ex-guerrilla (1)

The juridical and political link about security, it is an expression that what we are asking for is our right to live. The right to security is the physical integrity of the human beings. Then we are voting for Uribe not because he exterminates the guerrilla movement but because we can now live in peace in our territory.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Arturo makes a rather highly sophisticated interpretation of the notion of security and emphasizes its link to the physical integrity of human beings. By so doing, he nicely connects the issue of security to that of people's right to live in peace. The conversation keeps a high level of deliberation.

Ernesto, ex-paramilitary (1)

Uribe has already been in office for two presidential periods in a row. Security has really increased, but the economy is showing signs of a downturn.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: As in his previous intervention, Ernesto acknowledges Uribe's security results but also points to his failures in other areas, this time he mentions the economy as one of the fields that is showing some serious signs of depression. The level of deliberation stays high.

Hilda, ex-paramilitary (1)

No, before Uribe we were worse, much worse.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Hilda disagrees with Ernesto in the issue of the wellbeing of the economy and compellingly states that before Uribe, we were much worse in economic terms. The level of the conversation is respectful and therefore remains highly deliberative.

Bernardo, ex-paramilitary (1)

During Uribe many companies have closed... And that means greater unemployment. When companies are sold, then the new one comes and says, "I don't need you any more" and brings someone on his side.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Following the issue of economy, Bernardo agrees with Ernesto's statement and affirms that during Uribe's presidential periods many companies have closed. The level of deliberation is high.

Ernesto, ex-paramilitary (1)

It may be what he says, if the great monopolies, if there was a legal method, so we wouldn't have to go back in arms way, to redistribute those monopolies' profits for the benefit of all, we could be in better economic terms. An after being better off in economic terms, then we could concentrate in education. May be what she (Fernanda) says about our thinking too much in the present. And one thing is true, whatever we do now is not for us, it's for those who come after us. It is also true that this is a country with no memory. We don't pay attention to what has really happened in our history. Our current situation does not rest upon the two periods of Uribe. It comes from many years ago.

This conflict has been here for more than 40 years. We cannot end this in one or two or four years. If we start to ask for better and real unrestricted education, not us but maybe our children and grandchildren could see a better country. And since we are a country with no memory, people may never remember what we used to fight for. Then, education and ethics. We need to cultivate ourselves so we can take our kids to a better future. After all that I have lived and learned, I am not so worried about me. I am worried about our kids. They will have to live on the remainders that we leave them behind. Let's worry more about tomorrow, not only on today. I think I understood. Let's extract some more concrete ideas so our kids can have a better future.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Ernesto's final statement is indeed a highly deliberative one and wraps up what seems to have been the consensus of this group. In this speech, Ernesto sets forward the existing associations among the various proposals presented. He nicely connects the issue of the economy as a fundamental one. Having the economy in order would permit to concentrate on education as the most essential step in building a much better future not only for us but also for the future generations. In thinking and caring about future generations, Ernesto refers to the common good in a profound sense. This final speech act is indeed a highly deliberative ending for a highly deliberative exercise. Analyzing the discussion of this group I was times and again impressed how interactive and respectful arguments were exchanged.

Summary explanation of transformative movements

Whereas in the first group that I analyzed there were twenty transformative moments, the current group has only two transformative moments, the first one down, and the second one up again. There were long stretches where the discussion remained at a high level of deliberation. Focusing on the two transformative moments in the current group, I find

confirmation of two explanations that I derived from the analysis of the first group. There, I found a situation where the level of deliberation went down because the actors addressed questions that went intellectually over their heads. As we remember, they attempted to draw lessons from Venezuela and Cuba to Colombia and were drawn into definitional confusion with regard to the concept of Socialism and how it is applied in Venezuela and in Cuba. In the same way, in the current group, Arturo gets over his head when he attempts to come to terms with the relation between national consensus and power and desperately tries to make sense in referring to the work of the Austrian philosopher Kelsen. With his attempt to reach to the highest level of philosophical discourse, Arturo only muddles the flow of the discussion bringing it down to a low level.

The discussion in the current group also helps to add to our understanding of the deliberative function of the telling of personal stories. In the analysis of the first group, I noticed that it depends very much on how a story is told of whether it has a deliberative quality. As we remember, two jail stories were told. One story was used to connect it to important societal issues, whereas the other story remained at an erratic personal level without broader implications. In this second group, Ernesto uses a personal story in a very efficient way to take the discussion back to a high level of deliberation. In telling the story of how he was chased away by the police from a wealthy neighborhood, he can make the point that social discrimination based on social stratification is a great problem in Colombia and should be remedied. In gathering more information on stories told in a specific context, I hope to be able in the course of this dissertation to further clarify the conditions under which stories have a deliberative quality and when they do not, helping in this way to answer the puzzle raised by Sharon R. Krause in the following pointed way: "To be sure, it is important to distinguish between deliberative and non-deliberative forms of expression (of stories). Not every expression is deliberative, and we risk losing the clarifying power of analysis if we define the category too broadly."⁷⁷ Krause puts it in a concise way that not all personal stories contribute to deliberation. Analyzing stories in a qualitative

⁷⁷ Sharon R. Krause, *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation*, Princeton University Press, 2008, p. 119.

way should help me to distinguish between deliberative and non-deliberative stories.

Chapter 3: Transformative moments in group 3

Majority of ex-guerrillas in group-composition

No decision at end of discussion

Codes after the name of each speaker for the respective speech act

- (1) The speech act stays at a high level of deliberation.
- (2) **The speech act transforms the level of deliberation from high to low. (These speech acts will be set in bold letters.)**
- (3) The speech act stays at a low level of deliberation.
- (4) **The speech act transforms the level of deliberation from low to high. (These speech acts will be set in bold letters.)**

Moderator

What are the proposals for Colombia to reach peace? We would like to hear your opinions.

Armando, ex-guerrilla (1)

For me one good thing that would be good for peace to happen is for government not to invest so much money in arms, in war. Money that is being sent from other countries, about 80% of that money is spent in war making. And because of war, we have the internally displaced people. Some of those displaced peoples go to the paramilitaries, some to the guerrillas, because they ask the government for help and attention and don't get anything from the state. In many occasions, I have seen that some groups come to Bogotá and gather in some public places and parks, and instead of getting some help, the police is removing them by force. They could perfectly say that we are going to help these immigrant people on the streets; we are going to give

them some land in order for them to work and produce for themselves and for the country. For me, it would be good that government take that road. With respect to us, the demobilized, when we were there, we were promised housing, and everything and once we are here, we are faced with a very different reality. It is not all that has been promised to us. That is why many of the demobilized go back to the armed groups; many go out to the streets to steal, to do drugs. This is because the amount of money given by the government is not enough. For example, if someone who comes with five children, they receive the standard amount of COP 600.000. Out of that stipend they have to pay for housing, food... Rent for such a family would be around COP 400.000, depending on the location. That is why they have to go back to arms, join another group, or go out and steal. That is what I have to say so far. I let someone else speak.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Armando opens the conversation in a highly deliberative way. He asks for governmental help for both, demobilized and displaced peoples. He offers a specific way in which government could help: by giving people some land to work and produce. For him, this lack of administration support may be one of the causes for ex-combatants and displaced people to go back or to join armed groups. He illustrates his point by giving clear and concrete examples of how much money is received and how much they have to spend in order to have a decent quality of life. He nicely ends his intervention by inviting other to speak and participate. The level of deliberation is high.

Benjamín, 28, ex-guerrilla (1)

For us, the demobilized, the most important thing is employment. For example I work for 4-72, which is government-owned and they have already told me that in two months I will be laid off. I just wrote a letter to the Ministry telling them that if government-owned companies don't give us the opportunity to work, private companies are less likely to do so. And now, those very little salaries that are not enough for anything; if, for example, I lose my job and this thing (the government program) ends, I will go back to

the jungle and I will join the “Águilas Negras”, a group that is now accepting people from the left and from the right, and that is even more dangerous than the guerrillas or paramilitaries, because it is a group made up of resented people that feel that the government has not given us the necessary support and had to go back there.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Benjamín builds upon Armando’s point of government support and asks for employment opportunities. He forcefully mentions the difficulties for the demobilized to find decent and well-paid jobs, even in government-owned companies –more so in private corporations and asserts that because of that, many of them are tempted to go back into the armed groups, where there is always a place for them. The level of deliberation stays high, as Benjamin keeps right in the subject of building peace, as there is indeed a direct linkage between the success of the demobilization program and the future of peace in our country.

Carmen, ex-guerrilla (1)

First of all, it is always difficult to reach peace. There will always be problems. But there has to be willingness on the side of all of us, Colombians. We all make war and if each and every one of us doesn’t contribute at least a little to end the war, it will never end. There is no need to blame the government or the guerrilla movement. The problem is with the people that follow. If no one follows the guerrillas, then there is no war; and if nobody follows the government, the same. Because if the President or those who are blamed for having people killed don’t have workers to do the dirty job, then nobody will kill anyone. A president or minister will never go out to the street to kill someone by himself or herself. They have to hire somebody else. So, if that someone hired for the job of killing or kidnapping someone else, doesn’t do the job, who will do it? So, it is up to us, Colombians that we have become puppets of war. It is also important not to wait for things to fall from heaven. There are many Colombians that if they are not given everything, they just don’t do anything. Of course, one understands that there are many demobilized people who have children and don’t have a job, and because the

majority of reincorporated people have a very low level of education, it is very difficult for them to find a job. In any company, the minimum requirement they ask for is a high school diploma. So, a good possibility would be good that government try to find a job for those peoples, for government to try and find these some kind of jobs for those peoples that don't have a diploma and can't find a job. Not for government to give everything for free. It's about helping them find a job. It is not about waiting in bed for food to come. That is not fair. There are displaced people that are begging on the streets and it is not about that. The important thing is to offer jobs for people. As long as there are jobs, Colombians do work as Colombians are among the hardest working people. But if they are not offered any jobs... Talking about people that go out to the streets to steal, it is up to every one to see what they are going to do. I know of many reincorporated people that are going through very difficult situations with their kids and they have not chosen to follow the "street road," they work and fight hard to make a living for them and their families. Because life is to fight it for not to lose it. Go back to one of those groups is not the idea; at least in my case I won't do it. I, for example, when I was there I won't go back to an armed group for anything. As long as I can find a job even if it is selling candy on buses. Not even in dreams I would go back. Because I have my experience and I remember when I was there I used to wish I could wake up from that nightmare. One should try to look for another way of life. It is important for the government take into account those demobilized with kids and no jobs, because if grown ups don't have anything to eat, it's OK, but with kids it's not fair. It is up to all Colombians, if we don't let ourselves turn into puppets, there won't be war.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: In this long speech Carmen brings up some important aspects to the conversation. She opens in a highly deliberative way showing some ambivalence and asserting that getting to peace is indeed a complex and difficult exercise that requires the full commitment of all Colombians, not only that of the combatants exclusively – namely government and guerrillas. Carmen elaborates on Benjamín's argument of the need for employment for ex-combatants, who are mainly low-

educated people and face real difficulties in fitting in the job market. She forcefully calls for governmental help in this respect. She also reacts to Benjamín's last point of joining back the armed groups and in a nice and respectful way disagrees with him, stating that not even in dreams she would consider going back to what she calls a nightmare. She also makes the case for special policies for demobilized people with children. The level of deliberation stays high.

Armando, ex-guerrilla (1)

For me, it is not that I blame the government. Maybe it is not the government, I don't know. It might be that there is another country that is making the government do the things. It is through forced displacement, for me it is forced displacement that is causing war to happen. For example, government is fighting the guerrillas or the paramilitaries, and then many people have to leave those territories because of war. These people come here (meaning big cities) and because they don't have any kind of help from the government, they have to go out to the streets and steal and join other groups. For example, before there were the AUC and now there is the "Águilas Negras." These are new groups that are being born because of that. And war is generated all over again.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Armando reacts to Carmen's argument of not blaming the government and asserts that forced displacement is one of the major causes of conflict, as displaced people come into the big cities and because the lack of opportunities they find themselves forced to join the armed groups. It is noteworthy that throughout this particular experiment they seem to be confusing displaced people (victims) with ex-combatants (killers). He ends by agreeing with Benjamín in the cyclic nature of armed groups, as one of them may end but others keep coming into existence. The level of deliberation stays high

Dora, 42, ex-guerrilla (1)

For me it is the same. I think that, in first place, for there to be a beginning of peace, government should offer democratic security and social stability. For me it is the main reason for people to go back to the armed groups. Secondly, there must be real determination on the side of the government, and on the side of those groups that have taken up arms against it. Because if government feels that it is surrendering to the armed groups when it accepts what they are saying, the government feels that it is putting its head down, then it says that it has to demonstrate that it is the one that rules over and cannot submit. I think that there should be a dialogue in which there is real will on both sides and that government takes responsibility for the security of the people, because if there is not security, there is no point for there to be a dialogue if everything is going to be the same. Because look for example what happened with that baby, if there was democratic security, it wouldn't have happened. That can perfectly be a reason for someone to join one of the armed groups. Because if I were his mother and see that after a couple of days the guy is still free, either I take justice into my own hand or I join a group that can help me get Justice. So, first of all, I think that government should offer both social and democratic security.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Dora keeps the level of deliberation high as she respectfully reacts to the arguments of the previous participants by saying that the main reason for people to go back into illegal groups is the lack of government security and social stability. She illustrates her point with a specific example in which she unambiguously shows that government provision of security is a major guarantee in the building of peace. The level of deliberation, as it has already been mentioned, remains high. In these five first speech acts, interactivity is high with speakers reacting what previous speakers have said. It is also noteworthy that arguments are justified of how Colombia can reach peace.

Elmer, 34, ex-guerrilla (1)

What is most important to diminish violence is that there should be clear social-minded public policies and attack corruption and bureaucracy. There is no equity in the social aspect.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Elmer picks up the thread of social policies and compellingly states that the most important issues to be dealt with in order to reach peace are to really provide for social equity and to fight corruption and bureaucracy. This is a very short statement, but it is to the point so that the level of deliberation stays high and the conversation is flowing.

Fabián, 35, ex-paramilitary (1)

Also with respect to labor-training issues. They make you study what you don't want. For example, I am studying computer engineering and I thought it had to do with how to assemble and disassemble a computer, and no, it has nothing to do with it. We are going to graduate as computer technicians and we don't even know how to send an email. They are teaching us algorithms and all those things that no one understands. No one.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Fabián builds upon the job-training and employment strand and with his personal story forcefully illustrates the inadequacy of the government-sponsored job-training programs, where instead of really taking into consideration the limitations of the participants, the designed programs go well beyond their actual capabilities, leaving the ex-combatants frustrated and hopeless. The level of deliberation stays high. The story of Fabián is a good illustration for Sharon Krause's argument that "by allowing informal, symbolic, and testimonial types of deliberative expressions, it can enrich citizens' reflection on public issues and thereby improve public deliberation."⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Sharon R. Krause, *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation*, Princeton University Press, 2008, p. 122.

Carmen, ex-guerrilla (1)

Colombian children. There are many kids who don't have the right to education. And then those kids grow in those crime-tainted environments. Education and health, they are essential for people that can't afford them. In Bogotá there may be some programs that work, but in those remote and government-forgotten little towns, when kids grow up, they find out that their only chance in to work in the fields, that's why they like the "jungle."

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Carmen mentions the need to enforce the right to education for children and clearly states that because of that lack of future and possibilities, many kids in far away places don't see any other prospect than going to the jungle (meaning to join armed groups). The conversation remains at a high level of deliberation.

Gerardo, 28, ex-guerrilla (2)

For example peace in Colombia should be managed in the way other participants are suggesting, they should focus on low class people. Instead of the Colombian Government's spending so much money in arms; it should invest in education, housing, food. But no, here in Colombia, if you have an opinion that would help lower class people, and even if you have the means to run for president or mayor of a municipality, or governor of a department to promote such lower-class oriented policies, then the state applies the *law of dissidents*, because the state doesn't like such a person that would help people, peasants, low-class fellows. A person like that is of absolutely no use for governmental purposes. Because that is the way it works here in Colombia, oligarchy has always had the control; it has always managed the system. We have never heard of someone from a lower class origin that becomes president, or mayor, or governor, or legislator. It is always the "Yankees," the big ones. These people are the ones that rule this process. And that shouldn't be so. For example, why is that that the majority of peasants of the plains have to plant coca? Because they don't have the economic support needed to harvest something else and

to take those products out to the markets. They can't take them out of the jungle. There are no means of transportation, not by land or river. So, peasants have to turn to coca production and by so doing, they start to infringe the law and foster corruption. Why? Because wherever there is coca or whatever drug-related businesses, there is violence. Why? Because if one joins the drug trafficking, one starts to violate the law, not only with arms, because one starts to finance and to pave the way for other people to join this business –“raspachos”, planters, etc., because it is an easier life, you make money easier in drug trafficking than in other fields. And once you have money, you want more. So, that peasant will never have a chance. So, what government should do is when they confiscate those farms from drug traffickers, they should give that land to the peasants and to the displaced people and have them produce for themselves, not sell it to the rich people. But no, they give them to the big oligarchs and they just leave them there. And us? What happens to us in the meanwhile? We keep suffering to try to make a living for us and for our families. And the addicts, the ones that take the streets, that is another issue. That is up to every one. There are many people that just go out to the street because their parents give them a hard time of because they just don't like to work. They make up whatever excuse not to work.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gerardo joins the conversation for the first time and brings in some interesting issues relating to the Colombian conflict. He vehemently builds upon some previous arguments such as the need for social spending instead of investing so much money in war making issues. He moves forward and touches upon topics of social exclusion and the lack of opportunities for lower class people to move up the social and political ladder. He also mentions some of the difficulties faced by peasants with regard to crop diversification and gives the reasons behind the growing existence of coca plantations. He even offers what he thinks would be a feasible solution –to distribute drug traffickers' confiscated properties among peasants and displaced people. Despite the inner sense of some of the

issues, the level of deliberation is brought down, mainly because the hopeless tone of the overall speech. In fact, Gerardo's presentation of his ideas is desperate and with a strong mark of irony that deeply hurts the deliberative process, because other participants do not get a direction where to go from here. Continuation of the conversation is also not easy because Gerardo brings up so many issues in an unorganized way.

Explanation of transformative moment: The expression of hopelessness and despair makes it difficult to continue the conversation at a high level of deliberation.

Elmer, 34, ex-guerrilla (3)

Comrade.

(A long period of silence)

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Elmer's response to Gerardo's intervention demonstrates that the level of the discussion has indeed decreased, as it reinforces the heavy ideological burden of the previous speech. The level of deliberation remains low and the overall dynamics seems to have come to an impasse.

Moderator

Proposals, proposals, what need to be done for war to come to an end? For people not to go back to arms?

Armando, ex-guerrilla (3)

War will never end. I don't think that war will end. If an agreement is reached, as Gerardo just said, there will be need to take something from the "Yankees," from the oligarchs, from the rich, from the landowners to give it to the rest. And those rich people will form a group, a contra-revolutionary movement. In order for there to be peace, this has to be a country like Cuba, where everybody has something, where there are no poor or rich people. If

we did so, there would be peace. But that is where the problem is, if we take something away from the “Yankees,” from the rich, they will turn against those who took their properties away from them. That is why I don’t think there will ever be peace.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Armando keeps the level of deliberation low as although agreeing with Gerardo on the need for agrarian reform and redistribution of wealth, he does it in such a desperate and messy manner that he is not able to present his argument in a coherent way.

Fabián, 35, ex-paramilitary (3)

There will be no peace. If they took away 5 big farms from the rich in Medellin to give them to us, the demobilized, in two weeks we would be killed. Some people were sent to a farm and not later than in three days, they were taken out. Those rich people will form a group and whoever tries to go and live in those farms will be killed. A greater war will begin.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Fabián agrees on the difficulties faced in the achievement of peace and keeps the despairing tone of the previous participants. The level of deliberation stays low and the ex-combatants seem to be running in circles with no way out in sight.

Gerardo, 28, ex-guerrilla (3)

It is because the Colombian state is not interested in bringing war to an end, because war is the reason why it is receiving so much money. If it weren’t for war, it wouldn’t receive any money. What state would help a country with no war? For example, think about the problem with Venezuela. Why is it that the United States wants to fight with Venezuela? It is because Venezuela is one of the richest countries in the Latin America in oil. And Chavez doesn’t want to let the Americans come into Venezuela. Why? What is the name of that country, the one that took down the Twin Towers?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gerardo starts by making a forceful statement that the Colombian state is not interested in getting to peace, as conflict is a major source of foreign assistance from other countries. Despite the validity of his first point, he is unable to present it in a coherent and deliberative way. He gets entangled with the Venezuelan example, which clearly doesn't relate back to the issue of foreign aid. He ends by bringing in the issue of the Twin Towers and asking for the name of the country behind the attack. The overall level remains low.

Elmer, 34, ex-guerrilla (3)

Afghanistan.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Elmer answers Gerardo's question and gives the name of the country allegedly responsible for bringing the Twin Towers down. In group 2 we also had a situation when a participant gave a helping hand to the previous speaker in offering the concept of rehabilitation for behavioral change. In this situation the discussion was at a high level of deliberation and I argued that uttering this single word was not disrupting the deliberative flow of the discussion. In the present situation, however, the context is different since the discussion had fallen to a low level of deliberation. Although offering the name of Afghanistan, Elmer was helpful, but his brief speech was not sufficient to bring the discussion back to a high deliberative level. Again and again I have to stress the importance of context for my analysis. It is altogether a different question whether a speech act disrupts a high level of deliberation or transforms a low to a high level of deliberation. If the level of deliberation had been high, Elmer uttering the name of Afghanistan would have kept the discussion at a high level of deliberation. Therefore, my analysis is not a mechanical exercise identifying transformative moments with particular words.

Gerardo, 28, ex-guerrilla (3)

Why did those guys go into that country? The Americans said that the guy in charge of their army, their commander, had nuclear weapons. That was the

excuse for them to go there and take the oil. That is why they went there. And that is why they have a problem now with Venezuela. They want to go there anyhow, they want to find something in Chavez in order for them to go there and take their oil away. Because we Colombians are kneeled down before those guys. All we work is for them. We eat, we suffer, we drink and whatever little is left they take it away. And we buy all the old stuff from them, the oldest weapons, and the oldest helicopters. All that is already useless for fighting.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gerardo keeps developing his point on Afghanistan, or what seems to be Iraq instead as he keeps mentioning the oil issue, as oil is what brings him back to Venezuela and the Americans desire to go there and get their oil. The level of deliberation remains low since Gerardo has drifted far away from the agenda of the discussion, how to reach peace in Colombia.

Elmer, 34, ex-guerrilla (4)

One proposal to better the situation of our country would be autonomy. Not letting other countries intervene in our internal matters. For example with Plan Colombia, all the help we receive is conditional. If we don't fulfill conditions imposed by the United States, then there is no help, no Plan Colombia.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Elmer enters the conversation retaking the initial topic and somewhat inspired by the previous interventions, he puts forward that autonomy would be a concrete proposal that would help our country better its situation. He offers a concrete example of how we are losing autonomy with the Plan Colombia, a quite relevant example. By so doing, he takes the conversation back to a high level of deliberation.

Explanation of transformative moment: The discussion had severely drifted away from the peace issue in Colombia. Elmer had only intervened with two single words, first with "comrade" and then with "Afghanistan." Both interventions were quite helpful but not yet enough to raise the level of the

discussion. Now he makes a successful effort to transform the discussion from a low to a high level of deliberation. From the group dynamic of the previous discussion he was in the best position to do so.

Armando, ex-guerrilla (2)

To be independent. Colombia is one of the richest countries in the world. As we said, all our richness goes to the United States, to other countries. Once I heard in a talk that there is a municipality in Colombia that produces emeralds, and they said that with the emeralds produced in ten years it would be enough to pay off the external debt. If Colombia did that, the United States would send us as slaves.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Armando picks up Elmer's point on autonomy and frames it as Colombia's great need to be independent. Rather than keep on building on this issue, he quickly deviates from this thread and starts swirling around in an incoherent way about Colombian great richness and American slavery. He takes back the discussion to a low level of deliberation, first started by Gerardo's initial speech.

Explanation of transformative moment: Although Elmer gave a good opening to continue the discussion at a high deliberative level, Armando does not follow suit. If the discussion already ran for some time at a low level of deliberation, there seems to be a tendency to continue at this level and to overlook a speech act at a high level of deliberation. From group dynamic one may call this phenomenon "inertia."

Gerardo, 28, ex-guerrilla (3)

We are going in that direction. If Colombia refuses to pay off the external debt or to be independent...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gerardo's keeps off track and clearly keeps the level of deliberation low.

Carmen, ex-guerrilla (4)

I would say something. I respect everybody's opinion. But, one should see things from a point of view, for example, you see but you haven't actually lived and, for example, the situation in Cuba and Venezuela is not as many people imagine. "Tiger is not as depicted." Believe me, I have met people that come from Cuba, or go to Cuba, and they say that over there, it is like hell. Then, you can't look at another country and say that there is equality there. People are never happy with anything. If there is equality, they get tired of that. "Good life is tiresome and bad life tames." Don't you see how many people throw themselves into the ocean to swim to the other side. Tired of that. What happens in Cuba is that there is an empire. And nobody can raise and if someone dares to say something, they throw him or her in jail. There is high inconformity in Cuba and also in Venezuela. Venezuela is a country where war has diminished, still it doesn't have peace, but is has diminished because in Venezuela people have good level of education. In Venezuela they do what they don't do here in Colombia, they pay students to study. Then, they make kids want to study. Because think of a kid that have to pay for schooling, that have to kill themselves to be able to go to school. Who is going to do that? That is why in Colombia most people don't like to study, because it is hard. In that respect is why in Venezuela they have diminished war. But, in Venezuela there are some little towns that live in misery. I read a lot of magazines in which those towns are shown. There is a town that is behind the 60's. They don't know modern cars still. Life from the outside looks pretty but looking closer... Sincerely, there should be development in a country where there is equality but especially in jobs, because it is complicated. Moreover, that thing of equality, it doesn't exist. Not even in the family. Look, the youngest son, just because of that, can hit anyone else. Equality is terrible. That is not as easy to speak about.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Carmen makes a long speech and again brings the discussion back to a high level of deliberation. . She starts by

expressing respect for everyone's opinion and clearly presenting various illustrations and popular sayings that life in Cuba and Venezuela is not as they think it is. By so doing, she calls for some perspective taking and ambivalence, essential to deliberative theory and practice. She also points to the need to reform educational policies in Colombia. She says that in Venezuela they do a good job in promoting education and making kids want to go to school. She keeps the conversation open and brings it back to a high level of deliberation.

Explanation of transformative moment: As Elmer before, Carmen has not spoken for some time so that she was also in a good position to bring back the conversation to a high level of deliberation. Her comparisons with Cuba and Venezuela are sophisticated and informative with concrete illustrations. Although she draws from these comparisons the conclusion that Colombia needs more equality to reach peace, her main message is that things are complicated if one wants more equality. With such ambivalence she creates a good basis to continue the discussion at a high level of deliberation. Based on her statement, she raises the discussion to a level where it is not simply the question whether one wants more equality or not but of how to overcome the many obstacles to more equality.

Elmer, 34, ex-guerrilla (1)

Not equality. Let it be a capitalist system but with a greater focus on social issues.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Elmer agrees with Carmen as to how difficult it is to achieve complete equality and insists on the great need to pay attention to social issues. He keeps the conversation open at a high level of deliberation.

Moderator

Someone else has any other proposal or any comments on the proposals. What has to happen in Colombia in order for war to end?

Fabián, 35, ex-paramilitary (1)

It is because war is a big business.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: After another period of silence in which the moderator had to call for some further participation, Fabián comes in and makes a forceful statement regarding the big business that war entails.

Though no new arguments of further elaborations on the previous ones, the level remains high.

Elmer, 34, ex-guerrilla (1)

It is because war is a business. War is functional to many entities. If there is war, then there is more investment on the military, on the intelligence services. If there is no war, then the budget will come down. It is not easy.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Elmer stays on the subject of war as a business and elaborates on it by expressly mentioning the different entities that profit from war. The level of deliberation remains high.

Gerardo, 28, ex-guerrilla (2)

The management of the military economy. It is managed by AUC, by FARC, by the Army, by common delinquency, everything that has to do with delinquents. Society, what is society, society never manages issues of armament or delinquency. Society is composed here in Colombia by no more than 2% or 4%. The arms that the guerrillas have, the arms owned by the AUC, whom do they get them from? They buy it from the Colombian military forces, or from the Venezuelan Army or the Peruvian Army, or whatever legal army, an army of a state, because here in Colombia, guerrillas don't have enough money to make the kind of armament they have. They get them from the military forces. They have some providers of the big ones of the state. That is the situation. If we are to get to an agreement or the military forces would say, we are all going to work according to government's statutes and whoever is

stepping out of the government's orders will be killed, then things might work and war will get better, but just a little. In order for here to be peace is going to take a long process, long process, because if the guerrilla movement will not surrender. If the FARC comes to and end, there will be another group that will stand for those ideals.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gerardo comes back into the discussion and once again he brings the level of deliberation down. He unsuccessfully tries to pick up the thread of the military economy and makes a failed attempt to show that there might be some connections between the legal and illegal armed groups with regard to arms trafficking. Once again he takes the conversation down to a low level of deliberation.

Explanation of transformative moment: Gerardo lacks the intellectual skills to put sentences together in a coherent way. This problem is particularly severe in this case because he speaks at some length and in doing so loses the thread of his argument.

Carmen, ex-guerrilla (3)

From the Universidad Nacional.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: With this very short sentence, Carmen seems to agree with the last statement made by Gerardo regarding that if the FARC comes to an end, someone else will stand for those ideals. According to her it would be the National University. The level of deliberation stays low.

Gerardo, 28, ex-guerrilla (3)

Congressmen, generals, they are all militants in fact and we don't realize that. For example when Mr. President was the governor of Antioquia, where did the paramilitaries grow more? When was it that the paramilitaries grow stronger? When Mr. President was governor of Antioquia. Back then it was when they attack the situation harder. Why is that that Mr. President is attacking the guerrilla so hard? Because according to him, the guerrillas killed

his mother and father. Why? Because he is a “Yankee,” a member of the oligarchy and, like them, they want to have everything for themselves and don’t want the peasants to have anything. Most of us come from the countryside, we all know how hard it is there, how much we suffer there, very different from here in the city. Most of us have very low level of education. People who come from the left are very low educated. People with high school diplomas are very few and most of them are part of the rightist groups. That is the situation. Remember when we were in the “jungle,” for example in the leftist groups, there were hardly anyone who had finished seventh grade.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: As in his previous interventions, Gerardo presents his thinking in a rather disorganized manner. In his very basic mental structure there seems to be no room for the rule of law, he explains everything in terms of sides, and war-related language. The level stays low and the conversation has lost direction.

Armando, ex-guerrilla (3)

In order for there to be a little peace, it would be good to implement the agrarian program of the FARC, the platform. I don’t know it by heart, otherwise I will tell you how exactly it is.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Armando enters the conversation and tries to bring it back in track. Although he puts a concrete proposal on the table such as the agrarian program of the FARC, he doesn’t even know what it is all about. He seems to be repeating a kind of rhetorical statement. The level of deliberation stays low.

Carmen, ex-guerrilla (4)

Another thing is that some people are seeing the demobilization program as a form of peace: “people are turning themselves in.” But what they are not seeing the problem that there will be if they start disappearing or killing the demobilized people. If, here in Bogotá, they start killing 30 ex-combatants a day, I bet that people will start joining

the “Águilas Negras.” It may be over with the FARC but they will go there. That is logical. I say I am not a delinquent but if I see that they are coming to kill me, and the government isn’t providing for any security, I quit as I won’t let myself get killed. No, I am not going to sit down at home and wait for them to come and kill me. That is what government is not seeing. The government keeps offering all kinds of things over the radio but they are all lies, because they just throw us in Ciudad Bolívar and in those neighborhoods where one gets killed for a marihuana cigarette. What kind of security is that? And that is going to get worse. It is strange that it has calm down a little. But when it does get worse and they do start killing various demobilized people per day, or per week, I tell you that people are not going to sit down and wait to get killed. They are going to form a group that is even going to be worse, because they are going to have resentment with both, the guerrilla and the government, so neither there nor here.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Carmen joins the conversation again and makes a powerful statement regarding the demobilization program. She presents a sound connection between the demobilization program and its success and the creation of peace in Colombia. She cautions that if demobilized people start to be persecuted and getting killed and the government doesn’t provide for the necessary security, the ex-combatants will immediately turn to the newly formed armed groups such as the “Águilas Negras.” This fear may perfectly come from the fact, mentioned often in the discussions, that in a previous demobilization program, that of the M-19 movement and the back then newly formed political party of the Unión Patriótica - Patriotic Union, most leaders were killed, allegedly by government or government sponsored forces. If this is to happen again, the whole prospect of peace in Colombia will be greatly endangered. She gives some powerful illustrations of the current state of the program and how ex-combatants are being thrown in dangerous neighborhoods. This justified warning and the connection she is able to make with the issue of peace help her to successfully bring the level of deliberation high again.

Explanation of transformative moment: Carmen has become a deliberative leader. She brought the discussion back to a high level of deliberation before and her interventions were most often at a high level of deliberation. This time, she uses her personal story to make the argument that ex-combatants need more security: otherwise they would join newly created armed groups.

Armando, ex-guerrilla (1)

They even might form a group together with the paramilitaries. They might form a group of all demobilized.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Armando agrees with Carmen's point of the ex-combatants likelihood of joining or creating new armed groups. He even goes a little further and speaks about the probability of ex-guerrillas and ex-paramilitaries forming a group together. This issue of collective identity beyond conflict boundaries (left and right) is very interesting and indeed from the beginning of the project, it caught my attention as I always felt they didn't feel their counterpart to be the "other" in the political identity formation process. Rather, I got the feeling that the "other" for them was the government, the political establishment and the upper social classes, which in a way they considered to be the same. The level of deliberation remains high.

Carmen, ex-guerrilla (1)

Exactly

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Carmen agrees with the statement made by Armando, keeping the level of deliberation high and the discussion open to further interventions.

Armando, ex-guerrilla (1)

I also say that, if they come to kill me...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Armando keeps agreeing with Carmen reinforcing each other's points, making the level of deliberation remain high.

Carmen, ex-guerrilla (1)

There are people that may stand it when they have to work. But it is different if they start killing... Especially demobilized people; they are not going to accept that. They are not easy to kill.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Carmen stays in the same point of the imminent danger they feel of being killed, and acknowledges that although there are difficulties that come along with the demobilization program, such as having to work, people can endure them. Having their lives at risk is a completely different thing, and given their past, ex-combatants would most probably fight back. The level of deliberation stays high.

Fabián, 35, ex-paramilitary (1)

The same way they disappeared the M-19... the UP

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Fabián agrees with the current trend of discussion when he names the M-19 and Patriotic Union cases as concrete experiences of targeted killings, making explicit what has been at the backstage of the participants' minds. The level of deliberation stays high.

Carmen, ex-guerrilla (1)

Then people already have experience...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Carmen presents in a very succinct manner the core of the argument being discussed by the previous participants, as it goes back to past demobilization experiences that have remained in people's minds and have caused a lack of trust in the current process, especially on the side of the ex-combatants. The level of deliberation remains high and the conversation open and inviting further participation.

Hugo, ex-guerrilla (1)

The M-19 was a demobilization program that failed...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Hugo reinforces the current opinion, keeping the level of deliberation high.

Armando, ex-guerrilla (2)

The UP was not an armed group, it was a political movement but since they saw, the oligarchy saw that they might win then they started to kill all its leaders. Jorge Eliécer Gaitán⁷⁹, Jaime Pardo Leal⁸⁰, Jacobo Arenas⁸¹, all of them.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Armando makes statement regarding the UP not being an armed group. Despite this important beginning, he gets lost and starts again with the heavily charged ideological rhetoric, about the oligarchy, the killing of UP's leaders, etc. This is clearly a speech act that doesn't help the deliberative process and indeed it brings its level down again.

Explanation of transformative moment: Armando brought the discussion down to a low level before. In contrast to Carmen, Armando lacks deliberative leadership.

Hugo, ex-guerrilla (3)

It is very difficult to reach peace in Colombia because it is the government itself who is providing arms to the AUC. The government itself is the founder of the paramilitaries. And if today some 700 paramilitaries turned themselves in, it is because there is already another group of 1500 that has been created,

⁷⁹ Jorge Eliécer Gaitán (1903 – 1948), a leader of a populist movement, former Labor Minister, Education Minister and Mayor of Bogotá, and one of the most charismatic leaders of the Liberal Party. Although a prominent figure, he lived much before the Patriotic Union. The speaker was confused, maybe due to his poor education.

⁸⁰ Jaime Pardo Leal was the candidate of the Patriotic Union for the 1986 Presidential elections. He, as well as most leaders and members of this political party, was killed in 1987.

⁸¹ Luis Alberto Morantes, *alias* Jacobo Arenas, an ideological leader of the FARC-EP, who was very much involved with the organization and creation of the Patriotic Union political party.

and with new arms. The hand in all the old armament and get some new one. So, it is difficult.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Hugo is also affected by this heavy ideological twist that was first brought by Gerardo. He argues that peace is very difficult to reach as he considers the Colombian government as the founder of the AUC. This speech act is certainly not conducive to the experiment's goal and the level of deliberation stays low.

Carmen, ex-guerrilla (3)

And also for the guerrillas, for both...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Here Carmen is finally disturbed by the ideological winds and says that the government is also behind the founding of the guerrilla movement. It is not clear what she means and why she is making such a statement. The level of deliberation stays low.

Moderator

We are almost done. Does someone else have some other proposals?

Gerardo, 28, ex-guerrilla (3)

For example in Vichada, no, not in Vichada, in San José del Guaviare, the commander there is *Cuchillo*; that man turned himself in in 2003 or 2004. He demobilized, they demobilized... And he gave some land to his people... But if he doesn't have at least 5000 men he doesn't have anything... He controls at least 5 departments.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gerardo comes back with an out of the blue statement regarding a recognized paramilitary leader and his controlling some important territories. The level of the conversation stays low.

Armando, ex-guerrilla (3)

My thesis is... I think that most of the demobilized that are here today have left the armed groups because of the strict discipline they have. If the guerrillas would loosen a little that strict discipline, it would be much different. If the FARC would take another road, if they started to pay at least a little-minimum wage, I am sure that nobody would leave. Because the guerrillas have a good political plan, the ones I told you, the agrarian program and the political platform.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Armando comes back saying something about the strict discipline of the FARC movement and how, according to him, it is the main reason for people to leave and demobilize. This certainly doesn't help to achieve the overall goal of getting to peace in Colombia. The level of deliberation stays low.

Gerardo, 28, ex-guerrilla (3)

If the FARC paid a salary, half of Colombian people would go to the guerrilla.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gerardo keeps the flow of nonsense talk and adds a quite dicey guess regarding that if the guerrilla paid its people, half of Colombian population would join them. The level of deliberation stays low.

Carmen, ex-guerrilla (3)

But where will they get the money from to pay all these people?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Carmen tries to bring a little meaning and down-to-earth logic to the conversation and asks a question directly related to the prior speeches by Armando and Gerardo about the paying of a salary by the guerrilla and the way this would increase its membership. Although the question is asked in a respectful fashion and it's interactive with the current thread of conversation, it is not enough to bring the level of deliberation up again.

Armando, ex-guerrilla (3)

From drug trafficking...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Armando answers Carmen's question plainly and asserts that the guerrilla would get the money out of drug trafficking, something that in itself contradicts not only the wishes for peace but also the alleged FARC's code of ethics. In fact, they have long argued that they are not drug traffickers. The conversation stays at a low level of deliberation.

Carmen, ex-guerrilla (3)

Whoever has listened to the reports Ninth Conference knows that the FARC doesn't have the money to pay its member. They haven't even been able to develop...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Carmen, showing a little more knowledge of what is actually happening inside the FARC movement, clearly states that they don't have the money to pay. This is further proof of how low the level has become, the conversation has lost track and it's just revolving around some incoherent circles. The level is still low.

Armando, ex-guerrilla (3)

They do have the money. May be it is that they just keep it for its leaders. They have it hidden or buried in the "jungle." Think of that "caleta" (hidden money) they just found. How many more can there be? It is not because they don't have the money, it is because they just don't want to pay. It is a conscious policy, because we are there because we are conscious of things. We just can't stand the discipline.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Armando adds some more information about the FARC's finances and how he thinks that they do have the money but it is saved and hidden just for its leaders. He clearly states that the

leaders don't want to pay the troops. He then contradicts himself and says that it is a conscious policy and kind of legitimates the fact of not receiving a salary. Armando's confusion is just another sign of the lack of clarity and direction that the whole conversation has reached.

Fabián, 35, ex-paramilitary (3)

Was it true? Did they really find that money? Was it theirs?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Fabián reacts to Armando's intervention regarding the FARC's alleged practice of hiding the money for its leaders and asks whether the widely broadcasted issue of a multimillionaire finding of buried money. The conversation is completely off track and the level of deliberation is low.

Armando, ex-guerrilla (3)

Yes. The guerrillas do have money. And not only here in Colombia, it is also that the FARC is receiving a lot of money from other countries.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Armando answers the question and says does it is not only that the buried money was theirs but that they are receiving lots of money from other countries. The level of deliberation is low.

Fabián, 35, ex-paramilitary (3)

What is the name of that little country that is making a monument to honor Marulanda?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Reacting to the point of other countries' help to FARC, asks for the name of the country that is raising a monument to honor Manuel Marulanda, the founder and maximum leader of the FARC until his death in 2008. The level of deliberation is low.

Armando, ex-guerrilla (3)

Nicaragua. And for example that seizing of power they're talking about. If they start a war for taking up power, there will be a war because there are many countries that are behind the FARC, there will be a world war. If they go against the guerrillas they will go against a large number of countries, and there will be a war between the oligarch countries and the revolutionary countries. May be then there would be peace. When everyone is killed.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Armando ends the conversation by envisioning a world war. Going back to the original goal of the exercise, which was the achievement of peace in Colombia, it is difficult to think of a more distant endpoint. The discussion ends at a low level of deliberation.

Summary explanation of transformative moments

The number of transformative moments varies greatly from group to group. In group 1 there were twenty transformative moments. By contrast, in group 2 there were only two such moments. The present group takes a middle position with altogether seven transformative moments.

(a) Transformative moments from high to low levels of deliberation.

As in the two previous groups, the discussion began at a high level of deliberation, was dragged down four times and ended up at a low level of deliberation. As in the first two groups, there was here, too, a situation where an actor addressed an issue that went way over his head. This was the situation for Gerardo on page 11. He tries to analyze the complex web of weapons procurement in Colombia. There are so many actors involved with complex linkages among them that Gerardo loses the thread of his argument and ends up in confusion in this speech act. For Colombian ex-combatants, some issues can easily go way over their heads. In group 1 it was a speech act where a participant tried to show how to draw lessons from Venezuela for

Colombia, in group 2 it was the relations between power and consensus in a society, and in group 3, now, it is who sells weapons to whom in Colombia. In all three cases the complexity of the issue was so high that the speakers lost the thread of their arguments.

A second factor leading to a drop in the level of deliberation is a lack of intellectual skills of the speaker involved. We have seen this already in group 1 when Iván lowered several times the level of deliberation for lack of intellectual skills. In the present group, it was Armando who for lack of intellectual skills brought down the discussion twice, once with his statement on page 9, the other time with the statement on page 15. In both situations he drifted away from the topic under discussion presenting incoherent information that had nothing to do with how to help peace in Colombia. In the first situation, he jumps from Colombian richness to American slavery, in the second situation he presents out of context episodes of political killings.

A new factor dragging down the level of deliberation comes up in group 3 that we have not encountered in the first two groups, namely expression of extreme hopelessness and despair. Again it is Gerardo, who is involved with his statement on page 6. This time, he is so negative about the situation in Colombia that a long pause follows his statement and that the moderators had to intervene for the discussion to continue. In indicating in strong emotional terms that the situation for ordinary people is hopeless in Colombia, Gerardo took aback the other participants. His contribution was a discussion killer. How can one continue to discuss ways to improve the chances for peace in Colombia, when Gerardo expresses such despair? So it was no wonder that other participants did not immediately know of how to continue the conversation. Deliberation is basically an optimistic model in the sense that it is based on hope that ultimately life can be somehow improved if people are only are willing to talk with each other about common solutions. Expressions of extreme hopelessness and despair can easily discourage other participants to continue the discussion at a constructive deliberative level. This is what the speech act of Gerardo on page 6 seems to indicate.

(b) Transformative moments from low to high levels of deliberation

There were three situations where a low level of deliberation was transformed into a high level. In all three situations, deliberative leadership was the key. We have seen the importance of this factor already in group 1. This time, it was Elmer and Carmen who took leadership positions. Elmer did this with his statement on page 9; Carmen did it even twice, once on page 10, the other time on page 13. Both Elmer and Carmen tended to express their views during the entire session on a high level of deliberation, and neither of them caused at any time the discussion to drop to a low level. When the discussion meandered without clear directions at a low level of deliberation, Elmer and Carmen were well positioned to step in and to raise the conversation again to a high level. They had the necessary authority to do so. From the perspective of group dynamics, it is important that actors can emerge who demonstrates deliberative leadership skills.

The present group also helps with the understanding of the deliberative function of the telling of personal stories. We have seen in the first two groups that the function of personal stories is ambivalent in the sense that they may help or hurt the deliberative quality. In the present group, Carmen uses in her statement on page 13 a personal story in an effective way to bring the discussion back to a high level of deliberation. She presents the argument that ex-combatants need more governmental protection to prevent them from joining again some armed groups. Carmen reports that in the Bogota area many ex-combatants have been killed. In order to make this report more vivid, she described of how she herself fears for her life, even when she stays at home. With this personal story, she supports in an effective way that the government should procure more physical security for ex-combatants. Furthermore, she links her personal story to the peace issue in stating that if the government does not give her more security, she will quit the status as ex-combatant and will become again some kind of combatant to get more security. This is a personal story that is linked in a logical way to the issue under discussion, peace in Colombia.

Chapter 4: Transformative moments in group 4

About equal distribution of ex-guerrillas and ex-paramilitary in group composition

Majority decision required at end of discussion

Codes after the name of each speaker for the respective speech act

- (1) The speech act stays at a high level of deliberation.
- (2) The speech act transforms the level of deliberation from high to low. (These speech acts will be set in bold letters.)**
- (3) The speech act stays at a low level of deliberation.
- (4) The speech act transforms the level of deliberation from low to high. (These speech acts will be set in bold letters.)**

Moderator

What has to happen in Colombia, what do you propose, in order to reach peace in the future?

Ana, ex-guerrilla (1)

I initially see that the problem in both, the left and the right has turned to be mafia. It is about mafia. That is why they feed on the poor classes, on the peasants. Mafia calls for more misery and as long as there is more misery, people are more vulnerable and more likely to be manipulated. And that is why the richer countries take advantage, because and exploit the vulnerable classes. So, I see that it is important for the state to support the poorer classes, the peoples from the countryside, the peasants. That support would be in the fields of health, housing and education. Those are the main themes.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Ana starts the discussion at a high level of deliberation. She forcefully states that regardless of whether people come from the left or from the right, the problem has become a common one and that is what she calls mafia. Although, she doesn't explain what she means by "mafia," it can be easily inferred that she is referring to the connection between armed groups and drug trafficking business, and states that mafia usually brings along misery and with misery, the possibility for manipulation and exploitation. She also makes concrete suggestions as to the possible solutions and the form of support that poorer and vulnerable classes should receive from the government. The level is certainly high.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (2)

As my fellow participant says, before the leftist groups had a mission, some ideals, they wanted to free the people, to help the people; nowadays it is different, they are there for the money, for the drugs. Today, it is all about drug trafficking, in both, left and right. Before, the AUC was an organization. It is no longer such. Now it is a whole bunch of bandits, each one taking their part. For example, we (the AUC) used to "clean" from thieves, from cattle thieves, from the rapist. Nowadays, it is no longer so, they are such worried to get their part.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario starts in a rather deliberative manner as he builds upon one of the ideas brought by Ana: the linkage between the armed groups and drug trafficking. He expressly mentions how the FARC movement has lost its ideals and nowadays it is just about making money. The same with the AUC, which he considers to have been an organization and now, he says, it is just a "whole bunch of bandits." Up to this point the level of deliberation remains high; nonetheless it is brought down drastically by his overt legitimization of social cleansing activities that used to be carried out by the paramilitary groups. In this way, Belisario shows great disrespect for the ex-guerrillas in the group because guerrillas were targets of such cleansing. Referring to ex-guerrillas as potential thieves and rapists is not deliberative at all. Belisario may have referred to such cleansing as

valuable information about the past, but he would have to put it in perspective in saying something critical about these atrocious activities. Then he would not have been so disrespectful of the ex-guerrillas in the group. The larger point from this analysis is that any relevant information may be put into the discussion as long as other participants in the group are not overly offended. Such offence was done by Belisario in the current case.

Explanation of transformative moment: This case shows that disrespect can be expressed in an indirect way. At first sight, it seems that Belisario simply gives to the group truthful information about past activities of the paramilitary. Truthfulness is considered an essential part of deliberation. But Belisario frames the information in such a way that it is offensive to the ex-guerrillas in the group. In stating the information in a matter-of-fact way, he legitimizes the cleansing done by the paramilitary. The larger point derived from this case is that in evaluating information from a deliberative perspective, one should not only consider whether the information is true but also of how it is framed.

Carlos, ex-guerrilla (4)

Based on what Ana says, there has to be support in agriculture, like micro-credits, a support in which the peasants can improve their capacity to generate income. To advance in ... For example, if they have 20 cattle, a support, in for example they can better the pastures, a support in which they can generate like more income.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Carlos brings the level up again as he goes back to Ana's point of the need of governmental support of agricultural activities. He illustrates his point with a vivid and practical example concerning the cattle business. The level of deliberation goes up once again, which is helped by the fact that Carlos as an ex-guerrilla does not react to the offensive remark of Belisario concerning the cleansing activities of his paramilitary group.

Explanation of transformative moment: Generally speaking, deliberation is talk-oriented,⁸² but the speech act of Carlos shows that sometimes being mute on an issue may help the discussion to continue at a high level. This aspect, as far as I see, has not yet been discussed in the deliberative literature. But there are proverbs in popular sayings that sometimes silence is to be preferred, for example in German the saying that “silence is gold”. There may be lessons from such proverbs for deliberation. In the case of Carlos, it did certainly help to keep deliberation at a high level that he did not react to the disrespectful remark of Belisario.

Ana, ex-guerrilla (1)

It is like the theory of why is it that the thief steals? The thief robs out of hunger. Why do people break the law? Out of necessity, out of resentment. It is like to counteract that.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Ana keeps the level high by pointing out to the economic causes of criminal activities, the same thread first brought up by her and then followed by other participants. The conversation stays open and inviting for further participation.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (1)

Something basic that the government should study is the workers class, the salaries being paid to workers. Let's see, what is a minimum wage right now? COP 461.000. Think of a president, a high rank official, if we gave them COP 461.500, taking away the luxurious shoes they have, tell me, where would they go, where would they live, with their families, of course? How much would be for rent? How much for utilities? They would have to pay for transportation, for pension, for health, etc. etc., etc.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana joins the conversation for the first time and opens a new line of discussion: she refers to the need to pay attention to the minimum-wage salary paid in Colombia. She makes the case

⁸² Jürg Steiner, *The Foundations of Deliberative Democracy. Empirical Research and Normative Implications*, Cambridge University Press, 2012.

that it is indeed very low and no high rank official would ever be able to live with it. The level of deliberation stays high.

Esther, ex-guerrilla (1)

That's what they spend in a lunch.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Esther agrees with Diana's statement and offers another example to illustrate how low the minimum wage really is in Colombia. It is what high-rank official would usually spend in a lunch. Being interactive, Esther keeps deliberation at a high level.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (1)

In a lunch! And what happens there? Gas prices go up, food prices rise, and what happens with the minimum wage of the workers class? Nothing. It stays there, and that the minister is fighting over a 12% rise. They die for it. What happens? The president, what's his name? The president of the workers' organization? If we have a representative it is someone who is going to speak for all of us, who is going to say what we ask for, what we need. But no, if he is only going to ask to fill his pocket, it doesn't hold. The corruption. That is another big point: Corruption, another theme to broaden the conversation.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana agrees with Esther and forcefully states that the minimum-wage monthly salary is what high-rank official would spend in a lunch. She keeps on the salary issue and makes a concrete reference to the negotiations of the minimum wage and how the minister is fighting over the 12% raise that had been asked for by the workers' representatives. Although the parties to the salary negotiations are the employers' and workers' organizations, it is rather very common that people would consider the government to be aligned on the employers' side. The government (usually represented by the Minister of Labor) participates as an observer in the negotiations and only makes a decision in case the parties don't reach agreement. Diana makes a final point regarding those cases in which those representatives don't look after all workers' interests but are only

concerned about their own benefit, which she rightly calls corruption. She ends by nicely mentioning that corruption is another subject they can continue the conversation on. The level of deliberation stays high.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (1)

The biggest corruption is within the state. They are thieves with ties. It is so! Exactly, there is no more. The police persecuting the thieves and the thieves are they.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario picks up the corruption thread and states that the greatest corruption is found within the state. He makes the humorous remark that the police go after the thieves who are really they themselves. Belisario does not go back to the cleansing issue, which reinforces my argument that Carlos was right not to react to it. Thus, deliberation can stay at a high level.

Ana, ex-guerrilla (1)

The problem is right there. We can't pretend to say, let's reunite the commanders of the leftist and rightist groups, because where are they? If we go up in their hierarchies, where do we find the direct responsible people of each group? There are some figures where we can say, it is a leader from the right or it is a leader from the left. But look at the recent processes that have appeared in the country. There starts to appear the guys with ties.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Ana builds upon the point of state corruption and nicely presents the existing connections between the armed groups' commanders and state officials. She illustrates her point with the recent scandals that were widely publicized in the media. The level of deliberation stays high and the conversation open to further participation.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (1)

Be it Yidis-politics, Farc-politics, or para-politics, whatever. And what is coming next...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana gives the names of the processes relating the illegal armed groups with acting and widely known politicians. This is valuable information in the present context so that the level of deliberation stays high.

Belisario, 33, ex-paramilitary

That is why I see that the armed groups have never come to an end. And why? Like us, the demobilized, we were told a handful of lies before we demobilized... I, for example, I come from a little town in the Department of Magdalena, Uribe went there and we met with him in a big, big school and what did he say? He said that we had right to a housing subsidy, that they would pay for our kids, what's the name? (Someone helps form the back) A family subsidy, and where are those subsidies? There is nothing. Nowadays, they started to give us COP 358.000, now the more the time passes, the fewer bonuses we receive... There are more obstacles for us to get the money, each day more obstacles... An example, Psych-social meetings used to be every week. Now, OK, at least, they are now every two weeks. Government should realize that most demobilized people here in Bogotá are not from Bogotá. We come from other parts of the country; we have come here because we had to flee from our regions.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario comes back into the discussion and states what is exactly the reason why the armed groups have never come to an end. It is interesting to see the way Belisario picks up the subject of corruption and illustrates it with his own personal story. He tells that Uribe himself went to his own little town and promised them so many things in order for them to demobilize; promises that haven't been fulfilled. The level of deliberation stays high. In the spirit of Sharon R. Krause he uses his personal story to illustrate the problems that ex-combatants have.⁸³

⁸³ Sharon R. Krause, *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation*, Princeton University Press, 2008.

Carlos, ex-guerrilla (1)

With illusions. We thought, let's go to Bogotá, because in Bogotá...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Carlos tries to supplement Belisario's statement with what he thinks is Belisario's main point. Thus, he is interactive letting the discussion flow at a high level of deliberation. It is remarkable how interactive participants are up to now in the discussion.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (1)

On the contrary, it is much worse here, my brother! And you know why? Because in the Coast tutors pay attention to you. Here, for example, they owe me two months; they owe me the month of November and the month of March. And there are so many papers I have to fill out... If you go to the psychosocial meetings, it is COP 150.000... If you study, then there is a COP 150.000, and for transportation...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario interactively reacts to what Carlos says and clarifies what he meant before. He makes a powerful point regarding the tutors in the Coast, where he felt they paid much more attention to the demobilized population. He offers his personal experience as an example of how difficult it is now in Bogotá to access the government's help. The level of deliberation stays high.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (2)

Transportation? It is COP 80.000. It is a total of COP 380.000, not even the minimum wage. In a few words: don't demobilize.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana enters the conversation and interactively helps Belisario's with regard to the cost of transportation; the latter, by the tone of his voice, did not seem to know exactly what the amount for transportation was and was eagerly asking for help. Diana ends her intervention by forcefully claiming that combatants should no longer demobilize. Thus, she accepts that the fighting should continue. In my

interpretation, this lowers the level of deliberation because Diana strays away from the assigned topic to the group, how to reach peace in Colombia.

Explanation of transformative moment: Diana does not make any argument of how continuing the fighting could ultimately contribute to peace. If she had made such an argument, Diana would indeed have stayed within the parameters of the group discussion. But since she did not offer such an argument, her intervention disrupted the deliberative flow of the discussion. The larger point of this case is that from a deliberative perspective it is not bad and even desirable if someone broadens the issue under discussion. Such expansion of the issue, however, must be linked to the issue itself, which Diana did not do.

Ana, ex-guerrilla (3)

Exactly

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Ana seems to agree with the latter part of Diana's speech but does also fail, like Diana before, to make the link with peace in Colombia so that the level of deliberation remains low.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (3)

Another thing. If you stop working, there is a problem. If you don't attend the psychosocial meetings, there is another problem. Sincerely, I have two kids. Sometimes my wife helps me with her salary. I have to look for a way to maintain them. Government is doing bad things. Before, there was COP 358.000, but you knew you didn't have to attend the psychosocial. And if you fail one.... then, automatically... There are tutors that fail you. They say the psychosocial is at 1:30 and when you get there a little past one, at 2:00... there is no one, the tutors haven't arrived. And if it is one that is late, then it shouldn't be so... It shouldn't be so... It is "funnel's law," the broad side for them and the narrow tube for us. And it shouldn't be so. And if you tell them you haven't received your money, they say, "Well, and what do you want me to do? I did my part... I passed the list"... Every time I come to the

psychosocial and I complain, they write down my name. They are good at writing down. I have two friends. They demobilized; we came from the same place. They came here but didn't like it here. They saw this as very stiff. Now they are back there. They are earning COP 900.000. If government would just treat us the way they promised, they offered us so many things... If they call me now, I will certainly tell them: "no, my brother, stay in the jungle. Don't come here." If government would just treat us the way they promised, they offered us so many things... Things would be different.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario keeps complaining about the different failures of the demobilization program. He then supports the position of Diana and Ana that it would be better if combatants stayed in the jungle. But Belisario, too, fails to link this position to the issue under discussion, peace in Colombia. The level of deliberation stays low.

Carlos, ex-guerrilla (3)

I wouldn't stay here, I would rather have myself killed, I won't starve...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Carlos agrees with Belisario that it would be better to go back to the armed groups, even if getting killed, in case things in Bogotá and in the program would get much worse. The level of deliberation stays low.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (4)

The government wanted the peace process... It was the much renowned "Peace Process with the AUC." It was 38.000 that demobilized. We were 38.000, and I say "we" since I am among them. Aha! But a big problem: where are the jobs for those 38.000? Why don't they put people to work? Why don't they tell some big private companies, we would reduce taxes if they took some of these people... Hey, take 10, 50, 100, help a little... I was there for many years and when I go and try to find a job, they ask for references and I think well, commander X, commander Y... How do I do? Please!

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana makes a powerful speech and vehemently calls for governmental attention. She argues that the government widely publicized the peace process but it has not given all the support they need to fully and successfully reintegrate back into society. She offers her own experience to illustrate how difficult it is to find a job after having belonged to the armed groups, which really makes the government help much more essential and needed. Diana goes back on track, by offering concrete examples of how to make the demobilization program work, she is able to bring the level of deliberation up again.

Explanation of transformative moment: This is another good illustration of how a well told personal story can bring deliberation back on track. My analysis increasingly supports the argument of Sharon R. Krause and others that personal stories have a place in deliberation.⁸⁴

Carlos, ex-guerrilla (1)

Yes, it is so. In every job they ask for a high school diploma upfront.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Carlos offers another example of the difficulties they, as ex-combatants, face when trying to find a job. In fact, in the Colombian job market it has become a widespread requirement to ask for a high school diploma. Given the fact of the low level of education of the demobilized population, they need special consideration in that respect. The level of deliberation is kept high and the conversation remains open, inviting further participation.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (1)

I came from the “Magdalena Medio⁸⁵” fleeing... Why? Because they gave me 24 hours to leave as they were calling me to go back to work. They gave me 24 hours to leave. What I did was to take whatever I found in hand and came

⁸⁴ Jürg Steiner, *The Foundations of Deliberative Democracy. Empirical Research and Normative Implications*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 57-87.

⁸⁵ Magdalena Medio is a geographical region in Colombia that takes its name from the river Magdalena, the main fluvial artery in the Andean segment of the country.

here. Then, I came here looking for a future. But, no, everything has been different. I would have rather stayed in the Coast, although having to sleep here and there... But I think I would be better there.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario tells his personal story concerning how he has to flee from his town, and how it would have been much better to stay in the Coast. Belisario's speech supports in an interactive way the claim of Diana and Carlos that it is difficult for ex-combatants to make a living. It is noteworthy how such complaints cut across the division between ex-paramilitary and ex-combatants. In this way, the two groups form a common life world (Lebenswelt) in the sense of Jürgen Habermas⁸⁶, which helps to explain why in all groups the level of deliberation is generally quite high despite the fact that participants were on opposite sides in the conflict.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (1)

Even on a hammock under a palm tree...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana agrees with Belisario with regard to having stayed in the Coast. The level of deliberation is kept high.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (1)

Here, here, here the ugliest room is COP 200.000. And you have to take a letter... But, the ugliest, ugliest... Where there are fleas! (Everyone laughs!). And you have to take a letter of recommendation, leave a deposit. Real State. Who recommends you? It is so much trouble... And they look at you up and down.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario keeps telling how hard and expensive it is for them to get established in Bogotá and provides concrete and vivid illustrations that seemed to be shared by his fellow participants. Since the success of the demobilization program is closely related to the issue of peace, the level of deliberation is kept high.

⁸⁶ Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie des sozialen Handelns*, Frankfurt a.M. : Suhrkamp 1981, S.159.

Carlos, ex-guerrilla (1)

A letter from your employer...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Carlos agrees with Belisario and offers another illustration as to the stringent requirements to rent a room. The level of deliberation stays high.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (1)

And if the guy is from the Coast, then no...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana gives another example. The participants seem to agree in the issue of the difficulties they face. The level of deliberation stays high and the conversation is flowing in a very interactive way.

Ana, ex-guerrilla (1)

And if you have kids, no...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Ana comes into the conversation and gives still another widely spread obstacle for the demobilized to find a place to live. The level of deliberation is kept high.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (1)

Just what I told you! For example in my case I had to come to Bogotá because of security reasons. It is not that I like Bogotá. I don't like Bogotá. Everything is so expensive, the distances...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: The thread of conversation regarding the difficulties of life in Bogotá seems to have moved the participants, which certainly shows that it is a much felt issue. The level of deliberation is kept high.

Gabriela, ex-paramilitary (1)

Here you need money for everything...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gabriela enter the conversation for the first time and agrees with the previous speakers on the matter of the strains faced for them when trying to make a life in Bogotá. Participants build up more and more a common life world facilitating the level of deliberation to stay high.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (1)

I am not here because I want to...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana, once again, stresses the fact that she is not in Bogotá because she wants to. The level is still high.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (1)

Here is very different. In the Coast it is much cheaper; if you don't have enough to pay for the bus, the driver will take you anyway; if you have just COP 500, you can still eat breakfast, you buy COP 200 in sour cream, COP 300 in cassava ... Here, they don't sell a quarter of a pound of rice, or half a block of brown sugar. If you don't have the full fare for the public bus, they take you out. In the Coast, it is different.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario offers further vivid and concrete illustrations of how different Bogotá is from the Coast, the Colombian region he comes from. The level of deliberation is high and the conversation is kept open and flowing.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (1)

I was in a meeting in the House of Young people in Madrid (a small town just out of Bogotá) and there was a very stiff woman, one from Bogotá, with a big hairstyle that looked like a turkey (everyone laughs!)... And she said, because it was a meeting between the demobilized and the community, and students

were also present. And the woman said, it is that you, the demobilized, who came to steal the air we breathe in Bogotá.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana comes into the conversation once again and tells her experience during a meeting with community members and students. In this particular intervention, she raises the important point that seems to have been around and not spoken yet: the problem to be accepted back into the communities. The level of deliberation is still high and the conversation keeps open.

Felipe, ex-guerrilla (2)

I would have told her, you better thank you are here in Bogotá, otherwise, I would give you a big kick in your ass... I once had a big problem in one of the psychosocial meeting in Cundinamarca, when one day one of those “studied” women came to give us advice...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Felipe reacts forcefully to Diana’s story and says that he would have kicked that woman in her “ass”... He continues and starts to tell his own similar story but cannot finish it as Diana interrupts him. Felipe’s use of foul language brings the level down again.

Explanation of transformative moment: Although the foul language is not directed at other members of the discussion group, it expresses disrespect for the women in the group. Presenting in such graphic terms how a man may kick a woman in her ass is offensive to any woman. More generally, Felipe violates rules of good manners, an aspect stressed by Mark Warren.⁸⁷ This does not mean that deliberation requires manners in a conventional way, but it means that extreme vulgar language is not used. In the present case, Felipe uses extreme vulgar language inappropriate for a deliberative atmosphere.

⁸⁷ Mark E. Warren, “What Should and Should Not Be Said: Deliberating Sensitive Issues.” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 37 (2006), p.164.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (4)

We demobilized because we wanted to leave that way of life. And we wanted to be with our families. But, it is not... Being demobilized is a total stigmatization.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Despite her interrupting Felipe, Diana is able to bring the level of deliberation up again as she puts in a coherent way that although they really wanted to leave that way of life as combatants and be with their families, stigmatization of ex-combatants is a much felt problem among them.

Explanation of transformative moment: In this way, she puts stigmatization clearly on the agenda of the group, expanding the serious issues to be discussed. Diana does not offer solutions of how such stigmatization could be overcome. But given the situation of the ex-combatants, it is difficult to see what such solutions could be. Therefore it cannot be held against Diana that she is not offering any solutions. Putting the issue squarely on the agenda is already sufficient to raise the level of deliberation.

Gabriela, ex-paramilitary (1)

If they know you are demobilized, they don't rent you a room; they won't offer you a job...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gabriela builds upon Diana's point and offers two practical examples of how difficult it is for the demobilized to lead a normal life; basically, to find a place to live and to find a job. The level of deliberation stays high.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (1)

We are discriminated against. Sincerely, we demobilized are put like 10 meters under the soil... Wherever you go, wherever you go.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario expresses the same feeling of being discriminated and stigmatized. He uses a very vivid metaphor in stating that he feels like being 10 meters under the soil. This metaphor is very appropriate in the present context and helps to keep the level of deliberation high.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (1)

Government supposedly wanted to take away a problem, out of the list of thousand and thousand it has...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana expresses that in the hurry for peace, government improvised a great deal in the design and implementation of the peace process, as according to her, the conflict is just one of the many, many problems the government faces. Diana's effort to look at the conflict from the government's perspective is highly deliberative and thus, the overall level of deliberation is kept at a high level.

Gabriela, ex-paramilitary (1)

But really, it is not taking away anything... Same, we are here...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gabriela complements Diana's point in a nice way as she rightly states that the "problem" didn't go away with the program. They are still there, reinforcing the unplanned aspects of the program, which should have taken into account that the demobilization stage was just one among many others items that should have been considered. The level of deliberation stays high and the conversation is flowing.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (1)

If we are talking about how the groups from the left and from the right will live in peace. That was the key question. That is difficult. That is very complicated.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana goes back to the original question of reaching peace and says in an insightful way that it is indeed a difficult task. Although Diana's speech goes off track of the current thread of the government's planning and implementing of the process, this pause to reflect and acknowledge the inherent difficulties certainly doesn't harm the process. The level of deliberation stays high.

Gabriela, ex-paramilitary (1)

And how things are right now...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gabriela reinforces Diana's point and states that things (meaning the demobilization program) are indeed not in a very good situation. The level of deliberation stays high.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (2)

Never. That will never be.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana and Gabriela have put the conversation in a reflective state. They were expressly mentioning that the task of reaching peace is indeed a difficult one. This is what we have previously seen as ambivalence. Instead of thinking a little bit more about it and bringing some other aspects to improve the program or handle the obstacles, Belisario falls in despair and brings the level down again.

Explanation of transformative moment: We have already seen in group 3 how despair and hopelessness can be a deliberation killer. In this previous case, despair and hopelessness was expressed in very vivid terms. In the present case, Belisario is very abrupt just shouting out "never." In this way, he disrupts the deliberative discussion even more. In not even give reasons for his expression of "never", he is all the more non-deliberative.

Felipe, ex-guerrilla (3)

If the ELN ends, another group will appear, the same group with another name...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Felipe, also showing despair, reinforces Belisario's point and affirms the never-ending nature of the Colombian conflict as he forcefully states that in case one of the armed groups disappears, another one will immediately emerge. The level of deliberation is still low.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (3)

Let's not tell any more lies. If you were from a rightist group, because if you will excuse me, but people from the left were always "unos chuchos" (this is a disrespectful slang expression, implying that leftist people are mingy)... Because in the leftist groups the only one that always won was the commander. Always the commander wins. Some people from the leftist groups that came to our groups. They used to tell us that they had a backpack and they will give them groceries in small portions: a pound of rice, a piece of brown sugar... Everything that they were given was noted and you have to live by the rules, otherwise you will get punished.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario keeps the level down as he goes back to show so little respect to the members of the other group. He uses foul language to refer to them ("Chuchos"⁸⁸) and also to their practices and ways of living. The level of deliberation is kept low.

Felipe, ex-guerrilla (3)

Because over there everything is about equality if one eats, all have to eat...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Felipe explains as an ex-guerrilla why it is that in the leftist groups food is so closely controlled, as the principle of equality it is always to be observed, if one person eats, all should eat. Felipe is interactive in giving Belisario an answer. This answer, however, does not

⁸⁸ *Chucho* is a pejorative word that is used in colloquial language to refer to mingy people.

contribute to the issue of peace in Colombia so that deliberation remains at a low level.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (3)

Cuba style.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana reacts to Felipe's explanation and insolently says that it is just like in Cuba. As Belisario before, Diana, also a paramilitary, shows disrespect towards the other side because in the present context she means the reference to Cuba in a negative way. The atmosphere seems to become quite tense between the two groups. The level of deliberation stays low.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (3)

Instead, we groups from the right, we had plenty, jam, crackers, etc... Every thing! If you wanted a juice, you would drink it and go to bed, no problem... Let's think, you come here, and you were from the right, and you are here with your wife and kids, and someone comes and offers you to go back to the jungle and you go... Because you prefer to be making war in jungle and not here starving... There are some things that the government doesn't realize. They say, "The demobilized are committing crimes once again," They don't see that we are facing many difficulties, because we were taken out of the jungle with mirrors...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: In contrast with his previous intervention in which he shows his dislike for the guerrilla practices, in this speech Belisario talks about the "good life" they used to have in the rightist groups, where there was plenty of food and they were not supposed to share with their fellow combatants. He strongly advocates for the life they used to have in the "jungle" and forcefully states that it is better to be making war than to be starving in Bogotá. As in one of his previous statements, Belisario expresses his despair with the government, which is not seeing the problems that ex-combatants face. With his suggestion to go back to war, Belisario certainly

does not advance the discussion on how to have more peace in Colombia. Deliberation stays at a low level.

Felipe, ex-guerrilla (3)

We were shown a big screen... And now that we are here, they have started to take things away...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Felipe builds upon Belisario's final point and metaphorically reinforces the idea of governmental manipulation and lies in order to get them out of the "jungle." The level of deliberation is kept low.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (4)

We were taken out with mirrors and nowadays they act as if they had nothing to do with it... And you go to Frank Pearl's office and he would say, that thing is not here... And that hurts; there are some things that hurt... It hurts to think what is happening right now... I am one that if had known so many things, I...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario comes back to express his deep feelings of disappointment and frustration with the program. He keeps repeating the word "hurt" when he expresses how lonely and unattended by the government they feel. He starts a last sentence in which he seems to imply that had he known that the government wasn't going to live up to its promises, he would have never left the armed group. This deep expression of feelings opens a window for change in deliberative terms as it brings back the discussion to a very personal level. The level of deliberation is brought up again.

Explanation of transformative moment: It is once again a personal story, which brings back a high level of deliberation. The hurt feelings that Belisario expresses brings to the forefront that something needs to happen to improve the life of ex-combatants.

Felipe, ex-guerrilla (1)

I would have never left... Not even in the craziest dreams...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Felipe finishes in an interactive way the sentence started by Belisario and reinforces the idea that they wouldn't have left if they had known better about the program. The level of deliberation stays high and the conversation remains open, inviting further participation.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (1)

Exactly

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario confirms that Felipe understood finishing his sentence. The level of deliberation keeps high.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (1)

We ask... I don't know whether we would qualify as a minority, I don't know... but we could ask, as everyone does, for equality. For the right to equality. I know someone in Bogotá who has 6 cars...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana enters the conversation again and nicely presents an argument for equality. She thoughtfully asks whether they as ex-combatants would classify as a minority and illustrates her point by giving a concrete example of someone who owns 6 cars. The level of deliberation stays high.

Gabriela, ex-paramilitary (1)

If he can afford them...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gabriela speaks from the back and in a very low tone, reacts to Diana's point and says that it is OK to have 6 cars as long as he can afford them. She seems to disagree with Diana in how to interpret the car story, but does it in a respectful way so that the level of deliberation stays high.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (1)

Of course he has the right to have them... Nobody is going to say the contrary. But everyone should have a little... The right to equality. How come Frank Pearl says in the July 24th, 2008 publication that the demobilized don't have a right to housing? How is that possible? That the victims and displaced people come first! That we didn't have the right, that we are the last on the list. Frank Pearl said that it would be so bad for us to get a dignified housing. And if Frank Pearl that is the representative, the director of the program and says that, what can we expect?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana nicely responds to Gabriela's remark and agreeing with her interpretation of the car story. Diana is now able to fully present her point, which basically doesn't go against those who own much but rather advocates for a more equitable distribution of wealth. In the same line of equality, she speaks about the right to equal treatment with regard to the victims of the conflict. She forcefully expresses her feelings of disappointment about a recent statement of the director of the reintegration program in which he says that they are last in the list for housing. Expressing one's feelings and doing it in a clear and not offensive way as Diana does is always good for deliberation as it helps to get a more complete picture of what is really happening. The level of deliberation stays high.

Felipe, ex-guerrilla (1)

And if he says that, he that is the head and so on... What can we expect?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Felipe builds on Diana's point and says that the head of the program should not say such thing as he is the one who should represent their interests. The level of deliberation stays high in a very interactive way. Participants clearly listen to each other.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (1)

If he says that, what would the others say? And it shouldn't be so...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario stays on the same page. The level of deliberation is kept high.

Felipe, ex-guerrilla (1)

Then if we had to leave this dream, we will have to, because if the head says that...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: In a clear sign of despair, Felipe expresses that if things are like that, they may have to leave the program. Although there is a glimpse of hopelessness in this speech act, it is not strong enough to bring the level down as his words can also be interpreted as ambivalent. It would very much depend on how the next speaker reacts. The level is still high.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (1)

Of course, we could resign to the program. We could write a letter and resign but the majority of us have open processes, judicial-past document that hasn't been issued, it is not that...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: In a thoughtful and coherent way, Diana, is able to articulate in a better way the different options they have. She clearly states that although the resignation path is open, this is not an easy decision to make. There are negative consequences that should be considered before leaving the program. The level of deliberation is high.

Felipe, ex-guerrilla (1)

Yes, of course... they will issue an order to capture you...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Felipe agrees with Diana and warns about another undesirable consequence of leaving the program: a judicial order to hold you. The level is still high.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (1)

Automatically, if you fail to attend one psychosocial meeting, you go to jail, that is for sure...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario reinforces Felipe's point regarding the possibility of going to jail but goes a little too far. He states that there is the possibility of going to jail even if you fail to attend one of the psychosocial meetings, which is not true. This exaggeration on the part of Belisario reveals again as in some of his previous speech acts how intensively he is hurt by the situation of the ex-combatants. Expressing this feeling, again contributes to keep deliberation at a high level because other participants can have empathy with him.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (1)

You have to ask permission for everything...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana is certainly more sensible and brings the discussion back to reality when stating that indeed if someone is in the demobilization program, there is need to ask permission for everything. Being a more down-to-earth statement, this speech act stabilizes the level of deliberation, which stays high.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (1)

Another thing... I once had a problem in the Coast and some time after I came here, there was an order to capture me and they said I had to go back... The police came into my house and destroyed everything, mistreated my mother-in-law, and what? I came here since we are supposed to have here the right to legal advice and when I came, they assigned me a lawyer, a thin guy, and when I came to see him, he just told me you have to do this, and this and you have to go to the People's Attorney's office... That was what he told me... Here, at this very same table... And that shouldn't be so...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario starts telling his personal experiences once again and clearly illustrates the different failures of the program. His statement and the approving atmosphere in the group indicate that ex-combatants were offered legal assistance, which was then not provided by the government. Another unfulfilled promise that leaves the ex-combatants with a deep feeling of resentment and regret. The level of deliberation stays high.

Felipe, ex-guerrilla (1)

He should go himself.... They listen to him much more than they listen to you...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Felipe nicely complements Belisario's point by compellingly stating how the government lawyer should have gone with Belisario himself, if he had really been interested in helping out. Felipe shows respect and concern for the wellbeing of Belisario, which is all the more remarkable since Felipe is ex-guerrilla, Belisario ex-paramilitary. A common life world in the sense of Habermas⁸⁹ develops more and more in the group across the initially deep division. The level of deliberation is kept high.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (1)

That was what I told him... I told him that I had all my papers in order; it is not that I am doing anything wrong, I have all those papers... And what did he say? Look, my brother, what happens is that you have to go yourself. I can only give you advice. He tried to explain but I didn't listen since I was already so angry and I better left. He could have said, you know I can't go right now, but come back next week and I will go with you... That was the logical thing to do... Do you understand me?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario finishes his story and clearly expresses how lonely he felt when the assigned government lawyer just sent

⁸⁹ Habermas, *Theorie des sozialen Handelns*, S. 159.

him to a different governmental office. He nicely states how he would have understood that the lawyer was busy and would have been grateful if he had offered his help for later date. Belisario does such a good job in depicting the situation, that it is indeed easy to imagine how someone who is not from Bogotá felt in such a situation. In an also quite deliberative manner, Belisario ends his intervention by asking whether the other participants understand what he just said. This is indeed a very deliberative gesture, which makes the overall level of deliberation to remain high.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (1)

They just told you what to do...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: In a sign of having listened and understood, Diana paraphrases Belisario. The level of deliberation stays high.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (2)

He just said... Go straight, turn right, there is a red door... (Everyone laughs). That shouldn't be so... Each day you feel more regret of having joined this program.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario puts in a humorous way the fact of just being told what to do and not really having been helped. So far, so good from the deliberative perspective. Nonetheless, he finishes in a vigorous manner how regretful he is of having joined the program. This last sentence doesn't leave room for building up a peaceful future for the country, and once again this sign of despair brings the level of deliberation down.

Explanation of transformative moment: Despair is expressed here in an abrupt and cold manner not leaving any opening for hope. In other cases in this group, despair was expressed with heart-felt emotional personal stories leading to feelings of empathy by other participants, even participants across the deep division between ex-guerrillas and ex-paramilitary.

Felipe, ex-guerrilla (3)

You have to always fulfill what they say... If not, they fuck you... In other words, if you want to stay in this program, you have to even give up your job... Each day asking for permission to come and bring papers, you lose your job... Backwards!! Aghhh!

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Felipe, possibly due to his very low level of education, is highly suggestible and easily changes his opinion in order to better fit inside the group. His use of foul language is also very low deliberative, making this speech act to stay at a low level of deliberation.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (3)

In a few words, war is not going to end... There is so much support from Plan Colombia, so much money to buy more arms, to pay professional soldiers, etc., etc., etc., and what happens with the people that are dying of hunger?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana, who has been able to keep her thoughts straight in difficult situations, falls in this hopeless mood and states that war is not going to end. She says in a despairing manner that there is so much money being received from Plan Colombia. Money that is being used to buy arms and pay for professional soldiers, instead of helping so many people that are in need. The level of deliberation stays low.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (3)

It is because war is a business...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario tries to give a reason for not using the money for better purposes, but falls in common places and fails to add new elements to the conversation, which stays at a low level of deliberation.

Felipe, ex-guerrilla (3)

The ones they have is because they have turned themselves in; they haven't captured, not even a hundred...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: In the back of the room, some people are heard talking about Diana's point about the never-ending war. Felipe picks up that thread and forcefully states that the illegal armed groups are still very powerful, that the people that are out of them now are because they have turned themselves in not because of having been captured. The conversation seems to have lost direction and the level of deliberation stays low.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (3)

Recently, a few demobilized.... But they are now in the happy hour... They are being offered so many things... But wait a few months...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario keeps on with the hopeless tone of the conversation and says that although there are a few people who have recently demobilized, they will soon start to regret it. The level of deliberation is kept low.

Carlos, ex-guerrilla (3)

The more logical... What I think... It is that they changed a rural war for an urban war... Because when they were there in the jungle, they didn't have any income but they didn't have so many needs... Now, that there are so many people here it is different, now you have to take out some money to pay for your health, for education... They try to comfort you with so very little, while they are giving another report, with other numbers, they are taking some...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Carlos enters the conversation and tries to offer a somewhat valuable point regarding the difficulties the ex-combatants have to endure when they come to the city in contrast with the life

they used to have when they were in the “jungle.” He gets confused and starts to talk about money, numbers and possible events of corruption, making his speech incoherent. The level of deliberation is still low.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (3)

A man told me that they send the money complete... It is standard...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario builds on Carlos’ statement and affirms that the money is being sent complete, implying that it is getting lost somewhere. The level of deliberation is still low.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (3)

I was told that the assigned sum for each demobilized is USD 400, and how much do we get? Let’s see, we get COP 380.000, let’s see the conversion...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana ends the conversation by making an assertion regarding the current thread of money and corruption. She proclaims how there is an assigned sum of USD 400 for each ex-combatant, though she doesn’t mention where she got that information. The conversation ends at a low level.

Moderator

Now the proposal is for you to make some concrete proposals, we will write them down and you will vote for them... Let’s see if you can start from here, what concrete proposals do you have?

Ana, ex-guerrilla (4)

For me, basically and most importantly, what I said in the beginning, in order for us to reach agreement we need to be able to talk in a civilized way, just like human beings. That there be negotiation in order to reach an agreement.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Ana states that deliberation is needed in order to move forward with the discussion. It is amazing of how clearly she expresses the core of the deliberative model. In this way, she transforms the discussion back to a high level of deliberation.

Explanation of transformative moment: For this transformative moment the intervention of the moderator was crucial. In asking the group to make some concrete proposals, the moderator encouraged the group to be reflective. This situation shows of how the behavior of the moderator can be a key factor how a discussion evolves. In the Colombian project we minimized the role of the moderator as much as possible so that we could investigate how the discussion evolved by the internal dynamic among the participants.

Felipe, ex-guerrilla (1)

There will never be peace... In order for there to be at least an attempt for peace, the government would have to live up to its commitments. If a government promises a school, then build it! If there is support in something, then people will believe...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Although a hopeless beginning, Felipe gives a tangible answer when he states that the government should keep its promises. Given the bad experiences with previous peace processes and the existing disappointment of the ex-combatants with the demobilization program, this is indeed a reasonable argument that is able to overcome the initial despair. The level of deliberation is kept high.

Esther, ex-guerrilla (1)

Equality.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Esther gives a short but down-to-the-point answer regarding the need for a more equitable society. This is a point that was broadly covered in the previous discussion and is indeed a very logical proposal flowing out of it. The level of deliberation remains high.

Carlos, ex-guerrilla (1)

To create new strategies and guarantees... in health and education.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Carlos interactively says that there is need for new education and health policies; a topic that had been discussed and that comes naturally from the exercise. The level of deliberation remains high.

Gabriela, ex-paramilitary (1)

To better the situation of the people and to talk the truth to all the people, because the situation we are now seeing...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gabriela is able to synthesize in a concrete manner two aspects widely brought up during the discussions: the need to improve the life conditions and to be honest; this last point goes back to Felipe's point of the deeply felt sense of government's failure to keep up its promises. The level of deliberation stays high.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (1)

A policy of social security: to better the situation of the people, to create a special ministry, I would say, to attend those special cases: Chocó, for example... In order to guarantee these people all the things we have a right to...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana interactively picks up the thread about the need for social policies and gives a concrete example of a particular depressed area in our country: Chocó, where indeed people have long suffered from all kinds of deprivations even in the most basic public services such as water and electricity. The level of deliberation stays high.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (1)

I propose that in any way, like this man says, that the government would fulfill its promises. If the government would be fulfilling its promises then for example, I have many friends there and I would tell them to come here...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario goes back to Felipe's point regarding the need for the government to live up to its promises. He even mentions the multiplying effect that government seriousness will have and the impact it would have on the whole demobilization program, as word would spread among the current combatants, giving them an incentive to follow this path. The level of deliberation stays high.

Esther, ex-guerrilla (1)

The government doesn't put so many obstacles to exercise our right to work. Right now, they are taking that right away from us. Because with all the things we have to do, if we have to study, etc. is not possible to work. That would be my proposal.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Esther also gives a concrete proposal: the need to provide the adequate conditions for a more authentic reintegration of the ex-combatants into the job market. Besides the obstacles they face due to their previous activities, they also have to fulfill a number of requirements that are not always compatible with their job-related activities, as they have to ask for permission to go to classes. The level of deliberation stays high. It is amazing how in this final phase of the discussion, participants are interactive and are able to pick up points raised earlier in the discussion.

Moderator

I am going to read the proposals and whoever agrees with that concrete proposal, please raise your hand: The first proposal is for us to talk in a civilized way in order for there to be a negotiation. That there be dialogue.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (1)

In this case we have to be clearer. A dialogue between who and who? Who will sit at the table? There is need for more clarity.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: When the moderator explains the procedure for voting and puts forward the first proposal, Belisario comes in and asks who should participate in that dialogue. He forcefully argues that there is need for more clarity. Inquiring and asking go to the core sense of the deliberative theory. In this sense, Belisario's expressed need for more information before committing his vote is highly deliberative. The level of deliberation stays high.

Ana, ex-guerrilla (1)

Between the parties. Between the parties that are generating now the conflict. Logically. Because if you talked in a civilized way and we reached agreement, we will have a better standard of living for every body, for ones and the others.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Ana answers the question in a very clear and deliberative way, stating that it would be between the parties to the conflict. She also asserts that an agreement would be good for having a better life for all. The level of deliberation stays high.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (1)

We should complement that and say yes to a dialogue but with guarantees that the government really commits and fulfills its promises. Because, how many times we have talked and the government hasn't lived up to its agreements?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana suggests a new phrasing for Ana's original proposal in the sense that if there were to be a negotiation,

there would be need for guarantees and for government's real commitment to its promises. Deliberation stays at a high level.

Ana, ex-guerrilla (1)

Obviously, if we sit down and there is an agreement it is because there is a real will to live up to it, on each side.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Ana insists on her proposal and answers that indeed real determination on each side is a pre-requisite of a dialogue between the parties. The level of deliberation is kept high.

Gabriela, ex-paramilitary (1)

There have been many times that the government hasn't lived up to its agreements. It has played dirty. Look at what just happened to the people that were extradited. On the one side, government gives you support and encouragement and on the other side, it tries to take advantage of you.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gabriela keeps on with the commitment thread and illustrates her point with a vivid example: the extradition of the paramilitary leaders by the Uribe government, after having negotiated and handed in their arms. Deliberation is kept at a high level.

Ana, ex-guerrilla (1)

Obviously, there have been negotiations and encounters but nothing has been in concrete terms. Never in our country did we reach a concrete agreement. That is why we are like we are.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Ana acknowledges all the issues and arguments brought up by her fellow participants and, at the same time, insists on the validity of her own proposal. She says that although there have been encounters and previous encounters and negotiations, there has never been a real one. The level of deliberation stays high.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (1)

And because that lack of governmental credibility is why it is so difficult to reach an agreement... It is not impossible but it is difficult that there will be another negotiating table between guerrilla and government, between the government and the new groups...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana is able to coherently articulate the main obstacle to carry out a new negotiation process with the illegal armed groups: the lack of credibility with respect to the government actions. She forcefully recognizes that this absence of trust would make a negotiation almost impossible. The level of deliberation stays high.

Ana, ex-guerrilla (1)

But if we don't negotiate and don't get to an agreement, then we will never get anything. If everybody goes a different way, then we can't talk about democracy and social justice. We have to agree before we can talk about that.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Ana insists on her point in the way André Bächtiger has stated when he argued that "questioning, disputing, and insisting are core but frequently overlooked and undervalued elements of a desirable and effective deliberative process."⁹⁰ The level of deliberation stays high.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (1)

When listening to you, you see that every one has doubts, then it is like talking like dumb people....

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario shows empathy with Ana and acknowledges how difficult it must be talking to a public that deeply doubts the merits of your point. The level of deliberation stays high.

⁹⁰ André Bächtiger, "On Perfecting the Deliberative Process: Questioning, Disputing, and Insisting as Core Deliberative Values," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington D.C., September 2-5, 2010.

Ana, ex-guerrilla (1)

Obviously, if we don't talk about those issues there will never be peace, there will never be social justice and welfare for the people, there will always be inconformity.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Ana reinforces her argument by making a powerful statement in which she asserts that peace, social justice and welfare for all can only be reached through a real negotiating process. Deliberation and dialogue are the ways she sees, as the paths to peace and reconciliation, otherwise there will be inconformity. The level of deliberation is high.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (1)

If there is inconformity it is because there are things that fail...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana states that if there is inconformity it is because there are things that fail. Deliberation remains very interactive and therefore is kept at a high level.

Ana, ex-guerrilla (1)

Yes, but those are the things that we have to talk about at the negotiation, to be able to reach agreement, those things that the people are worried about... It is logical... Because that is what we are going to talk about...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Ana interactively reacts to Diana's concerns and clarifies that those things that are not working well, those things that fail, will be the issues to discuss in a negotiation process. The conversation is nicely flowing and the level of deliberation remains high.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (2)

I think that it is like "botar pólvora en gallinazos" (wasting gunpowder on worthless birds)...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario expresses his despair once again and uses a common and popular saying meaning that it would be a completely worthless effort. With this statement, Belisario completely de-legitimizes Ana's point and shows no respect towards her argument. Deliberation is brought down to a low level.

Explanation of transformative moment: This is another good example of how utter despair and hopelessness transforms a discussion from a high to a low level of deliberation.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (3)

Because those who have are not going to give their things up so easily...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana keeps the hopeless tone and desperately says that those in privileged positions won't give them up so easily. Just as Belisario, she seems to be stuck in the past and unable to foresee a better future. The level of deliberation remains low.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (3)

Look, look, we are living it and you don't realize it, maybe you do realize it but you don't want to accept it. Look at the negotiations in Ralito, how many people went there, how many things they promised there...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario continues at a hopeless note and brings the example of the past negotiations with the AUC and the government's failed promises. The level of deliberation is low.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (3)

You see... I always said that there was great need of a woman there. How many women were fighting in the jungle and not a single one was sitting at the table... Hmmm!

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana comes back again and brings an interesting point regarding women participation in the negotiations with the paramilitaries. Although a worthwhile argument, it seems to be completely off-track in the current context. The level of deliberations remains low.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (3)

The world is well made. There are rich people, there are poor people, there are blind people, there are handicapped people, there are homeless people... Anyway, this world is well made, you understand me? Then, that is a lie... That we think that they are going to do it... It is not so... Those who left for the Águilas Negras, do you think they are going to come back and sit here and talk? No one, because they left with the feeling of having been betrayed... There are so many members from the left and have gone back... That is a lie to believe in things that can't be... We shouldn't think about things that can't be... If it was you that was sitting in that table, that would be different, because you go with an open heart... but those peoples with ties that sit at the table, they are different...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario is completely despairing regarding the possibility for negotiation. He shows respect towards Ana but is completely closed to a possible negotiation and even to the possibility of building a better and more peaceful future in our country. The level of deliberation is kept low.

Ana, ex-guerrilla (4)

You know, there is something clear, something we understand, we all know that the guerrillas –FARC, ELN, can't take power in an armed confrontation, because there is a powerful army. But we say if there is a negotiation, obviously both have deceived each other... The guerrillas have deceived the government says, "wait, I won't let them do it again..." and the government has deceived the guerrillas, they have deceived us all, the demobilized... But we can't act out from resentment... If we want a better society, we have to fight for it...

Everything that happens within a particular society, everyone in that society is responsible...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Ana is completely relentless in her effort of making the case for negotiation and peace. She forcefully states that there are absolutely no chances for taking over power through an armed confrontation and thus, negotiation becomes an imperative. She nicely reacts to the objections presented by Belisario and Diana and agrees that there has been deception on the side of the government, but also on the side of the guerrillas. She makes a powerful point about the need to leave resentment behind and the fact of co-responsibility by all members of society in the building of a better world. She again is able to bring up the true spirit of deliberation and raises the level of deliberation once again. The discussion is now flowing and the level of deliberation is high.

Explanation of transformative moment: This transformative moment reinforces the argument of André Bächtiger that it is appropriate to insist on one's position. Ana is not polite in a conventional way in giving up arguing and remaining silent. On the contrary, she insists on her position, making the discussion spirited and in this sense deliberative.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (1)

You know, I don't know about you, but for me... if I go by here and hit a stone, I don't want to pass by again and hit the same stone twice...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario is again pessimistic and in a metaphoric way expresses how doubtful he is about a new negotiation. But his tone has become more moderate, probably reacting to the uplifting statement of Ana. With the stone metaphor, he brings a personal aspect in the discussion. If he hits a stone a second time, this is not the end of the world. It is fascinating to follow the dynamic of the discussion, to see how the speakers influence each other, even if they are on opposite sides, Ana an ex-guerrilla, Belisario an ex-paramilitary.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (1)

You pass by with caution...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana builds on Belisario's metaphor and says that in those cases in which you have encountered some obstacles before, you need to be cautious. Her intervention also has a humorous aspect in the sense of Sammy Basu, who emphasizes the virtue of humor for deliberation.⁹¹ The level of deliberation is kept high.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (1)

Exactly. What happens then? For example, I would advise people from the left not to come here... I would say to them, stay there.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario is tempted again by despair and is quite dubious about the demobilization program. The level of deliberation hangs in there and stays at a not-so-stable high level. This is a good example to show that it is sometimes not easy to determine whether a particular speech act keeps the discussion at a high deliberative level or whether it transforms it to a low level. One has to consider the context and to make an effort for the best possible judgment. If two coders come to the same judgment, as in the present case, this is comforting, but does not negate that we have to do with interpretations not precise measurements. As I wrote in the introduction, all coding in the social sciences ultimately rely on interpretations.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (1)

Under different conditions, in these obviously not...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana asserts the need to change the current conditions in order for there to be an agreement. The level of deliberation stays high.

⁹¹ Sammy Basu, "Dialogical Ethics and the Virtue of Humor," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 7 (1999).

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (2)

Remember when Pastrana used to travel so much to those meetings, remember? In those where Marulanda stood him up. Think of how many millions he put into his pocket. Whenever he came back from those reunions, he would say, “hey treasurer I spent in the trip 50 millions, when really his expenses were about 10 millions at the most... A total of 40 millions for him... That is what I say that what the government did with our demobilization was to control a little the crime rate, you understand? This is, the deaths and so on...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario refers now to the negotiation process carried out by President Pastrana and accuses him of having taken much of the money for himself. This is completely off-track and again the level of deliberation is lowered.

Explanation of transformative moment: Off-track remarks do not always disrupt the deliberative flow of a discussion but may loosen up the atmosphere.⁹² But here, Belisario is so lengthy and so off-track that he disrupts deliberation.

Ana, ex-guerrilla (3)

It is because they have not fulfilled their agreement, but this is no what they want...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Ana makes another effort to bring the discussion back to its topic and says that it was because they didn't fulfilled their agreement and implies that now it may be different as this is not what they want right now. It is not clear what she means by “they” and the level of deliberation stays low.

⁹² Jürg Steiner, *The Foundations of Deliberative Democracy. Empirical Research and Normative Implications*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p.85.

Belisario, ex-paramilitary (3)

At this moment I feel that I could do whatever, then I have to think twice and calm down...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Belisario expresses how desperate he feels at the moment. Although the expression of feelings is most times helpful in the deliberative process, this time it is not sufficient to raise the level of deliberation, which stays low.

Gabriela, ex-paramilitary (4)

And all this discussion is because of the proposal?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Gabriela accurately and timely asks whether all this back and forth discussions were originated by Ana's proposal. Making a stop and reflecting back on the original purpose of the process is always good for deliberation. The level of deliberation is again high.

Explanation of transformative moment: Gabriela has not spoken for a while, but in all her previous interventions she was at a high level of deliberation. In reminding the group with the present speech act of the agenda, she acts in a leadership role. This is another good example of the importance of participants who take on the role of deliberative leaders.

Carlos, ex-guerrilla (1)

It is a good proposal; the problem is with the government, they don't live up to its agreements...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Carlos respectfully acknowledges that it is indeed a good proposal notwithstanding the lack of trust with respect to government's actions. Being able to distinguish between the proposal itself and some of its plausible obstacles, Carlos is able to keep the conversation open and inviting to further discussion. The level of deliberation is kept high.

Diana, ex-paramilitary (1)

It is because it can't be with Uribe... But Uribe will not govern forever...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Diana ends the conversation making a powerful statement regarding the unlikelihood of a negotiation with Uribe being the president. Nonetheless, she leaves the door open to the future without Uribe as president. The conversation ends at a high level of deliberation.

Moderator

Ok. Time is over now... All your proposals have been recorded although we haven't reached agreement...

Summary explanations of transformative moments

The number of transformative moments continues to vary strongly from group to group. Whereas in group 1, there were twenty transformative moments, in group 2 there were only two, in group 3 there were seven, in the current group there were fourteen such moments.

(a) Transformative moments from a low to a high level of deliberation

Once again in this group, too, leadership was a key factor to transform the discussion from a low to a high level of deliberation. The clearest case of a deliberative leader is Gabriela. She began to intervene quite late in the discussion and did it always at a high level of deliberation. We have seen in the earlier analysis of deliberative leaders that they established themselves at the very beginning of the discussion as deliberative leaders. The case of Gabriela indicates that it is also possible for a latecomer in the discussion to take the role of deliberative leader. What was the situation when Gabriela was able to emerge as a leader to transform the discussion back to a high level of deliberation? At the time, the discussion meandered along without clear

direction, and Gabriela waited for some time to intervene. Then she stepped in reminding the group to bring the discussion back to the assigned agenda.

In this group, I also find evidence that personal stories are of great importance for the explanation of transformative moments. There was no situation when a personal story dragged down the discussion to a low level of deliberation. I found only cases when personal stories helped to raise the level of deliberation. Up to now in the analysis of the first four groups, there was only a single case in group 1, when a personal story transformed the discussion from a high to a low level of deliberation. Thus, the worry of Sharon Krause seems to be overstated that personal stories may often also have “nondeliberative forms of expression.”⁹³ So far in my data, it seems that personal stories almost always have a positive effect on deliberation. This may have to do with the kind of data that I rely on because ex-combatants can tell so many personal stories of how difficult it is in Colombia to make progress toward peace. A good example of using a personal story in a deliberative way is Diana when she tells the group how she is stigmatized, which makes it very difficult for her to find a job.

In group 4, I also found an explanation for an upward transformative moment that did not yet emerge in the previous groups. It has to do with a possible beneficial deliberative effect of reacting with silence to an offending remark. When an ex-paramilitary showed great disrespect for the guerrillas, an ex-guerrilla continued the discussion without reference to this remark, which brought the discussion back to a high level of deliberation. Although deliberation is basically talk-oriented, sometimes not to talk and to react with silence toward an offending remark may prevent the discussion to further deteriorate from a deliberative perspective. I am aware, however, that this argument contradicts the postulate of Jürgen Habermas that deliberation must be truthful, so that hurt feelings, like in this case, should be expressed.⁹⁴ In this particular instance, however, I side with Mark Warren who argues for the deliberative benefits of occasional white lies.⁹⁵ For the ex-guerrilla to

⁹³ Sharon R. Krause, *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and democratic Deliberation*, Princeton University Press, 2008, p.119.

⁹⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *Ach, Europa*, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp 2008, p. 148.

⁹⁵ Mark E. Warren, “Deliberation under Non ideal Conditions: A Reply to Lenard and Adler,” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 39 (2008), 658-60.

remain mute in this particular situation was also a kind of white lie because he did not say what probably he wanted to say.

Finally, one upward transformative moment came about by the intervention of one of the moderators. As we remember from the Introduction, the moderators did generally not intervene, so that the discussion could go wherever participants wished to take it. The only exception when the moderators intervened was at the end of the discussion because this was one of the groups where at the end a decision had to be made. When one of the moderators asks for concrete summarizing proposals that will be sent to the High Commissioner for Reintegration, this raised the level of deliberation. This case shows that moderators can have an influence on the occurrence of transformative moments. In this particular research project, we wanted to minimize such influence. This does not mean that an investigation about the influence of moderators would not be a valuable research enterprise, but for us this would be for another day.

(b) Transformative moments from a high to a low level of deliberation

As in group 3, here, too, it was utter despair and hopelessness that transformed a high to a low level of deliberation. It was Belisario who acted three times in this way. Thus, in addition to deliberative leaders, there were also actors who took an opposite role, dragging down deliberation. Belisario is an extreme case of such an actor. What is striking is how he expresses his despair in an abrupt way without giving justification. In his first intervention, he simply says that there will never be peace. In his second expression of despair, he states that each day he feels more regrets of having joined the program of reintegration. In his third intervention, he uses the metaphor that talking about peace is like wasting gunpowder on worthless birds. Stating despair and hopelessness in such an abrupt way does not give an opening for other participants to reply in an interactive way because Belisario does not give reasons for his position.

For the first time in this group, we find situations where a speech act is so off-topic that a high level of deliberation is transformed to a low level. To

broaden the discussion in adding new aspects is not *a priori* bad from a deliberative perspective. On the contrary, it may indeed be positive, as we have seen in earlier groups when comparisons with Cuba and Venezuela were brought into the discussion for the future of Colombia. Off-topic funny stories may also be helpful for deliberation in relaxing a tense atmosphere in the group. In the current group, however, there were two situations not fulfilling any of these two criteria. In the first situation, Diana, an ex-paramilitary, demanded without further justification that the process of demobilization should be stopped. This statement, expressed without justification, was clearly outside the assigned task of discussing ways to peace in Colombia. Diana, however, could have broadened the agenda, for example in arguing that continuing the fighting would lead to the defeat of the guerrillas, which would be the best way to ultimately reach peace. Would she have made such an argument, other actors could have reacted, and perhaps a spirited exchange may have resulted. But not making such an argument or any argument, Diana was definitively way off-topic from a deliberative perspective.

In this group, we also find for the first time situations when utter disrespect transformed a high to a low level of deliberation. There were two such situations. In the first instance, an ex-paramilitary called the guerrillas bandits, thieves and rapists. In the second situation, an ex-guerrilla also uses vulgar language in stating that he would better give a big kick in the ass of a female community leader. André Bächtiger is certainly correct that deliberation does not need to be overly polite and that spirited exchanges are welcome.⁹⁶ These two situations, however, are well beyond spirited exchanges. Their vulgar languages express utter disrespect and are thus disrupting the deliberative flow of a discussion.

⁹⁶ André Bächtiger, "On Perfecting the Deliberative Process: Questioning, Disputing, and Insisting as Core Deliberative Values," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington D.C., September 2-5, 2010.

Chapter 5: Transformative moments in group 5

Majority of ex-guerrillas in group composition

Consensus decision required at end of discussion

Codes after the name of each speaker for the respective speech act

(1) The speech act stays at a high level of deliberation.

(2) The speech act transforms the level of deliberation from high to low. (These speech acts will be set in bold letters.)

(3) The speech act stays at a low level of deliberation.

(4) The speech act transforms the level of deliberation from low to high. (These speech acts will be set in bold letters.)

Moderator

What has to happen in Colombia, what do you propose, in order to reach peace in the future?

Alberto, ex-guerrilla (1)

That everybody demobilize, the guerrillas, the paramilitaries, everybody...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Alberto enters the conversation with a concrete proposal for the achievement of peace, which is for all combatants to demobilize. The discussion begins at a high level of deliberation.

Bruno, 25, ex-paramilitary (2)

There will never be peace in Colombia. Why? And you know why there will never be peace? Because war is a business...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bruno interrupts Alberto and argues that there will never be peace in Colombia as war is a business. Although the profitability of the Colombian conflict could serve as a thoughtful departing point if presented differently, Bruno says it with such despair that he doesn't leave any room for a better future. Despair plays a crucial role in bringing the level of deliberation down to a low level.

Interpretation of transformative moment: As we have seen in previous groups, utter despair is a frequent reason for a transformative moment from a high to a low level of deliberation.

César, 37, ex-guerrilla (3)

Yes, because war is a business. If war ends there will be no work. War is the business that renders more money.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: César picks up the thread of war as a profitable business with the same hopelessness tone introduced by Bruno. He falls into the despair trap and keeps the discussion at a low level of deliberation

Bruno, 25, ex-paramilitary (3)

And if the war ends there will be no more jobs. For the government it is good that there is war.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bruno comes back again with the same unhelpful feeling and doesn't even try to build a more coherent argument around his ideas of more jobs or why it is good for the government that war continues. The level of deliberation is kept low.

Danilo, 24, ex-guerrilla (3)

The abuses from the military...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Danilo comes in for the first time in the conversation and introduces what would have been an interesting new thread, had he presented in a different and more constructive way. Despair continues and the level of deliberation remains low.

Emilio, 22, ex-guerrilla (4)

That there won't be as many corrupt politicians. That there be people that exercise power in a serious way and use the money for what is really needed... and not take it for themselves...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Emilio brings back some optimism, refers to common good and even social justice in the sense of Rawls. He expresses optimism that this can be done and thus, is able to raise the level of the conversation back to a high level of deliberation.

Interpretation of transformative moment: With his optimism Emilio reacts against the despair of previous speakers and attempts to establish himself early in the discussion as a deliberative leader.

Fermín, 30, ex-paramilitary (2)

Here in Colombia there is a Uni-personal democracy...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Fermín doesn't pick up the optimism brought by Emilio and without giving any kind of explanation, he inarticulately asserts that there is a uni-personal democracy in Colombia. Listeners and readers are left with a feeling of complete vagueness, as we certainly do not know whether a uni-personal democracy is a cause of conflict and if so, what would be then the proposal for the achievement of peace. The discussion is transformed from a high to a low level of deliberation

Explanation of transformative moment: Fermín lacks intellectual skills to deal with a broad issue of democracy. We have seen such causes for downward transformative moments already in earlier groups.

Emilio, 22, ex-guerrilla (3)

To generate more jobs...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Emilio, as he did previously, tries to formulate a concrete and relevant proposal but is interrupted and he can't even say what he wanted to say. The conversation is kept at a low level of deliberation.

Bruno, 25, ex-paramilitary (3)

But there are some that like the easy life... In Colombia there are jobs, what happens is that people don't look enough...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bruno comes back again interrupting Emilio and even contradicting what he himself had previously argued. He had indeed vehemently made the point that without a war there won't be any jobs in Colombia. It begins to look as if he is boycotting the conversation. Despair continues and the level of deliberation stays low.

Emilio, 22, ex-guerrilla (3)

But not for us, the demobilized...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Emilio tries to move the discussion forward but is not able to do it since Bruno abruptly interrupts him. The level of deliberation is kept low.

Bruno, 25, ex-paramilitary (3)

Ehhhhh?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bruno, in a clear sign of disrespect, interrupts Emilio with an expression that openly rejects Emilio's argument. As respect for the ideas of others comes at the heart of deliberative theory, the level of deliberation is kept at a very low level.

Jumbled speech acts (3)

It is impossible to understand the single speech acts. There is a vivid discussion about the difficulties of the demobilized to find jobs.... Participants speak at the same time trying to tell their stories but they certainly are not listening to each other. Some words are identifiable: jobs, papers, offices, identification number which give the idea of their trying to single out their particular details of their stories regarding the difficulties of finding jobs.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: These jumbled speech acts are a perfect demonstration of the very low level of deliberation the conversation has reached. No one listens, no one is open to others' ideas, and no one is willing to fully engage in a deliberative exercise. The level of deliberation remains low.

Moderator

Proposals? What do you propose?

Emilio, 22, ex-guerrilla (3)

May be if there won't be guerrillas, no "paracos"⁹⁷ ...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: In an attempt to bring some order to the room, the moderator steps in and once again poses the original question to the audience. Emilio is the first one to answer and in a rather vague manner, mentions that peace could be reached if there wasn't any arms groups at all. The conversation is up in the air and the level of deliberation is low.

⁹⁷ "Paracos" is a colloquial expression used to refer to people in the paramilitary groups.

Horacio, 46, ex-guerrilla (3)

May be if it won't be an Army or a police force...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Keeping the same overall atmosphere, Horacio states that it would even be necessary for the Army and Police forces to not exist. The level of deliberation is kept at a very low level.

Bruno, 25, ex-paramilitary (3)

There will even be more poverty... If there is no war, there will be more poverty, because if there is no war, there will be no jobs...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bruno brings again his original point of complete despair. He doesn't see any future and absolutely no possibilities for peace in Colombia. The level of deliberation is kept low.

Guido, 31, ex-guerrilla (4)

Education for the least-favored classes...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Guido makes a valuable and concrete proposal regarding education for the least favored classes. The search for the common good and social justice in terms of Rawls is a key feature in the deliberative theory. The level of deliberation is brought up to a high level once again.

Explanation of transformative moment: Guido speaks up for the first time, and given the low level of deliberation in the preceding discussion, he attempts to transform the discussion to a high deliberative level. As with Emilio above, new entries in a low level discussion may feel the need to bring about a turn around. Fresh voices may be good for deliberation.

Bruno, ex-paramilitary (2)

No... There won't have to be anything... War will always be there...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bruno comes back again and gives an answer to the moderator's question with the same despairing tone that has been a constant during the exercise. The level of deliberation is brought down to a low level once more.

Explanation of transformative moment: As there are deliberative leaders, Bruno acts in the opposite direction dragging down the discussion with his expressions of despair. The analysis increasing confirms the importance of despair for transformative moments from high to low levels of deliberation.

Emilio, ex-guerrilla (3)

No, that "thing" not... We are at war...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Emilio's answer to the moderator's question is noticeably influenced by Bruno's despairing tone, as he says that peace -which he referred to as "thing", will never happen and that there will always be war. The level of deliberation stays low.

Guido, 31, ex-guerrilla (4)

In the conflict between the guerrilla and the Army and the paramilitaries, it would be important to sit down and talk... And see what happens...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Guido tries to bring some sense back into the discussion and states the importance that the parties sit down and talk about the -possibility for the achievement of peace. He doesn't say that peace will necessarily come; he doesn't guarantee what is going to happen. As previously mentioned, this is a very important feature that goes to the heart of the deliberative theory. Guido is able to raise the level of deliberation and it is high again.

Explanation of transformative moment: Just as Bruno drags down the discussion, Guido lifts it again. From the perspective of group dynamics, it is

interesting to note how different ex-combatants establish their roles as deliberative leaders or deliberative spoilers.

Bruno, 25, ex-paramilitary (2)

Had you known that they were not going to live up to their agreements, would you have turned yourself in? Would you have left the jungle?

Interpretation of level of deliberation: In a non-interactive way, Bruno ignores the point brought by Guido about the possibility of a negotiation and asks the question whether it was really a good idea to demobilize. He clearly implies that he would have rather stayed in the jungle had he known the government was not going to live up to the agreements. He again boycotts the discussion and lowers the level of deliberation.

Explanation of transformative moment: Bruno manages again to spoil the effort of Guido to raise the level of deliberation, which shows how difficult it can be for deliberation if an actor is stubborn not reacting to reasonable proposals of others.

Guido, 31, ex-guerrilla (4)

But if one starts thinking about life here and there... Logically, I would prefer to be here and not there...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: In another attempt to straighten the flow of the dialogue, Guido interactively answers Bruno's question and makes a powerful statement regarding the benefits of the demobilization route. He is able to bring the level of deliberation to a high point.

Explanation of transformative moment: Guido sticks to his role as deliberative leader.

Bruno, 25, ex-paramilitary (2)

I had clothes, I didn't have to work...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bruno keeps reinforcing his regret of having demobilized. He mentions how when he was part of the armed group, he had access to clothing and he didn't have to work. These remarks clearly don't point to the building of peace in Colombia, and Bruno is able to lower the level of deliberation once again.

Explanation of transformative moment: Bruno sticks to his role as deliberative spoiler.

Emilio, 22, ex-guerrilla (4)

I am better here I have my family, my freedom...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Emilio makes also an effort to change the current despairing dynamics of this exercise and asserts how, as demobilized, they are able to be with their family, to have their freedom. The conversation is taken back to a high level of deliberation.

Explanation of transformative moment: Emilio was an early deliberative leader in this discussion, and he continues to exercise this role.

Bruno, 25, ex-paramilitary (2)

There I didn't have to pay, here if I don't pay...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Bruno insists on his regrets of having taken the demobilization path by stating that when he was in the armed group, he didn't have to pay. The level of deliberation is down again.

Explanation of transformative moment: Bruno continues to stick to his role as deliberative spoiler. To be sure, he is deliberative from the perspective of participation in continuing to speak up. The deliberative model of democracy is talk centered, but for the case of Bruno one may wonder whether there are no time limits to talk, if the same actors repeat an argument times and again.

A moderator may step in to signal to actors like Bruno that it is time to move on. As I described in the Introduction, in our research design we gave no such role to the moderator, so that the discussion could go wherever it went. The consequence is that Bruno could continue to disrupt the discussion. But this happened to be the reality in this group, and we could observe close up this reality. If the purpose would have been, on the other hand, to attain a high level of deliberation, the moderator could have quite down Bruno. Therefore, instructions for the moderators depend very much on the purpose of organizing deliberative experiments.

Irma, 27, ex-guerrilla (3)

If you don't pay, they put you on the street...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Irma joins the conversation for the first time and finishes Bruno's statement saying that indeed if you don't pay, you are put right on the street. This speech act clearly suggests that Bruno's negative spirits has influenced Irma. The level of deliberation stays low.

Guido, 46, ex-guerrilla (4)

In order for there to be peace there has to be some reforms, in work issues, in housing...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Guido retries to unwind the current developments and goes back to the original question. He starts rephrasing the purpose of the exercise and gives some concrete proposal. He stresses the importance of undertaking some reforms in work issues, housing, etc. The level of deliberation is again brought up to a high level.

Explanation of transformative moment: Guido continues to be a deliberative leader.

Emilio, 22, ex-guerrilla (1)

The government would have to fulfill its obligations...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Emilio, also a deliberative leader, builds upon Guido's statement and offers another concrete example of how peace could be achieved. The level of deliberation is kept high.

Jumbled speech acts (2)

Participants start to talk once again at the same time and it becomes very difficult to single out the individual speech acts. Some recognizable words are: guerrilla, illiterate people, government, and army officials...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Everyone is talking; no one is listening so the moderator has to intervene. Although participation is a key aspect of the deliberation process, it alone can't guarantee it, as respectful listening is essential for deliberation to happen. The exercise is completely out of track, chaotic. Without a moderator this may perfectly have ended the discussion. The level of deliberation is taken to a low level of deliberation.

Explanation of transformative moment: When everybody speaks at the same time, this is a sure way to lower the level of deliberation, as we have already seen in previous groups.

Moderator

Well, well, proposals, proposals.... What has to happen in Colombia in order to reach peace?

Bruno, 25, ex-paramilitary (3)

We will need completely new politicians, they will have to be born again... and to be born honest, and that will never happen...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: After the moderator's effort to get the conversation back on track, Bruno gives his answer in the sense that it would be necessary to have completely new politicians that will have to be born

again. Bruno's statement is another clear indication of his continuous efforts to boycott the exercise. The level of deliberation stays at a low level.

Emilio, 22, ex-guerrilla (4)

That there will be a reform, a constitutional reform... that the Constitution gets changed...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Avoiding Bruno's trap, Emilio offers his answer to the question posed by the moderator. He argues that it would be necessary to have a constitutional reform, to change the constitution. Emilio's concrete proposal is able to raise the level of deliberation once again.

Explanation of transformative moment: Emilio steps in once again as deliberative leader.

Guido, 31, ex-guerrilla (1)

A negotiating table...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Guido, the other deliberative leader in the group, offers another concrete proposal for the achievement of peace. The level of deliberation is kept at a high level.

Jumbled speech acts (2)

Once again participants start to talk at the same time. It becomes almost impossible to understand what they say, some words stand out: agreement, demobilized, etc...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Once more all participants start to talk at the same time making it impossible to understand what they are saying. This is another clear indication that the exercise has failed to develop in an orderly manner. The level of deliberation falls back to a low level.

Explanation of transformative moment: This is another example showing that deliberation breaks down if everyone speaks at the same time.

Moderator

So, let's go back. What are this table's proposals going to be? Do you agree that it would be a good idea that the president would sit and negotiate with Alfonso Cano? Is this a concrete proposal? Who doesn't think it is not a good idea?

Irma, ex-guerrilla (3)

The problem is for them to finally meet...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Irma, just as in her previous speech shows a great deal of disbelief and in a very ironic tone doesn't completely discard the negotiation proposal but does present it as a very implausible option. The level of deliberation stays low.

Emilio, 22, ex-guerrilla (3)

The guerrilla is not going to talk with Uribe...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Emilio is also very dubious with the negotiation way. He shows a great deal of pessimism whether the guerrilla will talk with President Uribe. This time, Emilio is not able to bring back the discussion to a high level of deliberation: perhaps he is influenced by the negative atmosphere in the group so that he gives up this late in the discussion to make another deliberative effort.

Jumbled speech acts (3)

Following the same pattern, participants start speaking at the same time... This time it is very difficult to even single out some words, guerrilla is heard a couple of times and "Caguán."⁹⁸

⁹⁸ El "Caguán" is the name by which President Pastrana's (1998-2002) negotiating process is known. The name Caguán comes from San Vicente del Caguán, one of the municipal entities

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Participants start speaking at the same time in a chaotic manner, making it impossible to catching the contents of the conversation. The words “guerrilla” and “Caguán” are heard a couple of times, which gives the idea that the shadows of the previous Caguán negotiations are still hunting them. The level of deliberation is kept at a low level.

Moderator

Some other proposal that everyone agrees on?

Guido, 31, ex-guerrilla (4)

May be that some other country intervenes...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Guido gives now a concrete proposal regarding the intervention of a third country. Although he doesn't exactly say the exact role that the third country would play in the negotiation, this speech act brings some specific and tangible option for peace. The level of the conversation is raised to a high level once again.

Explanation of transformative moment: In contrast to Emilio, Guido still makes an effort to bring back the discussion to a deliberative level.

Jumbled speech acts (2)

People start to talk in a very disorganized way. It is very difficult to follow the thread. The only recognizable word is “Chavez.”

Interpretation of level of deliberation: The anarchic behavior of the participants impedes once again the normal development of the exercise. The only word that can be told apart is Chavez, giving the idea that they may have in mind an eventual participation of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez. This

that comprised the demilitarized zone that the guerrilla had asked for as a precondition for coming to the table.

would have perfectly counted as a reasonable proposal if presented in a more coherent way. The level of deliberation is brought to a low level.

Explanation of transformative moment: Jumbled speech acts let the discussion again break down.

Moderator

Some other proposal that everyone may agree? Could we say that this table puts forward a proposal that another country comes in and intervenes?

Chorus (3)

Yes...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Since this experiment has consensus as a decision mechanism, the moderator has made an effort to present the different proposals to the audience, namely a constitutional reform, a negotiating table and the participation of a third country. The first two have been the target of a great deal of criticism and we are left with a feeling of uncertainty regarding the consensus quality. With the latter one, the intervention of a third country, participants as a chorus shout yes. This agreement, however, was out of impatience to bring the experiment to an end, so that the discussion finished at a low level of deliberation.

Summary explanations of transformative moments

(a) Transformative moments from a high to a low level of deliberation

In this group there were altogether nine transformative moments from a high to a low level of deliberation. Thereby, Bruno had a key role, bringing down the discussion five times. Each time, he uttered utmost despair to ever reach peace in Colombia. We have seen in earlier groups that despair turns out to be an important factor to spoil deliberation. Bruno was very repetitive in

expressing despair. Since war is good business, there will always be war. If there is always war, it is better to be part of war because then at least you get food and clothes and you do not have to pay bills. Given that the group had to discuss possibilities for more peace in Colombia, Bruno was very destructive for this endeavor. With his frequent interruptions he prevented a smooth flow of the discussion.

Three times the discussion was brought down to a low level of deliberation when several actors wanted to speak at the same time, so that the speech situation became so jumbled that on the tapes one can only identify single words without connection with each other. Quick interactions may be deliberative in revealing an interest in what others say. But this was not the case in these three situations. Nobody listened to each other, and it was only thanks to the intervention of the moderators that the discussion continued at all. Due to the despair spread by the frequent negative interventions of Bruno, many participants were despairing themselves, so that they did not see much point to continue the discussion about peace in Colombia. Instead of showing discipline in structuring the conversation, they just let go expressing whatever was on their mind.

In the remaining downward transformative moment, Fermín spoke over his head when she tried to characterize democracy in Colombia. We have seen similar situations in previous groups, for example when it came to characterize the political regimes in Cuba and Venezuela and to make comparisons with Colombia. There are simply complex political topics that are intellectually too challenging to the participants in our groups of often not very educated ex-combatants.

(b) Transformative moments from a low to a high level of deliberation

There were nine transformative moments from a low to a high level of deliberation. Only two actors were responsible for all these cases, Guido with five cases and Emilio with four. In his different interventions, Guido made the following proposals to contribute to more peace in Colombia: more education for the least favored classes; sit down together and talk; reforms with regard

to work and housing; intervention of other countries. Guido also tries to lift spirits in claiming that life as ex-combatant is better than fighting in the jungle. Emilio makes the following proposals: politicians should spend public money for where it is really needed and not for their own purposes; government should fulfill its obligations; reform of the constitution. Like Guido, Emilio also tries to lift spirits in claiming that as ex-combatant he can enjoy his family and his freedom.

All these proposals can easily be linked to more peace in Colombia and were good openings for a spirited deliberative discussion. But times and again, Bruno disrupts the flow of the discussion with his gloomy interventions. In this way, the discussion is never really going. Other participants become discouraged and instead of pursuing an orderly discussion get bogged down several times in jumbled speech. Several actors do not even speak up. Of the 17 participants, indeed, six do not say a word.

This group is a good illustration of how a single obstructionist can prevent a deliberative flow of the conversation. What should one do with someone like Bruno from a deliberative perspective? A moderator may be able to quiet down such an obstructionist and to give the floor to other actors. But as I wrote in the Introduction, we had decided against such interventions of the moderator, so that the discussion could go wherever it went. So what should deliberative leaders like Guido and Emilio have done with Bruno? Obviously, it was not enough to come back times and again with still new proposals to contribute to more peace in Colombia. Should they have told Bruno to no longer intervene in the discussion? Such a demand would have violated the deliberative principle of unconstrained participation for Bruno. He certainly had the right to express in a forceful way his utter despair of ever arriving at peace in Colombia. There is, however, also the perspective of the group, which was assigned the task to come up with proposals for more peace. In particular, there is the perspective of the six actors who did not speak up at all being discouraged by the obstruction of Bruno. In my view, it would have been in deliberative spirit if deliberative leaders like Guido and Emilio would have told Bruno after two or three of his gloomy interventions: "We have heard you and we sympathize with your despair, but perhaps you

let other participants speak up before you intervene again.” It is a difficult issue of how to deal with deliberative obstructionists, and there are no easy solutions. After all, deliberation is talk centered. But can talk be endless if it repeats the same point times and again, especially if the point does not contribute anything to move the discussion forward?

Chapter 6: Transformative moments in group 6

Majority of ex-paramilitaries in group composition

Majority decision required at end of discussion

Codes after the name of each speaker for the respective speech act

- (1) The speech act stays at a high level of deliberation.
- (2) The speech act transforms the level of deliberation from high to low. (These speech acts will be set in bold letters.)**
- (3) The speech act stays at a low level of deliberation.
- (4) The speech act transforms the level of deliberation from low to high. (These speech acts will be set in bold letters.)**

Moderator

What has to happen in Colombia, what do you propose, in order to reach peace in the future?

Adrián, 24, ex-paramilitary (1)

For me, what is most important in order to reach peace is to provide for work opportunities... If there are jobs, people would think about work...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Adrián starts by mentioning a concrete proposal for the attainment of peace. He clearly states that if there are work opportunities, people will have something to think of. The exercise begins at a high level of deliberation.

Benito, 34, ex-paramilitary (1)

Yes, yes, I think that is very important...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Benito agrees on the stated proposal, which clearly shows that he is not only listening to what his fellow participant is saying but also, that he is paying due respect to Adrián and his ideas. The level of deliberation stays high.

Cayetano, 24, ex-guerrilla (1)

Before thinking about jobs, it is important to think about training and education so we are able to get better-paid jobs... Because if we have to live from a minimum wage salary when you pay 400 thousand pesos for a rent, I don't see the solution to that problem...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Cayetano starts his speech by clearly connecting the issue of jobs being discussed with the necessary training and education that would enable them to get better-paid jobs. He makes the point that a successful reintegration process, especially in the expensive Bogotá, requires them to be able of making more than a minimum wage salary. Respectful and interactive listening and participation go at the heart of the deliberative process. The conversation keeps flowing at a high level of deliberation.

Adrián, 24, ex-paramilitary (1)

That is what I was telling him. When we demobilized collectively what we received was 358 thousand pesos... And who lives with that amount of money? Nobody. Not even in my town where everything is cheap. Plantain is cheap, cassava, coconut and everything is cheap. Even there, that would be so little money.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Adrián forcefully makes the point of the difficulty of living out of COP 358.000, the government subsidy for the demobilized population. He also builds upon Cayetano's opinion regarding

the high cost of living in Bogotá and contrasts it with his hometown. The exercise keeps open and inviting further participation and the level of deliberation remains high.

Benito, 34, ex-paramilitary (1)

What our fellow participant is saying is true. Those are real facts. And sometimes we should get into those people's shoes, into the shoes of those people that have been forced to go back to the jungle, because what is a family, with two, three or even four children, supposed to do here with 358 thousand pesos. They have to pay for education, for housing, for clothing... They can't really make a living. That is a reality and a very important one. I don't mean to speak bad about the government, but I don't really understand from what perspective the government is analyzing these things, our situation.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Benito begins by explicitly acknowledging Adrián's reasoning regarding the difficulties of making a living with the government subsidy. He forcefully and empathetically states that it is a fact that people are going back to the jungle because of that. It is noteworthy the non-judgmental tone of his speech, which clearly helps deliberation as it focuses the conversation on the problem to be solved and doesn't blame anyone – he is being hard on the problem and soft on the people. This shortness of the government subsidy is indeed a quite concrete example of the things that the government should consider when designing and putting into practice the public policies for peace. The conversation is open and inviting to further participation, keeping its high level of deliberation.

Adrián, 24, ex-paramilitary (1)

Or what they thought before we demobilized? I, for example, only knew that we were going to receive 358 thousand pesos one day before I demobilized, when they called us to the main plaza and everybody was there, the Peace Commissioner, everybody. Only then we were told we were going to receive 358 thousand pesos. But then, we couldn't do anything because they already had all our information... And who is going to live with 358 thousand pesos.

And it was only for 18 months because if we wanted to receive the money for a longer time, up to 24 months, then we had to fulfill certain conditions, such as study, etc. For me, the bad thing the government did was to only sit down with the high rank officers and not communicate with us, the whole group. Because had we known we were going to receive so little, we would have never agreed to demobilize. When the late Carlos (Carlos Castaño) met with the High Commissioner, he told him very clearly that he needed at least 20-22 millions pesos per each combatant which would guarantee him a dignified house and a good and secure job. If not, I won't hand in my people. I remember they met at farm 06, just before entering Ralito and when the High Commissioner, I don't quite remember his name, told him that he would only guarantee 15 million per each combatant, Mr. Carlos, gave him the papers back and left and said that he wouldn't talk until his conditions were met. For me, Mr. Carlos did care for us, because the "Mono Mancuso"... Mr. Carlos, when he resigned, before he was killed... or well before he is supposed to have been killed – because I can't tell for sure... Mr. Carlos resigned and became to be the political voice of the AUC. The "Mono Mancuso" came to power and he was offered some benefits by the government... The government told him "you are going to have this, and this, and this..." For me, he didn't think about us, he only thought about himself. We only knew how much we were going to receive one day before handing in our arms. Two weeks before that day, we met with Mancuso and expressly asked him how much we were going to receive and he said that he didn't know, that they had still not agreed on how much each of the combatants would receive. But I think he knew, all of them knew.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Adrián picks up the demobilization policy issue raised by Benito and states that the government should have thought about those issues before putting the program into practice, suggesting a great deal of ad-libbing in the demobilization policy design. He mentions that the government's mistake was to negotiate with the leaders and not with the troop. He then makes a complete recount of his version of how the negotiations took place. He comments about the different roles that the AUC

leaders are believed to have played. Although Adrián's speech is focused on the past, it serves the purpose of putting this sense of betrayal out in a kind of an emotional relief. The level of deliberation is kept high.

Cayetano, 24, ex-guerrilla (1)

So, for me, summarizing in this first point would be to create some jobs, with dignified salaries and trained people, but that the government would subsidize training and education, for example, for us that are studying at the university hopefully in a 100%. But, it would also be important that we should also commit, for example, in getting good grades in passing all courses. That would be the first point. Well, there would be so many things that would help in the creation of peace, but one thing is what we think and want, and another very different thing is what others especially those in power, those who have money and manipulate mafia and drug trafficking, think. We are now out of that world and it is difficult to know what is happening, but the idea is to try, to try to find a solution for peace. When we got here, some of us, we came with a different perspective; we were waiting for some much more benefits. When we got here we found out that it is not as depicted. If they want that more people demobilize, they should at least fulfill what they promise. For example, they don't know whether we have still some contacts with the people that are still there. And we might serve as bridges with those guys that are still there. But they want to see real things; they want to see our standing in the program. From there it comes that the guerrillas are paying for education for some of their members in order for them to become their ideologists to gain more power in the jungle... Well, I still don't know...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Cayetano makes an interesting summary presentation of the issues that have been discussed so far. He puts forward the creation of jobs and the necessary training and education needed to get better-paid positions. He goes a little further and proposes that education and training should be offer on a free basis by the government. He also interactively builds on Adrián's concern as to the demobilization program public policy related matters, and rightfully states that their experiences with

the program would provide an incentive to the people still in the armed groups. They could serve as bridges. Up to now the level of deliberation of the discussion is very high. It is amazing how Adrián, Benito, and Cayetano at the beginning of the discussion interact with each other in a highly deliberative way, building on each others' ideas.

Moderator

What other ideas, what others proposals do you have in order to reach peace in our country?

Cayetano, 24, ex-guerrilla (1)

May be it would be to ask too much, but may be to do what Chavez did in Venezuela, that he took so much land and gave it to so many poor people to cultivate in dignified crops and also gave them subsidies. Not like here in previous amnesties where the state, for example, gave away the land and then they had those people killed in order to take the land back. It may be a part of the solution that taking into account the intellectual capacity of each of the individuals in the program. Because not everyone has the same capabilities to run a farm, may be some more than others...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: After the moderator has stepped in and asked for more proposals, Cayetano suggests an agrarian reform just like the one Chavez has carried out in Venezuela. He contrasts the reform in Venezuela with the previous ones in Colombia, where he states that the government had the beneficiaries killed, in order to gain back the land. He also says that the intellectual capacities of the individual should be taken into account when allocating the different resources. The conversation continues at an unusual high level of deliberation.

Benito, 34, ex-paramilitary (1)

There is something very important that I think is the essential, I don't know, I think. As long as there is not a stop, as long as we don't eradicate from it very roots the corruption in the high government, we are not saying that all of

them, it is very difficult to do something... Because there are some people who have very good ideas, but if those other people keep putting a stop to those ideas and well-intentioned people, I don't think anything could be done.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Making an interesting connection with some of the wrongdoings of the government mentioned by Cayetano, Benito puts forward the issue of corruption and forcefully asserts that as long as there is not a stop to the high government corruption practices, it would be very difficult to put an end to war and to see prospects for peace in our country. The conversation still continues at a very high level of deliberation.

Cayetano, 24, ex-guerrilla (1)

In order for that to happen, it would be a miracle. For that machinery, for that politics to come to an end, and for them to open a space for new people it is indeed very complicated. Because people that have money they would like to have more and the same with people with power. It is complicated to believe that inside the government they would make such changes all of a sudden. At some point we believed and saw some processes that we were going in that direction, but when they found that some people were going to be affected and some favors had to be paid off and they stopped. Unfortunately, there were some commitments they couldn't put aside. If we really want peace for our country... To begin with, we have to think that war is not only made in the jungle, it is also made within the same powers, within this same city. Within this city a lot of money has come out, for everything. For example, the United States, a capitalist country, is the first one that is not interested in reaching peace in the world because they are the ones making and selling those powerful guns to other countries. What I have seen is that no one gives away something without expecting something in return and the United States apparently gives us something, but they are really going or looking to get some other benefits, may be weapons, intelligence, anything to foster war.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Cayetano offers an interesting reflection of how ingrained is corruption in our country and how difficult it is to think that

people with power and influence would ever give away their privileges. He also presents the argument that war is not only made in the jungle, that it has much more complex scenarios, such as people in this city and even abroad that are in some way benefiting from the conflict. The conversation has reached a sophisticated level of deliberation and is indeed covering issues that, if dealt with in a right way, would guarantee a long-lasting and more solid peace. The level of deliberation stays high.

Moderator

In this picture, what would be your proposal then?

Cayetano, 24, ex-guerrilla (1)

The essential step would be to promote jobs with dignified salaries. Another point, to give some land that has been confiscated to the drug lords, to the commanders of the left or the right to some people that can probe to have some conditions and really commit. Another thing is to have equity. For example, all that money they found in Cali, millions of dollars, to be more equitable. Some subsidies. Now there are some but it is very complicated to have access to housing subsidies. For us, the demobilized, to serve as an example for those that are still in the jungle. Because if we tell them that we were promised such and such and eventually were given nothing, nothing yet...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Answering the moderator's direct question for a concrete proposal, Cayetano succinctly presents his points of job, dignified salaries and agrarian reform. He then reaches for the abstract principle of equity to present the need for subsidies and the fulfillment of the government promises. In this latter topic he insists in his previously mentioned argument referring the positive consequences that this fulfillment will have on further demobilizations. The level of deliberation remains very high.

Moderator

Do you see any problem that tomorrow if I come from the guerrilla and someone from the paramilitaries, do you see any problem for us to live in peace in this country?

Adrián, 24, ex-paramilitary (1)

Well I imagine that it is not difficult. Because you see we have seen many examples. Recently they showed on TV a demobilized from the paramilitaries, someone from the FARC and someone for the ELN they all had a microenterprise. So, for me, I don't think so as long as we have the support from the government. For us it is very difficult. For example I was fired from my job when they found out I was demobilized. It is not that they told me it was the reason, but as soon as they knew, they started to look for a reason until they told me there is no more work. I once said in a meeting... And that was because of lack of government support.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: After the moderator has posed the question of whether they see any difficulties in living together with people coming from a different organization, Adrián comes forward and asserts that it is indeed quite possible, he offers as an example a recently broadcasted case of a group of demobilized –coming from the left and right, in the creation of a microenterprise. He contends that even more important is the government support needed especially when the demobilized population is subjected to various kinds of discrimination because of their condition. The level of deliberation stays high.

Cayetano, 24, ex-guerrilla (1)

I say that to be able to learn live in the future with someone from another organization, I don't see much difficulty. It is all like a slow process but it's all part of that process. Before, we were against, for example, if right now there were some people from the right, back then we might have had some problems because of that, but not now... Right now we know and are conscious that we are all civilians. Just like everybody else.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Cayetano, an ex-guerrilla, confirms Adrián's assertion and nicely says that he indeed sees no problem in living in peace with people from another group. He ends by stating how they all are now part of the same group: civilians, as everyone else. He attractively captures the very spirit of the demobilization program. The deliberative level of the conversation remains high.

Adrián, 24, ex-paramilitary (1)

And that now, excuse me, in civilian life we all fight for the same cause. Whether we are from the guerrilla or from the self-defenses, all those who want to move forward. We are all fighting for the same cause. And what is that? For the government to live up to its commitments. Because, of all the things we were told, we have not been given even a 50%.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Adrián explicitly acknowledges that notwithstanding which side they are coming from, they are all now part of the same community and fight for the same cause. He ends by reinforcing the point of the dissatisfaction that exists among the demobilized community with respect to the unfulfilled promises by the government. Although this has already been told and is put by Adrián in a negative way, his whirling around serves the purpose of emotional outburst, which will eventually help the deliberative process. If emotions are not put forward and recognized, they will disturb the peaceful development of the exercise. The level of deliberation stays high.

Benito, 34, ex-paramilitary (1)

There is something that the government should take into account and follow closely is those people who really want to move forward, those of us who really want to study, to work, to be someone in life. But there are many people who have gone back to the armed groups. And they don't care whether you come from the left or right. They take you no matter where you're coming from. Those people are going to keep their ideals and they are not going to

accept us, they are not going to like us, those who stayed. That will be very complicated. I don't really know how the government is going to take care of that. That is a problem.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Benito insists on his point regarding the people that have gone back to the armed groups. He deeply believes in the validity of his argument and although some have acknowledged it, Benito apparently doesn't feel he has been fully listened to and his point duly recognized. He insists on his point, and I agree with André Bächtiger that such insistence is compatible with good deliberation.⁹⁹

Moderator

With respect to that problem, what do you think it should be done?

Benito, 34, ex-paramilitary (1)

I think that if people took that option, as we were saying in the beginning, is because the government didn't live up to its commitments. Some of them went back because that is what they like. Others had to go back because they were not being able to make a living. They were being thrown out of their homes. Their landlord would go to the Service Center to complain that they were not paying the rent. But if they didn't have money... We don't say that the government has to give us everything... They tell us "go find a job", but it is not that easy... There are many people that have judicial problems. For example, you have to have "preclusion" in order to get the "judicial past" needed to find a job. That takes a lot of time, many months to obtain that "preclusion". That's why sometimes people are forced to go back to arms. The government doesn't think about it.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: This time the moderator takes Benito's argument and asks him directly what does he think should be done to solve this problem. Benito then offers a detailed account of the reasons behind

⁹⁹ André Bächtiger, "On Perfecting the Deliberative Process: Questioning, Disputing, and Insisting as Core Deliberative Values," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C. September 2-5, 2010.

people's returning to the armed groups. He illustrates his point with a concrete and vivid example regarding the "judicial past," a government issued document that is often asked by employers. This is a tangible example of a difficulty being faced by the demobilized. The relationship with the building of peace is also noticeable, as the failure of the demobilization program will directly affect peace in our country. The deliberative level of the discussion remains high.

Adrián, 24, ex-paramilitary (1)

That was one of the first things the government told us when we demobilized. They told us that anyone who had problems with the justice system those problems would be solved. Some of my friends that went to get the judicial past were captured and sent to jail. That is why sometimes it is better to keep on with the criminal life. And one knows that we have to be careful with the government. Then, what problems have been solved? None. I once had a problem because there was a judicial order to capture me. And when I went to get my judicial past I was in trouble. Fortunately I was working with a lawyer and he was able to help me out. That was one year ago. Now I am afraid of going there, to go and get my judicial past.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Adrián enters the conversation and offers his personal story as an illustration of Benito's argument regarding the lack of government support in the clearing up the ex-combatants' judicial records. Illustrations and examples serve a very good purpose in the deliberative process and in this case provide authentic proof of the struggles faced by ex-combatants. The level of deliberation remains high.

Benito, 34, ex-paramilitary (1)

It is not that we want to blame the government for everything. There have been some good things, for example the education and training, the opportunities for people to go to the university. But there are also many things that have to be analyzed. There are also some of our fellow-demobilized that haven't done the things correctly and are not taking advantage of the given

things and are setting a bad example. It may be that the government thinks that we are all the same. And that is not the whole reality. There are some of us who really want to do things right. Some of us who want to move forward. But yes, we lack some more support from the government. It is not that we want the government to give us everything, because one has to also put in work and effort. We would expect the government to think of us a little more.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Benito comes again into the conversation and in a quite even-tempered manner presents the demobilization program in a broader context. He acknowledges the positive aspects of the program and presents in an impartial way the obstacles that, as ex-combatants, they have to face when reintegrating into society. The conversation keeps its high level of deliberation.

Moderator

Some other proposals? Some other ideas? Some other important aspect that should be dealt with in order to reach peace?

Adrián, 24, ex-paramilitary (1)

For me it is education and work. If government is really committed, because we were told that we were going to have job opportunities with companies and enterprises, that those companies have made a commitment to receive some of us and offer us a job. Not all, because may be some are not fully qualified to take a job. But those of us who qualify should be offered a dignified job and to give us some further opportunities to keep on learning and developing. Some of our fellows would receive their money and just used it for drinking and partying.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Adrián insists on his original proposal of job opportunities and, in a deliberative way, adds the education component. He expresses how one of the government promises was to get the private sector to fully commit with the process. He also recognizes the need of further government support for some of the demobilized to keep training and

studying in order to be able to get better-paid jobs. The conversation is flowing at a high level of deliberation.

Benito, 34, ex-paramilitary (1)

Be sure that if you keep people busy studying and working, there won't be chance for people to think about going back to the armed groups or doing bad things.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Benito agrees and forcefully states that if you keep the demobilized busy with study and work, the process will certainly develop in an easier manner, as they won't have time to think or do bad things. The level of deliberation stays high.

Adrián, 24, ex-paramilitary (1)

Yes, they won't have time. Yes, there are many of us who are giving a bad example. There are many that have not fully adapted to the new life. They think they are still there "take everything to their chests," and we should all think that we are now civilians, we are ex-combatants and the word itself means we are no longer part of those groups. That is past. We have to adapt to the new way of life.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Adrián explicitly acknowledges and agrees on Benito's argument. He expresses in a nice way that, although there are still some ex-combatants that have not fully adapted to the new life, they are now civilians, all of them, and as such they should no longer take the law into their own hands. This speech act shows how deliberative the conversation has been and Adrián is live proof of that. He is no longer looking back at the past or complaining about the government unfulfilled promises. He is looking at a common future for all. The level of deliberation stays at a high level.

Cayetano, 24, ex-guerrilla (1)

The government should classify the demobilized. For those who have fewer years of schooling, the government should provide for some support by psychologists. Because one thing is to think when you have 3 years of primary school and another one when you have completed high school. Those are two completely different ways of thinking and behaving. When we went to take the courses, there were no qualified people for dealing with these people. And if you think and analyze the less educated are the ones that are ones ready to say something like “Matar y comer del muerto”¹⁰⁰. When for example they captured Mancuso¹⁰¹ or Simón Trinidad¹⁰², those are educated people that have university studies. Despite the things they may have done, but they are people, they are people that when you talk to them you always learn something. But if you are going to talk with someone with just two years of schooling, believe me, you learn nothing positive. Then, they should classify people according to their education level and provide some additional support to those with the fewer years of education. Some support by psychologists, priests... Well, I don't know, some many good things...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: In a very interactive way, Cayetano picks up the issue of the ex-combatants that have not fully adapted and, that according to Adrián are taking the law into their own hands, and offers a nice explanation and subsequent proposal to deal with this issue. In fact, he creatively states that government should classify the ex-combatants and offer differentiated treatment for the various groups. He forcefully expresses that since the less educated are the ones that are the ones most likely to take the law into their own hands, the government should provide additional psychological support for them. The exercise keeps open at a high level of deliberation.

¹⁰⁰ “To kill and eat from the dead body”—a popular saying meaning taking the law in one's own hands.

¹⁰¹ Salvatore Mancuso, a paramilitary leader extradited to the U.S. in May 2008.

¹⁰² An ex-guerrilla leader imprisoned in the U.S.

Adrián, 24, ex-paramilitary (1)

I had the opportunity to meet with some fellow ex-combatants completely illiterate. They were about 28 years old and for example, the first thing they would say was, why should I study? I would tell them it is important to study, because what the government is giving us right now will end sooner or later. But I tell you something; I myself am not studying because what I am receiving from the government is not enough to support my family and myself. And if I study, and above that I have to attend the psychosocial meetings, then I won't have enough money to pay the rent or to feed my daughter. In the company I was working I was earning 680 (COP 680.000), plus 150 that I receive for attending the psychosocial meetings, it is about 830, something like that, and I saw myself in trouble, I still do, so much that my wife had to find a job. Then...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Adrián agrees with Cayetano regarding the importance of education in making a difference in the program. He also mentions that some of these less-educated ex-combatants don't recognize this importance and also makes a valuable point in stating that, even though he acknowledges how essential education is, he is not able to attend further courses since the required activities of the program don't leave any room for it. Some action is needed from the government in this respect. The deliberation level remains high.

Cayetano, 24, ex-guerrilla (1)

I want to say something... I am studying at the university and I would like to serve as an example for other fellow demobilized and not only as an example, also like a bridge to those friends of ours that are still fighting in the jungle, to be able to drag them into this program, for them to become promoters of peace. For that we need real commitment, from the state, from ourselves, that we really want to change, there is need to be really committed with the achievement of peace, for us to really want to do some good things for the betterment of society.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Cayetano comes back with his desire of serving as bridge, as an example to other combatants to follow the demobilization road. This is indeed a valuable argument, as we have seen that past failed experiences do cast a negative shadow on the implementing of new efforts for peace. The level of deliberation is high.

Adrián, 24, ex-paramilitary (1)

Like I tell you, I was contacted to go back to the group, to earn COP 900.000. And I didn't want...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Adrián's offers once again his personal story as an example that failure of the program would cause some of the ex-combatants to go back into the armed groups. The level of deliberation stays high.

Benito, 34, ex-paramilitary (1)

You receive that kind of proposals quite often...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Benito reinforces the previous point, stating that in fact they receive offers to rejoin all the time. The level of deliberation remains high.

Adrián, 24, ex-paramilitary (1)

I won't lie to you. One day I was so desperate that I even thought of going back and when I went to receive the money needed for travel, while waiting I told God, God, you brought me back safe and sound after 8 years of fighting in the jungle. If this is not for me, if this is not the right thing to do, show me a signal. And that day the man didn't show up. And he had confirmed he would be there. We waited until 3 pm and the man didn't show up and we decided to leave. And then, 2 days later, I received the call from Bogotá, that there was a job with a lawyer... And then I came. The truth is that for me is that I don't want to go back to fighting. That would be my last resource. As long as I can make a living here...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Adrián presents his own experience as a vivid example of how tempting these proposals may sound depending on the particular moment they may be facing. He finishes with a powerful statement in the sense that he doesn't want to go back to fighting, that that option would certainly be his last resort. This personal story is very much in line with the argument of Sharon R. Krause that such stories help deliberation.¹⁰³ The conversation is still at a very high level of deliberation.

Cayetano, 24, ex-guerrilla (1)

Going back may be not but creating a new group under our rule, which may be an option. In my case, for example, I demobilized as an individual, because the simple fact of being here, one becomes a “sapo” (traitor). In the future, out of necessity, forming a new group would be an alternative. But from my own perspective, from my ideology and way of thinking, that won't be an option. In order for there to be peace, we need a radical change. From the government down, beginning also with us.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Cayetano keeps swirling around the going-back issue. He asserts that since he comes from the left and he demobilized on an individual basis, it would be very difficult to go back, but forming a new group would be a suitable option. Although in the conversation they have been discussing around the topic of going back, they have done it in a spirit of warning and not of despair. The level of deliberation remains high.

Adrián, 24, ex-paramilitary (1)

Yes, as I say, because in society many doors have been closed for us. Do you understand? The moment they know you are demobilized, they put you aside. Because of the same problem, we, the demobilized, are to blame. We gave reasons to society to think badly of us. I for example had to see some acts by my fellow ex-combatants, and I considered that what they were doing

¹⁰³ Sharon R. Krause, *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation*, Princeton University Press, 2008.

was not OK. From the very beginning, people, civilians are afraid of us when they find out we are ex-combatants and moreover, they did some bad things... Then, as my fellow participant says, “por unos, pagamos todos” (because of some, all of us have to pay), it may be that some of us don’t think like everyone else, but with the simple fact that they know we are demobilized, they would think that you are a revolutionary, they would be afraid that we are ready to give trouble anytime you are not satisfied. That is the opportunity I want the government to give us, the opportunity to move ahead.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Adrián presents in a very reasoned manner how society does have some prejudices with the ex-combatants. In an objective way he recognizes that the demobilized population are in a way responsible for what society thinks of them, as they have done some bad things. He vehemently asks for government support in changing society’s stereotype and in giving them an opportunity to move on. The conversation keeps unfolding at a high level of deliberation.

Cayetano, 24, ex-guerrilla (1)

In order for all society members to believe in us, the demobilized, it would be good to have some help. How in in what sense? The government should identify some demobilized to serve as examples so society doesn’t see the demobilized as the “black thing,” but to consider us as citizens, as normal citizens. May be in the media, that society members would know that in the same way that there are corrupt politicians, there are also some good ones. The same happens with us, the demobilized. While there are some that are doing some bad things, there are also some, like me, that want to set some good example. But for that we need some real commitment. Look, where I live no body knows who I am or what I did but they see me as a “todo un señor” (a complete gentleman)... I am almost sure that if they start to show some examples of demobilized people that are doing some good things, there may be some that would want to take the same steps.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: In a very interactive way, Cayetano accurately captures the essence of Adrián's point and start building upon the issue of changing society's perception on ex-combatants. He offers specific ideas of what could be done, such as presenting some successful reintegration stories. He accurately compares the situation of ex-combatant with that of politicians and argues that with the plan he recommends, society would understand that just as there are corrupt politicians, there are also some demobilized that are not behaving correctly. Of special interest is his statement regarding his personal story, he nicely presents that where he lives nobody knows about his past and everyone sees him as a complete gentleman, showing how people need recognition. The discussion continues at a very high level of deliberation.

Moderator

There are some ideas on the table. Why don't we start to mention concrete proposals? Each of us would mention one and afterwards we can proceed with the voting.

Adrián, 24, ex-paramilitary (1)

There are so many things we have to say that a day is not enough. My proposal is that I have talked about so far that in order for there to be peace, well, not exactly for the achievement of peace, because there will never be peace, but may be a more tranquil environment, we need jobs. Work above all. Training and education will follow.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: When the moderator asks for concrete proposals, Adrián, coherently with what he has said before, argues for jobs and education, in that order. The level of deliberation remains high.

Moderator

The proposal would then be to create jobs. Who will vote yes on this proposal?

Cayetano, 24, ex-guerrilla (1)

Yes, yes, but... I agree that there is great need to create jobs but also to train people for those jobs, because nobody is going to drive a car without knowing how to. So, I would say training and offering jobs depending on the academic or professional capabilities of each and everyone.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: When asked who will vote yes on Adrián's proposal, Cayetano says yes, but insists on the need for adequate training and education. The level of deliberation stays high.

Moderator

What are the concrete proposals then?

Benito, 34, ex-paramilitary (1)

I know that it may be strong for a demobilized to say such a thing but I think that what is most essential is for the government to sit down and really think and solve the internal problems faced by the demobilization program. There are many problems, many and the government is the only one who can give a solution to those problems. As long as the government doesn't make the decision to solve those problems, I think that nothing can be done. Because we put all our interest, we want to study, we want to work but we need a little help, a little push forward. There are some of us who really want to move forward. If the government helps, then we can respond. I think that is the most crucial thing.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Benito considers that what is most essential is for the government to give some thought and solutions to the problems faced by the program. The discussion remains at the high level of deliberation it has reached.

Moderator

Then the proposal would be for the government to sit down and think about the problems of the demobilization program. Who agrees with this proposal?

Benito, 34, ex-paramilitary (1)

I don't mean that all in the program is bad, but there are some problems that need to be taken care of.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: When the moderator puts forward Benito's proposal and paraphrases it, he comes back and clarifies it in a highly deliberative spirit. The discussion keeps developing at a high level of deliberation.

Cayetano, 24, ex-guerrilla (1)

It may also be that the problems are not of the program itself. It may be that there are some officials that are distorting the proper functioning of some of the characteristics or norms of the program for their own benefit.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Cayetano, also in a deliberative nature, introduces some ambivalence. He says that it may not be the program itself, but some officials that are making some nuisances in its proper development. The level of deliberation stays high.

Benito, 34, ex-paramilitary (1)

Yes, I think that there are some officials that only think about their own benefit. We are talking here with all sincerity...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Benito agrees with Cayetano on that it may be that some officials are thinking about their own particular benefit. He ends by explicitly recognizing how sincere they are. Truthfulness is an essential attribute of the deliberative process and certainly helps to keep the conversation at a very high level of deliberation.

Moderator

Some other proposal besides those?

Adrián, 24, ex-paramilitary (1)

There is something I have been meaning to say. It is not a proposal; I don't know how to name it... The government never sat down with us. For me, it was so bad what the government did. The government was never well prepared to take us back or to receive so many people. For example, the government should have asked us what we liked, what we wanted to do, when thinking about the designing of the productive projects. The government should have analyzed that not everyone likes to do the same. I, for example, don't like to grow palm. My idea is to work on other things. Some people don't like agriculture, or the cattle business, or grow fish. The government should have formed some groups according to people's preferences and then help them, because if you don't like to plant trees, you are not going to go to a farm to plant trees. It is not like they told you have to do this. That's not the way. They never let us participate. Do you understand? Then what did they do? What they did in our town was that they sent the money for those projects and as soon as the money was finished, everyone went back to the jungle.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: When asked by the moderator once again for more proposals, Adrián comes back in and showing some level of ambivalence, answers that he doesn't quite know whether it is a proposal and, in fact he refers to it as something he has been thinking on. Using his personal experience as a starting point, he explains how the government never thought about the different interests of the various groups of ex-combatants. They just designed a general formula for everyone. This would indeed be a valuable aspect of Benito's concrete proposal too sit down and make the necessary adjustments to the program. The level of deliberation stays high. Adrián actually proposes that the government should have engaged deliberation with the ex-combatants. This speech act shows that the concept of deliberation is not foreign to ex-combatants, at least not in this group, and certainly not to Adrián.

Benito, 34, ex-paramilitary (1)

Once I was invited to a meeting in which a “gringo” was coming, someone that was in charge of giving the money. We were eight, four from the left and four from the right. And we had to talk all good things about the program. I was a little afraid. The gringo was making questions and had his translator. Deep down you don’t know what kind of consequences you will have to bear if you told the truth. We really didn’t know what to do. If we had told the whole truth, that “gringo” would have learned all about the program. But no, everyone was afraid.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Benito goes back to the truthfulness thread in broader theme of the problematic issues regarding the program. He refers to a past experience when an American citizen, probably from the U.S. Agency for International Development, met with a group of demobilized people and they were afraid of telling the truth. The issue of truthfulness and being able to speak freely and unconstrained is central to the deliberative process and Benito’s speech is a vivid proof that the current conversation is developing at a high level of deliberation.

Adrián, 24, ex paramilitary (1)

I once met with senator Zulema Jattin and I did tell her the whole truth. I told her what I thought about the government, what I thought about my bosses then. I did tell her I don’t know whether they will kill me, but what I think is this and this and what is happening is this and this. Because I was once told that the government received a farm from Mancuso for the development of productive projects and Mancuso himself was given the contract. And I thought, how come they are going to give such a contract to someone as rich, as rich as Mancuso. He would treat people so badly and would fire people so easily. I was in one of his farms once and I could see how a group of young people and I don’t know exactly what it was that happened but he came and told the leader “¡Si este hijueputa no sirve, échelo!” (If this son of a bitch is of no use, fire him). Do you think that that is a right way of treating and addressing people? He felt he still had power over us. All those things were

the ones that I didn't think the government was doing right. And that was what I told the senator because she invited us to her office to learn a little more about the program. She also thought the same. There are some officials, as my fellow participant said, sometimes there are some officials who make the program look bad. According to her, the government would think that the program was perfect. But they didn't know what was happening underneath.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Adrián reacts to Benito's story by telling his own personal experience with one well-known Colombian senator from the northern part of Colombia, apparently the same part where Adrián comes from. In his account he tells that, unlike Benito, he was able to speak freely and openly with the Senator. He ends his speech by reinforcing the issue that there are some officials that are not handling the program correctly and that make it look bad and that, according to the senator, the government thought the program was perfect. The level of deliberation stays high.

Benito, 34, ex-paramilitary (1)

There are some officials that want to show the program as if it was perfect. There are about 8 or 9 countries that have been constantly helping the government financially and the government wants to make the program look as if it was perfect, when it is not so. I am not going to say that the program doesn't have some good things, it does. But it also has some mistakes that should be looked a little closer.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Benito goes a little further and explains what he thinks the reason is for the government to make the program look as if it was perfect. He indeed asserts that it is because the government is afraid of losing the foreign countries' aid. The level of deliberation is unusually high, as it has become evident one of the obstacles for the program's improvement, which would be the government willingness to listen to the ex-combatants. The conversation is open and flowing at a high level of deliberation.

Moderator

Then the proposals that you had...

Cayetano, 24, ex-guerrilla (1)

There are two so far: the creation of jobs and the analysis of the internal problems of the reintegration program. Education primarily. Those that want to pursue a professional career the government should subsidize that.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: The moderator stepped in once again asking for proposals and Cayetano was the first to come forward and to give an answer. He presents a succinct summary of the proposals presented so far: creation of jobs, review of the internal problems of the program and subsidized education. The conversation remains at a high level of deliberation.

Moderator

Then education? The proposal would be for the government to subsidize professional careers.

Cayetano, 24, ex-guerrilla (1)

No, not only education because if we say education what they used to do is that they used to send someone, some tutors, to do some training and nothing else... No, those that want to go to a professional career, let them do it, supported by the government. Those that want to finish high school, let them do it, always subsidized and supported by the government. Those that want to do some technical training, also, but in a rigorous way.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: In the sense of the argument of André Bächtiger already mentioned above, Cayetano insists on the validity of his argument -as he thinks the moderator has overlooked it, regarding the soundness of educational programs for ex-combatants. It is not only education or subsidized education; it is a well-designed and thoughtful education platform. The level of deliberation stays at a very high level.

Adrián, 24, ex-paramilitary (1)

Yes, because there they were going to give mechanics training. For example I used to understand that mechanics would take at least two years. And what they did was that they gave it in three months...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Adrián agrees with Cayetano's thinking and provides an illustration regarding a mechanics-training course he intended to take, which he originally thought would take at least two years, not three months, which was what they were offering. The conversation is open and inviting at a high level of deliberation. It should be noted that Adrián comes from the side of the guerrillas and Cayetano from the side of the paramilitary, and yet they have a civilized deliberative conversation about concrete issues. My qualitative analysis allows me to get in detail at the relations across the deep divisions among ex-combatants. The exchange between Adrián and Cayetano reveals that under some circumstances a very high level of deliberation is possible between the two sides.

Cayetano, 24, ex-guerrilla (1)

And in three months you don't learn anything... See, when I went to the institute I registered for computer ensemble and maintenance. Man, in a week what we saw was a few hours of how to disassemble a computer and the rest of the days, some hours of theory, nothing else. So, I don't think those were the appropriate courses or the right schedule to be really prepared. They would say that with that we were ready. And what do we gain from having fifty diplomas on the wall if we don't really know and we are conscious that we don't know.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Cayetano interactively agrees with Adrián and compellingly affirms that in three months you don't learn anything. With his own experience as an example, Cayetano illustrates his point of the need for appropriate education programs. The conversation is open and at a high level of deliberation.

Adrián, 24, ex-paramilitary (1)

They were mainly giving theory, not practice... It was the same with the electricity course... And I know electricity because I learned it myself...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Adrián reinforces Cayetano's point and finishes with a concrete example. The conversation is open at a high level of deliberation.

Cayetano, 24, ex-guerrilla (1)

When that sir, Juan David, was there I wrote him a letter asking for help to get into the university, while he was there he never answered. He never said anything. It wasn't until two years later, with these new aids that they said something... How much time lost with negative thoughts...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Cayetano provides further evidence of how government officials are so unwilling to listen to the demobilized population. The level of deliberation remains high.

Moderator

Then what you propose is that the government subsidizes high school, university, technological and professional training... Then, who agrees on that?

Adrián, 24, ex-paramilitary (1)

It's that all that goes hand in hand. If you have education, and you a job then you are not tempted to go back into the groups. I mean, I haven't done it...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Adrián responds to the moderator's question summarizing the proposal of subsidized education from high school to technical and professional training. He says that education brings along some other things such as good jobs, and prevents people from rejoining the armed groups. The conversation stays at a high level of deliberation.

Benito, 34, ex-paramilitary (1)

And we receive those proposals every day... They analyze because they know. The people that are recruiting, they know the internal problems of the program. And they start offering you all kind of things...

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Benito comes in to reinforce Adrián's argument and says that people that are recruiting ex-combatants know exactly what the problems of the program are. Although participants seem to be swirling around the same issues, this venting process serves an important purpose, basically an emotional relief. According to their account, there are not many safe places where they can get the feeling of being heard. The level of deliberation stays high.

Adrián, 24, ex-paramilitary (1)

Mainly money, what they offer is money... As I told you, they even mentioned how much they were going to pay me... They are paying COP 900.000. I remember perfectly when they came to my house that day at 10 a.m. Two of my fellow ex-combatants came.

Interpretation of level of deliberation: Adrián finishes the conversation by completing Benito's point and stating that what the recruiting people are offering is mainly money. The exercise ends at a high level of deliberation.

Summary explanation

In contrast to the previous five groups, in this last group there was not a single transformative moment. The discussion began at a high level of deliberation and stayed at this high level until the very end. This is indeed a surprising result, given the finding that in the other groups it happened times and again that the discussion fell from a high to a low level of deliberation. In group 5, for example, there were nine cases of transformative moments from

a high to a low level of deliberation. The current group continued its conversation in a highly interactive way in the sense that participants reacted in a respectful way to each other's suggestions and proposals, and this across the division between ex-guerrillas and ex-paramilitary. Much of the discussion had to do with how ex-combatants should get better job training and how this could help to integrate them in society, thus preventing them from going back to fight in the jungle.

What can explain that in this group the discussion stayed at a high level of deliberation? It may have to do with the fact that of all six groups it had by far the lowest number of participants, namely only three, two ex-paramilitaries and one ex-guerrilla. This small number, however, would not necessarily guarantee a constant high level of deliberation. From the perspective of group dynamics, one could even expect that the two ex-paramilitaries would always ally themselves against the sole ex-guerrilla. Generally speaking, a group of three may be prone to conflicts. On the other hand, a small group gives a certain intimacy to a discussion, allowing participants to express their views at some length. It is indeed the case that compared with the larger groups in this sixth group speech acts were usually quite long and expansive. With only three participants, there was little time pressure to bring a speech act to an end. It was also remarkable that the three actors divided the time about equally among themselves.

Besides the small size of the group, deliberation was also helped that the three participants addressed from the beginning a very concrete and uncontroversial topic, namely the demand for more education and better job training for ex-combatants. The two ex-paramilitaries and the ex-guerrilla could easily agree on this topic, which opened the way to go into specifics, like how to improve computer training. It was also easy to link the topic of education and job training to more stability and peace in Colombian society, because this could be presented as the golden way to really integrate ex-combatants into society. It also helped deliberation that the three participants stayed mostly with very concrete issues and did not address, as in other groups, complex issues like what one can learn from Cuba and Venezuela for

Colombia. In this way, the danger was avoided to lose the thread of arguments and to glide into a chaotic discussion.

It is remarkable that none of the three participants had a high level of formal education. Cayetano has five years of schooling, Benito six years, and Adrián seven years. To be sure, there were participants in other groups with even less education, but there were also some with university education. Five to seven years of education in a country like Colombia is certainly not much. Yet sometimes the discussion among the three participants was quite sophisticated, which is encouraging for the deliberative model of democracy. A high level of education is not a necessary condition for good deliberation.

From my research design, it may seem disappointing not to have any transformative moments in this sixth group. But it is still interesting to explain the absence of any transformative moments, especially if the discussion stayed constantly at a high level of deliberation. It would even have been interesting, although frustrating from a normative deliberative perspective, to analyze a group with a constant low level of deliberation; but there was no such group.

Conclusions

For Jürgen Habermas, the ideal form of deliberation is as rare as “islands in the ocean in everyday praxis.”¹⁰⁴ At the macro level of entire political systems, one would certainly not expect that all interactions would have a deliberative character. Even at the micro level of specific political group discussions, it would be rare that all actors would constantly interact at a high deliberative level. For me the interesting question is how a high level of deliberation is transformed to a low level and vice versa. To study this question was the challenge for my dissertation. As far as I know, this question has not yet been studied at an empirical level. Looking at discussions among Colombian ex-combatants is of particular interest because it has to be expected, given their background, that it will be difficult for them to go from a low to a high level of deliberation and highly probable that they will again fall back to low level.

Thus, my dissertation is located at the micro level of specific group discussions. As John Parkinson and Jane Mansbridge argue, there is an urgency to study deliberation in a systematic empirical way also at the macro level of entire political systems.¹⁰⁵ I agree with this assessment, and I would like to add the argument that it would be particularly important to study transformative moments also at the macro level. Let us take the example of Colombia, where much change has occurred in the last few years. The question then would be to identify transformative moments from a low to a high level of deliberation and vice versa for the country as a whole. It would be a formidable task, although not impossible, to research this question in a systematic empirical manner. Investigating deliberative transformative moments at the micro level of group discussions is a good basis to expand my research later on to the macro level.

For the micro level, I had to decide for each speech act between two alternatives. If the discussion was already at a high level of deliberation, the choice

¹⁰⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *Die Einbeziehung des Anderen. Studien zur politischen Theorie*, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1996, S. 323.

¹⁰⁵ John Parkinson and Jane Mansbridge (eds.), *Deliberative Systems: Deliberative Democracy at the Large Scale*, Cambridge University Press, 2012.

was whether it stayed at this level or was transformed to a low level. If the discussion was at a low level, either it stayed at this level or was transformed to a high level. To decide among these alternatives, the entire context of the discussion had to be considered. Thus, it was not only the question of what was said in a particular speech act, but how this speech act was related to previous speech acts. Although my dissertation has a strongly qualitative orientation, it also has a quantitative aspect in the sense that for each speech act I give a code of whether a transformative moment occurred or not.

As I described in the Introduction, for group 4 Jürg Steiner coded its 107 speech acts independently of me, and we got reliability in our coding of a high 93 percent. Therefore, for my qualitative interpretation it is not a valid critique that it is so subjective that it cannot be checked by outside observers. As I already argued in the Introduction, all coding in the social sciences is ultimately based on subjective interpretation. Even the age given by a subject in an interview cannot necessarily be taken at face value because the subject may not be honest in giving his or her real age. For the coding in my dissertation the subjective aspect was, of course, much wider. Therefore, it is all the more gratifying, that Jürg Steiner and I reached such a high reliability in our coding decisions. A precondition for achieving this high reliability was that the two of us had reached agreement on what we mean by deliberation. Jürg Steiner, for his part, has presented our common understanding of the concept of deliberation in a recent book.¹⁰⁶ Despite this common understanding there were still many open questions for our coding. A particularly difficult task was to determine whether a personal story helped or hurt deliberation. The same was true for the evaluation of the deliberative quality of jokes and humor. It was also not easy to judge whether a particular expression of self-interest was compatible with deliberation. Despite such tricky questions, we were able to reach high reliability. My dissertation should show that a strong emphasis on qualitative interpretations does not exclude high reliability coding. This aspect should be more emphasized in teaching methods classes. It is possible to do at the same time highly complex qualitative interpretations and reduction of this complexity with simple coding categories.

Such high reliability is probably much more difficult to achieve if in a further research step we would attempt to identify deliberative transformative moments at

¹⁰⁶ Jürg Steiner, *The Foundations of Deliberative Democracy. Empirical Research and Normative Implications*, Cambridge University Press, 2012.

the system level. Let us take as example the failed appointment of Robert Bork to the US Supreme Court in 1987. Some pundits¹⁰⁷ see this episode as a turning point in American political culture with a dramatic increase in polarization. Was it a downward deliberative transformative moment at the system level? In order to answer this question in a systematic empirical way, one would have to establish the level of deliberation for the entire political system of the United States before and after this Bork episode. To do this, one would have to study debates in both Houses of Congress, in the media, and by other political actors like interest groups, professional and charitable organizations. If one could demonstrate a transformative moment from a high to a low level of deliberation for the political system at large, one would have to show that the failed appointment of Robert Bork was indeed the triggering factor. This would be a fascinating research project, but a project not easy to be executed. With this example I wish to show that there is a rich research field ahead using the concept of deliberative transformative moments not only at the micro but also at the macro level.

Returning to the micro level, I am now going to summarize the findings of the transformative moments that I analyzed for the six groups of Colombian ex-combatants. My research strategy was to identify from the group dynamics the mechanisms that led to these transformative moments. I begin with the transformative moments from a low to a high level of deliberation.

1. Transformative moments from a low to a high level of deliberation

Personal stories of the ex-combatants helped to transform a discussion from a low to a high level of deliberation. This was in particular true when ex-guerrillas and ex-paramilitaries could share the same stories. This happened, for example, with touching stories about the difficulties to be re-integrated into Colombian society, which is an equal problem for both ex-paramilitaries and ex-guerrillas. In this way, participants could build up in the sense of Jürgen Habermas a common life world, a favorable condition for deliberation.¹⁰⁸ My research supports the argument of scholars like Sharon R. Krause that personal stories may often have a positive influence on deliberation, when she writes: “By allowing informal, symbolic, and

¹⁰⁷ See for example Nina Totenberg, “Robert Bork’s Nomination Changed Everything: Maybe Forever, *National Public Radio (NPR)*, December 19, 2012.

¹⁰⁸ Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie des Kommunikativen Handelns*, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1981, Band 2, S. 208.

testimonial types of deliberative expressions, it can enrich citizens' reflection on public issues and thereby improve public deliberation."¹⁰⁹ My research, however, also supports the warning of Krause that not all personal stories have a deliberative quality. She puts her warning in the following terms: "To be sure, it is important to distinguish between deliberative and nondeliberative forms of expression (of personal stories). Not every expression is deliberative, and we risk losing the clarifying power of analysis if we define the category too broadly."¹¹⁰ What makes the distinction between deliberative and nondeliberative stories? My data indicate that a story must be very precise and furthermore needs to be related to a broader issue to have a deliberative quality. If on the other hand, a story is vague and not linked to a broader issue, it risks leading the discussion astray.

I found in the literature also the warning that personal stories can be used in a manipulative sense, with the implication that manipulation has no place in good deliberation. Claudia Landwehr's warning states that "narratives can be highly manipulative, and it is difficult to establish to assess their truth. Even if the storytellers are not exactly lying, they may be exaggerating, playing with the audience's emotion."¹¹¹ Kasper M. Hauser also sees the danger that personal stories can be "strongly manipulative."¹¹² Is there any evidence in my data that stories are used in a manipulative sense as feared by Landwehr and Hauser? Let us take group 2 where Ernesto told the story of how he and two friends were chased away by the police from a rich neighborhood in Bogota, presenting this story as a flagrant illustration of discrimination. Did he use this story in a manipulative sense, playing to the emotions of the other participants, did he exaggerate the story? Ernesto certainly wanted to make the argument that in order to have more peace in Colombia there should be less discrimination of poor people like himself. But was this manipulative? What is the difference between influence and manipulation? Looking carefully at my data, the answer is not clear. I do not negate that Landwehr and Hauser have a theoretical point, but looking at concrete stories it is difficult to determine empirically what is influence and what is manipulation. My research also supports the argument of Sammy Basu that "humor can be a social lubricant. It breaks the ice and fills

¹⁰⁹ Sharon R. Krause, *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation*, Princeton University Press, 2008. p.122.

¹¹⁰ Krause, *Civil Passions*, p. 119.

¹¹¹ Personal communication, March 10, 2010, quoted in Steiner, *The Foundations of Deliberative Democracy*, p. 59.

¹¹² Kasper M. Hauser, *Deliberative Democracy and Opinion Formation*, Odensee: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2004, p. 121.

awkward silences.”¹¹³ I found indeed cases fitting the description of Basu where humor was “putting the mind at liberty to hear all sides. It allows one to temporarily suspend one’s cherished beliefs and contemplate the implications without treachery.”¹¹⁴ My research also shows, however, that sometimes humor can be detrimental to deliberation, transforming a discussion from a high to a low level of deliberation. This was in particular the case when humor was vulgar or offensive against other participants. Therefore, the recommendation for good deliberation is not simply more humor. Habermas has a point when he warns that “jokes, fictional representations, irony, games, and so on rest on intentionally using categorical confusions.”¹¹⁵ At a conceptual level it is not easy to determine which humor is beneficial for deliberation and which is not. My research gives some illustrations for both types, on which in further research a systematic typology of deliberative and nondeliberative humor may be built upon.

Although with regard to personal stories and humor my research findings conflict with the heavy emphasis of Habermas on rationality, there is also some support for the rational Habermasian position in the sense that I found cases where well argued rationally based arguments helped to transform a discussion from a low to a high level of deliberation. It is particularly noteworthy that I also found participants with little formal schooling who were able to present an argument in a logically coherent way. Therefore, one should not assume that only actors with a university education have the skills to make a logical rational argument, which is good news for the viability of the deliberative model of democracy.

Whereas the arguments with regard to personal stories, humor and rationality are very much part of the existing deliberative literature, my research allows me also to point to arguments that are not yet widely discussed. One such argument has to do with the role of deliberative leaders. For the group dynamic it was important whether at the very beginning of the discussion some participants could establish themselves as deliberative leaders in placing the discussion from the outset at a high level of deliberation. When this was the case, they could step in when later the discussion dragged on at a low of deliberation; at this point they could bring the discussion back to a high level. It was crucial that such actors did not participate when the discussion dragged on at a low level of deliberation, so that they could step

¹¹³ Sammy Basu, “Dialogic Ethics and the Virtue of Humor,” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 7 (1999), p. 385.

¹¹⁴ Basu, “Dialogic Ethics and the Virtue of Humor”.p. 385.

¹¹⁵ Quoted in Basu, “Dialogical Ethics and the Virtue of Humor,” p. 398.

in as fresh voices keeping up and strengthening their role as deliberative leaders. In future research one should try to get a handle at the question under what circumstances what kind of actors can establish themselves as deliberative leaders. I can already say that a high level of schooling is not a necessary condition to take over such a role.

I also can present an argument for good deliberation that I have not yet found in the literature, namely the beneficial effects of silence. Such an argument seems to go against the core of the deliberative model, which is supposed to be talk centered. But I found a case where silence helped to transform a low to a high level of deliberation. When an ex-paramilitary used extremely vulgar language against an ex-guerrilla, the latter disregarded this remark and made a constructive proposal for micro credits for small farmers, transforming in this way the discussion back to a high level of deliberation. This was not interactive since the ex-guerrilla did not respond to the remark of the ex-paramilitary. But the old German proverb that “silence is gold” may have some validity in this case. Afterwards, the ex-paramilitary also kept silence, so that the discussion could continue at a high level of deliberation. There may be limits to always talk. If the situation threatens to become emotionally explosive, a wise reaction may be to disregard the explosive issue and to turn the discussion to more constructive matters.

2. Transformative moments from a high to a low level of deliberation

As I already wrote in the previous section, there are also personal stories and humor that cause a transformation from a high to a low level of deliberation. Personal stories were particularly detrimental to deliberation when they expressed utter despair about the prospects for peace in Colombia. Since the topic given for discussion was precisely to find ways for peace, such despair often brought the discussion to a halt, so that the moderator had to intervene for the discussion to continue at all. It is understandable that many ex-combatants feel so much despair that they do not see any point to have a discussion about peace. But it is not unique to ex-combatants that despair is detrimental to deliberation. One can imagine, for example, groups discussing climate change, where some participants express so much despair to find a solution that they disrupt the deliberative flow of the discussion. There was also inappropriate, especially sarcastic humor, transforming a

high level of deliberation to a low level.

There were several incidents when the level of deliberation was transformed from high to low, because participants addressed questions that went over their heads, for example definitions of democracy and socialism. I was struck, however, that sometimes ex-combatants with a low level of formal schooling could address quite complex issues like the best job training programs for Colombia, but in other cases their intellectual skills were simply not sufficient to have a meaningful conversation, given the complexity of the issues.

A problem to keep up a high level of deliberation also occurred when a participant had an emotional outburst that seemed related to psychological instability. Here again it is understandable that ex-combatants suffer from psychological instability that may lead to emotional outburst at any time. But here, too, such outbursts may occur in any discussion group since psychological problems are wide spread. From a theoretical perspective it is not easy to identify actors who may be prone to such outbursts.

It is not necessary that a discussion constantly stays on topic. Some deviation from the topic may even help deliberation in loosening up the atmosphere. But there were also cases where some actors went so much off topic that the discussion lost its focus altogether, transforming the level of deliberation from high to low. That group discussions go off-topic was also found in other empirical research, for example in the study of Jennifer Stromer-Galley at the University of Pittsburgh, which brought together residents to discuss in small groups problems of the city's public schools.¹¹⁶ Her research shows, too, that it is often not easy to determine whether off-topic remarks help to loosen the atmosphere and thus help deliberation or whether they lead the discussion astray disrupting the deliberative flow.

3. Overall evaluation of the empirical results

Leaving the strict Habermasian definition of deliberation has made my empirical work more difficult. Allowing personal stories, humor, and self-interests to have deliberative qualities, has often led to difficult judgment calls because sometimes personal stories, humor and self-interests are detrimental to deliberation. Despite the difficulty of such judgment calls, it is gratifying for my dissertation that

¹¹⁶ Jennifer Stromer-Galley, "Measuring Deliberation's Content: A Coding Scheme." *Journal of Public Deliberation* 3 (2007), p.19.

Jürg Steiner and I achieved high reliability when we coded independently all speech acts of group 4. Theoretically, in my judgment, the Habermasian definition of deliberation is too narrow, not allowing a more nuanced view of deliberation. Sometimes, indeed, personal stories, humor, and self-interests can play an important role for good deliberation. My dissertation shows that we should not be discouraged to get an empirical handle at this more nuanced notion of deliberation. Our research should not be guided by the easy feasibility of empirical investigation but by the theoretical soundness of the underlying concepts. And, in my view, it makes theoretical sense to allow personal stories, humor, and self-interests to contribute to deliberative quality.

4. Ideas for further research

I found much variation of what happens after a transformative moment. When the discussion was raised from a low to a high level of deliberation, sometimes it stayed for a long time at this high level; sometimes it fell quickly back to a low level. The same pattern I found when the discussion was transformed from a high to a low level of deliberation; sometimes it stayed for a long time at this low level, sometimes it went quickly back to a high level. To explain such variation one could take different approaches. One approach would be to look at the mechanisms by which a transformative moment was brought about. One may ask, for example, whether a transformative moment from a low to a high level of deliberation triggered by a personal story has a high or a low probability to stay at a high level. Going more into detail, one may ask whether the effect depends on the nature of the personal stories. Other approaches would be to look at the characteristics of the groups and the topics they discuss in order to explain how long a discussion stays at a high or a low level of deliberation. Why would it matter how long a group discussion stays at the same level of deliberation? Perhaps the outcome of the discussion depends on the frequency of transformative moments. One may hypothesize that frequent transformative moments lead to more innovative outcomes because new ideas may be triggered by each upward moment from a low to a high level of deliberation. Another hypothesis would be that long stretches of a high level of deliberation are needed for reaching a consensus because consensus building is time consuming. These ideas indicate that identifying deliberative transformative moments may vary

well be the starting point for a long and fruitful research program.

5. Practical implications

Besides my academic work, I am deeply involved in practical conflict resolution in Colombia. I go in particular to poor housing projects in Bogota to help settle conflicts among neighbors as well as between the community and the construction company. My dissertation already helped me greatly in this work. To present cases of transformative moments from my dissertation helps to show in these neighborhoods how they can go about to raise the level of deliberation and to prevent that it goes down again. In my future professional career, I plan to combine this practical work of conflict resolution with further scholarly work on transformative moments. I am also heavily involved in training programs of state bureaucrats in various ministries, in particular in the ministry of foreign affairs and in the labor ministry. Here, using deliberative transformative moments is increasingly a useful teaching device for me because they are very concrete, so that they are a good basis for spirited discussions.

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