THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO


AN AMBIVALENT PEACE:

MISTRUST, RECONCILIATION, AND THE INTERVENTION ENCOUNTER IN

COLOMBIA


A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY


DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT


BY

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

JUNE 2019

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In Caquetá, I have much gratitude to give. Marvel you are a kindred spirit and I am so glad we found each other. Thank you for your care during the dengue and chikungunya; I remain convinced that I would not have made it without you. And thank you for the many shared bottles of wine and wonderful conversations once I recovered. To Flor Alva Rojas, you nursed me though both stomach ache and heartache, and made me feel at home in a place that was all but familiar. Thank you. Lidia, you are among the strongest women I know and your smile always told me that we were connected, even when your words could not. Josefina, we baffled each other, but I'm pretty sure we both enjoyed it immensely. We were us four a household for a while, and I am deeply grateful for it. Manuel Puentes, *compañero,* our time together is not over, and I so very much hope to jostle uncomfortably in a *chiva* down a country road with you again sometime soon. Gena Steffens, speaking of country roads, thanks to you as well for your inspiring work and willingness to wax nostalgic every now and then. I remain inspired by you, Excenower, and your perseverance and diplomacy through challenging times. Aifa, an understanding in leadership is incomplete without having known you. Thank you for showing me what is possible. Thank you María, Don Miguel, Monica, Kennedy, Angie, Leidy, Faber, and all the professionals at the Caquetá service center of the Colombian Agency for Reintegration, especially Carlos Mera. And additional thanks is owed to Sandra, Doña Gloria, Anderson, and Aleida. Thank you, Nacho, for bringing me to Kata.

I also must thank the many Muay Thai communities that have welcomed me as one of them during my time in the field in beyond. The practice gave me good health and fierce skills (and a little bit of pain), but the comradery and achievements made it a landmark experience in my life. Without exception, you gave me a sense of home and community when I most felt that I had neither. *Kap khun krap.* To the *Legionarios* of the Caquetá League of Muay Thai, thank you for teaching me the fundamentals and welcoming this novice into the fold. Thank you, Giovani

Bedoya, Andrés Dussan, Jota Be Mejia Valencia, and Anita Noriega, for your friendship, motivation, and *puños y patadas*. I am also grateful to the students of Ramakien Bogotá for their practice of Muay Boran and weeknights spent decompressing from the life of organizational ethnography. A special debt of thanks to Daniel Bozso, John Prieto, and Nilson Potes, Training Nation, and Muay Thai Bogotá for helping me get ready for the ring and more. John you are an exceptional teacher and outstanding role model for the young men that you train. Also, thanks to Eddie Vendetta and the attendees and staff of Muay Thai Medellín for hosting one of the most grueling and gratifying physical challenges of my life. I also am grateful for the Chicago Muay Thai Kickboxing Club for their entry into my life during the final stages of dissertation writing, and for their warm welcome and call to arms. I am certain I would have had a much tougher time of things in the last few months without you. To Team Cotur and Muay Thai Thailand Barcelona, thank you for the community and tremendous expectations and support during the revisions process.

My deepest gratitude to my cohort, colleagues, and good friends, Kelsey Robbins, Rebecca Frausel, Séamus Power, Sean Coyne, and Xu Qin. Xu, I'm sorry I never fully understood your statistical brilliance. From early tentative meetings in the Pub and Jimmy's to heartier nights in Boys Town and playing Cards Against Humanity, I cherished all of the moments we had together and will remember them ever after. Kelsey and Becca, words do not do it justice, but you already know there is much love in my heart for you and that it will never fade. To Sanja Miklin, I hope we always find a way to another cup of tea and homemade cookies. Carly, these years have forged between us a friendship that will sustain me for a lifetime, and I look forward to many further adventures on this continent and any others that dare to host us. Jeanne Lieberman, Susan Hershenson, and Marvin Lieberman, thank you for the home that received me upon my arrival back from the field, and the incredible views of forest and mar that

To my parents, John and Miranda, thanks are not enough. I love you so much and am so grateful for all that you have given me, not least of which were a love of learning and an appreciation for the beauty that this world has to offer. This never would have been possible without you.

**Abstract**

The abundance of ongoing armed conflicts and ailing or failing peace processes in the world throws into sharp contrast the disparity between the billions of dollars invested into resolving systemic division and the extent to which societies have been able to effectively build sustainable peace.  Most notably since the South African Truth & Reconciliation Commission (1996), reconciliation has figured centrally in post-conflict programs. However, academics and practitioners have largely ignored the topic of interpersonal trust in post-conflict contexts, the *sine qua non* of national reconciliation. The notable exception to this lacuna argues that trust figures centrally in ideas about reconciliation in the aftermath of conflict violence: it constitutes a repair in a rift of relations and a rebuilding of trust in the wake of an actual or perceived wrongdoing (Govier & Verwoerd, 2002). In response, several questions guide this investigation: How do community mechanisms for governance and coexistence, which emerged within a context of catastrophic violence and an absent state, configure trust and mistrust within the social frameworks that guide every day interactions? In what ways are new possibilities for personal and communal healing produced and foreclosed in encounters between well-meaning, but imperfect interventions and their beneficiaries? How do conflict-affected communities build new ways forward when they remain steeped in an environment that reproduces the dynamics of half a century of armed conflict?  To answer these questions, I draw from 35 months of field work in Colombia. I first spent 15 months living in an informal settlement comprising conflict victims and former and combatants from illegal armed groups living together in the war-torn state of Caquetá. Following, I spent 20 months working in a United Nations program for Reintegration and Recruitment Prevention in Bogotá. I find that organizational and policy interventions designed to promote trust-building and reconciliation inadvertently reproduced the very divisions they sought to repair. In the following analysis, I first establish the emergence and reproduction

of mistrust that shapes everyday relations among individuals implicated in armed conflict and its aftermath. I then go on to analyze community, NGO, state, and international interventions intended to promote reconciliation among those individuals. Throughout, I present the ways in which attempts to resolve what is broadly understood to be a social problem of cycles of violence and revenge re-inscribe the very structural conditions that gave rise to such dynamics. In each instance, I argue that the administrative practices – accounting, reporting, and training - that sustain the interventions as organizations provide the means by which this re-inscription is made possible. Furthermore, I suggest that organizational and policy interventions designed to foster reconciliation reproduce divisions *by* structuring the interventions between citizens, organizations, and the state according to conflict identities. That is, by the very nature of *being* a reconciliation intervention, it convenes conflictive parties – and it does so according to their positionality in that conflict. These identity categories reinforce the conditions of possibility for current and future ways of relating to the other and to the state. And third, I argue that subjective experiences with social and political life in contemporary Colombia (re)configured social relations in hierarchical terms consistent with a long history of inequality and established ways of being in social and political life. This dissertation thus contributes to an anthropology of reconciliation and interventions with an eye towards how administration of political and organizational mandates serve to unite as much as they do to produce the grounds for the novel but familiar dynamics of past sociopolitical divisions along identity, class, and political grounds.

# Introduction: The Unknowable Heart of the Other and the Will to Intervene

In 2012, after more than 50 years of war, Colombia began to broker peace accords, promote reconciliation, and re-integrate ex-combatants back into the community as a whole. In this ethnographic account of this transition, I first establish the emergence and reproduction of mistrust that shapes everyday relations among individuals implicated in Colombia's armed conflict and its aftermath. I then go on to analyze community, NGO, state, and international interventions intended to promote reconciliation among those individuals. Throughout, I describe how attempts to resolve what is broadly understood to be a problem of social division along a variety of axes – and in particular, cycles of violence and revenge – "re-inscribe" the very structural conditions that gave rise to such dynamics. In each instance, I argue that the administrative practices that sustain the community, NGO, state, and international interventions as organizations provide the means by which this re-inscription is made possible. I understand interventions as those organized programs that attempt to improve certain classes of problems over others by providing certain technical solutions to those problems (Murray Li, 2007). In the case of reconciliation in Colombia, these technical solutions may take the form of emerging domains of policy, pedagogical workshops on the management of memory and social relationships, or international "best practices" for promoting certain kinds of citizens and interactions among them.

For example, in the NGO context, such administrative practices include tracking attendance in NGO activities and implementing a training model to support project sustainability. In the state-citizen encounter, the practices take on a more bureaucratic tone: producing images and other forms of documented success to present to donors and superiors, and claiming credit for improving citizens' capacities to reconcile. I go on to analyze local level policy-making

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settings and find that anxieties around producing evidence of institutional participation and civil society involvement give rise to practices that paradoxically undermine those very same goals.

And finally, I examine the national and international policy-making domain and find that the clash between the technocratic ideals of internationally provided "best practices" and established ways of participating in political life in Colombia create the grounds for reproducing long-standing social and political hierarchies. In each chapter, I draw from ethnographic and interview data in order to illustrate how these dynamics consistently emerge in a variety of community, organizational, and institutional settings.

By the end of 2015, I had already spent nine months in my primary field site of Caquetá, Colombia, living in the community of Las Delicias.[1] I conducted participant observation in both the community and various intervening NGOs, religious organizations, and international agencies operating throughout the department[2] as they worked to foster institutional and interpersonal practices loosely categorized as "reconciliation" at the trailing end of fifty years of war. Though the notion of reconciliation was rarely defined in context, I draw from prior scholarship on reconciliation in post-conflict settings that defines it as the (re)establishment of trust after a rupture in social relations related to an actual or perceived wrongdoing (Govier & Verwoerd, 2002).

In one instance, I worked to evaluate the effectiveness of a community-based intervention meant to promote forgiveness and reconciliation practices. The intervention drew funds, oversight, and administrative guidance from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It leveraged, in part, the

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[1] Unless otherwise indicated, I have used pseudonyms for all communities and individuals for security reasons.
[2] Colombia is a unitary republic made up of thirty-two departments and a Capital District.

flagship pedagogy of Colombia Reconciles[3], a Bogotá-based NGO with presence in 21 other

countries: forgiveness and reconciliation workshops that convened conflict victims, former

combatants, and other community members with the intention of offering practices and

therapeutic tools helpful for forgiving and reconciling with those who have committed an offense

against you. Finally, the initiative drew from the community access, religious leadership, and

cadre of psychologists working for the Social Pastoral of the Archdiocese of Florencia to

implement the pedagogy directly with the targeted communities, which had been selected due to

their particularly acute levels of victimization by armed groups in the Colombian conflict.

As part of my work with this initiative, I designed a mixed methods study to assess

understandings of forgiveness and reconciliation using a survey to be applied prior to,

immediately after, and one year following the ESPERE intervention. One set of questions,

however, had proven difficult for my respondents. I puzzled over why these particular questions

yielded silence and muted shakes of the head rather than the voluminous narratives the

methodologists had promised me my interlocutors would provide. In one of these questions, I

offered a short vignette of a former combatant asking to reconcile with a woman against whom

he had committed a wrong during the war. The story was a real one, plucked from the exploratory

interviews that I had conducted the previous summer, then shortened and anonymized for the

purposes of the survey.

> A 45 year-old-woman lives in a small village and runs the main store in town. She
>
> refuses to pay the "tax" (extortion) to the guerrillas and they kill her son, kick her out
>
> of the store, and give her 24 hours to leave town. Five years later, she sees the man

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[3] The name of this NGO has been changed.

who killed her son in a church group. He is now demobilized and doing community service to help the victims of the armed conflict and he tries to reconcile with her.[4]

The vignette ended with two questions: What did the woman do? And, what would you have done? Most of those whom I had interviewed refused to answer the first question, though they readily answered the second one. Responses to the second one typically ran along three lines: they would be willing to reconcile because the person is clearly trying to change his life; they would not be able to because the crime is unforgivable; or it was not in their hands because only God could decide such things. Regarding the unanswered first question: given the sensitive nature of the topics, I never pushed beyond asking the question in a variety of ways to see if wording might explain the consistent gap in my response data.

One day, however, I found myself face to face with Don Saúl, an elderly gentleman who busied his days with agricultural labor, and with whom I had developed a strong rapport over my time living in the community of Las Delicias. The vignette ended, and I asked: What did the woman do? He stared at me, saying nothing, face gathered under his straw field hat into a stoic collection of eyes, wrinkles, and sun spots that offered me no clues as to the reason for his silence. I decided to wait it out, in what felt very much like a Western showdown, on his wooden porch under the searing afternoon sun. After what seemed like an eternity, but was likely only ten seconds, I broke, and blurted out in a moment of frustration: Why won't you answer the question!? Immediately, he responded: "Because one never knows what is in the heart of the other." With that, he lifted his feet and shot back in his plastic mesh porch recliner, a common furnishing in the neighborhood. From his new-found position, swinging his feet back and forth at

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[3] I have translated the original question from Spanish for the purposes of this document.

me and staring at the roof, Don Saúl graciously and completely answered the remaining survey questions.

I began my fieldwork in a rapidly demilitarizing Colombia looking to interrogate how second chances are understood, configured, contested, won, and lost in a society ravaged by war: for those excombatants wishing to atone and start anew within the bounds of legality, for victims looking to come out from under the crushing weight of loss, and for government officials looking to shed the image of malfeasance. However, in all of my field sites, the palpable sense of mistrust that shaped all manner of interpersonal interactions – from personal security practices for safety when exiting one's home to major national policy decisions – seeped out from under the specter of betrayal inherent in protracted war. This sense of mistrust thus came to dominate my analytic field much in the same way as it emerged as an everyday ontology in my field settings: over time, through discourses and interpersonal interactions, and based on first hand experiences with the unfathomable. When combined, this sedimented a sense of what Don Saúl would call the "unknowability" of the heart of the other. This work is thus an investigation into what it means to intervene in such a context with the explicit intention to promote reconciliation. I find that mistrust informs the limits and possibilities for such interventions and that the interventions themselves, at times, inadvertently reproduce the grounds for ongoing mistrust and divisions across historically consistent divides (e.g., state-society, victim-former combatant, and local-national).

**National reconciliation and the intervention encounter**
Experiences with war and violent oppression transform citizens, social relations, and societies (cf., Das, 1990; Kleinman, 2007; Theidon, 2013). The direct exposure to atrocity and the discourses that circulate in the aftermath can result in a complete collapse of trust in oneself

and the other – both known and unknown (Kleinman, 2007; Perera, 2001). While I do not posit such a complete collapse in my work, I do examine the role that emergent mistrust plays in shaping both everyday relations among those implicated in the war and the intervening organizations and institutions working to build certain kinds of post-conflict subjects and relations among them. In doing so, I draw out the ways in which trust among individuals, as well as the trust between society and organizations or institutions is made and unmade. I also argue that a reflection on trust and mistrust is, at its heart, a meditation on knowledge and knowability. Trust would not be necessary in the presence of absolute knowledge: if one is certain about the future actions of another, then one need not trust that person (Luhmann, 1988). And mistrust, more than the mere absence of trust, represents its own legitimate domain of inquiry into the resignation to the ultimate unknowability of the other (Carey, 2017).

The notion of knowability begs the question: what kinds of knowledge matter in such a context? And what does the presence and circulation of that knowledge do in terms of fashioning the social relations among the implicated actors? Interventions have, for the last 25 years or so, served as the ideal "petri dish" for analysis of technologies of knowledge. Since the publication of Ferguson's *Anti-Politics Machine* (1994), a rich body of critical work has emerged on development interventions that names them, on one hand, as cynical hegemons creating the very categories of underclass citizens they purport to serve (Escobar, 2011). On the other hand, others have taken seriously the intervening agents' genuine *will to improve,* and nonetheless found that governments and agencies render technical qualities of social life in terms of the kinds of services and knowledge they bring to bear (Murray Li, 2007). Thus, the question of knowledge, and the uses to which it is put, must figures centrally in any examination of desires to intervene. In this work, I examine various kinds of knowledge, and as well as their lack: knowledge of the motives

of the other, knowledge of organizational and administrative practices, and knowledge of claims to expertise. I find that claims to knowledge and expertise in contexts marked by uncertainty and mistrust result in the reproduction of historic hierarchies of power along political, social, and economic lines.

My work occurred in the "pre-post-conflict" (Theidon, 2007) context of Colombia between 2014-2018. Though the development ideologies that formed the basis of the above cited works certainly comprised an element of the interventions' designs, foundation directors and policy leaders framed the interventions in terms of reconciliation, and focused most overtly on promoting certain kinds of social practices that supported nonviolent coexistence. In my work, such interventions took the form of pedagogical workshops on particular subjective or relational practices (e.g., forgiveness and reconciliation – Chapter 2), committee meetings for developing and implementing legislation (e.g., mandates for a human rights committee – Chapter 4), or "technical knowledge" training (e.g., how to effectively coordinate larger policy goals at the national level – Chapter 5). I examine each of these sites in turn. I followed my interlocutors as they worked to, among other things, manage the uncertainty that marks their daily lives. As alluded to previously, certainty reduces the inherent risk associated with trusting. But my neighbors in Las Delicias— and the organizations and institutions who worked upon, through, and among them— lived in quite uncertain times, and the cultivation of trust becomes much more challenging in these circumstances. I argue that interventions that purport to teach individuals how to reconcile ignore existing practices of reconciliation that pre-exist the intervention. In doing so, they interventions implicitly suggest that it is the ways in which people relate to one another in their everyday lives which constituted the very grounds for the Colombian conflict,

rather than the structural inequalities in Colombian society that originally gave rise to and perpetuated the ongoing war.

I suggest that these dynamics occur in part because the nature of the reconciliation encounter among citizens and between society and various kinds of institutions primes individuals' identities in terms of their experiences with the armed conflict. One cannot think of reconciliation without simultaneously calling into being the rupture around which parties must be reconciled. Priming refers to activating particular domains of memory and representations prior to engaging in an action. Individuals perceive, make decisions, and draw from values according to the aspect of identity that is most salient in those moments. Numerous studies in social psychology on negative priming and positive priming have demonstrated conclusively in a variety of domains that priming aspects of an individual's identity shapes the way they think and behave in a given setting.

For example, in a report detailing the work of Colombia Reconciles[5], the inaugural event occurred "with the participation of the community, the victims, people in the process of reintegration, and allied institutions." Despite the fact that all of these individuals, save the allied institutions, lived in Las Delicias, they did not simply all fold within the category of "the community." The naming of these categories suggested that a former combatant was more a combatant that just community, at least in the context of the intervention. Organizational documents, Colombia Reconciles employee discourses, and eventually forms of recognition and address among the participants primed the facets of their identities that related to their experiences with the armed conflict. For example, in the agenda for that morning, between 8:45

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[5] Citation withheld to maintain NGO anonymity.

and 9:00, a "victim person" and a "person in the process of reintegration" from the right-wing paramilitary group, the AUC would lead a "Celebration of Memory and Restoration" together.

Additionally, a 2015 Colombian Agency for Reintegration (of ex-combatants) (ACR, 2015) agency press release covering a march for the end of violence in Caquetá cited an NGO's National Coordinator for the Communities Unit: "More the 7,000 process have been conducted with demobilized persons, victims, and members of the community, who have worked very effectively on local peace initiatives. These three population groups have joined together to work and promote the practices of principles such as respect, inclusion, participation, and defense of life, evidencing the possibility of reconciliation" (ACR, 2015). And at the local state level, the Caquetá governor's office reported in its annual accounting of activities and costs that "The Institute of Culture has taken an important step to preserve the written, oral, and audiovisual memory…Six art exhibitions have been held…[one] with victims of violence, seeking to generate reconciliation and visibility for this important victim population" (Gobernación de Caquetá, 2017, p. 155). Thus, organizations and institutions addressing a range of policy domains, from those related directly to the armed conflict to simply culture in general, conceptualize of their subjects in terms of the conflict-related aspects of their identities.

Unsurprisingly, so do those implicated in these policies, especially when conversations move to the topic of reconciliation. Recent work on reconciliation in Colombia confirms that victims of displacement understand reconciliation as comprising an encounter between victim and victimizer and, among other things, a degree of harmony between these two categories of individuals. And, despite the focus on the interpersonal encounter between these two groups, victims also claimed that state and broader citizen involvement were necessary to bring reconciliation about (Castrillón-Guerrero et al., 2018). This same study investigated differences

in victims´ understandings of reconciliation in general, versus in terms of acts that occurred specifically within the context of the armed conflict. While in both conflict and non-conflict scenarios, victims focused on the encounter between the victim and the aggressor, in the conflict related reconciliation work, victims emphasized the necessity of an involved state.

Thus, in Colombia, to name the social process of reconciliation is to call on individuals according to these ¨three population groups¨: demobilized persons, victims, and members of the community. Particularly within the post-conflict context, the state also emerges as a key actor category, and I will address this more in the chapters that follow. All of the above is to argue that mandates for reconciliation prime individuals in all domains of Colombian civilian, political, and academic life, to think in terms of their identities vis-à-vis their experiences with the armed conflict.

**A brief overview of the Colombian conflict**
The internal conflict in Colombia has left more than 220,000 dead in its wake, along with more than 7 million persons displaced by violence, according the country the dubious distinction of the highest number of displaced persons in the world (IDMC, 2018). Though a complete accounting of the Colombia conflict and peace processes is beyond the scope of this work, a few points are necessary to situate historically the present analysis and the uncertain times in which my interlocutors went about their daily community and institutional lives. Colombia's conflict was the longest such conflict in the Western hemisphere, and there exists a general consensus that it is in large part tied to issues related to unequal land distribution and the failure to institute meaningful land reform since the colonial period (Roldán, 2002). These conditions in part led to significant tensions between the Conservative and Liberal parties which escalated over the long term. While the start date varies depending on what school of thought one subscribes to, many

date it back *to El Bogotazo*, or the violent riots that erupted after the leading Liberal presidential candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán was assassinated on April 9, 1948. These riots gave way to a 10-year period known as *La Violencia* ("The Violence"), which resulted in 200,000 deaths in a country with a population of roughly 13 million at the time (today, Colombia has roughly 45 million citizens).

This period saw significant government repression of marginal political groups and widespread political assassinations in large swathes of the country. In response to this, the 1958 *El Frente National* ("The National Front") accord alternated presidencies between the Liberal and Conservative parties; this program would last until 1974. However, violence continued due to widespread popular dissatisfaction with the accord, criticized for being a mere "*pacto entre caballeros*," or an arrangement between a very small number of the ruling elite that allowed them to retain power and oppress any oppositional members of the masses (Guzmán, 2012; Hartlyn, 1988). In particular, dissident liberal factions continued to mount attacks against both of the parties that were in power.

Important international involvement also emerged during this period. The United States became increasingly interested in Colombian affairs during the Cold War and began to offer military support to the conservative governments, which in turn began to articulate a shared vision with Washington of a Colombia rid of the Communist movements that were taking place in Latin America at the time. Also on the international stage, Fidel Castro's 26th of July Movement and the success of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 energized national leftist movements in Colombia, and led to even further investment on the part of the United States. Between 1950 and 1957, Colombia received 11% ($18.3 million) of the total military aid accorded to Latin American countries in that period ($156 million) (Stokes, 2005). This involvement only

increased, with the total spending in Colombian aid – the vast majority of it military – between 1996 and 2005 totaling $3.8 billion. International involvement in Colombia's conflictive life continues today, not least of which emerges as influence wielded by international donors funding the peacebuilding process. I will explore this last point in greater detail over the course of this dissertation.

After a military operation in June of 1964, which targeted dissidents who had concentrated in a rural region of the country known as Marquetalia, surviving rebels dispersed throughout the country with plans to meet in the near future. These rebels would become the founding members of the Marxist-Leninist guerrilla group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army, or FARC by its Spanish acronym. The war in Vietnam, assassination of President Kennedy, and other political fiascos of the era would subsequently turn the attention of the United States away from Colombia for much of the 1970s and 80s.

Successive Colombia presidents continued to wage war against the leftist guerrillas, and along the way, other factions emerged, such as the M-19 (April 19th Movement) and the ELN (National Liberation Army). After some years of violence by these groups, right wing paramilitary groups formed - originally as self-defense groups of the politicians and the wealthy land owners seeking to protect themselves against the kidnapping and aggressions of the guerrillas. Time, social forces, and political economies shaped all sides of the fray into new forms and throughout the 80s and 90s the groups largely lost their original ideological purposes (though some members of these groups would likely disagree) and largely shifted towards sustaining territorial claims and narcotrafficking interests.

During this period, individuals living in regions such as the zone in which I conducted my field work suffered the consequences of these warring factions: daily civilian deaths due to

skirmishes between the paramilitaries, the military, and the guerrillas; occupation of public

spaces such as grade schools in order to develop training sites for torture; the sense of complete

helplessness when illegal armed actors played soccer matches with military and police personnel

in full view of entire towns held hostage; and the disappearance[6] or outright slaughter of loved

ones for suspected armed activity independent of any form of due process. The level of

devastation wrought throughout the country over these decades cannot be overstated, and many

find themselves still reeling from the losses that they have suffered.

The government of then President Alvaro Uribe negotiated a full demobilization of the

paramilitaries between 2003 and 2005, and currently 55,000 individuals are in the process of

reintegrating back into civilian life from both the paramilitaries and the guerrillas (who have been

allowed to enter the process on an individualized basis should they so desire, or if they are

captured by the military). Despite this ten-year start to the transitional process in Colombia,

major issues of political representation, corruption, unequal land distribution, and massive wealth

distribution disparities – often-cited root causes of the conflict – remain problematic, alongside

new and historical forms of organized violence. As such, any promise of durable peace carries

with it a robust dose of skepticism for even the most enthusiastic of transitional practitioners and

scholars.

The most recent Colombian peace process (2012-2016) and resultant Havana Peace

Accord (November 24, 2016) between the Government of President Juan Manuel Santos

Calderon and the FARC mark a major milestone in a protracted process of ending more than half

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[6] The term "disappeared" appears several times in this work and is an instantiation of the longer referent "enforced disappearance of persons." This practice, common in many wartime contexts, refers to state or other armed actor abduction of an individual with no acknowledgment of their fate or whereabouts and with the intent to place them outside of the protection of the law. The 1992 Declaration for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances classifies "disappearing" as a war crime.

a century of internal armed conflict. The Accord's preamble states the motivation behind the superhuman efforts of the negotiating team: peace and national reconciliation. Indeed, despite the fact that the authors never fully define either of those terms, the word "reconciliation" appears, on average, every six pages in the 310-page document (Santos Calderón & Jiménez, 2016). The reconciliation discourse builds on a long history of transitional and human rights work in Colombia (cf., W. Tate, 2007) , and has served as the vague teleological end for peace processes in the country for decades (Pizarro, 2017). As a result, a seemingly endless array of community-level NGO and policy interventions have emerged, among other interconnected legal, social, and religious initiatives, all calling for a reconciled Colombia. Key international actors have also taken up the discourse: for example, in the September 2017 Papal visit to the country, Pope Francis framed his travel as the church's response to the call to "the task of promoting reconciliation" (Kraul, 2017).

Observing reconciliation through an anthropological lens, this work finds that organizational and policy interventions designed to promote trust-building and reconciliation inadvertently reproduce the very divisions they seek to repair. There are four approaches to thinking about various kinds of socioeconomic and political divisions in Colombia: those experienced by multiple countries in the region; those experienced by multiple countries in the region and shaped by the conflict's dynamics; those related exclusively to the Colombian armed conflict; and those germane to Colombia, but that are unrelated to the armed conflict. As in all countries, these social fault lines occur as a function of geography, politics, economics, and class.

In terms of resource distribution and concentration, for example, Colombia represents the most unequal countries in the world, with the highest concentration of land and capital resources in the hands of the smallest proportion of its population (M. Serrano, 2018). A series of shocks,

not least of which included the neoliberal reforms of the early 1990s, contributing to transforming the largely peasant economy into what it is today. These shocks included, but were not limited to industrialization, changes in economic and labor relations, increase in formal education, urban growth, and the introduction of women into the labor market. In the period beginning with industrialization and the introduction of capitalism through 2010, three tendencies shaped the class relations more so than any others: 1) the permanent reduction of organized, rural agricultural workers; 2) the growth and then decline of salaried workers that called for and then spurned industrial workers and increasingly required technical and professional employees; and 3) the dramatic increase in independent, non-agricultural workers, who represented a particularly precarious labor constituency (Fresneda Bautista, 2017). The decrease in organization among the popular and middle classes as well as the increase in more precarious labor conditions has managed to sustain reasonable levels of employment while ensuring that the popular and middle classes do not have meaningful participation in social and political life. And while these conditions are not unique to Colombia, particular features of the Colombian context with respect to the armed conflict exacerbated the effects. First, decades of various forms of violence resulted in a large scale displacement of extensive swathes of rural populations. And second, conflict violence prompted substantial immigration to other countries (Fresneda Bautista, 2017).

Thus, while the political, economic, and social divides predate the armed conflict – indeed, they directly contributed to its emergence and persistence – they were nonetheless permanently changed by their violent enactment over the last 60 years of the country's history. I argue that the reason that these social divides, colored by recent histories of violence, remain and are reproduced in the intervention encounter, is that reconciliation as it is conceptualized in this context tends to miss these deeper structural roots that render these divides particularly resistant

to change. I argue that the reproduction of division occurs along three lines. First, through the administrative practices that sustain them as organizations. In order to ensure some measure of sustainability, NGOs, state agencies, and international donors must account for resource distribution and produce evidence of effectiveness according to some set of externally imposed criteria. Those who apply these mechanisms of accounting and display manage access to a variety of forms of resources; this access both reaffirms traditional relational hierarchies and creates opportunities for new ones. As a result, acts of administration emerge as key sites of contests over power and identity.

Second, and relatedly, organizational and policy interventions designed to foster reconciliation reproduce divisions *by* structuring the interventions between citizens, organizations, and the state according to conflict identities. That is, by the very nature of *being* a reconciliation intervention, it convenes conflictive parties – and it does so according to their positionality in that conflict. Furthermore, intervening agents often call on "beneficiaries" to provide stylized performances of ideal identity types, such as the remorseful excombatant, or the forgiving victim. Such performances are useful for justifying donor funds and potentially securing future ones. However, they also reinforce that aspect of the individual's identity, continually reminding them of their victimhood or excombatant status.

Third, I argue that the technocratic aspirations of international intervening agencies clash with existing ways of participating in Colombian political life. By analyzing this clash, I demonstrate that the application of intervention logics reinforces, rather than levels out the relational and political hierarchies that constitute the hallmarks of doing politics in this context. Furthermore, I show how desires for recognition and political patronage result in a sense of operating under what one interlocutor named as "friendly fire" among institutional counterparts

who were supposed to be collaborating on peacebuilding policies. I also examine how the common tropes of *envidia* (envy) in the policy-making realm acts as an oppressive force by discouraging would-be usurpers from attempting to gain power. I position this against the backdrop of a context marked by profound mistrust in order to answer larger questions related to building community life at the tail end of war.

**In the Cauqeteñan piedmont and beyond**

I conducted my field work for this dissertation between 2014 and 2018, the years before and immediately following the signing of the November 26, 2016 Havana Peace Accord between the largest remaining guerrilla group in the Western hemisphere (the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – FARC) and the government of then President Juan Manuel Santos. While I began my work investigating questions of victims and former combatants living together under conditions of ongoing insecurity, I can only claim serendipity with regards to such a formal benchmark located squarely in the middle of my time there. At the time, the prospect of a negotiated settlement to conflict in Colombia was not novel, as negotiations with illegal armed groups across the political spectrum had occurred in every presidential administration since the failed first attempt by then President Julio Cesar Turbay to negotiate peace with the guerrilla 19th of April Movement (M-19) in 1981 (Pizaro, 2017). With the FARC alone, three distinct processes had previously begun and ended in failure, each time resulting in a worsening of the armed conflict. Most relevant to my research, the right-wing paramilitary group, the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC, by its Spanish acronym) had submitted itself to justice between 2003-2006 and resulted in roughly 35,000 former members scattering throughout the country trying to make their way – to varying degrees – within the bounds of legality. Initially, I conducted exploratory research in regions where the ex-paramilitary member presence was

particularly dense and had decided on Cúcuta, Norte de Santander, on the Venezuela-Colombia border, as my field site.

However, by the time I was ready to begin more extensive work, it was June 2014; the peace process in Havana was two years in and looking increasingly likely to arrive at some substantial end. After extensive interviews with policy makers, former FARC members who had already demobilized individually prior to the current peace process, and other academic and practitioner experts working in the field of excombatant reintegration, I shifted my gaze towards the impending large-scale guerrilla demobilization on the horizon. I did so with the idea that I would learn, along with them and the communities who received them, what the prospects were for beginning new ways of being together – "building peace" – against the backdrop of waning civil conflict. I thus relocated my inquiry to the department of Caquetá, in the Southwest of Colombia, where the Western Andean mountain range ends and the Amazon jungle begins (**Figure 1**).

**Figure 1: Map of Colombia, Department of Caquetá**



Source: Gifex

The logic of the move was twofold: first, the department had a long history of strong

FARC presence and a fraught relationship with peace processes with the guerrilla. The FARC

presence was notably concentrated in and around Caquetá (see **Figure 2** for a map of reported

FARC presence in the country in 2011, as the confidential exploratory phases of the peace talks

began). Most recently, the guerrilla group had strengthened its position in the department through

and after the disastrous episode with the "Zone of Distention" (1999-2002). This demilitarized

zone comprised 42,000 km$^2$ of land between Caquetá and its neighboring department, Meta,

where the FARC, during its peace talks with then President Andrés Pastrana, managed to

negotiate the wholesale exit of all state presence from the territory. As the peace talks faltered,

the group used the opportunity to regroup, train, an rearm. One embarrassing moment from the

Pastrana administration occurred when maximum leader of the FARC at the time, Manuel

Marulanda Vélez simply did not show up to the opening day of peace talks with President

Pastrana in January 7, 1999, leaving the President sitting in the press conference next to an empty

chair. The reasons for that absence are unknown, though several sources offered the explanation

that Marulanda feared an assassination attempt. Pastrana and his administration did not buy the

excuse, saying that the zone was so tightly controlled by the FARC that it would have been

impossible for paramilitary forces to infiltrate the site; for them, it was a betrayal of an agreed

upon moment of mutual, public commitment to the peace process.  That very public betrayal has

been sedimented in name of one of Colombia's most prominent political analysis news sources:

The Empty Chair. With this episode in recent memory, discourses related to the possibility of a

peace accord were both highly salient and understandably polarizing in the region, offering rich

analytic opportunities for an investigation into society building in such a context.

**Figure 2: Map of Colombia with Reported FARC Presence in 2011**
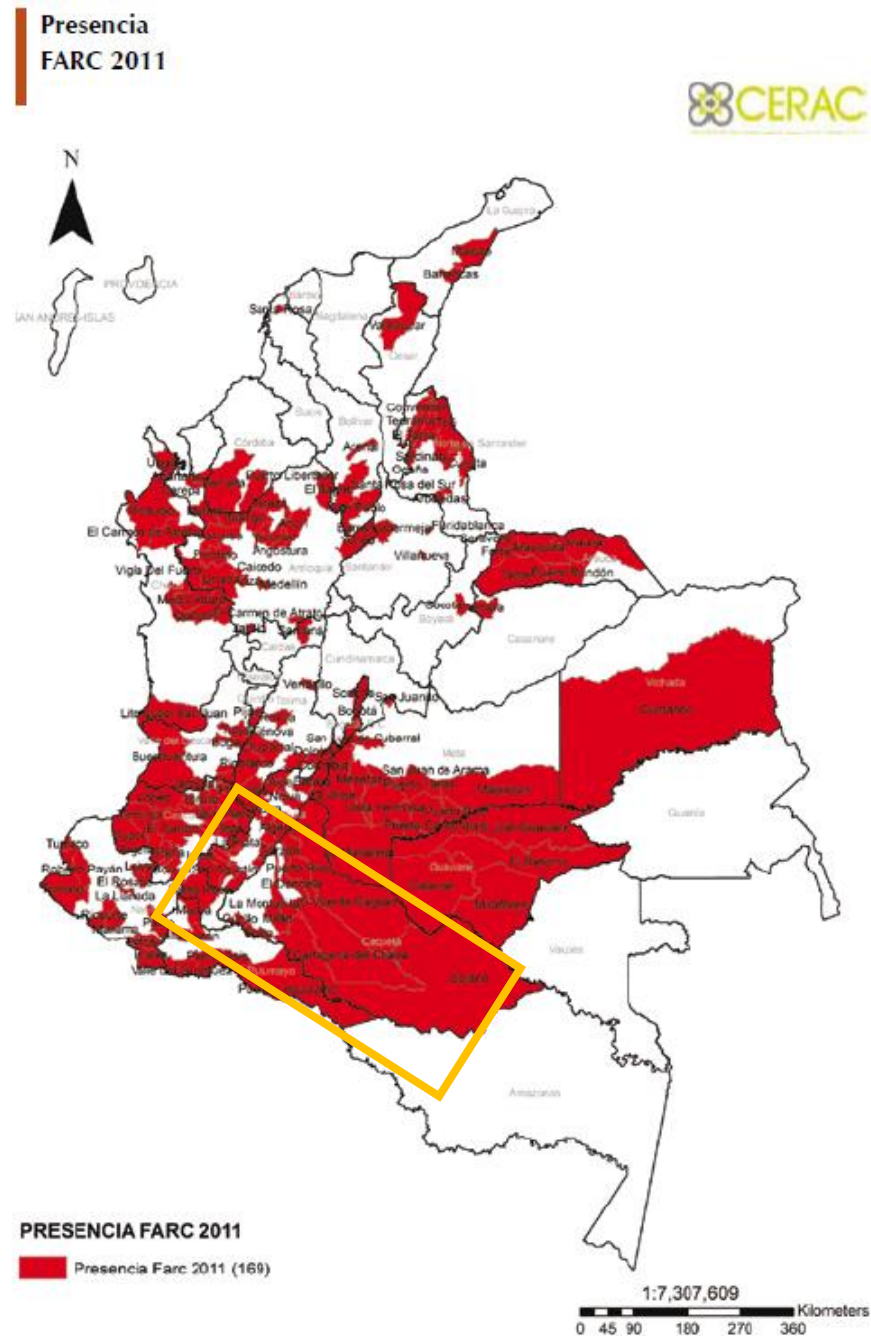


Source: Colombian Conflict Analysis Resource Center (CERAC)

The second element of the logic behind site selection was the presence of intervening

organizations and agencies in the territory working on topics of excombatant reintegration into

civil society, as well as reconciliation and society-building between these populations and

between civilians and the state. If I were to begin to unloose the Gordian knot that was the relations among the actors and agencies that make and unmake war, I would want to place myself at the cross roads of their convergence. I thus situated myself both in the formal intervention settings and in the daily lives of both the interveners and the intervened upon.

I worked together with the Social Pastoral of the Catholic Church, which in my time with them executed a UN-funded project to coordinate collective victims' claims to land restitution throughout five communities in Caquetá, including the one in which I lived. I also participated in the daily life of an NGO, the Foundation for Reconciliation, which opened a Center for Reconciliation next door to the house in which I was living in the community Las Delicias. I attended department-level policy-making meetings that convened local and national public officials together with international agency representatives and civil society leaders. I also accompanied a local women's activist consortium that tried to convene all social leaders in the domain of gender and LGBTI interests and met bi-weekly to set policy priorities for the department. My time with them coincided with the 2015 local elections and, as such, I observed in greatest detail their work to ensure that gender and LGBTI priorities made it into the candidates' proposed four-year departmental plans. Without line items in these plans, it was well known, no policy agenda would gain traction during the elected administration. Securing that coveted bureaucratic space marker involved constant advocacy from the beginning of the campaign season through the first year of the candidate's time in office. Attempting to hold public officials to account on that backing occupied the remainder of the four-year terms. In Caquetá, I supported the UN Agency for Migration in composing a report of all the international actors and the work that they were doing in the department. I then moved to the national offices of the same agency and worked for 20 months in its Program for Reintegration and Prevention of Recruitment as a research specialist. The program designed and administered interventions

intended for communities like Las Delicias from afar in the offices of the nation's capital of

Bogotá according to UN and other international donor mandates.

**Trust, performance, and the intervention encounter: The making of an ambivalent peace**

In my field settings, trust figured centrally in ideas about reconciliation in the aftermath of

conflict violence; as previously stated. reconciliation requires repairing a rift in relations and

rebuilding trust in the wake of an actual or perceived wrongdoing (Govier & Verwoerd, 2002).

The idea that interventions may serve to promote trust is a logical one for a variety of reasons.

The first is that one can decide to trust – i.e., while one cannot will oneself to *believe* that another

is trustworthy, on can *decide* to trust that person nonetheless. If he acts in the hoped for way as a

result of that trust, then one can eventually come to believe that he is trustworthy (Holton, 1994).

This fact that trust can be submitted to conscious decision-making positions it as a possible point

of intervention.

Trust is also social. It emerges in the relationship between two individuals and gives rise

to certain kinds of collectively agreed upon and policed practices. In two instances in this

dissertation, I refer explicitly to trust in the state. However, the remainder of the work focuses on

interpersonal trust. Interpersonal trust constitutes a particular kind of relation in which the

trusting individual adopts what some have termed the *participant stance* (Holton, 1994) (or,

alternately, the participant attitude) (Strawson, 2008). The participant stance is the willingness to

feel betrayed if the trusted person does not behave in the hoped-for way. Trust can be

distinguished from mere reliance on others specifically because of this attitudinal component. For

example, I might rely on my neighbor to always have a cup of cornmeal when I go over to

borrow one. But I cannot rightly feel betrayed in the event that she does not (Gambetta, 1988;

Shklar, 1984). Trust is also unique because it is social, and is further distinguished from anything

we might feel towards non-human objects or beings. I might depend on my motorcycle to start each day so that I can go out and work as a *mototaxista* and make my living. But again, I cannot feel betrayed when the starter on the motorcycle no longer works. Because of the additional investment embedded in trusting – alternatively described as emotional, attitudinal, or affective, depending on the author and the discipline (Carey, 2017; Faulkner, 2017; Faulkner & Simpson, 2017; Holton, 1994) – trusting also raises the stakes for relationship and society-building.

I foreground these stakes when I analyze the discourses and practices in contexts rife with suspicion and mistrust that have come to constitute the subjective and relational realities of everyday life in Colombia – or, "everyday insecurities" (Ochs, 2011). I trace the practices and discourses related to mistrust among individuals affected by the armed conflict, as they have emerged through experiences with that very conflict. Unlike previous analyses of "low trust" societies, in which authors argue that familiarity does not serve to reduce mistrust (Benedict, 1959; Carey, 2017), familiarity still plays a powerful role in trust-building in Las Delicias. I thus analyze the forging, development, and breaking of "familiar ties" to better understand the emergent ways in which trust manifests and is practiced. I analyze moments of betrayal and disillusionment, and argue that they serve as important sites for understanding (in)security. Across all of the settings featured in the following pages, trust and mistrust worked upon the behaviors and anticipations of those involved in social and political life. Sometimes this work was explicit, as when a workshop facilitator told the community members present that they had "five more minutes to generate trust" during a forgiveness workshop. Sometimes, this work was hidden from view, as when government officials concealed information from one another because they feared their peers would claim credit for work they had done. Throughout this analysis, I develop the argument that mistrust, as well as the discourses and practices of personal security

that accompany it, are performative: they are as much a *result of* as they are *constitutive of* the dangerous people and places they ostensibly protect against.

To support my assertion that mistrust is performative, I also examine the performances that evidence its practice. I analyze instances in which the performance of personal security and protection exceeded their stated intentions, in order to better understand the role of audience in these performances. A neighborhood resident assiduously fastens a deadbolt each time she exits the gate of her home: the deadbolt is easily opened from the outside and the gate has two other working locks. For whom is she performing this act of precaution, and why? A police patrol responds to an instance of domestic violence, takes the alleged perpetrator away, and then releases him at the entrance of the community so that he may walk back up the hill and right back into his home. Why even take him away? State officials commandeer an event they had no role in planning, and made it appear as if it had been theirs all along. Who was meant to believe the agency's role was greater than it was? A local government official compulsively circulates an attendance list during a policy development meeting, eventually producing a complete list of actors that was not at all representative of who was in the room and what they were able to accomplish that day. Why did this list have so much power over him, and whom was it meant to convince? At each juncture, I examine the implications of performances on larger questions of trust- and relationship-building along a variety of axes. I find that apparent contradictions in what is *said* is being done and what is *being* done in social and political life can at least be partially explained by juxtaposing these contradictions with the multiple intended audiences for which they are intended.

In my analysis of performances and audiences, a constellation of community, organizational, religious, governmental, and international actors emerges. Each has his own stake in promoting reconciliation. I analyze the various ways in which practices of *bureaucraft* emerge,

which is a concept developed by Erica James through her study of humanitarian interventions in Haiti. Bureaucraft comprises both the overt and occult means by which organizational actors curate, cull, and package individual experiences with trauma and suffering in order to advance both benevolent (providing aid) and malevolent (self-interest, or even revenge) ends (James, 2010). Bureacraft can be distinguished from bureaucracy in that the latter refers to forms of governance of resources, typically by state officials and within the state apparatus, though it has certainly been applied as an analytic in other contexts. Bureaucraft, on the other hand, refers to multiple domains and levels of social and organizational life and indexes specifically the way in which human experience becomes the object of organizational refashioning towards some productive end.  Bureaucracy can comprise an element of bureaucraft, but bureaucraft exceeds bureaucracy. I extend James' development of the construct by bringing it to bear as an analytic framework in this setting. In doing so, I pull back the curtain on the opacity of the work being done in its practice. I focus on the administrative practices that support interventions as organizations and institutions (reporting, accounting, and communication functions). These practices represent the means by which the production of evidence of particular kinds of encounters can directly work against the spirit of those encounters. This finding holds in community, NGO, governmental, and international agency settings.

Chapter One traces the historical emergence of what Juliana Ochs calls the "everyday insecurities" of living in war-affected contexts: the habits and discourses that address danger and threat, along with locally understood ways of avoiding those threats. Ochs finds that these discourses and practices extend violence rather than opposing it. I argue that in the context of Las Delicias, the practices and performances related to everyday insecurities make and remake people and places as dangerous, even as they protect against them.

The remaining chapters present instances of the ways in which interventions, which intend to promote what is loosely categorized as "reconciliation," in fact re-inscribe the very kinds of dynamics they are attempting to resolve. Each instance shows how the administrative practices that support intervening agencies and institutions as organizations may be deployed to achieve this unintended effect.

Chapter Two analyzes a forgiveness and reconciliation intervention in the conflict affected community of Las Delicias. In it, a center worker, who is also a member of the community and a victim of the armed conflict, leverages her access to NGO resources and the requirements of her job in order to alienate former combatants from the community center.

In Chapter Three, I present an event in which state institutions set up a services fair in Las Delicias and call on former combatants and conflict victims to perform certain ideas of reconciliation and related practices. However, this is done in a way that does not approximate how these practices occur in everyday life. I suggest that state preoccupations with presenting particular kinds of actions to donors make invisible certain productive ways of building peaceful social life in which residents of Las Delicias already engage.

Chapter Four moves out of Las Delicias into a local policy making setting. Here, international and national calls for collaboration and technical knowledge transfer are the means by which historically consistent power and status hierarchies are reproduced between different levels of government and between the state and its citizens.

Finally, in Chapter Five, I analyze the differences between the technocratic ideals of internationally imported "best practices" for state building in the wake of armed conflict and established ways of participating in political life in Colombia. I demonstrate how this divide

fosters, rather than reduces, divisive emotions and social practices in the political realm through credit-seeking, information-hoarding, and institutionally interested behaviors among national and international actors.

The principle argument of my dissertation is thus that the administrative practices that support organizations and institutions intervening to promote reconciliation can be deployed instead to reproduce social, political, and economic divisions – or even create new ones. This may on the surface read as a cynical rendering of daily life in transition. I argue that it is not. Instead, I suggest that this analysis is an honest acknowledgment of the limits of the will to intervene on the daily lives of those affected and implicated by the armed conflict. By identifying those limits, we can name even more clearly those moments of hope and promise upon which new forms of social life may be built. Even further, this work represents a call for recognition of the sociohistorically relevant ways that these individuals have learned to build social life in the aftermath of war.

**Chapter 1: Dangerous people, Dangerous places: Discourses and Practices of Mistrust and Self-Protection**

Experiences with war and violent oppression transform citizens, social relations, and societies (cf., Das, 1990; Kleinman, 2007; Theidon, 2013) and have been shown to result in a collapse of trust (Perera, 2001). With a minor adjustment to this assertion, this chapter presents the way in which experiences with armed conflict and its aftermath *rework* the way in which its victims and perpetrators build trust at the tail end of war. Kleinman (2007) has shown that when faced with danger, uncertainty, and the limits of control, human beings can change their subjective understanding of themselves and the world. Acute external dangers can threaten our core values and lead to unthinkable behaviors both in others and in ourselves. Such shifts have tremendous implications for trust in the aftermath of mass atrocity. Such dynamics are not unique to Colombia: stories have emerged in a variety of contexts of brothers divided by belief, couples separated by imposed social divisions, and friends and neighbors betraying one another to survive – or even to benefit from the chaos of social change and conflict. For example, during the Cultural Revolution in China (1966-1976) not only were friends forced to denounce one another in order to survive, but some took advantage of these practices of denouncing the other in order to achieve personal gain. According to many accounts of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, Hutu families felt obligated to kill their Tutsi neighbors, despite the years they had spent living in collective peace (Fujii, 2011). And, a classic trope of the American Civil War paints the picture of a family divided: brother fighting brother on opposite sides of The Cause (McPherson, 1997). Rather than re-examine the now well-trodden terrain of how it is that individuals, groups, and circumstances can move others to act in morally repugnant ways, I dig deeper into the way in which understandings of oneself and one's relationship to others in the world shift after experiences with the atrocities of war and in contexts of ongoing insecurity.

As discourses and practices related to trust and mistrust change, a fundamental shift in cultural norms and values assigned to these constructs follows suit. For those living in Las Delicias, experiences with conflict and betrayal made, unmade, and transformed the significance countless times of different groups of social actors (e.g., state representatives, armed groups, civilian victims). Nonetheless, each time established ways of being together unraveled and reformed, emergent practices carried with them traces of their past: new cloth woven with old fibers. In this chapter, I examine how individuals affected by armed conflict living together in conditions of ongoing insecurity weave together the threads of their experience and form new ways of trusting as they create the fabric of everyday social life.

I argue that mistrust is performative and that this occurs in two steps: first, it emerges from discourses related to past experiences with betrayal. Then, through enacting the practices associated with mistrust, it and constitutes the contemporary physical and social space as untrustworthy. Given their past experiences with war, residents of Las Delicias understand that betrayal of trust can result in death, dispossession, and other forms of war-related trauma. I examine the domain of quotidian self-protection practices as a subset of those related to broader ideas about mistrust in order to develop this chapter´s main argument on the performativity of mistrust.

I go on to argue that these practices exert a centrifugal force on social relations in that they widen physical and interpersonal distance between individuals. By exerting this centrifugal force, these practices in turn reproduce the grounds for ongoing mistrust – i.e., they are performative. At the same time, I do not posit a complete collapse of trust. Instead, I take seriously the way in which trust and mistrust are contingent upon one another: each setting the bounds of possibility for the other (Gambetta, 1988). For this reason, I weave throughout the

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chapter an illustrative account of the quotidian way in which trust emerges through an exchange between two conflict victims, fellow members in a community association for victims, and friends as one decides whether or not to visit a new NGO that has just opened in the community.

**Yana´s Window: Deciding to Trust**

I awoke to the smell of burning feathers. One of my housemates, Elena, found four o'clock in the morning the ideal hour for killing and preparing chickens, and burning off the residual post-plucking feathers represented one of the final steps in the process. It must be around six by now, I thought, grateful that I had done my laundry the previous afternoon, as the stone upon which we washed our clothes was also the site where the occasional collection of ducks and chickens that arrived at our house from the countryside met their unfortunate ends.  This day marked the inaugural session of the Schools for Forgiveness and Reconciliation (ESPERE) in the Center for Reconciliation where I conducted my fieldwork, and the raps on our window began early as community members stopped by to find out more information. Outside, Las Delicias was already alight with small cylinder motorcycle taxis shuttling people out for the morning to other sectors, returning within minutes to look for their next 65¢ fare, sputtering up and down the main road, and occasionally stopping so the driver could help out a stranded colleague off to the side attempting to breathe new life into an ageing machine. Yana exited her room, already showered and ready for the day, and slid open the window after a voice familiar to her screamed "*Buenas!*" and tapped the window again with her keys.

"Buenos días." Yana responded, as she loosened the hatch and opened the window to the narrow pathway that separated our house from the Center for Reconciliation, which would host dozens of ESPERE over the next two years. Saira stood on the other side of the bars that protected Yana from the outside world. She wore a mono-colored outfit typical for women of her advanced age in the community: a modest, well-worn, short-sleeved blouse that hugged the many

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curves of her body, matched with a shin-length sky blue skirt of the same color. The glued-on sparkles on her pedicured toes poking out from the end of her sandals were her only adornment. The neighborhood women had advised me against ever wearing ostentatious jewelry, because it invited theft. "Are you coming to the ESPERE this morning?" Yana inquired offering an enthusiastic smile to her interlocutor's expressionless face. *"Y eso?"* Tell me about that, Siara responded. The ESPERE was exactly the reason for the dawn visit, and Saira was looking for more information before committing to showing up that day.

Yana was a middle-aged woman and president of the neighborhood association of female victims of the armed conflict. She was once mother to a 22-year-old son murdered by the FARC guerrillas prior to her and her family's displacement and dispossession. Over my time living with her, I had come to appreciate the communal importance of that single bar-lined plastic window. People from the community, and especially the women from her association, would rap their key rings or *flechas* (cheap cell phones) against that windows at all hours of the day to speak with Yana about a range of issues: from sharing last night's episode with an abusive husband, to planning birthday parties and prayer meetings. Early after my arrival in the community, many would come to ask about the meaning and purpose of my presence. Other times, concerned mothers would come to gossip about a neighborhood teenage boy, whom everyone was convinced was inappropriately touching a young girl with a developmental disorder in the neighborhood. In those instances, the women of the community looked to Yana for counsel, as an impromptu therapist, as someone more familiar with the *rutas* (official processes) for claiming victims' reparations and other forms of material or psychosocial supports, or as someone well-known as ground zero for all neighborhood gossip worth its time in hearing.

Who are these people - the Center for Reconciliation?

> *A Colombian priest.*

Who will be there?

*Other women from the association.*

What will we be asked to talk about?

*Only what you want to.*

Saira mulled over the responses, still not sure whether or not it was a good idea to go that day. She eyeballed me suspiciously as I stood behind Yana watching the exchange unfold, still in my pajamas and disheveled locks, and so I moved to the left of the window out of sight and into the space where I could prepare what was the object of daily friendly teasing: my apparently incomprehensibly large cup of morning coffee. Moments later, a decision had been made.

Should I bring a copy of my ID?

+ + + + +

Saira, like Yana, was also a victim of the armed conflict, mourning daily the disappearance and presumed death of her son 10 years prior, and experiencing the suffering of unending uncertainty about his whereabouts or end. Indeed, Las Delicias nearly entirely comprised individuals somehow implicated in the armed conflict. The majority of the population had settled illegally there due to prior displacement – either violent or due to natural disasters – demobilization, or other conditions of acute vulnerability, generally directly related to conflict dynamics. As of 2015, an estimated 6,580 families (>30,000 people) lived in the sprawling informal housing settlement, which contained 14 distinct neighborhoods and 22 "sub-normal human settlements"[1] resulting from the illegal *invasiones*[2] (invasions, illegal settlements) that

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[1] A governmental term that describes areas of illegal land occupation that remain disconnected to any form of public services or infrastructure.

[2] The term "*invasion*" (invasion) is one used by those building the illegal housing settlements, as well as those attempting to oust these people from their territory. Many describe themselves as "*invasores*" (invaders), and these settlements typically occur with planning and organization ranging from some 25 to 1000 or more families who occupy the land collectively in the cover of night. In the case of Las Delicias, some 1,000 families formed its initial

directed the uneven development of the sector. The most recent survey had been conducted by

SISBEN in 2013 and found that 58% of the population was minors, and that the average monthly

wage of residents equaled a mere 49% of the national minimum wage. That means, in the very

typical situation of a single income-earner in a household of multiple children and at least one

other adult, the *average* monthly income was $100 USD for that household. Of those residents

sampled for the same SISBEN survey, 25% had never attended school and 40% only had a

primary school education. One third of residents surveyed had a high school diploma, and only

20% had studied at all at a university level. But economic and developmental insecurity were just

two elements of the daily struggle that was everyday life in Las Delicias. Caquetá and its capital

city of Florencia, in which Las Delicias located, were already disproportionately violent sites in

Colombia in terms of violence outside of the framework of the armed conflict. While physical

aggressions had increased 130% year over year in the capital city of Florencia between 2012 and

2013, Las Delicias had seen a 900% increase in that same (Lopez Valencia, 2016). In many areas

of the community, basic services such as water and light were absent, and I observed little to no

police presence in the barrio in the first year of my time there, though that increased over time.

In this context of insecurity, mistrust, and fear, I traced the subjective and social realities

of everyday insecurities (Ochs, 2011), a term that draws both conceptually and discursively from

prior work on "everyday violence" (Das, Kleinman, Ramphele, & Reynolds, 2000; Scheper-

Hughes & Bourgois, 2004) and refers to the habits and discourses that address danger and threat

in a given context. Set in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Ochs finds that performances of security

in Israel actually tend to extend, rather than oppose violence. I take up her approach to

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colonization (another term used less frequently by community members). While there is much room for critical
analysis of this terminology, it falls outside of the scope of this chapter, and so I use the vocabulary as it was
presented to me by those involved in its enactment.

interrogating performances and the performative dimensions of security and build on this work by also identifying audiences for which these performances are intended. Rather than extending violence in Las Delicias, however, I find that performances of securing oneself and one's space are the very acts that co-constitute people and places as dangerous. I first provide the sociohistorical backdrop of experiences with armed conflict for residents of Las Delicias. I examine how those experiences manifest in discourses and practices in contemporary community life along with their constative meaning and performative force (Krystalli, Forthcominga; Theidon, 2007). I argue that these learned ways of being result in first maintaining a distance from other people. They also result in maintaining physical distance from public places. They are thus as much resulting from as they are constitutive of the profound mistrust that permeates a context with a long and recent memory of war. At the same time, I show throughout the chapter the ways in which residents of Las Delicias find ways to build trust, without some measure of which society would cease to function (Möllering, 2001; Simmel, 1950).

**Learning to Mistrust: Experiences with War and Their Aftermath**

In this section, I draw from the narratives of those who lived in Caquetá prior to and throughout the entry of armed actors and armed occupation (1950-1960) to first provide the sociohistorical backdrop of experiences with war and betrayal, and second to demonstrate how mistrust is learned, transmitted, and sedimented through social interaction. To do so, I conduct a narrative analysis influenced by feminist approaches, which call for analyzing interlocutors' discourses in their own terms (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992; Wibben, 2010). I do so, in part, because it is not the analytic priority of this work to determine the veracity of narrated accounts. First, I take for granted that both time and violence disturb the processes of remembering (Viterna, 2013; Wood, 2000). Second, my project is not to get to the heart of what "really"

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happened, but instead to identify the anxieties and priorities that the narration of the past renders discursively in contemporary social life in a time of neither war nor peace (Nordstrom, 2004; Theidon, 2013; Wedeen, 2010). Furthermore, I join other anthropologists of transitioning and post-conflict societies who argue that narrative accounts have constantive meaning and performative force, and that they transmit, construct, and contest values and meaning (Krystalli, Forthcominga; Theidon, 2007). I thus examine here what discourses of mistrust and betrayal *do* in the constitution of daily life among former combatants and conflict victims.

It was in search of just such narratives that I set out one evening to head up to the home of Don Giovanni. After about 20 minutes of ascending the mountain that cradled Las Delicias, I arrived at the doorway of his home. By 2015, it had doubled in size from the original 15' x 15' square that had housed his family of four when they first settled the *invasion* among the group of first *colonizadores* (colonizers, settlers) in the early 2000s. My neighbor, Brayan, had accompanied me for the walk for protection at the recommendation of my host family. He took his position outside of the door with the dinner I had promised him in exchange for his time, uninterested in joining us inside because he could catch a better signal to browse his social media from the front step. It was the night before Christmas Eve, and the block was bursting with competing regional *ranchera* ballads pin balling off the concrete walls and corrugated tin roofs, as the non-stop drinking and celebrating – and related brawling and intra-familial disputes - of the holiday month crescendoed to their zenith during the last week in the year.

Don Giovanni and his wife Mariella received me warmly and we eagerly dished out the dinner that I had brought with me – a large, family-sized pot of *arroz chino* (Chinese pork fried rice). A few tall cans of *Aguila Light* beer appeared and, at the sound of their opening, Brayan's head poked in through the doorway and he was offered one to wash down his food. I opened the conversation by asking Don Giovanni about his childhood, in the 50s and 60s in the rural

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Northwestern part of the department. "In those parts it was delicious, very rich. One went out to hunt and there were animals in great quantities, and one passed one's life very well [*muy rico*], and the neighbors were very kind." He painted a picture to me of an idyllic, pastoral life, with few strangers, certainly no organized armed presence of any kind – state or otherwise – and with time spent working and enjoying the land. Though Las Delicias sat at the urban edge of the department's capital city, most of the people that I had met during my time there were from rural origins prior to their displacement – or, multiple displacements - by conflict violence.

I had gone to Don Giovanni and his wife's house that evening to learn about the history of the informal settlement that I was living in, as he was a member of the founding group of roughly 1,000 families who had illegally staked their claim on the land nearly 15 years prior. What he offered me instead was insight into the perceived inescapability of war in Caquetá, and the way in which this inescapability shaped beliefs and practices of trust and suspicion when it came not just to the unknown other, but also to the lifelong neighbor and friend. The FARC had taken control of the area of the department in which Giovanni and his family lived early in his adolescence, and the people that he had once known as neighbors and friends, began to turn on one another. "After they [the FARC] entered, the people began changing, and changing, and some injecting these ideas, and this mistrust began to be created between the population and others, and one's own friends became almost enemies." These "almost enemies" first affected Don Giovanni's life when neighbors leveled false accusations about his father to the FARC of his collaboration in intelligence work for the Colombian military. His father was forced to flee the countryside when neighbors began to accuse him of being an informant – an accusation that Don Giovanni dismissed as ridiculous.

When Giovanni was 16, the FARC forced the farmers and ranchers to construct with their own materials and money the roads that would connect the countryside to the main highway so

that the FARC could transport their soldiers and munitions. The roads would later serve the

*campesinos* (peasant farmers) as well, as they struggled to gain sufficient government backing to

build the means to transport their crops and meats to market. When Don Giovanni showed

leadership in this infrastructure effort, the local FARC commander tried to recruit him into the

subversion. Don Giovanni was not unsympathetic to their ideals, housing in his own ranch a

library for the guerrillas – a library that would later gain him unwanted attention from the Armed

Forces. Nonetheless, he was opposed to their methods, arguing that they should not use the rural

residents as slave labor. His refusal met with threats to his person, and so he too was forced to

flee to the department's capital city of Florencia. There, with no work and no plans, he decided to

enroll in a local grade school in order to educate himself. Within weeks, his secondary school

teacher, praising Giovanni for his astute analysis of social matters, attempted to recruit him to the

FARC. Through these early experiences, Giovanni learned that neighbors, guerrillas, and grade

school teachers were not to be trusted and that ending up on the wrong side of an accusation

meant displacement and the threat of death.

*Caquetá: Settlement, Exploitation, and Displacement*

A brief examination of the settlement of the department of Caquetá lends to an understanding of

how the arrival of new actors came to signify harbingers of more treacherous times ahead. The

context of Don Giovanni's youth in rural Northwestern Caquetá was, as were many other regions

of the country, indelibly shaped by the National Front.[3] The Caqueteñan piedmont skirted the

Andean mountain range and descended into the jungles of the Amazon. Colonization occurred at

the hands of extraction economies, most recently through the present, cattle ranching.

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[3] The National Front (1958-1974) represented a pact between the Liberal and Conservative Parties in Colombia in which they agreed to alternate power every four presidential terms. The agreement not coincidentally aligned with the rise of the leftist guerrilla rebellion and was associated with, among other things, violent oppression of third political parties to participate in the electoral process or become public employees.

Importantly, the livestock economy formed prior to the introduction of armed conflict in the region, and along with it, the formation of a political elite and partial presence of the state, forming the basis for fluid divisions and alliances upon the entrance of insurgent groups (Vásquez D., 2015)*.*

The original colonization of the region at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th directly resulted from the regional quinoa and rubber booms of the era, respectively. State presence emerged at the behest of the four principal rubber extractors in the face of encroaching Peruvian operations, which jockeyed with their Colombian counterparts for both territory and indigenous "workers" (slaves).  The indigenous populations in this region experienced a near genocide during this time, with their numbers reduced to 8,000 from 30,000-200,000 over the 20-year period between 1920-1940. Estimates suggest that every ton of latex produced cost seven human lives (Ariza, Ramírez, & Vega, 1998). Those remaining comprised the first large wave of displacement in the department, fleeing to nearby departments to escape almost certain death. The requested state presence for defending these exploding economic interests, however, initially materialized through proxies: the missionaries of the Order of the Capuchin, who were assigned to administer this "savage and uncivilized" land (Ciro Rodríguez, 2015)*.*

By 1910 the rubber boom began its 20-year collapse in the region due to falling market prices, the development of synthetic rubber, and the exit of the Dutch and English to more fertile lands in Asia (Artunduaga, 1987; Domínguez, 2005). Subsequently, over the first 30 years of the 20th century, failed rubber plantation workers and companies began to consolidate in the hands of the political elite through the introduction of cattle ranching from the neighboring department of Huila.  The 1930s and 1940s saw a slow but consistent conversion of large swaths of the region into cattle and ranching operations, generally, though not exclusively, by a few wealthy

landholders. The standard pattern of colonization occurred through establishment of urban centers, north and northeastern settlement moving down into the piedmont through the expansion of large haciendas, and small independent farmer occupation of territories extending out from the urban centers up to the limits of the haciendas.

During the second half of the century, colonization of the Caqueteñan piedmont continued, driven by the armed conflict, private interests, and spontaneous migration. As a result, formal state institutions began to emerge through the two traditional Liberal and Conservative parties, and the subsequent monopoly of political representation by these two in the form of the National Front. At first, conflict violence merely resulted in the inflow of migrants from other neighboring regions, nearly tripling the population between 1951-1964. After these two parties gained ideological control over the region, armed conflict on Caqueteñan soil began: the cattle ranchers, largely belonging to the Liberal party, responded to perceived abuses by the National Police (under Conservative Party control) and the first registered armed guerrilla attack in 1951 (Carrillo Andrades, 2009). Beginning in the second half of the 20th century, increasing state control resulted in a consolidation of the cattle ranching economy and the formation and entrenchment of the local political elite. The political class went on to monopolize power in the region and served as the sole intermediaries between the local and national population. Because of the dominance of the Liberal party in the region, areas of Caquetá, such as Don Giovanni's childhood home, became sites of military persecution and Conservative Party violence against small farmers and ranchers.

It was in this context that Don Giovanni spent his youth, as did many others who had fled the Caguán region of the department. In the days just prior to the arrival of the guerrillas, systematic military abuses were still unheard of, active threats by or recruitment to the insurgency or state-

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backed paramilitaries a distant dynamic that would take a decade or more to materialize, and the use of these armed apparatuses by neighbor against neighbor an inconceivable threat. It was, as many interlocutors would tell me, the introduction of one armed group of actors or another that would bring this otherwise fairly typical story of colonization and extraction, marred as it was by small territorial disputes, into a new chapter of violence and inhumanity.

The successive betrayal of once trusted neighbors, friends, and of presumed "neutral" professionals such as a school teacher, however, was neither site nor guerrilla specific. Don Giovanni´s story was a typical one. For example, in Puerto Torres[4] in the Southeastern area of Caquetá, another couple shared with me the effects that the 2000 right-wing paramilitary occupation had on relations between neighbors and friends in their small hamlet. At the time, only 10 of the original 45 families remained after the initial flight of residents upon the group's arrival. The Southern Andaquíes Front of the Central Bolívar Bloc of the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia – AUC) converted the town school into a torture training facility for its members throughout the region and served as a large base of operations (Quevedo Hidalgo, 2014). My interlocutors, Camilo and his wife, Liz lived catty corner to the school, where cries regularly emerged from civilians suffering unspeakable acts. They quickly learned to leave space and silence between themselves and those that they had once called friends and neighbors:

> *Never in my life would I go to visit a neighbor, because really it made one very*
>
> *afraid…If, suddenly, you had a dispute with someone or a problem with someone,*

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[4] I have chosen to use the hamlet's actual name here in light of the public accounting that has taken place regarding the atrocities there both through transitional justice mechanisms and other means.

*then they (the paramilitaries) would arrive and that person would go and give a*

*comment saying that you were from the other side, and up they would go with you.*

"Up," in this case, referred to a tree where the paramilitaries regularly hung people and burned them alive using fire and aerosol cans, filling the town square with what was described to me as the smell of pork, and filling the hearts and minds of its residents with doubt, uncertainty, and fear. "How many of these instances did you personally witness?" I asked Camilo. "Two or three," he replied: in a town of only ten remaining families, and within the time span of a ten-month formal occupation between 2000 and 2001.

The armed forces were also not to be trusted. Members of the Army who had sworn to protect the rights of Colombian citizens regularly entered the ranks of the illegal paramilitaries. They became instructors of both military and torture tactics. For example, in subsequent justice proceedings in the years following the occupation of Puerto Torres, prosecutors proved that retired Army Sargeant Nevardo Antonio Millán Sanchéz from the department of Antioquia trained the AUC how to torture and "service" victims (dispose of, either by chopping the cadaver to pieces and throwing it in the river, burning it, or burying it in a mass grave). Estimates suggest that his unit alone was responsible for the torture and murder of between 800 and 1,000 victims (Quevedo Hidalgo, 2014). The paramilitaries occupying Puerto Torres counted among their ranks ex-police, ex-military, young men who had just gotten out of their mandatory service obligations, retired Army sub-officials, and military contractors. I also received unconfirmed accounts of military helicopters shuttling in food and provisions for the paramilitaries, none of which reached the hands of the civilians. It thus comes as no surprise that even after the formal military "victory" that expelled the paramilitaries from the town in 2002, the illegal armed group maintained a presence for years in the form of recruited locals in civilian clothes.

In a nearby hamlet, an independent farmer, Carlos, recalled, "In this time (2003), 'the base' [here, he refers to the occupied grade school] was no longer here, but yes, there was still a presence; they maintained some over there (he pointed to the single corner store in the town) controlling things and they were no longer uniformed. They were in civilian clothes." He paused, and I followed up with, "Did you recognize any of them?" "Oh sure," he added. "In this group that stayed, there were two guys who were my classmates – of my youth, growing up. And I wasn´t very afraid of them, but one knows that if they had to make an attempt on your life, they would do it." Even when time and familiarity ameliorated the existential agony of persistent uncertainty and fear, residents could not escape the many ways in which experiences with conflict violence had permanently altered the terrain of everyday relations and social life. That night in conversation in Las Delicias, Don Giovanni expressed his frustration at having escaped threats to his life in the countryside only to arrive at a city center where his school teacher tried to recruit him to the same FARC that he had just fled. In response, he moved back to the countryside in a different part of Caquetá, where he tried to build a quiet life despite the growing guerrilla presence, the introduction of a paramilitary element, and an increasingly unhinged Army that was relentlessly, and not infrequently inaccurately[5], identifying and killing leftist guerrillas and their sympathizers.

Every new armed actor or related institution represented new suspicions: rural residents accused of being paramilitary spies even before they knew what the paramilitaries were. An elderly *campesino* who had only ever left his land for visits to Florencia to buy new clothes every few years was accused by armed militants of being a DAS[6] agent nearly immediately upon the

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[5] I refer here to the "false positives" scandal, in which soldiers motivated by pay-per-death incentive structures dressed civilians as guerrillas and killed them in order to collect additional bonuses.

[6] DAS was the Administrative Department of Security, which was formed in 1960 and dissolved in 2011 in the wake of multiple institutional scandals linking it to the right-wing paramilitaries and illegal wiretapping practices

founding of the agency. Giovanni had seen what he believed were false accusations of intelligence work for the other side – that "side" changing depending on the group who was receiving the report - flung among long time neighbors, who chose to use the weapons and torture tactics of the armed actors as their means of retribution for disputes ranging from stolen livestock to borrowed women. At one point he too became the target of such accusations, denounced as a guerrilla informant to an Army that came to kill him in the night. The only reason for his escape: the assassins had mistaken his neighbor for himself, and killed the wrong person, the noise of which opened just enough of a window for him to flee and return to Florencia. Thus, over the decades of armed conflict in Colombia, community members learned to distrust their neighbors, new organized armed actors, public figures, politicians, and the state.

The idea that mistrust figures as a particularly salient contextual consideration in the Colombian case is supported by regular regional public opinion surveys. Vanderbilt University's Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) has compiled 30 years of data covering 34 countries across North, Central, South America, and various Caribbean countries. The AmericasBarometer report – conducted roughly annually - represents the only comparative and scientifically rigorous effort of its kind. The 2016/17 AmericasBarometer report included the survey's standard questions on the climate of trust (LAPOP, 2017a). In all, across the 29 countries included in this round of surveys, researchers interviewed 43,454 respondents and constructed nationally representative samples of voting age adults using a multi-age probabilistic design, and stratified by regions, municipality size, and urban versus rural contexts (LAPOP, 2017b).

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involving Colombian politicians. It was replaced by the National Intelligence Agency in 2011 under then President Juan Manuel Santos.

The most recent dedicated country report dates back to 2015 (LAPOP, 2015), and offers some insight into the extent to which Colombian citizens trust the different sectors and domains that comprise their society. The top three most trusted public institutions included the Catholic Church (63.1% trusted), the Armed Forces (54.6%), and the Evangelical Christian Churches (51.5%). The three least trusted institutions comprised Congress (40.8%), Unions (37.7%), and Political Parties (29.7%). In all instances, trust in public institutions has declined since 2004 in Colombia, though some improvements have registered after the start of the peace negotiations in 2014. LAPOP analysts suggest that the decreasing trust in public institutions and increasing frustration with the justice system in Colombia in the 2004-2015 period have contributed to the increased justification of illegality. Colombia in 2014 reported the second highest perceived corruption in Latin America (79.6%, just a hair shy of Venezuela's leading 80.0%).

At the interpersonal level, more promising trends emerge. Between 2004 and 2014, overall interpersonal trust improved (2.08 to 2.10) in response to the following question: Speaking about the people around here, would you say that the people in your community are very trustworthy, trustworthy, not very trust worthy, or not trustworthy at all? The slight increase in medium responses went against trends in the region, which fell from 2.21 in 2004 to 2.15 in 2014. Nonetheless, Colombia's scores still remained well below the regional averages.

The findings of this institute's studies provide an important backdrop to the work of this dissertation. First, they establish mistrust in Colombia – both towards public institutions and among neighbors – as particularly acute. In all instances of survey questions related to trust, Colombia scored in the lowest quartile of respondents. Second, the clustering of responses according to different domains of public life – i.e., respondents trust religious institutions much more than overtly political ones – suggests that citizens operate by a different set of affective

rules depending on the type of institution with which they are engaging. Third, the change in nationally reported averages over time reveals the variability in the beliefs and practices of trust. I thus investigate the sociohistorical situating of these changes, contemporary practices of trust, and organized attempts to change the way in which people practice trust among individuals implicated in conflict violence. In summary, I provide explanatory power to the statistical assertion that mistrust is notably high in Colombia, and delineate the social and historical backdrop against which that mistrust manifests and situates as the target of policy and third-sector interventions.

*Discourses on self-protection: How I learned to be afraid*

Learning to mistrust gave rise to social practices and discourses that these individuals with direct experience transmitted, circulated, and sedimented over time. I was in part both the subject and object of these discourses, both mistrusted and someone who needed to be properly taught to mistrust. In this section, I focus on the narrow domain of self-protection and personal security in everyday life to illustrate the way in which mistrust is taught and circulated. I present this experience to highlight the ways in which mistrust manifested consistently and was practiced by my interlocutors, acknowledging that what advice and guidance may be provided to someone in my position differs from those from that same context. Nevertheless, it provides insight into the manner in which individuals conceptualized of risks in the everyday and acted to mitigate those risks, and the extent to which fear of the other affects individual positioning vis-a-vis that other. My entrance into the community had been both an anxiety-inducing and coordinated affair. As noted in the introduction, I first came to Caquetá to locate myself and my investigation in a site dense with populations affected by the armed conflict on all sides: former combatants, direct victims, and those suffering the expansive reverberations in sociopolitical and economic life of a region torn apart by a multi-generational war. When I arrived, the friend who had originally

recommended the site had arranged for me to live in the local Catholic seminary with the priests so that I might get the lay of the land from a position of relative physical security and social protection. They, together with the Monsignor welcomed me warmly into their shared home. I held early conversations with local government officials, NGO leaders, and the priests themselves over breakfasts and dinners in the seminary in order to begin to get an idea of where I should begin my work. Without exception, my interlocutors named Las Delicias. "They are all there," I was told by officials from the local offices of the Colombian Agency for Reintegration, the Mayor's and Governor's office, and local politicians and civil society leaders.  The throwaway statistic about Las Delicias often cited in local governmental meetings was that 80% of the regions' excombatants lived there, and 80% of the residents were registered victims.

My announcement that I would move into that community met with concern. More than one (always male) interlocutor attempted to suggest – even demand – that I not move into the community because of the danger that I would face. Indeed, it became a point of explicit tension between the Monsignor and myself, which I regretted in light of his generosity. I learned that the Center for Reconciliation featured in the next chapter would be opening in Las Delicias and had known the director of the Foundation for Reconciliation that was the Bogotá-based headquarters for several years at this point. We arranged that I would go into Las Delicias as part of the opening of the center and my purpose and explanation for my presence would be supporting the center in its activities and teaching English classes. Once it was clear that my mind had been made up, and that I had coordinated these plans with the Foundation for Reconciliation, my kind hosts at the seminary quite visibly escorted me into the community one day and walked around introducing me to other community leaders. Their highly public presentation of me to the community did much to facilitate my entry in terms of legitimacy and safety. Yana helped me find a small single-room home just two blocks away from the community center, and in my first

three months there, my life largely consisted of the five-block radius around my apartment. After leaving and returning to the community, I simply moved into Yana's home with her, which was right next to the Center. But by that time, I had established my social networks there and walked around far more freely, always bearing in mind and avoiding the "red zones" that were militia and paramilitary controlled, about which I had been informed by many of my new neighbors.

I was, of course, afraid. And that fear was stoked less by outsider ignorance, than it was by conversations that I had had with other Colombians. Everywhere I went, those present cautioned me against the other. *Bogotanos* told me that the territories were dangerous. Those in the territories prescribed me a laundry list of personal precautions that I should take in Bogotá, many saying they were loathe to have to go there and only did so for the inevitable bureaucratic tasks that the nation's capital demanded of them from time to time. When I informed my various institutional and friendly contacts that I would conduct my full dissertation research in Caquetá, *caliente* ("hot", "dangerous") and *ten cuidado* ("be careful") were the standard replies. Once in Caquetá, I was warned in the capital city of Florencia how dangerous the rural zones were (and those rural inhabitants would later caution me against the dangers of "the city"). Those living in the working-class neighborhoods of Florencia would marvel at the fact that I lived in a neighborhood as fear-inducing as Las Delicious. Some taxi drivers would not take me there, or they would ask me if I knew where it was I was trying to go, often clarifying several times that I meant the neighborhood and not the grade school that went by the same name, which was located in a much "safer" neighborhood.

My status as a lone female and foreigner made me an object of curiosity and suspicion, among many other things. *How did get your husband to let you come down here? Do you have a husband here? Where are your children? You are living with family, right?* To which my answers were uniformly no. No husband. No family. No kids. It was a conversation that I had with

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frustrating regularity. *Are you CIA? Who do you work for? What is your purpose here?* Even my gym mates from the United States Army who had been stationed there to do training work with the Colombian Armed Forces had originally suspected that I was with the CIA. In a place in which the FARC guerrillas bear an explicitly anti-American discourse, and a long history of kidnapping, such presumptions of affiliations are of course dangerous and must be addressed. Shortly after my time with the Center, some of the former combatants with whom I had spent time liaised with the neighborhood militias on my behalf to assure them that I was no threat to them. I am certain that there are still those who have their doubts. Fear was thus a filter through which I conducted this work; I had recurring nightmares of being gunned down, moments of panic when I found myself in an unplanned place far from my house at night, and I restricted my movements and travel in many ways.

Though these early experiences were not the direct basis for my examination of mistrust, they still have plenty to do with the overarching narrative of this work. In particular, they illustrate the ways in which fear and mistrust are taught and learned. Furthermore, they underscore how very surprisingly average and boring are the daily lives of the feared other. For example, after the FARC demobilization, what surprised civil society reporters most in the reporting of former combatant life in the zones in which they had gathered to lay down their arms was the normalcy of their daily routines, lives, hopes, dreams, and yes, fears (E. K. McFee, Johnson, & Adarve, Forthcoming). In each of those moments when I went forward together with my fear, I found the same thing that reporters on the FARC demobilization had found: individuals living in a hostile social world who were trying to meet their basic needs and those of their families. Some with more or less success. Others with more or less tenacity. Still others with more or less legality. But in every place that I had been warned against, I found the open arms and full plates of women and families who never hesitated to feed, shelter, protect, and counsel

this strange woman who wandered into their midst. I was not blind to the potential promise that a presence such as mine might signal, and the intricate and deeply pressing web of desires and motives that might drive such hospitality. But I am certain that it would be incorrect to name that hospitality as purely resource-seeking, as much as it would be naïve to call it entirely disinterested. In all, I became intimately familiar with the social effects of everyday insecurity (Ochs, 2011), both through observing those around me and by reflecting on the counsel I received and embodied experiences of my own entry in to Las Delicias. My induction into my field site was thus inextricably linked to the discourses of fear of the unknown other offered by my interlocutors from a range of backgrounds, exposure to these others, and personal experiences. Once in Las Delicias, I observed practices of self-protection and personal security as the key sites in which these anxieties manifested in the production of social life. I turn to these practices in the next section to begin to elaborate how they were both performances and performative in nature.

**Practices of Security and Self-Protection: The Performance of Mistrust**

I examine in this section the social practices of self-protection and personal security among residents in Las Delicias. I argue that they are at once performances and performative. Certainly, these practices often achieve their stated aim: e.g., make sure the gate is secure so no one can break into your home while you are out. They take on the qualities of performance when they are enacted and do not achieve their stated aim but instead appeal to anticipated audiences, such as neighbors who might gossip about your carelessness: e.g., fastening a deadbolt that does not serve its stated function because it can be easily opened from the outside. Practices motivated by mistrust of the other and of public places become performative when they begin to reproduce the grounds for mistrust even as they protect against the possibilities for betrayal. Previous work

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on the performance of security has found that associated habits and performances tend to extend, rather than to oppose, violence (Ochs, 2011). I argue throughout this chapter that it is the very practice of securing oneself and one's space that, rather than violence, co-constitutes the dangerous place and the "other" in the minds of the residents of the community. I shall examine each of these claims in turn below.

*Self-protection and Security: A Repertoire*

That night that I headed up to Don Giovanni's house in the last days of 2015, I followed the advice of my host family and secured a male companion to accompany me up the mountain after dark. Having been warned of the potential dangers of venturing out at night, I stayed close to the bulky form of my willing neighbor Brayan as we walked, attempting to configure my face into what I felt was the appropriate expression of boredom for someone for whom such a walk was ordinary, for whom the night held no threat, and who had nothing but a large pot of pork fried rice to offer. I was attempting, as advised by many interlocutors, to avoid presenting a *cara de güevon* (literally, "face of an idiot" – i.e., an easy target). The mud of the road sucked at the spongy soles of my off-brand Crocs, as aesthetically horrendous as they were practical in an environment in which the road could turn from oven to mud pit after just moments spent enduring an impenetrable wall of Amazonian rain, destroying any footwear not make of plastic. I had checked myself before heading up into the rocky terrain, well-counseled on the appropriate way to venture into the night as a woman. I had stuffed all items of value (keys, cell phone, minimum necessary cash) into my bra – in pockets they attracted the sleight of hand, in bags they attracted the emboldened mugger – and removed all watches and jewelry.

Residents in Las Delicias infused many quotidian actions with meticulous attention to personal security. Indeed, the distress that registered on companions' faces when I did something that might *dar papaya* (literally, "give papaya," – i.e., make oneself vulnerable to any form of

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predatory behavior) was at times so filled with anxiety that I felt compelled to, at length, confirm

my understanding of the risky behavior and make numerous commitments not to repeat it before

the rigidly knit eyebrows confronting me would once again relax. Wearing my backpack on my

back met with a tug on the strap by Yana and the advice to wear it on the front of my body, even

if I was just walking next door to the Center where we worked. Taking out my laptop in what I

felt was the safety of the town's only shopping mall inspired three elderly gentlemen to come

over to my table, sit down, and elaborate on the new ways in which pairs of thieves were

distracting people in order to steal laptops - so better to put it away. When I arrived at a friend's

mother's home for a Sunday lunch on the back of a motorcycle taxi, she met me with a warning

to be careful about taking *mototaxis* because, as a woman and a foreigner, I was exposing myself

unnecessarily to *malicia indigena* ("indigenous malice").[7] Breaches of self-protection norms met

with concern and correction, even when that correction meant breaking that same norm. In the

case of the elderly gentlemen, their warnings required breaking another self-protection norm:

don´t engage with unknown persons, even if they look like they may be in need, as they may be

setting you up for some act of *malicia indigena.*

Certainly, some of these concerns related to universal challenges of life in insecure

settings that had little to do with armed conflict. However, their urgency and frequency were

notable. Furthermore, I also experienced no shortage of advice regarding aspects of the context

that related to the armed conflict: block-by-block descriptions of which militias were where and

where I should and should not go, and detailed social norms around with whom I could speak to

about the conflict ("he's my uncle, so it's ok to mention it") and under what conditions ("you

shouldn´t go to his home (because he is an excombatant)"). The children of the neighborhood

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[7] An ugly term dating back to colonial times, which, in its contemporary use, refers to the belief that others are
constantly looking for a way to take advantage of an opportunity, even if it is at your expense.

informed me of the locations in the overgrown mountainous edges of the community where land

mines had been found - unfortunately, by their playmates. Comments about where I would be

going elsewhere in the more rural areas of the department were often met with wide-eyes and the

sucking in of air between the teeth. My assurances that I would go accompanied by the Social

Pastoral community service group of the Catholic Church would close the mouth and soften the

eyes. While I was offered advice freely upon my arrival, it became clear that the general sense of

personal security was one of personal responsibility. You would only have yourself to blame if

you found yourself in a compromising position and suffered for it.

These practices were neither situationally specific, nor geographically idiosyncratic. Just

two years prior, government agencies had begun a "self-protection" initiative. The first time I

became aware of this initiative, I was in Barranquilla in 2013. By pure chance, I passed on the

way to the bus stop the Victims Attention Center, which was the local office of the national

government agency responsible for attending to the claims of Colombia's nearly 8 million

victims of armed conflict. Perhaps simply because I was passing by, or perhaps because the

police officer had mistaken me for one of the victims as I had been slowly walking as closely as

possible to their line in the hopes of catching just a sliver of the shade they had themselves only

barely crowded into that infernal afternoon, I received in my hands the "National Police Self-

Protection Guide Workbook." I scoffed internally and thought, "Isn´t that your job?" and

continued on my way. Two months later, in interview with the Center Director for the Colombian

Agency for Reintegration's Service Center in Cúcuta, I learned about the new initiative for self-

protection among former members of illegal armed groups. I dug up the Workbook I had

received in Barranquilla, which, among other instructions, asked me to "understand and

internalize the guide for my self-protection and that of my loved ones" (Policía Nacional, 2013,

p. 3). Three years later, I received the same booklet while standing in line at four in the morning

in Florencia, Caquetá along with a family of conflict victims who had invited me to follow their reparations process following the FARC assassination of the male head of household. It was identical in content and form to the one that I had received in Barranquilla in 2013. As of December 2018 (two years following the signing of the peace accord), the same document remains posted on the National Police website, suggesting the durability of the notions of self-protection that it espouses. The fact that public officials handed out guides for self-protection measures emerged in or near the two institutional settings serving among the most marginalized of Colombian society sent a clear message: you're on your own.

In this, the state and the citizenry were in agreement, and I received anxiety-filled assertions to this end throughout my time in the field. And there in Las Delicias, I had grown to fear the darkness and the same community that received me so warmly during the daylight hours. Each sounding of the neighborhood klaxon announced fleeing criminals and called men from their homes armed with machetes, broom handles, or fists powered by the desire to protect that which was collectively theirs. The periodic wailing of the alarm only confirmed the warnings I had received during the daylight hours. The effects of immersion in such a context became very apparent to me when in 2018, two years after leaving Las Delicias and in the relative safety of a middle-class neighborhood in Bogotá, I saw a man in a wheelchair struggling to get up on an uneven sidewalk. I stepped one foot towards him to help him up the curb and stopped, looked around, and crossed the street and walked away, justifying to myself this small cruelty by thinking, "Well, it could have been a trap – *malicia indigena*." I had internalized, as requested, the content of the National Police Self-Protection Guide Workbook (p.9): "Do not create situations on which your potential victimizers can capitalize. The fewer opportunities you offer, the less exposed you will be." Such practices, discourses, and embodied experiences thus leave

their imprint through the way in which individuals relate to one another and to their physical environment.

*Self-Protection and Security: A Performance*

However, such practices to secure person and place did not always achieve their sole stated aim. I provide the example below of fastening a lock that does not actually secure a gate. I suggest that in these moments, when the reasons provided for a particular action fell short of explaining the entirety of that action the idea of performance and audience begins to fill that gap. My many interlocutors made it clear: taking individual responsibility for your personal security is important, and you cannot expect the state to provide that security for you. The rules for how to do so circulated freely and were socially policed. I complement these claims with one of my own: *appearing* to take responsibility for your personal security is equally important. Individuals took pride in not being perceived by others as someone that makes oneself vulnerable (*dar papaya*). Verbal chastisement occurs when you do so. Stories of victimization are often accompanied with admissions of culpability – "I had my phone in my hand, like an idiot." – or, more frequently, clarifications that all of the appropriate measures had been taken and the robbery had been thus unavoidable – "I had my backpack on the front and everything. They had huge knives." It is thus as important to both do things that reduce risk to person and place as it is to be read by both potential criminals and one's neighbors as such a person.

I began to understand the importance of these performances that night that I went up to Don Giovanni's house. I first secured the three locks on the front door of our home, and then the two additional locks on the gate that formed part of a cage around the front wall of the structure. I had believed that one of the latter two locks was utterly useless, as it was a deadbolt that could be opened on either side of the gate, but when I left it unfastened that night, Yana scolded me for

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being careless. "What purpose does it serve, if you can just open it from the outside?" I asked. She never answered me, but I never left it unlocked again.

Performing security was not exclusively an individual affair. Even when the Police made a rare appearance in Las Delicias, it was often only to feign the performance of law enforcement to the community – a very skeptical and mistrusting community who remained unconvinced - and for the reports they would later have to fill out. When I first arrived at Las Delicias in 2014, I almost never saw police officers in the community. By the end of 2015, that had changed slightly, with the occasional two-person motorcycle patrol or Army troop on foot passing through, dropped off at the top of the mountain, and sweeping down through the different levels down to the community entrance, though typically only during the daylight hours.

Around the same time as my interview with Don Giovanni, I arrived home one night to a large crowd of people screaming in front of a neighbor's house. The unfortunately all too quotidian affair of a man punching his wife in the face had spilled out from the interior of the home into the public sphere. As I debated the wisdom of walking over and the possible outcomes of doing so – or not doing so – two police officers arrived sharing their standard issue dirt bike. My time working with local gender and LGBTI rights activists had taught me that the police were "useless" in terms of addressing domestic abuse and femicide. My time with neighborhood residents passing in turn in front of Yana's window to seek counsel after a violent incident, suggested that domestic abuse was a significant problem. I walked over to see how the situation would be handled.

The officers passed the first 30 minutes of telling the woman to stop being emotional and to go inside (to move her affective experience back into the domain of the private), and cajoling the accused aggressor to calm down, as he continued to assert that his violence against her did not matter because she was just a "stupid whore." After the dueling couple had cooled down –

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throwing occasional insults across the crowd at one another rather than tugging, pulling, and

kicking at each other as they had been - the Police stood around chatting with the man and

onlookers for about half an hour, while the woman received consolation from her friends. Finally,

a police truck came up and the man stepped in, uncuffed, and they all left into the night.

Suspicious of the collegiality between the police officers and the accused, I broke one of the

cardinal rules of life in Las Delicias: I walked over to a dark patch alone and waited behind a tree

at the top of the hill that was the only entrance into the community. Within ten minutes, the man

came walking up the hill turned left in front of me and walked right back into his house. They

had, as I had been told by others that they would, just dropped him off at the bottom of the hill.

Like the lock on Yana's gate, the man´s capture had also been such an illusion, a performance of

protection by a police force that, at least in that moment, fell far short of all of its institutional

mandates: protect the Colombian nation, enforce the law by constitutional mandate, maintain and

guarantee the necessary conditions for public freedoms and rights, and ensure peaceful

cohabitation among the population (Policía Nacional, 2018). Self-protection, indeed, appeared to

be the best course of action, even if it remained wholly inadequate to guarantee one's own

security.  I later learned that the half hour spent in conversation with the man was a critical part

of the performance, and one enacted at the institutional level. A few years later, I was in the

tourist center of Santa Marta on the Caribbean coast when my companion struck me several times

on the street. Onlookers had called over a police officer and, upon convincing the officer that I

was fine, he told me that he would need to stand there for a few minutes with us because the

people "were still watching and it has to look like I´m doing something about it." And so, the

three of us stood staring awkwardly at each other in silence for about fifteen minutes, at which

point he just got on his motorcycle and left without a word. Silence and inaction constituted the

very stuff of protection and security in a performance made for onlookers alone. Thus, while my

interlocutors narrated some acts in a way that fully explained the substance of those acts (e.g., don´t take your laptop out in public or it might get stolen), other narrations revealed the way in which *being perceived* as diligent about security and protection exceeded the limits of the mechanism under consideration (e.g., an act of violence punished by law enforcement with a fake arrest and an annoying walk for the abuser back up to his home – and the victim).

**Making Dangerous People and Dangerous Places: The Performativity of Mistrust**

More than just the occasional performance, practices related to self-protection and personal security are also *performative*. I argue in this section that these practices, in their ubiquity, make people and places dangerous even as they protect against those dangers. They achieve this through the effect that they have on social and spatial relations: they create and maintain distance. This social and physical distance reduces the quantity and depth of interactions required to gain familiarity. They reduce the interactions, but as we see from Yana and Saira´s exchange, they do not eliminate them entirely. In the following two sections, I elaborate first on how these practices reproduce social distance. I then go on to show how they maintain physical distance through withdrawal from communal activities and places.

*Creating Distance from the Other*

In the opening vignette of this work, I puzzled over a survey question that respondents would not answer. I presented a short vignette of a former combatant asking to reconcile with the woman he had offended during the war. The vignette ended with two questions: What did the woman do? And, what would you have done? Most of those whom I had interviewed refused to answer the first question. Since I tended not to push when interviewing about sensitive topics, I never pushed them to explain why. An acquaintance informed me when I pushed back on his silence that he would not respond because one never knew what was in the heart of the other. I

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suggest here that this sense of unknowability results in the maintenance of social distance from the other.

Analyzing these accounts and practices brings to light the contextual pressures that reshaped the nature of relational life: violence, uncertainty, and threat to life and livelihood. These pressures and subsequent experiences left their mark on the nature of interpersonal relationships in the wake of conflict and betrayal. At stake in navigating contemporary social life in these communities is no less than one's life. The calculus of revealing and concealing parts of one's subjectivity occurs within this context. As seen above, the introduction of new groups, organizations, and actors brings the spectre of past violence. They are thus understandably treated with great skepticism and mistrust first, and then, only after vetting and sufficient reconnaissance, are they potentially and cautiously approached by individuals.

I had originally perceived Yana's responses to Saira's sunrise queries as entirely incomplete, wondering if she had been ill-informed of the nature of the ESPERE encounter:

Who are these people - the Center for Reconciliation?

*A Colombian priest.*

I assumed here that Yana referred to the founding director of the Foundation, and the mind behind the design of the ESPERE pedagogy. However, I knew that he would not be there for the opening. Additionally, she failed to mention the two other individuals who comprised the center team at this time, one of whom was a former member of the right-wing paramilitary group, the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC, by its Spanish acronym). The second was a professional social service worker.

Who will be there?

*Other women from the association.*

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While Yana's response was technically true, it was also misleading. One of the main purposes of ESPERE was to convene individuals from all backgrounds – including former combatants – not just female conflict victims such as those who comprised the membership of Yana's association. And although the pedagogy stipulated that initial encounters call only for the exchange of names (and not conflict-related identities), such information almost always emerged over the course of the workshop. It was almost inevitable, then, that Saira would thus come face to face with those who had previously belonged to the group that had disappeared her son.

Yana's responses, however, bore in them the knowledge of experiences with war: a withdrawal from the social, fear of new actors, and bone-chilling uncertainty about the unknown other.  Based on these shared experiences between Yana and Saira and millions of others, the responses served to ease Saira's concerns.

*A Colombian priest.* He is from here, so he understands. He is a priest, so he can be trusted, the response seemed to say.[8]

*Other women from the association.* These are people whom you already know and who already know you (and your story). They are women. They are safe. They are not the unknown other.

Mistrust indeed gave rise to practices that preserved isolation and reticence in sharing personal information, details, and histories. However, community members still found ways to elicit and communicate the terms of early approaches to new institutions and actors, demonstrating that the collapse of trust had not been complete.

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[8] Churches are the most trusted institutions in Colombia according to regular opinion polls (LAPOP, 2017).

*Creating Distance from the Place*

Mistrust related to experiences with armed conflict also resulted in withdrawal from community spaces and physical distance between individuals and their environments. From the outset, the armed groups left their mark upon the spaces of the commons – e.g., public parks, community groups, and communal meals. When the paramilitary AUC arrived at Puerto Torres, they had convened all nearby residents in the small town square:  a patch of dirt that served as the soccer field in the middle of the 65-family town. They cleared up any remaining confusion or rumor about their identity or purpose, since many residents had thought they were the formal Army at first. They then went on to remake the space over the next ten months into a "space of death" (Taussig, 1984) and foreboding. Carlos, a long-time resident, remembered the day, "Well, I mean we went and listened and we're just standing there and they identified themselves as the AUC and then and there is when life got complicated, because they had already started to have control of the town and in the region." This moment had marked the start of an era in which a communal call to the town center signified, at best, bad news, and at worst, your own end.

Due to the shared tactic of illegal armed groups targeting the *juntas de acción communal* (neighborhood association groups, ubiquitous in the Colombian context), either as nodes of persuasion over community activities or as targets for extermination, both community leadership and the act of convening became zones of uncertainty and hazard. Leidy, a local resident who lived through this period, had shared with me her family's near escape on multiple occasions from paramilitary assassination, brought on by her sister's membership in the town *junta.* "We fled to Belén (the municipal center), but then after three days, they started killing everyone there as well. Our particular problem was that my sister was a member of the *junta*, and they wanted to kill all of the members of the *junta* when they arrived so that they couldn´t report on what was going on here with the occupation." Indeed, up until I left Florencia in mid-2016, a close friend

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of mine who participated in her community's *junta* regularly received notes from the FARC advising her of required payments and "recommended" community leadership actions. As a result of the violent targeting of organized community life, violent armed actors and community members signified these domains as ones of risk of interaction, control, and threat by non-state armed groups.

I focus here on the public and communal spaces as well as the physical integration of individuals through an analytical lens because space, its narration, and its patterns of occupation have been shown to be key sites of community production and contestation in the aftermath of violence (Mehta & Chatterji, 2001; Navaro-Yashin, 2012). Part of limitations to mobility and social life occurred because of external controls imposed by the groups such as curfews and restrictions on travel. A large part of the social withdrawal, however, occurred because of fear of the consequences of interactions, as exemplified by Camilo and his wife, who had earlier in this chapter said that they feared visiting neighbors in case an argument over some quotidian affair resulted in their neighbors' turning against them and denouncing them falsely to the paramilitaries. The consequences of such a betrayal could easily be hanging from the tree in front of their home and converting into one of the bodies burned daily during the occupation.

For these reasons, we may count freedom of movement among the many victims of armed conflict. In paramilitary-occupied Puerto Torres, for example, narratives of the time before their arrival tended to reference to the liberty with which the farmers roamed their lands, much in the way that Don Giovanni wistfully recalled a time in which he could hunt freely among the bounty of animals in the countryside prior to the arrival of the FARC. In Puerto Torres, Camilo shared with me from his home in front of the now abandoned grade school that "we grew up going wherever we wanted, when we wanted, and not having to ask permission from anyone." The arrival of the torture training school marked the high-water mark for sociality and commerce in

the region: "In the time before, people came and went here much more. We had more commerce: fishing, stores, little bars, even women were brought here to work, well, I don´t know the word (the word he is unable to summon is "prostitutes"). There were two or three *mixtos* (buses that carry human and agricultural cargo) a day (now there is only one)."

Both in terms of an outside world unwilling to venture to occupied territories, and in terms of generating a livelihood within these territories, residents became paralyzed in their poverty, unable to leave to seek income because of imposed curfews and entry and exit restrictions, and unable to generate a living where they remained. Attempting to fulfill basic familial and economic needs could quickly devolve into a terror-filled experience. In a nearby hamlet, Carlos recalled one of the first times he had direct experience with the paramilitaries while he was out fishing with family and friends:

*That day was a terrible fright, because all five of us thought we were going to die that day. The professor (the local school teacher) brought the fishing nets, and we had filled two of them. I was the net caster, and so I carried one and the others carried the other to help me. We were crossing the bridge and they (the paramilitaries) came down to us. We thought it was my cousin, Ricardo, and I said "stop messing around, because we are already living quaking in fear!" And then they said, "Stop there!"…And they showed us these weapons and we realized that they were for real, and they had us trapped in the canyon, and they treated us like guerrillas, and they made us put our hands up and all of the fish fell, and no one could speak out of fear and they told us that we were going to die on the spot for being guerrillas…And we said the only thing that we had killed were these fish…After (an exchange between one member of the*

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*fishing group and the paramilitaries), they told us that they were the* Autodefensas *and*

*they let us go. But they scared us like that every once in a while.*

In order to establish and maintain their authority in the region, the paramilitaries injected fear into all aspects of communal life, beginning with the relations between friends and neighbors, as discussed in the previous section, and extending into the everyday social life and economic activities necessary for survival among the rural poor. The armed actors kept that fear alive through violence: eventually, the paramilitaries killed two members of Carlos's fishing troupe, one of whom was only confirmed dead when Rosa, Carlos' wife, began cutting open a large catfish one evening to prepare for dinner and found their friend´s wallet inside of it. He had, as had thousands more before and after him, been *picado* (cut to pieces) and thrown into the river.

While terror reigned in the countryside, the urban centers offered little in the way of solace. Don Giovanni, on the night of our shared pot of *arroz chino*, reflected on the distinct ways in which dangers presented in the department's capital city: "I mean, it has changed a lot," he gestured in a circle around his head, referring to our current surroundings. "Back [in the 1960s], we could arrive (to Florencia) and walk around relaxed at night. The police or the army might come, but they would just look around and nothing more, and you could go to them just like you were entering your own home – and that has totally changed. The authorities have taken on drastic measures, and you can´t trust the space of anyone anymore." As someone entering this context in 2014, and earlier in other areas of the country, the idea that citizens might consider a police station or Army battalion as anything akin "entering your own home" was astonishing to me. Both institutions, depending on the populations in which one found oneself, were known for their human rights violations and overall inefficacy. The notable exception to this sentiment was

towards the Army during ex-president Uribe's two terms (2002-2010), when they proved quite effective in their elimination of large portions of the FARC guerrillas.

Eventually, despite narrowly escaping with his life three times during urban FARC bombings in Florencia, Don Giovanni decided to stay in the capital town. He and his family were among the founding members of Las Delicias, where they lived in relative peace. On a typical day, he moved only between his home and his adjacent workshop next door. From there, he designed and forged the very bars and bolts that formed the cages of protection around most of the structures in the neighborhood. At one point during his multiple displacements and migrations, Don Giovanni had found a small sliver of hope in the form of a human rights meeting, where government actors gathered in order to discuss the human rights violations occurring in Caquetá. He had spoken up to denounce what was happening in the countryside with the FARC. He was rewarded the following morning with a phone call from the same FARC commander that had tried to recruit him from the road paving project when he was 16: "If you ever do that again, we will kill you." The very government space in which some were working to address the human rights violations carried out by the FARC had been compromised, infiltrated by the very guerrilla against which they had hoped to defend themselves. It is thus not surprising that Giovanni and those like him maintained their distance from both public and political domains.

In the midst of all of these pressures, constraints, and threats present in the public sphere, and where "the space of others" became something to mistrust and fear, many began to isolate themselves and withdraw from social life nearly entirely. One rural housewife near Puerto Torres lamented the enduring social consequences of these conditions, in an opinion shared by many in the surrounding hamlet:

*I want it to return to how it was…These days, no one trusts anyone. What happened has damaged a great deal the people who live here. There are no big parties, and the ones that are, are kind of weird* (son raritos)*…There is no communal food. I have tried to do community dinners, but no one comes.*

In an extreme case of the same dynamic, the fourth member of our household was Yana's mother, Doña María, an elderly woman diagnosed with the debilitating combination of post-traumatic stress disorder and dementia. She had, most unfortunately, witnessed the assassination of her own grandson – Yana's son – by the FARC, and the mother and daughter had immediately fled the town where they had been living to escape their own deaths, losing everything in the process. Enduring profound hunger throughout the process of displacement and resettlement, along with the traumatic experience of witnessing the murder of her grandson and the deteriorating effects of age, María had developed two compulsive behaviors: she refused to leave the house and she hoarded food under the bed, which, if left unchecked would transform into an ecosystem of arthropod activity. Without assigning attributions where I am clinically unqualified to do so, I suggest it is revealing that Doña María found self-imprisonment in her own home as the only means to ensure some level of peace of mind in the

One effect of the partial withdrawal from common and communal spaces is an overall reduction in the amount of personal information shared among members of a society living together. This is both intentional, as elaborated in the previous section, and a product of reduced social interactions. Such experiences comprise even popular understandings of contemporary life in the country. Colombian author Luis Noriega's 2015 award-winning collection of fictional short stories, *Reasons to Mistrust Your Neighbors,* wonders through his characters, "Why in this country can they kill with such ease?...In this country, there are people who kill, people who

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don´t kill, and, at best, people who want to kill." And who are these people who occupy these first and third categories of being in Colombia? "The resentful [man]." Noriega elaborates through the example of the ubiquitous quotidian activity of enjoying a well-roasted chicken.

> *The resentful man sees that I am eating a chicken and doesn´t think that he too can eat chicken…He ignores the fact that, in this sentence, "I" and "he" are empty positions, capable of being filled with an infinite number of different possibilities, and he transforms his poor grammatical understanding and his impossibility for using language in a creative way into an accusation. I eat chicken* **because** *he does not…The final conclusion is inevitable: he has to call me to account for the chicken that I have eaten in his stead. Avenge himself. Kill me…If he has the opportunity, he will try to do it: if not, he will be consumed with rancor. We are subjected to the dictatorship of the resentful man…And what more than killing to resentful men want? That there are more resentful men, of course. Brothers in resentment, because* **hate is gregarious** *(Noriega, 2015: 30-31, emphasis added).*

Don Giovanni's experiences, as well as those of many others who ventured to share their stories over a pot of *arroz chino* with me paint the picture of a constantly changing framework social and subjective life marked by mistrust, fear, and suspicion. The people, they changed and changed, Giovanni remembered, not from moment to another, but over time, and became "almost enemies" along the way. And some of these people who were relentlessly pursued by the monsters of war, in their changing, became unable to trust in the good will of others, and succumbed to Noriega's eloquently named "gregariousness" of mistrust. Spaces became insecure, and the "deliciousness" of life had faded.

Fierce self-sequestering begets suspicion and the same in others, and in this way, new threats are woven in with the old to create a social fabric lined with mistrust and fear. For example, in their study of a Bombay community after a religious riot, Mehta and Chatterji (2001) identified a community leader, who had tried and largely failed to create unity among previously fighting religious communities by creating shared spaces among the neighborhood residents. But, citing their interlocutor, after many times of hailing out into an unanswering void, "we start to behave like them. We also know how to preserve our self-respect. This is why there is suspicion and fear." This suspicion and fear recycles and reproduces anxieties regarding what can and can be used against the person, as revealed in Saira's penultimate question:

*What will I be asked about?* (i.e., what information about myself will I be asked to share in this communal space?)

And Yana's this time complete and transparent answer:

*Only what you want to.*

In the comparative calm of the years surrounding the 2016 signing of the Havana Peace Accord, rural and urban residents alike continued to navigate the personal and relational aftermath of these events. Leidy, previously plagued by her sister's affiliation to the *junta,* responded cautiously to my question from the relative calm of her hamlet in early 2017, "So, what's it like here these days?" "Fears exist," she said, matter of factly. "One watches out for oneself. There are still rumors, stories of new paramilitaries." She pauses for a long while, alternately looking at me and at the corner of the room, seeming uncertain as to whether or not to continue, perhaps as to whether or not I can be trusted. I agonize in the silence, hoping that she

will indeed continue. "Well, you see, there are people who pass by in the night." She sighs, standing to signal the end of the interview. "But who knows who they are."

One distinction between those living amidst the conditions of mistrust that marked daily life in Las Delicias and other writings on societies that have been categorized as "low trust" revolves around the relationship between (mis)trust and predicting the future behavior of others. For example, in his ethnographic exploration of mistrust among the Moroccan High Atlas, Carey (2017) found that familiarity does not constitute sufficient grounds for trust. Despite intimacy, kinship, and friendship, familiarity does not equate to knowability of the other or predicting their behavior. On one hand, familiarity certainly mediated relations and practices of trust among neighbors in Las Delicias. Saira trusted Yana when she decided to attend the first ESPERE workshop after the window consultation. Their relationship was a familiar one, and that familiarity had everything to do with the trust between them. Carey analyzes a society in which a pervasive sense of mistrust has given rise to a particular class of autonomy: one cannot predict the actions of others and that leaves oneself and others free to act. The mistrust that I observed in my various field settings carried the them the dual flavors cynicism and fear: if one allowed oneself to be vulnerable (*dar papaya*) the very nature of those around you would lead them to take advantage of your vulnerability (*malicia indigena*). For this reason, practices of personal security and protection emerged as a site in which these anxieties manifested in observable actions and interactions in daily life.

**Conclusion**

Recent ethnographic scholarship on mistrust has artfully examined the ways in which the ideas about mistrust manifest in discourses and influence the everyday (Carey, 2017). I this chapter, I have extended and shifted this argument: the very experience of mistrust produced

discourses and practices that constituted the social world as untrustworthy. I first traced the sociohistorical context of war and its aftermath as lived by many of the residents of Las Delicias, showing the many ways in which once trusted individuals and institutions became sites and sources of betrayal. I then examined the particular domain of discourses and practices related to self-protection and personal security that emerged, largely informed by these experiences with betrayal. Following, I argued that they simultaneously achieved their stated function and revealed the limits of protection and security in insecure contexts. Finally, I demonstrated how discourses and practices related to mistrust are also performative: they create and maintain the social and spatial distances that contribute to suspicion even as they protect against the objects of that suspicion.

And so these 6,000 or so families in Las Delicias find themselves together in the "almost after" of a context sputtering along as it drags behind it the weight of a half-century of war. Old threads of a social world remembered with the distortions of nostalgia - some preserved, some damaged, and others lost forever - weaving together to create new ways of building relationships and being in a community. These frameworks do not remain frozen in time, but instead extend out into the social realm, implicated in and influenced in day to day interactions – some reinforcing and others in contradiction. All of this is not to say that people do not trust. Society, even a small one like Las Delicias, would come to a grinding halt if there were absolute mistrust (Möllering, 2001; Simmel, 1950). Even in the data that I have provided, we see instances of trust – of risking something of oneself, at least affectively, in the reliance on another to abstain from causing you harm: Saira trusts Yana in her decision-making calculus about whether or not to attend the ESPERE that day, Don Giovanni trusted me and the environment of the Center for Reconciliation enough to invite me into his home to meet his family and share a dinner, and all of the people who offered me advice on how to protect myself likely did so under the assumption

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that I would trust them.  Understanding the sociohistorically embedded ways of trust building

among conflict-affected actors offers insight into just a single strand that comprises the broader

tapestry of the values, beliefs, and norms that produce social life in such communities. In as

much as promoting reconciliation in transitional settings requires trust-building after actual or

perceived wrongdoing (Govier & Verwoerd, 2002), this chapter serves to frame the remaining

analyses of interventions attempting to do just that. It suggests that the work of the intervention is

thus double: first to address the prevailing mistrust in the broader social environments, and

second to focus on the narrow domain of social practices that the organization or institution

purports to act upon.

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## Chapter 2: "You have five minutes to generate trust": The NGO encounter and the reproduction of division

I argue throughout the remaining chapters that the interventions that attempt to resolve a social problem actually create the conditions for the replication of that social problem. The administrative practices required for sustaining an organizational intervention constitute the means by which that replication becomes possible. In this chapter, I begin with a small-scale NGO intervention, Colombia Reconciles (CR), which attempted to promote reconciliation among conflict affected populations as one instance of this dynamic. I argue that by opening a physical center within Las Delicias, an NGO such as CR always already creates the conditions for contests over power and resources. The presence of a physical center signaled the promise of a wide range of possible resources in an acutely resource-scarce environment. Furthermore, by hiring a staff member directly from the community, the NGO inadvertently altered existing relations of power and hierarchy because of the access to various forms of social and financial capital that such a job entailed. As part of her job responsibilities, this community member completed various administrative practices in the day-to-day operations. These practices represented the means by which she sustained her access to the resources and produced new forms of social hierarchy.

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Daniel stood at the back of the church, which sat perched upon the singular hill marking this small hamlet of 65 families and their farms in rural Caquetá. It was May 2016, just under two years after the entry of the Reconciliation House in the community of Las Delicias, and the task of the day was to deliver a series of forgiveness and reconciliation workshops to the residents of this hamlet. The two workshop facilitators with whom I had arrived that morning wandered out back behind the church to the cemetery, arms outstretched to the heavens that the steeple had

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blocked in the hopes of catching just one bar of cell signal, occasionally available in this cell tower-starved corner of the world. They informed the Center Director that we had arrived and were about to begin. Fifteen community members quietly filled in participant surveys in this small town that had long ago fallen from even the periphery of state planning and resource allocation. Daniel, a former FARC guerrilla and himself a lifelong worker of the land, removed his straw hat to fan his face in the growing heat of the late morning. I asked him why he had decided to become a *dinamizador* of these workshops (one who "makes dynamic" workshop pedagogies – i.e., a volunteer facilitator), since this volunteer work occupied the better part of his weekend after a long week of backbreaking labor cultivating the African Palm trees that stretched for miles in every direction.

As he spoke, he scratched at a few gray curly chest hairs lounging in the low "V" formed by his unbuttoned shirt. His speech became increasingly animated, and his field machete swung back and forth at his side as he gestured, brushing the tassels of the leather sheath against his impossibly white slacks.

> *[In my first workshop], we painted an egg with our most important hopes*
> *and dreams. And then – then they (the facilitators) put them all in a bag and*
> *dropped it on the floor and they all broke. You can have all of these hopes*
> *and dreams and work towards them and, at any moment, they can be*
> *destroyed. You have to be prepared and willing to deal with that, and deal*
> *with things that happen that are beyond your control. The experience was*
> *very beautiful, and it changed everything about my perspectives. I took it*
> *home with me and shared it with my wife and my children. It had a big*
> *impact on me.*

By this time, I had participated in and observed a dozen or so versions of these forgiveness and reconciliation workshops across a wide variety of institutional and community settings. In each of them, I had seen a wide variety of reactions to the pedagogical content. Some finished the series of 40-hour workshops inspired to make major changes in their lives and proselytize their learning. Others remained cynical and continued to maintain the physical and interpersonal distance described in the previous chapter. Still others simply came and went, passing through the experience as one passes through an art exhibition in a public park: stop, look, dwell awhile, and then continue your way.

Daniel's experience was by no means unique, then, but was also the kind of experience most commonly foregrounded in donor reports and press releases about these initiatives. Moving beyond the benefits of these workshops, this chapter looks into the bag and examines the "broken eggs." I investigate how it is that the implicit promises – resources, refuge, healing - that the entry of an outside NGO brings can also fracture. I argue that, by analyzing these broken moments, we can better understand the reach and limits of an NGO that, at its heart, seeks to build more trusting and trustworthy subjects in the aftermath of extreme violence.

In the previous chapter, I argued that the mistrust that emerged from experiences with armed conflict shaped social life in Las Delicias: practices and performances of personal security constituted the very dangerous people and places against which they defended. Here, I follow the residents of Las Delicias into Colombia Reconciles' Reconciliation House and its forgiveness and reconciliation workshops; it was the first non-religious organization to establish a physical presence in the community. As such a flagship organization, it quickly became the object of intense inquiry, interest, and not a small measure of skepticism. In order to understand the social realities of life together after betrayal, violence, and suffering, I trace the lived experiences of

those implicated in these acts both in and beyond the walls of an NGO promoting forgiveness and reconciliation.

In the context of post-conflict peacebuilding, NGO interventions tend to serve a role that emphasizes the use and development of existing local capabilities, and that operates at the community level. Specifically in terms of reconciliation, NGOs will often facilitate community-building projects that support convening individuals from vulnerable groups and promoting mutual trust and non-violent conflict resolution among them (Mesa P., 2017). The work of Colombia Reconciles thus finds echo in a variety of post-conflict settings, and serves as a useful empirical example for similar interventions more broadly. The administrative practices of CR that I examine in this chapter, I argue, constitute *bureaucraft* - the overt and occult means by which organizational actors curate, cull, and package individual experiences with trauma and suffering in order to advance both benevolent (providing aid) and malevolent (self-interest, or even revenge) ends (James, 2010). Bureaucraft comprises "the opaque and sometimes secret crafts of activists, bureaucrats, and humanitarian and development experts [who] made suffering productive" (pp 32-33). By interrogating the practice of this craft, the present chapter pulls back the curtain a bit on these "opaque" dynamics. It foregrounds how producing material and symbolic signs of reconciliation can exacerbate conflict-identity related divisions, rather than ameliorate them. I draw from anthropological work on interventions and moral philosophy of trust in order to develop these findings and their implications for social life in a time of neither war nor peace.

**Raising the Stakes: Calling for Trust in Las Delicias**

The push for reconciliation in post-conflict settings stems from a variety of anxieties and experiences worldwide, not least of which include the tendency in these contexts to experience

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increases in violence, struggle with  weak state institutions, and suffer the corrosive effects of

cycles of violence and revenge  (Suhrke & Berdal, 2012). War affected societies have also,

generally, suffered a widespread collapse of trust, both among individuals as well as between

society and the state. Social psychologists, for example, have named mistrust as the single

greatest problem in the aftermath of armed conflict. Politicians and academics alike in this setting

have reflected on the need to "decommission mindsets" in order to overcome the sociopolitical

divides that emerged in the aftermath of war (USIP, 2001). Seminal research in political science

based in the Central and Southern African regions has identified three broad political challenges

in the aftermath of war: attacking root causes of the war, fostering attitudes and behaviors that

promote the peaceful coexistence and political participation along with economic investment, and

to adjust and learn based on the nuances of each particular context (Widner, 2004). Setting aside

for now the larger structural components such as infrastructure and economy building, this

chapter focuses on the attitudes and behaviors and builds on Widner's assertions that building

and sustaining peaceful societies after armed conflict requires a restoration of interpersonal trust.

Extending prior work, I take as my starting point the assertion that reconciliation after

armed conflict requires the establishment of mutual interpersonal trust (Bar-Tal & Bennink,

2004; Bloomfield, Barnes, & Huyse, 2003). For Widner and others in the field, trust represents an

indispensable prerequisite for reconciliation among those implicated in organized armed violence

(Malloy, 2008). In the case of the Cambodian genocide, for example, scholars have identified

trust as foundational for reconciliation in a war torn society (Rasmussen, 2001). Although

asserted in the context of political and military leadership, the idea nonetheless aligns with other

related writings that argue the same across a variety of domains in life at the tail end of organized

armed violence. It also aligns with the definition of reconciliation that I draw from to frame this

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work, which posits the process as a restoration of trust after relational ruptures resulting from a perceived or actual wrongdoing (Govier & Verwoerd, 2002). As noted by Jamal's (2016) work on the Israel-Palestine conflict:

> *The root of such a goal—reconciliation that is lasting and effective—is an effective operationalization of trust, requiring one to take into consideration its roles and various dimensions, how they are conceptualized by both parties, and how such conceptualizations interact with various environmental and political elements; only then can it take hold and facilitate a viable and sustainable outcome. The following pages demonstrate that trust is of the utmost importance to reconciliation, especially in the present context, which is characterized by two groups with not only separate, but also contradictory ideologies, narratives and goals. (p. 12)*

Taken together, the call to reconcile is thus, at its heart, a call to trust after experiences with the betrayals that occurred in the framework of the armed conflict. Such a call raises the stakes tremendously when the consequences of betrayal elaborated in the last chapter represent the potential loss of life or loved ones, let alone land and livelihood. Reconciliation and trust are complex calls in both emotional and structural terms. To the latter point, among  the most important factors in determining a sense of generalized trust in post-conflict settings is the robustness of rule of law in the particular setting (Widner, 2004). In a neighborhood like Las Delicias, with little Public Forces presence and community-level organized militias, widespread drug selling and consumption, rampant robberies and killings, this represents a particularly tenuous proposition. Emotionally and affectively, calling on people to trust in a post-conflict setting is affectively laden because it, in part, appeals to individuals' hopes for a better future (Rasmussen, 2001). In addition to the potential emotional and subjective disillusionment that

such an appeal could cause when implicated actors fall short of expectations, trusting in transitioning contexts involves considerable risks to physical security as well. It is, from whatever angle of approach, exposure to vulnerability for which the costs can be grave.

Furthermore, I suggest that calling for reconciliation in communities with a high concentration of conflict-affected individuals primes participants to draw from the elements of their identity that relate to the armed conflict. In the following chapter, I develop further how similar intervention settings call on them to perform particular idealized types of those identities, entrenching division, instead of bridging it.

*Trust, Hope, and Waiting: The NGO's call to trust*

In this section, I analyze an RH facilitator's guided attempts to "generate trust" among the individuals in the room. I find that the effective hailing of particular kinds of conflict-affected individuals – community leaders, members from associations that organize around conflict identities, individuals actively seeking personal healing and learning opportunities – does indeed convene those previously divided by conflict violence into the same physical space. I go on to confirm that the call to reconcile in this setting is at its core a call to trust, and the challenges inherent in such a proposition in a  site like Las Delicias, where mistrust and the performance of personal security represent core sites of personal and social anxieties.

By June 2014, the Reconciliation House was soon ready to host its inaugural forgiveness and reconciliation workshop just over one month after the doors had first opened. I, along with the Center Director, Yula, Yana, and Julio joined as participants: the first step in the "train the trainer" model used by the parent foundation of Colombia Reconciles. Yula would receive additional training for all Center Directors nationally in Bogotá.  Rusa, an experienced workshop facilitator from the headquarters in Bogotá, had traveled to deliver the first session and to help

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bring the Center up to speed alongside Yula. All future workshops were to be led by the three

Center employees and those that they eventually trained in the community.

On the first day, we were 17 total: the remaining 14 attendees included members of

Yana's association of female victims of the armed conflict who were community leaders in their

own right, and ex-combatants from illegal armed groups who had come at the recommendation of

the Colombian Agency for Reintegration – the state agency charged with "re"integration

Colombia's excombatants from all illegal armed groups at the time of this fieldwork - as well as a

few children of those present. While the purpose of the workshop was to convene without

assigning conflict identities (e.g., victim, former combatant) and to allow those to emerge

organically through conversation and trust-building exercises over the 80 hours of the course, in

most cases, it would not be hard for those present to divine the pasts of others. Many of the

women already knew each other through Yana's association, and the presence of a single man

with a single arm as a recent entry into a community dense with ex-combatants was typically read

as an increase in the count of the same by one. Thus, "open to all" did not equate to random

selection. By convening participants in the way that they did, RH workers hailed their future

"beneficiaries" by drawing from networks of local leadership and government and donor

networks already involved in the peacebuilding project – i.e., RH was looking for a particular

kind of subject already constituted in terms of engagement with their own stories, community

life, and possible futures. Furthermore, the model of reproduction that CR employed was a "train

the trainer" one, in which some percentage of workshop participants were expected to go out and

reproduce the methodological practices in their own local contexts in order to multiply the effects

of the intervention and to contribute to sustainability of workshop outcomes in the local sites

(Vargas, Monroy, Narváez, & Galindo, 2015). Those who responded to these proposed criteria

came to be workshop participants.

This understanding reflected in the responses that individuals gave to opening questions about motives for attendance. For example, the five men present said that they wanted to learn more about what this Reconciliation House was, share their own experiences, and learn about those of others. The responses of the 12 female participants did not differ dramatically in terms of wanting to contribute and gain knowledge and life experiences. Two additional women noted that they were interested in taking full advantage of the program, sharing the materials with the rest of the community, and strengthening the community in the process.

Over the first six months of the RH, official registries showed that 450 individuals participated in its activities. Of those, the vast majority (62%) were minors who attended my English classes, dance classes, arts and crafts workshops, and other afterschool programs designed for youth participation and community involvement. The remaining attendees were fairly evenly divided between adults between 19-44 (20%) and those 45 and older (18%). Women and girls comprised 60% of the "beneficiaries," to use the NGO's terminology.

Rusa, the facilitator from the national headquarters, stood before us for the opening exercise, and instructed us to wander around the room, looking at one another, introducing ourselves to one another by only our first names. She told us to look into the eyes of the other people, study their hair, their skin, their clothes; we were not to use identifiers of any kind when we introduced ourselves. Here we were not lawyer, victim, anthropologist, house wife; here we are just Erin, Carlos, María, and Yana. I was not alone in my somewhat compulsive awkward giggling as I made eye contact then look at people's clothes and heads as I tried to do what I imagine "studying someone's hair" might be like.

I sympathized with the two participants who constantly shifted their gazes, pregnant with discomfort, between the linoleum floor and freshly painted peach-colored walls of the communal room, resisting engagement with their companions, and gravitating towards the walls and corners

as they were able. Quick to wrangle in those seeking solace on the periphery, Rusa urged them

back in, looking at them as she emphasized the call to "recognize" the other people in the room.

After a few more minutes of this guided mutual recognition, which stretched to an eternity (as

awkwardness tends to do) the facilitator asked us to form small groups: "Without speaking, form

groups of three with people that you do not know at all." We complied, and the only sound that

filled the room was the continued shuffling of shoes now paired with the whine of the white

plastic chairs being dragged around as we gathered in our small groups. We exchanged looks

among each other that ranged from more giggling, to confusion, to deep skepticism as to where

all of this shuffling and hair studying was headed.

What I did not know at the time, was that the two complete strangers with whom I was

attaching myself - literally, as Rusa instructed the now-seated triads to ensure that they were

sitting with their knees touching at all times – would form the nucleus of my individual and

shared journeys of healing and rebuilding over the next 80 hours or so of the intervention: the

*grupiño*. "What gets said in the grupiño stays in the grupiño," Rusa told us. It was sacred ground

– "like a church." She instructed us to introduce ourselves to each other, free to offer whatever

degree of detail one wanted to. Some glanced sideways suspiciously at their new companions;

while others began sharing quickly and effusively. Still others only touched knees after much

cajoling and encouragement from their more gregarious peers and the facilitator, who publicly

praised the first group to correctly demonstrate the desired physical arrangement. Others never

did touch knees. After a few minutes, the human triangles begin to hum with chatter, and the

facilitator checked the clock and reviewed her materials for the next step of the intervention. "OK

everyone," she called out over the rising din of the conversations, "you will have about five more

minutes to generate trust in your groups."

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In this standard introduction to the forgiveness and reconciliation workshop experience, we find that facilitators ask participants to engage in some social interactions intended to build trust: looking at someone else in the eyes, studying their person and permitting oneself to be studied in turn, physically touching one another, and sharing personal details about oneself. In communities such as Las Delicias, these actions run directly counter to many the social rules elaborated in the last chapter of how to engage with a person unknown. For example, direct eye contact with a stranger is rare, and even sharing a name is done with reticence, for as the oft-repeated adage goes in areas with long and violent histories with armed actors, "you never know with whom you are speaking" (a spy, a militia member, a paramilitary actor, military intelligence). I was warned by a friend after answering the standard barrage of questions from a local taxi driver about where I was from and what on earth I was doing there: "Never tell anyone anything about yourself. You cannot trust anyone here." In communities in which direct address is often realized in terms of descriptive adjectives – *Gordo* (fatso), *Mona* (blondie), *Jóven* (kid) – and people have often known each other for extended periods without ever knowing the other person's name ("*Buenos Dias, veci*." "Good morning, neighbor!"). I had commented as much to a local photographer while we were visiting the site of the torture training school in Puerto Torres during a pilgrimage organized by the local Archdiocese. As he explained to me the potentially fatal consequences of recognition in communities such as the one in which we stood, an adolescent boy walked by and grabbed the tree branch over his head and paused for a while, swinging back and forth by his arm in the shade a few yards away and staring at us. Apropos of the conversation the photographer and I were just having, I decided to introduce myself. My name was met with a nod and silence. A few second later, I hazarded an inroad: "What's your name?" As if on cue, the boy squinted at me, then at Andres, and then at Andres' professional camera and the voice recorder in my hand. Andres turned to me, "See?" Inaudibly, the youth then

mumbled what I presume was his name and then wandered off. In such contexts, just offering a

name can be risky. A name, after all, can always end up on a list; and lists, in the wrong hands,

have been known to lead to displacement, disappearance, or death.

"You will have five more minutes to generate trust in your groups," Rusa had told us. To

comply, we continued sharing superficial personal details as instructed, such as favored and

unfavored foods, likes and dislikes in life. In addition to explicit calls to build trust among those

present in the room, implicit in the workshop pedagogy are calls to the same. But can such calls

be answered? Can trust be built, on command, one *grupiño* at a time? We may find some inroads

in the philosophical scholarship delineating the role of will and belief in trusting. Holton (1994)

argues that in order to decide to trust, one simply must lack the belief that the other will certainly

betray you, which is distinct from being uncertain about whether or not he will fulfill the

expectations you have for him. In this way, trust and belief are distinct: one can will oneself to

trust, but one cannot will oneself to believe. Trust without full belief may also be framed as

pretense, acting as if something were true. Indeed, one can decide to trust an individual to speak

truly and sincerely; if, over the course of interactions that trust is proven to be well-placed, then

belief will follow. Two important points underlie these conceptualizations: first, that trusting is a

choice, among other things. Second, attitudes about trust can change over time and over the

course of interactions. Both of these points also position trust as relational and malleable – i.e., a

site of subject formation and social interaction upon which one might intervene.

To get at the emotional and affective dimensions of trust, it is first necessary to

distinguish trust from a related but distinct construct: reliance. Trust implicates reliance, but

relying does not equate to trusting (Baier, 1986). Trust requires reliance in addition to some other

attitudinal, emotional or otherwise subjective element emergent only in interpersonal relations.

Reliance fails to comprise the entirety of trust by the very fact that we can rely as much on

objects (e.g., cars and watches) as we can on other individuals or agents (e.g., friends and government officials) (Luhmann, 1988). Additionally, a person can behave reliably – e.g., waking up every morning at the same time – independent, indeed, entirely ignorant of whether or not her behavior is anticipated or hoped for by another individual (Baier, 1986). Reliable behavior can also result from a variety of external stimuli, only one of which among them is the fact that the person is aware that another trusts them to behave reliably (Jones, 1996). Finally, one can rely on another – as evidenced by making plans according to the anticipated actions – without trusting that person to act in a particular way (Gambetta, 1988). Importantly for the present analysis, reliance without trust forecloses the possibility for a sense of betrayal when the anticipated actions do not materialize: I cannot rightly feel betrayed when I plan to catch a motorcycle ride into town with my neighbor because I see him leave at the same time each day and he stays home sick in bed.

To determine what then constitutes an act of trusting, scholars have developed a variety of terms for elaborating on that "additional element."[1] Holton (1994) names the additional component that combines with reliance the *participant stance*, which he defines as a certain attitude that one has attached to the act of trusting that suggests a disposition to feel resentful or betrayed should the trusted not behave in the hoped for way. For Holton, trust is reliance combined with an emotional, affective, and/or attitudinal investment. Others have framed the gap between relying and trusting as requiring a "leap" (Simmel, 1950), or implying a "mysterious, unaccountable faith" (Möllering, 2001): an adoption of the uncertainty of imperfect information.

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[1] To clarify what I am talking about when I talk about trust in this context, I also need to distinguish among the three ways in which an individual may be said to trust: in a three-way relation (X trusts Y to □), in a two-way relation (X trusts Y), and in a one-way relation (X trusts, or X is disposed to trust). All three of these kinds of interpersonal trust can be found throughout the present analysis: victims trust – at least for a while – Yana in general (two way), Yula trusts Yana to lock the door at the end of each day (three way), and a former combatant becomes more willing in general to share his story with those around him over time (one way).

In less ethereal terms, trusting is a way of seeing the other in a specific interaction: it is an attitude of optimism regarding the goodwill and moral competence of the trusted combined with the expectation that they will be moved to behave in the hoped for way precisely because one trusts them to do so (Jones, 1996). Furthermore, trustworthiness is intrinsically valued in a given society, and it is a good thing to act in such a way (Faulkner, 2017). Thinking of trust in this way opens up the conversation to individual dispositions and the multiple moral frameworks within in which a community of actors operates, and, importantly for this work, the way in which those dispositions and frameworks may be changed. Such an assertion however – that to trust is to act in a morally good way – is certainly complicated in a context like Las Delicias, where a justifiable paranoia regarding the possible mal-intentioned positions mistrust as the more sensible, "good" option. As I elaborated in the previous chapter, the social rules around self-protection in Las Delicias and transmitted in official state discourses were clear: do not make yourself vulnerable. You are on your own. To trust is to be a fool. Thus, promoting reconciliation is a doubly challenging task because individuals have developed certain behaviors as a result of threats against their lives, and engaging in reconciliation in the way envisioned by the NGO alters these coping strategies.

To the credit of Colombia Reconciles, at least several of those present in that first workshop began to build trusting relationships with individuals they had never met before that day. Some of the most socially productive instances of these relationships took years to emerge, and would escape reporting intent on demonstrating near- to mid-term impacts of CR's pedagogy. I foreground one such relationship towards the end of the chapter: a former victim previously afraid to leave her house because of the ex-combatants she knew lived in the neighborhood and one of those ex-combatants collaborating on an economic initiative for neighborhood women. I watched friendships forged on that day across conflict identity lines

grow into nodes of community building and just plain comfortable and trusting ways of being together in the world.

However, mixed with these successes were occasions in which Daniel's eggs painted with the dreams of the center workers and beneficiaries lay shattered. I sift through the shards of the broken shells in the following section in order to better understand how those so fervently committed to the reconciliation and trust-building project could themselves contribute to the disillusionment that some passing through that center felt and the further deepening of conflict-identity based divides along the way. I find that the *administration* of the intervention – i.e., the bureaucratic practices necessary for its operation and sustainability – emerges as the mechanism by which the ambivalence inherent in the projects of personal and social healing materializes in the interpersonal interactions of the implicated actors.

*Reconciliation and Identity Priming*

I suggest that one of the reasons for the reproduction of divisions along conflict identity lines, such as those presented in the following sections has to do with the way in which calling for "reconciliation" primes participants in terms of the relationship they have or had to the relational rupture that begs repair. As mentioned above, amassing the funding required to back a two-year physical center and the salaries and programming to fill it was no small feat on the part of the directors of Colombia Reconciles. It also signaled as much the profound need for "reconciliation" in Las Delicias as CR's ability to effectively communicate that need to donors. The very presence of RH indexed significant social divisions that were deemed to have required facilitated resolution, and the NGO convened participants according to those divisions: conflict victim, excombatant. Throughout participation in the forgiveness and reconciliation workshops, facilitators primed these aspects of individuals' identity by continually referencing the "offense"

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(details to be filled in by each participant) committed by or against an individual. Furthermore, events like ritual workshop activities and donor visits called on participants to perform idealized identity types related to experiences with the armed conflict, such as a repentant excombatant or forgiving victim. With these constant reminders of who one is vis-à-vis the armed conflict, inevitable divisions, contest, and frictions emerged along these identity lines.

Thus, calls for reconciliation in a context of transition out of armed conflict implicate the elements of one's identity as it related to that conflict, and we would expect that effect to be all the more acute in communities in which the vast majority of residents are either former combatants or victims. As mentioned, CR's pedagogy used the term "offense," to refer to the relational rupture on which participants would spend their workshop hours reflecting. It also attempted to directly ameliorate the very identity priming that I describe here as occurring through the use of the terminology "offender" and "offended." Part of this is due to the application of the CR pedagogy in non-conflict settings (e.g., in family reconciliation encounters, or in communities of at-risk youth), and part of this is to try and support participants in creating new narratives about their identities that reduce the power of identities vis-à-vis the armed conflict, and increase the role of more forward-looking life projects. Still, in a community with the demographic qualities of Las Delicias, "reconciliation" among such a population cannot help but carry with it the intonation of acts committed within the framework of the armed conflict. Certainly the discourses of the participants suggested this was the case, as former combatants would speak of contribution to community, repair for past damages done, and a sense of responsibility; victims would refer to forgiveness for violent displacement, disappeared loved ones, and murdered fathers and husbands.

**The social work of interventions: Power, hierarchy, and contest**

Previous ethnographic work on development and humanitarian interventions has found

that they produce relational re-structuring and struggles for power (Buur, 2000; James, 2010;

Lea, 2008; Murray Li, 2007) and that they are key sites for contests over identity and subjectivity

(Carr, 2010; Green, 2009; Muehlebach, 2012). But more than just novel domains for enacting the

same old social and subjective struggles, interventions themselves - aid, humanitarian,

peacebuilding, development –always already produce contests over power and relational

positioning. In his writing on the "tyranny of the gift," Godelier (1999) argues that the

presentation of a gift works upon the relation between the gift giver and the recipient along two

contradictory lines: first, in the event that there is a pre-existing hierarchy, the gift expresses and

reinforces it. Giving a gift reduces interpersonal distance because it represents sharing; it

increases that distance in that it creates a kind of debt from one to the other. It can be an act of

violence under the guise of a disinterested gesture. In a parallel though distinct argument, Fassin

(2012) critiques compassion via humanitarian aid, citing the implicit superior/inferior

relationship it presupposes between the provider and the beneficiary. The intervening

organization is, as Godelier's gift, a double-edged sword in terms of social relations in that it

represents an instantiation of inequality and dominance while at the same time drawing on a

politics of solidarity. In this section, I argue that the opening of the Reconciliation House in a

resource scarce community such as Las Delicias equated to such an instance of introducing

hierarchy and differential access to power. It was the first NGO of its kind to launch a physical

site in the community, and thus represented the first such infusion of such financial, technical,

and relational capital. Furthermore, the Reconciliation House employed one woman who lived in

the community - Yana. Her salary and her increased access to the resources that the Center

promised altered dramatically the social relations and hierarchical structures both within and beyond the walls of the Center.

Yana received a monthly salary of $575 USD, nearly three times the minimum wage.[2] She had completed her primary school education – the average education level for women in this context is the 5th grade[3] - and was in the process of working through her high school studies. Such a salary was unheard of in that community, where most lived well below the poverty line, and certainly struggled to get anywhere near the legal minimum wage ($209 per month at the time) in households with multiple adults and children. In this instance, Yana's wage went to supporting herself and her elderly mother, since all of her children were grown and with their own families. Such relative wealth catapulted Yana´s status among her association members as well as international institutions and other NGOs. She was a consistent presence in all forms of local policy, international agency, and other NGO meetings in the city – meetings in which few other individuals from the popular classes were present. Colombia Reconciles was keenly aware of the opportunity that this afforded Yana. "It's unheard of for someone like her to have this salary," one of the central office leaders whispered into my ear during one of her earlier visits to the Las Delicias center. Yana's window, featured in the last chapter, became a hive of activity, gossip, resource seeking, and aid intelligence, with key ring raps on the trembling plastic intensifying in frequency as her role in the center grew more and more prominent. Perhaps most tellingly, as I will discuss later on in this chapter, her and her window's prominence in community affairs receded dramatically after the NGO closed.

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[2] Recall in the previous chapter that the average monthly *household* income in Las Delicias hovered around $100USD, less than half of the mandatory minimum wage for individuals in Colombia at the time.
[3] Independently conducted socioeconomic census of Las Delicias.

I follow the work of those such as Tanya Murray Li (2007), who take seriously the NGO directors' *will to improve,* as she titles her work on agricultural conservation and development interventions in Indonesia. I do not posit a sinister plot on the part of NGO designers and their national, governmental, and international funders to divide, conquer, and render (in)visible certain kinds of citizen subjects. However, in keeping with Fassin and Godelier's framing of interventions and aid as inevitably implicating social relations and hierarchy, I first analyze how the arrival of the Reconciliation House was always already going to structure, disrupt, and perpetuate the tensions in the community's network of social relations. I argue this was the case for three reasons: first, due to the infusion of various forms of resources into a context of acute scarcity. Second, because the intervention implicitly called on community members to convene according to their conflict identities and continually return to the wrongs they had committed and/or received during the armed conflict. And third, because the very nature of an intervention that both implicitly and explicitly calls on a generally mistrusting population to trust anew – and in ways that run counter to established shared practices for personal security – strums the median nerve of past experiences with betrayal. It exposes the vulnerable underbelly of an already violated body politic to a process that is excruciatingly fragile as formal war ends but socioeconomic insecurity and violence continue with unrelenting force.

I argue that it is a categorically distinct experience to participate in an intervention such as that analyzed by Murray Li, which attempts to modify farming practices, than it is to participate in an intervention attempting to alter one's way of being in the social world, when the stakes for the latter include one's own life. As previous scholars have convincingly shown, dating back to Ferguson's (1994) and Scott's (1998) works on development and governmentality, respectively, even the most mundane of "technical" tasks can have significant implications for politics and subjectivity. This work attempts to extend our understanding of specifically how these

implications materialize by examining a context in which the social and subjective projects are front and center.

*Reframing "re"integration*

At this point, I would like to make a theoretical adjustment to the framing of activities such as those that occurred within the Colombia Reconciles. Academic and policy domains refer to those activities that focus on facilitating sustainable civilian lives for former members of illegal armed groups as "reintegration." While the term "reintegration" pervades discourses about ex-combatant life after they have disarmed and, for the most part, disbanded, I propose to shift to the term "integration," and will do so for the remainder of my work. One of the reasons for this shift is the small domain of research that questions the "re" of any kind of exit from an armed group, not just in Colombia, where historically former combatants have had to leave their natal territories for security reasons, but also worldwide, in the sense that there is nothing approximating a sense of return for many, if not most of those exiting combat situations and joining civil society (E. K. McFee et al., Forthcoming; Sprenkels, 2018; Theidon, 2007). In many cases, due to the unfortunate widespread practice of child recruitment into these groups, civilian life is simply beginning for the first time for many fighters. Furthermore, at least in the Colombian case, combatants belong to particular geographically bounded "fronts," which further complicate ideas of return when they become more "of" the territory in which they fought than that into which they had been born. "Reintegration" also implies not just returning somewhere physically, but also going to that place in order to integrate oneself into a particular society, a mandate with powerful undertones. The idea that what one's time "in the mountain" or in an illegal armed group represents is not the equivalent to a society of some kind strips the former fighter of very salient elements of his or her corporeal and epistemological experience.

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I also propose this alteration to naming for analytic reasons: I examine the production of daily life among individuals affected by armed conflict – direct and indirect victims and perpetrators of violence. It is more appropriate to frame these encounters in terms of the way in which these populations co-produce their social and other forms of integration rather than simply adopting the perspective of the ex-combatant parachuting out of nowhere into a community with no history. Thus, while the present work fully speaks to literature on reintegration of former fighters after armed conflict, it exceeds that, and so I will use the term "integration" moving forward.

*The promise of the NGO*

Building off of the above assertion that opening the Center created and disrupted existing social hierarchies in Las Delicias, I also found that community members interpreted RH as a promise – of financial, relational, and technical resources. Simply by showing up, RH and, in turn, it's Bogota backer, Colombia Reconciles, signaled the potential for improved quality of life among a population that clamored for greater institutional attention and the means to meet basic needs. It signaled and made good on this promise through beneficiary recruitment practices, providing a safe physical space,  hosting both fun and vocationally valuable classes, attracting outsider funding and site visits, and offering the forgiveness and reconciliation pedagogy, which promised psychological and social relief from the suffering of war.

In the previous chapter, we learned through the conversation at Yana's window how individuals came to arrive at the Reconciliation House. She recruited participants through her women's victim association and motivated a skeptical friend to give the workshops a shot. It was an interaction that bore many qualities, not least of which was the fact that these were two women who had suffered tremendous loss at the hands of the FARC over the life of the armed conflict: one had lost her son and her livelihood, and the other had suffered through the

disappearance of her son and spent her days dwelling in the purgatory of uncertainty that a disappeared loved one brings. The Bogotá-based Foundation directors and newly hired director, a professional social worker named Yula, worked with the government agency that managed former combatants in order to identify and convene participants who they felt would make best use of RH's activities and pedagogies.

RH opened its doors a month before the first workshop, in part to establish a presence in the neighborhood and identify strong candidates for participation in the inaugural workshop. During this time, I taught free English classes out of it twice a day: once for youth in the afternoon, followed by an adult class in the evening. It served as a useful mechanism for both getting to know community members and providing activities immediately for residents as the Center Director, Yula, worked to line up other kinds of programming, such as SENA[4] classes, exercise activities, dance classes for the kids, and different kinds of pedagogically driven sessions (e.g., a local social worker would spend a few afternoons in the center teaching children about inappropriate touching and how to report it to the authorities or people they trusted). The two other full-time employees in our center included Julio, a former right-wing paramilitary member six years into his integration process who did not live in Las Delicias, and Yana, whose son had been killed in front of her and her mother by the FARC. I lived with Yana and her mother for nine months of the 15 that I spent in the community. Another woman with whom I also lived – a hearing and speech impaired woman who had gone to Yana's home seeking refuge after repeatedly suffering spousal rape at the hands of her husband - also eventually came on to work as the cleaning help and to help with distributing snacks and coffee to participants and visitors. It

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[4] The National Training Service, a public technical and vocational program for high school graduates.

was an environment of hopeful uncertainty: two years of guaranteed funding, employment for a chosen few, and grand ideas for what could be accomplished in that time.

The Reconciliation House and workshops that it hosted explicitly promised the transmission of the psychosocial tools necessary for individual participants to begin their own journeys of repair and healing. Facilitators did not expect an immediate transformation, but one that occurred over time as participants found themselves ready and able to do so. But the mere entrance of an NGO with sufficient funds to mount a physical presence and guarantee jobs for its employees for two years signaled something else: a notable infusion of financial, political, and social capital in a resource-scarce context. This infusion of resources immediately went to work on the social relations and practices of power.

At times, community engagement took on a transactional hue. For example, sessions prior to lunch would always be fuller than those after the provided meal. In a community in which daily food budgets did not always allow for meat, many would not eat their lunches, and save them to take home to their children. Yana distributed the few extra meals that made it into the budgets at her discretion, usually to members of her association. I was asked directly on many occasions when I invited community members to the English classes, and once it had been established that they were free, "What will you give me?" (for attending). Center workers advised me that one could not have an activity without offering food, and countless individuals inquired if I could give them work, either in the RH or just anywhere in general. Part of these demands and expectations likely had much to do with the fact that I was a foreigner in a place where foreigners had not yet tread, and that outsider status signaled to the community – among many other things - potential opportunities for getting ahead of the daily struggles they experienced. Nonetheless, I observed the provision of food, the concentration of attendance around the hours that food was provided, and the explicit request for material goods such as pens, markers, and notebooks in

nearly all of the intervention settings that I encountered. To be clear, when I suggest that there is

an element of transactionality in the intervention context, I do so without suggesting that there

was a sense of maliciousness or manipulation in all instances. Instead, I simply recognize that I

would be remiss if I denied the absolute necessity of resource-seeking in a context such as Las

Delicias.

Financial capital was not the only resource that the Reconciliation House brought to bear.

That such a physical intervention presence constituted such a rarity evidences the degree to which

Foundation leaders were able to communicate the profound needs of the community to donors.

First, the community comprised largely former combatants and victims of conflict violence (and

individuals who occupied some combination of the two categories). As such, there existed a very

real need for the psychosocial supports and practices that the reconciliation pedagogy promised.

Second, RH provided free vocational courses in areas like bread making, cooking, artisanal

crafts, shoe-making, and basic computer skills. As I will discuss in the next chapter, *cupos*

("seats") in the free state-sponsored classes in these domains were extremely difficult to secure. If

someone did secure one, it was not a guarantee that they would be able to get to the classes, as

responsibilities to work, manage the home, and the $1.75 fare to and from the class made it

nearly impossible to ensure regular attendance and the coveted certification at the end that could

lead to new labor opportunities. As such, the presence of these courses physically in the

community represented an entire new domain of possibility for residents who otherwise would

not be able to attend them. Finally, the physical space of RH itself provided an oasis for many

youth and parents concerned about security risks in the hours outside of school.

For example, a particularly committed young student of mine suffered from a

developmental disorder and at 12 years of age, was said by physicians to have the cognitive

capabilities of someone roughly one-third that age. Her mother had left her with the child's grandmother to raise and gone elsewhere in Colombia, and the elderly woman struggled to meet the developmental needs of her granddaughter. As such, the young girl often managed to get out of the house and wander in the streets of the neighborhood and had attracted the unsavory attentions of at least one particularly predatory young man. That she could now spend her afternoons inside the Reconciliation House enjoying English classes, arts and crafts activities, and pedagogical activities meant for children was not just a boon for her physical safety, but also a tremendous psychological relief for her grandmother. Such precarity and acute insecurity marked most households, if only with a slight variation in situational detail. With this in mind, the multi-faceted significance and interpreted promise of a place like the Reconciliation House opening its doors in Las Delicias cannot be overstated. It thus also came as no surprise that access that tensions and contests around access and resources emerged over the life of the center.

**Administering Bureaucracy in the Social Wounds of War**

This section analyzes three moments that, while impactful, were simultaneously representative of the kinds of tensions that I observed emerging over my time working in RH in that they tended to occur according between individuals not just along historic conflict-identity divisions but also by invoking qualities of those specific identity divides. I argue that the administrative practices required to maintain the intervention as an organization represented the tools that these individuals used to manifest these divisions.

*Expulsion thru Application of Protocol*

In this first example, I show how Yana uses on of her job responsibilities – completing the attendance list for each activity at RH – as a means to expel from the classroom a student against whom she held a personal grudge. The student was a former combatant, and whether or not that

was the reason for Yana's discrimination against her, it was certainly the perception by the individual and other excombatants that it was the case. The incident was among the first of a long line of similar ones that contradicted Yana's discourses of complete forgiveness and motivation to reconcile.

After extensive conversations with Julio, Yana, Yula, and community members, we had decided the English class schedule would be 4-5p for the kids, and 5-6p for the adults. Tatiana and her friend Leo had arrived that day for the first time for the 4-5p class. When that class ended, I turned from wiping down the white board to see that Tatiana and Leo still sat in the room. She twirled her hair with one hand and giggled at everything that he said, while he hunched over his cellphone and directed his comments to the screen, seemingly oblivious. They wanted to stay for the next class, and I was happy to have them. I reorganized the lessons papers that I had for the session, trying to afford as much privacy to the two as I could by studying the papers in my hand intensely and greeting the other handful of older students who trickled in over the next fifteen minutes or so.

As I started up again for the second class, Yana entered with the attendance list, looked Tatiana squarely in the eye and said: "You can't sit twice in a row. There aren't enough *cupos* (spots). You're not the right age, and there is a limit to the number of spots for people to sit in the class and we can´t have people sitting twice." I looked up, surprised, assuming there was something that I did not understand. We were six in a room that could comfortably accommodate ten or more, and uncomfortably accommodated many more on numerous occasions thereafter. Added to that, Yana said nothing to Leo, who had also been in the first class and was clearly planning on staying for the second as well.

My chest clenched with embarrassment for Tatiana, who shoved her chair out from under her so swiftly that it toppled over backwards. She never took her eyes off the floor as she nearly

flew out of the room, leaving her meticulously crafted class notes behind and muttering

something to Yana as she passed her that I did not hear, but whose sentiment was nonetheless

abundantly clear.   What had started as a jovial group session of sticking out our tongues at each

other through clenched teeth and practicing the English "th" sound, laughing through

unintentional spitballs and phonetic struggles, had ended in a moment of embarrassment and mild

aggression between Yana and Tatiana, the latter of whom was a young woman who had come to

RH for the first time to attend free English classes.

 "Why didn´t you let Tatiana stay?" I asked Yana later.

"She is a rude girl (*una grosera*)," Yana replied, flattening her lips together in disdain and

dismissing me with a wave. Being so new to the community and RH, I did not push further,

despite the fact that whatever it was that Tatiana uttered – which I have no doubt was, in fact,

"rude" – was after Yana had kicked her out from the class.  A year later, I learned that Yana had

called her an assassin on a prior occasion. "I never killed anybody," Tatiana told me, indignantly.

She attributed Yana's discriminatory behavior to her reported bias against ex-combatants.

Whether or not this was the motive for Yana's use of the attendance list to claim that Tatiana

could not stay, this was certainly the way that the act was read among Tatiana and her other ex-

combatant friends in Las Delicias.

This moment of discord depicts the quotidian backdrop of relations among conflict-

affected individuals as they encounter each other outside of formal workshop settings, albeit still

within the physical Reconciliation House. Even within these ostensibly safer spaces, the ease

with which the veneer of cordiality cracked - much like the shell of Daniel's eggs inscribed with

carefully worded hopes and dreams – represented an ever-present element of the relational work

being done. In this instance, Yana leveraged her access to the power accorded to her status as an

RH employee and the ostensible responsibilities attached to her administration of RH to exclude Tatiana. And though in the NGO's eyes, Tatiana's participation and narratives held equal value to those of Yana's – because all were always welcome – the administration of that ideal produced a very different reality. Such an incident illustrates the way in which local leadership implicates local struggles over power, identity, and historical divides. While I do not advocate for a top-down depersonalized and decontextualized intervention apparatus, it bears noting that local leaders bring with them local lives, which inform how administration of an NGO unfolds. Indeed, it was entirely in line with practices at the vanguard of the peacebuilding intervention domain to hire Yana in the first place. Many emerging best practice recommendations for reconciliation interventions call on international and national policy makers and funders to rely more heavily on local organizations and community leaders, to the point of asserting that such local organizations and individuals are ¨removed from the political scene¨ (Agency for Peacebuilding, 2016, p. 2). As this ethnographic vignette shows, however, this assertion obfuscates the fact that local actors and community leaders are always already embroiled in their own local pollical scene, as tenacious and tumultuous as any at the national level. In another illustrative moment, the implementation of the train-the-trainer model reveals how such a model can be simultaneously a best practice in the NGO world in terms of contributing to local sustainability and an instantiation of a hierarchy that presents opportunities for claims to power and acts of subordination.

*Subordination thru Implementation*

In this second example, I demonstrate how Yana's application of the "train the trainer" model, standard in a wide variety of intervention settings, represented another instance of leveraging organizational administrative practices as a means to exclude others. In this instance,

as in the previous one, the object of her conflictive application of administration was a former

FARC combatant.

"Are you ok?" I asked Rex, startled, as he uncharacteristically shoved passed me on his

way out of RH. I ended the call that I was on and stood in the entryway, watching him as he

grabbed a cell phone from the corner store to buy minutes and make a call. Upstairs, I heard Yana

leading a particularly fervent round of one of the forgiveness modules in her signature

evangelical style. I hung back, wanting to comfort the visibly distraught Rex, but a little unnerved

by the spectacle. Having ended the call, he stood staring out to the street with his back to me,

shifting back and forth on each leg, hands on his hips, periodically pacing back and forth in a

meter-long circle and shaking his head.

Moments later, Iván approached with Yula and I walked over to the group.  Rex was

incensed, flinging his hand up to indicate the second story Center window and saying that Yana

had berated him so severely in front of the group that he was teaching the workshop content to

for the first time, that he wanted to punch her in the face. Yula, the Center Director, replied

calmly, "OK, Rex, but we cannot have an excombatant punch a victim in the face in the

Reconciliation House." He calmed a bit at the preposterous obviousness of the statement, and

agreed: no, no we cannot.

"Liberate yourself!" came bursting out of the windows above us above the din of the main

road, along with a round of jubilant applause and cheers.  Rex sucked his teeth and rolled his

eyes. This six-foot tall former guerrilla fighter who had spent years of his life in combat in the

Amazonian jungle had felt so humiliated by Yana, that he would never return to RH after that

day.

After the dust had settled, I later asked Rex to share with me his version of events. He had

just finished his first workshop and was learning how to teach the same, "learning like an intern,"

he explained the train-the-trainer model to me. He acknowledged that he expected that she would correct him along the way but argued that "it wasn´t that. She would say these other things. And she wouldn´t just correct, she would scold." He continued:

> *It's really complicated with her because she's always with her things, her wounds that she has with regards to us (the ex-combatants). It was hard to work there. She kisses our asses (*nos lambea*) in front of everyone else, but behind closed doors (*por detrás*) she is doing something else. I didn´t enjoy working there – one couldn´t (*work there). She said that it was all forgiveness and reconciliation, but I felt like I was in the wrong place*.

Had Rex experienced similar kinds of treatment elsewhere during his six or so years of reintegration? "Well, it's that I've been very evasive with that, very careful. No one goes around knowing who I am or anything." That Rex maintains the excombatant aspect of his identity a secret in the other domains of his daily life is standard practice in this context (E. McFee, 2016) and signals the way in which the stakes of engagement with RH increase by the very nature of the work on interpersonal trust that the pedagogies do. To speak of trust is to speak of vulnerability and exposure to risk; the stakes attached to such risks in a place like Las Delicias are substantial. As noted above, by entering the domain of trust building, the CR pedagogies create the conditions for the particular participant stance implicated in a relationship of trust: first evaluative in terms of deciding whether or not to do so, and then affective in the sense of opening up the possibility for a sense of betrayal should that trust be broken. This sets the experience with such an intervention apart from other kinds of interventions that target social and economic practices, such as land use for farming (Murray Li, 2007) or drug addiction (Carr, 2010) in that it directs explicitly to the ethical project of subject and society making. While scholars have argued

forcefully for the subjective and moral effects of policy and development interventions (Ferguson, 1994; Muehlebach, 2012), such effects comprise the epicenter of the workshop pedagogies' calls to forgive and reconcile in a community ravaged by the social wounds of war.

Something distinct in terms of relational work was happening in RH if Rex was willing to share his conflict-related status there and nowhere else in his daily life. Despite his eventual willingness to render himself vulnerable to retribution, revenge, or in the unfortunate case presented here, humiliation, he was rewarded only with a sense of being in the "wrong place" if it was reconciliation that he was after. Furthermore, Yana's reported chastisement and subsequently fervent delivery of the workshop materials hints at the deeply emotional experience that she embodied in administering the "train the trainer" model of the pedagogy with someone who triggered in her memories of a violent past. Indeed, her marginalization and humiliation of Rex was only possible in this instance because of her access to and application of organizational administration practices. Taken together, these elements index the episodic, non-linear nature of the process of integration and reconciliation (or its demise) in day-to-day life in Las Delicias.

Integration requires assemblage of myriad elements, such as management of shared conditions of acute scarcity and insecurity in the environment, as I indicated earlier when presenting the various forms of resources that RH attendees sought and made use of in their time there. I also do not question the sincerity with which each actor may have been engaged in the forgiveness and reconciliation project of the workshop pedagogy. Both transactionality and desires for healing can and do coexist in a setting such as this; one does not preclude or diminish the presence of the other. But individuals arrived at RH's doors with histories, and these processes were marked by those histories. In this way, individual suffering was experienced socially. Yana's interior struggle to overcome unthinkable loss spilled out into her interactions with those who signify the source of that loss. It's not imperfect; it's *inherent* in the process of

creating new ways of being together in an environment in which you have every reason to mistrust the other. Certainly, these episodes were experienced by all as jarring, a reminder of the egg-shell fragility of the relational threads stitching together social wounds. They evinced the way in which personal pain becomes social, as Yana struggled to create an inclusive space and poisoned social relations in the process, and the politics of trust as Rex experienced her betrayal of his in such a public forum and withdrew his endorsement of the process. The episode with Tatiana and this one with Rex became common topics of discussion among the excombatant populations in the community, as I heard them referred to on many occasions when I found myself alone with them in the years following the incidents. Such fits and starts represent the substance of life when pasts weigh heavily and futures are uncertain.

*Exile by Association*

In this last example, I leave the Reconciliation House in order to analyze organizational activities that occurred out in the community of Las Delicias unrelated to RH, but nonetheless requiring administrative actions to sustain organizational life. In this instance, that organizational life took the form of community associations, and Yana's position in social hierarchies once again shifted, this time for the worse, as she lost her power to convene such an association because of a perceived betrayal by her former association members.

I returned to Las Delicias to visit Yana for Mother's Day in 2017, and I arrived to find her tending to one of the two pharmacies that she ran. The first one she had had since the time we had met in 2014; the second newer one occupied the living room of her home, and was manned by her mother, daughter in law, and now fully mobile three-year-old grandson, who had discovered and was making unending use of his vocal chords that particular day. What was once the hub of neighborhood social and political activity had transformed into a miscellaneous store of sandals,

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diapers, and herbal remedies for sale. A now dormant shoe-soling machine that Yana had fought particularly tenaciously to procure in 2016 from the German government's international development agency, GIZ, now propped up a variety of sherbet-colored stuffed animals in plastic bags, which protected them from the constant clouds of dust kicked up from the unpaved roads but gave the salon a sort of stagnant warehouse feel.

We sat and talked for a while, and I asked her how her victims' association was doing. "You know, with the closing of RH and all…" her voice trailed off. RH had only been able to secure enough local funding to operate for a few months beyond the initial two-year timeline and had subsequently closed with the end of the year in 2016. Yana's association existed prior to RH, however, and there was no particular reason why RH's closing should have triggered the decline of her association. In fact, it was the very purpose of RH to provide community leaders with *more* capabilities in terms of building and sustaining their local associations. Part of the reason that Yana had been selected to work there was due to the fact that she had demonstrated leadership and access to community networks of potential participants through her association. As had been hoped, many of its members participated in RH activities throughout its life. "I'm so busy with these two pharmacies." I felt her discomfort with the topic and did not wish to push it further, so I took my leave temporarily and went up into the hills to visit some other friends.

No more than 100 yards away as the macaw flies, I ran into Esperanza and Iván. Esperanza was one of the victims that had attended the forgiveness and reconciliation workshop on that first day of chair shuffling and hair studying and Iván, an eventual RH volunteer, had been a political commander in the FARC guerrillas for many years. They conspired over a new productive project initiative combining female ex-combatants and female victims to make *arepas* (corn bread, a staple of the Colombian diet) and sell them throughout the neighborhood. I asked about what had happened to Yana's association, and Esperanza informed me that the women had

left to join her own association instead because Yana began charging them to use the shoe-soling machine, which had been donated under the auspices of income generating projects for female victims who were not to be charged for its use. Yana had, as it was reported to me, betrayed the trust of her association members, who then left her for another association, and she now occupied her days tending to her two small pharmacies and her family, effectively exiled from associational life in Las Delicias, which meant a significant loss of social capital and power.

In this context, community associations represent an extremely tangible source of power and opportunity. Outside institutions and intervening actors will tend to only work with organized groups of citizens, citing the need for some degree of formal association in order to better ensure appropriate use of donor funds. Government actors will also tend to negotiate more readily and actively with organized associations instead of individuals. And most neighborhoods are not considered official entities until they have a legal neighborhood association (the *junta accion communal*) registered, formed, and following the requirements of administration and organizational protocols, including note-taking and attendance lists as evidence of regular meetings. Political candidates visit neighborhoods through the invitation and logistical support of various associations, which can represent a range of interests, from female victims, such as Yana's to cooperatives of rubber tree cultivators. Associations, by definition, convene according to a particular element of their members' identities: victim, excombatant, woman, farmer. They are thus constituted by and constitutive of identities and sources of recognition and power in this setting. Yana's loss of her association, whatever the reason, was unarguably a loss of status in these domains. By gathering around a different community leader, the women accomplished several things: first, they continued to identify and group according to their identities related to the armed conflict (gender, victim). Second, they participated actively in an integration project foregrounding ex-combatant and victim mixing. And third, they exercised political agency with

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regards to the claims that they felt they had on physical capital intended to support collective livelihood projects, and in response to the trust in Yana[5] that they felt had been betrayed.

I argue that it is no coincidence that all of the episodes presented here occurred in the administration of organizational and associational life – i.e., through reporting, accounting, and training. This chapter suggests that by examining the mundane practices of administering interventions – filling out attendance lists, transferring pedagogical knowledge, complying with requirements for a neighborhood association – we can gain insight into the effects upon social relations that these actions achieve. Additionally, by analyzing the moments of incongruence between what is said is done by an intervention and what occurs in context, we gain purchase on a more nuanced understanding of the individual experience of engagement with the social and ethical project of becoming a more trusting individual in the aftermath of war. This represents the heart of the project of beginning anew, of integrating populations that are, at times, at great odds with one another, and of moving out from under the weight of a devastating history.

What all of this suggests is that the administrative practices such as accounting, reporting, and training within structured interventions can be leveraged to divide along historically

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[5] A brief note on the name of our protagonist: Yana acquired her pseudonym from a refashioning of the Roman god of beginnings and endings, time and duality, and passages and doorways: Janus. His two faces are permanently fused in the present, with his eyes looking ever to the past and future simultaneously. My sense is that this mythology elegantly captures what it is to live in the "almost after" of not yet peace, but not still war, and the push and pull that Yana experienced in the aftermath of her own suffering. Her fictitious moniker also hints at the way she was perceived to be two-faced by the ex-combatant population who called her out for being false in her proselytizing of ESPERE pedagogies. However, I came to know this woman very well over the 15 months spent in this community, and I am certain that these calls to acceptance of former combatants were not entirely disingenuous. Rather, Yana's behavior reflects a pattern that I observed in a range of settings during my time in the field, from rural hamlets situated hours from the nearest paved road to the polished offices in the regal ministry buildings in the nation's capital of Bogotá: intervention and policy design along with its reception and uptake by intended recipients is a complex and above all, deeply ambivalent – even confusing - experience in a society such as Colombia during this particular historical juncture. Victims struggled with their own highly context- and experience-specific processes of healing and recovery, and ex-combatants contended not only with the social and psychic consequences of the harm that they and/or their armed groups wrought over others but also their own healing processes for whatever traumas they may have further suffered combined with their reception by others in society at large, even as they worked to make good within the bounds of legality.

consistent understandings of identity categories related to the armed conflict, despite best

intentions. I argue this to draw attention to the weight of the past experience that convening these

populations bears with it, and just one of the varieties of mechanisms through which those

histories and imaginaries become realized and reproduced through social interaction. As I will

show in subsequent chapters, bureaucratic and organizational practices constitute the new

battleground of the Colombian conflict to the extent that they allow for groups of actors,

organized according to their conflict-related identities, to further divisions and (re)structure social

hierarchies according to those categories, even when they do so under the mantle of

reconciliation and "re"integrating ex-combatants.

## Chapter 3: "Making an Institutional Presence": Reconciliation in the Shadow of Imaginaries of State Absence

This chapter argues that state discourses about "making a presence" are a direct attempt to change longstanding ideas about state absence and abandonment in Colombia. I develop this claim through an analysis of a so-called Institutional Fair for Reconciliation that occurred in the community of Las Delicias. State officials explained their activities in the Fair as "making a presence," a commonly used phrase in this context that described a wide range of activities that took them out of their offices and into neighborhoods and regions where they did not typically go. I first situate this discourse sociohistorically as a response to longstanding ideas about state absence and abandonment in Colombia. I then draw from Navaro-Yashin's theorizing on how the state operates through practices that she calls "make-believe" to argue that the Fair was in part an effort to change these ideas about absence and abandonment: to make a presence in order to begin to shift beliefs about absence.

I suggest that, in addition to simply responding to discourses of state absence, the state presence in the Fair for Reconciliation also constituted an effort to more effectively govern and provide for its citizens. The irony of that attempt, however, emerged when making a presence did more to highlighted its shortcomings as a provider of services than it did to frame it as a benefactor to the people. Furthermore, "making a presence" also entailed producing evidence of the event in anticipation of future audiences such as the media, senior government officials, and donor agencies. As part of that, state officials called on residents of Las Delicias to perform reconciliation and related social practices as international agency representatives, local media, and state agency communications specialists looked on and documented the affair. The performances nowhere near approximated how these individuals enacted reconciliation in their

daily lives. I include ethnographic detail on both the performances and the everyday ordinary, and even extraordinary ways that residents of Las Delicias and communities like it reconcile. I suggest that the gap between the performances and daily life revealed the logics of an institution that presume communities do not have already existing and productive ways of managing conflict and division. The Fair for Reconciliation, in which "reconciliation" to state actors signified "making a presence," revealed the enduring tensions between society and the state that predated, persisted, and deepened over the life of the armed conflict. In this particular case, as was the case in many comparable events that I observed during my time in the field, the will to reconcile largely missed its mark, in some ways deepening, rather than filling in historically entrenched sociopolitical divisions.

**"Making a Presence": The State shows up**

This first section sets the stage for the Institutional Fair for Reconciliation ("the Fair") that serves as the ethnographic focus of this chapter. I select the Fair in particular because it is illustrative of the many kinds of similar events that periodically materialized in the lives of citizens and state representatives during this time in Caquetá and throughout Colombia. As noted in the introduction, "reconciliation," though rarely explicitly defined, provided the framing for a wide variety of citizen, NGO, state, and international interventions. The NGO in the previous chapter worked to promote forgiveness and reconciliation between conflict affected actors in Las Delicias through a dedicated physical Reconciliation House in the community. In this chapter, we remain in Las Delicias, and turn our analytic attention to those institutions who arrive just for the day. The explanation state representatives provided for their involvement in the Fair this particular Saturday was to "make a presence." I analyze first what it means to do so in a

community and region that has a long history of discourses related to state absence and abandonment.

I hitched a ride in the back of the Army cargo truck from my house up to where the "Institutional Fair for Reconciliation" event was going to be held in the hills of Las Delicias. In the soft light of the December Caqueteño dawn, I stood among the equipment and a handful of armed soldiers as we bounced and swerved along the unpaved roads leading up to the event site at the *polideportivo* (covered, cement athletic field). It was just after six a.m. when we arrived, and I began to help Center employees Yana and Iván take down the plastic tables and chairs from the truck to the basketball court below and get set up for the day. The Governor's office was the principle event sponsor. However, the Fair drew from a constellation of donors, and the banner that hung high up in the rafters of the tin roof covering the athletic field informed observers of the startling array of institutions that also funded the event. These organizations and institutions represented the private, NGO, international cooperation, public and armed forces, and government sectors.

Such a diverse collection of entities represented to these governmental institutions and international cooperation agencies the gold-standard in what was commonly referred to as "cross-sector collaboration." Government institutions included the Victims Unit, Department of Social Prosperity, local mayor's and governor's offices, and the Colombian Agency for Reintegration (of excombatants) (ACR). The Florencia Chamber of Commerce and regional Ultrahuilca Bank offered private sector backing. "International cooperation," the term for donor agency and other forms of international government involvement, came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the German Development Agency (GIZ). The Colombia Reconciles, the NGO home of the Reconciliation House in Las Delicias, also had a logo on the event banner. CREO represented an

ACR initiative, financed through as many institutions as those otherwise supporting the Fair. CREO was an acronym for We Construct Reconciliation through Equitable Opportunities and also stood for "I believe" in Spanish, and the initiative provided support that day in the form of the embroidered, branded shirt that I would be given to wear for the event, indexing the many layers implicated in the funding behind such "fairs." The Army provided logistical support in the form of armed military police every 20 yards or so surrounding the *polideportivo*. The National Police also stood guard and mingled with the community members throughout the day. Conspicuously absent from any of the branded banners or clothing were any reference to the United States military and embassy representatives whom I was able to identify only because we shared the same gym, as they bore no indication of their institutional or national affiliations aside from their telltale crew cuts and larger frames. The local university had loaned tents and their sounds system for the event, which a National Police Lieutenant put to inspiring use as he emceed the event for the entire day, as tireless in his narration of the different activities as he was enthusiastic in their description.

As the institutional representatives set up for the day, I approached the Families in Action program table.[1] After chatting with one of the officials about the scope of Families in Action, I asked, "So why are you guys here at an event on reconciliation?" "Oh, I don't know," she responded. "I presume that we will just be doing our normal office work, but just doing it here." What do you do in your office? "Well, we receive people who, for example, bring their son and say, 'why don't you pay me?'" Here, the young woman contorted her face and whined the question out in a derisive imitation of her clients. She continued, "Then, we review their file and

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[1] Families in Action is a national poverty reduction program supported by the Department of Social Prosperity and servicing an estimated 2.6 million Colombian families living in conditions of extreme poverty. It is a health and education benefit for families with children intended to support their participation in the formal education system and ensure healthy development of the child.

tell them 'well you haven't done this or that or fulfilled some sort of requirement.'" Behind her, her two male colleagues dramatically gestured to the empty table in front of them, annoyed that the computers had not yet arrived. We were three hours after the scheduled institutional arrival time, so I extended my sympathies to the stressed teammates. "Oh it's always like this," one responded. "Everything's always half-assed." He continued, having overhead my question to the young woman in front of him. "We're here to provide information and support today, and to *make an act of presence (hacer un acto de presencia)* but what we do doesn't have any connection to reconciliation. They just told us to be here today; we don't know why." I left the three to their WhatsApp conversations as they tried to locate their late computer equipment and said good morning to some officials from institutions that struck me as more obviously congruous with the topic of the day – the Victims' Unit and the ACR.

"What's the plan for today?" I asked the three young women who represented the Victims' Unit and wore matching gray branded institutional vests over their T-Shirts. One responded as she set up her laptop, which had found more reliable transportation that morning that those of her colleagues at Families in Action: "I don't know. *To make an institutional presence (hacer una presencia institucional)*." When I push for what specifically "making an institutional presence" might mean at a reconciliation event in Las Delicias, she provided me with a short list of statistics on how many victims Caquetá had, how many they "treat" each day in their brick-and-mortar service center, and the phone number of her boss if I had any further questions.

The government representatives with whom I had spoken understood their purpose for working at the Fair that day as simply being present – doing the work they normally do during the week days in their office, only in the community itself and on a Saturday. However, the

employees from the Reconciliation House had spent the three months leading up to the Fair organizing it and informing the community about the event, recruiting participants, and framing it as a year-end celebration of the work of the Center. It was not atypical for government officials, contractors, and small businesses and NGOs to shut down either formally or informally between December and January. The Fair thus also marked the last opportunity for the year for many to access the services provided by the government agencies, and take part in the activities of the Reconciliation House. Its proximity to Christmas and the promise that the Center had made of toys for neighborhood children also lent an additional celebratory atmosphere to the proceedings and incentivized participation. For those present, then, the Fair served a variety of purposes beyond just an institutional presence for the day in the community. This multiplicity of ideas about the significance of the Fair would contribute to the tensions that arose over the course of its unfolding.

*Discourses of state presence and absence*

This section analyzes discourses of presence and absence as they situate in the sociohistorical context. I first locate the government representatives' claims to "making a presence" against the backdrop of longstanding discourses of state absence in this setting. I then examine the ways in which ideas about state absence are both complex and ambivalent. Following, I draw from Navaro-Yashin's work on the way in which "make-believe" can be used to define a category of state practices that simultaneously shape physical and psychic landscapes in order to argue that "making a presence" is the state's effort to work against ideas of state absence. I then analyze the implications of these discourses for other organizational and institutional actors who were both present and absent at the Fair for Reconciliation that day.

The notions of "making a presence" or "making an act of presence" carry with them in the Colombian context the flavor of a response to claims of state absence and abandonment. The catch phrase that punctuated countless tales of past and present need in both urban and rural communities was "The state has abandoned us." The term for abandonment (*abandon*o) foregrounds community descriptions of what it is to be in contemporary Colombia at the margins. It can be used in interpersonal relations – *Me dejaste abandonado en la Universidad!* You left me abandoned at the university! As in, you left without me. More often than not, however, it refers to the state and its imagined absence. The notion that the state has abandoned the territories has a long history in Colombian political discourses, though it has been shown to work in service of a centralized Bogotano elite in depicting the territories as more lawless – when in many ways that is demonstrably not the case – in order to legitimize, among other things, armed action (Ramírez, 2015).

Discourses of state abandonment are complicated for a variety of reasons. Technically speaking, "the state has abandoned us" (*el estado nos ha abandonado*) is not entirely representative of the condition under which my interlocutors lived. First, "the state" signifies many entities and actors, and certainly the Colombian Armed Forces and illegal armed actors who have at times benefitted from the protection of the state have made themselves very much present in the lives of those living in Colombia, even at the farthest fringes of society. Second, the utterance suggests that absence is a bad thing and presence a desirable one. In this context, state presence is not a universally good thing, as a great deal of human rights violations have occurred at the hands of both official and unofficial state and state-like actors. On many occasions, each collaborated with the other. Third, the assertion that the state has abandoned a population tends to index more the lack of bureaucratic processes and provision of fundamental social services, rather than the actual condition of anarchy and lawlessness that it implies. Fourth,

citizen laments of an absent state are too a site of ambivalence, as many rural communities with which I interacted simultaneously deployed this discourse and rejected practices like taxation and governance over land use that a state presence brought with it.

Furthermore, discourses about the Colombian state tended to convey an imagined idea of entities that never were. Ramirez's accounting of the frontier lands of lower Putumayo, the departmental neighbor to Caquetá that shared many of the same dynamics in terms of social conflict and economic ties to illicit economies, led her to conclude that cries of state abandonment reflected the nostalgia for a state that had not yet arrived, but should (Ramírez, 2015). This is in contrast to the idea that the state had been present previously but had turned away and abandoned the citizens, as the phrase might suggest. Furthermore, she found that "the state" in the Colombian imaginary is a fiction, and that discourses of what the state is and should be find no purchase in the everyday realities of even the most effectively governed areas of the country.  Even those Colombian scholars writing critically of state absence point to the formative effects that *discourses about this absence* have, as "new generations grew up with *the concept of state abandonment*, of that which has not protected us from the war" (Pérez S., 2013) and have thus come to appropriate, redeploy, and resignify what that "concept" signifies in a given context. However, even though narratives of state abandonment may not necessarily reflective the structural realities of the situation, they are nonetheless important to understand.

In particular, discourses of presence and absence are important to understand because of the constantive force that they implicate. Such discursive work of "making a presence," for example, is reminiscent of Navaro-Yashin's (2012) investigation into post-partition Cyprus, in which she analyzes the Turkish effort to rename previously Greek town names in the newly minted (and *not* internationally recognized) "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" in the aftermath of the violent 1974 Partition. This effort at renaming represented one of the many ways

that the material and the imaginary came to co-constitute emergent realities: residents began to

inhabit their surroundings both physically and psychically. She argues for *make-believe* as a

social form that juxtaposes the social labor of producing practices, procedures and processes, and

the imagination that goes into infusing that labor with meaning. In the context of her analysis on

remapping and renaming: make the towns through naming and associated discourses and citizens

will come to believe *through the making and reproduction* of those names and discourses.

Thinking along these lines, I argue that "making a presence" in the Institutional Fair for

Reconciliation is simultaneously the arrangement of booths, laptops, bodies, and services

rendered as much as it is an effort to shape the imaginaries of those present that day. By

participating in the state's making of a presence, government officials and citizens chiseled away

at discourses and beliefs about state absence.

Other ideas of absence and presence also matter for this analysis. Consider the name of

the event: the Institutional Fair for Reconciliation. The previous chapter argued that the very

presence of an NGO calling for reconciliation indexes identity categories divided by war who

require reconciliation between them. In this same vein, an Institutional Fair for Reconciliation

reminds attendees of those victims of the armed conflict who could not be present, and whose

deaths may have left those who survived them with the need for a particular kind of state

presence. Each "act of making a presence" also bore with it the evidence of the limits of that

presence.

For example, the Governor's office provided the greatest proportion of funds for the

event, but the Governor did not come (it would not be unusual for an elected or campaigning

official to pass through such an event to give a few words or pose for a photo op). The ACR was

perceived by Reconciliation House workers as claiming too much presence, as I will analyze later

in this chapter. Several organizations that had clear links either to Las Delicias or to the theme of

reconciliation and institutions were not there, begging the question of the motives and criteria for their absence. And the United States government made itself present through a few marginal observers and donated eye glasses as a part of its Medical Civic Assistance Program (MEDCAP), which supplied such events through dedicated Embassy funds or representatives in governmental and non-governmental organizations. But that presence was effectively rendered an absence due to the contextual rarity of not including a logo anywhere in the melee of institutionally branded hats, vests, banners, and vehicles. Indeed, the US government had a wide range of projects quietly underway in Florencia at that time, including civic and military infrastructure projects, medical assistance, military training, crime scene forensics and exploitation, economic assessment and development, and liaising with other embassies and governmental agencies, including, but not limited to, the Drug Enforcement and Central Intelligence Agencies. "Making a presence," thus represented a highly complex political affair in which donors, interests, and the presentation of that presence represented an orchestrated effort to provide the image of particular kind of event and form of state-society engagement. The discourses surrounding presence and absence in this context offer insight into the stakes attached to such an event.

The idea of state absence foregrounds as a critical domain of policy intervention in post-conflict settings worldwide. Global interventions name governance, in part understood as the ability of the state to access and control its subjects through its presence without resorting to the use of violence, as critical for ameliorating the risk of renewed conflict during the peacebuilding period worldwide (World Bank, 2017, 2018). While state monopoly of violence is indeed a core metric of the extent to which it achieves full governance – and one in which Colombia still struggles to move in the right direction – the element of control *without violence* is a particularly important bellwether for stability in the transitional period. Development economists have

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classified Colombia as a "limited order society," in which the government achieves relative stability, but nonetheless depends heavily on the use of violence or the thread of the same in order to maintain that stability throughout its territories (Justino, 2017). International agencies possess a keen awareness of the way in which their work can and does substitute for the state in this regard. For example, in Sierra Leone and Liberia, the more militarized peacekeeping missions of the United Nations experienced a security gap when the missions withdrew and worked to varying degrees of success to ensure that the local state institutions would be able to address this gap in advance (Vorrath, 2014). These cases bear striking resemblance to the Colombian context, in which strong illicit economies and related organized crime undermine efforts to dismantle illegal armed groups sustainably and over the long term, resulting in "ungoverned spaces," or spaces in which the state is absent.

State interventions such as the Fair for Reconciliation featured in this chapter, work to mitigate these challenges during transition out of war. The agencies that conduct these interventions are also themselves organizations and, in the Colombian context, they are organizations backed by complex webs of public and donor funds, and in collaboration with religious, private, and other public sector entities. As such, in addition to addressing larger national anxieties about cycles of violence and revenge, monopoly over violence, and governance without the threat of violence, officials in these agencies must also conduct the basic functions of all organizations: managing and distributing resources, accounting and reporting on their abilities to do so, and ensuring the ongoing provision of future resources. As such, I find that, similar to the NGO analyzed in the previous chapter and the collaborations that follow in the rest of this work, acts of administration such as accounting and reporting related to these organizational needs become inadvertent mechanisms for exclusion. In this way, state officials act against the

very populations they look to serve and with whom they are attempting to repair relations strained by war. This argument is not intended to discount the good intentions of the state representatives present that day, which I do not doubt drove the enthusiasm with which many of them engaged with the residents of Las Delicias on this Saturday work day. Instead, the way in which these instances of interventions backfire evidence deeper structural problems and problematic assumptions embedded in these institutions and their donors, which tug at the good intentions of these actors, and which cannot be resolved by good intentions alone. The remainder of the chapter elaborates on the way in which these dynamics occur.

**The Limits of the Presence**

This section explores the irony of the state effort to provide services to its citizens when such an effort does more to reveal its limits as a provider than its potential. I analyze *cupos*, or access to state services, in order to show how the very practice of providing services indexes the extreme limits of those services. Following, I present the case of the ACR's disingenuous presentation of its contributions to the Fair as an illustration of how efforts to foster more productive state-citizen relations can actually undermine those relations in the process. I argue that the condition of extreme resource scarcity along a variety of dimensions makes these ironies possible.

By six in the morning on any given day, Las Delicias was already an active hive of mototaxis and household activities. Many homes' doors opened at that hour and remained so all day to let in whatever breeze that ventured by. Already those living around the *polideportivo* had occupied chairs out onto their front stoops to observe the commotion. A woman in her sixties, perhaps not wanting to be labeled a *chismosa* (gossiper, "lookie loo"), dragged a trembling wooden chair out from her black tarp and wooden plank home, and feigned housekeeping as she

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looked on. She swatted at the faded black and rose-colored floral fabric seat a few times with a dusty rag and proceeded to polish the top corner of the chair for half an hour: an uphill battle, no doubt, since the varnish on that part of the chair had long ago worn away and only unfinished wood remained in its stead. I approached her to let her know she was welcome to come over. In response to my overtures, she opened her mouth and pointed to a space where a tooth had once been. She looked to where the Army had been setting up their medical tent: could she be seen by them too? I walked over with her to help her get signed up for one of the 300 *cupos* (spots, or appointments, in this case) that would eventually occur that day.

*The state gives…*

Citizens typically access state services by securing *cupos* – e.g., appointments for health care, spots in a state sponsored vocational program, or windows of time to visit a service center and review their reparations case with the Victims' Unit. However, the difficulty in securing *cupos* and the bureaucratic nightmare of taking full advantage of them revealed the limits of the state's ability to provide fully for its citizens, and the scarcity with which government representatives had to content. *Cupos* represent a coveted good deserving of intense competition and adjustments to anything resembling a reasonable schedule. Those awaiting state-distributed benefits may spend all night or near to it camping out in front of the office of the distributing agency, with some enterprising individuals charging others to do the waiting for them so that they can simply show up right before the office opens in the morning and claim a *cupo* towards the front of the line. The shortage of *cupos* in the mostly free state-sponsored vocational program SENA for a wide variety of courses, ranging from motorcycle repair to English or business administration, provoked all-night hovering over the computer for the opening of a course that would only minutes later be filled, followed by regular review of the website for future courses. People would call in personal favors from cousins who worked in SENA to learn before others

about new listings so that they could get a jump start on reserving their *cupo*. Residents in Las Delicias bemoaned the state practices of guaranteeing *cupos* for children of ex-combatants in the neighborhood grade school, since supply of *cupos* far outstripped demand of children, and those who were left without would have to walk along the major (and only) transportation highway for a few kilometers in order to reach a "mega-grade school" that had in excess of ten times more *cupos* than children to occupy it. *Cupos* thus constituted symbols of anxiety in their pursuit and, at times, not insignificant victory in their attainment.

By far, the *cupos* of the Army's medical tent were the most coveted attraction of the Fair. The soldier-medics arrived with twenty plastic cabinets, each with five or so drawers, full to the brim with medications – mostly preventative, they informed me. The draws carried handwritten labels in fading black marker such as "acetaminophen," "ibuprofen," and "vagina." Out of curiosity, I peeked into the "vagina" drawer: it contained dozens of boxes of an anti-fungal cream for yeast infections. Additionally, they had several cases of Nutribén baby formula and 300 pairs of eye glasses that had been donated by the United States Embassy – "a gesture of good will" the plainclothes American soldiers and Embassy officials informed me. Fairly quickly in the morning, people began arriving to be seen at the medical tent. Others tricked in more slowly to generate a constant, though manageable stream of visitors to the other tables. When I saw that the Victims' Unit was "making a presence," I called the woman who ran the vegetable cart across from my house to come up to the Fair, since she had just days prior told me that she and her husband had been violently displaced from their homes from the paramilitaries and did not know how to access any victims' services. She came up later in the morning and the next day, dropped a few of my favorite hard-to-come-by chili peppers off as a thank you for the tip: such was the neighborhood system of alerts and gratitude for information about *cupos.*

A young man in his late teens or early twenties ran up to me and presented a very young infant, and I directed him to the line to sign up to be seen. A middle-aged couple walked up to me with a long list of at least 15 or so medication names written on a piece of paper that had been guarded and folded, unfolded, and refolded for what was likely many years. I directed them to the tent. An elderly woman informed me that she had not had a bowel movement in many days. I offered my condolences, and then directed her to the line where they were handing out appointments. A young boy who reeked of alcohol and had pupils the size of pin holes told me he had the flu, "but a really bad one," wiping the mucus from his nose onto the inside of his t-shirt collar compulsively as he told me. The *polideportivo* was adjacent to one of the largest *ollas* (sites of intense drug and contraband trafficking) in Florencia, which in part explained the armed Army and Police presence surrounding the event. What documents do I need? Your ID is fine, I told him, and I showed him the line. Within half an hour of word getting out that there would be medical treatment that day, no more *cupos* remained, though the army medics would continue to see people until the medications were gone. Unfortunately, many residents in Las Delicias would nonetheless still be turned away.

As previously noted, the residents of Las Delicias and many comparable communities throughout Colombia lived under conditions of tremendous socioeconomic and physical insecurity. For example, I might be greeted by someone of whom I just asked in passing, "How are you?" with "enduring hunger" (*aguantando hambre*). Residents also participated in widespread systems of small loans among friends and family to maintain modest living expenses, such as food, medical care, or motorcycle repairs that were typically repaid when some form of government subsidy arrived. Such networks of relations have been previously theorized in peasant and other subsistence economies (cf., Scott, 1976) though the introduction of the economy of government subsidies and victims' reparations certainly complicates any effort to

frame daily economic life in Las Delicias as a "peasant" one. On more than a few occasions, for example, the paltry victims reparations checks – years in the making in terms of battling out the bureaucracy behind producing them – disappeared the moment they were received into the hands of the many friends and neighbors responsible for helping the now "repaired" victim to get back on his feet after being violently displaced, or on her feet after having the single breadwinner of the household of five murdered by guerrillas. Bartering was not uncommon either: a child's bicycle now too small for its original owner traded for some cabinetry work in the kitchen, or the use of a coveted clothes washing machine in exchange for a pedicure. City poverty, I was told on countless occasions by residents in Las Delicias and communities like it, is so much worse than country poverty. At least in the country, you could just reach outside of your window and grab a plantain to eat, it was said; one did not have to *aguantar hambre.* But those in the country, especially the younger generations, often sought opportunities to go to the cities to find work. Unemployment and, relatedly, survival produced tensions in both rural and urban settings. I was often approached by individuals of all ages that I had only just met, usually men, asking me for work. "What is it that you do?"

"Whatever there is to be done," (*Lo que hay*) these men nearly uniformly responded.

Need far outstripped available state and social services in communities of war affected actors in Colombia. Thus, the *cupo* – the means by which the state administered its supply of services in the face of overwhelming demand – represented a key site for understanding the production of state-society relations and imaginaries. *Cupos* constitute the moment in which the state most effectively performs its role as provider of social services. It provides the services guaranteed to Colombians in the constitution and through human rights law – e.g., health, education, victims' reparations. Moreover, in this Fair, the presence of the Chamber of

Commerce, Ultrahuilca Bank, and the provision for community entrepreneurs to sell their artisanal wares alongside the medical tent suggests that the state also imagines itself as a conduit for modern well-being. However, the very nature of *cupos* (limited spots) and the wild insufficiency of what they in the end represent, simultaneously indexes the scarcity and limits of the state's ability to provide those things. Thus, when shackled by the limits of its ability to provide, the state reinforced rather than repaired ideas the citizens held about absence and abandonment even as it tried to directly address these ideas.

*...and the state takes away*

Unfortunately, in this particular Institutional Fair for Reconciliation, state representatives not only brought resources to the community, they also took resources away. By doing this, they reinforced ideas of citizens as victims of state actions instead of creating more positive citizen-state relationships. Yana and Iván and the rest of the Center staff had been busy since 4am and had spent the last three months promoting this event throughout Las Delicias in order to make the government's goal of 600 attendees for the day. (In the end, 900 community members' names had been registered on the multiple attendance lists going around.) As part of the work that morning, they had set up 20 tables to showcase the products made by ex-combatants and victims through the vocational courses that the Center had hosted over the last year and a half: e.g., hand crafted gift bags, crochet purses, baked goods, and cleaning products. Iván, in particular, had spent an hour or so quietly arranging the tables as Yana went around knocking on doors to remind people about the Fair. He handed the Center's attendance list clipboard to Angelica, a teenage girl who spent most of her free time in the Center in the afternoons and who was infallible in her attendance of the dance classes, no matter the style. She sniffled at me through watery eyes as she handed me a pen to register my presence, clearly quite sick, but nonetheless committed to volunteering and doing her part for the Center that day.

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Around 10:00am, I looked over to see that Iván was incensed, pacing back and forth and raising his voice to the Center Director, Yula. I had never before and have never since seen this man raise his voice, as Iván was notable in his equanimity and moderation in all domains of life. It was now six hours after he had started for the day, and 10 ACR representatives had arrived in bulk. Iván had an outstanding relationship with the agency and its local representatives. Although he complained along with his other "reintegrating" comrades of having to constantly go to "perform the repentant excombatant" at all of the ACR events for international and governmental donors, they knew that was the price they paid for getting their prime choice of job and training opportunities. These performances and their lived commitment to living within the bounds of legality were the very reason that the ACR had originally recommended their connection to the Center, after all.

I approached to catch the end of what he was saying, "And then they just come in here with their red vests and their signs and take all of our stuff!" I looked to where he was pointing and saw that the ACR had come in and taken all of the tables that he had carefully arranged that morning. "And what the fuck is CREO!? I don't even know what that is!?" Iván tugged at the color of the white polo shirt that I had on, which the ACR had given me when they arrived. "CREO" translated to "I believe" and also represented an ACR-led initiative that involved no fewer than 10 NGOs, government agencies, and international donors. The acronym stood for "We construct reconciliation with equity and opportunities;" judging by the backing of the Florencia Chamber of Commerce, those "opportunities" were business-like in nature. And, despite Iván's ignorance of the initiative, the Colombia Reconciles was listed as one of the program sponsors. Yula went off to get more tables and calm Iván's tirade. "*Compañera,*" he said to me, calming somewhat, "It's a good thing that I love Yula, because otherwise I would just leave!"

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The calm was quickly shattered. Angelica approached me with an attendance sheet again, extending a pen towards me, and still struggling through her congested sinuses. "I already signed in, remember?" I said to her. "No, it's for them," she pointed the pen cap towards the red vests swirling around their ill-gotten tables. I looked down, and indeed recognized the ACR format for attendance sheets. "What!?" Iván exclaimed. "Angelica is ours! Look at her! She's sick!" He stood behind her and grabbed her shoulders, shaking her slight frame from left to right as he showed me how sick she was, and doing little to alleviate her discomfort in the process. "Do our sheets first," he said to her. Despite my affection for young Angelica, I decided to rummage around in my bag for a pen that she had not touched. By the time I looked up again, Iván was gone, no doubt to commiserate with others about the injustice that had just occurred.

Thus, calls for a state presence were sometimes met with an undesirable answer. In this instance, the state officials came in and took tables and staff away from the Reconciliation House and Ivan. ACR officials did not think twice about the fact that they were arriving into a set of existing social processes and practices. They enacted a sort of eminent domain over social life in that they acted as if they entered into a world in stasis that was simply awaiting the arrival of the state. Instead, this world comprised a vibrant community with a complex, functioning socioeconomic, political, and yes, even (para) governmental life.

Such acts of eminent domain over social life certainly did little to strengthen the trust between state and society actors. In this particular case, Iván was a former FARC political commander, who joined the guerrillas because his brother was killed by the paramilitaries and he believed *el abandono del estado* was the direct cause of the conditions that led to his brother's death.[2] Thus, he took up arms against that state. At the time of our meeting, he was long into a

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[2] Paramilitary-state ties have been well-documented in the Colombian context (Richani, 2000; W. L. Tate, 2010)and they were often deployed either directly as the shadow enforcer of the government or permitted to act with impunity.

very successful (according to ACR measures) reintegration process, a volunteer at the Center, and a very active community leader that convened both victims and excombatants to work together on community improvement projects. He was also one of the "model" former combatants called on by both the Center and the ACR to perform his commitment to reintegration in legible terms for national and international donors in the periodic meet and greets that occurred when the donors donned their khakis and sensible shoes to come out to "the territories" to see what their Dollars, Euros, and Yen were up to. In this moment of state appropriation of the community's efforts and resources, the state once again appeared in Iván's field of vision as an enemy. Though the enemy no longer fixed at the receiving end of a rifle, it nonetheless took the tenor of injustice, abuse of power, and marginalization of those whose body politic sustained it.

The incident was just the start of a difficult day for relations between the Center and the ACR – between the victim and two former combatants who comprised the staff of the center, and the red-vested government officials that represented the local service center of the ACR. In this particular exchange, it was apparent that institutional attempts at make-believe had fallen short. The materiality of the making was constituted through a white branded polo shirt that read only to the uninformed observer "I believe," which the I, the American woman, bore on my back, validating the message. But in that moment, I did not believe, and neither did Iván. I did not believe that what I had witnessed was the process of an equitable approach to reconciliation between anyone, least of all between citizens – for let us not forget that former combatants are also and have always been citizens of Colombia – and the state. And I felt embarrassed, because I had been so excited to put on this first piece of institutionally branded clothing that I had received after wandering among similarly dressed individuals both in institutional and community settings for nearly nine months. I, too, had crowded eagerly around the box of shirts with my fellow Center-mates at the ACR table when it was opened. And now I felt let down. It had been a lie.

As those representing victims' services and providing medical care in the Army tent provided services through *cupos,* identifying and categorizing and rendering legible through that provision, the ACR officials worked on the same exercise in legibility on other fronts to present the image: to audiences both present and absent. Iván's carefully set up tables for the Center participants and their goods for sale, both victims of and former combatants in the armed conflict, had been commandeered by the ACR who entered late and, with great flourish, marked their institutional territory through banners, T-shirts, and red vests, around the entire event. A casual observer could easily think that the event had been largely produced by the ACR (and its donors), but they had provided no funding, and it had been Yana and Iván knocking on doors for months to get the word out and help organize the affair. In response to this perceived unjust appropriation of their efforts and community networks, Ivan and Yana become frustrated and angry, beyond just disappointment. Those at the Reconciliation House had gone into the day thinking that this would be a celebration of what the Center had accomplished for the year, and instead they felt insulted, abused, and inferior in the face of their institutional "collaborators." Ivan and Yana's disappointment index their subordinated position to the institutional actors present and the branding and funding apparatus that backs these institutions: were it not a position of dominance, it would not have the power to give hope and to disappoint. Consequently, even though the state has long been accused of *abandono,* reactions such as those of Ivan suggest that it had never fully receded from the imaginaries of its citizen-subjects.

I argue that the manifestation of these tensions along identity lines familiar to those related to the armed conflict may be in part attributable to the aspect of identity priming that I developed in the Introduction. The name of the Fair for Reconciliation and the presence of specific conflict-oriented agencies (the Colombian Agency for Reintegration of Excombatants)

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and the Victims' Unit) combined to remined participants that day of the elements of their experiences that related to the war. The scenarios that I elaborate in the successive sections of this chapter related to performing reconciliation before state agencies and NGO representatives further sediment the sense that one's conflict-related identity surfaced as most salient for the activities that day. The event convened people according to who they were with respect to the armed conflict – the presumed reason why reconciliation was needed at all – and this primed participants to perform those parts of their identities. It is thus unsurprising that whatever contests and sociopolitical divisions that occurred during the day's interactions organize along similar lines.

*"Making a presence": Categorizing and governing conflict-affected citizens*

With this in mind, the Institutional Fair for Reconciliation also provides an opportunity to better understand relationships between citizens and the state at this historical juncture. Understandings of the state and relationships to it are constituted through everyday discourses, practices, and encounters; the fictional reality of the state is made as much as it is believed, and believed through its making (Aretxaga, 2003; Borneman, 1997; Brown, 1995; Gupta, 1995; Navaro-Yashin, 2012; Nelson, 1999; Taussig, 1997). It is thus imperative to analyze critically the production of these encounters and the practices, promises, and upsets that they produce in order to understand both what is at stake for the governors and the governed, and how they come to co-constitute one another in these spaces. For this reason, I position the Institutional Fair for Reconciliation as a site in which we may begin to come to know how this reality is both made and believed.

I take for granted that one of the primary purposes of the state is to render citizens more legible to state institutions – i.e., to assign them to certain categories of citizenship, such as victims and former combatants, in order to be able to more effectively govern them (Scott, 1998).

The "will to legibility" (Aretxaga, 2003) has been posited as perhaps the defining feature of statecraft since Scott's (1998) seminal work on the topic. Thus, in addition to addressing discourses of state absence and abandonment, the Fair represented the state's attempt to register and categorize the residents of Las Delicias according to the categories of the institutions that could best manage them. Given the population of this community, those institutions included the Victims' Unit, the Colombian Agency for Reintegration, and programs like Families in Action. This was in part achieved through the naming of the Fair: an Institutional Fair for Reconciliation hailed intended "beneficiaries" according to their relationship to the country's armed conflict – for what else would reconciliation be required? Many implicated in the conflict have remained at the fringes of state-civil society relations either as a result of their direct engagement against the state (in the case of illegal armed combatants) or their enduring and repeated marginalization and dispossession through the effects of armed, structural, and bureaucratic violence (Gupta, 2012). Thus, it makes sense that the will to render these illegal settlers in the informal housing settlement of Las Delicias at the margins of governable life might represent an itch that precipitated the government agencies' coordinated presence that day. A formally registered victim, for example, is a more governable one. Certainly, those institutional representatives present very much had in mind that the work of the day was business as usual in terms of "treating" victims and "doing normal office work," as they had informed me – i.e., the exercise of statecraft. The state making of its own presence thus produced a legibility effect (Trouillot, 2000) through the institutional and thematic organization vis-à-vis the armed conflict.

In addition to organizing more governable citizens, state agencies also undertook actions to produce a particular image of their work at the Fair in order to demonstrate their capabilities. I argue that national and international donors motivated these actions: first, to justify the dollars and euros spent on the event, and second, to ensure their continued flow. For this reason, it was

as important to have done the work as it was to *have been seen to have done the work.*

Coordinated photo ops, reports handed into donors, and media accounts would later announce the achievements in reconciliation and state-society relationship building. That morning, the officials I questioned quickly informed me of the quantitative reach of different agencies' efforts: numbers treated, and populations served. There was a clear understanding that each institutional actor was as much fulfilling their stated objective as they were performing the fulfillment of that objective through quantifiable, reportable means (Merry, 2016). Certainly, the community of Las Delicias comprised one of the intended audiences. But they were only one of multiple audiences. Another audience included those who would later receive the evidence of the Fair through photos, reports, and media accounts. This evidence would be made visible in order to secure ongoing financial and technical support, continued political backing, and a public image of a state that was no longer absent. Such reporting, framing, and curating of these spaces of intervention comprised yet another set of considerations in the institutional and organizational milieu: the donor audience that is always present even in its physical absence through its promise of funding and other forms of capital. Thus, the Institutional Fair for Reconciliation served both to better organize and categorize citizens who may have remained at the fringes of governable life prior to the Fair, and also to show other donor audiences that the state was effectively engaging in this work. The effectiveness of this engagement constitutes the remaining consideration of this chapter.

**Performing ideal post-conflict subjects: Where the imaginary and the real do not collide**

In this final section, I analyze the "reconciliation" aspect of the Institutional Fair for Reconciliation. I first present the manner in which former combatants and victims were explicitly called upon by institutional actors to perform certain ideas about reconciliation, and the way in which these ideas did (and mostly, did *not*) approximate how they actually practiced

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reconciliation in their daily lives. On one hand, the performances were necessary in order to provide evidence that the state had made a presence that day; this evidence – attendance sheets, photographs, media accounts – would be circulated to the public, senior officials, and international donors and governments. On the other hand, the large gap between quotidian relational practices and the performances of these practices in this fair also signaled the extent to which institutions both missed the mark in terms of capturing these relations and also citizen competency at performing certain kinds of post-conflict subjectivities for institutions.

The Reconciliation House Director and employees had informed participants in the Center that there would be toys given away at the Fair. When the day arrived, the Colombian Agency for Reintegration (ACR) officials and National Police emcee asked them to perform various relational and subjective practices that they had "learned" during their time at the Reconciliation House (RH). For the former combatants in particular, many of these domains were also the subject of their reintegration training provided by the ACR. Recall in the last chapter that those former combatants that had been recruited to participate in the Reconciliation House had been named by the ACR as model participants in the state-sponsored program. They were named as such because government and NGO officials viewed them as making a genuine and largely successful attempt to live within the bounds of legality. More cynically, it was also a reflection of these excombatants' abilities to perform what they called "the repentant excombatant." The performance and the genuine will to live a legal life were not mutually exclusive; rather, they comprised two elements in a multidimensional relationship between "good" former combatants and the state. I examine some of these performances here in order to illustrate first the large gap between what they feel they are being called on to act out and the realities of reconciliation and related practices in everyday life in a community like Las Delicias.

While the Army-sponsored medical tent was the morning's epicenter of activity, the adjacent Heaven Store (*Tienda del Cielo*) would capture the hopes and imaginations of the neighborhood children and their parents and caregivers for the entirety of the afternoon. Visually, it was inviting, framed by two columns of sky-blue balloons on each side of the loaned University of the Amazon tent. A sign stretched between the two pillars, temporarily stapled to the tarpaulin edge: each word on its own cardboard cloud, spelled out in painted blue puffy foam letters. Add to that the three displays of children's toys set up late morning and the proximity of the event to Christmas in a community in which usually only the youngest child in the family typically received a single gift for the occasion, and the effect on those assembled was predictably magnetic. So much so, that the ACR had to leave one or two red-vested officials at the *Tienda* to manage the constant barrage of children who wanted to know how they could get a toy, and to deter the few sticky-fingered bandits who preferred not to ask questions.

The list of whom among this throng of children who would receive the roughly 25 puzzles, whiffle ball sets, and soccer balls in the *Tienda* had been drawn out in advance: these were to be gifted to the children of the regular participants in the RH. Certainly, after the year spent in RH activities, and presenting the results of these activities to outside audiences, these individuals had refined their understandings of what was expected of such public displays of RH pedagogies – i.e., how to articulate for the governing gaze idealized discourses of forgiveness and reconciliation. For those assembled who were not on that list, however, they simply observed a Lieutenant of the National Police emceeing the activity and the ACR representatives handing out the gifts and taking pictures. Judging by the depth of Iván´s scowl as he looked on, I suspect it irked him all the more that he activity, which had been designed by the RH and for RH participants (though funded by the Governor's office), was now under the executive control of the National Police and the ACR. After much anticipation, the hour arrived for handing out the

gifts, and everyone at the event concentrated around a single table draped in blue paper with two of the "flags" of the eight components of the RH's pedagogy - "Memory" and "Care" - stuck into cement-filled cups weighing the paper down. On the table were sixteen note cards with different components of the pedagogy printed on one side in capital letters: FORGIVENESS, RESPECT, PARTICIPATION, RECONCILIATION, CARE, EMOTION, VALUING DIFFERENCE, DIALOGUE, and MEMORY. In order to receive their toys, participants would need to act out a scenario illustrating one of the principles promoted on the small sheet.

I eyed Don Geronimo among those present, an aging patriarch in a three-generation FARC family now six years into their integration into civilian lives: two of those generations had been born into the FARC after he was recruited as a younger man. Though his recruitment had been more or less forced, Don Geronimo came to appreciate the principles and practices he had learned in the guerrilla group, which included a strong sense of community. As part of that, he had become a regular fixture at the Reconciliation House since its opening and was an enthusiastic participant in community life. He saw me looking at him as he periodically shoved his two "granddaughters" in front of him closer and closer to the *Tienda.* I knew the family well and was quite sure that one of his granddaughters had simply adopted her genetic status for the day. I raised my eyebrow at him from the other side of the circle, calling him out on his ruse. He smiled at me and shrugged, inching ever forward with his semi-fictive kin. His patience rewarded, he was finally called on to select his scenario: RECONCILIATION.

Lieutenant Morales of the National Police announced to the entire neighborhood through the PA system, that "Don Geronimo would be helping his granddaughters reconcile...." After a meeting of the minds, they decided that they would act out a scene in which the two granddaughters were fighting over a toy and Don Geronimo intervenes:

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"Why won't you buy one for each of us?" one young girl improvised.

"Because we can only have one," Don Geronimo responded, smiling.

"We will not do it (fight) again," said the second girl, offering up fluttering eyelashes and a pout as evidence of her commitment.

They then clasped hands and skipped around in a circle, singing a song.

RECONCILIATION.

The audience clapped and looked on approvingly as the two girls ran over to the *Tienda*, received their toys, and had their picture taken by and with ACR officials, Geronimo, and the toys. These pictures would later end up circulating in donor reports as evidence of reconciliation achieved and populations served thanks to the generous contributions of said donor. Intervening agents made reconciliation occur through the production of a role play scenario of reconciliation: make believe indeed.

An elderly gentleman and his adult daughter then acted out a scene in which he played a man trying to seduce a woman sexually despite her wishes to return home by 10pm. RESPECT, they teach the audience, when his "But you're so delicious" was met with a firm and final "No," and he "let" her walk away untouched. The daughter then got the all-clear to send her own child across for her toy and accompanying picture.

A ten-year old boy pretended to hit his mother, with whom he stood nearly eye-to-eye, and with some physical difficulty, she swept him up and cradled him like an infant, adjusting him so that she could press his head against her bosom as she began to sing him a lullaby. His sister came over and stroked his head and sang along, looking lovingly down at her giant baby brother. The spoiled boy played his part, placing his thumb next to where his mother's nipple would be and sucking on it, mimicking the act of breast feeding. The mother stopped singing as the

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daughter continued, still stroking his hair. Rocking her son back and forth, the mother said, "You can hit me, but I am going to keep loving you, and clean you. I *care* for you." *Suck suck*, the boy slurped exaggeratedly on his thumb. "Sleep. Sleep." The mother cooed, and then kissed her son on the head. Behind them, the ACR journalist there for the day from the national headquarters took frame after frame of shots of the encounter.

CARE! Announces the lieutenant. More smiles and applause.

Toy.

Photos.

Sixteen of these scenes played out in this way. I had observed plenty moments of care, and arguments and interactions approximating reconciliation following those arguments among these individuals in my time there, and I never once saw a woman sweep a giant son off his feet, nor did I see mother and daughter clasp hands and swing each other around in a circle singing after they made up from a fight over curfew or completing household chores. The vast majority of the time, I observed minor conflicts resolved through a period of estrangement followed by a resumption of the relationship as it had been, with no explicit conversation regarding the incident in question. Even what I would consider to be fairly just cause for a permanent rupture in relations often resolved in a similar fashion. For example, one drunk young man split his lifelong friend's back open with a machete during a bar brawl over a woman. One spent a month in the hospital, the other, two months in hiding (from any possible police involvement). By month three, they were back in the same bar drinking together again. When I inquired about the mechanism behind their impressive reconciliatory powers, I was told by both that nary a word between them had been exchanged to that effect.

The case of Don Geronimo was particularly revealing of the disjuncture between quotidian practices and those presented to the state and NGO actors along two lines: first, the complete non-representation of how reconciliation actually occurs. Second, the frequent (though by no means universal) gendering of reconciliation processes in daily life. In another episode of quotidian conflict, Geronimo's young grandson scratched the paint on a neighbor's car, to which the neighbor, John, responded by physically handling and berating the child. Geronimo stepped in and the confrontation in the street between him and John escalated to the point that they had both drawn machetes on one another. At this point, Don Geronimo's daughter and John's wife came out of their respective homes and negotiated between themselves the terms of the confrontation and agreed that an argument over "such a thing that isn´t important" (a scratched car) should not continue any further. The men would, they instructed them, lower their machetes, return to their homes, and not talk to one another until they could behave civilly towards one another. It was common in this setting that disagreements between men would be arbitrated by the women who were close to them – between the women first, and with their decisions then transferred to the men involved.

In another instance, a mother and son had a reasonably public argument over a motorcycle that he wanted because he had bought it for her and she never used it. Now that his was in disrepair, he needed the one he had originally gifted to conduct his daily activities. Their shouting made the content of this argument known to all of us in the surrounding homes, and she screamed at him, calling him ungrateful (presumably for all the mothering that she had done) and told him he could not have it. She yelled various insults at him for a time as he seethed in the doorway, and he eventually stormed off down the street. I inquired of my neighbor, who had previously told me that "the Caqueteñan culture is such that the women are always the ones who intervene to reconcile the family because they have the most access to everyone" (a claim of fluctuating

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veracity): why didn´t the woman's daughter (the now dispossessed young man's sister) then intervene to resolve the conflict? "No no," he told me as he shook his head. "Not when it's the mother. With the mother, no one intervenes." A week later, I saw the young man driving his mother around to run errands, since she was in fact so fearful of driving the vehicle in question that she always called on him to drive her. What had their process of reconciliation entailed? A few days of silence in the household, some longer hours for him outside of it, and the resumption of life as usual shortly after.

Outside of Las Delicias, in contexts directly related to the end of the armed conflict, larger scale moments of "organic" reconciliation tended to occur when previously antagonistic groups of actors convened to meet a shared need related to their livelihood and daily existence, and without the fanfare of institutional banners, "spaces of encounter," or international investment. For example, during the earliest days of the demobilization of the FARC after the late 2016 signing of the Peace ACcord, I visited a transitional zone where the FARC had gathered in the department of Antioquia. The FARC were first to construct the infrastructure required to receive WiFi in the Zone. The region was without cell service, and both the United Nations officials and Colombian armed forces, along with the residents of the surrounding community desired access to the signal accorded by the guerrilla infrastructure. The FARC were happy to accommodate and, for a small fee, individuals could buy PIN numbers to access the internet with their device of choice. Since the FARC camp was at a bit of a distance, community members – once victims and near hostages of the FARC - could be found standing at the highest open point in their housing cluster, facing the guerrilla encampment, or wandering to the borders of the zone, arms outstretched with their cellphones in the air, and the military and international observers readily complied with the PIN payments so that they could communicate with the Mission at the national level and send in their required reports as needed, as well as keep current on their social media feeds. In this way, a simple

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– but not insignificant – piece of infrastructure served as a social and even physical rallying point for all of the groups living in the and around the zone, and resulted in the very sort of "reciprocal cooperation" so deeply desired by reconciliation interventionists.

In another such camp in Colinas, Guaviare, community members looked to the FARC in order to work together on improving the bridge along the road to the village. They met with the FARC commander in the zone who then assigned certain guerrilla fighters to work on the bridge with the locals. As one community member put it, "We talked to the commander, and because they are an organization with a hierarchy, he picked a group of guerrillas to work on the bridge with us." The two groups were able to improve the bridge with the minimal tools at their disposal, apparently so much so that later FARC dissidents who had decided to opt out of the peace process would later put a bomb under the bridge, which was found and deactivated before it could go off.

Further along in the process timeline, the leaders of the Agua Bonita site in La Montañita, Caquetá, had recently formed a community action committee (JAC) by October of 2017, just seven months after the reported construction of their zone commenced. As the resident political project leader for the FARC looked over the fish farming tanks that he and the economic collective comprising 196 former guerrillas in the zone had built, along with the vast majority of the building structures and an impressive field of, at the time, shin-high pineapple trees, he explained that the JAC comprised three committees: environment, culture, and agriculture. If they were able to stay on this land after the end of the transitional period – a casual threat was offered that they would have to be forcibly evicted if the government wanted them out – this JAC would coordinate with those of surrounding communities along these three lines. The FARC would continue to educate themselves, work to advance their political project, and find a way to take to market their pineapples, fish, and wood crafts that they were just then learning to make.

Though not yet mature, the JAC was a way of making the social, political, and economic work being done in the zone legible to the world outside of the still guarded perimeter of their new home. The JAC accomplished several gains in terms of integration and possible future reconciliation. First, while it was clearly comprised FARC members, given the geographic concentration of these individuals in the single community, and the to-date homogeneity of residents in Agua Bonita as former guerrillas, it was not an organization *of the FARC as former guerrillas* – i.e., their conflict-related identities. Instead, it represented an established form of civilian organizing to manage territorial and communal affairs. Second, while military structures served to facilitate interactions between the Army and the FARC in these transitional sizes where the FARC had gathered to lay down their arms, civilian structures in this case served to facilitate interactions between the former guerrillas and their farming neighbors, and on the latter's terms.

Soccer, perhaps unsurprisingly, also had a protagonist's role in peacebuilding. For example, in Buenos Aires, Cauca, the FARC brought in locals to build the new *polideportivo* (sports complex) in the reception area of the zone near the hamlet of Robles. Local civilians worked on the project and also benefitted from it, with regular soccer tournaments occurring between guerrillas and civilians; women's teams; and even the occasional visiting former professional soccer players joining in. With these examples, it becomes evident that activities ranging from the mundane to critical infrastructure projects can serve to convene actors from groups who have experienced deeply entrenched historic tensions in productive, non-violent cooperative relationships.

Thus, state calls of former male combatants to perform certain imaginaries of reconciliation miss the mark not only in terms of the gendering of the process, and the content of reconciliation encounters in everyday life, but also in terms of the structural conditions that can

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motivate them. With regards to the element of gender, I want to make clear that I am not suggesting that women are, by nature, more conciliatory, as I certainly observed as many interpersonal conflicts instigated and exacerbated by women as I did men. However, the roles that individuals played in conflict and its consequences in everyday life were very much gendered.  This element of reconciliation was almost uniformly missed in all manner of interventions intended to foster such practices. So when what is called for is such a far cry from what is truly lived, why the saccharine display of these affective states for the state police and ACR officials?

In some ways, these encounters between the victims and excombatants and the state-sponsored Fair for Reconciliation reflect Carr's female addicts in a rehab clinic in Chicago, who "flip the script" in their institutional therapeutic encounter, leveraging the very terms of the organizational rhetoric used to render them and their experiences legible back at the institution in order to work their way towards greater access to services (Carr, 2010). Carr terms this *anticipatory interpellation,* in which the subject calls on the institutional representatives to recognize her as, in this case, an addict "and therefore recognize their own categories of recognition…[and] effectively hailed those who hailed her." (p.182). Similarly, in the Fair for Reconciliation, the subjects in the encounter deployed the discourses learned during their time in the Center (partially sponsored by state institutions) and in other similar events throughout the city, in which legible forms of reconciliation made visible certain kinds of actions (e.g., dialogue and humility) and made invisible others (e.g., having a beer together with your buddy after he cut your back open with a machete). The difference between Carr's discursively adept addicts and those attending the Fair that day, is that those addicts deployed institutional language to make more legible the real subjective experiences that they were hoping to address. A mother in the addiction center board room, for example, used institutional language to paint the picture of her

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great need for childcare support. In contrast, the caricature representations of relational practices provided in the Fair for Reconciliation in no way approximated how these individuals really addressed the quotidian scenarios they represented.

I argue that Carr's idea of anticipatory interpellation only partially explains the performances during the Fair specifically because of the contextual particularity of discourses about state absence and abandonment. It is exactly because of these discourses and the sense that you are "on your own," as I elaborated in the first chapter that communities like Las Delicias have developed full social, economic, and political lives – *without* the presence of a police station, a functional formal justice system, or even nominally passable public health services. However, these shortcomings juxtapose against a very present idea that the state *ought* to be there to provide these things, contributing to the force of the discourses of its absence. The state, in part responding to discourses of its absence, entered onto the scene as though it brought with it the relational solutions to ending cycles of violence and revenge. As it did so, it ignored entirely the fact that these individuals already have practices that achieve these ends in their everyday life. At the same time, it suggested that war and its aftermath had to do with the resolution of quotidian conflicts and not the legacy of structural violence in which these individuals lived. Despite having needs and having some of those needs superficially met during this Fair for Reconciliation, the community existed prior to and following the events of this day. The tendency for institutional actors to present themselves as the cavalry come to save the day in marginalized communities where they have not traditionally made a presence of any kind tends to be received by those living there with deep cynicism and the anticipation of future disappointment. As such, attendees engage with what is before them that day during the Fair in order to make the best of what is tangibly possible at the time.

At the micro level of communities such as Las Delicias, the institutional presumption that it has brought reconciliation to these communities is a flawed one, but unfortunately, other forms of reconciliation that pre-existed the Interinstitutional Fair – even those more directly related to transitional, post-conflict times – are not acknowledged by the state: a decision not to engage in retributive violence, the acceptance of a neighbor's child as a playmate to your own child even though that neighbor is a former member of the FARC who displaced you and killed your husband, and the provision of a stove by a victim to a pair of former FARC members trying to start their state-sponsored "productive project" by building a corner store in your neighborhood until they can get it up and running and buy their own stove. NGO interventions and state presence can be good things, but they presuppose the absence prior to their entry into the community of any version of the practices and techniques they transmit, rather than understanding themselves as entering an already rich tapestry of social actors with already rich repertoires of care and conflict in their everyday lives.

**Conclusion**

The principle argument of this chapter has been that the production of state presence through an Institutional Fair for Reconciliation is simultaneously a response to historic discourses of state absence and abandonment and an attempt to govern more effectively its citizens. I demonstrate, however, that under the conditions of limited state resources, that this effort does more to highlight the limits of the state than to showcase its capabilities. Furthermore, I show how efforts to show future anticipated audiences (donors) the successes of these moments of intervention can actually undermine the relations between citizens and the state that they attempt to repair. I conclude by analyzing the gap between performances of reconciliation and related relational practices and the actual enactment of these practices in daily life. I suggest that this gap

evidences intervening agencies' tendencies to enter a given setting with the assumption that its targeted domain of expertise (e.g., reconciliation) did not previously exist in that setting.

Two individuals were notably absent from the crowd surrounding the Store of Dreams: Yana and Iván. That morning, those of us affiliated with the event were given tickets to claim our lunches that would be provided that afternoon. The lunches arrived at noon, to be distributed at 12:30. Iván, having been working since 4am without food, took one of the lunches off the stack and left his ticket with the government official guarding them. An ACR official walked over and took the lunch out of his hands, scolding him for eating before the community, apparently unimpressed by the dual facts that he had been working since four in the morning and that he was also a member of the community. I felt the weight of the hypocrisy of the "I believe" embroidery pressing into my back. Whatever patience for such antics Iván possessed after the morning's incident with appropriation of his efforts and material goods burned off in that moment, and he and Yana left for another community event happening up the hill, leaving the RH Director, Yula, alone to manage everything for the afternoon. Such tensions between discourse – "Fair for Reconciliation," the banner had advertised – and action were commonplace in the production of such events, as citizens and government officials jockeyed for all too scarce resources and across class, identity, and hierarchical divides to address overwhelming needs: administrative as well as existential.

**Chapter 4: Disappointment by Design: Bureaucratic technologies of knowledge and the "inter-institutional articulation"**

Throughout this work, I have examined how the administrative and bureaucratic processes of NGO and state interventions reproduce social divisions even as they work to promote reconciliation. Mundane tasks such as filling out attendance lists, training newcomers on NGO pedagogies, and arranging tables for a state services fair become sites of conflict and contestation as participants – primed to participate in terms of their experiences with the armed conflict – contend with the individual and collective ambivalence inevitable in the aftermath of violence and betrayal. An NGO worker who is also a conflict victim publicly humiliates another excombatant as she "trains" him in the NGO pedagogy. And a state agency for reintegrating excombatants disrupts the community work of one of those excombatants and claims his successes as their own in a state fair for reconciliation. They achieve this by rearranging his tables without his permission, coopting the young woman he had recruited for the day to do work for them, and placing agency logos on goods they had not sponsored in order to look as though they had for media interviews and donor reports.

The present chapter leaves Las Delicias and analyzes this same dynamic in a local policy-making setting. Local governments in post-conflict settings tend to be understudied and remain in the intellectual shadow of the larger national government and nation-building projects. This oversight becomes all the more unfortunate when the conflict in question is an intra-state one, as is the case in Colombia, in which sub-national institutions have everything to do with the mitigation of ongoing violence and reduction of risks to stability (UNDP, 2015). Researchers in the Afghani context suggest that this tendency occurs due to

beliefs that investment in the national government capabilities will "trickle down" and due to the overwhelming complexity of developing local government programs (Wang, Suhrke, & Tjønneland, 2005). Such assumptions might be reasonably applied to intervening agency logics in the Colombian context as well. However, analyzing local government actors provides meaningful insight into the episodic and regionally sporadic realities of ending armed violence – i.e., it tends not to occur uniformly and simultaneously at a national level, but rather in certain geographic pockets and over time (Salomons, 2002). Furthermore, interventions that operate hand in hand with local governments may be more adequate for demilitarizing politics and re-establishing the presence of the state in strategic areas of the country (Romeo, 2002). In a country like Colombia, where violent clientelism (discussed in greater detail in the following chapter) has dominated the practice of politics for the better part of a half-century, this last component becomes particularly salient.

In response to a perceived lack of coordination in the public sector, international agency consultants and national officials introduced the "inter-institutional articulation" (IA) throughout Colombia as a means to facilitate coordination and reduce bureaucratic waste. I situate this approach historically in Colombia and with regards to international involvement in peacebuilding more generally. However, rather than engendering the sort of horizontal leadership, technocratic vision, and participatory democracy that their designers envisioned, these "articulations" – analyzed both here and in the following chapter – become sites of ongoing division and hierarchical jockeying. In this chapter, I examine the administrative and organizational practices that constitute a core aspect of producing these "spaces of encounter", revealing the way in which they simultaneously achieve institutional goals and undermine them. To this end, I first analyze how managing attendance emerges as one of the key sites in which this contradiction occurs and the supporting bureaucratic

practices make this possible. Second, I follow attempts by national officials to realize

"knowledge transfer" to the local government representatives and the ways in which these

attempts reproduce hierarchies of power instead of generating the technocratic "leveling"

intended. And third, I trouble the practice of "democratic participation," when opening the

policy conversation to the inputs of civil society leaders does more to foreclose their

participation than it does to promote it or integrate their comments in any meaningful way.

**The Inter-Institutional Cross-Sector Committee for Human Rights and the Nation-**

**Territory Coordination Mechanism**

This section locates and defines the unfortunately named "Nation-Territory

Coordination Mechanism" within the "Inter-Institutional Cross-Sector Committee for

Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law" along three axes: the domain of

human rights in Colombia, the role of international agencies in promoting these kinds of

forum in contemporary governmental life in Colombia, and the sociohistorical significance

of the "nation-territory" discourse. Human Rights is a complicated topic in Colombia and a

source of ongoing frustration for civil society leaders as policies and protections tend to fall

flat in implementation. For example, in 2018, the country ranked 87 out of 162 in the

Human Freedom Index (Vásquez & Porčnik, 2018), and had long been criticized globally

for grave violations of human rights in nearly all areas of social life: from para-politics

scandals in which the military knowingly killed civilians and dressed them as guerrilla

rebels, to ongoing threats and rampant assassination attempts against social leaders and

human rights activists; ongoing failures to prevent violent displacement and snails-pace

processes of land restitution to victims of displacement; record-setting levels of femicide,

gender-based violence and attacks on the LGBTI communities; and a history back to

colonial times of violent exploitation of indigenous populations and their lands (for an updated assessment of current human rights priorities in the country, see HRW, 2018). I mention these challenges in Colombia's human rights record so as not to lose sight of the gravity of the matter under bureaucratic consideration in the meeting featured in this chapter. The suffering that is the object of administration and curation in such a setting can exceed the realm of human comprehension. It is thus important here to underscore the stakes of successful or unsuccessful policy-making that underlie the following analysis of ledgers and language.

This chapter analyzes one instance of an "inter-institutional articulation" (IA), which was illustrative of the dynamics and practices of many such meetings that I had observed. This particular committee formed in Caquetá in 2014, three years after then President Juan Manuel Santos signed the decree calling for its creation, a decree that emerged in direct response to Colombia's signing of international guidelines and commitments to a basic standard of human rights (Presidency of the Republic, 2014). Though policy makers in mid-2015 already busied themselves with adjustments according to the anticipated Peace Accord, the Decree would be formally amended in 2017. The Decree named a dizzying web of institutional actors either required or invited to participate in these committees at the national, departmental, and municipal levels in order to form a mechanism for "nation-territory coordination": 10 ministries and one Presidential Agency as core members; 8 other Ministries implicated in the realization of human rights and international humanitarian law policy work; permanent invitations to Commission quarterly meetings extended to 4 other government agencies, the Legal Counsel, and Congress; and a provision for the permitted invitation of any other actor or individual with a stake in human rights and international humanitarian law – including, thankfully, academics. I had actively

sought an invitation to a meeting such as the one described in this chapter because my

organizational and institutional interlocutors had named these spaces as the means by which

government officials would address in the policy domain the *abandono* referenced in the

previous chapter.

*Situating the inter-institutional articulation in the historical landscape of international*

*interventions*

The use of IAs spanned a variety of policy domains, and were often in no small part

backed by international donor agencies such as the United Nations Development Program,

or Germany's development agency, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale

Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ, for short). NGO leaders, local government officials and

politicians, and international agency representatives living in and around the region had

attested to the promise of these undertakings. And while I am certainly not arguing that

international intervening agents were the first to bring the idea of collaboration across

institutions in the public sector to Colombia, their consistent financial backing and

evangelizing of such arrangements certainly contributed to the ubiquity of their presence.

Since many of these kinds of initiatives indeed made use of international donor dollars, it

was not surprising that representatives from these agencies also attended the meetings in

order to assess progress in a given domain and offer what was termed "technical support" –

i.e., advice on work design and recommended procedures gleaned from other international

and national experiences in comparable contexts.

"If I arrive as an observer on a project that is already underway, the first thing that I

do is to participate in the Committee where they make decisions and establish

commitments. Within one or two meetings, you will know if the project is going well or if

it is going poorly," shared one such contractor with me from his office in Bogotá.

According to professionals in this domain, signs that a committee was a well-functioning one, included compliance with previously established commitments, the presence of key decision makers from the mandated institutions at the meetings, regular communication among committee members above and beyond the periodic (usually quarterly) meetings, and judicious accounting of meeting notes, advances, and challenges along the way. As the international cooperation professionals represented those agencies and governments who were the major financial backers of such processes, their understanding of what made for a successful "articulation," directly shaped the kinds of practices that took place in these contexts, especially the presentation and documentation of what it was that transpired in these meetings. These documented "memories" (*memoria*) of the encounters both served to buttress institutional memory and also circulated to citizens and international donor communities alike as evidence of the articulation that was taking place. In the paragraphs that follow, I provide a bit of context in order to orient the reader to the complex web of motives and mandates implicated in an interinstitutional articulation[1] such as the one featured in this chapter.

As noted, these spaces received significant backing from international donors, which explains some of the rise in popularity of the "articulation" approach to governance within Colombia. Since its inception, the United Nations has been involved to some degree in peacebuilding interventions. It formalized this involvement in the 1992 Agenda for Peace under then Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Other international institutions,

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[1] Despite the awkwardness of the term "articulation," I preserve the most literal translation of the term and provide the following definition, which I developed through a series of interviews (41) that I conducted with international cooperation officials, who are so often the bearers of such project and cross-institution work design: a coordinated process in which more than one institution contributes relevant financial and/or technical resources towards a common goal.

such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank also became deeply involved

in post-conflict environments throughout the last two decades of the 20th century. In the

early 2000s, the European Union and the European Commission moved to also formalize

the collaborations that they had been engaged in for peacebuilding alongside the UN. As a

result, in 2003, the UN-EU Joint Declaration on Crisis Management emerged. This

represented one of the first large-scale formalized "inter-institutional articulations" in

international peacebuilding. Between 2001 and 2008, 37% of peacebuilding aid (€2.2

billion) distributed by the EU went to UN agencies (Tardy, 2011). The purpose of the

formal arrangement was to increase efficiency and develop competencies in

communication, planning, training, and sharing lessons learned.

In 2016, the European Union sponsored an initiative that convened state agencies

and NGOs to develop a guide for "articulation of regional actors for implementing public

policies for development, peace, and reconciliation." The initiative defines  mechanisms for

articulating actors as the "collection of voluntary relations and for a [*instancias*] established

between civil society and state organizations that cooperate for an agenda of potential or

real interests implemented in the form of public policy with a dedicated budget" (Carvajal

O., Arías, Aunta, & Merchán Z., 2016, p. 5). The report suggests that greater articulation

can address historic issues with ineffective programs, unsustainable peacebuilding

initiatives, lack of accounting for regional variation during implementation, and weak

public sector legitimacy. Thus, while the IA faces a wide range of challenges in daily

operational life, such as those elaborated in the remainder of this chapter, its persistence as

a policy tool reflects its ongoing popularity in peacebuilding policy circles. Throughout the

remainder of this chapter, I examine critically the espoused benefits of these arrangements,

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questioning the understandings and implications of these terms by tracing their enactment in practice.

The Colombian instantiations of IAs emerge out of these international precedents. Furthermore, in Colombia, the IA has come to constitute the principle mechanism for governance initiatives related to reconciliation and post-conflict transition and development. For example, the Director of the Colombian Agency for Reintegration was quoted saying that "the reintegration policy is not conceived of as a task that is exclusive to the government, but rather a result of the articulation with local governments, other state institutions, the private sector, the media, and civil society" (Pardo C. & Duque S., 2015, p. 9). Nevertheless, policy makers have already acknowledged the limits of the AI approach. Continuing with the ACR example, Agency leaders noted that the articulated institutional arrangements had, as of 2015, still failed to ameliorate the stigma experienced by former combatants in their communities, a principle impediment to sustainable integration into civilian life (E. McFee, 2016). Of note for the present work, officials noted that articulating among institutions and sectors in order to reintegrate former combatants presents a distinct structural challenge when it occurs alongside ongoing conflict and insecurity.

Around the same time the ACR report emerged, technical committees – "spaces of articulation" – began to form in Colombia for "Peacebuilding, Peaceful Coexistence, and Reconciliation" (FND, 2015). For example, in Barranquilla, such an Inter-institutional Committee formed with the stated objective of "promoting and consolidating a space for articulation in which national, departmental, district, and municipal institutional along with the academy, economic associations, civil society, and communities in general would

convene." Involving "all sectors" would, it was hoped, lead to generating "sustainable alternatives for this sector (conflict affected individuals) of the population."

Even the National Police included these kinds of institutional arrangements in their "Peacebuilding Model." Reporting on itself as an institution, the National Police stated that they relied on "inter-institutional articulation to achieve governance, and the full respect for human rights, the transformation of conflicts, the prevention of violence, the differentiated approaches to security, and territorial peace" (Policía Nacional, 2017, p. 36). Deploying the nine components of its Peacebuilding Model required interinstitutional coordination among other agencies in the public sector and international alliances in order to "seek resources, technical and scientific support, and successful experiences that will assure effective results in peacebuilding" (p. 102). I present these examples to establish the way in which AI has become a ubiquitous feature to policy development in contemporary Colombian life and finds particular purchase within the domain of reconciliation and peacebuilding.

*The nation-territory divide*
Discourses are the nation-territory divide in Colombia are additionally relevant to the analysis of this chapter, given its focus on the Nation-Territory Mechanism of this particular initiative, as well as to the whole of this dissertation, given its focus on the reproduction of historically entrenched sociopolitical and economic divisions. The "nation-territory" distinction is an emic one and infused with local understandings of structural inequalities in the context. In particular, it is a common referent in discourses about *abandono* among both policy makers and civilian interlocutors. As an axis of division, it precedes the armed conflict, was a key factor in the emergence and persistence of that conflict, and persists after having been exacerbated by the same (Moncayo, 2019).

As an example of how this discourse arises in institutional life, a historian working in the Mayor's office in another area of the country along the Venezuelan border explained to me early on in my field work his take on the center-periphery relationship between Bogotá and Colombia's other handful of major cities, and the rest of the country. He lamented the many ways in which his office had to scrape together the very minimum of necessary provisions for their citizens. They had been "abandoned to the periphery" of national budgets that allocated an embarrassingly small sum of money for the execution of their responsibilities, according to him.  It was a discourse repeated to me on many occasions across various regions in the country, including Caquetá.

The term "nation" in this context referred to policy-making at the national level in the capital city of Bogotá and tended to also carry the sense that it was not just the policy-making that occurred in the nation's capital, but much of the national spending and investment as well. Certainly, traveling throughout Colombia, one experiences quite readily the sense that Colombia is, as is so often said, "a country of countries" or a "country of regions" as the differences in quality of life and access to basic services are radically and immediately observable once one leaves the more or less polished hubs of the nation's few metropolitan centers (cf., Ramírez, 2015).  The 2018 census of Colombia's 45.5 million inhabitants, revealed that just over 10 million people (22%) live in Bogotá and Medellín alone. Roughly 15% live in the rural countryside, which means that 85% of Colombia's population lives either in municipal town centers or cities (DANE, 2018). Resource distribution follows similar patterns of concentration as the populations who consume them, which is not illogical. However, budget limitations stretched thinner by rampant corruption are experienced as unjust by many of those operating in public life in "the territories." Furthermore, the terminological distinction of the "nation" (Bogotá) and "the

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territories" often carries with it fairly overt references to related distinctions in class, education, and cosmopolitanism as well. As such, these terms are as much structural referents as they are affectively laden indicators of where one resides on various hierarrchies of social and political value.

One approach to analyzing the history of this nation-territory discourse in Colombia is through an analysis of the National Development Plans that emerge at the outset of every presidential term, starting in 1966. Such an analysis reveals there have been three phases of politics that supported and addressed the idea of "the nation and the territories" (Moncayo, 2019). Moncayo distinguishes each phase according to its treatment of decentralization in the national planning processes. Between 1966 and 1990 the idea of "regional politics"[2] emerged. During this phase, the country passed through a wave of decentralization that shifted many prior responsibilities from national ministers to regional officials. Contemporary discourses regarding tensions around agricultural versus industrial production bear striking similarities to those of "closing gaps" in this era: namely, attempts to modernize rural production while industrializing the larger cities and reduce the dependency on imports.

The second phase occurred between 1991-2006, during which the state gradually withdrew from control over a wide range of public policies. During this second wave, economic policy turned its eye towards internationalization of Colombia's markets. Additionally, the new 1991 Constitution of Colombia included decentralization as a core objective. However, despite significant rhetoric behind decentralization in the name of regional autonomy, government national planning documents in this era do not provide

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[2] Regional politics in this setting refers to those policies that attempt to reduce regional inequalities and promote development initiatives that emerge from the regions themselves.

specific actions or dedicated budgeting to achieve these ends, instead folding them within the ideas of increasing transparency and improving state effectiveness. As such, decentralization efforts lost traction during this second phase.

Finally, the third phase occurred between 2007 and 2018, during which the state began to return to engage in economic and social development in the territories. During this time, there was a renewed fiscal commitment to territorial projects, especially development ones, as well as a recognition in national policy of territorial differences in the development of that national policy. Among the domains that required "closing gaps" in this period: government institutional capacity, infrastructure, logistics, communications, and socioeconomic inequality. Unfortunately, despite the increased specificity and recognition, the question of the territories remained outside of the core objectives of the most recent presidential administrations. Meaningful consultation of regional officials and integration of their diverse range of inputs failed to materialize. With the above in mind, the tensions between the national level and territorial level actors clearly exceed both the temporal and thematic frameworks of the armed conflict in Colombia.

Returning to the particular "Nation-Territory Coordination Mechanism" under study in the present chapter: the purpose of the mechanism at the national level was to "look for how to consolidate a territorial agenda for guaranteeing and protecting human rights through the appropriation and implementation of the Comprehensive Policy of Human Rights and the National Strategy for Human Rights, through the creation or reactivation of territorial entities" (Presidency of the Republic, 2014, p. 17). In 2015, the mandate for this mechanism included constructing a comprehensive local public policy in terms of human rights that was aligned with the Departmental Plan and regional political priorities (DAPRE, 2014). The data collection process had been led by the Presidential Council for

Human Rights and the National Department of Planning, with the financial, technical and human capital support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHCR), and civil society organizations (the latter only in one of the five phases). These inputs were also to inform future policy design at the local and regional level.

The coordination required to achieve such an "articulated" approach across institutions, geographies, and sectors of Colombian societies was about as straightforward as its copious and vague call to membership might suggest. Once the work of the Nation-territory Coordination Mechanism (the "Mechanism") had been approved by the Commission, the Mechanism then emerged through coordinated work between the Ministry of the Interior and the Technical Secretariat at the national level. Within the Mechanism, Technical Groups coordinated issues by thematic area, still at the national level. Then, each Technical Group had to "articulate" with governors, and those governors would then be responsible for coordinating with mayors and all of the departmental and municipal level entities responsible for the various themes covered by the technical groups. The governors also had to actively monitor changes at the national level to adjust local policies and send updates and recommendations from the local level back to the national offices. *Articulación* in the way it is used in bureaucratic terms refers to coordination, broadly speaking. The word *articulación,* however, also means "joint," which serves as an, at times, apt metaphor for the work of the crafting of bureaucracy. Thus, in this particular example of the Human Rights Committees, the governors were the meniscus of the creation, implementation, and tracking of human rights policy in Colombia, catching both the weight of national mandates bearing down as well as the force of the unmet needs of the masses as voiced by social leaders shooting up. This experience of being caught in the middle, and rendered somewhat

impotent in the process, emerged in this particular meeting that I attended. These Departmental Committee meetings, such as the one I analyze here, represented the convening moment of physical co-presence for all of the above-mentioned coordination and collaboration.

Thus, I set out to learn more about the complexities of generating and complying with commitments to human rights law among the leadership elite of my host department. In James's (2010) rendering of the idea of *bureaucraft*, she refers to the practices of assembling, curating, and reshaping what she terms "trauma portfolios" – discourses of suffering and loss by victims of the violent regime - in order to transform these experiences into various forms of power and capital. The craft is at once bewitching and bureaucratic and can be deployed towards benevolent or malevolent ends. The means of its making implicate, among other things, access to resources, knowledge, and power. Throughout the remainder of this chapter, I examine the material tools of crafting bureaucracy and technologies of knowledge, including physical collections of knowledge developed and packaged for "transfer," and the seemingly innocuous but deeply significant material trace of such encounters: the attendance list. I dedicate a fair bit of analytical attention to this small piece of traveling paper because it is the only material item that emerges in all of the settings under examination in this dissertation. It travels great distances, receives preferential treatment, is the object of anxiety and manipulation, signifies the magnitude of social change through quantifiable metrics, and endures years in dusty archives in its original form: the only character in the ensemble cast of this ethnography to survive and thrive at all levels of society and in all manner of associational, organizational, and institutional – and of course, intervention - settings.

**As Evidenced, the Encounter: Attendance, Stone Attendees, and the Institutional Address**

This section interrogates three common features of the meeting life in particular in institutions across the public, private, and international sectors operating in this domain in Colombia: attendance lists, the functional capacities of those physically present, and what I am calling the "institutional address," or the calling of individuals by the institutions that they represent rather than their names. I explore these artefacts and practices of accounting for presence and action because they are constitutive of the larger projects of reconciliation and peaebuilding attempted through these encounters, as these projects embed within government institutions that are organizations in their own right. In exploring their use and fabrication, I reveal how the production of evidence of an encounter can, in itself, undermine the spirit of the very same.

*Registering Attendance*

That morning of the IA that I attended, my contact in the Governor's office, Juan Pablo, pulled up to the building and dragged a heavy box out of the trunk of his car and into the front of the assembly hall. By this time, a handful of other attendees had arrived and greeted one another. Today's meeting was an important one, Juan Pablo had said when he invited me, because two officials would be flying in from Bogotá to lead the meeting: one from the Presidential Council for Human Rights and the other from the National Planning Department. These trips from the governing center of the country would generate boarding passes, payment receipts, hotel invoices, and field reports, all to be later catalogued, reported, and compiled into evidence of intervention and completion of the mandate of the Nation-Territory Coordination Mechanism. Officials would then present this evidence to

both their superiors and to external donors supporting the peacebuilding project. Assistants periodically swept the meeting, taking pictures both for later formal reports, and to send immediately to the national communications team; those on the receiving end would reject any images that showed too many empty chairs, posting the acceptable shots on social media feeds to demonstrate the Council's commitment to getting out into the territories.

Before the formal start of the meeting, Juan Pablo kindly introduced me to those present, among them the representative from the Governor's office, Andrés, who was responsible for the committee. Juan Pablo then quietly left in order to attend the simultaneously scheduled Departmental Committee for Drugs. On his way out of the hall, he filled in the attendance sheet for the meeting, leaving his registered presence in one site while transporting his physical presence – no doubt, also registered – to another. Fudging or falsifying attendance in these kinds of meetings was both common and, in many cases, impossible to avoid. A program manager in Bogotá from an international cooperation agency, who had also worked for 14 years in the Bogotá mayor's office prior to joining the agency, shared her reflections with me in interview regarding the strains placed on local officials:

> *Obviously it is going to be difficult when you tell me that you are going to schedule a Social Policy Committee and five people show up, and then you schedule a Transitional Justice Committee and the same five people show up. The same people work on everything…trying to articulate all the time. What time are they given to execute this articulation? It's not good to burn out the people that are trying to articulate a million things…If one day, I'm sitting here [in a committee] for victims, and two days later, I am talking about poverty, and not all*

*of the officials can attend all of the committees…it happens a lot in our*

*territories.*

The growth of these "inter-" committees (interinstitutional, interorganizational,
cross-sector) created a unique *kind* of work and brought with them a unique suite of
responsibilities, only one of which was showing up: making a presence, as our Institutional
Fair for Reconciliation officials in the last chapter might say. In the above quote, we see
that even just showing up creates challenges when the same handful of officials receive
mandates to participate in a wide range of such collaborations and suggests a further
psychic strain when the topics under consideration are disparate in their coverage.
Experiences from other regions confirm this perspective and help to explain Juan Pablo's
exit that morning.

For example, an official working for an international agency in Valle del Cauca
confirmed the scope of demands on local officials in a 2017 focus group on the topic of this
chapter. "We have 35 [interinstitutional and inter-sector] committees in Valle del Cauca.
For 20 of them, no one goes; five function well – they have structure, people go, they have
their objectives." This represented a typical dynamic outside of the political center of
Colombia. The ever-increasing burden on local officials to attend what often extend into
half-day commitments strained already understaffed, underfunded governors' and mayors'
offices that were, as I was often told, *trabajando con las uñas* (literally, "working with the
fingernails," i.e., just scraping by). Often, even the simplest of statistics used to capture
efficacy – number of beneficiaries served – was, at best, inaccurate, and at worst, a
complete lie.

I also observed in other settings the meticulous forging of attendance sheets in order
to prove a particular activity benefitted dozens more individuals than the handful of people

that showed up that day. Organizational staff members, having failed to convene as many individuals as they had hoped for the day, drew from existing registers of neighborhood residents to fill in the gaps in order to both provide the sense that the work they were doing was reaching a large audience (and thus, that there was continuing need) and to account for money spent on things like office supplies and snacks for participants. On other occasions, I was asked to register my attendance when it was not really appropriate to consider me a beneficiary or participant, as I was simply there to observe. But, in these instances, more is always better. Even those working in national offices for the international cooperation agency missions were not exempt from the force of the attendance list, as one employee reported having to fish around in the basement dumpsters after her boss chided her for mistakenly handing in a photocopy of an internal meeting attendance sheet, rather than the original version. These attendance lists, first signed in the spaces of encounter (or manufactured to look as such), ended up in local and national headquarters of government offices, international agencies, and NGO and foundation archives. There they justified expenses and some institutionally defined (and quantified) notion of impact, and then filled physical archives that would remain on-site until a pre-determined time period (usually several years), after which they were finally destroyed. In this context, I observed that indicators of attendee volume and provenance were leveraged as mechanisms for power and governance, and the source of great anxiety. Previous work on audit cultures, measurement, and global governance in the domain of human rights has found that organizations and institutions come to perform the indicators by which they are measured (Merry, 2011, 2016) – an institutional variant of "teaching to the test". I find, however, that the production of this evidence, more than simply constitute the performance of the desired

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indicator, also gave rise to practices directly contrary to the spirit of the affair. I explore this more in the latter half of the chapter.

Other registered presences at the "interinstitutional articulation" that day included the National Police, the Colombian Agency for Reintegration (ACR), the Colombian Institute for Family Wellbeing (ICBF), the local Planning Department, the Regional U.N. Human Rights Office Director, the Regional IOM Director, the Ministry of Agriculture, the National Learning Service (SENA – a state-sponsored technical training program), and the Colombian Army. Among the civil society organizations present were the Women's Platform (for female victims of violence), a Rural Teachers' Association, a local transgender LGBTI activist and social media darling, and, of course, Yana, representing her association of women victims of conflict violence in Las Delicias. There they were convened – government and civil society, nation, and territory "so that the institutional design in the national and territorial orders are properly articulated and (able to) define the directives for the implementation…of the Comprehensive Policy for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law" (Ministry of the Interior, 2011). The meeting and presence of the national level officials represented full compliance with Article 123 of Law 1753, signed just one month prior, that required that the "Presidential Council for Human Rights…articulate, coordinate and supervise the implementation of the Comprehensive Human Rights Policy in accordance with the National Strategy for the Guarantee of Human Rights 2014-2034" (Congress of the Republic of Colombia, 2015). The Nation-Territory Mechanism was working to achieve an "effective appropriation of [the policy] and a Rights-Based Approach in the public policies of territorial entities" (DAPRE, 2014). Revising the attendance list that morning would suggest an inclusive policy-making environment that convened representatives from key state institutions, the social sector,

academia, and international cooperation. Certain practices related to ensuring and confirming attendance, however, inverted the spirit of collaboration and technocratic, participatory policy making.

*Institutional Attendance*

Notably, for a small city of roughly 160,000 people and in a room of around 40 total attendees – most of whom were the same attendees that I would see in countless other inter-institutional cross sector committees at the departmental level – those present were referred to by their institutional affiliation, rather than by their names. "Is ICBF here?" the moderator wondered aloud before everyone had settled into their seats, scanning the sign-in sheet. ICBF, or the Colombian Family Welfare Institute was an important institutional presence, as it represented the only one dedicated solely to the rights of minors. Nearly an hour into the meeting, Andrés asked the audience, "Why aren´t the Army and the Ministry of Health here?" The question went unanswered, but just a few minutes later, three uniformed military men walked in and took their seats: perhaps summoned through a WhatsApp alert by a friend to their noted absence at the meeting, perhaps already on their way that morning. Near the close of the meeting, "Ministry of Health?" was belted out across the crowd. A young woman at the back of the room, who looked very far away from the age of someone who might wield decision-making capabilities within a Departmental-level Ministry, raised her heavily bangled wrist into the air, and Andrés glared at her, but nodded and then visibly relaxed, sending the attendance sheet her way.

In the close-knit community of public officials in small cities and towns in Colombia, in which a Police Lieutenant preferred an office interview to a coffee-shop one because of the rumors that might start if he were seen with a foreign female in the coffee

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shop, why revert to identifying by institution rather than by name? They certainly all knew each other by first name and addressed each other by those names outside of the meeting. What does referring to attendees by their institution allow, and what does it hide? On one hand, the institutional address prevents last minute emergencies or conflicting meetings – such as that which had called away Juan Pablo that same morning – from cancelling representation in these settings. In a moment of urgency, one can send a proxy. It was not uncommon that the assistant of an invited official would attend these sessions in his or her stead. Indeed, it was important that someone, *anyone* was present from ICBF when the topic of children's rights surfaced, as representatives from that institution were best suited to comment on the reaches and limits of their knowledge and implementation capabilities. Addressing at a level above the individuals sitting in the room – at the institutional level - also accorded the air of officiality befitting of a policy planning and development domain. Furthermore, it reminded those present that they were there representing institutional, rather than particular personal interests.

However, the institutional address also erased the qualities of the individual; arguably, that is its very purpose. By calling for the institution by name, the moderator made invisible the institutional rank of the person in the chair, who may or may not have been the person best suited to the task at hand. In this case, the task of the day was to develop a plan for collaborative department-level policy making in the domain of human rights. Whether or not that bangled wrist belonged to the most appropriate representative for the Ministry of Health to have sent that day will remain unknown to anyone outside that room. I do not suggest this was intentional subterfuge: the articulation is inter*institutional* and not inter*personal,* after all. However, that institutional representation figures as the core means of confirming and reporting what is being done in these settings belies the extent to

which those individuals present matter for the possibilities of the meeting. If it is not the right person, then the collaboration cannot move forward – typically for lack of authority or expertise – and coordination stalls with those who are present but a poor fit.

*Stone Attendance*

To this point, the institutional address hides the imperfect, messy, and sometimes even disingenuous placement of the *who* in that seat for the day. Sebastián, a former ICBF official, now Bogotá-based project manager in an international cooperation agency, elaborated on the institutional constraints and processes related to the individuals participating in these spaces. "In terms of technical knowledge and initiative, the (government) contractors are much better than permanent staff; but in terms of capacity to make compromises, sign agreements, it would have to be permanent staff or a director that can make decisions." In addition to factors related to hierarchical positioning, government and labor cycles also complicated the way in which different institutional representatives would be able to contribute to Committees such as the one presently under consideration.

> *In terms of continuity, a contractor leaves the 15th of December and doesn´t return until February. These [committees address] complicated topics…and sometimes officials (permanent staff) show up, but then they rotate because in many cases they are political appointments, and so, at the end, who is actually part of this committee? There are four* pela gatos[3]*, or there are permanent staff assigned the topic, and the rest is a floating population who doesn´t really care about the committee. And no one knows who the person responsible is. It is a very difficult thing working*

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[3] Literally, a term that refers to the town fool sent to treat the skin infections of the street dogs and cats – in this case, referring to people who know nothing and are useful for just as much.

*with a state that is dedicated to distributing bureaucratic quotas in order*

*to fulfill campaign promises – and this is a trademark of the institutional*

*process. And at the local level, it's worse, it's terrible. Contractors with*

*three-month contracts. No interinstitutional articulation will achieve*

*anything if it is organized in this short-term way.*

Sebastian refers here to the politics of participation in the policy-making setting, and the signaling work that is done by selecting who attends in the name of the institution. As I mentioned previously, the legal mandates that call these kinds of articulations into being name explicitly the institutions required to participate. As such, attendance is technically mandatory at the institutional level, though absence likely would not lead to any meaningful formal sanction. Nonetheless, the means by which institutional leaders responsible for compliance *achieve* attendance at a given meeting does much to implicitly inform those present of their commitment and interest in the topic at hand. Sending low-ranking representatives with little power suggests that the committee topic is not an institutional priority. Among the most frustrating of attendees for those trying to advance policy? *Invitados de piedra* (stone guests), who are, as Sebastián lamented, laughing in exasperation, "people without the power to make decisions in these spaces. They go, but they don't talk; they don't say anything. And this happens a lot: you want to make a decision, but half of the entities aren´t there, even if they are present." Thus, even in their registered presence, the institutions are absent from the spirit of the collaborative policy making endeavor. Returning to the metaphor of the articulated joint: not just any bone will do. Taken together, these practices used to prove participation, inclusivity, and involvement are actually  poor assessments of the quality and nature of policy work occurring in an "inter-institutional cross-sector committee." Furthermore, the demand for

this particular form of measurable evidence of the encounter itself gives rise to practices that undermine the spirit of the undertaking.

**Power and Technologies of Knowledge: Knowledge transfer, participatory democracy, and the reproduction of historic divisions**

Among other buzzwords in the internationally supported processes of state and society building are technocratic and democratic practices such as "knowledge transfer" and "participation," respectively. "Knowledge transfer" is a common institutional term in these domains that refers to communicating expertise to an organization or population intending to influence their practices based on that expertise moving forward. It is a structural and procedural feature of inter-institutional articulations. I analyze in the following section the effect on social and political hierarchies of "transferring knowledge" to a local population of government officials and grass roots organizations. I suggest that, much in line with the main argument of Chapter 2, the delivery of technical knowledge from the national agencies to the territorial representatives reproduces existing political hierarchies, instead of promoting more horizontal, egalitarian conditions for rule. Knowledge transfer achieves this stratifying effect because it implicates relations of power: power to decide what content is communicated and how. Those present in the committee meeting included governing officials from a variety of state institutions. I examine here how those attempting to govern the conduct of others are themselves shaped, guided, and affected by the conduct of other persons (Gordon, 1991).

Any analysis of relations with and within the state and the deployment technologies of knowledge owes its first debt to Foucault's writings on the power, knowledge, and subjectivity. Through his work and those who have built upon it, we have a clear

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understanding of the way in which power is inherently relational and observable not in its locus, but rather in its exercise (Foucault, 1990). Importantly for the arguments here, the Foucaudian line of thinking positions knowledge and power as mutually constitutive in that the formation of knowledge –the range of what is seeable, knowable, and intelligible – is itself an act of exercising power, and that exercise of power cannot itself occur without knowledge (Foucault & Gordon, 1980). The two cannot be meaningfully disarticulated in any analysis of social relations. In the section that follows, I interrogate the exercise of power in an institutional context, not over citizens writ large, but over and through those who enact governance in their daily professional lives beyond the four walls of the meeting featured here.

What exactly is an "interinstitutional articulation"? This term glosses as a collaborative undertaking among various institutions (and sometimes across different sectors of society, such as the private, public, and religious domains) in which the idea is to pool resources to achieve a common policy goal more efficiently than would happen were each institution and organization to operate independently. Advocates of the approach to governance convincingly argue that it reduces fiscal and political waste by leveling out existing hierarchies of power that exist between government and civil society, and between different agencies and levels of government. As detailed in earlier sections, international agencies present this technocratic ideal as a best practice for completing the mandates of government institutions, especially when resources are scarce.

*"Higher Level" Knowledge*

In the preceding section, I suggested that the production of evidence of collaboration gave rise to practices that undermined the intended spirit of collaboration. Here, I argue that the transfer of knowledge re-inscribes historically consistent hierarchies

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of access to knowledge and power. After all attendees – stone or otherwise – had settled

into their folding wooden auditorium seats, Andrés opened the box that Juan Pablo had

brought in from his car that morning. Aware that all eyes were now on him as he stood

under the heaving and sputtering of the geriatric HVAC system overhead, he took the

opportunity to wave the attendance sheet in the air and reminded everyone again to sign in.

Andrés began to hand out the "products"[4] contained in the box, and I received the

following: a book documenting the content of the *Guarantee Process for the Work of*

*Human Rights Defenders, and Social and Community leaders* (*Proceso de Garantías para*

*la Labor de las Defensoras y los Defensores de DDHH, Lideres Sociales y Comunales)*

(published in 2013)*,* the equally dense Appendices to this process, a book documenting the

content of the *High Level "Augusto Ramírez Ocampo" course on International*

*Humanitarian Law* (also dated 2013), a professionally designed legal card stock chart

describing the scope of human rights work, and a blank notebook featuring on its cover two

cartoon renderings of prosthetic legs and the phase "*Todos en los Derechos*" (roughly,

"Rights for All"). These books evidenced past collaboration, since the content purportedly

drew from meetings that various institutions had in "the territories" as they developed

national policy. They also partially constituted the inter-institutional articulation, in that

they were physical symbols implicated in the "knowledge transfer" that was taking place in

that meeting. These "products" and the knowledge they both contained represented the

durable evidence of previous meetings such as the one in which I found myself that day.

The origins of the content were indeed grassroots. But they had been curated and modified

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[4] This is the standard term used to reference reports, documents, and other forms of tangible results of knowledge production and codification in the domain of international agencies and government actors in Colombia. While the term alone is worthy of its own dedicated investigation, such an inquiry falls beyond the scope of the present chapter. I thus deploy the term in quotes to suggest that it be regarded critically.

at the national level and, in the process, various domains of grassroots knowledge had been rendered (in)visible.

Once everyone was equipped with their tomes of lessons learned, best practices, and documented processes, Andrés formally began the committee meeting by reading directly from the text Decree 4100 and the second article of the Colombian constitution, noting after his reading, that Caquetá would need to help develop the national system of human rights and international humanitarian law compliance, presumably through implementing the materials that we had just received. Funding for this would be decentralized from Bogotá and through the governor's office, and then financed at the municipal level. As he spoke, Andrés spied the attendance sheet sitting on a desk top, abandoned and clearly out of circulation, picked it up, and handed it to the woman in front of him to begin passing it around again.

By any standards of public speaking, opening a meeting by reading several pages of a law verbatim from a printed sheet ranks as a dubious strategy for fostering audience engagement. Why resort to such a dreary start to the long-awaited collaboration to take place that day? Certainly, Colombian public life is a ceremonious affair. For example, public lectures offered at the local university always opened with the singing of the national anthem, followed by the singing of the departmental anthem, then the municipal one, and finally the university anthem – and by that time, it was usually just the person on stage mumbling inaudibly under the blaring pre-recorded track and staring at the ceiling as he attempted to recall the words. It was not asynchronous, then, that a government meeting should start with such an reading, and they often did. But what did Andrés's selection of opening material *do* in this particular setting?

First, it established himself - and if we are to be consistent in terms of the institutional address, it established the Governor's Office - as the source of official immutable knowledge. Despite the cynical refrain that "Colombian laws aren´t worth the paper on which they are written," often offered as the reason for which some social malady goes unchecked despite existing laws intended to address it, legal frameworks nonetheless legitimate institutional action justify international funding to ensure compliance. By reading the law regarding the establishment of the Departmental Committee for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, Andrés was not only calling into being a new domain of official responsibility to those present, he was positioning the Governor's Office as the direct point of "articulation" between departmental concerns and national mandates, as had been stipulated in the text. So far, nothing terribly surprising about this public sector exchange. However, for those civil society leaders present, such a technical reading only served to alienate them and reinforce the bureaucratic distance between them and their public sector counterparts.

Social organization leaders tended to maintain themselves very well-informed of emergent international and national frameworks relevant to their work. As such, if the law were relevant, they had likely already read it or appropriated it in some way. Certainly, they had had plenty of time to review the Colombian Constitution as it pertained to the guarantee of human rights in the 24 years since its writing. Those who were unaware of these regulations were certainly not going to gain much by having them read out loud to them in the technical, cerebrally straining tone that tends to be the hallmark of the legal realm. Many social leaders had journeyed to this meeting on pre-dawn cargo buses from hours outside of the department's capital, the ticket costs of which represented a large proportion of their scarce cash resources, and the day spent attending this meeting

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representing that much lost labor in their own fields or cattle operations. To make such an arduous journey only to be met with a wall of technical jargon emanating from the front of the room constituted yet another frustration in connecting the needs of the organized society that they represented to their rights as citizens of Colombia. The act was in no meaningful way representative of a transfer of knowledge – either between government actors, or from the institutions to civil society – and in its most generous rendering, served only as a referent for those who may need to examine the law in question at a later time.

Upon completing his monologue, Andrés then gave the floor to Shelby, Advisor to the Office of the Presidency on Human Rights. Shelby greeted the room with a smile and provided a brief presentation on human rights and international humanitarian law frameworks. After her own legal reading –relevant items in Decree 1629 (2014) – she emphasized the six areas for which Colombian public institutions were responsible, urging the audience to check the website because there were far more details than she had time to present in the forum this day. Knowledge of these details was important, Shelby emphasized, because, in addition to "working against the culture of violating human rights," those assembled also needed to "combat the low levels of education about human rights in general with the general population and the governors." Andres, off to the side of the slightly elevated stage, looked up at her, but did not otherwise visibly react to this commonly echoed sentiment that the territorial public sector was fundamentally lesser equipped than the national one to handle matters of the state. There is truth to the assertion, but these limitations have more to do with a lack of training, human capital, and infrastructure rather than intellect and cosmopolitanism, as is sometimes the thinly veiled suggestion. The slides changed before I had a chance to copy the website address down in my notebook. Nearly all meetings at the local levels in which I observed both national and

local level governmental actors together included at least a few jabs back and forth in terms of local officials painting the national ones as removed from reality, and national ones depicting the locals as uninformed and less capable in some way.

The next slide Shelby clicked to featured an image of a document: *From violence to a society of rights 2013-2034 (De la violencia a la sociedad de los derechos 2013-2034).* Thinking that she would now discuss one of the tomes that we received that morning, I shuffled through the materials on my desk. The document cover projected onto the slide was not among them. Shelby explained, "This is a very high-level document, and there is another one with much more detail with an operational plan." The slide changed, I was confused. No further explanation emerged, and Shelby moved on to the next point: the purpose of our work in the room this day - the effective enjoyment of human rights by all citizens through the implementation of a *política integral* (comprehensive policy). Someone up front sighed as she tried to take a picture of the slide with her cell phone and Shelby changed slides again. "We will send the slides around to the database," she assured, gesturing to the sign-in sheet.

Through her presentation, Shelby provided us with the impetus for her visit: to educate us, and in so doing, to combat the culture of violating human rights in the territories. To achieve this, she assembled a power point presentation that summarized key national and international frameworks with which the public sector must comply, evidence of other, grander, higher-level documents that legitimized the work that has been done at the national level, and the promise for digital archives that we might use accompanying the physical ones that we had received that day. All of this comprised the work of legitimizing and reinforcing the authority and mandate of the national office. Merry has argued in her work on human rights that documents emerging from an international consensus on human

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rights standards bring to bear a legitimizing force when they are deployed (often through NGOs) on national governments (Merry, 2006). The scene depicted here accomplishes the same between the national and territorial government levels. Shelby's acts of "articulation" suggested that "knowledge" lived in the formal documents produced by national officials. These products had a taken for granted legitimacy, then, that eschewed the need for explanation. Simply showing an image of their cover will do.

Shelby designed an encounter to bridge the distance between nation and territory and to transfer the technical fruits of the, in-part, internationally funded labor of institution building and citizen engagement, with the ultimate goal of equipping those in the territories with the "tools" that they would need in order to develop a congruent, locally relevant policy supporting the promotion and safeguarding of basic human rights in compliance with international humanitarian law. These tools included the physical transfer of knowledge in written form, barely reviewed in the oral presentation, and accompanied with little guidance as to how one might use these material representations of knowledge to prevent a neighbor's child from being sexually abused, a rural teacher from receiving a salary that does not permit him to live a dignified life, or any other of the scores of human rights abuses national policy makers planned to address.

But the audience assembled never actually learned of the national plan that day: instead, we only saw an image of the cover of a document that contained that plan – something above us, at a "higher level" – a Cartier advertisement in a working-class fashion magazine. And Shelby never did send the slides around. Indeed, with two exceptions among the dozens of similar encounters that I attended in my time in the field, promises to send slides or other documents to the email list on the sign-in sheet were not fulfilled, proving even at the micro level the already held hypothesis by most present

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(include government officials themselves): the government does not fulfill its promises. In this instance, the national government does not fulfill its promises to the territories.

Shelby continued, referring now to Law 1753 (2015) Article 123, which is the law that puts the four-year national development plan into effect, and which calls for implementing the plan with a tailored approach to human rights. Among the demands of this law is active citizen participation in human rights public policy. The books summarizing the territorial participation in previous years evidenced such participation, as did the invitation of civil society leaders to this event. She addressed the cross-sector audience with advice for the government officials. Somewhat awkwardly for those non-public sector folks in the room, she referred to them in the third person – as if they were not present:

> *You must include the community in the entire process of accountability. Often, people in power will say that "the people are not interested in human rights," but this is because they are not familiarized with the content and process of access [to these rights], the point [of human rights], and the details and objectives. You can´t just give people information and then take off and say that you've fulfilled your obligations. You have to actually engage with them and get in a discussion with them and work through the ideas with them. You have to get out into the community and actively participate have an impact…Human rights are something for right now, not for the future. This forum is for you to think about how, in your own work, you are going to address the theme of human rights. We are the articulators, and I am here to support you at the national level.*

A woman sitting towards the front of the room snorted at Shelby's claim to support. The cynical reaction caught Shelby's attention, and she looked over to the skeptical attendee and smiled and laughed uncomfortably. The local official scoffed again, this time more quietly, stared down at her notebook and shook her head. Cynicism and reproduction of nation-territory tensions aside, Shelby had completed her planned segment: she had transferred the knowledge she brought with her from Bogotá, and established the clear and urgent legally-grounded mandate to establish a local human rights and international humanitarian law policy that aligns with national priorities. By all counts, all of the ingredients had been readied to realize the five ubiquitous qualities of a successful public sector initiative in contemporary Colombia (Ministry of the Interior, 2011): interinstitutional involvement (as evidenced by the meticulously maintained sign-in sheet and bodies in chairs), inter-sector engagement (as evidenced by the civil society leaders present), a mechanism for articulation among these sectors and institutions (the meeting itself), a plan-in-progress for developing and implementing a comprehensive policy (the purpose of the meeting), and the guarantee of a legally and constitutionally guaranteed *enfoque diferencial* (a tailored approach to ensure that historically marginalized populations would be effectively included in the aforementioned comprehensive policy).

However, at least two major contradictions emerge in this segment of the morning's proceedings. First, "knowledge transfer" presupposes prior ignorance of (inter)national norms and legal frameworks as among the principle drivers for human rights violations. Second, Shelby is enacting the very type of exchange that she advises against in her discourse: she gave us information, took off on the single flight that leaves Florencia each afternoon, and said in her reports to bosses and donors that she fulfilled her obligations. In some American private sector cultures, the entry of a superior on the

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organizational hierarchy, with mandate in hand, the promise of support that never materializes, followed by an immediate exit and promise for a future call to account garner the elegant title of "the swoop and poop." Shelby's efforts that day are thus neither culturally idiosyncratic nor institutionally incoherent. However, in a context in which deep-seated mistrust in government officials persists, even among the officials themselves, such efforts largely fall flat. In this way, Shelby's combatting of local ignorance through the transfer of knowledge served more to reinforce a sense of alienation at the territorial level than to engage in meaningful dialogue with local officials on the topic.

**Engagement as Foreclosure: Civil Society Questions Unanswered**

While transferring knowledge provided the platform for re-inscribing the nation-territory hierarchy of political power, "engaging" civil society provided a novel site that day for the familiar experience of exclusion and silencing of civilian leaders by government officials. Slide show complete, Shelby opened the floor the Questions & Answers (Q&A) period of the meeting, which was the standard 20 minute window in which local public sector officials and civil society attendees could directly address the local and national institutional representatives at the front of the room. Practically speaking, the Q&A session represented the only opportunity that local citizens had to address directly national-level government officials in their organizing and activism work in the policy setting context. In this instance, as in most that I observed in comparable settings, the tone of the Q&A quickly became one of airing of grievances to the national government about the performance of the local one, perhaps in the hopes that the push from on high might rectify the noted deficiencies here in "the territories."

A community leader from a farming cooperative spoke up:

*What role are [social organizations] going to have in this committee? So far, we have participated in the formulation, but what about the implementation? We don't have any resources, and it's not like they* (gestures at the representatives of the local public sector) *are going to do anything about it…Peace is for the citizens, and it will be found with the people.*

To the community leader, the national government represented a clearly distinct body of actors, source of possibility, and potential promise apart from the local instantiations of the same entities. "They" – those local public sector representatives present in the room – were one thing, but Shelby was quite another, as his language suggested: she represented the possibility of someone who can promise to "do something about it." Shelby's response was brief and deflating: "You are certainly entitled to your opinions, but ultimately the implementation will be the job of the law enforcement." The answer both misses the spirit of what the community leader had asked, and in doing so, is not entirely accurate. Though he used the word "implementation," (which Shelby coded as "enforcement"), he was asking how civil society would ensure that what she had just presented would materialize in their everyday lives – a valid claim according to human rights law and the Colombian constitution. Shelby's response, in failing to address this, not only put civil society actors at arm's length from a process with which they had every right to engage, it also stood in stark contrast in its curtness to the lengthy readings of laws and presentations of documents that had just transpired. I argue that the allocation of time in the "interinstitutional and cross sector articulation" serves as a signaling mechanism that served to privilege and marginalize particular kinds of knowledge and engagement. She

raised her eye brows and scanned the room, satisfied with her answer and looking for the next question:

> *In a place in which the conflict is permanent and human rights violations happen every day – a condition for which Caquetá is known – how are the social organizations going to participate? We need a space, a mechanism for organizations already working on these issues to work together with the government on these topics. The information that we have now is incomplete.*

"That question is beyond the scope of this conversation," Shelby responded through her implacable smile, as if her response would somehow be acceptable to the person who just spoke, "but we are sure that the local government is going to do what they need to in order to be sure that we have a panorama of the situation." She paused, and added on, perhaps sensing that the audience was not satisfied with the answer, "And this can´t happen without you!" I felt the tension behind me in the room rise in response to her condescending remark and turned back to scan the reactions of the attendees. The community leaders, visibly put off by her responses, begin to whisper louder amongst themselves in their seated clusters of two and three. I observed on countless occasions these forms of dismissive remarks in these moments of "articulation", always from she who was transferring the knowledge to she who was receiving it. The oozing condescension was offensive at a visceral level, and the work that such a comment did was to simultaneously shift the burden of responsibility from the government to the citizens (i.e., if you keep fighting, you've only yourselves to blame) and render the citizens impotent to exercise any responsibility in a meaningful way (i.e., your involvement is beyond the scope of this conversation).

Throughout the Q&A, civil society leaders offered their own scoffs to complement that of the local official who could not keep up in her note taking with the pace of the presenter. In turn, these moments of would be later reported to donors and superiors as "engagement with civil society" or "cross sector articulation" (between the public and civilian sectors). But Shelby never answered their questions, and the Q&A session became a mechanism by which a national government representative leveraged technologies of knowledge in order to exercise her power in shaping what did and did not constitute relevant themes for the domain of human rights policy. In doing so, she silenced what might easily be read as relevant concerns over protection and rights guarantees. She simultaneously re-inscribed two axes of division, both of which implicated hierarchies of power, though in distinct ways: that between the nation and the territories, and that between the state and civil society.

Shelby's staccato responses foreclosed reasonably clear and specific attempts by civil society organizations to find that point of articulation through which they could substantively engage in a process that she herself had positioned as inclusive. They only further reinforced the sense of marginalization felt by these actors in matters of policy for which they advocated in their daily labor as social leaders and activists. In these examples, not atypical of Q&A sessions in similar settings, the national official engaged with the citizens of the territory and registered through photographs and attendance lists their involvement in the meeting. But instead of meaningfully drawing them into the process, the engagement only served to reinforce the already perceived divide between civil society and public sector actors.

In one of the few moments of moment of exemplary nation-territory collaboration, Andrés rescued his Bogotá-based colleague by walking out to the center of the small stage

and standing in front of her. She edged off to the side and did not speak for the remainder of the meeting. Andrés elaborated on the plans and projects that the governor's office had in play regarding the implementation of a human rights program. As he spoke, I looked back again to see how the audience was responding. They had quieted down, though my gaze was met with a dramatic eye roll by Luisa, the seasoned director of an NGO for female victims of violence at the department level. "Now back to the local official," Luisa's eye roll seemed to say, "whose words carry less weight than the air that was expended to issue them." Such cynicism represented entirely reasonable reactions to historically entrenched practices of cooptation and corruption by the local government officials.

Andrés continued to field audience questions, and the remaining civil society leaders offered supporting vignettes of discrimination, human rights abuses, and the force of impunity that fostered them. These tales, tokens of the crisis of rights experienced by those living in the margins in Caquetá, were already known by all present. It is likely for this reason that the interlocutors spoke looking directly at me – the one stranger in the room aside from the two national government representatives, who were already packing up their laptop bags anyway. Shelby, though at times inelegant in her responses, was by no means the villain in this story, however. The cynicism, frustration, skepticism, and mistrust enacted between the individuals that morning in all directions of the social and governing hierarchies, represent the excesses of a system of governance dragging with it a history of problematic center-periphery relations and failed commitments. This excess spills out into the vast divide between the *what* and the *how* of what needs to be done to ready a country for peace after 50 years of war. As another international agency official noted, reflecting on his work implementing the Victims Law, which emerged in 2011 after the 2003-2006 paramilitary demobilization: "There is all of this institutional development and

coordination stuff at the national level, and the [victims'] committees, and each committee participates in the national entities, they opine, comment, and say that 'We are going to do…' and 'We are going to bring…', and 'We are going to go to the territories…', and they get to the territories and there is no money and no one there capable of executing all of these beautiful things that the national entities are saying."

Eventually, the Q&A session devolved into a series of interruptions among the organization leaders and government officials, and Andrés took the reins to assign action items and delineate the next steps in the process of developing the departmental human rights policy and action plan. At this point, he was nearly shouting over the din of distinct side conversations and flapping auditorium chairs, as people pack their materials and began to leave. Later that day I heard a 30 second mention of the meeting on the local radio station (coded by institutions as "disseminating" to the public the activities of the day in the name of achieving transparency) in between advertisements for the local *aguardiente* liquor brand – far and away the most advertised product in the department – and an announcement of deals that just can´t be beaten in the King of Fashion clothing store in the small downtown sector. Compliance with the legal and donor requirements of the meeting was achieved: Shelby transferred knowledge, facilitated civil society participation, and ensured the dissemination of the proceedings to broader society. But to those present, and to those most in need of the protections of a human rights policy, the affair had just been more of the same official neglect that had led them to that meeting in the first place.

**Conclusion: Joints in the Governing Body**

I have advanced several arguments in this chapter through an analysis of the implementation international "best practices" in inter-institutional articulation and

knowledge transfer. I first examined how the production of evidence of these kinds of encounters can give rise to practices that undermine the spirit of the undertaking. I then established that international donors promote, or at the very least perpetuate government officials' attempts to engage in these practices, drawing on technocratic and democratic ideals of collaboration and participation. I embedded these practices within the particular historical discourses of "nation-territory," which suggest hierarchies of power, class, cosmopolitanism, and knowledge. Drawing from Foucault, I reaffirmed that power and knowledge co-implicate one-another and examined the practice of knowledge transfer as an instance of how that occurs. I also presented knowledge transfer and civil society engagement as examples in which attempts to bridge gaps in sociopolitical hierarchies serve to instead to re-inscribe those gaps.

The Committee meeting represented an instance in which a national official facilitated the government of the governors by using technologies of knowledge as the tools of bureaucraft. And this exercise occurred at multiple levels. First, the very act of "knowledge transfer" worked to set the bounds and limits of how these populations – the governors and the governed – were to understand and evaluate the world. Explicitly naming it does not reduce the subtlety of its work upon social relations in the room that day. The act of knowledge transfer established hierarchies in that Shelby made clear that certain elements of knowledge were for certain populations: here I only need show an image of the national plan rather than to provide you with a physical copy of it or summarize its contents. And you, civil society leaders, need not concern yourself with whether and how it materializes on the ground; that is for law enforcement. By setting boundaries, conditions, and content restrictions in the very act that is by its design intended to open possibilities for all of the same, the national government official has effectively set

the bounds of participation for those in the audience that day, and the terms of their conduct moving forward. Those terms include more of the same in that they call for deference to national authority, and a civil society as a distant observer to the production of policies that address the conditions of acute physical insecurity that they live daily and for which they clamor for solution. Finally, this is all made possible through the act of articulation, which again, was designed to reduce divisions and flatten historic hierarchies of power.

The term "articulation" is not a theoretically innocent one, and this chapter begins to critique what is said is done against what is actually done in instances of articulation in these spaces: in between local and national governments, different branches of local government, and public officials and civil society. Returning to the joint metaphor that the term inspires, we see here that the smashing together of a humerus bone and scapula does not a shoulder make. If I am to quench my urgent thirst by picking up a glass of water and raising it to my mouth to drink, my shoulder joint must comprise a precisely fitted and continuously maintained assemblage of bones, ligaments, tendons, muscles, and fluids, each in its complementary form to the elements that surround it. Stone attendees, smiles that deny access to knowledge and involvement, and images of policies that are "higher-level" than the audience, render what is ostensibly a collaborative space into a breeding ground for ongoing mistrust in state institutions.  In Tilly's (2005) terms, trust in the state is an emotional positioning on the part of the citizen that emerges through honesty and competence with regards to delivering on commitments.  The ritual of the meeting that accomplishes nothing works directly against such relations, and results in a disingenuous claim to compliance on the part of state officials.

The spirit of what Shelby intended to accomplish that day remained unfulfilled. What did occur, however, was a meeting in which everyone is present and nothing gets done. The meeting did not achieve its stated objective: getting an action plan going for how to develop departmental policy aligned with national and international standards. Furthermore, it brought to light the tokenism of civil society participation in such settings. What the meeting did accomplish, however, was to reinforce historic divisions between the center and the periphery (nation-territory) and between public officials and civil society ("your concerns are beyond the scope of this meeting," she had said). In order to fulfill her mandate and report back the images and empty boxes of books to donors about knowledge transferred and policy-making articulated, Shelby had to conform to a tight schedule of 1-2 day trips to "the territories" on a limited budget. The constraints on Shelby's time, resources, and capacities to meaningfully engage local civilian participants silenced the involvement of the same and maintained them in a state of ignorance as to how they were to articulate at all.

Many dynamics common to these "inter-"settings in this period emerged clearly. Key institutional representatives were absent – at least one to attend a competing Committee meeting – or late to the point of near absence. Unnecessarily technical readings of laws and images of "higher" plans-not-present confused and frustrated attendees rather than "transferring knowledge" to them in any useful sense of the phrase. The sole moment of direct address between the non-governmental citizens present and the representative of the Presidential Council of Human Rights did more to widen the divide between the nation and the territories, and the state and the people than anything else. Certainly, none of the posed questions met with well-matched answers. And with the exception of the closing Q&A, the largely unidirectional address of the morning was received with punctuated

sighs, scoffs, and tense whispers from the audience. Final action items and next steps –

ostensibly one of, if not the most important part of a meeting designed to launch the

collaborative development of a new domain of public policy – barely made it to the ears of

the already departing attendees, engrossed in side conversations and lunch plans. And radio

announcements far more likely to be missed than consumed "disseminated" the pertinent

points to the masses in the name of transparency. Nonetheless, through a type of

bureaucraft that I observed repeated in these "inter-" spaces that convened community

members, social organization leaders, conflict-identity based populations (former

combatants, victims, their receiving communities, children at risk of recruitment from

armed actors), and (inter)national institutional actors, Shelby transformed the acquisition of

travel receipts, photos of attendees, meticulously maintained sign-in sheets, presentation

slides, and the loss of 50 kilos of weight in printed materials and 45 minutes of spoken

materials into evidence of an encounter that never was. In this way, local leaders were

trained, citizens were engaged, knowledge was transferred, and few that emerged from that

assembly room that morning were any the wiser.

**Chapter 5: Passion, Provocation, and Friendly Fire: Making Policies and Politicians in "Transitioning" Colombia**

In the preceding three chapters, I presented the ways in which NGO and state officials who worked to promote reconciliation simultaneously deployed administrative practices like accounting, reporting, and training to reproduce social divisions: between former combatants and conflict victims, between local and state government officials, and between society and the state. For example, in Chapter 2, Yana, a conflict victim, gained new power and status in the community of Las Delicias when she received a job at the Reconciliation House (RH). As part of her job responsibilities, she took attendance at RH activities and trained the next generation of workshop facilitators. At times, her execution of these tasks resulted in the alienation of former combatants from the RH, despite the sponsoring foundation's goals of promoting trust and peaceful coexistence.

In Chapter 3, state agencies hosted the Institutional Fair for Reconciliation, "making a presence" to provide public services in Las Delicias. The event occurred in the shadow of longstanding discourses of state absence and revealed a lack of shared understanding about what the event signified, and what the needs and objectives of citizens and the state were that day. Part of this legacy is made evident, when community members performed ludicrous caricatures of reconciliation that did not approximate the reality of these practices in daily life. Over the course of the Fair, photo ops, attendance sheets, and credit claiming became the means by which citizen-state tensions were reproduced, even as the banner overhead boasted the reconciliatory aims of the day.

Then in Chapter 4, in a local policy-making setting, a national state official arrived to engage in the technocratic practices of "knowledge transfer" and "democratic participation." However, the manner in which she deployed these ostensibly inclusive and hierarchically leveling processes only reminded audiences of historically consistent divisions: national level policy makers worked to "combat ignorance" in their territory-level counter parts, and meaningful civil society engagement in the protection of their own human rights was "beyond the scope of the conversation." An anxiously circulated attendance sheet, the distribution of books, a 30-second radio spot, and a slide show with critical information that was never sent to the attendees all constituted evidence of an encounter that, at least in spirit, never really was.

In this final empirical chapter, I focus on the lived experience of politics and policy-making in Colombia at the time of my field work at the territorial, national, and international levels. In these contexts, as much as in those of the previous chapters, administrative practices sustain governmental organizations and political careers. In this chapter, however, I shift the focus to the emotional and affective dimensions of attempting to fulfill official mandates in this domain. The effect is the same: relations forged in the interest of promoting reconciliation are subjected to understandings and practices that exacerbate social and political divides. I open with a brief reflection on patronage politics – *clientelismo* – in post-conflict settings and in Colombia in particular to highlight the way in which these divides are particularly hierarchical in nature. I then analyze ethnographic and interview data collected during the local elections in Caquetá in the latter half of 2015 to identify the relational work of making both politics and politicians in Colombia. I also draw from interview data collected after the November 2016 signing of the Peace Accord among

international officials and national policy makers in Bogotá, who design programs and laws intended to facilitate the very integration and trust-building processes foregrounded in the preceding chapters. I find that embodied experiences and discourses surrounding contemporary political life in Colombia reveal a paradox: on one hand, a history with political life steeped in armed conflict gave way to practices that guard against the other and maintain a kind of intersubjective arm's length between individuals – even those on the "same side." On the other hand, successful navigation of political life required a complex network of debts and favors, which pull these same individuals back together as they jockey for limited resources, donor dollars, and even just the time of their institutional counterparts. I argue that this paradox is explained and sustained by the competing ideals of clientelism and the technocratic promise of internationally-driven calls to collaborate and manage horizontal power relations.

**Patronage politics and clientelism in (post)conflict Colombia**

I had barely noticed the stranger come into the gym. When he did finally catch my eye, I suspected immediately that he worked in the public sector. In this town of jeans and T-shirts, and little in the way of professional services, the khakis and pastel polo shirt, close shave, and two smartphones in hand were a dead giveaway. Plus, by mid-2015 it was the local election season, and the communities were already wallpapered with candidate posters, cars covered in candidate portrait adhesives, and motorcycle taxi drivers wearing slide-on sleeves emblazoned with candidate names. Campaign managers were making the rounds to all corners of the city and department. They rolled in with multi-car caravans and bodyguards, made promises, and as my neighbors assured me, would never be heard from again once they got their votes. In the meantime, residents made the most of the situation:

swarming campaign staff for T-Shirts, hoarding boxes of sleeves to later distribute within the community at their discretion, and demonstrating an impressive collective knowledge of which events would be offering food at what times throughout the day. Thus, that night at the gym, it didn´t even turn my head when I heard the visitor ask the gym owner, "*Te puedo pedir un favor?*" (Can I ask you a favor?).

What did interest me, however, was the fact that the two then called over one of the gym's prize fighters, Mora, just a few minutes into the conversation, and he had missed the rest of the night's training because of it, head angled into a quiet conversation drowned out by the regular song list. Fortunately, Mora was my neighbor and ride home, and I pressed him for details as we made our way back to Las Delicias on his motorcycle that night. As it turned out, the candidate's campaign had provided the gym owner with plane tickets for some of his fighters to attend a competition in Brazil later that month, and the campaign was now calling him to account. The following night was the eve of the elections, and standard practice dictated that each candidate deploy various squads of motorcycle patrols in the more marginalized parts of the city in order to ensure that other candidates do not bring in large truck loads of food and clothing to curry favor with residents of these areas in the hours before the vote. Mora, a young man without work or formal education, trained for free and was the recipient of one of the plane tickets. He was thus effectively on-call for whatever favors might be needed. As he dropped me off in front of my house, he agreed that I could accompany him for the 10pm-2am assigned shift the next night and I returned the borrowed oversized helmet to him to hang from his arm as he drove off.

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*Clientelism and patronage politics in post-conflict settings*

Clientelism and patronage networks are by no means the sole providence of Colombian political life. Such practices constitute a common condition of post-conflict contexts. NGO, local and national governments, and international cooperation agencies have a long history of contending with these networks in transitioning societies (UNDP, 2015). For example, research on NGO peacebuilding interventions across a variety of comparable settings has found that the entrance of these organizations into the domain of community rebuilding often activates and occurs within local patronage channels and networks (Pouligny, 2005). This is increasingly the case as the mantra of "local solutions to local problems" engages intended beneficiaries in their own rebuilding. The relationships between interventions and clientelistic practices serve as core sites of building or breaking down peacebuilding efforts. Some aspects of the intervention-patronage network relationships can be attributed to the asymmetric relations that are inherent in the entry of an outside organization to a given community, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Additionally, many armed conflicts first emerged in direct response to or as a result of elitist patronage networks – networks that persisted and generally strengthened over the life of the war. For example, in West Africa, armed group leaders in post-conflict environments have leveraged patronage and clientelism practices to remobilize, stage military coups, topple chastised business leaders, and seize control of critical licit and illicit markets – all during the "post" of the conflicts under study (Reno, 2007). In both Sierra Leone and Afghanistan, the introduction of interventions and local government initiatives resulted in the unintended strengthening of informal power holders through patronage practices, undermining the ostensible goal of strengthening the *de jure* state (Lister & Wilder, 2005). Most of the work on patronage politics and clientelism in post-conflict

contexts focuses on the way in which actors intentionally deploy these networks towards self-serving or malicious ends (Englebert & Tull, 2008).

The present chapter instead examines the emotional and affective experiences of policy makers operating in these contexts, and takes seriously the professionals' claims to best efforts to promote peacebuilding and reconciliation among their fellow conflict-affected Colombians. Instead of tracing the malappropriation of intervention resources and logics, I examine how historic practices of clientelistic politics in Colombia manifest through the administrative and organizational lives of intervening agencies and their officials. I reveal how intervention logics and the technocratic ideals that drive them become "clientelized" through their deployment in such a context, taken up and implemented through systems of informal debts and favors, even as policy makers express ambivalence about what they feel is the necessity of doing so.

Furthermore, Colombia is somewhat distinct from other global post-conflict contexts in that it bears the title of the "oldest democracy in Latin America" (even if some have contested the veracity of such a claim in practice) (cf., Castillo-Ospina, 2010; Leal Buitrago & Dávila Ladrón de Guevara, 2010). The entirety of the armed conflict has thus occurred within the framing of this ostensible democracy. This condition alters the landscape of political life in the relative aftermath of war. For example, after the Cambodian Genocide, a multitude of postwar state-building and democratizing interventions attempted to  move the country towards a democratic ideal. Seventeen years after their project began, the results of these interventions proved to be limited, and all the more so in the rural regions when compared to the metropolitan centers. While patronage politics among an elite ruling class tends to support those governing in contexts that lack constitutionally determined power transfers and lack a culture that supports non-violent

democratic transitions, this is not the case in Colombia. For the last ten years, Colombia has ranked on the lower end of the "flawed democracy" ranking by the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index (between 6.55 and 6.96 out of a scale of 10, with 10 being a full democracy). Over that same time period, Cambodia has fallen from 4.87 (hybrid regime) to 3.59 (authoritarian regime) (EIU, 2018).

This claim to democracy, however, simultaneously obfuscates the extent to which patronage networks are entrenched in political life, and thus, how they are navigated and sustained. And while a direct comparison between the two postwar contexts is not possible, an emergent domain of patronage practices that flourished in the Cambodian post-genocide context may be useful for understand the practice of daily political life in the Colombian one: common social patronage. This term refers to the quotidian practices deployed in social encounters that draw from ideas of patronage, assistance, consideration, and helpfulness (Roberts; Scott 1985). Thus, while I examine clientelism in Colombian life, I do not do so in the light of espoused state failures that result in regional patrons who substitute the failings of the state. Instead, I look at the seemingly innocuous practices and emotional and affective experiences of politicians and policy makers as they do their daily work in institutions that constitute the political realm: practices such as the exchange of tickets to a sporting competition for the provision of street-level political muscle during a local election cycle such as that in the vignette above.

In the Colombian case, modern clientelism involves the private appropriation of official resources towards political ends. It reflects a value system that privileges loyalties and comes to be within social and political structures that comprise vast networks of social relations based on debts and favors that extend into the smallest corners of quotidian life. Political scientists have asserted that in Colombia, clientelism represents the dominant

political system (Leal Buitrago & Dávila Ladrón de Guevara, 2010). These systems and relations of power, though certainly not originating during the armed conflict, found their current potency specifically through alliances with illegal armed actors on both the liberal and conservative sides of the historically emergent bipartisan divide – a divide that gave rise to much of the logics leading into and perpetuating the war. The use of organized violence to advance political agendas at the local and national levels through the practice of violent clientelism, either explicitly condoned or through the permission granted by state absence, carries echoes into the present and foreseeable future (Ocampo, 2014). Embedded within this broader political context, I found prevailing discourses about the process of making politics and politicians offered productive inroads for understanding the stakes of relations of power and hierarchy in "transitioning" Colombia.

Specifically, I examine the experiences and relational force of *ego, envidia,* and *protagonismo* as they feature in the (re)production of relational hierarchies. Based on my ethnographic and interview data, I gloss these constructs as they apply to the political domain in the following terms: e*nvidia* (envy) in policy- and politician-making settings typically refers to a negative reaction to the success of others, and can result in information-hoarding, an unwillingness to collaborate, sabotage, or violence, among other things. *Ego* (ego, selfishness) in the institutional or organizational domain can refer to the tendency to uncritically adhere to her organization's or institution's approach to addressing a given problem despite the presence of other, possibly better alternatives, or to her prioritization of her personal objectives over shared goals. *Protagonismo* (limelight-seeking) indexes the desire of (typically) social leaders, state officials, and international agency representatives to seek acclaim and credit to an extent that it impedes collaborative work. I select these three concepts because of their prevalence in both institutional and quotidian discourses in

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the field settings in which I found myself, and the explanatory power that interlocutors accorded to them. They are by no means distinct, and there is some conceptual overlap, especially between *ego* and *protagonismo;* as such, the division for the purpose of analysis comes at a small cost to their constitution and blurring in the everyday lives of individuals in this context.

One strand that runs throughout this chapter is the ubiquitous practice of *pidiendo el favor* (asking for a favor), which constitutes a mutually recognizable grammatical framework for all manner of interpersonal interactions – not just political ones. I shall argue throughout this chapter that the deployment of these terms and related practices reveal a culturally-constituted manner of thinking about policy and politician-making that reveals the way in which transnational technocratic aspirations become entangled with a social world marked by a particular brand of clientelistic practices.

**Favors to the favorites**

In the last chapter, I elaborated on an inter-sector policy development meeting that reproduced historically-grounded nation-territory and state-society divisions. I had sat glued to my chair in the last moments of the meeting, eager to hear what the next steps would be in developing the departmental human rights policy, and appalled that everyone around me stood to leave, already in other conversations. I strained to hear the named commitments, and I was soon the only person still seated, thinking myself in the moment very diligent for doing so in comparison to the exiting officials who did not have the decency to let the speaker finish before they left. But it was not rudeness that pushed them out of the assembly hall that morning; rather, it was ignorance that had kept me in my chair. The attendees all knew that the real advances were not to be made that morning.

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In this section, I argue that the real work of policy and politician making in Colombia's clientelistic system occurs through the practice of *pidiendo el favor*, or asking for a favor. This is not to say that asking a favor is always a clientelistic act, but rather that it constitutes a shared grammar for the practice of patronage politics. The above vignette offered an instance in which this practice emerged in daily life: a campaign staffer calling a beneficiary of campaign dollars to account. The Secretary of the Governor in the last chapter, despite fervent efforts to ensure and record inclusive attendee presence the morning of the Human Rights Committee meeting, appeared unconcerned about the massive exodus of those present precisely while he was announcing what each of them would be responsible for given their domains of responsibility and expertise. Commitments and compliance would be negotiated, likely in-person, since most worked in the singular building that housed the entirety of the mayor's office and sat catty-corner to the governor's office building along the central town square. Instead, he would come to rely heavily on Colombia's most deceptively humble of political tools: the favor.

The Colombian public sector operates through a tremendous over-reliance on personal relationships that officials must tap in order to call their colleagues to account to complete functions that are already part of their formal job description. This does not even take into account the extra-official (or extra-legal) domains of political activity, which are voluminous. Here, I focus only on those acts which might be considered the most basic of officials' fulfillment of role responsibility. Ironically, those who benefit most from these practices – senior officials who have spent entire careers among various institutions in the public sector with ample access to social and political capital and networks – are among the most vocal of the practice's detractors. This voiced opposition to the practice that serves them in their daily professional lives emerges in contexts in which other institutional and

foreign actors are present and suggests a divide between narrative and practice in the execution of their work. In the context of a conversation about the inter-institutional and cross sector interactions such as those elaborated in the previous chapter, one official from the Attorney General's Office in Bogotá said to me in interview in early 2018:

> *These spaces are important so that we get to know each other at each institution and know what each one does and up to what point. It's a good channel of communication between institutions so not everything is about personal favors. In the end, these are state institutions. So tomorrow, [my work] isn't a favor to someone…They should be the procedures of your position…standardized procedures...that everything is systematized…and defined.*

In interview, this official confirmed in detail what I had observed over the previous several years: acts of governance and compliance occurred in response to request for a favor – i.e., official completion of job responsibilities tended to occur only when another party called on the individual to comply, and not for the mere fact that the job responsibility existed. This posits a reactive, rather than proactive approach to governance. He shared with me that he was able to complete his work because of strong relationships that he had with directors from other institutions, such as the National Police, because of the many years that he had spent working in Bogotá. "For my part, it's because they know me. But if another attorney shows up, they will just say, 'I'm sorry [qué pena], but I don't know who you are.' And that guy can't get anything done."

Another official in the national offices of the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF) – the government agency that manages issues related to the rights and

protection of minors and families – confirmed her colleague's comments from the Attorney General's office in a 2018 interview on these spaces of policy development. "We all suffer from the same shortcoming (in the public sector): that there is a high rotation of personnel. So the numbers change, you lose your contacts, and today I'm in this work committee, and tomorrow I'm on another, and I lose all of these empathies that these spaces generate among officials and work teams. The theme should be institutional, not personal, and that is a profound difference. You should develop institutional competencies, not personal ones." She too lamented her professional reliance on personal favors and, in doing so, revealed the way in which personal networks and access to power and influence remain deeply implicated in the political and the public.

Another official from the same agency clarified what favors could do that simple assigned job responsibilities could not. Individuals were "more vigilant" about their work as it affected colleagues when they knew those colleagues personally. In one particular project, for example, the ICBF official needed to collaborate with the National Police, among other institutions. It worked, because they had a good relationship. "So, I say to him, 'Captain, I need this favor.' And he puts his team to work on it and they are rapid and diligent. But if I went through the official channels with some kid (a low-ranking police officer responsible for receiving official requests)…already two months have passed, and nothing gets done, and I'm already working on something else. It shouldn´t be like that…It should be institutional, not personal." There is thus a clear and consistent recognition that policy design and implementation should occur at an institutional level, depending less on the *who* of execution and more on the institutional processes that ensure its effective occurrence. At least part of this push comes from international agencies, whose project

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requirements often require, as "products" (for sale on the donor market), evaluations that bear the unfortunate name of "systematizations." These systematizations represent efforts to evaluate the work done and render it part of institutional practice rather than living only in the minds and relationships of those who originally carried it out. Nevertheless, these officials feel compelled to continue with the practice of politics through favors since official channels still remain ineffective.

For those with the social, political, and experiential capital to make these requests, such practices meant maintaining a complex balance of accounts in which they worked to maintain their status and abilities to make such claims. It also meant slow response times and challenges related to the high turnover of government officials due to the pervasive system of short-term contracts that constitute a defining feature of government life. For those who lacked the status and power required to call on others for favors, *pidiendo el favor* represented an insufferable element of public sector life and often acted as a high barrier to entry, progress, and claims making.

This favor-based practice of politics bled out of the institutions and into everyday life. In 2013, for example, while visiting the offices of the Colombian Agency for Reintegration in Cúcuta, Norte de Santander, along the Colombia-Venezuela border, the outspoken showman who ran the local Service Center opined freely and at length on his own resourcefulness for mounting a highly successful reintegration process with a centrally-dictated budget that he felt was quite insufficient for the task at hand (an instantiation of the *abandono* discourse mentioned in prior chapters). He indicated the man who had been drilling holes in the walls behind us and feeding Ethernet cables into the capacious conference room – located in a building for which he had apparently negotiated an unthinkably good deal for rent – and wiring the whole building for internet. "*Le pedí un*

*favor.* (I asked him for a favor) because we don´t have money in the budget for this kind of work." I later asked the worker, who turned out to be an ex-combatant receiving services at the center, why he was willing to do the work for less or no payment and how he felt about it.

Referring to his reintegration process in general, he responded "I had to make the decision to stop suffering. To be successful at reintegration, you have to learn how to do favors. We (ex-combatants) are very simple, so we don´t have much. But I always give minutes when someone asks me for the favor." "Giving minutes" refers to lending someone your cell phone, and is not an insignificant act when an individual has only enough budget for buying his phone calls one minute at a time. In this instance, the ex-combatant also had his labor and technical knowledge to give, and the center director had made full use of his position of power in order to benefit the technological infrastructure of his service center. Not only in his interactions with his state – or rather, more likely *through* his interactions with the state – the former combatant had learned that favors constitute the very fabric of constructing everyday social life, and was, through practice, integrating himself in the web of debts and favors that comprise the social fabric of his community.

Remembering the work of Chapter 1, I argue that the fact that these actions occurred against the backdrop of widespread mistrust directly related to experiences with the armed conflict and in conditions of ongoing fear, suspicion, and insecurity shaped how these practices were experienced by those implicated in them. I explore these affective and emotional dimensions in the following three sections of *envidia, ego*, and *protagonismo.* In doing so, I highlight the way in which the subjective experience of policy and politician making in the twilight of war materialize in the technical and relational practices inherent in

sustaining one's position in a political organization. In particular, they maintain and deepen relational hierarchies even as intervention logics push for democratization, horizonal leveling of power relations, and institutionalization of previously patronage-dependent political practices.

**Fear and *envidia* on the campaign trail**

On the eve of the local elections, I hopped on the back of Mora's bike at the appointed time. The organizers had not revealed the plan for the evening in advance. Just a few minutes down the road, Mora's phone rang, and he shimmied it out of his pocket and stuck it between his helmet and his ear to take the call as he continued driving. We were to go to the main gas station on the road into town: more directions to follow. Within 12 hours, the streets of the city would fill with bands of people dressed in various political party colors and signature candidate hats, waving matched colored flags in the air and heckling or honking at other parties' groups around the polling stations and throughout town. Tonight, however, the fervor had not yet taken hold.

The singular salaried staff member from the campaign with whom we would interact coordinated remotely until he was satisfied that our group of eight motorcycles had arrived – each moto featured a young male driver and female adornment on the second seat. The staffer then made his way to meet us down out of *Antilles*, which was another large sprawling slum similar to Las Delicias, though more centrally located in the city. He filled our tanks and presumably funded the constantly traveling bottle of *aguardiente* (typical anise liquor) that made its way among the patrol members throughout the night. I cringed inwardly at the choice of compensation, grateful that my driver was in the final preparatory

phases of his training for the competition in Brazil and would thus not be drinking this night.

We followed the campaign staff member up for what seemed an eternity into hills of Antilles, "This is a bad place," Mora called back to me, uncharacteristically in the mood to share. As we climbed up and up, Mora pointed out the spaces in between the homes and outcroppings of the hill where small groups of individuals sat consuming drugs. Finally, we dropped down a steep section of the hill and, tensely drawing on the last withering strands of Mora's brake pads, stopped just at the edge of the overhang right in front of a single-room home in which an adolescent boy played video games in front of a large screen TV with the door wide open, either immune to or nonplussed by the reported dangers posed by neighborhood thieves. Each section of the informal housing settlement had been named as a numbered sector, which lent to the militant feeling of the night as the staffer got on his walkie talkie and flipped through pages on a clipboard handed to him by the owner of the house where we convened. "Sector Six. Sector Six. We have new troops in Sector Six."

A group of neighbors saluted us from up on our temporary host's ceramic tiled porch and I eyeballed a separate group of four young men out from under my helmet, who had been squatting in a dark patch of grass before standing and walking towards us. "We have permission to be here and not get robbed," Mora said to me, likely feeling that I had stopped breathing behind him on the motorcycle. "From whom?" I asked. "The people who live here. Don't worry." Very much worried, I dismounted the motorcycle and scuttled up the seven enormous tiled stairs as casually as I could manage towards the small welcoming group, placing myself and my backpack full of photographic and recording equipment behind the bars of the enclosed porch. I smiled at my new companions and sat down in the chair offered to me, finally taking off my helmet. Field of vision fully cleared, I

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found myself face to face with fifty iterations of the candidate staring back at me from the crumbling brick wall opposite the house, which was tiled in party posters.

An inaudible reply came over the radio, and the staffer walked down the stairs of the porch towards the group of young men, "*Hágame el favor,*" (Do me a favor…) he began, spending just a few moments in exchange with them and advising them of our "approved" status in the neighborhood for the night. He returned smiling, a notably warm individual, and informed us our route. I walked up to the top of the hill we had just barely made it down so that Mora's motorcycle did not have to bear the weight of the two of us at it wheezed up, and we made our way back out and down out of Antilles and to the *olla* (literally, "pot," referring to gang- and militia-controlled sections of barrios with heavy contraband and microtrafficking activity) that we would be patrolling that night.

We never did see any goods traveling through the *olla*, though in one instance, we rode past a GAULA unit (*Grupo Antisecuestro y Antiextorsión de la Policia Nacional* / National Police Anti-Kidnapping and Anti-Extortion Group) busy inspecting the trunk of a black tinted SUV that indeed looked very out of place in our humble surroundings. Overall, the tone of the night was calm and jovial: the young women on the backs of the other motorcycles arranged their hair and posed for selfies at each stop, diligently updating their Facebook and WhatsApp statuses, as I have seen them also do when visiting the one shopping mall in the city, at festivities of various sorts, and on the front steps of friends' houses. The young men joined them, sometimes enthusiastically, sometimes cajoled, and we all passed the time with idle chit chat, listening to whatever music was blasting from a home or cantina nearby: usually *ranchera* or *reggaeton,* - often both, banging into each other in the still night air. Many residents were out in the streets drinking, I was told in anticipation of the *ley seca* ("dry law") that would forbid the purchase of alcohol in the 24-

hour period of the Election Day beginning at 6am the next morning. The use of a dry law, which goes into effect in Colombia around important football matches and elections, was the mechanism by which the government made tangible its mistrust towards its own citizenry. Rooted in past political violence and the general uptick in violence around these events, no doubt exacerbated by the heavy consumption of alcohol, the dry laws signaled the state belief that the citizens would be unable to conduct themselves accordingly without the prohibition of alcohol sales. Compliance came in the form of even heavier drinking leading up to the dry period and stockpiling beer and *aguardiente* in advance so as to be better able to make it through.

By one o'clock in the morning, I was tired and disappointed by what I felt was our troop's inefficacy at finding the campaign contraband. "We didn't see any trucks," I said to Mora, deflated. "Oh yeah, they don't do it that way anymore," he responded, casually poking at a small fire that someone had lit in the middle of the street. I looked around, confused.

"So why are we here then?"

"*Por envidia*," ("Because of envy"), he responded.

He explained: the party with the most money wins. Mora confirmed what many had already told me in a place where vote buying is standard fare. The dominant party in the region funded a great number of motorcycle patrols on the nights before elections. These patrols originally emerged in response to candidates sending in truckloads of goods to marginalized communities the nights before elections, but have evolved more into an exercise in posturing and flexing one's capacity to mobilize. For a candidate to stand a chance in the polls, he or she also has to send out these patrols to send a visible message of power and strength to citizens ahead of the vote. This represents an instance of political

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*envidia* as it was explained to me, because the weaker candidates want to both emulate the stronger ones and chisel away at any advantage that the they might have; those from political parties with deep pockets cannot back down either because they risk losing status, even when the practice no longer serves its original function.

In the week after the elections, I found myself in a lawyer's office as I accompanied the gym owner and his other prize fighter – a local state prosecuting attorney – in their process of formalizing the sporting club. Along the long right wall of the office, gift baskets stacked floor to ceiling, and a steady stream of people came in that morning to claim their baskets, the secretary of the office referring to a list that the office had somehow acquired (and that I was told was widely shared) of who voted for whom and crossing off their names each in turn. Instead of trundling in on trucks the night before the election, these *detalles* ("details", gifts) found their way into voters' hands through another route. In this instance, envy in context emerged out of past experiences with clientelistic practices and desires to gain fervor and favor with the population leading up to the next morning's vote, even though the stated purpose of the motorcycle patrols had lost their original content along the way. The anticipation that backing down would lead to exploitation of perceived weaknesses and the fear that it gave rise to was sufficient to keep the hollow practice afloat. The spirit of vote buying, however, stayed strong, and politicians found other means, thus not only justifying the anxieties surrounding the practice but also reproducing new and emerging tensions and sources of uncertainty along the way. Would parastate activities like our motorcycle patrol begin policing lawyers' offices in 2019?

The idea that *envidia* can shape social life has a long history in Latin American contexts, where it has a long and well-documented history, especially among the shamanistic literatures. More than just envy, *envidia* represents the *experience of the*

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*gnawing effects* of feelings of strong envy – desiring the goods that another possesses - jealousy, rancor, resentment, and can manifest as an emotionally upsetting experience, leading to physical ailments (Maduro, 1993). Among some mestizo populations in Peru, for example, *envidia* tends to go hand in hand with sorcery and is understood as the source of the majority of illnesses and subjective torment (Apud, 2015; Taylor, 2011; Zambrano, 1996). In its kindest rendering, it may be considered a reflection of tendencies towards solidarity in Latin American cultures (ILSUND, 2010) – i.e., the idea that we are in this together and so no one person should stand out more than the rest. In a more cynical description of this phenomenon, Colombian philosopher and author Enrique Serrano argues that *envidia* – both a national virtue and defect - exercises a "democratizing" force in social relations, in that it "does not permit individuals to willingly distinguish themselves too much from the rest of the group" (2016, p. 154). *Envidia* emerges out of an unsatisfactory response to two questions - why is he progressing? And, why am I left behind? – and can result in actions intended to reduce the betterment of the other (Rubel, 1977). Zambrano (1996, p. 94) claims it is "the most self-absorbed of passions", creating clear connections to *ego* and *protagonismo.* The "equalizing passion of envy," Serrano suggests (2016, p. 162), signals a national mentality in Colombia that everyone should have more or less the same.

The work of the experiences with these domains and the tensions inherent to this paradox play out in the way in which they (re)configure interpersonal relationships. For example, *envidia* directed most powerfully towards someone who was perceived to be a social equal in some way: someone who *should be* equal to oneself, but for some reason emerged with more. My envy towards someone who justifiably has more than I do does not exert much social force (e.g., the community leader cannot justifiably envy or resent the gubernatorial candidate for having access to financial capital and power networks because

they occupy different rungs in the social ladder). In the constitution of social relations, *envidia* (and concerns over being the object of *envidia*) thus works to keep social equals in the same condition. Serrano names it a democratizing force; I suggest that it is instead an oppressive one. *Envidia* oppresses in that it works to the benefit of those who occupy the class above the envious individuals in question. A community leader preserves his power and resources as "ordinary" community members busy themselves with envy practiced and elided among one another. An institutional leader experiences reduced threat from would-be usurpers below her on the institutional hierarchy as subordinates manage *envidia* between peers. It is also self-oppressive in that it fosters the desire to bring another back down to where she "ought" to be, instead of lifting oneself up to what the other has attained. The force of *envidia* is grounded in the gravity of the consequences should one become a target, which in the political realm across all strata in Colombian society, immediately conjures memories of persecution and mortal threats by actors implicated in the armed conflict.

Due to its widespread recognition and social power, *envidia* can also be effectively deployed in order to keep others in their presumed place. One can call out another as *envidioso* for criticizing one's gains and use such an attack as a means to justify one's own position or gains (Rubel, 1977). Furthermore, among the constructs that represent the focus of this chapter, *envidia* is the only one that places the onus of the negative affect on the other person: I am envious because she has more than she should not because of some quality of personhood that I lack. Certainly, a person can be denigrated as an *envidiosa,* or one who is prone to envy, and that carries with it its own set of judgments and negative assessments. Still, the experience of envy presents as the perception that *the other* has violated generally held standards of decorum and equality – rightly or otherwise – and in

this way promotes certain norms and standards for behavior in community and institutional settings.

While I am reluctant to take up uncritically Serrano´s assertions of a "national mentality," the fact that he includes the construct in his writing indexes the anxiety that Colombian wrestle with vis-a-vis this construct. *Envidia* uniquely shapes social and political life in a country with the second most unequal distribution of income in Latin America (seventh in the world) (M. Serrano, 2018) and in the context of clientelistic networks that are, by definition, dependent on differential access to various kinds of power and capital. Along these lines, other Latin American philosophers have tied the particular social and emotional force of *envidia* to scenarios in which resource scarcity presents a particularly acute social problem. Neighbors view any kind of differentiation as unjust and an instantiation of greed in the face of widespread suffering, and represents the logical reaction in those who feel that an egalitarian ethos has been violated (Zambrano, 1996). More commonly throughout Latin America, *envidia* encapsulates a sense that life is a zero-sum game (Beyer, 2009), can be the genesis of hostility and desires to cause harm and inflict suffering on another (Rubel, 1977; Taylor, 2011), and can give rise to practices of backbiting and sabotage (Quiñones, 2007). Thus, *envidia* and its related constructs are recognized as powerful affective conditions across Latin American cultures, exerting social force and control in a variety of historical and contemporary contexts.

### Ego te provoco

*Ego* in the organizational and institutional realm tends to refer to selfishness in terms of interests, which can be personal or professional in nature. *Protagonismo,* on the other hand refers to claims for credit and recognition, which are selfish as well, but less

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tangible. In this section, I examine how *ego* and its practices work to produce and entrench existing relational hierarchies in context.

On one day in September 2015 leading up to the local elections, I accompanied Yana to the weekly meeting of a department-level women and LGBTI rights committee, *Mujeres Avanzan* (MA)[1], coordinated by a local women's rights NGO, Arazá[2]. After many interviews with women in communities who had received support and interventions from Arazá, and extensive time spent observing their work, I harbor not a shred of doubt that the NGO improved the lives of many women living in conditions of violence and vulnerability in the department of Caquetá. However, the particular style of securing resources and advancing activist agendas that Arazá's principle director deployed - largely through the work of MA - had left a bitter taste in the mouths of many: specifically, with regards to what was perceived as excessive *ego*.

For example, in June 2016, Fernando, a young twenty-something professional social worker in the community outreach group within the Catholic Church participated in a group training led by United Nations officials from agencies funding the Group's multi-year project for supporting collective victims' reparations claims. The topic of discussion at this particular moment was the way in which *ego* materialized in communities and detracted from more egalitarian distribution of whatever benefits intervening agencies were trying to bring to bear. When the U.N. representatives asked what those present had done to address this problem, Fernando said that they had planned to go in to promote the development of a more egalitarian network of power and resource sharing, but cited the *ego* of Arazá's director as an obstacle: Arazá was occupying the community center despite Fernando's

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[1] A pseudonym.
[2] Also a pseudonym

previous reservation. "And you know, since it was *Arazá…"* he said derisively, trailing off, and suggesting that the NGO's reputation for dominating scenarios and monopolizing resources spoke for itself. It did, as the laughs and eye rolls from his colleagues in the room confirmed.

Within MA, Araza's director, Paola provided frequent behavioral evidence as to the source of such perceptions, and she was not alone in doing so. MA meetings were often tense affairs, especially between Paola and a career-long collaborator, Dana. I suspected that the two had only spent decades working together less out of any particular affinity that each had for the other and more due to the extreme gravity of the situation facing women and girls in Caquetá and the small universe of actors who wanted to invest in changing that situation at all. They agreed on little, and advanced collectively on less. Yana had told me that for this particular meeting, she wanted to make sure that her women's victims association, AMUNSEPAZ, received a slot on the agenda for a breakfast with gubernatorial candidates, which had been scheduled for the following week and whose planning was the topic of the MA session that day. The purpose of the breakfast was to vet each of the candidates in terms of their prioritization of women and LGBTI rights in their platform. It also served to put the candidates face to face with the activists with whom they would be confronted over the four-year life of their term should they win, and served to foreground certain political priorities that would be expected to make it into their administration's action plans should they assume office.

Yana requested her time slot, and Dana quickly responded that requesting time slots was not the purpose of that day's meeting: they first needed to determine the policy priorities. As it was the last MA meeting before the breakfast, Yana would not have any other moment to make her request. Thus Dana´s response served more to keep

AMUNSEPAZ off the final agenda than it did to keep that day's conversation on track as she outwardly suggested. Yana remained silent, and Dana and Paola continued arguing over the ranking of different policy priorities. Dana had dedicated more than 35 years of her career as a medical doctor to preventing teen pregnancy in a department where it was not uncommon to send away teenage daughters to middle aged men as wives and household help for a farmer, or for men in their 30s and 40s and beyond to collect adolescents and very young women as trophies. On the other hand, Paola's similarly long career in service of women victims of violence foregrounded issues of gender-based violence and structural violence as critical for improving conditions for women. They never came to an agreement on which domain would receive greater attention for the breakfast. However, it didn´t really matter. The meeting minutes distributed later by Paola's assistant had only recorded Paola's arguments, and had excluded from documented memory any mention of teen pregnancy prevention, let alone petitions for AMUNSEPAZ's time slot.

Dana opened the conversation the day of the breakfast as she often did, propped up with her status as a medical doctor to lend gravitas to the grassroots initiative. Despite the pre-crafted agenda regarding gender-based violence, she offered a lengthy presentation of the scourge of teen pregnancy in Caquetá as Paola paced back and forth in the back of the room in frustration.[3] The administration of meeting minutes and the production of evidence of the encounter, both for internal and donor audiences, bears traces of the dynamics behind Yana's administration of attendance lists in the second chapter. They are both indicators of and tools for power and agenda-setting: while Yana was the organizational staff member employed and constituted in a position of dominance over those who entered the center to

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[3] In order to maintain anonymity for my informants, I have changed the context and content of the activism agenda, but the dynamics are as they are presented here.

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participate in its free service offerings, she was here subjected to the political whims of the note-taker, who was under Paola's employ. She was subordinated through the silencing of her and her association's interests, and instrumentalized through her inclusion in the attendance list that day, which would be used to report to MA's board and donors the extend of organizational inclusion that MA fostered throughout the department.

The night after the MA meeting, I asked Yana over dinner what she thought about what happened. Sensing my meaning, she responded:

> *They think that we are weak and lazy. There's an issue with the non-conformity between classes. The professionals don't want to work with the* analfabetas, ("illiterate women," in this case she refers to both technically illiterate women and women who are from the poorer classes in general) *and the poor women are made to feel uncomfortable in these kinds of settings. I've experienced this personally. I have said in meetings many times that in order to work on these issues, we have to reduce* ego."

Yana's comments are revealing along a few dimensions. First and foremost, they signal the way in which political actors experience broader class and social dynamics in terms of individual personality flaws. Frequently, I heard participants in the policy-making domains attribute social failings to individual personalities and naming it as some form of Colombian national character flaw. "Colombian's don't know how to collaborate," an international agency program director commented to me, when referring to the struggles he experienced working with a particular group of top officials at one of the Ministries. Rather than considering how issues of credit-taking and mandate-advancing might embed within broader concerns about job security in clientelistic political networks, statements such as this hint at a tendency to attribute complex structural challenges to national

character flaws embodied in individual interlocutors. These attributions echo emerging work that has found that government officials attribute failings in the policy arenas to the state, and success in the same, to individual qualities (Krystalli, Forthcominga).

In another example, the sense that there exists a distinctly Colombian way of enacting *ego* was repeated in many conversations with citizens, social leaders, public officials, and international agency representatives alike. The local director of the Victims Unit center, responsible for servicing the claims of the entirety of the department's roughly 200,500 victims (UARIV, 2018) (nearly half of the department's estimated population of 465,000 people), explained "Colombian *ego"* to me: "When we go out, we like to show ourselves off: 'Look at me! Look at what I am doing!' And those who work for foreigners (she refers here to Colombians working for international cooperation agencies) get even more inflated because they think they are better than those who work for the state." The comment emerged in the context of a conversation about the use of institutional banners in events targeting citizen populations, such as the Institutional Fair for Reconciliation described in Chapter Three. She lamented the banners of the international cooperation agencies because those agencies then received all the credit in the citizens' eyes for the work that the Victims Unit was actually doing. (Here we see traces of *envidia* and *protagonismo* as well, underscoring their interrelatedness.) "The Department for Social Prosperity doesn´t use a banner," she said, "because they like to be humble." Such a comment suggests that it is valued among these institutional actors to project the appearance of humility, even while jockeying for recognition and claims-making. She repeated this a few times throughout the rest of the interview, contrasting humility and commitment to the Colombian people with *ego* and showing off the work that one does.

The above interactions expose the variety of ways in which *ego* and its consequences play out in political and policy-making settings: class-based *ego* reproduces practices of marginalization even in advocacy groups composed of likeminded individuals; policy domain *ego* (teen pregnancy vs. gender-based violence) resulted in the positioning of the two as mutually exclusive rather than complimentary; and individual *ego* meant that the medical doctor and NGO director monopolized meeting time (and its recorded content) and, as a result, the final time spent face to face with political candidates, resulting in the silencing of the more than dozen other female social leaders present and the issues that they represented. And earlier in this section, institutional *ego* gave rise to the resentment of professional peers in other institutions, when Arazá received *in absentia* publicly ratified ridicule and derision for its practices.

Thus e*go* comprises a salient construct in Colombian political life. I argue this is partially connected to the way in which clientelistic networks function: personal success depends on personal favors and thus, a perception that what one brings to the table is not just valuable in its own right, but also the best of available options and therefore worthy of patronage. However, political actors do not mobilize it without ambivalence. For example, the governor's candidate for the *Alianza Verde* party, Luis Antonio Ruiz Cicery, noted during the proceedings of the MA-sponsored breakfast that "we need to create a new culture…and to govern Caquetá without hate and without *ego*." In doing so, he assured the room of assembled women leaders, that he would "connect all of the politicians with the productive sectors and reduce corruption." It was an enticing promise to the room of traditionally marginalized activists, even the promise did suffer from painfully vague causal relations. How did Cicery specifically plan to reduce hate and selfishness in the local government? By selecting "competent professionals" for key posts.

This moment reveals a dynamic that Shakow (2011) has previously identified in her work on clientelism in Bolivia, where she found that even those working to eliminate clientelistic practices in a small town found themselves enacting the very same kinds of relational maneuvering in order to situate themselves in positions of power and influence so that they could advance their political agendas. Those who fell outside of the current power holders' networks criticized clientelistic practices specifically by lamenting their inability to access them. Social leaders Yana, Paola, and Dana exercised *ego* in order to make their voices heard (some more successfully than others) to an audience of gubernatorial candidates, where the concept of *ego* was then critiqued and marked as a counter-policy priority for at least one potential administration. All of this combines to illustrate that calls to change particular social practices materialize in contested and contradictory ways, both through clientelistic networks and as constitutive of those same networks.

*The emotional management of ego and its consequences*

Those who have successfully navigated these policy settings refer to "emotional intelligence," "the humane part" of the work, a need for "sensitivity" and "sensibleness," and the importance of maintaining positive interpersonal relationships as the requirements for mitigating *ego* and its consequences. Similar work has been done by Burnyeat (2018) in this same setting, who theorizes the "conscientious bureaucrat" as he who successfully manages the emotional, relational, and affective requirements of everyday political life in Colombia. The problem is thus not that one has *ego*; the problem arises when one does not effectively manage it. One international cooperation official found success when she and her team were able to effectively foreground the policy goals and "reduce the importance of *who* is doing what…and reduce the tensions of *ego*."

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Interlocutors tended to cast *ego* in a negative light. When social leaders referred to *ego* in their meetings, they often included it on a list alongside other undesirable practices: revenge, envy, rancor, and hate. These same leaders and the intervention professionals who worked among them, often quipped that its practice created and reinforced social hierarchies, exclusion, division along socioeconomic lines, and other forms of impediments to democratic participation; they contrasted it to ideas like horizontal leadership, information sharing, and open communications, the last of which comprise touchstone elements of the international cooperation agency vernacular. These apparent divides related directly to the technocratic ideals that emerged through interactions with international donor agencies, which brought with them "expertise" on how to produce more democratic and participatory political action that privileged in experience and professionalism over nepotism and informality.

Nevertheless, *ego* practices resulted in the same people always receiving resource inflows in conditions of extreme shared precarity, including knowledge resources, such as how to make rights-based claims. *Ego* also led to resentment between institutional representatives and *choques* ("clashes") between institutions, creating challenges for individuals representing institutions to work together in a collaborative way. The construct also found its way into conversations about ex-combatant reintegration, with ACR/ARN officials suggesting that those former combatants who were unable to manage their *ego* were more likely to re-arm, because it kept them at a social distance from the communities and households into which they were reintegrating. Thus, at institutional and interpersonal level, *ego* worked to shape the way in which political actors related to one another in a crowded, under resourced field.

The idea of creating a social distance between individuals in community and institutional life is an important one in light of the prevalence of clientelistic networks and political practices that still structure policy- and politician-making in contemporary Colombian society. Furthermore, it echoes some of the previous arguments that I made in the first chapter regarding the way in which practices of self-protection and security exercise a centrifugal social force, widening the space between individuals in a community and, in the process, co-constituting people and places as "dangerous." International intervening agencies and their state-sponsored counterparts have infused the citizen-intervention and citizen-policy encounters with terms such as "horizontal leadership," which carry with them a malapropos call for egalitarianism and technocracy in a society that is notable for its structural inequalities and abyss-like gaps between rungs in the socioeconomic ladder – gaping wounds on the flesh of a nation that won't allow itself to heal. This represents a significant contradiction between organized approaches to building and implementing transitional policies and the daily practices of policy makers and politicians. Indeed, *ego* works *through* capitalizing on and exacerbating points of difference, directing each individual a bit further away from each other even when operating under the guise of unification and collective action.

### *Protagonismo* **and policy-making under friendly fire**

In mid-2018, policy makers, government officials, international cooperation, and social leaders struggled to address the ongoing – in some areas, growing – recruitment of youth and minors into illegal armed groups of various kinds: most notably, the right-wing post-demobilization groups such as the *Clan de Golfo,* and standard fare neighborhood

gangs. To address this problem at a local level, representatives from a variety of sectors convened to develop policy solutions over a two-day workshop in Bogotá.

I joined the workshop during lunch on the first day, arriving before the group had reconvened so that I might settle in, find a good spot for observation, and set up my equipment for the afternoon. The hotel meeting room could have been any of the dozens that I had stepped into over the past few years: mid-range hotels featuring non-descript carpets blending into similarly colored non-descript wall partitions (in hotter climates, white tiled floors, white walls, and white plastic chairs); carafes in the back of the room with coffee and hot water for *aromatica* (fruit tea) and shot-glass sized Styrofoam cups; unforgiving fluorescent light; the distinct smell of a meeting room – a blend of cleaning products, recycled air, coffee, and bodies; and the background hum of AV equipment with some final slide from an earlier presentation meditating on a bare white wall or a pull-down screen.

The usual suspects of policy making interventions, at times indistinguishable from a grade-school arts and crafts salon, scattered over the three tables in the room assigned to workshop participants: brightly colored note cards and post-it notes, scissors, a variety of thick-tipped markers, glue sticks, clear and masking tape, white boards and white erase markers, large sheets of newspaper stock, and to-be filled in worksheets with participatory "play" exercises designed to tap into participants' creativity: artifacts of the "participatory democratic decision making" activities that are the hallmark of internationally led policy-making settings. By lunch on the first day, the walls had already been covered in large sheets of newspaper stock and peppered with note cards and sticky notes creating "shared understandings" of key policy terms, and institutional claims on domains of responsibility for links in the policy chain.

Throughout the day, those assembled would follow the well-worn pattern of these kinds of inter-institutional, cross sector policy-making spaces. They would break out into small groups to address distinct aspects of a common challenge, then convene as a large group again and report back to all assembled their thoughts and recommendations. They would be asked to dream big and present novel prototypes to persistent structural problems - prototypes constructed out of computer paper and post-it notes and held together with scotch tape and good humor.  Some might present their group's response in the form of a chant or a song. Breakout teams would name themselves for the workshop, an exercise intended to create a sense of temporary identity and facilitate collaboration. Ideally, attendees would form lasting collaborative relationships that continued beyond the walls of the hotel meeting room. Through these artifacts and activities (like the books and slide show in the prior chapter), institutions would later report to funders that knowledge transferred between them, technical support flowed from international agencies to government entities, empowerment manifested in civil society leaders, and public policy and community interventions emerged.

At first glance, these settings and exercises did indeed produce the desired experience. Attendees, when not transfixed to the screens of their cell phones, contributed expertise to the conversations, appeared to be enjoying themselves while constructing post-it and note card models of ideal inter-institutional database systems, laughed at themselves and together as a group, clapping when a group delivered a particularly pithy team song, and exchanging phone numbers and commitments for work together moving forward. However, these fora also represented intense sites of contestation, inter-institutional and individual struggle for recognition and claims making, and – especially when the civilian sector was present – platforms for pouring out the frustrations of ultimately ineffective

policies, and rarely missed opportunities for some good old-fashioned finger-pointing. In this segment, I focus on the practice and experience of *protagonismo,* (literally "limelight", and referring to the desire for taking the lead in a given undertaking and claiming credit for any gains) as it emerges in the Colombian policy- and politician-making contexts.

That afternoon in Bogotá, as lunch settled in the stomachs of those present, a government official stood, sounding very much like he was continuing a conversation that had started among colleagues over the meal that the international agency sponsoring the event had provided just a few moments before.

> *We've been working here on this between the National Police, Forensic Medicine, GAULA, SIJIN, a group of us. Then, the Public Prosecutor's Office arrived in 2015 with the activation of a [rapid response mechanism]. You all* (referring to the international cooperation representatives) *come here with this idea and we already have this here. We don´t need it. Commitment, disposition, and attitude: these are what we need.*

A technical consultant might code this as an instance in which those present needed to *socializar* (raise awareness of) and *gestionar conocimiento* (manage knowledge) about what each of the institutions was doing in order to reduce overlap and redundancies and improve service delivery to the end user: the citizens. However, beyond this technical rendering, what this comment also suggested was the speaker's sense of missed recognition for work that he and his collaborators had already done and a feeling of having been insulted by his fellow Colombians-*cum*-internationals for bringing an ostensibly better solution to the table when a comparable, homegrown one already existed. The presence of international-backed actors frequently falls within the framing of "technical support,"

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"capacity building" and "government strengthening," (Turk, 2009) and they are understood, solicited, and reported back on in those same terms across institutions and sectors. This speaker rejected the need for "support" as well as the suggestion that he and his colleagues' efforts were weak (and thus in need of "strengthening" and "capacity building"). The structural conditions already existed, he said: the appropriate personal dispositions were what was lacking.

In interview, Tatiana, a program director for an international cooperation agency expressed empathy for this position. She had worked on reintegration with the Colombian government since the 2003-2006 demobilization of the AUC and attributed her success in the international cooperation sector to her practice of maintaining a "low-profile" in these contexts. Many interlocutors repeated the idea of a "low profile" the key to success. "All of this has a history behind it; it's not something you construct from one day to the next. But it is work that requires a lot of patience: it's making yourself indispensable without appearing to be doing *protagonismo*…This low profile is very important because it gets rid of the tension. We're not competing; it's just 'let us help'." Tatiana linked these practices to her and her program's ability to build and maintain trust-based relationships with individuals such as the one that had spoken out during the workshop. She was keenly aware of reactions like that of the Victim's Unit official above, who bemoaned the shiny banners of the international agencies.

> *You can´t underestimate the (government) institutions. I'm not in Libya or*
> *Syria, and can't just show up and intensely criticize* [dar cátedra] *the*
> *institutions of the Colombian government…You're not showing up to teach*
> *anyone anything. You have to have a lot of respect for that…*(Other

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*international agencies) are very ego-centric, so they show up and intensely*

*criticize* [dar cátedra]. *'No, it's that your transitional justice here is shit and*

*there is not justice, etc.' No. NO. You can't show up like that. One has to*

*arrive and say, 'You have enormous capabilities, you have enormous budgets,*

*tell me: Where can I make an impact?'*

Tatiana revealed a nuanced understanding of the practice of working with public

sector and NGO leaders in order to design peacebuilding interventions and policies. As a

representative of an international agency, she had to deftly maneuver the politics of credit

and recognition in order to give the impression of a subordinated position of support -

rather than a lead protagonist's role - in order to manage effectively the egos and envies of

those with whom she was in dialogue. Having worked for nearly 15 years on reintegration

in Colombia, she had every ounce of political and social capital necessary to take on more

overt leadership in these scenarios and was invited to guest speaking opportunities by

national universities and think tanks on the subject. Nonetheless, knowing the homegrown

bias that countered the benefits of belonging to the international intervention domain, she

chose to navigate the cross-sector and inter-institutional terrain from a self-selected

position of subordination in order to advance her own mandates. Tatiana exposed the

fragile ego of her country's policy leaders while simultaneously exposing her own,

reminding her interlocutor that Colombia, at least, was not Libya or Syria.

*Protagonismo,* too, has a long history in the Latin American context and emerges in

a wide variety of settings and forms. The word roots in the Greek *prôtagônistês,* derived

from *prôtos* "first in importance" + *agônistês* "actor"; relevant for its use in the region, and

in particular in Colombia, the root of *agônistês, agôn,* signifies "struggle" (González-

Abrisketa, 2013). In the social and political domains, *protagonismo* tends to associate with ideas of human and collective agency, empowerment, and struggle, as well as social change, claims making, participation, decision-making, problem solving, and power (Alther, 2006; Bartoli, 2005; Burch, 2010; Taft, 2010). Its exercise occurs in cultural, political, and economic spaces and patterns of *protagonismo* can reveal the tensions, contests, and values embedded in a society's moral frameworks. Actions such as public demonstrations (Fernandez, 2007), performing cultural representations (González-Abrisketa, 2013), coordinated community action (Alther, 2006), NGO interventions (Aguayo Quezada, 1992), and remembering (Domínguez Almansa, 2008) can all constitute the enactment of *protagonismo* and demonstrate the wide reach of related practices.

It is a powerful social and political tool: it can mitigate the risks of anonymity and oblivion (Aguayo Quezada, 1992; Domínguez Almansa, 2008) and can be marshaled to fight against all forms of exclusion, marginalization, invisibilization, denial, silencing, and oppression (Alther, 2006; Cussianovich, 2001). However, actors can also leverage *protagonismo* towards those very same ends (e.g., male citizens producing cultural representations in a way that systematically excludes women) (González-Abrisketa, 2013). *Protagonismo* can describe the acts of nations, such as Sikkink's (2014) assertion that Argentina has exercised *protagonismo* in shaping narratives about human rights and according legitimacy to global governance projects in Latin America and beyond. The evidence for this, according to Sikkink, lies in the uptake and integration of national discourses in later international normative and legal standards for human rights in a variety of institutions. *Protagonismo* also covers the societal roles of individual actors. Evidence of these instances can be found in discourses – those made hegemonic and those silenced – in the occupation and dominance of physical space, in the meanings attributed to the actions

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of individuals or institutional actors, in relational practices, and in practices of dominance and repression throughout all domains of social life (Gutiérrez Colomina, 1999).

As a construct, *protagonismo* is understood differently depending on its sociohistorical context, and even within a given context, depending on the historical moment in which it locates and towards what end it is being deployed. For example, the concept's 40-year history in Peru children's labor movements has emerged in three distinct forms and over the years has been deployed in different ways in order to achieve distinct social, economic, and political goals. Importantly, leaders within that child *protagonismo* movement have expressed worry at its selective uptake by government actors, who have focused on just one small facet of the capacious construct at the expense of advances in children's rights according to the more wide-reaching goals of movement leaders. Thus, *protagonismo* is fluid, open to contestation and potentially perverse uptake; it is a response to international political projects, and the object of continued definitional work, practice, and societal reworking (Taft, 2010). It is something that can be possessed, a quality to be protected, and an embodied and affective experience. For these reasons, it presents a generative site for analysis of a given society's social relations.

In the Colombia's policy-making domains, *protagonismo* features as a constant element of institutional actors' ways of relating to one another. One professional in the international cooperation sector in Bogotá attributed the positive productive relationship that his agency had with a government institution to the "balanced flow" that they achieved between the two. "They give and we also give, and the *protagonismo* is managed well…[We] position the institutions to defend their own products; we don't attribute achievements to ourselves." In this instance, the international agency "gives" by allowing the government institutions to take credit for gains in the policy domain, ostensibly

supporting the claim that international cooperation works to support rather than supplant state functions and allowing the individual officials to use collaborations to their professional and institutional advantage. Representatives from international institutions have the luxury to forfeit *protagonismo* because they lie somewhat (though not entirely) outside of the clientelistic political system, in large part because their financial backing is largely external to governmental budgeting and contracting processes and the intricate web of social and political networks influencing them. Furthermore, many employees of international agencies have indefinite employment contracts, in contrast to the constantly shifting flow of contracted labor that represents the hallmark of the Colombian public sector. Thus, credit and recognition are less important for professional and institutional survival.

Though *protagonismo* could well be deployed towards positive ends, in institutional life in Colombia, it tended to create challenges. Government officials are difficult to work with, I was told, when "they want all of their *protagaonismo,*" for example. And the acknowledgment exists that "there is always going to be some more than others that do it for political reasons and these personal egos that want to have the *protagonismo.*" One Bogotá-based interlocutor who had worked in both the public, NGO, and international cooperation sectors lamented:

> *In the Colombian case, at least, there is a big obstacle with regards to a general perception in life, and I feel it between government entities in particular, one feels a lot of friendly fire. And that I would define as: we are all part of the same institution – the mayor's office, or the presidential council – but we all have to come out and get noticed…that everyone has a theme of* protagonismo *in a setting in which we are all joining together to guarantee*

*the rights of Colombians…So, it's this thing with visibility that generates a*
*lot of problems.*

Performing effectively on the battleground of policy making requires exposing oneself regularly to "friendly fire." In a clientelistic political system in which success depends largely the extent to which one garners political favor from those currently holding power, "coming out to get noticed" figures as a critical practice for ensuring, at the very least, one's job security, which is not even to take on the issue of advancement. "Visibility" to political superiors or favored parties and actors, as well as the international donors who sponsor this work and the compulsive way in which its pursuit is practiced in this setting, generates problems for achieving the purported goal: delivering effective policies to all Colombian citizens. It is understandable that individual and institutional actors want credit for the work that they do, and certainly not unique to this context that some may seek more credit than is their due. However, by analyzing prevailing discourses of *protagonismo* and the tensions that emerge around its practice and management, a more complete picture of social relations comes into view in this context. In particular, the way in which making politics and politicians draws from and reinforces hierarchical interpersonal relationships and how these practices work directly against calls for technocratic "expertise-based" collaboration from international donor agencies and governments – calls constituted in Colombian law through initiatives such as those that mandated the inter-institutional committee on human rights featured in the previous chapter.

*Building peace on the battleground of policy-making*

While *ego* and *envidia* transcended all settings and forms of institutional and community life, references to *protagonismo* occurred more in the institutional and political

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realm. Distinct from *ego,* which tended to only emerge in critical review of an individual, citizens and institutions can leverage *protagonismo* towards positive ends. For example, FARC political party leader Ivan Marquez, in a speech during a December 2017 forum reflecting on the first year of the implementation of the peace accord, called on Colombian civilians to engage in more *protagonismo*, and "take up the flag" of democratic participation to call for compliance with accord mandates. In contrast to this use of the term as a call to arms, a mayoral candidate in Caquetá noted during the 2015 campaign cycle that he would try to create a leadership climate that worked against *protagonismo*, which was, the candidate claimed, the undesirable modus operandi of the current administration against which he was campaigning.

With this in mind, experiences with *protagonismo* in the spaces of making policies and making politicians can be an ambivalent one: on one hand, one may very well represent the best of available ideas and options and deserve and enjoy the credit received for contributions given setting. On the other hand, putting oneself out ahead of others in that way can expose one to "friendly fire," can position oneself as a target for *envidia* and its discontents. Furthermore, it may be that an institution requires *protagonismo,* because it operates under a legal mandate that dictates its leadership in a given policy field. But it is often the case that the institution lacks the budget, staff, and technical knowledge in order to effectively fulfill that role, or its dependencies on a variety of other institutional actors make it vulnerable to failure when others do not fulfill their particular piece in the policy puzzle – an act of non-action that often has everything to do with *their* sense of undervalued *protagonismo.* Finally, because it is something that can be given, negotiated, protected, and hoarded it represents a site of contest and struggle for institutions and individuals looking to formulate complex policies in overwhelming numbers based on the

November 2016 Final Accord and its subsequent mandates, which created no fewer than 558 new committees, institutions, and cross-sector collaboration requirements in its 310-page text (Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, 2017).

*Bent spines and the reproduction of hierarchy*

Back at the gym for another training session in mid-2016, I once again caught Mora in a conversation with the same campaign staffer and the gym owner long after the noise and fervor of the campaign season had ended, and long after the candidate, having lost the governor's race, had redirected his network and funds towards other political ends. I watched Mora's back curve into a question mark, as he lowered his eyes to the floor and mumbled something to his interlocutors. The campaign staffer, now returned to his own legal practice, patted the humble athlete on the back and smiled, nodding. "What was that all about?" I asked Mora, as he rejoined the rest of us as we stretched and readied ourselves to go home for the evening. "I needed his help with a legal issue for my mom." I commented on his posture, and he laughed, replying, "Well, you know, you can´t very well ask for a favor with your back straight."

This particular quotidian exchange illustrated the embodiment of everything that I had observed in terms of policy- and politician-making in transitioning Colombia, both at the local and national levels: bent spines of subjugation for those compelled to, at every step of the way, put their fate of agendas and needs in the hands of another. Navigating Colombia's political domain, which emerged from a long history with involvement of extra-official and parastatal armed actors, was an experience of passions and emotional upsets, physical suffering and anxiety due to the fear of and experience with *envidia.*

Practicing politics required the constant struggles related to *ego* and *progragonismo*. For those capable few, these actions represented opportunities and recognition necessary to advance when doing so depended more on the favors and whims of the connected and less on the specific content of a given proposal. For the rest, these practices led to resentment, disenfranchisement, and a sense of constantly being on the receiving end of friendly fire. I noted earlier that *ego* (and add to that now, *protagonismo*) exerted a centrifugal force: they served to separate, marginalize, silence, repress, and maintain or even exacerbate the space between the different rungs on the constantly re-forming ladder of social and political hierarchies.

I have explored here *envidia, ego,* and *protagonismo* because my interlocutors foregrounded these affective domains in producing politics and politicians in a time of neither war nor peace in Colombia. The embodiment and narration of contemporary political life reveals a paradox: on one hand, a history of violent clientelism and armed conflict and the anticipation of future betrayal have given way to practices that guard against such betrayal, maintaining a kind of intersubjective arm's length between individuals – even those on the "same side." On the other hand, successful navigation of political life required the maintenance of complex webs of debts and favors, pulling these same individuals back together as they jockey for limited resources, donor dollars, and even just the time of their institutional counterparts in other branches, so that they can account for even minimum standards of compliance.

Both *ego* and *protagonismo* implicate relations of power in their enactment and tend to reflect a zero-sum view of a given scenario, foregrounding one individual or agenda *at the expense of* another. Thus, their practice tends to replicate social hierarchies. When enacted effectively, they necessarily require the subjugation of other individuals and

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agendas, and the marginalization of voices and actors. Given the stakes of the political realm, actors and institutions practicing *ego* and *protagonismo* do so under constant struggle, contest, and remaking. That they can be granted (from above) – especially in the case of *protagonismo* – but not always claimed (from below) also indexes the role of power relations and hierarchy in their practice. That they require recognition and ratification indexes the foregrounding of interpersonal relations in their making. For example, Yana was unable to effectively exercise *ego* and ensure *protagonismo* for her association, AMUNSEPAZ, because those in greater positions of power – the medical doctor and NGO director – did not recognize and grant her legitimacy to effectuate her claim. These emotions constitute, in part, the bureaucratic experience of scarcity and inequality.

Finally, *pidiendo el favor* is in its essence an act of subjugation. In some instances throughout this chapter, the phrase emerged as a thinly-veiled demand: e.g., when, for example, the politician's lackey came to collect from the gym owner when they needed men for a motorcycle patrol, or when a reintegration director imposed on an ex-combatant dependent on the benefits offered through the Service Center so that he could wire the building for internet. However, when deployed in a more literal sense, it represents the articulated acknowledgment that you have something that I need, and that my positionality necessitates that I ask for access to that something, creating a debt in its wake.

## Conclusion

Reconciliation interventions unite as much as they create the grounds for historically consistent dynamics of past sociopolitical divisions along identity, class, and political grounds. This occurs in part because conflict-related identities represent the price of admission into this project. By naming the work that of "reconciliation", the various policy, NGO, and other forms of intervention featured in the preceding pages call into being individuals based on their relationship to war. It primes these aspects of their identity and reminds citizens repeatedly that they are victim or former combatant. Administration practices – accounting, reporting, training – are necessary to sustain any kind of organization. In the context of reconciliation interventions, I find that participants can deploy these practices to re-inscribe the very social divisions they work to resolve. All of these dynamics occur against the backdrop of mistrust emergent from experiences with betrayal and perpetuated by ongoing physical and socioeconomic insecurity.

At the community level, mistrust manifests in daily practices of personal security. These practices protect the subjective self as much as they do the physical one. Socially policed rules for how much of one's personal story and subjectivity to share and how much to hide emerge in quotidian life when one exceeds the boundaries of collectively agreed upon prudence. Occupations and reasons for being there should not be shared with taxi drivers. Names are only reluctantly provided to suspicious outsiders with cameras and recording equipment. One does not opine on a survey question regarding what lies in the heart of another. The responsibility for physical self-protection falls on the individual, and public places have taken on the significance of sites of potential danger. Government institutions cannot be trusted to either provide the services that they promise or to be free

from infiltration by illegal armed actors looking for an excuse to classify the individual as enemy and bring them to an untimely end. Town centers bear with them the recent memories of a call to order for a town in which such a call could signify death or disappearance. Participation in the organization in community life through the ubiquitous neighborhood action committees almost guaranteed engagement with armed interlocutors if not the direct placement of a target on one's back. Community dinners invite lackluster attendance. State-backed human rights initiatives address nearly empty halls. And in the extreme case of post-trauma, a stunned grandmother refuses to leave her home. I argue that mistrust, in addition to finding purchase in its narration and practice through engagement with the social world (Carey, 2017), also serves to constitute that very same social world, rendering both people and places as dangerous through the practices of protecting oneself from them (Chapter 1).

Mistrust in practice extends out into the social realm, implicated in and influenced by day-to-day interactions – some reinforcing and others in contradiction. A group of gentlemen caution me against having my laptop out because those around me are not to be trust, even as they presume that I will trust their counsel as they break the rule of not engaging with others unknown. Nevertheless, those touched by the war find ways to trust again, and it is made, unmade, and remade anew. A community association leader's window signals the source of reliable intel on the entrance of a new organization and its significance. Individuals eventually grow willing to share sensitive information and personal tragedies with a stranger who wandered into their midst. And though one organization leader betrayed the trust of her members when she manipulated her status for personal gain at their expense, they disband and reorganize around another community leader, who they grow to trust. Eventually, a former FARC commander and a woman who

once would not even leave her home due to fear of such individuals collaborate together on community improvement projects and economic opportunities for both female excombatants and female victims.

In the intervention context, conflict-related identity categories constitute the organizing mechanism for calls to reconcile. The Foundation for Reconciliation ESPERE workshop focuses attendees' emotional labors on a particular "offense" that they have suffered at the hands of another. In a war-torn community like Las Delicias, such a term inevitably triggers memories of their violent displacement, or the murder or disappearance of a loved one. Former combatants assembled may think back to their own losses that precipitated joining the armed groups or recall an imaginary of an absent state that primed them to take up arms. Intervention participants then focus their deeply laden emotional and relational work on this offense, carrying the sense of violation forward in their daily lives even as they work to reframe their narratives about it. They sit with their memories, in conversation with their victimhood and/or their perpetration of a violent act. Government institutions such as the Victims' Unit and the Colombian Agency for Reintegration (which changed its name to the Agency for Reincorporation and Normalization in 2018) attend to their populations based on who they were in terms of the armed conflict. Many of the processes related to victims' reparations and excombatant reintegration can occupy the better part of ten years. Additionally, they can signify the exclusive means of survival for much of that timeframe – especially in the case of excombatants, since they receive a stipend for compliant participation. Many victims maintain a complex and extensive web of debts and favors from family and neighborhood friends in anticipation of a reparations check many years in the making that all but disappears to pay those debts once it finally arrives. Institutional encounters are thus the

recurring reminder over the long term of who one is vis-à-vis the armed conflict and part of the mechanism for reconstituting these identities in daily life. Both these institutional encounters and periodic donor visits that are the lifeblood of the NGO world call on those implicated to perform ideal types of their conflict identities: the forgiving victim, the repentant excombatant, and the economically productive widow. Combined, these constant reminders of conflict status create the conditions for the reproduction of the very kinds of divisions they work to repair (Chapters 2 and 3). It is thus not terribly surprising that the inevitable contests and frictions also emerge along these lines.

Two other thematic domains emerged as salient in the context of Las Delicias and the intervening agencies, governmental institutions, and international agents that feature as protagonists in this account: performance, and the co-constitutive notions of presence and absence. I have already hinted at the need for performances of ideal identity types for donors and other kinds of institutional actors in the domain of interventions. The rewards for good performances can take the form of first selection for choice job opportunities, access to valuable knowledge networks, or, as we saw in the Institutional Fair for Reconciliation, a toy. These performances by the organizationally savvy, can also come at a social cost.  Yana, who could always muster an emotional display of affection for demobilized combatants when Foundation leadership and donor agents were present, was perceived by those same excombatants as "kissing our asses in front of everyone else and doing something else behind closed doors." Such performances, socially speaking, thus sharpened the blade of a double-edged sword that at once instilled hope and a sense of accomplishment in the donors present and deepened resentment among others in the room who felt they knew the other side.

Performances also feature in thinking about personal and public security. Neighbors informed me that I required a male escort to walk up the mountain for an interview at night, despite the fact that my physical stature and defensive capabilities were greater than were his. My host mother scolded me for leaving a lock undone on a gate, when it could easily be released from the outside. I accompanied a motorcycle patrol guarding a neighborhood against the delivery of goods intended to "buy" votes that everyone knew would never arrive. And the National Police "detained" a man who beat his partner only to let him go so that he could return home 20 minutes later. Such performances lead immediately to questions of audience. First, in a climate of prevailing mistrust, individuals place social value on being seen to be practicing acts of self or public protection. Second, the hollowness of their substantive significance in terms of actually achieving their stated aims reveals the limits of such acts in contexts of profound insecurity, corruption, and negligence. The multiple audiences for which performances in this domain are made and the administration of acts of intervention within a field shaped by the politics of scarcity make possible this reproduction of historic divisions.

Institutional and organizational actors also engaged in a variety of performances, which I suggest became visible as the contradictions between what was done and what was said was done emerged. State representatives "made an act of presence" in the Fair for Reconciliation through the arrangement of booths, laptops, bodies and services rendered – including those bearing the promise of economic opportunity – as the state positioned itself of a provider of well-being to the people. That act of making a presence was as much done for those present in Las Delicias as it was for future anticipated audiences of superiors and donors who would later review the evidence produced of this display. The constellation of NGO, religious, state, and international actors involved in the project of national

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reconciliation connotes two things: first, that audiences are multiple, future, and feature a mix of complementary and competing goals. And second, that the economy of presence, credit, and even fictitious absence (as was the case in the example of the United States military) depends on differential values of visibility.

Presence and absence also emerged as an important consideration in terms of what state efforts at "making a presence" came to signify against the backdrop of longstanding discourses of state absence and abandonment.  Due to this contextual particularity, I argue that the encounter between state officials and society is as much an exercise in the citizens rendering legible the state as it is the other way around. This is possible because these citizens have developed full, complex social and economic lives in the company of an imaginary of state absence. The disconnect between performed relational and affective states related to reconciliation and the extent to which those performances approximated everyday life (they did not) provided the analytic entry point for examining this process of dialogical legibility. Furthermore, the disconnect between the performances of subjective and relational qualities imagined to elements of reconciliation index an acquiescence on the part of both state and society actors to the performativity of the intervention medium as a mechanism for the distribution of available goods and services (Chapter 3).

This in-depth examination of replication, performance, and performativity begs interrogation of the means by which such social processes are made possible and sustained in the daily work of bringing to bear the project of national reconciliation. I draw from James' (2010) theorizing on bureaucraft in order to frame this component of the analysis for several reasons. First, it acknowledges that interventions with the stated aims of repair and restoration can be deployed to both benevolent and malevolent ends. Second, it highlights the way in which experiences with trauma and suffering undergo processes of

curation, cultivation – craft - in their representation in order to achieve those ends. And third, because it indexes the opacity behind which much of this work is shrouded. In doing so, I direct the analytic gaze towards the administration of bureaucraft as individuals, organizational, and governmental actors work to make visible and sustainable their work in this domain. I find that the administration of these interventions – i.e., the bureaucratic practices necessary for its operation and sustainability – emerges as the mechanism by which the ambivalence inherent in the projects of personal and social healing materializes in the interpersonal interactions of the implicated actors (Chapters 2, 3, and 4).

Attendance lists, the seemingly innocuous product of all sites of intervention, come to the fore as tools for both manifesting acts of marginalization as well as evidence of the fiction of inclusion. In the Departmental Committee for Human Rights, we follow this traveling piece of paper as it collects evidence of representative inclusion in the form of civil society leaders and institutional actors present in a forum designed to foster collaboration and democratic decision-making. However, the substance of both the actors involved and of actor involvement troubles claims to inclusion. Proxies for decision-making institutional representatives arrive late and without the authority to contribute meaningfully to the order of the day. And social leaders clamor for answers from a national official who offers only further marginalization from the matters that quite literally bear the weight of life and death. In the NGO-sponsored community center, a local victims' leader uses the excuse of an attendance list and the *cupos* (spots) that it indexes in order to deny services to a former combatant.

Furthermore, the *cupo* as a signifier of access to services constitutes a core site of anxiety both for the populations to which it grants access as well as to the agency that manages them. This occurs because of the acute scarcity experienced by all actors in this

context. Having control over the *cupo* accorded power to the victim *cum* NGO employee to exclude her neighbor who was also an excombatant from the free English class to which she was supposedly guaranteed access. State officials simultaneously announce their presence and provision of services through the provision of *cupos* and the stark limitations in their ability to provide those services to all populations in need. Other forms of institutional practices also work doubly in terms of their achievement of stated aims and perpetuation of the divisions they purport to resolve. The train-the-trainer model, which is the hallmark of claims to sustainable project design for interventions globally, calls on those initial "beneficiaries" in a given setting to themselves take up the work of replicating a given pedagogy and creates the conditions for the organization's eventual withdrawal. This ostensibly reduces dependencies on outside sources of knowledge capital and "empowers" local populations to exercise leadership and accountability for improving their lot. The model, by its design, also represents an instantiation of hierarchy, since he who trains the trainer presumably does so because of his superior technical knowledge on the matter at hand. However, leveraging this leg up in the hierarchy can also result in humiliation and alienation of the trainee when it is done so towards malevolent ends. Taken together, the inscription and coding of the intervention encounter as well as the enactment of related practices can undermine the collaborative, technocratic, and unifying aims of the implicated mandates. I build on previous work that demonstrates that bureaucratic practices can contribute to replicated structures of violence (Gupta, 2012) but question the ways in which these outcomes are arbitrary in this setting, as work in other contexts has suggested. Instead, I argue that the dynamics are entirely in line with past patterns of social and political life, even though they occur under the mantle of large-scale social change (Chapters 4 and 5).

Thus, the administration of organizational and political interventions to facilitate reconciliation provides the tools whereby those implicated in the process are able to structure social relationships in a hierarchical manner along familiar political, economic, and class lines. In as much as the NGO intervention represents the presentation of a gift to the community, it is an instantiation of inequality and dominance in that it draws on unequal power relations between the provider and the beneficiary (Fassin, 2012; Godelier, 1999). At the same time, it draws on a politics of solidarity and pulls the two parties closer together through an act of sharing (Godelier, 1999). The trust-building project alone brings to light issues of control and dependence. Trusting exerts control over the behavior of others when betrayal of that trust signifies the loss of the benefits of being trusted. At the same time, trusting another implies submitting oneself to the risk that he will betray that trust and thus accords some degree of control to that person (Carey, 2017). Control as an analytic also brings us back to the role of social hierarchy and relational positioning in these and other intervention settings. Furthermore, mere participation in social and political life in this domain brings to the minds of participants affective and emotional experiences with status and hierarchy, as politicians and policy makers jostle for credit and navigate social fields marked by fears of and experiences with envy and counterparts looking for an advantage, even if it is at the cost of their collaborators. In the institutional and international agency realms, the technocratic ideals infused in the project of the national (and internationally sponsored) project of reconciliation clash with established ways of being in institutional and political life in Colombia, and leave officials feeling as though they are operating under "friendly fire" (Chapter 5).

Among the citizens themselves - within state institutions, NGO and other organizational settings, and in the communities in which they live – aspects of the

performances of daily life (i.e., mistrust and practices of personal security) are as much performed as they are performative. They create the social and subjective structures through which ontological effects are established. Taken together, these broader social dynamics contribute to the fits and starts, episodic unfolding, and periodic reversals of an ambivalent peace.

**Policy Recommendations**

I conducted my ethnographic work among the designers, implementers, and beneficiaries of reconciliation interventions over the course of three years. Based on this work, I offer a set of recommendations for those who dedicate the better part of their person and livelihood to repairing the deleterious social effects of war. In doing so, I find that it is worth repeated mention that this work in the aggregate is not a critique of the state-NGO-international cooperation intervention apparatus *per se.* The value of these initiatives and the passion and commitment displayed by nearly all of my interlocutors to the cause of peacebuilding and reconciliation cannot be overstated. What this dissertation represents, however, is a deep dive into the specific ways in which the life blood of interventions as organizations – administrative, accounting, and organization-sustaining practices – reflect and refract the structural divisions that preceded and perdure the armed conflict.

Some of this, I argue, is inevitable. Despite my finding that agencies such as the Colombian Agency for Reintegration and the Victims' Unit prime citizens to think and act in ways consistent with these conflict-related identities, for example, I would not deign to suggest that such agencies should be eliminated. Certainly, other possible institutional arrangements might be posited, such as one that addresses conflict and transition affairs, and another that adopts a more holistic view of post-conflict society building. But at some

point, divisions along these lines would need to occur, as the needs of victims require dedicated political and technical attention as much as do those of former combatants.

What this work does confirm, however, is the need for more detailed and systematic investigation of interventions in context and a serious revisiting of specific ways in which imported logics and practices become woven into the social fabric within which they are deployed. I also claim that the idea that a social fabric needs to be *rebuilt* is a flawed one. A community like Las Delicias was organized before it was even formed: it began with an illegal "invasion" of privately held land by 1,000 families simultaneously and over the course of a handful of days. To suggest that these families lack a social fabric is to be tone deaf to the symphony of melodic, cacophonous, and dissonant interactions that are always already present in any collection of individuals.

Based on these assertions, my first recommendation is to  listen more: prior to, during, and following the development of site-specific interventions. Perhaps in knowing that these intervention sites become a *part of* community life rather than merely *operate within* a host community, we might begin to take more seriously the significance of the particular individuals and practices that comprise them. Perhaps most famously in Rwanda, the adaptation of community traditional *gacaca* courts to achieve justice and reconciliation represented one of the first major efforts to integrate indigenous practices with international mandates following the Genocide in 2001. Despite extensive initial praise and claims to success in grassroots peacebuilding, we have learned with time that such adaptations and grass-roots efforts bring with them the challenge of replicating local power dynamics that lead to exclusion and dissent and perpetuate the very divides that lead to war ((Haberstock, 2014; Longman, 2009).  My claims to replication are thus not novel ones. Instead, I provide

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additional empirical support to a long-standing problem in the intervention domain, and offer new insight into the role of organizational practices in contributing to it.

My second recommendation relates closely to this one, and addresses the directionality of making interventions "local," whatever that scale of locality presupposes. The analysis provided in Chapter 3 troubles the idea that outside "higher" agencies and institutions "bring" certain kinds of practices to communities – in terms of the focus of this dissertation, those related to reconciliation. After several years spent participating in both the receipt of and design and implementation of these kinds of interventions, I found that, while there is an understanding that local instances of global or national policy goals will differ in their materialization, there nonetheless exists the impetus to bear down upon local practices to conform them more to macro-level standards and logics. To return to the example of the *gacaca* courts, a fundamental problem with their grounded in the fact that they were never designed to address the kinds and scale of grievances that occurred in the context of a national-level genocide. Currently, interventions tend to bring in outsider expertise and accommodate micro-level practices to that expertise – if they even do that at all (e.g., in the case of reconciliation performances elicited during the state-sponsored Fair for Reconciliation). I recommend instead developing first a deep understanding of how the desired manner of social relations are practiced *in situ*, and then adapting the range of external measures and practices to those ways of being and relating in a given community. This is, of course, easier said than done: how does a United Nations official make sense of the two machete-wielding young men who rejoined as drinking buddies three months after a barroom brawl? How does wordless resumption of life as usual translate into a systematic approach to promoting reconciliation in communities affected by war? Nevertheless, the difficulty of the work does not erase the need for it. I have provided ethnographic detail of

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the spirit of reconciliation during life in transition, even when that detail escaped interveners' view. Few of them occurred in the intended and planned for ways. So, either reconciliation is not the target, or reconciliation interventions would be better served in accommodating existing ways doing this relational work in the communities they attempt to serve.

Another idea that I develop implicitly throughout this work is the notion that certain elements, dynamics, and practices of interventions are inescapable due to the fact that they operate as organizations. The entire field of organizational studies rests on the premise that people behave in particular ways once they find themselves within the social, physical, political, and fiscal structures of an organization – be it an NGO, government, community, or religious one. I found my field sites to be no exception to this premise. Furthermore, the particular context of a (more or less) post-conflict transition among populations brimming with mistrust, both within and exceeding the framework of the armed conflict,t signified the infusion of significant relational and emotional stakes into organizational actions that might otherwise be glossed as mundane, boring, *trabajo operativo* (busy work). Finally, though not mentioned previously, I add that there is a sense of denying the organizational-ness of many of these interventions. Many of those working in, say, the Catholic Church and the NGO domain viewed all of the reporting, administration, and donor fund-seeking activities as anathema to the spirit of their work, which was to be with the people, working hand in hand with them, and contributing to the improvement of the conditions of precarity in their lives. This was not grounded in naiveté: all were abundantly clear about what was needed to sustain their work. Instead, it was a sense of valuing the face-to-face work with communities as the good and desirable work, and the reporting and support-seeking activities as the tedious and perhaps less "good" side of things.

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This leads to my third recommendation: acknowledge explicitly the way in which interventions exist as organizations in context. Make the actions necessary to sustain the organization identifiable as such, and name the political economies within which these institutions operate. By doing so, actors working in these settings will may be better able to disentangle the motives, drivers, and affective experiences shaping social interactions. This understanding may contribute to more effective attainment of institutional mandates. And demystifying the administration of organizational life may begin to take away some of the power to divide that it holds in moments similar to those featured in this work. This recommendation is, of course, not as straightforward as its writing may suggest. No victim of violent displacement in Las Delicias who is spending his time in a workshop for reconciliation instead of out looking for life sustaining work wants to hear about the salaries for his neighbor Yana, or funding inflows to the Reconciliation House. The idea that others in the state and NGO sectors are profiting off of victimhood in Colombia is a discourse commonly presented by the country's more than 8 million victims (Krystalli, Forthcomingb). Nevertheless, everyone there know that such a site requires funding and administration. By making more transparent how that occurs and the logics behind it, those already doing so much to promote positive changes within their communities may find themselves better equipped to mitigate the counterproductive dynamics that undermine those efforts. I conclude this work with a description of a moment in which all of these implicated actors were present in an episode that would be institutionally coded as anything but reconciliatory. I nonetheless argue that it bore many of the desired qualities of trust- and community-building among populations impacted by war, and suggest that it makes us question the boundaries between war and peace and between reconciliation and division.

**The Purge**

On Monday April 3, 2017, my phone started buzzing on my desk from my office in
Bogotá with residents from Las Delicias calling and messaging for help in advance of
public forces that promised to come in the following day and begin demolishing homes
throughout the sprawling slum. The case was a complicated one, and the motives not
entirely clear for several reasons: though illegally settled land, the neighborhood comprised
somewhere upwards of 6,000 homes and the 60 selected homes eventually torn down were
scattered throughout. Additionally, residents of the neighborhood had lived in many of
sectors of Las Delicias for more than 13 years, and so the timing raised suspicions of
political motives. Finally, more than a year after the incident, the destroyed wooden shacks
still sat as vacant piles of what scant rubble carried no reusable value – empty hiccups in an
otherwise long line of informal houses put to no particular alternative use in the meanwhile.

The little local press coverage that took place featured photos of government workers
with agency-emblazoned vests, uniformed standard police officers standing in groups of
conversation with residents, and workers in yellow construction helmets "helping"
residents to take what few possessions they had out of their homes. The language of the
reporting tended to frame the events as the mayor fulfilling campaign processes to address
the scourge of informal housing settlements that formed the backbone – poorly articulated
as it may be – of the city's development for the past 20 years. The videos and pictures that I
received of the episode – soon after referred to as "The Purge" by community members –
and subsequent interviews that I conducted a week later with those who had been present
revealed a different side of the events as they unfolded. One state institution that had
remained entirely absent in press images, but that featured prominently in the images,
videos, and narratives of the residents: ESMAD, Colombia's notoriously violent Mobile

Anti-Disturbance Squad (e.g., riot police). Identical accounts emerged from residents of the neighborhood. ESMAD blocked the single entrance to the community prohibiting residents from leaving, started throwing tear gas in the morning of the first day – a time of day when most of the community's men had already left to work or look for work – and, since the entrance was blocked, the women and children present had to flee up into the mountains in order to go back around and down out of the community to escape the gas. Some crouched in the mountains and waited until night, when ESMAD finally left, and this cycle continued for several days. Given the fact that the different houses that were eventually torn down were scattered throughout the large complex of houses, and that there were no reports at first of any kind of resistance by community members, opening the process by bathing large sections in the community in tear gas during a time of day when mostly just women and children occupied the homes and then blocking their only exit seems, at best, misconduct – likely more accurately, a violation of their human rights.

One single mother with five young children, now living in a home with only three walls, since the fourth had been shared with one of the destroyed homes and those tearing it down had deemed it necessary to destroy the shared wall as well, recounted the morning to me:

*I couldn´t leave. I didn´t know where to go. I just went out of the house running. I grabbed two of my youngest – one in each arm – and went running. The other ones had to follow behind. I got my kids to the mountain and came back to help maintain the calm, and this [elderly woman] was in the street and hadn´t gotten out. Esperanza (the community leader) and I each grabbed one arm and carried her out of there. You know, you get out of the war, and then you realize you didn´t.*

The impression conveyed to me by many whom I interviewed repeated this sense that just when one thought one had managed to escape the violence of the armed conflict one is reminded that "one will never be free." Some of the destroyed houses were indeed under dubious use as narcotics labs, but the vast majority of those sacked from their homes that day were conflict victims, many elderly ones. And the legally mandated relocation supports offered to those with no money and nowhere else to go? They were dropped off at the church parking lot a few blocks down the road. One community leader, filled with rage, turned our interview around on me with an impossible question: "Where is our peace!?"

Institutional actions aside, what is interesting about this incident for the purposes of this analysis, are the ways in which the community responded. Recall that this community comprises dense networks of former combatants and victims living together, and the particular segment affected by this state-backed displacement was no exception. As ESMAD backed down for the night after the first day, a group of former FARC members mobilized. They were well known to me from my time living there as "model" former combatants to the organizations and institutions compliant not just in the letter, but also in the spirit of living civilian lives and atoning for the past damages caused by their group (e.g., they helped painting houses in the community and contributed to building a public park). By the following morning when ESMAD arrived again, they had blocked the community entrance with barricades of burning tires and had amassed a generous cache of hand-sized rocks and bottles for throwing at the uniformed presence. The former combatants stood at the ready – "They really seemed to be enjoying themselves," remarked one ex-FARC commander who lived in one of the targeted sections of the community, but who was old enough to stay back a bit from the fray. He laughed softly and smiled, "It gave us a sense of nostalgia, I think."

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As the gas once again began to fill the streets of the neighborhood, the JAC president, Esperanza organized her fellow association members – these were the female victims of the armed conflict who had defected from Yana's group – to prepare cold towels soaked in milk to bring down to the former guerrillas down below, and they spent the day making *arepas* (corn bread) to also shuttle down to them so that they could eat. A neighbor and member of the women's victim association recalled to me,

> *First, we left in groups to get the kids to the portero ["doorman"], then we came back and, from one moment to the next, we made a chain of women for peace [un cordón de mujeres para la paz]. For three days, we women brought them water, milk, and we made a community fund [vaca] (for buying the food and milk that they sent down to those in direct confrontation with ESMAD).*

The "doorman" was an individual who remained at the upper limits of the community to help shuttle groups of children to safety away from the gas. Not a single of the dozen or so people that I interviewed about that day reported any kind of explicit planning to send the ex-combatants down to fight while the victims stayed up top and relayed them food and milk-soaked towels for the tear gas: in a moment of shared crisis, everyone just did what they could to try to protect their neighborhood. It was the spark of perceived state abuses that catalyzed very recognizable ways of collective being in a war-torn society.

This incident reveals frailty of the veneer of peace in contexts of ongoing insecurity, a veneer that spreads sometimes unevenly, unjustly, and episodically over war-affected populations. This veneer can all to easily crack, like the shells of Daniel's eggs as he learned a lesson in dealing with hardship during an ESPERE workshop. The threat of ESMAD to Las Delicias primed ex-combatant imaginaries of themselves and their own pasts in the midst of active projects of reworking these identities. Furthermore, the specific

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ex-combatants involved were many of them six-plus year veterans of their state-sponsored reintegration programs who were often called on by the ARN when they needed to present successful case studies to international donors and other outsiders. While any measure of institutional reporting on the event would produce terms that suggest a failure of reconciliatory endeavors – "recidivism," "illegality," "violence," "*invasores*" (invaders), "riot" – I argue that what unfolded in those few days was the very best of what the promise of reconciliation entails, even if only between the community members themselves. Rather than denying or absconding past associations, each category of conflict-affected actor drew from their repertoires of life experiences organically in ways that served what was understood to be the greater good of the collective. And they convened, not as conflict affected actors, but as neighbors, simply drawing from their capabilities in differential ways that happened to include the part of their lives that had been influenced by their relationship to Colombia's conflict. They collaborated and organized and, in so doing, created new ways of being together that were both productive in their own terms and entirely illegible to any organization or institution as an episode of reconciliation.

It should go without saying (though I shall say it anyway) that "The Purge" is by no means the model for fostering reconciliation between former combatants and the victims their illegal armed groups left in their wake. And I do not advocate the creation of a threat to mobilize the passions of a unified collective. Furthermore, state-society relations are every bit as important to the project of national reconciliation as are those between society actors themselves, and certainly the public forces did not do themselves any favors to that effect. But what this episode demonstrates, is the need to accommodate the nonlegible forms of being together when everyone is learning new ways of doing just that.

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