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# Between pacification and dialogue: Critical lessons from Colombia's territorial peace

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## ABSTRACT

Colombia's peace process prioritised conflict-torn geographies ostensibly suffering from historical state absence. We examine the origins and afterlives of this 'territorial' peace using discourse analysis, archival research and field interviews. The state-initiated agenda exceeded the objective of structuring negotiations with FARC guerrillas, pointing to the transformative potential of social dialogue. The negotiating parties co-sponsored participatory rural development forums, which attracted numerous collectives. These diverse actors' visionary proposals to address neglected claims and conflicts influenced the government's and FARC's respective discourses, ultimately informing the 2016 peace agreement. Yet, state priorities for peace centred on international legitimisation and post-conflict infrastructure development to accelerate foreign investment in export-oriented mining, oil extraction, and agri-business. The beleaguered FARC challenged government's narratives while struggling to rebuild organisational legitimacy and prevent fragmentation. Subsequent disappointments with fraught territorial development plans, a new government's securitization of peace programmes, and continuing violence mar the post-agreement period. Prior contributors to participatory forums have joined contentious actions against neglectful austerity, extractivist maldevelopment and targeted assassinations. Thus, we argue that Colombia's international lessons may reside less in governmental pacification programmes - the potential of state-sponsored participatory dialogues notwithstanding - than in resilient (post-)conflict communities open to exercising their peace imagination while remaining mobilised against new-and-old violences. Furthermore, the territorial peace saga illustrates productive overlaps between critical peace geographies and socio-territorial analysis - especially the territorial restructuring induced by neoliberal economic policies, the violent multiple territorialities of differentiated state presence in geographical peripheries and pluriversal struggles against ontological occupation addressed herein.

## 1. Introduction

Once the object of international expectation and local hopes, Colombia's peace process risks derailment. Only a few years have passed since the 2016 landmark peace agreement between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which earned President Juan Manuel Santos (2010–2018) the Nobel Peace Prize for innovative efforts toward building lasting peace. Yet confidence in the agreement's balance between security and socioeconomic reform has waned, as has Colombia's exemplary role to "help find solutions in other parts of the world with similar or worse problems" (Santos, 2017: 11).

International observers who validated the robust program now raise concerns over complications and delays to implementation (Kroc Institute, 2018, 2019). Moreover, the electoral tidal shift of 2018 ushered in contentious post-agreement politics with a hardened state focus on security. Continued violence blights post-conflict territories: in the first three months of 2020 alone, 71 social leaders and 20 FARC ex-combatants were assassinated (El Tiempo, 2020). Research on everyday life in post-conflict settings draws attention to multiple orders of enduring violence (O'Bryen, 2019; Ojeda, 2013). Garcia-Villegas et al. (2016: 10) deem the agreement's initial years "crucial for both avoiding a return to conflict and transcending it permanently," but even

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the most innovative legislation and government programmes have failed to improve the lives of Colombia's disadvantaged, often due to inadequate or flawed implementation (see Oslender's arguments in Cairo et al., 2018). Indeed, the agreement may fatefully join a long list of failed ceasefires interspersed with resurgent conflict over the last five decades. Even some FARC leaders, including former chief negotiator Ivan Márquez, have renounced the process and called for rearmament.<sup>1</sup>

This paper focuses on the 'territorial peace' pillar of the ambitious peace process and its post-agreement disappointments. The Colombian government ostensibly sought to transcend the standardised and much-critiqued 'liberal peace' framework by delivering an internationally exemplary program with geographic 'differentiation' and socially transversal transformations, thereby benefiting the people and territories most affected by conflict (see Koopman in Cairo et al., 2018). However, they took few effective steps to overcome the assumption that "democracy and economic development create peace" (Brauchler and Naucke, 2017: 422), and the project exhibited built-in limitations from its inception. From a geo-political economy perspective, delivering improvements to conflict-torn regions was subsidiary to a globalist neoliberal economic development strategy, to be achieved through increased access to international capital and supply chains. The government's priority was thus re-designing erstwhile disputed and inaccessible geographies: peace would help Colombia gain international recognition and render pacified hinterlands investment-ready through infrastructure provision. Entrepreneurial projects would facilitate the expansion of agribusiness and extractive industries including mining. Meanwhile, our analysis of the contested negotiations illustrates the FARC's opposition to this agenda, as negotiators sought to rebuild organizational legitimacy by engaging in consensus-building and open participatory dialogue, simultaneously leveraging the process to advance alternative explanations of the conflict's root causes and the necessary steps to transcend them.

For historically side-lined collectives, such as Afro-Colombians, indigenous peoples and *campesinos*, the participatory forums co-sponsored by the negotiating parties as part of the peace process meant a space to assert alternative territorial visions, which influenced both governmental and FARC discourse. Moreover, in the face of post-agreement disillusionment, and the new government's lack of commitment to a long-term peacebuilding process rooted in people's everyday lives and "situated knowledges within different cultural settings" (Williams et al., 2014: 22), many of these collectives engage in more explicit contentious politics and social protest. Responding to the incumbent administration's emphasis on peace-as-security and legality, instead of peace for social and territorial justice (Richmond, 2006), and the intensification of extractivist maldevelopment (Escobar, 2018; Svampa, 2019), these collectives continue to resist the threats of environmental collapse and destruction of their diverse ways of life and livelihoods through asserting multiple territorial ontologies.

Our methodology for delineating the origin and contested resignification of territorial peace centres on close reading of archival documents,<sup>2</sup> supplemented with secondary sources and field interviews collected since the agreement. The paper begins with a brief timeline of peace negotiations and the key elements of the Santos government's territorial peace discourse, which gradually replaced the

administration's earlier rhetoric of economic prosperity while retaining an international orientation (Section 2). We then analyse how contestation from FARC negotiators and input from civil society inscribed new meanings and potentials into territorial peace discussions along four key analytical dimensions: rural land and natural resources; the historical geography of uneven development and differentiated state presence; local-level participatory approaches; and alternative visions of territorial well-being (Section 3). In the next section, we examine the agreement's implementation and post-agreement threats to peace. Specifically, we review the fraught Territorially Focused Development Plans (*Programas de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial* or PDET) scheme and critique the resignification of peace under the current government administration (Section 4). In the concluding section, we reflect on lessons for international peace-making practices and the critical geographies of peace, which we believe could be enriched by emerging Latin American perspectives on the analytical value of territory. We specifically highlight the possibility of further dialogue between geographical approaches to peace and work on the geo-political economy of neoliberalization-induced territorial restructuring; the violent multiple territorialities of differentiated state presence in peripheral regions; and the varied dialogue-and-contention repertoires of those struggling for a 'pluriverse', wherein multiple territories of life may co-exist (Escobar, 2018). If geographies of peace is to incorporate multiple perspectives – to become a "deliberately broad umbrella" (Williams et al., 2014: 27) – it is imperative from them to consider the contributions of socio-territorial analysis to critiquing state-led pacification schemes, and the actual territorial struggles of people striving for peace in Colombia and beyond.

## 2. Tracing the territorial dividend of peace

The peace process has passed through three stages, which together constitute the genesis, contested evolution and fraught implementation of the peace agreement's territorial provisions. The first stage (2010–2012) consisted of secret negotiations initiated at the outset of the Santos administration, whereby the parties agreed on a negotiation agenda with the overarching aim of ending armed conflict between the FARC and the Colombian government. This coincided with the government's roll-out of ambitious countrywide economic programmes, with evident transnational designs for post-conflict territories. The second stage comprised the main, open negotiations in Havana, Cuba, resulting in a general agreement in September 2016. Formally introduced in 2012, the territorial peace construct helped to structure contentious negotiations, but underwent resignification in the process.<sup>3</sup> The third, current stage began with the 2016 national referendum, whereby voters narrowly rejected the agreement,<sup>4</sup> signalling the prevalence of significant anti-FARC sentiment fanned by the vocal opposition of former President Álvaro Uribe.<sup>5</sup> Though a revised final agreement was eventually ratified in parliament, opposition to the peace process was compounded by the election of President Ivan Duque, Uribe's close ally, in May 2018.

Peace promised a lucrative dividend at the beginning of negotiations. President Uribe's (2002–2010) 'democratic security' policy had centred

<sup>1</sup> On 29 August 2019, Ivan Márquez released a video statement alongside other senior FARC members, including Jesus Santrich and 'El Paisa', denouncing the peace process and calling for a return to arms.

<sup>2</sup> We draw primarily on two sources: (1) the *Biblioteca del Proceso de Paz* (Peace Process Library), an archive of 11 volumes held in the National Archive of Colombia, containing records of seven years of exploratory and public discussions between the FARC and the Colombian government; and (2) a digital archive held by United Nations Colombia and the *Universidad Nacional de Colombia* (UN and UNC, 2012a, 2012b), on the Agrarian Development Forum and other participatory dialogues. All translations are our own.

<sup>3</sup> Though 2012 signalled the first explicit reference to territorial peace, its origins can be traced to former President Uribe's administration, when Santos served as Minister of Defence and Jaramillo as Vice Minister for human rights and international issues. During this period (2006–2009), Jaramillo designed the Plan for Comprehensive Territorial Consolidation for the Macarena region (*Plan de Consolidación Integral Territorial de la Macarena*), a regional intervention strategy which sought not only to eliminate the presence of insurgents, but to "bring the state closer to communities" (Rodríguez 2019: 176).

<sup>4</sup> In the plebiscite, 50.2% voted against the agreement and 49% in favour, based on 37% of eligible voters casting a ballot.

<sup>5</sup> According to a newspaper report published soon after the result, only 22% of Colombians would accept the FARC in politics (Semana, 2016).

on aggressive actions and, underwritten by US-sponsored *Plan Colombia*, left the FARC militarily weakened and ideologically isolated, though not defeated (Ojeda, 2013: 760). In 2010, newly instated President Santos faced pressures and incentives to “normalize” the country by ending the conflict altogether and eradicating violence (Hylton and Taus, 2016: 254). The expansion of extractive industries into erstwhile inaccessible unproductive zones promised a significant boost to economic growth, paralleling the extractivist approach applied throughout Latin America and enabled by the investment capital made available to much of the global South by a regime of infrastructure-led development (Schindler and Kanai, 2019). But accessing international markets through free trade agreements and luring foreign investment required assurances that the rule of law – property rights in particular – would be guaranteed (Hylton and Taus, 2016). Santos’ inaugural speech framed his economic strategy by replacing “security” with “prosperity”. He developed the program in his proposal for “locomotives” to drive the march towards progress for the “entire country”, including FARC-controlled areas. Priorities included infrastructure (roadways and ports), the countryside (agribusiness and mega plantations) and mining and oil exploration (Biblioteca del Proceso de Paz, henceforth BPP, 2018, Vol.1: 134; 137). The expansionist rural agenda manifested in the creation of ZIDRES (Zones of Interest for Economic and Social Rural Development), intended to facilitate large-scale export-oriented development in remote underexploited regions (Camargo, 2017). Thus, beyond the value of peace per se, pacification (as in neutralising the risk of FARC attacks on lucrative economic activities and costly infrastructures) would leverage growth. In fact, the ZIDRES project was pursued in conjunction with large national public investment in building, upgrading and extending road networks to serve erstwhile remote, conflict-ridden geographies and “generate both peace and prosperity” (Zeiderman, 2019: 11).

The state’s territorial peace framework evolved as Santos’ government attempted to avoid past negotiation failures<sup>6</sup>, and pursue a comprehensive yet geographically tailored approach to peacebuilding, while setting red lines on major economic and political reforms. However, trust between the FARC and government was at an all-time low (BPP, 2018, Vol. 1: 60), and initial discussions stalled on disagreements regarding the nature and scale of required transformation. This discord persisted throughout negotiations, particularly as the country’s underlying economic model lay at the heart of FARC’s *raison d’être*. Disappointed by sluggish talks, Santos threatened to halt the process (Ibid, Vol. 2: 190); for their part, FARC argued that previous failed attempts had resulted from governmental reluctance to address the conflict’s true causes, not to their unwillingness to negotiate (Ibid, Vol. 2: 59–60). Against this backdrop, government negotiators introduced territorial peace to bridge seemingly irreconcilable interpretations, drawing on Jonathan Powell’s notion of compatible narratives (Ibid, Vol. 1: 214). Powell, chief UK negotiator for the Good Friday Agreement and one of Santos’ high-profile international advisors, argued that it was possible for each party to hold divergent interpretations of underlying problems and necessary solutions, provided there was agreement on ending conflict as the common objective. Thus, territorial peace became crucial for establishing communication channels that both parties could trust.

Territorial peace was elaborated through state discourse, particularly in speeches<sup>7</sup> by Sergio Jaramillo, High Commissioner for Peace (2012–16) and the construct’s lead architect. Though never fully systematized, we identify several overlapping core dimensions, all of which point to a significant shift in state-citizen relations. These include a focus

<sup>6</sup> El Caguan process (1999–2002), the most recent peace attempt, had ended bogged down in procedural issues, arguably providing much of the impetus for Uribe’s pursuit of all-out military victory (Herbolzheimer, 2016: 2).

<sup>7</sup> It is noteworthy that many of these speeches were given in English to high-profile forums at Harvard, Oxford and the University of Chicago, thereby laying the groundwork for international legitimation.

on peripheral regions most affected by the conflict; the expansion of the public sphere; strengthening the institutional presence of the Colombian state; the provision of “territorial justice”, incorporating victims as active agents in peace-building; and strengthening democratic participation both during and after negotiations. It was the explicit *enfoque territorial* which provided the impetus for incorporating civil society organisations and the Colombian people more intimately in the process of peacebuilding, with Jaramillo claiming that “territorial peace would be impossible without massive citizen participation” (BPP, 2018, Vol. 3: 231). This discourse of open dialogue and participation garnered significant praise among international monitors and scholars alike. In a brief commentary, however, Colombian sociologist Arturo Escobar drew attention to what he perceived as an inherent limit to the transformative potential of these participatory elements, warning that “a more lasting territorial peace would have to *begin* by being consulted with the population” (Salgar, 2017, *emphasis added*), a critique which seems particularly prescient considering subsequent disjunctures.

### 3. Contested resignification

This section analyses FARC negotiators’ contestation of the state’s territorial peace discourse. Fundamental differences concerned explanatory narratives on the conflict’s origin and proposed policies to overcome it. Specifically, we present and review two fundamental areas of retrospective contention, (1) the (mal)distribution of rural land and natural resources, and (2) geographically uneven development and differentiated state presence; and two areas of prospective reshaping, (3) (dis)continuities between civil society peace practices and the state agenda for political participation, and (4) alternatives to the hegemonic imagination of economically mainstreamed post-conflict territories.

The FARC’s decision to opt for a negotiated end to more than 50 years of conflict requires consideration of their origins, ideological underpinnings and prior experience with peace negotiations. Between 1964 and 2016, the FARC were a political-military organisation allied to the Colombian Communist Party, with which they acted in close partnership until the early 1980s. Though they would later split in pursuit of more offensive military tactics (see Brittain, 2010: 25), their core rationale of *todas las formas de lucha* (all forms of struggle) had never precluded electoral politics. Indeed despite several failed attempts at a peace, and what can only be described as the political genocide of the *Unión Patriótica* party<sup>8</sup>, FARC leader and founder Manuel Marulanda would continue to emphasise the value of political parties as tools for societal change (Marulanda, 2003: 120). Thus, as argued elsewhere (see Phelan, 2018), their transition to party - particularly one engaging in local politics - was consistent with their revolutionary aims. One negotiator affirmed: “FARC’s goal of the profound transformation of Colombian society remains intact and continues. What we are looking for is to take a less painful route” (Colectivo Viktoria, 2016).<sup>9</sup> This promise of continuity with their ideals – including the opportunity to resolve the ‘land question’ - was central to their willingness to engage in peace talks.

<sup>8</sup> In 1985 the *Unión Patriótica* party was established as a result of peace negotiations under President Belisario Betancur, mainly constituted by FARC members and allies. While enjoying moderate electoral success, during the period 1985–1992 over 3500 members - including presidential candidates, governors and mayors - were massacred, leading to the FARC’s “understandable reluctance to exchange the gun for the ballot-box” (Hobsbawm, 2003: 381).

<sup>9</sup> A series of interviews with FARC negotiators, conducted in May 2016 in Havana, detailing their experiences and opinions regarding negotiations. The video was explicitly recommended as a source in conversation with FARC members during fieldwork in 2019.



### 3.1. Rural land and natural resources

The ‘land question’ requires contextualisation. Despite being a middle-income country, around 36.1% of Colombia’s rural population live in poverty, double the rate of urban areas (16.2%) (Colombia Reports, 2019). Land concentration among a few wealthy landowners helps explain the persistence and pervasiveness of this deprivation, with 1.15% of the population owning 52.2% of the land (UNDP, 2011: 50). This maldistribution has deep-rooted historical origins, dating back to the colonial *latifundio* system wherein a small political and economic elite accumulated vast swathes of land. Successive land reforms throughout the twentieth century focused principally on freeing up nationally owned *baldios* (wastelands), yet failed to purchase or nationalise private property owing to strong opposition from elite interests (Pearce, 1990; Ríos and Gago, 2018). Rural vulnerabilities were further exacerbated at the turn of the century by dramatic increases in coca cultivation, the rise of paramilitary groups, and the ongoing conflict with the guerrilla insurgency, leading to widespread displacement of rural *campesino* and indigenous communities. Together with the continual failure of legal institutions to adequately define and enforce property rights, this has meant that between 1980 and 2010, around 434,100 families were forced to abandon, sell, or entrust 6,638,195 ha of land, of which only 495,493 have been recovered (UN and UNC, 2012b: 74).

The FARC first emerged as dispersed clusters of *campesino* self-defence groups opposing the ongoing dispossession and state-sponsored violence against rural populations unable to defend their land legally (Pearce, 1990). Despite later expansion into urban areas, FARC leadership has largely always consisted of people from rural backgrounds, with a “personal connection to the countryside” (Brittain, 2010: 47). Their first political agenda, the 1964 *Agrarian Programme of the FARC-EP Guerrillas*, has remained largely consistent over time, centring on an eight-point *Revolutionary Agrarian Policy* envisaging a rural credit system, land titling, health and education, protection of indigenous groups, and ultimately to “change the social structure of Colombia’s countryside” (Phelan, 2018; FARC-EP, 1964). Logically therefore, land reform was promised as cornerstone to territorial peace, as Márquez clarified: “[f]or the FARC, the concept of LAND is inextricably linked to territory; they are an indivisible whole that goes beyond the merely agricultural and touches on strategic and vital interests for the whole nation” (BPP, 2018, Vol. 2: 59, emphasis in original).

Introducing a territorial perspective allowed FARC negotiators to engage with the question of what kind of land reform was being proposed and what could be realistically achieved. The government initially appeared to be sympathetic to the need for significant change: Jaramillo’s (2013a: 3–4) early espousals of territorial peace included a massive programme of land distribution to reverse the causes of conflict. This was to be implemented as a form of “territorial justice”, whereby property redistribution to conflict victims would promote collective reparation, with “everything that has to be done to restore and protect property rights” (Jaramillo, 2013c: 6). The FARC were critical from the outset; they advocated for yet more ambitious reforms, while in reality the government continued implementing policies which made significant change impossible (including ZIDRES, discussed in the previous section). Márquez also spoke out against the 2011 Victims’ and Land Restitution Law, passed soon before public negotiations began,<sup>10</sup> as little more than a scheme to defraud *campesinos*, calling instead for a more profound territorial re-design which would challenge the overlay of a

mining-energy extractivist matrix on agricultural space (BPP, 2018, Vol. 2: 59–63). With the disruptions, conflicts and even massacres brought about by past experiences of prospective mining, fracking, mega-dam construction and large-scale agri-business projects, the FARC echoed scholarly work on the dangers of recasting maldevelopment as a pathway to sustainable peace (Montesinos Coleman, 2017). One negotiator pointed out: “The agrarian reform.... they are proposing it in terms of titling vacant *baldios*, not from the point of view of *latifundio*” (Colectivo Viktoria, 2016). In other words, the provisions in the agreement were ultimately not redistributive, as they involved “no transference from legal and private large estates to small landholders or property-less individuals” (Gutiérrez Sanín, 2019: 314). For the FARC, maintaining land concentration within a few hands would continue fostering violence, yet the Colombian government continued to redline these issues – alongside related topics including free trade and food sovereignty – as off-topic to negotiations (BPP, 2018, Vol. 2: 409–413), and repeatedly decried the FARC’s tendency to discuss issues extraneous to the agenda (Ibid: 73, 98; Jaramillo, 2015, 2017).

While still pushing for change, FARC negotiators ultimately recognized that some accommodation would be necessary: “If we’d taken power by armed means, we have a revolutionary agrarian program. Immediate liquidation of *latifundios*. Confiscation of land. Appropriate state land and distribute it for free ..... provided we succeeded through armed means. As we’re now in dialogue, the music changes, the dance changes” (Colectivo Viktoria, 2016). Thus, they shifted to a more pragmatic stance, speaking the language of sustainable economic development and a more equitable distribution of land *benefits*, as opposed to the land itself: “Colombia has a wide variety of natural resources, with enormous potential and wealth. But these assets are not enjoyed by the majority of the population” (Ibid). Therefore, governmental red lines notwithstanding, broadening the axis of contention from land maldistribution to territorial prosperity enabled a compromise allowing both government and FARC negotiators to continue bargaining in the implementation phase.

### 3.2. Differentiated state presence and multiple territorialities of violence

At least six million Colombians – or around 12% of the country’s population – live in areas with limited state presence (García Villegas et al., 2016: 17). Given the inadequacy of public services in these areas, and the associated narrative of ‘state absence’, it is little surprise that expansion of government institutions was widely regarded as central to post-conflict rural development (Junieles Acosta, 2017). During negotiations Jaramillo (2014) echoed that narrative, asserting that “the big challenge” for peace was “how to build the institutions that are going to guarantee a long-lasting peace on the ground.” In this way, territorial peace for the state amounted to the payment of a “historical debt” to communities (BPP, 2018, Vol. 7: 521; González González et al., 2016).

The FARC contested this view, drawing on their ideological foundations and historical practices. In his book *Ceasefire (Cese El Fuego)*, Jacobo Arenas - FARC’s primary political ideologue – describes the post-1945 national security doctrine which emerged in the Cold War era, beginning in the USA and emanating across Latin America. Under this doctrine, the world is imagined as “powers in constant battle”, wherein the state acts as “an organism that must defend itself, grow and expand: little more than, a tool for capitalist expansion” (Arenas, 1984: 51). Accordingly, even the state’s willingness to negotiate a peace deal was attributable to this underlying expansionist logic: “before, it didn’t matter that in the jungle, which is far from the cities, there was an insurgency resisting. Now it does, because they need these places to develop large mining projects, because it’s where the natural resources are” (Colectivo Viktoria, 2016).

The FARC, a suspected internal enemy under national security, drew attention to the state’s complicity in local territorialities of violence, including the ongoing threat of paramilitary actors (BPP, 2018, Vol. 7: 521; González et al., 2016). For their negotiators, the paramilitaries

<sup>10</sup> The 2011 Victims and Land Restitution Law (Ley de Víctimas y Restitución de Tierras, Law 1448) covers a range of issues including land restitution. The Law provoked strong opposition both from sectors of society who feared it may jeopardize their control of lands seized illegally through human rights violations, and those seeking the return of lands they were forced to abandon (see Amnesty International, 2012).

were an expression of the same force of territorial domination: "...it's not only the issue of guns, because that is the expression. They're who goes and shoots, it's true. But this has an economic, political, and social basis. Who gives the orders?" (FARC member, in *Colectivo Viktoria*, 2016). This view to some degree reflects other challenges to the 'state absence' narrative, including Ballvé's (2012) suggestion that modern liberal statehood is not in conflict with, but in fact co-constitutes, local economies of violence. Other Colombian scholars have evidenced that, rather than replacing the state, non-state actors (including guerrilla, religious, narco-trafficking, paramilitary organisations and landowners) establish a multiplicity of local governance arrangements, which may negotiate with or run parallel to the state (González et al., 2016; García Villegas et al., 2016; González González, 2016). Working within the political geography canon influenced by Robert Sack and Claude Raffestin, Courtheyn (2019) refers to these multiple territorialities as a contested process whereby social actors and political subjects attempt to maintain a degree of autonomy in their space-exteriority relations, and thereby produce 'other territorialities' that resist the violences of armed actors.

FARC negotiators further praised "patriotic resistance" to state-sponsored violence, citing semi-autonomous indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities in the Cauca, Quimbo and Caldas regions (BPP, 2018, Vol. 2: 63–64). Though the guerrilla insurgency had pursued military expansion and the seizing of central power, their strategy had gradually shifted in the late 1980s towards long-term territorial consolidation and the deconstruction of state power at the village and municipal level (Brittain, 2010: 155). Thus, drawing on their historical practices and a discourse emphasising local potentials beyond state territorialities, the FARC sought to carve out a revived, newly legitimized space for themselves in post-agreement politics: "We will be an alternative and a new territorial power. ... We will be a revolutionary party that represents a response to the needs of the population" (Marquez, cited in *Resumen Latinoamericano*, 2017). Yet, it was this emphasis on the *unmet needs* of peripheral regions which, despite the multiple competing narratives including 'national security', 'historical debt', 'abandonment' and 'absence', ultimately served to unite FARC and the government on the urgency of expanding the public sphere – albeit contingent upon active local participation.

### 3.3. The participatory process

Participatory experiences in peace and development have a long and rich history of co-producing territorial diagnostics and initiatives with local communities in Colombia. Since the mid-1990s, these kinds of processes have taken place in numerous municipalities; a notable example is the 'Peace Laboratories' initiative in the Magdalena Medio region, which explicitly emphasised broad conceptions of peace, both 'designed for' and 'developed in' local experience (Barreto Henriques, 2009: 142)<sup>11</sup>. Jaramillo called for participation as key to (state) institutional strengthening and recognised that peace was "something we have to do with communities in the territories" (Jaramillo, 2015). Yet the governmental programme only drew partially (mostly discursively) from the robust knowledge systematized from participatory experiences by numerous NGOs, thinktanks and grassroots social organisations including the *Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular (CINEP)*, *DeJusticia*, and *Fundación Ideas para la Paz*. This was permeated by multiple other struggles made visible by the participatory forums included in peace negotiations.

The FARC have consistently highlighted allegiance to Colombian people in opposition to state repression and *latifundistas*. They repeatedly reiterated that the peace process was to benefit "all Colombians",

not just their members (BPP, 2018, Vol. 2: 58–62). Moreover, even if agreeing with a differentiated peace for post-conflict territories built from within the regions (Cairo et al., 2018: 466), the FARC firmly emphasised the collective over the individual for land restitution and participatory governance. For their own members, they vehemently opposed being subjected to the standard disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) approach (FARC-EP, 2017: 29), on the grounds that what they were doing was not demobilizing, but "mobilizing into open politics", and called on their entire guerrilla, militia and urban clandestine structures to join the effort (*Colectivo Viktoria*, 2016). They also rejected the term reintegration, claiming that, in reality, they had never been separate from the country's civilian community.<sup>12</sup>

Co-sponsoring broad-based participation served to legitimise the peace process domestically and internationally. The Agrarian Development Forum (ADF) in Bogota initiated a series of events held between 2012 and 2014, where elements of rural reform would be discussed among 1314 representatives from 522 organisations, accompanied by national and international observers, cooperation agencies and the media (UN and UNC, 2012b: 13). The explicit objective was to input into a concerted model of rural development to inform the agreement. More broadly, however, the Forum outlined the complexities and intricacies of rural Colombia and a platform for voicing alternative conceptions of territorial peace. Representatives of the *Asociación Nacional de Zonas de Reserva Campesina* described the peace process as a unique opportunity to discuss and define rules of social justice with landowners, businessmen and bankers (Ibid: 86). Keynote speaker Darío Fajardo conveyed the attendees' hopes and expectations, emphasising that urban quality of life depends on rural wellbeing (Ibid: 34). Thus, the Forum provided an opening for civil society organizations and grassroots collectives to inscribe practical experiences and theoretical lessons into broader understandings of territorial peace.

Tellingly, the non-participation of certain factions revealed the existence of deep-seated ideological opposition to the process. In particular, the absence of the powerful National Federation of Cattle Farmers (FEDEGAN) foreshadowed later resistance to the peace process. As outlined in their letter rejecting the invitation to participate, FEDEGAN's President Lafaurie stated they would never agree to negotiate rural development with the FARC, whom they blamed for decades of conflict and "destruction" (Ibid: Annex 8). FEDEGAN's associates own one-third of national land, and their absence significantly weakened the Forum's socio-political potential, arguably foretelling the opposition to the process which crystallized in the 2016 referendum and 2018 presidential election. In response, FARC delegates accused FEDEGAN of concealing their true interest, protecting the untouchable *latifundio* behind an ideological façade (BPP, 2018, Vol. 2: 150).

The participation that did occur informed FARC's evolving understanding of territorial peace and subsequent policy proposals. In January 2013, they issued *Ten proposals for an integrated rural and agricultural land development policy (with territorial focus)*, which explicitly incorporated ideas from *campesino*, indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities involved in the Forum regarding decentralization, land access, autonomy, planning and political recognition (Ibid, Vol. 2: 195–201). While this revised agenda retains a clear emphasis on land, its explicit territorial focus implies a more comprehensive and multi-dimensional conception of territory as social and historical product. In this reading, territory comprises forms of production, consumption and exchange, and networks of institutions and organisational forms (UNDP, 2011: 31). In this sense, pluralistic dialogues informed FARC's discursive shift from land to territory, as well as input into the final agreement on various issues pertaining to rural reform, political participation, victims' rights and transitional justice.

<sup>11</sup> The community-lead peace zone at San José de Apartadó has been widely studied as exemplary of peacebuilding from below (Hancock, 2017; Courtheyn, 2016).

<sup>12</sup> "The FARC said to the government that they are not going to reintegrate into civilian life because they had never left the country" (interview with former reintegration worker, May 2019).

### 3.4. Alternative visions of territorial relationality

At the Agrarian Development Forum and subsequent participatory events that took place both in Bogotá and numerous local territories, diverse collectives responded to Jaramillo's (2014) call for an 'act of imagination', which paraphrased Lederach's (2005) influential 'moral imagination' approach for moving past destructive cycles of violence. In doing so, they inscribed new meanings into territorial peace that challenged both the state-sponsored project of extractivist transnationalisation and neoliberal tropes of peace and sustainable development underpinning it.<sup>13</sup> These were predicated on *buen vivir*<sup>14</sup> (translated as good living or living well), collective life projects, and comprehensive rural development plans respecting diverse human-nature relations (UN and UNC, 2012a). Participants explored concepts such as autonomy and co-existence, echoing Escobar's (2018: 181) work on pluriversal territorial designs, which draw on "dialogue with other people, albeit under conditions of greater epistemic and social equality"<sup>15</sup>. Proposals also intersected with gender perspectives on women's role in agroecology and economy of care, food sovereignty, and, in the case of the Afro-Colombian roundtable, claims of ancestral territorial presence combined with *el derecho a la ciudad* (the right to the city), thereby linking urban and rural struggles through an appeal to collective territorial rights (Zeiderman, 2016; Asher and Ojeda, 2009). In this way, the Forums allowed for articulation of "an alternative territorial order resisting the state's intent to subject [communities] to a hegemonic idea of economic development" (Montoya, 2018: 475).

Drawing together diverse interpretations, a group of organisations produced and presented a joint declaration at the ADF, which heralded peace negotiations as an opportunity to contest the agribusiness and extractivist "locomotives" of the hegemonic economic model. Rather than reversing previous threats of territorial violence, they argued that the model, based on export-oriented monocrops, oil and metals extracted from the land with high socio-environmental costs, exacerbates inequity, deepens the rural/urban divide, and fuels structural forms of conflict, including violent appropriation of land and mass displacement (UN and UNC, 2012b: 67). Their analysis speaks closely to Escobar's (2018: 68) notion of a "sociology of absences", whereby diverse forms of life are rendered invisible and then threatened with complete or ontological occupation. Still, the declaration concluded, peace had the potential to facilitate alternative income opportunities beyond traditional services such as trade and transport, including ecological, rural and adventure tourism, environmental services and other forms of non-agricultural work (UN and UNC, 2012b: 74–76). For some, the mere acknowledgement of these alternatives was a notable step forward: Father Francisco de Roux, President of Colombia's Truth Commission, affirmed that "what Colombia is doing is discussing the [development] model although it has been said that it can't be discussed, that it is not negotiable. What this forum has made clear is that WE DO NOT HAVE

<sup>13</sup> Even more benign forms of this pervasive view on globalization-dependent prosperity – what Escobar (2016: 15) calls the One-World world – encouraged campesinos to shift from traditional agroforestry forms of relational world-making to market-oriented agro-industrial monoculturevas intended to secure long-term income. See Lederach's (2017) insightful example from the Montes de María highlands.

<sup>14</sup> The *sumak kawsay* or *buen vivir* paradigm, which foregrounds human-nature relations, has been highly influential within indigenist, socialist and post-structuralist approaches to socio-environmental sustainability in Latin America in the early twenty-first century (Vanhulst, 2015).

<sup>15</sup> The concept of relational world making is key to understanding pluriversal claims and the territorial resistances of which they are part. Regarding long-standing indigenous demands over their territories, Caro (in Ulloa and Coronado, 2016: 38) argues that collective retribution can only be successful if designed around the notion of 'territory-environment' as a continuum for indigenous life, whereby land rights are supplemented with holistic considerations for what lies underground and what lives on the ground.

TO KILL EACH OTHER to discuss this model" (Ibid: 111, emphasis in original).

The ideas and visions expressed by civil society participants at the ADF resonated with the FARC's long-standing agrarian policy, which recognises alternative forms of peasant landholding, and demands collective forms of land tenure. Indeed, as a highly territorial organisation with many of its members historically drawn from indigenous and *campesino* communities, the FARC shares certain characteristics with ontological struggles (Atuesta, 2019). In further testament to this, leader Jesús Santrich even explicitly referenced *buen vivir* as core to the organization's understanding of territorial peace (Cairo, 2018: 468). Furthermore, the consideration of multiple ontological perspectives suited the FARC's aim to achieve the "maximum number of changes possible" through negotiations (Colectivo Viktoria, 2016). While undeniably strict, even harsh enforcers of their own forms of governance in territories under their influence (Arjona, 2016), FARC had long emphasised education and debate both within their own ranks and among civilian communities. For Arenas (1984: 47), it was "the essential task of the revolutionary parties... to arrive with new ideas to the minds of the working class and the people, so that people ...become aware of the need for change". Indeed, there is further evidence of engagement with scholars, journalists, civilians and researchers on a range of issues including peace, agrarian issues and international humanitarian law while the conflict was still ongoing (Brittain 2010: 178). Thus - in words closely echoing those of Father Francisco - FARC were ultimately "... trying to create the minimum conditions of [being able to say] 'come on, I think like this, don't kill me... I want to build a country like this, let's not shoot each other, let's not kill each other.' ... That's what we want to achieve with this peace agreement" (Colectivo Viktoria, 2016).

Importantly, not all organisations at the Agrarian Forum supported radical takes on territorial peace. The National Agricultural Association of Colombia (*Sociedad de Agricultores de Colombia*, SAC) saluted government refusal to discuss the economic model, especially concerning guarantees to private property and a market economy production framework (UN and UNC, 2012b: 45). SAC welcomed social investment and infrastructure plans to close the gap between rural and urban areas but urged the government to reverse plans for Family Agricultural Units (UAF)<sup>16</sup>, which, they argued, constrained large-scale agribusiness development. This seemed to be more aligned with the government's own stance: with factions inside the Santos administration envisioning territorial peace as no more than the pacification of post-conflict territories via strengthening state control, there was no room for alternative provisions to their incorporation of the extractivist economic model (Cairo and Rios, 2019). The FARC too recognised this; in later criticism they described the government's stance on the agreement as "simply as the disarmament of the FARC, the possibility of increasing economic growth [...] and arriving with investments in territories that had not previously been reached due to the guerrilla presence" (FARC-EP, 2017: 24). The next section further distinguishes between territorial peace as a policy discourse reshaped by social actors and its thus far fragmented and limited implementation, before we turn to the policy and theoretical lessons that territorial peace offers.

## 4. Fraught implementation, continuing struggle

The peace agreement included numerous mechanisms for securing an end to armed conflict and long-term peace (altogether 578 provisions). Among these, Territorially Focused Development Programmes (*Programas de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial* – PDETs) were to play a preeminent role in comprehensive rural reform. This section argues that

<sup>16</sup> The UAF represents "the amount of land considered necessary for a family to obtain a decent livelihood ... the maximum the state may award to a single person" (Oxfam, 2019: 3); in other words, it is essentially an attempt to impose limits on land concentration.



the scheme is failing to meet its transformative potential. PDETs have been unable to integrate bottom-up territorial visions into state-sponsored regional development and implementation has been vulnerable to delay, obfuscation and re-orientation. Bureaucratic and logistical challenges compound the underlying ontological threats to post-agreement territories. These have intensified since the 2018 change in national government – a shift which to some degree represents a political backlash against the reforms themselves (Gutiérrez Sanín, 2019) and induced further deviation from PDETs as stipulated in the agreement. For their part, the FARC have experienced fragmentation amidst ongoing political violence. Social protest has resurged, culminating in the unprecedented Paro Nacional (national strike) of 2019–20, which not only expressed disapproval of Duque's policies but also manifested discontent over the initial yields of territorial peace and historical grievances across Colombia's regions.

#### 4.1. Territorially Focused Development Programmes (PDETs)

Designed to spearhead rural reform, PDETs involve 16 specially designated sub-regions encompassing 170 municipalities. These constitute peripheral areas of the country which have been most affected by conflict, illicit economies, poverty and institutional weakness (Fig. 1).<sup>17</sup> PDETs were to operate through a consistent, sequential and multi-scalar participatory process. Beginning with each *vereda* (the smallest administrative division), the diagnostic phase would centre on pre-defined thematic pillars including land use, infrastructure, economic development and social services, which would support the construction of a collective “territorial vision” (CEPDIPO, 2020: 3). In turn, these dialogues would inform municipal- and sub-regional level discussions, aggregating into distinct Action Plans for Regional Transformation (*Planes de Acción para la Transformación Regional*, PATR) for each of the sub-regions. With a 10-year time frame, PATRs would be delivered through \$79 billion pesos of funding, equating to 60% of the entire peace budget. Gutiérrez Sanín (2019) praises these provisions, describing them as “sensible and progressive”. For Phelan (2018: 845), they represent the direct realization of territorial peace as an inclusive, democratic process.

Limits and challenges initially emerged under Santos. Firstly, the pre-defined thematic pillars narrowed the realm of dialogue and were disconnected from communities' historical experiences (CEPDIPO, 2020: 5). Staff from the newly-created Agency for Territorial Renovation (*Agencia de Renovación del Territorio*, ART), the unit responsible for administering the PDETs, lacked information on former local state-led initiatives, many of which had failed to achieve desired changes. This fomented mistrust and participation fatigue: one researcher decried “communities are tired of being asked what their problems are, which have been the same for years” (Ramos, 2019). Further implementation was subject to significant delays - indeed, rural reform continues to lag behind other agreement provisions, and even with the ART including ‘PDET works’ (*Obras PDET*) as an indicator of progress, these small, rapid infrastructure improvements do not contribute to longer-term transformation (CEPDIPO, 2020: 11). Furthermore, despite the PDETs' impressive funding figure, more than half of their \$79 billion peso budget is sourced from central government funding constitutionally allocated to municipalities for core services like education, health and basic sanitation, thus prohibiting the possibility of re-directing resources to align with transformative territorial visions (Ibid: 10).

President Duque's stance towards PDETs is still further removed

from the agreement's vision. Implementation has come to centre on the delivery of piecemeal projects. Characterised as a “policy of simulation” (CEPDIPO, 2020), the PDET scheme has departed from the recommended comprehensive process of collective construction (Kroc Institute, 2018: 25). The *vereda* dialogues resulted in over 32,000 separate requests, with many constituting pre-existing local needs underserved by the state, and have not been effectively cohered, scaled up into regional and national initiatives, or integrated with other rural reform instruments (CEPDIPO, 2020: 5). Moreover, the new High Commissioner for Peace Miguel Ceballos established five Strategic Zones for Comprehensive Intervention (*Zonas Estratégicas de Intervención Integral*, ZEII), encompassing 44 municipalities, with the aim of improving national security through the “micro-focalisation of military and police plans” (DNP, 2019: 20). While the government claims that ZEIIIs have no bearing on PDET implementation (Forero, 2019), analysis suggests PDETs' diminishment as planning instruments and the overlaying of a pacification logic backed by state security forces (CEPDIPO, 2020: 7–8). In fact, peace funds risk being diverted for ZEIIIs and other political uses instead of advancing the PDET programmes (Parada Diaz, 2019). While this re-orientation echoes Uribe's ‘Democratic Security’ approach (Jerez, 2019), it also points to a deeper issue: the historically entrenched complexity of Colombian bureaucracy, whereby conflicts over land are de-emphasised and de-politicized through the creation of ever more complex territorial designations and decision-making procedures (Castillejo-Cuelar, 2019; Gutiérrez Sanín, 2019: 328).

#### 4.2. Undoing territorial peace

The slackened and reoriented PDET implementation which has occurred under Duque has fuelled misgivings over the future of territorial peace (CINEP, 2018: 37–8). Adhering to the “peace with legality” rebranding, the High Commissioner for Peace was tasked with managing the FARC's “demobilization, disarmament and reinsertion... upon which true peace can be consolidated” (Duque, 2018), despite the FARC's explicit rejection of these terms. While the continued threat of armed actors, including FARC dissidents, allegedly justifies this resignification, the criminalisation of protest serves to re-frame socio-environmental conflicts as security issues (through legislation first introduced under Santos), and territorial peace becomes territorial pacification (Olarte-Olarte, 2019). Furthermore, this confirms Zibechi's (2016: 184) prediction of a pervasive, ‘capillary militarization’ whereby non-ideological armed actors for hire continue vying for territorial control in areas suitable for coca production or with mining potential, including many PDET municipalities. A recent report from the UN Human Rights Commission identifies cases of collusion between security forces and illegal armed groups (Relief Web, 2020). Implications are grave: in 2019 alone over 50,000 people were displaced (Fundación Ideas Para La Paz, 2019).

For their part, the FARC accuse the government of delays and re-orientation of peace, and responsibility over ongoing assassination of social leaders and ex-combatants. Leaders have also challenged international monitors, rejecting the Kroc Institute's (2020) assertion that 40% of the agreement's provisions have been implemented or are on their way to being fully implemented (Partido FARC, 2020). However, disillusionment with both the process and leadership has driven internal fragmentation, particularly exacerbated by Marquez's call for rearmament. Poor election results through 2018 and 2019 have not helped. Moreover, most ex-combatants have dispersed from transition camps. Whereas these spaces are becoming permanent sites for collective reincorporation, and all but one can be found in PDET municipalities, as of January 2020 just 54% of ex-combatants remained in all PDET areas (ARN, 2020). A minority have joined dissident or other illegal armed groups, and though most are engaging with the reincorporation process, many have severed ties with the party structure. This disintegration furthers the unravelling of territorial peace, especially promises of facilitating a legitimate role for FARC in politics.

Post-agreement delays and continuing violence have, somewhat

<sup>17</sup> Though most PDET municipalities (68%) are located within departments where the Yes vote prevailed in the national referendum, the ballot exhibited complex patterns and cleavages across Colombia's regions. Those patterns require close analysis, and are not fully explained by the well-known account that remote areas subject to ongoing violence supported the process, while the No vote in core regions led to an overall narrow defeat for Santos.



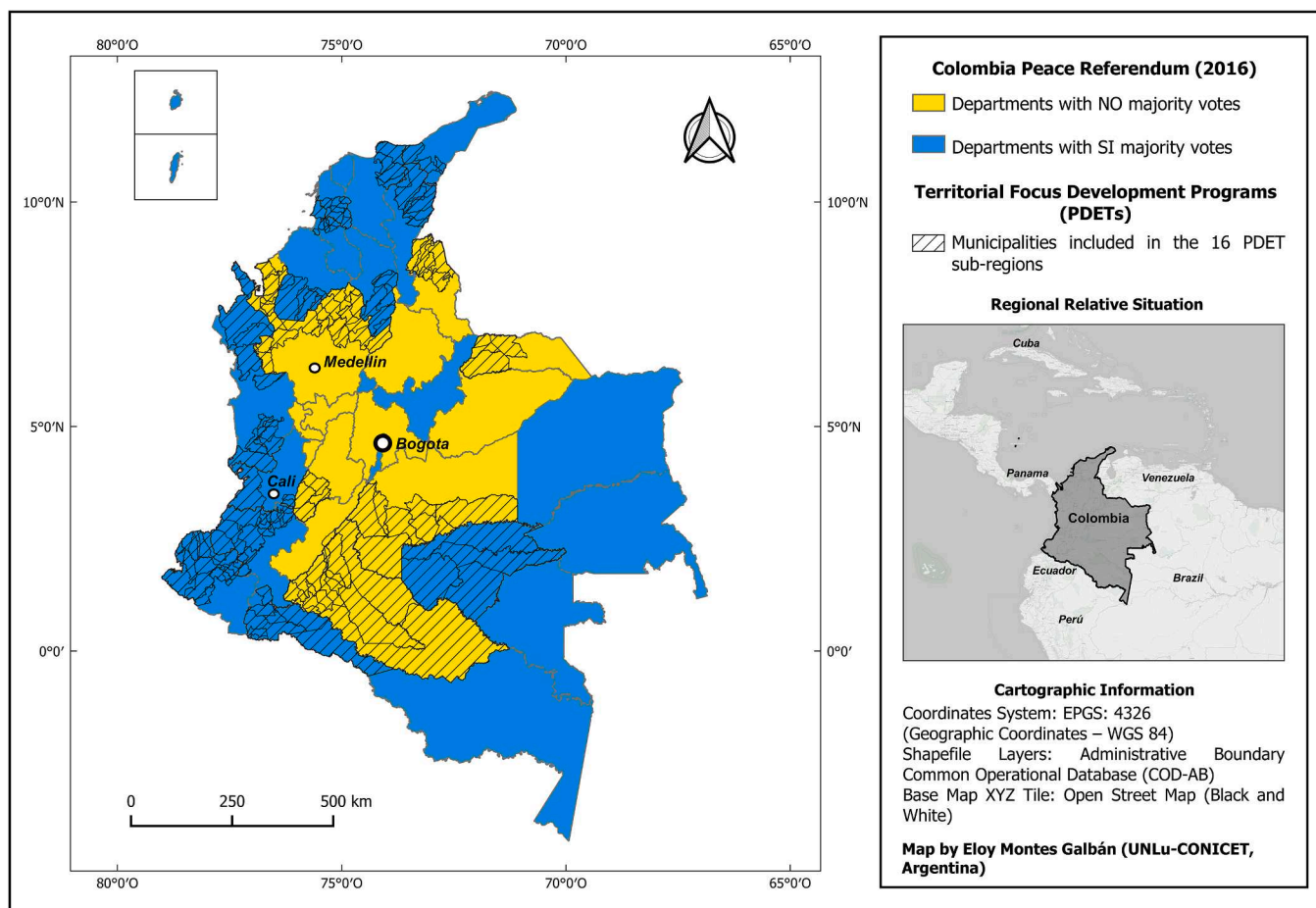


Fig. 1. Map depicting PDET municipalities overlaid on departments classified by 2016 referendum results. Source: Map produced by Dr. Eloy Montes Galbán for authors' use based on data from the ART - available online at [https://www.renovacionterritorio.gov.co/Publicaciones/municipios\\_pdet\\_subregiones](https://www.renovacionterritorio.gov.co/Publicaciones/municipios_pdet_subregiones).

paradoxically, served to unite Colombians across myriad territories. This came to the fore in November 2019, when a planned one-day national strike against labour reforms transformed into weeks of mobilization. While undeniably motivated by widespread disapproval of Duque's administration, including its stance towards peace, the *Paro* is best understood in the context of historical, local and regional-level mobilizations and the accumulation of unresolved demands. Protestors called not only for improvement to core public services and human rights guarantees, but also for structural socio-economic change including what we interpret as ending the ontological occupation of territories. The *Paro*, colourfully characterised as a "referendum" on Duque, included widespread participation of student, indigenous, labour, political and social groups (Janetsky, 2019). One poll showed public support of 74% (Semana, 2019), a figure notably higher than the 2016 peace referendum 'Yes' vote (49.8%). More notable still, protests were not limited to peripheral or conflict-affected regions, predicted to experience a spike in protests (see CINEP, 2016: 14), but included urban territories with a 'No'-voting majority. It may be, then, that the failures of territorial peace have done more to rally Colombians than its unrealistic promises.

### 5. Concluding remarks: lessons from Colombia

Colombia's peace agreement is no longer hailed as the exemplary model of success it once was. International monitors at the Kroc Institute now offer comparisons to fraught peace processes including in Lebanon, Nepal, Angola, Tajikistan, Cambodia, Sierra Leone, and the Ivory Coast, and the latest report warns of the "risk of compromising the achievements made by not taking advantage of the full potential for transformation" (Kroc Institute, 2020: 5). By way of conclusion we consider,

firstly, the extent to which territorial peace ever encompassed genuine transformative potential and, secondly, what other lessons for peace research geographers extricate from its construction and implementation.

The territorial peace agenda, for all its ambiguities and limitations, allowed institutional, insurgent and people's voices to co-construct a common vision committed to overcoming the longest armed conflict in modern history. Amidst scepticism and political polarization, the focus on local territories "generated an atmosphere of hope" inducing bottom-up, participatory engagement (Le Billon et al., 2020: 305). For the Santos government, it justified focusing on state consolidation and economic growth in peripheral areas; it brought and kept FARC negotiators at the table while curtailing their "maximalist ambitions" for national transformation (BPP, Vol. 1: 216; 220); and it garnered international acclaim while securing the necessary domestic support to rescue the agreement after the referendum reversal. For the FARC, territory resonated with their historical agrarian agenda while allowing them to articulate an oppositional discourse on the conflict's foundations; carve out a legitimized role in local and national politics, and present themselves as allies of Colombian society in opposition to state-sponsored development projects and (para-)state territorialities of violence. For grassroots organisations of diverse collectives representing long-suffering rural areas, it offered hope for material change through more equitable land and resource distribution, infrastructural investment and democratic participation, and a secure space to propose alternatives to development. This act of peaceful "geographical imagination" (Peña, 2019) simultaneously claimed recognition for pluriversal territorialities and forms of life seeking co-existence with an expanding mode of extractivist development rife with new-and-old

violences. Therefore, rather than a weakness, the polysemic character of territorial peace (Cairo et al., 2018: 466–67) allowed, or even spear-headed, inclusive dialogues regarding what an end to conflict *could* mean as a first step to building peaceful futures.

Implementation disappointments illustrate the impossibility of focalised peace programmes becoming transformational, or even sustainable, if unaccompanied by broader political economy shifts (Duffield, 2005; Cooper et al., 2011). With unaltered power relations, the peace discourse recast economic development as indispensable to ending conflict, instead of one of the factors historically fuelling it (Montesinos Coleman, 2017). The notion of pacification through strengthened institutions veiled the structural violence of differentiated state presence and did little in practice to curb new forms of intimidation and assassination of defenders of *campesino*, indigenous and Afro-Colombian territories. After the electoral backlash, in which entrenched political-economic interests and societal resentment towards FARC played no minor roles, President Duque's resignation of peace 'with legality' furthered the criminalisation of social protest in rural areas (Olarte-Olarte, 2019) and diluted the transformative potential of development plans, overlaying them with security-enhancement zones. The broader problem of overlapping jurisdictions and fragmentary remits discussed in the paper forewarns against the unheeded reification of 'local' territory, as well as the dangers of failing to integrate policies and analyses across scales.

The important roles that resilient indigenous, Afro-Colombian and *campesino* communities played in the territorial-dialogical participatory construction of the peace programme confirm that peace is an inherently plural, socio-spatial phenomenon (Koopman, 2019: 209). Moreover, as our analysis of the genesis, evolution and implementation of territorial peace demonstrates, peace encompasses a realm wherein political legitimacy is sought and contested (Megeran, et al., 2014: 211), and pluralistic collectives may be able to re-claim and re-signify its meanings and practices in direct challenge to 'liberal peace' agendas (Hammett and Marshall, 2017: 130). Mobilized actors were able to insert territorial well-being and *buen vivir* provisions in the peace agreement. These provisions indicate a counter-hegemonic ability to re-inscribe an inherently Western-centric policy document with culturally specific collective ways of being in the territory, such as those captured in Fals Borda's (2009) earlier work on people's thinking, feeling and desires in the *Caribe* region. As we have shown, the opening of peace occurs both within and beyond the bounds of formal participatory mechanisms, as reflected in the ongoing contentious actions spurred by fraught implementation of the agreement. We have mentioned that FARC ex-combatants pursue individual livelihoods beyond collective reincorporation spaces, beyond PDETs, and beyond the realm of electoral politics. Further research is required to examine how they will continue shaping peace following the notion of peace construction in the 'everyday', where multiple social actors' agency is unmistakable and consequential (Mac Ginty, 2010; Richmond, 2009; Williams, 2015).

As a final lesson, Colombia's territorial peace showcases the analytical value of territory for uncovering a more expansive, multi-dimensional understanding of peace and conflict through geography, which responds to calls from within and beyond the discipline (Kobayashi, 2009; Björkdahl, and Kappler, 2017). The geographies of (post)conflict are being thoroughly examined from various perspectives internationally. For example, Purdeková's (2017) examination of 'ontopolitics' in Burundi engages with struggles over the terms and practices employed to restructure both the physical and discursive space of post-conflict regions. As part of these debates, Latin American socio-territorial analysis provides insights on how territory may constitute "a key to conflict and a key to peace" (Vasquez and Valeriano, 2009: 205). Thus, we argue, territory merits inclusion alongside space, place, scale and network as a core concept in the burgeoning critical geographies of peace literature (Williams et al., 2014).

Our critique of the territorial peace framework draws on multiple strands of Latin American perspectives on territory, all of which have

implications for the geographies of peace and conflict. The Colombian government's effort to 'bring peace to the territory' reflects the fact that territory has emerged as a core political cleavage, over and above class or ideology (Rossi, 2019). The scheme's shortcomings point to the state's failure to understand forms of multiple and overlapping territorialities (Agnew and Oslender, 2013; Haesbaert, 2013), or to account for the ways in which (para)state actors continue to be entangled in violent regimes of differentiated governing (Ballvé, 2012; García Villegas et al., 2016). Emphasising territory, and particularly state efforts towards 'territorial redesign' brings to the fore the socio-ecological disruptions induced by neoliberal economic policies in Latin America and beyond (Kanai, 2016). Pacification efforts by the Colombian state can be understood as a localised form of "actually existing neoliberalism" within a broader, variegated process of geo-political economy transformation (Peck and Theodore, 2012). The focus on peripheral post-conflict territories constitutes an example of infrastructure-led development, resulting in a scramble of investments in peripheral regions of the global South (Kanai and Schindler, 2018; Schindler and Kanai, 2019). Finally, resistances to territorial peace point to pluriversal geographies and struggles against the ontological occupation of life and difference (Escobar, 2018). Our examination of proposed alternatives during negotiations and post-agreement protests should inspire future studies to engage more deeply with local epistemologies and indigenous/traditional ontologies, whilst theorising and supporting diverse repertoires of mobilization across marginalized spaces.

The story of territorial peace continues. Despite announcing a "conversation" to hear the demands of protestors, the government's initial response to the *Paro Nacional* left hundreds injured and at least three dead in the first day alone. The subsequent Covid-19 pandemic has raised further doubts about the future of the agreement and of peace on the ground. At this critical juncture, it is crucial that further research is conducted to map out ongoing reverberations of the territorial peace construct, particularly in communities where the agreement's promises most raised expectations for change. Further inquiry along the retrospective and prospective dimensions deployed herein could provide a solid basis for peace research in diverse contexts, including and in juxtaposition with the Colombian case. Peace is "not the same everywhere" (Koopman, 2011: 194); nor should it be, and open dialogues on its – territorial – causes and solutions may yet contribute to imagining and realising the kind(s) of peace that people truly want.

#### CRediT authorship contribution statement

**Juan Mario Diaz:** Conceptualization, Investigation, Writing - original draft. **Henry Staples:** Investigation, Writing - review & editing, Project administration. **Miguel Kanai:** Supervision, Writing - review & editing. **Melanie Lombard:** Funding acquisition, Supervision, Conceptualization, Writing - review & editing.

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