

Bipartisanship: A Discursive Phenomenon in the United States of Colombia (1863-1886)

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ABSTRACT

Discussing the constitution of Colombian society throughout history provides important reflections on the social basis, as well as the flats that are demonstrated in the scenarios constituted by the confrontation between political and civic ideals and demands in terms of the prevalence of peace in a community.

Key words: Bipartisanship, Social constitution, Political transformations.

INTRODUCTION

Discussing the constitution of Colombian society throughout history provides important reflections on the social basis, as well as the flats that are demonstrated in the scenarios constituted by the confrontation between political and civic ideals and demands in terms of the prevalence of peace in a community.

However, when these processes are enunciated in the materialization of the 19th century in the territories that make up today's Colombia, additional challenges arise, particularly with the need to think about the relationships and overlaps between the moments of peace and the logics that have been arising from the conflict and war. Commonly, from this particular point of view, it has been thought that the interludes of confrontations, conflicts and even wars are more numerous and broader than the scenarios and interludes of national peace.

The relevance of these studies is based on an analysis of the prevailing political and social conditions, which is estimated to analyze several aspects of the socio-political processes that took place in the analyzed period, particularly when understanding the historical stage called the United States of Colombia (1863 to 1876), a historical period that is the effect of the political transformations of the first half of the nineteenth century in the country. Although the purpose of this research is to analyze the discursive forms associated with the bipartisan processes in the time period described, it is necessary to specify the historical context from which they emanate in order to develop the associated processes.

In this sense, as Uribe de Hincapié (2001a) rightly exposes, he enters into the constant search for the determinants that ultimately are outlined as the basis of the Colombian nation, specifically in the

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constitutive elements that, retaking Hannah Arendt's bet, comprise the political and philosophical dimensions that will be a constitutive element of the nation, based on the labors, work contribute to the constitution of a human condition that will be an inescapable requirement to understand the characteristics of the human condition.

Thus, a new stake emerges in the review of the nineteenth century, the analysis of the civil, political and social subjects that were involved in the adventure of a new nation, especially a stake that would have various flats that would establish the founding form of the Imperating Republic today.

To look back at the 19th century represents an undertaking of monumental connotations, since this century starts with the constitution of a new estamental entity, which unfolds in the crucial transformations and legal changes that give rise to a Sovereign State, different from the Spanish Crown that had been entering and dominating the national territory since the 16th century. Particularly, to inquire about this temporal period estimates a constant change, which will transform the normative, economic and political bases of the free territories.

Although political parties, at least in present-day Colombia, emerged around the middle of the 19th century, their ideological bases date back to the epitome of the libertarian deed, for some, such as López Michelsen, the traces of Colombian political parties go back to the colonial missions; estimating that liberalism adhered to the Dominican order and Conservatism to the Capuchin community (Llano, 2009).

This reflection of the former president, which is very controversial, as expressed by Llano (2009), is openly discussed by the historiographic foundations that, from the traditional understanding, have presented liberalism as the natural successor of Santander's ideas; on the other hand, Bolívar, with his bets of unification and centralist government, ideologically founded the Colombian Conservative Party, a position that has even been amalgamated in school books and has gained relevance in the public sphere.

On the one hand, it aims at processing from a critical stance the linear assessment of the historical processes that have allowed the configuration of the bipartisanship in Colombia, which, as expected, is amalgamated in the national and sovereign narratives that have shaped the Colombian nation.

Secondly, as part of the construction of this narrative, it is crucial to value the processes that have taken place within the framework of the national configuration, a historiographic category that, although it seems fortuitous, has brought about a preponderant alteration of the state of things existing up to that time, that is to say, although in the colony the territories of the viceroyalty had a legal and political organization that gave certain legitimacy to the sociopolitical distribution of the time, after the emancipation of the crown, the development of a new nation began (Banrepcultural, 2020).

However, when evaluating the factors that have been discussed as isolated elements, they estimate an important valuation of processes, that is to say, to analyze the bipartisanship and the political implications of this social movement in the light of the emergence of a new sovereign state, starts from a



constant valuation of historical inputs that allow a glimpse of this reality as a complex phenomenon that requires reflection from various social disciplines.

Thus, entering into an analysis of the Colombian bipartisanship is based on a historiography of social events, in the words of Uribe de Hincapié (2023) the political history of this period is recognized as an interdisciplinary phenomenon, which in its axis adds the products of various disciplines, to expand the assessment of the fact, implying that it is constituted not only as a historical milestone, but also as a process with social and political effects that must be articulated for a relevant assessment.

That is to say, that entering into the reflection on the historical phenomena associated with the history of Colombian bipartisanship in the 19th century requires not only historical inputs, but also an evaluation of the political processes from a discursive perspective that takes into account the recognition of the hermeneutic particularities of the phenomenon of violence in the United States of Colombia, therefore, this research raises the question, in what way can the bipartisan political discourse in the United States of Colombia (1863 to 1876) be analyzed?

OBJECTIVE

To analyze the sociohistorical features of historical discourse in the United States of Colombia (1863-1876).

METHODOLOGY

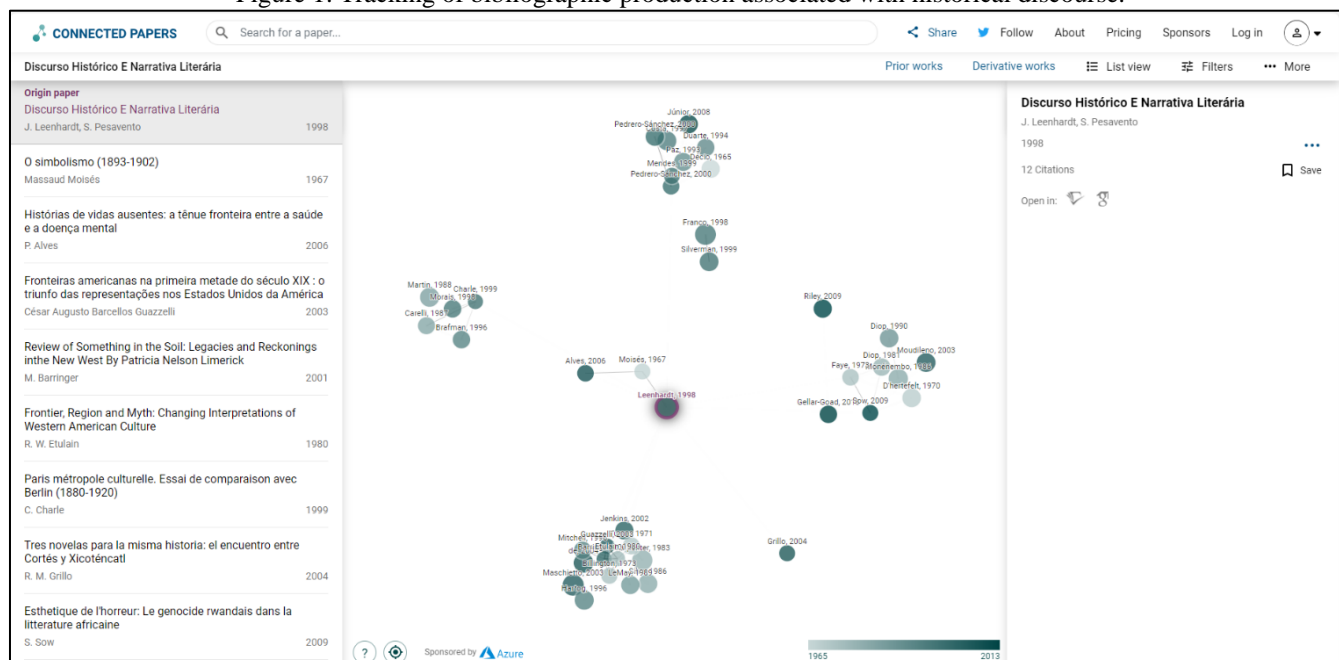
This research bet is housed within a process of reflection associated with the qualitative approach, which is enthroned in what Hernández Sampieri et al. (2004) refers to as a research that seeks the nature of a phenomenon, problem or object of research that aims to characterize, describe and state the factors, as well as the characteristics of the problem analyzed in a real context.

From this approach, the characterization of a study associated with descriptive processes is presented and, starting from a literature review, allows the enunciation of the features, components and variables of a research problem. In this sense, the initial approach to the documentary inputs contributes to the recognition of the thematic components of the analyzed phenomenon, even estimating its features and its implications in contexts; in such a way that it allows the constitution of a problem from the logic of a theoretical approach and thematic enunciation of validation (Hernández Sampieri, 2004).

This approach is a successor of a documentary review, which starts with a detailed description of a topic and theoretical scenarios that allow to propose the progress and materialization of the successes that have been articulated, with respect to a situation or scenario described (Gómez-Luna et al., 2014).

Consequently, as expressed in this graphic component, the historical and theoretical transformation of the thematic category of discourse analysis can be glimpsed, thus producing the following evolutionary scheme of the concept:

Figure 1. Tracking of bibliographic production associated with historical discourse.



Note: Prepared by the authors.

This documentary tracking made it possible to find elements in common among the bibliographical production that converge in a state of the art, as a basis for interpreting the historical analysis, particularly, the recognition of the connotations and effects of the discourses that from a political obituary were transforming the social processes in the context in which they were imbued.

However, the mere discursive interpretation provides a basis for the recognition of historical events, a basis for recognizing the main actors, events and socio-political processes that demarcate the paths and occurrences in a temporo-spatial frame of reference.

Therefore, from a process of interpretation that attends to the procedural logics contained in what González (2021) has called a hermeneutics of complexity, characterized by providing interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary views to the rare phenomena or events that are studied in real contexts by the subjects of observation.

This proposal for the analysis of the historical discourse appeals to three essential stages; initially, it allows for the arrangement of the themes and theoretical nodes from which the documentary review is articulated, to move on to a discursive analysis and finally to present an interpretation, with hermeneutic deepening that gives an intentional voice to the main historical-social actors who are subscribed to a time frame.



DEVELOPMENT

To talk about political parties in Colombia, necessarily estimates to return on the sources of democracy, particularly when historicizing the constitution and construction of the republic for the national case, it is a recognition of binomials, which in good measure are found to confront each other, to discourse in a collegiate way or to be found to controvert in political scenarios, and even, in extreme cases to oppose each other through the use of weapons that have demarcated to a great extent the relevant events in historiographic terms that the adolescent nation is facing.

Thus, in order to recognize the discursive bases of bipartisanship in the United States of Colombia, it is pertinent to evaluate the very constitution of the nascent republic and its political flats, the emancipation of the Viceroyalty of New Granada from the Spanish Crown not only deployed a poetic gesture of creation of a new sovereign State, but also implied the recognition of the citizenship in general, as well as of the totality of people in this reality.

Although it may seem a semantic change, the introduction of the category of nation and citizenship in the case of the emancipated territories, represented, in the words of Armando Martínez Garnica, a change from a conception in which the sovereign exercised as such, demarcating the power relationship, to one in which everyone had to recognize this practice and be admitted as citizens, processes that are largely the effects of the Napoleonic wars that widely influenced the transformations in the Iberian Peninsula (Banrepultural, 2010).

This transformation brings with it important changes in the socio-political structure and relationships, starting from what Uribe de Hincapié (1999) has called a fragile sovereignty, since

The pacification of society, the stateization of war and, even less, the establishment of the necessary authority to reasonably guarantee the constitutional and legal order (p. 27), cannot be achieved either through consensus or through violence.

As an effect of this process, from this diffuse notion of nation and sovereignty that was sketched during the first half of the 19th century, emanate the political conflicts that are the structuring axis of the armed confrontations in the country. In this regard, Uribe de Hincapié (2001b) makes evident the fact that violence, manifested in struggles between militants of different political factions, have been structuring processes of long duration in national history.

Although it is also true that, despite the estimated long duration of this reality, there have been interludes in which peace and its manifestations have prevailed, that is, despite the *animus belli* that may prevail in society, various political groups sought peace from multiple paths.

According to Vázquez-Piñeros (2007), the liberal and conservative political parties appeared in 1848 and 1849, respectively, as the basis of an ideological construction that responded to the proposal and revision of ideological currents that were oscillating in the international academic and political world.



Now, in order to develop a deep analysis of the history of the parties in Colombia, it is crucial to take up again what Tirado (1978) states:

The liberal and conservative parties are multi-classist in their composition, but in them the representation of different classes, or class fractions, implies the impossibility of the interests of the dominant class. This characteristic has allowed them to survive and explains in part the Colombian bipartisanship (p.104).

Nevertheless, this condition of being containers of the diverse social groups of the country has also been a determinant that plays against the political parties, this by virtue of the fact that all the nationals are added, at least for the time, in mention and has propitiated the entrance of population in general that can assume from diverse emotionalities the phenomena in conflict in the XIX century.

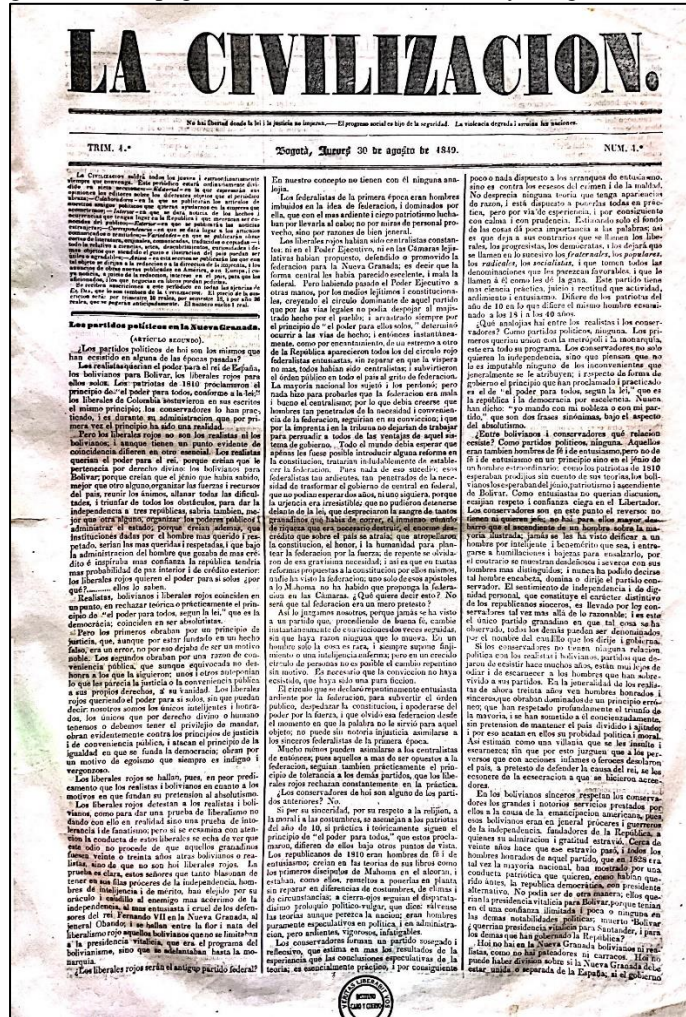
Although the United States of Colombia is not the first glimpse of the federal models and their insertion in the national estamental section, it is the ideal scenario to assess the influence of liberalism and conservatism in a scenario of exchange of ideas.

Precisely, this process of juxtaposition and juxtaposition of arguments, in which the parties emerge, is a fundamental and particular state that combines with the genesis of both movements, where it is pertinent to take up again what is stated by Moreno et al. (2010) that lists the journalistic origin of the political parties, which estimate in newspapers the way in which their agenda of interlocution is developed with the citizens and diverse communities.

Within this review Moreno et al. (2010) oppose, in an exceptionally valid way to the traditional thesis that establishes the ideological bases of the parties in the struggle for emancipation, instead, they have in mind the way in which the newspaper *La Civilización* shows that the parties have nothing to do with the sides and military leaders that were configured and came to power with the emergence of the Republic of New Granada, expressing from their editorials the way in which with the independence from Spain there were no political orientations properly speaking emerged in a Creole scenario.



Figure 2. Front page of La Civilización, Thursday, August 30, 1849.



Note: Prepared by the authors.

Although the affirmation is partially debatable in virtue of the fact that it highlights the main features of an ideological construction that took place in the Creole spectrum, it does allow us to advance in the demystification of the origin of the Colombian political parties, particularly by separating the origin of these associations from the independence movement.

Also, this approach to the origin of the political parties enthrones in an exceptional way the discussion and confrontations emanated in the United States of America, there the violence retakes political flare-ups, as it has been seen by the newspapers for the time were the main informative source, in them the majority and most varied disposition of opinions were expressed, that is to say, to the clamor of the political movements newspapers of both ideological sides were gestated and the natural leaders of liberalism and conservatism occupied important columns to reflect on conjunctural subjects in each newspaper.

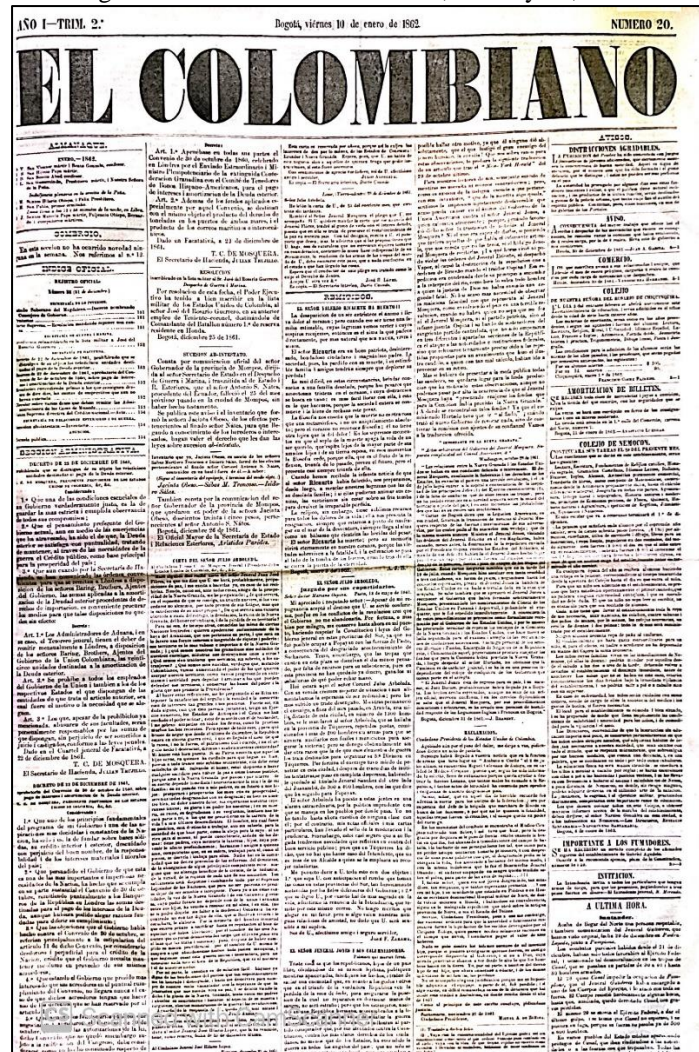
The particularity of the historiographic period analyzed lies in the fact that, for the Constitution of Rionegro, also called the Constitution of 1863 for being the year in which it was promulgated, when



considering a reflection on the proposal of evocation and legal construction of the same, it is observable that the power of God is not evoked, instead it appeals to the exercise of citizenship and empowering the legislative branch of the state (Cruz, 2010).

This confrontation between the political sides, using some newspapers of the time, left important documentary evidence that, housed in newspapers, allow us to glimpse the relationships associated with the constitution of a political discourse through the print media of the time.

Figure 3. Cover of El Colombiano, January 10, 1862.



Note: Prepared by the authors.

This predominance of the written document as newsprint made it possible to determine that the bipartisanship of the time was mainly a discursive phenomenon, although its military, social and even economic effects would later generate a profound transformation of the estates that led to a period known as Regeneration, which, at the time of the Christian, republican and conservative values, sanctioned a constitution that served as the supreme norm until the end of the twentieth century.



FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is important to state that despite the multiple scenarios available for the analysis of historical discourse, it is always important to value the political dimensions of each discursive expression; in practical terms, this implies recognizing the features and essence of the speaker at the moment of expressing his ideals in a time frame of expression, as well as recognizing the variables that make up the associated narrative. In this way, it is possible to dimension the expressions and products generated, although in the issuer, constantly assessing their implications for the receivers of this narrative.

It is also crucial to adhere to discourse analysis an interpretation that not only appeals to the recognition of the events and actors that configure a given social process, but that is based on hermeneutic procedures that appeal to a greater recognition and estimation of the intentions of the major historical actors that have demarcated an agenda of events in a given time period.

Beyond the commonplace and somewhat fallacious assertion of citing the country as an endemically violent nation, it is necessary to consider that the republican past has allowed us to recognize that there are various factors associated with multiple conflictive manifestations, that is, although confrontations are a sort of natural channel between social and political mobilizations, it is also possible that this type of manifestations have generated important transformations in the operation of the state.

In the same sense, although there are currently important debates in the public sphere on the changes between centralism and federalism to alter the structure of the Colombian State, it is necessary to nurture these discussions with historical experiences that have shown whether these changes are relevant or not in light of the socio-political evidence.

Finally, expressing from discourse analysis a valuable mechanism for nation-building, which, as has been stated, requires a greater outline, recognition and appropriation that enables a varied reflection from political science, history, sociology and other branches of the social sciences that allow us to approach the intentions of the author, as well as his immediate context.



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