A new course or simply discourse?

The security discourse strategies of Felipe Calderón Hinojosa and Enrique Peña Nieto in the Mexican war on drugs

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Abstract

Since the beginning of the Mexican war on drugs in late 2006, violence has increased dramatically. By examining six presidential speeches from different years and with an analysis grounded in the work of Norman Fairclough and his Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this thesis analyses the security discourse strategies used by the two Mexican Presidents Felipe Calderón Hinojosa and Enrique Peña Nieto. By studying the parts where they talk about insecurity and organized crime, the study aims to reveal the strategies used and thus contribute not only to more understanding of the Mexican war on drugs but also to a broader discussion of how political discourse can be used in violent contexts. By applying CDA both as theory and method, this thesis concludes that the security discourse used by Calderón differs much from that of his successor, Peña Nieto. Calderón, for example, uses more metaphors and discursive tactics against organized crime. This study also concludes that there are both similarities and differences between the security strategies of the two.

Keywords
Critical discourse analysis, Mexico, security, war on drugs, Calderón, Peña Nieto
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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

At the end of 2006, the Mexican War on Drugs (also referred to as the Mexican Drug War) was officially initiated when President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa (2006-12) deployed military personnel to the Western state of Michoacán and launched the joint operation “Operativo Conjunto Michoacán”. Since then, various initiatives of similar character, where military and civil authorities cooperate, have been utilized to fight organized crime across the country, both during the Calderón administration and that of his successor, Enrique Peña Nieto. Although there are similarities between the security strategies of Calderón and Peña Nieto, it is still worth remembering that they represent different political parties; while Calderón represented the National Action Party, Partido Acción Nacional (PAN), Peña Nieto is from the Institutional Revolutionary Party, Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI). Between 1929 and 2000, the PRI held executive power in Mexico without interruption, and Peña Nieto is the first President from the party to be elected since the loss in the elections 2000.

During the still on-going drug war, violence in Mexico has escalated dramatically and official sources report that between 2006 and October 2016, 212,656 people have been assassinated and at least 26,274 have disappeared (Animal Político 2016a). However, due to high levels of impunity and irregular investigations, it is impossible to know how many of these are victims of violence from authorities or from non-state actors.

Nonetheless, while violence and the use of public force continue increasing, it does in fact seem that some parts of Mexican society see this as somewhat of a necessary evil, in order to successfully combat the country’s organized crime. For example, in an extensive national survey, 61.6% of the respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the statement “kidnappers’ human rights should not be respected”. In the same survey, 58.9% agreed that in order to guarantee national security, human rights are either “an obstacle” or “somewhat of an obstacle, it depends”, whereas 37% meant that it is “not an obstacle” (de la Barreda Solórzano 2015:129, 133). It seems that both sides – those who argue that human rights are secondary to security issues versus those who do not view human rights as an obstacle – show large percentages. Whether there has been a polarization of the Mexicans’ attitudes to the role of
the country’s armed forces and its methods, one cannot deny the importance of better understanding the official discourse of the subject and the perceptions it generates among the population. Furthermore, it has been argued—and I believe this to be very true—that the presidential discourse plays a critical role in shaping public opinion (Holland 2013:16), which is why this study chooses to focus on this. The case becomes even more interesting when one considers that credibility levels for President Enrique Peña Nieto are on an all-time low (El Sol de México 2016).

1.1.1 Objective and choice of case

The objective of this study is to analyse and better understand how the security discourses of Felipe Calderón Hinojosa and Enrique Peña Nieto in the Mexican war on drugs and the differences between these can be understood from a critical discourse analytical perspective. In a context of violence, distrust, rampant crime and insecurity, it is highly relevant to study the official discourses used to justify the war on drugs. The study’s relevancy is clear since the situation in which the country finds itself, with high levels of violence and weak institutions, constitutes a critical case well suited for study, and because insecurity concerns many Mexicans and is seen as the country’s biggest problem (Latinobarómetro 2015). The study aspires to gain a profound understanding of how different discourses have been utilized by the two presidents and understand possible differences and similarities between these.

1.1.2 Research question

In order to reach the study’s objective for a better understanding of the security discourses used by Felipe Calderón and Enrique Peña Nieto, the study parts from the following research question:

According to a critical discourse analytical perspective, what discourse strategies do Felipe Calderón and Enrique Peña Nieto use in the Mexican war on drugs and how do these relate to their security policies?
1.1.3 Disposition

In the first section of the thesis, the literature review is presented as an introduction to the research related and relevant to the subject of study. Then, the theoretical outline and definitions of some important concepts are presented. Here, I also included a discussion around common criticisms that the theories referred to in this study have received. I have also included an ontological discussion in this part, in order to try to explain my own views as researcher. Also in the first section of the thesis, I present the method, material and process of analysis as well as discussions around qualitative research in general and other methods that could have been used for this case. In the second section of the study, I have included a few contextualizing chapters that aim to introduce the reader to the subject and its background. Then, in the third section of the study, the principal analysis as well as its results is presented. Here, the analytical concepts introduced earlier are applied to the case of Mexico and the two Presidents. The fourth and final section of the study is a concluding one, which also contains a few ideas for possible research within the subject in the future. Finally, the study includes a bibliography on its last pages.

1.2 Literature review

The field of discourse analysis has grown much since its birth and is now a diverse field of many different perspectives, theories and methods. One of these approaches is found in the critical discourse analysis, which is where this study has its origin and guidelines. Although there are differing views and opinions also within the field of critical discourse analysis, the theories and methods of this study are inspired especially by those of Norman Fairclough. He argues that one of the goals of research within the field is to make people more aware of how their use of language is limited and what the possibilities for change are (Fairclough 1992:239).

Van Dijk (2006) means that it is important to understand the role of ‘manipulation’ when conducting critical discourse analytical research and he describes how this ‘abuse of power’ is used socially to “confirm social inequalities” and cognitively to disturb the process of understanding (van Dijk 2006:359). Van Dijk mentions how in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks the US government strengthened a polarization between two sides: ‘Us’ side and ‘Them’, where the first represents the good and the second the evil (van Dijk 2006:370).
believe that there are several similarities to be found between the discourses studied by van Dijk and the Mexican presidential speeches studied here.

In 1999, Mary Kaldor (1999, 2013) introduced the concept of ‘new wars’, which she argues follow a different logic than what she refers to as ‘old wars’ (1999:6). Kaldor does in fact mention the similarity in character between her “new wars” and the Mexican conflict, although she mentions how the Mexican conflict should be considered ‘criminal’ (Kaldor 2013:6) because of the effect the word ‘war’ has and how it implies (legitimate) military involvement. However, her concept is highly relevant for this study since it can help us understand better the conflict in which Mexico finds itself.

Holland (2013) discusses the importance of analysing politicians’ discourses in a profound manner and mentions the importance of ‘legitimacy’ for leaders and their foreign political ambitions. Although the subject studied in Holland’s book –foreign policy discourses in the US, UK and Australia after the 9/11-attacks– might seem very distant from the case of Mexico, his ideas can definitely be worth discussing also in this study. As mentioned, the concept of legitimacy is discussed and Holland quotes Western and mentions how elites (for this case, the two Presidents) are “sensitive to public opinion on matters related to the use of force” (Holland 2013:16). Although Holland speaks about the use of force in a foreign political perspective, I believe that this idea can definitely be transferred to the Mexican case, which means that both Calderón and Peña Nieto would continuously seek the public support for the continued use of military personnel in the country’s war on drugs and organized crime. This is, according to me, an example of where the importance of discourse analytical studies is really shown since, as Holland mentions, the “public opinion is highly sensitive to the arguments put forward by politicians” (Holland 2013:16). One could see it as a kind of symbiotic relationship where both sides are sensitive to the changes of the other.

Also Spencer (2012) has researched the discursive aspects of the war on terror and specifically his research dealing with the use of metaphors will be referred to in my study.

Ahuactzin Martínez (2014) has also analysed the discourses used by President Enrique Peña Nieto and concludes that there has been a change in the official discourse since the change of administration from Calderón to Peña Nieto (Ahuactzin Martínz 2014:288). However, I mean that the fact that other research has been done to analyse the discourse of Peña Nieto does not affect the relevancy of this study at all. First of all, Ahuactzin Martínez presented his study in 2014 and did not have access to material from the following years. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, his research was done with theories and methods that differ greatly from
those I use in this study. I hope and believe that also this new perspective presented here makes my study interesting. Of course, my study also focuses on the comparison between the two Presidents –Calderón and Peña Nieto– which is something Ahuactzin Martínez, whose focus is more on Peña Nieto, does not.

The articles of Bailey (2012), Felbab-Brown (2014), Pérez Correa et al. (2015), Zepeda Gil (2016), Bonello (2016) and Guerrero Gutiérrez (2012) help us understand the Mexican context and the reality of the country’s war on drugs with extensive analyses of the security strategies and their results. My hope for this study and the analysis presented here is to contribute in some way to the discussion around Mexican security policies and the discourses that justify them.

### 1.3 Theory and definitions

#### 1.3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis as theory and criticisms against it

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) will be used both as a theoretical base and a method for this study. CDA provides theories and methods that help us problematize and analyse the “relations between discursive practice and social and cultural development in different social contexts” (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:66).

Using the term Critical Discourse Analysis has led to much confusion and debate (Ibid. 66) about what is included in this ‘package’, which is why van Dijk prefers to refer to this field as Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) to make clear that it is in fact a ‘critical perspective’ or ‘attitude’ and not only a method (van Dijk 2009:63). Although van Dijk makes an important point, I will refer to the field as CDA in this study simply because I believe this is the most common denomination.

Although Winther Jørgensen & Phillips mention the diversity of CDA and the many differences between the different branches, they also observe that all CDA perspectives share five common traits (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:67), which are:

1. Social and cultural processes and structures have a partly linguistic-discursive character. Both the production and consumption of discourse are seen as social practice, which affects the development of the social world, including relations and identities (Ibid. 67).
2. “Discourse is both constitutive and constituted” (Ibid. 67). This may sound diffuse or complicated but can perhaps be more easily understood if compared to other branches of discourse analysis. Winther Jørgensen & Phillips illustrate this with a continuum in which they include, among others, Laclau & Mouffe’s discourse theory, CDA, and historical materialism. The theories of Laclau & Mouffe stand in stark contrast to the ideas central to historical materialism, such as the notion that discourse is a “mere reflection of other social mechanisms” (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:26). Laclau & Mouffe argue instead that discourse is fully constitutive of our world and also material things are part of and formed by discourse, even the economy and the infrastructure, for example (Ibid 26). CDA, finds itself somewhere between the theories of Laclau & Mouffe and historical materialism – discourse is seen as something that can change existing structures and relations but is also, simultaneously, a reflection of these (Ibid. 68).

3. The use of language must be studied within its social context (Ibid. 68-69).

4. “Discourse functions ideologically” (Ibid. 69) and creates, maintains and recreates unequal power relations.

5. Its research is critical – CDA does not claim to be neutral or objectivist and admits its politically charged critical approach (Ibid. 70).

Critical Discourse Analysis and the theories of Fairclough, as many other branches and researchers in the field of discourse analysis, have received their fair share of criticism and it is, I mean, necessary for me to at least briefly mention some of these in order to present serious results.

Fairclough’s most serious problem, according to Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, is the consequences for empirical research” that stem from the not so clear distinction between what is discursive and what is not. This, they mean, is shown in the difficulty of showing where and how the non-discursive affects the discursive and vice versa (Ibid. 93).

Fairclough also means that it is necessary to combine his discourse analysis with other theories but, according to Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, does not mention to what extent these theories should be applied nor if they can come from any field. They mention how in his work, Fairclough draws from theorists from many different fields but that it is not clearly stated that any theory works together with his discourse analysis (Ibid. 93).
Although I do understand where these criticisms come from, I view most of it as directed to the theorists and the more theoretical aspects of CDA. Since my study does not aspire to contribute to a theoretical discussion but only uses already existing theories as guidelines, I will not discuss these criticisms further but keep them in mind for research within the field.

1.3.2 The discourse

This is perhaps the most important concept for this study. For this reason, it is absolutely necessary to make clear what is meant by discourse. As Winther Jørgensen & Phillips tell us, the concept of discourse has been used in innumerable ways, which has led to understanding it being increasingly complicated. Although there are different approaches and understandings of what discourse is, they present a relatively easy definition of the concept of discourse: according to Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, discourse is “a particular way of talking about and understanding the world or an aspect of the world” (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:7).

The definition of Fairclough does not differ too much from the one presented by Winther Jørgensen & Phillips but he uses the concept in different ways and is a bit more specific. The most abstract definition of discourse presented by Fairclough is “language use as social practice”. He also mentions that he views discourse as “the kind of language used within a specific field” (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:72), such as the political discourse, which is relevant for this study. In this study, discourse is understood and referred to according to Fairclough’s views, although Winther Jørgensen & Phillips’ definition, I mean, is included in Fairclough’s. To this definition I add the common perspectives for all CDA theorists that were presented in 1.3.1.

1.3.3 Fairclough’s three dimensions

Fairclough has a three-dimensional conception of discourse: he sees discourse as 1) the object of analysis: a spoken or written text, 2) discursive practice, within which the processes of production and interpretation of the text are included, and 3) social practice. He explains how the social practice of a discourse can be viewed at numerous levels: in the ‘immediate situation’ or for example between genders at a societal level. In his model, he refers to these levels as ‘situational’, ‘institutional’, and ‘societal’ (Fairclough 1995:97). As mentioned briefly in Chapter 1.3.1, this social practice Fairclough speaks about constitutes much of the
context presented in this study. The social practice can of course be incredibly complex and
difficult to analyse since it can be studied on so many different levels and with tools from
almost any approach and discipline. However, although it sometimes may be complex, I mean
that analysing the context of societal issues is necessary and important since, I believe, it is
often in this context or social practice one finds the possible explanations to the issues
studied, which then lead to results and conclusions.

1.3.4 Key concepts

Winther Jørgensen & Phillips discuss two important grammatical elements for text analysis:
transitivity and modality. Transitivity studies grammatical agency and the way processes are
connected or not to the subject and object of a sentence. One of the objectives of transitivity
analysis, and perhaps the one that makes it such a relevant concept for this study, is to
distinguish the underlying ideological reasons of a sentence’s structure and phrasing (Winther
Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:87). The relevancy of agency in discourse could be illustrated by
the differences regarding responsibility in the two sentences “two men died…” and “two men
were killed”. Of course, it is plausible to believe that these kinds of different phrasings could
be of interest to politicians when, for example, presenting achievements or failures.
Depending on whether responsibility in a sentence is “hidden” and the agent is passive, the
way people react may differ significantly.

The second grammatical element of importance for discourse studies is modality. Modality
analyses how necessity versus possibility is presented in a sentence and modality analysis
focuses on the opinion of the speaker in a sentence. The following sentences can illustrate
how modality can be expressed in different ways: “It is the only alternative”, “I believe it is
the only alternative” and “I believe it to be one alternative.”

The effects and consequences of what the speaker says depend greatly on the modality;
depending on how modality is used by the speaker he or she can influence the perspectives
and relations of others (Ibid. 88) and modality is relevant also for this study and studies of
political discourse in general.

Interactional control has to do with the relations between different speakers and who gets a
say in a discussion (Ibid. 87). The concept is, for example, related to the study of whether
different speakers get the same space.
Two other concepts that are often defined and applied in critical discourse analyses are those of *intertextuality*, especially in the form of *interdiscursivity* and the *order of discourse*. Both of these are concerned with relations between different discourses but will not be discussed more thoroughly since this study’s focus is more directed to analysing and applying other discourse analytical concepts.

### 1.3.5 Ontology, social constructivism and CDA

When conducting research, and especially research of a qualitative character, I think some kind of ontological discussion can be of use, both for the researcher and the reader; by critically discussing and trying to understand the position and approach of the researcher, we can gain a more profound understanding of the study and its results.

For qualitative research in general, and maybe even more so for research within the field of CDA, it is of great importance to always motivate decisions and theories in an adequate manner. The somewhat subjective nature of these studies, compared to more quantitative research, is what makes the aspects of explanation and presentation absolutely necessary – without these two, it is near impossible to accept any kind of significance for the results. The difficulty of reaching objectivity is also one of the aspects of qualitative research that has been subject of critique, since a lack of objectivity can lead to a distortion of the study and thus if not useless, at least worse results.

Although I do understand where these criticisms come from, and understand that some view complete objectivity as the ideal (even if it is impossible to achieve), I do not share the idea that quantitative research is superior to qualitative within the fields of social science. On the contrary, I believe qualitative research to be better suited to analyse the complex nature of human society. The speeches given by Calderón and Peña Nieto that are analysed in this study are, I believe, something that both has its origin in social constructions and that will be understood differently, depending on the receiver. This may sound diffuse but what I mean is that when listening to a speech or reading a text (or ‘consuming’ any other discourse), people will have different reactions depending on innumerable reasons of which some of the most obvious may be related to, for example, nationality, religion or political ideology.

I see my views as social constructivist and that they stand in stark contrast to the positivist idea that “advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality” (Bryman 2012:28). Constructionism argues that “the social world and its
categories are not external to us, but are built up and constituted in and through interaction” (Bryman 2012:34). For me, the idea that social phenomena can and should be studied completely impartially and as static, non-changing entities, is very far from valid. Although it would be neat if this were true, since research within social science surely would be far easier, I believe that a completely positivist approach to social science only brings with itself washed-out results that do not really tell us that much about our very complex reality. That being said, I do of course not disqualify all quantitative research as useless; I simply mean that not everything can be studied with quantitative methods and that we should aim to understand society as something much more dynamic and ever-changing. Although I think it is important to not embrace any epistemology or ontological position completely and exclusively, I am aware that my research and perspectives have much more in common with social constructionism than other epistemologies and ontological positions.

There are, however, certain built-in ‘weaknesses’ included in the package that is the constructivist perspective. Probably the most important one – the complex relationship between constructivists and objectivity – has already been discussed but needs further examination. First, we have to accept that with these views, reaching complete objectivity is impossible. This is not really a weakness for constructionism but rather a more honest position on the complexity of social science. Let me explain further: although research done by positivists may be more objective than that of constructivists, it commits a critical error when assuming that social science can be objective without losing the significance of its results.

We accept then, that studies of social phenomena will always be biased to some extent. This is, of course, the case also for the discourse analysis presented here. However, this does not have to be a problem; I mean that we instead of objectivity should view transparency as the key to good research. By transparency, I refer to thorough and continuous explanation of the researcher’s stance on issues, decisions and interpretations presented in his or her study. By always keeping transparency in mind, the results presented will be more trustworthy, even if they should not be viewed as the only correct answer or interpretation – one must still understand that social phenomena can often be understood and explained in countless ways, and that all those results can, if presented with enough transparency, be just as correct and justifiable as the ones presented in this study.
1.4 Method and material

This chapter serves as an introduction to the qualitative method used in this study, as well as a presentation of the material that has been analysed. The method used here is the three-dimensional method of Fairclough but as there are, as always, alternative methods suitable for conducting studies similar to mine, it is necessary to problematize my own choices and try to explain the approach used and why this was seen as the best option. I will also try to discuss and problematize my own position as researcher and understand what effects this might have on the study’s results.

1.4.1 Data collection

The data presented in the study was obtained from Internet sources and the main material, the six speeches, was downloaded from and is available on the Mexican government’s official website: [www.gob.mx](http://www.gob.mx).

1.4.2 Data analysis

Throughout the analytical processes I have followed two guiding tools: the research question and Fairclough’s three-dimensional method.

According to Fairclough, it is necessary to investigate who has produced the material studied and how. For my study I mean that this is not as important since it is quite clear that the two Presidents’ offices have produced the material studied and that it is of a political character.

The next step of the analysis is to study the speeches of Calderón and Peña Nieto with the analytical concepts transitivity and modality. The use of metaphors was also analysed, as well as if what was said by the two Presidents corresponded to what their policies were. Finally, by consulting some recent research dealing with the Mexican context, we got a brief look at what subjects they avoided in their speeches.
1.4.3 Material

The principal material used in this study are the six speeches, *mensajes a la Nación*,\(^1\) that the President of Mexico traditionally gives every year when presenting his yearly *informe*.\(^2\) Since a Mexican term of office is six years, Calderón gave six of these speeches between 2007 and 2012 whereas Peña Nieto has given three (2013, 2014, 2015). In September 2016, when he presented his fourth informe, he did give a speech but one of a different kind,\(^3\) which is why this is not included in the present study; I argue that, in order to successfully compare and study these speeches, it is important that they are of similar character and given in comparable contexts.

Since my study will analyse six out of nine (ten including Peña Nieto’s 2016 speech) speeches of this kind, it is necessary to explain the process of this limiting selection, at least for Calderón (for the speeches given by Peña Nieto I believe not much justification is needed). I have chosen to focus on the three speeches Calderón gave in 2007, 2011 and 2012. 2007 and 2012 are studied simply because of the fact that they are the first and the last of the speeches given by Calderón, which I believe makes them preferable over the others. The year 2007 is interesting also because it is the first mensaje given after the beginning of the joint operation in Michoacán and thus the country’s war on drugs. The speech given in 2012 is interesting not only because of the fact that it is Calderón’s last, but also because, unlike his other five speeches, it was given in a context of declining deadly violence in Mexico (INEGI 2015). Mexican homicide statistics are of course closely linked to insecurity and maybe this specific data has affected the official discourse. Also the reason for which the speech he gave in 2011 is included in the study is related to violence and insecurity: the year 2011 was the most violent year during his presidency (INEGI 2015) and I mean that it is natural to argue that this extreme violence shaped or affected the official discourse in some way. Although the choice of speeches given by Peña Nieto does not really have to be discussed more thoroughly, it is still interesting and, I believe, important to understand how Mexico and the conflict has developed during his presidency, which is why a deeper discussion of this will be included for contextualization. I mean that these *mensajes a la Nación* constitute a suitable material for study not only because they are presented every year (with the exception of 2016) in similar contexts, but also because they usually contain a discussion around the issues that are

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\(^1\) In English: "Message to the Nation".
\(^2\) A kind of annual report from the executive power to the legislative power.
\(^3\) According to Peña Nieto himself, he wanted to “replace the monologue with a dialogue”, which is why he, instead of giving a traditional mensaje a la nación, chose to organize a discussion with youths from different parts of Mexico.
interesting for this study, as well as explanations of why the Presidents did what they did, and their ‘results’.

1.4.4 Qualitative research

The essential core of this study is the qualitative analysis of six chosen speeches that was done using a Critical Discourse Analysis. As in many cases, one could argue that a quantitative approach would have been more suitable for the case, for example in the form of a content analysis, however, I argue that my qualitative analysis is well suited for this case since it aims to understand the chosen texts more profoundly and contextually, instead of quantifying material that I mean should be studied and explained with qualitative methods. To continue using the example of a quantitative content analysis: had it been used for this study I could have, for example, calculated the frequency of certain key words or the length of the parts where the two Presidents talk about the subjects of interest. I would have ended up with many numbers –some of which surely are interesting– and although I would have tried to analyse these, it would not be possible to do it with near the same depth as a qualitative analysis. I mean that this is the most critical difference between the two; I prefer a contextualizing analysis that does not over-simplify and quantify the complexity of human nature. However, one should understand that the fact that a qualitative approach was chosen for this study is probably more based on my own preferences rather than this method actually being superior to other, more quantitative, methods.

For my study then, it is of great importance to contextualize what is being said (words, expressions, sentences, etc.) in the six speeches, in order to explain both how one can interpret it but also how it can be perceived by the Mexican population, the ‘target’ of the speeches. This contextualization has a lot in common with analysis of the social practice that Fairclough talks about (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:90-91) and perhaps it is in this part that one can see clearest that my study is of a qualitative character.
1.4.5 Discourse Analysis and Content Analysis: differences and similarities

Qualitative approaches of content analysis and discourse analysis may seem too similar to be separated completely. There are, however, a few critical differences. A difference seen as fundamental by Hardy et al. is found in how the two methods understand meaning; whereas content analysts see a ‘consistency of meaning’ of words that allows them to, for example, analyse the frequency of certain key words, discourse analysis emphasizes the fact that meaning is ever-changing (Hardy et al. 2004:20). This view of ‘meaning’ pairs well with my view of human nature as something changing and dynamic.

As discussed earlier, I believe that it is important to always contextualize one’s findings and results to understand them more profoundly. This view I have of the importance of context is another aspect that makes discourse analysis seem like the best suited method for my study, since this focuses on the relation between text and context, whereas content analysis chooses to focus on the text itself and ignore the context (Hardy et al. 2004:20). The fact that content analysis focuses merely on the text and its content also leads us to another advantage I see in Discourse Analysis – it also aims to understand what is not said. This can of course be interesting when studying the speeches given by Calderón and Peña Nieto; for example, what parts of the reality of Mexico do they leave out and why? Although counting the frequency of words is most often associated with content analysis, Hardy et al. (2004:21) mention that this can be done with a discourse analysis as well, of which this study is an example.

Another view I share with many discourse analysts is the belief that language and discourse do not constitute neutral or objective mediums through which knowledge is transferred between people, but rather something very much dependant on external factors such as one’s background and earlier life experiences or greater social processes. These outer factors are often very difficult to distinguish but, somewhat paradoxically, also often at the core of a discourse analyst’s objective. One could say that one of the principal objectives of all studies within the field of discourse analysis is to reveal and understand the patterns of language.
1.4.6 Method of analysis: Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

The method presented by Fairclough bears much resemblance to his theories and views on what discourse is and how it works and he also introduces three corresponding dimensions for discourse analysis methods, which are 1) the text analysis, 2) the interpretation of the relation between the text and discursive processes of production and consumption, and 3) the explanation of the relation between these discursive processes and social processes.

The text analysis helps us understand how discourse is being used textually and it is here we can begin constructing our interpretations (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:87).

It is important, however, to understand that when studying the text and its structure, one is also involved with the discursive practice – the processes of production and consumption (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:74). By studying the discursive practice, we want to understand how the text was produced and how it is being consumed. For this case I argue that not too much emphasis should be put on studying the production of the text since it is relatively clear that the two Presidents’ offices produced the material. However, the discursive practice, as a whole – including the consumption of the texts – remains relevant.

Finally, the social practice is studied in order to contextualize the analysis. For example, here we are interested in understanding whether the discursive practice reproduces or changes this and what effects this has on the social practice, the broader social context (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:90, 75). In this part of the analysis, we also want to understand the discourses’ possible ideological effects and what consequences it might have, for example on existing power relations (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:90).

1.5 Limitations

Due to the limited time, the focus of the study will be solely on the speeches mentioned in Chapter 1.4.3. The study also analyses the discourses of just two Presidents, however, this delimitation would probably have been used even if more time had been available; although many Mexican administrations have had to face similar challenges in the form of organized crime and drug trafficking, the country changed dramatically with the launch of the war on drugs in 2006, and only two Presidents have been in office since then. Since these post-2006 years constitute such a critical case (this is discussed more thoroughly in the following chapters), a focus on the two Presidents of this new context is natural.
2. Background

2.1 The Mexican War on Drugs

2.1.1 Background

Bailey (2012) provides us with important knowledge about the Mexican war on drugs and how it has developed in relation to Mexican politics during the last thirty years. As mentioned in the brief introduction, during most of the 20th century –between 1929 and 2000— the Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI, held executive power in Mexico. Bailey argues that there are five key steps that led up to the ‘disequilibrium’ in which Mexico finds itself today. During the first period, between 1985 and 1988, the Federal Security Directorate (DFS) was dissolved, which Bailey means paved the way for Mexican drug-trafficking organizations (DTO), the cartels. Moreover, during the last years of the 1980s, cocaine trafficking routes began to shift from Colombia and the Caribbean, leading to increased activity and conflicts between DTOs in Mexico (Bailey 2012:7). During the late 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, the “erosion” (Ibid. 7) of the PRI increased while the Gulf DTO in the north-eastern state Tamaulipas got stronger. During the third step, between 1997 and 2002, the gigantic centralized political system of the PRI finally collapsed and decentralization accelerated (Ibid. 7). During this period, the DTOs grew much stronger and able, of which the 2001 escape from prison of Joaquin ‘El Chapo’ Guzmán Loera (who then came to lead the Sinaloa DTO) or the involvement of military defectors within the DTOs (Los Zetas) are examples. According to Bailey, the final two periods are characterized by more sophisticated tactics and the growth of DTOs and, since 2006, the increased involvement of the military, beginning with the operation in Michoacán. During this period, violence also grows significantly.

2.1.2 A ‘new war’

Mary Kaldor has introduced the concept of what she calls the ‘new wars’ and although the term itself may sound dramatic it can give us important insights for understanding the new conditions in conflicts such as the one present in Mexico since 2006.

New wars are different from what Kaldor calls ‘old wars’ since they follow a different logic; in these new conflicts, the actors, goals and methods have changed, among other things
(Kaldor 2013:2). Whereas old wars were fought between states’ armed forces, in the new wars non-state actors have gained significance through, for example, jihadists or paramilitary groups. In the case of Mexico, of course, the principal non-state actors affecting the violence in the conflict would be the drug cartels (however, there are others, such as the autodefensas).

Kaldor mentions how new wars can be seen as a mixture of war (“organized violence for political ends”), crime, and human rights violations (Ibid. 6). This seems to fit the Mexican case quite well, however, Kaldor argues that the drug war in Mexico (and many other conflicts) has to be classified as “criminal” and that there is an advantage in avoiding the word ‘war’. She mentions that by speaking about these new conflicts as ‘wars’, it automatically implies and, as I understand it, justifies military participation (Ibid. 6). This is a very interesting point, and it is incredibly difficult to understand the effect that the word ‘war’ might have, and whom it would benefit. As Kaldor mentions, “war does imply organised violence in the service of political ends” and that is how it “legitimises criminal activity” (Ibid. 6). Of course, this makes the word ‘war’ incredibly relevant for my own study since I want to analyse how the violence present in Mexico is being justified. In this study, I will continue to refer to the Mexican conflict as the ‘war on drugs’ or ‘drug war’, because of two reasons. First, I believe that this is the most common denomination. I do also, although I agree with Kaldor that one should be careful with words such as ‘war’, believe that the word ‘war’ is a suiting term for this conflict, maybe precisely because of the militarization of public security through the involvement of the Mexican Armed Forces and its increasing funding (SIPRI 2015).

The Mexican case fits the logic of new wars on several points. Several of the actors involved are, as mentioned, non-state and the goals are different – much of the Mexican conflict stems from the extreme lucrativeness of trafficking drugs and not from ideological differences or political power battles. Kaldor mentions the difficulty in arguing that the reason new wars are started are economic gains, since it is “difficult to distinguish between those who use the cover of political violence for economic reasons and those who engage in predatory economic activities to finance their political cause” (Kaldor 2013:3). I agree that it is indeed difficult but this distinction is not needed to understand the importance of economic gain in the Mexican conflict. This discussion also leads us to another aspect shared by the Mexican case and

4 The Autodefensas are community self-defense groups that arose to combat drug-trafficking organizations in crime-plagued states and especially in Guerrero, Oaxaca, Mexico State, Veracruz and Michoacán (CNDH 2016:54).
Kaldor’s new wars: how they are funded. In new wars and ‘weak states’, the conflicts are often financed by what Kaldor refers to as ‘predatory private finance’: kidnapping, smuggling or human trafficking, etc. (Ibid. 3), all of which are present in the Mexican war on drugs.

One of the new methods Kaldor argues is present in the new wars is population displacement (Ibid. 2-3). Also this is very much present in Mexico, and the country’s National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) explains, very similarly to Kaldor, how criminal organizations use this method:

“When the criminal groups arrive to a community their objective is to install themselves and violently recruit mainly youths and adults by using as methods of enrolment threats against their families, destruction of their properties and acts of extreme violence that come to cause their death when they reject ‘working’ with them.”

CNDH 2016:51

Kaldor explains how population displacement is used in new wars to control territory (Kaldor 2013:3), which seems to be true also for the case of Mexico. However, she also emphasizes the importance she sees in ‘identity’ as a goal in these new contexts (Ibid. 2). To see how this concept and ‘identity politics’ matters for the case of Mexico may be difficult. I do, however, believe that traits of this can be found also in the Mexican drug war albeit somewhat differently from what Kaldor talks of. Kaldor mentions how in new wars, identity and “mobilisation around identity” is seen as the goal of war rather than “an instrument of war, as was the case in ‘old wars’” (Ibid. 2). I mean that identity in Mexico more is being used as an instrument of war, for example through the official discourse that will be studied here. An “Us and Them discourse” is widely used. This, however, will be discussed more thoroughly in the analytical part of this study but, to conclude, we can confirm that the Mexican war on drugs does indeed share several similarities with the Kaldor’s ‘new wars’ and that her theories are useful for understanding the situation in which the country finds itself.

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5 This is my own translation. The original text in Spanish can be consulted on http://www.cndh.org.mx/sites/all/doc/Informes/Especiales/2016_IE_Desplazados.pdf
2.2 The security policies and strategies of Felipe Calderón and Enrique Peña Nieto in the current conflict

The 89th article of the Mexican constitution states that one of the authorities of the President of Mexico is to fully dispose of the Armed Forces (Army, Navy and Air Force) to preserve national security (Cámara de Diputados 2016). As will be seen clearly in this part of the study, both Calderón and Peña Nieto have made much use of this article through the use of militarization in Mexico. However, it is important to note that there are also important differences between the two approaches.

With his five-year development plan, presented in 2007, Felipe Calderón immediately promised tougher actions against Mexico’s drug-trafficking organizations (DTOs), the cartels. In fact, one of the main objectives was to strengthen the State and increase security through the “direct and efficient combat against drug-trafficking and other kinds of organized crime” (Presidencia de la República 2007:59). The strategies he presented to reach this objective was 1) to use the force of the State against organized crime, 2) to implement a coordinating policy that makes use of the three branches of government to fight drug trade, 3) to reach international standards for fighting money laundering, and 4) to destroy the elements that allow economic gains for criminal organizations. Guerrero Gutiérrez (2010) mention four similar objectives, presented by the Calderón administration at different times: 1) Strengthen the security institutions, 2) lower, detain or prevent drug consumption, 3) break up criminal organizations and 4) recover public spaces (Guerrero Gutiérrez 2010). With this plan for his time as President, it was natural to assume that Calderón would be much tougher on criminals than his predecessor Vicente Fox (2000-06).

Calderón initiated the war on drugs with the joint operative in Michoacán in 2006, ten days after having taken office. In this operation, federal police cooperated with military personnel, state police and prosecution authorities. During the following year, 2007, followed several similar operatives in different states across the republic: in Baja California, Chihuahua, Sinaloa, Durango, Nuevo León, Tamaulipas and Guerrero (Zepeda Gil 2016:11).

Calderón put much emphasis on the breaking up of criminal organizations and he often displayed the captured narcos in front of TV cameras, showing the public that his strategy
indeed was making progress. During his administration, much more kingpins were captured than during earlier presidencies: in 2012, 26 kingpins (capos) had been captured since Calderón took office whereas during the six years of Vicente Fox, his predecessor, only seven were captured. Furthermore, during the government of Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000), this number was as low as four (Guerrero Gutiérrez 2012). However, both Guerrero Gutiérrez (2010) and Zepeda Gil (2016:34) view the disarticulation of criminal organizations as critical for explaining the development of violence in Mexico. Zepeda Gil mentions that the kingpin strategy of capturing criminal leaders can affect violence in two ways. One, the criminal organizations can react with violence and attack the government, as retaliation. Second, these organizations can, due to the lack of leadership, become more violent until a new leader comes along (Zepeda Gil 2016:21). Having read the work of Zepeda Gil, a non-violent reaction to the kingpin strategy applied by Calderón seems unlikely.

Much of the increased intensity of Calderón’s war was a response to the bilateral objectives of the US and Mexico and in 2008, the governments of Felipe Calderón and George W. Bush signed the ‘Mérida Initiative’ which came to influence the conflict significantly with the US sending vehicles and military equipment to the Mexican government (Zepeda Gil 2016:12).

Although the Mexican government during the Calderón presidency managed to capture more kingpins than earlier administrations, the conflict also led to an extreme increase in the deadly violence. And perhaps even more alarming than the sudden increase in violence, is its strong concentration to the states with joint operatives (operativos conjuntos), which can be seen in the following graphic.
Due to the criminality and troubled nature of the states to which the military was sent in 2006 and 2007, an increase in violence could perhaps be expected. However, how does one justify a spike of this magnitude with so many deaths? Looking at the graphic, it does indeed seem unnatural and very different from the trend of the years leading up to 2006.

In his own National Development Plan (Plan Nacional de Desarrollo) presented six years later, Enrique Peña Nieto criticized the security strategy Calderón put in place in 2006, arguing that this ‘direct combat’ and extradition of kingpins generated a power vacuum within the criminal organizations which led to violent conflicts over territories across the country (Presidencia de la República 2013:32).

His strategies, Peña Nieto said, would be characterized by a respect for human rights (Ibid. 33) and with the first goal of his plan being Mexico in Peace (México en Paz), Peña Nieto made clear that he wanted to reform the judicial system, strengthen the defence of human rights and fight corruption. He mentioned that in order to govern efficiently, Mexico would “establish strategies of prevention and solution of conflicts through dialogue” (Ibid. 39). This was seen in action through the creation of the National Program of Social Prevention of Violence and Crime in 2013, which was seen as one of the pillars of the new strategy of not fighting organized crime solely with force. However, the program yielded little results (Zepeda Gil 2016:16) and, after investments of almost 10 billion Mexican pesos (4,38 billion SEK as of 2017-01-03) in the program, as a measure to strengthen the country’s economy it
has been decided that the program will be without economic resources for 2017 (Expansión 2016).

Peña Nieto also proposed the creation of a new division within the federal police force to fight organized crime, the gendarmerie, which would use the military’s facilities and consist of 40,000 members (Expansión 2012). The gendarmerie is supposed to be sent to support communities and areas affected by crime and violence. However, the gendarmerie has been somewhat of a failure and became a police force much smaller than what was promised (Zepeda Gil 2016:16).

Both when campaigning and during his time as President, Peña Nieto has said that he wants better coordination between Mexico’s law enforcement and security agencies, which is why he dissolved the Secretariat of Public Security (SSP) and integrated this in the Ministry of Interior (SEGOB). Also the federal penitentiary system is now part of SEGOB and is another example of the increased centralization of the Peña Nieto presidency. Better coordination has since continued to be presented as the key to decreasing violence in Mexico by the current administration. However, as Felbab-Brown (2014) points out, this focus on poor coordination has brought little progress and risks diverting attention from other explanations of the conflict, such as corruption, which she means the Peña Nieto administration has failed to deal with (Felbab-Brown 2014:20).

Following the change of President, violence persists and according to official statistics, the number of homicides in the country has developed as seen in figure 2.

![Figure 2. Total number of homicides between 2009 and 2015. Source: INEGI (2016).](image-url)
As seen in the graphic, according to INEGI deadly violence has indeed declined since Peña Nieto took office in 2012, albeit marginally. However, by comparing the numbers of figure 2 with those in figure 1, we soon understand that violence is still on alarming levels. Looking only at the statistics from INEGI then, due to the still very high level of violence I believe that we can conclude that the two Presidents have found themselves in similar situations and facing similar challenges.

When it comes to the military, in late 2016 it remains very much active in fighting crime and military officers are leading police units all across the country, similarly to during the Calderón administration. There are soldiers patrolling the streets of 24 of the country’s federal entities, and the number of bases used for these operations have increased significantly (Animal Político 2016b). Deploying military personnel to combat crime remains the central strategy of the Mexican government, also since the change of President in 2012. Meanwhile, military expenditure in Mexico continues to grow (SIPRI 2015). Interestingly enough, another difference between Calderón and Peña Nieto in the conflict is seen in which Armed Forces that are used to fight crime. While Calderón (along with the US) preferred to use the Marine Forces (SEMAR) since these were seen as less corrupt and more efficient, Peña Nieto has instead shifted this use to the Army, decreasing the role of the SEMAR (Felbab-Brown 2014:7). Furthermore, with the proposed new Internal Security Law (Ley de Seguridad Interna), Peña Nieto seems to wish to regulate the use of the Armed Forces in tasks of internal security. However, as Bonello (2016) notes, critics of militarization receive little comfort from this since the new law also contains a broader definition of the concept of internal security, which could in fact expand the use of the military (Bonello 2016). Nevertheless, what consequences this initiative brings remains to be seen.

Looking more closely at the concrete strategies of the two Presidents, we can conclude that there are differences, as well as similarities. Perhaps one of the most important and obvious is the decreased emphasis on issues regarding violence and crime in general and on capturing kingpins and ‘decapitating’ DTOs in particular. Peña does not like to talk about these issues as much as Calderón, who profiled himself with his security policies. Some of the profiling subjects of Peña Nieto have instead been his educational reform and the Mexican economy. A similar attitude (of regarding for example economical questions as more important) could be what is behind the withdrawal of funding for the national crime prevention program and the failure of the gendarmerie.
The security strategy of Peña was meant to be different and as he said in his 2015 speech, the objective of his government “goes beyond simply capturing leaders of criminal organizations” (Peña Nieto 2015). Rather, his government’s focus is on reducing violence and homicides. However, even if some forms of violence may have declined, it remains on worrying levels and the future of the National Gendarmerie (Gendarmería Nacional) to combat crime is at the least insecure and maybe even a fiasco. Due to the difficulty of seeing clear differences between the gendarmerie and the army regarding both strategy and results, critics may argue that the change of strategy was simply ‘for show’ and that it means little for resolving security issues (Kane 2012).

3. Analysis

3.1 Introduction

While doing the principal analysis for the study, it soon became quite clear that although Calderón and Peña Nieto share some common traits when it comes to discourse, there are also several notable differences between the two. It is in this part of my study that I present the results gained from my discourse analysis.

3.2 Transitivity and the discursive construction of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’

In the speeches analysed, a discursive construction of the good ‘Us’ and the evil ‘Them’ is very much present in the speeches given by Calderón. As early as in the introduction of Calderón’s 2007 speech, we can see traits of this social construction when he talks about the objective of his fight against organized crime:
“… not allow that the criminals take hold of what is ours, we fight so that our families, our children, the women and in general all Mexicans can walk the streets without fear…”

Felipe Calderón, 2 September 2007

In this quote, Calderón makes absolutely clear that there are two sides in this conflict and who is on which side: it is the country –the Mexicans and their families– who are fighting the criminals. We can see similar characteristics in his choice of words: he reminds the Mexican people that the goals of the delinquency are to “kidnap” the future of Mexico, “dominate” the people and “paralyze” the government (Calderón 2007).

Four years later, fighting organized crime remains an important subject for Calderón in his 2011 speech. He mentions that his biggest worry is that the criminals interfere with “the people” (Calderón 2011):

“Our biggest worry is that the criminals interfere with the people. They interfere with people to blackmail, to kidnap, to threaten. And that’s why we act, to defend our families.”

Felipe Calderón, 2 September 2011

In this quote, the criminals are dehumanized and presented as something opposed to the own side and the people. Also in his 2012 speech he uses similar language. Van Dijk (2006) talks about how a similar discursive strategy was applied by the US government after the September 11 attacks. He also mentions that through repetition and discussion around similar events, this idea talked about in the strategy can be generalized, leading to a ‘stable social representation’ or even an ‘ideology’ (van Dijk 2006:370). By drawing from van Dijk’s ideas and applying these on the Mexican case, we can understand that a possible reason Calderón used this strategy was to increase the Mexican population’s dislike for criminality and criminals. Zepeda Gil (2016) writes about how the new discourse used by the Calderón administration affected the Mexican media climate and how this put the complete

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6 This, as well as the other translations of what is said in the speeches is my own. The original sentences in Spanish can be consulted on www.gob.mx (see References for exact links).
7 I believe that due to the highly political character and importance of the speeches analysed, we should view any detail of them as part of a (discursive) strategy.
8 Here, he talks about an anti-terrorist ideology. In the Mexican case, this could be an “anti-organized crime” ideology, for example.
responsibility of the increased violence on the criminal organizations (Zepeda Gil 2016:13), even if this surely is far from the truth.

Peña Nieto does not speak as much about ‘Them’ but is quite similar to Calderón when speaking about the own side, the ‘Us’. Both Presidents talk about the “courage”, “valor” (Calderón 2007, 2012; Peña Nieto 2013) and “patriotism”, “patriotism” (Calderón 2007, 2011; Peña Nieto 2013, 2014, 2015) of their Armed Forces and they seem to share the same proud opinion of these.

However, although there are similarities, the structures of the speeches of Calderón and Peña Nieto differ quite a lot. Compared to Calderón, Peña Nieto does not seem to put near as much emphasis to issues related to crime and insecurity. The following table is included to show the frequency of a few key words. Since these key words do not form part of the principal analysis – as they would in a more quantitative content analysis – I argue that not much explanation is needed for the choice of words, since these should be regarded as a kind of ‘bonus’ to the analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>“Crime”</th>
<th>“Criminal”</th>
<th>“Delinquency”</th>
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<td>Calderón 2007</td>
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<td>Calderón 2011</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calderón 2012</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peña Nieto 2013</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Peña Nieto 2015</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Frequency of a few key words in the speeches analysed. Source: www.gob.mx.

Moreover, when Peña does talk about the issues related to crime, he almost exclusively talks about the improvements he means are taking place. For example, every time he mentions the word criminal (delincuente) –which he does once every speech– it is to inform the people that various of the most wanted criminals have been captured and that they no longer pose a threat to the Mexican people. In these examples we see clearly one of the most significant
differences between the discursive strategies of the two Presidents analysed: Peña Nieto focuses on his achievements and what is being done whereas Calderón puts more focus on emphasizing the dangers that organized crime poses to the Mexican society.

“... of the 122 suspected criminals most wanted, the Republic’s Government has achieved that 65 of these do not pose a threat to the population.”

Enrique Peña Nieto, 2 September 2013

“... 84 of the 122 most dangerous criminals are now not a threat to the society.”

Enrique Peña Nieto, 2 September 2014

“Moreover, thanks to the cooperated work of the units of the Security Cabinet, 92 of the 122 most dangerous criminals are now not a threat to the Mexican society.”

Enrique Peña Nieto, 2 September 2015

Based on these quotes, it seems like the discourse of Peña is of a much more positive character than the one used by Calderón during his years as President. Moreover, we can conclude that the way both Calderón and Peña Nieto talk about these issues is closely related to the concept of transitivity. We see clearly that Calderón’s speeches include a higher level of transitivity since he, much more than Peña Nieto, connects himself or, for example, the “families of Mexico”, to the on-going processes of crime and violence. We see this also in the examples included above. Although Peña Nieto does relate these processes to a subject (e.g. the Security cabinet or the government), he seems to want to avoid these connections in a negative way. To explain further, where Calderón mentions how his government fights for the families of Mexico and that his biggest fear is that the criminals interfere with these, Peña avoids this and only uses agency positively, as in the examples above. In fact, of the words in figure 3, the only time Peña uses one of these words in a, as I see it, negative manner is when he mentions “crime” ("crimen") in the following sentence from his 2015 speech:
What he refers to as “the events in Iguala” is the mass kidnapping and following disappearance of 43 male students from the rural school of Ayotzinapa in the southern state of Guerrero. The Ayotzinapa case has received international attention and has shed light on the country’s human rights situation. This will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 3.4.

It is also interesting to talk briefly about interactional control since this can further highlight the relevancy of this chapter. Interactional control has to do with who gets to control the agenda and naturally, in the speeches studied here, interactional control lies completely with the two Presidents. Looking at a broader context, the interactional control still probably is mostly with Calderón and Peña Nieto, even if critics of their governments and critical social groups of course also get a say. However, what is interesting for this chapter dealing with the construction of an ‘Us’ and ‘Them’, is that close to no interactional control is with the ‘Them’ side, the criminals. This may perhaps seem obvious but its importance should not be disregarded since this complete lack of interactional control lets the two Presidents talk about the other side any way they want. Without arguing in any way that much more media space should be given to criminal organization, the fact that the Calderón and Peña Nieto are in strong control of the discussion can of course distort the truth, as can be seen in Chapter 3.4.

### 3.3 Metaphors and modality

Perhaps the strongest and clearest metaphor used in the speeches is the disease metaphor from Calderón’s 2011 speech. First, when speaking about insecurity, he says that the only way to fight this ‘cancer’ is to carry on with his strategy and, later in the same speech; he refers to organized crime as “a true social cancer” (Calderón 2011). Referring to the state or the society with terms related to the human body is not something Calderón was the first to do. Once again I will refer to research on terrorism. Spencer (2012) argues that by conceptualizing terrorism as a ‘disease’, one implies that certain measures are required and that “engagement or negotiations” (Spencer 2012:18) are not viable options. Thus, by referring to organized crime as a disease, Calderón implies that the only way to deal with escalating crime and violence is Mexico is how he deals with it, by putting force against force.
“The only way of truly eliminating this cancer is to carry on with the strategy.”

Felipe Calderón, 2 September 2011

The quote above is interesting to us for two reasons. First of all, it contains the ‘disease’ metaphor, although in this quote he not only implies that his strategies are needed but says it directly. Secondly, it is interesting to study this sentence using the concept of modality, which we introduced in Chapter 1.3.4. This sentence is a clear example of how modality is used to push Calderón’s agenda as the only reasonable alternative. Of course, had he said “I believe that the only way of truly…” or “I believe that one way of eliminating…”, it would not have had nearly the same effect on his listeners.

Also Peña Nieto makes use of metaphors albeit, perhaps unsurprisingly, in a different manner. In 2014, he included the following his sentence in his speech to the nation when talking about the new national program to prevent violence and crime:

“This is a qualitative change which has given new life to communities and neighbourhoods that were threatened by crime.”

Enrique Peña Nieto, 2 September 2014

I believe that the sentence above is quite effective in showing us the main difference between the discourse used by Peña and Calderón. Of course, here Peña argues that the result of his policies is the ‘new life’, something positive, brought to people who were once ‘threatened’ by delinquency. Naturally, also Calderón argues that his policies have had similar positive effects although when talking about these he does not use metaphors like Peña Nieto. Perhaps—and this is what I believe to be true—, where they use metaphors is where their focus is. In other words, the main focus of Calderón is on the negative effects of organized crime whereas Peña’s is on the positive effects of his policies. Due to what we have seen so far when comparing the two, this seems believable.

Studying how Calderón and Peña express modality is also of interest since this can contribute also to a larger discussion studying political discourse in general. Almost nowhere in the speeches analysed do the two express any kind of doubt and, interestingly enough, in the parts that were analysed here (those where they speak of insecurity and crime), no hesitation or
doubt is expressed at all. However, due to a lack of time it was not possible for this study to investigate whether political discourse research studying doubt or hesitation exists and what the existing state of the art looks like. Instead, this study will have to settle with the conclusion that these kinds of expressions are absent in the speeches analysed.

### 3.4 What is left out?

The parts where Peña Nieto speaks about the captures of some of the most wanted criminals have been criticized. The list of the 122 most wanted was not made public, which made it impossible to know if these results even made sense or were pure show (if the people does not know who has been captured, how can they accept these results?). Even after pressure from the National Transparency Institute (INAI⁹), the Ministry of Interior (SEGOB) did not make the list public, arguing that this would jeopardize security operations (Siete24 2015). Of course, without having knowledge of all the names on the list, it is difficult to accept the relevance of these numbers.

The ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ discourse used by Calderón and the tendency to classify victims of violence as criminals have been criticized from various social movements and organizations, who mean that this discourse paints a very incorrect picture of the reality of the Mexican conflict (Zepeda Gil 2016:15) and there is most certainly truth to these criticisms. Although impossible to know for certain, there are several examples that indicate that many of the victims of deadly violence in Mexico are not criminals but, rather, from different vulnerable groups (e.g. women or migrants). The National Commission on Human Rights (CNDH) in Mexico has registered many complaints of abuses committed by authorities, something seldom mentioned in the speeches analysed. Between 2006 and 2016, the CNDH received 12 408 complaints of human rights violations by the Armed Forces, of which 10 054 (80,1%) were directed to the Secretariat of National Defence (SEDENA), the army (La Jornada 2016).

> “The State must protect the Mexicans’ human rights, starting with the most valuable thing they have: life.”
>
> Enrique Peña Nieto, 2 September 2013

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⁹ Its Spanish name is Instituto Nacional de Transparencia, Acceso a la Información y Protección de Datos Personales.
According to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR or CIDH in Spanish), Mexico is in a human rights crisis (CIDH 2016:31) in which crime and abuse committed by authorities is common and impunity strong (Ibid. 34-36). Both Presidents analysed in this study, however, seem to view these cases as little more than isolated cases (for example, see Calderón 2012) or ‘bad eggs’. Many human rights organizations are of a differing opinion and the CIDH have, for example, shed light upon the corruption in certain judicial systems and state governments (Ibid. 213). Human Rights Watch (HRW) has also opposed the Mexican strategy in the war on drugs and means that many of the victims in the conflict are not criminals and that abuses by authorities are common (HRW 2011:175).

These reports, combined with some of the statistics included here, paint a grim picture of Mexico. Calderón has also, at times, talked about the difficult reality of Mexico but of course in a very different way. Whereas many human rights organizations choose to emphasize state complicity, corruption, impunity and unwillingness to investigate, Calderón chose to strongly focus on the non-state criminals and the DTOs. In his final speech to the nation, he discussed these issues as follows.

“Certainly, mistakes have been made and, in some cases, abuses by authorities, but they have been exceptions, not rule. And far from hiding them, in every known case, action has been taken against the responsible.”

Felipe Calderón, 2 September 2012

Of course, this stands in stark contrast to the reports of CIDH and HRW. Also the Peña Nieto administration has been criticized for failing to defend human rights in Mexico. Pérez Correa et al. (2015) have written about the disproportionate lethality of the Mexican armed forces and the consequences of these being used in the war on drugs. They conclude that although the lethality statistics (the number of civilians killed for every police/soldier) peaked in 2011, when the nation-wide index was 32.4 civilians killed per soldier, they remain alarming and tell a story where the illegal use of deadly force by authorities is normalized (Pérez Correa et al. 2015).

As in many Latin American countries, corruption remains an issue in Mexico and maybe even more so in the on-going war on drugs. Both Calderón and Peña talk about corruption and their strategies to combat it but there are, of course, things that are left out. For example, when speaking of corruption, they are both eager to talk about their strategies and the potential of
these but reluctant to present the magnitude of the problem. Perhaps the clearest example is when Peña talks about Ayotzinapa (see the quote in Chapter 3.1) as “the events in Iguala” (Peña Nieto 2015). Nowhere does he mention the responsibility of the Guerrero State authorities even though the independent expert group (GIEI) investigating the case already had concluded the involvement of various authorities, linking these to criminal organizations (e.g. GIEI 2016:15).

Sadly, despite several attempts to present the Ayotzinapa case as an isolated incident, other situations in which authorities are violently involved have been a central ingredient in the war on drugs. Another example, given much attention in the media but little by Peña Nieto is the Tlatlaya massacre presented in the National Commission on Human Rights (CNDH) in the 51/2014 Recommendation. In Tlatlaya, Mexico State, soldiers killed 22 people in an event that has since then received international attention. Maureen Meyer of the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), points to the urgency of a change of strategy for the Mexican military and says that “it is alarming to think that if there hadn’t been survivors and international media attention, Tlatlaya may have been registered as just one of many confrontations with the military” (WOLA 2015).

Similar to Peña Nieto, Calderón has been reluctant to recognize the magnitude of human rights abuses committed by authorities during his presidency. Despite the fact that the CNDH registered more than 9 000 complaints for human rights abuses by the Armed Forces during the Calderón administration (Contralínea 2015), when speaking of these in his speeches, he is almost exclusively positive and proud of their “sacrifice for the good of the homeland” (Calderón 2007). Moreover, they both seem to fail to recognize the (often violent) consequences of military forces involved with matters of public security. It should also be remembered that military personnel does not receive training to the same extent as police when it comes to investigating and solving crimes.

In his 2011 speech, Calderón mentioned that “Federal Forces intervene where there is violence and because there is violence in a particular place” and that they are not the cause for this violence (Calderón 2011). Although these members of the armed forces certainly were deployed to communities troubled by violence, looking at Figure 2 in Chapter 2.2.2, it is difficult to not question Calderón’s statement.

The possible ideological consequences of the way discourse has been used by the two Presidents are of course very difficult to distinguish but at least some discussion of this can be interesting. Having concluded the analysis, it was clear that Peña Nieto put less emphasis on
insecurity and violence in the context of organized crime, compared to Calderón. Between 2006 and 2011, Mexicans went from thinking that unemployment was the country’s biggest problem, to think that crime and public security are the biggest problems (Latinobarómetro 2006, 2011). This increase of worry of insecurity is interesting (in 2011, 38.5% saw this as the biggest problem) and may be related to the discursive strategy used by Peña Nieto. Although this is little more than speculations, I would think that less discussion of these issues would lead to fewer worries, even if statistics remain similar. To explain further; we have already concluded that violent crime and human rights abuses remain on very high levels, even if some crimes (e.g. homicides) have decreased slightly. As mentioned, we have also concluded that Peña Nieto talks less about these issues than Calderón. With these two conclusions in mind, the numbers of the Latinobarómetro database are very interesting. Between 2011 and 2013, that is, between the last year of Calderón and the first of Peña, the number of Mexicans who view insecurity as their country’s biggest problem has shrunk from 38.5% to 27.9% (Latinobarómetro 2011, 2013). However, it is important to keep in mind that these are merely observations and not ‘truths’ in any way. Nevertheless, it could be of interest as a starting point for research in the future.

3.5 A new course or simply discourse?

This chapter has been included as a kind of closing chapter to the analytical section. In the background section, as well as the analysis chapters, we have seen that the discourses used by Calderón and Peña are very different, and that there are differences also between their security strategies in the current conflict. Peña emphasized the importance of defending human rights and the need of a dialogue, instead of a full-on violent fight against crime, which was what Calderón suggested. Among his main projects for combatting organized crime are the new National Gendarmerie and the national prevention program to decrease violence and crime. However, having studied briefly at the results of these mega-projects, it seems that they have left much to desire; they can be said to have collapsed and the main objectives of the strategy of Peña Nieto (e.g. reducing violent crime) remain far from achieved. I believe that because of this, one can argue that he wants to profile himself as not a ‘war-president’ (like Calderón) but rather, one that focuses on the economy and other reforms.

With his discourse, Calderón emphasizes the importance of public security issues much more than Peña. He also makes more use of the discursive ‘Us’ and ‘Them’, which I mean he does in order to shape polarize public opinion to support his tough actions on organized crime.
When speaking about the development of the country, Peña is also significantly more positive than Calderón. Where Calderón speaks of “difficult times”, Peña highlights the progress he means he is making for the country. To somewhat answer the study’s title; I would conclude that both the discourse of security as well as the concrete security strategy of Peña Nieto is indeed different than that of Calderón. However, although Peña Nieto can be said to represent a new course when it comes to security policy, it can also be argued that this new strategy has collapsed and that he in his discourse is oblivious to the violent consequences of this failure.

4. Concluding notes and proposals for future research

Having done the analysis, we can conclude that there are several significant differences between the two Presidents, and that there are a few interesting points in our results.

One of the most significant differences in found in the character of the speeches; where Calderón speaks of “difficult times” (something negative) and the necessity of tough actions, Peña highlights the progress he means he is making for the country (something positive).

Peña Nieto may have seemed to stand for a change with the creation of the new gendarmerie and promises to reduce homicide and violent crime. Nevertheless, the new President and the new strategies have left much to desire. Several of the pillars of the new strategy (e.g. the National Prevention Program and the Gendarmerie) have collapsed and the main objectives of his government are still unachieved.

Likewise, we can conclude that both Presidents keep certain things out of their speeches. Of course, one cannot expect that everything should be brought up in these speeches that, after all, are not too extensive. However, when it becomes obvious and globally recognized that state authorities in Mexico are systematically involved in human rights abuses, I argue that more discussion of these issues is needed. Critically examining these presidential speeches is important since these, naturally, are often given much more media space than the voices critical of the official discourse, such as human rights organizations or different social groups.
Although issues such as human rights abuses by authorities are mentioned, not much weight is put on these issues and they are, it seems, hastily forgotten in order to give place to other issues that get much more attention in these six speeches. I see this highlighting of this disequilibrium as one of the most ‘critical’ aspects of my study. As mentioned, a critical discourse analysis is not meant to be politically neutral but rather something that points to existing injustices that prevent social change. I hope to have contributed to a better understanding of the ruling discourse and how this can be critically analysed.

Having finalized this study, I have also noted some possible research ideas for future research. For example, one could do a new discourse analysis (critical or not) in the following years or after the end of the Peña Nieto presidency. Naturally, analysing the following President-elect in 2018 would also be interesting. With other ontological views than mine, it could also be interesting to do a more quantitative content analysis of presidential speeches in Mexico.

Moreover, it might be interesting to examine if my study’s results are found also in other materials. As I have only studied six mensajes a la Nación, which may differ significantly from other speeches or interviews, perhaps other tendencies could be revealed with another material.

Looking at cases other than the Mexican one could also be interesting for future research. By conducting similar studies on other contexts of violence and distrust, the knowledge on how the official discourse can be used in these would grow. Results from these studies could then be compared to mine to further deepen this discussion.
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