



**From guerrilla insurgency to movement-party: A territorial analysis of armed
group transition in Colombia.**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the role that ‘territory’ has played in the origins, negotiation, and implementation of Colombia’s 2016 peace agreement. It centres on the experiences of members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrilla group and argues that the different and sometimes contradictory meanings which FARC, government and civil society actors inscribed into the concept ‘territorial peace’ continue to shape the dynamics of political relationships at the local level.

The thesis is situated within and against the ‘local turn’ and the more recent ‘spatial turn’ in peace studies. It draws together Latin American geographical perspectives with contemporary insights from studies of Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programmes, a well-established cornerstone of international peace agreements. I argue that the Colombian peace process provides an opportune moment to advance DDR research, and that far from a smooth transition from combatant to civilian or from armed group to political party, the FARC are now best understood as a “movement-party” which strategically combine electoral and contentious practices as they (re)territorialise. This framing recognises the limitations of an exclusive focus on elections, the express aspirations of FARC members and the fuzzy boundaries between movements and parties in Colombia, Latin America and beyond.

Analysis draws on an extensive literature review on Colombia’s conflict with first-hand data collected during 9 months of fieldwork. I focused on two case studies: Agua Bonita, one of the transitional camps established for the FARC to disarm, situated in a rural, conflict-affected region, and Cali, a major city where many FARC members have migrated and where they were also active in clandestine form. Carrying out research across these sites allowed me to engage with urgent gaps in DDR research and draw important methodological, theoretical and policy insights.

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GLOSSARY AND ACRONYMS

ACCU: Peasant Self-Defense Forces of Cordoba and Urabá – a paramilitary group (*Autodefensas Campesinas de Córdoba y Urabá*).

ARN: Agency for Reincorporation and Normalization (*Agencia para la Reincorporación y la Normalización*).

ART: Agencia for Territorial Renovation (*Agencia de Renovación del Territorio*)

Asociación Mejorando Vidas: Improving Lives Association – a grassroots organisation located in the barrio Charco Azul, Cali.

AUC: United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*).

Baldíos: Lands owned by the Colombian state.

Barras bravas: A group of organised football supporters.

Barrio: A district or neighbourhood of a city.

Barrismo social: A term to describe the transformation of *barras bravas* away from violence and towards positive social objectives.

Buen Vivir: A term loosely translatable as ‘good living’, rooted in the Quechua concept of *sumak kawsay*, to describe a way of organising which emphasises community and ecological sustainability.

Caleño: A colloquial term to describe someone who is native to Cali.

Campesino: Someone who is native to the countryside, sometimes translated as farmer.

Centro Democrático: Democratic Centre – a political party established by former President Uribe in 2013.

CDR: Departmental Reincorporation Council – a committee established by the 2016 peace agreement to oversee the reincorporation process across each department where ZVTNs are situated (*Consejo Departamental de Reincorporación*).

CNR: National Reincorporation Council – a committee established by the 2016 peace agreement to oversee the reincorporation process at the national level (*Consejo Nacional de Reincorporación*).

Comuna: (1) Administrative divisions of a city / (2) The term employed within FARC party statutes to refer to ‘cells’ after its transition to party.

Convergencia Humana: A coalition of parties which took part in the 2019 local elections in Cali.

COOMBUVIPAC: Multi-active Cooperative for the Buen Vivir and Peace of Caquetá – a cooperative established by the FARC in Agua Bonita (*Cooperativa Multiactiva para el Buen Vivir y la Paz del Caquetá*).

CRIC: Regional Indigenous Council of the Cauca (*Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca*).

DDR: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration.

ECOMUN: A national FARC-run cooperative established through the peace agreement (*Economías Sociales del Común*).

ELN: National Liberation Army - a guerilla group (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*).

ETCR: Territorial Space of Training and Reincorporation (*Espacio Territorial de Capacitación y Reincorporación*).

FARC: Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia).

Fariano: A member of the FARC.

Guerillero: A member of any guerilla organisation.

JAC: Community Action Board (*Juntas de Acción Comunal*).

JAL: Local Action Board (*Junta de Acción Local*).

JUCO: Communist Youth (*Juventud Comunista*)

La Violencia: A period of conflict in Colombia’s history (1948-58).

Ladera: Literally ‘hillside’ - used to describe the western neighbourhoods of Cali.

Latifundio: Large estate of land.

Minga: Translatable as ‘collective work’, used to describe indigenous protest marches and occupations.

MB: Bolivarian Movement for a New Colombia – clandestine organisation established by the FARC in 1997 (*Movimiento Bolivariano por una Nueva Colombia*).

MRD: Departmental Reincorporation Roundtable – a voluntary partnership established to oversee the reincorporation process in Valle del Cauca (Mesa de Reincorporación Departamental).

NAR: New Area of Reincorporation (*Nueva Area de Reincorporación*).

Pandilla: Urban gang, usually associated with drug trafficking.

PATR: Action Plans for Regional Transformation (Planes de Acción para la Transformación Regional, PATR) –

PCC: Colombian Communist Party (*Partido Comunista Colombiano*)

PCCC: Clandestine Colombian Communist Party (*Partido Comunista Clandestino Colombiano*)

PDET: Development Programmes with a Territorial Focus (*Programas de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial*).

PNIS: Comprehensive National Plan for the Substitution of Crops for Illicit Use (*Programa Nacional Integral de Sustitución de Cultivos de Uso Ilícito*)

Polo Democrático Alternativo: Alternative Democratic Pole - a political party.

POT: Territorial Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial (*Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial*)

PPT: Temporary Pre-grouping Points (*Puntos de Preagrupamiento Temporal*)

PTN: Punto de Transición y Normalización

Reincorporado: An individual who is undergoing the reincorporation process.

UP: Patriotic Union (*Union Patriótica*) – a political party established during the 1980s peace process between the FARC and President Betancur's administration.

Vereda: The smallest administrative division in rural Colombia.

ZVTN: Rural Transitory Zones of Normalization (*Zonas Veredales Transitorias de Normalización*).

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

“Colombia is a country of countries.”

Oscar, Agency for Reincorporation and Normalization (ARN), 15 May 2019.

“I don’t think anyone knows what peace is, nor the formula for making peace.”

Former FARC guerilla member, Cali, 9 August 2018.

Colombia is unique in many respects. It has more biodiversity for its size than any country in the world, and is the only country in Latin America to share a coast along the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. It is also home to people of many cultures and ethnicities which, as one interview explained, is a source of pride for many who live there: “we’re a nation despite the fact that we’re totally diverse.”¹ But what Garcia-Villegas et al., (2016: p.10) calls the Colombian Paradox refers to another, more troubling aspect of the country’s singularity with respect to its Latin American neighbours: the endurance of endemic violence and democratic stability through time, and entrenched conflict in some regions compared with relative peace in others.

The Colombian Paradox provides the backdrop for the idea of ‘territorial peace’ as advanced during negotiations between the Colombian national government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - FARC*) guerrilla group. The concept promised to truly overcome the conflict by redressing its structural causes through state investment in conflict-affected regions, strengthening democratic participation and supporting the FARC’s transition to “valid actor inside the democracy.”² The peace process was the most comprehensive in Colombia’s history, received widespread international attention (winning former President Santos the Nobel Peace Prize) and, after signatories reached an agreement in June 2016, ostensibly ended the modern world’s longest armed insurgency. But Colombian society rejected the deal in a national referendum, while enduring violence and political polarization have made visible clear differences about the meaning of ‘territorial peace’ in practice, raising important questions about the extent of its transformative potential.

¹ Interview with Julian, Geography Professor, 22 Aug 2019.

² Centro de Memoria Histórica, 2016., 12 November 2016., ‘Acuerdo Final Para la Terminación del Conflicto y La Construcción de una Paz estable y duradera’. Page 7. Available from: <http://www.centrodehistoriahistorica.gov.co/descargas/finAcuerdoPazAgosto2016/12-11-2016-Nuevo-Acuerdo-Final.pdf> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

The debates stimulated by Colombia's 2016 peace agreement are of critical value to peace and conflict research, and perhaps more than any other contemporary conflict setting, geographers like myself are well-placed to make a meaningful contribution. Situating the current moment within a historical perspective and drawing on immersive multi-methods fieldwork, this thesis explores the role which 'territory' has played throughout Colombia's conflict and in the negotiation and implementation of the 2016 peace agreement. Rather than offer a full analysis of the multiple components to the territorial peace agenda (a task beyond the scope of a single PhD), my analysis centres squarely on the FARC's transition from armed group to non-violent political actor, reimagining them as a 'movement-party' employing a combination of collective participatory practices. In doing so, the aim is to draw insights for Colombia's conflict, for peace and conflict research, for the design, implementation and analysis of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programmes and for other researchers interested in applying qualitative and spatial methods to the study of peace processes.

1.1. Research Questions

In this thesis I ask a number of interlinking research questions:

RQ1. What is the significance of territory in Colombia's conflict and in the 2016 peace agreement?

- 1a) Why does territory matter in Colombia's conflict?
- 1b) What ideas did FARC, government and civil society participants use to inform the concept of 'territorial peace'?

1a). This thesis first seeks to understand why Colombia's conflict has endured through time and how it has been manifested differently across space. An in-depth interrogation of the dynamics of Colombia's conflict reveals multiple overlapping explanations, including the differentiated presence (and forms of presence) of the state; a closed political system which has violently repressed and delegitimated alternative political projects, and the FARC's adaptability and strategic vacillation between territorial expansion and consolidation. It further finds that multiple factors, particularly the boom in narco-trafficking, led to a shift away from a conflict based on ideological disagreements, to one which came to be increasingly rooted in violent competition for territorial control among fragmented state and non-state actors. Yet, rather than analyse Colombia as a unique and isolated case, analysis shows how the conflict must be understood with reference to

broader geopolitical dynamics. Just as the government and the FARC understood and sustained their antagonism against the backdrop of the Cold War and later, the War on Terror; communities and social movements have connected to wider Latin American resistance to neoliberal economic policies and militarization, wherein ‘territory’ has surfaced as a core discursive tool to frame their struggles for self-determination and peace.

1b). The thesis explores the emergence of the concept ‘territorial peace’ through detailed analysis of the negotiation period. Despite the international focus on Colombia as a conflict-torn country and on its most recent attempt at transcending it, territorial peace has so far inspired only a limited body of geographical scholarship. Existing research notes that the concept is ‘fuzzy’ and polysemic (Cairo and Rios, 2018), was intended to draw negotiators to the table, encapsulate the need to strengthen state-citizen relations in conflict-affected communities, and unify all of society in a concerted effort. However, this participatory emphasis – and the decision to put the deal to a referendum - allowed very different perspectives to solidify about what peace would mean for the future of Colombia, ranging from “a more radical and comprehensive democracy” to “handing over the country” to the FARC (Cairo and Rios, 2018; 2019). By tracing the main events of the negotiation period and the concepts and ideas which signatories used to inform their positions, I set the stage for analysing the implementation period.

RQ2. What role did the 2016 peace agreement envisage for the FARC and how does this (mis)align with members’ aspirations and practices in the post-agreement period?

- 2a) What is ‘community reincorporation’ and what are the dynamics of its implementation?
- 2b) How did different actors adapt the ‘community reincorporation’ approach to the urban context?
- 2c) What role are formerly non-combatant/ clandestine members playing in the FARC’s reincorporation?

Answering RQ1 is necessary to understand principle conflict drivers and the processual development of the territorial peace model (including its broader focus on rural development and democratisation), but the precise scope of this thesis is specifically limited to the (mis)alignments between the imagined role for, and lived experience of, FARC members in the post-agreement period. The guerrilla’s lead negotiators vehemently rejected standard Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) terminology: for them, peace could not mean demobilization, but a mobilization into politics and a continuation of their revolutionary struggle.

As such, the framework for their ‘reincorporation’ established their commitment to “close the chapter on the internal conflict, become a valid actor within the democracy and contribute to peaceful coexistence”³, allowing for an initial process of disarmament and communal living in specially constructed camps as they begin this process. The agreement further provides for the FARC’s transition to party *or* political movement; an ambiguity echoing leadership’s dual aspirations to intercede in national legislative politics while simultaneously positioning themselves alongside grassroots social movements. This was differently expressed by their Chief Negotiator, Iván Márquez, who envisaged the FARC as “a new territorial power ...[and]... a *party-movement* of intertwining struggles.”⁴ But peace agreements – and in particular their DDR provisions – continue to prioritise elections over and above other forms of participatory actions. This is one of the most significant unchallenged assumption within the dominant liberal peacebuilding approach (Greener, 2011), disregarding the potential for elections to be generative of conflict, the diverse modalities of participation which ex-combatants actually (or aspire to) utilise, and the increasingly fuzzy boundaries between parties and movements in Latin America and beyond.

(2a). The 2016 agreement left additional, important questions regarding the FARC’s transition to politics unresolved. For the rank-and-file, the agreement provided for an extended cantonment period whereby combatants would disarm and begin reincorporation in 26 transitional camps, situated primarily in the guerrilla’s rural regions of influence. When it became clear that many members wanted to continue communal living, FARC and government jointly developed a Community Reincorporation model, transforming these camps into Territorial Spaces of Reincorporation and Training (*Espacios Territoriales de Capacitación y Reincorporación* - ETCRs) and providing for two-years of security, food and support in establishing collective livelihood projects. This model broke with conventional DDR policy wherein armed groups demobilize and ex-combatants are encouraged to “disappear” altogether (Daly, 2011: p.282) – and thus provides an opportune case to understand the opportunities and pitfalls that derive from a collective DDR process.

(2b). Since FARC were granted freedom of movement in July 2017, many members decided to leave the ETCRs in search of alternative livelihood and other opportunities elsewhere, with a significant number migrating to cities. This atomisation and the resultant “new geography of

³ Ibid. Page 8.

⁴ Resumen Latinoamericano, 28 August 2017. ‘Colombia. Iván Márquez: «Seremos la alternativa de un nuevo poder territorial» Resumen Latinoamericano [online] 28 August 2019.’ Available from: <https://www.resumenlatinoamericano.org/2017/08/28/colombia-iván-marquez-seremos-la-alternativa-de-un-nuevo-poder-territorial> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

reincorporation” has been described as the most significant hurdle for the peace deal.⁵ Yet, as Stienen (2020: p.292) notes, there is hardly any research on “whether and how the tensions, contradictions and paradoxes” inherent in ‘territorial peace’ apply to urban contexts. Moreover, prior research on the FARC has predominantly centred on conflict regions, with less attention to places where they carried out only “sporadic actions” (Arjona, 2016: p.23), leading Zambaro Quintero (2018: p.466) to conclude that their capacity to intercede in the political arena is essentially unknown in such spaces.

(2c). The failure of prior peace agreements has stemmed, in part, from a lack of information about the guerrilla’s internal structures (Heinz, 1989: p.255). Contrary to popular imagination, the FARC have never been an exclusively rural phenomenon, but have built alliances with urban social and political movements and established their own clandestine structures across many cities. However, the majority of this membership are not engaging with reincorporation, with research speculating this is in order not to “lose their clandestinity”.⁶ Still, as later chapters make clear, said membership are playing a central role in post-agreement politics, and possess myriad capacities (and vulnerabilities) which the 2016 agreement - and DDR research/policy more generally – overlooks.

1.2. Objectives and Contribution

Objectives

1. Analyse the origins and negotiation of territorial peace (RQ1).
2. Collect primary and secondary data on the implementation of reincorporation (RQ2).
3. Draw insights of specific relevance to Colombia.
4. Draw insights for peace research.
5. Provide insights for the design, implementation and analysis of DDR programmes.
6. Contribute methodological insights for the study of peace processes.

3. Draw insights of specific relevance to Colombia.

The Colombian armed conflict is multi-causal, multi-actor and multi-scalar (González, 2014) – and understanding the achievements and shortcomings of the 2016 agreement will be crucial to ensuring that it is one day overcome. According to a recent study, between 1958-2013, 220,000

⁵ Semana, 29 June 2019, ‘La Farc llegó para quedarse’. <https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/Iván-duque-le-titulara-tierras-a-los-excombatientes-de-la-farc-en-su-Reincorporación/621498/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

⁶ Fundación ideas para la paz. April 2018. ‘Trayectorias y dinámicas territoriales de las disidencias de las FARC’. Page 22. Available from: http://ideaspaz.org/media/website/FIP_Disidencias_Final.pdf [last accessed 5 May 2021].

people were killed including 177,307 civilians and 40,787 combatants, and between 1985-2012, five million civilians were displaced, creating the world's second-largest population of internally displaced people.⁷ Evidence indicates that the FARC were responsible for a notable proportion of the massacres, kidnappings, and illegal recruitment of minors, among other conflict harms during this period, and their leadership's decision to renounce armed conflict is clearly a welcome change.⁸ So too is the recognition – provoked by negotiations if not delivered upon - that to truly transcend the conflict will require structural transformation. But enduring political polarization and violence are indicative of structural challenges, particularly as multiple armed actors compete for territorial control including guerrilla, paramilitaries, international drug cartels and FARC dissidents. It is hoped that this study will provide insights pertinent for future peace deals, particularly as such analysis is of most value in the years immediately following an agreement (Garcia-Villegas et al., 2016: p.10).

Turning to the FARC, studies of previous (failed) peace processes have argued that the best guarantor of peace will be their incorporation into local governance structures (Chernick, 1999: p.188). But the guerrilla's presence has been highly differentiated, and the legacies of war vary significantly from region to region, or indeed from village to village (Arjona, 2016). Moreover, as later chapters will develop, the rejection of DDR terminology in favour of a collective, community-centred approach may disguise a continuing focus on formal political practices (elections), without sufficient consideration of the individual desires of members, or on their collective (contentious) socio-political aspirations. Understanding these discrepancies through close, concerted research is important not only for the guerrilla, but for peace itself, as Ugarizza and Quishpe (2019: p.24) convincingly assert:

The primary challenge ... isn't necessarily that the new FARC party survives through time: at heart, it's about ex-combatants being able to join the Colombian political debate, individually or collectively and in formal participation scenarios (such as the Congress of the Republic or electoral dynamics) and non-formal (such as the creation of associations, protest and social mobilization, among others).

4. Draw insights for peace research.

⁷ Historical Memory Group (2013). "Enough Already!" Colombia: Memories of War and Dignity (PDF) (in Spanish). The National Center for Historical Memory (NCHM). Available from: <http://centrodehistoriamemoria.gov.co/descargas/informes2016/basta-ya-ingles/BASTA-YA-ingles.pdf> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

⁸ Verdad Abierta, 17 Septiembre 2016, 'Así llegaron las Farc a su última conferencia guerrillera'. Available from: <https://verdadabierta.com/asi-llegan-las-farc-a-su-ultima-conferencia-guerrillera/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

This study is situated within and against both the ‘local turn’ and the nascent ‘spatial turn’ in peace studies. As the international peace and development agendas became more closely entangled, what was once a short-term ‘peace-making’ came to be replaced by a longer-term ‘peacebuilding’ approach, such that interventions were tasked not only with ending violence (negative peace) but achieving structural transformations and redressing conflict drivers (positive peace) – a shift clearly reflected in the Colombian case. But civil conflict continues to be a major global problem: in 2016, more countries were experiencing violent conflict than at any time in the previous 30 years.⁹ This demands re-interrogation of the core assumptions of said agreements, in particular the focus on economic growth and democratisation. In understanding the failures of prior processes, scholars from multiple disciplines have questioned the top-down nature of peace interventions and the need to consider local circumstances, as well as the role of communities and civil society in shaping outcomes on the ground (Autesserre, 2010; Da Costa & Karlsrud, 2012; Hancock & Mitchell, 2018; Mac Ginty, 2008). However, scholars call for more nuanced approaches with grapple with the heterogeneity of the ‘local’, the way local dynamics intersect with other scales, and the need to incorporate non-Western perspectives (Bush and Duggan 2014; Diehl, 2016).

This study advances peace studies through incorporating Latin American perspectives on territory. Peace studies has undergone a ‘spatial turn’ in recent years, with geographers highlighting the intertwining of violence and non-violence in *space* (Koopman, 2019) offering new definitions of peace as “societies claiming and designing...*places* jointly and in shared way” (Björkdahl and Kappler, 2017: p.144), and exploring how peace operates across different *scales* (Björkdahl & Buckley-Ziste, 2016). There is more which a geographical perspective can offer, but as has been recently noted, the concept ‘territory’ has been somewhat lacking in this scholarship to date (Diaz et al., 2021). Seeking to fill this gap, I draw from Latin American perspectives on how movements and communities resist state and non-state domination by producing their own territories through the daily reconfiguration of social relations (Fernandes, 2005; Agnew and Oslender, 2010; Vela-Almeida, 2020). I draw on Stienen’s (2020: p.301) approach to territorial peace as, firstly a “political project” of either the state or marginalized actors and secondly, as a form of social dispute between actors which generates an “ongoing and unpredictable” process of territorialisation. I then extend Stienen’s approach by incorporating the armed group (in this case the FARC) as a distinct actor

⁹ World Bank. 2018. Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict. Executive Summary. iii. Available from: <https://olc.worldbank.org/system/files/Pathways%20for%20Peace%20Executive%20Summary.pdf> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

with its own political project yet which interacts with both state and non-state actors, leading me to a review of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration literature.

5. Offer insights for the design, implementation and analysis of DDR programmes.

Close analysis of the FARC's transition to politics represents a major opportunity to contribute to the design, implementation and analysis of DDR. Over the last 30 years, DDR has become a cornerstone of international peace interventions, but the underlying rationale has shifted substantially over that time. First-generation DDR envisaged ex-combatants as potential threats to peace, despite scholars calling for them to be recognised as 'moral agents' with the capacity to make positive contributions (McEvoy and Shirlow, 2009). Then, in seeking to account for prior failures, the UN's first International DDR Standards (IDDRS), released in 2006, re-framed DDR as a process which contributes to long-term transformation and accounts for community-combatant relationships. However, 'political reintegration' in particular, is poorly understood and unduly prioritises formal as opposed to informal participatory practices (Quishpe, 2017). Other major gaps include the dynamics of implementing DDR as a collective process, the specific complications inherent to urban DDR, and the relationship between armed group organisational structure and outcomes. The most recent UN International DDR Standards (2019) emphasise flexibility, sensitivity to local political dynamics and more effective collaboration across the research-policy-practice nexus – and research into the FARC provides an opportune moment to answer that call.

This thesis re-imagines a (former) armed group as a 'movement-party' which, in the wake of a peace agreement, strategically and collectively combines a range of participatory practices in pursuit of (re)territorialisation. The movement-party concept surfaced in non-conflict contexts to describe organisations whose structure and practices cannot be reduced to either party or movement, yet who possess clear identifiable characteristics of both (della Porta et al. 2017). Employing this framing within the context of DDR moves beyond an exclusive focus on elections, captures the diversity of practices which former combatants employ (or seek to employ), and the realities of the political context characterised by movement-party alliances and fuzzy organisational boundaries. Under this approach, reintegration (the final stage of DDR) is not a distinct set of (economic, social and political) mechanisms, but the experiences of members of the movement-party as they interact with state and non-state actors on the ground, and the resultant process(es) of de- and re-territorialisation. By applying this framework to the Colombian context, I further

address three concrete gaps in DDR research: whereby ‘community reincorporation’ illuminates the opportunities and pitfalls of DDR as a collective process (RQ2a); where the migration of FARC members to cities provides insight into urban DDR (RQ2b) and where the FARC’s formerly clandestine structures’ participation in post-agreement politics provides insight into armed group structural variation and DDR (RQ2c).

7. Contribute methodological insights for the study of peace processes.

This thesis is the culmination of close to four years of work and draws on first-hand data collected during nine months of ethnographically inspired fieldwork (2018-2019). As Chapter 3 explores, I employed a combination of qualitative methods across two primary case sites: (1) Agua Bonita, an ETCR in the department of Caquetá and (2) Cali, Colombia’s third-largest city by population, where I directly engaged with FARC members; civil society organisations; national, departmental and municipal government officials; the United Nations monitoring team; local academics and community residents. In order to build a complete picture, I supplemented this with an extensive literature review on the history of Colombia’s conflict and the negotiation period, combining academic and ‘grey literature’ including online media publications, social media posts and international monitoring reports on the implementation process.

Researching conflict and peace can be challenging. The normal ethical and other difficulties familiar to social scientists are often heightened, and emotional and psychological challenges can become apparent for both researcher and participant. Yet, a literature review reveals many more publications on the methodological complexities of conflict as opposed to ‘post-conflict’ settings. While many of the concerns overlap, there are important idiosyncrasies characteristic of the early years of implementation of a peace agreement which warrant precise attention, both from the perspective of individual researchers and the wider academic community. This is particularly the case when engaging closely with former combatants who have experienced significant traumas, and whose practices straddle electoral and contentious repertoires of action. By providing a frank account of the research process including the many setbacks I faced, my aim is to provide critical insights for future studies of peace processes.

1.3. Thesis Structure

TABLE 1: THESIS CHAPTERS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Chapter	Content	
2	Theoretical-Conceptual Framework	
3	Methodology	
4	RQ1. What is the significance of territory in Colombia's conflict and in the 2016 peace agreement?	1a). Why does territory matter in Colombia's conflict?
5		1b) What ideas did FARC, government and civil society participants use to inform the concept of 'territorial peace'?
6	RQ2. What role did the 2016 peace agreement envisage for the FARC and how does this (mis)align with members' aspirations and practices in the post-agreement period?	2a) What is community reincorporation, and what are the dynamics of its implementation?
7		2b) How did different actors adapt the 'community reincorporation' approach to the urban context?
8		2c) What role are formerly non-combatant/clandestine members playing in the FARC's reincorporation?
9	Conclusion	

Following this introduction, the rest of the thesis is comprised of eight chapters (see Table 1). **Chapter 2** provides more detail on the concrete gaps in peace research to which the study contributes. It does so by firstly outlining both the local turn and the spatial turn in peace studies and fundamentally argues for concerted engagement with territory in this work. It then develops the movement-party framing and explains its applicability for understanding multiple gaps in DDR research. **Chapter 3** then describes the project's methodological approach, beginning with a chronology of fieldwork including how objectives and theoretical-conceptual underpinnings co-evolved with data collection, before providing a detailed explanation of the specific methods employed and the ethical challenges that arose throughout and after fieldwork.

Chapter 4 is the first of two contextual chapters and examines and critiques alternate explanations for the conflict. These include state abandon in the rural periphery, political repression, and the FARC's capacity to adapt to changing circumstances and maintain internal cohesion through a military structure, distinctive social identity and ideology. Major events are examined first from the perspective of Caquetá, a region of particular historical significance for the FARC, and then from Cali, a major city in the Valle del Cauca department which became known as one of the epicentres of regional mobilizations for peace. **Chapter 5** then delves into the peace negotiations between the Santos government and the FARC. Here I explore how government negotiators employed 'territorial peace' in recognition of past state failures, emphasising a comprehensive, differentiated, participatory approach, while FARC and civil society inscribed more plural understandings into the concept. The chapter traces major events during the process including political mobilizations, the FARC's first dissident structures, and culminates in the 2016 referendum which gave a surprising victory for 'No' and set the stage for ongoing political polarization in the post-agreement period.

Chapters 6-8 comprise the thesis' main empirical chapters. **Chapter 6** centres on Agua Bonita, one of the transitional camps established for the FARC to disarm and begin the reincorporation process. It begins with the immediate aftermath of the referendum, the FARC's arrival and the site's redesignation as a Territorial Space of Training and Reincorporation. The chapter then analyses the dynamics of community reincorporation, wherein economic, social and political logics became enmeshed as residents pursued closer territorial integration, sometimes in ways that contravened the precise terms of the peace agreement and instead appealed to their daily realities. Moving from Agua Bonita to Cali, **Chapter 7** explores how FARC, government and civil society actors co-produced an 'urban reincorporation' framework in the city. Here I begin by outlining Cali's unique socio-political and geographical positioning, the municipal government's 'post-conflict' preparedness initiatives, and show how some FARC carried forward expectations of collective support while the majority found themselves individualised as they navigated the unfamiliar dynamics of the city. **Chapter 8** then centres on the role of the FARC's clandestine structures in urban politics, beginning with an exploration of the distinct internal dynamics of said structures. I evidence how national leadership saw Cali as a 'pilot city', steering local efforts towards the 2019 municipal election campaign and developing a multi-scalar strategy to securing support. Lastly, **Chapter 9** concludes the thesis, offering an overview of the empirical findings, a review of the main theoretical, policy and methodological contributions, and an outline of some avenues for future research.

CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

“It seems really interesting to me to see how in the midst of so much difficulty, political action is materializing, through civil forms of struggle, social forms of struggle. That’s a really important part of how, despite everything, spaces are being generated.”

Romeo, Geography Professor, Cali, 2 August 2019.

This chapter provides the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the thesis and outlines the concrete gaps in understanding to which it contributes. The main argument is that the concept of territory offers much potential to provide greater insight into the power dynamics at play within peace processes. The chapter then turns to Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and proposes a ‘movement-party’ framing for capturing how members of a former armed group collectively pursue a combination of participatory practices in the wake of a peace agreement.

The chapter is structured as follows. **Section 2.1.** introduces both the ‘local turn’ and the ‘spatial turn’ in peace studies. I begin by outlining the shift in international peace discourse from ‘peace-making’, which centred on ending violence, to a more comprehensive ‘peacebuilding’ which accounted for structural conflict drivers and redresses them through a core set of economic and democratic principles. I then introduce the ‘local turn’, a multi-disciplinary body of research which rejects this hegemonic ‘liberal peace’ and instead positions communities as decisive actors in peace processes. I argue that, while providing important insights, this local turn demands more nuanced consideration of power to understand the complex dynamics of modern conflicts and the fraught implementation of peace processes. I then review the recent ‘spatial turn’ in peace research wherein geographical concepts (space, place and scale) have been employed to provide new conceptualisations of peace, revealing it to be an “uneven socio-spatial process” (Koopman, 2020), yet note the absence of engagement with territory in this work and, drawing on Latin American perspectives, point to its analytical value for elucidating “how peace territorialises in specific geographies” (Barrera et al., upcoming).

Because my interest centres on the role of armed groups in peace process, **Section 2.2.** reviews DDR research and offers a framework for re-thinking armed groups as ‘movement-parties’ and, therefore, reintegration in terms of interlocking processes of de- and re-territorialisation. To achieve this, I first show that reintegrating ex-combatants into civilian life has always been a

cornerstone of peace interventions, but that once focused on ending the threat they posed, the logic shifted in line with the international peace, security and development agendas, with ex-combatants re-imagined as active agents with the potential to contribute to peace. However, I argue that current conceptualisations of DDR as a process involving distinct social, economic and political components, and the related emphasis on electoral participation within political reintegration, fails to consider the potentially conflictive nature of elections, the diverse, informal and contentious participatory practices which ex-combatants actually utilise, and the increasingly messy boundaries between parties and social movements characteristic of the political arena. I suggest that a ‘movement-party’ framing more accurately captures this reality before applying it to three additional concrete gaps in DDR research. Finally, **Section 2.3.** considers some of the potential limitations to the framework, including whether a territorial focus sufficiently accounts for multi-scalar dynamics and the escalating impact of digital information and communication technologies on peace processes, as well as whether the ‘movement-party’ framing captures the full range of practices which (former) members of armed groups employ.

2.1. What (and where) is peace?

This section introduces burgeoning multi-disciplinary critiques to the hegemonic ‘liberal peace’ encapsulated within the ‘local turn’, and the additional nuance required to advance this body of work (2.1.1). It then reviews the ‘spatial turn’ in peace studies, notes the limited engagement with territory alongside other core geographical concepts, and argues that territory is an illuminating concept through which to analyse the socio-spatial dynamics of peace (2.1.2).

2.1.1. The Local Turn

“...there is no single template when it comes to post-conflict peacebuilding efforts.”

Greener (2011, p.365).

FIGURE 1: INTERPRETATIONS OF PEACE OFFERED BY RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

- “...disarming the FARC. Full stop.”
- “...not just stopping the shooting, but social wellbeing.”
- “...fundamentally political power.”
- “...a process of internal transformation.”

- “...eliminating those invisible barriers in society”
- “...everyone having the same rights and obligations.”
- “... a state of harmony that can only arise when societal inequalities are overcome”
- “... for *campesinos*, the land”
- “... a city that can behave itself, that doesn’t need to kill itself, where you can walk quietly through the streets without fear.”
- “...a more inclusive Colombia.”

At the end of the Cold War, the United Nations’ (UN) attention shifted from conflicts between states to intrastate conflicts, resulting in a gradual strategic evolution from ‘keeping peace’ to ‘building peace’ (Mohammed, 2005). The former prioritised ending violence through the presence of light troops, monitoring a truce or preventing cross-border terrorist actions, but with the advent of peacebuilding, the mandate grew to incorporate new responsibilities including the protection of human rights, land reform and rebuilding the state (Ibid: p.810). UN interventions now required a combination of agencies and expertise to understand the structural drivers of conflict such as maldistribution of land and resources, internal displacement and political exclusions: a complex set of challenges collectively necessitating an “integrated response on a large scale” (Clover, 2004: p.72). In theoretical terms, this shift from peacekeeping to peacebuilding echoed Galtung’s (1969) distinction between ‘negative peace’ - the absence of physical violence - and ‘positive peace’ - the absence of structural violence¹⁰ - and as Figure 1 indicates, is more aligned to people’s expansive and abstract interpretations of peace, which typically extend well beyond the end to overt hostilities.

The ‘local turn’ in peace studies criticises the UN’s ‘liberal’ peacebuilding approach, in particular what scholars view as an unquestioning focus on democratisation and economic development as the route to a lasting peace (Richmond, 2006; Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013). Leonardsson & Rudd (2015) trace the origins of the local turn to Lederach’s (1997) idea of ‘peace from below’, wherein, peace is “rooted in the local people and their culture” (p.8). This people-centred perspective reflects clear evidence that communities play an active role in minimising the harmful impact of civil conflict prior to international involvement and beyond the purview of the state, employing diverse non-violent strategies to resist domination by non-state actors including (but not limited to) the construction of informal peace agreements (Arjona, 2016; Kaplan, 2017;

¹⁰ Later, Galtung (1996) added ‘cultural violence’ to refer to the ideas used to legitimise direct and structural violence, thereby arguing that a truly ‘positive’ peace must be free of all three kinds of violence.

Hallward et al., 2019). Overall, the ‘local turn’ points to the fact that internal conflict affects societies in a heterogeneous manner both within and across states, and thus rejects the one-size-fits-all approach of peacebuilding interventions (Greener, 2011).

The local turn has contributed much to peace theory and practice, as most recently evidenced by the UN’s embrace of a ‘sustaining peace’ model wherein lasting peace must ‘emerge from within’ (de Coning, 2016), but still more nuance is necessary to advance the theory beyond a simplistic critique of the liberal peace. Firstly, as Bräuchler and Naucke (2017: p.410) have argued, there is a tendency to treat ‘the local’ as “a stereotypically idealised and homogenised construction”, without sufficient attention to inequalities, exclusions and power struggles. There is a related risk that all local actors are unquestioningly treated as legitimate community representatives, without acknowledging their ambivalent or potentially even detrimental impact on outcomes. As Donais, (2009: p.22) summarises, making these “naïve assumptions” about locals ‘knowing best’ is potentially just as dangerous as conferring authority on international actors. Secondly, and building on the above, by framing ‘the local’ in simplistic terms, local turn scholars potentially remain trapped within a straightforward dichotomy between imposition from above and resistance/emancipation from below (Paffenholz, 2015), without capturing how local actors may themselves be motivated by ostensibly ‘liberal’ ideas or, conversely, how the ‘international’ has evolved over time and across contexts (Debiel and Rinck, 2016). These theoretical limitations lead Leonardsson and Rudd (2015) to ask whether a ‘bottom-up’ framework truly offers an “alternative to” or simply an “alternative of” liberal peacebuilding.

Here I want to highlight two central tenets to advance the local turn, through “a more comprehensive set of theories, methodologies and fields of knowledge” (Debiel and Rinck; 2016: p14). Firstly, a rigorous conceptualisation of peace must reject Galtung’s (1969) negative/positive dichotomy, and instead embrace how conflict and peace intersect in space and across time. Scholars have noted that ‘negative peace’ does not provide the necessary tools to envisage when peace is achieved (Koopman, 2011), and that a complete ‘positive peace’ – i.e. the absence of all structural violence – is utopian and thus of little empirical value (Klem, 2018: p.235). Instead, multiple scholars have advanced relational perspectives which seek to capture how people experience peace and conflict in their daily lives (Flint, 2011; Brigg, 2018; Campbell et al., 2017; Maddison 2015; Guarrieri et al., 2017). These perspectives broadly envisage peace not as a measurable end-state, but as “a subjective abstraction that people long for”, the analytical value of which derives from how actors legitimate certain actions in the pursuit of peace, and thereby

awaken old tensions, generate new antagonisms or create opportunities for collaboration (Klem, 2018: p.235). Secondly, aligning with Bräuchler and Naucke's (2017) assertion that the local is inevitably bound up in culture and, returning to Figure 1, that people interpret peace with reference to culturally specific concepts. peace researchers must do more to incorporate non-Western perspectives (Diehl, 2016). In the Colombian case, this necessarily leads to the concept of 'territory' which, as the next section explores, has become a fundamental concept in framing how different actors have positioned themselves and advanced their goals throughout the conflict and in the pursuit of peace.

2.1.2. The Spatial Turn

In the last decade, geography has joined international relations, anthropology, and political science as among the core disciplines engaging with peace, giving rise to what Briggs and George (2020) call the 'spatial turn' in peace studies. This is not surprising: peace literature is replete with geographical terminology, if not always robustly defined: Lederach's concept of 'improbable dialogues' requires former enemies to "move across and beyond what's comfortable",¹¹ while Soderstrom et al. (2020) define a peaceful relation as when actors "accept that they share space or community with one another" (p.13). Geographers have thus provided more precise analysis of how peace is "shaped by the spaces in which it is made, as it too shapes those spaces" (Koopman, 2016), offering new definitions of peace as "societies claiming and designing...places jointly and in shared way" (Björkdahl and Kappler, 2017: p.144), and exploring how peace operates across different scales (Björkdahl & Buckley-Ziste, 2016). This work also focuses our attention to questions of power by examining community responses to government socio-spatial reconfiguration policies (Purdeková, 2017), further asking us to consider "what kind of peace and for whom that peace is created" (McConnell et al., 2014: p.29). This is a burgeoning agenda, but as Björkdahl & Buckley-Ziste (2016) note, geographical concepts have not been fully exploited in analysing either peace or conflict.

Even beyond the explicit territorial focus underlying Colombia's 2016 agreement, the concept of territory can help to elucidate a deeper understanding of peace. Recent years have seen a 'territorial turn' in Anglophone geographical scholarship (Offen, 2004; Bryan, 2012). Robert Sack's (1981; 1986) influential work adopts a state-centric view whereby territory represents controllable space

¹¹ Nahar and Nahar, 10 June 2019, From table to termites: A conversation with Mennonite peacebuilder John Paul Lederach. *Anabaptistworld*. Available from: <https://anabaptistworld.org/table-termites-conversation-mennonite-peacebuilder-john-paul-lederach/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

with clearly defined edges, and thus territorialisation denotes the strategic classification and exertion of control over that space. Elsewhere, theorists draw on Claude Raffestin's (1980: p.133) more informal, every-day and relational perspective wherein "space becomes territory when it emerges out of social interaction." Although these schools of thought are often treated in juxtaposition, Murphy (2012) notes that both fundamentally view territory as a product of social relations. Rather than relations, it is power which is central to different conceptions of territory, which as Haesbaert and Mason Deese (2020: p.365) note, is produced on a "broad continuum" between one power with greater "functional and/or repressive force" and another "symbolic and/or autonomist power." It is this careful treatment of power which makes territory a particularly valuable spatial concept for analysing peace processes.

Colombia's 'territorial peace' has provoked calls for territory to be incorporated as a core spatial concept in geographical peace research (see Diaz et. al., 2021), but there is more work required to incorporate the role and experiences of former combatants into a territorial framework. Stienen (2020: p.301) distinguishes between territorial peace as a "political project to be achieved" and as a social dispute between different actors and the resultant "ongoing and unpredictable process of territorialisation." The first considers how actors draw on the concept of territory, peace (or indeed territorial peace) to position themselves as political actors and advance their agenda, aligning with Klem's (2018) view of peace as a subjective aspiration. In Latin America, this necessarily requires us to contemplate the ways in which communities and movements imagine territory as a 'space of resistance' to universality and globalization,¹² and employ the term as an assertion of their ontological autonomy (Escobar, 2018: p.86). The second then focuses our attention on the power dynamics underlying real-world territorial organising, as communities and movements construct 'plural' or 'differentiated' territories through the daily reconfiguration of social relations (Agnew and Oslender, 2010; Mason-Deese et al., 2019; Vela-Almeida, 2020), insisting that the territory of the nation-state is "only one territory among many" (Ballvé, 2012: p.605). This is a valuable way of thinking about how state and non-state actors interact within the context of a peace process. However, Stienen (2020) does not consider the armed group as a third and fundamental actor within this social dispute: requiring understanding of evolution in the design of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programmes, now a recognised cornerstone of UN peacebuilding interventions.

¹² Posso, C. G., 8 October 2015, 'El territorio de la paz es Colombia y su gente', Revista Semillas. Available from: <https://www.semillas.org.co/es/el-territorio-de-la-paz-es-colombia-y-su-gente> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

2.2. Re-thinking DDR as (re)territorialisation.

This section re-imagines DDR as the process of de- and re-territorialisation triggered through an armed group's transition to non-violent politics. To build this framework I begin by outlining the evolution in the UN's approach to DDR, pointing to the misalignments between the different components of reintegration and especially critiquing current understandings of political reintegration (2.2.1). I then outline recent literature on 'movement-parties', a concept which describes organisations that do not neatly fit into pre-existing conceptual categories, and connect the emergence of said organisations to what Rossi (2017) has dubbed 'territorialisation of politics'. I then argue that a movement-party framing provides a solid basis for analysing how armed groups (re)territorialise in the wake of a peace agreement (2.2.2). Lastly, I apply this framework to three important gaps in DDR research which correspond to this thesis' main empirical chapters: collective DDR, urban DDR and the role of clandestine structures in DDR processes (2.2.3).

2.2.1. The Evolution of DDR

Since the Observer Group mission in Central America (1989-1992), the UN has supported DDR programmes in over 20 countries, and while the fundamental aim remains supporting combatants in transitioning to civilian life, the underlying rationale has shifted substantially in that time.¹³ First-generation DDR centred on ending the threat posed by armed groups, predicated on a view of ex-combatants as 'spoilers' of peace. The logic was economic: the 'youth bulge' hypothesis proposed that young men lacking meaningful livelihoods filled the ranks of armed groups (Sommers, 2011), while at conflict's end, the 'security risk' perspective presupposed that a sudden reduction in income would increase individual recidivism or even lead to collective re-mobilization (Collier, 1994). Accordingly, the surrender of weapons equated to a voluntary social contract between ex-combatants, the government and the international community, based on a credible offer of economic and security guarantees (Knight and Özerdem, 2004). However, early DDR produced mixed results and revealed divergent expectations between the international community, who prioritised conflict termination, and civil society, who imagined more expansive change (Alden, 2002). Seeking to build on past failures and align with the evolving peacebuilding landscape, the UN's first Integrated DDR Standards (2006) re-conceptualised DDR as a tool which contributes to immediate security goals and supports long-term recovery and development.¹⁴ DDR thus

¹³ Data provided to author by the United Nations Department of Peace Operations (DPO)/Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI)/DDR Section (July 2020).

¹⁴ United Nations (2006). 'Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS)', Available from: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/609144?ln=en> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

moved away from an purely economic focus and instead began to prioritise social outcomes, based on growing evidence that ex-combatants rely on community support networks (Kaplan and Nussio, 2018), with ideas like ‘repatriation’, ‘rehabilitation’ and ‘reconciliation’ entering the policy lexicon, involving training and employment schemes to promote positive relationships. This evolution from first- to second- generation DDR above all heralded a re-imagining of ex-combatants from a potential threat to a positive contributor to peace.

Research has been integral in building the evidence base which has informed evolution in DDR policy, and continues to challenge some of the limitations of - and weak assumptions underlying - interventions. Firstly, the UN continues to treat DDR as a sequential process, with reintegration as the final and most complex stage and (usually) with distinct economic, social and political dimensions. However, multiple researchers point to the misalignments between ex-combatant and community desires and thus question the assumed synergy between these components. For example, providing ex-combatants with economic support may reduce the incentive to engage with communities, or create resentment among them (Berdal, 1996; Kostner, 2001; Humphreys and Weinstein, 2007). Additionally, in a manner echoing the local turn, scholars show that the decision of communities to resist, tolerate or accept ex-combatants has often gone unaccounted for in the design of DDR programmes (Eastmond, 2010; Clubb and Tapley, 2018). This is particularly crucial given the significant heterogeneity of combatant-community relationships produced through conflict (Arjona 2016: p.66). Additionally, Daly (2011) rejects the distinction between social and political reintegration, noting that ex-combatants engage in a wide variety of socio-political practices which cannot be easily categorised, particularly after the advent of second-generation DDR. Overall, just as the local turn has made clear the need for nuance in conceptualisations of peace, DDR scholars increasingly point to the importance of accounting for local power dynamics.

One of the major gaps in DDR research relates to the concept of ‘political reintegration’ which is not attuned to real-world local politics beyond the electoral realm. Scholars have offered diverse interpretations of what political reintegration means for an individual, usually centring on a combination of attitudinal shifts and active participation in democratic decision-making (Guáqueta 2009; Gilligan et al., 2013; Özerdem, 2003). At the organisational level, the emphasis on democratisation within peacebuilding has mostly prioritised rebel-to-party transformation: that is, supporting armed groups in achieving political party status. As evidence of this, between 1975-2011, nearly one-third of 93 non-state signatories to peace agreements eventually became political

parties (Söderberg Kovacs and Hatz, 2016). This means that peace agreements often involve changes to legal frameworks to make this possible, and rebel-to-party transformation has emerged as a field of research within its own right, with a number of studies pointing to elections as a potential peacebuilding tool (Soderberg Kovacs 2007; Matanock, 2017; Ishiyama 2019). However, as Greener (2011: p.365), asserts, this exclusive focus on elections is one of the liberal peace's primary unchallenged assumptions.

Here I develop three challenges to the assumption that elections should provide the sole basis for measuring political reintegration which, taken together, demand incorporation of social movement literature into a DDR framework. Firstly, Christensen and Utas' (2008: p.534) show how politicians in Sierra Leone strategically remobilized ex-combatants during an early 'post-conflict' election campaign, describing how party membership perversely provided a mandate for ex-combatants to "do whatever they want" to secure their rights. In this sense, elections may not only "distract" from peacebuilding as Greener (2011) has suggested, but can domesticate, legitimise and generate political violence. Secondly, ex-combatants share more in common with activists than politicians, harbouring ideological convictions that make them mistrustful of government institutions, beliefs which often provide the original motivation for joining the group (Sindre, 2016; Friðriksdóttir 2018). Yet, as Daly (2011, p.26) notes, high-ranking leadership destined for roles in national politics do not always consult the rank-and-file prior to disarmament, meaning that these convictions often go overlooked in DDR design. Thirdly, an exclusive focus on elections neglects the increasingly fuzzy boundaries between social movements and parties. Thus, while Daly (2011: p.190) calls for further research on when armed groups transition to parties or informal socio-political organisations, it is more pertinent to ask how former armed groups strategically combine electoral and other informal or contentious political practices. Taken together, these challenges demand a re-imagining of DDR in such a way that reflects the idea of peace as a subjective abstraction and social dispute (as in Section 2.1) and that incorporates ideas from social movement research; a realm "completely unexplored" in DDR scholarship to date (Quishpe, 2017).

2.2.2. Armed Group as Movement-Party

In recent years, scholars have questioned the commonly accepted conceptual boundaries between movements and parties through real-world study, within which the 'movement-party' concept has emerged. A number of researchers have explored new forms of alliance-building between movements and parties, particularly across the USA and Europe (March 2017; Schwartz 2010; Van

Dyke and McCammon 2010). Kitschelt (2006) provides one of the first ‘movement-party’ analyses, discussing movements which contest elections to pursue specific agendas, while others have published on movements that become parties, or parties that temporarily adopt movement-like strategies (Anria 2019, Van Cott 2005; Almeida, 2010). Della Porta et al., (2017) conceptualise movement-parties as organisations with the “material and symbolic resources” of both parties and movements, which are situated within and influenced by both the electoral system and the social movement field. This framing challenges long-standing distinctions in contentious politics scholarship between “members of the polity” with access to elite spaces and those who challenge from outside, instead showing how some individuals move easily between these arenas (Tilly 1978: p.117).

A movement-party framework provides a solid basis to reconceptualise DDR, for three main reasons. Firstly, it is attuned to the diversity of practices which armed groups pursue during conflict, both in terms of their relationship to communities and to the state (García Villegas et al., 2016; Kasfir et al, 2017), and reflects recent research on the commonalities between armed groups and social/political movements (Thurber; 2014; Duhart, 2017). Secondly, by focusing analysis on collective agency and strategic decision-making, it answers Torjesen’s (2013) call to rethink DDR in terms of the process ex-combatants experience, rather than the precise programmatic support they receive, thereby better aligning with a relational and subjective perspective on peace. Thirdly, it connects with the view of peace as a social dispute and ongoing process of territorialisation, particularly in the Latin American context. Whereas historically, Latin American movements organised around ideological and/or class cleavages, the 1990s wave of mobilization was a direct response to the harmful and spatially situated impact of neoliberal economic policies (discussed further in Chapter 4). Consequently, political relationships were increasingly produced through physical encounter or distance, whereby “what differentiates the political actors is not their ideology or class but rather their geographical location” – in a process Rossi (2017: p.13) dubs the territorialisation of politics. Because of this, movements and parties began to interact in new ways, with movements seeking out access to newly decentralized state spaces (e.g. municipal councils) through alliance-building or in some cases forming their own parties. For example, Halvorsen (2020) describes how *Nuevo Encuentro*, an Argentine grassroots organisation, responded to its changing political environment by moving “further towards the movement side of the movement-party spectrum”, in order to “articulate with, and hence better represent, the needs of its inhabitants” (p.1723). Given the above, any armed group seeking to intercede in Latin American politics will encounter a political arena increasingly characterised by organisations territorialising

through strategic mobilisation “across contentious and electoral arenas” (Ibid: p.1711). Overall, by drawing on the movement-party concept, I am able to reconceptualise DDR in terms of territorialisation, within a broader social dispute (peace) and apply this to three additional gaps in DDR research.

2.2.3. DDR Gaps

1. *Collective DDR*

The first gap in research relates to the opportunities and pitfalls of DDR as a collective process. During the era of first-generation DDR, the UN described demobilization – understood as breaking down an armed group’s structures – as “the single most important factor” for peacebuilding.¹⁵ This typically occurs in transitional cantonment sites; a “halfway house” between mobilized and demobilized states, whereby temporary physical concentration increases the efficiency of the distribution of material and other assistance (Knight and Özerdem, 2004: p.507-8). However, the ensuing policy of assimilation, such that ex-combatants are expected to return to their homes of origin, disregards a potential shared preference for communitarian living (Subedi, 2014: p.244). As noted in Chapter 1, and as further explored in Chapter 6, in Colombia the expression of this preference led to the development of a ‘community reincorporation’ model, allowing former combatants to remain in cantonment camps beyond the initially agreed six-month period. This novel, as yet untried collective approach to DDR aims to deliver mutual benefit for ex-combatants, their families and the “communities which cohabit the territories.”¹⁶

Existing research points to the potential advantages of allowing ex-combatants to live and work collectively, yet there is more that can be offered through a territorial perspective. Multiple scholars have pointed to the benefits of allowing – even encouraging – ex-combatants to live and work together (De Vries and Wiegink 2011; Wiegink, 2015; Ouais and Rowayheb, 2017). Daly (2011) takes a network-centred approach, showing that continued physical clustering leads to iterated interactions which “protects and strengthens the social capital between comrades”, reduces incentives to defect, ensures collective capacity and allows ex-combatants to construct a “shadow of the future” (p.27-28). Another recent study of ex-combatant land grants show that ex-

¹⁵ United Nations General Assembly (2004). ‘Note by the Secretary-General. Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit’. Page 61. Available from: https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/files/gaA.59.565_En.pdf [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹⁶ Agencia Para la Reincorporación y La Normalización (ARN). 2018. Política Nacional Para La Reincorporación Social y Económica de Exintegrantes de las FARC-EP. Page 79. Available from: http://www.Reincorporación.gov.co/es/documents/conpes_finlal_web.pdf [last accessed 5 May 2021].

combatants perceived the land as “something won” and symbolizing “alternative futures” (de Bremond, 2013). However, more research is needed exploring the strategic collective actions of ex-combatants in these collective contexts.

A territorial perspective, aided by a movement-party framework, can offer important insight into the local power dynamics involved in a collective DDR process. Existing scholarship on socio-territorial movements notes the strategic value conferred by access to a demarcated territory, in terms of generating “new encounters and values” (Halvorsen et al., 2019: p.1456) and “new potentials” (Zibechi, 2012: p.79). Elsewhere, Escobar (2018: p.71) shows how Afro-Colombian communities draw on their ancestral connections to territory in resisting ontological (and literal) occupation of their land and to “envision a different future.” For these communities, the territory represents “the existential space for the sacred and the everyday alike” including the relationship with other beings and nature itself (Ibid: p.74). On the other hand, recent work in the geographies of peace notes the inherently conflictive nature of territory, such that the demarcation of territorial boundaries sparks new and unexpected antagonisms (Donaldson, 2014: p.291). Even in Escobar’s (2018: p.71) example, territorial bonds can inspire risky behaviour, as one Afro-Colombian activist asserted, “...nobody is willing to leave her/his territory; I might get killed here, but I am not leaving.” These perspectives indicate that DDR as a process of territorialisation will generate new conflicts to the extent that the former armed group challenges the power of other actors as it intercedes in electoral and contentious participatory arenas; a hypothesis which I develop further in Chapter 6 which delves into the dynamics of ‘community reincorporation’ in a former FARC stronghold.

2. Urban DDR

The second concrete gap which this study addresses concerns the under-researched dynamics of urban DDR and, in particular, the experiences of new arrivals to a city. The emphasis on state sovereignty and economic support underlying first generation DDR necessarily focused attention to rural areas, where the state lacked institutional capacity and where (most) armed groups developed their base of support. Consequently, support packages have often prioritised agriculture, based on the assumption that employment opportunities in other sectors are limited (Porto and Parsons, 2003). But owing to variations in labour supply and demand, ex-combatants’ skillsets do not always match those rural surroundings, particularly in remote areas with sparse opportunities (Peters, 2007). This can make migration an attractive option, which has certainly

been the case in Colombia - and which one interviewee described as a ‘double rupture’ to the lives of FARC members as they navigate new modalities of political participation in an unfamiliar (and dangerous) environment.¹⁷

Current research points to multiple complexities associated with the urban context, revealing clear potential for a nuanced geographical perspective on the power dynamics of urban DDR. Peace researchers have drawn on the community-centred perspective characteristic of the local turn to explore the lived experience of conflict within urban communities (Björkdahl, 2013; Weinmann and Juttersonke, 2019). Studies of DDR processes have further explored the role of ex-combatant migrants in exacerbating pre-existing violence, including Rozema’s (2008) examination of the trajectories of Colombian ex-paramilitaries in Medellín. Given the risks associated with the urban context, particularly in large Latin American cities, DDR policy guidance normally encourages ex-combatants to pursue ‘identity concealment’ to ensure their immediate security. Yet multiple researchers have since argued that this ultimately reinforces their marginalization by requiring they either cling to their military identities or construct a “made-up self” that keeps them in a constant paradox (Escorcia Martinez, 2018; Maringira, 2015; McFee, 2016). Moreover, the predominant strategy of individual identity concealment disregards new evidence concerning the potential benefits of ex-combatant socio-economic cohesion in the urban context. To illustrate, Uehling (2019) outlines how Ukrainian ex-combatants established an urban café which offered a positive atmosphere and facilitated peaceful dialogue with civilians, while Caryiannis and Pangburn (2020) explore how ex-combatants in the Democratic Republic of Congo formed an urban bicycle-taxi union, simultaneously granting them collective bargaining power and providing a much-needed public good to the city. These are unresolved debates which, I suggest, a territorial perspective on ex-combatant experiences can help to elucidate further.

By re-framing DDR as a process of (re)territorialisation, I later draw on a growing body of geographical scholarship which is exploring the novel forms of urban territorial organising among migrant populations. For example, López (2019), writing on displaced conflict victims in Medellín, shows how migrants “make their own spaces of belonging, as part of their political claims”. Conversely, Zeiderman’s (2013) study of urban governance in Bogotá shows how a ‘liberal governance’ model requires marginalized sectors to position themselves as ‘lives at risk’ in order to access resources. By drawing on this literature, Chapter 7 engages with how FARC combine electoral and other participatory practices in asserting their right to a collective urban

¹⁷ Interview with Romeo, Geography Professor, Cali, 2 August 2019.

reincorporation process in Cali, and through this, draw insights into the dynamics of urban DDR processes more generally.

3. DDR and Clandestine Structures

The third gap in research which I consider pertains to the role of non-combatant structures in DDR processes, again with a particular focus on the urban context. Accounting for individual variations has become common in DDR policy: the UN's latest DDR standards (2019) asks practitioners to consider variations in ex-combatant gender, age and ethnicity, drawing on research pointing to the exclusionary nature of previous interventions (Phayal et., al 2015; Upreti and Shivakoti, 2018). Research also shows that senior leadership are typically highly educated, which often translates into expectations for a high-status role in post-agreement life (Alden, 2002; Humphreys and Weinstein, 2007). Meanwhile, mid-level commanders, a previously overlooked group, are receiving growing attention, with evidence suggesting they occupy a critical space within armed group structures and thus represent an untapped resource in post-conflict building (Shesterinina, 2020). Yet, important gaps remain regarding how variation in conflict-era role and collective structures shapes the dynamics of DDR process. This is certainly true in Colombia where, as Chapter 8 will explore, the FARC's varied clandestine structures have remained obscure to researchers, are not necessarily engaging in the official DDR process, yet are playing a crucial role in the FARC's overall reincorporation and post-agreement political practices.

Existing research on armed group structural variation provides some important clues with respect to their possible role in DDR, which a territorial perspective can illuminate further. Duhart's (2017) study of conflict in Northern Ireland and Spain reveals how armed groups form alliances with movements and/or create their own movement identities. Similarly, Zaks' (2017: p.4) study on El Salvadorian armed groups shows how they create urban clandestine support networks including proto-party structures, which may offer important advantages in the post-agreement period by allowing for the repurposing of existing structures, "rather than building a party from scratch". Yet, said structures operate under different internal and socio-spatial (or indeed socio-territorial) logics to a rural *guerrilla* organisation, including a distinct set of "roles and relations" attuned to navigating in clandestinity (Ibid: p.112). However, this aspect of armed group organisational diversity and its socio-spatial implications in the context of a DDR process remains largely under-researched.

This thesis seeks to contribute to understanding how formerly clandestine structures experience DDR as territorialisation in an urban context. Here I particularly draw inspiration from Zeiderman's (2016) notion of submergence wherein, under conditions of urban violence and insecurity, movements and communities strategically (and out of necessity) "descend below the horizon of intelligibility" (p.826). As Chapter 8 explores, this concept will allow me to think through to what extent formerly clandestine structures remain 'submerged', whether and how they draw on conflict-era roles and relations to advance the FARC's political project and the resultant processes of de- and re- territorialisation.

2.3. Limitations

Every social science model is a balance between simplicity and complexity and can never provide a full reflection of reality. The concept of territory has provided important insights into politics and – increasingly - peace, and has more to offer in this regard. Stienen's (2020) faith in the concept as an analytical tool is such that she concludes her work by challenging Zibeche's (in Streule and Schwatz, 2019) assertion that "not all spaces are territories", instead asserting that "all spaces are continuously (re-)territorialised territories" (p.302). This assertion places significant faith in the analytical power of territory, yet, as Halvorsen (2019: p.803) argues, with the 'opening up' of territory to new perspectives, there is a risk of "subsuming everything as territorial", without truly accounting for its limitations. Accordingly, this section addresses three potential limitations to the framework developed in this chapter. This includes whether territory can help to understand peace as a multi-scalar phenomenon (2.3.1), whether territory captures the increasing ubiquity of digital information and communication technologies (2.3.2), and whether a movement-party framing truly captures the scope of practices which former armed groups pursue (2.3.3).

2.3.1. Territory and Scale

A geographical perspective on peace must contend with the networks which connects territories to other spaces in an increasingly economically, politically and culturally globalized world (Piazzini Suarez, 2018: p.470). Both peace and conflict are multi-scalar phenomena. During conflict, armed actors pursue strategies beyond their direct surroundings including across national borders (Mampilly 2011; Arjona 2016); hence the growing recognition of multiple "scales of violence" when designing peace interventions (World Bank Group et al, 2018). Research further shows that peace processes are trans-scalar, intersecting with processes and dynamics across different

geographical units (Björkdahl & Buckley-Ziste, 2016). Yet, simplistic conceptualisations have often produced reductive analysis concerning the way these scales intersect. For example, in calling for community inclusion, local turn scholars often assume that the ‘local’ may directly interact with the ‘international’, without mediation by state actors across national and sub-national scales (Hughes et al., 2015: p.821).

Seeking to carve a middle-ground between the ‘bottom-up’ local turn, the ‘top-down’ liberal peace, scholars have advanced ‘adaptive’ ‘everyday’ and ‘hybrid’ models which aim to bridge local and national experiences (Greener, 2011; Williams, 2015; De Coning, 2018; Mac Ginty, 2010; Firchow, 2018). Inspired by these approaches, this thesis adopts a relational perspective on scale, drawing on existing geographical work on the political construction of scale (Delaney & Leitner, 1997). I also note how Latin American movements operate in multi-scalar terms and draw on national and international inspiration and alliances (Rossi, 2017; Mason-Deese et al., 2019). Relatedly, in accounting for a “mixture of wider and more local social relations” Haesbaert’s (2013: p.148) influential concept of ‘multi-territoriality’ is fundamentally multi-scalar. Overall, by treating scale as a relational category rather than a fixed administrative boundary, a territorial approach is able to incorporate scale by approaching territorialisation as a fundamentally “multi-scalar process” involving both electoral and contentious mobilisation (Halvorsen, 2020: p.1711).

2.3.2. Cyberterritories

New information and communication technologies (ICTs) have increasingly replaced traditional media sources and communication channels, re-shaping how activists organise (Arias, 2004; Castells, 2012) how political parties conduct their campaigns (Fattal, 2019), and are fundamentally challenging our preconceived notions of place-based identity (Escobar, 2018: p.11). Research on ICTs within peacebuilding is still in its infancy, and notes their potential for empowering marginalized voices and connecting local and national peace efforts, notwithstanding the potentially exclusionary effects and/or the production of new unequal power dynamics (Bau, 2015; Tellidis and Kappler, 2015; Brownell and Basham, 2017). Such reflections are critically important for DDR, as evidence indicates that the perception of being provided false information can reduce ex-combatant satisfaction and increase the likelihood of remobilization (Kilroy and Basini, 2018).

Rather than treat cyberspace as external to territory, I respond to Ash et al.’s (2016) call for geographers to incorporate digital tools into existing theoretical models. In achieving this, I draw

on Lambach's (2020) outline of the commonalities between cyberspace and territory, including how both distinguish between 'inside' and 'outside', have boundaries which are communicated and involve some attempt at control. Additionally, as cyberspace is increasingly produced by an array of actors, cyberspace is not a flat expanse, but many non-exclusive, overlapping, and intersecting spaces which are "constantly being negotiated" through continuous and conflictual processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization (Graham 2013, p.180-1). Thus, cyberspace can be thought of as cyberterritory - or indeed cyberterritories - which intersects and interacts with territory as physical space.

2.3.3. Beyond Movement-Party

A third potential limitation concerns the proposed 'movement-party' framing. There are two risks I note here. Firstly, there is a risk of inadvertently reinforcing a dualistic view of politics as either non-contentious/contentious; formal/informal or institutional/non-institutional. As both existing literature and first-hand data made abundantly clear, elections can involve moments of extreme contention, while protests and mobilizations can become highly ordered and institutionalised. By treating movement-party as a 'spectrum' of action, I aim to avoid a dichotomous approach by showing how armed groups combine different strategies across time and space to exploit the political opportunities offered by the moment and/or context. Secondly, armed groups undoubtedly adhere to other organisational logics (military, state-building, commercial etc) beyond those typically ascribed to movements and parties. As post-agreement violence shows and as is evidenced in DDR research, military logics do not disappear overnight. Still, I argue, by approaching DDR as a process wherein multiple logics interact to drive de- and re-territorialisation, I capture a greater array of collective action responses than rebel-to-party literature currently addresses, without disregarding the possibility for military logics to continue or for others to arise.

2.4. Conclusion

"So, when I was telling you, like, about how to define the territory, perhaps the most important factor to take into account is how do they see themselves."

Interview with Alejandro, ARN Departmental Director, 23 October 2019.

In summary, this chapter has argued for concerted engagement with territory as a discursive tool and as a site of contestation for providing insights into the local dynamics of peace processes. In

making the case, I have drawn together literature from the local turn and the spatial turn in peace studies, contemporary DDR research, contentious politics literature and Latin American geographical perspectives on territory.

The local turn in peace scholarship has served to move beyond the ‘positive’ yet fundamentally top-down view of peace as an end state to be achieved through economic growth and democratisation. Geographers have made important contributions to this work, driving the recent spatial turn in peace studies and re-imagining peace as an uneven and power-laden socio-spatial process. However, more nuanced tools are still required to avoid dichotomous conceptions of peace, and a territorial perspective can offer much in this regard. Rooted in recent Latin American scholarship, I adopt a pluralistic approach to territory wherein territory [and thus, territorial peace] firstly represents a discursive tool used by actors to position themselves within a political arena, and secondly, as an ongoing process of de- and re-territorialisation as different actors clash in pursuit of those goals. This dualistic framing provides the basis for later empirical analysis in Chapters 6-8.

Beyond the express aspiration of Iván Márquez for the FARC to emerge as a ‘party-movement’ (as cited in the introduction), a ‘movement-party’ framing has significant analytical value for re-conceptualising DDR as a process of territorialisation. Existing research has already questioned the simplistic approach to the ‘political’ in political reintegration, with work noting the conflictive nature of elections, the ideological leanings and behaviour of combatants which makes them akin to activists, and a political arena increasingly characterised by fuzzy boundaries between parties and movements. Given this, a movement-party framing can, I suggest, account for the strategic combination of electoral and contentious political practices which members of (former) armed groups employ, without precluding the possibility that war-time logics endure or that other logics emerge. Further elaboration of this framework against three gaps in DDR research (collective DDR, urban DDR and role of clandestine structures in DDR) will later be explored through concrete analysis of the FARC.

Despite claims to neutrality, the international community has been “very much part of the conflict” in contemporary peacebuilding environments (Özerdem 2013: p.228). Drawing on Diehl’s (2016) call for scholars to also acknowledge the values and normative agenda of their own interventions, the next chapter outlines the thesis’ methodological underpinnings.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

One evening in August 2018, I was playing football in the department of Caquetá, southern Colombia. Always somewhat over-enthusiastic on the pitch, I attempted a tackle and instead collided with another player, knocking us both to the ground. My opponent, a member of the FARC I had never spoken with, grinned as he helped me to my feet, saying, “they sent you all the way from the USA just to kill me, didn’t they?”

The previous chapter pointed to the clear and mounting recognition within policy discourse concerning the ethical and political implications which derive from international peace interventions. These concerns are of critical importance not just for policymakers but for researchers who - despite best intentions - often do not recognise their decisions as political, nor consistently account for power asymmetries, the possibility of inducing harm, and the divergences between our interests and those of respondents. Such challenges are heightened when carrying out immersive qualitative research, because as Schatz (2013: p.12) notes, power is inherent to the gathering of ethnographic data, and thus all ethnography is ‘political ethnography’ to some degree.

In the interest of “auditability” - leaving a clear decision trail during research (Sandelowski, 1986) – this chapter provides an honest and frank account of the research process, showing how objectives and theoretical-conceptual underpinnings co-evolved with data collection. The chapter is structured as follows. **Section 3.1** provides an outline of the research design. Here I describe how data gathered during a preliminary trip challenged my original assumptions, and how intentions to draw on the principles of Participatory Action Research (PAR) were limited by setbacks and logistical challenges yet nevertheless provided important insights, ultimately leading to modifications of where, with whom, and how I conducted research. **Section 3.2** then provides detail on the four qualitative methods I employed, including interviews with actors across multiple case sites, an immersive and embodied participant observation/observant participation, spatial methods, in particular the ‘go-along’, and collection of extensive grey literature from multiple sources. **Section 3.3** acknowledges that doing research ethically means continual consideration of one’s position, obligations to participants and the representations we make in our texts, points to a surprising dearth of guidance regarding the specific idiosyncrasies of ‘post-conflict’ settings, and explores some of the main ethical challenges I encountered throughout and beyond fieldwork.

3.1. Evolving Research Design

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK ACTIVITIES

Fieldwork Trip	Key Locations and Dates	Main Events and Activities
Pre-Fieldwork 31/10/2017 – 26/01/2018.	Bogotá	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improbable Dialogues team meetings (involving staff from Sheffield, CINEP and Universidad de Javeriana). • Conference “Primer año de implementación del Acuerdo de Paz ¿Qué sigue?”/ “One year of Peace Accord implementation. What follows?” hosted by Corporación Viva la Ciudadanía (12-13 December). • Three semi-structured interviews.
Preliminary Fieldwork 16/07/2018 – 26/09/2018.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bogotá (16 –25 July, 19-22 September) • Cali (26 July-13 August, 2-18 September) • Agua Bonita (14-21 August) • <i>Brazil International Conference (22 August- 1 September)</i> • Medellín (22-26 September) 	<p>In Bogotá:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARN ‘Rendicion de Cuentas’ Event, summary of first year of reincorporation activities (24 July). • Improbable Dialogues Conference (20-21 September). <p>In Cali:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established contact with FARC (7 August), conducted several interviews and attended events. • Regular participant observation with Centro de Capacitacion Don Bosco and Improving Lives Association. • Participatory visual activities with Improving Lives Association (9 Aug and 17 September). • Peace Managers public event, Hotel Intercontinental (6 Sept). • Twelve semi-structured interviews. <p>In Agua Bonita:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site tour, participant observation. • Five semi-structured interviews. <p>In Medellín:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three days living in Ciudad Don Bosco (twin organisation with CCDB in Cali). • Two semi-structured interviews.
Primary Fieldwork 22/05/2019 – 03/11/2019.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bogotá (22 May- 2 June, 22-23 August). • Cali (3 June -3 Aug, 22 Aug – 7 Sept, 30 October- 3 Nov) • <i>Fieldwork break in Peru (4 – 21 August).</i> • Florencia and Agua Bonita (8 – 29 September) 	<p>In Bogotá:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FARC Senatorial debate (27 May) • Six semi-structured interviews. <p>In Cali:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARN Event ‘Ciclo de Foros’ discussing urban reincorporation progress (6 June). • Tour of Siloé barrio (24 June). • 34 semi-structured interviews. <p>In Florencia and Agua Bonita:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>La Montañita</i> municipal council campaign event (14 September). • Meetings with civil society organisations (19 and 21 September). • Three semi-structured interviews.
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As Table 2 indicates, this project is the result of three separate trips to Colombia spanning 11 months of fieldwork. The first visit occurred prior to starting the PhD yet, as I discuss below, usefully informed my own research plans. This section documents the evolving research design beginning with that ‘pre-fieldwork’ trip and the subsequent preliminary fieldwork trip, wherein I sought to carry out an ethnographically inspired investigation into ex-combatant experiences, drawing on the principles of Participatory Action Research (PAR) and centred on the idea of ‘following the ex-combatant’ from one of 26 rural ETCRs to the urban setting (3.1.1). I then describe the modifications to this original design, including early engagement with civil society organisations, my first unplanned interaction with FARC gatekeepers, a change to case selection, incorporation of non-combatant members into the framework and the logistical and ethical complications of conducting PAR (3.1.2).

3.1.1. Initial Research Design

This study takes inspiration from a long and rich history of ethnographic research and its recent, proven track record of delving into the local dynamics of peacebuilding. Ethnography is rooted in early twentieth-century anthropology and broadly refers to the study of social interactions and perceptions in communities and/or organisations, and is predicated on “being there”; that is, direct observation of participants and their life-worlds (Hannerz, 2003). Ethnographies are used extensively in research on civil conflict and political violence (Shesterinina, 2016; Wood; 2008, 2013), with much focus given to Latin American conflicts (Hellman, 2015) and Colombia specifically (Brittain; 2010; Arjona 2016), as well as urban violence in Latin American cities (Arias 2004; Restrepo, 2004). Bräuchler and Naucke (2017: p.432) posit that the combination of an emic (insider) and etic (outsider) perspective afforded by an ethnographic approach make it indispensable to peace research. This combination is crucial for DDR research centring on intimate community-combatant relationships, as explored in Chapter 2 and as affirmed by other scholars (Kaplan and Nussio, 2018), The number of ethnographies published on the implementation of

Colombia's 2016 peace agreement (e.g. Salazar et al., 2019) is testament to their value in addressing this project's topic and research questions.

Discussions of power dynamics abound within ethnographies, though how researchers engage with power varies substantially. In general terms, immersion allows one to draw connections between observed practices and a structural framework, and to theorise on the transformative impact of those actions on the structure itself (Kubik, 2013: p.33). Ethnographers can therefore grapple with how micro-level power dynamics in the directly observed context interact with power at other scales, and how people experience laws and structural shifts in their daily lives (Bayard de Volo 2013: p.222). Given this focus on power, Jones and Rodgers (2019) posit that all ethnography is both a methodological choice and a political act, particularly when shining a light on the everyday experiences of marginalized populations. This political dimension is made more explicit in critical ethnography, wherein the researcher assumes the moral obligation to not only understand but to transform structural conditions, by considering how existing power relationships might be disrupted (Madison, 2005).

Among the tools which have allowed ethnographers to become more politically engaged is Participatory Action Research (PAR), a methodology with its own distinct roots yet which has become increasingly entangled with traditional ethnography (Eisenhart, 2019). PAR was conceived against the backdrop of two competing schools of thought in Colombian intellectual circles. On the one hand were those who advocated armed resistance in response to the country's deep-rooted structural inequalities; on the other were those who called for civil resistance and alliance-building with indigenous, Afro-Colombian, and campesino communities, to make visible their diverse cultures, ethnicities and alternative histories. The latter group included the influential sociologist Orlando Fals-Borda (2013), who defined PAR as research which aims to achieve societal transformation by "shortening the distance ... between oppressor and oppressed", combining popular thought with academic science, and knowledge from the Global North and Global South (p.160). These overtly political - even radical - goals challenge scholars to grapple with how knowledge production is itself a political act, and to build stronger and lasting collaborations with social movements and marginalized populations.

My early involvement in a wider network of researchers introduced me to PAR and led me to adopt its transformative goals within my own project. Shortly prior to beginning the PhD programme, I worked on a grant application for a research project involving the University of

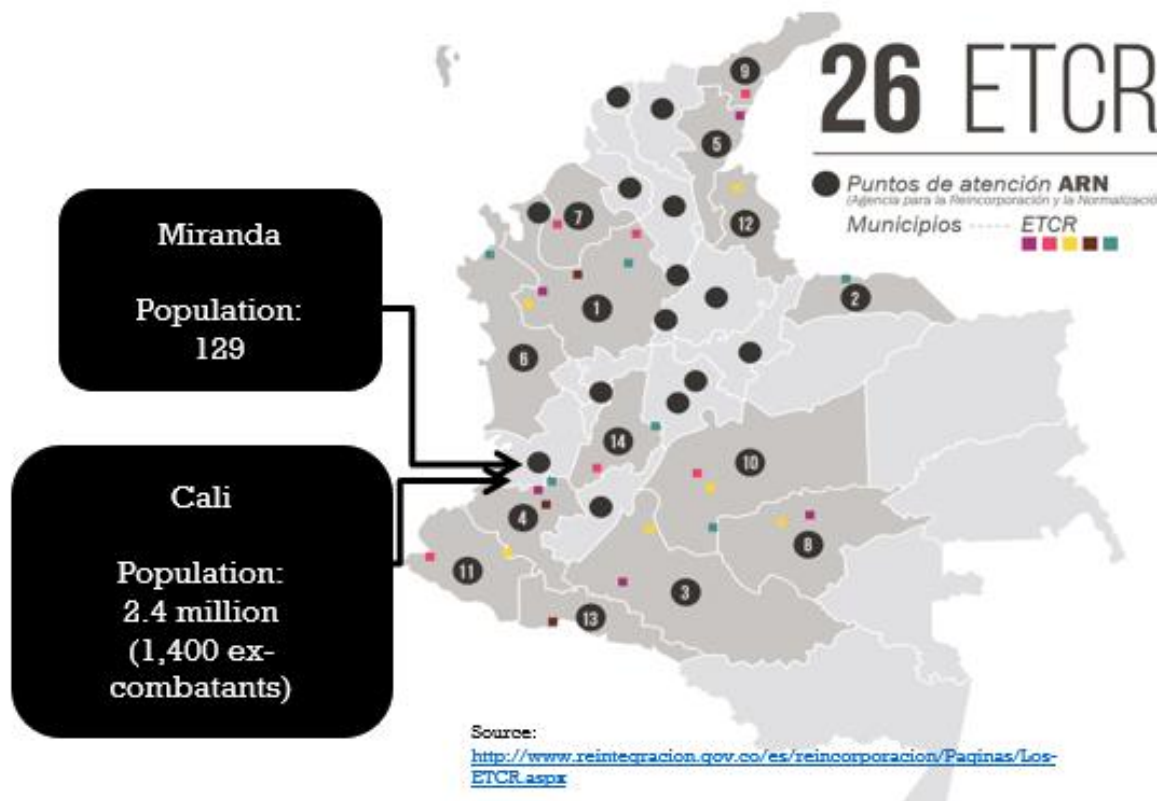
Sheffield, the Centre of Investigation and Popular Investigation (CINEP) and Javeriana University. The resultant project, *Improbable Dialogues*, connected me to a network of institutions and exposed me to pertinent contextual data and methodologies, chief among them PAR. Further reading revealed the diverse application of a range of other participatory methodologies, which converge on the aim of transcending a one-way flow of information - as in conventional research - to a joint decision-making process and the co-production of data (Chambers, 1994; Borg et al; 2012; Rappaport 2016; Bergold and Thomas, 2012). This includes peace research, wherein the consideration of local needs and empowerment of civil society is seen as a counterforce to the dominant liberal peacebuilding approach and thereby supports the incorporation of “alternative ways of thinking, knowing and doing” into the design of interventions (Bush and Duggan, 2014: p.15). Indeed, Professor Manuel Salamanca, Javeriana University, advocates a ‘militant’ approach: in other words, research must directly contribute to peacebuilding (cited in Arguedas Mejia, 2017). Engaging with these ideas during the early stages of my research project, I developed a research plan wherein I would directly apply PAR principles within my study.

Turning to case selection, my research plan centred on community reincorporation (Chapter 6), and its adaptation to the urban context (Chapter 7), and for this reason, I initially adopted a straightforward two-sided approach utilising Marcus’ (1998) notion of ‘following the person’. By first engaging with FARC members who had disarmed in one of the 26 Territorial Spaces of Reincorporation and Training (ETCR), I would then ‘follow the ex-combatant’ as they migrate to a city. Based on secondary data, I selected **Miranda**, one of four ETCRs in the Cauca department, and **Cali**, the country’s third-largest city by population and capital of the neighbouring Valle del Cauca department, where early reports indicated a significant number of former combatants had already settled (see Figure 2).¹⁸ I reasoned that the sites’ geographical proximity would confer logistical benefits and allow me to divide my time equally between the two.

FIGURE 2: INITIAL CASE SELECTION

- (1) Cali, Valle de Cauca
- (2) Miranda (ETCR), Cauca

¹⁸ Criollo, O L. / Reportera de El País, 26 November 2017, ‘Así es la vida de los excombatientes en Cali un año después de la firma de la paz’. Available from: <http://www.elpais.com.co/proceso-de-paz/asi-es-la-vida-de-los-excombatientes-en-cali-un-ano-despues-de-la-firma-de-la-paz.html> [last accessed 5 May 2021]



Through engaging with the University of Sheffield confirmation review process, I received feedback which helped me develop a concrete plan for a three-month preliminary fieldwork trip, with the intention of confirming the suitability of each research site, assessing alternatives, and collecting some basic data to inform and where necessary modify the research plan. After my presentation to colleagues, one attendee asked how I would guarantee safe access Miranda given ongoing political instability. Having examined secondary data pertaining to security,¹⁹ I also collated a list of alternatives should the need arise. Turning to Cali, the city dwarfs Miranda in size and population, and thus a secondary dimension of case selection pertained to where in the city to focus my attention. Secondary sources indicated that ex-combatants mostly lived in Aguablanca, the city's swathing eastern district with relatively high socio-economic deprivation and gang-related violence. Notwithstanding security concerns, my intention was to reside there pending supervisor approval and advice from local contacts. The next section explores the events of my 2018 preliminary fieldwork, the early stages of the 2019 main fieldwork and the resultant modifications to the project design.

¹⁹ González Perafán, L., 2 October 2017. 'Informe Espacios Territoriales de Capacitación y Reinserción – Defensoría del pueblo'. Available from: <http://www.indepaz.org.co/informe-espacios-territoriales-de-capacitacion-y-Reincorporación-defensoria-del-pueblo/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

3.1.2. Modifications

My preliminary fieldwork trip started in June 2018 in Cali, where I reached out to a number of local institutions via the Improbable Dialogues network, to build a knowledge base and find gatekeepers to facilitate - and possibly also mediate - further contact with FARC arrivals (Campbell et al., 2006). Chief among these were two civil society organisations: the Improving Lives Association, a small grassroots organisation in the barrio Charco Azul, Aguablanca and the Don Bosco Training Centre, an NGO which supports socioeconomically disadvantaged youth in the barrio El Diamante. Both were receptive to research engagement, as Alfred, director of the Improving Lives Association, later affirmed: “we need academia ... to work with us, because research is what allows us to really know what is happening from a more scientific perspective, and to find alternatives together.”²⁰ I also contacted several universities and spoke with geographers and other social scientists, as well as employees within the state reintegration agency and the municipal government. While this time was productive, I became concerned about the likelihood of accessing the FARC directly via these organisations.

My first direct contact with the FARC was unexpected and occurred on 7 August 2018, the day of President Duque’s inauguration (discussed further in Chapter 6). A close ally of former President Uribe, Duque was already a polarizing figure, and his imminent entry into office triggered widespread protests across multiple cities including Cali. Taking the opportunity to observe, I wandered through a large crowd outside the Municipal Council, I spotted a flag emblazoned with the FARC’s distinctive red rose. I approached the man waving it, and we began talking. His name was Carlos, we exchanged numbers, and he invited me to *La Casa De Los Comunes*, the FARC’s new party headquarters. This resulted in an impromptu interview with a senior FARC figure and, over time, I developed a solid base of contacts with members. This completely chance encounter entirely changed the direction of my research and provided an early lesson on the unexpected turns fieldwork can take.

After establishing direct contact with the FARC in Cali, security concerns in my second case site, Miranda, led to a change in case selection. Although it was difficult to attain accurate secondary data on the day-to-day security conditions in ETCRs, my FARC contacts in Cali had access to direct reports and – when I outlined my research plans to them - strongly advised against any visit.

²⁰ Alfred, during public event hosted by Pontificia Universidad Javeriana Cali, 1 November 2019. Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLLz0LFoCRU> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

Instead, I reached out via *Improbable Dialogues* to Arturo, the gatekeeper for Agua Bonita, one of two ETCRs in the Caquetá department which, I was informed, regularly received visits from students and the media. Given the 400km distance, I was uncertain that the ‘follow the ex-combatant’ rationale would hold, but nevertheless boarded an overnight coach to Florencia, the departmental capital, and caught a taxi to the town of La Montañita. Arturo awaited me in a bakery, before carrying me by motorcycle past a military cordon to the camp. Rather than the guest building, I spent the next week living in a family’s spare room which I later discovered reflected the local tourism strategy (see Chapter 6). On the way back to La Montañita after a productive week of data collection, Arturo assured me I was welcome to return: encouraged, I committed to replacing Miranda with Agua Bonita as the first case study, with the intention of returning in 2019 for an extended period. Lastly, I made a brief trip to Medellín (see Table 2), where I spent several days at the *Ciudad Don Bosco* centre engaging in conversations with reintegration professionals and expanding my knowledge of Colombia’s diverse urban political cultures, invaluable for later comparative analysis of urban DDR (in Chapter 7).

Preliminary findings had revealed what I considered to be unusual trajectories, leading to a crucial modification to the research plan. Carlos, in Cali, was in his sixties and a native caleño. In the 1970s he had migrated to Cúcuta, a city in north-eastern Colombia where he became active in radical politics as a trade unionist, then moved to Caracas, Venezuela, where he lived for many years. Meanwhile Arturo, in Agua Bonita, was in his twenties and born in a rural region, before his family were displaced to Cali. There he joined the *Movimiento Bolivariano*, one of the FARC’s clandestine structures, and later absconded to Ecuador to evade capture by security forces. These trajectories (and several others I learnt of) pointed to a highly mobile population well beyond the simplistic notion of ‘following the ex-combatant’ from an ETRC to a city. Furthermore, neither Carlos nor Arturo were undergoing the official reincorporation process, yet both had returned to Colombia in the wake of the peace accord and were clearly active in the FARC’s post-agreement transition. Reflecting on these early findings, I decided to incorporate non-combatant clandestine structures as an additional dimension of the overall research plan.

Returning to Colombia in 2019 with the case selection confirmed and a solid network of contacts, I nevertheless faced multiple hurdles to effectively employing a participatory approach. Beginning again in Cali, the diversity of individual trajectories (discussed further in Chapters 7-8) made it difficult to delineate a group which would collectively collaborate within the PAR process. Some members worked full-time and dedicated weekends to party activities; others were completely

focused on the 2019 election campaign; others were simply prioritising family and/or personal finances and completely uninterested in any kind of collective practice. In all cases, time was of the essence, yet time is undeniably required to co-construct and implement a plan for joint data production. Turning to Agua Bonita, I faced other challenges. Firstly, Arturo was somewhat less responsive than the year before, and my arrival was delayed. Secondly, unlike in Cali, internal FARC meetings were essentially closed off to visitors, and there was a general atmosphere of hesitation with respect to outsiders (discussed further in Chapter 6). And thirdly, one week after arrival I contracted dengue fever. Though this allowed me to ‘participate’ in the use of onsite health services, my symptoms did not improve after a week, and I was advised by local health professionals to cut the fieldwork short and head to the Florencia hospital.

The difficulties I faced in successfully employing a PAR approach stimulated additional reflection on the transformational goals of PAR in relation to the context I was studying, particularly given the FARC’s present focus on an election campaign as opposed to grassroots practices. It is noteworthy that PAR’s inception reflects this dilemma in that the efforts of Fals-Borda (2013: p.355) and others ultimately consolidated movement (rather than party-political) organising, stimulating energies which emanated “from the periphery towards the centre.” Notwithstanding this non-institutional genesis, PAR and other associated participatory methodologies have been co-opted by universities, governments and international agencies, which frequently use the term ‘participation’ in confusing and ambiguous ways, particularly in of unequal power dynamics (McTaggart, 1997). Further reflection on the dangers of what Zibechi (cited in Streule and Schwartz, 2019) dubs “academic extractivism” and the precise logistical and ethical obstacles I faced in pursuing PAR in the current context, ultimately led me to abandon the approach, but nevertheless provided invaluable analytical insight which directly informed later empirical analysis of the FARC as a movement-party.

3.2. The Socio-Territorial Approach – A Mixed Methods Study

Triangulation of methods is a fundamental principle of qualitative research and is perhaps more necessary in conflict and peace research than any other setting. This is because of the inevitable divergences of experiences and opinions, both at the individual and organisational levels; as the Director of the KROC Institute - one of the organisations responsible for monitoring the implementation of Colombia’s 2016 deal - succinctly affirmed: “What for one person is an advance, for another is a setback. What one institution shows as a success, for the other is a

failure...It is difficult to draw conclusions from such polarized and diverse readings of reality.”²¹ Furthermore, as logistical and other difficulties resulted in modifications to the research design and, hence, an overwhelming focus of time in Cali, I began to explore literature on urban methodologies, a topic receiving growing attention across the social sciences. Indeed, urban ethnography has emerged as a research practice in its own right (McFarlane, 2010; Duneier et al., 2013; Katz, 2010), which geographers have employed to understand the lived experiences of marginalized groups in Latin American cities (Clare, 2017; López, 2019). Within this work Schwarz and Streule’s (2016) propose the socio-territorial approach which, they suggest, foregrounds the power dynamics which underscore the production of urban space. In presenting the approach, the authors draw on Robinson’s (2006: p.121-22) argument that “by paying attention to the city—as a territory ... the diversity of city life and the multiplicity of networks and connections that shape it come back into view.” Combining the need for triangulation with the principles of a socio-territorial approach, this section outlines the combination of methods I employed throughout fieldwork, including interviews (3.2.1), participant observation/observant participation (3.2.2) (cyber)territorial methods – the ‘go-along’ (3.2.3), and grey literature (3.2.4).

3.2.1. Interviews

I relied heavily on interviews throughout fieldwork, which I obtained via multiple routes. During the preliminary fieldwork trip, I secured interviews primarily via my involvement in the Improbable Dialogues project, which provided early access to international and government institutions and civil society actors. Later interviews with members of the FARC were obtained after attaining access via gatekeepers, as outlined in the previous section. My interviews were semi-structured and normally began with a planned set of questions depending on the stage of fieldwork and the identity of the participant, allowing me to diverge when necessary if new information arose through the course of the interview. I was also able to conduct multiple interviews with the same interviewee in a number of instances, and this allowed for further elaboration, discussion of intervening events and possible shifts in perspectives.

To ensure my interviews were robust, I drew on multiple guides to interviewing in the planning stage, reflected on the interview process in the period between interviews, and still further between fieldwork trips. Compared with other methods, interviews are sometimes critiqued for being

²¹ Borja Paladini, Director of Kroc Institute, cited in El País, 23 November 2017. “La paz no es hacer muchas cosas, sino construir legitimidad”, Director Instituto Kroc’. <https://www.elpais.com.co/proceso-de-paz/la-paz-no-es-hacer-muchas-cosas-sino-construir-legitimidad-director-instituto-kroc.html>

artificial, in the sense that they “separate informants from their routine experiences and practices” (Kusenbach, 2003: p.462). Nevertheless, interviews provide invaluable insight regarding the meanings that lie behind observable practices, as evidenced by the sheer number of guides to interviewing in the social sciences (e.g. Arskey and Knight, 1999; Fielding and Thomas, 2008; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009), and specifically in geography (Longhurst, 2010). These guides often emphasise building rapport, particularly when discussing sensitive topics like violence, as well as the value of our own emotional responses and how these can help us to question our original assumptions (Shesterinina, 2019: p:11). I also drew insight from Fujii’s (2018) idea of relational interviewing, which replaces the emphasis on rapport with acknowledgement of doubts and failures, and a continual willingness to learn. To aid in this reflection, I supplemented interviews with notes, recorded interviews when consent was offered, and the process of listening back allowed for further contemplation on verbal and non-verbal cues, and improvements to my interviewing technique (see Table 3).

TABLE 3: SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW EXTRACTS AND REFLECTIONS

Interview	Extract	Reflection
FARC ex-combatant, Agua Bonita, 20th August 2018,	<p>...In the peace agreement, they talk about economic, social and political reincorporation. And that part, political reincorporation interests me the most...</p>	Over emphasising concepts too early in the interview.
FARC ex-combatant, Agua Bonita, 16th August 2018,	<p>For example, I don’t trust in politics anymore. I mean, I don’t like politics.</p> <p>You don’t like it?</p> <p>No, and so when I analyse it, I say...</p> <p>You really don’t like it?</p>	Implying judgement; interrupting.
IOM Official, Bogotá, 20th September 2018	<p>So, the implementation, and that’s what you most hear about in the news, that they haven’t...</p> <p>That they aren’t fulfilling it?</p>	Asking leading questions; interrupting.

	<p>That they aren't fulling it. It's also difficult...</p> <p>With the new government?</p>	
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Interviewing in a second language involves both hurdles and opportunities (Crane et al., 2009). Reflections on multilingual research in human geography note that the presence of an interpreter can open up space for additional questions, allowing for deeper understanding of the cultural context, yet can also represent an additional logistical burden and inhibit direct access to knowledge (Ibid: p.40). For this latter reason in particular, I was determined not to rely on an interpreter, and as I already had a solid grasp of Spanish prior to fieldwork, was able to build confidence in my capacity to communicate and exchange ideas during the preliminary trip. As a result, nearly all interviews were in Spanish, with the few in English due to the interviewees' choice (including a series of three interviews with a former ARN Departmental Director, Alejandro, who I cite extensively in Chapter 7). Although interviewing in Spanish occasionally created moments of awkwardness, misunderstanding, or an inability to express myself to the full extent I would like, I found that my positionality as a non-native speaker afforded me a degree of leniency with respect to mistakes which, as Fujii (2018: p.70) writes, are themselves "gifts" to an interviewer. This was particularly valuable with respect to the labels ascribed to the FARC, as Arturo made clear during our first interview, "we are not ex-combatants, I'm still fighting."²² Overall, pursuing interviews in Spanish as opposed to relying on an interpreter afforded me the flexibility and intimate relationship-building necessary to complete the project effectively.

3.2.2. Participant observation / observant participation

"From an extreme point of view, it's a serious subject. But from the internal point of view, it's like an everyday subject, like telling people about your birthday party."

- Noa, Former PCCC leader and current FARC member, 6 September 2019.

Ethnographic researchers must continually strike a balance between observation of practices and direct, immersive participation in said practices. This balance is normally captured by the idea of participant observation; a cornerstone to any guide to qualitative research and invaluable to human geography (Laurier, 2010). For Everts et al., (2011), practices constitute "an organised nexus of

²² Interview with Arturo, Agua Bonita, 14 August 2018

doings and sayings” (p.327) which are even more central to the everyday delineation of social groups than age, sex, income or other categorisations, while for Arendt (1958: p.179), practices are fundamentally performative, constituting a combination of what the outsider observes and how the performer understands what they are doing. It is this performative element which leads Moeran (2007: p.148) to propose that researchers employ ‘observant participation’; a method predicated on deeper immersion and only achieved when participants realise the researcher has “learned the rules”, leading them to “stop pretending” and allow themselves to be “seen as they are.” Numerous researchers have since utilised this more immersive method to enrich a qualitative study (Wacquant, 2010, Wilkinson 2017). Rather than selecting either participant observation or observant participation as my guiding framework, I simply decided to continually reflect on my changing relationships with participants throughout the process.

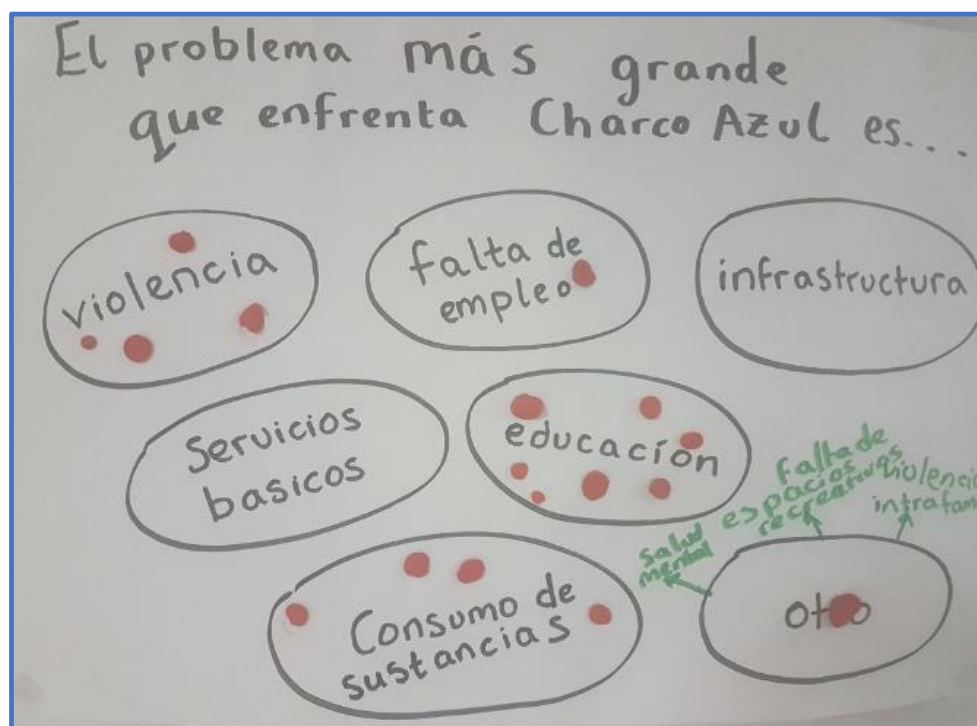
As is to be expected, the balance between participation and observation fluctuated across case sites and over time. When I first arrived in Cali in 2018, I was inundated with safety warnings and, rather than living in Aguablanca as originally planned, instead opted for a room in a relatively wealthy, touristic neighbourhood called San Antonio. Although this provided a unique and valuable perspective in itself, my capacity for direct observation of FARC practices was somewhat limited, particularly given their dispersal throughout the city. When I returned in 2019, however, I attended an early campaign event and met several new members, including Tom and Alejandra who had only arrived in January (discussed further in Chapter 8). After several more meetings, the couple invited me to live in their spare room - which I gladly accepted. Over the following weeks I spent more time with Tom, Alejandra and other members, and my frequent attendance at public meetings transitioned to more direct participation, invitation to semi-private and private events, and other informal social activities. Meanwhile, in Agua Bonita, the small size of the camp afforded a greater sense of continual immersion, and I took every opportunity for direct participation in local life (e.g. participating in planned tourism activities, collective agricultural work, supporting another student in offering English lessons). However, as noted in the previous section, internal meetings were generally more restricted. Still, external visits provided crucial opportunities to observe political discussions, and football and other casual activities including a Sunday afternoon picnic, afforded me the chance to spend informal time with residents which often led to valuable informal conversations.

Consistent interaction with members of the Improving Lives Association in Charco Azul, Cali, allowed me to organise a series of participatory visual activities to elucidate group opinions on key

topics. Throughout the preliminary trip, I made regular visits to the barrio, offering English lessons and supporting the delivery of other social projects. Building on these solid relationships, I adopted a methodological tool to jointly produce data and capture a diversity of perspectives on barrio dynamics, the association's strategies for affecting change, and opinions on the 2016 peace accord. Drawing on Weber's (2019) work with displaced conflict victims, I adopted a system where each member had a single vote on a chosen topic as represented by plasticine. This had the additional effect of equalizing internal power dynamics, allowing each member the opportunity to express their views, with the final image then forming the basis of additional discussion (see Figure 3). Without suggesting that these activities were transformative, members took photos of and/or kept the final products and several expressed that participation had helped them reflect on their collective approach to local issues.

FIGURE 3: EXAMPLE OF PARTICIPATORY VISUAL METHOD OUTPUT

“The biggest problem faced by Charco Azul is: violence; unemployment, infrastructure; basic services; education; substance abuse; other.”



3.2.3. Exploring (cyber)territories – the ‘go-along’

“Language limits us in many things, I think. Then again, those things are quite minimal. But there are other things, that are typical of the land, that are typical of the place...”

Social Leader, Charco Azul, 9 August 2018

In building a socio-territorial approach, I required a method that would provide insight into how participants navigate and produce territory. For this I relied primarily on the go-along method - allowing a researcher to collect data beyond ideas expressed in language or through in-situ practices, and instead involves jointly moving with participants’, to capture the perceptions, emotions, interpretations and social architecture of their surroundings (Kusenbach, 2003). This is particularly helpful when researching the socio-spatial dynamics of fragmented conflict or ‘post-conflict’ settings and the different ways in which social groups experience the space around them, as Michael, a social leader from Putumayo, explained in interview: “if you talk with a soldier or a policeman, he’s going to tell you the complete opposite of what I’m telling you. Because he doesn’t know how people move in the conflict area, in the territory.”²³

I conducted go-alongs of various kinds and via different modes of transport. Many were on foot, with single individuals and planned in advance; for example during the official tour of Agua Bonita with Arturo (see Chapter 6) or accompanying Alfred on a walk through Charco Azul during my first visit (see Chapter 7). Others were spontaneous, with groups, and in conjunction with observant participation e.g. handing out flyers with the FARC’s 2019 campaign team in Aguablanca (see Chapter 8). In Cali, while I had planned to spend most time in Aguablanca, early data evidenced that organisations and actors were dispersed throughout the city. This meant that I made regular trips across the city either by public transport or taxi, and these journeys were often highly informative, particularly when drivers shared personal perspectives.²⁴ I also accompanied the FARC in their security vehicles on a number of occasions, which highlighted the additional challenges of navigating the city safely. Lastly, I purchased a bicycle on the advice of my roommate in San Antonio (an avid cyclist) and casual trips with him and his friends provided a wholly new perspective on navigating the city, further allowing me to venture out to its peri-urban edges (a core theme of Chapter 8).

In seeking to overcome the potential theoretical limitations identified in the prior chapter, I supplemented the more traditional go-along in physical space with concerted investigation of how

²³ Interview with Michael, social leader from Putumayo, 4 August 2018.

²⁴ Indeed, even the mention of Charco Azul could trigger a look of surprise, as the barrio is not a typical destination for tourists.

people and ideas move across and between scales (beyond the territory), as well as how people navigate and produced cyberterritory in parallel to territory as physical space (Lambach 2020). Conducting ethnographic research across multiple sites naturally draws a researcher's attention to trans-local dynamics which, as Kubik (2003: p.50) notes, are increasingly mediated by virtual space – above all social messenger apps. Research further notes how the use of chat apps constitute part of the everyday “intimate sphere” and how identity is increasingly produced through a combination of physical and virtual relationships (Barbosa and Milan, 2019: p.55). WhatsApp is the most popular chat app in Latin America and most of Europe, with 2 billion active monthly users as of February 2020,²⁵ - and particularly given the multi-sited nature of the study, was invaluable for building and maintaining relationships with participants. Access to internal FARC and other WhatsApp groups provided me with crucial insight into the exchange of information across and between scales. It also helped me delve into the dynamics of peacebuilding as social dispute, how trust is built through WhatsApp exchanges, and how this can provide efficiency gains while also exacerbating misinterpretations otherwise resolved in physical space – core themes of later chapters.

3.2.4. Grey Literature

“I’ll send you the video which explains about Alfonso Cano. I have many videos to send you.”

Former FARC Member and Current ARN Official, Bogotá, 28 August 2019.

I could not have completed this project without extensive collation and analysis of secondary data sources throughout the project timeline. As Section 3.1 explored, international monitoring reports on ETCRs and media reports on FARC migration patterns were crucial to building an initial picture of local dynamics during the planning stage. However as I discovered almost immediately after arriving to the field, and as Quishpe (2017: p.7) notes, nominally ‘post-conflict’ contexts are often highly fluctuating, with on-the-ground dynamics differing to written accounts. These discrepancies make online media and/or social media posts particularly valuable. After I established a list of reliable sources, I kept myself informed of changing events in-between fieldwork trips, and was able to fill in gaps in my knowledge during the later analysis and write-up stage; particularly valuable for Agua Bonita where fieldwork was unexpectedly cut short due to

²⁵ Iqbal, M. March 9 2021., WhatsApp Revenue and Usage Statistics (2020). Available from: <https://www.businessofapps.com/data/whatsapp-statistics/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

illness. Moreover, my extensive use of WhatsApp provided me with access to the information sources consumed by participants, though these generally required triangulation to ensure their reliability. Lastly, these sources helped me develop a national perspective, and to draw comparisons between Agua Bonita and other ETCRs, and between Cali and other major cities.

3.3. The Ethics of (Post-)Conflict Research

“It behoves us to consider the ways in which the research process – as well as the research product – itself may have positive or negative societal influences in subtle, and not-so-subtle, ways.”

Bush and Duggan, 2014: p.307

Ethics is an open-ended responsibility rather than a discrete task to be completed, and though academic institutions provide general guidance, always requires adaptation to the social environment, research design and technological and other tools employed throughout fieldwork (Barbosa and Milan, 2019). This section examines the main ethical considerations that arose during fieldwork, including researcher-participant power dynamics, consent and the do-no-harm principle (3.4.1), before outlining the process of analysis and writing, decisions regarding confidentiality, dissemination and impact (3.4.2).

3.3.1. Consent, Harm and Safety

This project sits across multiple research topics without fitting neatly into any one category, requiring me to amalgamate ethical guidance across several sub-topics into an overarching concern for power dynamics and harm minimisation. Power matters in conflict contexts as, while the unpredictability and volatility of conflict can “magnify existing challenges” familiar to social and political scientists (Bush and Duggan, 2014, p.5), they can also be permissive environments, resulting in researchers “skirting the edges” of responsible practice (Cronin-Furman & Lake: 2018: p.611). The UKRI provides ethical guidance for researching conflict and political instability in international contexts, outlining why consideration of actual *and* perceived power asymmetries can have lasting implications for whether and how informants participate.²⁶ There is additional guidance on researching protest²⁷, while digital tools have become central to data collection and

²⁶ UKRI. Economic and Social Research Council. ‘International research: Consideration of ethics in an international context’. Available from: <https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics/frequently-raised-topics/international-research/>

²⁷ UKRI. Economic and Social Research Council. ‘Case study: surveying protestors Caught in the act of protest.’ Available from: <https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics/ethics-case-studies/case-study-surveying-protestors/>

analysis and guides on ‘digital ethnography’, or ‘ethnography for the internet’ now abound, offering insight into both the opportunities and ethical challenges that such tools provide (Hine, 2015), though as Pink et al., (2016: p.8), notes, their rapid evolution means that said guidance quickly goes out of date. Overall, I had to combine guidance and insights across multiple themes; guided firstly by the principle of ‘dialogue’ between researcher and researched (Burawoy, 1998), and secondly by the more general principle of ‘do no harm’.

Transparency and informed consent are crucial components of ‘dialogue’ and ‘doing no harm’ and, I found, are crucial when navigating relationships across multiple actors with whom there exists a sensitive and potentially even hostile relationship. When dealing with large-scale observations, guidance notes that attaining written consent from all participants may be impossible (Crag and Cook, 2007), and that the process by which consent is obtained must be aligned with local norms (Wood, 2006: p.384-385). Whenever feasible, I presented a physical consent form and information sheet to interviewees, explaining the content of the research, its voluntary nature, intended use for the data and my contact details. I also had the information sheet and consent form checked by an ARN professional who suggested modifications to terminology to ensure its sensitivity.²⁸ In practice, my contact with participants often begin via WhatsApp and, as I made multiple trips to the field, consent had to be continually (re)built, in a manner aligning with Barbosa and Milan’s (2019) view of consent as a “conversation starter” which demands continual (re)negotiation, and Ellis’ (2007) notion of “process consent”. Transparency was an essential component of consent, particularly as I was engaging with individuals from the FARC, civil society and the government simultaneously – often in the same day – which made guarantees of confidentiality all the more essential.

The concept of ‘harm’ is complex and abstract, and while familiar with the psychological harm induced by exposure to combat, I was less cognizant of the sensitivities pertaining to engaging with people suffering ‘secondary trauma’ (see Wood, 2006: p.384). The trauma induced by exposure to conflict is a burgeoning area of study and, prior to beginning fieldwork, I read multiple accounts of Colombian ex-combatants speaking on this topic.²⁹ Ergo, my ethics plan addressed the possibility of inducing emotional distress through discussion of past events, centring on the premise that any such conversations would be pursued cautiously and always voluntarily. This was

UKRI. ‘Internet-mediated research’ Available from: <https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics/frequently-raised-topics/internet-mediated-research/>

²⁸ I was advised to replace to the word “alias” with the word “pseudonym” owing to its distinct connotations.

²⁹ Reardon, S., 2 May 2018, “Colombia: after the violence,” *Nature*. Available from: <https://www.nature.com/immersive/d41586-018-04976-7/index.html> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

crucial given that I was conducting fieldwork in the immediate years following the conflict when combatants (and non-combatants) are especially vulnerable, potentially living in an unstable security context, and with no prior experience of talking about their experiences with outsiders; as Noa unequivocally told me: “I would not have talked about this topic two years ago.”³⁰ However, my ethics plan did not account for the possibility of engaging with people who had witnessed but not directly participated in conflict. To illustrate, during my first interview with Melissa, a former ARN official, she became visibly emotional recounting a security incident she had witnessed in an ETCR. In line with my plan, I reiterated that she was under no obligation to continue; to which she responded that telling the story was itself a “process of healing”. Building on this experience, I ultimately reasoned that participants should be afforded the agency to define harm on their own terms.

A review of my original ethics plan reveals an almost exclusive concern with avoiding physical harm opposed to the psychological or emotional challenges of intensive fieldwork. Cali is a fragmented and in places dangerous city, and to ensure my personal safety I adopted a “localised ethic” strategy, making decisions based on advice from residents more familiar with the context (Kovats-Bernat, 2002). This essentially meant avoiding certain areas altogether, or at certain times, or ensuring I only went accompanied by a resident: something I once neglected and was swiftly chastised for: “In Colombia, if someone tells you to wait somewhere, you wait!”³¹ However, I can admit to having given far less thought to the possibility of catching an illness like dengue fever, nor how I would cope with the emotional toll of an intense period of research on a sensitive topic. Sheffield University and other guidance notes that “the boundaries between research and everyday life can become blurred” in immersive contexts, and recommends that researchers take regular breaks in order to relieve stress.³² I adopted this strategy naturally, and spent a week in Peru (to allow my student visa to reset) - which helped me get a sense of distance from the study and reflect on data collected, yet somewhat ironically resulted in a fairly severe ankle sprain which left me unable to walk for several weeks. Overall, fieldwork was inevitably a process of navigating and mitigating multiple forms of personal harm though was ultimately hugely rewarding.

3.3.2. Analysis, Writing, and Impact

³⁰ Interview with Noa, FARC member, 6 September 2019.

³¹ FARC Member, Siloé, Cali, 29 August 2019.

³² University of Sheffield. Specialist Research Ethics Guidance Paper. Ethical Considerations in Participation Research / Participatory Action Research. Available from: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.586567!/file/SREGP-Participatory-Action-Research-2015.pdf (Page 2); Emotionally Demanding Research. Available from: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.834056!/file/SREGP-EmotionallyDemandingResearch.pdf

As the chapter has evidenced, and as is commonly advised, data analysis was an iterative process as each fieldwork trip provided new insights. This required continual consideration of data sources and methods, particularly given the evolving research design. As Barbosa and Milan (2019) note, the ‘real-timeness’ of WhatsApp exchanges can result in huge amounts of data which must then be organised, and information (e.g. videos with no source cited) is not always reliable and requires triangulation with other methods. Aiming to avoid any one data source dominating, I transcribed all data - including handwritten notes – which I then uploaded into NVivo analysis software. The process of ‘making sense’ of data then involved identifying core themes and sub-themes (Jackson, 2001), and where appropriate, translation from Spanish to English.

The decision of how to write draws on yet is ultimately separate from the research design, and while this chapter foregrounds my personal experiences, beliefs and assumptions and how they shaped the process, my overall goal when writing is to centre on participants’ experiences and thereby expand the diversity of voices in peacebuilding (Bush and Duggan, 2014: p.320). On writing sensitively in international contexts, Kapoor (2004) asks researchers to consider how our representations neglect or perpetuate existing power relationships, while Cope, (2010, p.169) calls for consideration of how meanings ‘map’ across cultures in the process of translation. On conflict and peace writing, Koopman (2019, p.209) astutely notes that the terms ‘post-agreement’ and ‘post-conflict’ have wholly distinct connotations, while Janzen (2014: p.3) critiques the common labels ascribed to ex-combatants (e.g. ‘spoilers’, ‘belligerents’ ‘obstacles’) which perpetuate their stigmatization. Overall, my use of terminology has been informed by participants themselves, and I have tried to not write anything that I would not show the person mentioned (Medford, 2006). I have also tried to avoid sensationalist accounts of violence and to instead show how violence has been, and continues to be for many Colombians, a constitutive component of daily life (Jones and Rodgers, 2019: p.3).

There are multiple dimensions of confidentiality to consider in research outputs. In line with general ethics guidance, I have avoided using personal identifiable information unless in limited cases when specifically requested or where the individual has agreed to be named. With respect to organisations, Sheffield University guidance notes the complexity of managing different participants’ conflicting desires regarding attribution, which calls for careful negotiation and consensus-building.³³ As a general rule, I have altered the details of organisations where association

³³ Sheffield University. Specialist Research Ethics Guidance Paper (2019). ‘Principles of Anonymity, Confidentiality and Data Protection’. Available from: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.724754!/file/SGREP-Anonymity-Confidentiality-DataProtection.pdf [last accessed 5 May 2021]

with the FARC is mentioned, echoing the direct advice of a Cali-based academic: “you must be very careful. Because anyone who highlights the direct participation of people from the FARC in those occupations, they put at risk the same occupations” (discussed further in Chapter 8). Further university guidance on participatory research notes that confidentiality is “situational” and changes from context to context.³⁴ While I considered the possibility of anonymising case sites, given the specific geographical and other characteristics of Cali which are central to analysis, the degree of publicity and research material which already exists on Agua Bonita, and the general wishes of participants, I ultimately judged this was unnecessary.

Conflict research normally operates within a policy-oriented paradigm, that is, advising governments on how to overcome conflict (Mills et al., 2020). Similarly, some DDR researchers characterise their work in terms of predicting ex-combatant behaviour in order to minimise recidivism in future peacebuilding contexts (Ugarizza and Nussio 2016: p203). While not inherently problematic, researcher’s relationships with state actors should be subject to ethical and political reflection, and wider audiences including civil society ought to be considered (Mills et al., 2020). Drawing on PAR, my early intentions were to share results with FARC and other participants, for them to provide input regarding its ultimate use (Fals-Borda, 1987: p.344). I had thus planned a return trip for dissemination among key audiences, with a view to possible further collaboration. Owing to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, a return visit has not since been possible, but I have nevertheless maintained contact online with a number of participants across multiple organisations and intend to share results once published.

3.4. Conclusions

This chapter has outlined the project’s methodology and provided an honest appraisal of the decision-making process. The intention has been to demonstrate coherence between theoretical-conceptual underpinnings and the methodological approach. Pursuant to this, the chapter shows how early data collection led me to incorporate a wider range of individual trajectories and give additional focus to non-combatant members, while also leading me away from an explicitly PAR-inspired design to a socio-territorial approach focusing on the city as a territory. In seeking to triangulate perspectives, I employed multiple qualitative methods, including extensive interviews, navigating a balance between observation/participation, (cyber)territorial methods and secondary data. I also reflected on power asymmetries, harm, consent, transparency, the multiple dimensions

³⁴ Sheffield University ‘Ethical Considerations in Participatory Research / Participatory Action Research.’ *Op cit.* Page. 2

of confidentiality, representation, impact and my (continuing) obligations to participants. Overall, I hope to have responded to Escobar's (2018, p.103) call for researchers to "practice what we preach" by putting "one foot in a relational world".

CHAPTER 4. CHARTING COLOMBIA'S CONFLICT

This chapter explores the main events of and dynamics underlying Colombia's civil conflict, critically assessing three intersecting explanations for the endemic political violence which has characterised much of the country's post-colonial history. These are (1) differentiated state presence across space (2) structural political inequalities and repression and (3) the FARC's distinctive politico-military strategy, ideology and social identity. These explanations speak to the role of the state, civil society and FARC throughout the conflict and how they have understood and operated within the Colombian territory, thus providing the necessary basis for analysis of the origins and implementation of the territorial peace agenda, particularly with respect to the FARC's role in the post-agreement period.

Discussions of Colombia's conflict often distinguish between a wealthy urban centre with high state capacity and an impoverished, institutionally vacant rural periphery with varied terrain and multiple borders: "the natural habitat for insurgency" (Daly, 2011: p.250). As such, a 'state absence' narrative has underlain successive government interventions in rural areas, where a significant proportion of violence has been concentrated and where multiple non-state actors have materialised and become entrenched. However, violence and other conflict harms have impacted Colombian society heterogeneously across space, with regions and localities differentially implicated in national government agendas and geopolitical dynamics, and with life across both urban and rural communities shaped by conflict in myriad ways. Thus, rejecting a simplistic centre-periphery or state absence narrative, this chapter will detail the ways in which the state has exerted a differentiated presence across the national territory (Garcia-Villegas et al., 2016).

Colombia is unique to the extent that no other country in Latin America has been so heavily dominated by two political parties throughout its history. An enduring Liberal/Conservative duopoly and the resultant concentration of power among a small political and economic elite has triggered multiple outbreaks of overt hostilities alongside a persistent structural violence manifested in rural deprivation and land disputes between campesinos, landowners and private industry. Politicians across both parties have utilized a discourse of order and security to incapacitate and delegitimise opposition; employing policies which have re-imagined citizens as tools in the United States' war against communism and, later, terrorism, with a multitude of right-wing paramilitary actors enjoying implicit (and sometimes explicit) state backing. In response, diverse civil society organisations have mobilized in calls for democratization, respect for human

rights and a negotiated end to conflict, drawing on inspiration from collective resistance to neoliberal policies across Latin America. Crucially, as this chapter will argue, said struggles extend beyond calls for political incorporation and a more meaningful citizenship, but instead employ ‘defence of the territory’ as an assertion of their right to self-determination and a rejection of territorial domination by both state *and* non-state actors.

Of course, Colombia’s conflict cannot be understood without the FARC. Their origins are bound up in communist-organised land invasions which, over time, “could not be easily distinguished from armed resistance” (CEDLA 2004, p.68). These communist roots mean that leadership often proposed strategies for obtaining central power through revolutionary victory, while also consistently affirming their commitment to democratic principles. As the guerrilla grew in size and popularity, it also consolidated territorial power in core strongholds, permitting members to undergo extensive ideological training, establish invaluable support networks in and among (mostly rural) communities, and, over time, develop the distinctive *fariano* identity. But while the FARC’s fundamental objective has consistently centred on seizing central power via revolutionary victory, such that previous (failed) peace agreements have prioritised access to national political spaces, this to some extent disregards the guerrilla’s fluid and strategic vacillation between territorial expansion and consolidation, and in a different sense, between party and movement identity.

The chapter is structured as follows. **Section 4.1** explores the major political and geographical tensions underlying Colombia’s immediate post-colonial history and the pivotal events leading to the inception of the FARC. **Section 4.2** covers the conflict’s evolution during the latter part of the twentieth century, including the FARC’s rapid expansion, the first comprehensive peace agenda, decentralizing political reforms and the appearance of narco- and paramilitary structures. **Section 4.3** charts the first decade of the twenty-first century, during which the escalating impact of the conflict on major cities provided the impetus for the election of President Uribe, whose pursuit of all-out military victory left the FARC weakened, reconfigured state-citizen relationships amidst renewed calls from civil society to find a negotiated end to the conflict.

4.1. Conflict Origins

This section covers the period of early nation-building leading to the emergence of the FARC. It begins with tensions between centralists, federalists and separatists, Colombia’s 1886 constitution as the initial basis for understanding state-citizen relations, the enduring and conflictive political

duopoly of the Liberal and Conservative parties, and early U.S. economic and political influence (4.1.1.). It then describes the period known as *La Violencia* (literally ‘the violence’), mounting hostilities between state-led colonization plans and communist-organised land invasions, and the military intervention to re-establish control over so-called ‘independent republics’ (4.1.2). It concludes with an overview of the FARC’s militaristic blueprint, political ideology and social identity, particularly focusing on their relationship to the Colombian Communist Party (4.1.3).

4.1.1. Differentiated State Presence and a Political Duopoly

“We’ve spent a lot of time tackling the consequences of our problems, not the causes. ...Some people say we have to finish the guerrilla, others say no, we have to make peace with them. But these struggles are with the consequences, not with what started it. What started it all, seems stupid ... the segregation of the majority of the country as a result of geography.”

- *Enrique, Professor of Geography, Cali, 4 September 2018.*

For over 200 years Colombian politics has been characterised by an underlying tension between central authority and regional autonomy: a strain directly exacerbated by the country’s size and varied geography. The Viceroyalty of New Granada, originally a jurisdiction of the Spanish empire, comprised an area nearly ten times the UK, encompassing present-day Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Panama, and parts of Suriname, Peru, Guyana and Brazil. The successful liberation campaign, led by Simon Bolivar, fomented a sense of union and shared struggle, resulting in the formation of the independent state, Gran Colombia. The 1821 Constitution of Cúcuta established 12 departments, with Santa Fe de Bogotá (the former Spanish capital) continuing as the seat of government. But divisions between centralists under Bolivar, federalists favouring greater decentralization, and separatists in Venezuela and Ecuador eventually resulted in Bolivar’s resignation and the dissolution of Gran Colombia just a decade later. After several other constitutional variations, including a brief period as the United States of Colombia, the Republic of Colombia was established in 1886. While this laid tensions between centralism, federalism, and separatism to rest – at least in law – they would continue to shape Colombian politics throughout the next century.

If the 1886 Constitution crystallised a shared basis for understanding state-citizen relations, the ongoing process of nation-building was fraught, uneven and calamitous for indigenous

populations living far from the capital. Article 2 defined the state's functions as defending national independence, maintaining territorial integrity and assuring peaceful co-existence and public order, while Article 4 established that the entire territory (and the public goods in/on it) belonged "only to the nation." However, , much of the country was still unexplored at this time: only eight of today's 32 departments were named, with the remaining low-populated distant regions referred to simply as National Territories. The Constitution further granted the President the power to appoint all departmental governorships who in turn appointed all mayors, while central state resources prioritised a few major cities (Bogotá, Medellín and Cali), delegating day-to-day administration of National Territories largely to the Catholic Church (Currie, 2019: p.36). Meanwhile, the *latifundio* system, a direct legacy of the colonial era, had allowed a small political and economic elite to accumulate vast swathes of land, with ongoing colonization cementing rural inequities and devastating indigenous communities. Consequently, despite early civil resistance and calls for recognition of collective land rights, by the end of the nineteenth century indigenous populations in Caquetá and other peripheral regions had been decimated (Ibid: p.34).

Political loyalties and animosities were also inseparable from the process of nation-building. The Conservative and Liberal parties were Colombia's first truly national organisations, and as renowned author Gabriel Garcia Márquez famously commented, people often felt they were 'born' either Liberal or Conservative (Livingstone, 2004: p.62). Each party claimed loyalty across a large area and united people around core ideas and principles, with Conservatives generally favouring centralist government and the Liberals regional autonomy. But these allegiances also exacerbated political instability, divided communities and families and sparked multiple internal conflicts, with presidential elections often serving as the catalyst. This included the 1898 election which Liberals claimed was fraudulent: the resultant Thousand Days War directly led to the death of 100-150,000 people.

A major new factor at the turn of the century, and one which ultimately united Conservatives and Liberals, was the burgeoning political and economic power of the USA. The U.S. government had long planned to connect the Atlantic and Pacific oceans with a waterway, and work on the Panama Canal had initially begun in 1881 in partnership with French industry, though this had been halted because of the high death rate of workers. But in the chaotic aftermath of the Thousand Days War, U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt strategically supported Panamanian separatists' declaration of independence, sending warships to block any Colombian military response. Panama's subsequent secession dealt a severe and enduring national blow to Colombia, yet just a

few decades later U.S. economic influence had become well-established. This was most clearly evidenced in 1928, when in response to an employment dispute between the U.S.-owned United Fruit Company and its Colombian plantation workers, the Colombian government called on the military to violently repress the strike, resulting in the infamous *Bananero Massacre* during which hundreds were killed. In this sense, Colombia's geopolitical positioning and economic dependence on the mass exportation of agricultural products ultimately ensured that Conservatives and Liberals were united in repressing internal challenges to their hegemony.

4.1.2. *La Violencia*, Independent Republics

The first half of the twentieth century began with a lengthy period of Conservative hegemony, but enduring political hostilities eventually culminated in Colombia's most bloody period: *La Violencia*. The spark continues to provoke debate among historians: some trace events to the 1946 presidential election, when the Conservative victory over a divided Liberal party resulted in changes to town council and police leadership, and when Conservative elites encouraged campesinos to seize land from Liberals, setting off violence in rural areas (Livingstone, 2004: p.66). Others points to the assassination of charismatic orator and Liberal party presidential candidate, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, in April 1948. A vocal opponent of violence, proponent of socialist reform and considered a likely future president, Gaitán's death triggered a day of riots in Bogotá leaving much of the city in ruins and hundreds dead, with a "creeping sense of disorder" emanating outwards and triggered uprisings across the country (LaRosa and Mejía, 2012: p.45). Whether *La Violencia* began in the centre or the periphery - the truth is likely a combination - total deaths over the next decade are estimated at 134,000–400,000 (Arjona, 2016: p.89).

La Violencia disrupted an already delicate balance between democracy and security and led to new forms of political repression. Both the police and army employed extra-judicial violence at a massive scale, exacerbating mistrust in the state (Diaz, 2017: p.271). In 1953, General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla mounted a coup d'état, buoyed by the support of both major parties eager to re-establish order, but widespread protests led to his resignation just four years later. The Liberals and Conservatives then reunited to form the National Front, agreeing to alternate presidencies and divide Senate and Congress seats equally regardless of election results. This power sharing arrangement ensured that political authority remained concentrated with Colombia's traditional elite, while also strengthening the government's capacity to suppress opposition or calls for reform.

If devastating for thousands of Colombians, *La Violencia* also provided the conditions for new challenges to Conservative-Liberal hegemony, triggering out-migration to regional cities like Florencia and the emergence of semi-autonomous rural enclaves. The population of Caquetá - at this point still a National Territory - doubled between 1951 and 1964; a “spontaneous colonization” which generated land disputes between campesinos and landowners, with the former now backed by the Colombian Communist Party (*Partido Comunista de Colombia* – PCC) (Currie, 2019: p.49). Based in Bogotá, the PCC had emerged as a major organisational force throughout the 1940s-50s, uniting the urban working class with campesino struggles, supporting land occupations and “establishing a cross-cultural and geographical class-linkage between city and countryside” (Brittain, 2010: p.2). Liberal and communist *guerrilleros* took an even more radical approach, organizing autonomous self-defence groups in a process dubbed “armed colonization” and establishing a number of semi-autonomous rural enclaves, chief among them Marquetalia (in Tolima), Riochiquito (in Cauca), El Pato (in Caquetá) and Guayabero (in Guaviare) (Currie, 2019: p.51). Soon after taking power, Rojas Pinilla had offered a truce to the leaders of these enclaves, but many who surrendered were killed while those who refused became further entrenched. It was during this period that future FARC commanders Manuel Marulanda and Jacobo Arenas first came to prominence in Marquetalia.

To realise its burgeoning internationalist and economic ambitions, the national government needed to re-establish territorial control over the rural enclaves, now disparagingly dubbed ‘independent republics’ by some in Congress. In the wake of the 1959 Cuban Revolution, U.S.-backed military coups had already toppled several leftist governments including in Guatemala (1954), the Dominican Republic (1963) and Brazil (1964), while US-Colombia diplomatic relations had been strengthened. Given prospects for increased trade, National Territories like Caquetá were re-imagined under a logic of expanding productivity (Currie, 2019: p.85). The Caquetá Land Colonization Project, financed through President Kennedy’s Alliance for Progress development plan, reduced the economic viability of products like rice and sugar through which campesinos had sustained livelihoods, instead driving a territorial re-distribution based on mid-size cattle ranches, with Florencia as the commercial centre (Ibid: p.94). Further supported by U.S.-funded *Plan Lazo*, President Guillermo León Valencia (1962-66) launched *Operation Marquetalia*, the first of several military operations against the enclaves, shortly after followed by *Operation Pato* targeting El Pato in Caquetá, with Florencia a secondary military target to ensure regional control. Exploiting this military presence, counter-insurgency measures began to permeate all civic spheres in the city, with the army offering psychological and anti-insurreccional courses in schools and even

encouraging citizens to organise Self-Defence Committees (Currie, 2019: p.158). Yet neither the re-imagining of citizens as active agents in the war against the ‘internal enemy’ nor the direct attacks on the enclaves were sufficient to end regional resistance, as survivors of the Marquetalia attack fled, reunited and formed the FARC’s first structure: the South Block.

4.1.3. From Self-Defense to All Forms of Struggle

In the wake of the Marquetalia attack, FARC leadership developed a centralised, militaristic structure and adjusted their tactics to the demands of a mobile, guerrilla-style conflict (Brittain, 2010: p.15). The base unit was the squadron comprising twelve combatants; two squadrons then made a guerrilla unit, followed in turn by company, column, front and block, though in practice numbers varied depending “on the concrete reality of each front.”³⁵ All blocks were directed by the Central High Command and breach of duty (e.g. laziness, cowardice) was punished through a system of increasingly harsh sanctions, with the most serious misdemeanours (e.g. drug use, failure to obey orders) punished by suspension or obligatory community work (Ugarizza and Quishpe, 2019: p.13). Membership was now a life-long commitment and desertion could even result in a sentence of execution.

While the FARC’s communist origins provided crucial ideological, organisational and strategic underpinnings, over time they developed a solid identity of their own. Traditionally a conservative emblem, the founder of the PCC, Gilberto Viera White, wrote a treatise re-framing Simon Bolivar as a symbol of Latin American solidarity and sovereignty, inspiring multiple revolutionary movements including the 1959 Cuban revolution and the 1988 Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela. The FARC in turn embraced *Bolivarianism* as a central ideological tenet and some leaders were afforded the opportunity to study in Russia and Cuba (including current President Timoleón Jiménez, alias Timochenko), who in turn established a network of training schools where recruits were introduced to core foundational principles through “daily and permanent education”, including discussions on politics, geography, history, music, poetry and current affairs (Ugarizza and Quishpe, 2019: p.13). As most leaders had a direct personal connection to the countryside, the guerrilla’s first independent political agenda was fundamentally rural in scope, centring on an eight-point Revolutionary Agrarian Policy including land titling, investment in health and education, protection of indigenous groups: an overall shift in the rural social structure.³⁶ Still,

³⁵ Interview with Juan Diego, FARC member, 5 June 2019.

³⁶ Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP). 20 July 1964. Programa Agrario de Los Guerrilleros. Available from: <http://cedema.org/ver.php?id=4021> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

communist links allowed for direct recruitment from cities, including Iván Márquez (Chief Negotiator of the 2016 deal) who joined the Communist Youth in Florencia in 1977 before joining the FARC. Over time, these practices permitted for the crystallization of the *fariano* identity as distinct from the PCC, in such a way that nevertheless extended beyond the guerrilla's mostly rural origins to incorporate urban, national and international perspectives.

The PCC statutes establish collective work, democratic decision-making and the combination of legal and illegal actions as guiding principles, each of which the FARC adopted in their own (Arjona, 2016: p.220). Beginning with collectivity, accounts of life in the guerrilla describe a typical day beginning by “eliminating any trace of their existence” from the night before, followed by morning exercise, educational classes, division of tasks (patrolling, combat, community outreach), before ending collectively once again (Brittain, 2010: p.188). Secondly, while the FARC's structure was essentially militaristic, its statutes assert a dual politico-military identity, whereby “every squadron ...is at the same time a political cell” (Article 2), further establishing criticism and self-criticism as core duties of all members (Article 7). Additionally, in adherence to the Marxist-Leninist principle of democratic centralism, leaders introduced a system of National Conferences with decisions taken through ballot, though in practice mid-level commanders (a role undefined in statutes though understood as deputies and commanders of squadrons, companies and fronts) assumed a crucial role in regulating daily life (Shesterinina, 2020). And thirdly, the FARC adopted the “combination of all forms of mass struggle” as their fundamental strategic principle (Article 1), which implied the combination of legal, military and clandestine efforts and building support across urban and rural areas (Rivera and Osorio, 2018: p.40). As this and later chapters will explore, this three-way commitment to collectivity, internal democracy and *todas las formas de lucha* would shape the FARC's evolution over following decades.

4.2. Conflict Evolution and Degradation

“Our war was degraded to the point where the initial objectives were lost.... Imagine, 60 years ... The first generation was clear it was about the land. But the next generations, well, was it about drug trafficking? ...So, this degradation led us, for example, to commit murders, massacres, displacement, to generate something horrible, in which the state was also involved.”

- Enrique, *Professor of Geography, Cali, 6 June 2019.*

This section covers the latter half of the twenty-first century. It begins with limited efforts by successive national governments to integrate rural peripheries, the resultant territorial configuration in Caquetá, the FARC's rapid expansion and the first compressive peace effort under President Betancur (4.2.1). It then turns to the 1991 Constitution and associated decentralizing political reforms, the FARC's relationship with local communities, the new modalities of violence driven by narco-paramilitary structures, and the combination of military confrontation and stalled peace talks which characterised the final years of the century (4.2.2).

4.2.1. *Turbayismo*, the Patriotic Union

Although successive national administrations pursued policies designed to engender territorial and societal unity, rural deprivation endured into the twentieth century, with new clientelist networks further inhibiting structural transformation. Over time, the rise of national media outlets, improvements to transport infrastructure and centralised control of education had allowed for dissemination of knowledge about the country's diverse peoples, and permitted Colombians from distant regions to overcome Colombia's diverse and difficult geographies (La Rosa and Mejia, 2012: p.39). Concerted governmental efforts at territorial integration increased from 1958, after which every government introduced policies to redress rural inequalities and "bring the state" to underinvested regions (López, 2013). However these policies were limited, focusing principally on freeing up state-owned *baldios* (wastelands) without nationalising private property owing to strong opposition from elite interests. Meanwhile, the lack of competition between the two major parties had gradually undermined ideological affinity as the basis of political relationships, with local political elites established new, personal ties predicated on rational instrumentalism - trading votes for material resources. In Caquetá, Hernando Turbay first entered politics in San Vicente del Caguán, becoming Councillor, Intendent, Congressman and finally Senator for Caquetá, and this position straddling national and local politics allowed him to channel state resources through the parliamentary aid system, bypassing the (already limited) local state. Thus, regardless of national government policy, *Turbayismo* represented a governance arrangement whereby access to public funding was only assured through personal loyalties to Hernando Turbay (Currie, 2019: p.135).

Counteracting the rise of *Turbayismo* and other clientelist arrangements, left-wing radical organising continued as the FARC both consolidated power and underwent rapid expansion (see Table 4). During the 1960s, the PCC had allied with a liberal dissident group called the Liberal Revolutionary Movement and secured the election of a Congressman in 1964, while the Caquetá Land

Colonization Project further fomented expectations of public service provision beyond land titling. Caquetá was finally conferred Department status in 1981, granting greater fiscal autonomy and expectations of meaningful representation. These shifts drew together rural and urban sectors in civil strikes, cohering around a new political platform, the Caquetá Democratic Front, which was electorally popular in the first ever municipal council elections in 1985 (Ciro, 2021). Meanwhile, the FARC increased their range of influence from just four municipalities in 1964 to over 100 by 1979, with power concentrated predominantly in rural regions though also including cell structures in major cities like Cali (further discussed in Chapter 8). The guerrilla’s first National Conference (1965) had established seizing power as their ultimate objective, but in 1973 High Command introduced a Secretariat of six members to make quick decisions in a rapidly changing context.³⁷ Then, at their seventh conference in 1982, High Command perceived what they saw as strong support for their cause, particularly in historical strongholds like Caquetá, added ‘People’s Army’ to their name and announced a new plan to surround Bogotá and overthrow the government.

TABLE 4: THE GROWTH OF THE FARC IN MUNICIPALITIES THROUGHOUT COLOMBIA³⁸

Year	Number of municipalities	Percentage of national municipalities
1964	4	0.4%
1970	54	5%
1979	100	9%
1985	173	15%
1991	437	2%
1995	622	59%
1996	800	76%
1999	1,000	95%
2003	1,050	100%

Although the power of the guerrilla was in the ascendancy, FARC maintained direct and indirect communication with government actors at different scales, culminating in the first major attempt at peace under President Betancur. Regionally, Hernando Turbay never publicly denounced the guerrilla; indeed there are accounts of informal dialogues between the two along with evidence of “state decisions, Turbay decisions, that helped the FARC”, including the construction of roads and bridges (Ciro, 2021). At the national level, notwithstanding their ambitious objectives, guerrilla

³⁷ Verdad Abierta, 17 September 2016. *Op cit.*

³⁸ Source: Brittain, 2010

leadership never dismissed finding a negotiated end to the conflict, although two early attempts failed due to lack of credibility (Heinz, 1989: p.251). Ultimately it appeared that both Hernando Turbay and his direct relative, President Turbay Ayala (1978-82) were committed to military victory, with the latter embracing the U.S. anti-communist ‘national security’ and ‘internal enemy’ doctrines and extending military courts’ capacity to judge civilians suspected of subversion. As a result, by 1980 Caquetá was essentially a “territory at war”, with army bases across the region and several commanders implicated in human rights violations (Currie, 2019: p.160). It was only when President Turbay left office that the first comprehensive national peace effort began under President Betancur (1982-86), who called for societal participation in a “historical debate” about the country’s future, further introducing an Amnesty Law and Peace Commission which established new mechanisms for dialogue and formally recognised the FARC as a political actor (Sarmiento, 2013: p.112). Letters were then exchanged in secret between the Betancur government and four guerrilla groups including the FARC, by then Colombia’s largest rural guerrilla, along with the M-19, their largest urban counterpart.

The Betancur peace process is a crucial antecedent to the 2016 agreement and provides insight into the FARC’s vacillation between movement and party identity. Reports indicate that the guerrilla’s ideological leader, Jacobo Arenas, was both sceptical about the government’s credibility – fearing a repeat of the Rojas Pinilla betrayal - and uncertain about the kind of organisation FARC would establish: “Would it be a movement, a party, or both? Who would lead it? How would we organize it? What were its goals... The questions seemed to have few answers” (Dudley 2006: p.56). This reflected Arenas’ own ambiguous political philosophy: in his book *Ceasefire*, Arenas (1984: p.51) describes the state as “an organism that must defend itself, grow and expand: little more than, a tool for capitalist expansion”, while also acknowledging that elections provide an opportunity to debate all aspects of society and are thus potentially transformative. The government’s Peace Envoy encouraged Arenas to be pragmatic, telling him: “You’re not demobilizing. This is just a new type of revolutionary mobilization... a political mobilization without the guns”, further arguing that electoral participation would allow the FARC to “reach the cities” (Dudley, 2006: p.56). Ultimately despite his initial hesitation, Arenas and other leaders signed *Los Acuerdos de La Uribe* on 28 March 1984, for the first time publicly announcing their intention to establish a political party, rather than a movement.

Sadly, the 1980s peace process eventually returned to open conflict, while also revealing the extent of violent opposition which the state would (directly and indirectly) employ against progressive

political forces. FARC's new party, the Patriotic Union, participated in the 1986 Congressional elections, securing five Senate seats and nine in Congress (including Iván Márquez), and 16 seats in the first mayoral elections two years later (Bushell 1993: p.259). But over the following years, approximately 3,500 members including presidential candidates, governors and mayors were assassinated by drug and proto-paramilitary gangs in allegiance with the military. Violence surged in Caquetá as FARC retaliated against *Turbayist* candidates, while the M-19 (which had selected Caquetá as their rural support base) renounced peace and returned to public shock tactics, culminating in the notorious Palace of Justice occupation in November 1985 and further undermining public belief in the FARC's commitment to the deal (Heinz, 1989: p.256). Lacking support in Congress and facing a fiscal crisis, President Barco (1986-1990) withdrew funding for peace programmes and nominated a military governor for Caquetá, who in turn designated a number of military mayors.³⁹ By 1990, violence had all but destroyed the Patriotic Union and a form of militarized clientelism was once again re-established in Caquetá (Ciro, 2021), and Iván Márquez renounced his seat in Congress and took refuge with the guerrilla once again.⁴⁰ This “dark chapter in Colombian history” (Rojas, 2009: p.228) is now recognised by the Colombian Penal Code as political genocide, which a recent investigation reveals had presidential backing.⁴¹

4.2.2. New Constitution, Narco-Trafficking

Despite its ultimate failure, the 1980s peace process heralded a new emphasis on participation as the tool to reformulate state-citizen relations and redress the conflict's underlying drivers. Of course Colombia was not isolated in calls for meaningful societal change; throughout this period countries across Latin America had undergone what Rossi (2017) describes as the “territorialisation of politics”, with parties and movements forming new coalitions, demanding political incorporation and resisting the harmful, spatially-situated effects of neoliberal economic policies including reductions in social spending, environmental degradation and precarious urban working conditions. In Colombia, communities and civil society began employing a human rights discourse to resist displacement and violence (Currie, 2019, p.163) and, in part owing to the dialogues spurred by Betancur's administration, the idea of rewriting the constitution had entered the public consciousness and become widely accepted (Múnera, 1999: p.2-3). In response, President Barco

³⁹ Pares., 4 January 2019. ‘Procesos de Paz en Colombia’, Available from: <https://pares.com.co/2019/01/04/procesos-de-paz-en-colombia/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

⁴⁰ Paris and Salcedo, 22 June 2016, ‘Los Miembros de las FARC que participaron en la mesa de diálogos’ *Pares*. Available from: <https://pares.com.co/2016/06/22/los-miembros-de-las-farc-que-dialogan-con-el-gobierno-nacional-en-la-habana-cuba/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

⁴¹ Justice for Colombia, 20 January 2021, ‘Former Colombian president backed murders of thousands of UP party members’, Available from: <https://justiceforcolombia.org/news/then-colombian-president-backed-extermination-campaign-against-political-party/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

(who had adopted a military regional strategy in Caquetá), secured the disarmament of four guerrilla groups comprising 5,500 combatants, chief among them the M-19. M-19 leadership, who had always enjoyed greater popularity than the FARC, now found themselves as a leading actor within this “wave of renovation”, transitioned to the M-19 Democratic Alliance party and secured 19 representatives in the National Constituent Assembly which would draft a new constitution (Sarmiento, 2013: p.118).

Colombia’s 1991 Constitution reconfigured state-citizen relations in a number of ways that at first seemed promising, but ultimately did not achieve a meaningful democratic opening. The Constitution introduced the *Estado Social de Derecho* (loosely translatable as “Social State of Right”), a juridical order whereby the citizen is the “nucleus”, and “the social is the reason for existence of political powers” (Coleman 2013: p.174). This extended economic, social, cultural and political rights (including the right to public space) and recognised the collective territorial rights of indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. Later statutes of the decade made it easier to establish new parties and political movements and introduced a new territorial designation, the Campesino Reserve Zone, the first of which was established in Caquetá.⁴² Despite these promising legislative changes, the underlying focus on formal political incorporation acted as a centrifugal force, such that the civic and campesino movements of the 1970s now pursued coalitions with traditional parties, disincentivising the use of more contentious repertoires of action, while emerging indigenous and other parties competed amongst each-other for recognition and votes, generating internal antagonisms and a moderation of discourses (Cruz 2017a: p.49). In this sense, although the 1991 constitution demonstrated the potential for civil society to secure collective territorial rights, it ultimately failed to translate into a better environment for social movements to assert their claims (Ibid: p.55).

Throughout this period, political violence became increasingly enmeshed in the narco-trafficking economy, which as geography professor Julian expressed in interview, served as a “conflict detonator” and drove fundamental shifts in territorial distribution.⁴³ Between 1976-1987, Colombia’s cocaine revenues had catapulted from 1 to 4.5 billion US dollars (O’Connor, 2009: p.84) – and given the prospect of massive profit and the low upfront capital required compared with cattle-ranching, urban business-owners started lending campesinos vast amounts of money to set up coca crops. This triggered a “demographic revolution” as the narco-economy began to

⁴² Semillas. August 10, 2011. Primera Zona de Reserva Campesina del país. Available from: <https://www.semillas.org.co/es/primer-zona-de-reserva-campesina-del-pa> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

⁴³ Interview with Julian, Geography professor, Bogota, 22 August 2019.

permeate the entire social fabric of Florencia and the wider region (Currie, 2019: p.119-120). After an initial hesitance, FARC leadership eventually perceived the financial significance of the coca market and secured dominance over regional commercialisation and distribution, just as these same drug revenues financed new paramilitary organisations whose members often had personal vendettas against the guerrilla. Fidel Castaño is a leading example: his father had been killed by the FARC and, after leaving the infamous Medellín Cartel (discussed further in Chapter 6), he founded the Peasant Self-Defense Forces of Córdoba and Urabá (*Autodefensas Campesinas de Córdoba y Urabá* - ACCU), targeting both guerrilla members and civilians suspected of collusion. After Fidel's death, his brother Carlos grouped several paramilitary structures into the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* - AUC), which counted 30,000 fighters at its peak and pushed the FARC out of several strongholds (Gill 2008, p.135). Rather than political ideology, conflict was now increasingly characterised by competition for territorial dominance to ensure access to the profits of the drug market.

The extent of the FARC's (un)popularity during this period is a subject of ongoing debate. Evidence indicates they required 2-3 supporters for every combatant and relied heavily on community support networks, establishing varied militia structures in rural communities which provided crucial information and resources (Dudley, 2006: p.241). In practice, however, guerrilla-community relationships were typically quite fuzzy, as one religious leader in San Vicente del Caguán asserted: "Between guerrilla and non-guerrilla, there's every shade of grey" (in Garcia-Villegas et al., 2016: p.90). Moreover, in the wake of decentralizing reforms, evidence indicates FARC tried to "capture local democracy", targeting Community Action Boards (*Juntas de Acción Comunal* – JAC), the basic unit of rural social organization which had acquired new functions and competencies within territorial administration (Arjona, 2016: p.242). In some instances these relationships were based on mutual agreement, with FARC and JAC members jointly regulating social conflicts through 'coexistence manuals' and organising community projects, as one JAC member explained: "...if you went to my region [Caquetá], you could move where you liked ... we created a small government with the FARC... we learnt to build roads, gutters, all the social work we needed to sustain ourselves" (in Nussio and Quisphe, 2018: p.10). Still, the guerrilla undeniably employed intimidation, threats, vetoes and assassination, and violence became a major driver of collective actions including strategic displacements, informal humanitarian agreements, legal recourses and protests (Roldán, 2014; Gormally et. al. 2016; Moncayo, 2014, Garcia-Duran and Sarmiento, 2015). Indigenous communities were often at the forefront of direct opposition; as Arjona (2016: p.151) reports, one mid-level FARC commander complained that it was "useless"

to fight them. In sum, support for FARC varied significantly as the dynamics of guerrilla governance and community responses were spatially heterogeneous, varying even between neighbouring villages.

The 1990s saw FARC and the national government adopt stances that nominally indicated a willingness to find peace, yet always nested within an overarching and diversifying military strategy. President Gaviria (1990-94) first introduced individual reintegration support for deserters in the absence of a peace agreement; a policy which all future governments would maintain as a tool for reducing the FARC's numbers. He also launched Operation Casa Verde with the dual objectives of defeating the FARC and eradicating coca production. Using aerial satellites and deserters' testimonies, the military targeted strategic and symbolic sites including the homes of Manuel Marulanda and Jacobo Arenas, lecture halls and logistical stores, and though FARC suffered only minor casualties, the army captured documents revealing their growing financial dependence on narco-trafficking.⁴⁴ In response FARC adjusted both their tactics and structures, employing ambushes on police and military targets and forming new 'mobile columns', including the infamous Teófilo Forero which consisted of 600 elite fighters under the command of *El Paisa* (discussed further in Chapter 6).⁴⁵ Never wholly blind to the public mood, FARC used peace dialogues with Gaviria to affirm that any eventual deal needed widespread societal support, even proposing Regional Dialogues to effectively incorporate public opinion, but these talks broke down shortly after and leadership later re-affirmed their vision to establish the 'state of Caquetania' across Meta, Caquetá, Guaviare and Putumayo.⁴⁶ Overall, just as the government were guilty of employing DDR within their overarching military strategy, analysis indicates that the FARC pursued peace dialogues as "a tactic of peace inside a strategy of war."⁴⁷

4.3. Twenty-First Century Conflict

This section explores the conflict's evolution at the turn of the twenty-first century. It begins with the failed Caguán peace process under President Andres Pastrana; the clear and growing impact of the conflict on Colombia's major cities; the creation of new clandestine structures and the election of President Duque (4.3.1). It then turns to explore the impact of Duque's military and

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ CINEP, 2019. Caquetá. Rastreo de una barbarie silenciada. Page 14. Available from: <https://www.cinep.org.co/publicaciones/en/producto/caso-tipo-15-caqueta-rastreo-de-una-barbarie-silenciada/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

⁴⁶ Vélez, J. 15 May 2017. 'El regreso de Iván Márquez al Sur', *La Silla Vacía*. <https://lasillavacia.com/historia/el-regreso-de-ivan-marquez-al-sur-60872>

⁴⁷ Fundación ideas para la paz., 1 October 2008., 'Una mirada atrás: procesos de paz y dispositivos de negociación con el Gobierno Colombiano'. Page 27. Available from: <http://www.ideaspaz.org/publications/posts/100> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

civic strategies on the FARC and on state-citizen relationships; scandals which revealed the state's complicity in human rights violations, and growing demands from civil society to find a negotiated end to the conflict (4.3.2).

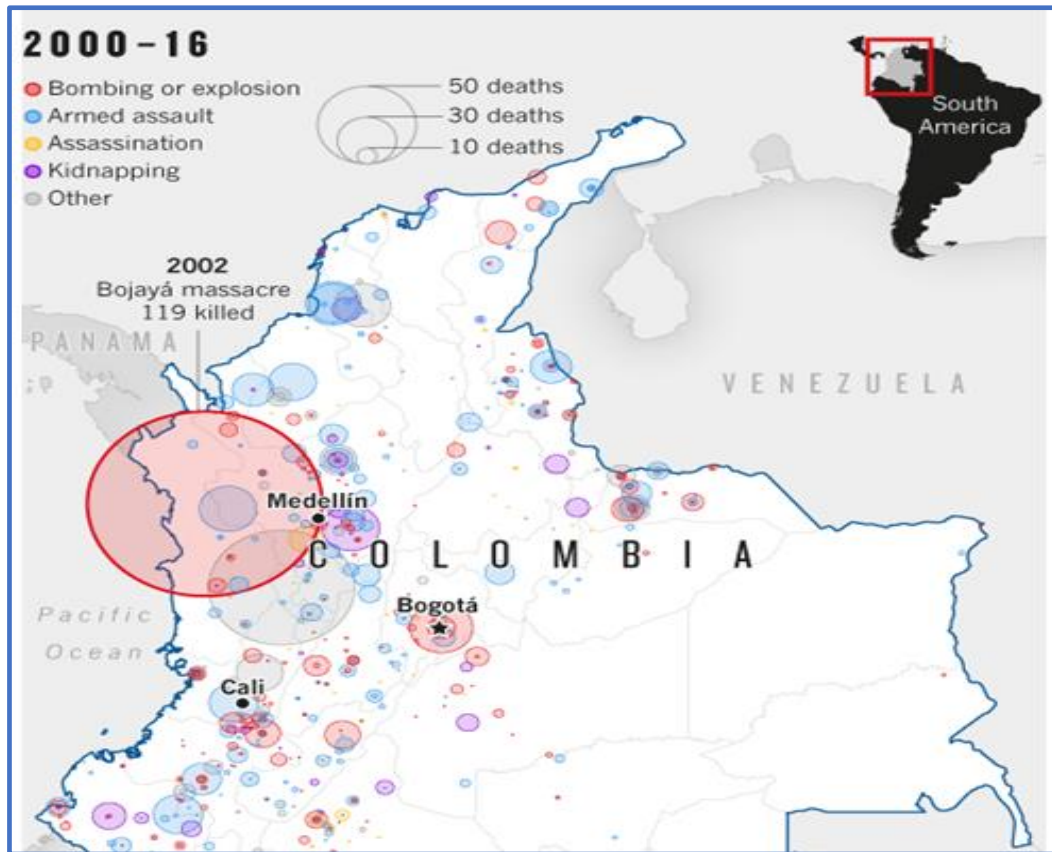
4.3.1. Caguán, Cities and Clandestinity

The end of the twentieth century heralded Colombia's most serious attempt at securing peace to date, and its spectacular failure and chaotic aftermath made clear that the conflict was no longer a marginal issue, but impacted urban and rural communities alike. President Andres Pastrana (1998-2002) held talks with the FARC in San Vicente del Caguán, Caquetá, establishing a 42,000km² demilitarized zone in the surrounding area. Like Florencia, the town also served as a base for coca commercialisation, and guerrilla leadership, suspicious about the government's intentions, used the truce to consolidate power over drug-trafficking routes and recruit new members, raising their total forces to 20,000 (Ugarizza and Quishpe, 2019: p.19). Then in December 2000, during a break in negotiations, members of the fourteenth front assassinated Congressman Diego Turbay Cote, son of Hernando Turbay and president of the Peace Commission.⁴⁸ This and other procedural issues undermined the process which ended shortly thereafter; a breakdown which was widely perceived as a government failure and with some even fearing an eventual split between the Colombian Republic, the Republic of Caguán and the Republic of the Medio Magdalena where paramilitaries were now well-embedded (Watson, 2019: p.600). The ensuing revival of conflict exacerbated rural-urban displacement and kidnappings on major road networks and, in April 2002, members of a FARC mobile column disguised as soldiers kidnapped 12 deputies from the Valle del Cauca departmental assembly in Cali. These and other acts (including the infamous Bojayá massacre – see Figure 4) further undermined the guerrilla's popular support and affirmed that life for the urban middle classes was not wholly divorced from the conflict.

FIGURE 4: CONFLICT DEATHS AND CAUSES (2002-2016)⁴⁹

⁴⁸ BBC Mundo, 29 December 2000, 'Asesinado mediador de la paz en Colombia' Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/spanish/news/news001229colombia2.shtml> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

⁴⁹ Source: Rearon, 2018. Colombia: after the violence. Available from: <https://www.nature.com/immersive/d41586-018-04976-7/index.html> [last accessed 5 May 2021].



During this period the FARC concertedly switched their attention to cities in new ways. After the genocide of the Patriotic Union and their official split from the PCC in 1993, the guerrilla were left with limited capacity to connect with urban politics. In response, Alfonso Cano – their foremost ideological leader after Jacobo Arenas’ death in 1990 - founded the Bolivarian Movement for a New Colombia (*Movimiento Bolivariano por una Nueva Colombia*, MB) and later the Clandestine Colombian Communist Party (*Partido Comunista Clandestino Colombiano* - PCCC). The former was envisaged as a broad-based political movement, incorporating “everyone dissatisfied with the government, like communists, anarchists, and socialists - everything fits,”⁵⁰ while the latter was envisaged as “a party for war...a party for participating in all forms of struggle.”⁵¹ Furthermore, although FARC launched the MB in a public act with more than 30,000 campesinos across Caquetá in attendance, and each organisation counted on guerrilla support and resources, both structures were designed to operate clandestinely in order to minimise the risks incurred by open affiliation with the guerrilla.⁵² As later chapters will develop further, the creation of these structures clearly

⁵⁰ Interview with Rory, Former FARC member and current ARN employee, 30 May 2019.

⁵¹ El Tiempo, 29 April 2000, ‘Nace el Movimiento Bolivariano de las FARC’. Available from: <https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-1291569> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

⁵² Ibid.

indicates the FARC's growing orientation towards securing urban influence long before the most recent peace negotiations.

The clear and growing urban impact of the conflict combined with geopolitical shifts paved the way for President Alvaro Uribe's (2002-2010) election victory; a result which would shape the course of the conflict over the next decade. Decentralizing reforms were such that mayors of major cities were no longer appointed, but came into view as prominent political figures in their own right. Meanwhile, by the turn of the century, the FARC were the longest-running insurgency in Latin America, and Colombia remained the strongest U.S. ally in the continent. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and attack on the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001, the global threat of communist revolution was replaced with that of global terrorism, and the U.S. State Department added the FARC to its list of proscribed terrorist organisations; a claim given more weight by the increased Álvaro Uribe Vélez combined these developments; as Mayor for Medellín and later Senator for Antioquia, he developed a reputation for toughness, dismissing the FARC's ideological underpinnings by instead calling them terrorists and "the biggest drug cartel in the world."⁵³ If elected president, he promised to defeat them militarily, re-establish state control over the entire national territory and re-position Colombia as an attractive destination for international financial capital (Rojas, 2009). The election was heavily contested and the FARC tried to assassinate Uribe, placing a bomb in a bus along the route of his campaign convoy which killed three people and wounded 13 more, but Uribe survived and won in the first round with 53% of the vote.⁵⁴ Three years later, Congress passed a constitutional modification allowing presidents to serve two terms, in order to overcome what was increasingly seen as a short-term, improvised approach to redressing the conflict.⁵⁵ Backed by the U.S. multi-billion-dollar Plan Colombia and significant national spending, the incoming Uribe administration would now potentially have eight years to defeat the FARC.

4.3.2. Democratic Security and a Semantic Revolution

Increased anti-insurgency spending under President Uribe dealt the FARC severe blows and forced a number of adaptations. The military now enjoyed access to advanced satellite technology, installing GPS chips into radio equipment in towns known to be under guerrilla influence.⁵⁶

⁵³ Alvaro Uribe, cited in Deutsche Welle, 26 December 2016 'Colombia's cocaine, who will take charge now', Available from: <https://www.dw.com/en/colombias-cocaine-who-will-take-charge-now/a-36915853> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

⁵⁴ BBC News, 28 July 2010. 'Profile: Alvaro Uribe Vélez', Available from: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-10788697> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

⁵⁵ Fundación ideas para la paz., 1 October 2008., *op cit.* Page 27.

⁵⁶ Interview with Ronalto, Agua Bonita, 17 August 2018.

Concerted aerial bombardments left the guerrilla weakened, as one interviewee explained: “the hardest blows we received were by air, not by land,”⁵⁷ and even making a phone call was considered “suicidal”⁵⁸, particularly in remote regions where signals could be easily tracked. In response to these threats, leadership curtailed external communications such that South Block combatants adopted the saying “He who loves his family doesn’t call them”⁵⁹; tried to “slow down” the conflict by refraining from overt confrontations and embedding themselves into criminal networks in partnership with Ecuadorian and Mexican drugs cartels, amidst increased reliance on Venezuela as a strategic rear-guard and sanctuary for High Command.⁶⁰ Additionally, the recruitment upsurge during the Caguán dialogues had created a large swathe of poorly trained members, and fearing widespread desertion, leadership re-emphasised political and socio-cultural practices in order to keep recruits “occupied from one moment to the next” (Ugarizza and Quishpe, 2019: p.20). But continual aerial attacks directly impeded these efforts: “We couldn’t stay for long anywhere. And so political education became problematic because we were dying. Of course militarily, you are in military activity, so in good times and bad you are training, but the political side is something different. It requires a certain tranquillity and stability.”⁶¹ Desertion rates and death in combat were such that between 2002-2012, total numbers reduced from a peak of 20,000 to just 8,000 (Ibid).

President Uribe’s administration contributed to a fundamental re-orientation of national politics amidst multiple scandals which pointed to the state’s direct complicity in extra-legal violent repression. No longer defined by the Conservative/Liberal duopoly of prior decades, a number of parties surfaced in the wake of the 1991 Constitution;⁶² now added to these were the Alternative Democratic Pole, established in opposition to Uribe’s economic and militarization policies, and the Social Party of National Unity, founded to unite Uribe supporters for his 2006 re-election. A key feature of Uribe’s brand of governance around which these parties now defined themselves (either in favour or opposition) was Democratic Security, a framework for state-citizen relations described by Rojas (2009: p.232) as a kind of “voluntary obedience” in return for protection, imagining civil society as active participants in the war who could be expected to participate by “pointing their fingers”. Later studies reveal numerous incidents of violent repression by Mobile Anti-Riot Squads, torture, forced displacement, assassination of innocent civilians as a result of

⁵⁷ Interview with Horacio, Cali, 16 October 2019.

⁵⁸ Iriarte, R. C., 15 August 2017, ‘Colombia’s path from revolution to social media campaign’. MobilisationLab <https://mobilisationlab.org/stories/colombia-path-revolution-whatsapp/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

⁵⁹ FARC member, cited in ‘Guerrilleras. Testimonios de cinco combatientes de las FARC’ (2018, p.67). Available from: <https://partidofarc.com.co/farc/download/guerrilleras-testimonios-de-cinco-combatientes-de-las-farc/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

⁶⁰ Hernandez-Mora, S. 8 March 2013, ‘Las FARC y Chávez, una alianza pendiente de la continuidad del chavismo’. <https://www.elmundo.es/america/2013/03/07/colombia/1362684353.html> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

See also Fundación ideas para la paz, 2018. *Op. cit.* p.91.

⁶¹ Interview with Horacio; FARC representative, Departmental Reincorporation Roundtable, 16 October 2019.

⁶² E.g. the Independent Social Alliance and the Indigenous Authorities of Colombia.

the army's 'body count' system which paid soldiers based on confirmed kills, and direct connections between paramilitary actors and dozens of sitting congressmen.⁶³ The fact that, amidst these scandals, *Uribismo* materialized as its own distinct political ideology supports the view of Uribe as the most divisive political figure in Colombian history.

Despite the atmosphere of political repression, regional mobilizations for peace actually increased during Uribe's presidency, and Cali and the surrounding Cauca region became known as a leading reference point nationally. A 2008 *minga* organised by the Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca (CRIC) united 50-60,000 indigenous people, campesinos, Afro-Colombian cane cutters, urban *barrio* associations and human rights activists in opposition to the government's militarization policies which had left communities "immobilized" (Zibechi, 2012: p.301). Rival politicians accused the CRIC of FARC infiltration, but after a video of police shooting protestors circulated in international media, Uribe released a televised speech offering an alternative account before suggesting a meeting in the departmental capital of Popayán. But protestors were already on route to Cali and rejected a meeting on the president's terms; a direct challenge to the government's unidirectional style of communication (Cruz, 2017a: p.52-3). The next year the National and International Meeting for Humanitarian Agreement and Peace took place in Cali, providing the main antecedent for the 100,000-person Patriotic March on Bogotá in July 2010. Organised to coincide with the 200-year anniversary of independence, protestors demanded a negotiated end to conflict, comprehensive rural reform and rejected the government's new infrastructural megaprojects in favour of territorial autonomy: only then, they argued, could Colombia achieve a "second independence."⁶⁴ The march eventually coalesced into the Patriotic March movement, representing 1,471 organisations across 28 departments with one analyst noting: "it's going to be an important movement... with respect to peace, because it's related with FARC zones of influence."⁶⁵ Beyond peace, however, these varied mobilizations showed that a 'semantic revolution' was underway, as protestors drew on wider Latin American inspiration to put forward concepts including *buen vivir*⁶⁶, interculturality, decolonization, a dignified life, sovereignty, and right to the territory (Ibid: p.54-5).

⁶³ Colombia Reports, 14 June 2019, 'Extrajudicial executions'. Available from: <https://colombiareports.com/false-positives/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

⁶⁴ Osorio, C. 19 April 2012, 'Marcha Patriótica, la nueva izquierda que nace con un estigma' *La Silla Vacía*. Available from: <https://lasillavacia.com/historia/marcha-Patriotica-la-nueva-izquierda-que-nace-con-un-estigma-32748> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ The concept of *buen vivir* [also referred to as *sumak kawsay*] centres on human-nature relations and has become increasingly influential in debates on economic and environmental sustainability, particularly in Latin America (see Vanhulst, 2015).

4.3. Conclusion

This chapter has explored the main drivers behind Colombia's conflict, first showing how tensions between central authority, regional autonomy and calls for separate statehood permeated the process of nation-building. National governments consistently focused their resources on major cities, delegating responsibility of peripheral regions to local actors which established and enforced heterogeneous and informal governance structures. These regions served as a refuge for displaced conflict victims, landless campesinos and communist organisers, but were later re-imagined under a logic of development transforming territorial dynamics and exacerbating both rural poverty and urban precarity. The boom in the narco-trafficking economy reconfigured the territory once again, further undermining the prospect for peace by creating an economic basis for organised violence and reducing the significance of any single actor. In regions like Caquetá, a distinctive interweaving of national government policy, geopolitical dynamics and local resistance created the conditions for *Turbayismo*, a militarized clientelism which essentially operated as an extension of the conflict. Overall, a full understanding of the conflict extends beyond a simplistic centre-periphery dichotomy and must recognise, firstly, that the state's influence has been felt *through* its absence (Currie, 2019), and, secondly, that violence and other harms have impacted the Colombian territory and its people in a heterogeneous fashion, creating "different patterns of being and relating" at the local level (Arjona, 2016: p.2).

Traditional party allegiances have united Colombians nationally and divided them locally, with elections often sparking violence and in turn justifying democratic restrictions. Armed resistance provided the impetus for U.S. political influence and the framing of state-citizen relations within an anti-communist and later anti-terrorist rationale, as successive governments sought not just to defeat the guerrilla militarily but to separate them from their support base. The failed 1980s peace process gave birth to the Patriotic Union, spurring new challenges to traditional parties' hegemony in regions like Caquetá, though the status quo was ultimately re-established in the wake of a massive assassination campaign. Ongoing calls for political inclusion culminated in the 1991 Constitution, heralding an end to the Conservative/Liberal duopoly, but this did not usher the hoped-for political renovation, instead spurring internal tensions, solidifying local clientelist networks and generating new coalitions between political and criminal actors seeking to capture local democracy. The 'internal enemy' doctrine was renewed under President Uribe's Democratic Security framework, while aerial bombardment and concerted investment in DDR left the FARC

weakened, de-territorialised and with numbers massively reduced. Still, this period also witnessed major mobilizations organised from below, drawing on Latin American inspiration and cutting across scales and sectors to demand a negotiated end to conflict. This ‘semantic revolution’ (Cruz 2017a) shows that while Colombia does represent a paradox in many respects, it has not been divorced from territorial struggles elsewhere in the world.

The FARC evolved from the military wing of the Colombian Communist Party to an independent guerrilla group with its own doctrines, structures, and socio-cultural identity. Leaders drew inspiration from Latin American revolutionary movements and continued to view the leading figures of those struggles as direct allies.⁶⁷ Even in their strongholds they relied heavily on community support, establishing governance arrangements which, if authoritarian, were often “the only authority that existed” (Garcia-Villegas et al., 2016: p.13). Their gradual independence from the PCC and development of their own norms led to a fundamental shift to rural power bases, and they showed an uncanny ability to adapt by creating mobile structures, clandestine networks and international alliances, and strategic use of peace talks as “a space of consolidation” and tool for indirect communication with Colombian society.⁶⁸ Yet even after successive failures, leadership were consistent in espousing elections as a tool for structural transformation and to ensure urban and national influence. Overall, the FARC’s centralized structure somewhat disguises their highly heterogenous impact over space and vacillation between territorial consolidation and expansion over time.

In sum, analysis in this chapter shows that the government’s consistent incapacity or unwillingness to establish full sovereignty has led to a fundamental view of Colombia’s rural territories as a repository which must be ‘filled’ (Piazzini Suarez, 2018), that territory has served as a discourse and ‘space of resistance’, through which communities and movements have asserted claims to self-governance (Possi, 2015), and that FARC have strategically pursued territorial expansion and consolidation, building close alliances with communities and even loose pragmatic arrangements with local state actors, while also forced to compete for territorial dominance among an increasingly fragmented web of violent actors. The next chapter will analyse the extent to which territorial peace met the many impediments to sustaining peace raised in this chapter through analysing the origins and negotiation of the 2016 agreement.

⁶⁷ Puglarín Cabellos, L. C., 24 December 2016, ‘Yo estuve en una zona de pre agrupamiento de las FARC EP’ *Democracia en la Red*. Available from: <http://www.democraciaenlared.com/2016/12/yo-estuve-en-una-zona-de-pre.html> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

⁶⁸ Verdad Abierta, 18 November 2012, ‘Acuerdos del cese al fuego entre 1984 y 1986 con las FARC, el M-19, el EPL y la ADO’. Available from: <https://verdadabierta.com/acuerdos-del-cese-al-fuego-entre-1984-y-1986-con-las-farc-el-m-19-el-epl-y-la-ado/> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

CHAPTER 5. TERRITORIAL PEACE: THE EMERGENCE OF A CONCEPT

This chapter explores the negotiation of the 2016 peace agreement between the FARC and the Colombian government. Rather than present a full outline of the agreement's final contents, the aim is to explore 'territorial peace' as a guiding framework through which the government would overcome the conflict's major drivers as outlined in the previous chapter, and the alternative ideas and meanings which FARC negotiators and civil society participants inscribed into the concept. In doing so, I lay the groundwork for precise analysis of the dynamics of the reincorporation process in Chapters 6-8.

The chapter is structured as follows. **Section 5.1.** covers the development of the 'territorial peace' concept as it relates to integrating the country's conflict-affected regions and promoting rural development. It centres on the early period of secret negotiations, when the parties established the overarching aim of ending the conflict, followed by the main negotiations in Habana, Cuba, when President Santos drew on international peacebuilding concepts to promote a vision of a prosperous economic future, while FARC and civil society challenged this state-centric, developmentalist approach and instead inscribed alternative visions centring on autonomy and self-determination. The core argument is that territorial peace promised a differentiated approach, yet -as the previous chapter made clear- nevertheless extended from a long history of prior interventions. **Section 5.2** then explores discussions on the agreement's second chapter pertaining to political participation, which coincided with regional mobilizations in opposition to the government's forced coca eradication policy and its broader development agenda. Here I show how negative publicity surrounding violent repression of these protests ultimately forced Santos to break from his commitment to separate peace dialogues from his military strategy, while FARC negotiators demonstrated their allegiance to campesinos by drawing on their ideas within negotiations. I also explore Santos' announcement of a referendum to ratify the agreement, followed by his close-run 2014 re-election campaign; the first clear sign that not everyone supported his vision of territorial peace as a unifying societal project.

Section 5.3. deals with the imagined role of the FARC in a post-conflict Colombia. It shows how the success of prior governmental use of DDR left the guerrilla's negotiating team eager to avoid being subject to standard reintegration, eventually agreeing to a six-month process of disarmament and early *reincorporation* in transitionary camps. I show that the final agreement left much

unresolved, while also introducing a distinction between the socio-economic reincorporation of the rank-and-file (a rural process) and the political reincorporation of leadership (an urban process); a distinction made still more evident by efforts to build support with urban middle classes during the 2016 referendum campaign. I then explore how political opposition to the FARC's involvement in politics (and other aspects of the deal) coalesced around the still-prominent figure of former President Uribe, and how violence and stigmatization against sympathetic political forces inhibited alliance-building and made clear the enduring toxicity of the FARC 'brand'. These factors culminated in a surprise victory for 'No' in the referendum, setting the stage for ongoing polarization in the post-agreement period.

5.1. Territorial Integration and Rural Development

The emergence of 'territorial peace' as a guiding doctrine for the 2011-2016 negotiations can be traced to President Juan Manuel Santos' (2010-2018) desire to avoid previous governmental failures, boost Colombia's international standing and secure its future economic prosperity. Santos had formerly served as Minister of Defence under President Uribe and, for this reason, was expected to continue with his predecessor's all-out military strategy. But Santos was acutely aware of the vast sums of financial capital flowing to Colombia's Latin American neighbours, and his administration's first National Development Plan (2010-2014) affirms an "incomparable confidence ... [in]... transforming [Colombia] into an emerging economy, attractive for investment and tourism", further introducing a series of 'locomotives' to drive a new era of economic growth.⁶⁹ To achieve this vision, Santos sought to disarm the FARC rather than defeat them militarily, and thereby ensure direct state access to the country's peripheral regions through a decentralized peace agenda. This is clearly reflected in the government's Vision for Rural Reform: "we must improve land use...A good part of Colombian lands aren't being used productively" (Biblioteca Proceso de Paz Volume 2, 2012: p.39).

Of course, the Santos government was not the first to pursue a decentralized peace agenda predicated on territorial integration and rural development. During the 1980s process, President Betancur introduced new laws which shifted competencies and functions to the municipal level, further implementing a National Rehabilitation Plan designed to increase social investment in rural regions and bring those communities closer to the state through active participation. Indeed, in

⁶⁹ Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2010-2014. "Prosperidad para todos" Resumen Ejecutivo. Page 1. Available from: <https://colaboracion.dnp.gov.co/CDT/PND/Resumen%20Ejecutivo%20Ultima%20Version.pdf> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

analysing the ultimate failures of the process, Betancur's interior minister Jaime Castro called for further political decentralization (Heinz 1989: p.252); a suggestion which Betancur's successor, President Barco, fully embraced in his own national peace agenda which also prioritised regional development. Following this, the 1991 Constitution and associated decentralizing reforms had heralded a new age of city governance, beginning with Medellín's Integrated Slum Upgrading Program (*Programa Integral de Mejoramiento de Barrios Subnormales en Medellín – PRIMED*), an urban renewal initiative established to overcome violence and reduce poverty by socially and materially incorporating the city's peripheral barrios through a comprehensive, community-oriented approach. In this sense, as Stienen (2020) argues, the government's conception of territorial peace as a tool for reformulating state-citizen relationships and integrating peripheral regions is directly traceable to these prior initiatives.

If territorial peace was not a wholly new endeavour, international inspiration unarguably shaped the concept (and process) in ways which set the 2016 agreement apart from prior negotiations. Sergio Jaramillo, High Commissioner for Peace (2012-16), played a leading role in setting out the government's ostensibly more informed and comprehensive approach. During speeches to national and international audiences, Jaramillo (2016) rejected the short-term 'peace-making' of prior administrations wherein agencies landed "like Martians among the communities." He instead called for a long-term, differentiated peacebuilding approach predicated on consensus-building, recognising that "the conflict has affected some territories more than others" and further accounting for the FARC's pre-existing "authoritarian and insufficient" governance arrangements (Ibid). In a 2019 interview, Santos also explains that he studied peace agreements in Israel, Northern Ireland and South Africa and noted the pivotal role of international oversight in securing an agreement.⁷⁰ He turned to Jonathan Powell, formerly Chief Negotiator for the Good Friday agreement, who proposed the idea of 'compatible narratives' to overcome divergent interpretations of peace through agreeing a common goal: ending the conflict in its entirety (Diaz et al., 2021). In this respect, territorial peace was inherently designed to be a 'fuzzy' concept which would ensure the FARC remained at the negotiating table by appealing to their historically agrarian policy aspirations, while limiting the extent of structural economic reform (Cairo and Rios, 2018; Diaz et al., 2021).

⁷⁰ Juan Manuel Santos, cited in Georgetown and Latin America, 4 March 2019, 'Former President Juan Manuel Santos Discusses Peace Process in Colombia'. Available from: <https://latinamerica.georgetown.edu/features/former-president-juan-manuel-santos-discusses-peace-process-in-colombia> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

The FARC were not blind to the underlying economic rationale behind Santos' decision to negotiate, but having suffered significant military blows in preceding years, ultimately took a pragmatic stance. Having agreed to secret exploratory discussions with government representatives in 2011, one member noted that “before it didn't matter that in the jungle, far from the cities, there was an insurgency resisting. Now it matters because they need these places to develop large mining projects, because it's where the natural resources are.”⁷¹ Another negotiator, Marcus Calarcá (a key figure in Chapter 8), dismissed the government's focus on the “problem of guns” as merely the “expression” of a structural problem with an underlying “economic, political, and social” basis. By highlighting the state's complicity in paramilitary violence in this way – at one point hypothetically asking “Who gives the orders?”⁷² – Calarcá and other FARC members rejected the common ‘state absence’ explanation for conflict, a critique similarly expressed by Ballvé (2012), who argues that paramilitary structures are not separate from, but a direct extension of, liberal statehood, as well as Stienen's (2020) argument that urban governance policies disguised a hidden agenda to assert state dominance and prevent guerrilla groups from establishing territorial footholds. Still, it appears that FARC negotiators were realistic about the extent of structural reform that peace could offer, and thus essentially sought to achieve “the maximum number of changes possible” through dialogues.⁷³ Hence, in August 2012 the government released a public statement announcing that they would proceed with full negotiations in Cuba.

If the emphasis on state-citizen relations allowed civil society to inscribe alternative meanings into territorial peace, the final agreement's rural reform measures bely a clear economic orientation. Sergio Jaramillo was familiar with bottom-up peacebuilding perspectives including Lederach's (2005) notion of closing the ‘distance’ between the state and communities, and called on Colombians to collectively participate in an “act of imagination.” To this end, the government convened a series of participatory fora through which diverse civil society actors would inform the deal. During the 2012 Agrarian Development Forum, the first of these spaces, participants offered multiple perspectives: while the National Agricultural Association of Colombia praised the government's economic approach, others argued that extractivism exacerbated rural-urban inequities and fuelled structural violence, instead proposing concepts like *buen vivir*, food sovereignty, and the right to the city.⁷⁴ The final agreement somewhat reflects this more expansive

⁷¹ FARC Member, cited in: Colectivo Viktoria, 25 June 2016, ‘Hablan las FARC-EP’, Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rh1RUOUuhks&t=10st> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ United Nations and Universidad Nacional de Colombia., 13 April 2018., ‘Foro Política de Desarrollo Agrario Integral (Enfoque Territorial)’, 17-19 December, 2012. Informe y Balance General. [Page 46, 67]. Available from: https://www.co.undp.org/content/colombia/es/home/library/democratic_governance/foro-politica-de-desarrollo-agrario-integral-enfoque-territorial [last accessed 5 May 2021].

view, defining territory with reference to social and cultural diversity and calling on communities to play a leading role in realizing “structural transformation” and an “equitable relationship between the countryside and the city.”⁷⁵ This is to be achieved through Territorially Focused Development Programmes (PDET), a scheme which targets 16 sub-regions selected on the basis of poverty, violence, limited state presence and illicit crop cultivations, collectively comprising 36% of the national territory. These PDETs (which include Caquetá – see Chapter 6) would receive \$79bn pesos of investment (equivalent to 60% of the entire peace budget), allocated through a sequential, multi-scalar participatory process centring on eight thematic pillars and resulting in a collective “territorial vision” (CEPDIPO, 2020: p.3). While this scheme received praise from Gutiérrez Sanín (2019: p.314) as “sensible and progressive”, Arturo Escobar critiqued the pre-defined nature of the pillars, warning that “a more lasting territorial peace would have to begin by being consulted with the population.”⁷⁶

5.2. Political Participation (and Polarization)

The second topic of discussion in Habana concerned political participation, about which government and FARC negotiators appeared to express a similar fundamental conception. For one member of the FARC team, their basic goal was to achieve the “minimum conditions” such that people could freely and safely express their political views: “come on, I think like this, don't kill me... I want to build a country like this, let's not shoot each other.”⁷⁷ Similarly for Sergio Jaramillo, the deal had to re-establish a “basic rule of society” whereby violence is never used to promote or repress political ideas.⁷⁸ This latter view aligned with territorial peace as a necessarily participatory project, as indicated by the concerted inclusion of civil society in discussions which, Jaramillo (2016) assured, did not end once the deal was signed but had to be carried forward into implementation.

If territorial peace was to be achieved through - and engender - democratic participation, the government's commitment to separate dialogues from ongoing military interventions appeared to disregard more contentious collective expressions of community needs. Seeking to break from prior failures (particularly the Caguán process), discussions had not been predicated on a ceasefire

⁷⁵ Centro de Memoria Histórica., *Op. cit.* Page 7, Page 21 21.

⁷⁶ Salgar, D., 14 September 2017. ‘Arturo Escobar: Los acuerdos de paz son una puerta para repensar a Colombia más allá del desarrollo’, <https://www.aa.com.tr/es/mundo/arturo-escobar-los-acuerdos-de-paz-son-una-puerta-para-repensar-a-colombia-m%C3%A1s-all%C3%A1-del-desarrollo/910296> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

⁷⁷ FARC Member, cited in: Colectivo Viktoria, 2016. Hablan las FARC-EP [online]. [Viewed 6 August 2020]. Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rh1RUOUuhks&t=10s>.

⁷⁸ Jaramillo, S. 19 March 2014. ‘The Transition in Colombia and the Process to Build a Territorial Peace’, Harvard Carr Center for Human Rights Policy. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fvjib1xT5o> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

or the creation of a demilitarized zone: instead Santos (2019) announced his intention to abide by the Rabin Doctrine and “negotiate as if there is no terrorism, and ... combat terrorism as if there is no negotiation.”⁷⁹ This meant continued aerial bombardment of FARC strongholds, directly resulting in the death of Alfonso Cano in November 2011 (who replaced Manuel Marulanda as FARC commander after the latter’s death in 2008. While this was undeniably “the biggest blow in the history of the organisation,”⁸⁰ Santos nevertheless asserted that abiding by this doctrine paradoxically cemented trust with the guerrilla, who agreed to continue negotiations. However, the continuation of forced crop eradication triggered a regional strike of campesinos in June 2013 in Catatumbo, as 300 coca growers blocked the Tibú-Cucuta highway in opposition to the threat to their livelihoods which the policy presented.⁸¹ Numbers soon rose to 10,000 and attracted significant media attention, but military personnel accused campesinos of guerrilla infiltration, while government representatives agreed to meet provided they end the roadblock, further declaring that Santos was too busy in Cuba to attend (Cruz, 2017b: p.8). In this respect, the government signalled that territorial peace was synonymous with political expression only within accepted, invited channels, and that discussions would not be derailed by any spontaneous acts of resistance.

Subsequent events evidenced governmental willingness to adjust its stance to protect its national and international standing. On 12 July, a confrontation in Catatumbo left 10 protestors and two police officers injured and, fearing reputational ramifications, Santos sent Vice-President Angela Garzon to negotiate, resulting in an agreement for additional government support. But campesinos across multiple regional organisations had already announced a National Strike during which 10,000 campesinos across Caquetá marched on Florencia.⁸² This drew a further spotlight on the challenges faced by marginalized rural communities and, seeking to convey solidarity, FARC negotiators directly praised campesino and indigenous resistance, proposed a model of rural development based on Campesino Reserve Zones and “territories of co-existence” (Biblioteca Proceso de Paz 2012, Volume 2: p.195-6), called for gradual voluntary coca substitution and comprehensive economic support (Bermúdez Liévano, 2019: p.188-190), and asserted that social movements were more representative of people’s interests than parties and must be included in any political reform.⁸³ In this respect, campesino mobilizations successfully overcame the

⁷⁹ Juan Manuel Santos, cited in Georgetown and Latin America, 4 March 2019, *op cit*.

⁸⁰ Alsema, A. 5 November 2011. ‘Cano’s death ‘biggest blow in history’ of FARC: Santos’. *Colombia Reports*. Available from: <https://colombiareports.com/canos-death-biggest-blow-in-the-history-of-farc-santos/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

⁸¹ A poor region in the department of Norte de Santander.

⁸² Girardo, H. D., 27 August 2013, ‘Paro agrario, la batalla del Caquetá’, *Agencia Prensa Rural*, Available from: <https://prensarural.org/spip/spip.php?article11847> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

⁸³ León, J., 6 November 2013, ‘El Acuerdo de participación política: lo acordado, lo aplazado y lo ganado’, *La Silla Vacía*, Available from: <https://lasillavacia.com/historia/el-acuerdo-de-participacion-politica-lo-acordado-lo-aplazado-y-lo-ganado-46035> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

government's intention to separate peace negotiations from conflict dynamics, raising additional expectations that movements would play a key role in post-agreement politics.

Amidst growing speculation of a leading role for social movements in driving post-agreement societal transformations, an initial statement betrayed a fundamental focus on formal channels of participation. In November 2013, government and FARC released a joint summary of progress on Chapter Two of the agreement. The statement emphasises political pluralism, announces the creation of Special Transitory Peace Districts which would grant additional Congress seats to conflict-affected regions, and proposes support for social movements in transitioning into parties or political movements, direct access to media spaces and opportunities to oversee implementation.⁸⁴ This emphasis on institutionalisation is reflected in the final agreement which further introduces a Law of Guarantees and Citizen Participation, a proposal which would provide movements access to official information, the right to reply to false declarations, and a new central registry of all “formal and informal” social and political organisations.⁸⁵ On the one hand, these expansive promises led analysts to speculate that the peace agreement could trigger a revival of the political system from below and achieve a more inclusive, democratic and just society.⁸⁶ On the other, some raised concerns that the regulation of movements would undermine the effectiveness of protest which, by its nature, “is not always planned, especially when it’s a spontaneous response to acts of violence.”⁸⁷

Further mobilizations during the negotiation period indicated a fundamental rejection of territorial peace as either state-led rural development [Chapter One] or political inclusion [Chapter Two]. In November 2014, a group of mostly Afro-Colombian women marched 440 kilometres from the town of La Toma - in the north Cauca region, just south of Cali - to Bogotá, in opposition to state and non-state violence and illegal gold mining in breach of existing government agreements. One of the leaders wrote an open letter to Santos, saying: “Our land is the place where we dream of our future with dignity. Perhaps that’s why they [armed actors, including the army, paramilitaries, and guerrillas] persecute us, because we want a life of autonomy and not of dependency.” The letter further criticises the government’s National Development Plan, which promised to increase

⁸⁴ Presidencia de la Republica, 6 November 2013, ‘Comunicado Conjunto de las Delegaciones del Gobierno y las Farc’, Available from: http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/Prensa/2013/Noviembre/Paginas/20131106_06-propaz-Comunicado-Conjunto-de-las-Delegaciones-del-Gobierno-y-las-Farc.aspx [last accessed 5 May 2021].

⁸⁵ Centro de Memoria Histórica., *Op. cit.* Page 42.

⁸⁶ CINEP, la Corporación Viva la Ciudadanía, la Fundación Foro Nacional Por Colombia, 2017. ‘Documento de lineamientos para una ley estatutaria de garantías para la participación de organizaciones y movimientos sociales y para la movilización y la protesta social’. Page 7. Available from: http://participando.co/media/docs/leves/Documento_lineamientos_Final.pdf [last accessed 5 May 2021]

⁸⁷ Archila, M. and García, M. C., 26 July 2018., ‘Reglamentar la protesta social: Pero ¿cómo?’ Available from: <https://www.cinep.org.co/Home2/component/k2/item/614-reglamentar-la-protesta-social-pero-como.html> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

mining, before ending with the slogan: “The territory is our life, and life is not sold— it is loved and defended” (Escobar, 2018: p.71-72). In this respect, protestors drew on the concept of territory to re-imagine peace as the guarantor of their autonomy, rather than as territorial integration or access to institutional spaces of participation.

Two further national participatory events evidenced enduring divisions concerning the territorial peace agenda as it related to politics: the 2014 presidential election and the 2016 referendum on the final agreement. President Santos first proposed a referendum in January 2013; a break from prior agreements agreed through constituent assemblies. As such, peace was central to his 2014 re-election campaign, for which several leading progressive politicians offered their support. This included Aida Avella, President of the newly reinstated Patriotic Union party, who expressed hope that the FARC’s future participation in Congress would aid in reconciliation: “It will be good for people to see them in a new role, debating legislation and drafting laws.”⁸⁸ But shortly before the election, the Conservative Party withdrew their support for Santos and former President Uribe founded the Democratic Centre party to unite all those opposed to the deal. The Democratic Centre candidate, Óscar Iván Zuluaga, attained the most votes in the first round, but Santos narrowly won the second-round runoff, and his post-election televised address occurred amidst the excitement of the 2014 World Cup wherein, wearing the national kit, he called “for all those who accompanied our proposals, and also those who voted for other options or didn’t vote, to unite around the construction of a just peace” (Watson, 2019: p.1). But the election had clearly signalled mounting political opposition to peace, and - as the next section details - further disagreements concerning the FARC’s future political role would plague the 2016 referendum campaign, directly undermining the government’s vision of territorial peace as a Colombia free from political violence.

5.3. Reincorporation and Referendum

The FARC’s political transition was perhaps the most contentious aspect of negotiations, with tensions directly stemming from the historical role of the Colombian reintegration agency (*Agencia Colombiana de Reintegración* - ACR). As briefly noted in Chapter 4, President Gaviria (1990-4) had first introduced individual reintegration support in the absence of a peace deal, and while this offered unwilling combatants a route out of conflict, it also meant that DDR essentially constituted

⁸⁸ Rueda, M., 29 January 2018., ‘A FARC Rebel Commander Runs For President. Many Colombians Aren't Ready To Forgive’ NPR. Available from: <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2018/01/29/581553541/a-farc-rebel-commander-runs-for-president-many-colombians-arent-ready-to-forgive?t=1609178734393> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

a military tactic to reduce guerrilla numbers. This was considered a highly effective policy that all successive governments would maintain, yet ultimately left many ex-combatants vulnerable, stigmatized and economically and politically “immobilized” (Fattal, 2019). Aware of this background, and the institutional capacity necessary to support the FARC, Santos issued a 2011 decree granting the ACR greater administrative and financial autonomy and improving its organisational structure.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, FARC vehemently opposed the standard DDR model; in words echoing Jacobo Arenas during the 1980s process, Chief Negotiator Iván Márquez declared that demobilization was synonymous with surrender, and sent a “message of hopelessness” to Colombian society.⁹⁰ He further rejected the involvement of the ACR, demanding a new institution be created to cater for them specifically: “They didn’t care about anything the agency had to say ...they were so convinced that we weren’t interested in their benefit.”⁹¹ The government dismissed this demand, citing the ACR’s extensive experience, but agreed to change its name to the Agency for Reincorporation and Normalization (*Agencia para la Reincorporación y la Normalización* - ARN) and create a ‘reincorporation’ framework. This shift from reintegration to reincorporation signalled that FARC were distinct from individually demobilized combatants and, as later chapters explore, provided the basis for ongoing claims for collective support.

If FARC and government negotiators eventually agreed that the ARN would oversee the transition, memories of prior DDR experiences and the current atmosphere of political polarization marred discussions about where and how reincorporation would occur. During President Uribe’s administration, 20% of Plan Colombia funding was earmarked for DDR, allowing the government to establish the Programme for the Reincorporation into Civil Life in 2003 and the High Presidential Council for Reintegration in 2006, in response to the demand generated by the AUC demobilization. This led to the expansion of national coverage, increased individual support and – aligning with the burgeoning second-generation of DDR policy (see Chapter 2) – the introduction of a Community Reintegration model explicitly designed to promote “coexistence” between ex-combatants and host communities.⁹² However, the AUC process received criticism for unduly granting the paramilitaries political status, leaving the rank-and-file stigmatized and unable to access employment opportunities, indirectly generating fierce competition over narco-trafficking routes between still-mobilized actors (which now increasingly encroached on Afro-Colombian and indigenous territories) and exacerbating urban violence across

⁸⁹ Colombian Reintegration Agency, Historical Overview. Available from: <http://www.Reincorporación.gov.co/en/agency/Pages/historical.aspx> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

⁹⁰ Iván Márquez, cited in Biblioteca del Proceso de Paz 2010-2018. (2018).

⁹¹ Interview with Alejandro, ARN Departmental Director, 4 September 2019.

⁹² Organización Internacional para las Migraciones, March 8 2017. ‘Infografía: Lecciones sobre el Modelo de Reintegración Comunitaria para excombatientes en Colombia’ <https://colombia.iomdev.org/news/infograf%C3%ADa-lecciones-sobre-el-modelo-de-reintegraci%C3%B3n-comunitaria-para-excombatientes-en> [last accessed 5 March 2021]

some cities (Angelo, 2017: p.137; Rozema, 2008). Aware of this history, including the high recidivism among ex-paramilitaries, Jaramillo (2014) asserted that victim reconciliation would be a cornerstone of reincorporation, while political opponents argued the FARC would use any socio-economic support (particularly land grants) to pursue their political objectives rather than in aid of communities or victims. These disputes directly shaped negotiations over how, and where reincorporation, would take place, as Cristo, an official in the High Commission for Peace, explained in interview: “The FARC began by saying that they would need 90 sites across the country... it would have seemed like we had delivered the whole country to them.”⁹³

Although Chapter Three of the agreement provides guidance on reincorporation, it only offers temporary certainty and leaves the guerrilla’s future political role undefined; issues which early internal ruptures suggested FARC had not yet resolved internally. Eventually, it was agreed that the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism - constituted of national government, FARC delegates, international observers and police support - would oversee the disarmament of combatants and militias in 27 specially constructed rural camps.⁹⁴ Each camp would be “territorial, temporary and transitory” and limited to a six-month process of disarmament and “preparation for reincorporation.”⁹⁵ The agreement further provides for FARC representation in the Senate and Congress for two electoral cycles and their direct participation in future elections either independently or in coalition. However, the FARC’s transition to “party or movement” is left in vague terms, leaving the guerrilla to decide their final form internally. Pursuant to this, in September 2016 the FARC held their Tenth (and final) National Conference in San Vicente del Caguán, for the purposes of holding an internal referendum on the agreement and confirming their future political identity. After days of discussions, leadership announced a unanimous decision to ratify the agreement, by which point the first Front had declared that they would not abide by it: a clear early sign of internal fracturing.⁹⁶ Guerrilla leaders released a public declaration affirming that they would “keep the doors open” to any dissidents who wanted to return,⁹⁷ but this schism contributed to speculation that FARC would not begin their political transition “as united as they claim in the media.”⁹⁸

⁹³ Interview with Cristo, government official in High Commission for Peace, 3 October 2018.

⁹⁴ 20 Zonas Veredales Transitorias de Normalización (ZVTN) and 7 Puntos Transitorios de Normalización (PTN).

⁹⁵ Centro de Memoria Histórica., *Op. cit.* Page 250.

⁹⁶ El Espectador, 6 July 2016, ‘Frente de las Farc dice que no entregará las armas’ Available from: <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/frente-de-farc-dice-no-entregara-armas-articulo-641831> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

⁹⁷ Resumen Latinoamericano, 24 September 2016, ‘Declaración Política X Conferencia Guerrillera: ¡Se acabó la guerra, vamos todos y todas a construir la paz!’ <https://www.resumenlatinoamericano.org/2016/09/24/declaracion-politica-x-conferencia-guerrillera-se-acabo-la-guerra-vamos-todos-y-todas-a-construir-la-paz/> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

⁹⁸ Verdad Abierta, 17 September 2016, *op cit.*

The 2016 referendum campaign hinted at further internal strategic divisions, as senior FARC leaders embraced a modern and fundamentally urban political identity. Historically the guerrilla's emphasis on rural simplicity aligned with a rejection of technological advance, with leadership denouncing the state's use of mainstream media (including newspapers, magazines, books, radio and television) as tools of propaganda and imperial domination.⁹⁹ Said concerns were justified: misinformation and inaccurate reports on violence had undermined the 1980s peace process (Heinz, 1989), and research points to significant media bias during Uribe's presidency including distinct language to describe violence perpetrated by FARC as opposed to the military or paramilitaries.¹⁰⁰ But after the advent of new digital information technologies, branding itself became a core terrain of conflict, as FARC sought to transmit their ideas onto regional radio channels and established new websites in Sweden because of their lighter freedom of speech laws (Fattal, 2019). Now, unlike the failed Betancur or Caguán processes, FARC's communications team planned for leadership's imminent move to Bogotá by redoubling these efforts: "we started setting up social media accounts, learning to code and maintain our websites, and creating public profiles for our leaders, who were just coming out of hiding and needed to start being seen as public figures in Colombian politics."¹⁰¹ Further embracing modern technology, they began circulating videos on WhatsApp and Facebook using a "fresh discourse" which deviated from their former style, even employing a Bogotá marketing firm to help them target the urban middle class.¹⁰² As FARC Director of propaganda Sergio Marín asserted: "We are absolutely convinced that in the 21st century, you cannot do politics without targeting the media and social networks." (Fattal, 2019).

Amidst FARC's strategic rebranding, the referendum campaign made clear the strength of political opposition, and that direct association (or even accusation of accusation) with their organisation could still result in severe reputational damage for prospective allies, or worse. After Santos' narrow re-election, opposition to the peace deal coalesced around former president Uribe, whose party called for greater emphasis on justice, decried the guerrilla's political guarantees, stoked fears that Colombia would face similar turmoil to its neighbour Venezuela, and even spread the false idea that peace would be funded by reducing pension payments (Angelo, 2017: p.117). Religious actors also vocally opposed the accord's gender focus, describing it as a potential gateway to other progressive policies such as same-sex marriage (Carnes, 2016), The FARC lost still more support

⁹⁹ FARC-EP, *Cartilla ideológica*, 1978. Available from: <https://www.farc-ep.co/pdf/Cartillaideologica.pdf> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹⁰⁰ Pritchard, O. 28 November, 2016. 'Why we hate the FARC (and not so the paramilitaries)'. Available from: <https://thebogotapost.com/why-we-hate-the-farc-and-not-so-the-paramilitaries/18994/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹⁰¹ Iriarte, R. C., 15 August 2017, *op cit*.

¹⁰² *Ibid*

when a photograph circulated of negotiators Iván Márquez and Jesus Santrich on a sailboat, which Uribe posted to his Twitter.¹⁰³ Still, Márquez expressed confidence in the Colombian people and hope that the deal would inspire other guerrilla groups to renounce conflict.¹⁰⁴ He and other leaders also travelled to speak with families of victims, including to Apartadó, Antioquia, the site of a massacre, declaring “it never should have happened”, to Bojayá, Chocó, where a 2002 bombing killed 119 people, and to the families of the 12 Valle del Cauca deputies kidnapped in Cali.¹⁰⁵ yet However, community reactions to this outreach were reportedly mixed, while political forces suspected of FARC collusion continued to face stigmatization. A clear example pertains to the Patriotic March, which organised several pro-peace events including a public TV screening of the accord’s signing in June 2016.¹⁰⁶ While they initially received support from other parties including the PCC, Patriotic Union and Polo Democrático, after opposition accused them of FARC-infiltration, Polo Democrático leadership broke from the Patriotic March and even criticised its leaders for copying their discourse.¹⁰⁷ In response Patriotic March representatives emphasised their political independence, but nevertheless registered over 100 members assassinated during negotiations (Cruz 2017a p.45-6). Overall, the FARC’s unpopularity and the very real threat of extra-legal violence at any suspected allies directly undermined pro-peace coalition-building and public declarations of support for peace.

The disappointing outcome of the referendum which gave a marginal victory for ‘No’, spoke directly to the intractability of the conflict’s main drivers which, somewhat ironically, territorial peace had promised to transcend. Firstly, if voting patterns were complex (see Figure 5), the referendum revealed a clear divergence between urban and rural support for peace, with Santos even referring to “two Colombias” in its aftermath (Koopman, 2018: p.473). Both FARC and government negotiators centred their agendas on communities which had suffered the worst of the conflict, which did support peace in greater proportion (Kreiman and Masullo, 2020), but the failure to win widespread urban support revealed that “peace cannot be built without the cities” (Currie, 2019: p.213). Turning to political participation, the referendum saw the lowest national

¹⁰³ NotiAmerica, 17 December 2013, ‘El Gobierno dice que los jefes de las FARC "viven como reyes"’ <https://www.notiameerica.com/politica/noticia-colombia-polemica-colombia-publicacion-foto-dirigentes-farc-catamaran-20131104180419.html> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

¹⁰⁴ CGTN America, 20 September 2016, ‘FARC’s negotiator Iván Marquez on the peace deal’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tidHlmGiHh4> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

¹⁰⁵ Marquez, cited in Brodzinskiy, S., 3 October 2016. ‘Colombia referendum rejects peace deal with Farc guerrillas’, The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/02/colombia-referendum-rejects-peace-deal-with-farc> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

Verdad Abierta, 11 September 2016, ‘Farc pidieron perdón a familiares de los diputados de Valle del Cauca’ <https://verdadabierta.com/farc-pidieron-perdon-a-familiares-de-los-diputados-de-valle-del-cauca/> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

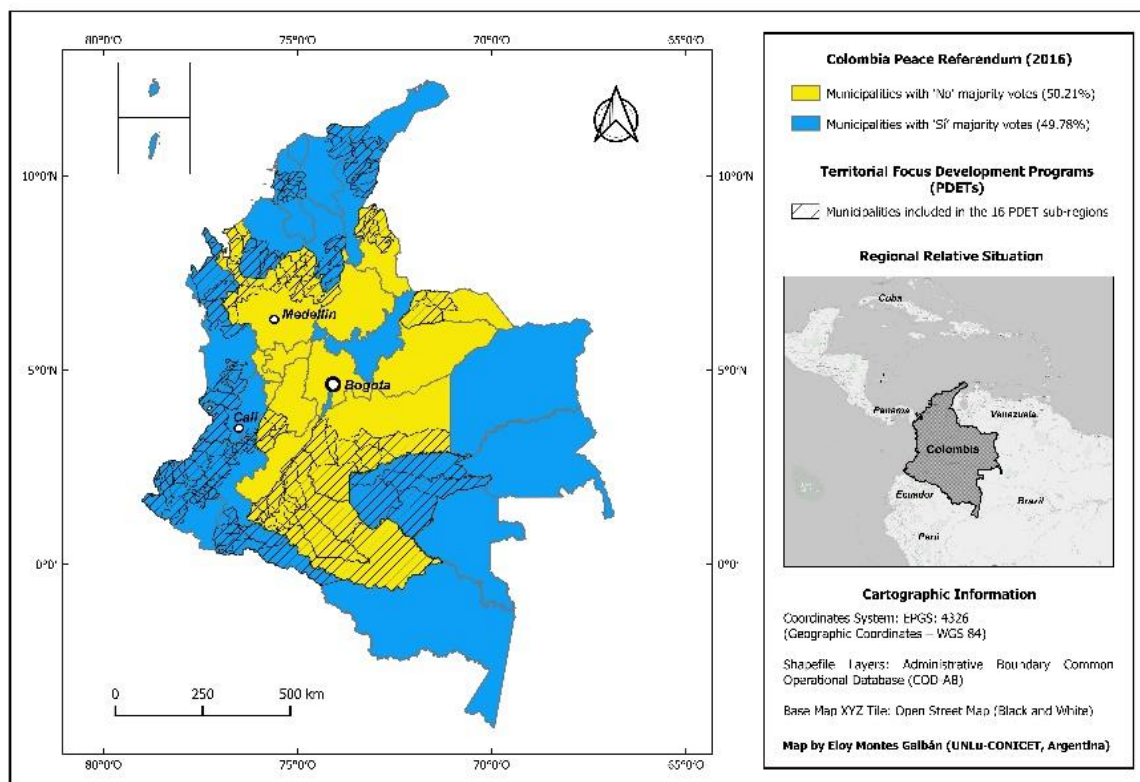
Alema, A. 8 December 2015. ‘No matter how much the FARC cries, victims not yet able to forgive massacre’ *Colombia Reports*. Available from: <https://colombiareports.com/no-matter-how-much-the-farc-cries-not-all-victims-able-to-forgive-massacre/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹⁰⁶ Restrepo, E. R., 23 June 2016. ‘Marcha Patriótica apoya la firma del cese al fuego bilateral’, *El Colombiano*. <https://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/marcha-patriotica-apoya-la-firma-del-cese-al-fuego-bilateral-entre-gobierno-y-las-farc-KE4446738>

¹⁰⁷ Lee, C., 1 July 2014, ‘Santos’ Re-election Puts Colombia’s Left in Spotlight’, *World Politics Review*. <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/13894/santos-re-election-puts-colombia-s-left-in-spotlightx> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

electoral turnout in 22 years, with less than 38% participation. Together with continued calls for self-determination, this widespread abstention indicated a rejection of institutional participatory channels as the means to redress the conflict's causes. Thirdly, the FARC's rural reincorporation plan, urban communications strategy and the emergence of early dissident structures offered early indicators of the many future hurdles they would face in maintaining organisational and political unity. Overall, the referendum pointed to multiple early warning signs about the challenges of implementing territorial peace as envisaged.

FIGURE 5: NATIONAL REFERENDUM VOTING PATTERNS¹⁰⁸



5.4. Conclusion

This chapter explored the multiple competing narratives which intersected during negotiations to inform the concept of territorial peace. It traced the concept's origins to governmental efforts to avoid previous failures, boost Colombia's global standing and promote economic growth. I argued that territorial peace as a project of peripheral integration and development is directly reminiscent of prior state-led interventions at both the national and city-scales (Stienen, 2020), and that if

¹⁰⁸ Source: Diaz et al., 2021.

Santos broke from former president Uribe in pursuing negotiations, both presidents justified their policies in terms of opening up Colombia's peripheral regions to international capital flows. I further showed that government negotiators drew on international expertise to distinguish their 'differentiated' peace agenda, in such a way that nevertheless focused attention to conflict-affected regions and promised continuity with the FARC's rural policy goals without promising significant structural reform. Meanwhile, guerrilla negotiators were not naïve about the government's underlying economic rationale and pointed to the state's complicity in paramilitary violence, but ultimately agreed to full negotiations out of an instrumental pragmatism. Still, if the government approached territory (and thus territorial peace) in terms of exploiting a rural 'repository' for economic gain (Piazzini Suarez, 2018: p.7), its participatory orientation permitted civil society actors to draw on the semantic revolution of preceding years and articulate alternative territorial visions.

Political participation comprised the second major topic of discussion, and while it appeared government and FARC agreed in principle, later events pointed to divergences regarding which actors would take centre-stage and consequently which participatory channels would be conferred legitimacy in post-agreement politics. Drawing still further on international inspiration, government negotiators tried to enforce a division between its continued militaristic policy interventions and peace dialogues in Cuba, but a surge in regional (and then national) mobilizations provided an opportunity for FARC to demonstrate solidarity with social movements, generating further expectations about their centrality to territorial peace. However, the emphasis on political incorporation and institutionalisation within both the 2013 mid-way statement and final agreement suggested an inclination towards regulating and thus domesticating contentious actors, neglecting Escobar's (2018: p.72) assertion, based on observation of the 2014 Cauca march, that "without conditions of autonomy for the territories, peace will be illusory." Moreover, the announcement of a referendum to ratify the deal and the close-run 2014 presidential election both evidenced *and* spurred political polarization, directly threatening the idea of territorial peace as a project of societal unity.

The most contentious aspect of the territorial peace agenda concerned the FARC's role in the post-agreement period. Well aware of the government's strategic use of DDR to diminish their numbers and the precarity faced by many individual ex-combatants in preceding years, FARC rejected standard reintegration and expressed a desire for a more collective *reincorporation* process. Yet, societal memories of prior DDR experiences and mounting political polarization spurred

significant resistance to extensive land grants. As such, the final agreement leaves major issues somewhat unresolved: while leadership would enter national politics (in some form), rank-and-file would undergo a temporary reincorporation process in rural transitional camps. Furthermore, although guerrilla leadership expressed a public narrative of internal cohesion, early ruptures pointed to a lack of unity, while leadership's imminent move to Bogotá re-doubled a strategic emphasis on the urban middle class (a group made newly accessible via social media) rather than territorial consolidation in rural strongholds (as in prior processes). In this sense, the political sensitivities and specific processual nature of territorial peace drove a gradual distinction between reincorporation as a rural collective process and as an urban elite process which, as later chapters make clear, has directly shaped the dynamics of implementation.

The 2016 referendum result was disheartening for FARC, government and many civil society participants alike, and signalled the intractability of the conflict's underlying drivers. The victory for 'No' pointed to Colombia's classic centre-periphery divide as well as the dangers of trying to achieve unity through formal participatory channels (particularly in an era of misinformation), while the hostility and threats directed towards FARC and their allies evidenced the reputational and personal risks which speaking out in favour of structural change could incur. Still, there were some causes for hope: 16 of Colombia's 32 departmental capitals recorded majority support for peace, with diverse urban social and political organisations later organising a March of Silence in favour of renegotiation – including in Cali.¹⁰⁹ But in any case, attention would now turn to the FARC's historical strongholds like Caquetá, where surprisingly and disconcertingly, voters had rejected peace (46.96%).

¹⁰⁹ Lafuente, J., 4 October 2016, 'Colombia dice 'no' al acuerdo de paz con las FARC', *El País*

https://elpais.com/internacional/2016/10/02/colombia/1475420001_242063.html

Basset, Y. (2016, 10 October), 'Los resultados del plebiscito mirados con lupa.' *Razón Pública*. Available from: <https://razonpublica.com/los-resultados-del-plebiscito-mirados-con-lupa/>
<https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-16719798>

CHAPTER SIX. COMMUNITY REINCORPORATION IN A FARC STRONGHOLD

The southern department of Caquetá has been the “heart of the FARC” since their inception.¹¹⁰ During negotiations, Iván Márquez became known as the guerrilla’s most renowned member in the region, leading to speculation that Caquetá would become their political epicentre after 2016. Plans for two *Zonas Veredales de Transición y Normalización (ZVTNs)* where the renowned South Block were to disarm and begin reincorporation drew additional political and media attention. However, the Putumayo-Caquetá region has the fourth highest concentration of coca cultivation in the entire country and, with the FARC’s presence across 242 municipalities reduced just 26 *veredas*, leaving 90% of the guerrilla’s former territories free,¹¹¹ analysts speculated that other actors would immediately seek to “fill the vacuum of territorial power”.¹¹²

Combatants from the third, fourteenth and fifteenth fronts arrived in the *vereda* Agua Bonita in February 2017. Mid-ranking leader Federico Montes described the welcome they received passing through the town of La Montañita, “I have never seen so many people... everyone at the side of the road, waving flags and receiving us with a lot of emotion”¹¹³ which online media described as one of the peace process’ most historic moments.¹¹⁴ When I arrived in August 2018, all ZVTNs had been redesignated as Territorial Spaces of Reincorporation and Training (*Espacios Territoriales de Capacitación y Reincorporación – ETCR*) and the government had announced a Community Reincorporation model, providing state security and other core services for a two-year period. I spoke with a UN official who described Agua Bonita as the “post-card” ETCR to connote Agua Bonita’s symbolic status as the exemplary case at the national level.¹¹⁵ In explaining this, she and others cited the relative proximity to nearby towns, support from local communities, strong leadership under Federico Montes, and a collective purchase of the land. These factors had allowed residents to project a vision of territorial integration, as Federico asserted: “Here we all work towards the same goal. ... Agua Bonita was born a *zona veredal*, but this is going to be a

¹¹⁰ Verdad Abierta, 25 September 2013, ‘El Caquetá es el corazón de las Farc’, Available from: <https://verdadabierta.com/el-caqueta-es-el-corazon-de-las-farc-1/> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

¹¹¹ Valencia, L., Avila, A. Montoya, C. and Medina, D. 31 January 2017. ‘En Que Están Los Territorios que Dejan las FARC: Estado de las zonas de concentración y las agresiones a líderes sociales.’ Fundación Paz & Reconciliación. Available from: <https://www.pares.com.co/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Informe-en-qu%C3%A9-est%C3%A1n-los-territorios-que-dejan-la-FARC.pdf> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹¹² Duarte, C. and Betancourt, D., 21 August 2017, ‘Los territorios que dejaron las FARC: ¿cómo se vive bajo una paz incompleta?’ *Razon Publica*, Available from: <https://razonpublica.com/los-territorios-que-dejaron-las-farc-como-se-vive-bajo-una-paz-incompleta/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹¹³ Vega, K. 21 January 2017, “‘Trabajamos contra reloj’”: Carlos Córdoba, gerente de las zonas veredales’, *La Patria*. <https://www.lapatria.com/nacional/trabajamos-contra-reloj-carlos-cordoba-gerente-de-las-zonas-veredales-343697> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹¹⁴ Valenzuela, S., 15 February 2018. ‘Mapa: a un año de fundados, así van los espacios territoriales de las Farc’, *Pacifista*. Available from: <https://pacifista.tv/notas/mapa-a-un-ano-de-fundados-asi-van-los-espacios-territoriales-de-las-farc/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹¹⁵ Interview with Jorena, Employee of United Nations Verification Mission, 16 August 2018.

corregimiento.”¹¹⁶ Still, my fieldwork revealed severe delays to implementation, financial difficulties and mounting security concerns, such that over half of those first arrivals had left to pursue reincorporation elsewhere by the end of 2018.

This chapter explores the dynamics of community reincorporation in Agua Bonita. By re-framing DDR in terms of territorialisation, the aim is to provide insight into the opportunities and pitfalls of a collective DDR process. The chapter points to early mistrust and a short-term approach to collectivity which undermined communality; the crucial role of mid-level commanders in building (or undermining) internal cohesion; and the strategic combination of participatory practices which extended beyond the terms of reincorporation, instead revealing a lingering ‘insurgent territoriality’ (Wahren, 2010). The chapter also points to important multi-scalar dynamics including the impact of the reorientation of peace following President Duque’s election and Iván Marquez’s departure from the process. Overall, territorialisation was conflictive to the extent that FARC encroached (both literally and symbolically) on the territories of other actors, providing a warning for future processes to ensure (and publicise) mutual benefit.

Chapter 6 is structured as follows. **Section 6.1.** covers the arrival of FARC to Agua Bonita, the central role of leadership in early cohesion-building and the early factors which provided the basis for a concerted drive towards territorial integration. **Section 6.2.** outlines evolving internal and external relationships as residents combined a narrative of self-sufficiency, built new relationships with surrounding communities and appealed for continued governmental support to meet their everyday needs. **Section 6.3** then outlines mounting security concerns, the 2018 presidential election and the consequent emphasis on ‘legality’ within the national administration, multiple ruptures to the FARC’s unity and the 2019 regional elections.

6.1. Arrival, Leadership and a Commitment to Territorial Integration

This section begins with the immediate aftermath of the 2016 referendum and covers the arrival of FARC members to Agua Bonita, how short-term military and humanitarian logics influenced the location and construction process, and how FARC’s desire to remain living communally ultimately led to an extension of government support (6.1.1). I then outline analysis pointing to the crucial role of mid-level commanders, during which Federico became known as an exemplary

¹¹⁶ Federico Montes, cited in Rueda, S. F., 15 July 2019, ‘Agua Bonita (Caquetá), el primer centro poblado de excombatientes de las Farc’, El Espectador, Available from: <https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/territorio/agua-bonita-caqueta-el-primero-poblado-de-excombatientes-de-las-farc-articulo-870933/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

case. I then explore the creation of a local cooperative, and a deal with the local landowner, decisions which provided the basis for ongoing efforts to achieve territorial integration (6.1.2).

6.1.1. Arrival and Construction

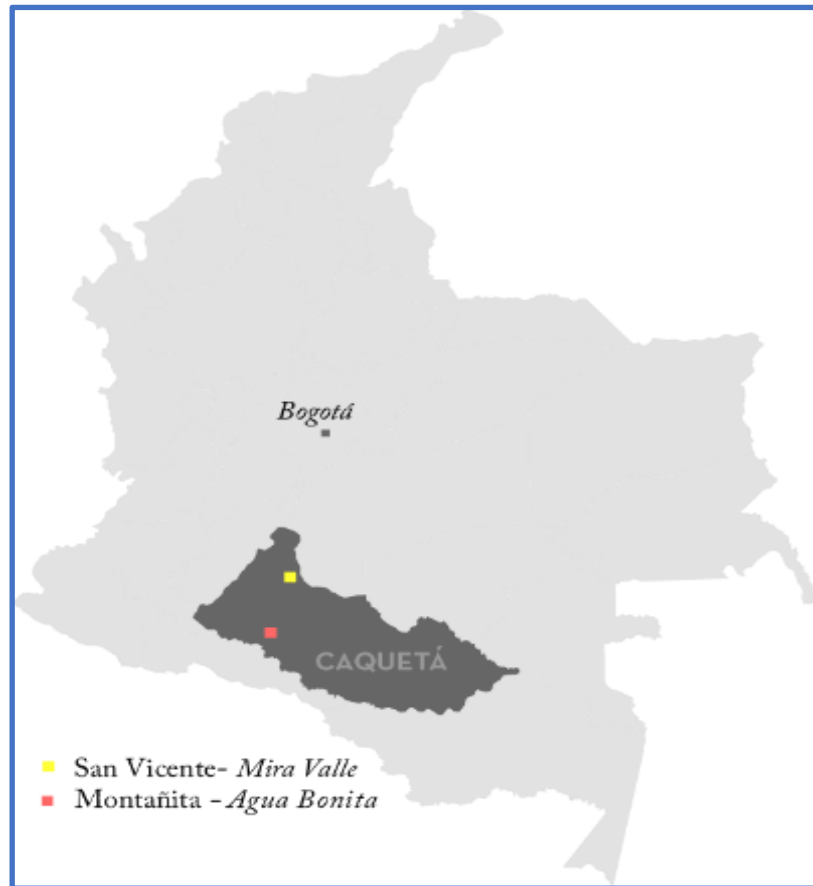
Notwithstanding the disappointing referendum result, rapid renegotiation allowed for a continuation of disarmament and early reincorporation as agreed, albeit after some initial delay. After learning of the outcome, FARC leadership in Cuba met and decided the loss was only a temporary setback.¹¹⁷ Days later, signatories agreed a protocol for those undergoing reincorporation to cohere at Temporary Pre-grouping Points (*Puntos de Pre-agrupamiento Temporal - PPT*) to allow for a continued ceasefire.¹¹⁸ This signalled “a message of political will” from high-ranking leaders to Colombian society, and a “message of calm” to their base, many of whom had been travelling to No-voting municipalities to disarm and were uncertain about their future.¹¹⁹ FARC and government then reached a revised agreement on November 24, responding to some of their opponents’ concerns by clarifying the terms of rural reform and extending the implementation period to reduce funding pressure on the government (Angelo, 2017: p144). Over the following weeks, combatants began the process of relocation, and in February 2017, the South Block travelled to two ZVTNs in Caquetá: Miravalle, in the San Vicente Del Caguán municipality, and Agua Bonita, in La Montañita (see Figure 6).

¹¹⁷ Johnson, K., 9 March 2017. ‘A Wary Farewell to Arms for the FARC’, *International Crisis Group*. Available from: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/andes/colombia/wary-farewell-arms-farc> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹¹⁸ UN Mecanismo De Monitoreo y Verificación, 30 December 2016, ‘Primer Informe De Actividades del MM&V’, Accessed from: https://unmc.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/informe_nov-dic_mmv_v9_gobierno_farc_onu_version_27_dic_16.pdf.pdf

¹¹⁹ Calderón, D. P., 8 November 2016, ‘Los “mensajes” del pre-agrupamiento de las FARC’, Fundación Ideas Para La Paz, Available from: <http://www.ideaspaz.org/publications/posts/1429> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

FIGURE 6: MAP OF ZONAS VERDALES IN DEPARTMENT OF CAQUETÁ¹²⁰



Evidence suggests that mid-level commanders provided significant input into the location and construction process, resulting in significant variation. In accordance with the agreement, each camp was protected by a 1km security cordon wherein the United Nations Monitoring Mission exercised full authority, but FARC were responsible for their members inside, who were prohibited from leaving until disarmament was complete.¹²¹ One account indicates that El Paisa, the commander of the notorious Teófilo Forero mobile column, was fearful of an eventual government betrayal, and chose the site for Miravalle owing to the strategic view it offered of the surrounding region.¹²² Additionally, despite the government’s Chief Negotiator Sergio Jaramillo speaking of the importance of public space for peacebuilding, the camps’ layouts were modelled on refugee camps, with homes arranged “like a barrio” – and lacking communal spaces for collective decision-making.¹²³ This reduced opportunities to resolve internal tensions, with a report from another ETCR indicating that three mid-level commanders had demanded the construction

¹²⁰ Source: Cardona A., 9 December 2018.

¹²¹ Centro de Memoria Histórica, 2016., 12 November 2016., *Op cit.* Page 61.

¹²² Interview with Cristo, government official in High Commission for Peace, 3 October 2018.

¹²³ Semana, 29 June 2019, *op cit.*

of three separate *barrios*. The result of these disagreements was such that, as Cristo in the High Commission for Peace explained, “we don’t have two identical camps among the 26.”¹²⁴

Geographical isolation was another important factor. Each camp had to be limited to the administrative boundaries of a single *vereda*, but in many cases, isolation inhibited the identification of said boundaries. Inaccessibly further hindered the delivery of construction materials, leading to construction delays and forcing combatants to live in makeshift tents in some cases.¹²⁵ In Agua Bonita, the FARC faced uneven topography, heavy rains, damage to roads due to machinery, and limited internet and water access, and construction proceeded slower than in many other cases.¹²⁶ However in comparison with Miravalle – as my own journeys attest - the site was relatively accessible: a crucial advantage for later reincorporation efforts.

As construction continued, it became increasingly clear that many in the FARC wanted to continue to live communally, and government officials realised a change in approach would be necessary to ensure the process was not derailed. A national census revealed that the average combatant had spent 15-20 years in the guerrilla, 20% had no families to return to, while 80% expressed a preference for agricultural projects.¹²⁷ Consequently, in May 2017 Santos released a presidential decree re-designating all ZVTNs as Territorial Spaces of Training and Reincorporation (ETCRs), guaranteeing a further two years of security, food, housing and support in establishing collective livelihood projects. This would begin with a four-month transitional period as responsibility passed to the National Reincorporation Council (CNR), supported by a network of Departmental Reincorporation Councils (CDR) and a Territorial Reincorporation Council (CTR) located in each ETCR. Rival politicians vocally criticised this decision, with one Democratic Centre congressman calling it “another one of Juan Manuel Santos and the FARC’s tricks and lies”, and even warning that ETCRs would become reincarnated ‘independent republics’.¹²⁸ In response, Sergio Jaramillo assured close dialogue with municipal authorities and neighbouring communities, declaring that “a model is already being put together that we call community reincorporation.”¹²⁹ Until the full policy was developed, the priority would be fulfilling the requirements of ‘early reincorporation’

¹²⁴ Interview with Cristo, Government official, High Commission for Peace, 3 October 2018.

¹²⁵ Daniels, J. P., 5 December 2017., “There’s nothing for us’: Farc rebels search for purpose a year after historic deal’, Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/05/farc-rebels-civilian-life-colombia-peace-deal-one-year-later> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹²⁶ González Perafán, L. *op. cit.* p.15.

¹²⁷ Semana, 12 August 2017, ‘La reincorporación de las Farc va a paso de tortuga’, Available from: <https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/excombatientes-de-las-farc-en-vilo/536116> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹²⁸ El Universal, 4 June 2017, ‘Los espacios territoriales de capacitación, un debate que hasta ahora empieza’ Available from: <http://www.eluniversal.com.co/colombia/los-espacios-territoriales-de-capacitacion-un-debate-que-hasta-ahora-empieza-254630> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹²⁹ Ibid

citizenship registration, income support, health, education, and collective productive projects. Now, residents in Agua Bonita could make plans for a two-year period of stay, if they so wished.

6.1.2. Agua Bonita as the Success Case

After July 2017, reincorporados were granted freedom to leave and pursue individual reincorporation if preferred, and as the date approached, analysts speculated on whether (and how many) FARC would pursue a collective process, with many concluding that this would ultimately depend on leadership. Early monitoring reports warned that former mid-ranking commanders' sudden loss in status (particularly relative to senior leadership) would make them unlikely to commit to agricultural project management,¹³⁰ and while an important number had willingly adopted new intermediary roles (Shesterinina, 2020), others repeatedly threatened remobilization amidst government delays. These concerns centred on the South Block, especially El Paisa, with one report suggesting he and others in the Teófilo Forero would likely renege on peace.¹³¹ Concerns were heightened when another mid-ranking leader, Gentil Duarte, announced plans to establish “another South Block”, prevent coca substitution, and reassert authority over *campesinos* via local governance structures.¹³² Lastly, even for those who seemed committed, government officials opined that a residual militaristic authoritarianism was fostering resentment among the rank-and-file, driving them to abandon a collective process, and instead called for leadership based on “words, not weapons.”¹³³

In national meetings, ARN officials began citing Federico Montes in Agua Bonita as an exemplary case of leadership, as evidenced by efforts to establish a cooperative and build communal spaces. Interviews revealed that the three front commanders had stepped back from everyday decision-making allowing Federico to become ETCR Coordinator. Formerly second-in-command of the fifteenth front, a position of logistical as opposed to military responsibility, early research cited his organisational capacities and commitment to peace (Nussio and Quisphe, 2018: p.11). He and others, including former squadron leader Jonas who I lived with in 2018, organised a Business Committee to develop a strategy for establishing productive projects. The committee proposed to aggregate 50% of normalization funding, distributed to each individual for basic needs, and found the Multi-active Cooperative for the *Buen Vivir* and Peace of Caquetá (COOMBUVIPAC). To

¹³⁰ KROC. November 2017. Informe Sobre El Estado Efectivo de Implementación Del Acuerdo de Paz en Colombia. Available from: https://kroc.nd.edu/assets/257593/informe_kroc.pdf [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹³¹ Fundación ideas para la paz. April 2018. *Op cit.* Page 91.

¹³² El País, 7 August 2019, ‘La guerra, a sangre y fuego, que estaría librando ‘Gentil Duarte’ en Putumayo’, Available from: <https://www.elpais.com.co/colombia/la-guerra-a-sangre-y-fuego-que-estaria-librando-gentil-duarte-en-putumayo.html> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹³³ Interview with Cristo, government official in High Commission for Peace, 3 October 2018.

overcome the lack of purpose-built public spaces to make collective decisions, Federico and others also organised the construction of public areas for discussions (see Figure 7). Cristo, acknowledging that such designs ought to have been incorporated into their initial plans, perceived these efforts as a positive sign that residents were “appropriating” the space.¹³⁴

Figure 7: Layout of Agua Bonita



Residents then experienced a stroke of luck which provided a major piece in FARC’s collective re-territorialisation, while also revealing an enduring mistrust of the state. In most instances, the national government had signed six-month leases with landowners, but complications and disagreements arose in a number of camps following the extension of support.¹³⁵ In Agua Bonita however, residents used their collective funding to strike their own deal, as Federico explains: “We spoke to the owner of the farm, a priest ...who has been very generous to us ...he granted us the right to the farm. Logically a contract was made, but it was essentially an act of good will rather than economic interest.”¹³⁶ Several interviewees confirmed this widespread perception of the landowners’ generosity, as “the government could have paid him a lot more than we paid him.”¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Vega, K. 21 January 2017, *op cit*.

¹³⁶ Canal Trece Colombia, 8 April 2019, ‘Federico Montes, un exguerrillero de las Farc que ahora siembra y cultiva paz - Somos Región Cap 47’, Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dglMunaSqeQ> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹³⁷ Interview with Ronalto, FARC member, Agua Bonita, 20 August 2018

However, when I asked Arturo about the government’s reaction to this purchase, his response was revealing: “When you buy something for yourself, a mobile phone or a house, you don’t tell the government. I mean, why should we tell them?” Thus, if as Federico expressed, the land purchase provided the impetus for the development of a “medium—term road map”, the decision not to ask for government consent reveals enduring tensions.

6.2. Community Reincorporation

“I believe the *zonas veredales* have to be a nucleus of solidarity and self-sufficiency. They need to make clear that we want to build socialism from capitalism, which is a titanic task.”

FARC member, in ‘Guerrillas. Testimonios de cinco combatientes de las FARC’ (2018, p.151).

When charting the history of Colombia’s conflict in Chapter 4, I noted that aerial bombardment had forced the FARC to become more mobile, reducing opportunities for collective cohesion-building activities. This section builds on this by suggesting that the re-establishment of an atmosphere of ‘tranquillity’ provided the central basis of early efforts, drawing on the FARC’s ideological foundations, emphasising autonomy and self-sufficiency and introducing new norms of behaviour to regulate internal dynamics, while also appealing to the government to meet their daily needs in ways that extended beyond the terms of the peace agreement (6.2.1). I then explore the arrival of family, sympathisers and visitors, which provided new opportunities to publicise this tranquillity to a wider audience, while simultaneously disrupting it. I also explore efforts to establish positive relationships with surrounding communities, including through participation in rural reform (6.2.2).

6.2.1. Tranquillity

Central to achieving tranquillity was remaining faithful to the guerrilla’s cultural and ideological underpinnings. During an interview with local media, Federico explains that agricultural work undoubtedly represented a change from “the mobility characteristic of war.”¹³⁸ Nevertheless, in making this adjustment, he refers to the traditions of the “campesino family” which was “was self-sufficient and self-sustaining” and outlines how “our grandparents learned to cultivate plátano, yuca, maize, rice, raise birds and pigs, and support their family.” He further describes his own induction into the FARC which – as someone originally from Medellín – he characterises not as a

¹³⁸ Canal Trece Colombia, 8 April 2019, *op cit.*

civilian-combatant transition, but as a city-dweller adjusting to rural life: “they were like my tutors...you sharpen the shovel like this ...this is how you sow the yuca.” He also directly cites the FARC’s founder, Manuel Marulanda, who emphasised respect for nature, adaptability, and self-reliance as core tenets of the *fariano* identity. Overall, by “bringing that philosophy” to Agua Bonita, residents would “do what we have always done”: a framing that directly connected their cultural and ideological heritage to a vision of the future which was intimately tied to the land itself.

Achieving tranquillity was first dependent on the long-term viability of COOMBUVIPAC and, while the cooperative made important advances towards collective self-sufficiency, many residents also spoke of a creeping economic individuation. I interviewed Alejandra, who outlined her experience as a jewellery-maker in a city before joining the guerrilla: “If I made two pieces, my boss wanted me to make four tomorrow. If I made four, she wanted eight the next day, and on and on... I mean please, I’m a human being.” This desire to avoid financial dependence on the state and the atomisation characteristic of urban labour markets is reflected in COOMBUVIPAC’s official objectives which are: transcending standard DDR, meeting individual needs and strengthening the “guerrilla community.”¹³⁹ Land, weather and soil quality were found to be suitable for agriculture, and among the first products were *plátano* and yuca, later adding chickens, honey, and hydroponic fish-tanks, and additional non-agricultural micro-businesses including carpentry, boot-making and a bakery. The initial focus on subsistence was later re-directed towards production, and the cooperative began selling fish, eggs and other products in Florencia, La Montañita and other nearby towns.¹⁴⁰ While some projects received government funding, international support was consistently described as fundamental,¹⁴¹ and by July 2018, COOMBUVIPAC achieved 30% self-sufficiency and aimed for 100% after two years.¹⁴² Still, conversations revealed an acute sense of financial individuation, as once residents began receiving individual income support, money began circulating at the bar, bakery and miscellaneous shop, allowing individuals access to everyday necessities.¹⁴³ While government officials like Cristo welcomed the creation of an “urban economy”,¹⁴⁴ for residents like Roberto this financial separation had transformed daily life: “in the guerrilla, they gave us everything.... now nothing

¹³⁹ COOMBUVIPAC Statutes, Article 4. Available from: <https://coombuvipac.com/#section-home> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹⁴⁰ Construyendo Identidad Desde el Cooperativismo, Cooperativa Multiactiva para el Buen Vivir y la Paz del Caquetá, Available from: <https://coombuvipac.com/historia.html>

¹⁴¹ Cardona, A., 9 December 2018, ‘Fotorreportaje | De la selva a la vida civil: la transición del Bloque Sur de las Farc’, *Semana Rural*, <https://semanarural.com/web/articulo/fotorreportaje-de-la-transicion-del-bloque-sur-de-las-farc/729> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

¹⁴² Rueda, D. A., 9 July 2018, ‘A pesar de Duque, la esperanza de los excombatientes no se va de La Montañita’, *La Silla Vacía*, <https://lasillavacia.com/silla-sur/pesar-de-duque-la-esperanza-de-los-excombatientes-no-se-va-de-la-montañita-66875>

¹⁴³ Forero, J., 3 September 2019, ‘Así es la vida en el primer pueblo 'socialista' del país’, *El Tiempo*, <https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/asi-es-el-primer-pueblo-socialista-del-pais-creado-por-exguerrilleros-143534> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Cristo, government official in High Commission for Peace, 3 October 2018.

comes for free. If I want to build this wall, I have to wait because I have to buy the sand, bricks, cement... And if you don't have money, well, forget it."¹⁴⁵

Another essential tenet of tranquillity concerned establishing internal harmony between all residents. Although all residents had once belonged to the South Block, they were from different fronts, with many meeting for the first time inside the camp. Notwithstanding Federico's role as ETCR coordinator, several interviewees referred to collective decision-making: "Things are never done without consulting. Everyone contributes, everyone has a voice and a vote."¹⁴⁶ Pursuant to this, residents agreed new regulations, drawing on their conflict-era statutes and "adapting them" to the current moment, and established a number of new committees to oversee different aspects of daily life including sport, health, education, environment, housing, tourism, and conflict resolution.¹⁴⁷ Through this, FARC were able to establish an atmosphere of internal harmony, such that, as Roberto explained, "You can drink and drink until you fall asleep on the floor with your phone there on the table, and there it will be."¹⁴⁸

Notwithstanding the emphasis on self-sufficiency, healthcare provides an example of residents seeking access to government resources by appealing to the realities of their daily lives as opposed to the agreement. Agua Bonita's reputation attracted family members and others to settle there, amidst reports of high birth-rate and range of physical and mental health concerns.¹⁴⁹ The peace agreement provided for a health station (with a nurse and medical supplies) inside each ZVTN, and an ambulance stationed nearby to attend FARC and neighbouring communities. But the withdrawal of this support raised concerns, and when a reincorporado (from another ETCR) suffered a miscarriage en route to hospital, FARC accused the government of negligence, who responded that provisions already went beyond the agreement, but committed to a further extension for 13 of the most isolated camps.¹⁵⁰ Still, in Agua Bonita health remained among the top issues: shortly before my arrival in 2019 a woman gave birth inside the space before the ambulance arrived, and a subsequent dengue fever outbreak required residents to travel to La Montañita for supplies. As such, Federico lobbied for residents' incorporation into the System of Benefits Selection, an indicator of household well-being used by municipal authorities to allocate resources to all citizens. The peace accord provided no such guarantee, yet by mid-2019 accounted for 30% of all residents were not former combatants (among them 42 babies) and thus, as Federico

¹⁴⁵ Interview with Roberto, FARC member, Agua Bonita, 16 June 2019.

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Adriana, FARC member, 16 August 2018.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Ronaldo, FARC member, 20 August 2018.

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Arturo, FARC member, 14 August 2018.

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Melissa, Former ARN employee, 27 June 2016.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

asserted, failing to incorporate them equated to social segregation.¹⁵¹ This distinction between reincorporation as originally agreed and its denial “in practice”¹⁵² and the combination of a self-sufficiency narrative with appeals with government support, supports the reconceptualization of collective DDR as a strategic and contentious process of territorialisation.

6.2.2. Publicity and Community Relations

If the FARC and the Santos government were allied in publicising the success of reincorporation, the 2017 presidential decree had raised concerns that neighbouring communities and municipal authorities did not support ETCRs becoming a permanent feature of the territory.¹⁵³ In Agua Bonita, the Conservative mayor of La Montañita had at first demonstrated his public support, organising their welcome celebration and later speaking out against construction delays.¹⁵⁴ Commercial linkages and, later, social and cultural activities (e.g. football) had provided opportunities to establish relationships with neighbouring communities. At the same time, there were reports that some in neighbouring communities were anxious that FARC would eventually look to re-assert dominance, as Arturo explained, “with 95% of the people ...we have a good relationship. But there is a very small percentage that are afraid that if they start buying eggs from us, suddenly we will start persecuting them.”¹⁵⁵ Misinformation exacerbated these suspicions, with some speculating that FARC dissidents – an escalating concern nationally - were charging taxes inside the camp.¹⁵⁶ Given these mixed reports, FARC in Agua Bonita recognised the need to look beyond their own internal tranquillity and to ensure that surrounding communities perceived a mutual benefit to their presence.

Local efforts to participate in the agreement’s rural reform provisions provides an example of FARC seeking to demonstrate the mutual benefits of the peace deal, while once again pointing to their adaptability and willingness to extend the precise terms of the agreement. All 16 Caquetá municipalities were incorporated into a PDET sub-region, and the participatory dialogue process resulted in 3,138 suggestions for initiatives.¹⁵⁷ President Santos visited La Montañita on the one-

¹⁵¹ Useche Losada, 16 April 2019, ‘Entrevista a Federico Montes’, Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKqUKKTv1wc> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹⁵² Ibid

¹⁵³ El Universal, 4 June 2017, ‘Los espacios territoriales de capacitación, un debate que hasta ahora empieza’ Available from: <http://www.eluniversal.com.co/colombia/los-espacios-territoriales-de-capacitacion-un-debate-que-hasta-ahora-empieza-254630> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹⁵⁴ RCN Radio, 18 January 2017, ‘Alcalde de La Montañita reveló retrasos logísticos en la zona veredal’, Available from: <https://www.rcnradio.com/colombia/region-central/alcalde-la-Montañita-revelo-retrasos-logisticos-la-zona-veredal> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Arturo, 18 August 2018.

¹⁵⁶ Lente Regional, 15 June 2017, ‘Dejacion de armas en Agua Bonita no avanza’, Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JL2UppMaB1Y> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹⁵⁷ Alcaldía La Montañita, 4 February 2019, ‘Alcalde de La Montañita Firma Plan de Acción PDET. Available from: <http://www.laMontañita-caqueta.gov.co/noticias/alcalde-de-la-Montañita-firma-plan-de-Acción-pdet> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

year anniversary of the peace agreement, by which point 11 PDET infrastructural projects were completed including 50km of road, with local residents employed to carry out the work and expressing support for the initiative.¹⁵⁸ However, when FARC sought more direct involvement by registering their Community Action Board (*Junta de Acción Communal – JAC*) with the municipality, their application was refused. Chapter Three did not provide for FARC to establish JACs – as their presence was only guaranteed for six-months: instead Federico and other members demonstrated acute knowledge of the peace accord and of their constitutional rights, firstly citing Chapter Two on expanding and strengthening political participation channels, and secondly, filing a ‘tutela’ process to assert their constitutional right to form a JAC.¹⁵⁹ These efforts show an acute awareness of the necessary institutional participatory channels required to achieve re-territorialisation, in such a way that extends beyond the precise terms of reincorporation in the agreement.

The arrival of external guests combined with extensive social media usage provided the opportunity to publicise the success of community reincorporation to a wider audience. Over time, geographical accessibility and heightened emphasis on cultural practices resulted in a steady stream of visitors, with one media outlet reporting 300 monthly arrivals by 2019.¹⁶⁰ The tourism committee agreed an ‘agrotourism’ model, encouraging visitors to live alongside residents, participate in collective work and other aspects of daily life, and thereby experience the “natural wealth” of the space and the “human qualities” of its people.¹⁶¹ University students regularly visited and reported positively on their experiences. One group helped to construct the Alfonso Cano Popular Library where guests can purchase books and other memorabilia from the conflict (Nussio and Quishpe, 2018), while another student visit coincided with the anniversary of the 1928 *Bananero Massacre* (see Chapter 4), which FARC used an opportunity for debate: “we watched some documentaries and they opened the space up for dialogue and collective memory.”¹⁶² FARC also pursued social media visibility, establishing a Twitter and Facebook page to publicise cultural events such as the annual Graffiti Festival, and adopting the name ‘Centro Poblado’ instead of ETCR in order to project their future vision of territorial integration. In one video posted to Facebook, a student describes how she felt “integrated the whole time”, and that “seeing how they [the FARC] are concerned with biodiversity and sharing resources ...challenged those negative

¹⁵⁸ Agencia de Renovacion del Territorio, 24. November 2017, “La construcción de la paz sí está avanzando, La Montañita y la vida de sus habitantes son muestra de ello” Available from: https://www.renovacionterritorio.gov.co/galerias/Publicaciones/la_construccion_de_la_paz_s_est_avanzando_la_montaita_y_la_vida_de_sus_habitantes_son_muestra_de_ello [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Arturo, 14 August 2018.

¹⁶⁰ Torrado, S., 15 July 2019., ‘Los exguerrilleros intentan asentarse en la paz’, *El País*. Available from: https://elpais.com/internacional/2019/07/10/colombia/1562739148_809840.html [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹⁶¹ Canal Trece Colombia, 8 April 2019, *op cit*.

¹⁶² Fonseca, L. and Reinoso, N. 3 December 2018, Universidad de la Sabana, Available from: <https://www.unisabana.edu.co/programas/carreras/facultad-de-psicologia/psicologia/noticias/especiales/especial-caqueta/bitacora/?L=0>

stereotypes generated in the city.” This combination of physical visits with online dissemination gradually formed a crucial component of the FARC’s community reincorporation strategy.

Amplified publicity (including direct visitations and social media) generated concerns among some FARC members regarding potential disruption to internal tranquillity, while also inhibiting the continuation of some historical collective practices. During interview Ronalto explained that he was still acclimatising to the regular arrival and flow of guests like myself: “when other people start coming in, well, it’s not the same anymore, because they come from outside, right?”¹⁶³ For him, a “certain restriction” was necessary in order to “preserve” the atmosphere of tranquillity that he and others had worked to establish, which in practice meant that ensuring all guests abide by local norms and that internal (political) meetings remain exclusive to FARC unless in special circumstances. Furthermore, given mounting attention from national and international media, I was informed that a national political decision had been taken to prohibit morning exercise inside all camps, for fear this would be misconstrued as a combat exercise and, thus, imply they were not committed to peace. As discussed in Chapter 4, said exercise had previously constituted a core collective practice; now, as secondary data and direct observation attests, ex-combatants’ “new calisthenics”¹⁶⁴ consisted of extensive social media usage, to contact family, former comrades and keep abreast of national developments.. Overall then, if FARC encouraged arrivals to abide by their internal norms, emerging political concerns were in turn re-shaping those norms through a multi-scalar process mediated by and maintained through ‘cyberterritories’ (Lambach, 2020).

6.3. Reorientation and Ruptures

This section explores mounting external security concerns, the 2018 presidential election and the subsequent reorientation of territorial peace as the guiding framework to ‘peace with legality’ (6.3.1). I then outline multiple national ruptures to the FARC, mounting concerns over livelihood projects and fears over the end of governmental support, before ending with residents’ participation in the 2019 local election (6.3.2).

6.3.1. From Territorial Peace to Peace with Legality

If FARC in Agua Bonita experienced early success in pursuit of territorial integration, the broader regional and national dynamics of peace had been tumultuous to say the least, and these concerns

¹⁶³ Interview with Ronalto, FARC member, Agua Bonita, Caquetá, (17 August 2018).

¹⁶⁴ Iriarte, R. C., 15 August 2017, *op cit*.

were undeniably felt locally. By July 2019, 123 ex-combatants had been assassinated, with Caquetá among the five most dangerous departments.¹⁶⁵ Aside from paramilitaries, there were also approximately 1,200 FARC dissidents involving 16-18 separate structures across 13 departments, with reports noting a continuity in their *modus operandi* coupled with a growing intersection with international narco-trafficking structures.¹⁶⁶ Given their reliance on the drug-market, Gentil Duarte, the most powerful dissident leader, ordered a sub-commander to unite dissidents across Caquetá and Putumayo, who then carried out an assault on six UN functionaries in El Paujil, (Caquetá) in opposition to the PNIS voluntary coca substitution programme.¹⁶⁷ Against this backdrop, Ministry of Defence analysis categorised Agua Bonita as ‘low complexity’ and the government established a permanent police presence inside each ETCR, with the army strategically situated depending on municipal-level risk analysis.¹⁶⁸ Residents reported feeling secure inside the space, although noted their awareness of external dangers including paramilitary groups, dissidents, and even possible revenge attacks from the civilian population.¹⁶⁹ Still, as evidence of intensifying security concerns between my 2018 and 2019 fieldwork visits residents had begun monitoring entry and exit independently to army cordons.

The 2018 presidential election resulted in a reorientation away from territorial peace as the guiding principle to a new focus on legality, with significant implications for community reincorporation and hopes for further territorial integration. Polarization generated in the 2016 referendum carried forward into the campaign, and the first round offered voters a choice between Gustavo Petro, progressive politician and former M-19 member, vowing to uphold the peace agreement; Iván Duque, Democratic Centre candidate and ally of former President Uribe, promising to revise it, and Sergio Farjado, former mayor of Medellín, offering a technocratic governance style (discussed further in Chapter 7). In a second-round run-off, Duque won 54% of national votes and 62% in Caquetá, and later professed he wanted Caquetá to be the “example of how to build peace with legality.”¹⁷⁰ He redefined the role of the High Commissioner for Peace as guaranteeing the legality of disarmament and demobilization, disregarding FARC’s rejection of this terminology.¹⁷¹ Now

¹⁶⁵ El Espectador, 2 July 2019, ‘ONU, “profundamente” preocupada por la seguridad de los excombatientes’,

<https://www.elspectador.com/colombia2020/pais/onu-profundamente-preocupada-por-la-seguridad-de-los-excombatientes-articulo-868847/>

¹⁶⁶ Fundación ideas para la paz, 2016, ‘Las disidencias de las FARC: un problema en auge’, Available from:

<http://www.ideaspaz.org/publications/posts/1662> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹⁶⁷ Fundación ideas para la paz, 7 February 2018, ‘Disidencias de las FARC. ¿Cuáles son, dónde están, qué hacen?’, Available from:

<http://ideaspaz.org/especiales/infografias/disidencias.html> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹⁶⁸ Semana, 17 August 2017, “Las infraestructuras que hay en las zonas no son de las Farc”: Carlos Córdoba’,

<https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/carlos-cordoba-habla-de-los-espacios-territoriales-de-Reincorporación/536760/>

¹⁶⁹ González Perafán, L. *op. cit.* p.86.

¹⁷⁰ *Presidencia*, 6 February 2020, “Queremos que el Caquetá, con sus 16 municipios PDET, sea el ejemplo de cómo se construye la Paz con

Legalidad en los territorios’: Presidente Duque’, Available from: <https://id.presidencia.gov.co/Paginas/prensa/2020/Queremos-que-Caquetá-con-sus-16-municipios-PDET-sea-ejemplo-de-como-construye-Paz-Legalidad-en-territorios-President-200206.aspx>

¹⁷¹ Duque, Iván., 14 August 2018., ‘Duque nombra al abogado y filósofo Miguel Ceballos alto comisionado de Paz’, Available from:

<https://www.efe.com/efe/america/politica/duque-nombra-al-abogado-y-filosofo-miguel-ceballos-alto-comisionado-de-paz/20000035-3719154> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

the governing party were those who had opposed the extension of reincorporation support, and consistently cited dissidents as the principle driver of violence; accusations which FARC representatives decried as unfairly delegitimising the majority and transmitting a message of polarization from Bogotá “out to the territories.”¹⁷² In response, Federico had critiqued the Duque administration’s “arrival to the territory” as contravening the original promises of the agreement, described Agua Bonita as a “true town” requiring proper state investment, and argued that their exclusion from the municipal Territorial Ordering Scheme sent the message that they were not “valid actors within the territory.”¹⁷³

The slowdown to implementation of the peace agreement under Duque provided FARC the opportunity to ally themselves with communities in a familiar anti-government stance. PDET dialogues – the cornerstone of rural reform - had generated 32,000 proposals in Caquetá, many constituting pre-existing unmet needs, and were not effectively scaled up or integrated with other rural reform components, such that delivery was characterised as a “policy of simulation” (CEPDIPO, 2020). Renewed emphasis on military presence and forced coca substitution and the overlay of different territorial designations contributed to a situation whereby “not even the state knows who is doing what, in what moment and with what results, particularly when it comes to territorial implementation”¹⁷⁴ – and even Sergio Jaramillo openly criticised the government over delays.¹⁷⁵ These issues spurred renewed political action including a march of 300 coca growers in Caquetá, even hinting at an eventual National Strike.¹⁷⁶ In response, Agua Bonita resident organised meetings with a grassroots association collectively representing 85 JACs with strong historical links to the guerrilla.¹⁷⁷ During one meeting I attended, the director of the association outlined his initial concerns that the guerrilla would “leave the territories, leaving the social leaders behind...and there wouldn’t be that ‘government’ to support our work”, and continued scepticism that the government would resolve what it had “abandoned for 200 years.” In this sense, government delays allowed FARC and communities to come together in a familiar narrative of state abandon.

¹⁷² El Tiempo, 23 August 2019, ‘El Congreso no se preocupó por los verdaderos problemas del país’ Available from: <https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/congreso/sandra-ramirez-de-la-farc-habla-de-la-situacion-del-congreso-404116> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹⁷³ Useche Losada, 16 April 2019, *op cit*.

¹⁷⁴ Rudling, A., 3 June 2020., ‘El Estado colombiano y el posconflicto: de nombramientos, instituciones y víctimas’, Available from: <https://blogs.elspectador.com/politica/con-los-pies-en-la-tierra/estado-colombiano-posconflicto-nombramientos-instituciones-victimas> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹⁷⁵ Marulanda, P. R., 17 June 2019, ‘Gobierno contradice a Jaramillo sobre implementación del Acuerdo’ *El Colombiano*. Available from: <https://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/paz-y-derechos-humanos/gobierno-desmiente-a-sergio-jaramillo-sobre-implementacion-del-acuerdo-KB10999553> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹⁷⁶ Madrid, M., 30 December 2018, ‘La protesta social, el personaje del año 2018 en las regiones’, *Semana Rural*, Available from: <https://semanarural.com/web/articulo/protestas-sociales-personaje-del-ano-2018-regiones-colombia/760> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹⁷⁷ Vélez, J., 25 October 2019., *op cit*.

After Duque's 2018 election victory, the relative success of Agua Bonita compared to other ETCRs generated new concerns about public opinion, including the idea that local efforts would be exploited to disguise government failures elsewhere. Two examples are illustrative. Firstly, mistrust of the ARN was such that officials stationed in the camp were accused of trying to take credit for FARC's efforts by taking photos of local projects and posting them online, rather than providing material support.¹⁷⁸ Secondly, the Catholic Church's Apostolic Nuncio to Colombia conducted a tour of ETCRs accompanied by a media company. The Nuncio praised the local commitment to peace, and when residents raised concerns about national political opposition, he acknowledged them and offered support in applying international pressure via the media company. Yet, subsequent conversations revealed that his visit was widely perceived as superficial, offering little concrete support, and that he was only visiting the most successful camps.

Against a backdrop of suspicion and tension, military and police personnel emerged as unlikely allies both to FARC and campesinos. In the wake of the above-mentioned campesino protest, the Caquetá army general committed to ending forced eradication in PNIS municipalities, while during another meeting in Agua Bonita, an army Colonel spoke out against the government, congratulated residents for their commitment to peace, and encouraged his unit to support them.¹⁷⁹ For residents like Ronalto, this narrative from a senior military figure was "rarely seen", and thus widely perceived as an authentic demonstration of solidarity.¹⁸⁰ Additionally, while initial reports suggest FARC had complained about the army's control point, as helmet-cameras recorded every interaction,¹⁸¹ over time everyday casual conversations had become commonplace and, for some, provided an opportunity to informally debate the conflict, as Ronalto explained: "I've spoken with many police, very diplomatically... I tell them our story, what happened from our perspective. I accept things, but I also question them." According to Ronalto, the "fraternal treatment" of police even led to them "becoming like *guerilleros*" and seen as evidence of their ability to advance their political agenda through dialogue. However, said conversations served a more concerning secondary purpose: "if they come to kill us, the police will be here to defend us."¹⁸²

6.3.2. Dissidents, New Areas of Regrouping and the 2019 Election

¹⁷⁸ Conversely, when staff from the UN monitoring mission agreed to provide funding *without* taking photos, a degree of trust was established.

¹⁷⁹ Girardo, H. D., 27 August 2013, *op cit.*

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*

¹⁸¹ González Perafán, L. *op. cit.* p.86.

¹⁸² Interview with Ronalto, FARC member, Agua Bonita, Caquetá, 20 August 2018.

If Agua Bonita residents were committed to peace, divisions between competing factions had been brewing at higher levels, culminating in the departure of Iván Márquez from the peace process. In August 2017, the FARC's first national assembly confirmed 111 National Direction members, and 10 Senators and Congressmen including Iván Márquez and Jesus Santrich, who had emerged as significant but controversial figures during negotiations and who had continued to vocally criticise government delays. The meeting further confirmed their identity as the Common Revolutionary Alternative Force political party, allowing them to maintain the FARC acronym and thereby satisfy their more hard-line members. Then, in April 2018, Márquez travelled to Caquetá to support reincorporation, and shortly after Jesus Santrich was arrested on drug charges, and the US Department of Justice called for his extradition. In protest, Márquez refused to take his Senate seat, instead disappearing along with El Paisa and several other mid-level commanders, later releasing a letter further denouncing the government and declaring that “the peace accord has been betrayed”¹⁸³ and, the next year, appearing in a YouTube video openly calling for remobilization. Reportedly Márquez then reached out to Gentil Duarte to build an alliance with existing dissidents, though the latter refused and instead declared war.¹⁸⁴ This meant there were now three competing FARC factions and, especially given Márquez's and Duarte's personal links to Caquetá, the success of community reincorporation looked increasingly uncertain.

A third fracture was already becoming evident, this time *within* the legal bounds of the reincorporation process. In the wake of Márquez's announcement, national leadership released a public declaration reaffirming their commitment to peace and calling on the government, international community, businesses, movements and communities to redouble their support.”¹⁸⁵ Nevertheless, reports indicated a sense among the rank-and-file that high-ranking leaders had abandoned them, whereas regional leadership had at least remained alongside them. This was given further credence when 29 members of the National Direction failed to attend the 2018 National Council in Bogotá, with the highest number of absentees from the former South Block including former block commander Fabian Ramirez..¹⁸⁶ Meanwhile, international monitoring reports warned of delays to the National Reincorporation Council's approval process for projects, such that only 10% of ex-combatants had accessed funding, resulting in a negative feedback loop as growing numbers left the camps in search of alternative opportunities, requiring projects to be reformulated

¹⁸³ Vélez, J., 3 October 2018., 'Fabián Ramírez ratifica lo reventada que está la Farc', *La Silla Vacía*. Available from: <https://lasillavacia.com/silla-sur/fabian-ramirez-ratifica-lo-reventada-que-esta-la-farc-68224> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹⁸⁴ La Vanguardia, 28 August 2019. 'El ex número dos de las FARC, Iván Márquez, anuncia que retoma las armas', Available from: <https://www.lavanguardia.com/internacional/20190829/4734958577/farc-guerrilla-vuelta-armas-ivan-marquez.html> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

¹⁸⁵ Consejo Político Nacional. Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Comun, FARC., 28 August 2019. 'Declaración pública', Available from: <https://partidofarc.com.co/farc/2019/08/29/declaracion-publica-3/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹⁸⁶ Vélez, J., 3 October 2018., *op cit*.

and generating still further delay.¹⁸⁷ Consequently, by mid-2019 just 3,246 ex-combatants lived in ETCRs; less than half of initial arrivals, and though many left individually, a significant number had continued to live communally, establishing New Areas of Regrouping (NAR), an unofficial designation which allowed them to maintain dialogue with the ARN and receive collective recognition.¹⁸⁸ Fabian Ramirez had then travelled throughout Caquetá and Huila speaking with ex-combatants living in these NARs who “not only feel abandoned by the government, but by the party’s national direction”, later announcing a plan to oversee a parallel reincorporation process and thereby “give regional recognition ...[to Caquetá]...and fill the gap left by Iván Márquez.”¹⁸⁹ Over the next year, Ramirez built institutional support, culminating in a meeting of 35 delegates representing 2,000 reincorporados, with representatives of the High Office for Peace and ARN in attendance. This was the third rupture to the FARC’s unity, as one attendee affirmed, “we’re not with Iván Márquez, nor with Gentil Duarte. But neither with the party.”¹⁹⁰

These wider ruptures to the FARC undeniably impacted the dynamics of community reincorporation in Agua Bonita, particularly given mounting concerns over productive projects and an urgent decision regarding funding. The 170 COOMBUVIPAC members had been promised a return on their investment after two years, and although 23 projects were running, only the pineapple and fish projects were generating income. The land was also found to be unsuitable for coffee and plátano, there were difficulties with market access, a lack of machinery inhibited productive capacity, and reports had also emerged of their crops invading land beyond what they had purchased – generating discontent among neighbouring communities.¹⁹¹ According to one source I spoke with, a cooperative member had recently spoken out during an assembly meeting, declaring “we don’t do anything” and quit. Additionally, because COOMBUVIPAC had so far relied exclusively on individual ‘normalization’ payments and external support, a decision was needed regarding whether to apply for collective or individual disbursement of project funding, and while cooperative leaders called for the former, the three mid-ranking commanders - whose voices still held weight in these discussions - favoured the latter. Overall, multiple conversations suggested a developing disconnect from high-ranking leadership, some of whom had visited after Márquez’s departure to provide reassurance, yet as one analyst noted, “information about

¹⁸⁷ El Espectador., 8 July 2019. ‘Menos del 10% de excombatientes de las Farc han accedido a proyectos productivos’, Available from: <https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/pais/menos-del-10-de-excombatientes-de-las-farc-han-accedido-proyectos-productivos-articulo-869826/> [last accessed 5 May 2021]. / Interview with Sara, Employee of International Organization for Migration, 20 September 2018.

¹⁸⁸ Vélez, J., 3 October 2018. *op cit.*

¹⁸⁹ Vélez, J. 23 September 2019., ‘Una derrota de la reincorporación para la Farc’, *La Silla Vacía*. Available from: <https://lasillavacia.com/silla-sur/derrota-Reincorporación-farc-73604> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Forero, J., 3 September 2019, *op cit.*

developments in the high spheres of government and the FARC's own leadership do not flow with the speed necessary to give tranquillity to the guerrilla in the regions"¹⁹²

Another critical concern related to the approaching end of state support, though a late announcement provided reassurance and made clear that surrounding communities had perceived a degree of mutual benefit from community reincorporation. In May 2019, the government had announced it was considering plans to resettle 11 ETCRs owing to land disputes and complications with private landowners; a decision which senior FARC representatives claimed had been taken unilaterally without consultation.¹⁹³ Agua Bonita was not included in the list and the initial land purchase had provided some sense of security – as Arturo expressed to me in casual conversation “they can't kick us out of here” – yet first-hand data also revealed significant anxieties about the future. However, on 15 August, the government announced that all ETCRs would be granted permanent juridical status. This decision reportedly stemmed from mounting pressure from neighbouring communities, which had benefited from the “visibility” conferred by the FARC's proximity.¹⁹⁴ The government would continue to provide public services and income support, conditional on residents “living within legality”, and supported by the ARN which would pursue “peace with legality... across all levels of territorial ordering.”¹⁹⁵ Further ARN guidance explained that Former ETCRs (now their official designation) would be “transformed into permanent settlements”, incorporated within territorial plans and able to officially register as *veredas*, *corregimientos* or *centros poblados* depending on local specifics, and provided additional land for housing and productive projects where necessary.¹⁹⁶ In Agua Bonita, the next stage would be collective titling of properties under COOMBUVIPAC, before appealing to the municipal government for inclusion in the municipal Territorial Ordering Scheme. Thus, local attention turned immediately to the pending 2019 local elections, through which residents would seek to intercede in the incoming municipal administration.

If the FARC's 2019 election strategy somewhat echoed the national strategic orientation towards urban voters, campaigners struggled to overcome ambivalent feelings towards peace in cities. Reports across Caquetá indicated that multiple actors opposed to coca substitution had continued to commit violence against ex-combatants and civil society activists, and were looking for

¹⁹² Puglarin Cabellos, L. C., 24 December 2016, *op cit*.

¹⁹³ Interview with Carlos, FARC Communications Manager, National Reincorporation Council (30 May 2019).

¹⁹⁴ Semana, 29 June 2019, *op cit*.

¹⁹⁵ Agencia para la Reincorporación y la Normalización (ARN) > La Reincorporación > AETCR Caquetá - Agua Bonita. Available from: http://www.Reincorporación.gov.co/es/Reincorporación/Paginas/ETCRs/AETCR_agua_bonita.aspx

¹⁹⁶ Semana, 29 June 2019, *op cit*.

opportunities to coerce incoming elected officials.¹⁹⁷ These threats limited public campaigning and meant that the party contested far fewer municipalities than expected at the national level, only prioritising a few cities and PDET regions where they could campaign on the benefits of rural reform.¹⁹⁸ Despite being considered an *Uribista* stronghold, the city of Florencia had provided nearly a third of Iván Márquez's votes in 2018, yet Marquez had certainly faced overt opposition and was been forced to cancel a rally due to protest. Because of this, departmental leadership (led by Federico) strategically selected a non-combatant candidate as Florencia Municipal Council candidate in 2019. Originally from Cali, Carlos was a clandestine guerrilla affiliate who travelled regularly to Agua Bonita and Miravalle to support the reincorporation process before directing Márquez's 2018 senatorial campaign. His campaign the next year focused on the benefits of peace, but he struggled to connect with the city's voters: "it would be easier if I were a candidate for departmental assembly, because I could run a campaign in the rural areas... where the ex-guerrilla were the authority."¹⁹⁹ Moreover, the decision to run a non-combatant candidate reportedly generated some resentment among combatants living in the ETCR who had expected the endorsement. In sum, a combination of historical political affiliations, ambivalence towards territorial peace and divergent expectations between combatant and non-combatant members undermined the effectiveness of the FARC's strategy to garner urban support.

FARC had more success in the rural zone, capitalising on concerted community outreach of prior years. FARC participated in the municipal elections for La Montañita municipal council with a campaign centring on their continued alliance to campesinos, their desire to connect with institutional spaces as a valid territorial actor, and a manifesto promising to combat corruption, defend the territory, and defend the peace agreement.. They also secured an alliance with an independent candidate for mayor, based on a campaign promise to incorporate Agua Bonita into future Territorial Ordering Plans. During a campaign speech, the mayoral candidate spoke highly of Jonas (one of the four candidates), who had "won the love of the people" through concerted community outreach: "we don't see them as FARC, we see them as people who want to change the destiny of this municipality." While the results were not promising overall,²⁰⁰ the outcome for Uribe's Democratic Centre was equally poor, losing both Florencia and San Vicente del Caguán. Moreover, the FARC's chosen candidate for Departmental Assembly, a Polo Democrático campesino leader who had emerged as a leading figure in disputes regarding coca substitution won

¹⁹⁷ Ciro, A., 23 June 2018. 'Votando en paz: el caso de Putumayo y Caquetá' *Razón Pública*. Available from: <https://razonpublica.com/votando-en-paz-el-caso-de-putumayo-y-caqueta/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

¹⁹⁸ 59 out of 1,202

¹⁹⁹ Carlos Patino, quoted in: Vélez, J. 25 October 2019., *op cit*.

²⁰⁰ The FARC won just 176 votes (2.57%) for La Montañita council, and only 484 votes (0.73%) in Florencia. Their candidate for mayor lost by 114 votes to the Conservative party.

his race, and of his 3763 votes, 61% of his votes came from La Montañita - suggesting local support may have decisive.²⁰¹

6.3. Conclusion

This chapter explored the dynamics of community reincorporation in Agua Bonita. I began with disarmament and arrival amidst significant uncertainty following the 2016 referendum result, and showed how decisions regarding location, layout, and construction reflected the FARC's military rationale and the government's humanitarian aid rationale. Only when FARC expressed desire for continued communal living did community reincorporation emerge as a medium-term solution, amidst intense criticism from political opponents. After residents were granted freedom of movement, analysts pointed to the crucial role of mid-level commanders in either generating new antagonisms or acting as competent intermediaries, and Federico Montes emerged as an exemplary case. Under Federico's leadership, residents drew on the guerrilla's cultural heritage to construct a vision of future autonomy and self-sufficiency centring on the land itself, building communal areas, founding a cooperative and striking a deal with the landowner: strategic decisions which pointed to a commitment to pursue territorial integration, yet in such a way that revealed a lingering mistrust. The cooperative achieved early successes, though this was counterposed against a mounting sense of economic individuation. FARC emphasised collective decision and adapted their historical regulations to the new context, which aided in creating an atmosphere of internal tranquillity, but as family and others arrived, they also pursued government support beyond the precise terms of the agreement, instead appealing to their practical, everyday needs as citizens.

While FARC and government were initially aligned on the need to publicise the mutual benefits of community reincorporation, some neighbouring residents were fearful that FARC would reassert territorial dominance. Tourism and media publicity provided an opportunity to present a counter-narrative, yet this generated fears of an eventual loss of tranquillity and inhibited the continuation of collective practices which might be open to misinterpretation (e.g. morning exercise). Over time, external turmoil and political polarization generated by the 2016 referendum culminated in the election of Iván Duque to the presidency, heralding a reorientation of the underlying rationale behind peace to one which emphasised legality. The resultant slowdown to rural reform implementation provided FARC opportunities to draw on a familiar narrative of state

²⁰¹ Ciro, A., 20 January 2020. 'El declive del uribismo y de las FARC en Caquetá' *Razón Pública*. Available from: <https://razonpublica.com/declive-del-uribismo-las-farc-caqueta/> [last accessed May 2021].

abandon and strengthen their allegiances with grassroots actors, but also generated new concerns that the ‘success’ of Agua Bonita was being used to disguise government failings. Against this backdrop, daily interaction between FARC and military personnel emerged as a surprising element of reincorporation: free from the public gaze, these conversations appeared to be authentic opportunities to debate alternative perspectives on the conflict, though sadly for some disguised an ulterior motive.

The chapter also situated the local dynamics of community reincorporation against the FARC’s national political transformation. Efforts to present a unified commitment to peace clashed against multiple ruptures, including the growing power of dissidents under Gentil Duarte, the remobilization of Chief Negotiator Iván Márquez, and the amalgamation of New Areas of Regrouping under former South Block commander Fabian Ramirez. All these ruptures had acute ripple effects in Caquetá, given the historical connection of these competing leaders to the region, and while local cooperative leaders tried to ensure continued cohesion, they faced mounting concerns over their projects’ long-term economic viability. Fortunately, the government’s announcement of the re-designation of ETCRs as “Former ETCRs” - and associated assurances for territorial integration - demonstrated that communities had at least perceived some benefit from the “institutional glance” to their regions (Valencia Aguedo, 2019: p.6). This provided the backdrop for the 2019 regional elections – another opportunity for alliance-building - though the poor result (particularly in Florencia) pointed to an (urban) electorate which still did not perceive a benefit from territorial peace nor reincorporation.

Analysis in this chapter is intended to support the re-imagining of DDR as a collective process of territorialisation and demonstrate the analytical value of territory for understanding peace processes more broadly. Throughout the process, the FARC demonstrated a willingness to strategically combine institutional participatory channels and legal recourses with more contentious or disruptive acts. This flexible approach centring on short-term territorial integration (and the benefits that derive from this recognition) reflects the guerrilla’s historical guiding doctrine of ‘all forms of struggle’, yet as one ARN official asserted “in time, it will demand of them responsibilities.”²⁰²

The chapter further revealed how national turmoil, violent resistance to implementation, and competition for territorial control among non-state actors directly undermines and feeds through

²⁰² Interview with Antonio, former ARN Departmental Director, 23 October 2019.

into local relationships. Buoyed by the 2016 referendum, political opposition presented the creation of ETCRs as a challenge to the state's sovereignty akin to the time of the conflict's origins, revealing the dangers of prioritising formal political channels for the sake of an apparent national consensus. This eventually gave way to reorientation of territorial peace towards a legality framing, though the eventual extension of support points to the significance of publicising successes and evidencing mutual benefits. Lastly, the chapter highlighted multiple urban-rural connections; the proximity of Agua Bonita to Florencia provided vital commercial advantages, juxtaposed with a sense of physical and symbolic distance from Bogotá where senior leadership now dedicated their time. This demonstrates the incongruity between the rurality of community reincorporation and the FARC's clear political orientation towards cities – the arena to which the next chapter turns.

CHAPTER 7. URBAN REINCORPORATION IN A FRAGMENTED CITY

- “We already know that the accord doesn’t have anything to do with the urban. Everything is designed for the rural. But the reality is that today, we have nearly 400 *reincorporados* and their families living in Cali.”²⁰³

As FARC began leaving ETCRs in greater numbers, the idea that President Santos had “delivered the country” to the FARC (Cairo and Rios, 2019) was no longer the dominant narrative among those opposed to the agreement; instead the guerrilla were ‘abandoning’ the ETCRs and thus community reincorporation - and by extension the peace process - was failing. Multiple national ruptures to the FARC’s unity, including competing dissident structures, and the creation of New Areas of Regrouping and their amalgamation under Fabian Ramirez, had served as successive “proofs” of the challenges of a collective reincorporation process.²⁰⁴ But by then, the ARN National Director, Andres Stapper, had already announced that “reincorporation, just like reintegration... is done wherever the ex-combatant is.”²⁰⁵ Now, discerning analysts observing FARC’s migration patterns looked to Cali, particularly given its economic primacy, specific geographical characteristics and history as a receptor of displaced people, victims, and ex-combatants. As a city already home to 170,000 conflict victims, 200 demobilized ex-combatants and a further 980 still undergoing standard DDR in 2016, one media outlet dubbed Cali the Capital of The Post-Conflict, with the institutional capacity necessary to manage the process effectively.²⁰⁶ Yet, given Cali’s own violence dynamics, another outlet described FARC’s pending arrival as “a volatile addition to a city where criminal gangs already run rampant.”²⁰⁷

In July 2019 I interviewed Orion, a member of the Cali ARN team with extensive experience working with individual ex-combatants: “I always said that the reincorporation process in Cali will require close monitoring. Because it turns out the focus is in Cali, just like with the paramilitaries the focus was in Medellin.”²⁰⁸ Orion is not the first person to compare Medellin and Cali, given their positions as Colombia’s second and third cities and the former’s success at violence reduction

²⁰³ Interview with Carlota; Employee Cali Secretariat for Peace and Citizen Culture, 15 October 2019.

²⁰⁴ Vélez, J. 23 September 2019., *op cit.*

²⁰⁵ Public Event, ARN Rendición de Cuentas 2014-2017 (24 July 2017)..

²⁰⁶ Cortés, H. O., 18 August 2018., ‘Las razones por las cuáles Cali es la capital del posconflicto en Colombia’, *PubliMetro*. Available from: <https://www.publimetro.co/co/cali/2016/08/18/razones-cuales-cali-capital-posconflicto-colombia.html> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

²⁰⁷ Labbé, S., Seucharan C. and Villegas, A. (24 May 2017). ‘Disarmed and dangerous: can former Farc guerrillas adjust to civilian life?’ *The Guardian*. Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/may/24/disarmed-dangerous-farc-guerrillas-struggle-city-life-cali> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

²⁰⁸ Interview with Oscar, ARN Official, Cali, 2 July 2019.

compared with the latter. This ‘Medellin Miracle’ is often attributed to the administration of Mayor Sergio Farjado (2003-2007), whose depoliticised, technocratic and consensus-building approach launched his political career to Governor of Antioquia and an impressive third place in the 2018 presidential elections and likely candidate in 2022. If Cali was now the focus, the Cali municipality could in turn be expected to take a leading role.

This chapter employs the concept ‘urban reincorporation’ to understand the process through which different actors brought forward distinct interpretations of community reincorporation and the resultant process of (re)territorialisation. In Chapter 2, I showed that as international ‘peacebuilding’ accounted for context and structural conflict drivers, and as DDR evolved to consider community dynamics, cities were given more consideration within policy frameworks, but that only recently have scholars pointed to the possible benefits of a *collective* approach to urban DDR (Uehling 2019; Caryiannis and Pangburn, 2020). Chapter 4 further argued that urban areas were broadly perceived as unaffected by Colombia’s wider conflict dynamics until the 1990s, when urban renewal programmes positioned cities as sites of (territorial) peacebuilding. As I develop in this chapter, this model reached its zenith under Sergio Farjado in Medellin and was echoed by Cali’s mayor, whose narrative of civic pride, citizen co-existence and ‘post-conflict’ preparedness achieved major steps in supporting FARC arrivals, yet whose policies reflect a liberal form of governance whereby access to resources requires populations to be classified as ‘at risk’ (Zeiderman, 2013). Counterposed to this, I show how a minority of FARC members drew on expectations of collective support as established in ETCRs to make collective territorial claims, but divided and fragmented, broadly reconciled themselves to the municipality’s approach.

The chapter is structured as follows. **Section 7.1.** situates Cali’s urban violence within the context of the broader conflict, draws comparisons between Medellin and Cali and provides detail on Mayor Mauricio Armitage’s approach to post-conflict preparedness. It then reveals how the rural focus within the 2016 agreement required local actors to develop a voluntary response to reincorporation. **Section 7.2** then outlines how FARC, ARN and the municipal government brought forward distinct interpretations of urban reincorporation, how these conflicting ideas clashed within the context of a municipal government initiative, and how FARC contested the public narrative surrounding the apparent success of urban reincorporation amidst the political turmoil generated and sustained by President Duque’s 2018 election.

7.1. The Capital of the Post-Conflict

This section provides a brief historical overview of territorial dynamics in Cali's peripheral neighbourhoods, juxtaposes violence reduction in Medellin with continued socio-spatial fragmentation, before outlining the municipal government's de-politicised urban governance approach and vision of the national peace agreement as an opportunity to improve trust in the administration, redress urban violence and boost economic growth (7.1.2). I then show that the prioritisation of rural conflict-affected regions inherent to the 'territorial peace' framework meant that, despite the municipal government's emphasis on post-conflict preparation, Cali sat within an institutional void with respect to reincorporation. Consequently, the Departmental Reincorporation Roundtable emerged as a voluntary partnership between FARC, state and non-state actors to adapt reincorporation to the city, while also establishing and enforcing a distinction between FARC as collective and as party (7.1.2).

7.1.1. Urban Governance in Cali and Medellin

“The streets and the public buildings of Cali have been built through our own tenacity. ...the people do it, because the state has not. Because the state says that if this land is not legalized, it cannot put public services on it. So, we have to do it by our own means.”

Barry, Social Leader in Aguablanca, Cali, 21 July 2019.

The territorialisation of Cali's peripheral neighbourhoods was deeply enmeshed in wider conflict dynamics and reflects an interweaving of development, military and wider Latin American territorial discourse. From an economic perspective, Cali is strategically situated, with the road to the port city of Buenaventura providing a vital link to international trade routes and the basis for early industrial growth in the region. Then in August 1956, seven army ammunition trucks accidentally exploded in south Cali, killing 1,300 and wounding 4,000 residents. This was the most serious non-natural tragedy in Colombia's history, but also came to symbolise unity as residents voluntarily aided in the rescue, while the municipal government and international humanitarian aid distributed vacant *baldíos* and built new homes for survivors.²⁰⁹ This paradoxically triggered an era of resurgence, culminating in the 1971 Pan-American Games which stimulated further infrastructural development, economic growth and cemented the *caleño* identity as one that

²⁰⁹ El País, (2017). Explosión 7 de Agosto (Especial). Available from: <https://www.elpais.com.co/especiales/explosion-7-agosto/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

celebrates cultural diversity. But the documentary “Oiga vea” highlighted a disjuncture between this public image and the lived experience of marginalized peripheral communities.²¹⁰ Conflict-driven displacement (mostly from the Pacific region) fuelled socio-spatial division between a predominantly white middle class and a mostly Afro-Colombian population in peripheral neighbourhoods (Escobar, 2018: p:190-1). After the boom in narco-trafficking, the Cauca Valley became a major zone of coca cultivation, with Cali serving as “the headquarters that makes that business happen.”²¹¹ – and the infamous Cali Cartel consolidated considerable economic, political and territorial power. Meanwhile, a network of grassroots organisations emerged across the western *ladera* and the eastern district of Aguablanca, today home to 30% of the city’s population²¹² drawing on inspiration from indigenous communities in Cauca, urban movements in Bogotá and as Barry, a long-standing activist explained in interview, “from the favelas in Brazil ... it’s the same problem, the fight for the territory.”²¹³

Medellin has since experienced significant violence reduction compared to Cali; a success often attributed to effective municipal governance, though the true reasons might be disputed. As noted in Chapter 4, the 1990s ushered a wave of new urban renewal initiatives designed to integrate peripheral neighbourhoods, though these disguised a secondary motive of preventing radical actors from consolidating territorial control (Stienen, 2020). Then, in 2003, Sergio Farjado emerged as a popular mayoral candidate in Medellin who campaigned ‘in the street’ and built a reputation as sympathetic and accessible despite his wealthy background (Davin and Chaskel, 2010: p.6). After a landslide victory, Farjado promoted a new identity for Medellin – “the most educated” – introducing civic pacts between his administration and communities, employing a technocratic and depoliticised approach, deliberating issues in objective, quantifiable terms and allowing politicians of any disposition to take credit for projects: “I don’t care if you are from the Liberal or Conservative party... I’m going to say that you helped us—in front of your people, your constituents” (Ibid: p.10). Farjado’s time in office coincided with the AUC demobilization and the city’s homicide rate dropped substantially, with the Inter-American Development Bank recognising it as an exemplary case of public administration. However, critical research offers an alternative explanation, indicating that paramilitary successor groups simply switched strategies and established informal agreements between each other and with state security forces (Doyle, 2019), while further accounts outline how ex-paramilitaries established *Bandas Criminales*

²¹⁰ Echeverry, K. A. (2020). Santiago de Cali y Los VI Juegos Panamericanos de 1971. Universidad de Bogotá Jorge Tadeo Lozano, Facultad de Artes y Diseño Bogotá, Colombia.

²¹¹ Interview with Gerry; Cali Mayor Candidate, 22 July 2019.

²¹² LA Network, 9 August 2018, ‘Aguablanca, un fenómeno que desbordó la planeación de Cali’, Available from: <https://la.network/aguablanca-un-fenomeno-que-desbordo-la-planeacion-de-cali/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

²¹³ Interview with Barry, Social Leader in Aguablanca, 21 July 2019.

(BACRIM) and/or inserted themselves into existing criminal networks (Rozema, 2008). Indeed, in other cities, urban violence was exacerbated such that, as Gill's (2008: p.246) account attests: "nobody is ever completely sure where the boundaries between safety and danger are located. Overall, while the so-called Medellin Miracle continues to provoke debate among research and policy circles, but it is undeniable that, as of 2018, Medellin's homicide rate was almost half the rate in Cali - which is the highest in Colombia."²¹⁴

Despite a culture of radical organising in Cali's peripheral *barrios*, entrenched violence, the harmful impact of prior ex-combatant arrivals, and the recent arrival of new violent actors have sustained calls for military solutions. Residents in Charco Azul, a barrio in the Aguablanca district, explained during participatory workshops that after the AUC demobilized, individual ex-paramilitaries inserted themselves into existing criminal structures, exacerbating violence and insecurity. A recent government diagnostic revealed 182 distinct 'baby cartels', competing for control over micro-trafficking routes.²¹⁵ Violence disproportionately affects the younger male population, but the resultant enforcement of 'invisible borders' and the 'fragmentation of space' (Restrepo, 2004) restricts mobility for everyone: "when you arrive to these spaces, you find that it is like a concentration camp for them."²¹⁶ The recent encroachment of Mexican cartels, Venezuelan gangs arriving from border regions and massive in-migration of Venezuelan refugees have only exacerbated these challenges. Consequently, Democratic Centre politician, Juana Cataño declared "we're not prepared!" in response to the prospect of FARC arrivals, and called for militarization: "We have various forces: special forces, military police, the army, the regular police and intelligence...Use them!"²¹⁷

During his 2015 election campaign, Mauricio Armitage combined a discourse akin to that utilised by Sergio Farjado and other successful independent mayors, with an explicitly territorial approach to urban governance in direct alignment with Santos' and Jaramillo's national peace rhetoric. Beginning with the former, Armitage built on his profile as a businessman and philanthropist to connect the problem of urban violence to a lack of educational and employment opportunities for the city's youth, promising to make education a cornerstone of his administration. Then, as a twice-victim of FARC kidnapping, he had participated in Habana dialogues where President Santos

²¹⁴ Acero, H. 1 April 2019. 'Más homicidios y más hurtos: la realidad de las ciudades colombianas'. *Razon Publica*. Available from: <https://razonpublica.com/mas-homicidios-y-mas-hurtos-la-realidad-de-las-ciudades-colombianas/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

²¹⁵ El Tiempo, 12 February 2020, 'Bajan homicidios en Cali, pero la ciudad sigue siendo violenta'. Available from: <https://www.eltiempo.com/opinion/policia-civica-local-una-propuesta-en-duda-para-los-calenos-459562> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

²¹⁶ Interview with Carlota; Employee Cali Secretariat for Peace and Citizen Culture, 15 October 2019.

²¹⁷ Juana Cataño, cited in: Labbé, S., Seucharan C. and Villegas, A., 24 May 2017. *Op cit*.

praised him for seeking reconciliation.²¹⁸ After winning the election, Armitage made ‘post-conflict’ preparation central to his administrative reforms, establishing the Secretariat of Peace and Citizen Culture, tasked with preventing violence, promoting co-existence and catering for victims and ex-combatants. For Guitierrez Cely, the Secretariat’s director, it was Cali’s “painful history” of having suffered “the externalities of the war” which made the 2016 deal an opportunity to restore civic pride, build confidence in the municipal government, combat poverty, reduce violence and position Cali as Colombia’s Capital of Economic Development.²¹⁹ Armitage’s 2015 victory thus indicated a direct alignment between national and municipal approaches to peacebuilding – providing a potentially optimistic backdrop for FARC arrivals.

7.1.2. The Departmental Reincorporation Roundtable

I spoke with Alejandro, former ARN Departmental Director for Valle del Cauca, whose team speculated on whether - and how many - FARC would leave ETCRs and migrate to Cali, looking particularly to the four ETCRs in the neighbouring Cauca department. They were aware of combatants’ high mobility which, for Norelia, a member of the ARN team, stemmed from a simple desire to enjoy their personal freedom, “if I decide tomorrow that I want to go to La Guajira. I can go. And I don't have to go through a whole process of asking permission.”²²⁰ They were also conscious that in seeking out family members, FARC sometimes placed themselves at greater risk: “...they go back to the hotspots ...Some of them might have strong arguments, like, ‘pretty much my whole family’s there, I don’t know anybody outside the city. If I leave, where am I gonna go?’”²²¹ But everyone was surprised at the speed of their departure: “It took days. I don’t think anybody expected that, I don’t think FARC expected that, I don’t think the government expected that.”²²² Miranda, the nearest ETCR to Cali, underwent significant challenges due to the nearby presence of the FARC’s first dissident structure (noted in Chapter 5). Then, as delays and other issues with community reincorporation became increasingly evident, analysis warned that up to 25% of all FARC would migrate to Cali.²²³

²¹⁸ La Silla Vacía, 4 August 2020, ‘Maurice Armitage Cadavid’. Available from: <https://lasillavacia.com/quienesquien/perfilquien/maurice-armitage-cadavid> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

²¹⁹ Cortes, H. O., 29 March 2019. ‘Alcalde.Armitage encabeza firma del Pacto Municipal por la Paz, la Vida y la Reconciliación.’ Cali.Gov.Co. Available from: <https://www.cali.gov.co/gobierno/publicaciones/146637/alcalde-armitage-encabeza-firma-del-pacto-municipal-por-la-paz-la-vida-y-la-reconciliacion/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

Cortés, H. O., 18 August 2018., ‘Las razones por las cuáles Cali es la capital del posconflicto en Colombia’, *PubliMetro*. Available from: <https://www.publimetro.co/co/cali/2016/08/18/razones-cuales-cali-capital-posconflicto-colombia.html> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

Cali Gov. 25 August 2018., ‘Posconflicto, una oportunidad para que Cali sea la capital de desarrollo económico’ Available from: <https://www.cali.gov.co/alcaldenlinea/publicaciones/117179/posconflicto-una-oportunidad-para-que-cali-sea-la-capital-de-desarrollo-economico/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

²²⁰ Interview with Norelia, Employee at Cali Secretariat for Peace and Citizen Culture, 22 June 2019.

²²¹ Interview with Alejandro, 23 October 2019.

²²² Interview with Alejandro, 4 September 2019.

²²³ Labbé, S., Seucharan C. and Villegas, A. 24 May 2017. *Op cit*.

Despite the emphasis on institutional preparedness, the departmental ARN team faced three significant impediments to coordinating an effective, collective reincorporation process. Firstly, FARC continued to be highly mistrustful of the ARN: “we are the first face that they see ... So we end up being a representation of the state’s position which, well, historically has been an opposition, an antagonism.”²²⁴ Consequently, the first group to arrive to the department (settling in Tuluá, a town one hour from Cali) were only willing to communicate with the regional government and the United Nations, spurning all ARN outreach. Secondly, FARC’s physical dispersal and lack of centralised structure impeded co-ordination because “each entity was speaking with someone different.”²²⁵ And thirdly, while the agreement had designated three PDET municipalities and a further eight PNIS coca substitution programmes in Valle del Cauca, and despite Cali’s proximity to four ETCRs in Cauca, there was no mandate to establish a Departmental Reincorporation Council to co-ordinate with the National Reincorporation Council in Bogotá.

Seeking to overcome the multiple challenges to providing collective support for FARC arrivals, different actors agreed an innovative solution. Alejandro led informal discussions with other institutions regarding the need for a unified approach which eventually culminated in an agreement to create the Valle del Cauca Departmental Reincorporation Roundtable (*Mesa de Reincorporación Departmental* – MRD). Actors agreed that the MRD would be an informal space and would invite delegates from FARC, ARN, essential municipal departments and civil society, and would discuss how to meet reincorporados’ collective needs through a ‘territorial perspective’.²²⁶ Municipal, departmental and national government representatives attended the launch event, FARC leaders praised the Roundtable as “an enormous step”,²²⁷ and independent research heralded it as an “alternative effort of the first order...in opening up new decentralized peace actions.”²²⁸

The creation of the MRD provided the basis for a distinction between FARC as party and as collective. The MRD required two FARC delegates to attend meetings. I spoke with Horacio, who outlined his extensive experience in the guerrilla’s clandestine structures and thus his familiarity

²²⁴ Interview with Alejandro, 3 August 2019.

²²⁵ Ibid

²²⁶ El País, 26 May 2018, ‘Instalan Mesa de Reincorporación en el Valle’, Available from: <https://www.elpais.com.co/proceso-de-paz/instalan-mesa-de-Reincorporación-en-el-valle.html> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

²²⁷ Hertz, R. 23 May 2018, Acto de Instalación Mesa Dptal. de Reincorporación Valle del Cauca. Retrieved from: <https://www.facebook.com/notes/farc-occidente/rhertz-acto-de-instalaci%C3%B3n-mesa-dptal-de-reincorporaci%C3%B3n-valle-del-cauca/586922341692736/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

²²⁸ Niño, J. 10 December 2019.. ‘De la incertidumbre nacional a la urgencia territorial en el Valle del Cauca’ Available from: <https://www.valledelcauca.gov.co/gestionpaz/publicaciones/64764/de-la-incertidumbre-nacional-a-la-urgencia-territorial-en-el-valle-del-cauca/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

with Cali: “We had many meetings here, we came from different places, we all met in Cali.”²²⁹ After supporting the release of political prisoners in another city, he travelled to Cali in 2018, and joined the newly formed Local Council (discussed in Chapter 8) which nominated him as MRD representative. This role and the authority it bestowed on Horacio provided the basis for a distinction between the FARC collective and the party, and in a different sense, between urban reincorporation as a collective but largely apolitical process, and urban reincorporation as direct intercession in city politics (discussed in the next chapter).

7.2. Contesting Urban Reincorporation

This section analyses the dynamics of urban reincorporation beginning with the evolving power relations between the ARN and the FARC, and discusses how collective leaders brought to bear expectations generated from ETCRs to make new territorial claims (7.2.1). It then delves into competing understandings of the FARC’s collective responsibilities in the context of a municipal employment programme, Peace Managers, and the impact on the FARC’s internal dynamics (7.2.2). Lastly, it evaluates competing narratives about the success of urban reincorporation, against a backdrop of the turmoil resulting from President Duque’s 2018 election, Iván Márquez’s call for a return to arms and ongoing political violence against FARC and civil society activists (7.2.3).

7.2.1. Power Dynamics, Sensitivities, and Expectations

“Even the people that are reluctant to be in a collective process, they’re still interested in knowing what information is circulating ... so they don’t completely cut their ties.”

Alejandro, Former ARN Departmental Director, Cali, 23 October 2019.

“Back then we were under the shelter of the jungle ... but here they can murder you with a stone, a dagger.”

Horacio, FARC Collective Representative, Cali, 16 October 2019.

Roundtable attendees advanced distinct interpretations of urban reincorporation as it pertained to meeting ex-combatants’ needs, and though ARN drew on extensive reintegration experience, it soon became clear that adaptations would be necessary. Cali already had two ARN offices: one in a central neighbourhood and a second in Aguablanca, and now backed by the Secretariat for Peace

²²⁹ Interview with Horacio; FARC representative, Departmental Reincorporation Roundtable, 16 October 2019.

and Citizen Culture, municipal employees like Carlota argued that the city was well-prepared to support ex-combatants in “taking root” in the city.²³⁰ However at this early stage, the community reincorporation model was still under development such that Alejandro’s team lacked a guiding framework beyond the five requirements of early reincorporation. To meet said requirements, officials drew on prior experience with reintegration, for which they typically acted as mediator between ex-combatant and staff in core municipal departments: “you ask for an appointment this way, if you have an emergency you can go to these places.”²³¹ Pre-existing partnerships ensured this process ran smoothly and thus, “the reintegration process laid the foundations for a more effective reincorporation.” However, some in the FARC demonstrated acute sensitivity to terminology, as an encounter with a housing official evidenced: “she insisted on calling them ‘demobilized’ [*desmovilizado*] or ‘reintegrated’ [*reintegrado*] and we were like ‘No! Don’t do it, they’re *reincorporados*. ... It was a process of learning that for some people, that’s a sensitive subject and you have to respect that.” These sensitivities were the first clear sign that reincorporation “is not the same process” as reintegration.

The process of building trust between ARN and FARC was characterised by a combination of physical and online contact, demanding multiple adaptations in comparison with prior DDR experiences. Unlike ex-paramilitaries, who “didn’t keep those ties between them”, Alejandro explained that FARC had established internal WhatsApp groups to exchange information over distance. This was a novel everyday practice for many, and given the ongoing threat of violence, he viewed it as necessary to “guide them about how to ...keep themselves safe with social media”, recounting an interaction with a *reincorporado* who had his hotel room-key displayed as his profile picture: “I was like ‘take that picture down, like, whoever has your number knows where you are.’” But beyond safety, these WhatsApp groups fundamentally altered the one-to-one relationship characteristic of reintegration, “we learned pretty quickly that whatever you tell anybody can easily be shared by the whole collective, at a national scale, in no time.” Unaccustomed to this, early exchanges generated significant confusion: “The first time we arranged a meeting, we weren’t careful about the details ...we were receiving calls from Popayán ...asking if this is mandatory, and we were like ‘no that’s just for Cali, what’s that doing in Popayán?’” After early misunderstandings, Alejandro insisted that each message was “complete in itself” and that consistency gradually built trust, even without direct physical contact: “because they had a way to check whatever I was telling them, or because I was referred by another colleague who they know

²³⁰ Interview with Carlota; Employee Cali Secretariat for Peace and Citizen Culture, 15 October 2019.

²³¹ Interview with Alejandro, ARN Departmental Director, 4 September 2019.

personally.”²³² In this respect, new digital technologies and the ARN’s adaptation to their use among the FARC, were another clear sign that reincorporation was a fundamentally more collective process than reintegration, and dependent on shared contact across physical and online spaces.

As ARN-FARC relationships were solidified, Alejandro was also sensitive to potentially undermining the authority of collective representatives like Horacio: “as an agency, we have a difficult position ... If we do a good job, the population will refer to us. And that will be a threat to the leadership”²³³ In discussions with other departmental directors, he perceived that despite the ubiquitous use of WhatsApp groups, the physical distance between former rank-and-file and mid-level commanders had massively reduced the FARC’s internal cohesion. Another ARN employee, Lara, outlined prior conversations with deserters which revealed what she perceived as a pervasive internal mistrust: “many of them deserted without telling anyone, because they thought they would be betrayed. There’s no trust between them.” This lent credence to the idea that mid-ranking leaders had intentionally disseminated false information to manipulate the rank-and-file into remaining in ETCRs: a challenge which Alejandro had redressed by disseminating official documents and “keeping the people informed in real time”, such that the mid-level commanders “realised it wasn’t going to work.” But now collective leaders like Horacio – who lacked the military trajectory of mid-level commanders – were struggling to establish authority. To illustrate, Alejandro explained that after early dissemination of meeting invitations, Horacio complained that he was not informed in advance, leaving him unable to respond to questions. In response, Alejandro began sending all communications to Horacio first for approval, a norm which demonstrated his sensitivity to FARC’s power dynamics which helped to ensure a stable working relationship.

Despite the efforts of collective leadership to engender social and economic cohesion beyond WhatsApp, urban reincorporation in Cali was a fragmented process. In order to match services to needs, the MRD commissioned a census, revealing housing, financial difficulties, insecurity and discrimination among top concerns.²³⁴ Of the 368 reincorporados now in Valle del Cauca, 72% were residing in low-quality urban housing, with 51.7% living entirely on monthly income support, equivalent to just 90% of the minimum wage. Horacio was acutely aware of their newfound individuation and vulnerability: “There [in conflict] we were together and we watched each other,

²³² Interview with Alejandro, ARN Departmental Director, 23 October 2019.

²³³ Interview with Alejandro, ARN Departmental Director, 3 August 2019.

²³⁴ El País, 18 July 2019, ‘Así viven los excombatientes de las Farc en el Valle del Cauca’, Available from: <https://www.elpais.com.co/proceso-de-paz/asi-viven-los-excombatientes-de-las-farc-en-el-valle-del-cauca.html> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

we lent security to each other ...here everyone is kind of by themselves.” Drawing on the strategy adopted in ETCRs, he founded a department-wide cooperative, the *Corporación Comun Valle*, to secure collective socio-economic support and implement productive projects. He achieved moderate success with the former, negotiating an expansion of an existing university scheme, but owing to members’ delicate financial situation, he could only charge a symbolic monthly fee, thus generating limited capital in comparison with COOMBUVIPAC in Agua Bonita. Moreover, physical dispersal and other daily commitments hindered active participation, “When I organise meetings, one person is working, the other is studying, the other has to be at home looking after the family. It’s not the same as the Territorial Spaces because they are together or relatively together.” In sum, the realities of urban life were fundamentally individualising as compared to life in the guerrilla, and certainly not conducive to achieving Community Reincorporation as envisaged in ETCRs.

From the ARN perspective, the quickest way to meet FARC’s immediate needs was through incorporating them into existing municipal initiatives, while FARC collective leaders continued to draw on expectations generated in ETCRs in pursuit of a (more) collective process. In 2016 the Secretariat for Housing introduced a housing subsidy for priority groups including victims and ex-combatants undergoing reintegration.²³⁵ In 2019, the MRD coordinated the extension of this scheme to include reincorporados, the first urban housing initiative to specifically cater for FARC in this way.²³⁶ However, Horacio complained that the prerequisites were unfairly prohibitive such that only a few could access the subsidy, while independent analysis pointed to inflexibility and a failure to build partnerships with the private sector.²³⁷ Instead he called for a collective housing support “like a Territorial Space” to be provided for FARC members inside the city, a demand which Alejandro construed as sending a negative message: “like, this is our territory, in here you have to abide by our rules”, and was furthermore unrealistic given the limited municipal budget and the probable need for security provision.²³⁸

Horacio then requested the ARN designate the entire city a New Area of Regrouping (NAR). As outlined in Chapter 6, FARC created this designation in order to access collective support after

²³⁵ Macias, Y., 15 May 2019., ‘Alcaldía entregará 35 subsidios de vivienda a personas en proceso de reintegración y reincorporación’ Available from: <http://www.cali.gov.co/vivienda/publicaciones/147395/alcaldia-entregara-35-subsidios-de-vivienda-a-personas-en-proceso-de-Reintegración-y-Reincorporación/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

²³⁶ Cali Buenas Noticias, 7 April 2019, ‘Secretaría de Vivienda realiza taller especial a población reincorporada de Cali’ Available from: <https://calibuenasnoticias.com/2019/04/07/secretaria-de-vivienda-realiza-taller-especial-a-poblacion-reincorporada-de-cali/>

²³⁷ Niño, J. 10 December 2019, ‘De la incertidumbre nacional a la urgencia territorial en el Valle del Cauca’ Available from:

<https://www.valledelcauca.gov.co/gestionpaz/publicaciones/64764/de-la-incertidumbre-nacional-a-la-urgencia-territorial-en-el-valle-del-cauca/>

²³⁸ Interview with Alejandro, ARN Departmental Director, 3 August 2019.

leaving ETCRs. But the ARN employed distinct terminology²³⁹ and introduced a precise definition: a NAR had to comprise at least 10 people living in the same area, and with a defined leadership. At least 300 *reincorporados* were now in Cali, but as Alejandro explained, “some are in the political party, some aren’t, some of them know each other, but others are from a different city, a different region” and thus did not qualify. Ultimately, Alejandro suggested Horacio and others reconcile with the reality that “having a home is not something that you get in a couple of years.” In this sense, FARC’s fragmentation and vulnerability itself justified the advice that they adhere to an individualising support model, and accept that any major policy adjustments were beyond the limitations of the current administration.

7.2.2. Peace Managers

During Roundtable discussions, FARC and ARN brought to bear different perspectives on urban reincorporation as it pertained to other aspects of the agreement. For example, Chapter Three established that those undergoing reincorporation should contribute to reconciliation by delegating spokespeople to travel across each municipality during the early reincorporation stage. But both Alejandro and Horacio acknowledged that the majority of new arrivals were prioritising personal, family and financial security above collective or community responsibilities. Moreover, for Alejandro, any reconciliation initiative had to avoid being perceived as overtly political. This included both symbolic and discursive separation, for example not allowing the FARC’s red rose symbol to appear on Roundtable documents - “having that rose is like having the liberal banner, the conservative banner” - and only discussing issues relevant to social and economic, rather than political reincorporation. Still, a minority were determined to contribute to the broader goals of peace:

“I’d say that, at most, 15-20% of the agreement directly benefits the guerrilla. The rest was thought for Colombian society, to overcome the causes that generated the conflict. So we need to go to the community and tell them that, but also tell them that we are in the process of reincorporation and we come as a gesture of reconciliation ... that’s something we have to do wherever we go.”

Horacio, FARC Representative, 16 October 2019

²³⁹ Areas of Group Reincorporation – ARG.

The Peace Managers initiative provides an illuminating case of how different perspectives on urban reincorporation clashed within the context of a municipal scheme. In April 2017, the Secretariat of Peace and Citizen Culture launched a training and employment programme to support former *pandilla* members, victims, ex-combatants undergoing standard reintegration, and Afro- and indigenous Colombians living in conflict-affected communities. During a public event about the initiative, a municipal government employee explained how Peace Managers constituted an important component of Mayor's Armitage's strategy for converting Cali into Colombia's "example of civicism and citizen culture", and referred specifically to the 1971 Pan-American Games as the pinnacle of this lost cultural identity.²⁴⁰ The scheme draws from the ARN's Community Reintegration model, with the overall goal of "changing the lives of these people, and in doing so, changing the city"²⁴¹ and is achieved through artistic and psycho-social support, the development of individual Life Plans and reconciliation activities in public space. In 2018, the British Council funded an extension of the programme to incorporate 22 FARC members: the first municipal government employment scheme to combine reincorporation and reintegration efforts in this way.²⁴²

Interviews with FARC Peace Managers and government staff involved in the scheme revealed initial tensions, giving way to a gradual evolution in internal group dynamics. The group of 22 first incorporated into the programme were from diverse backgrounds, including formerly non-combatant members (like Horacio), former combatants who had migrated from ETCRs, and political prisoners – with only a small minority native to Cali. I interviewed James, an employee of the Secretariat for Peace and Citizen Culture tasked with the group's induction, who explained how the legacies of military hierarchy were such that senior members frequently spoke on behalf of younger members. To counteract this, James drew on his theatrical background to organise ice-breaking activities and thereby equalize power dynamics: "I had everyone sitting against a wall and pulled them out one by one, and no matter who was in front, the rest of us watched and commented. And that was the idea, giving equal importance to each persons' voice."²⁴³ Consequently, James found that senior members recognised that the "the space was different" and that former vertical power dynamics were gradually transforming.

²⁴⁰ Peace Managers Event, Hotel Intercontinental, Cali. 6 September 2018.

²⁴¹ Director of Peace Managers, Ceremonial Graduation Event, 30 July 2019.

²⁴² Reincorporation.Gov.Co. 17 October 2019. Gestores reincorporados de paz, le entregaron a Cali un mural de reconciliación a través del arte y el color. Available from: <http://www.Reincorporación.gov.co/es/sala-de-prensa/noticias/Paginas/2019/Gestores-reincorporados-de-paz-le-entregaron-a-Cali-un-mural-de-reconciliacion-a-traves-del-arte-y-el-color.aspx> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

²⁴³ Ibid.

Aided by a willingness to adjust the programme to their specific needs, James assumed an authoritative role in the everyday lives of FARC Peace Managers, in a manner echoing the historical role of mid-level commanders. Each weekday began with two hours of training followed by an afternoon of programme activities. Given the variation in location, James used WhatsApp to inform the group about the next day's plan: "I wrote them messages, guys, tomorrow we have training in the Cultural Centre." Most were unfamiliar with the names of locations, and when one member asked, "Which one is the Cultural Centre?", another responded "the one with the ant outside", referring to a statue outside the building (see Figure 8). Noting this, James adjusted his approach, sending an emoji of an ant to represent the Culture Centre and introducing similar symbols for other locations, "We started to just say 'See you at the ant, or see you at the turtle?'" By consideration of how they, "as people from the mountains and the countryside, relate to this city", James steadily built rapport with the group. In another example, when James informed them about an impending home visit with police accompaniment – a standard component of the programme used to assess family and living circumstances – the group refused, citing their view that police were complicit in the assassination of ex-combatants. In response, James spoke to his supervisor and pleaded on their behalf, until it was agreed police would not be involved. Stepping beyond protocol in this way further cemented trust - "That helped a lot, for them to know I was taking care of them. It's like having an ally" – and many in the group began treating James "like their commander."

FIGURE 8: ANT STATUE OUTSIDE CULTURAL CENTRE, CALI²⁴⁴



²⁴⁴ Source: <https://julian.albornoz.co/page/15>

James critiqued some elements of the behaviour of FARC Peace Managers, particularly their unwillingness to develop individual agency and integrate with other groups. Julia, a non-FARC Peace Manager from Charco Azul, explained that working at multiple locations had helped to develop her socio-spatial awareness and sense of independence: “I did not know my Cali, I only knew my neighbourhood, my area, and now with this work I know the north, the west, everything.” Additionally, during induction all Peace Managers are provided a uniform such that “wearing the uniform in any space of this city means that each one of you represents the 550 here.”²⁴⁵ Julia’s group developed a strong sense of cohesion, despite their diverse backgrounds: “now we are like family.” For James, it was crucial that each member of the FARC also develop these skills by “recognising that they can take decisions...[and] take responsibility for their life in their own hands”, and learn to interact with new people, yet most appeared to find this challenging. Firstly, when he told the group about the possibility of university enrolment, rather than take an independent decision they had deliberated amongst themselves “like it’s the subject of debate.” Secondly, unlike the other groups, FARC had completely refused to work alongside other Peace Managers on particular events: “They were like ‘I’m sorry but I’m not working with those people. We are here for a very specific thing... we are not here for that.’” This unwillingness to make independent decisions or interact with other Peace Managers pointed to clear limitations in the extent to which entry into the programme was contributing to a meaningful, lasting change to FARC’s internal dynamics.

Another important tension within the Peace Managers programme concerned how it fit within the mayoral administration’s depoliticised narrative of civic pride, which for FARC and others alike, downplayed autonomous community efforts to redress violence. James explained that at the beginning of the induction process, “All my coordinators told me, the first thing you have to say is that this is not a political space ... Everyone can have the political conviction they want. But in this space, we only talk about Peace Managers.”²⁴⁶ This was not contentious for the majority who were prioritising individual concerns above FARC commitments, but generated an ideological disjuncture for the politically active minority, particularly during activities in peripheral barrios. During an event in Siloé honouring Cali’s 482nd anniversary, Mayor Armitage gave a speech reiterating his civic unity narrative.²⁴⁷ For Peace Manager, Gabriel, this discourse overlooked the idea of territorial peace as recognition of community autonomy, yet his role left him unable to express

²⁴⁵ Peace Managers programme director, Cali, 30 July 2019.

²⁴⁶ Interview with James, Secretariat for Peace and Citizen Culture, 28 August 2019.

²⁴⁷ El Tiempo, 4 June 2018, ‘La comuna 20 de la ladera de Cali estrenó alameda’, Available from: <https://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/cali/la-comuna-20-de-la-ladera-de-cali-225798> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

his own views: "...supposedly, what we have to do is defend the municipality. So, there's a contradiction, us arriving with the municipal logo and speaking about defence of the territory."²⁴⁸

Other Peace Managers not in the FARC concurred that the programme failed to account for community resilience-building, like Beatriz in Charco Azul: "I was born there, I've lived there my whole life, and I know that you can do a good job from the street", and further, that the programme engendered an over-dependence on the current administration, particularly given the short-term work contract and its vulnerability to discontinuation after the upcoming mayoral election. I put these concerns to Alejandro in the ARN, who responded that managing multiple discourses was simply a reality of employment: "you have to be able to divide", he said, "I mean, we all have to do it. Having a double identity is recognising when you put your shirt on as a Peace Manager and when you take it off".²⁴⁹ This expectation that FARC accept and learn to navigate this 'double identity' represents a fundamental difference between urban reincorporation and community reincorporation.

7.2.3. Shaping the Narratives

"The dominant political thought in universities is that they had to find a negotiated end to the armed conflict ... In that sense, we defend the Havana dialogues. But my opinion is that our university has not developed its full potential in favour of the process. Somehow it's stuck on implementing programs, but in terms of developing a mindset of permanent agitation, it seems to me we have fallen short."

Romeo, Geography professor, Cali, 2 August 2019.

If President Duque's 2018 election and subsequent introduction of a 'peace with legality' framing generated tensions between FARC and the ARN in Agua Bonita, in Cali the limitations to urban reincorporation predated this reorientation and appeared to be (mutually) understood as institutional rather than political. Interviews with both ARN and FARC representatives described an inability to coordinate with the national level. For Horacio, the inability to implement local agreements was because "we don't have enough weight to dialogue with the national state", despite the "fraternal relationship" established among Roundtable representatives. Similarly, it was Alejandro's view that most people undergoing reincorporation were aware of these restrictions,

²⁴⁸ Ibid

²⁴⁹ Interview with Alejandro, ARN Departmental Director, 23 October 2019.

could see that “our hands are tied”, yet mostly “believe the agency is working in good faith.” In this sense, local relationships endured because the challenges to urban reincorporation lay with the design of the peace agreement itself, and not with a local (or national) unwillingness to implement its terms.

Another difference is that, while slowdown to implementation provided opportunities for FARC to strengthen community alliances in a familiar narrative of state abandon, in Cali the heightened political opposition stimulated trepidation among civil society actors to openly support the process, particularly given the potentially damaging reputational consequences. In response to wider concerns about implementation, Mayor Armitage had redoubled his public commitment to peace, introducing Colombia’s first Municipal Pact for Peace, Life and Reconciliation in March 2019, drawing on the National Political Pact established in Chapter Three of the agreement and representing a symbolic commitment across government and civil society.²⁵⁰ But by that point, the only ongoing reincorporation initiative which promoted peace (as reconciliation) was Peace Managers which, for participants like Horacio, prioritised artistic practices as opposed to meaningful community engagement: “it’s not what we wanted. You make a peace agreement with your adversary. You don’t do it with yourself, or with your friends.”²⁵¹ When I asked about successful examples, both Horacio and Alejandro explained that in 2018, the Cali Arch-diocese had independently approached the ARN and offered to run an intensive three-month reconciliation programme with a group of victims and reincorporados. Afterwards, Alejandro praised the programme as “a really good experience” and Horacio even declared that “if any entity in Cali has been seriously committed to the peace process ... it is the Catholic Church.” However, owing to reputational concerns, the Arch-diocese specifically requested that the project not be publicised; a request which Alejandro had agreed to, having also feared that it might “step on somebody’s toes” at the national level.²⁵² Consequently, the project was never replicated; a failing which, looking back a year later, Alejandro saw as a missed opportunity.

Reincorporados struggled to intercede in public discussions about reincorporation and/or other aspects of the agreement. Universities emerged as leading actors in defending peace, particularly when, in May 2019 a group of international academics sent an open letter to President Duque

²⁵⁰ Cali Gov, 27 March 2019, 'Cali, primera ciudad colombiana en promover el pacto municipal por la Paz, la Vida y la Reconciliación' Available from: <https://www.cali.gov.co/pazycultura/publicaciones/146603/cali-primer-a-ciudad-colombiana-en-promover-el-pacto-municipal-por-la-paz-la-vida-y-la-reconciliacion/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

²⁵¹ Interview with Horacio, Cali, 16 October 2019.

²⁵² Interview with Alejandro, ARN Departmental Director, 3 September 2019.

denouncing violence against ex-combatants and social leaders.²⁵³ Turning to Cali specifically, universities regularly hosted seminars during which participants like Alfred (director of the Improving Lives Association) offered vocal critiques of the municipal government as one of the actors “generating most injustice in Cali’s eastern territories, through its absence and incapacity.” Conversely, a number of academics pointed to a lack of concrete actions in defence of the agreement, with leadership broadly adopting the national and government narrative with respect to reincorporation.²⁵⁴ During one event the ARN National Director Andres Stapper a former Minister and two academics were invited to discuss urban reincorporation, during which Stapper praised the municipality’s commitment and cited a census indicating that 80% of FARC in Valle del Cauca felt optimistic about their futures. After opening the debate to the audience, Horacio stood and explained his role on the Roundtable, rejected the assertion that this optimism stemmed from government efforts (instead praising local communities), denounced violence against FARC and civil society, and criticised the university for failing to invite him to the panel: “the message is that they continue to see us as objects.” Shortly after, the host asked Horacio to cede his time, by which point Stapper had already left for Bogotá. While anecdotal, this account points to an inability to access “spaces for protected contention” (Rossi, 2017) beyond the Roundtable and thus meaningfully participate in discussions about governmental shortcomings with respect to urban reincorporation.

7.3. Conclusion

This chapter advanced the concept ‘urban reincorporation’ to make sense of how FARC, government and civil society actors brought to bear multiple and sometimes conflicting interpretations of reincorporation as a collective process, in the context of a violent and territorially fragmented city. I began by outlining how the production of territory in Cali was interwoven in broader conflict dynamics, and how the development of the *caleño* identity exemplified by the 1971 Pan-American Games obscured an enduring division between middle classes and marginalized peripheral *barrios*. In the wake of the corruption and violence generated by the Cali and Medellin cartels, a technocratic approach to urban governance appeared to curtail violence and restore faith in the Medellin municipality, though somewhat disguising the true reasons why violence fell. In comparison, Cali’s peripheral communities continued to navigate violent and fragmented geographies amidst continued underinvestment in basic services. Against this backdrop, newly

²⁵³ Semana, 25 May 2019, ‘Dura carta de académicos de 13 países al presidente Duque por asesinatos de líderes sociales’, Available from: <https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/carta-de-academicos-al-presidente-duque-por-asesinatos-de-lideres-sociales/617131/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

²⁵⁴ Interview with Romeo, Geography Professor, 2 August 2019.

elected Mayor Mauricio Armitage emphasised civic pride and portrayed the national peace process as an opportunity to redress urban violence and poverty, rebuild state-citizen relationships and stimulate economic growth. His government's new territorially-centred 'post-conflict' initiatives took on greater importance as dispersed reincorporados migrated to the city, but the agreement's rural focus and disregard for cross-departmental migration patterns left Cali in an institutional void with respect to reincorporation, requiring the creation of a voluntary partnership: the Departmental Reincorporation Roundtable.

The ARN benefitted from extensive local experience and a network of institutional partnerships, but early sensitivities over terminology, the widespread use of WhatsApp, and the FARC's evolving internal power structures made clear the need for flexibility, adaptation, and new norms of communication and trust-building. An early census revealed financial and housing as major concerns, and while collective leadership pursued socio-economic cohesion by drawing on the strategies pursued in rural areas, they struggled to overcome a pervasive vulnerability and individuation, and were ultimately encouraged to reconcile with the municipal offer. Nevertheless, analysis of the Peace Managers initiative revealed conflicting perspectives. Tasked with their induction, James drew on his theatrical experience to unravel the group's residual military hierarchies and, by showing a personal willingness to adjust the programme to their needs, inadvertently assumed a role of authority in their daily lives. James further encouraged individual agency but noted a general reluctance to step beyond the FARC identity (exacerbated by local and national security concerns), while politically active members critiqued the programme for demanding they adopt the municipality's depoliticised civic pride narrative. These tensions were interwoven in national politics and if FARC-ARN relations appeared to hold strong, fears over stigmatization directly stifled the involvement of civil society, while even ostensibly progressive universities largely echoed the government's unity narrative, sometimes even failing to include FARC in debates about their own experiences.

This chapter affirms the value of re-conceptualising DDR as a contentious process of (re)territorialisation, though notes the many challenges to its realisation in an urban context. In comparison to Agua Bonita, where the cooperative provided the first collective impetus towards territorial integration, in Cali, as FARC members arrived dispersed and fragmented, it was the Departmental Reincorporation Roundtable. This Roundtable provided the initial structuration around which the FARC 'collective' emerged, a loose structure of those undergoing reincorporation which drew on the party for support yet was ultimately distinct both in

membership and objectives. But amidst violence and insecurity, even the collective-minded FARC struggled to effectively promote a narrative of cohesion and self-sufficiency, while the majority made pragmatic decisions and prioritised (individual) financial and personal security – advice which DDR practitioners, drawing on prior experiences and aware of local geographies of violence, echoed and supported. Meanwhile, the voluntary nature of the Roundtable – a direct result of the rural bias of reincorporation as stipulated in the agreement – if conducive to ‘fraternal’ relationships on the ground, lacked institutional support at the national scale.

Turning to the broader implications for peacebuilding, as noted in Chapter 4 and as developed in this chapter, the idea of a peace intervention predicated on a consensual partnership between state and society, geared towards territorial integration of peripheral communities, is traceable to 1990s urban renewal initiatives; firstly PRIMED (as Stienen, 2020 explores), and subsequently under Sergio Farjado. This approach was revived under Mayor Armitage in Cali, whose post-conflict preparedness emphasised unity, but effectively required populations to position themselves as lives in danger (Zeiderman, 2013). Notwithstanding some achievements, this approach leaves communities vulnerable to the fluctuations in municipal politics, disregards decades of grassroots resilience building, and – in the case of displaced migrants/the FARC – undermines their capacity for long-term re-territorialisation. Indeed, is notable that when FARC requested additional support, they were encouraged to intercede in municipal elections and thereby direct political pressure at future mayoral administrations – the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT. FROM CLANDESTINE TO OPEN POLITICS.

(1) Four mayoral candidates are stood in a church next to a coffin. One faces the audience and says: “we are burying the social curse that has done the most harm to the dreams of caleños ... A cancer called Calibalismo.”²⁵⁵ Calibalismo is a colloquial term combining the words ‘Cali’ and ‘cannibalism’, and refers to the city’s renowned political culture of infighting and self-interest. Another candidate then takes the microphone and proclaims “the arrival of Calipanismo”, a word combining ‘Cali’ and ‘Pan’, alluding to the unity and civicism exemplified by the famous 1971 Pan-American Games. The candidates then jointly promise to “leave behind all ideological, political, economic or ethnic sectarianism, and instead work in a spirit that transcends personal interests” in the course of the 2019 election campaign.

(2) FARC established *La Casa de Los Comunes* (The House of the Common People) in a central Cali neighbourhood in late 2017; the first and only regional party headquarters outside Bogotá. Given the enforced distinctions between FARC as ‘collective’ and as ‘party’ (or between socio-economic and political reincorporation) as outlined in Chapter 7, ARN Departmental Director Alejandro had no influence over the decision and was somewhat concerned about the local response: “With most people, there wouldn’t be a problem ... But that little percentage of people that don’t care about being violent in public, that’s what I would be afraid of.”²⁵⁶ Despite concerted efforts by FARC at reaching out to their neighbours and establishing positive everyday relations, in January 2018 a letter from the *Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia* paramilitary group arrived at headquarters threatening violence.²⁵⁷ Then, just a few months later, FARC leader Timochenko visited during his bid for the presidency, attracting a crowd of protesters which gathered outside, chanting and throwing rocks, eggs and bottles, requiring National Protection Unit officers to intervene.²⁵⁸ Although Timochenko later quit the race citing health reasons, commentators speculated that this and other public attacks are ultimately what led to the decision.

²⁵⁵ Alcalde Michel Maya, 13 August 2019, ‘El Calipanismo da sepultura al Calibalismo’, Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Taw29gkC1XQ> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

²⁵⁶ Interview with Alejandro, 4 September 2019.

²⁵⁷ El País, 28 January 2018, ‘Partido político Farc socializa presencia de su sede en el barrio Junín, centro de Cali’, Available from: <https://www.elpais.com.co/politica/partido-politico-farc-socializa-presencia-de-su-sede-en-el-barrio-junin-centro-de-cali.html> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

²⁵⁸ AND Sepúlveda, J. P., 26 December 2018, ‘2018: el primer año de la Farc en la política colombiana’, *Pacifista*. Available from: <https://pacifista.tv/notas/primer-ano-la-farc-politica-colombiana/> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

(3) During protests outside the Cali municipal council building on the day of President Duque's inauguration, I watched an Afro-Colombian activist from the Jarillón – a community on Cali's peri-urban outskirts facing resettlement – speak to the crowd:

“We are tired of the war and we are here to say that we are committed to peace, that we are committed to the construction of another possible world... [and] ... transformation of this economic model of death ... We are also here to tell the government, as ethnic peoples, that we are not going to allow the peace accord to be torn apart, or for them to tear apart the fundamental right to prior consultation. We resist and defend that right which has supported many of our communities to remain in their territories.”

Activist from the Jarillón, outside the Cali Municipal Council building, 7 August 2018.

This chapter explores the experiences of members of the FARC's non-combatant structures in the period immediately following the ratification of the 2016 agreement. In doing so, I develop the thesis' broader framework wherein peace represents a social dispute and DDR is a collective, conflictive process of de- and re-territorialisation. I frame the analysis against the backdrop of multiple narratives characterising the 2019 election as exemplified by the above accounts, during which formerly clandestine members, who operated under distinct socio-territorial logics to combatants, took on a leading role in developing the FARC's campaign strategy and manifesto. I show that the civic unity narrative (extract 1) and Gustavo Petro's relative success in 2018 provided solid early prospects for alliance-building, and efforts to build internal cohesion drew directly on pre-established cell structures, affirming Zaks' (2017) hypothesis concerning their value in post-conflict transition. However, the diverse blend of individual trajectories spurred internal disagreements and high turnover, with many former affiliates continuing their community organising via other, less contentious socio-political movements. Meanwhile, heterogeneous socio-territorial relations could not be easily upscaled or converted to electoral support, particularly amidst the (often *Uribista*) clientelist politics which dominates former leftist *barrios*, whose residents saw little material gain from the peace agreement and voted in surprising numbers against it (extract 2). Re-territorialisation did occur, however, through the construction of a city-wide manifesto in conjunction with likeminded progressive organisations, ultimately connecting the party to peri-urban struggles where autonomist narratives are more prevalent (extract 3). But late ruptures and hostilities showed that the FARC are still vulnerable to attacks from politicians ostensibly espousing unity, keeping many individual members suspended in 'submergence' (Zeiderman

2016). Overall, the chapter argues for greater consideration of clandestine structures within DDR policy and research, in such a way that is rooted in urban politics.

The chapter is structured as follows. **Section 8.1.** outlines the historical practices of FARC's clandestine structures before turning to the early process of party formation and the development of a three-pronged campaign strategy. **Section 8.2** assesses that strategy, beginning with efforts to consolidate support from core membership; build on existing community relationships and produce a city-wide manifesto. **Section 8.3.** considers the damaging impact of ruptures both nationally and locally, disagreements about the FARC's future political identity, fallout from the election and the subsequent unprecedented 2019 National Strike.

8.1. From Clandestine Organising to Coalition-Building

This section begins with the notorious impact of the M-19 urban guerrilla group in Siloé, a large neighbourhood in Cali's western ladera, Siloé's continued symbolic pull for urban middle-class activism and its related significance for FARC's clandestine structures (8.1.1). I then turn to the immediate aftermath of the 2016 agreement, during concerted leadership, historical alliances and the broader progressive energies generated by Gustavo Petro in 2018 provided strong prospects for 2019, wherein Cali represented a 'pilot city' for the FARC at the national level (8.1.2).

8.1.1. The legacy of the M-19 and the FARC in Siloé

"I don't come from a rich family, but not poor either. I'm middle-class."

Noa, former PCC leader and current FARC member, Cali, 21 October 2019

"We didn't fight from one mountain to another here. We didn't have to walk from one camp to another, or not sleep because they were about to drop a bomb on us. The war was not the same here. The war here is drug trafficking, thieves, unemployment, lack of education, children enduring hunger."

Lorena, former MB member and current FARC member, Cali, 15 July 2019.

The M-19 has somewhat overshadowed the FARC in the collective memory of Cali's peripheral barrios, particularly given periods of intense, overt conflict with other state and non-state forces. During the 1980s, the M-19 were predominantly active in Siloé and enjoyed some local support,

organising informal construction projects and regulating certain aspects of daily life.²⁵⁹ Still, some accounts describe indiscriminate violence as, in neighbouring Comunas 1 and 18, paramilitary militias established territorial dominance and launched attacks against the M-19 and social leaders such that, together with a highly militarized police often killing with impunity, Siloé became the second-most dangerous barrio in the world (Alzate et al., 2015: p.147). During interview, resident-activist Harrison offered a damning account, explaining that the M-19 essentially operated as extra-judicial assassins: “after 10 at night, they would go out in masks and kill kids they found in the street. They’re urban militias... but they were *guerrilleros*.”²⁶⁰ In this sense, residents caught in the crossfire did not distinguish between the ideologies of the guerrilla, state and paramilitary forces engaged in extra-legal violence: “it’s the same... the difference is the way history has marked territories.”²⁶¹

The M-19’s subsequent successful transition from guerrilla to political party explains, in part, why the group hold a somewhat ambivalent position in collective memories to this day. During the 1980s peace process, M-19 militants briefly switched to open politics, establishing Peace Camps (*Campamentos de Paz*) and holding public meetings to discuss community issues (Perdoza and Sanabria, 2014). But after talks broke down, conflict resumed and in August 1985, the military launched operation *Oiga, caleño, vea* (listen *caleño* look), killing the group’s co-founder and injuring his son Jorge Iván Ospina.²⁶² Shortly after, Operation *Navidad Limpia* (clean Christmas) constituted the largest security operation in Siloé’s history, forcing many members into hiding or exile.²⁶³ This marked the end of the M-19’s public presence and, despite one final attempt at triggering a popular uprising, they were incapable of converting their territorial nucleus into widespread support.²⁶⁴ After the infamous Palace of Justice siege (discussed in Chapter 4), Gustavo Petro used his influence to bring about the group’s eventual dismantling and participation, now as the M-19 Democratic Alliance, in drafting the 1991 Constitution. This successful transition, most recently culminating in Gustavo Petro’s impactful 2018 presidential run, means that the M-19 still enjoy a degree of popular support; one social leader even openly told me that “if the M-19 reformed tomorrow, I would be the first to join.”²⁶⁵

²⁵⁹ Hoyos, S. C. 20 March 2016., ‘Una visita al Museo Popular de Siloé.’ *El País*. Available from: <https://www.elpais.com.co/entretenimiento/cultura/una-visita-al-museo-popular-de-siloé.html> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

²⁶⁰ Interview with Harrison, Social Leader in Siloé, 19 June 2019.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² *Semana*, 30 September 1985, ‘Muere el duro’. Available from: <https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/muere-el-duro/6948-3/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

²⁶³ Utopicos. 25 February 2019. ‘Museo Popular de Siloé, La Casa De Los Recuerdos.’ Available from: <http://utopicos.com.co/index.php/2013-01-31-06-37-23/module-position/723-museo-popular-de-siloé-la-casa-de-los-recuerdos-2> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

²⁶⁴ *El Tiempo*, 21 March, 2020, ‘30 años de una paz pionera’. Available from: <https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/m-19-30-anos-de-su-desmovilizacion-y-el-impacto-en-la-vida-democratica-475594/> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

²⁶⁵ Conversation with social leader, Aguablanca, 9 August 2018.

Unlike the M-19, the FARC's presence in Cali has predominantly been characterised by clandestinity, with members combining public work and study commitments with private organisation and training in secretive cell networks. After the M-19's decline, the enduring notoriety of Siloé made it a hub for activism for the city's middle classes and students. Noa became interested in social issues and joined a Siloé Community Action Board (*Junta de Acción Communal* – JAC) aged 16. During interview she recounted when then-Governor Alvaro Uribe visited in recognition of her achievement as one of Colombia's youngest JAC members. In the course of their encounter, Uribe asked how she and others intended to 'socially cleanse' the neighbourhood, referring to the extra-legal assassination of criminals and guerrilla members (akin to the above 'clean Christmas' operation). This conversation fundamentally changed Noa's view of politics: "In my mind, we were a group of people trying to improve the conditions of our community and work with the youth. When I heard that, I realised this wasn't my place."²⁶⁶ She later joined the Communist Youth, the Bolivarian Movement (MB) and finally the Clandestine Communist Party of Colombia (PCCC), while simultaneously pursuing a career in the municipal government. Now in her thirties, she explains that her "entire identity as an adult" was shaped by navigating these dual identities: "I worked between the clandestine and the public... and I was very disciplined with my clandestinity, precisely because I have a work reputation to take care of."²⁶⁷ Other conversations confirmed that navigating distinct public and personal lives was a quintessential feature of membership of the FARC's urban clandestine structures.

If drawing on the guerrilla for support and somewhat adopting a similarly militaristic style, the internal dynamics of the MB and the PCCC were necessarily somewhat distinct. The prioritisation of internal security necessitated militaristic hierarchical structures somewhat akin to the FARC, as former member Rory explained: "that's what gave us security, the verticality."²⁶⁸ But unlike the guerrilla, both organisations were structured in cell networks with each typically consisting of 4-6 people. Members were usually from the same public organisation, including "student organizations, trade unions, universities, ...associations", with newest cells organised spatially (i.e. residents of the same neighbourhood) for convenience.²⁶⁹ A Political Secretary led each cell, coordinated with other cells and recruited new members on an individual basis. More senior members, like Noa who ascended the ranks of the PCCC, coordinated with the FARC's regional Block structures and established norms of behaviour for the multiple cells under her command.

²⁶⁶ Interview with Noa, FARC member, 6 September 2019.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Interview with Rory, Former FARC member and current ARN employee, 30 May 2019.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

Noa and other leaders prohibited the sharing of personal information both internally and externally - “the less my family knew, the better”²⁷⁰ – and even dealt out punishments for breaches, albeit minor compared to those enforced by the guerrilla. Fundamentally unlike the guerrilla, it was this limited contact beyond the cell which allowed leaders to establish idiosyncratic norms, which Noa described as a form of *‘mística’*, a term meaning mystery or mystique. It was this *mística* which in turn solidified internal cohesion despite rarely, if ever, meeting many of those under her command “I didn’t know these people... but I worried a lot about them behaving ethically.”²⁷¹

Urban clandestinity was further characterised by intimate socio-territorial relations which necessarily complicated members’ efforts to separate their public and private identities. While the MB typically employed more contentious repertoires of contention, the PCCC prioritised community organising and empowering marginalized communities to “take control of their territory.”²⁷² For Noa, a commitment to Marxist ideology meant recognising that all daily acts had a political dimension: “When you go to the shop and greet your neighbour, that is a political act... it might appear small, but it has a big impact in the everyday.”²⁷³ Aware of police, military and paramilitary surveillance as well as gang-related violence, members typically paid close attention to their surroundings when participating in community activities: “in your neighbourhood, you knew the people around you, you knew who lived in each house, which block was safer than others.”²⁷⁴ Unlike the M-19, members were not armed - “We weren’t guerrilleros, or militias, because we don’t have contact with guns” – but sometimes carried out spatial awareness exercises, with cell leaders requiring members to scout unfamiliar neighbourhoods and provide detailed accounts of their observations. Additionally, given their physical dispersal and other commitments, Noa required those under her command to study essential political texts from home - “we had to study from 1am to 3am, that was the study hour”²⁷⁵ – and organised occasional *pijamadas* (sleepovers) for collective discussion and development of their own political discourse. In this sense, despite efforts to separate public and private identities, clandestine affiliation informed how members moved through and related to the city in myriad imperceptible ways.

8.1.2. A Pilot City

²⁷⁰ Interview with Noa. 6 September 2019.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

Unlike in Agua Bonita, the direct and continuous presence of senior FARC leadership played a central role in transforming Cali into a ‘pilot city’ at the national level. Marcus Calarcá joined the Communist Youth aged 12, and in 1977 established the FARC’s first urban cell in Cali, pre-dating the both the Bolivarian Movement and Colombian Clandestine Communist yet similar in structure. Between 1993-2002 Calarcá lived in Bolivia and Mexico building international alliances, before joining the guerrilla’s secret negotiating team in 2011.²⁷⁶ In Habana he called for the entire *fariano movement* (which includes the MB and the PCCC) to unite within the new party, and in 2017 the first party National Assembly elected him Congressman representing Valle del Cauca. After entering Congress, Calarcá travelled regularly from Bogotá to Cali and surrounding towns to monitor reincorporation and provide updates on national efforts. However, unlike Iván Márquez who had fulfilled a similar role in Caquetá, Calarcá was resolutely supportive of the peace deal and developed a reputation for consistent attendance in legislative discussions, engaging in peace pedagogy with international organisations, and even dismissed the concept of ‘dissidents’ during our interview: “that’s what the press calls them...But they left the organisation, they aren’t of the organisation.”²⁷⁷ That interview occurred just days after President Duque’s inauguration, and Calarcá explained that notwithstanding the clear threat that this new administration represented, Gustavo Petro’s success in uniting progressive forces - particularly given his M-19 background - heralded an opportunity for the FARC to join a coalition, defend the peace agreement and secure their own political future. Although Calarcá was speaking nationally, Cali would be absolutely central to these efforts, as 2019 campaign manager Clara later explained: “Cali is a pilot city for the party. It’s Calarcá’s strategy.”²⁷⁸

Multiple factors provided the necessary conditions for the FARC to join a coalition to contest the 2019 election. Firstly, interviews revealed that unlike in other parts of the country, clandestine members had maintained close relations with the Colombian Communist Party and the Patriotic Union throughout the conflict; an alliance known locally as ‘la tri’ (the trinity). This was crucial as in March 2019, the Patriotic Union and Colombia Humana, the political movement spearheaded by Gustavo Petro, agreed to field joint candidates for all municipal, mayoral, departmental and governorship races in a coalition “for peace, life and the territory.”²⁷⁹ At the departmental level, the Democratic Pole and the Green Alliance also joined this coalition, forming the Human

²⁷⁶ Ávila Cortés, C. 21 July 2018, ‘Marco Calarcá, un diplomático guerrillero que llega al Congreso.’, Available from: <https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/politica/marco-Calarcá-un-diplomatico-guerrilleroque-llega-al-congreso-articulo-856911> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

²⁷⁷ Interview with Marcus Calarcá, FARC leader, 11 August 2018.

²⁷⁸ Interview with Carla, 2019 Campaign Manager. 1 July 2019.

²⁷⁹ Semana, 20 March 2019, ‘El plan B de Petro para las elecciones locales’, Available from: <https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/petro-annuncia-alianza-con-mais-y-la-up-despues-de-decision-del-consejo-de-estado-de-negar-le-personeria-juridica-a-colombia-humana/606240/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

Convergence (*Convergencia Humana*). If, as outlined in Chapter 5, these parties had demonstrated acute sensitivity to stigmatization and reluctance to be associated with the FARC during the national referendum campaign, recent regional mobilizations indicated that, overall, Cali was “the most advanced, open-minded place in the country.”²⁸⁰ Consequently, the FARC successfully entered this coalition, which jointly nominated 14 candidates on a shared list for the Cali Municipal Council election.

Because the new Human Convergence coalition did not put forward a mayoral candidate, FARC members discussed potential partnerships with other candidates and, given his own guerrilla background, Jorge Iván Ospina emerged as the obvious first choice. The three leading contenders were Roberto Ortiz, standing for the Democratic Centre, Ospina with the Green Alliance, and Alejandro Eder. Eder was formerly ARN National Director and participated in peace negotiations in Habana, and was now standing as mayoral candidate for *Compromiso Ciudadano por Cali*, the same movement which launched Sergio Farjado’s career in Medellín. Several ARN staff suggested he would effectively advance the FARC’s objectives, particularly given his extensive knowledge of reincorporation. However, conversations with the campaign team indicated that Eder’s background was fundamentally disqualifying: his family owned the Manuelita sugar company which was implicated in campesino displacement in the Cauca region. Instead they looked to Ospina, who after surviving the 1985 military operation which killed his father (the M-19’s co-founder), had studied medicine in Cuba, returned to work for the Secretariat of Health and won the 2007 mayoral race through support of the political movement *Podemos Cali*. His 2008-2011 administration was known for a ‘21 megaprojects’ scheme which invested in bridges, parks and education facilities, as well as a Civic Guards initiative not unlike Peace Managers. Now running for a second time, Gustavo Petro offered his direct endorsement on Twitter: “Jorge Iván, your father fought and died for peace. We want the entirety of the *Colombia Humana* electorate to support you ... Let there be no room for ambiguity in your commitment to peace, social and environmental justice.”²⁸¹ Leaning towards Ospina over Eder indicated a rejection of technocratic governance in favour of joining the progressive wave brought about by Gustavo Petro at the national level.

As the early stages of the election were characterised by coalition-building and discussions about potential further alliances, in strategy meetings it became clear that the FARC would need to

²⁸⁰ Interview with James, Secretariat for Peace and Citizen Culture, 28 August 2019.

²⁸¹ Twitter, Gustavo Petro, 19 September 2019, Available from: <https://twitter.com/petrogustavo/status/1174658633541595137> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

employ a multi-scalar, multi-discourse approach to the campaign. These conversations culminated in the development of a three-pronged strategy: firstly, they would consolidate the support of their own membership; secondly, they would build on existing barrio-level support and expand into neighbourhoods where prior voting patterns indicated potential ideological alignment, and thirdly, they would co-produce a city-wide manifesto with support from other progressive civil society organisations. This strategy provided the central impetus for the ongoing consolidation of their organisational structure and political identity throughout 2019, while also making visible internal disagreements and tensions.

8.2. Multi-Scalar Strategy

This section outlines the FARC's pursuit of a multi-scalar strategy in the course of the 2019 election campaign. It shows how efforts to build internal cohesion centred on ensuring the commitment of a core membership, yet the diverse trajectories of said membership generated internal tensions which undermined cohesion (8.2.1). It then explores how efforts to build on existing community support revealed significant heterogeneity in practices, and how expansion out to sympathetic neighbourhoods had to contend with ambivalent feelings towards the peace deal, collective memories of the harmful impact of prior DDR experiences, and an entrenched clientelist politics (8.2.2). Lastly I outline efforts to co-produce a city-wide manifesto alongside sympathetic actors; how conversations about peace combined historical teachings with urban perspectives, and how 'right to the city' led to participation in contemporary territorial struggles in Cali's peri-urban edges (8.2.3).

8.2.1. Consolidating the Militant Vote

“Although it's easier to receive support as a movement and you can persuade more people to join, people linked to a party are more committed, and right now we need commitment.”

Noa, former PCC leader and current FARC member, Cali, 6 September 2019.

Despite leadership emphasising active participation, the transition process was characterised by significant fluctuation in membership. In accordance with new statutes, all previously clandestine cells were now *comunas*, with each sending a delegate to the Local Assembly to develop the Action Plan and elect the Local Council. The Local Council would be led by a Political Secretary, with additional Secretaries for Organisation, Finances, Education, Social movement work and

Communications, and would in turn coordinate with the Departmental and National Assemblies. During interview Noa explained that early in the transition, leadership had “organised an assembly for everyone from the clandestine life”, but owing to fear and uncertainty, “many didn’t want to participate...[and]...decided not to have an active political life.” In some instances, this decision stemmed from earlier ideological disagreements, including for Noa herself: “some of us returned...after distancing ourselves, because we had a critical perspective regarding what was going on...the relationship with narcotrafficking, for me this was problematic. You can’t talk about the people’s emancipation if you are participating in that ... when I saw more drugs moving around Cauca, I asked myself whether it was worth being involved or not.” Election to the Local Council thus ultimately favoured members with a record of dedication. Juan Diego was in his early thirties, and after studying political sciences abroad, joined the PCCC from which he provided political education to *guerrilleros* in FARC’s regional block structures. Also a close acquaintance of Calarcá, Juan Diego was elected Political Secretary and subsequently selected as the FARC candidate for Municipal Council.

While *La Casa de Los Comunes* provided a crucial space for open interaction, the blend of trajectories, expectations and communication styles undermined internal cohesion. Leadership established several new campaign committees including politics, communications, research and finances, and members benefitted from 24-hour secure access to the building to hold meetings. In keeping with FARC’s cultural identity, the walls were decorated with posters and meetings began with the *guerrilla* hymn. Formerly clandestine members, accustomed only to cell meetings, were now able to identify each-other through *mística*, as Noa explained: “a girl was talking about her experience, her daily practices, and I recognised it as part of my school.”²⁸² But many were recent arrivals or new recruits, had no prior relationships, and brought forward different expectations about exactly what membership entailed in practice. One account is illustrative: Tom, a long-standing member who arrived from France in January 2019 to support the campaign, complained that a new integrant in his *comuna* regularly failed to attend meetings and was therefore breaching her fundamental duties. These kinds of internal conflicts were exacerbated by an increasing reliance on WhatsApp group for coordination of campaign activities as, notwithstanding the logistical advantages, said interactions occasionally generated misinterpretations otherwise easily resolved face-to-face. Overall, the pressure of the campaign spurred a conflictive process of internal consolidation characterised by significant fluctuation in membership and inter-generational and inter-structure tensions.

²⁸² Interview with Noa, FARC member, 6 September 2019.

If efforts to incorporate ex-combatants in campaign activities revealed a reticent population, they also supported the view that the ARN were intentionally undermining the FARC's cohesion. Many formerly clandestine members were attuned to the dynamics of urban reincorporation (as outlined in Chapter 7) and encouraged the active participation of ex-combatant arrivals to the city. As well as keeping track of their locations and inviting them to meetings at *La Casa*, some non-combatant members took on official responsibilities, including Clara, who assumed the role of coordinator for a cultural café project, intended as an income generator and social space for female ex-combatants. But as the previous chapter outlined, many of those arrivals were prioritising financial security and family connections, had no prior contact with the guerrilla's urban networks and – in many cases – little desire to continue political involvement. Although Clara acknowledged a “real lack of communication” between the party and new arrivals, she also perceived that the ARN were deliberately stifling their efforts.²⁸³ She explained that, conscious of delays to the approval process, she had registered the café as an association rather than a cooperative, further proposing that each employee work part-time to maximise the number of beneficiaries. During a meeting to discuss these proposals, an ARN official expressed surprise at her calculations yet criticised them as overly ambitious: for Clara, this was clear evidence that ARN was not aligned to the FARC's collective objectives, yet also significantly underestimated the expertise of non-combatants –“they think we are all in the same group.”²⁸⁴

8.2.2. Territorial Support

“It's one thing to vote together for bills, participate in political control debates, or share space in interventions granted by the Statute of the Opposition, it's another to put on the FARC shirt and openly campaign.”²⁸⁵

As election day approached, Marcus Calarcá called for a strategic shift away from internal consolidation to direct engagement with the electorate: “when we were at war, we had to wait a lot, and we got used to those times....We can't work at our own rhythm, because we're going to arrive too late.”²⁸⁶ Drawing 2015 local election data, the research team calculated that Juan Diego needed 6,000 votes across the city and, given limited time and resources, developed a “territorially

²⁸³ Interview with Carla, 2019 Campaign Manager. 1 July 2019.

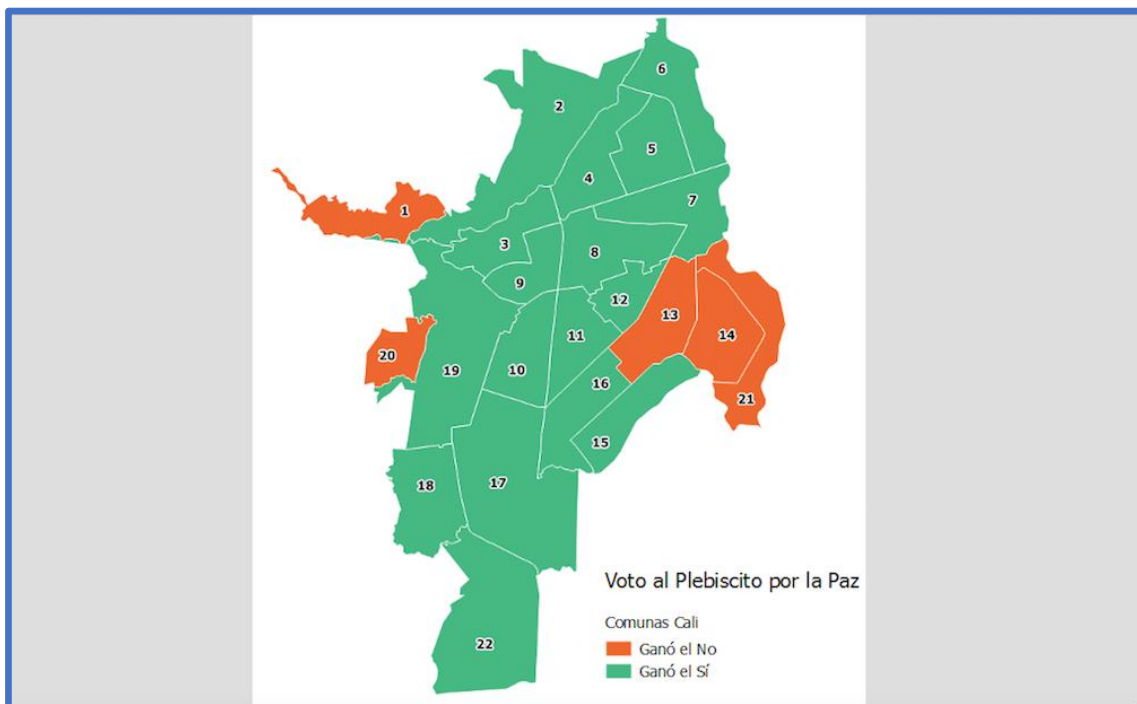
²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Colorado, F. A., 2 July 2019, ‘¿Partido Farc, sometido a un apartheid político?’, *Las 2 Orillas*, Available from: <https://www.las2orillas.co/partido-farc-sometido-un-apartheid-politico/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

²⁸⁶ Marcus Calarcá, Campaign Meeting in Cali, 31 August 2019.

centred” approach by identifying 10 of Cali’s 22 comunas where prior data suggested voters might be ideologically receptive to their proposals. This included neighbourhoods where they could create opportunities for exchange between Juan Diego and residents through established community organising, and other neighbourhoods where they had no current presence and would need to approach via other organisations and/or develop relationships from scratch. Crucially, however, the team did not consider data from the 2016 referendum which, although revealing marginal city-wide support for peace (54%), showed that five of the city’s peripheral comunas had rejected the agreement (see Figure 9). This represented a reversal of the national trend, in that communities most historically impacted by violence - including Siloé - had voted against the deal in greater proportion. In sum, if leadership called for an outward-facing campaign strategy, the potential for hostile responses made evident by Timochenko’s 2018 visit were a warning that openly identifying with the FARC could still incur personal risk.

FIGURE 9: 2016 REFERENDUM VOTING PATTERNS ACROSS CALI’S COMUNAS²⁸⁷



Efforts to build on existing community organising revealed highly heterogeneous practices, with most emphasising personal relationships as opposed to political affiliation. In August 2019, the Organisation Committee invited delegates from each of the FARC’s comunas to outline their current activities, and while most were in Siloé, delegates described highly varied practices. For example,

²⁸⁷ Source: Arenas, N., 16 October 2016, ‘Así votaron las comunas de Cali en el plebiscito’ Available from: <https://lasillavacia.com/historia/asi-votaron-las-comunas-de-cali-en-el-plebiscito-58387> [last accessed].

one group organised evening activities like film screenings and focus groups; another coordinated a regular dance programme for children; while another had a sitting member on a neighbourhood Community Action Board and was planning to campaign for the comuna-wide Local Action Board. Notwithstanding this variety, all delegates underscored their reliance on direct personal relationships, including Lorena who later described an ongoing construction project: “we’re going to need a lot of people to help paint, clean, provide donations, any number of things.”²⁸⁸ Moreover, having operated for so long in clandestinity, Lorena explained the diverse perspectives regarding the new expectation to openly identify as FARC: “I don’t think that you have to arrive and say ... ‘hello I’m from the FARC and you have to accept me because look at everything I’ve done’. My process is a little slower.”²⁸⁹ Others, like Carlos, felt confident in doing so in *his* neighbourhood, yet recognised the risks it might entail elsewhere: “It’s our territory...in other territories it’s more complicated.”²⁹⁰ Ultimately, given the diverse socio-territorial relation and ongoing fears of political violence, each comuna was left to decide whether to publicly announce their political affiliations, with the majority choosing not to remain in a semi-submerged state (Zeiderman, 2016).

Participatory visual data collected with resident-activists in Charco Azul, a barrio in Comuna 13 of Aguablanca, revealed a number of hurdles to FARC’s prospects for building electoral support in this or similar *barrios*. Firstly, in discussing attitudes towards DDR and the guerrilla’s pending intercession in city politics, residents did not refer to the M-19’s successful transition, but to the demobilisation of the AUC paramilitary group, which had negatively affected their daily lives, as Julio explained: “when the paramilitaries demobilized, they brought micro-trafficking to the community...now with the guerrilla it’s going to happen again.”²⁹¹ Secondly, and relatedly, while some expressed relief that the FARC’s disarmament had resulted in a reduction in everyday insecurity and violence for family members living in previously conflict-affected regions, the general view was that the process was far from an unreserved success, and that overarching prioritisation of rural development had offered little benefit to the urban poor (see Figure 10). And thirdly, although many were vocally critical of state failings and valued autonomous territorial organising, the pragmatic reality, as expressed by Alex, was that “without support, you die.”²⁹² Because of this, members of the Improving Lives Association were in discussions with Democratic Centre candidate, Roberto Ortiz, to secure public investment. In sum, even if ideologically sympathetic to the FARC, collective memories of prior DDR, the peace agreement’s rural focus

²⁸⁸ Interview with Lorena, FARC member, 15 July 2019.

²⁸⁹ Ibid

²⁹⁰ Interview with Carlos, FARC member, 5 June 2019.

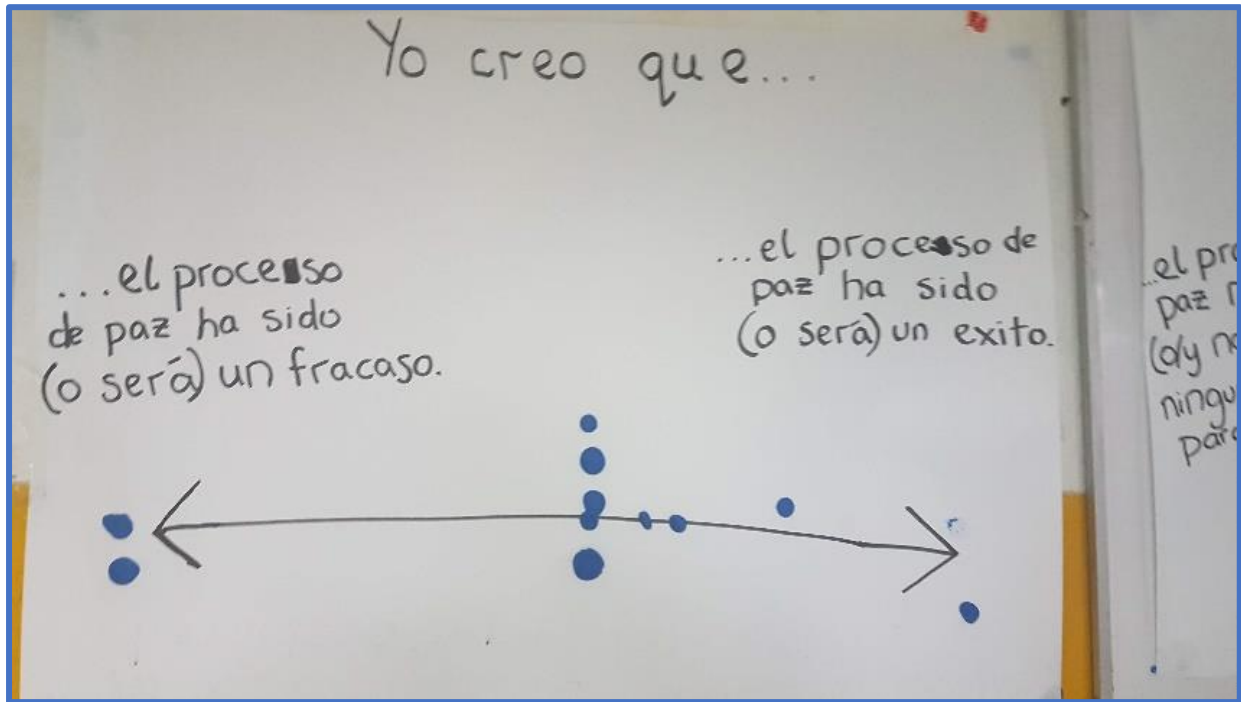
²⁹¹ Participatory Visual Activity, Charco Azul, Cali, 9 August 2018.

²⁹² Ibid.

and an entrenched clientelist politics undermined FARC's prospects for attaining votes in peripheral neighbourhoods.

FIGURE 10: OPINIONS ON PEACE PROCESS (CHARCO AZUL, CALI)

("I think the peace process has been (or will be) a failure/success")



Aware of the impediments to building electoral support, yet nevertheless seeking to expand, affirm their cultural identity and cement internal cohesion, FARC established a new *comuna* during the campaign period. The *Comuna Alfonso Cano* was named in honour of their former leader killed in 2011 (see Chapter 5) and consisted of five members from mixed backgrounds, including a recent international arrival, a former guerrillero who had arrived from an ETCR, and Barry, an experienced social leader. It was agreed that members would focus their efforts across the district of Aguablanca and, to support members in this goal, the Education Committee organised a cartographic exercise called "(Re)learning the territory", drawing on Barry's direct knowledge of neighbourhood dynamics to identify local needs and develop a strategy for community engagement. Barry, who was aware of the acute stigmatization faced by the *guerrilla* - "you arrive to the *barrio* and say you belong to the FARC, and they look at you like a criminal"²⁹³ - explained his preference for direct, personal relationship-building over and above party politics. Pursuant to this, I travelled with *Comuna* members to *Julio Rincon*, a *barrio* that derives its name from a

²⁹³ Interview with Barry, social leader and FARC member, 27 June 2019.

communist party organiser, where FARC and residents engaged in dialogues about the barrio's foundation, the recent construction of a bus station which had displaced a number of families, and subsequent, unsuccessful efforts to lobby the municipality to name the station *Julio Rincon*: “in rescuing the name, we also rescue its history.”²⁹⁴ These practices evidence that, notwithstanding the many challenges to territorial expansion, FARC adopted a long-term perspective, employing ‘latent’ practices such as collective memory recovery (Wahren, 2011) to gradually establish the legitimacy required to represent marginalized communities beyond 2019.

8.2.3. City Dialogues

The FARC built on early community outreach initiatives to co-produce a city-wide manifesto alongside sympathetic progressive organisations, through a process which one member described as “city dialogues”. Soon after establishing *La Casa de Los Comunes*, Marcus Calarcá began organising regular open evenings, inviting members, affiliates and sympathetic community activists to discuss the problems facing their neighbourhoods. Building on this, the Politics Committee organised a meeting to identify core areas of concern. These were later amalgamated into five policy areas, foremost among them ‘peace’ and ‘right to the city’ which I elaborate on below.²⁹⁵

Internal discussions about peace centred on ‘peace with social justice’ rather than territorial peace and revealed divergent interpretations and decisive limitations to their pursuit in practice. During discussions, Juan Diego directly cited Jacobo Arenas’ (1984) book *Ceasefire*, where Arenas writes that the principle objective of peace is ‘opening political space’ regardless of electoral outcome.²⁹⁶ For Juan Diego, this meant combining electoral and contentious repertoires of action in allegiance with marginalized sectors, such that any future FARC councillor would employ their political power to “stir up the struggle” from within; as encapsulated within the suggested campaign slogan “one foot in the Council, thousands in the streets.”²⁹⁷ However, there were two additional complications. Firstly, as a close ally of Timochenko, Marcus Calarcá continually emphasised the need to “fulfil their word” regardless of government failings.²⁹⁸ This emphasis on legality included within socio-economic projects (e.g. registering all financial transactions correctly) and, as Noa explained, avoiding involvement in contentious political acts such as the April 2019 indigenous *minga*: “it’s the taking of a public space. That’s a protest and you cannot close a road without

²⁹⁴ Community activist, Memory recovery dialogues in barrio Julio Rincon, Cali, 24 October 2019.

²⁹⁵ The five campaign topics were: 1) peace, (2) right to the city, (3) social and political participation, (4) defense of public services, and (5) work and economies.

²⁹⁶ Juan Diego, FARC campaign discussions, 7 September 2019.

²⁹⁷ Ibid

²⁹⁸ Marcus Calarca, spoken during press event, 23 August 2019.

permission.”²⁹⁹ Secondly, for members like Noa, peace and social justice were “fuzzy” yet distinct objectives, as while social justice was essentially a continuation of historical collective work, peace demanded a personal psychosocial transformation in order to reconcile with former enemies, in particular guerrilla deserters who had “abandoned us and ... gave up information, and had to participate in the deaths of their former comrades.”³⁰⁰ But most active members were not undergoing reincorporation and therefore did not have opportunities to participate in third-party organised reconciliation activities (such as those outlined in Chapter 7). In this sense, achieving ‘social justice’ was limited by concerns for legality, while pursuing ‘peace’ was undermined by the failure to incorporate FARC’s clandestine structures into the agreement.

The campaign team also drew on urban interpretations of peace, inviting members of one of Cali’s *barras bravas* to discuss their recent societal transformation. *Barras bravas* are gangs of football supporters with a historical reputation for violence and criminality including micro-trafficking. During the meeting, *barra* members explained that homicides disproportionately impact their membership: “If you look at *Cali en Cifras* (a statistical database), you realise that 70% of murders that happen in Cali are young people between 18 and 22 years old. In other words, our guys.”³⁰¹ As such, they explained their recent internal decision to turn away from violence and embrace a new concept, *barrismo social*: “we persuade our guys, being a *barra brava*, we will all end up dead, but with *barrismo social*, which is a little longer, a little slower, we can have life options and become a positive influence in the territory.”³⁰² After listening to the *barras*, Juan Diego and other FARC participants drew a direct comparison between *barrismo social* and reincorporation, and between football and politics: “we may be opponents, but at kick-off, we all accept the same rules.”³⁰³ Through these discussions, FARC advanced a manifesto grounded in the lived realities of marginalized Cali residents, while also using the process as an opportunity to build new alliances.

When discussing ‘right to the city’, FARC applied their members’ extensive theoretical knowledge to a pending territorial re-distribution plan. I observed conversations invoking French philosopher’s Henri Lefebvre’s original work on the right to the city and David Harvey’s concept of accumulation by dispossession. Although these ideas were normally instrumentalised through critique of Cali’s Municipal Territorial Ordering Scheme, the current moment focused on a new initiative. Five days before leaving office, President Santos signed a decree granting Cali Special

²⁹⁹ Interview with Noa, FARC member, 21 October 2019.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Meeting with Barras Bravas, Cali party headquarters, 5 July 2019.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid.

District status, initiating a 6-8 year process whereby the city's *comunas* and *corregimientos* would be reorganised into six localities.³⁰⁴ If unrelated to the peace deal, this decentralization plan is reminiscent of territorial peace, with a similar emphasis on strengthening state-citizen relationships by “shortening the distance between identifying a problem and producing a solution.”³⁰⁵ Yet many, like Barry, were wary of state oversight and the associated potential for resource extraction, as opposed to meeting community needs: “for example if you start a business, you’ll have the government closer to charge taxes.”³⁰⁶ Aware of these and similar concerns, the municipal government implemented a diagnostic process with university support, to build a “diverse and democratic” set of proposals and avoid “territorial fracturing”, which the incoming Municipal Council would select from. To understand the process, FARC invited a geographer, José, from the university consultation team to provide additional details. José outlined a disjuncture between administrative boundaries and lived realities in peri-urban *corregimientos* and the superficiality of the participatory process which, in his view, obscured the clear prioritisation of international capital over the material needs of residents, who “aren’t interested in being connected to China.”³⁰⁷ Given the scheme’s significance, José concluded that “those who enter the Council are going to have to fight for the issue of territory.”³⁰⁸

If any incoming councillor would prioritise the Special District process, discussions about ‘right to the city’ directed immediate attention to alliance-building with peri-urban communities engaged in concrete territorial struggles. During the 1950s/60s embrace of a development agenda (see Chapter 4), the World Bank and the Cauca Regional Autonomous Development Corporation (CRADC) implemented a plan to expand sugarcane and cattle farming throughout the Cauca Valley. In the 1980s, CRADC built the Salvajina Dam to regulate water flow and generate electricity for Cali’s growing middle-classes and agro-industrial industry, causing widespread ecological damage and territorial displacement (Escobar, 2018: p.192). At this time, the municipality also built the Jarillón barrier to protect Cali’s eastern zone from flooding, where thousands of families settled over following years as successive politicians promising to legalise the land.³⁰⁹ In 2010 the Rio Cauca flooded, inundating 3,000 hectares of crops across Valle del Cauca, and though the Jarillón held, the national and municipal governments partnered to introduce the Plan Jarillón scheme to

³⁰⁴ El País., 2 August 2018, ‘Santos sanciona la Ley que convierte a Cali en Distrito Especial’ Available from: <https://www.elpais.com.co/cal/santos-sanciona-la-ley-que-convierte-a-en-distrito-especial.html> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

³⁰⁵ Alcaldía de Santiago de Cali., 15 July 2019. ‘Cali Distrito Especial tendría seis localidades’ Available from: <https://www.cali.gov.co/gobierno/publicaciones/148406/cali-distrito-especial-tendria-seis-localidades/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

³⁰⁶ Interview with Barry, 21 July 2019.

³⁰⁷ Vamos con Toda ‘Cali Rural’ Discussions, 22 June 2019.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ El País, 2019, ‘Jarillón, La Amenaza Silenciosa de Cali’, Available from: <https://www.elpais.com.co/especiales/Jarillón-la-amenaza-silenciosa-de-cali/> [last accessed 5 May 2021]

strengthen the barrier and resettle families, despite their wishes: “Living on the Jarillón is like ...growing up on a farm. ...The insecurity is a lot worse in the barrios.”³¹⁰ This struggle was still ongoing in 2019, with Jarillón activists combining resistance to displacement with demands that the Duque government implement the peace agreement. Given this alignment, FARC successfully established a “permanent and systematic accompaniment” with one of a number of grassroots organisation supporting Jarillón residents in resisting resettlement. Thus, if prospects for alliance-building in ostensibly sympathetic marginal barrios (i.e. Siloé and Aguablanca) had revealed major hurdles, expansive city dialogues provided insight into where the FARC might be able to effectively intercede in urban politics in the future.

8.3. Vulnerability, Future Identity and Post-Election Fallout

This section considers the impact of multiple late (national and local) ruptures, associated debates about the FARC’s political identity and the appropriate public response to ongoing violence, and the personal feelings of vulnerability generated by Iván Márquez’s call for remobilization (8.3.1). I then explore the fallout from the election result, critiques of the failure to capitalise on the political energies generated by the peace agreement, before ending with some optimism regarding future alliance-building opportunities: the 2019 National Strike (8.3.2).

8.3.1. Ruptures and (Online) Threats

Despite the narrative of unity expressed by current and prospective politicians (as exemplified by the message of #Calipanismo), late events evidenced the toxicity of the FARC brand and undermined coalition-building potentials. Following the Municipal Pact for Peace (discussed in the previous chapter), Mayor Armitage introduced a Municipal Pact of Institutional Cooperation, committing the municipality to abide by the National Electoral Council’s guidelines on ensuring transparent, inclusive, free and peaceful elections.³¹¹ But days before the candidates’ official inscription, the *Polo Democrático* withdrew from the Human Convergence, with interviews hinting at internal disagreements and fear of stigmatization, forcing the remaining parties to find several last-minute candidates. Then in September, Jorge Iván Ospina participated in a live televised debate with Alejandro Eder, vocally criticising the latter’s involvement in peace negotiations and

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Alcaldía de Santiago de Cali., 17 July 2019, ‘Alcaldía de Cali se suma al pacto por unas elecciones en paz, libres, transparentes e incluyentes’, Available from: <https://www.cali.gov.co/seguridad/publicaciones/148459/alcaldia-de-cali-se-suma-al-pacto-por-unas-elecciones-en-paz-libres-transparentes-e-incluyentes/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

dismissing its reincorporation provisions a “bundle of impunity.”³¹² Online media denounced Ospina for playing politics with peace and “forgetting his father belonged to the M-19...it’s like Uribe gave him the order”³¹³ - but this debate ended any prospect of establishing a programmatic agreement with Ospina.

During the latter stages of the campaign, active members engaged in numerous discussions about the FARC’s political identity, with Iván Márquez’s departure from the peace process shining a clear light on divergent perspectives. When the video of Márquez, Santrich and other mid-ranking commanders first appeared on YouTube, concerns about the strategic decision to keep the name ‘FARC’ resurfaced, and a journalist even directly asked Timochenko whether he would consider changing the name once again. Rather than providing a definitive response, he affirmed that “it’s the Assembly that will take that decision, not the president.”³¹⁴ Meanwhile in Cali, the campaign team discussed numerous possible campaign slogans, among them “a new territorial power”, which closely echoed Iván Márquez’s 2017 statement (see Chapter 1) and indicating an alignment with his original aspirations. However, owing to the joint nature of the campaign, the communications team distributed publicity via social media with the more neutral *Vamos Con Toda* (loosely translatable as ‘let’s give it everything’), which all parties in the Human Convergence coalition had adopted. Yet for Calarcá, who was committed to the peace deal, failing to include the FARC’s distinctive red rose on campaign publicity amounted to “self-stigmatization.” This specific disagreement encapsulated broader divergences in views about reincorporation, with some adopting a more pragmatic, outcome-oriented stance, and others placing greater significance on defending and upholding the *fariano* identity, regardless of electoral prospects.

In a manner echoing events of the 1980s peace process, ongoing violence against ex-combatants and activists stimulated fears of an eventual breakdown of the agreement, and related discussions about the appropriate public stance. Shortly after Márquez’s call for remobilization, Timochenko suggested during interview that dissidents posed a bigger threat to his security than the Colombian state; a statement which, for Gabriel, was reckless and aided their political opponents.³¹⁵ For Ademar, however, a commitment to objectivity demanded self-criticism: “We have to be responsible. The state is failing to implement the agreements, yes... But in the territories,

³¹² Jiménez, F. A., 18 September 2019, ‘La perla de Ospina en el debate de los aspirantes a la alcaldía de Cali’. *Las 2 Orillas*. Available from: <https://www.las2orillas.co/la-perla-de-ospina-en-el-debate-de-los-aspirantes-a-la-alcaldia-de-cali/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].A

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Comun, National FARC HQ, 29 August 2019, Available from: <https://www.facebook.com/FARCFUERZALTERNATIVAREVOLUCIONARIADELCOMUN/videos/1240744469439021/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

³¹⁵ Gabriel, meeting of Organisation Committee, 3 September 2019.

comrades, the reality is more complex than saying the paramilitaries are killing us ... Our own dissidents are killing us.”³¹⁶ Noa concurred with this latter view, positing that peace with social justice necessarily committed them to the truth, which is “more important than image” and simultaneously “a guarantor of a good image... We shouldn’t be hiding anything.”³¹⁷ In taking this stance, Noa further drew on her professional experience as a psychologist: “I’ve had patients who were sexual assault perpetrators, and I have a gender perspective regarding sexual assault, right, but if I’m with my patient, my work is to guarantee my patient their rights.”³¹⁸ In this sense, the capacity to manage dual public and private lives provided Noa with the emotional and psychosocial tools necessary to navigate the conflicting demands of reincorporation.

In the wake of Marquez’s announcement, concern about personal security and political prospects intertwined, with formerly clandestine membership looking increasingly to digital platforms to assess personal risk. Although Iván Márquez had no direct links to Cali, in the YouTube video he released, he directly calls for remobilization of the Bolivarian Movement. Noa explained that, in the immediate period after 2016, she had been considering telling her best friends of her involvement in the FARC; a decision which would have ended some of the secrecy and duality characteristic of her adult life. However, in the wake of Marquez’s announcement, she had reassessed her view of the risks, judging it was best to continue to live in secrecy despite the emotional toll. Then, just a week before the election, a message from the *Águilas Negras* (a successor group to the AUC paramilitaries) began to circulate on WhatsApp identifying several members by name and threatening them with assassination. Responses varied, with some expressing scepticism about the message’s true origin, given the ease of copying the *Águilas* symbol, and Juan Diego defiantly dismissed the threat during his closing campaign speech: “if we weren’t causing fear in the regime, *then* we would have to worry.”³¹⁹ Still, several conversations revealed that these online communications had contributed to formerly clandestine members experiencing a greater sense of personal vulnerability than prior to 2016.

8.3.2. Post-Election Analysis, the 2019 National Strike

The 2019 election result reveals the difficulty of scaling-up socio-territorial relations into meaningful city-wide backing, while also pointing to unresolved internal tensions within the FARC. I arrived at headquarters while votes were still being counted, and it was clear Juan Diego had not

³¹⁶ Ademar, meeting of Organisation Committee, 3 September 2019.

³¹⁷ Interview with Noa, 21 October 2019.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Juan Diego, Closing Campaign Event, 23 October 2019.

won a seat on the Municipal Council, nor had Sam won a seat on the Siloé Local Action Board.³²⁰ But Sam had come much closer, and in conversation that night, he ascribed his (relative) success to personal relations built over years. For him, the future of the FARC relied on these direct relationships and the party needed to move beyond the classical style of its current leadership. In comparison, Juan Diego's post-election analysis centred on coalition-building: in a social media video, he listed the campaign's core achievements as consolidating the unity of 'la tri' as a revolutionary force, and the successful work of the Human Convergence which had united diverse social organisations in generating meaningful debate about the city's future. He further noted the election of one Green Alliance and another Polo Democrático Councillor, offering the FARC's support in defending their positions and connecting them to mobilizations, and praised successes beyond Cali including a trade unionist and civic strike leader, Victor Hugo Vidal, now mayor of Buenaventura, and the first FARC candidate to be elected mayor, in Guapi, Cauca. While offering different perspectives on how to move forward, both Sam and Juan Diego were certain that the election did not represent the end of their (or indeed the FARC's) role in urban politics.

Further post-election reflections pointed to positive prospects for progressive forces, counterposed with a widespread view that, despite the rhetoric of supporting popular struggle, the FARC had failed to meaningfully exploit the mobilizations stimulated by the peace process. I interviewed Jared, leader of a burgeoning socio-territorial movement in Aguablanca who had engaged in productive dialogues with Jorge Iván Ospina during the campaign and, now Ospina was mayor-elect, saw real prospects to intercede in the incoming administration's housing policy. Previously also a clandestine FARC member, Jared considered that the failure to build an alliance with Ospina indicated their political isolation, and that local and national leadership had failed to "manage the politics" and not "capitalized on all of that movement for peace" in the negotiation period.³²¹ This had been made more difficult after the 2018 election: "under Santos, they had a chance to dialogue with the state. But we are in another time. In the Duque government, there is no room for dialogue."³²² Instead, it was parties like the Green Alliance, who had won Bogotá's mayoral election, and independent political movements like Sergio Farjado's *Compromiso Ciudadano*, which had won in Medellín, that had effectively converted the broad movements for peace into electoral victory in major cities. Nevertheless, Jared was optimistic that the poor performance of traditional parties, including the Democratic Centre, signalled that Colombians

³²⁰ In total, the Convergencia Humana received 12,341 votes (1.65%), of which Juan Diego attained close to 1,000.

³²¹ Interview with Jared, 1 November 2019

³²² Ibid.

were “searching for bigger questions, not closed by the boundaries of parties,”³²³ and that said energies could be carried forward into future mobilizations.

Just days after I returned to the UK, the November 2019 National Strike provided the FARC in Cali another opportunity to step beyond the constraints of legality by publicly demonstrating their support for marginalized sectors. A planned one-day strike in opposition to a labour and pension reform evolved into successive days of protest, with participants combining new and old grievances including delays to the peace agreement and violence against activists, with one commentator calling the strike a ‘referendum’ on President Duque.³²⁴ Timochenko marched openly alongside protestors in Medellin, waving the FARC party banner without facing public aggressions.³²⁵ The newly elected mayor of Medellin proposed a National Constituent Assembly, akin to that used for the 1991 Constitution, while Sergio Farjado - considered a future presidential candidate - received criticism for not joining the protests and centring his analysis on youth unemployment, rather than supporting calls for structural change.³²⁶ Meanwhile, in Cali, campesino and indigenous organisations including the Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca (CRIC) joined strikers and marched on the city, with total numbers reaching over 20,000. Although I was not there to observe (or participate), videos can be seen of protestors waving a flag with a distinctive red rose, alongside other movements and parties.³²⁷ Thus, despite the disappointing 2019 election result, the National Strike indicates that the FARC will have future opportunities to defend the peace accord, build legitimacy and advance the original promises of territorial peace.

8.4. Conclusion

This chapter centred on the role and experiences of the FARC’s non-combatant members in working to secure the FARC’s legitimacy as an urban political actor during the 2019 election campaign. It began with an overview of territorial organising in Siloé, beginning with the legacy of M-19 before exploring the barrio’s symbolic pull for middle classes, students and the guerrilla’s clandestine organisations. I then explained how national leadership’s vision for Cali to serve as a

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Janetsky, M., 22 November 2019, ‘Referendum on Duque: Thousands march against Colombia president’, *Al Jazeera*, Available from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/11/duque-thousands-march-colombia-president-191121173409335.html> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

³²⁵ Oquendo, C., 26 November 2019, ‘El acuerdo de paz de Colombia cobra vida con las movilizaciones sociales’, *El País*, Available from: https://elpais.com/internacional/2019/11/25/actualidad/1574716620_961865.html [last accessed 5 May 2021].

³²⁶ Espejo, G., 25 November 2019, ‘Sergio Fajardo a Iván Duque: los jóvenes son protagonistas hoy en día’, *LA FM*, Available from: <https://www.lafm.com.co/politica/sergio-fajardo-ivan-duque-los-jovenes-son-protagonistas-hoy-en-dia> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

³²⁷ Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca CRIC, 19 November 2019, ‘Movilización por la defensa de la vida y el territorio, rechazo al genocidio de los pueblos indígenas y a las políticas de muerte establecida por el Estado Colombiano’, Available from: <https://www.cric-colombia.org/portal/movilizacion-por-la-defensa-de-la-vida-y-el-territorio-rechazo-al-genocidio-de-los-pueblos-indigenas-y-a-las-politicas-de-muerte-establecida-por-el-estado-colombiano/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

‘pilot city’, historical alliances and a new coalition formed after Gustavo Petro’s 2018 election bid provided the backdrop for a three-pronged strategy: strengthen internal cohesion, build on existing socio-territorial relations and engage in ‘city dialogues’ with ideologically sympathetic actors. Overall, the chapter points to the significant, under-researched impact of urban politics within armed group transition. Even if ultimately unsuccessful, elections may spur efforts to exploit historical alliances, establish new relationships and build political legitimacy, a process which could not have been understood without reference to the cultural specificities of Cali politics.

Analysis of the campaign revealed opportunities and obstacles. In pursuing internal cohesion, the party headquarters provided a crucial space for exchange, but uncertainty about the process, a diverse membership and an over-reliance on WhatsApp groups triggered disagreements and high turnover. Efforts to exploit pre-existing socio-territorial relationships encountered substantial heterogeneity, a reticence to openly identify with the party, and former strongholds like Siloé no longer the bastion of leftist support they once were. Electoral analysis drew the Research Team to other, potentially sympathetic neighbourhoods, but data evidenced negative feelings towards ex-combatants, ambivalent feelings towards the peace deal, and a pragmatic willingness to establish electoral alliances with right-wing *Uribista* candidates. In constructing a city-wide manifesto, discussions of ‘peace’ and ‘right to the city’ combined founders’ ideological teachings with theoretically grounded challenges to the government’s economic agenda, emphasising continued mobilization alongside marginal sectors. On the one hand, this expansive, open-ended approach resonates with Escobar’s (2018: p.197) idea of ‘Cali Labs’, whereby rather than adopt a pre-designed format as in government-led consultations, discussions have the capacity to generate “an image of Cali as a truly hospitable space for dwelling.” However, in practice leadership’s overwhelming focus on legality and the hostile responses in many barrios led to a focus on practical support to peri-urban areas where clientelist politics does not dominate, and where communities connect the national peace agreement to their ongoing struggles for territorial autonomy. Overall, the campaign was unarguably a learning experience and, although many non-combatant members never even left the city, can certainly be interpreted as a process of collective re-territorialisation.

As in Chapters 6 and 7, I also considered the relationship between local experiences and evolving national politics. The latter stages of the campaign witnessed multiple ruptures which damaged electoral prospects, impacted members’ personal sense of security and triggered renewed debates about the FARC’s public image. If the municipality and some prospective candidates upheld a discourse of unity, the decision by Democratic Pole leaders to break from the Human

Convergence coalition and Jorge Iván Ospina's public critique of the peace agreement, made clear that peace and reincorporation were still politically sensitive issues, while Marquez's call for the remobilization of clandestine structures made evident different perspectives regarding the 'truth' of post-agreement violence. The final, poor election result provoked criticisms that FARC had failed to capitalise on the progressive impetus generated by the peace deal, but the subsequent National Strike signalled future potential for FARC to engage with mobilizations both nationally and locally.

Overall, this chapter affirms the crucial yet overlooked role of clandestine support structures in urban DDR processes. Despite not having disarmed (as in Chapter 6) nor migrated (as in Chapter 7) non-combatant members played a leading role in the FARC's political transition. They possessed the capacity to navigate Cali's sometimes violent urban geography by drawing on their direct, pre-existing territorial knowledge, and their professional expertise provided important strategic advantages at times. Moreover, their ability to juggle ostensibly competing objectives (as exemplified by Noa's explanation of the 'fuzziness' of peace and social justice), indicates that they possess capacities of potential benefit not just for the FARC's political objectives, but for wider goals such as reconciliation. Said contributions must account for their distinct perspectives, as evidenced by Noa's assertion that reconciling with deserters represented a greater personal challenge for her than with ex-paramilitaries, owing to the former's assumed complicity in denouncing comrades. Lastly, their capacity to live under conditions of submergence means that they may be reluctant to step forward and openly affiliate with the organisation and

CHAPTER 9. CONCLUSION

“...There are other, really interesting methods, that don’t adapt to election cycles, nor to political agendas, and that aren’t negotiable in Havana. But that’s the future of our societies.”

*Raúl Zibechi, 29 November 2013*³²⁸

This thesis has offered a geographical perspective on Colombia’s 2016 peace agreement, focusing especially on its provisions for supporting members of the FARC guerrilla group in transitioning to civilian life. In approaching the subject, I first engaged with the causes of Colombia’s conflict to make sense of its duration through time and complex manifestations in space. This historical overview allowed me to position the concept ‘territorial peace’ against the failures it was designed to surmount, as well as the ideological and territorial struggles which have sustained the conflict and motivated successive calls for peace. Analysis revealed multiple conceptions of territory: as space over which the state exerts or delegates authority; as a resource over which non-state actors compete for material and other benefits, and as an expression of resistance employed by communities and movements to frame and motivate their struggles for autonomy. Building on this, I advanced a movement-party perspective to re-conceptualise Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) as an ongoing, unpredictable and sometimes conflictive process of de- and re-territorialisation driven by the strategic combination of electoral and contentious practices, and applied this framework to elucidate three gaps in contemporary DDR research. By way of conclusion, this chapter brings together the thesis’ primary empirical, theoretical, methodological and policy insights before pointing to future avenues for research.

9.1. Recapping the thesis: empirical findings

This section reviews the thesis’ research questions and main findings. Although different chapters have dealt with distinct questions, the aim was to build an integrated picture and demonstrate the need to consider all strands together.

RQ1. What is the significance of territory in Colombia’s conflict and in the 2016 peace agreement?

³²⁸ Raúl Zibechi, cited in Periódico desdeabajo, 29 November 2013, ‘Hacia la refundación del pensamiento crítico y los movimientos antisistémicos’, Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQhd0MaXDz8&feature=youtu.be> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

- 1a) Why does territory matter in Colombia's conflict?
- 1b) What ideas did FARC, government and civil society participants use to inform the concept of 'territorial peace'?

RQ2. What role did the 2016 peace agreement envisage for the FARC and how does this (mis)align with members' aspirations and practices in the post-agreement period?

- 2a) What is 'community reincorporation' and what are the dynamics of its implementation?
- 2b) How did different actors adapt the 'community reincorporation' approach to the urban context?
- 2c) What role are formerly non-combatant/clandestine members playing in the FARC's reincorporation?

(1a) Chapter 4 offered differentiated state presence, political repression and the FARC's distinctive ideology and adaptability as core explanations for the conflict's duration through time and heterogenous impact across space, and further considered how the state, civil society and FARC have engaged with the Colombian territory. Analysis revealed that Colombia's original centralist Constitution institutionalised a distinction between departments and National Territories, over which successive national governments delegated responsibility to regional actors like the Catholic church and wealthy landowners. The enduring rivalry between the Liberal and Conservative parties drove major outbreaks of conflict, providing the justification for repressive security measures and, in turn, the conditions for the emergence of semi-autonomous rural enclaves backed by the Colombian Communist Party. A combination of economic development and anti-communist rationales re-imagined rural areas in terms of productivity, providing the incentive and the funding to launch military operations to re-establish state sovereignty over these 'independent republics'. The FARC emerged in the wake of these operations, drawing on communist alliances for early ideological and strategic underpinnings, though over time developing its own doctrines as it underwent rapid territorial expansion. But the subsequent boom in the narco-economy provided the economic basis to sustain new paramilitary and drug-trafficking structures, with conflict increasingly predicated on competition for territorial control as opposed to ideological differences. The 1980s peace process hinted at FARC's vacillation between movement and party form, and the later genocide of the Patriotic Union revealed the full extent of the violence that open association could incur. The clear and mounting impact of the conflict on cities, combined with the burgeoning U.S. war on terror, provided the impetus for Alvaro Uribe's presidential election in 2002, whose policy of intensive aerial bombardment left FARC weakened and whose 'democratic

security' framework re-imagined citizens as active participants in the conflict once again. Amidst ongoing violence, communities and movements drew on wider Latin American discourse and inspiration to defend their territories.

(1b) Chapter 5 centred on the concepts and ideas which signatories employed in developing the 'territorial peace' agenda. From the government perspective, I pointed to President Santos and Chief Negotiator Sergio Jaramillo's economic and internationalist vision, citing speeches on integrating Colombia's conflict-affected regions and instilling a sense of unity and shared societal ownership of the process. During participatory fora, diverse organisations challenged the state's agenda, proposing more expansive concepts such as *buen vivir* and right to the city, while regional mobilizations called for an end to the state's militarized presence, triggering further expectations that social movements would constitute a pivotal force in the post-agreement period. However, analysts questioned whether new regulations would ultimately dilute the effectiveness of protest, while a later march in the Cauca region made clear that autonomy and self-determination, rather than rural development or access to formal political channels, lay at the root of many communities' expectations. Meanwhile FARC negotiators rejected DDR terminology in favour of a six-month collective 'reincorporation' process, through which they would re-position themselves alongside rural communities. But early ruptures including the emergence of the FARC's first dissident group pointed to a potential lack of unity, while leadership's focus on securing urban middle-class support through social media campaigning and coalition-building hinted at an emergent distinction between reincorporation as a rural collective process and as an urban elite process. Finally, the 2016 referendum showed that the government's unity rhetoric and call for an 'act of imagination' across Colombian society clashed with a population with ambiguous feelings towards peace and lingering hostility towards the FARC, setting the stage for ongoing polarization in the post-agreement period.

(2a). Chapter 6 analysed the implementation of community reincorporation in Agua Bonita. I charted the arrival and construction process amidst the fallout of the 2016 referendum result, and described how FARC members expressed desire for collective living beyond the agreed six-month transition period, resulting in an extension of support while also provoking acute political opposition. Mid-level leadership played an integral role in consolidating a horizontal internal structure, drawing on the guerrilla's cultural identity to imagine a positive and collective vision of the future centring on territorial integration. Amidst delays and enduring mistrust of the government, residents embraced a narrative of self-sufficiency that drew on, yet sometimes went

beyond, the precise terms of the peace agreement, including appeals for public resources as citizens with everyday needs. To build community support, residents emphasised the mutual benefits from their continued presence and looked for ways to actively participate in other aspects of the peace deal, benefitting from proximity to Florencia and other towns. But the consolidation of power under dissident leaders and multiple additional ruptures to the FARC at the national level signified the challenges of maintaining a collective process, while President Duque's reorientation of territorial peace to a 'peace with legality' framing generated concerns that the government was using Agua Bonita's success to disguise its shortcomings, sparking mobilizations in defence of implementation and creating opportunities for authentic expressions of solidarity from military personnel. The eventual announcement of an extension of support came as a welcome relief, but poor electoral results indicated limited regional support, particularly in cities.

(2b). Chapter 7 examined how FARC, the ARN, the Cali municipal government and civil society actors adapted reincorporation to the urban context. It began by outlining Cali's unique relationship to the conflict, followed by outlining newly elected Mayor Armitage's depoliticised civic unity narrative to urban governance, drawing on his experience as a conflict victim to portray peace as an opportunity to reconfiguring state-citizen relations and redress urban poverty and violence. However, the rural focus inherent to the peace agreement required the government to devise a voluntary forum, the Departmental Reincorporation Roundtable, wherein actors brought to bear conflicting interpretations on urban reincorporation, with the ARN exploiting prior (individual) DDR experience and partnerships and the FARC drew on expectations generated in ETCRs to assert claims for collective support. Said claims were impeded by FARC's physical dispersal, while engaging in schemes like Peace Managers further suppressed their internal hierarchies, with government professionals appearing to substitute the authority of former mid-level commanders. Although some criticised said programmes for their depoliticising effect and superficial engagement with communities, most FARC reconciled themselves to individual support; and these discussions were enmeshed in national political polarization which directly undermined civil society involvement. Overall, the chapter revealed the many impediments to achieving a collective DDR approach in an urban context.

2c). Chapter 8 explored the role of the FARC's formerly non-combatant structures in reincorporation. The chapter began by providing an account of a typical trajectory into one of FARC's clandestine structures, their relationship to the FARC, to each-other and to the territories in which they operated. I then outlined how senior leadership envisaged Cali as a 'pilot city', and

how historical conditions and the hope generated by Gustavo Petro's strong electoral performance in 2018 provided the conditions for the party to jointly contest the 2019 municipal election alongside several other parties. In pursuing a multi-scalar strategy, leaders emphasised commitment and cohesion through continuation of symbolic practices, yet encountered impediments and tensions due to the varied trajectories (and thus expectations) of members, as well as difficulties exacerbated by the pervasive use of digital technologies for coordination. Efforts to build on existing community work revealed heterogeneity in socio-territorial relations at the barrio level, while efforts to expand out into ideologically sympathetic neighbourhoods had to contend with negative collective memories of prior DDR, ambivalent feelings towards the peace deal, and a prevalent clientelism. FARC also engaged in expansive discussions to generate a city-wide manifesto, infusing their own ideology with distinctly urban perspectives on 'peace' and 'right to the city'. But late ruptures made clear the continued personal and political dangers of open affiliation, and formerly clandestine members largely resigned themselves to a continued submergence, with some even professing greater insecurity than before 2016. The disappointing election result further underscored the difficulty of converting local relationships into city-wide support, but the 2019 National Strike pointed to future alliance-building opportunities alongside social movements.

9.2. Research implications

Positioned against a range of literatures, this thesis has made a number of original contributions with theoretical, policy and methodological relevance. With reference to the objectives outlined in Chapter 1, these are made explicit below.

1. Analyse the origins and negotiation of territorial peace (RQ1).
2. Collect primary and secondary data on the implementation of reincorporation (RQ2).
3. Draw insights of specific relevance to Colombia.
4. Draw insights for peace research.
5. Provide insights for the design, implementation and analysis of DDR programmes.
6. Contribute methodological insights for the study of peace processes.

3. Draw insights of specific relevance to Colombia.

“They haven’t managed to visualize that our struggle didn’t end with the signing of the agreement... That’s what we’re going to analyse in the next assembly.”

Horacio, FARC Collective Representative, Cali, 16 October 2019.

Above all, this thesis has contributed to knowledge of the FARC, which are a fascinating case for anyone interested in civil conflict. As such, my core contribution pertains to the power dynamics underlying their transition from armed group to non-violent political actor across different socio-spatial contexts. However, broader analysis of the conflict’s origins and evolution, negotiation of the territorial peace framework and exploration of local, regional and national political dynamics during the implementation period, allows me to confidently proffer additional insights pertaining to Colombia’s conflict and future prospects for a socially transformative peace.

Outlining the FARC’s genesis and evolution (Chapter 4) and the competing discourses surrounding negotiation of the 2016 agreement (Chapter 5), this thesis confirms FARC’s strategic fluidity, while also tracing the roots of later internal ruptures as elucidated within empirical chapters. Throughout the conflict, the FARC successfully combined territorial consolidation in rural strongholds with alliance-building and structural variation in cities, and their guiding mantra of ‘all forms of struggle’ demanded both individual adaptability and a collective willingness to combine different political practices in pursuit of their objectives. But despite hopes of interceding in politics as a united force, the 2011-2016 negotiation process highlighted existing cleavages and crystallized new divisions, as rank-and-file combatants found themselves undergoing a limited reincorporation process in geographically isolated regions while, after temporary de-territorialisation in Cuba, leadership increasingly looked to the urban middle classes for support. Over time, this physical and symbolic distance created the conditions for major regional ruptures led by hard-line mid-level commanders looking to reaffirm their status. If Agua Bonita represented a success case, with competent leadership projecting a unified vision of collective reincorporation through territorial integration, national leadership failed to predict FARC’s wider migration patterns and, having allowed peace to be widely perceived as only of benefit to rural regions, struggled to maintain cohesion and build urban support. Overall, my in-depth multi-sited analysis across Agua Bonita (Chapter 6) and Cali (Chapters 7-8) illustrates both the FARC’s extraordinary adaptability along with the tensions and strategic missteps which underlay the ruptures and complexities of the reincorporation process.

One of this thesis' major contributions pertains to the role of non-combatant urban structures in the FARC's political transition, and the consequences of not incorporating them into the official reincorporation process. By exploring the historical role of the MB and PCCC in FARC's expansion into urban areas, I revealed the guerrilla's strategic lean towards cities long before the 2016 agreement. Clandestine membership could be all-encompassing, inspiring deep ideological commitment, shaping identities and fostering strong personal bonds despite limited face-to-face contact, which could endure even in exile from Colombian territory. But if this urban lean continued after 2016 – and with Cali a 'pilot city' – the Santos administration viewed reincorporation as a process exclusive to combatants and militia members, while FARC leadership naively assumed the smooth transition of all structures into one political force, disregarding their divergent capacities, expectations and fears of engaging with an uncertain and unstable process. Said concerns only mounted after Uribe entered office and Ivan Marquez returned to arms, keeping members like Noa stuck in clandestinity, and shortly I left the field, Tom and Alejandra (who I lived with in Cali) returned to France after realizing they were under surveillance by state or paramilitary forces. Despite these clear concerns and complications, I remain somewhat ambivalent about the incorporation of said structures into DDR: many would not have come forward even if offered credible security and economic guarantees, while the necessary expansion of ARN competences contravenes the view expressed by the agency's National Director that success means its eventual disbandment: "If we do our job, the ARN should not exist in the future."³²⁹ Regardless of the precise policy consequences in this case, the consideration of clandestine membership should be central to future peace deals in Colombia, including in potential discussions with the ELN.

It is too early to make any confirm predictions about the FARC's long-term viability as a political project. As part of the peace agreement, senior leadership are guaranteed Congress and Senate seats until 2026, and the party enjoyed a number of local successes including the election of the first ever FARC mayor in 2019. Overall, however, the 2016 referendum and 2018/2019 elections have provided stark warnings about the enduring toxicity of the FARC brand, and the group has suffered a significant loss in overall cohesion. Many members are acutely aware of these concerns: in our final conversation, Horacio spoke of the pending 2020 National Assembly where, he hoped, the party would address internal commitment issues and make necessary strategic adjustments, including a possible name change. For Alejandro, the ARN's former Departmental Director, the FARC's gradual disappearance will be loss not only for the guerrilla, but for Colombia's collective

³²⁹ Andres Stapper, ARN National Director, 'ARN Ciclo de Foros' event, 6 June 2019.

memory: “I think it will be important for them to keep an identity as FARC... it’s part of the history of the country.”³³⁰ On the other hand, this thesis began with the assertion that reincorporation must not be predicated on their endurance as a party, but – as other Colombianists like Ugarizza and Quisphe (2019) assert – prioritise safe guarantees for political participation of varied forms. In this respect, the FARC have proven to be quite tenacious.

Analysis beyond the FARC revealed that, far from a paradox, Colombia shares much in common with other conflict-affected countries, beginning with the state’s disguised complicity in extra-legal violence through delegation of authority in peripheralized regions. Territorial peace was supposed to resolve two centuries of abandon through concerted state investment, but in failing to grapple with the spatial heterogeneity of clientelist governance relations (e.g. *Turbayismo*) or the myriad ways in which the state has shaped the conflict *through* its absence (Currie, 2019), the final agenda remained somewhat trapped in a simplistic, familiar ‘state absence’ narrative. If invited civil society participants expressed alternatives, drawing on the semantic revolution of prior decades to advance a vision of “a world where many worlds fit” (Escobar, 2018: p.86), the final policy tools for transforming rural territories centred on pre-prescribed pillars wherein territory essentially represented a ‘repository’ to be filled by state institutions (Piazzini Suarez, 2018). Still, none of this wholly unique to Colombia; as Kleinfeld and Barham (2018) note, assumptions about ‘weak states’ can blind us to their complicity in internal violence, and, as Kanai and Schindler (2019) explore, territorial peace is merely neoliberal economic projects across the Latin American continent. Overall, Colombia’s recent experience provides another clear warning against simplistic, state-led solutions to conflict.

Colombia is only an extreme case of a country whose political elites are complicit in enforcing a system of material inequality and uneven democracy through violence (Kleinfeld and Barham, 2018), a dynamic also directly shaped by geopolitical shifts. The genesis of guerrilla forces stemmed, in part, from a rejection of the restrictions produced through Colombia’s Conservative/Liberal hegemony. After the Cold War broke out, FARC continued to benefit from communist support and influence, while the government exploited the economic resources offered by the United States’ anti-communist and, later, anti-terrorist policy agenda. The 1980s peace process carved out a new emphasis on political participation, but while the 1991 Constitution promised a democratic opening it ultimately led to a fragmentation of progressive forces and a diluting of more contentious repertoires of action. This complex backdrop explains why territorial

³³⁰ Interview with Alejandro, ARN Departmental Director, 23 October 2019.

peace was so predicated on strengthening democratic participation, paradoxically raising expectations that peace would threaten elite interests, providing renewed support for *Uribismo* and allowing President Ivan Duque to move the dial, once more, towards democracy over security through his ‘peace with legality’ framing. That approach has since been compared to Uribe’s democratic security framework, as a recent UN report found evidence of military collusion with illegal groups, and use of U.S. funds intended for fighting dissidents to spy on political opposition and the media.³³¹ Overall, analysis indicates a severe backlash from the political promises generated by territorial peace; an important forewarning for future peace deals in Colombia and beyond.

Still, there is some cause for optimism. The 2019 election pointed to a strong future for independent and coalition parties, which won 14 of the 32 mayoral seats they contested, while traditional parties did poorly overall.³³² The suggestion, made by one interviewee, that Colombians are searching for a “new political identity” beyond the bounds of traditional parties, was given greater credence after the 2019-20 National Strike, during which protestors rode a wave of Latin American social unrest to express their indignation at the Uribe administration’s planned economic reforms, ongoing violence against civil society activities and delays to the peace deal, with many openly calling for profound structural transformation.³³³ These and subsequent events (including the June 2021 national strike) bely fears that the territorial peace agenda would unduly ‘regulate’ protests (as in Chapter 5), instead it appears the expectations generated by the accord have wakened enduring transformative potentials. Indeed, speaking about events in Colombia and beyond, Raul Zibechi argues that ‘societies in movement’, rather than socio-territorial movements, are the predominant drivers of social transformation in Latin America today; organisations with lower barriers to entry, higher membership flows and greater capacity for spontaneity in response to emergent opportunities.³³⁴ By awaking these energies, the after-effects of the territorial peace agenda may continue long into the future.

4. Draw insights for peace research.

Through analysis of Colombia’s conflict and negotiation of its most recent peace agreement, my thesis offers a way of thinking through the extent to which the embrace of liberal ideas in

³³¹ Relief Web, 26 February 2020. ‘Situation of human rights in Colombia’. Available from:

https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/A_HRC_43_3_Add.3_AdvanceUneditedVersion.pdf [last accessed 5 May 2021].

³³² Espinosa, L. M. 28 October 2019, ‘En el nuevo mapa político coaliciones se quedaron con 14 alcaldías y 25 gobernaciones’, *La Republica*, Available from; <https://www.larepublica.co/especiales/elecciones-2020/en-el-nuevo-mapa-politico-coaliciones-se-quedaron-con-14-alcaldias-y-25-gobernaciones-2925864> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

³³³ Interview with Ferran, Employee, National Protection Unit, 30 October 2019.

³³⁴ Zibechi, R., 29 November 2013. ‘Hacia la refundación del pensamiento crítico y los movimientos antisistémicos.’ *Periódico desdeabajo*. Available from: <https://youtu.be/sQhd0MaXDz8> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

international peacebuilding represents a meaningful ‘alternative of’ or is merely another ‘alternative to’ the hegemonic liberal peace (Leonardsson and Rudd, 2015). In some respects, Colombia’s territorial peace agenda, as advanced by government negotiators, arguably represents the pinnacle of the United Nations ‘peacebuilding’ policy framework. The comprehensive, ambitious 2016 deal proclaimed to address the conflict’s underlying drivers in such a way that extends beyond the problem of overt violence, promising concerted investment in deprived regions, strengthening and decentralizing democratic participation and disarming and incorporating the FARC into the country’s political sphere, thereby resolving the modern world’s most protracted civil conflict. The additional embrace of bottom-up perspectives, as advocated by renowned experts like John Paul Lederach, led to the active incorporation of civil society in discussions, who were provided ongoing responsibilities to oversee implementation. However, drawing on relational perspectives wherein peace represents an abstract goal subject to interpretation, rather than the absence of violence or a set of other, specific conditions, revealed that the emphasis on state-led rural development and political incorporation did not fully reflect the more expansive imaginaries expressed during participatory fora (e.g. *buen vivir*) or ongoing contentious calls for territorial autonomy and self-determination. In this sense, while undeniably more inclusive of a wide range of perspectives than prior efforts, the thesis broadly affirms ‘territorial peace’ to be a fundamentally liberal project.

Aside from the clear references to territory within Colombia’s peace process, a core aim of this thesis has been to demonstrate that a territorial perspective offers a valuable analytical framework, wherein peace represents both an abstract goal *and* an unpredictable process of de- and re-territorialisation as different actors interact in pursuit of those goals. FARC, government and civil society experiences during conflict (Chapter 4) informed the ideas brought forward during negotiations (Chapter 5), which continued to shape their expectations during the implementation period, in ways that were both culturally specific and spatially situated (Chapters 6-8). In Agua Bonita, the rejection of *reintegration* and associated embrace of the *campesino* and *fariano* ethos were fundamental to collective efforts, yet the process of building relationships with neighbours and guests produced new antagonisms and fears of an eventual loss of *tranquillity*. Turning to Cali, the newly elected mayor embraced the national government’s narrative wherein peace is achieved through societal unity, civic pride, and internationalist economic growth (as exemplified by the concept of *Calipanismo*), a stance which clashed with the FARC’s expectations as generated in ETCRs. Accounting for these (and other) culturally and spatially specific concepts was central to

understanding the local power dynamics underlying the peace process as it stimulated (or indeed, constituted) multiple conflictive processes of territorialisation.

Lastly, this thesis provides much-needed nuance to the local turn in peace research, by showing that even actors which espouse progressive (post-liberal) ideas make choices which are constrained by the socio-territorial relations and exclusions of the realm in which they operate. During negotiations, not all civil society participants put forward shared understandings of territorial peace; while some offered expansive notions, others largely supported the government's economic agenda. Those in the former group consisted of grassroots territorial movements which recognised the structural conditions which marginalize them and which viewed the peace deal as an opportunity to resolve long-standing grievances. Yet, urban organisations like the Improving Lives Association in Cali, with a proud history of autonomous organising, held onto painful collective memories of prior (failed) DDR processes, saw little to be gained from openly supporting peace or identifying with the FARC, and perceived the value of entering into clientelist political relationships even with politicians espousing militaristic solutions to violence. This analysis reveals that even if non-liberal, transformative perspectives find their expression on paper, practical decisions concerning territorial transformation are often made on a pragmatic, short-term and instrumental (thus liberal) basis: a finding which must be taken seriously by the architects of future peace agreements in Colombia and beyond.

5. Provide insights for the design, implementation and analysis of DDR programmes.

“Our organisational structures never came out to the public light because the agreement doesn't cover them. ...So, it's more of a pacifying process than political reincorporation.”

- *Interview with Noa, FARC member, 21 October 2019.*

Based on a comprehensive overview of DDR's evolution coupled with detailed qualitative analysis pertaining to key gaps in scholarship, one of my fundamental contentions is that DDR must always be designed, implemented and evaluated in a contextually dependent and historically informed manner. When the United Nations' first International DDR Standards reimagined ex-combatants as active agents and communities as leading stakeholders in reintegration, this shift was reflected in Colombia's Community Reintegration approach, which was applied extensively with individual deserters from guerrilla, paramilitary and other groups. As a consequence, when FARC eventually came to the negotiating table, they refused to engage with the reintegration agency which, in their

view, had utilised DDR a tool within successive governments' wider military strategy. Moreover, the participatory emphasis underlying the territorial peace agenda stoked political polarization, such that important components of the FARC's political transition were left unresolved during negotiations. As Chapters 6-8 explored further, institutional mistrust did not dissipate oversight, and the limits of early reincorporation forced innovations and generated new antagonisms between FARC, state and community actors. Overall, my understanding of these dynamics was necessarily informed by tracing the country-specific policy origins of DDR including its use during conflict, as well as the broader dynamics of peace negotiations.

By failing to resolve some of the tensions which emerged during negotiations, the FARC's political transition has provided important insight into key gaps in research pertaining to collective (Chapter 6) and urban DDR (Chapter 7), and revealed the challenges of balancing clear institutional regulations with ongoing flexibility and adaptation. My research into DDR as a collective process shows that armed groups like the FARC pursue re-territorialisation in ways that transcend the precise terms of policy documents, requiring government and international authorities to adapt their approach to emergent conditions. I further showed how national resistance, slowdown and eventual reorientation of implementation can paradoxically produce personal relationships of trust, particularly when state actors are willing to express a view which appears to challenge the dominant narrative. Turning to the urban context, analysis revealed substantial will and innovation on the part of state actors, as the municipal government directed ample resources towards incorporating the FARC within its existing 'post-conflict' agenda, while the ARN demonstrated adaptability and sensitivity to the group's internal power dynamics. Yet despite the fraternal relationships fostered through this approach, both ARN and the FARC reported the difficulties of attaining institutional backing at the national level, while civil society were reticent to publicly support the process due to reputational fears. This comparative perspective reveals the complex multi-scalar dynamics of meeting the needs and aspirations of former combatants (either individually or collectively, and across rural and urban spaces) and affirms that what is left unspecified during negotiations may demand novel adaptations in the post-agreement period.

This thesis also explored the role of digital technologies within DDR which, I argue, create both opportunities and challenges for those undergoing the process and state actors overseeing implementation. In Agua Bonita, FARC successfully used social media to publicly demonstrate their commitment to peace, keep abreast of national developments and project their vision of territorial integration. Over time, as reincorporation ceased to be a territorially fixed process,

WhatsApp proved indispensable for establishing communication channels in Cali, with direct access to official documents empowering *reincorporados* to make independent decisions. Notwithstanding these logistical advantages, online communication also provoked disagreements and misinterpretations otherwise more easily resolved through direct communication, leading to accusations of inauthenticity and extractivism. This is perhaps best evidenced by the opposing responses to the Catholic Church: FARC critiqued the Nuncio's mediatic visit to Agua Bonita as superficial and perfunctory, but praised the Cali Arch-diocese's reconciliation programme despite his refusal to publicise the event online. In sum, even if "physical interaction could never be replaced,"³³⁵ I advocate for further research into the as-yet untapped potentials and intricacies of social media and related digital tools within DDR processes.

By interviewing and observing leading figures in the FARC's non-combatant urban membership (Chapter 8), I have provided valuable insight into armed group structural variation and the role of formerly clandestine militants in post-agreement politics. Analysis of these groups exposed highly vertical internal structures and strong, if fundamentally secretive, socio-territorial relations, challenging core assumptions pertaining to territorial control in conflict research (Kalyvas, 2006). Unlike combatants pursuing territorial integration in Agua Bonita (Chapter 6) or new arrivals seeking to adapt to urban life (Chapter 7), at first glance it might appear that formerly clandestine members - not engaged in official reincorporation - did not experience any major rupture to their daily lives. Nevertheless, the process of party-building was characterised by significant membership fluctuation and organisational instability, with members drawing on ideological foundations, pre-existing territorial knowledge and professional expertise to navigate dynamically shifting internal and external relationships, balance competing objectives and manoeuvre within a complex and sometimes dangerous urban environment. When interacting with government actors, members demonstrated acute knowledge of the official process, and DDR professionals and researchers must avoid antagonistically underestimating their capacities, which – as Noa evidenced - can be of potential value to advancing societal goals such as reconciliation. Analysis also noted the evident emotional toll of political engagement, with many reporting a greater sense of vulnerability than before 2016. Of course, these insecurities were not unique to non-combatants, and indeed if new arrivals were encouraged to pragmatically embrace a 'double identity' for the sake of security (as in Chapter 7), those accustomed to clandestinity may be better psychologically equipped at balancing this everyday duality. Nevertheless, a reincorporation predicated on long-term 'submergence' (Zeiderman, 2016) cannot be an acceptable policy outcome and more should be

³³⁵ Interview with Antonio, former ARN Departmental Director, 23 October 2019.

done to provide support for these members, potentially on an anonymous basis. Overall, there is ample opportunity for research into armed group structural variation and the consequences for the dynamics of DDR processes, in a manner which foregrounds clandestine members' unique capacities and vulnerabilities.

Lastly, a key insight of this thesis pertains to how academics represent armed groups within their texts. The UN's latest DDR standards warns practitioners to account for sensitivities around language when in dialogue with former combatants; a concern which must apply equally to how research findings are presented and framed.³³⁶ At the same time, the commonalities between members of armed groups and other groups to which labels are ascribed should not be unduly avoided. As this thesis has aimed to demonstrate, members of armed groups are - and aspire to be - many things, and drawing on different literatures can support the design of DDR in such a way that meets their needs while also contributing to broader societal goals.

7. Contribute methodological insights.

“You remember when you asked me when our commitment was stronger? Well now it's stronger, because the challenge is greater, and the challenge for people who do research is even greater.”

Noa, former PCC leader and current FARC member, Cali, 21 October 2019

This study has been ambitious in scope while offering a frank account of its limitations. In Chapter 3 I described how, after close engagement with scholarship and other academics advocating Participatory Action Research, early experiences and setbacks resulted in a shift away from this more explicitly transformative methodological approach. Yet, the experience of trying to apply a participatory approach proved invaluable to the process of data collection and helped with key reflections regarding my own positionality and on the underlying 'movement-party' perspective which I only later adopted. The experience sharpened my awareness of the dynamic interplay between a research project's theoretical-conceptual underpinnings and its methodological design, further echoing Maxwell's (2005: p.27) insight that a project's conceptual context is “something that is constructed, not found”, Malejacq and Mukhopadhyay's (2016) reflection that fieldwork

³³⁶ United Nations (2019). 'Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS).' Module 2.10: Page 16. Available from: <https://www.unddr.org/the-iddrs/> [last accessed 5 May 2021].

constitutes a kind of foreign intervention wherein researchers construct a ‘tribe’ to help them navigate, and Clare’s (2017) comment that reflections on failure are of critical value yet often go overlooked.

Studies of conflict and peace demand ethical nuance, and undergoing this PhD has stimulated innumerable personal reflections on the role of the individual researcher and the wider academic community in shaping peace processes. In navigating this delicate terrain, I found data triangulation to itself be an ethical practice, reducing my reliance on any one source and ensuring I was able to balance competing perspectives. Relatedly, my detailed account of how I employed WhatsApp as a central data source in conjunction with other methods should be of broader value, as social media and chat apps continually transform how research is done across many disciplines. I would further advocate for transparency as a guiding principle when working in ostensibly ‘post-conflict’ settings, wherein significant animosities are likely to exist among different actors now pursuing delicate, constructive relationships for the first time in decades. Moreover, a comprehensive interrogation of ‘harm’ extends beyond physical insecurity to oneself or the participant, or incurring psychological distress to people with prior experience of conflict, but must also incorporate the potential to induce secondary trauma and other, more abstract harms. Ultimately, I would advise prospective researchers to navigate these challenges through open, honest communication, to seek advice from locally-based academics and students, and to be guided by participants whenever possible. Finally, my overarching conclusion is that researchers *and* universities have a responsibility to provide “space for protected contention” (Rossi, 2017), which should incorporate a wide spectrum of perspectives, including those about whom the project is centred (in this case, the FARC).

9.3. Avenues for Future Research

In recent years, Sheffield has become a hub for multi-disciplinary perspectives on Colombia. My intention after finishing this PhD is to remain a part of this network and conduct additional research on Colombia in the wake of the Covid-19 outbreak, as well as comparative work on protracted conflicts elsewhere in the world.

Concerted research is warranted concerning the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, both on the FARC’s reincorporation and on broader implementation of the peace deal. The United Nations Special Representative warned that the pandemic must not delay implementation, but while

government authorities affirmed that the process was on track, analysis speculates that Duque will have “more room to drag his feet”, including cutting funds for ex-combatant and social leader protection.³³⁷ This is concerning, as ex-combatants living in rural areas indicate a heightened sense of danger, a challenge exacerbated by other armed groups capitalizing on lockdown to assassinate political rivals.³³⁸ Meanwhile in Cali, mayor Mauricio Armitage declared Colombia’s first city curfew in response to vandalism during the 2019 National Strike, setting the stage for continued political restrictions imposed by newly instated mayor, Jorge Ivan Ospina, who cancelled permissions for planned protests and deployed the army to enforce lockdown.³³⁹ There is also evidence of heightened conflict in online spaces, with FARC leadership publishing virulent criticism of the government’s militaristic response to lockdown enforcement, and while the ARN announced it would attend FARC online, hackers have also targeted and intercepted FARC-organised virtual debates about the virus.³⁴⁰ On a positive note, there is potential for the crisis to form the basis of a new common agenda, as reflected in Duque’s national unity rhetoric, while FARC leadership have called on members to adhere to health guidelines, and are producing face-masks as part of their reincorporation efforts in ETCRs.³⁴¹ Clearly the impact of Covid has been complex and significant, and will undeniably provide important backdrop for next year’s presidential election.

Moving beyond Colombia, I aim to draw insights for other protracted conflicts, both in terms of reaching an agreement and for the specific design, implementation and analysis of DDR. Beginning with the former, many modern conflicts are messy and protracted, making decisions about when,

³³⁷ United Nations Press Release, 14 April 2020, ‘COVID-19 Pandemic Must Not Be Allowed to Derail Colombia Peace Agreement, Special Representative Tells Security Council’, Available from: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/sc14160.doc.htm> [last accessed 5 May 2021]
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how and with whom to engage increasingly complex and nuanced (Muggah and O'Donnell, 2015: p.1). Take Afghanistan, a country which has experienced over four decades of conflict. In 2018 the US and the Taliban began new dialogues, with analysts noting potential lessons from Colombia such as the essential role of international monitoring and the participatory approach which, while imperfect, allowed for a broad articulation of ideas and inclusion of historically marginalized sectors.³⁴² By approaching peace from a territorial perspective, this thesis provides a degree of warning, through revealing how expansive participation can awaken conflicting interpretations and generate new antagonisms in the post-agreement period. Turning to armed group transition, the UN's latest International DDR Standards repositions DDR as a multi-dimensional process with potential applications along the "entire peace continuum", introducing a menu of options for when conventional pre-conditions are not met including DDR-related tools and reintegration support to prevent first-time recruitment.³⁴³ Research on this 'next generation' of DDR will need to revisit core assumptions, for example the notion that DDR represents a 'voluntary agreement', as was certainly not the case in the Democratic Republic of Congo where a 'forceful DDR' approach coincided with military intervention (Ibid: p.4). A movement-party framework could unpack how collective agency is enacted under these conditions. In sum, there is much which future comparative study could offer to bringing about peace and ensuring that armed groups successfully and safely intercede in politics if desired.

9.4. Coda

The FARC are no more. In January 2021, leadership finally announced a name change: they are now, simply, Commons. Meanwhile, Colombia's semantic revolution continues to draw on new concepts, this time from Africa. In 2018, a party in Cali was founded on the African concept of Ubuntu.³⁴⁴ In this sense, perhaps the lasting legacy of territorial peace will reside in the way it mainstreamed these more expansive imaginaries.

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