Grassroots Peace: Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Rural Colombia

By

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Nearly two hundred villages compose three neighboring rural municipalities –
Granada, San Carlos, and San Luis – in Eastern Antioquia, Colombia. Just a decade ago,
these municipalities were on the frontlines of the armed conflict between the
Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ELN),
paramilitary forces, and the Colombian army. The groups battled over political ideology,
control of civilian populations, and the strategic territory housing hydroelectric dams
producing 35% of the country's electricity. By 2006, more than half the population in
these three municipalities had fled to nearby cities or been killed. However, as the
Colombian state regained territorial control in this region and the violence subsided,
displaced persons began returning to their land and rebuilding their villages. In some
villages, residents worked together to demine public spaces, rebuild basic infrastructure,
and exhume the bodies of the disappeared. Meanwhile, other neighboring villages did
not organize their communities to rebuild infrastructure and guarantee common security.
This juxtaposition sparks an important research question that has not been examined by
peacebuilding scholars or social scientists: *What accounts for variation in grassroots
peacebuilding efforts in the post-conflict landscape?*

To explore this question, one must first identify grassroots peacebuilding as a
process that is *separate and distinct from* top-down peacebuilding initiatives. Yet the
majority of peacebuilding research overlooks local dynamics – or situates them in
relation to an existing United Nations peace operation – and there is no existing
scholarship that analytically and empirically decouples grassroots peacebuilding from
external interventions. To address this knowledge gap, the first portion of my

dissertation provides a theoretical foundation for grassroots peacebuilding as a unique phenomenon. Then, the second portion of my dissertation tests a causal theory – specifically, how local conflict dynamics help explain why some areas of a country rebuild after an armed conflict, while others fail to do so. This is an important empirical puzzle, with implications for theoretical debates about the impact of conflict on communities, and for peacebuilding efforts in countries wracked by civil war and violence.[1]

The Existing Literature

Peacebuilding scholars often focus their attention on top-down, UN peace operations. They have primarily debated the sequencing, pace, and nature of the political and economic reforms that form part of the "peace as democratization" paradigm, with an emphasis on national level political reforms and the administration of elections (Autesserre 2010). Most authors who focus on local aspects of the post-conflict landscape still situate local actors as participants in an externally led process. As such, to date there are no comprehensive, empirical studies of grassroots peacebuilding as separate from top-down legislation or programming. The scholars who have come closest – many of whom are historians or anthropologists – have looked at endogenous transitional justice processes, but their insights have not been integrated into the peacebuilding literature.

Further, there is a lack of understanding about how irregular warfare impacts the local post-conflict landscape. Despite a large body of scholarly work on civil war[2] and civilians' social and political behavior *during* the conflict (Wood 2003; Kalyvas 2006;

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[1] I *do not* define Colombia as "post-conflict," but do consider Eastern Antioquia, where violence has subsided, to be post-conflict.

[2] For a comprehensive review of the civil war literature, see Blattman and Miguel 2010.

Weinstein 2007; Arjona 2010; 2014; Steele 2011), little systematic research has offered insight into what shapes these behaviors *after* the violence ends. Among the few *post-conflict* studies that exist, most are the products of governments, international aid organizations, and NGOs (Blattman and Miguel 2010: 44), and have not systematically analyzed how local characteristics shape the conditions under which reconstruction takes root "below and beyond the state" (Jarstad and Sisk 2008: 17). By using country-level analyses and focusing on foreign-led peacebuilding interventions (Paris 2004; Junne and Verkoren 2005), the literature has overlooked the local characteristics facilitating or inhibiting sustainable peace (Autesserre 2010, 2015).

Finally, behavioral economists have claimed that an experience with civil war violence *increases* an individual's propensity to participate in local politics (Whitt et al. 2007; Blattman 2009; Bellows and Miguel 2008; Voors et al. 2012; Bauer et al. 2013; Cassar et al. 2013; Gilligan et al. 2014). Yet the authors do not discuss their findings in relation to research on "wartime institutions" (Arjona 2010, 2014) and "the transformation of social networks" during civil war (Wood 2008: 541), which structure individual behavior in the post-conflict context (Verwimp et al. 2009; Moore 2013). Further, my empirical findings contradict the economists' claim, and show that communities impacted by civil war violence are less likely to organize around community reconstruction and peacebuilding.

<u>The Argument</u>

My dissertation presents two separate – yet connected – arguments. First, I argue that *grassroots* peacebuilding is a distinct phenomenon from *top-down* peacebuilding interventions. By grassroots peacebuilding I mean, *the locally led actions to reconstruct,*

recuperate, or rebuild collective goods destroyed during a civil war.[3] This is not the

same as a process in which local residents "participate in" (Moore 2013: 65, 231), "take

ownership over" (Sending 2010: 19; Campbell 2012: 36; Paris and Sisk 2008),

"meaningfully engage in" (Moore 2013: 117), or "provide input for" (Autesserre 2015:

262) an *external*[4] peacebuilding intervention. Moreover, by "locally led," I do not mean

domestic or national decision-making elites (Kurcher 2013: 145, 150; Moore 2013: 5,

Roeder and Rothchild 2005). Instead, I am referring to activities designed and

implemented by the ordinary people and community actors[5] who were impacted by the

conflict in rural areas or impoverished zones of cities (Pouligny 2006: 67, 75). Their

work can precede or begin independently of national- or international-led programming

or legislation. These two distinctions are key, as they yield a new theoretical framework

that can help us identify truly *endogenous* peacebuilding initiatives – a topic that has been

largely overlooked in the political science and peacebuilding literature.[6]

It is not surprising that political scientists and peace practitioners have not focused

on the topic of *grassroots* peacebuilding. Indeed, in academia and in the field,

individuals are expected to verify and quantify, formalize and generalize, their results.[7]

Yet, many of the activities that communities engage in as part of local reconstruction

processes are informal, culturally specific, and carried out on a small-scale (Mac Ginty

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[3] I use Stathis Kalyvas' definition of civil war in the *Logic of Violence in Civil War:* "Armed combat within the boundaries of a recognized sovereign entity between parties subject to a common authority at the outset of the hostilities" (2006, p. 5). This "simplified and abstract characterization" (p. 6) allows my theory and causal analysis a degree of external validity that it would not otherwise have if we limited the meaning of civil war to refer only to political violence. I argue that the patterns of territorial control among non-state armed groups are more important than the ideologies that motivate their actions.
[4] By external I mean, national or international. Although some would argue that "nationally-led" or "elite-led" should be considered "local," I disagree. In the context of a developing country, discourse, power, resources, and decision-making concentrate in a country's "center" (urban) and are disseminated to the "periphery" (rural). This parallels the center-periphery dynamic that exists on a global scale.
[5] Beatrice Pouligny describes "community actors" as people who live in the rural zones and poorer districts of cities where individuals are "mainly organized on a community basis" (2006: 75).
[6] For notable exceptions, see Donais 2009 and Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013.
[7] See Autesserre 2015, pp. 76 -77.

and Richmond 2013: 770) and thus are not always immediately legible to an outsider (Pouligny 2006: 267). Often, the very "people concerned are themselves not always fully aware" of the larger implications of their actions (Pouligny 2006: 189). Most ordinary people in a post-conflict landscape are not "technical experts" (Autesserre 2006: 76) of peacebuilding who can easily engage with the academic discourse, employ the correct jargon, or use international best practices to frame their initiatives.

Moreover, external interveners face obstacles that prevent them from linking their top-down efforts to grassroots peacebuilding initiatives. Although international peace workers have thematic and technical expertise, they lack the incentives or time horizons to acquire the in-depth local knowledge needed to identify – and properly support – grassroots peacebuilding practices (Pouligny 2006; Campbell 2012; Autesserre 2015). This is not just an empirical failure, but an ethical one as well. Scholars of peacebuilding have shown that the inability for international peace workers to embed in – and truly understand – local contexts has been part and parcel to numerous failures[8] to establish sustainable peace (Cousens and Call 2008; Autesserre 2010, 2015; Moore 2013).

The second argument my dissertation puts forth is causal. I contend that armed groups' *subnational* patterns of territorial control during an irregular civil war impact grassroots peacebuilding outcomes after the violence subsides. Specifically, in highly contested territories – where violence is frequently and indiscriminately used against civilians – a community's social fabric is severely degraded, making it harder to rebuild after war. However, in areas where an armed group holds consolidated control for an extended period of time, social fabric among the community is retained, enabling

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[8] For example, Congo, Angola, and Rwanda.

residents to overcome their collective action problem and organize around grassroots peacebuilding.

The logic is as follows: in a contested territory, an acute identification problem – the inability to tell friend from foe[9] – depletes trust between residents. The continual violent armed clashes between groups in contested spaces place residents in the crossfire, encouraging them to displace, scatter, and settle in different receptor sites, which dissolves social networks. Finally, the strategic concerns of armed groups in areas where they must battle for control are limited to defensive or offensive combat tactics. They do not have the time or incentives to establish and enforce a social contract with the community (Arjona 2010, 2014). This creates a situation of disorder[10] where ordinary people cannot form expectations about the behavior of neighbors or combatants, and don't have "rules of the game" to guide appropriate social interactions, define curfews, or identify safe local transit routes or specific locales[11] within their community. These features of a contested space persist in the post conflict landscape. A lack of trust, depleted social networks, and no informal institutional legacy make it very difficult for the community to organize around grassroots peacebuilding. Furthermore, I argue that this dynamic discourages residents from seeking – or being receptive to – external sources of support.

Conversely, in areas where a single group holds consolidated control, violence is targeted and used less frequently against civilians in the territory.[12] The community is able to distinguish who is aligned with which armed group, permitting residents to

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[9] See Kalyvas 2006, p. 89.
[10] See Arjona 2010, chapters 2 and 3.
[11] For example, a particular town square, village or soccer field might be designated as safe for residents in controlled territory, however, this is not the case in a contested zone.
[12] See Kalyvas 2006, pp. 217-219.

develop or retain trusting relationships among each other. Additionally, the existence of a stable social order[13] – informal institutions that are consistently and publicly enforced by members of the armed group, as well as stable norms of behavior between civilians and combatants – allows all residents to form expectations about one another's behavior. The relative predictability of violence against civilians lowers the risk of remaining on the land and residents do not displace on a massive scale. Furthermore, armed groups are able to control entry and exit into the territory, allowing residents to maintain vetted extra-community contacts. This dynamic upholds local social networks.

In the aftermath of an irregular civil war in such a controlled area, a retained social fabric facilitates collective action around grassroots peacebuilding. Trust persists in the post-conflict landscape, and an institutional legacy facilitates the actions required for collective action, as there are pre-existing norms for interacting with other residents, engaging in associative activities, and meeting in public spaces. Finally, the ability to maintain extra-community contacts – albeit vetted and determined by the ruling group in power – makes it more likely that local residents will be willing and able to coordinate with interveners who arrive from outside their immediate community. The features of a previously controlled territory make it more likely that a community will engage in spontaneous grassroots reconstruction initiatives and will be receptive to the presence of external interveners as part of their post-conflict landscape.

In summary, this dissertation project analytically decouples grassroots peacebuilding from top-down peacebuilding interventions. Instead of focusing on the nation-state and decision-making elites in urban centers, it enters the space where the civilian and the combatant share the same neighborhood, the same market, and

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[13] See Arjona 2010, chapter 3.

sometimes the same roof. It is here in this conceptual space that I develop a definition

for, a means to identify, and a causal theory about, local efforts to reconstruct and rebuild

after an irregular civil war.

Why Colombia?

Colombia is the ideal context for examining grassroots peacebuilding as a

phenomenon distinct from top-down peacebuilding, and for testing its observable

implications on a small geographic scale. Until recently, no UN peace mission

intervened in Colombia as a "post-conflict" country. Yet, despite the historic absence of

international peace operations, Colombia's current presidential administration passed –

and in 2012 began implementation of – comprehensive post-conflict legislation. Finally,

Colombia's unique terrain shaped exogenous variation in patterns of territorial control

and contestation on a small geographic scale: the village.

No International Peace Operation

The absence of a comprehensive international peacebuilding or peacekeeping

mission to Colombia makes it an ideal location to study grassroots peacebuilding, as the

phenomenon is separate from the new political reforms, economic incentive structures,

and social relations that are introduced when UN peace workers arrive in a foreign

country.[14]

Although Colombia has been ravaged by an ongoing civil conflict for over fifty

years, between 2002 and 2010, insurgencies were labeled "criminal" or "terrorist," rather

than as armed actors in a politically motivated conflict. This framing made it impossible

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[14] The behavior and perspectives of community actors in response to the presence of a UN peace operation are the topic of Pouligny's 2006 book, *Peace Operations Seen from Below: UN Missions and Local People*.

for the United Nations, international NGOs, and even some departments[15] of Colombia's

national government to implement *explicit or comprehensive* peacekeeping or

peacebuilding projects.[16] Rather, international and national efforts to address the

consequences of conflict have used alternative frameworks, such as economic

development, human rights, forced migration, and democracy promotion.[17] And while

there have been many international agencies and NGOs that have worked in Colombia –

for example, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), International Red Cross,

Organization of International Migration (OIM), and USAID, among others – their

projects have been thematically and geographically bound. This dynamic has created

subnational areas of Colombia where it is possible to examine the bottom-up, locally

driven process of grassroots reconstruction in the absence of outside influences.

In particular, external peacebuilding organizations did not arrive where I test my

causal theory in the three neighboring case municipalities in Eastern Antioquia –

Granada, San Carlos, and San Luis – until years *after* local residents had already initiated

local peacebuilding activities. These activities include, but are not limited to, internally

displaced persons (IDPs) returning en masse to the land they abandoned without state

assistance, residents removing landmines without trained personnel to assist them, local

community action committees rebuilding public schools and repairing unpaved roads,

mothers searching together to unearth the remains of their disappeared children, and

community leaders organizing reconciliation activities between victims and perpetrators

of violence.

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[15] For example, Acción Social (now, the el Departamento de Prosperidad Social - DPS) housed programs to assist Colombia's huge IDP population as part of a broader mission of addressing poverty and providing social services to Colombia's poorest residents.

[16] Personal interview with consultant at UNDP in Bogotá. 1 October 2013.

[17] Personal interview with person in charge of the national "Land Restitution" program at the mayor's office in Bogotá. 17 September 2013. Personal interview with consultant at USAID in Bogotá. 15 October 2013.

Post-Conflict Legislation During Civil War

  The second unique feature of the Colombian landscape is that comprehensive post-conflict legislation was drafted, passed, and began implementation *after* communities initiated their own post-conflict processes. This helps me to develop my theory of grassroots peacebuilding and examine the points of intersection and/or contradiction with top-down peacebuilding.

  Although he had served as defense minister for President Alvaro Uribe, – who labeled insurgent groups terrorists – Manuel Santos changed course as president to promote human rights, reconciliation, and peace. Under his leadership, congress passed the historic "Victims and Land Restitution Law" (1448/2011), which officially recognized that the violence in Colombia was part of an internal armed conflict.[18] The law was meant to "promote and consolidate national peace and reconciliation"[19] by offering monetary, symbolic, and land-based reparations to victims of the conflict. Uniquely, it represents post-conflict legislation passed even while in many parts of the country the armed conflict continued.[20]

  Because the Victims Law was passed in July of 2011 and implementation did not begin until 2012, it was possible to observe its evolution and the first points of intersection with grassroots initiatives in my case areas. I began fieldwork in Colombia one month after the law was passed and followed its evolution closely over the next five years. Therefore, I had a privileged viewpoint to identify grassroots initiatives and understand how endogenous processes inform, intersect with, or go unnoticed by external

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[18] Ibid., 17.

[19] República de Colombia. Ministerio del Interior. Law 1148, Article 8, 10 June 2011.

[20] Interview with Juan Mauricio Torres Jaramillo in Bogotá. 1 July 2011. Interview with Ana Maria Ibañez in Bogotá. 22 June 2011.

interventions. Furthermore, because post-conflict programming in Colombia has been rolled out unevenly across geographic space – with pilot phases that began in San Carlos and expanded to its neighbors – it was possible to interrogate *why* the pilots appeared first in this particular municipality. In Chapter 3, I argue that not only did San Carlos represent "low hanging fruit" or a "quick win" for the national government's implementation of the Victims Law, but that legislation and the Department of Social Prosperity's programmatic support have been informed by and in some instances *modeled after* community peacebuilding practices that emerged first in San Carlos.

Unique Geographic Terrain

Finally, Colombia's civil conflict has been marked by many of the same features as other intra-state conflicts, including enduring high levels of violence against civilians, forced displacement, and geographic pockets of conflict that have existed side-by-side with neighboring "post-conflict" areas.[21] However, Colombia's unique geography makes it possible to examine distinct patterns in armed groups' levels of territorial control and contestation as *exogenously* determined variation. My empirical evidence corroborates Kalyvas' argument that – more than political preferences – geography and physical terrain shape patterns of contestation and control in a context of irregular warfare (2006: 132, 133).

The features of Colombia's geography determined the arrival of armed groups in the case region of Eastern Antioquia. By the end of the 1990s, the FARC had expanded its geographic reach to the point where it maintained an armed presence in 90% of Colombia's municipalities and was beginning to threaten Colombian state sovereignty (Brittain 2010: 16). It was in this context that president Alvaro Uribe launched a

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[21] I define "post-conflict" as an area where no armed clashes have occurred in the last six years

counterinsurgency to stop the expansion of the FARC. This included specific offensive

campaigns[22] designed to recover strategic territory located in six neighboring

municipalities in Eastern Antioquia – Cocorná, Granada, San Carlos, San Francisco, San

Luis, and San Rafael. Decades earlier, and because of their geographic characteristics,

the Colombian government had developed infrastructure in this rural area of Eastern

Antioquia. The narrow valley path that cut through the steep mountains in Cocorná and

San Luis permitted the construction of the only two-lane paved highway from Medellín

to Bogotá, while the extensive network of rivers and waterfalls in Granada, San Carlos,

and San Rafael allowed for the construction of a hydroelectric complex that provided

35% of the nation's electricity. Meanwhile, San Francisco – an isolated municipality

with extremely rough terrain and little accessibility by vehicle – provided a neighboring

haven for insurgent groups to hide in the lush forest covers of *el Monte*[23].

Between 1998 and 2006, the 9th, 36th and 47th fronts of the FARC, the *Carlos*

Alirio Buitago front of the ELN, and various paramilitary blocks battled for control over

this area of Eastern Antioquia.[24] Furthermore, *within* these six municipalities, variation

in patterns of territorial control among armed groups – and their concomitant strategies

used against civilians – were largely determined by geography. During the conflict

armed groups' movement and patterns of territorial control reflected the location of

hydroelectric dams, the paved highway, electrical towers, communication lines, and the

location of population centers. And the rugged, mountainous land and the unpaved roads

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[22] For example, *Operación Meteoro* (2002) and *Operación Marcial* (2003-2004) were intended to reclaim infrastructure in Eastern Antioquia and areas near the Medellín-Bogotá Highway.

[23] "The bush" or "the mountain." This was how ex-combatants and civilians referred to the remote, mountainous and forested areas where insurgent forces lived in encampments or patrolled for enemy forces. It literally means "The Mountain". Interviews with two ex-ELN combatants and three ex-FARC combatants in Medellín between 6 April 2014 and 27 April 2014. Interview with resident in El Prodigio. 6 February 2014.

[24] See Garcia de la Torre et al. 2011, chapter 2.

helped to determine the villages where the armed groups set up camps and bases.

Specifically, insurgent camps were located in remote, lush forested mountains that could

provide visual cover from aerial view. Paramilitaries favored areas that were accessible

by vehicle and in some cases, settled into humid tropical areas apt for growing coca. In

contrast, in open valleys where cattle grazed or where sugar cane grew, no armed group

could sustain a consistent presence because of the lack of shelter and camouflage.[25]

The municipality of Granada helps to illustrate the extent to which the terrain and

geography in this mountainous sub-region varies on a small scale. The village of *El*

Concilio is located in *tierra fría* ("cold earth") and *campesinos* grow beans and

raspberries. Meanwhile, two villages away, the village of *El Tablazo* is in *tierra caliente*

where residents grow sugar cane and tropical fruits. Another nearby village, aptly

named, *La Selva* ("the jungle"), is mountainous with nearly impenetrable forest cover,

and the "rugged terrain" favored by insurgents (Kalyvas 2006:132). Conversely, down

an unpaved road, *La Cascada* is located in a flat valley, carved out by a river and

surrounded by sugar cane stalks, with open, exposed, and accessible terrain that made it

less desirable for any armed group.

The Research Design

Case Selection

Before beginning field research in September 2013, I identified a universe of

cases within Eastern Antioquia where armed groups' patterns of territorial control were

exogenous to communities' pre-conflict characteristics.[26] I chose three neighboring

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[25] Interview with resident in San Luis. 6 February 2014.
[26] Interview with community member in town center of San Luis. 7 February 2014. Interview with resident in San Luis. 21 February 2014. Multiple interviews with Colombian journalist between November 2013 and April 2014 in Medellín and rural areas of Antioquia.

municipalities – San Carlos, Granada, and San Luis – that were nearly identical in terms of economy, culture, poverty, social fabric, and resource endowment before the conflict began. Despite the similarities between the three municipalities, the 182 villages within them suffered different patterns of armed control due to their location and proximity to particular geographic features. These villages represent the large-N universe of cases with which I test the relationship between my hypothesized independent variable – territorial control wielded by armed groups during the conflict – and dependent outcomes – post-conflict recovery and reconstruction through local peacebuilding. Wide variation on both the independent and dependent variables – paired with the ability to hold pre-conflict characteristics and other unobservables[27] constant – offers an opportunity to study the causal processes underlying local post-conflict peacebuilding.

In addition to the large-N sample, which permits me to use quantitative methods for analysis, I purposefully selected three case areas for intensive, qualitative and comparative study. Within each municipality, I chose a *corregimiento* – or "group of villages" – to study violence, displacement, and wartime social order and their relationship to grassroots peacebuilding efforts in the post-conflict landscape. The three corregimientos – *El Jordan* in San Carlos, *Santa Ana* in Granada, and *Buenos Aires* in San Luis – are "diverse cases," as they represent the full range of variation on the independent variable (Gerring 2007: 20, 89). El Jordan houses 17 villages and can be considered "consolidated control," while Santa Ana houses 12 villages and represents "medium-high contestation." Finally, Buenos Aires houses 16 villages and is a case of "high contestation." Below, I discuss how I measured the levels of contestation across

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[27] For example, the municipalities' culture, propensity for social and political organization, regional history, and local political economy.

time and space through the aggregation of village-level occupation patterns between 1998 and 2006.

Data Collection

My research design integrates both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Data collection and fieldwork in Colombia began in the summer of 2011, continued in the summer of 2012, and then unfolded over a nine-month period between September 2013 and May 2014. Although it was in an informal capacity, I maintained my relationships with local peacebuilders from Eastern Antioquia through frequent conversations via Skype and email while I was outside Colombia. Additionally, a group of four women peacebuilders from San Carlos and Granada visited me in Washington D.C. in September 2015. Over the course of the week they stayed with my family, we work-shopped the theory, substantive content, and causal arguments put forth in this dissertation. This visit was especially important for the theory-building portion of the dissertation, as it felt somewhat speculative until I received feedback from those directly involved in the activities that I, as a scholar, have defined as "grassroots peacebuilding."

The data collection process featured five components: a) collection of historical data through a national press archive and a Colombian human rights database, b) an original survey of all democratically elected village leaders in the three case municipalities, c) historical research on the pre-conflict social and political characteristics of the three corregimientos through the collection of primary documents housed at the municipal level, d) participant observation in local peacebuilding activities, and e) 248 semi-structured interviews. Over a cumulative total of 13 months of field research, I conducted interviews with internally displaced persons (IDPs) and conflict victims

throughout Colombia[28]; local peace and human rights activists; community leaders; demobilized combatants from insurgencies and paramilitary groups; local, regional, and national government representatives; businesspeople; Colombian and US journalists; human rights organizations; Colombian and international NGOs; UN agencies (UNDP and UNHCR); and ordinary people living in conflict and post-conflict zones of Colombia. (For a full, chronological list of interviews, please see the Appendix).

Village level information on patterns of territorial control and peacebuilding activities did not exist prior to my field research. A combination of multiple sources of qualitative and quantitative data was necessary to map and corroborate patterns of territorial control, violence, and displacement in the 182 villages between 1998 and 2006. As other scholars have noted, the reliability of information collected during or immediately after war is questionable and there are strong sources of bias in both qualitative (Fujii 2010; Cohen and Arieli 2011) and quantitative data (Raleigh et al. 2010; Gohdes and Price 2012; Salehyn 2015). This was especially true with respect to the national press archive, as published articles were systematically biased toward providing information about less contested villages, as journalists could enter into the territory only in those areas.

Keeping in mind the limitations of data collection, I used a creative coding method and corroborated information from various different sources before I began my regression analysis. This involved assigning each village to one of five zones of control *for each of four phases of the conflict,* which I outline in Chapter 5. I individually coded patterns of territorial control in the182 villages using national press archives, semi-

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[28] Bogotá, Medellín, Marmato (Caldas), and Caldas (Caldas), as well as rural and urban locales in municipalities throughout Antioquia: Apartadó, Cocorná, El Peñol, Granada, Rionegro, San Carlos, San Francisco, San Rafael, San Luis, and Turbo.

structured interviews with community leaders, mapping activities with residents and demobilized combatants, and information from a Colombian human rights database. In the villages where I did not have any source of village-specific data, I used information about neighboring villages. I then noted the villages I was uncertain about for a robustness check in my statistical analysis. I then estimated the regression models using both the entire universe of cases (N=182) and a reduced sample of only those villages that I was certain about (N=133).

Second, in order to measure community-led grassroots peacebuilding outcomes, I implemented an original survey with the president of each village's *junta de acción comunal*[29] (henceforth, "community action committee" or "junta"). Before implementing the survey, however, I designed and tested a pilot survey in San Rafael, a neighboring municipality to the north of San Carlos in Eastern Antioquia. I then spent the final six months of fieldwork implementing an original survey with the 182 village leaders in the three selected case municipalities, which represented the entire universe of cases.[30]

Methodology

In the first portion of my dissertation I use *process-tracing* to help me identify in San Carlos and its neighboring municipalities the existence of grassroots peacebuilding – a process that had previously remained "unobserved" (Mahoney 2012: 586). Process-tracing helped me identify grassroots activities that *preceded* both regional and national efforts to help San Carlos build peace, as well as to determine their moments of intersection and overlap. As a result, I am able to show that the San Carlos success case

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[29] A *junta de acción comunal* is the smallest unit of democratic participation in Colombia. Each village or neighborhood with 20 or more residents can elect a junta president who represents them in city or municipal level meetings. It is a community-based, non-partisan organizational structure for civic engagement and democratic participation.
[30] For a discussion of missing data, please reference Chapter 5, p. 28.

is not the outcome of a top-down intervention, but rather the result of its own endogenous process. Furthermore, I show that San Carlos' local experience has been the *origin* and *impetus* for some of the outcomes that have been associated with Colombia's post-conflict programming in the region, for example, collective return and landmine removal.

In the second portion of the dissertation, I use *regression analysis* to determine whether there is a correlation between patterns of territorial control among armed groups and levels of grassroots peacebuilding after the conflict ends. Then, I identify the causal mechanisms underlying this link, which helps me understand *how* the specific characteristics of the conflict period have shaped grassroots peacebuilding outcomes in the aftermath of war (Mahoney 2003). Specifically, I argue that the more a community retains its social fabric during conflict, the more capacity it will have to organize around peacebuilding activities. Understanding such causal connection as a process is imperative. According to scholars, the way that "wartime social processes shape postwar peace outcomes" (Moore 2013: 23) is one of the least understood, but most important topics of research in the civil war literature. Indeed, "the unpacking of these complex relationships is perhaps the most pressing area for future empirical research" (Blattman and Miguel 2010: 43).

Looking Ahead – The Plan of the Dissertation

Theory Building

In the first portion of the dissertation, I address a seemingly simple question: *What is grassroots peacebuilding?* Chapter 2 provides the reader with an introduction to the conventional wisdom about peacebuilding and makes a case for studying *grassroots* peacebuilding as its own phenomenon and topic of research. In this chapter I delineate

the contours – and gaps – of the peacebuilding literature and draw on multi-disciplinary scholarship on local post-conflict dynamics and transitional justice mechanisms. By drawing on these previously disconnected bodies of literature, I develop a theoretical framework to help scholars and practitioners identify grassroots peacebuilding empirically.

In Chapter 3, I use inductive, qualitative research in one purposefully selected municipality – San Carlos – to illustrate how endogenous post-conflict reconstruction processes emerge and unfold. If the goal here were theory testing, then it would be problematic to select a single, positive case. However, given that I use process-tracing to understand grassroots peacebuilding as its own unique phenomenon, it was necessary to choose a municipality where I could parse locally driven initiatives from the implementation of Colombia's national-level post-conflict programming. Using multiple sources of empirical evidence, I demonstrate that community led peacebuilding initiatives in San Carlos began years before national level post-conflict programming and independent of national or internationally led external interventions. Indeed, San Carlos is the site of a massive voluntary return process, artisanal demining efforts, local exhumation processes, community efforts to rebuild infrastructure, and locally led memory and reconciliation efforts. Using the case of San Carlos, I show how local processes are easily obscured by – *or confused as an outcome of* – top-down interventions. Indeed, because San Carlos has garnered attention as the first Colombian municipality declared free of landmines and as a "pilot" for the 2011 Victim's Law, it is easy to mistake its municipal-level peacebuilding outcomes as the end product of a nationally led process.

Theory Testing

The second portion of my dissertation offers and then tests a causal theory about grassroots peacebuilding, and addresses the following question: *What accounts for variation in grassroots peacebuilding outcomes?* Chapter 4 provides a theory about the relationship between local conflict dynamics and grassroots peacebuilding outcomes in the post-conflict landscape. Specifically, I draw on the civil war literature in political science to posit a causal relationship between patterns of territorial control among armed groups during an irregular civil war and the subsequent likelihood that local communities will organize around grassroots peacebuilding after the violence subsides.

Simply put, I argue that areas that are more heavily contested during a civil war, and whose civilians were caught on the frontlines among multiple armed groups, suffer more violence and displacement. This experience diminishes trust among residents and decreased the likelihood that they engage in grassroots peacebuilding activities after the violence subsides. Conversely, in areas that are under consolidated control of an armed group, violence is less frequent and more predictable, and thus some social fabric is maintained. After the conflict subsides, this community is more likely to organize around rebuilding in the post-conflict landscape.

In Chapter 5, I scale down my analysis from the municipality to the *vereda* or "rural hamlet" (henceforth, "village"). I use quantitative data to understand the link between village-level conflict dynamics and grassroots peacebuilding outcomes. Here I use an original, village-level dataset and regression analysis to test the causal theory outlined in Chapter 4. The results of my regression analysis provide support for my theory and show that villages that suffered high levels of contestation are less likely to

engage in peacebuilding than villages that were under the consolidated control of a single group during the conflict.

Chapter 6 is a comparative study of three purposefully selected "groups of villages" in which I use qualitative methods to more closely examine the causal mechanisms posited in Chapter 4. The corregimientos are: El Jordan (consolidated control), Santa Ana (medium-high contestation), and Buenos Aires (high contestation). Using culturally-specific indicators– such as *convites*[31] and *juntas de acción comunal*, among others – I examine the process by which a community's social fabric was retained under consolidated control or diminished as a result of contestation. Using empirical evidence, I show that El Jordan has carried out more extensive and transformative grassroots peacebuilding activities, while contested areas – Santa Ana and Buenos Aires – have had more difficulty in recovering in the post-conflict landscape. It is important to note that Santa Ana has fared better than Buenos Aires, which I argue is a result of a specific conflict dynamic. In Santa Ana, massive displacement from the area resulted in collective settlement patterns in the sites of reception (Medellín and Cali) and consequently the diaspora community has led the bulk of the corregimiento's grassroots peacebuilding activities.

Finally, Chapter 7 concludes by summarizing the dissertation's theoretical and empirical contributions, as well as offering some avenues for future research.

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[31] Convites are voluntary community work days commonly used in rural areas of Colombia to maintain or repair basic infrastructure, such as unpaved roads or primary schools. Convites are normally organized on a monthly basis through the structure of the junta de acción comunal.

Chapter 2: What is Grassroots Peacebuilding?

The United Nations coined the term "peacebuilding" and conventional wisdom now generally considers the practice a top-down intervention after civil war, usually carried out under the auspices of the United Nations – or its partners and contractors – after a military victory or successful peace negotiation. Often peace operations are implemented in coordination with domestic "local" elites. However, these types of projects are not the subject of this dissertation. Instead, I focus on small-scale peacebuilding initiatives led, designed, and implemented by ordinary people in the aftermath of an irregular civil war.

Top-down peacebuilders often misunderstand or ignore the role of ordinary people in the post-conflict rebuilding process, as well as the *local* dynamics of both conflict and post-conflict landscapes, and scholars have found this lack of understanding to be at the root of peacebuilding failures on the ground (Chandler 2006; Suhrke 2007; Pouligny 2006; Richmond 2011; Paris and Sisk 2008; Sending 2009, 2010; Campbell 2012; Moore 2013; Autesserre 2010, 2015). Because of this, in the final chapter of her recent book, Séverine Autesserre advocates for a change in the practice and culture of international peace operations. She emphasizes the need for "in-depth analyses of local contexts" (2015: 12) and greater "inclusion of local people in the design of international programs" (2015: 252). However, there are currently no templates to guide such a change (2015: 255) or any comprehensive, empirical studies of truly bottom-up peacebuilding.

This is not surprising, as the processes, activities, initiatives, and everyday behaviors that can comprise grassroots peacebuilding are easy for outsiders to overlook.

Scholars have noted that "local resources for peace are not necessarily found where they are looked for and may be hidden and belong to networks of 'the invisible[32]'" (Pouligny 2006: 267). They may be small-scale and informal (Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013: 770) or diverge from the "peace as liberalization"[33] framework that guides most peacebuilding operations and the types of activities that are implemented on the ground (Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013).

Another reason that grassroots peacebuilding initiatives are easy to miss is the fact that they may not be labeled as such by community actors. Indeed, the "formal democratic grammar" (Pouligny 2006: 238) or technical training and professionalization (Autesserre 2015) necessary to frame activities as "peacebuilding" is often out of reach for ordinary people in a post-conflict zone. Thus their efforts may not be recognized by outsiders at all.

The disconnect between outside and local actors so often lamented by scholars of peacebuilding is not simply a matter of increasing participation (Moore 2013: 65, 231), ownership (Sending 2010: 19; Campbell 2012: 36; Paris and Sisk 2008), input (Autesserre 2015: 262), or inclusion (Moore 2013: 117), of the "host population" in external[34] interventions. It is also a matter of rendering the local dynamics of a post-conflict landscape legible and recognizable to outsiders. Yet to date there has been no framework to help peacebuilders achieve this goal (Benner and Rotman 2008; Autesserre 2010; Autesserre 2015: 92, 247-274). This chapter aims to remedy that, by providing

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[32] See also Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013, p. 776.
[33] "Peace as liberalization" means a peacebuilding intervention emphasizes democratization measures – especially, elections – and free market reforms.
[34] By "external" I mean, national or international. Although some would argue that "nationally-led" or "elite-led" should be considered "local," I disagree. In the context of a developing country, discourse, power, resources, and decision-making concentrate in a country's "center" (urban) and are disseminated to the "periphery" (rural). This parallels the center-periphery dynamic that exists on a global scale.

such a framework, after first offering a theoretical foundation for understanding and identifying grassroots peacebuilding as distinct from top-down peacebuilding.

I define grassroots peacebuilding as: *the locally led actions to reconstruct, recuperate, or rebuild collective goods destroyed during a civil war.*[35] It is only by analytically decoupling grassroots peacebuilding from top-down interventions that it is possible to identify their points of overlap or contradiction, linkage or disconnect.

I follow Marek Kaminski, who divides transitional justice into endogenous and exogenous types, and divide peacebuilding processes similarly:

> In the endogenous case, the procedures are administered by the society itself, without external intervention. Exogenous transitional justice is administered from the outside, typically by agents who were not engaged in the conflict, and often under the auspices of an ongoing institution (Kaminski et al. 2006: 295).

Within the context of grassroots peacebuilding, local actions are conceptualized, organized, resourced and carried out by the ordinary people who were impacted by local dynamics of irregular warfare in a civil war. These actions can be informal, small-scale, and thus may not be easily legible to outsiders.

Importantly, grassroots peacebuilding is also a process that occurs when ordinary people or community actors organize around the recuperation or establishment of *collective goods* that were destroyed or harmed during the conflict. Collective goods are similar to "public goods" in that they "can be consumed by everyone without one's use detracting from the consumption or use by another" (Hirschman 1970: 101; Olson 1965).

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[35] I use Stathis Kalyvas' definition of civil war in the *Logic of Violence in Civil War:* "Armed combat within the boundaries of a recognized sovereign entity between parties subject to a common authority at the outset of the hostilities" (2006, p. 5). This "simplified and abstract characterization" (p. 6) allows my theory and causal analysis a degree of external validity that it would not otherwise have if we limited the meaning of civil war to refer only to political violence. For the purpose of this dissertation, the patterns of territorial control among non-state armed groups are more important than the ideologies that motivate their actions.

However, collective goods also refers to non-material goods such as justice, security, reconciliation, social cohesion, leadership capacity and collective memory. While these non-material goods are difficult to measure quantitatively, they are important to include in this analysis and are a key aspect of the local post-conflict landscape. I add *collective* goods to the definition of grassroots peacebuilding because it is important to distinguish between goods that benefit an individual or a specific group of people versus goods that have a collective benefit to the community and are non-excludable.[36]

This chapter addresses an existing gap in the peacebuilding literature and provides a foundation on which practitioners can build a new understanding of endogenous processes of post-conflict reconstruction. I draw on three disconnected bodies of post-conflict literature in order to provide a conceptual foundation and situate grassroots peacebuilding within the frames and assumptions we take for granted about peacebuilding. Additionally, I offer a theoretical framework to help scholars and peace practitioners identify the phenomenon empirically. I explain the framework's importance for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners in the field, and how it can be used across geographies, citing examples from fieldwork in Colombia.

What We Know about Peacebuilding

There is no single, integrated strand of literature that addresses *grassroots* peacebuilding as its own subject of study. This has left a major gap in our theoretical and practical understanding of the local dimensions of reconstruction after civil war violence.

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[36] For example, public roads in a given locale can be used by anyone and their use does not prevent or detract from others transiting the area. A community organizing to repair or repave a public road that was destroyed or fell into disrepair during the conflict would thus be part of grassroots peacebuilding. However, a private drive that was repaired on an individual's property would not be considered a public good and therefore not part of grassroots peacebuilding. In a similar vein, individual cases in which victims receive compensation for their loss, even if from a local entity, is not considered grassroots peacebuilding. Yet, if a group of victims impacted by the conflict lobbied the state for reparations for *all* victims in their town or community, then the act of lobbying would be considered part of grassroots peacebuilding.

However, there are three bodies of literature upon which we can build. First, UN policy documents provide a lens through which we see the historical evolution of international peacebuilding operations and address how this has informed what we take for granted about peacebuilding as a practice. Second, there is a healthy body of academic literature on peacebuilding, albeit focused on top-down interventions and without consideration of community-led peacebuilding as a separate, non-elite led phenomenon. Finally, numerous transitional justice studies examine the post-conflict landscape on the local level, although without directly engaging the peacebuilding literature. I draw on – and connect – theoretical and empirical insights from all three strands of literature.

The Evolution of UN Peace Operations: 1945-present

The United Nations has served as the international community's primary arbiter of peace for 70 years, and therefore its definition of peace operations is the dominant context in which my conceptualization of grassroots peacebuilding must be situated. A review of UN policy documents shows that, in fact, the institution's understanding of peace operations has evolved over time. This evolution has been in congruence with the changing nature of the world's prominent conflicts and has reflected the normative framework of the "peace as liberalization" paradigm favored by Western countries (Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013).

Pausing to understand the historical evolution of the meaning of peacebuilding helps render explicit some of the assumptions that scholars and practitioners take for granted. This is an important step, as adhering to a single normative framework about what constitutes actions to build peace makes it easy to miss the local, small-scale and often informal efforts of ordinary people to rebuild in the wake of violence.

Peace Operations after Inter-state War and the Rule of Law: 1945 – 1989

Before the end of World War II, international peace operations did not exist in theory or in practice. However, the aftermath of the large-scale war, fought between numerous nation-states around the world, created a context of perceived anarchy on a global level. Realists considered wars between countries the result of a security dilemma that emerged from an imbalance of power. This necessitated a "substitute Leviathan" to govern the international sphere (Dayal and Howard 2015: 1). Out of this context, the United Nations was created in 1945 and, although the UN's Charter did not explicitly include the term peacekeeping, its primary purpose was to oversee the successful implementation of peace accords (Fortna and Howard 2008: 285).

The practice of peacekeeping logically "flowed from political and military premises" (United Nations 1995, para. 35) and the UN used military force to oversee ceasefires, and to respond to threats of aggression or breaches of peace, as a way of establishing security and rule of law in the international sphere. In this context, peace was defined in negative terms – the absence of war between two nation states (Galtung 1969).

Given this understanding of peacekeeping – as a tool to establish international rule of law after an inter-state conflict – UN intervention was largely sidelined during the Cold War. At least rhetorically, the United States and Soviet Union referred to the often violent unrest within other countries as the responsibility of those countries' own governments. The type and effectiveness of governance, constitutional content, administrative boundaries, the shape (or absence) of political parties, were all considered internal issues of sovereign nations and not a part of internationally led peace operations.

Peace Operations after Intra-State War and State Building: 1989 – present

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, this idea changed. In 1989, the UN launched its

first *intra*-state peace initiative in Namibia. This action contradicted the original UN

Charter, which stated that the organization would not "intervene in matters which are

essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state" (United Nations 1945: article 2,

para. 7). However, the UN recognized that a "new breed" of conflicts had emerged

(United Nations 1995: para. 12) and most were being fought within the boundaries of

nation-states, rather than across them (Paris 2004: 1).

A few years after the intervention in Namibia, then-UN secretary Boutros

Boutros-Ghali authored *An Agenda for Peace,* which introduced the term

"peacebuilding" for the fist time (United Nations 1992). Peacebuilding was defined as

simply, "an action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and

solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict" (United Nations 1992, para. 21),

and included initiatives as diverse as:

> Disarming the previously warring parties and the restoration of order, the custody
>
> and possible destruction of weapons, repatriating refugees, advisory and training
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> support for security personnel, monitoring elections, advancing efforts to protect
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> human rights, reforming or strengthening governmental institutions and
>
> promoting formal and informal processes of political participation (United
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> Nations 1992, para. 55).

In the *Agenda*, Boutros-Ghali argued that intervening more directly in the

domestic affairs of a post-war country would help settle disputes between and within

nation-states by addressing the "deepest causes of conflict," including, "economic

despair, social injustice and political oppression" (United Nations 1992, para. 15).

Although the notion of state sovereignty remained a central tenet in the design of peace

operations, the organization noted that the "time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty"

had passed (United Nations 1992, para. 17). Now, at a country's request, the UN would

support "the transformation of deficient *national* structures and capabilities, and the

strengthening of new democratic institutions" (United Nations 1992, para. 59). This

expanded the jurisdiction of peace operations beyond the realm of security and rule of

law and the UN began to take on the responsibility of helping a country rebuild – or

establish for the first time – political, economic, and social institutions after war. These

types of activities fall into the realm of "state-building" which is defined as "actions

undertaken by international or national actors to establish, reform, or strengthen the

institutions of the state" (Call and Cousens 2008: 4).

The institutions the UN and its partners sought to build were not "ideologically

neutral" (Paris 2004: 13). Rather, they were premised on the "peace as liberalization"[37]

paradigm (Kumar 1997:10; Paris 2004: 6), which drew heavily on the "Democratic

Peace" theory (Doyle 1983, 1986) – the idea that democratic countries do not engage in

war with one another, but rather "settle their internal disagreements peacefully" (Brancati

and Synder 2012: 823). Peace as liberalization included two primary components –

democratization and free market reforms – and reflected the accepted political, economic,

and legal philosophies of Western society and culture at the end of the Cold War (Mac

Ginty 2008; Richmond 2012a; Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013).

In 1995, the UN issued another policy document, *Supplement to an Agenda for

Peace*, emphasizing the importance of the UN's role in peacebuilding. The *Supplement*

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[37] See Jarstad and Sisk 2008, Paris 2004, Paris 2010, Moore 2013.

outlined the UN's importance as both an international arbiter of peace in the global context *and* a body that could fill domestic power vacuums caused by state failure and collapsed domestic institutions after civil war (United Nations 1995, para. 13). New peacebuilding activities were listed as a way of re-establishing "effective government" and state authority after a conflict (United Nations 1995, para. 13).

Since the *Supplement* was issued, UN policy documents have continued to emphasize state-building measures as a key component of successful peacebuilding operations, with a particular focus on measures to build and strengthen democratic institutions. The 2000 Brahimi Report, which reflected on the failure to build sustainable peace in Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Angola (United Nations 1995, para. 34, 99; Fortna and Howard 2008), highlighted the importance of democratic institutions in post-conflict landscapes (United Nations 2000, para. 13, para. 242). Since the Brahimi Report, the UN has continued to emphasize peace and democracy as "mutually reinforcing imperatives" (United Nations 2004), however it has tempered its enthusiasm for holding elections immediately after a peace accord is signed, warning against "cosmetic electoral democracies" and building institutions before holding elections (United Nations 2004, para. 22). Despite acknowledging the importance of timing and sequencing, the paradigm that the UN espouses is one that builds democratic institutions in the wake of violence (United Nations 2012, para. 44, para. 60).

Peacebuilding in the Academic Literature

Given the evolution of peacebuilding practices since the end of the Cold War, it is not surprising that scholars also view democratization measures – preparing and administering democratic elections and drafting national constitutions (Paris 2004: 19) –

as a necessary component of any peacebuilding initiative. Indeed, the "liberal peace model" (Richmond 2012a: 129; Call 2008: 182, Doyle 2005) has been "formally enshrined in the postwar settlement of nearly all civil wars ending after the Cold War" (Doyle and Sambanis 2006: vii). Further, after the failed Washington Consensus, when economic liberalization as part of peacebuilding fell out of favor, scholars focused the term "peacebuilding" even more tightly, to become nearly synonymous with "democratization" (Paris 2004: 7; Carothers 2006; Diamond 2006; Berman 2007;).

Scholars have debated aspects of the liberal peace model, but few have questioned how our normative understanding of peacebuilding impacts practitioners' ability to identify and execute peacebuilding effectively. For example, scholars have criticized the pace and sequencing of democratization measures in peace operations, as it can destabilize a country in its transition to peace (Paris 2004; Berman 2007; Brancati and Snyder 2012; Autesserre 2010). And in his frequently-cited book, *At War's End: Building Peace After Conflict*, Ronald Paris argues against holding elections too quickly (2004). He emphasizes the need to first strengthen those institutions with "the capability to implement policies, or to process societal demands into authoritative decisions, or to maintain the rule of law" before democratization measures are introduced (Paris 2004: 173). Paris calls this idea "Institutionalization Before Liberalization" (2004), adding that "transforming shattered states into market democracies is basically a sound idea, but that pushing the process too quickly can have damaging and destabilizing effects" (2004: 6). Other more recent scholarly works support this idea. For example, Adam Moore agrees with Paris that "institutionalization should precede liberalization to a certain degree to limit the destabilizing effects of the liberalization process itself" (2013: 28).

Localized Dimensions of UN Peace Operations

Regardless of the pace or sequencing of democratization measures, they require legal and institutional changes at the level of the nation-state and in coordination with domestic decision-making elites. Therefore, it is not surprising that most scholars of peacebuilding have examined the topic of post-conflict reconstruction through the lens of the nation-state and consider domestic, decision-making elites the relevant "local actors" (Kurcher et al. 2013: 150). However, there have been critics of this perspective. Among them is Beatrice Pouligny, who, in her 2006 book, *Peace Operations Seen From Below*, called attention to the everyday, local experiences of "ordinary citizens" (2006: 67) in "rural zones and poorer districts of cities" (2006: 75). She offered extensive empirical evidence to reveal the disconnect between local "host" populations and UN peacekeepers. Pouligny also demonstrated that for international peacebuilding to succeed, there needed to be a "true revolution" in understanding local contexts (2006: 267) and a reduction in the wide "gap between what happens in the corridors of diplomacy and the reality on the ground" (2006: 274).

Adam Moore is another scholar who studies the "localized logics" (2013: 12, 61) of international peacebuilding and disaggregates his unit of analysis from the nation-state to two Bosnian towns. Moore examined – among other factors – the presence of UN peace workers, their level of embeddedness in their field placement, and their working relationship with local actors (2013: 117). He compares the two towns' progress toward three peacebuilding goals: security, quality and legitimacy of local institutions, and levels of reintegration,

including returns of people who were ethnically cleansed from their homes— as well as the incorporation of those originally from other areas of the country or region who decided to stay— and the more difficult to measure degree of social integration (2013: 9).

Moore argues that "a conjunction of four factors account for contrasting peacebuilding outcomes in the two towns," in which the town of *Mostar* features continued post-conflict violence, while the town of *Brcko* is presented as a "success" case. Among these four factors, Moore emphasizes the importance of the degree to which local elites and international peace workers establish a close and productive relationship (2013: 5). He states, "successful postwar peacebuilding requires a strong international presence at the local level, a meaningful engagement with local actors, and sustained commitment of resources and personnel" (2013: 117).

However, Moore defines "bottom up" peacebuilding as a process that "prioritizes the voice, needs, and participation of local communities in the peacebuilding process" (Moore 2013: 65), rather than as a truly grassroots process. This is an approach commonly used in the literature, in which scholars study local "ownership over" (Donais 2009: 21; Richmond 2012b), "participation in," (Pham et al. 2004; Autesserre 2010: 65: 6-8; Richmond 2011: 121), "inclusion in," (Autesserre 2015: 252), or "input in" (Autesserre 2015; 37) a UN program or project. These *local dimensions of UN interventions* unfold in the context of an international program that was designed, funded, and implemented primarily by outsiders. In these cases, it is impossible to identify if the behaviors among ordinary, local actors are a result of a top-down intervention, or are endogenous to a grassroots process that began *pre*-intervention.

Similarly, although Séverine Autesserre's books, *The Trouble with Congo* (2010) and *Peaceland* (2015), emphasize the need to better understand the local context and "the everyday" (2015: 8), her analyses are limited to countries that featured a UN intervention. This is a logical case selection, as her ethnography of the "inhabitants of Peaceland" describes the primary obstacles faced by foreign workers when they try to gain an accurate understanding of the local context in which they work. She explains how the unique practices, habits, and narratives of the expat community produce social distance between foreigners and the host populations they are trying to help (Autesserre 2015: 30).

While the insights of Pouligny, Moore, and Autesserre are important and relevant, they are studying a different process than the focus of this dissertation: grassroots peacebuilding. By selecting only cases in which a large-scale intervention is underway, grassroots peacebuilding initiatives are obscured by new dynamics introduced by external actors. As scholars have noted, the arrival of an international organization – with its accompanying resources, and personnel – introduces new economic incentives, as well as social and political structures, in the post-conflict landscape (Pouligny 2006; Autesserre 2015). Logically, in the context of an already existing UN intervention, scholars have been constrained in their ability to observe and evaluate truly *endogenous* processes and what might motivate these.

Domestic Elites Versus Community Actors

In my analysis, I consider domestic, decision-making elites analogous to "foreign interveners," and part of an "external intervention," rather than as part of a grassroots peacebuilding process. The social, political, and economic environment of domestic elites in the urban centers of a developing country more closely resembles that of

international policymakers, rather than the context in which ordinary people operate.

Like international actors from Western countries, domestic elites in many developing

countries throughout the world have similar access to global financial resources,

decision-making power over national and regional reforms, and operate in social circles

that are drastically different from the people who are "organized primarily on a

community basis" (Pouligny 2006: 75) and live in rural areas or the urban periphery.[38]

Further, national elites are often as far removed from the violent dynamics of the

conflict as foreigners to their country. As Kalyvas shows in his analysis of irregular civil

war contexts, most "are fought primarily in rural areas by predominantly peasant armies"

and thus often "described as 'wars in the hamlets,' 'the hills,' 'or the mountains'" (2006:

39). My fieldwork in Colombia corroborated this dynamic, as the lived experiences of

ordinary people in rural municipalities where armed groups battled for control were far

removed from the lives of people with money, power, and social resources living in the

upper-middle- and upper-class neighborhoods of Bogotá and Medellín.

This gap between the elite and the ordinary continues to exist when elites are

hired into positions as *national* aid, development, or peace workers. In fact, the lack of

understanding of local contexts among them is analogous to ignorance among foreign

outsiders who work in these same thematic and technical realms. For example, the

domestic peace workers in Colombia behaved in many of the same ways as the

international peacebuilders Autesserre describes in *Peaceland* (2015), Beatrice Pouligny

describes in her book *Peace Operations Seen From Below* (2006) and Susanna Campbell

notes in her doctoral dissertation, "Organizational Barriers to Peace: Agency Structure in

International Peacebuilding" (2012). During extensive field research in my case areas, I

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[38] See also, Uvin 1996, pp. 112-115.

witnessed development and peace workers travel from large cities to spend only a few days in rural "host" municipalities in Eastern Antioquia. They wrote long reports, socialized among themselves, and were easily distinguishable from *campesinos* by various conspicuous characteristics – their comparatively expensive clothing, white teeth (often with braces), and vocabulary. Locals considered them to be of another culture, markedly distinct from their own.[39] Many residents in the area referred to the influx of peace workers as *la feria de chalecos* – the parade of vests – alluding to the standard outfit the workers wore to identify their employing government agency.

Seeking A Broader Understanding

In summary, most peacebuilding scholarship reveals a normative bias in which peacebuilding processes only qualify *as such* if they fit into the accepted "liberal peace model" (Richmond 2012a: 129) favored by political scientists and peace practitioners (Call 2008: 182). Further, because this model is typically executed by domestic elites, the literature also reflects the "classic reflex" in peacebuilding practice – "the belief that local society is incapable of proposing its own" peace framework (Pouligny 2006: 238). However, I believe practitioners and scholars must question these assumptions, or move beyond them, and embrace a broader understanding of peacebuilding that includes a variety of grassroots efforts. Failing to do so limits the scope of activities and actors we consider when undertaking peacebuilding processes, resulting in missed opportunities and blind spots that reduce our likelihood of success.

To be clear, I am not arguing against democratization, the importance of top-down interventions, or well-meaning domestic elites in post-conflict societies. My

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[39] On one occasion, a group of locals asked if I had been sent from the central office of the Department of Social Prosperity in Bogota – suggesting that the peace workers from the capital were more easily confused with a North American than a local.

argument is empirical, rather than normative. By highlighting the gap in the peacebuilding literature, I interrogate the meaning of peacebuilding as *necessarily* designed and implemented by an external entity, as *necessarily* formal, and *necessarily* encompassing democratic or free market reforms. Building on these insights, I lay the groundwork for scholars and practitioners to identify how ordinary people and community actors in post-conflict societies rebuild, even if their actions are informal, small-scale, and not liberalization-oriented.

Transitional Justice Literature

The transitional justice literature and the peacebuilding literature are often viewed separately.[40] This separation is logical given that when the term "transitional justice" was first used in 1995, it was in reference to democratic transitions after the collapse of authoritarian governments in Eastern Europe and Latin America, not the aftermath of a civil war (Bell 2009: 7). Moreover, in practice, peace operations did not include "transitional justice" mechanisms until 2004, when then-secretary Kofi Annan, "publicly formalized the UN's normative commitment to the practice of transitional justice" (Bell 2009: 19).

Despite the separation between the two bodies of literature, a review of the scholarship on transitional justice reveals similarities to the peacebuilding literature. Many analyses remain at the level of the nation-state (Arriaza and Roht-Arriaza 2008: 153) and examine formal transitional justice mechanisms – such as tribunals; truth commissions; reparations programs; and demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR) programs. In the case that scholars do examine "the local," the most frequent approach is to study how ordinary people are impacted by or participate in formal, top-

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[40] For an exception, see Laplante 2008.

down mechanisms, in the same way peacebuilding scholars study how locals react to or participate in peacebuilding programs.

However, some transitional justice scholars diverge from peacebuilding scholars in an important way: they have looked at truly endogenous processes in the post-conflict landscape, which can *precede or begin independent from* national- or international-led programming or legislation. In this strand of the literature, we find a rich source of information about informal, small-scale, and community-led truth, memory, and reconciliation initiatives designed and organized by ordinary people that are not necessarily tied to the liberal peace model. This scholarship has not been explicitly linked to peacebuilding, but it offers insight for study of such grassroots processes.

Parallels to the Peacebuilding Literature

Like the academic literature on peacebuilding, much of the transitional justice scholarship has focused on the international or national domain (Theidon 2006: 436, Weinstein 2011, Fletcher and Weinstein 2015: 184). Legal and quasi-legal mechanisms, such as international criminal tribunals and truth commissions, have been examined as formal tools that can help a state "come to terms" with human rights violations in its past and ensure individual and collective accountability for perpetrating violence.[41] For example, The International Criminal Tribunals of Rwanda (ICTR) and the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), and the state-led Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa have become emblematic of the top-down nature of transitional justice mechanisms.

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[41] Article 8 from "The Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict and Post-Conflict Societies: Report of the Secretary-General," *United Nations*. (Doc. S/2004/616), August 23, 2004.

These tribunals were designed and staffed by international actors, and took a retributive approach to justice. Similarly, truth commissions globally – there have been about 40, occurring first in Chile – aimed at constructing a unifying truth, collective identity, and facilitating national reconciliation through non-punitive measures such as "dialogue, testimony, and ritual,"[42] have been carried out on a national-scale, often in coordination with international or multi-lateral organizations (Mendeloff 2004: 372; Fletcher and Weinstein 2015: 186). This focus on formal mechanisms at the level of the state is also true in the case of Colombia, and "with some exceptions, scholarly literature on peacebuilding and transitional justice processes in Colombia focus mostly on the state level, and legal analyses are more frequent than empirical studies" (Prieto 2012: 533).

Localized Dimensions of Transitional Justice

Like peacebuilding scholars, transitional justice scholars have studied "localized dimensions" of top-down transitional justice mechanisms. The perceptions and actions of ordinary people in response to national initiatives has been a popular topic in the literature. For example, scholars have studied individual-level responses to reconciliation initiatives such as the South African TRC (Wilson 2001; Gibson 2006), the ways in which Andean communities "experienced and comprehended" the national-level reparation program in Peru (Koc-Menard 2014), how village residents understood and participated in the nationally-directed "grassroots" *gacaca* process in Rwanda (Ingelaere 2009; Iliff 2012), and the ways in which demobilized combatants understand reconciliation and reintegration in the context of nationally led demobilization in Colombia (Theidon 2007; 2014).

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[42] Hersh, Alexander Keller. "Judgment, Imagination, and Critique in the Politics of Reconciliation." *The International Journal of Transitional Justice*. Vol. 7 2013, 178-185.

Within this line of thought, some scholars have noted that top-down transitional justice mechanisms can be disconnected from – or at odds with – local logics on the ground. For example, truth commissions intended to promote national healing may not translate into *individual* healing (Mendeloff 2004: 364), and may even create or polarize new "competing identities, such as those between victims and perpetrators" (Millar 2012: 717). In Chile, for example, the 1990-1991 state-led truth commission excluded accounts of torture, thereby compiling a national memory framework that did not encompass the experiences of many citizens, such as those who had been tortured or had family members who had been tortured (Stern 2006). Additionally, the *gacaca* courts – designed to promote reconciliation in the wake the community level killings of the Rwandan genocide – are another example of the disconnect between the national and local politics of reconciliation. Despite the fact that they derive their name from the "customary practice in the pre-colonial Rwandan state wherein villages would 'gather on the grass' (the literal meaning of *gacaca*) and resolve community disputes," they are considered an "invented tradition" (Iliff 2012: 259). This is because they are not "grassroots," but are actually a "government-organized and modified grassroots court system" to bring perpetrators to trial on a local level (Pham et al. 2010: 101).

Less frequently, authors have highlighted positive local outcomes that emerged as a result of top-down transitional justice mechanisms. For example, in Colombia, although transitional justice mechanisms[43] have often been considered disconnected from local realities, their existence has "been vital for Colombian human rights organizations"

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[43] For example, the 2005 Law 957, which initiated the collective demobilization of paramilitary groups and introduced transitional justice elements, such as truth and memory.

(Prieto 2012: 544) and victims groups.[44] Peru's nationally led truth commission also serves as an example of the potential positive impact of national-level reform. Here, Lisa Laplante shows how the *process* of "truth-telling" for the victims of the Shining Path insurgency was as important as the *product* of a national collective "truth" (2007). While these studies highlight localized dimensions of an international or nationally led transitional justice program, they do not examine truly endogenous processes.

Endogenous Processes

Yet, scholars have recognized the need to theorize the aspects of transitional justice that are culturally specific, community-driven, or informal. A study of endogenous processes is especially important for scholars who study reconciliation, as it must be "forged and lived locally" (Theidon 2006: 456) and ordinary people may use culturally specific or small-scale methods to achieve this goal. For example, communities may "mobilize the ritual and symbolic elements of these transitional processes to deal with the deep cleavages left – or accentuated – by civil conflicts" (Theidon 2006: 436).

Studies of endogenous processes have examined an array of topics in various geographic locations: reconciliation practices in Zimbabwe (Iliff 2012), memory-making practices in Northern Ireland (Brown 2012: 453), a local memory museum in rural Colombia (Romero 2012), as well as truth-telling practices, community sponsored psycho-social interventions, exhumations, and conflict resolution using Mayan methods in Guatemala (Arriaza and Roht-Arriaza 2008). Kimberly Theidon, an anthropologist who has conducted in-depth empirical research in various countries in Latin America,

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[44] National legislation has served as a as a means to identify new constitutional rights, helping human rights organizations and victims' groups to legitimize and frame their advocacy.

has been one of the main proponents of studying communal forms of transitional justice. Her 2006 work on the "micro-politics of reconciliation" in post-war Peru describes "conciliatory practices that respond to the needs of daily life and governance" that existed *before* Peru's national post-conflict process began. She argues that while reconciliation must take root and unfold on a local level in accordance to local norms, state policies have the potential to "either facilitate or hinder these processes" (2006: 456).

Unfortunately, while scholars have been vocal about the need to "look at independent initiatives arising from the local level as an integral part of the post-conflict justice landscape," they have not explicitly connected their inquiries and findings to the existing academic scholarship on peacebuilding (Arriaza and Roht-Arriaza 2008: 153). Yet this strand of transitional justice literature demonstrates how local post-conflict practices are often rooted in the "everyday" (Brown 2012: 453) and the informal. The peacebuilding literature – especially in relation to grassroots peacebuilding – could benefit from a similar understanding. In particular, peacebuilding scholars could draw insight from the transitional justice scholarship, which examines the local actions of ordinary people in the post-conflict landscape.

A Theoretical Framework for Grassroots Peacebuilding

I offer the theoretical framework below as a guide for peacebuilders who choose to heed the dual calls of scholars – to promote peacebuilding that is "context-specific" (Campbell 2012: 450), and "integrated into broader peace- and state-building efforts" (Autesserre 2010: 269). The framework is not a "one-size-fits all" template (Autesserre 2015: 257) or "cookie-cutter" approach (Call and Cousens 2008: 14) for how a national or international peacebuilding intervention *should be* carried out in the field. Indeed,

peacebuilding scholars have been very clear that there are "no simple solutions, no checklist of rules for peacebuilding practitioners to follow which will ensure success" (Moore 2013:29). Rather, I offer the framework as a tool to identify the structures, rules, and changes in a post-conflict society, and find a way to render them "intelligible, so as to assess the bases on which reconstruction is possible" (Pouligny 2006: 266).

This framework provides the foundation on which I build an empirical understanding of grassroots peacebuilding in Eastern Antioquia, Colombia in the remainder of the dissertation. I used this framework to identify grassroots processes on neighborhood, village, *corregimiento,* and municipal level during my fieldwork. Over the course of five years and 13 cumulative months in the field, I was able to garner both "country- or village- specific knowledge" (Autesserre 2015: 262) and recognize the importance of contextually grounded evaluation measures and qualitative indicators (Autesserre 2015: 265).

Through a close read of the peacebuilding scholarship, I realized it was necessary to provide an explicit approach for separating local and external interventions, as grassroots activities are often ignored, overlooked, or mistaken as the outcome of an exogenous process. The examples of grassroots peacebuilding practices that populate the framework are not a "laundry list of activities" (Call and Cousens 2008: 3) that should be checked off by scholars. Rather, they represent *possible examples* of what endogenous processes look like on the ground and how they fit into – or differ from – the broader architecture of and conventional wisdom about peacebuilding.

Table 1. Theoretical Framework for Grassroots Peacebuilding

FUNCTIONAL AREA	SECURITY	INFRASTRUCTURE	BASIC NEEDS AND SERVICES
Theoretical	Rule of Law	State-Reconstruction	State-Reconstruction

frame			State-Building
International intervention or national programming legislation to:	**Ensure cessation of violence** (Military deployment, police work, DDR, landmine removal) **Rebuild effective state institutions** (Police reform, Military reform, Judicial Reform).	**Return to pre-war status quo** (Rebuilding destroyed physical infrastructure, provision of humanitarian assistance to victims, displaced persons, or refugees).	**Return to pre-war status quo** (Restoration of – *or provision of* – electricity, potable water, sanitation, and basic services such as health, education, return of IDPs or refugees)
Examples of grassroots peacebuilding	**Community methods to mitigate violence**: Artisanal demining Establish neighborhood watch Incentivize voluntary or informal disarmament and demobilization Facilitate return of refugees or IDPs to local origins Facilitate local reintegration for returnees or ex-combatants	**Community methods to rebuild or repair public goods:** pooling local resources, lobbying regional government or NGO, voluntary manual labor. **Basic Infrastructure** (Unpaved roads, health clinics, public markets, public square, walking paths, community mill or storage space, community center, shared farm or grazing pasture)	**Community methods to restore (or provide) public services**: electricity, sanitation, and potable water to current residents and returnees Organizing to facilitate the return of IDPs or refugees. Lobbying electrical company, sharing electrical connection, building a community space for sanitation or water. Community organizing to resume classes, recruit teachers, change requirements for number of children in village or town to have a school.
FUNCTIONAL AREA	**POLITICAL**	**ECONOMIC**	**SOCIETAL**
Theoretical frame	State-Building Democratization	Market Liberalization	Transitional Justice
International intervention or national programming legislation to:	**Establish democratic–oriented political model:** Resurrection of civil society Political party transformation Constitution making or reform Decentralization measures Preparing and administration of elections Promoting free speech, freedom of movement and association	**Establish market-oriented economic model:** Privatization of property and banking sector Private ownership of core of economy Convertible currency for international trade Encourage market-based transactions Eliminate barriers to flow of goods and capital Stimulate growth of private enterprise	**Legal or quasi-legal Transitional Justice mechanisms:** Tribunals Criminal Trials Truth Commissions Reintegration component of DDR Reparations Lustration or Vetting
Examples of grassroots peacebuilding	**Decoupling of leadership from conflict power dynamics:** Removing perpetrators from political positions of power (city or town council, mayoral position, village leader position) Formation of local political parties that are separate from partisan, ethnic, or ideological divide. **Political participation among historically or conflict-context marginalized groups.** Literacy campaign, capacity building for political	**Community methods to increase access** to economic resources and markets for those who were previously marginalized or affected by conflict. **Decoupling of local economy from conflict-based financial and market structure** Arms, coca, drug trafficking, or other economic infrastructure that emerged as a result of the war). **Increased economic decision-making** for community leaders and local entrepreneurs. **Economic inter-dependence** across	**Local Accountability Mechanisms**: Community-based mechanisms for justice Truth-telling exercise Local naming and shaming of perpetrators Assessing fines on perpetrators **Everyday Coexistence:** Activities that deliberately establish mutual ties or obligations across lines of the conflict (soccer match, theater production, or economic activity). Establish non-violent means of local conflict resolution. **Local Reconciliation:**

| | participation, local leadership training, education about non-violent conflict resolution.

Strengthened local "civil society"
Participation in social justice groups or associations or those that promote non-violent conflict resolution.

Free association
Safe public assembly and speech about political topics on a local level | social demarcations, ethnic groups, or the victim-perpetrator divide. | Community conversations
Traditional reconciliation practices
Community works carried out by ex-combatants

Local Memory:
Public commemorations or places of remembrance: candlelight vigil, memorial in a garden, square, local museum, including symbols and rituals

Local Truth:
Ordinary people searching for disappeared persons and exhuming bodies
Archiving conflict events and victim testimony
Oral testimony |
| Differences | Grassroots may not be focused on elections. Mechanism may be informal | Grassroots may not be focused on capitalism or free market reforms | Grassroots may privilege co-existence above accountability |

Restorative Measures

Security

Within the peacebuilding literature, security and rule of law are identified as key public goods that must be attained *before* any sort of state reconstruction or state-building can occur (Junne and Verkoren 2005). The two primary activities carried out by international interventions with respect to "rule of law" are those that ensure the cessation of violence and rebuild effective *security-based* state institutions (Paris 2004:188), such as the national police force, military, or judicial branch of the government (Paris 2004: 19).

In practice, the lines between peacekeeping and peacebuilding have often been blurred with respect to security measures. Although peacebuilding is not premised on the use of force, troops are sometimes deployed as part of a broader peace operation in order to ensure that warring parties do not continue violence against civilians. Although peacebuilding operations do not have "the mandate of interposition between two armies"

or the supervision of ceasefires, they are often tasked with "restoring or contributing to the restoration and maintenance of 'law and order'" on the ground (Pouligny 2006: 250).

The emphasis on rule of law in the peacebuilding literature is not surprising, given that physical security and freedom from coercion and violence among the "host population" are necessary conditions for a peacebuilding process to take root and a "prerequisite to any effective recovery process" (Salomons 2005: 19). Accordingly, if large scale violence is continuing, combatants are still armed and active, or if landmines are still present in public spaces, residents cannot live safely in the area, resume commercial or agricultural activities, or restore transportation within the locale, let alone engage in activities that are more "transformative," such as political or economic reform or transitional justice measures (United Nations 1992, para. 58).

The latter of the "security" categories are associated with state-building and international interveners must ensure government institutions can guarantee "equal protection and non-discrimination, due process, police accountability, and judicial independence" (Pouligny 2006: 259). Additionally, programs may help a post-conflict country remove landmines and demobilize and disarm combatants to prevent ongoing violence (Mackenzie 2009; Theidon 2007).

Although international – and often national – operations premise security and the rule of law on the use of military force (United Nations 1992, para. 42), grassroots security activities need not be grounded in force. For example, in the case of DDR, local communities could provide a structure for combatants to voluntarily or informally lay down arms and demobilize. Village residents may organize to provide basic reintegration services, offering employment or shelter for those who choose to re-join civilian life and

pursue a non-violent livelihood. It is also possible for communities to establish and

uphold basic rule of law through local and informal practices. This includes

communicating with neighbors about unfamiliar individuals or suspicious activities in the

area, locating caches of arms or illicit crops on or near their property and organizing to

tell local authorities, or even confronting perpetrators of violence through organized non-

violent resistance[45] in the absence of police or army forces in the area (Galtung 1969:

186).

The case of San Carlos, Colombia, illustrates how grassroots security activities

might look in the field. After the violence subsided in the region, many displaced

persons returned from large cities to the rural homes they had fled during the war, only to

find their municipality littered with landmines. In response, they organized to remove

landmines from unpaved roads, agricultural fields, and around schools so that they could

resume their livelihood and help other displaced people return. Residents removed

landmines by hand and sent older livestock into fields and down abandoned roads to

explode mines. As more people returned, the community petitioned the municipal

government for help in the process, which then sought support at the federal level. A

humanitarian branch of the Colombian Army was sent to clear the mines. Residents

continued to support the process – and in doing so showed trust of the troops – by

mapping the location of existing mines.[46] As a result, San Carlos became the first

municipality in Colombia to be declared "free of suspected landmines."[47]

Infrastructure

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[45] I do not consider "vigilante justice" part of grassroots peacebuilding, as it is does not fall into the category of *non-violent* mechanisms to resolve conflict, but rather perpetuates violence and create new divisions within a society. See, Bateson 2013.

[46] Interview with resident in San Carlos, Colombia. April 2014.

[47] Monroy, Juan Carlos. "Presidente Santos Certificó a San Carlos como el Primer Municipio sin Sospecha de Minas" *El Colombiano*. 13 March 2012.

This category refers to the restoration of public infrastructure destroyed during the conflict and accordingly, international peacebuilding operations or national programs in this category focus on a return to the pre-conflict status quo. Here, I use the theoretical frame of "state-reconstruction" rather than "state-building," as the activities associated with this category refer to rebuilding or repairing the material goods and physical infrastructure that existed before the conflict began, rather than building new infrastructure.

In practice, interveners may assist a country to rebuild physical infrastructure that was severely damaged or entirely destroyed as a result of the conflict (United Nations 1992, para. 15), as armed groups often destroy public infrastructure and public works to incapacitate government or opposing forces or to create dependency among the civilian population (Kumar 1997: 29). The external intervention might provide material resources, personnel, or financing to rebuild bridges, roads, government buildings, police stations, businesses, or other public spaces.

In the case of grassroots peacebuilding, communities use various small-scale, informal, or culturally specific methods to restore local physical structures and public spaces. These spaces can include, but are not limited to, unpaved roads, public schools, public buildings, parks, plazas, community health clinics, sports facilities, shared mills, agricultural storage containers and community stores. Community efforts to recover and redefine public spaces are an important part of grassroots peacebuilding and may provide the physical spaces needed for other elements of the peacebuilding process, such as transitional justice.[48]

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[48] For example, in San Carlos a hotel that was previously used as a space for torture and interrogation by paramilitaries has been transformed into "CARE" – *El Centro de Acercamiento para la Reconciliación y Reparación* ("Center for

Community actors or ordinary people may band together to rebuild spaces that were abandoned, destroyed during the course of the conflict, or used by armed groups for shelter, protection, or storage. They may organize to attain labor, materials, machines, or partial financing through community-based fundraising or lobbying. They may even carry out the labor themselves. In under-developed countries – especially in rural areas – informal or community-based methods for maintaining local public spaces is not uncommon, due to a chronic lack of state resources and reach. As Pouligny points out, "while the mainstream approach is centered on the state as the primary provider of a number of functions, the reality, in many fragile contexts, is that the state's capacity to deliver efficient and fair services to ordinary people is extremely limited" (Pouligny 2010: 19). Within my case study areas in Colombia, communities that returned to their villages engaged in *convites* (mutual work days) to repair unpaved and impassable roads that had been abandoned during the conflict. Communities used *pico y palo* (picks and sticks) to open up the roads so that smaller mountainous villages could re-connect with the municipal seats in the region.

Basic Needs and Services

This category includes the *restoration and/or provision* of the basic goods and services that were destroyed or interrupted during the conflict (Kumar 1997) and also encompasses reforming or building the institutions that are necessary to guarantee the provision of these services. This category is thus related to both the theoretical frame of state reconstruction, in which "actions are undertaken by international or national actors to support economic and social *recovery*" (Call and Cousens 2008: 4) and state-building,

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Reconciliation and Reparation"). The hotel now houses a museum, a library of the conflict's history, and a garden to commemorate victims. The community also holds reconciliation, memorial, and human rights events in the space.

which includes actions to "establish, reform, or strengthen the institutions of the state" that are responsible for providing these services (Call and Cousens 2008: 4).

The restoration or provision of basic needs and services is a particularly pressing issue in the post-conflict landscape, as civil wars not only produce a high death toll due to direct violence, but also have many other health (Pham et al. 2004) and education consequences for the host population. For example, forced displacement and refugee flows can result in starvation and the rapid spread of disease. Making matters worse, doctors, nurses, paramedics, teachers, and administrative personnel often die in the conflict, migrate to a safer area of the country, are unable to carry out their professional responsibilities because of the threat of violence, or do not receive government orders to return to a post-conflict region (Kumar 1997: 19).

State-building is often necessary in the post-conflict context, as many conflict-ridden countries feature a "weak," "fragile," or "failed" state (Weinstein 2005: 4) that was not able to provide basic public goods and services before the conflict began. Take the case of the UN intervention in Liberia, for example. Here, the UN mission used the "*restoration* of state authority to rural areas as an important indicator of success" (Call 2008: 185). However, Charles Call argues that "helping the state recover its *pre-war ability* to deliver services" was not a relevant indicator since Liberia's "state performance was likely to have been inadequate and possibly an initial causal factor in the war" (Call 2008: 185). International interveners had to go a step further to provide access to basic health services, sanitary living conditions, schools for their children, potable water and a basic institutional presence. These types of problems are most often addressed through humanitarian assistance programs within the international peacebuilding architecture

(Paris 2004: 39) and take a variety of forms, for example, setting up a refugee camp or establishing a program to facilitate the return of displaced persons to their place of origin (Moore 2013: 9).

Community efforts in this category include activities to restore basic services to pre-war levels, expand them beyond pre-war levels, or address the gaps or deficiencies that were introduced *as a result of* the conflict. For example, communities might use culturally specific or informal methods to restore (or provide) public services such as electricity, sanitation, potable water, education, and health services to residents or returnees to the conflict area. Ordinary people might organize in the post-conflict context to help transport and receive displaced persons when they return to their place of origin. They may find communal ways to provide physical accompaniment during the return process or provide victims with safety information, food, water, shelter, or sanitation materials, upon arrival. Grassroots attempts might also use local educational campaigns about sanitation, hygiene, and public health issues. Additional examples might include lobbying an electrical company to restore an electrical connection, building a community space for access to potable water, recruiting local health workers and teachers, or organizing for local administrative and elected officials to return to the conflict zone after the violence subsides.

In the case of Buenos Aires, in the municipality of San Luis, Colombia**,** armed actors confined civilians to their rural area during the war, while health workers and teachers were driven from their posts or killed.[49] The departure of health workers left the community without access to basic medicine and they no longer received information concerning health, hygiene, and nutrition. Perhaps more importantly, they lost the

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[49] Participant observation in Collective Reparations Workshop in San Luis, Colombia. 19 February 2014.

presence of educated leaders. However, in the aftermath of the conflict, residents of Buenos Aires organized and successfully lobbied for health workers to return from the municipality's urban center.[50]

Transformative measures

In the area of transformative measures, the theoretical frames, international practices, and community initiatives have the potential to diverge more drastically than those in the "restorative measures" section. Just as international peacebuilding measures are designed to transform political, economic, and societal institutions in a post-conflict country as a means to establish peace, grassroots peacebuilding activities can also be identified by their transformative nature. However, it is important to note that the manner in which a community transforms its political, economic, or social structures may not be in perfect harmony with democratization measures, free market reforms, or the transitional justice mechanisms that are associated with international legal practices.

Additionally, the priorities of ordinary people who were directly impacted by the conflict may be very different from the priorities within national or international peacebuilding intervention. For example, on the state and elite level, the transitional justice debate might focus on the topic of accountability – trials for high-level human rights violators, transitional justice legislation to guide the DDR process of an armed group, or the inclusion of demobilized armed group leaders in legitimate party politics. However, these formal aspects of transitional justice may feel irrelevant on a local level. An ordinary person living in a rural area probably never came in contact with high level commanders, yet might have to interact with a lower-level demobilized combatant in his or her neighborhood on a daily basis. Thus, he or she might be more concerned with

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[50] Participant observation in Asocomunal Meeting in San Luis, Colombia. 12 May 2014.

themes of coexistence or reconciliation than with legal reform carried out by a national or international entity.

Political

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the term "peacebuilding" has become nearly synonymous with "democratization," with a particular emphasis placed on holding and administering elections. Other activities to support democratization after war include: "promoting civil and political rights, free speech, free press, freedom of association and movement…drafting national constitutions that codified civil and political rights, or retraining police and justice officials, strengthening civil society, and the transformation of previously warring groups into political parties" (Paris 2004: 19).

On a grassroots level, however, community-based political transformation does not necessarily have anything to do with holding or administering elections or other formal aspects of the political process. Communities might organize around measures to dismantle the political structures that were introduced as a result of the conflict. For example, community actors may team to remove from leadership positions those who were part of a "militarization of local governance" during the civil war (Wood 2008: 548) or who were perpetrators of violence or had been directly or indirectly affiliated with an armed group. Community members may also form local political parties that intentionally bridge national-level partisan, ethnic, or ideological divides. However, without in-depth local knowledge, an outside observer may not realize that political parties or leadership positions are organized according to a new, local logic. These grassroots activities can thus easily go unnoticed as part of an endogenous peacebuilding process.

Other grassroots efforts may be more explicitly tied to traditional democratization measures. Community actors could introduce initiatives to increase political participation among groups that were marginalized before or during the conflict, for example through a local literacy or civic education campaign. Local residents could organize capacity building or leadership training programs to facilitate local leadership that believes in non-violent conflict resolution. Civil society – or informal – organizations might design activities to promote social justice in the post-conflict context. Finally, a community can take measures to ensure that all residents are able to move freely, assemble in public places, or speak freely in a particular locale, without fear of violence or reprisal.

San Carlos provides a good example of local political reform carried out by civilians within the municipality. By the end of the conflict, the municipality's community action committees had lost their democratic representation in the rural villages and in the villages close to the urban center control had been taken over by paramilitaries. After the conflict, and paramilitary demobilization, the same leaders maintained control of the juntas. However, community leaders organized and lobbied to remove these leaders from power, and then traveled to the rural villages to teach residents how to legally re-establish their own junta and to operate it more effectively than prior to the conflict. This initiative improved access to representation for the most rural and hard-to-reach locales in the municipality, which had historically lacked a functional and effective junta.

Economic

In peacebuilding theory and in international practice, economic transformation has been historically associated with market liberalization (Kumar 1997:10; Paris 2004:

6). The activities associated with this facet of peacebuilding include, but are not limited to, measures to ensure the privatization of property, privatization of the banking sector, promotion of private ownership of the core economy, establishing a convertible currency for international trade, encouraging market-based transactions, eliminating barriers to flow of goods and capital, stimulating growth of private enterprise, and generally reducing the role of the national government in a post-conflict country's economy (Paris 2004: 166).

However, on a grassroots level, economic transformation may have nothing to do with free market or capitalist-based reforms. On a local level, activities to repair or transform the economy might include a more egalitarian distribution of economic resources or establishing community- (rather than privately) owned enterprises. For example, a locale might establish a community-owned "peace" store that provides subsidies to farmers who grow crops that are not conflict-oriented (coca, for example) and sells them in the store. The community store may also follow a "peace protocol" that prohibits the sale of goods or services to anyone in uniform, as a means to remain neutral and civilian-based. These are certainly not measures to promote private ownership over community resources, yet they can be considered grassroots peacebuilding activities within the category economic reform.

Additionally, on a local level, extensive measures might be necessary to decouple the economy from conflict dynamics. For example, employment might have been supported through arms trafficking, coca or opium growing, illegal resource extraction (artisanal mining, for example), kidnapping, extortion, or direct employment with an armed group as a combatant, courier, or member of administrative staff. Local

employment may have also been based on providing goods (food, clothing, housing) or services (laundry, entertainment, transportation, vehicle repair) to an armed group that was able to fund local consumption through large revenues connected to a national – or even international – illicit enterprise. Therefore, to rebuild economically, community actors might organize to introduce added value to a traditional crop – for example, packaging coffee beans, cacao beans, or fruit preserves and marketing them as "peace" products on a regional or national level.

Other examples of grassroots peacebuilding activities in the economic category include local participatory budgeting mechanisms, local land or resource redistribution programs, and progressive taxation reform. Additionally, the community might design initiatives to enhance savings for victims of the conflict, provide childcare subsidies to female victims or ex-combatants, or improve access to education and vocational training programs for previously marginalized groups, such as displaced persons, refugees, victims, and demobilized combatants.

In San Carlos, participatory budgeting was introduced after the conflict as a means to distribute municipal resources in a more democratic fashion. The mechanism permitted democratically elected village and neighborhood presidents (presidents of the juntas) to directly allocate municipal resources to projects within their communities, with each village receiving a portion of the pie, rather than only the villages selected by the mayor and council members of the municipal seat. According to multiple interviews during fieldwork,[51] the participatory budgeting mechanism has reduced corruption and

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[51] Interviews: president of San Carlos' ASOCOMUNAL, 4 December 2013, Pastora Mira, 10 December 2013, and former mayor, Francisco "Pelufo" Alvarez Sanchez. 6 December 2013. These interviews took place in San Carlos.

distributional conflicts between villages, and has promoted economic development in remote areas within the municipality.[52]

Societal

Historically, transitional justice has been firmly embedded in the quest for "liberal peace" – which emphasizes elections, procedural democracy, and marketization – rather than social justice (Gready and Robins 2014: 342). Born out of this normative framework, transitional justice measures have historically focused on legal and state-centered initiatives, such as institutional reform, criminal trials, formal reparations, lustration and vetting, and truth-telling commissions designed and led by elites. However, transitional justice measures have increasingly included reconciliation and co-existence[53] measures (Mendeloff 2004; Weinstein 2011) and the reintegration component of DDR, in addition to programs or legislation to establish a collective truth or historical memory (Bell 2009).

On a grassroots level, societal transformation might place much more emphasis on the need to establish non-violent social relations between victims and perpetrators in order to prevent a return to violence, rather than legal, formal accountability measures. Initiatives on a community level often "emphasize local agency and resources, the prioritization of process rather than preconceived outcomes and the challenging of unequal and intersecting power relationships structures of exclusion at both the local and global level" (Gready and Robins 2014: 340). Initiatives and activities that fall in the

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[52] Participatory budgeting in San Carlos has since served as a model for other municipalities, including the municipal government of Medellín.

[53] "More than living peacefully side by side but involving some degree of communication, interaction, and even some degree of cooperation" (Haider 2009: 108).

"societal" category introduce mechanisms for local communities and the everyday concerns of victims and perpetrators (Gready and Robins 2014: 340).

The observable examples in this category might include local truth-telling commissions or court trials (Autesserre 2010: 35), or endogenous initiatives focused on memory (Romero 2012), such as: the construction of local monuments or memorials (Brown 2012; Clark 2013); public acts or events; the preservation of written archives or oral histories; local civic educational reforms (Fletcher and Weinstein 2015); or the exhumation, identification, and reburial of missing bodies (Arriaza and Roht-Arriaza 2008). Communities may organize around searching for disappeared persons or exhuming bodies themselves. Truth-based activities on a community level may also be designed not only to record an "objective" or collectively agreed upon truth, bur rather to "empower the formerly silenced" and "break down entrenched habits of fear and distrust" in a community (Laplante 2007: 433, 434).

Reconciliation activities offer an opportunity "to acknowledge the contributions and sacrifices made by different groups of people during the war" (El Bushra and Mukarubuga 1995: 20; Strickland and Duvvury 2003) and to help transform the character of relationships between perpetrators and victims from violent to non-violent. Initiatives within this category not only refer to restoring, repairing, and rebuilding trust, as these may not have existed before the conflict, but also to mechanisms that allow a community to re-define relative power dynamics and create a space for a sustainable peaceful coexistence.

The main aspects of transformative justice – justice, truth, reconciliation, coexistence, and memory – can be overlapping and mutually constitutive (Gready and

Robin 2014: 344; Hayner 2009; Roht-Arriaza and Mariezcurrena 2006). The municipality of San Carlos provides a salient empirical example of this dynamic. After paramilitaries demobilized in the municipality, a group of community leaders organized a memorial service at the church and a procession through the plaza to help facilitate reconciliation. One of the community leaders entered the church arm-in-arm with the ex-combatant who had kidnapped her son during the war. In an interview, she explained that the personal pain she endured in the event was worthwhile. It was meant to help the community heal, both by showing a willingness to build relationships while also publicly "naming and shaming" those who had committed violence.[54]

Conclusion

This chapter makes an original contribution by offering a conceptualization of grassroots peacebuilding as its own empirical phenomenon. This is complemented by a theoretically grounded framework that can be used by academics or practitioners to identify local efforts to build peace, as well as to understand how they may connect to – or diverge from – the conventional wisdom on top-down peace operations. The framework is a tool for better identifying the *already present* dynamics of the local post-conflict landscapes when external interveners have a short time frame and lack a deep contextual knowledge of the country where they are stationed. The framework also provides a foundation for the rest of the dissertation's empirical and theoretical contributions. Importantly, it serves as the basis on which to examine a causal link between local conflict and post-conflict dynamics, a theme that I explore in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. In the next chapter, however, I use process-tracing and inductive research to show

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[54] Interview with Pastora Mira in San Carlos. 10 December 2013.

how grassroots peacebuilding processes manifest empirically and do – or do not –

intersect with national post-conflict programming and legislation.

Chapter 3: Grassroots Peacebuilding in San Carlos

In the previous chapter, I offered a new conceptualization of grassroots peacebuilding, as well as a theoretical framework to help scholars, policymakers, and practitioners better understand and identify *endogenous*[55] peacebuilding processes. In this chapter, using rich empirical evidence from a single municipal case – San Carlos – I demonstrate the existence of grassroots peacebuilding. I show that grassroots peacebuilding is a process that unfolds on a small-scale, often begins informally, and is led by ordinary people rather than elite actors. Further, I describe how grassroots peacebuilding and externally-led peacebuilding efforts can overlap or intersect in complex ways – a key reason why practitioners and scholars have had trouble distinguishing between them empirically.

In order to identify community-driven reconstruction processes, and examine how they interact with Colombia's post-conflict legislation and programming, I combine the "intensive study of a single case" (Gerring 2007: 20) and process-tracing (Mahoney 2012: 586). Using the case of San Carlos, I show how municipal level *restorative* grassroots peacebuilding initiatives were mistaken as *an outcome of* nationally-led programs. Furthermore, I demonstrate how the community's efforts to address security issues and basic needs of San Carlos residents actually *informed* the design and implementation of Colombia's post-conflict legislation, which subsequently expanded and supported local activities. The *transformative* measures organized by the San Carlos community provide another salient empirical example of how grassroots peacebuilding processes unfold on the ground. Here, ordinary people and local leaders provided the

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[55] I use "endogenous" interchangeably with "grassroots" and "bottom-up" throughout the dissertation.

impetus for transitional justice activities, at the same time they leveraged national legislation to legitimize, support, or expand their small-scale initiatives.

The Restorative Peacebuilding Process in San Carlos

On March 13th, 2012, Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos held a press conference in San Carlos, declaring it the first municipality "free of the suspicion of landmines."[56] He praised the army's extensive humanitarian demining campaign and announced that the national government would work with all municipalities where landmines were present, so that residents who had abandoned their land could return, as they had in San Carlos.[57] Although Colombia's president and the then-mayor of San Carlos – Maria Patricia Giraldo – had stressed the role of civil society during the event, media coverage framed the demining program as part of a "pilot" carried out by the national government and the Colombian army.[58] San Carlos has since been used as an example of how to successfully implement the Victim's Law (1448/2011) – Colombia's post-conflict legislation that promises to assist the return of, or provide monetary reparations to, the country's nearly eight million victims.[59]

How did the Colombian government "choose" San Carlos to pilot its post-conflict peacebuilding program? I argue that, in fact, it never did. Rather, it was the people of San Carlos, who like many in the region of Eastern Antioquia, began grassroots peacebuilding years before the national government became involved. As early as 2004,

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[56] President Juan Manuel Santos at "La Entrega de San Carlos Como el Primer Municipio Libre de Sospecha de Minas" (Announcement of San Carlos as the first municipality free of the suspicion of landmines) in San Carlos. 13 March 2012
[57] Ibid.
[58] Forero, Luis Guillermo. "Presidente Santos dice que no teme sacar la llave de la paz." *El Tiempo*. Bogotá. 13 March 2012. "San Carlos: pasos seguros gracias al desminado." *El Mundo*. Medellín. 20 September 2011. "San Carlos es el primer municipio desminado del pais." *Noticias Caracol*. Bogotá. 10 March 2015.
[59] Official statistic of Colombia's Department of Social Prosperity (DPS). As of November 2015, there were 7,758, 935 registered victims in DPS' database, the *Registro Unico de Victimas*. This number does not include Colombians who have not registered with the national government.

displaced persons started returning to San Carlos, Granada, and San Luis.[60] They did so

without financial or security support from the government, in the "silent and invisible"[61]

process that thousands have participated in during the last decade. They arrived in

abandoned villages, where landmines still littered walking paths and nature's overgrowth

had covered their homes.[62] Many re-settled in areas without an institutional presence –

no public security, potable water or electricity.

The many returnees – most of them coming from the slums surrounding Medellín

– took their municipalities of origin by surprise. The *Emergencia de Retorno* (Return

Emergency) overwhelmed municipal governments, prompting them to design new

programs and strategies to support the migrants. Community leaders (some of them

returnees themselves) and municipal officials also organized to lobby for financial and

administrative support from regional entities and the city government of Medellín. Only

after this lobbying, and the support strategies and programs had proven successful, did it

garner the attention of the national government.

While the national government did then begin providing resources, it is inaccurate

to call the resulting programs part of a federally-led peacebuilding pilot. The

government was merely supporting successful grassroots programming that had

unfolded in the absence of state intervention. Further, and to the federal government's

credit, it gleaned best practices that would be incorporated into the national Victims

Law. These communities had already determined how to support large returnee

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[60] Interview with Diego Molano in Bogotá. 17 October 2013. Interview with Migdonia Perez in Medellín. 20 October 2013. "Memorias desde el Retorno: Sistematización de las Prácticas de Memoria Impulsados en los programas del Retorno al Muncipio de San Carlos 2009 y 2013." *Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica*. Bogotá. 2013:5.
[61] Interview with Freddy Castaño in Granada. 14 November 2013.
[62] Sanchez, Gonzalo ed., "San Carlos: Memorias del Exodo en La Guerra." *Grupo de Memoria Historica*. Bogotá, 2011: 358. Javier Alexander Macias, "Cosiaca quitó minas y sembró esperanza." *El Colombiano.* Medellín. 6 June 2010.

populations, re-institute community action committees, count their populations and map the locations of landmines. Additionally, creative legal mechanisms had emerged from collaborations between municipalities and the city government of Medellín. The success of these mechanisms demonstrated to the national government how to institutionalize post-conflict programming and the incentives inherent in doing so.

The first portion of this chapter traces the bottom-up process of restorative peacebuilding through the lens of one municipality – San Carlos – and demonstrates how local efforts have informed and helped shape top-down peace programming. The story begins with the first returnees to the municipality and follows the chronology from community efforts to partnering with the city government of Medellín, to programming that has become the federal government's model for peacebuilding throughout Colombia. The San Carlos story shows how community members began the municipality's grassroots peacebuilding process, as well as illuminating how this process is easily overlooked or mistaken *as the result of* the actions of elites or external actors.

The data collection methods I used for this analysis include in-depth interviews with victims, community leaders, and ex-combatants, in addition to professionals working in NGOs or government offices in Bogotá and Medellín related to post-conflict and/or transitional justice programming. Additionally, participant observation in *Asocomunal*[63] meetings and grassroots peacebuilding activities[64] provides data that underpins the arguments of this chapter. I complement these methods with a review of

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[63] Asocomunal is the local association that encompasses all the juntas de acción in a municipality. Every month, the presidents from every junta gather as part of Asocomunal to pay dues, discuss municipal business, vote on motions, and organize community events.
[64] For example, participation in memory walks, frequent visits to sites of memory and memorials, as well as attending an *entrega de fosas* in the Attorney General's office of Medellín.

the CINEP newspaper archive[65] and Erin Parish's anthropological study of San Carlos' post-conflict landscape. Finally, I use my own ethnographic insights on Colombia's rural, "transitional" landscape, gathered during two summers and nine months of in-depth fieldwork in various rural areas of the country that were – or are currently – affected by the armed conflict.

Grassroots Peacebuilding Unfolds in San Carlos

The conflict experience of San Carlos is emblematic of the violence and forced displacement in Eastern Antioquia between 1998 and 2006. The levels of violence in this particular region were so severe that they have been referred to as "a genocide carried out little by little."[66] Like Granada and San Luis, San Carlos was caught on the frontlines of a battle for territorial control between numerous armed groups – the FARC, the ELN, multiple paramilitary fronts, and eventually the Colombian army – and suffered horrific abuses against the civilian population. In San Carlos alone more than 1,000 people were murdered or disappeared[67] and almost 20,000 residents – 80% of the municipality's pre-war population – were forced to displace.[68] A former mayor of San Carlos said, "San Carlos reached a point at which 95% of the rural villages were abandoned, as in there was no one, absolutely no one" in the countryside.[69]

Yet, despite the horrors they had fled, and the desolation and destruction that it left in their villages, and even before all the armed groups had departed, displaced people

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[65] The CINEP press archive houses every article published on conflict events in these municipalities from 1994 to the present. The database features newspaper publications that span the political spectrum, including *La Voz, El Colombiano, El Espectador, El Tiempo, El Mundo,* and *El Nuevo Siglo*.

[66] "Un genocidio a cuentagotas" - phrase translated from the article, "Un intenso dolor." *El Colombiano*. Medellín. 7 March 2004: 5A.

[67] Other abuses such as torture, rape, confinement, and psychological harm still remain systematically under-reported even a decade after the violence has subsided. "Queremos que se sepa lo que nos pasó." *Revista Semana*. Bogotá. 18 September 2010.

[68] Sanchez, Gonzalo ed., "San Carlos: Memorias del Exodo en La Guerra." *Grupo de Memoria Historica*. Bogotá, 2011: 358.

[69] Interview with Francisco "Pelufo" Alvarez in San Carlos. 6 December 2013.

began returning to San Carlos. As early as 2004 they came back, many from Medellín, leaving the squatter settlements that clung to the steep slopes of the mountains surrounding the city, where they had encountered urban violence, crime, and extreme poverty. Those conditions, combined with a strong *arraigo a la tierra* or "rootedness to the earth," made it worth the uncertain journey back to their land.[70] "A farmer is incapable of living in the city, a vulture can't live in a cage,"[71] said one returnee. "Living in a city is like living in a jail of concrete, it drives you crazy"[72] said another.

They did not return in large groups. Rather, the return patterns mirrored those most commonly observed of displacement during the conflict – *gota-a-gota* or "drop-by-drop" – in which people migrated in small groups, as families, or as individuals. In some cases a few families from the same village of origin coordinated to return together. In other cases, an adult male would return first – without his wife and children – in order to assess the security situation.[73] This also allowed children to continue attending school in Medellín, as many municipal schools had been destroyed during the war, and local teachers had long since fled or been assassinated. Most went back with no more possessions than they had fled with – a suitcase – and often by bus or hitchhiking. The returnees headed to the abandoned rural areas and cut with machetes through the dense overgrowth on the walking paths to their *fincas*, all the while carefully scanning the ground for landmines.[74] Despite land left fallow for years, and in some cases unexploded ammunition and grenades among the weeds, returnees attempted to reactivate their land,

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[70] Sanchez, Gonzalo ed., "San Carlos: Memorias del Exodo en La Guerra." *Grupo de Memoria Historica*. Bogotá, 2011: 32. Multiple interviews with returnees in Granada, San Carlos, San Luis, and San Rafael. 2013-2014.
[71] "El campesino no es capaz de vivir en la ciudad, porque gallinazo no pega en jaula," quote from Javier Alexander Macias', "Cosiaca quitó minas y sembró esperanza." *El Colombiano*. Medellín. 6 June 2010.
[72] Quote translated from Gonzalo Sanchez' "San Carlos: Memorias del Exodo en La Guerra." *Grupo de Memoria Historica*. Bogotá, 2011: 20.
[73] Interview with Midgonia Perez in Medellín. 20 October 2014.
[74] Macias, Javier Alexander, "Cosiaca quitó minas y sembró esperanza." *El Colombiano*. Medellín. 6 June 2010.

to grow crops and start anew.[75] Many people who returned to the town centers stayed with family or friends who were *resistentes* – the local terminology for "those who never left"– until they got back on their feet.[76]

Although return experiences varied – urban and rural, family and individual, and by the amount of personal resources one could dedicate to starting over – one trait was common among the majority of returnees in Eastern Antioquia. When asked if they had participated in a return program or received government subsidies, nearly everyone answered, "llegamos por nuestra cuenta," or "we arrived on our own, of our own accord."[77]

Without government or security support, the returnees took great risk. Although insurgents did not have consolidated control over most of the rural areas of San Carlos in the final years of the conflict, they still maintained a sporadic presence until 2010. In some cases, returnees were re-victimized, forced to displace for a second or third time, or killed upon returning to their land. As the former mayor of San Carlos explained, "There were villages where people returned and there was a guerrilla or paramilitary incursion, and they had to displace again, which is even worse. This is really hard – profoundly hard and profoundly cruel. But, well, at the end of it all, the people returned."[78]

Among the tragedies that occurred, one took place in the corregimiento of Samaná, when displaced persons from the villages of Sardinitas and Santa Rita returned in September of 2004. About 25 farmers intended to return their land by bus from San

[75] Interviews with residents in San Carlos. 14 February 2014.
[76] Interview with resident in San Carlos. 9 November 2013.
[77] Multiple interviews with returnees to San Carlos (26-27 July 2011) and Granada, San Francisco, San Rafael, and San Luis (November 2013- April 2014). Interview with coordinator of the Collective Return project as part of the Medellín-San Carlos Alliance in San Carlos. 27 July 2011. Interview with regional director of *Familias en su Tierra* in San Carlos. 13 February 2014.
[78] Interview with Francisco "Pelufo" Alvarez in San Carlos. 6 December 2013.

Carlos' town center. But the bus activated a landmine buried in the unpaved road, and the explosion alerted combatants from the 9th front of the FARC in the area. Assuming the bus carried members of the Colombian army, rather than civilians, the FARC attacked, killing four people, wounding 18, and forcing all survivors to displace for a second time.[79] Yet the displaced remained determined to return, and eventually did. "We arrived in Samaná and it was completely abandoned," said one of the young men who returned. "When we arrived there were only the marks from bullets and blood on the walls."[80]

In addition to bullets and blood, returnees to rural areas throughout San Carlos found their farmland and rural roads littered with landmines, unexploded grenades, and other explosive artifacts. Many of the latter had been constructed out of everyday objects such as syringes and soda bottles.[81] Returnees took on these dangers as well, again without government support. They set fire to the land and observed whether anything exploded. They put salt on unexploded grenades, pipe bombs, and ammunition in order to corrode the metal, and they threw the objects into rivers to de-activate them. When farmers suspected landmines were present but underground and out of view, they walked behind a row of older (sacrificial) livestock, stepping only where the animals had already done so safely.[82] Many of these activities were organized among small groups of people from the same village.

[79] Sanchez, Gonzalo, ed., "San Carlos: Memorias del Exodo en La Guerra." *Grupo de Memoria Historica*. Bogotá, 2011: 213.
[80] Translated from an interview in San Carlos in 2010 from Gonzalo Sanchez' "San Carlos: Memorias del Exodo en La Guerra." *Grupo de Memoria Historica*. Bogotá, 2011: 191
[81] "Strategic Return Plan," *San Carlos Municipal Government*. 2010.
[82] Sanchez, Gonzalo ed., "San Carlos: Memorias del Exodo en La Guerra." *Grupo de Memoria Historica*. Bogotá, 2011: 341-342.

Finally, some farmers de-activated landmines by hand. In San Miguel, a village in San Carlos that was previously under FARC control, one man de-activated and removed 32 landmines on his own. When interviewed he joked that "the only thing he lacked was an official demining training certificate."[83] While other residents thought this was a heroic act, they perhaps surprisingly did not consider it entirely irrational, as "the person who knows the most about landmines, their location, their placement, and their impact is the *campesino.*"[84] It was he or she who, during the conflict, had to co-exist with landmines while carrying out the daily activities of harvesting crops and bringing goods to and from the market. Therefore, it was often also the farmer that knew best how to solve the problem of landmines.[85]

The return process caught the municipal government of San Carlos by surprise. People arrived and, without alerting municipal officials, headed directly to remote rural areas, often on foot. In fact, many of the first returnees deliberately avoided interaction with the police, army or any governmental body or official. During the conflict they had witnessed or suspected civilian abuses and collusion with paramilitary groups, and even after the 2005 collective demobilization of paramilitaries, trust in the municipal government and the Colombian state remained low.[86]

The unmonitored flow of returnees left San Carlos officials without data on the quantity, location, or demographic characteristics of the municipality's residents. The enumerators of the 2005 national census proved to be of little assistance, as they avoided

[83] Translated from an interview in San Carlos in 2010 from Gonzalo Sanchez' "San Carlos: Memorias del Exodo en La Guerra." *Grupo de Memoria Historica*. Bogotá, 2011: 342.
[84] Interview with Jaime Fajardo. 22 April 2014.
[85] Parish, Erin. "The Bittersweet Coast: Environments of War and Aftermath in Colombia." Ph.D. diss., Duke University. 2015: 226-243.
[86] Sanchez, Gonzalo ed., "San Carlos: Memorias del Exodo en La Guerra." *Grupo de Memoria Historica*. Bogotá, 2011: 357.

entire swaths of the municipality out of fear of armed groups.[87] Yet it became clear that more people were returning, eventually drawing on and overwhelming local infrastructure and resources. Indeed, between 2006 and 2007, 5,000 people returned to San Carlos,[88] nearly doubling the municipality's population and creating a state of administrative "chaos."[89]

The chaos quickly became a second humanitarian crisis in San Carlos. Yet it was a crisis without precedent in Colombia, and it was unclear whether state or national government should take responsibility. There was no existing legal framework for such a situation, nor best practices that could be garnered from elsewhere in the country. By failing to intervene substantively, the departmental and national government essentially ceded responsibility to the municipal government (which after eight years of war was suffering diminished leadership, institutional capacity, and financial resources). As the historical memory publication, *San Carlos: Memorias del Exodo en La Guerra*[90], emphasizes: the case of San Carlos reveals the "lack of state response in relation to the magnitude and depth of the damage done to the people and the territory."[91]

It must be noted that the state and federal governments did provide support to San Carlos and surrounding municipalities. But the support was not comprehensive or coordinated.[92] In fact, the presence of state and federal (and non-governmental) officials came to be called a *desfile de chalecos* ("parade of vests," due to the vests that humanitarian workers wore) because the humanitarian workers arrived, distributed

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[87] Interview with journalist in El Peñol. 29 October 2013.
[88] "Protegiendo La Poblacion Desplazada Colombiana: El Papel de las Autoridades Locales. Resumen" (Protecting the Colombian Displaced Population: The Role of Local Authorities. Summary). *Brookings Institute and the University of Los Andes*. Bogotá. November 2008: 9.
[89] Interview with Midgonia Perez in Medellín. 20 October 2013.
[90] "San Carlos: Memories of Exodus in the War"
[91] Sanchez, Gonzalo ed., "San Carlos: Memorias del Exodo en La Guerra." *Grupo de Memoria Historica*. Bogotá, 2011: 357.
[92] Ibid., 359.

resources for a few days (for example, food, blankets, mattresses, and hygienic supplies), and then departed to their offices in Bogotá.[93] There, according to many residents, they would continue to design programs behind a desk, without knowing the reality on the ground.[94]

The lack of coordinated external support left it to community actors within San Carlos to organize their own initiatives. These community actors included both municipal officials and ordinary people within the municipality. It is important to note that the residents I interviewed did not consider municipal "officials" part of the "Colombian state," especially after community members pressed those with ties to the paramilitaries out of municipal office. Those who remained in the municipal government were in most cases lifelong residents of San Carlos, with no party affiliation or sway with the state or federal government.[95] Therefore, although they were elected to – or employed by – the municipal government, I do not consider local government officials in San Carlos "decision-making elites."

Initially, community leaders organized around the issues they could – those that could be addressed by people power instead of money – calling for temporary state support when needed. An example was the *convite* convened in 2006, which drew 400 residents to rebuild the abandoned, unpaved road between San Carlos and the corregimiento of Buenos Aires, San Luis. The group worked with *pico y palo* (pick and stick) to remove boulders, dig up and smooth out the dirt roadway, and cut back overgrowth. They convinced a few locally stationed members of the Colombian army to

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[93] Luz Patricia Correa Madrigal in San Carlos at a public meeting. 14 February 2014. Participant observation.
[94] Interview with resident in San Carlos. 9 November 2013. Interview with resident in San Carlos. 6 December 2013.
[95] Interview with resident in San Carlos. 6 December 2013. Interview with resident in San Carlos. 10 December 2013. Interview with resident in El Jordan. 9 December 2013.

walk ahead of them in search of landmines, but still worked in fear of a misstep. However, the effort was successful, and it enabled vehicles to bring commercial goods to the rural villages along the road, and farmers and their agricultural goods to town centers and markets.[96]

Indeed, there was utility in such support from the army, and in the temporary emergency assistance by state and federal governments.[97] But these piecemeal supports designed at the national level treated the phenomenon of population return as if it were simply another manifestation of population movement within the context of war. Even as the number of returnees increased, the Colombian state did not recognize what the municipal leadership did – that returnees were returning to their villages permanently, as part of an entirely new phenomenon: the emergence of a post-conflict landscape.

In response, the San Carlos leadership began the design and implementation of a long-term strategy to rebuild and reconstruct the municipality. First, on July 27, 2007, they declared a "Return Emergency,"[98] drawing creatively (and some might say brilliantly) on existing legislation designed to support Colombia's internally displaced population (Law 387/1997).[99] (Law 387 was passed in 1997 to establish a formal legal status for displaced persons and to guarantee their constitutional rights). By framing returnees as also holding the status of displaced persons, the declaration – "State of Emergency due to Massive and Individual Returns" – created legitimacy within Colombia's legal system for long-term support for the return population. The declaration

[96] Interview with resident in San Francisco, San Luis. 22 March 2014.
[97] Sanchez, Gonzalo ed., "San Carlos: Memorias del Exodo en La Guerra." *Grupo de Memoria Historica*. Bogotá, 2011: 391; "Reconstrucción de la Experiencia Alianza Medellín-San Carlos Piloto: Modelo Territorial de Acompañamiento a Retornos Colectivos 2009-2011" *Alcaldia de Medellín.* 2012: 50.
[98] Mayor's office of San Carlos. Decree N° 057. 27 July 2007.
[99] Sanchez, Gonzalo ed., "San Carlos: Memorias del Exodo en La Guerra." *Grupo de Memoria Historica*. Bogotá, 2011: 361, 391. Public presentation by Claudia Giraldo Gomez and Sandra Patricia Duque at George Mason University in Arlington, VA. 10 September 2015.

framed San Carlos' local phenomenon as a national issue. It called for attention from the media, and sought support from "all national and international organizations of humanitarian assistance and that work with the displaced persons"[100] to help the municipality guarantee the constitutionally protected basic rights of the displaced population, who in this case, were returning to and attempting to rebuild the municipality they had fled.[101]

But after the declaring the Return Emergency, the San Carlos leadership did not wait for external support. Rather, they sought ways to utilize the national requirement to guarantee constitutional rights to displaced people to their returnees in a post-conflict context.

Among the measures they took were pardoning taxes owed on returnees' properties, calling their right to land a constitutional guarantee, and also helping them to organize to get the region's electricity supplier – *Empresas Públicas de Medellín* (EPM)[102] – to pardon any electricity costs amassed during their absence. In some cases, armed actors had used electricity in the homes of residents they had forced off their land. In other cases, significant charges might not have been owed, but returnees could not afford the reconnection fee and back payments for unused electrical connections. The fact that EPM was charging returnees anything was considered ridiculous by many residents:

> Is it that they don't know the region of Eastern Antioquia? A farmer arrives with
> a suitcase, in the same way he left. He arrives at his house after walking two

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[100] Mayor's office of San Carlos. Decree #057, Article 2. 27 July 2007.
[101] Sanchez, Gonzalo ed., "San Carlos: Memorias del Exodo en La Guerra." *Grupo de Memoria Historica*. Bogotá, 2011: 391.
[102] "Public Companies of Medellín."

hours to his village, which is covered in weeds and without public services, electricity, roads, a school, where there is nothing, not even water, and EPM says, "If you give me the $250 you owe me, I will reconnect your electricity."[103]

In 2008, residents of San Carlos joined 300-400 regional voices[104] in protest of EPM policies. To make their case against the powerful energy company, residents drew on the letter of the 387 Law, and the fact that San Carlos had pardoned returnees back taxes for constitutional reasons, and framed electrical connections as a constitutional right as well. This pressed EPM to issue an internal decree (1657/2008) to establish a subsidized financing program for displaced persons and initiated the process of "turning the lights back on" in rural villages in the municipalities of Cocorná, Granada, San Carlos, San Francisco, San Luis, and San Rafael.[105]

That same year, San Carlos' then-mayor, Juan Alberto García Duque, sought support for the Return Emergency throughout Antioquia and in Colombia's capital city, Bogotá. While he called attention to the municipality's unique challenges, he also pointed out that San Carlos was experiencing a post-conflict phenomenon that was already playing out in much of Eastern Antioquia, and would one day occur in the rest of the country.[106]

García Duque found a receptive audience in Medellín. Over the previous decade, Medellín's population had exploded with an influx of displaced persons fleeing the

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[103] Sanchez, Gonzalo ed., "San Carlos: Memorias del Exodo en La Guerra." *Grupo de Memoria Historica*. Bogotá, 2011: 398.

[104] This meeting was part of the Eastern Antioquia Peace Laboratories.

[105] Henoa, Margaret Salazar, "Foro Empresarial del Pacto Mundial en America Latina y el Caribe: Derechos Humanos y Estandares Laborales" *Empresas Publicas de Medellín (EPM)*. Decree #1657. 2008.

[106] Indeed, San Carlos' neighbor, Granada, was already witnessing an influx of unaccompanied returnees and would eventually follow San Carlos' example, declaring its own "Return Emergency" on January 27th, 2013. Interview with then mayor, Freddy Castaño in Granada. 14 November 2013. Interview with then Secretary of Granada, Claudia Milena Giraldo Gomez, in Granada. 7 March 2014.

violence in other parts of Antioquia. The refugees had "invaded"[107] the empty land on the steep hillsides that surround the Aburrá Valley city, setting up squatter camps that had evolved into large slums. By 2008, the IDP (Internally Displaced Persons) population in Medellín had grown so large that it greatly outstripped any other city in Colombia as a proportion of the total population.[108] Thus, like San Carlos, Medellín had experienced an unprecedented refugee crisis that overwhelmed its local resources and had to be addressed without known best practices or comprehensive legislative or logistic support from the national government.[109]

In particular, García Duque found an interest among the directors at the Victims Unit – a department housed within the municipal government of Medellín that had been designed to provide humanitarian assistance in response to the large inflow of IDPs to the city. It was there that García Duque made his proposal: that Medellín designate approximately $200,000 of its local tax revenue to support the collective return of 300 IDP families living in Medellín to their place of origin, San Carlos.[110]

The Unit's longtime director – Luz Patricia Correa Madrigal – recalls that in response to García Duque's presentation, then-mayor of Medellín, Alonso Salazar, "said the function of an elected leader is to help people dream."[111] He aspired "to overcome normative challenges, to overcome the constructs of a public policy that had not yet been defined, to give this country a reference point, and in the context of a conflict, design

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[107] The slums surrounding Medellín are referred to as *invasiones* or "invasions."

[108] In 2011, Medellín housed 206,857 IDPs of a total population of 2,368,282 (~8.7%) versus Bogotá, which housed 302,400 IDPs out of a total population of 7,467,804 (~4%). Accumulated statistics from *Acción Social*, 31 May 2011 and the *Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística* (DANE). Bogotá. 2015.

[109] "Reconstrucción de la Experiencia Alianza Medellín-San Carlos Piloto: Modelo Territorial de Acompañamiento a Retornos Colectivos 2009-2011." *Alcaldia de Medellín.* 2012.

[110] "Adios a la Guerra." *Revista Semana.* Bogotá. 19 November 2011.

[111] Luz Patricia Correa Madrigal in San Carlos at a public meeting. 14 February 2014. Participant observation.

post-conflict actions and guidance for other territorial entities."[112] Correa claims his enthusiasm and belief that the two municipalities could work together was what made their eventual return project a reality.[113]

Correa considered it important to design a comprehensive collective return strategy, and she also saw how doing so benefitted Medellín economically. It was simply less expensive to design and carry out a multi-faceted collective return and municipal reconstruction program in San Carlos than it was to provide the IDP population sanitation, electricity, water, transportation, education, policing, and humanitarian subsidies in the slums of Medellín.[114] Under Correa's leadership, the Victims Unit and the municipal government of San Carlos formed an alliance and began to design a collective return project.

The two municipalities did not have many examples to work from. (Correa joked that "in 2008 the only 'return policy' was loading people onto a bus").[115] There was no template for how to establish the legal and financial mechanisms that would allow the municipality of Medellín to "invest" its local tax resources in the reconstruction of another municipal government. It had never been attempted in Colombia before.

To begin, the governments drew on the letter of the law (387/1997) and drafted a new law (1190/2008) that would authorize municipal administrations and mayors to transfer local resources to "receptor" municipalities as a means of guaranteeing the constitutionally conferred rights of the displaced population "in a situation of return."[116]

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[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.
[114] "Reconstrucción de la Experiencia Alianza Medellín-San Carlos Piloto: Modelo Territorial de Acompañamiento a Retornos Colectivos 2009-2011" (Best Practices from the Medellín-San Carlos Alliance Pilot: Territorial Model for the Assistance of Collective Returns 2009-2011). *Alcaldia de Medellín* (Mayor's office of Medellín). 2012: 47-48.
[115] Luz Patricia Correa Madrigal in San Carlos at a public meeting. 14 February 2014. Participant Observation.
[116] The Republic of Colombia. *Colombian Congress*. Law 1190. Article 07. Daily Log #46.976. 30 April 2008.

The article created a new financing mechanism on a national level, as well as method for

coordinating project implementation through various levels of government. The 1190

Law also brought to life the "Medellín-San Carlos Alliance," which gave the two

municipalities joint responsibility over Colombia's first truly comprehensive post-conflict

pilot project: Collective Return of 300 Families.[117]

The Alliance intended to provide comprehensive support to 300 families who had

displaced to Medellín and then returned to San Carlos. However, the project was

suspended soon after it began because García Duque was charged with embezzling state

funds and collusion with paramilitaries.[118] But the program was quickly reinstated in

2009 after Francisco "Pelufo" Alvarez was elected as San Carlos' mayor. A resistente

who worked in theater, Alvarez was of the community and had its trust. He emphasized

the importance of continuity with García Duque's government, despite the setback and

scandal, and also lobbied for programs, projects, funding, and support that would benefit

the return and reconstruction of his municipality.[119]

The Alliance's program – now with Correa and Alvarez at the helm – was the first

of its kind, as it sought to address both the immediate and long-term needs of the

returnees. It successfully garnered financial resources from an array of regional, national,

and international entities and coordinated their diverse interests and mission.[120] The

program then facilitated the construction of new homes, and provided a housing subsidy

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[117] "Reconstrucción de la Experiencia Alianza Medellín-San Carlos Piloto: Modelo Territorial de Acompañamiento a Retornos Colectivos 2009-2011." *Alcaldia de Medellín.* 2012:14.

[118] In 2014, García was convicted for embezzling national funds destined for health care services in San Carlos while he served as mayor during the conflict years (2003-2004). He is serving a 5-year prison sentence. Germán Jimenez Morales, "'Muerte Política' Para Ex-alcalde de San Carlos," *El Colombiano*, 17 December 2014. "Condenados Por Peculado Ex-alcalde Y Ex-concejal de San Carlos," *El Colombiano.* 22 January 2015.

[119] Interview with Francisco "Pelufo" Alvarez in San Carlos. 6 December 2013.

[120] For example, the Departmental government of Antioquia (regional), energy companies EPM and Isagen (regional), Cornare (regional), Sena (national), ICBF (national), Acción Social (national), and the Colombian army (national), as well as USAID (international) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (international). "Return Project Medellín-San Carlos: Presentation of Final Advances." San Carlos, July 2011. Participant observation.

and a long-term financing plan for the families who returned. Additionally, the project

provided social workers and psychologists specializing in trauma. They visited returnees

in rural areas and conducted workshops to address their experiences during the conflict,

displacement, and return.[121] The program also encompassed broader aspects of

municipal reconstruction that would have positive externalities for resistentes and

returnees who arrived from other parts of Colombia by supporting local economic

development and the restoration of basic infrastructure and services in rural areas. For

example, the Alliance helped to rebuild twelve rural public schools and provided salaries

for ten teachers, as well as oversaw the installation of 4.7 km of electrical wiring and 338

circuit boxes to provide electricity to the most isolated areas of the municipality.[122]

The Alliance's work brought San Carlos into the national spotlight and garnered

the attention of Migdonia Perez, the regional director for the national government's social

services agency, *Acción Social*. Perez was from Eastern Antioquia and had lived through

the conflict herself. She had previously attempted to advocate for the returnees of San

Carlos with national and international groups, but had been unsuccessful.[123] National

leaders had feared getting involved due to a lack of security and in the absence of a

template for action. But after the Alliance's work was underway, Perez convinced one of

Acción Social's national directors to visit San Carlos. The director visited a rural village,

walking hours there and then back to the municipal center along unpaved roads. But he

would later say that "being enclosed in four walls in Bogotá, you can't get to know the

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[121] Memory workshop addressing trauma in the village of San Miguel, San Carlos. 27 July 2011. Participant observation.
[122] "Reconstrucción de la Experiencia Alianza Medellín-San Carlos Piloto: Modelo Territorial de Acompañamiento a Retornos Colectivos 2009-2011." *Alcaldia de Medellín.* 2012:105.
[123] Interview with Midgonia Perez in Medellín. 20 October 2013.

reality" and decided to support a pilot project – *Retornar es Vivir*[124] – assisting returnees in San Carlos and five of the other municipalities hardest hit by the conflict in Eastern Antioquia.[125]

But before programming could advance, one major challenge remained – landmines.[126] Maria Patricia Giraldo – who would later become the mayor of San Carlos (2010-2014) – recalls the irony: "At that time I was the ombudsperson of San Carlos. Various institutions met together to discuss the fact that we were helping families to return to villages where explosive artifacts could still threaten their lives."[127]

The mountainous topography of San Carlos made mechanical demining impossible. Rather, workers had to traverse rugged territory on foot, carefully scanning each meter with hand-held device.[128] Although the Colombian army had the technical expertise to remove the landmines, they needed the support of the civilian population who knew every walking path and short-cut, as well as the patterns of mine placement used by the FARC.[129] But returnees and resistentes in rural areas did not trust the army. They had witnessed too much harrassment and too many abuses and false positives by army soldiers during the conflict.[130] Thus, it was impossible for national-level directives

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[124] "To Return is to Live."

[125] Interview with Francisco "Pelufo" Alvarez in San Carlos. 2 April 2014.

[126] Additionally, in 2008, an "emergency" demining campaign began, allowing the army to destroy landmines that had been located and identified by residents and returnees in San Carlos. This however, was not within international humanitarian demining safety protocol, as it put the onus of responsibility to locate the mines on the civilians and residents without proper training.

[127] Maria Patricia Giraldo in San Carlos at a public meeting. 14 February 2014. Participant observation.

[128] "La batalla de desminar un pueblo." *Revista Semana*. Bogotá. 14 March 2012.

[129] Comments of regional director of Acción Social at the inter-institutional meeting and presentation of the Colombian Army in the Mayor's office of San Carlos. 26 July 2011. Participant observation.

[130] According to information gathered from the human rights' database, "Noche y Niebla" and CINEP's newspaper archives, these types of abuses were recorded in 13% of the villages in San Carlos. There are also instances that took place in the town center.

to institute a successful demining process without community support in the most rural areas.[131]

The Alliance recognized this, and decided that the best way to gain ownership in the return and demining process from rural residents was through the Asocomunal.[132] When fully functional, was comprised of community action committees led by the democratically elected presidents of each rural village and urban neighborhood. The problem was that San Carlos' Asocomunal had disintegrated under the presidency of a paramilitary member who co-opted the institutional structure to collect information about civilians suspected of collaborating with the insurgency.[133] Of the municipality's possible 78 juntas, only 11 remained at the time the Alliance was initiated and none of them remained in rural areas. Of the 11, some were still led by individuals connected to paramilitary groups. Logically, and despite the fact that the paramilitaries had "officially" demobilized in 2005, the community continued to view Asocomunal with fear and mistrust.[134]

In 2008, residents of San Carlos nominated the president of the urban neighborhood, La Viejita, to run for president of Asocomunal. Rogelio "Roca" Cardona ran against the previous president, who had paramilitary connections, and took 100 of the 104 votes cast.[135] Subsequently, the previous Asocomunal president and other demobilized paramilitary members that led juntas were imprisoned for criminal activity.

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[131] For example, The humanitarian demining campaign concentrated on the following villages: La Hondita, Aguabonita, El Vergel, San Blas, San Miguel, Santa Ines, Santa Rita, Pabellones, Las Camelias, La Mirandita, and El Choco.

[132] "Cronología de Paz y Reconciliación en San Carlos," at the *Centro de Acercemiento, Reconciliación, y Reparación en San Carlos* (CARE). Multiple site visits, July 2011, June 2012, 2013-2014. Participant observation.

[133] Interview with Rogelio "Roca" Cardona in San Carlos. 4 April 2014. Interview with Pastora Mira in San Carlos. 10 December 2013.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Ibid.

Cardona saw this as his opportunity to resurrect the institution as a structure that was democratic, effective, and community-oriented. He described the work this way:

> With the help of the Alliance, we started to visit the villages one by one. We started to help people return to the villages and encouraged them to form community action committees in the rural areas. We told them, "Hey brother, come participate in the junta! I need you to be a member of the junta and make sure that the people involved aren't *strangers*[136] so that we don't end up in a situation that does damage to our town again."[137]

They dispensed information about the legal structure of the junta, discussed the role and responsibilities of its leaders, and assured returnees that paramilitary members were no longer part of the leadership. Cardona also worked to empower the juntas, facilitating their legal constitution and enabling them to contract directly with the municipal government, and regional, national, and private entities. By 2014, 77 of the 78 juntas had been legally constituted.[138]

Similarly, Alvarez sought to empower the junta presidents. He recalls, "I invited them to the mayor's office and told them to sit in my chair. They would say, 'no that is the mayor's chair, I can't sit there,' and I would explain how they are the 'mayor' of their village."[139] The presidents were also given vests with the names of their villages on them, conferring the same formality as the national and international humanitarian workers.[140] Finally, in 2009, Alvarez' administration introduced an innovative participatory budgeting mechanism, allowing each president to allocate municipal

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[136] "Gente extraña or "strange people" is also a euphemism for the armed actors, as they arrived in San Carlos from other areas of Colombia during the conflict. This was particularly true of paramilitaries.
[137] Interview with Rogelio "Roca" Cardona in San Carlos. 4 April 2014.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Interview with Francisco "Pelufo" Alvarez in San Carlos. 2 May 2014.
[140] Asocomunal meetings in San Carlos. November 2013 – April 2014. Participant observation.

resources to projects relevant to their specific village or neighborhood.[141] This took the

funds out of the hands of the municipality's elected council, thereby decentralizing

power from the hands of a few to the many juntas and their communities.

With the Asocomunal empowered and reconstituted by civilians, the Alliance

moved forward with plans for demining and Acción Social with the launch of Retornar es

Vivir.[142] A final preliminary step had the national government send army soldiers to the

rural areas to provide information and to expose residents to positive behavior by the

military. The Alliance then carried out informational campaigns through Asocomunal to

gain the returnee community's buy-in for demining.[143] Each junta president had to work

with his or her residents to map their territory and mark potential dangers. In some cases,

the residents had already carried out this activity within the community and it was a

matter of sharing accurate information with the Colombian army.[144] Finally, a

humanitarian wing of the army and the Medellín-San Carlos Alliance – with financial and

logistical support from the Governor's office of Antioquia, Acción Social, and the

Organization of American States (OAS) – carried out the first successful humanitarian

demining campaign in Colombia.[145]

Using maps created by residents, the group began a process of *Semaforización* or

"Stop-Lighting" in which a village was assigned the color green if it was not suspected

to have landmines or other dangerous elements, yellow if the community had indicated

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[141] Interview with Francisco "Pelufo" Alvarez in San Carlos. 2 May 2014. "Cronología de Paz y Reconciliación en San Carlos," Centro de Acercemiento, Reconciliación, y Reparación en San Carlos" (CARE). Multiple site visits to CARE between 2011-2014. Participant observation.
[142] "Retornar es Vivir." *Subdirección de atención a población desplazada, prevención, emergencias y retornos*. Acción Social, Bogotá. 2009.
[143] Parish, Erin. "The Bittersweet Coast: Environments of War and Aftermath in Colombia." Ph.D. diss. Duke University. 2015: 259. The author refers to the Colombian Army's informational campaigns as "public relations campaigns".
[144] Interview with Pastora Mira in San Carlos. 5 March 2014.
[145] Mayor Maria Patricia Giraldo's public presentation, "San Carlos Libre de Sospecha de Minas." *Alcaldía de San Carlos*. San Carlos. 13 March 2012.

the possibility of mines, and red if there had been an explosion or report of bombs, landmines, or unexploded ammunition.[146] Beginning with 14 men in 2009, Battalion 60 began the arduous task of humanitarian demining.[147] The Colombian army, with the community's support and territorial expertise, swept the municipality meter by meter, removing mines. By 2011, the Battalion had nearly one hundred men at its disposal[148] and the campaign had removed a total of 435 landmines from 70 of the 72 villages suspected to have landmines, including 277 walking paths and 40 schools.[149]

The demining process was successfully carried out, as were the collective returns. Thus, a template was created for comprehensive post-conflict programming. It would soon become an example for the nation, as a new Colombian president began shifting the country's focus from violence and terrorism towards a long-term plan for peace.[150]

San Carlos and the Victims Law

As president, Alvaro Uribe had focused on the military defeat of leftist insurgencies. His "Democratic Security" campaign, a military offensive, swept through Eastern Antioquia and pushed most insurgents out by 2007 (although the presence of armed actors was recorded as late as 2010).[151] Violence by guerrillas was labeled

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[146] According to residents, this technique was originally introduced and designed by returnees to San Carlos and then adopted by the Colombian army as a method that could easily be understood by the community. Carlos Mario Cano R.'s "San Carlos, en Antioquia, el primer pueblo libre de minas antipersonales." *El Tiempo*. Bogotá. 13 March 2012. This information was corroborated during the following meeting: "Avances del Desminado Humanitario en San Carlos," Inter-institutional meeting and presentation of the Colombian Army in the Mayor's office of San Carlos. 26 July 2011. Participant observation.

[147] Ibid.

[148] Cano, Carlos Mario, "San Carlos, libre de minas pero con miedo." *El Tiempo*. 19 March 2012.

[149] Alonzo Lopez, Nestor. "Otro paso para fortalecer el retorno en San Carlos, Antioquia." *El Tiempo*. 2 September 2011.

[150] Avendaño, Camilo Osorio, "La asombroso historia del retorno en San Carlos." *La Silla Vacia*. Bogotá. 6 February 2011. Digital Edition.

[151] Armed confrontations between the Colombian army and the FARC were recorded in San Luis in the village of La Estrella on January 27, 2010. "Caen guerilleros." *El Mundo*. Medellín. 27 January 2010.

"criminal" or "terrorist," stripping the insurgent groups of political legitimacy and undermining any opportunities for national peace negotiations or programming.[152]

Thus, it came as a surprise that when Uribe's Minister of Defense, Juan Manuel Santos, became president in 2010 and changed course. Instead of focusing on a military offensive, the new president took quick action to promote human rights, reconciliation, and peace. By July 2011 he passed a historic "Victims and Land Restitution Law" (1448/2011), officially recognizing for the first time in a decade that the violence in Colombia was part of an internal armed conflict.[153] The law further sought to "promote and consolidate national peace and reconciliation"[154] by offering reparations to victims of the conflict. These reparations would come in the form of monetary compensation, land restitution, and/or assistance for displaced persons who wished to return to their places of origin. The 1448 Law was broader than the 387 Law, which only assisted displaced persons to access their constitutional rights, and offered reparations for all types of victims during the conflict. Indeed, the Victims Law represented post-conflict legislation passed even while in many parts of Colombia the armed conflict continued.[155]

This unique circumstance presented a challenge to the Santos' administration, as there were few examples to draw on from other countries – most legislation addressing victims and transitional justice is drafted after peace accords are signed. Instead, the national government looked to San Carlos' experience for a template from which to draft

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[152] "Colombia: Peace at Last." Latin America Report Nº 45. *International Crisis Group*. 25 September 2012:14.
[153] Ibid., 17.
[154] República de Colombia. Ministerio del Interior. Law 1448, Article 8, 10 June 2011.
[155] Interview with Juan Muaricio Torres Jaramillo in Bogotá. 1 July 2011. Interview with Ana Maria Ibañez in Bogotá. 22 June 2011.

and implement post-conflict programming. In fact, the Victims Law drew directly on best practices offered by the Alliance and its Collective Return pilot.[156]

The law outlined three principals that were necessary for the return of IDPs – security, will, and dignity.[157] The "security" component was derived from the example of the Alliance's "Stop-Lighting" process and successful humanitarian demining work. The Victims' Law importantly recognized that it needed to assure that IDPs could return and settle in areas that were free of landmines, illicit crops, and armed actors. The law also guaranteed protection for community leadership positions and political participation. This was fundamental, given how important it had been to build community trust internally and with the military in San Carlos' demining initiative.

The Victims Law also identified the "will" of IDPs – their desire to return to their homes – as a critical requirement and reality. This recognition also drew from San Carlos' experience, where nearly 9,000 people had returned by 2010,[158] and Eastern Antioquia's where 68,000 IDPs had returned by the time the law was drafted.[159]

Finally, the Victims Law guaranteed "dignity" for returnees, promising to confer and protect the "the effective enjoyment of rights of the displaced population."[160] This wording encompassed aspects of restorative peacebuilding that could not be granted solely through individual reparations, including the provision of collective goods such as education, health, housing, and social services. The insight to ensure this was included in the law also came from the Alliance's example, as the Collective Return project had

[156] Secretaría de Bienestar Social. Gerencia Técnica Para La Coordinación y Atención a La Población Desplazada. "Experiencia Piloto: Retorno Colectivo de Población Desplazada al Municipio de San Carlos," *Alcaldía de Medellín*, 2010: 11, 40.
[157] República de Colombia. Ministerio del Interior. Law 1448, Article 28: Derechos de las Víctimas, 10 June 2011.
[158] "Adios a la guerra." *Revista Semana*. Bogotá. 19 November 2011.
[159] "Reconstrucción de la Experiencia Alianza Medellín-San Carlos Piloto: Modelo Territorial de Acompañamiento a Retornos Colectivos 2009-2011." *Alcaldia de Medellín.* 2012:115.
[160] República de Colombia. Ministerio del Interior. Law 1448, Article 1, 10 June 2011.

provided support with positive externalities for the entire municipality, beyond the families in the program. For example, the project helped to fund the opening of rural schools and subsidized teachers, which provided a benefit not only returnees, but also to other residents with children living in rural areas.

In addition to informing the content of the Victims Law, the Alliance also offered a legal infrastructure to coordinate resources, personnel, and activities between a diverse array of local, regional, national, and international entities. The Victims Law thus drew on the innovative financing mechanism introduced in 2008 (1190) that had allowed Medellín to invest its local resources in San Carlos.[161] The 1190 Law would subsequently be leveraged to implement programs in other municipalities throughout Eastern Antioquia.[162]

In September 2011, just two months after the Victims Law was passed, President Santos visited several rural villages in San Carlos and attended a ceremony in honor of the Alliance's first provision of subsidized homes to returnee families. At the ceremony, Santos noted publicly and with enthusiasm, "This is exactly what the national government wants to do. We want to establish peace, like peace has returned to the municipality of San Carlos."[163] He called the experience of San Carlos a "reference point" for the implementation of the Victims Law and a fundamental example for best practices in the process of return in Colombia.[164] Two months later San Carlos received

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[161] In 2010, during a constitutional court session passed an "Auto 383" citing the role of Medellín in San Carlos' collective return process and encouraging new legal tools to permit a broader reconstruction process. República de Colombia. *Congreso de Colombia*. Law 1190. Official Daily Log #46,976. 30 April. 2008.

[162] Interview with regional director of *Familias en su Tierra* in San Carlos. 13 February 2014.

[163] "Palabras del Presidente Juan Manuel Santos en la entrega de viviendas del programa 'Aldeas' de EPM en San Carlos, Antioquia" by Juan Manuel Santos Calderón 1 September 2011.

[164] "Reconstrucción de la Experiencia Alianza Medellín-San Carlos Piloto: Modelo Territorial de Acompañamiento a Retornos Colectivos 2009-2011." *Alcaldia de Medellín*. 2012: 99.

Colombia's National Peace Prize[165] and in March 2012, Santos returned to San Carlos to declare it the first Colombian municipality free of the suspicion of landmines. It was the example Santos wanted to replicate in the rest of the country.

In 2012, implementation of the Victims Law began and continued to draw on San Carlos and Eastern Antioquia as reference points. Then-director of Acción Social – Diego Molano – explained in an interview, "In order to design how to implement the Return and Land Restitution program, Acción Social had to look at where people had already returned."[166] He continued that the San Carlos experience was "an example in the world of processes and politics of return of the displaced population."[167]

The following year, the newly formed Department of Social Prosperity[168] (DPS) began its collective return program (*Familias en su Tierra*[169]), which was a replication and expansion of the 2008 Retornar es Vivir pilot. DPS began implementation in the same municipalities in Eastern Antioquia where the original pilot had been carried out– Cocorná, Granada, San Carlos, San Francisco, San Luis, and San Rafael – and in 2014 would extend to other regions of Colombia.[170]

As implementation of the Victims Law moves forward, national leaders continue to look at San Carlos as an example for the rest of the country. As the Vice Minister of

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[165] Adios a la Guerra." *Revista Semana*. Bogotá. 19 November 2011 and Rafael González Toro, "Premio Nacional de Paz Para San Carlos." *El Colombiano*. Medellín. 21 November 2011.
[166] Interview with Diego Molano in Bogotá. 17 October 2013.
[167] Ibid.
[168] The new department replaced Acción Social, Colombia's social service agency.
[169] "Familias on their land."
[170] Interview with regional DPS consultants in Topacio, San Rafael. 25 November 2013. Participant observation at Asocomunal in Granada. 7 December 2013. Interview with regional DPS consultants in El Jordan, San Carlos. 9 December 2013. Public presentation during implementation of the reparations process in Cocorná. 10 December 2013. Interview with regional director of Familias en su Tierra in San Carlos. 13 February 2014.

the Interior, Juan Camilo Restrepo, expressed at a 2014 meeting with other local leaders

of San Carlos, Eastern Antioquia,[171] and the municipal government of Medellín:

> We (the national government) didn't come here to bring dogma or even to bring
>
> specific topics, we came precisely to learn about what you all have done here in
>
> Colombia…twenty days ago in the Ministry we were discussing what had been
>
> the most relevant experience to this government, this administration. And without
>
> hesitation, I immediately thought about the work that you have done with victims.
>
> Without hesitation, I thought about Medellín and this sub-region, because there is
>
> no sub-region in Colombia that has experienced what Eastern Antioquia has
>
> experienced.[172]

The Transformative Peacebuilding Process in San Carlos

In the previous section, I examined a restorative peacebuilding process. Through

process-tracing, I demonstrated that the initiatives that emerged in San Carlos were not

part of a pilot program designed by the national government, but rather the outcome of a

complex, long-term process that began locally and unfolded over a decade. The narrative

traced the return, physical reconstruction, and demining of a municipality as part of

locally led restorative peacebuilding. The voluntary return patterns, *convites* to rebuild

basic physical infrastructure, and artisanal demining efforts in the municipality are all

examples of how ordinary people can provide the impetus and design for local

reconstruction activities in the post-conflict context. Additionally, the case of restorative

peacebuilding in San Carlos demonstrates how efforts by community actors were scaled

up to include regional and then national entities, and eventually became the example that

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[171] Then mayor of San Francisco, then Secretary of the government of Granada, then Secretary of the government of Argelia, and municipal representative from San Luis.
[172] Juan Camilo Restrepo in San Carlos at a public meeting. 14 February 2014. Participant observation.

Colombia looked to as it designed and began implementation of its first comprehensive post-conflict legislation and programming: the Victims Law.

In this section, I again use the case of San Carlos and the method of process tracing to examine grassroots peacebuilding as an endogenous phenomenon led by ordinary people. Specifically, I demonstrate that San Carlos' reconciliation, memory, and truth initiatives were started by community actors and began informally and on a small scale Additionally, I show that although the origins of the San Carlos' transitional justice measures have been local, many aspects of the grassroots process has been legitimized, expanded, or supported by the existence of national transitional justice legislation – specifically, Law 975 or the "Justice and Peace Law," which brought about collective paramilitary demobilization in Colombia in 2005.

I begin by describing how the San Carlos community designed reconciliation initiatives in the wake of the paramilitary demobilization. I then provide a snapshot of local memory efforts in San Carlos – community-designed memorials and museums – and explain their varying degrees of intersection with Law 975. Finally, I examine the efforts of ordinary people – especially mothers of disappeared persons – to find, identify, and exhume the bodies of disappeared persons, as part of a broader peacebuilding landscape.

Reconciliation

Mesas de Reconciliación

By 2002, the paramilitary *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*[173] (AUC) had consolidated territorial control in parts of Colombia, and the Uribe Administration thus began the process of negotiating for their disarmament (Sanchez et al. 2012: 27, 45).

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[173] United Self Defense Forces of Colombia.

Although specific paramilitary blocks voluntarily demobilized as early as 2003, many high-level paramilitary leaders subsequently formed new *bloques* and continued to operate as they had before. It was not until 2005, when the Uribe administration passed Colombia's Justice and Peace Law,[174] that a countrywide collective demobilization encouraged nearly all the paramilitary blocks to lay down their arms.

While the law's stated objectives were to "facilitate peace processes"[175] and "guarantee the rights of truth, justice, and reparations"[176] to the victims of armed groups, the primary goal was to oversee the collective demobilization of approximately 36,000 paramilitary combatants. In exchange for providing conflict-related information – that helped "clarify the truth"[177] and could be used in service of "attaining national peace"[178] – high and mid-level paramilitary officials would receive reduced jail sentences.[179] To facilitate this, the law created a new government institution– the National Center for Reconciliation and Reparation (NCRR)[180] – to verify perpetrator testimonies and gather a collective memory that included victims' accounts of violence.[181]

When the collective demobilization process began, Colombia's second largest paramilitary block – *Heroes de Granada* – began a journey from its headquarters in El Jordan, San Carlos, towards Cristales, San Roque. There, on August 1, 2005, 2,033 paramilitary members demobilized and lay down 1,223 weapons.[182] While the high-

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[174] Contrary to what the law's title might suggest, it was passed at the same time that the violence in Colombia was peaking.

[175] Article 1 of Law 975 (2005)..

[176] Article 4 of Law 975 (2005).

[177] Article 15 of Law 975 (2005).

[178] Articles 3 and 4 of Law 975 (2005).

[179] Paramilitary leaders would serve between five and eight years in prison. The rank and file paramilitaries – comprising 95% percent of the organization – would receive no jail sentence.

[180] The NCRR operated for eight years – until 2013 – when it became the National Center for Historical Memory under the Santos presidency.

[181] Articles 6 and 56 of Law 975 (2005).

[182] "Proceso de paz con las autodefensas: informe ejecutivo." *President of the Republic Office of the High Commissioner for Peace*. Bogotá. 2006. p. 41.

ranking officials would be tried according to punitive transitional justice measures, rank-and-file members would reintegrate into civilian life. Forty-seven of the ex-combatants[183] chose to return and settle in San Carlos – where they would live among the population they had previously terrorized.

For residents of San Carlos, the impact of the national demobilization process was not simply a matter of reintegrating individual demobilized combatants into a "receiving community" (Prieto 2012: 530). The geographic dynamics of paramilitary rule in San Carlos – paramilitaries had consolidated control in some villages, and battled harshly with insurgents in others – had also created tension and mistrust *between civilians*. Many residents believed that all civilians living in El Jordan were – directly or indirectly – connected to the social and logistical infrastructure that had enabled paramilitary rule. Conversely, those living in El Jordan viewed the rest of the municipality with skepticism, fearing they were insurgent collaborators.

This mistrust was more than perception. Stable paramilitary rule in El Jordan – as well as the existence of a regional headquarters and training camp – required some degree of civilian support. Civilians were called on to gather intelligence for the paramilitaries, provide transportation, food, clean clothes, shelter, or entertainment. Regardless of if such support was voluntary or coerced, it blurred the line between combatant and civilian victim, and this impacted the municipality's social fabric in a way that resulted in mistrust after the violence ended.

The paramilitary demobilization also dissolved a local economic system that had favored some residents and exploited others. For example, while those who lived in El

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[183] Although 47 demobilized combatants is not a large number as a proportion of San Carlos' population at the time, this was the highest proportion of demobilized combatants in the region after Nariño and La Ceja (Sanchez et al. 2012: 80).

Jordan paid the paramilitaries "taxes" (*vacunas*), supposedly in exchange for protection from insurgent incursions, they also benefitted from the flood of cash into the local economy that came from the paramilitary group's illicit activities on a national scale. Meanwhile residents living near the town center of San Carlos also had to pay *vacunas,* but, as they lived where paramilitary control was contested, it only made them vulnerable to fierce retaliation by insurgent groups.[184]

Thus, demobilization exposed a community need – to address the civilian tensions caused by the geography of conflict dynamics. Unfortunately, Law 975 offered no such techniques, strategies, or programs. Rather, the work was left to local leaders in San Carlos, many of whom were resistentes that had lived under occupation. Leaders called an open meeting to discuss reconciliation (or as they put it colloquially – "*¿qué hacer con esos carajos?*"[185]), and broadly two perspectives were shared. Some civilians wanted to engage the demobilized paramilitaries in non-violent dialogue, while others opposed talking to direct perpetrators of violence.

Pastora Mira was among the leaders who favored dialogue. A victim herself – the paramilitaries had killed her son and daughter – she had worked with other victims to claim their rights to the "truth, memory, and reparations" outlined in Law 975, and had also spearheaded an effort to bring together different types of victims[186] in the form of *Mesas de Afectaciones*. She realized, however, that all-victim reconciliation work would be too one-sided and therefore become political. Mira and other local leaders agreed that

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[184] Interview with resident in San Carlos. 3 December 2013.

[185] "What to do with these jerks?" from interview in San Carlos.

[186] Family members had experienced forceful disappearances of family members, sexual violence, homicides of family members, forced displacement, torture, and other forms of victimization.

in order to "de-politicize" and "institutionalize" any reconciliation efforts, they would have to include both victims and perpetrators.

The leaders designed a program – "Psychosocial Support for Victims and Perpetrators of the Armed Conflict in Urban and Rural Areas in the Municipality of San Carlos." They then presented it to regional organizations – *Prodepaz*[187] and the European-Union supported Peace Laboratories – and received financial and logistical support for what became the municipality's first exercise in coexistence and non-violent dialogue.

Based on this success, the residents sought a more permanent, neutral space for meetings and peaceful encounters among victims and the demobilized. Law 975 offered a potential path forward, as resources were available from the Attorney General's Office, which was tasked with retrieving testimonies and "truth" about violence carried out by paramilitaries. Thus, while the responsibility for designing and carrying out the reconciliation activities remained at the local level, the group attained a formal link with the federal government and support for its reconciliation and reintegration activities.[188] They opened *CARE – Centro de Acercamiento y Reconciliación y Reparación* – in a building that had previously served as the paramilitaries' headquarters in the town center of San Carlos. CARE's mission was "to attend to the psychosocial needs of vulnerable people through an integral approach, a reconstruction of the social fabric, and according to values of responsibility, tolerance, respect, and love."[189]

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[187] *Programa de Desarrollo Para la Paz* or "Program for Development for Peace."
[188] Interview with Pastora Mira in San Carlos. 30 January 2014.
[189] "Indice de Condiciones para la Reonciliacion Nacional: Piloto San Carlos." *International Organization for Migration*. 2014. p. 110.

Among its first initiatives, in 2008 CARE began organizing "*Mesas de Reconciliación.*"[190] The initiative included a series of dialogues, held in public spaces with spectators, that brought together victims and direct perpetrators of violence – both paramilitaries and insurgents, as well as members of the church, the local police, the municipal government, and various civil society organizations. At each dialogue – or *Mesa* – participants first established a factual timeline of the conflict events they were going to discuss. To do so they each recounted what they remembered, and then had to agree on a chronology. This was followed by a conversation about a conflict event – for example, an armed attack, a massacre, or a massive displacement – in which each participant was assigned a role to play. Mira describes the methodology used at the Reconciliation Tables:

> For example, the priest would play the paramilitary member, the paramilitary member would be the teacher, and the delegate from the mayor's office would have to play the role of the victim. It was an exercise in exploring the different rights that were violated, within a human rights framework, of all those who were involved in the moment of victimization. The paramilitary member would take the position of the church and in that moment, explain how he thought he should respond as a priest. The priest, who was playing an active paramilitary member, had to explain what was going on inside of his "self" in that moment, how did he justify his acts? And successively, everyone would change roles… It was an exercise of putting yourself in someone else's shoes.[191]

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[190] "Reconciliation Tables."
[191] Interview with Pastora Mira in San Carlos. 30 January 2014.

In the years that followed, CARE continued to carry out the *Mesas* and other reconciliation activities. Their work has included regular candlelight vigils for victims, in which demobilized paramilitaries participated, and a Catholic mass that paramilitaries and victims attended together to symbolically heal the wounds of the community. At the mass, Mira played an exceptional leadership role, walking arm-in-arm into the church with the paramilitary who had kidnapped her own son.

Reconciliation and Memory: CARE

The process that led to the establishment of CARE's headquarters provides another example of grassroots peacebuilding that began with community actors in the municipality, but was eventually supported by state and national legislation and programming.

CARE's headquarters are in a centrally located, three-story building, near San Carlos' downtown. The building is so non-descript that one would never guess it was a luxury hotel in the 1980s and 90s – Hotel Punchiná – and subsequently a "House of Terror" during the conflict years. Between 2001 and 2003, paramilitaries used the empty hotel as their urban base, where they carried out torture, rape, assassination, and forced disappearances (Sanchez et al. 2012: 96, 280). After the paramilitaries abandoned the building, its legal owner was arrested for drug charges and the hotel became the property of the Colombian state (Sanchez et al. 2012: 77). For the next few years the building stood empty, with its doors locked, windows shuttered, and the back garden overgrown with weeds. But because of its use by paramilitaries, the old, abandoned hotel was worse than just an eyesore. Erin Parish, an anthropologist who did extensive field research in San Carlos, describes the impact of the building on the community:

The building exerted a force of repulsion. Many avoided walking in front of it, no easy task considering its central location. Others would get dizzy and feel faint when walking past. The neighbors felt terrorized by the vestiges of violence they believed continued to inhabit the building.[192]

Many residents felt the building was haunted by the spirits of people who had been murdered there and suspected that under the back garden was a mass grave of dozens of disappeared bodies. But, although Law 975 guaranteed victims the right to "truth" about disappeared loved ones, and provided a mechanism for conducting exhumations, there was not enough evidence that bodies were indeed buried in Hotel Punchiná's garden. Given that Colombia had over 45,000 disappeared people, the government could not afford the time and resources to exhume every place where residents had suspicions.[193] Further, while Law 975 had prompted the collection of thousands of paramilitary testimonies, the volume of information was not sufficiently organized to sort through and extract or publicize specific details that could be used as evidence.

However, the local reconciliation tables had created a new opportunity. More than a forum for peaceful dialogue and reconciliation, some victims also saw the *Mesas* as a venue to confront ex-combatants directly and to inquire about the whereabouts of their missing loved ones. Indeed, it was by this method that victims confirmed that at least one body was buried in the old hotel's garden. With this testimony, residents organized to lobby the Attorney General's office in Medellín to exhume the garden. In

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[192] Parish, Erin, "The Bittersweet Coast: Environments of War and Aftermath in Colombia." Ph.D. diss. Duke University. 2015. pp. 189
[193] See "Reporte Especial: ¿Qué nos deja 10 años de Justicia y Paz?" (www.VerdadAbierta.com). Published September 27, 2015.

2008, a team sent from Medellín uncovered the remains of a single buried body. They soon left after the formal exhumation, and then returned to the city, leaving Hotel Punchiná vacant and free of the rumor of a mass grave.[194]

Three months after the official exhumation, CARE moved its headquarters to Hotel Punchiná. There the organization could operate there rent-free, at the same time it had to face the walls covered in violent graffiti and drawings and, in some areas, blood. The CARE team began a years-long process of re-appropriating the space. They washed blood off the walls and painted over graffiti, and then began hosting reconciliation activities and other organizations in the building. Parish articulately described how re-appropriating the building changed its meaning for the San Carlos community:

> The work of making the space inhabitable and putting it to multiple uses changed its meaning in the community, even for those who did not want to enter the building itself. These changes altered the psychic topography of the community as this landmark of violence came to have multi-layered meanings. No longer merely the former site of the paramilitary's headquarters, it also became where CARE and the Fish Farmers' Association had their offices, where people met with lawyers or picked up materials for their fishponds. It moved from purely a site of trauma to one in which the business of life is conducted, specifically the multi-faceted work of reparation.[195]

I first visited CARE in July of 2011, just a few weeks after Law 1448 passed. The building had a meeting space on its front patio, which it shared with a few other NGOs and civil society organizations in San Carlos. The front interior room held a

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[194] "El fin del dolor para 23 familias," *El Espectador*, October 15, 2009.

[195] Parish, Erin, "The Bittersweet Coast: Environments of War and Aftermath in Colombia." Ph.D. diss. Duke University. 2015. pp. 200.

chalkboard and metal folding chairs. At that time, I saw only two observable indications

of historical memory activities. The walls were lined with colorful – although violent –

children's drawings of their experience of the conflict in San Carlos, and in the back patio

– the previous site of the exhumation – a memory garden had been created. It featured

neatly lined walking paths and carefully pruned plants and flowers. The garden had been

created with resources from the Medellín-San Carlos Alliance, and the building had also

become the office space for Medellín colleagues when they were in town.

　　As I continued to visit CARE over the next three years, I watched the building

transform and its activities expand and start to connect with the Colombia's top-down

peacebuilding architecture. In addition to serving as the municipal home for local

transitional justice initiatives, the building also became a base for teams of consultants

from various national agencies as well as the return and reparations programs they

implemented as part of Law 1448. With the arrival of new personnel and funds, the

building itself evolved.

　　For example, the Department of Social Prosperity (created by the Victims Law)

repainted and renovated the building to enable access to the second floor of the old hotel.

CARE then opened a local library in the renovated space, where books about the conflict,

many of which were not available outside of the libraries located in Colombia's largest

cities, lined the walls, and a sitting space invited visitors to calmly read and reflect. Two

of the books on display were publications made possible by Law 975's NCRR – a

memory book entirely about San Carlos (2012) and an accompanying pedagogical text

(2013) that guided high school teachers on how to teach the history of the local conflict.

By 2013, CARE was offering "memory walks" to residents and visitors in San Carlos, guided by locals trained as memory facilitators by DPS.

The first memory walk I participated in was alongside students from San Carlos – including a group from the high school in El Jordan – all of whom knew people, and in many cases had close family members, that had been killed in the conflict. The students walked through the town center, as guides described how various locations in the town center had been used before, during, and after the conflict. At one stop during the tour, the memory guides explained how to make origami paper cranes, as well as their significance as symbols of peace. They then hung the paper cranes in an alley where paramilitaries had previously carried out torture (see Figure 1 in Appendix).

The memory walk ended at CARE, where guides provided slips of paper and instructed us to write down any negative thoughts or associations we had from our experience with Colombia's civil war – specifically those having to do with revenge, pain, or violence from the conflict. The guides then burned the slips, extinguishing the flame in a bowl of water, and our group continued our tour through the transformed building. We visited a photography exhibit, the memory garden, read a list of San Carlos' disappeared persons (which noted which bodies have and have not been found), and a timeline of locally-led resistance and peace efforts in the municipality.

On CARE's second floor, we were invited to write a response to the question, "How do you envision the future of San Carlos?" on an enormous chalkboard. We then proceeded to the library, where, in small groups, we sat on the carpet for a moment of silence, a meditation/prayer, and a healing exercise. Finally, facilitators poured water from a vase into our hands, to help cleanse them of trauma and pain. On their way out of

the building, we were given a copy of a slip of paper that said the following:

"Reconciliation is like water. It extinguishes anxiety in the soul and purifies the spirit."

(See Figures 2-5 in Appendix.)

The Garden of Memory and its Lost and Found Bodies

In this final section of empirical examples, I describe the Garden of Memory,

which is perhaps of the most iconic of the city's peacebuilding endeavors, and the efforts

of ordinary people to find and exhume the bodies of their disappeared family members.

The Garden of Memory was the product of a CARE-directed memory

workshop,[196] which offered women whose family member(s) had been forcefully

disappeared, a platform for sharing their stories. The workshop aimed to help "dignify

and heal" the victims and led to the idea for a public memorial. On the walls of the

fountain in San Carlos' town square, the women adhered dark gray plaques, each with the

name of a disappeared person written in white letters.[197] The project expanded as more

returnees arrived in San Carlos, and CARE and the Medellín-San Carlos Alliance saw the

need to address a broader range of victimization. The groups initiated more workshops in

which returnees could write, draw and paint about their experiences with the violence.

Facilitators noticed that the same colors were frequently used to represent specific acts of

violence – victims often painted with red to represent homicide and yellow for landmines.

In 2011, the gray circles were taken down from the fountain and in November of

the same year they were replaced with a colorful array of plastic flowers and leaves, with

each color and shape representing a different type of victimization. Nearly all the

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[196] With the support of the Medellín-San Carlos Alliance: "The Language of Memory from a Feminist Perspective."
[197] Interview with Pastora Mira in San Carlos. 30 January 2014.

symbols bear the names of the specific people they represent (see Figures 6-7 in Appendix).

Since 2013, additional symbols have been added that document elements of the post-conflict landscape. For example, while dark green leaves symbolize a displaced family or individual, an adjacent light green leaf represents that family's return to the municipality. Similarly, while a purple flower symbolizes a forced disappearance, a blue dragonfly beside it indicates that the remains have been found and the body put to rest. The blue dragonflies are of particular interest, as each body was found and identified by community members who then used national legislation to petition the government to exhume them. Thus, each dragonfly icon represents a post-conflict success made possible by ordinary people and grassroots efforts that leveraged federal law (see Figure 8 in Appendix).

The phenomenon of searching for the graves of disappeared persons began with the mothers of the missing. In the absence of information about the whereabouts of their loved ones – and in many cases with the hope that they may still be alive – women sought out information from any source that was available. Some located paramilitaries living outside of San Carlos and traveled to prisons to speak with them.[198] Others sought clues from neighbors and acquaintances.[199] In fact, with the help of CARE, a group of women distributed 1,000 maps throughout San Carlos, so that residents could help them locate the bodies of their disappeared loved ones. Armed with the information they had, women

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[198] Interview with Pastora Mira in San Carlos. 10 December 2013. Interview with San Carlos resident in Medellín. 20 March 2014. This phenomenon also occurred in other neighboring municipalities, for example Granada, but not on as large a scale as in San Carlos. See "Buscando la identidad de los desaparecidos del oriente Antioqueño." (www.VerdadAbierta.com), October 13, 2013.
[199] Interview with San Carlos resident in Medellín. 20 March 2014

walked the woods looking for their children's graves, pulling back layers of soil with their own hands.[200]

Mira, one of the community's leaders, described the desperation she felt when searching for her own disappeared daughter: "I traveled throughout Colombia to get information and I would have been willing to go to hell to find her."[201] After she did find her daughter, she accompanied other mothers on their own searches, and has personally helped San Carlos mothers locate 16 other disappeared bodies. In all, over the past decade, the San Carlos community has located and exhumed 75 graves of disappeared persons,[202] many of them in the corregimiento of El Jordan. At least 200 missing persons remain disappeared.[203]

The search for a disappeared body is a time-consuming and sometimes dangerous pursuit. It is also a necessary step before community members can formally confirm the body's identity through existing legal mechanisms. In the majority of cases where residents are searching for individual bodies, the Attorney General's Office will only provide technical support for exhumation and identification once the body has already been located. It is only then that there is adequate evidence to send a team of forensic experts and anthropologists to rural areas to carefully dig up the remains.

After the body is removed from the earth, the remains are transported to the nearest city, where DNA testing can provide confirmation. This must be done even if the family recognizes the body, in some cases only by braces on the teeth or scraps of clothing in the grave. The DNA identification process, which can take more than a year,

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[200] "Queremos que sepa que nos pasó" *Revista Semana*. Bogotá. 18 September 2010.
[201] "Interview with Pastora Mira in San Carlos. 10 December 2013.
[202] Interview with San Carlos resident in Medellín. 21 March 2014.
[203] Information provided during a visit to CARE in San Carlos. 30 January 2014.

ends in a formal ceremony hosted by the Attorney General. Families are brought to the Medellín for the *Entrega de Fosas*,[204] and the remains are returned to family members, who are then escorted back to rural municipalities or the impoverished outskirts of cities, where a local Catholic ceremony usually follows.

As the regional coordinator for Antioquia at the Historical Memory Center in Medellín explained, it is normally "regular people" who drive the process of exhuming the remains of displaced persons, as paramilitary testimonies have not provided the type of information necessary to locate – and identify – the remains of disappeared persons.[205] Indeed, ordinary people "have had to fight national-level bureaucracy and institutional difficulties in order to bring attention to the victims of forced disappearance and to achieve a real 'clarification of the truth.'"[206]

Conclusion

The case of San Carlos provides the empirical data necessary for understanding grassroots peacebuilding as a phenomenon distinct from top-down interventions. At the same time, this chapter demonstrates that endogenous processes can interact with top-down legislation and programming in complex ways that often go unnoticed by outsiders.

As Beatrice Pouligny rightly points out, "understanding the conditions on which peace can be built in a given society means trying to make the numerous changes going through it, in its structures and its rules, intelligible, so as to assess the bases on which reconstruction is possible" (2006: 266). It is only through careful process tracing that

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[204] A ceremony in which the identified remains of disappeared persons are handed over to their families.
[205] Since the Peace and Justice law was passed, 6,482 bodies have been found and only 15% of them have been found as a result of the formal testimonies of the demobilized paramilitaries (Verdad Abierta). 1,409 bodies (the largest amount of any Department in Colombia) have been found in Antioquia through information provided by family members of the victims, in contrast to the 83 that have been found as a result of testimony provided by demobilized paramilitaries.
[206] Interview with Regional Coordinator for Antioquia at the Department of Truth Accords in the National Center for Historical Memory in Medellín. 10 March 2014.

grassroots peacebuilding in San Carlos becomes "intelligible" to an outsider. Through this method, I demonstrated that the collective return process and accompanying reconstruction activities helped provide the impetus for parts of Colombia's national peacebuilding architecture. Additionally, I showed how transformative grassroots peacebuilding – the Reconciliation Tables, CARE, the Garden of Memory, and exhumations of disappeared bodies – interact with the Truth and Justice Law (975/2005) and fit into Colombia's broader post-conflict landscape.

Chapter 3 served as an empirical complement to Chapter 2, as well as the foundation on which I define the observable implications necessary to test my causal theory in Chapters 5 and 6. First, in Chapter 4, I scale down my unit of analysis to the community level and use the *vereda* (village) to examine how specific, local conflict dynamics influenced the likelihood that ordinary people and community actors would organize to reconstruct their villages in the absence of top-down programming.

Chapter 4: A Theory of Grassroots Peacebuilding after Civil War

La Cascada is a rural village in Colombia, tucked in a valley among lush

mountains in the municipality of Granada. On my way to an interview with the village

president, I trekked through mud while pushing aside stalks of sugar cane. When I

finally arrived at the *trapiche* – a community sugar mill – the villagers were rounding out

a 24-hour shift, still grinding, cooking, and caramelizing the sugar cane stalks used to

make *panela*[207]. The men sweat over the boiling vats as they explained what the conflict

had been like in their village. There were some homicides, and residents occasionally hid

from stray bullets, but more often they knew what to expect from the armed groups and

could avoid violence. The community never displaced and, according to residents, it

retained its social fabric.[208]

The strong social fabric helped La Cascada in the aftermath of the war. The sugar

mill I visited was new, built by the villagers after the violence, and being used

collectively to export aguapanela to Medellín. The local community action committee

was robust and active. It met regularly to organize mutual workdays to maintain rural

roads, discuss the local economy, address security concerns, and plan social events.

A few miles away is another village in Granada: *Campo Alegre*. One day in 2013

I rode by it in the back of a truck. As the vehicle climbed and bounced over large rocks, I

looked out at the thick vegetation encroaching on the unkempt road. During the conflict,

the residents of Campo Alegre faced indiscriminate violence until they were all forced

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[207] Hardened sugar cane juice, used to sweeten drinks and coffee in Colombia.
[208] In dozens of interviews with community members in Granada, San Carlos, and San Luis, interviewees consistently used the term *tejido social* – or "social fabric" – to describe the trusting relationships, associative behaviors, collectively sanctioned norms, shared cultural practices, and informal institutions that underpinned cooperative living and non-violent conflict resolution in their municipality's town center and rural villages before the war began.

from their land in a massive displacement. As recently as the day I rode by, no one had

returned or cleared the village of landmines. There was no community action committee.

In this chapter I offer a causal theory to explain how neighboring villages, such as

the two described above, can have such distinct local peacebuilding outcomes.

Specifically, I argue that variation in the level and type of violence wielded during

conflict impacts a community's propensity to organize around grassroots peacebuilding

activities after the violence subsides.

This argument has important ramifications for those who design and carry out

peacebuilding interventions – generally the United Nations, one of its contractors, or a

national government. It can help them identify which communities will be further along

in the process of organizing around and carrying out peacebuilding activities, which is

often difficult. As I pointed out in Chapter 2, residents themselves may not describe their

activities as grassroots peacebuilding. This was the case in La Cascada, where they

considered their rebuilt sugar mill and mutual workdays part of a more general recovery

from war.[209] As Beatrice Pouligny noted in her book, *Peace Operations Seen from*

Below, the way "collective life is organized at the grassroots level" (2006: 77) is not

always explicit, and the very "people concerned are themselves not always fully aware"

(2006: 189) of the larger implications of their actions.

Yet, understanding community capacities and actions in relation to larger

structures of peacebuilding is important to the success of external peacebuilding

interventions. Indeed, peacebuilding scholars have called for more complete pictures of

the "realities on the ground" (Pouligny 2006: 35), "the local specificities" (Autesserre

2015: 52) of a country affected by civil war, and a deeper understanding of a local

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[209] Interviews with residents, village of La Cascada, Granada. 26 March 2014.

community "to assess the bases on which reconstruction is possible" (Pouligny 2006: 266).

However, despite a large body of scholarship considering the micro-foundations of political violence and civilians' social and political behavior *during* a war, little systematic research has offered insight into what shapes these behaviors *after* the conflict ends. For example, while scholars have found that in different geographies within the same conflict, civilians respond in different ways to insurgencies (Peterson 2001; Wood 2003) and armed groups change their repertoires of violence depending on strategic interests concerning territory (Steele 2010; Arjona 2010; Weinstein 2007; Wood 2009), there is little discussion of how this impacts the local post-conflict landscape.

This dissertation seeks to expand the discussion. In Chapter 2, I offered a framework to help external peacebuilders situate grassroots actions within the frame of peacebuilding structures, and in this chapter I go a step further. I offer a causal theory to explain why some communities will be more likely than others – even within the same region – to organize around peacebuilding activities.

The theory also aims to help fill a gap in political science literature. Specifically, despite the call for a better understanding of local contexts,[210] many scholars have resisted disaggregating the nation-state in their analyses.[211] Further, those who have used distinct units of analysis to study variation in post-conflict outcomes have focused on local *elites*[212] or examined the organizational culture of the foreign peace workers or

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[210] See Moore 2013 and Autesserre 2010, 2015.
[211] See Cunningham 2011 and Zurcher et al. 2013.
[212] See Moore 2013, Chapters 4, 6, and 7. In his subnational analysis of two Bosnian towns, he focuses on local elites, rather then ordinary people.

organizations that implement top-down interventions.[213] Therefore, grassroots peacebuilding in post-violence and post-conflict landscapes remains largely unexplored terrain.

The scholars that have stepped into this realm have carved out a very narrow methodological and empirical niche. The majority of their studies have used experimental methods, such as natural, field, or lab-in-field experiments, to explore only a *single facet* of the complex process that signifies peacebuilding: political participation. Most of the analyses have found that violence galvanizes political participation. Their authors have drawn broad and bold conclusions about the positive relationship between the violent dynamics of civil war and social capital and collective action. However, it seems counterintuitive that war exposure would have a net positive impact on the individuals, households, villages, and regions that it affects. Indeed, my empirical observations show a more nuanced dynamic.

Those observations, the extant gap in the social scientific literature, and the broad conclusions of the most recent literature motivate this chapter. Here I lay out a theory of grassroots peacebuilding outcomes that draws upon and is informed by a rich foundation of micro-comparative work about civil wars in political science. I begin by discussing the current state of the fledgling body of literature examining post-civil war settings and address its limitations. I then present an alternative approach for understanding the relationship between the civil war and post-civil war context. Specifically, I offer a theory delineating how different patterns of armed group control over territory – and the concomitant levels of violence and displacement – impact a community's ability to

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[213] See Campbell 2012 and Autesserre 2015 for in-depth analyses of the United Nations as an international peacebuilding organizations.

overcome its collective action problem and organize around peacebuilding activities after the violence subsides. Additionally, I explain how the legacy of conflict helps to shape a community's receptivity to external interventions. I elaborate the causal mechanisms that underlie this relationship and affect the likelihood that a community will work together to reconstruct material and non-material collective goods that were destroyed during the conflict. Finally, I conclude by discussing the external validity of my theory and explain how I test its observable implications in the following empirical chapters (five and six).

Does Violence Really Increase the Propensity for Collective Action?

In 2010, Christopher Blattman and Edward Miguel published the article, "Civil War," and provided a comprehensive review of our collective knowledge on intra-state conflict. The authors summarized key findings within the "long overdue explosion of research into war's causes and consequences," focusing primarily on works from the disciplines of political science and behavioral economics (2010: 3). Despite the broad range of civil war topics addressed, the authors lamented the lack of micro-empirical research on the social and institutional legacies of civil war, noting that these are "arguably the most important but least understood of all war impacts" (Blattman and Miguel 2010: 42).[214]

Recently, scholars have responded to this call to action and produced a body of scholarship examining the causal relationship between civil war violence and post-war social and political behavior. In general, this body of literature focuses on the post-war landscapes of underdeveloped countries – primarily in Africa – and employs experimental methods to investigate the impact of violence on political participation,

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[214]Also see Moore 2013, pp. 23: "Perhaps one of the most important, but least understood elements of post-war peacebuilding is the way in which wartime social processes shape postwar peace outcomes."

collective action, and social capital.[215] Counter to conventional wisdom, the majority of

the studies show victimization during war leading to an *increase* in social and political

participation (Whitt et al. 2007; Bellows and Miguel 2008; Blattman 2009; Voors et al.

2012; Bauer et al. 2013; Cassar et al. 2013; Gilligan et al. 2014).

Bellows and Miguel were some of the first scholars within this strand of the

literature to conduct empirical fieldwork in a post-conflict landscape. They implemented

a large-n study to evaluate the consequences of Sierra Leone's civil war. Using a survey

instrument, they compared households exposed to violence[216] during the war to

households that were not exposed. The authors found that individuals who experienced

violence were more likely to vote, attend local community meetings, join local political

community groups, and contribute to local public goods after the war ended (2008:

1148). The article concludes on an optimistic note, suggesting that, "on average,

experience with war violence mobilizes people and turns them into community activists,

rather than demoralizing them" (2008: 1156).

Blattman takes a similar approach in his analysis of the post-civil war landscape

in Uganda. He tests the effect of child soldiering – and the exposure to violence that

comes along with it – on the likelihood that an individual will vote, participate in

community meetings, or hold a leadership position after war ends. Blattman exploits

"exogenous variation in recruitment," arguing that children were abducted from their

homes at random (2009: 231). He then compares a control group of non-abductees to a

treatment group of abducted child soldiers from the same geographic area of Uganda

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[215] For a notable exception, see Moore 2013. His comparative study of two post-war towns in Bosnia finds that four factors – political institutions, wartime legacies, sequencing of reforms, and external peacebuilding practices and institutions – concomitantly help to determine peacebuilding success or failure on a subnational level (p. 16).
[216] The survey asked members of the household if someone in the household had been killed, if children had been captured, if someone had been injured, or if their house had burned down.

(2009: 234). According to the study results, there is a positive relationship between exposure to civil war violence (witnessed, received, or perpetrated) and political participation. Specifically, abduction results in a "27% increase in the likelihood of voting and the doubling of the likelihood of being a community leader among former abductees" (2009: 231).

The recent flurry of lab-in-field experiments in post-conflict contexts also lends support to the finding that exposure to violence galvanizes political participation and cooperation. Behavioral games[217] have been implemented in post-conflict contexts as diverse as Bosnia (Whitt et al. 2007), Northern Liberia (Fearon et al. 2009), Colombia (Moya 2012), Burundi (Voors et al. 2012), Sierra Leone (Bauer et al. 2013), Georgia (Bauer et al. 2013), Tajikistan (Cassar et al. 2013), and Nepal (Gilligan et al. 2014). The majority of these studies find an increase in pro-social behaviors – for example, altruism, trust, egalitarian motivations, trustworthiness, or obligation – after an individual is victimized or exposed to war violence (Voors et al. 2012; Gilligan et al. 2014; Bauer et al. 2013). These results have led scholars to conclude that "violence may actually *contribute* to social capital" (Voors et al. 2012: 962) or give a "community a comparative advantage in social cohesion" in the post-conflict landscape (Gilligan 2014: 617).

To make sense of these findings, scholars offer causal mechanisms that underpin the observed positive correlation between violence and social and political participation after war. Many point to "posttraumatic growth theory" [218] (Tedeschi and Calhoun 1996, 2004) – which posits personal growth and overall positive individual responses to trauma

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[217] For example, "trust game," "dictator game," and "public-goods game."

[218] Broadly, the term "posttraumatic growth" refers to "a positive psychological change experienced as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life circumstances" and the theory was born out of a lab experiment at a U.S. university with a voluntary sample of undergraduate college students in a psychology class (Tedeschi and Calhoun 1996: 459). It is unlikely that the results of this lab experiment have external validity or relevance to those in developing countries who were victimized and lived through the atrocities of a violent civil war.

– as a valid explanation for a greater propensity to engage in collective action and participate in politics (Bellows and Miguel 2008: 1144; Blattman 2009: 231; Voors et al. 2012: 961; Cassar et al. 2013: 304). Even scholars who study "victimization" and "violence" more broadly – outside of the context of civil war – have drawn on posttraumatic growth theory to explain the positive impact of violent victimization on the likelihood that an individual will vote (Bateson 2012: 571).[219]   Finally, one group of scholars studying the post-war context of Nepal offers two alternative causal mechanisms to explain the positive correlation they observe between civil war exposure and social cohesion (Gilligan et al. 2014: 201). They describe a *purging mechanism*, "by which less social persons disproportionately flee communities plagued by war" (2014: 604), and a *collective coping mechanism* "by which individuals who have few options to flee band together to cope with threats and trauma" (2014: 605).

For example, a study conducted in the aftermath of Tajikistan's civil war showed increased levels of trust among individuals affected by war, but only with respect to one's "in-group" (Cassar et al. 2013). The study finds people are less willing to engage with *unknown* individuals after exposure to war violence (Cassar et al. 2013: 290). Andres Moya finds a similar pattern among rural communities in Colombia. Using lab-in-field experiments, he studies massive displacement as a "treatment" and finds that victimization shifts individuals towards more risk-averse behavior and higher levels of fear and mistrust towards outsiders (2012: 28). Finally, the authors of another study conducted in Colombia offer an alternative explanation for the observed positive

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[219] Although Bateson's main focus was on the implications for democracies with high levels of violent crime, she argues that in combination with the literature on *wartime* trauma, her research provides "tantalizing hints at a potentially wide-reaching relationship between victimization and participation" (Bateson 2012: 583).

correlations in the literature. They argue that participation is often coerced – and institutions co-opted by armed groups and their affiliates – even after violence has subsided (Gáfaro et. al 2014).

Perhaps eager to mirror the findings showing *inter*-state wars spurring economic development (Organiski and Kugler 1977; Przeworski et al. 2000; Davis and Weinstein 2002) and "nation-building" (Tilly 1985; Weinstein 2005; Sambanis et al. 2015), the majority of the authors of microeconomic studies have drawn broad theoretical conclusions about the normatively positive impact of *civil* war on post-war outcomes. However, they make little attempt to reconcile their findings with the contrasting insights from the qualitative research in the literature on civil war or the quantitative findings in other disciplines.

The qualitative work examining the post-conflict landscape, describes civil war as producing "increased social isolation," "fear and distrust of others and by others" (Wood 2008: 546), "debilitated social networks and community organizations" (Grupo de Memoria Histórica 2010, 2011), "pervasive uncertainty" (Kalyvas 2006: 226), and "shattered societies" (Arriaza and Roht-Arriaza 2008: 153), in which "rumors rule, faith in established categories disappears, the grounds on which everyday trust is built crumbles" (Warren 1998: 110).

Additionally, scholars within the field of public health have shown the negative impact of civil war violence on post-conflict outcomes.[220] For example, a group of scholars conducted a series of survey-based studies in Rwanda (Pham et al. 2004) and northern Uganda (Vinck et al. 2007, Pham et al. 2010) that examined the causal impact of

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[220] For a comprehensive review of the public health, psychology, and medical literature on this topic, see Pham, Vick, and Weinstein 2010, pp. 98-101.

cumulative trauma exposure on attitudes towards judicial processes,[221] attitudes towards

different components of reconciliation,[222] and the likelihood of long-term psychological

effects such as PTSD or depression.[223] In the case of Rwanda, the authors found that

individuals with high levels of trauma exposure had negative attitudes towards judicial

processes, did not favor reconciliation, and considered violence a reasonable way to

resolve conflict.[224] The results from northern Uganda mirror these findings and show that

individuals who met PTSD symptom criteria (had a high cumulative level of trauma

exposure) were more likely to identify violence as a legitimate resolution to conflict

(2007: 543).

Five Key Limitations in the Approach of Behavioral Economists

These divergent results beg the question: *Why do scholars' accounts of the same*

phenomena differ so dramatically? The answer to this question lies in five key

limitations inherent in the behavioral economists' approach to studying the impact of

civil war on post-conflict outcomes. First, the majority of recent studies incorrectly use

"exposure to violence" as observationally equivalent to a treatment of "exposure to civil

war." Second, by using the individual as the unit of analysis to measure group-level

dynamics, the authors miss interactions that occur between and among individuals in the

context of irregular warfare. Third, the authors use narrow indicators to proxy broad

theoretical concepts and then inappropriately draw inferences about how their findings

will affect concrete outcomes in the post-war context. Fourth, this body of scholarship

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[221] For example, the International Criminal Tribunal of Rwanda (ICTR), Rwandan national courts, and gacaca (2004: 604).

[222] Attitudes about a) shared vision and sense of a collective future (*community*), b) establishing mutual ties and obligations across lines of social demarcation and ethnic group (*interdependence*), c) coming to accept and actively promote individual rights, rule of law, tolerance of social diversity, and equality of opportunity (*social justice*), and d) adopt non-violent alternatives to conflict management (*non-violence*). (2004: 603).

[224] Specifically, respondents with did not support the idea of community, interdependence, or resolving conflict in a non-violent manner.

takes for granted the normatively positive nature of political participation, collective action, and social capital/cohesion, without examining whether – as mediating variables – these will lead to concrete activities in service of peace or more violence. Finally, this body of literature does not adequately draw upon important theoretical insights in the literature on civil war, such as the logic of violence, the nature of irregular warfare, and the existence of wartime institutions.

Independent Variable

Individuals receive the treatment of civil war by virtue of their community's "share of wartime deaths" (Voors et al. 2012: 945), "number of wartime fatalities" (Gilligan et al. 2014: 608), or their households' exposure to somatic violence, for example killing or maiming (Bellows and Miguel 2008: 1148, Blattman 2009: 244). However, it is inappropriate to equate "exposure to violence" with "exposure to civil war" in a causal analysis. In contrast to inter-state wars, civil wars often feature irregular warfare in which insurgents attempt to win control of the state *by first winning control of the civilian population* (Lindsay 1962: 264). In this scenario, combatants rely on collaboration, coercion, or control over the civilian population (Wood 2008: 543) and their strategies may or may not feature somatic violence. In fact, research show that violence is often non-existent or "redundant" in areas where an armed group has full control of the territory (Kalyvas 2006: 220). In controlled areas, combatants may intervene in civilians' lives without directly harming their physical integrity, by imposing rules about romantic relationships, rationing the amount of food that can be bought and consumed, restricting mobility in the area, and enforcing curfews.[225]

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[225] All of these tactics were employed in different areas of the three case municipalities in this study – Granada, San Carlos, and San Luis.

Even in the case in which violence is used, it may not manifest as the wartime deaths measured in many of the quantitative studies.[226] A rich, inter-disciplinary body of literature describes the extensive use of non-homicidal tactics towards the civilian population. For example, armed group strategies range from employing the threat of violence and coercion, to tactics such as confinement (Internal Displacement Monitoring Center 2008), forced displacement (Pham et al. 2004; Steele 2007, 2010, 2011; Ibañez and Velez 2008), forced disappearances (Zur 1994; Romero 2912), destruction of property, (Pham et al. 2004), forced recruitment of youth (Garcia de la Torre and Aramburo Siegert 2014: 71), extortion and kidnapping (Aguilera 2006; Pizarro 2006; Sanchez and Chacon 2006; Theidon 2007), rape (Wood 2009; Pham et al. 2004), and the use of landmines (Collier 2003). By only examining a death toll, it is easy to obscure variety of other forms of violence that are relevant for understanding how local dynamics impact the post-conflict landscape (Weinstein 2007: 201).

Unit of Analysis

Employing the individual as the primary unit of analysis obscures group-level dynamics that can result from variation in patterns of territorial occupation among armed groups. In most *intra*-state conflicts where insurgencies seek territorial dominance, entire neighborhoods, communities or villages live under the occupation of armed actors. Individuals who are not directly victimized still experience important dynamics of the conflict. For example, variation in informal institutions and norms during war can shape how civilians form expectations and relate to one another, impacting the collective experience of a community (Balcells and Kalyvas 2007; Wood 2008; Arjona 2010).

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[226] For a notable exception see Pham et al. 2004, pp. 604. The authors measure *cumulative* trauma exposure, which includes seven traumatic events: property destroyed or lost, being forced to flee, serious illness, a close family member killed, a close family member died from illness, sexual violence, and physical injury.

Additionally, forced displacement results in profound demographic changes in villages or neighborhoods where displaced persons leave or arrive, affecting even those individuals who did not migrate (Ibañez and Moya 2010; Aysa-Lastra 2010).

Dependent Variable

The authors use measures of individual participation to draw conclusions about solving a collective action problem in the post-war landscape. In the above-mentioned literature, "voting in a local referendum" suggests broader patterns of political participation (Blattman 2009), while "serving on a local school committee" is used as way to measure collective action (Bellows and Miguel 2008; Voors et al. 2012). Similarly, the behavioral games compare pro-social behaviors[227] among individuals exposed to violence, as a proxy for social capital or social cohesion after war (Moya 2012; Cassar et al. 2013; Gilligan et al. 2014), which are assumed to influence broader patterns of collective behavior.

Conceptually, an *individual*'s willingness to devote time (by voting or attending meetings) or resources (money donated in behavioral games) is equated with resolving a collective action problem. However, it is important to note that individual desire or motivation must be balanced against the costs associated with acting upon that desire. This is largely determined by structural constraints. Therefore, to understand how voting, attendance, and pro-social behaviors translate into political change, cooperation, and activism after war, individual behaviors must be embedded within the on-the-ground reality of a wider institutional framework (Granovetter 1985: 487; Justino 2013; Arjona 2014: 1361) and relevant social networks (Wood 2008).

Outcomes

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[227] Trust, sense of obligation, trustworthiness, altruism, and risk absorption.

Even if we accept that the proxies mentioned above are appropriate measures for the likelihood that groups of individuals will act in their own collective interest, it still leaves us wondering how this translates into concrete post-war outcomes, such as instances of grassroots peacebuilding, stalled local reconstruction, or renewed violence. The authors in this strand of the literature treat political participation, collective action and social capital as inherently constructive – actions that are "positive and civic in nature" (Blattman 2009: 238), and that will lead to "post-war civic activism" (Bellows and Miguel 2008: 1154, 1156), and facilitate post-war "reconstruction" (Gilligan et al. 2014: 617). Yet, when we consider these concepts as mediating variables, rather than dependent outcomes, it is possible to see how they may be used for positive *or* negative ends in the post-conflict landscape.

For example, collective action after war could be used to re-organize and re-arm an insurgency (Zuckerman-Daly 2012; Jha and Wilkinson 2012) *or* to organize activities meant to rebuild a community's social fabric (Arriaza and Roht-Arriaza 2008: 170, Romero 2012, Schindel 2012: 468). Similarly, votes and leadership positions in the post-conflict context may first go to demobilized members of armed groups and their allies, which would reinforce previous coercive power structures. Alternatively, civilians could rally behind a candidate who runs on a platform of rebuilding and establishing peaceful relations between former victims and perpetrators. Finally, social capital and social ties could prove a "liability, as well as an asset," in which violence could strengthen cooperation among one's "in-group," while solidifying schisms with perceived outsiders (Woolcock and Narayan 2000: 226, 230).

Theory

The previous four limitations are part and parcel to scholars' seeming reluctance to draw on extant theory when designing their identification strategies and discussing their findings. For example, quantitative researchers have not adequately drawn on insights from the rich body of micro-comparative studies on civil wars. Although research shows that patterns of physical violence are often decoupled from other important conflict dynamics during *irregular* warfare (Kalyvas 2006: 20), researchers have drawn on characteristics of *conventional* warfare – set battles and clearly delineated spaces of violence (Balcells 2010: 296) – to separate the treatment and control groups in experimental studies.

Additionally, quantitative researchers focus on individual behaviors to make inferences about whether civilians will act in the collective interest in the post-conflict period. This ignores the idea that "social behavior is more than the sum of individual participation choices" (Valdivieso and Villena-Roldan 2014: 123) and "consists of some aspect of social structure" (Coleman 1990: 320). Their conclusions should thus be discussed in reference to research emphasizing the existence of "wartime institutions" (Arjona 2010, 2014) and "the transformation of social networks" during civil war (Wood 2008: 541), both of which leave "enduring changes in their wake" that can shape individual decisions in the post-war context (Wood 2008: 555).

Finally, the quantitative researchers focus on the narrow indicator of democratic participation but then draw broad generalized conclusions about post-civil-war landscapes, and in some cases post-conflict reconstruction. By doing so they demonstrate a lack of knowledge of or disregard for the peacebuilding literature discussed in Chapter 2, in which numerous scholars have found democratic participation to be a shallow

indicator of actual peacebuilding.[228] In scholarship, academic publications recognize

peacebuilding as a multi-faceted process that is mediated through local political

institutions (Moore 2013) and includes local conflict resolution strategies (Autesserre

2010: 35) and reconciliation among ordinary citizens (Pham et al. 2004; Prieto 2012).

Thus, although political participation is an important aspect of the broader post-war

landscape, it is not *the only* relevant indicator of the causal impact of war, and behavioral

economists would benefit from at least a brief discussion of how their dependent outcome

fits into the broader theme of local peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction.

A Causal Theory of Grassroots Peacebuilding

Here I offer an original theory linking local conflict dynamics to grassroots

peacebuilding outcomes. The theory addresses the five limitations listed above by

drawing on the most important insights in the civil war and peacebuilding literatures.

Specifically, it builds on findings about the nature of irregular warfare, the relationship

between patterns of territorial control and levels of violence, and the importance of

wartime institutions. Further, the theory delineates how an armed group's[229] level of

territorial control over a *community[230]* during civil war impacts its subsequent propensity

for local-level peacebuilding. Finally, I discuss how variation in patterns of territorial

control also impacts a community's receptivity to external peace interventions.

Research shows that during irregular civil wars, combatants' frequent contact

with civilians "impacts every day social processes" and "creates a legacy" that persists in

the post-conflict context (Wood 2008: 543). In particular, and as other scholars have

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[228] See, Autesserre 2010.
[229] "Armed group" refers to both non-state armed groups and the national armed forces of a country government in instances of civil war when they are battling for territory against insurgencies, gangs, or militias.
[230] By "community" I mean the people who live in a particular local territory and "interact directly, frequently, and in multi-faceted ways" (Bowles and Gintis 2002: 240). The community is thus a fairly small unit, a rural or urban neighborhood, a town, or a village that is small enough for people to know one another.

argued, the form of territorial control imposed during the conflict – consolidated or contested – helps to determine variation in wartime social orders (Arjona 2010, 2014), patterns of violence used toward civilians (Kalyvas 2006), and levels of displacement within a community (Steele 2010).

My theory posits that the type of wartime social order, the level of violence, and the pattern of displacement, impact the strength of the social fabric that remains among civilians in a community after civil war. Specifically, I argue that communities where a single armed group holds control for an extended period are more likely to retain a strong social fabric and to thus overcome their collective action problem and organize meaningfully around local peacebuilding after the conflict ends. They will also be comparatively more receptive to working with external interveners after violence subsides. Conversely, communities that were contested by one or more armed groups are less likely to retain this type of social fabric and spontaneously initiate local activities in service of reconstruction in the post-war period and will be less inclined to work with community outsiders on a peacebuilding project or program.

In order to conceptualize my theory's proposed causal mechanism – *social fabric* – I draw primarily on Robert Putnam's definition of social capital. Putnam describes social capital as "…features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (1993: 167). Putnam's definition allows me to discuss whether, after war, personal relationships in a community are trusting, stable, and reciprocal in nature, or if they are coercive, contentious, and untrustworthy. However, the meaning of social fabric includes formal associative or organizational activities as well as the *informal and culturally specific*

ways in which "collective life is organized at the grassroots level"[231] (Pouligny 2006: 77).

It also leaves room for discussion of the nature and extent of wartime norms.

Specifically, I explore whether the informal "rules of the game" (North 1990: 5) allowed

civilians to form stable expectations about the behavior of armed actors and their

neighbors during war (March and Olsen 2006), or if a situation of disorder (Arjona 2010:

8) created pervasive uncertainty and distrust.

Finally, I hypothesize whether social fabric is primarily retained *within* a

community, or one's "in-group," or if it also has linkages to extra-community networks

and "out-groups" (Woolcock 1998: 168). This is particularly relevant for my discussion

of a community's post-conflict receptivity to external interveners who are *de facto*

"outsiders."

In the next section I present ideal-type characterizations[232] of two communities

that experienced contrasting forms of armed control during an irregular civil war. First, I

describe a contested community, showing how violent wartime dynamics degrade social

fabric among residents and undermine a community's propensity to organize in its

collective interest after the war ends. Then I discuss a scenario of consolidated control

and the accompanying conflict dynamics, tracing the retention of social fabric and its

impact on a community's post-conflict trajectory in terms of organizing around local

peacebuilding and receptivity to external interventions.

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[231] The informal aspect of social fabric is grounded in cultural practices. Indicators to identify this causal mechanism are thus context-specific and inductively derived. For example, in the case of Colombia relevant indicators included: Catholic rituals, norms for greeting visitors in one's home – offering a *sancocho* and *aguapanela* – and shared practices for building or maintaining public goods such as roads, schools, or soccer fields.

[232] Because this is an ideal type characterization of control in a particular area, not all features will be present in every empirical case. Additionally, not all empirical cases will fall perfectly into a single category, as territorial control often shifts over time and a single community may experience more than one form of control over the course of a war. When analyzing empirical cases from the Colombian civil war, I will try to account for these complexities by noting the dates at which territorial control patterns shifted, as well as the number of years that one single form of control (consolidated vs. contested) persisted throughout the course of the most intense years of the war (1998-2006).

Contestation: Grassroots Peacebuilding Less Likely After War

Irregular Warfare and Contestation

During a civil war, a geographic area that is "contested" is defined as one where no single armed group has complete control over the territory and sovereignty is fragmented, often between an insurgency and state forces (Kalyvas 2006: 225). A contested area can range from a scenario in which one armed group holds "secure but incomplete control" (Kalyvas 2006: 212), to a fully contested area in which citizens are caught in the crossfire between two or more warring groups (Kalyvas 2006: 224-231). In the former scenario, the rival group retains clandestine cells within the community and can make sporadic visits or incursions to the area, often wielding indiscriminate violence against civilians (Kalyvas 2006: 223). In the latter, sovereignty is fragmented and multiple armed groups come and go frequently and unpredictably, making it difficult for civilians to align with a single actor (Kalyvas 2006: 225, 237). Levels of violence against civilians are highest – and most unpredictable – in contested areas (Kalyvas 2006: 231).

In contested areas of a civil war, armed groups focus attention on defending or acquiring territory that is essentially up for grabs (Arjona 2010: 38). This creates short time horizons for a group's expected stay and undermines the incentive to invest resources and time into establishing a stable set of rules with the civilian population (Arjona 2010: 7, 16). Rather, a situation of "disorder" is likely to emerge. In the literature, disorder is described as a scenario in which "combatants do not abide by clear rules and local residents have few solid beliefs about the likely outcomes of alternative choices" (Arjona 2014: 1374). In this situation, the behavior of an armed group is

unpredictable and unconstrained. Homicides, massacres, and random attacks on infrastructure frequently affect civilians living in the territory (Arjona 2010: 21).

Finally, contested areas feature high levels of displacement, both on an individual and massive scale (Steele 2010: 15-17). Logically, in a scenario in which levels of violence are high and there are no stable rules of the game, the cost of remaining in the community becomes too high for households. Thus, they migrate independently from one another, based on household-level, cost-benefit calculations (Stanley 1987; Engels and Ibañez 2007; Czaika and Kis-Katos 2009). In this case, households usually do not settle as a group, but rather scatter and disperse among different sites of settlement.[233] In the case of massive displacement, armed groups are most likely to strategically displace a subset of a community (Steele 2010:15) – or the entire community – in highly contested areas (Sanchez et al. 2011; Arjona 2010: 80). When entire communities are expelled from their land, households may scatter or they may settle collectively in a nearby village or in slums surrounding the nearest urban center – a pattern that can only be examined empirically.[234]

Social Fabric Under Contestation

These key characteristics of a contested zone – frequent unpredictable violence against civilians, the absence of a social contract and high levels of displacement – have a profound impact on a community's social fabric.

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[233] Results of 19 interviews with internally displaced persons (IDPs). Six interviews took place in Medellín and 13 in Bogota over the course of two summers (2011, 2012). Locations of expulsion included the following Colombian Departments: *Antioquia*, *Arauca*, *Caldas*, *Caquetá, Chocó, Cundinamarca, Huila, Tolima, Nariño, Quindío,* and *Valle de Cauca.*
[234] The two outcomes – scattering vs. settling collectively – will be addressed in my empirical analysis. Groups who settle in the same place may retain strong social networks and social capital, making it possible that contestation could lead to some post-conflict grassroots peacebuilding in this particular case.

When levels of violence are high and random (Steele 2010: 12), civilians tend to withdraw from the public sphere (Kalyvas 2006: 227). For example, civilians in a contested area may avoid eye contact with others and shy away from greeting neighbors on the street. Residents may stay in their homes, avoid storing food in their homes as it is subject to confiscation, or reject gifts offered by armed groups.[235] Additionally, it is common to avoid public spaces, such as market squares, transit routes, parks, schools, community centers, or other areas that might be targeted during an incursion or random attack by an armed group.[236] This retreat from the public sphere, and avoidance of face-to-face interactions is accompanied by a severe breakdown in trust within communities living in a contested space (Gibson 2004; Oliver and Wong 2003; Wood 2008: 545). The personal relationships that exist in this scenario are cautious, suspicious, and not usually cooperative.

In a community that is contested and disorder prevails, civilians have no clear rules to navigate daily life. Combatants may enter and leave the area, but civilians may not be able to identify members of one group from another and be coerced into cooperating with them. To other civilians, the observed interaction between neighbors and armed actors creates a situation in which it is unclear who is "loyal" to which side, creating an "identification problem" (Kalyvas 2006: 89). In such scenarios, where no set of rules creates a stable structure for human interaction (Helmke and Levitsky 2006: 5; North 1990), "faith in established categories disappears, the grounds on which every day trust is built crumbles, and feelings of extreme contingency and vulnerability take over" (Warren 1998: 110). The constant uncertainty and inability to form expectations about

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[235] Personal testimonies from Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 28 February 2014.
[236] Personal testimonies from Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 5 February 2014.

the behavior of one's neighbors or combatants in the area produces a "paralyzing, turbulent, and irrational fear, scarcely permitting any thought, leading to the atomization of society" (Kalyvas 2006: 143). Logically, in this scenario of uncertainty and mistrust, without rules of the game to guide safe behaviors, community member stop participating in associative activities such as mutual help practices and projects, school boards, political organizations, sports teams, or cultural events.[237]

Finally, in contested areas, high levels of displacement rupture intra- and extra-community social networks (Deininger et al. 2004). When people migrate and scatter (Ibañez and Velez 2009: 432), they lose touch with the neighbors, friends and family members they leave behind, or those who settle in other locales. Additionally, the nature of contested areas makes it nearly impossible for migrants to safely return to the area for a visit, as they may be perceived as a stranger – and therefore a threat – to rival armed groups.[238] This dynamic makes it very difficult to maintain contact between those who stay behind and the diaspora of forced migrants. Consequently, social networks, family structures, and friendships are strained or ruptured.

After War in Contested Territory: Grassroots Peacebuilding Unlikely

A lack of trust and shared norms, as well as the dissolution of social networks, weakens a community's social fabric. I argue that this undermines a contested community's capacity for collective action after civil war and makes it unlikely it will initiate grassroots peacebuilding activities. Additionally, it undermines the likelihood that the community will seek support from regional, national, or international entities –

[237] Interviews with residents in El Concilio, Granada and in San Luis. January-March 2014.
[238] Interview with resident in Granada. 14 November 2013.

"outsiders" – or be receptive to the local implementation of an external peacebuilding intervention.

When the conflict ends and armed groups depart – or demobilize and remain in the territory – trust between residents does not simply return to the area. Civilians who have survived the violence will most likely continue to feel suspicion towards their neighbors, refrain from wanting to participate in associative activities, and avoid public spaces.[239] This is relevant because research has shown that lack of trust greatly undermines a group's organizational capacity and willingness to organize in its collective interest (Granovetter 1985: 490; Baland and Platteau 1996; Putnam 1993; Uslaner 2002; Knack and Keefer 1997; LaPorta et al. 1997; Zack and Knack 2001; Paraskevopoulos 2010).

Further, the lack of a shared set of informal rules and norms leaves residents without an institutional structure to help guide collective action or participation in an unfamiliar program, such as a local security or reconciliation initiative. A basic set of shared norms could facilitate the coordination and cooperation required for reconstruction after the conflict ends (Putnam 1993; Ostrom 1990, 2005; Aoki 2001), and potentially reduce the perceived risk of participating in these activities.

Finally, the identification problem is likely to persist in the immediate aftermath of the conflict, and wartime polarization, as well as displacement, is likely to have reshaped, fractured, or entirely dissolved friendship networks in the contested area (Wood 2008: 540). This makes it difficult to recognize friend from foe in the territory even after the violence subsides. As a result, civilians may not be able to distinguish those individuals who were previously allied with particular armed groups, those who

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[239] Interview with resident in San Luis. 6 February 2014.

attempted to remain neutral, or those who "sat on the fence" and helped both sides at the same time (Kalyvas 2006: 228).

An inability to distinguish in-group boundaries has two consequences for local patterns of post-conflict reconstruction. First, this dynamic makes it much harder for local communities to organize among themselves (Hardin 1995) and therefore, it is much less likely that grassroots peacebuilding will spontaneously occur. Second, the identification problem – compounded by high levels of victimization – has created a post-conflict environment where locals deeply fear and mistrust outsiders (Moya 2012: 28).

Even if outsiders arrive in a contested community as part of a governmental program, an international peacebuilding mission, or humanitarian NGO, it is likely residents may avoid providing them with accurate information or technical assistance. This is phenomenon that has been noted by scholars of international peacebuilding missions, as "local people frequently evade, contest, resist, or reject international initiatives designed to help them" (Autesserre 2015: 13). Indeed, ordinary people in places as diverse as El Salvador, Cambodia, and Haiti, have used "avoidance strategies" as a means of protecting themselves from outsiders, even in the case that they were foreign peace workers (Pouligny 2006: 234-237).

Consolidated Control: Grassroots Peacebuilding More Likely After War
Irregular Warfare and Consolidated Control

During an irregular civil war, areas of "consolidated control" are those in which a single armed group can prevent its rivals from entering or operating with any effectiveness in the territory. The armed group in control has destroyed most or all

clandestine cells of the opposing group (Kalyvas 2006: 211) and in this scenario, an armed group monitors and engages with the civilian population (Kalyvas 2006: 211), on which the armed organization's survival depends (Wickham-Crowley 1992: 52; Weinstein 2007; Wood et al. 2012). In areas of consolidated control, violence is low or non-existent, a social contract is established, and levels of displacement are low.

First, in the case of violence in a controlled territory, armed groups can easily distinguish their enemies and correctly identify those individuals who are responsible for collaborating with the enemy. As a result, the use of violence "becomes redundant" as most civilians residing in the controlled area have difficulty collaborating with the rival group, because they simply do not have access to it (Kalyvas 2006: 220). When violence is used, it is selective in nature, and targets specific individuals (Kalyvas 2006: 142).

Second, in areas where an armed group wields consolidated control, they are more likely to form some type of social contract with the civilian population, as this makes it less costly to monitor residents in the territory and weed out defectors (Arjona 2010: 27). The social contract creates a set of socially shared, informal rules that are communicated and enforced (Helmke and Levitsky 2004: 727) by members of the armed group (Arjona 2014: 1374). This can range from imposing rules regarding only security and taxation, where civilians are "otherwise free to manage their own affairs" (Arjona 2014: 7), to scenarios where the armed group intervenes in a comprehensive and complete manner[240] (Arjona 2014: 1375). In the latter case, an armed group may preside over the day-to-day

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[240] The former scenario is one in which the scope of armed group intervention in civilians' affairs is narrow and is labeled "Aliocracy." The latter scenario is one in which armed groups' intervention is broad and is referred to in the literature as "Rebelocracy" (Arjona 2010, 2014).

affairs of civilians, impose social norms,[241] enforce curfews, adjudicate personal and marital disputes, and oversee the rules of market transactions (Arjona 2010: 7).

Finally, in an area of consolidated control, levels of displacement are lower. When violence is less frequent and civilians have stable rules of the game, the cost for a household to stay on its land often remains below the threshold that impels them to migrate (Lee 1966; Todaro 1976; Massey et al. 1998). Additionally, in areas of consolidated control where there is a social contract in place, armed groups have lower incentives to displace civilians, as they depend on them for logistical support, recruitment, and as a resource base to sustain their organization (Weinstein 2007; Kalyvas 2006: 91-92). The exception to this scenario is when an armed group has complete control, but decides to expel the entire community in order to make use of strategic infrastructure or land (Arjona 2010: 49; Sanchez et al. 2011). In this latter scenario, the impact of an armed group massively displacing an entire community will depend on the settlement patterns of the expelled group, which can only be examined empirically.

Social Fabric Under Consolidated Control

In this section I delineate the process by which a community situated in controlled territory retains trust, stable norms of interaction and behavior, and social networks. This permits the community to preserve a basic level of social fabric and act in its collective interest in the post-conflict context.

Because areas under the control of a single armed group experience violence levels that are lower and more predictable than in contested areas (Kalyvas 2006: 220-

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[241] For example, regulation of personal appearance and sexual behaviors, and other established "rules to regulate private behavior" (Arjona 2014: 1373).

222) – and when it is used there is a personalization and logic to the victimization – civilians are able to form expectations about their own safety. They can accurately predict the behaviors that provoke a violent reaction from particular members of armed groups and, accordingly, they can avoid violence.[242] Civilians are therefore less likely to avoid public spaces and interactions with other people living in the territory. Rather, civilians living in controlled territory continue to maintain relationships with their neighbors. Here, the community is not "atomized" and retains a basic level of trust.

Within a controlled area, norms of behavior and interaction are established and upheld, which reduces uncertainty in the area. Civilians can learn the principal "rules of the game" (North 1990: 5) and form expectations about the behavior of armed actors and their neighbors (Berger and Luckmann 1966; March and Olsen 2006). Additionally, because the sanctions that the armed actors impose are credible, it may be rational to publicly take sides with the armed actor that holds consolidated control (Kalyvas 2006: 235). Public loyalties allow civilians to decipher friends from foes, confident in who they can trust and who they must avoid. Civilians within the community can safely establish a rapport with their neighbors and often with combatants.[243] In general, civilians learn to adapt and co-exist with the armed group, settling into an equilibrium situation where they can continue some of their previous daily activities[244] and engage in certain associative activities – albeit only those that are permitted within the space controlled by the armed group.[245]

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[242] Interview with resident in El Jordan, San Carlos. 15 November 2013.
[243] Ibid.
[244] Testimony of a young woman from *El Jordan*, February 2012, cited and translated from Spanish from Ramiro Osorio's article: "Paramilitarism y vida Cotidiana en San Carlos (Antioquia): Etnografía desde una Antropología de la Violencia" in *Boletín de Antropología. Universidad de Antioquia*, Medellín, Vol. 28, No. 45, 2013: 145.
[245] Interview with resident, *El Jordan*. San Carlos. November 15, 2013.

Finally, because less people displace within controlled areas, basic intra- and extra- community networks are maintained. Because a large proportion of the population remains instead of displacing, intra-community social networks are sustained. When visitors from neighboring towns come or people who have displaced return or visit, residents may be able to ask permission for the visit to the controlled area, which allows those who stay behind to maintain communication and occasional face-to-face contact with their community's diaspora population.[246] This retains the extra-community social networks and may even create new linkages to locations, people, and resources outside of the immediate geographic area.

After Control: Grassroots Peacebuilding More Likely

Basic levels of trust between residents, shared norms, and intact social networks contribute to the likelihood that a community is able to overcome its collective action problem. In a community where these elements of social fabric were retained during controlled occupation, spontaneous grassroots peacebuilding is more likely. Additionally, once the conflict subsides, a community that lived under consolidated control – and retained extra-community social contacts – will be more receptive to outside interveners.

As stated above, civilians who lived in a controlled area continued to participate in community activities, occupy public spaces, and interact with their neighbors. This has two important impacts. First, this dynamic allows a basic level of trust to remain, which in turn can help to encourage collective action among community members (Granovetter 1985: 490; Baland and Platteau 1996; Putnam 1993; Uslaner 2002; Knack and Keefer 1997; LaPorta et al. 1997; Zack and Knack 2001; Paraskevopoulos 2010).

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[246] Interview with resident in El Jordan. 15 November 2013. Interview with resident in San Carlos. 3 December 2013.

Second, the continuation of associative behaviors – and the willingness to congregate in a public space – facilitates the participation of locals in top-down peacebuilding interventions.

Additionally, a shared set of norms may help structure interactions, reduce uncertainty, and further reinforce the likelihood that a community will engage in grassroots peacebuilding after the conflict ends. When a basic institutional fabric is maintained – albeit informal – it can facilitate coordination and cooperation, as well as make it easier for civilians to navigate any residual uncertainty or perceived risk still present even after armed groups have departed or demobilized. As the literature shows, when in-group boundaries remain clear and a shared set of norms remains, collective action is more likely (Levi 1996; Posen 1993; Weingast 1998; Hardin 1995; Putnam 1993; Ostrom 1990, 2005; Aoki 2001), making it more probable that civilians who lived under a scenario of consolidated control will cooperate and overcome their collective action problem – as well as be open to working with outsiders – once the violence subsides.

Finally, intact social networks due to low displacement also help facilitate organization among a community. Social networks create social ties and a "source of organizational resilience in the face of fragmentation" (Parkinson 2013: 430). Further, if fewer people flee the territory, communities remain clustered in space and confront fewer obstacles to overcoming their collective action problem (Hardin 1995, Weidman 2009: 530). Close-knit communities in previously controlled areas – where outside visitors were identified and vetted before entering – are more capable of distinguishing in-group boundaries after the conflict, making coordination more likely (Hardin 1995), and

ultimately increasing the likelihood of grassroots peacebuilding and coordination with outside interveners.

Table 2. A Theory of Grassroots Peacebuilding after Civil War

CONFLICT			POST-CONFLICT[247]
Territorial Control	Characteristics of Control	Social fabric	Grassroots Peacebuilding
Contested	No Social Contract High Violence High Displacement	No Rules of the Game Trust broken Social networks dissolve	Unlikely
Consolidated	Social Contract Low Violence Low Displacement	Stable Rules of the Game Trust maintained Social networks maintained	Likely

External Validity of the Theory

My theory of the causal relationship between the micro-dynamics of civil war and variation in grassroots peacebuilding outcomes is based on a few assumptions that here I make explicit in order to identify how the theory is – or is not – generalizable to other geographic contexts. First, this theory is premised on Stathis Kalyvas' definition of civil war: "Armed combat within the boundaries of a recognized sovereign entity between parties subject to a common authority at the outset of the hostilities" (2006: 5). It is important to note that this "simplified and abstract characterization" (2006: 6) does not differentiate between *political* and *criminal* violence. Rather, variation in patterns of territorial control among armed groups – and their concomitant strategies against civilians – are the analytical driver, rather than underlying political, ideological, or criminal motivations.

In line with Stathis Kalyvas, I contend that geography is the primary driver in determining patterns of territorial control – and the combat strategies armed groups use according to variation in levels of control – regardless of the group's ideology or the political preferences of the resident civilian population (2006: 132). My fieldwork, as

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[247] This section of the table is also applicable to contexts that are transitioning from war to peace.

well as extensive empirical evidence from academic and non-academic sources,[248]

corroborates the idea that armed group behavior depends more on geographic control

than the group's political profile. For example, within my case area, numerous

interviews with civilians and ex-combatants revealed that while the ELN, FARC, and

AUC held quite different philosophies and political motivations, when on the battlefield

or in control of territory, their treatment of civilians was similar with regard to levels of

indiscriminate violence, displacement, and the establishment of a social contract. [249]

Because of the geographic proximity of the distinct armed group factions, it is unlikely

that observed differences in behavior were due to a principal-agent problem or drastic

differences in pre-existing social cohesion of the communities located in the territory.[250]

Therefore, this theory is generalizable to non-ethnic[251] civil wars and intra-state

armed conflicts that feature *irregular,* rather than conventional, warfare (Kalyvas and

Balcells 2010).   By irregular warfare I mean warfare that does *not* include set battles,

strict rules of combat, or the geographic separation of combat and non-combat zones

(Afshar 72). This includes armed conflicts that are not *exclusively or explicitly* political,

such as inter-cartel or "cartel-state" violence in Mexico, Central America, or Brazil's

favelas. Within these conflicts, the armed groups that operate use many similar

strategies[252] as "traditional" insurgencies in their quest to conquer territory from the state

or rival criminal groups (Lessing 2015; Kalyvas 2015). In Latin America especially,

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[248] For a review of empirical examples, see Kalyvas 2006, chapter 5.

[249] Testimonies of community members at collective reparation workshop, San Luis. 28 February 2014. Interviews with ex-combatants from various factions of insurgencies (ELN and FARC) and paramilitary blocks, Medellín. April 2014.

[250] I will discuss patterns of territorial control as an "exogenous shock" in empirical chapters 4 and 5.

[251] In the case that the territorial experience of a community overrides ethnic identities (Kalyvas 2006: 132) or that ethnic identities prove malleable through the course of civil war violence (see Kalyvas 2008), the theory may be applicable.

[252] Here I distinguish between strategies used against *ordinary people* in a community and the type of "violent lobbying" or "violent corruption" against elites (judges, politicians, businessmen) described by Lessing in his 2015 study, "The Logics of Violence in Criminal War."

political and criminal violence are increasingly difficult to distinguish and have begun to

overlap in complex ways (World Bank 2011; Lessing 2015: 1487).

Furthermore, in some cases, armed groups contesting the nation-state are defined

as "terrorist" or "criminal" as a result of domestic or international political concerns, in

order to strip them of political legitimacy. For example, this was true in Colombia until

the current administration of president Juan Manuel Santos and with respect to the United

State's listing of foreign terrorist organizations.[253] Regardless of these labels, the

strategies of armed groups to control territory – and variation in the violence against

civilians during turf wars or moments of stable control – mirror coercive behaviors of

traditional insurgencies.

Conclusion

Chapter 4 is motivated by a desire to understand how key theoretical insights

about the dynamics *during* a civil war can help us to disentangle the micro-foundations of

local post-conflict reconstruction. Although a small group of scholars has examined this

question, they have convened on a counterintuitive finding: violence improves collective

action and galvanizes political and social participation. I argue that the observed positive

correlations are driven primarily by research design and scholars have failed to draw on

the rich body of qualitative research on civil war settings. Specifically, studies have

overlooked the nature of irregular warfare, the relationship between territorial control and

patterns of violence against civilians, and the existence of wartime social orders in civil

wars. I draw on these insights and posit a theory about how the degree of territorial

control an armed group wields over a community helps to determine whether it will

organize around local peacebuilding activities once the conflict subsides. Violence,

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[253] See the US State Department website: http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm.

displacement, and wartime social orders help shape a community's retention of social fabric, which facilitates or undermines organization around local reconstruction and impacts a community's receptivity to external interventions.

The Colombian context proves the perfect case for developing, refining, and testing this theory. Colombia is unique in that post-conflict areas exist on a subnational level, yet the ongoing nature of the armed conflict has prevented the implementation of large and comprehensive international peace interventions, which could obscure the study of spontaneous, local efforts. Through careful case selection, my research design allows me to study the exogenous impact of territorial control on the likelihood that a community will organize in its collective interest after civil war violence ends.

Chapter 5: The Determinants of Grassroots Peacebuilding: A Village-Level Analysis

This chapter explores the impact of varied patterns of armed actor control over territory in the context of an irregular civil war in a rural setting. By situating the analysis at the village level, this study makes a unique contribution by examining how a community's conflict experience impacts the likelihood that it will engage in peacebuilding activities following the conflict. Specifically, this chapter examines the case of 182 villages within three neighboring municipalities in Eastern Antioquia, a region of Colombia where the armed conflict reached its apex in terms of violence and displacement in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

This chapter aims to accomplish four objectives. First, it operationalizes and tests a model put forward by Stathis Kalyvas to understand whether observed patterns of territorial control correlate with patterns of indiscriminate violence against civilians in a civil war, as Kalyvas predicts (2006). Second, it examines the relationship between armed actor control and conflict dynamics (other than indiscriminate violence) that arise during irregular warfare, such as the use of landmines to deter the advancement of enemy troops, the tendency for communities to massively displace, or the destruction of basic infrastructure. Third, and most importantly, this chapter examines the relationship between armed actor control and post-conflict outcomes, such as community-led peacebuilding activities and rates of voluntary return to the original sites of migration. Finally, the analysis will test an alternative hypothesis: that the ideological profile of armed groups, in conjunction with patterns of territorial control, impacts how communities organize in the post-conflict context.

I begin this chapter by explaining Kalyvas' model as a foundation for testing the relationship between conflict and post-conflict dynamics, and note some of the model's limitations as it relates to both measuring patterns of armed group control and my theory of grassroots peacebuilding. I then offer hypotheses derived from Kalyvas' theory and my own theory on grassroots peacebuilding outlined in Chapter 4. Following the hypotheses, I provide a brief narrative timeline of the evolution of the armed conflict and violence in the three case municipalities (Granada, San Carlos, and San Luis) between 1998 and 2006, and a statistical account of these phenomena. The next part of the chapter presents the empirical data, identifies the data sources, explains the measurement of the variables, and provides some descriptive statistics. I then present and discuss the results of the statistical analysis, concluding with a brief discussion of unexpected findings.

The Logic of Violence in Civil War and Post-Conflict Outcomes

Stathis Kalyvas' seminal work *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (2006) offers two principal theories about the nature of violence in civil war. The first theory states that local patterns of violence against civilians often reflect personal and private matters rather than the "master cleavage" of the war (Kalyvas 2006: 383, 386). While this contribution is of great importance within the subfield of civil war studies, it is not central to my own theoretical argument about grassroots peacebuilding in the post-conflict context, as outlined in Chapter 4.

The second theory – the one I will use and test in this analysis – asserts that patterns of violence are predicted by subnational variation in territorial control. The spatial distribution of territorial control ?can be mapped using Kalyvas' five zones of

control, which are defined as follows: Zone 1 (Z1) and Zone 5 (Z5) are fully under control of the "counterinsurgents" (state or state-allied forces) or "insurgents" (groups fighting the state), respectively. These two zones are associated with the lowest levels of violence overall, as the group in control has little incentive to use lethal means against civilians in the territory and can prevent incursions from the rival group. As a result, neither selective nor indiscriminate violence should be observed. Second, the two intermediate zones of "fragmented control" – Zone 2 (Z2) and Zone 4 (Z4) – are under partial control of a single group, either counterinsurgent or insurgent, respectively. Here violence levels are higher overall and more likely to be exercised by the actors with more control over the territory. Also, in Zone 2 and Zone 4, the rival group is able to make incursions into the territory and when that group does use violence in these areas, it is more likely to be indiscriminate, rather than selective.

Finally, with respect to Zone 3 (Z3), I depart from Kalyvas' characterization, as his conceptualization is unclear. Paradoxically, Kalyvas defines Zone 3 as an area where land is "most *contested*" (206) or "equally *contested*" (196), at the same time he defines it as equally *controlled* (206, 277) or where control is "shared" between rival groups (232). Logically, the distinct definitions should have very different observable implications for the levels of violence against civilians.

For example, a *most contested* or *equally contested* zone is akin to a "zone of dispute" (212), or the traditional "frontlines" of a civil war (204) where "contestation sparks an outbidding of violence" (231) and civilians are caught in the crossfire of one or more groups (224). Essentially this is a "no man's land" (2006: 244), indicating that no

group holds control. But here, "no control" is not the "mirror image of full control" (2006: 222), rather it is better conceptualized as *the temporary absence of a sovereign*. In this context, armed groups force civilians off their land or wield violence indiscriminately, as they battle fiercely to gain partial or full control of territory on the edges of their fragmented sovereignty (Z2 or Z4).

In stark contrast to this scenario, *shared* or *parity of control* (204) more accurately describes a "stalemate" (227), which is defined by a "standstill" or an "impasse." Both groups are present in the territory, but not engaged in open combat with one another. Thus, they are both dependent on civilians for collaboration and in this scenario "local committees can veto violence" (242). Consequently, selective violence is low or "non-existent" as Kalyvas' Hypothesis 5 predicts (2006: 204, 240-241). For the purpose of my analysis, I use the former definition of Zone 3 and consider it analogous to the "frontlines" and indicative of the highest level of confrontation, rather than as areas of "stalemate" or standoff.[254]

Thus, while Kalyvas' theory is an excellent starting point for analyzing the observed relationship between patterns of territorial control, armed actor violence during the war, and post-conflict outcomes such as community-led peacebuilding, there are several limitations to his work. First, Kalyvas' theoretical framework does not offer insight into the violent outcomes that result when a group is trying only to deter enemy combatants, rather than deterring civilian collaboration with the enemy. For example, in the context of irregular civil war, insurgent groups often use landmines to protect territory from encroaching army forces in remote rural areas. These landmines may explode and

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[254] A stalemate or standoff was not observed in my empirical analysis of contestation between insurgent and counterinsurgent groups.

injure a civilian five years after they are put in place, even when a rival group has already secured control in the territory,[255] affecting the civilian in a way that is neither timely nor causally related to his or her behavior during the conflict. While landmines were not originally put in place to influence civilian behavior and may not correlate with the zones of control predicted by the theory, they may still impact the likelihood that civilians will return and rebuild in the post-conflict context.[256]

Similarly, while armed groups often use forced displacement as a strategy of war (Steele 2007, 2009, 2011), this phenomena can also have unintended consequences among geographically proximate communities. In villages within Eastern Antioquia in the wake of a targeted massive displacement or massacres, many people in neighboring or nearby villages *voluntarily and pre-emptively* migrated.[257] Also, cases of forced disappearances were observed where no group took responsibility for the act, defeating the purpose of using violence only as a means to deter collaboration with the enemy. Thus, it is important to consider the ramifications of territorial control for civilians living in the territory, even if they are not directly tied to deterring civilian collaboration with the enemy, as these dynamics still impact outcomes in the post-conflict context.

A second limitation of Kalyvas' theory is that it does not offer insights about how to interpret particular cases or moments in a conflict when patterns of control *do not accurately predict* patterns of lethal violence against civilians. For example, in Gonzalo

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[255] According to the CINEP press archives, this type of incident was reported five times in the following locations: El Choco (2003), Puerto Rico (2004), Cocalito (2005), San Blas (2005) in San Carlos and in Los Medios (2011) in San Luis.

[256] This phenomenon was described in a personal interview with the president of the Association for Victims of Landmines in San Luis. 21 February 2014.

[257] According to the CINEP press archives this was the case in the following locations: La Hortona (2002), La Hondita (2002), El Palmichal (2002), Santa Rita (2002), Patio Bonito (2002), Puerto Rico (2002, 2003), El Tabor (2003), Sardinita (2003), Vallejuelo (2003), El Contento (2004), San Miguel Arriba (2004), San Miguel Abajo (2004), San Jose (2004) in San Carlos, La Garrucha (2000), La Independencia (2001), La Palma (2001), Las Margaritas (2001), La Cristalina (2001), La Cumbre (2001), El Socorro (2002) in San Luis, and La Cascada (2002) in Granada.

Vargas' study "Urban Irregular Warfare and Violence Against Civilians: Evidence from a Colombian City" (2009), he observes six neighborhood districts of Barrancabermeja, Colombia, to identify a correlation between control and selective violence against civilians.[258] Vargas finds that although the logic of violence in Barrancabermeja corresponds relatively well to the five zones of control, paramilitary violence is higher than the theory would predict in zones where they held full control, and in areas where paramilitaries had less control they were still "surprisingly able to produce selective violence" (Vargas 2009: 126).

Similarly, in Eastern Antioquia I observed that high levels of indiscriminate[259] violence occurred even after state forces had regained full control of territory. Beginning in 2004 and extending into the first years after the conflict ended in the three municipalities of Granada, San Carlos and San Luis, the Colombian army kidnapped and killed civilians, dressing them in the camouflage of insurgent groups and presenting them as a casualty of war. According to one human rights database,[260] this practice – known as "false positives" – was confirmed in 21% of the villages within the three case study municipalities.

Hypotheses

In this section, I briefly outline the primary hypotheses that I will test using a statistical analysis of the village level empirical data. First, I test the validity of one of Kalyvas' main arguments – as the overall level of contestation increases (and control decreases) during the conflict, indiscriminate violence against civilians will spike.

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[258] This was measured using homicide rates provided by the press archives of the CINEP database as well as the Noche y Niebla human rights database (Vargas 2009:124).
[259] For the purpose of this study, indiscriminate violence refers to random violence that is not targeted collectively. In the case areas, massacres were carried out indiscriminately.
[260] "Noche y Niebla."

H1: Indiscriminate violence is more likely in areas that were contested.

Second, I will examine conflict dynamics other than those indiscriminate or selective violence practices used to deter enemy-collaboration by civilians. I hypothesize that villages that suffered a higher level of contestation are more likely to experience other negative consequences of the war – landmines, destruction of basic infrastructure, disappearances, false positives,[261] and massive displacements. These are the dynamics of war that are left under-theorized by Kalyvas' theory, but that were observed empirically while conducting fieldwork in rural Colombia.

> **H2:** Violent outcomes (landmines, disappearances, false positives, etc.) are more likely to have occurred in areas that were contested.

Third, based on my theory of grassroots peacebuilding outlined in Chapter 4, I anticipate that the level of contestation experienced by a village impacts the likelihood that the village will organize around grassroots peacebuilding activities in the post-conflict context. In the case that a single group is in control for a longer period of time (low contestation), I hypothesize that the village will be more likely to engage in community-led peacebuilding activities, regardless of the groups' ideological affiliation or specific organizational structure.

> **H3**: Villages that were under the control of a single group for a longer period of time – regardless of ideological affinity – are more likely to engage in grassroots peacebuilding.

Finally, I test the primary alternative hypothesis, that the ideological profile of an armed group controlling a village impacts the likelihood that the village will organize around grassroots peacebuilding in the post-conflict context.

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[261] Although this is indeed a violent practice used directly against civilians, I argue that it is a dynamic that is distinct from selective or indiscriminate violence used to ensure collaboration among civilians. Rather, incidences of false positives were driven by incentive structures specific to the Colombian army, as soldiers were required to fill a body quota in order to get leave from the frontlines or to get promotions within their army unit. Personal interview with ex-member of the Colombian Army in Granada in April 2014.

H4: *Given the same overall level of control*, the ideological profile of the armed group in control will impact the likelihood that a village will engage in grassroots peacebuilding activities after the conflict ends.

History of the Case Area: Eastern Antioquia

This section provides a brief background of the region, describes the main events that shaped the evolution of the armed conflict and violence across the three case municipalities between 1998 and 2006, and concludes with some descriptive statistics about the magnitude and trends of massacres and massive displacements during those years.

Background

Eastern Antioquia is housed within the department of Antioquia and is composed of 23 municipalities. Until the early 1970s, these municipalities were primarily agricultural, producing the bulk of Antioquia's food – coffee, potatoes, yucca, sugar cane, plantains, and beans. Rich in natural resources and in close proximity to Colombia's second largest city, Medellín, Eastern Antioquia was a logical place to promote Antioquia's industrialization campaign. The campaign began in the early 1970s and featured three "megaprojects:" a hydroelectric complex, a paved highway connecting Medellín to Bogota, and an international airport.

The construction of a hydroelectric dam complex began in 1971 with the erection of the *Calderas* dam and seven years later construction of the Medellín-Bogotá Highway was initiated. By the late 1990s, the hydroelectric complex was producing electricity for 30% of Colombia and 79% of Antioquia, while the Medellín-Bogotá highway was the conduit for nearly 30% of the country's commerce. The international airport provided export access to the rest of Colombia and other parts of the world.

The megaprojects in Eastern Antioquia not only changed the course of regional economic development, but also unintentionally sowed the seeds for violent conflict in the territory (Sanchez et al. 2011: 45). Despite the prosperity that was beginning to accumulate in Medellín and its neighboring municipalities, the residents of the *Oriente Lejano* ("Far Eastern Region") – from where natural resources were extracted – continued down a path of economic and political exclusion. For the most part, the megaprojects were carried out without the consent or consultation of these municipalities. The construction of the hydroelectric complex required flooding large swathes of their territory[262], while the Medellín-Bogotá highway divided the geographic layout of some municipalities, interrupting historic patterns of political, social and economic interaction. Many rural inhabitants were forced off their land without compensation (UNDP 2010: 8).

In response to marginalization from both economic growth and the political decision-making process that drove it, residents of Eastern Antioquia organized and formed the *Movimiento Cívico* ("Civic Movement"). The Movement held its first strike in 1982 and continued to organize politically throughout the 1980s, electing candidates in municipal political offices, such as mayor and council positions. The new leaders distanced themselves from Colombia's two traditional parties and took up the cause of "peripheral" municipalities against the "central" powers in Medellín (UNDP 2010: 11). Yet by the end of the 1980s, the Movement faced violent repression and the majority of its leaders had been killed by agents of the Colombian state (De la Torre and Aramburo

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[262] For example, the town center and surrounding areas of the municipality of El Peñol was flooded in 1978, requiring many landowners to abandon their land without compensation. This is often considered the first forced massive displacement in Eastern Antioquia.

Siegert 2014: 66). In one municipality alone, in less than four years, 17 members of the Movement were threatened, seven were disappeared and 66 were killed.[263]

The repression of the Civic Movement, combined with the historic absence of the state in Eastern Antioquia, created fertile ground for the ELN and the FARC to gain control. Although the ELN had been present in the region since the 1960s, it began recruiting more members and expanding throughout the territory in the 1980s. The *Oriente Lejano* – in particular San Luis – became the most important ELN stronghold, housing the *Carlos Alirio Buitrago* front. During this time period, the ELN had a more social and political profile than a military one, forging relationships with civilians in the territory.[264] Similarly, the FARC first used Eastern Antioquia as a rearguard for its base of operations in Urabá. But after 1982, when the FARC took on a more militant profile, adding "Ejército Popular" (EP) to its name, its 9th and 47th fronts were charged with making inroads into Eastern Antioquia as a new of base of military operations (Garcia de la Torre and Aramburo Siegert 2014: 72; Bushnell 1993: 256; Simons 2004: 52). By the 1990s, both insurgent groups were present throughout the region, with the highest concentration of combatants in the *Oriente Lejano*.

Despite the presence of the two insurgent groups, for many years the region did not experience open conflict between insurgents and state forces, nor was violence commonly wielded against civilians. Rather, civilians describe the presence of armed actors during these years as "ephemeral" or "sporadic"[265], explaining, "yes they were there, but they didn't bother the civilian population, nor did they force us to do

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[263] Fabio E. Velásquez C. (Coordinador). *Las Otras Caras del Poder. Territorio, Conflicto y Gestión Pública en Municipios Colombianos*. Bogotá: GTZ, Foro Nacional por Colombia, 2009. Available at: http://works.bepress.com/alexander_montoyaprada/3
[264] Interview with priest in San Carlos. 3 December 2013.
[265] Interview with resident in San Carlos. 5 December 2013.

anything."[266] But then in 1997 – the year before the conflict erupted – the ELN set up checkpoints along the Medellín-Bogotá highway and was able to control entry in and exit out of the territory. In the same year, both the FARC and the ELN issued statements suspending municipal elections and threatening to kill anyone who ran for local office or cast a vote in the elections for mayor or council members. At this point, the two insurgent groups wielded authority in most of Eastern Antioquia, and threatened to expand into new areas of the country. They posed a viable threat to the Colombian state.

Figure 9. Map of Antioquia[267]

As a response to the insurgent group expansions in Eastern Antioquia, paramilitary groups began their first incursions into the *Oriente Lejano* in 1998 and the army followed with a series of offensives to take back the region. The entire region of Eastern Antioquia was then essentially situated on the frontlines of the country's conflict. However, not every municipality experienced the conflict with the same level of intensity. The paramilitary and army offensives specifically targeted the historic

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[266] Interview with resident in San Carlos. 5 December 2013.
[267] Modified by author.

strongholds of the insurgent groups *within* the region – primarily those municipalities surrounding strategic infrastructure such as hydroelectric dams and the highway, as well as the remote and forested mountainous areas that offered shelter for insurgent groups (Garcia de la Torre and Aramburo Siegert 2014: 132).

Granada, San Carlos, and San Luis – the three municipalities chosen for this study – endured some of the harshest dynamics of the war, largely because Granada and San Carlos housed hydroelectric dams (*Calderas* and *Punchiná*) and the Medellín-Bogotá Highway ran east-west through the heart of San Luis. Granada – the municipality located closest to Medellín of the three – housed Santa Ana, the town where the ELN and later the FARC had consolidated their pre-conflict headquarters. To the east, the first paramilitary incursions in Eastern Antioquia began in 1998 in El Jordan, San Carlos, where the *Bloque Metro* paramilitary front would set up its headquarters until demobilization in 2005. In San Luis, to the south of San Carlos, paramilitaries gained a stronghold in El Prodigio while the FARC fought to retain its historic territorial stronghold in Buenos Aires. By 2006, the villages of San Luis along the highway were essentially demolished and left completely abandoned.

Armed Conflict and Violence Against Civilians from 1998 to 2006

The most intense conflict in the three case municipalities occurred from 1998 to 2006. I have broken this duration into four sub-periods because each is defined by the main events that significantly shaped the evolution of control. These sub-periods include the beginning of the paramilitary campaign and military offensive, the peak of violence, the retreat of insurgents from strategic strongholds and population centers, and the rocky transition during paramilitary demobilization and consolidation of counterinsurgent

control. The information in this section is based on historical records, oral testimony of the civilians who lived through the conflict during these years, and the CINEP press archive containing national and regional Colombian newspapers (e.g. *El Tiempo, El Colombiano*).

Figure 10. Map of Granada, San Carlos, and San Luis[268]
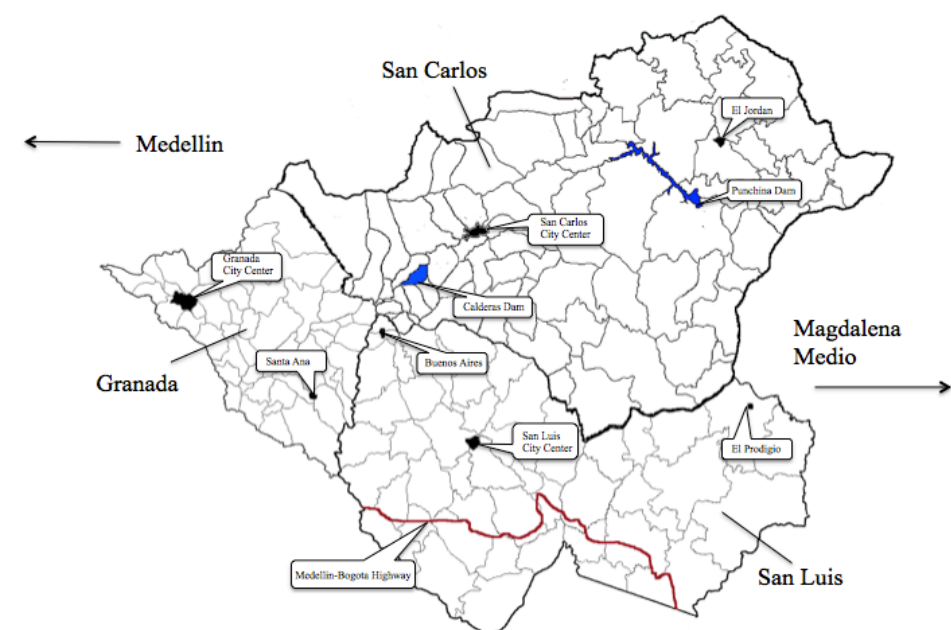
Phase 1: 1998-1999: Insurgent Control of Territory, Paramilitary Offensive Begins

Broadly speaking, this phase can be characterized by the halt of the territorial expansion of the 9th and 47th front of the FARC and the *Carlos Alirio Buitrago* front of the ELN, after paramilitaries began a counter-insurgency campaign. At the beginning of this phase, the two insurgent groups had attained near complete control over the three municipalities and had attacked all the hydroelectric dams in the territory.[269]

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[268] Map created by author.
[269] For example, the ELN attacked the Playas Hydroelectric Dam in San Carlos in 1997, while the FARC attacked the Jaguas Hydroelectric Dam on April 23, 1998 and on August 18, 1998, as well as the Calderas Hydroelectric Dam in San Carlos on August 7, 1998,

In San Carlos, the FARC had consolidated control of the city center and was expanding east towards the region of *Magdalena Medio*, a longtime paramilitary stronghold. In response, paramilitaries launched incursions into San Carlos, first into the town center of El Jordan. One paramilitary-led massacre also occurred during this time period, in the village of La Holanda, which borders the San Carlos city center. To the west, in the municipality of Granada, the FARC and ELN held control of Santa Ana, a large town center with four easy access routes to the Medellín-Bogotá Highway.[270] This made Santa Ana an ideal location to secure a steady stream of supplies and financial resources, either by robbing truckers of commerce, passengers of material goods, or by kidnapping for ransom civilians traveling along the highway. The first paramilitary incursions into Santa Ana and the surrounding villages began in 1998, when paramilitaries also entered Granada's city center. To the east in San Luis, insurgents had secured full control of the town center of Buenos Aires and surrounding villages, and near full control of the city center. Combat between paramilitaries and insurgents began along the border with San Carlos.

This time period is marked by armed clashes between insurgents and paramilitary groups, which produced massive displacement in rural areas. However, many populations returned a few weeks after displacement, assuming incorrectly that the combat was temporary.[271]

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[270] Through roads that run through the villages of Galilea (Granada), el Oso (Granada), Buenos Aires (San Luis) or linked directly to the Medellín-Bogotá Highway through an unpaved rural path. Personal interviews with journalist and resident in Santa Ana, Granada. 22 January 2014.

[271] For example, in San Luis, nearly 300 people displaced in March 1998 to the town center from the villages of La Cristalina, La Palma, La Cumbre, Las Margaritas, and Monteloro, after armed clashes but returned immediately afterwards. Similarly, in Granada, 2,000 people displaced to the town center in August 1998 because of armed clashes from the villages of Santa Ana, El Roblal, El Tablazo, La Estrella, La Selva, Arenosas and Las Faldas. They returned two weeks afterward with the help of the Red Cross.

Phase 2: 2000-2002: "War of All Against All"- Intense Combat between Insurgents, Paramilitaries, and the Colombian Army

This phase began with a series of all-out paramilitary attacks, met by insurgent counter-attacks, and is marked by fierce battles over strategic territory, as well as high levels of indiscriminate violence and massacres carried out by both the FARC and the paramilitaries. This period also witnessed a series of armed blockades or "confinements" of larger population centers, while in more rural areas massive displacement left large swaths of the territory completely abandoned. Much of the territory remained abandoned for the duration of the conflict, as residents moved to more densely populated areas either within the three municipalities, to neighboring municipalities in Eastern Antioquia, and eventually to Medellín. Adding to the battle, President Alvaro Uribe's counterinsurgent campaign – *Seguridad Democrática* – began at the end of this period. Designed to wrestle territory from insurgent groups, the military campaign featured operations specifically focused on regaining control of the Medellín-Bogotá Highway. The first was Operation "Meteoro," launched in 2002.

In the municipality of Granada, this phase of the conflict began in earnest on November 3rd, 2000 when paramilitaries entered the city center and fired on civilians indiscriminately, killing 19. A month later the FARC launched a retaliatory offensive, bombing six blocks of the city center, destroying infrastructure and killing 15 civilians. In the villages along the paved road connecting the town center to the Medellín-Bogotá Highway, all four groups – ELN, FARC, paramilitaries, and the army – set up checkpoints and stopped all vehicles entering or leaving the municipality. The groups randomly confiscated goods from passengers and kidnapped, disappeared, or killed civilian passengers they suspected of harboring an allegiance to their rivals. Residents of

Granada have described the journey on these "seven kilometers of terror" in or out of the municipality as a game of "Russian Roulette" in which the random violence made it impossible to know if you would survive.[272] As the paramilitaries gained control of the city center in 2002 – hoisting a paramilitary flag over the central plaza – they began to push further into neighboring rural areas. They committed massacres in villages previously controlled by insurgents – El Eden, Las Faldas, and El Vergel – indiscriminately killing residents and accusing them of being FARC and ELN collaborators. During this time period, paramilitaries also erected an armed blockade, preventing food from getting into the town center.

In San Carlos, paramilitaries consolidated control over El Jordan and battled the FARC for control of the surrounding rural villages, massively displacing the majority of the residents. Similarly, as the paramilitaries fought the FARC to consolidate control over the city center of San Carlos, they committed massacres in the surrounding villages, such as El Vergel in 2002. Many residents fled their land, fearing they would be attacked for living in a historic insurgent stronghold.

In San Luis, armed clashes between the insurgents and the paramilitaries and army occurred along the villages lining the Medellín-Bogotá Highway, causing massive displacement. In the eastern region of San Luis, paramilitaries fought to consolidate control of the remote township of El Prodigio, but the FARC retained enough power to commit a massacre and displace 1,200 people in 2001. In the region of Buenos Aires – near the border with Granada – paramilitaries and the army united in a campaign to regain control of the historic FARC stronghold. In the Buenos Aires town center, the

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[272] Interview with resident in Granada. 14 November 2013.

FARC prevented residents from leaving, while engaging in open warfare and combat with the paramilitaries and army in the surrounding rural areas.

Phase 3: 2003-2004 – Army Offensive and Insurgent Retreat, Continued Displacement

During this stage the paramilitaries were reaping the rewards of their offensive and beginning to secure control over population centers in all three municipalities: the town center and El Jordan in San Carlos, the town center and Santa Ana in Granada, and the town center of El Prodigio in San Luis. They also began their retreat from the territory, leaving the remainder of the offensive to the army, which launched a second *Seguridad Democrática* operation – Operation "Murial" – to take back the highway. In 2003, the first paramilitary demobilization occurred in Eastern Antioquia – by *Cacique Nutibara*.[273] *Bloque Metro* continued to conduct military operations out of El Jordan until 2005.

Throughout the three municipalities, the insurgents were retreating from population centers, while still conducting sporadic attacks on both civilians and infrastructure. During this time, open combat with army or paramilitaries became more rare, only occurring in the most remote, rural villages of the municipalities. The ELN had been nearly pushed out of the region, while the FARC continued to conduct operations from a defensive position, using landmines, attacks on electrical infrastructure, armed blockades and kidnappings along more remote and unpaved roads as ways of cutting off movement of counterinsurgent combatants and civilians. Similarly, paramilitaries staged armed blockades to prevent anyone from entering or leaving their strategic centers, cutting off civilians from electricity, transportation, and food.

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[273] Sanchez, Gonzalo ed., "San Carlos: Memorias del Exodo en la Guerra" *Memoria Historica*, Bogotá. 2011, p 78.

Phase 4: 2005-2006 – "End" of the Conflict, Insurgents in Retreat, Counterinsurgents Demobilizing, State Retains Tentative Control of the Region

By the end of 2006, nearly half of the villages in the three municipalities were completely abandoned. According to some interviews, the paramilitaries had "laid the groundwork" and "done the dirty work" for the Colombian army, which could then enter without resistance and finish consolidating territorial control.[274] It was during this time period that systematic and extensive abuse of civilian population by the Colombian army has been reported. Oral testimonies[275] describe army members abusing civilians, raping women, and in some cases killing civilians and dressing them as members of the insurgency, a phenomena that has been referred to as "false positives."[276]

Despite the continued violence on the part of the Colombian army, this phase is also marked by the winding down of the conflict. Uribe's national campaign to demobilize all paramilitary blocks culminated in 2005, with over 50,000 paramilitary combatants[277] laying down their arms in San Roque, a municipality that neighbors San Carlos to the north that had been a paramilitary stronghold. By the end of this phase the insurgent groups were in retreat and the state had essentially regained control of Granada, San Carlos, and San Luis.

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[274] Personal interviews with journalist and residents in San Francisco. 5 November 2013.
[275] Oral testimonies collected during participant observation at the Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis on January 25th, February 5th, and February 19th, 2014.
[276] This dynamic that was corroborated by three sources: a human rights database (Noche y Niebla), oral testimony among victims of the conflict and during participant observation during the collective reparations activities in San Luis during fieldwork in 2014.
[277] "Ley Permitió Desmovilización de 53,037 personas y conocer 40,455 crímenes." *Semana*, Bogotá. 28 June 2010.

Magnitude and Trends[278]

Figure 11. Total Massacres in Granada, San Carlos, and San Luis between 1998 and 2006

Figure 12. Total Massive Displacements in Granada, San Carlos, and San Luis between

1998 and 2006
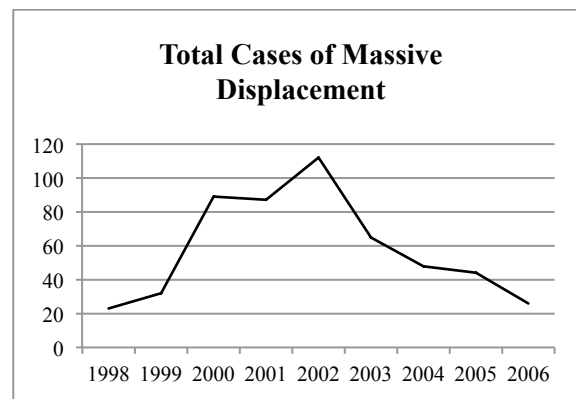
Data and Measurement

The introductory chapter of this dissertation described the data sources and data-gathering methods I used while in the field to collect evidence on both conflict dynamics and community-led peacebuilding activities in a representative sample of villages across the three case municipalities. Village-level data on patterns of armed group control and

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[278] Charts by author.

violence were gathered from multiple sources, both qualitative and quantitative in nature. First, I use in-depth interviews and mapping exercises conducted with long-time residents, community leaders, and victims of the conflict in Granada, San Carlos, and San Luis to understand local historical patterns of armed group control and violence in the case areas. Second, in order to corroborate and refine this information, I used a comprehensive, national-level press archive held by the Center for Popular Research and Education (CINEP) to collect historical data on village-level conflict dynamics between 1998 and 2006 in Granada, San Carlos, and San Luis. The press archive houses every article published on conflict events in these municipalities from 1994 to the present. The database features newspaper publications that span the political spectrum, including *La Voz, El Colombiano, El Espectador, El Tiempo, El Mundo,* and *El Nuevo Siglo*. I have coded 493 articles from this database chronologically, according to the date and type of conflict event, the author of that event (the ELN, the FARC, a paramilitary group, or the army), as well as the village where that event occurred. Finally, to complement the CINEP data, I have drawn on the SAT (*Sistema de Alertas Tempranas*) – the Colombian municipal governments' early alert and monitoring system of human rights abuses and conflict events – and *Noche y Niebla* ("Night and Fog") a conflict database run by a consortium of human rights organizations. I use these sources in combination to code each village's level of contestation during all four periods of the conflict.

Next, in order to construct the dependent variable – *grassroots peacebuilding* – I used a simple survey instrument that allowed me to collect detailed local information on displacement patterns and eight types of community-led peacebuilding activities since 2006. Surveys were conducted over the course of six months through the organizational

structure of a community action committee, which I also refer to as a "junta." In rural

Colombia a junta is the "foundation for democratic participation,"[279] serving as "an

institutionalized space where one meets and works with his or her neighbors."[280] In

peacetime, every village has an organized junta that provides "the official link between

the community and the state"[281] in rural areas.

The unit of analysis for this study is the *vereda* – the smallest administrative unit

within rural areas of Colombia. I use this term as a synonym for "village," but it can also

be thought of as a "rural hamlet" or a "rural neighborhood" within a municipality. There

are 182 villages within the three case municipalities and they comprise the universe of

cases. Below I describe each variable's measurement and coding and note any

limitations in the data or uncertainty surrounding how each village was coded.

For the purpose of this analysis, the category of "insurgents" refers to both

guerrilla groups – the ELN and the FARC – while the category of "counterinsurgents"

refers to the army, police, and paramilitaries. Although there were moments before 1998

when the ELN and the FARC had power struggles that resulted in armed clashes,[282] I

believe it is reasonable to define them both as "insurgents." During the time period

highlighted in this study (1998-2006) they generally respected one another's roles within

the territory and often united against common enemies.[283] In the case of "counter-

insurgents" there are no reported events of clashes between the paramilitaries and army

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[279] Colombian Law 743 of 2002, Rule 2350 de 2003, Article 8.
[280] Interview with regional representative of *Ascomunales* in Eastern Antioquia in Santa Ana. 9 February 2014.
[281] Ibid.
[282] For example, sporadically in rural areas of San Carlos between 1980 and 1994, according to an interview with a resident in San Carlos. 30 January 2014.
[283] Interview with priest in San Carlos. 3 December 2013.

or police in the press archives, and in many interviews, primary documents, and historical sources it was made explicit that the two groups were working hand in hand.[284]

Independent Variables: Contestation and Group Ideology

The primary independent variable, *contestation*, is an ordered categorical variable that can take on three values: *low contestation*, *medium contestation*, or *high contestation*. It measures each village's experience with armed group control – regardless of ideology – over the course of the conflict (1998-2006). Coding this variable required several steps. The first step involved assigning each village to one of five zones of control *for each of the four phases of the conflict*. For example, if the village was under full control of insurgents in 1998-1999, I assigned it a '1' for Z5 and gave it a '0' for the other four zones in that time period. Conversely, if the village was under full control of the counterinsurgents in 1998-1999, I assigned it a '1' for Z1 and a '0' for all other zones in that time period. I did this for each of the four phases (1998-1999, 2000-2002, 2003-2004, and 2005-2006).

In-depth interviews and mapping exercises served as a foundation for coding control in each village and allowed me to form a null hypothesis about areas of control and contestation within the three municipalities. To determine whether the null hypothesis was true or if a village needed to be assigned a different zone of control, I used data on *non-lethal* conflict dynamics from the CINEP press archives, the *Sistema de Alertas Tempranas* (SAT) and the *Noche y Niebla* dataset (N*N). Take for example, the case of the villages bordering the Medellín-Bogotá highway in the municipality of San Luis. Multiple interviewees and historical sources indicated that these villages were

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[284] Interviews with journalist who lived in San Luis between 2002 and 2003 and covered the area during the war. November 2013 – April 2014. Medellín. Interview with former mayor of Granada in Santuario. 13 November 2013.

under full control of the insurgents between 1998-1999. In order to confirm this as true

during that time period, I checked the press archives, SAT, and N*N for reported

incursions by rival groups and for other conflict dynamics. If no conflict activities on the

part of the rival group were reported from any of the other data sources, I coded the

village as Z5 or "full insurgent control," in line with the null hypothesis. In the case that

the rival group (counterinsurgents) was able to make incursions during that time period –

for example, armed clashes, bombing infrastructure, etc. – then I would code the village

as Z4, or "fragmented insurgent control." In the case that the village was the site of open

combat, or multiple cases *in which both groups* conducted massive displacements, armed

blockades, or other forms of attacks followed by counterattacks, then I would code the

village as Z3 or "contested."

It is important to note that in this study, I disaggregate *control* from *selective and

indiscriminate violence* as a way of accounting for the fact that "the dynamics of violence

and the dynamics of war are analytically distinct" (Kalyvas 2008: 401-402). In order to

do this, I follow Vargas' approach for coding control, whereby he demarcates zones of

control according to the number of hostile events – clashes, uncontested attacks, and the

destruction of infrastructure – and then compares these to patterns of *lethal* violence,

which were coded as either indiscriminate or selective in nature (2009: 123).

After coding all four chronological phases, I sum the codes to achieve a

composite score for the village that would reflect its accumulated experience with

conflict and contestation. For example, if Village 1 was assigned to Z1 or Z5 for 1998-

1999, I assigned the village a "0" for that phase, indicating "no contestation" (and

indicating consolidated control of either counterinsurgents or insurgents). If Village 1

was under fragmented control of the insurgents or counterinsurgents during 1998-1999

(Z2 or Z4 respectively), I assign the village a "1" for that phase. Finally, if Village 1 was

fully contested (Z3), then I assigned the village a "2" for that phase. Therefore, the

possible levels of contestation a village could experience ranged from 0 to 8.

Ultimately, the villages within the universe of cases only ranged between a total

score of 0 and 6. Because the villages did not receive a score other than a whole number

of 0 through 6, I did not measure *contestation* as a continuous variable. Rather, I used a

discrete variable, in which villages were assigned a category of *low contestation* (a total

score of 0, 1, or 2 for the four phases of conflict), *medium contestation* (a total score of 3

or 4), and *high contestation* (5 or 6). In all, 77 villages (~42%) were assigned to the *low

contestation* category, 88 villages (~48%) were assigned to the *medium contestation*

category, and 17 villages (~10%) were assigned to the *high contestation* category. Again,

it is important to note that for this independent variable, I do not distinguish between the

groups that had control – insurgent vs. counterinsurgent – as this is in line with my theory

that the ideological profile of the particular group should not matter for grassroots

peacebuilding trends in the post-conflict period.

However, the second independent variable, *ideology*, measures a village's

experience with territorial control during the conflict, while also accounting for the two

groups' ideological profiles. In order to measure this variable, I created three categories

for villages. Those villages that had never been under the full control of an insurgent

group during the four phases of the conflict, but were under full control of the

counterinsurgents (Z1) *in the last phase of the conflict* (2005-2006), were coded as "more

counterinsurgent." This first category includes 45 villages. Conversely, the villages that

had never been under full control of the counterinsurgent group, but had been under full control of the insurgent group (Z5) *in the first phase of the conflict* (1998-1999) were coded as "more insurgent." This second group includes 44 villages. The remaining 93 villages fell into a third category of "more neutral" and make up 51% of the sample.

Although the mapping exercises and knowledge of the historical evolution of the conflict in the three municipalities served as a foundation for coding control on a village level, the micro-variation was at times difficult to decipher for every village, in every time period, especially in areas that were more remote. In the cases where there was no *village-specific* data on the conflict, I made a decision based on the experience of neighboring villages, as well as the mapping exercises and interviews. In these cases where I did not have any additional data on the village, I assigned the village a "1" indicating that I was uncertain about my coding decision. In order to account for this uncertainty, I conduct the statistical analysis using both the entire universe of cases (N=182) as well as a reduced sample of only those villages I was certain about (N=133) and compare the results.

Dependent Variables: Grassroots Peacebuilding and Proportion of Returnees

The primary dependent variable, *grassroots peacebuilding*, is measured as a proportion and ranges from 0 to 1. Each village was scored based on the total number of peacebuilding activities the community had carried out as a proportion of the total number of problems the village confronted after the conflict ended. This information was collected using an original survey of the democratically elected presidents of the juntas for each village. Survey responses were corroborated with the *Promotor de Desarrollo*

Comunitario (the "Community Development Worker") and when possible, another member of the village.

The survey instrument included a simple filter in which the president of each village was first asked whether or not a problem existed in his or her village during the conflict. If the answer was "yes," he or she was then asked whether the community organized around resolving this problem in the post-conflict context (post-2006). Although I coded the president's response as a simple "yes" or a "no" in the second stage of the question, the "yes" or "no" response reflected a more in-depth and nuanced conversation about multiple ways the community could have organized to resolve each unique problem.

Take the case of landmines. I first asked the junta president if landmines were installed in his or her village during the conflict. If the respondent said "no" I used a non-directive probe once and if the answer was still no, I moved on to the next question (Fowler 1991: 43). If the response to the filter question was "yes," I then asked if the community had done any type of organizing on their own to remove them. This resulted in conversations about cases where the residents had removed landmines by hand upon returning to the region, had used old livestock to blow up unexploded landmines, had mapped the location of landmines, or had petitioned the municipal government for resources to remove them. All of these types of responses would be coded as a "yes", in response to whether or not the community organized around this conflict problem.

In order to account for the survey's filter question – whether the village had the problem in the first place – each village was assigned a grassroots peacebuilding ratio of the number of peacebuilding activities it had carried out as a proportion of the total

number of problems the village confronted. For example, if Village X had eight

problems after the conflict ended and engaged in six activities to address them, then

Village X would receive a score of 6/8 or .75. The possible score of the villages ranged

continuously from 0 to 1 and villages had an average score of .62, with a standard

deviation of .32. Of the 182 villages, 28 villages engaged in no peacebuilding, whereas

in 27 villages, the community addressed every problem they confronted in the post-

conflict context.

The survey addressed the following grassroots peacebuilding actions: The

removal of landmines (*landmines*), the reintegration of ex-combatants (*ex-combatant*),

organization around security and community policing (*security*), the creation of public

spaces for reconciliation or the commemoration of victims (*memory*), the re-building or

re-opening of a school after the conflict (*school*), rebuilding of basic infrastructure that

had been destroyed by the conflict (*basic infrastructure*), the exhumation of disappeared

or missing bodies (*disappeared*), and community organizing around helping other

displaced persons return to the village (*displaced*).

Of the 182 villages in the sample, 25 of the villages did not have a junta and thus I

was not able to conduct a survey. Instead, I interviewed the Community Development

Worker of the municipality in order to a) determine why there was no junta and b) what

the conflict and post-conflict dynamics had been in that particular village. In all 25

villages, the absence of the organized committee was due to the fact that either no one

had returned to the village or there were too few people in the village to constitute a

junta. According to multiple interviews, these villages were often the hardest hit by the

conflict and no one had returned to them because there were still landmines present or the

community was too scattered to organize around returning to the original site of displacement.[285] I purposefully keep these villages as part of my sample rather than treating them as missing data, as I believe that "no junta" is a good proxy for the lowest level of peacebuilding. All of the villages with no junta were given a score of "0." Although I was unable to determine the specific number of problems the village confronted, the numerator of the ratio could be assigned a "0" because without a junta, no grassroots organizing around peacebuilding was carried out.

I also analyze a second dependent variable – *returnees* – which measures the proportion of displaced persons who returned to their village after the conflict ended in 2006. This measure ranges as a percentage from 0 to 1, with 0 indicating 0% of the village returned and 1 indicating 100% of those who displaced returned to the village. The mean value of the sample is 31%, while the standard deviation is also 31%. Of the 182 villages, in 21 villages no one returned, whereas in 20 villages everyone who displaced returned.

Local municipal data from Granada, San Carlos, and San Luis serves as the primary source for measuring this variable. This data offers the most up-to-date local count of registered displaced persons in the villages. Because the most recent Colombian census was carried out in 2005 – in the midst of the conflict in Eastern Antioquia – the national level data on population in this region is not accurate. However, I believe the data provided by the local governments is reliable, as the governments have been incentivized to accurately track this information to receive subsidies and other financial resources from departmental or national-level governments. The local census of all the

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[285] Personal interview with local director of Department of Planning programs in San Luis, February 5, 2014, in San Luis. Personal interview with the Community Development Promoters in Granada on February 8, 2014, and with the Community Development Promoter in San Carlos in March 2014.

people living in the municipality provides information about displacement, including the year, the village from which residents displaced, whether residents displaced massively or individually, the receptor location (village or neighborhood, in a municipality or city), and the year and the location (village) of return within the municipality. Using this information, I was able to form a ratio of the number of people that were displaced from each village and the number that returned.[286]

Control Variables

In order to account for possible omitted variables – factors that could correlate with the independent variable (*contestation* or *ideology*) and the dependent outcome of interest (either *grassroots peacebuilding* or *returnees*) – I include three control variables. The first variable – *strategic* – measures whether a village borders or contains strategic developed infrastructure, such as the Medellín-Bogotá highway, paved roads, a population center (pop. > 1,000), a hydroelectric dam, or an electrical tower. It was important to include this variable, as I hypothesize it will be positively correlated with the level of contestation (armed groups target areas that are of strategic interest) and the likelihood that a community will return and organize around grassroots peacebuilding activities. Villages located close to developed infrastructure are more likely to draw displaced persons to return, as they feature more state presence and may be perceived as safer or more likely to attract resources. A village's proximity to developed infrastructure also makes it easier for returnees to move throughout the municipality and sell their wares at the market. This variable was coded using detailed maps of the region

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[286] I corroborated this information with original data I gathered using the survey, in which I asked the president of each village how many households were present in the village before the conflict (pre-1998), how many households "resisted" or stayed during the conflict (1998-2006), and how many had returned since the conflict ended (post-2006). Although this information was based on recall and local knowledge, the ratio of households was used as a simple litmus test for the municipal census' accuracy.

and the CINEP press archives. Of the 182 villages, 73 fall into the category of "strategic"

(about 40% of the universe of cases) while the other 109 villages can be considered more

remote or in areas that are "non-strategic" for either the state or insurgent forces.

The second control variable – *massacres* – measures whether or not a massacre[287]

occurred in the village between 1998 and 2006. This variable is measured as a binary

outcome, of '1' indicating "yes" and '0' indicating "no." Of the 182 villages, 50 villages

experienced a massacre at least once between 1998 and 2006, while 132 villages did not.

Finally, the variable –*massive displacement* – indicates whether or not there was a

massive displacement during the conflict period, with a '1' indicating "yes" and '0'

indicating "no." The majority (nearly 60%) of the villages in my sample experienced a

massive displacement, with 109 of 182 coded as a "yes" and 73 coded as "no."

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of villages in Granada, San Carlos, and San Luis

VARIABLES	(1) N	(2) mean	(3) sd
Strategic Location	182	0.401	0.491
Proportion Returnees	182	0.307	0.308
Landmines	157	0.707	0.457
Security Problems	182	0.973	0.164
Destroyed Basic Infrastructure	157	0.917	0.276
Forced Disappearances	157	0.796	0.404
Grassroots Peacebuilding Ratio	182	0.623	0.327
Massacres	182	0.275	0.448
Massive Displacement	182	0.599	0.491
False Positives	182	0.209	0.408
High Contestation	182	0.0934	0.292
Medium Contestation	182	0.484	0.501
Low Contestation	182	0.423	0.495
More Counterinsurgent	182	0.247	0.433
More Insurgent	182	0.242	0.429

[287] A massacre is defined by an incident in which four or more people are killed by a single armed group in the same instance.

Statistical Analysis

In this section I estimate a series of multivariate regressions in order to test the four hypotheses outlined above. The first two sets of models directly address the first two hypotheses and estimate the relationship between different levels of village-level contestation and violent outcomes during the conflict. The third set of models tests hypothesis three and examines the relationship between overall levels of contestation and outcomes in the post-conflict context, such as grassroots peacebuilding activities and the rate of return among displaced persons. Finally, the last set of models evaluates the alternative hypothesis – that the ideology of different armed groups, given similar levels of control, impacts post-conflict outcomes. I estimate the models with robust standard errors to allow for potential heteroskedasticity in the error term.

Hypothesis 1 – Indiscriminate Violence

I start my analysis by estimating a linear probability model (LPM) to test the impact of different levels of contestation on indiscriminate violence, which I measure using massacres as a proxy.[288] I do this in order to empirically test the hypothesis derived from Kalyvas' theory that there is a positive relationship between the level of contestation in a village and the amount of indiscriminate violence wielded by armed groups.[289] The model truly estimates the probability that a given village will experience a massacre during the conflict years, given the overall level of contestation in the village

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[288] I believe that in the case of Eastern Antioquia, massacres are a good proxy for indiscriminate violence and are not capturing instances in which a certain category of people is targeted and then killed en masse. The massacres described in interviews and newspaper articles are instances of random and indiscriminate killing of four or more people at a time.
[289] Due to a lack of data on selective violence in the universe of cases, I am not able to test other aspect of Kalyvas' theory, such as the overall level of violence in a village.

and controlling for the strategic location of the village. The model can be thought of as follows:

$$Y_i = \alpha_i + \beta X_i + u_i$$

Where i is the village and α is the level of contestation (low contestation, medium contestation, or high contestation). The control variable X measures an attribute of the village during conflict – that is, strategic location of the village – and u is the error term.

The results in Table 4 suggest that there is a statistically significant relationship between the medium level of contestation and the likelihood that a village experienced a massacre during the conflict. A village with a medium level of contestation has a 23.7% higher chance of experiencing a massacre during the conflict than a low contestation village (p<.001). Although there is a positive relationship between a high level of contestation in a village and the likelihood that a massacre occurred, the relationship is not statistically significant (p=.58).

Table 4. Models 1-3: Linear Probability Model (LPM) of Conflict Outcomes

VARIABLES	(1) Massacres	(2) Mass Displace.	(3) False Pos.
Med contestation	0.237***	0.448***	0.314***
	(0.0694)	(0.0735)	(0.0546)
High contestation	0.0552	0.516***	0.359***
	(0.100)	(0.108)	(0.118)
Strategic	0.119	0.0933	0.103*
	(0.0723)	(0.0681)	(0.0609)
Constant	0.107**	0.297***	-0.0177
	(0.0428)	(0.0589)	(0.0192)
Observations	182	182	182
R-squared	0.101	0.238	0.184

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Hypothesis 2 – Other Conflict Dynamics

In addition to massacres, I also estimate the relationship between a village's level of contestation and the likelihood that it will experience a massive displacement or cases of abuse against civilians by the Colombian army (false positives), while controlling for the strategic location of the village. First, in the case of massive displacement, both medium and high levels of contestation have a positive and statistically significant relationship with the likelihood that the village experienced a massive displacement during the conflict (p<.000). A medium contestation village is 44.8% more likely to have had a massive displacement at some point during the conflict than a low contestation village. In the same model, a high contestation village is 51.6% more likely to experience a massive displacement than a low contestation village. Second, in the case of false positives, both medium and high levels of contestation have a statistically significant, positive relationship with the likelihood that civilian abuse by the Colombian army occurred in a village during the conflict. A medium contestation village was 31.4% more likely to experience a false positive when compared to a low contestation village (p <.000). A high contestation village was slightly more likely than a medium contestation village, with a 35.9% higher likelihood than a low contestation village (p<.003).

In order to understand other pathways through which contestation could impact grassroots peacebuilding outcomes, I also address the relationship between different levels of contestation and six additional conflict outcomes. To do so, I estimate six multivariate regressions using a series of different dependent outcomes, measured using the results of the survey. The dependent outcomes estimated are the following: landmines, destroyed basic infrastructure, security problems, forced disappearances, school destruction, and the presence of ex-combatants. They are all binary outcomes,

with a "1" indicating "yes, it occurred in the village," and a "0" indicating "no, it did not occur in the village." In all six models, I use the same primary independent variable (low contestation, medium contestation, and high contestation) while controlling for the strategic location of the village.

Table 5 shows that contestation only has a statistically significant relationship with conflict outcomes in three of the six models. In the first model, only the category of medium contestation has a statistically significant relationship with the dependent outcome (destroyed infrastructure). A village that experienced medium contestation is 12.2% more likely than a low contestation village to have had its basic infrastructure destroyed (p<.004). In the second model, a medium contestation village has a 31.6% higher likelihood of having landmines when compared to a low contestation village (p<.000). This likelihood increases by approximately 5% when a village falls into the category of high contestation (p<.000). In the third model, a high contestation village is 4.3% more likely than a low contestation village to have experienced general security problems (p<.081). In the last three models (Model 7-9), there is no statistically significant relationship between a village's level of contestation and the likelihood that it will experience either disappearances or the presence of ex-combatants.

Table 5. Models 4-9: Linear Probability Model (LPM) of Additional Conflict Outcomes

VARIABLES	(4) Infra	(5) Landmine	(6) Security	(7) Disappear	(8) School	(9) Excomb
Med contestation	0.122***	0.316***	0.0101	0.108	-0.0247	-0.0871
	(0.0418)	(0.0755)	(0.0256)	(0.0709)	(0.0781)	(0.144)
High contestation	0.0672	0.363***	0.0435*	0.0281	-0.0824	0.0843
	(0.0905)	(0.100)	(0.0248)	(0.134)	(0.140)	(0.242)
Strategic	0.0305	-0.0580	0.0249	0.0901	0.0980	-0.106
	(0.0399)	(0.0731)	(0.0221)	(0.0679)	(0.0774)	(0.139)
Constant	0.844***	0.564***	0.954***	0.707***	0.816***	0.558***
	(0.0453)	(0.0618)	(0.0265)	(0.0563)	(0.0527)	(0.0978)

| Observations | 157 | 157 | 182 | 157 | 131 | 68 |
| R-squared | 0.056 | 0.119 | 0.010 | 0.039 | 0.021 | 0.032 |

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Hypothesis 3 – Grassroots Peacebuilding

In this section, I test the third hypothesis – that different levels of contestation (vs. control) have a relationship with the likelihood that communities will organize around peacebuilding activities in the post-conflict context. For the purpose of this analysis, I use two dependent variables: the grassroots peacebuilding ratio and the proportion of returnees to a village. For both dependent outcomes, I first estimate a simple multivariate regression controlling for only the strategic location of the village. Then, I add two other controls – *massacres* and *massive displacements* – in order to estimate the independent effect of contestation given different repertoires of violence.

The first set of models estimates the determinants of the ratio of grassroots peacebuilding. In the simple model, both categories of medium contestation and high contestation have a statistically significant negative relationship with a village's ratio of grassroots peacebuilding – indicating that at higher levels of contestation, a village will engage in less peacebuilding activities as a proportion of the total number of problems the village had. A medium contestation village will engage in .16 fewer activities when compared to a low contestation village (p<.002), whereas a high contestation village will engage in .23 fewer activities (p<.006).

When I add two additional control variables – *massacres* and *massive displacements* – to the model, the statistical significance and the magnitude of the relationship between the level of contestation and the level of peacebuilding strengthens, but the results also reveal an unexpected positive relationship between these two conflict

dynamics and the level of rebuilding. First, a medium contestation village will engage in .23 fewer activities than a low contestation village (p<.000), while a high contestation village will engage in .29 fewer activities than a low contestation village (p<.001). However, a village that experienced a massacre will engage in slightly more (.09) peacebuilding activities than one that did not, and a village that experienced a massive displacement will also engage in slightly more peacebuilding activities (.10) than a village that did not. The statistical significance on these variables is p<.09 and p<.07, respectively.

In the second set of models, I use the proportion of returnees as another measure of the incidence and magnitude of community organizing in the post-conflict context. I believe this is a good proxy because in most villages the pattern of return was among groups of people returning to the village and assisting others to do the same, rather than a stream of individual households without any form of community support. In the simple model – controlling only for the strategic location of the village – the results show a statistically significant, negative relationship between both medium and high contestation villages and the proportion of returnees to the village. In the case that a village falls into the medium contestation category, the proportion of returnees will be 15% lower than in a low contestation village (p<.001). In a high contestation village, the proportion of returnees is 19% lower than a low contestation village (p<.03).

When I add additional control variables – *massacres* and *massive displacement* – to the model, this increases the magnitude and statistical significance of the relationship between the level of contestation and the proportion of returnees to the village. For example, a medium contestation village will experience nearly 20% less people returning

(p<.001), while a high contestation village will experience nearly 22% less people

returning to the village (p<.03). Again, unexpectedly, both massacres and massive

displacement have a positive relationship with the proportion of returnees to a village,

although only massacres has a statistically significant coefficient. A village that

experienced a massacre will have 12% more returnees than a village that did not (p<.01).

Table 6. Models 10-13: Multivariate Regression Model of Peacebuilding Outcomes

VARIABLES	(10) Peace Rat.	(11) Peace Rat.	(12) Propreturn	(13) Propreturn
Med contestation	-0.160***	-0.226***	-0.150***	-0.196***
	(0.0516)	(0.0548)	(0.0458)	(0.0502)
High contestation	-0.233***	-0.288***	-0.189**	-0.216**
	(0.0830)	(0.0886)	(0.0849)	(0.0984)
Massacres		0.0901*		0.121**
		(0.0535)		(0.0491)
Mass Displace.		0.0977*		0.0390
		(0.0538)		(0.0542)
Strategic	0.133***	0.113**	0.0331	0.0150
	(0.0506)	(0.0494)	(0.0426)	(0.0414)
Constant	0.669***	0.630***	0.384***	0.359***
	(0.0344)	(0.0403)	(0.0430)	(0.0441)
Observations	182	182	182	182
R-squared	0.099	0.134	0.063	0.097

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Hypothesis 4 – Alternative Hypothesis

Here I test the possibility that an armed group's ideology – in conjunction with

patterns of control – has an impact on post-conflict outcomes. In this section, I use a

different independent variable – whether a village falls into the category of "more

insurgent," "more counterinsurgent," or "more neutral." In the simple model, only "more

insurgent" has a statistically significant relationship with the ratio of grassroots

peacebuilding activities (p <.001). A village that was under full insurgent control in the

first phase of the conflict and never under full control of counterinsurgents during the

course of the conflict, results in approximately 20% fewer peacebuilding activities than a "more neutral" village. Adding the additional control variables – *massacres* and *massive displacements* – does not change the statistical significance or the magnitude of the effect. Neither of the additional control variables has a statistically significant relationship with the grassroots peacebuilding ratio.

Table 7. Models 14-17. Multivariate Regression Model of Peacebuilding Outcomes

       (Alternative Hypothesis)

VARIABLES	(14) Peace Rat.	(15) Peace Rat.	(16) Propreturn	(17) Propreturn
More counterinsurgent	-0.0289	-0.0288	0.0480	0.0466
	(0.0551)	(0.0546)	(0.0561)	(0.0570)
More insurgent	-0.197***	-0.196***	-0.131**	-0.120**
	(0.0600)	(0.0622)	(0.0517)	(0.0523)
Massacres		0.0389		0.0772
		(0.0544)		(0.0526)
Mass Displace.		0.0159		-0.0301
		(0.0521)		(0.0480)
Strategic	0.115**	0.105**	0.00917	0.000126
	(0.0462)	(0.0481)	(0.0439)	(0.0427)
Constant	0.632***	0.615***	0.323***	0.321***
	(0.0387)	(0.0437)	(0.0389)	(0.0482)
Observations	182	182	182	182
R-squared	0.090	0.094	0.046	0.058

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

In the second set of models, I test the effect of a group's ideology on the proportion of returnees to a village. Again, there is a statistically significant negative relationship between a village that was under more insurgent control and the proportion of people who return to the village. Compared to a "more neutral" village, a village that was under more insurgent control will result in 13% fewer people returning to the village (p<.01). When massacres and massive displacements are added to the model, the

magnitude of the effect remains nearly the same (-.12), while the statistical significance is reduced slightly (p<.023). Neither of the control variables has a statistically significant relationship with the proportion of returnees to the village.

Robustness Check

In order to account for potential errors made when coding each village's zone of control during each of the four phases of the conflict, I also estimate each of the above regressions using only the sample of villages that I was certain about. This reduced the universe of cases from N=182 to N=133. Here I compare the results of the first set of regressions to those from the reduced sample.

The first model tests the impact of levels of contestation on the likelihood of a massacre. Dropping the uncertain cases and re-estimating the regression results in an increase in the magnitude and the statistical significance of the effect. While in the full model, a medium contestation village has a 24% higher likelihood of experiencing a massacre than a low contestation village, estimating the regression using only certain cases increases that likelihood to 34.7% and the statistical significance increases slightly from p<.001 to p<.000. In the second model, dropping the uncertain cases increases the magnitude of the effect of a medium contestation village (from 44.7% to 48.5%) and mutes the effect of a high contestation village (from 51.6% to 49.6%) on the likelihood of a massive displacement incident, while the statistical significance for both remains the same (p<.000). In the case of false positives, dropping the uncertain cases increases the magnitude of both the effect of the medium and high contestation villages, while the statistical significance remains the same. The likelihood of experiencing a false positive in a medium contestation village increases from 31.4% to 41.7% when one compares the

full sample to the reduced sample, whereas the magnitude of the coefficient on high contestation increases slightly from 35.9% in the full sample to 36.2% in the reduced sample (p<.003).

With respect to the other conflict outcomes (landmines, security, school destruction, basic infrastructure, ex-combatants, and disappearances), dropping the uncertain cases does not greatly impact the results. Dropping the uncertain cases changes the results in only one case – school destruction – in which the relationship between the medium contestation category and the likelihood of school destruction gains statistical significance. After dropping the uncertain cases, a medium contestation village has a negative relationship with school destruction and is significant at the p<.10 level. In the other five cases, the statistical significance remains and in two cases (landmines and security) the magnitude of the effect actually increases.

In the case of post-conflict outcomes, dropping the uncertain cases slightly reduces the magnitude of the effect of medium contestation on the grassroots peacebuilding ratio and the proportion of returnees to the village, but does not impact the coefficient on high contestation. The statistical significance remains for all four models that test the impact of contestation on post-conflict outcomes. Dropping the uncertain cases also does not have an impact on the models used to test the alternative hypothesis and the direction, magnitude, and general statistical significance remains very similar to the results from the regressions estimated using the full universe of cases. For the results of the regression models using the reduced sample of villages (N=133), please see Tables 9 – 13 in the Appendix.

Discussion of Unexpected Results

This section discusses unexpected findings in the statistical analysis. Here I refer to those results that are not directly in line with what Kalyvas' theory predicts or what my theory on grassroots peacebuilding predicts as outlined in Chapter 4. I offer a few possible explanations for these outcomes.

Contestation and Massacres

The results of the statistical analysis show that there is a positive, statistically significant relationship between medium levels of contestation and the likelihood that a massacre occurred in the village between 1998 and 2006. However, the relationship between high levels of contestation and massacres is not statistically significant. This is an anomalous result and begs the question: Why is there is a relationship between medium contestation and massacres and not high contestation and massacres?

One possible explanation has to do with patterns of civilian response to violence that could be obscured by the quantitative data. For example, although massive displacements occurred in the majority of both medium and high contestation villages (80% and 82%, respectively), civilian responses could vary according to the level of control exerted by the armed group. In villages that were under fragmented control of one group, people were more likely to displace temporarily and then return to the village within a few days or weeks, incorrectly perceiving that the violence had died down. Massacres often occurred in the wake of these collective returns, as the rival group would "punish" those who returned.[290] Conversely, in villages in the high contestation category – and consequently on the frontlines of combat – people massively displaced and did not

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[290] For example, this occurred in both Santa Rita and Samana in San Carlos, in which there was a massive displacement and then upon return to an area of "perceived safety" the rival group committed a massacre (Sanchez 2011: 436). The same thing happened in Santa Ana, where the first massive displacement occurred in 1998, but people returned with the help of the Red Cross and then a massacre occurred (*El Mundo*, August 9, 1998).

return, which left no one in the village that could fall victim to a massacre.[291] This is a

potential explanation for the lack of correlation between the highest level of contestation

and the proxy for indiscriminate violence.

I observed a second unexpected outcome while testing hypothesis three, when I

added *massacres* and *massive displacements* as control variables to the models.

Although adding the control variables strengthened the negative relationship between

contestation and both the ratio of peacebuilding activities and the proportion of returnees,

both massacres and massive displacements reveal a statistically significant, *positive*

relationship with the dependent outcomes. This was an unexpected result, as my theory

states that indiscriminate violence should reduce the likelihood that people will trust one

another enough to overcome their collective action problem after the conflict ends.

A plausible explanation in the case of massive displacements is that groups that

migrated did not scatter, but rather settled collectively as a group in a nearby village or

city. This type of displacement pattern could result in strengthened rural social networks

in the site of reception, and would help explain the positive relationship with grassroots

peacebuilding activities in the post-conflict context. Indeed, this was the case in Santa

Ana, Granada, which experienced an ideal-type massive displacement in 2002. Here

nearly the entire population (1,600) displaced simultaneously, with the majority of

migrants settling in the slums surrounding Cali and Medellín. In the cities, they retained

their networks and associated with *Amigos por Santa Ana* ("Friends for Santa Ana"),

which facilitated the first collective return visits to the town in 2004 and 2005, and

subsequent annual return trips in which people began staying for longer periods of time

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[291] This was indeed the case in the villages within the corregimiento of Santa Ana in Granada.

and eventually resettling after the conflict ended.[292] I discuss this empirical observation in more detail in the following chapter.

The positive relationship between massacres and peacebuilding is more difficult to reconcile with my theory. It is possible that this relationship reveals support for the alternative hypothesis about the impact of indiscriminate violence – that egregious violent acts could actually galvanize people to organize and work with one another, an argument made by some scholars.[293]

Group Ideology

Unexpectedly, I find support for the primary alternative hypothesis – the ideology of an armed group matters for post-conflict outcomes. The statistical results show that *given the same overall level of control*, those villages that were under insurgent control had a harder time rebuilding than those that had been under counterinsurgent control for the same amount of time. There are several possible explanations for this and none entirely undermine the theory that control and contestation are the primary independent variables doing the work in the variation in post-conflict outcomes.

First, while conducting fieldwork in Eastern Antioquia I observed that villages that were *never* under full insurgent control fared better in terms of indiscriminate violence and indirect conflict dynamics when compared to villages that were initially under full insurgent control and where the state was never fully able to recoup territory by the end of the conflict (2006). This second category of villages includes the sites of the most brutal treatment of civilians by both paramilitaries and then the army, as those

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[292] Interview with the Director of *Amigos Por Santa Ana* in Medellín. 11 March 2014.
[293] For example, Elisabeth Jean Wood argues that frequent and arbitrary violence against civilians was channeled into support for insurgent groups and may have been the "best recruiter" for the FMLN in El Salvador (2003:115). Also see Blattman 2009; Valdivieso and Villena-Roldan 2014; Bateson 2013, Mason and Krane 1989.

who did not displace were assumed to have been members of the ELN or FARC, even if they were not part of the rank and file. This observation was substantiated by the quantitative data, in which "more insurgent" villages correlated positively with the incidence of false positives. According to the statistical analysis, those villages in the "more insurgent" category are 26% more likely to have an incident of civilian abuse by the Colombian army than "more neutral" villages ($p<.001$). Abuse by the Colombian army – despite a high level of insurgent control in the beginning of the conflict – may undermine the likelihood that civilians will organize and rebuild local institutions and basic infrastructure.

Additionally, by bringing ideology into the story of control I am also capturing a chronological dimension of the conflict, as nearly the entire region transitioned from being "mostly insurgent" at the beginning of the conflict (1998) to "mostly under control of the state" by 2006. Those particular villages that were never under full counterinsurgent control during the conflict are synonymous with areas that were not fully recouped by the state by 2006. It is logical that civilians would be more reluctant to both return to – and organize activities in – areas where the state had not consolidated control and where the potential for further conflict dynamics was still present in the early post-conflict years.

<u>Conclusion</u>

In this chapter I tested the theory developed in Chapter 4 about the relationship between armed group levels of control and contestation in a village and the likelihood that the village will rebuild once the conflict has ended. Relying on an original cross-sectional dataset of 182 villages in three municipalities, I found broad support for the

hypotheses about both conflict and post-conflict dynamics. Contestation has a robust, negative effect on community organizing around peacebuilding, measured using both a ratio of peacebuilding activities and the proportion of return to the village among displaced persons. These findings are true for both medium and high contestation villages when compared to low contestation villages and are robust to different model specifications, including a reduced sample (N =133) that used only those villages that had multiple data sources to corroborate the coding of control across all four chronological phases of the conflict.

Additionally, I attempt to disaggregate different types of violence from contestation and empirically test the theory that higher levels of contestation correlate with more indiscriminate violence. I find a robust relationship between different levels of contestation and the following conflict outcomes: massive displacements, false positives, the use of landmines, and school destruction. Surprisingly, only medium contestation had a relationship with massacres and the destruction of basic infrastructure. Only high contestation correlated with a higher incidence of general security problems in the village. Finally, there is some evidence that given the same level of overall control, a group's ideology matters for post-conflict outcomes, with traditional insurgent strongholds having more difficulty rebuilding than those that were under the control of counterinsurgents for the same amount of time.

Although these findings reveal a correlation between the level of control and patterns of violence during a conflict, as well as levels of control and a village's propensity to rebuild once the conflict ends, they do not shed light on exactly how these processes take place nor the causal pathways through which these observed relationships

occur. How does contestation affect the relationships between civilians living in conflict-ridden territory and how does this play out in the post-conflict context? Do different types of violence affect the social and political organization in a village? I turn to these questions in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6: Community Social Fabric and Grassroots Peacebuilding

In the previous chapter, I showed that high levels of contestation in a village correlate with low levels of grassroots peacebuilding. This chapter goes a step further and shows that the relationship is more than correlative – it is causal. Using qualitative methods to compare three case *corregimientos* – groups of villages – I find that high levels of contestation destroyed communities' social fabric. I argue that for this reason – diminished social fabric being the causal mechanism – those communities that experienced higher levels of contestation had more difficulty organizing around local reconstruction after the violence ended.

These empirical findings are important for numerous reasons – perhaps primary among them that they can help inform the design and implementation of future peacebuilding programs. Also, from an academic perspective, the evidence is important because it contradicts the theoretical arguments of numerous other scholars. As I explained in Chapter 4, those scholars contend that experiencing civil war violence increases a community's social capital and propensity for collective action. However, my findings show this is not true. In this chapter I define social fabric and examine its role in community dynamics during and after an irregular civil war. By doing so, I illustrate how a rural community's ability to organize around peacebuilding measures in the post-conflict landscape cannot be fully understood by conducting lab-in-field experiments or using oversimplified measures to proxy collective action and political participation. Rather, it must be studied using indicators that are rooted in the cultural practices of the community of interest.

For a comparative case study, I selected three corregimientos in the three case municipalities, each of which had similarly strong social fabric prior to the conflict. However, the three corregimientos experienced the conflict differently. *El Jordan* (within San Carlos), became the regional paramilitary headquarters and was therefore under consolidated control of a single armed group throughout the conflict. Meanwhile, both *Buenos Aires* (in San Luis) and *Santa Ana* (in Granada) experienced high levels of contestation, as guerrillas battled fiercely against paramilitaries and the national army. However, in Santa Ana, this contestation eventually resulted in a massive displacement of nearly every resident of the corregimiento, whereas in Buenos Aires, residents were not allowed to displace.

Figure 13. Case Corregimientos: El Jordan, Buenos Aires, and Santa Ana[294]
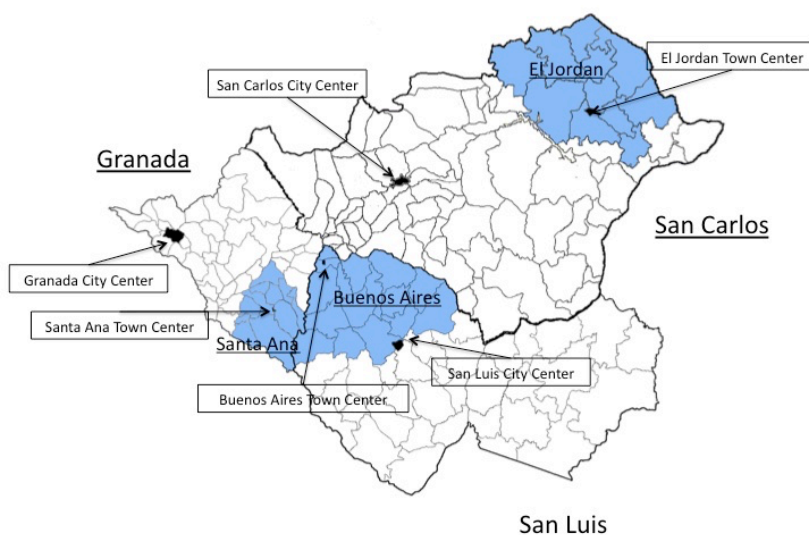
The distinct conflict dynamics of the three corregimientos resulted in variation in their social fabrics. This, in turn, led to different post-conflict peacebuilding trajectories. Specifically, in El Jordan, where residents lived under consolidated control, social fabric

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[294] Map by author.

was retained, and the community has carried out extensive peacebuilding activities. In Santa Ana, where residents endured high contestation and then massively displaced, social fabric was hurt, but retained to some extent in receptor communities of the major cities where the displaced settled collectively. This has resulted in some level of grassroots organization around rebuilding, which has been supported Santa Ana's diaspora community. Finally, in Buenos Aires, where the community endured high contestation for the duration of the conflict years, never able to flee collectively, social fabric has been largely destroyed, and little progress has been made among the community to organize around reconstruction or peacebuilding.

Qualitative Research Design

The results of the regression analysis in Chapter 5 show a negative relationship between the level of armed contestation in a village and the same village's subsequent level of grassroots peacebuilding in the post-conflict landscape. Although the quantitative analysis provides an excellent snapshot of the relationship between local conflict and post-conflict dynamics across the universe of village cases, a qualitative approach is needed to understand the causal mechanisms driving these correlations. Specifically, an in-depth study of carefully selected case corregimientos allows me to determine exactly how and why the dynamics of civil war affect a village's propensity to organize around local reconstruction after the war ends. My hypothesis going into this research was that the strength of a community's social fabric, or the lack thereof, may be the mechanism at work.

By "social fabric" I mean: the trusting relationships, associative behaviors, collectively sanctioned norms, shared cultural practices, and formal or informal

legitimate institutions that underpin cooperative living and non-violent conflict resolution in a community. This draws on Robert Putnam's definition of social capital, but diverges based on my interest in capturing how "collective life is organized at the grassroots level," especially in rural areas or impoverished zones of cities in developing countries (Pouligny 2006: 77). Qualitative work allowed me to infer the strength of a community's social fabric through ethnographic research, resident testimonies, and participant observation.

In the case region corregimientos, there were two primary community practices that indicated the strength of a community's social fabric: the use of *convites* – voluntary mutual workdays – and the existence and strength of the community's *junta de acción communal*. However, there were other less tangible "indicators" that informed my understanding of a community's social fabric. For example, I used ethnographic observation to understand the frequency and type of social interactions between community members, the type of greetings between neighbors and outsiders, and the existence of neighborly etiquette, such as offering *sancocho* or *aguapanela* to visitors.

Other cooperative activities – such as sports tournaments between villages, community milling of sugar cane, and community wide celebrations – served as other observable indications of a community's social fabric and are described extensively in the section "Social Fabric in Pre-War Eastern Antioquia." It is important to note that, in line with my theoretical framework of grassroots peacebuilding in Chapter 2, these are not "generalizable measurements" of social fabric that have external validity beyond Eastern Antioquia. Consequently, they differ from the observable indicators commonly used in

the political science literature, such as "voting," "attending meetings," or contributing to "public goods" in a behavioral game.[295]

The nature of a post-conflict setting necessitates a qualitative and reflective research approach. This approach treats the difficulties of data acquisition and missing data points not as flaws in the research design, but rather as important clues about the variables of interest. For example, in the large-N sample of 182 villages, 49 have no *village-specific* data on levels of violence or patterns of territorial control. The data is not available for these specific villages precisely because they are the locations where journalists, the 2005 census enumerators, and local civil servants could not enter due to the presence of armed actors and extreme violence against civilians.[296] The missing data is not randomly distributed, but rather skewed towards the harshest conflict dynamics. This makes it inappropriate to throw out or replace the data through imputation methods. Rather, we should consider *why* the data is missing and what that reveals about the universe of village cases in conflict zones. Nuances such as these are better understood if quantitative analysis is paired with in-depth case studies and qualitative methods.

In this chapter, I use the corregimiento as the unit of analysis, which is defined by the logic of its geography. Villages are grouped together by the ease of transportation between them and to the corregimiento town center versus the municipal seat, as well as their agricultural and commercial ties.[297] As a result, the boundaries are often not apparent when looking at an administrative map, as they can depend on walking paths

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[295] See Blattman and Miguel 2008, p. 1148, Blattman 2009, Whitt and Wilson 2007, Fearon et al. 2009, Moya 2012, Voors et al. 2012, Bauer et al. 2013, Cassar et al. 2013, Gilligan et al. 2014.

[296] Interview with Colombian journalist in San Luis. 21 January 2014. Testimonies during the Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 28 February 2014.

[297] Interview with resident in Santa Ana, 22 January 2014. When asked why particular villages pertained to Santa Ana, she explained that it was determined by whether it was easier to travel by bus to the municipal seat of Granada or to the town center of Santa Ana.

between villages or the production chain of a local good, such as coffee or sugar cane, within a municipality.

The corregimiento is an appropriate unit of analysis to study associative behaviors in the post-conflict context for two reasons. First, it outlines a broader community that extends across and between villages, which a have historically shared town center: a paved square, a small marketplace for commerce, a church to oversee baptisms, funerals, and marriages, a high school,[298] bus service to the municipal seat, a small health center, and a decade ago when the conflict was at its peak, the only telephone access outside of the municipal town center. Second, although basic and small-scale peacebuilding activities can also be observed at the level of the village as they were in Chapter 5, larger reconstruction initiatives often require the coordination and pooling of resources of a broader community, especially in the context of diminished post-war populations.

I purposefully chose one corregimiento in each municipality for in-depth study: *Buenos Aires*, San Luis, *Santa Ana*, Granada, and *El Jordan*, San Carlos. This diverse selection of cases was designed to leverage variation along the hypothesized independent variable (Gerring 2007: 89). Buenos Aires (16 villages) was the most highly contested group of villages, with an average village contestation score of 4.38. Santa Ana (12 villages) follows close behind and was also highly contested, with an average village-level of contestation of 3.92. In contrast, El Jordan (11 villages) represents an area that was under the consolidated control of a single armed group, with an average village contestation score of .63. For clarity, Table 8 lists the villages within each corregimiento

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[298] Each village has a primary school, but students must travel to the corregimiento town center or municipal seat to attend high school.

as well as the villages' corresponding cumulative scores for the level of contestation

between 1998 and 2006.[299]

Table 8. Case Corregimientos

Municipality	San Carlos (80 villages)	Granada (53 villages)	San Luis (49 villages)
Corregimiento	El Jordan (11 villages)	Santa Ana (12 villages)	Buenos Aires (16 villages)
Villages within Corregimiento (Contestation score, 0-8)	Paraguas (0) La Cascada (0) Tinajas (0) El Jordan (town) (0) Portugal (0) La Ilusion (0) Las Frias (1) Llanadas (1) Santa Isabel (1) El Cerro (1) El Tigre- La Luz (3)	Las Arenosas (3) La Florida (3) Bella Maria (3) Libertador (3) La Maria (4) El Tablazo (4) El Oso (4) La Estrella (4) Buena Vista (4) Santa Ana (town) (4) Las Palmas (5) La Selva (6)	La Estrella (3) San Francisco (3) Villa Nueva (4) La Merced (4) Manizales (4) La Aurora (4) Santa Barbara (4) El Popal (4) Buenos Aires (town) (5) El Porvenir (5) Minarrica (5) San Antonio (5) Sopetran (5) El Socorro (5) Los Planes (5) La Gaviota (5)
Average Level of Contestation	**.63**	**3.92**	**4.38**

In order to unpack the process of grassroots peacebuilding, I rely on empirical

evidence from several sources. First, I used ethnographic observation in each of the three

corregimientos. I visited El Jordan on three separate occasions for multiple days at a

time, and spent a total of five nights in the homes of local residents. I visited Santa Ana

three times as well, and spent two nights in the guest quarters in the Catholic Church in

the town square. Finally, I visited Buenos Aires twice, however, due to safety concerns I

did not spend the night. Extensive information about this corregimiento was gathered

over the course of three months of participant observation in a workshop with the Buenos

Aires community in the town center of San Luis. (I describe this method below). These

experiences allowed me to have informal conversations with residents, as well as observe

and participate in the daily rhythms of each locale. Although my experience in each

corregimiento differed, I believe that variation in my experience as a researcher – safety

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[299] For how this score was calculated, please see Chapter 5, p. 19.

concerns, available accommodations, and receptivity of the community to an outside

observer – provided important clues about each corregimiento's social fabric and post-

conflict trajectory.[300]

Second, I used semi-structured interviews with civilians, victims of the conflict,

displaced persons, returnees, community leaders, relevant political actors, journalists,

NGO workers, government employees, and demobilized combatants living in Eastern

Antioquia and in Medellín.[301] I used a snowball sampling technique to acquire at least 10

interviews with residents from each locale. Rich evidence from the interviews reveals the

specific relationships that existed between civilians and combatants, as well as civilians

and their neighbors, during the course of the conflict. It also permits me to identify how

the nature of social fabric changed throughout the course of the conflict and impacted a

particular community's ability to overcome its collective action problem in the post-

conflict landscape.

During interviews, I asked *resistentes*[302] to map the strategic infrastructure and

other unique geographic characteristics of their village, as well as local patterns of control

and contestation among armed groups. Additionally, respondents were asked to describe

the rules armed actors imposed, the level of trust and willingness to cooperate among

civilians, the nature and timing of displacement and return, as well as grassroots

peacebuilding activities that they engaged in or that occurred in their local area. In order

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[300] This idea builds on Lee Anne Fujii's approach in her book, *Killing Neighbors: Webs of Violence in Rwanda* (2010). Fujii noted that gathering accurate qualitative information in the wake of violence was sometimes impossible, yet when her interviews repeatedly elicited "rumors, inventions, denials, evasions, and silences," Fujii began collecting this information as "meta-data." She argues that meta-data is not extraneous, but rather should "be viewed as integral to the process of data collection and analysis" (2010: 231).

[301] Please see the Appendix for a list of all interviews that were conducted during fieldwork between June 2011 and May 2014.

[302] Literally, "resistors." This was the term used when people described themselves or other civilians in the region who did not displace during the conflict and lived under armed occupation, or who displaced during a short period of time and returned to their place of origin while the conflict was still in full swing.

to corroborate information about conflict dynamics, patterns of violence, displacement and return, and the pre-conflict history of the area, I use the CINEP press archives, primary documents, and statistics from the case municipalities and other municipalities within the region of Eastern Antioquia.

In addition to interviews, I also engaged in participant observation in local peacebuilding activities and relevant meetings organized around local democratic and civic engagement. For example, in each municipality, I attended regularly scheduled *Asocomunal* meetings. At these meetings the democratically elected presidents of the community action committees of each village paid dues, publicly discussed municipal business, gathered and shared information, and presented village-level concerns with other community leaders. The president of each junta was responsible for both advocating for the village he or she represented and disseminating pertinent information to the residents of the villages. This included details about local and national-level laws, safety issues in the municipality, local economic opportunities, public transportation routes, municipal-level programs, and details about electoral processes.[303] Between November 2013 and May 2014, I attended and participated in a total of 14 Asocomunal meetings in the three municipalities.

I also participated in a series of "Collective Reparations" workshops with community members of Buenos Aires. During the workshops, residents mapped and narrated the pre-conflict history of their villages, their experience with violence and displacement during the conflict, and the current post-conflict state of their villages. The Collective Reparations workshop also included smaller workshops titled *Tejedores*

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[303] The verbal delivery of the information was important for two reasons: First, most people do not have cell phone service or newspaper access in the remote, rural villages. None had Internet access. Second, a proportion of the junta presidents is not literate and got their news and information from these meetings.

("Weavers"). Community leaders met on a bi-weekly basis to learn techniques to repair the ruptured social fabric among their communities and to help victims and returnees deal with collective trauma. These workshops were organized and led by the Carlos Galan Foundation and the Department of Social Prosperity, based in Bogotá. I attended and participated in seven workshops between January 2014 and March 2014.

Social Fabric in Pre-War Eastern Antioquia

Before discussing how the conflict dynamics impacted case communities' propensity for grassroots peacebuilding, it is important to explain why the armed groups arrived in them in the first place. Armed groups did not select particular villages, corregimientos, or even the municipalities based on the receptivity of their residents, ideological profile, or organizational capacity (or lack thereof). Rather, all the case communities were caught in the crossfire of a national level war due to their geo-strategic position within the country. The three neighboring municipalities – and the three case corregimientos within them – were very similar in the majority of their pre-war characteristics, and the violence struck all of them as an exogenous shock. However, unique geographic characteristics determined where guerrillas would dig in their heels and where paramilitaries would set up their regional headquarters, which in turn determined varying levels of control and contestation during the conflict.

The three case corregimientos are very similar due to their geographic proximity and regional history. They also shared customs, norms, and culture strengthened by patterns of settlement, travel, and trade. Before the Medellín-Bogotá highway was built, tourists and traders regularly passed through the three corregimientos, as they are located along the shortest route connecting Medellín to Magdalena Medio – a sub-region of

Antioquia rich in gold, emeralds, and oil. In fact, the corregimiento town centers

emerged as natural stopping points along the "long and burning hot journey"[304] from

Magdalena Medio, through the mountains of the Eastern Antioquia, and on to Medellín.

El Jordan was the first stop on this path, followed by the municipal seat of San Carlos.

Buenos Aires' town center was the next resting point before continuing on to the town

center of Santa Ana, Granada. Granada's municipal seat offered the final stop before

reaching the paved road leading west to Medellín.

Before the conflict, El Jordan, Buenos Aires, and Santa Ana had significant

populations, boasting between 5,000 and 6,000 inhabitants in their town center and rural

areas combined.[305] They were rich in natural resources and had stable economies based

primarily on agriculture. Each corregimiento produced coffee, beans, sugar cane, yucca,

potatoes, plantains, corn, and fruit. Buenos Aires also harvested lumber from the forested

areas and El Jordan produced fish in the villages neighboring the River Punchiná. Unlike

other regions of Colombia, these corregimientos did not feature the concentration of large

landholdings in a few hands. Rather, many individual farmers owned small parcels of

land on which to grow their crops.

Each corregimiento town center is situated approximately 15 to 20 miles from the

municipal seat and is only accessible by unpaved roads that are often muddied or closed

by rains and landslides. Even in good conditions, traveling by vehicle takes at least an

hour. Due to this sporadic isolation, before the conflict the corregimientos functioned as

self-sufficient entities on many fronts, offering basic infrastructure and public services for

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[304] Pbro. Hoyos, Juan Francisco. "Ayer Canoas, ¡Hoy Jordan!" *Cornare y Planeación y Promoción del Desarrollo en el Oriente Antioqueño.* 1986.
[305] According to survey results, the population before 1998 was 5,419 residents in Buenos Aires, 5,500 in Santa Ana and 5,948 in El Jordan.

the town and surrounding rural villages. Before the war began, each town center had a public high school, a health clinic, and daily bus service between the corregimiento center and the municipal seat. The town squares of El Jordan, Buenos Aires, and Santa Ana were similar, featuring local stores, restaurants, and homes built around a Catholic church. In each town the church had an adjoining residence to house the priest working under the jurisdiction of the Sonsón-Rionegro Archdiocese.

In terms of religion, political legacy, and culture, the three corregimientos were nearly identical. Historically, all three were Catholic and Conservative party strongholds and residents shared a basic cultural ethos, referred to as the *cultura paisa*.[306] During interviews and workshops, residents from all three corregimientos described themselves in a similar fashion – "echados pa'lante," "solidarios," and "trabajadores" – as self-starters in solidarity and hard working.[307] When asked to describe the collective identity within Buenos Aires during the *Tejedores* workshop, participants explained that their collective identity was not particular to the corregimiento, but rather reflected the "paisa" culture of Eastern Antioquia.[308]

Two representative community practices were mentioned frequently in reference the paisa culture: *aguapanela* and *sancocho*. Aguapanela – a drink made of sugarcane produced in the region – is always offered when a visitor arrives in one's home, whether that person is a stranger, friend, or visiting family member. The willingness to share with a neighbor or a foreign traveler was considered the appropriate way of expressing hospitality, basic etiquette, and solidarity, especially in rural areas.

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[306] Grisales Hernández, Marisol. "El Espacio Roto: Entre la Violencia y el Retorno," *Universidad de los Andes*. 2012: 31.

[307] Multiple interviews in municipalities within Eastern Antioquia. Specifically in San Carlos, San Rafael, Granada, San Luis, and el Peñol. Participant observation in Collective Reparations Workshop. January 25, February 5 and 13, and March 13, 2014.

[308] Participant observation. *Tejedores* Workshops in San Luis. February 8, 2014 and March 23, 2014.

The preparation and sharing of *sancocho* also symbolizes the "paisa" ethos. A stew made in rural areas of Antioquia, it is closely tied to the community-oriented and associative behavior of the region. The stew is prepared during community meetings, convites, or holidays, and each household or village contributes something to the pot – yucca, potatoes, or a chicken. Sharing the meal is a practice that symbolizes solidarity and *convivencia.*[309]

Most importantly, El Jordan, Buenos Aires, and Santa Ana had comparable social fabric and organizational capacity before the conflict began. Although the entire region of Eastern Antioquia has a strong history of political and social organizing, there are two practices that illustrate the region's strong tradition of associational behavior and political organization: *convites* and *juntas de acción comunal*.

Convites are voluntary community workdays. Before the conflict began, rural residents of the three corregimientos regularly engaged in this practice to construct, maintain, or repair basic infrastructure. These workdays were carried out in rural areas in response to the insufficient human and material resources that could be provided from the municipal, departmental, and national-level governments.[310] Convites thus evolved as an effective community practice used to build and repair primary schools in each village, walking paths, health clinics, community centers, sports fields, and to provide other basic public goods or services. In El Jordan, for example, convites were used to build the aqueduct and the sewage system in the late 1960s, providing residents with potable water

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[309] The ability to live together in a harmonious way. Peaceful coexistence.
[310] Participant observation in Collective Reparations Workshop in San Luis. 15 February 2014.

and basic sanitation for the first time.[311] Typically, men provided the labor for the mutual

workdays, while women would make *sancocho* for the group.

The tradition of organizing convites has been particularly important to ensure

mobility throughout rural areas, as the majority of roads and paths are unpaved and must

be continually maintained because of seasonal rains and constant use. A resident from

the village of Galilea in Santa Ana, explains

> Before the conflict, people organized development projects without the help of
>
> outside institutions. When everything was still normal, the president of the
>
> village would organize convites and we would work together. Each village was in
>
> charge of repairing their corresponding part of the road. There was always a day
>
> when we would all do it together, every village. In the case that we needed
>
> additional resources, such as a machine from the municipality, we would organize
>
> and negotiate with the mayor, and first show him what we had accomplished.[312]

The convite is not idiosyncratic or trivial within rural Colombia. According to the

Colombian Ministry of the Interior, at least 30% of Colombia's rural infrastructure has

been built through convites since the inception of the first junta de acción comunal was

founded in 1958.[313]   Hand in hand with the tradition of convites, the presence of a junta

de acción comunal is the second observable indication of associative behavior within a

village. As outlined in Chapter 5, the junta is the smallest unit of formal political

organization in Colombia's democracy. Any village with 20 or more residents can form

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[311] Pbro. Hoyos, Juan Francisco. "Ayer Canoas, ¡Hoy Jordan!" *Cornare y Planeacioón y Promoción del Desarrollo en el Oriente Antioqueño.* 1986: 53-54.

[312] Interview with resident in Santa Ana. 22 January 2014.

[313] "From the experience of community self-management, these juntas, according to the Ley 19 in 1958, have been focused primarily on building infrastructure that the communities requires, for example, bridges, roads, health centers, police stations, marketplaces, aqueducts, sewage systems, electrical infrastructure, housing construction, and profitable community businesses, reaching around 30% of community infrastructure" (www.miniterior.gov.co).

a junta and elect a president who resides in the village and both men and women can serve as presidents as long as he or she is at least 14 years old.[314] This mechanism not only allows rural residents to access pertinent information from the municipal center, it also creates a legally constituted entity that can contract with different levels of government, NGOs, or private companies. The junta president is in charge of organizing convites, as well as serving as an elected authority figure and the de facto institutional presence. The current president of San Luis' Asocomunal, described the junta as:

> The strongest organizational structure in the municipality and the only one that survived the war. The premise is community-oriented. Although we are not government employees and everything is community based, it is the very foundation of our democracy. We are elected by popular vote and it is how people choose their leaders to represent them within institutions, but without being aligned with a particular political party.[315]

The tradition of convites and juntas has helped to create trust and strong social ties between residents of the corregimientos and has laid the groundwork for other associative activities that were common before the war began. For example, El Jordan, Buenos Aires, and Santa Ana organized weekly sports tournaments between villages, monthly *bingos bailables*[316] to raise money for community events and needs, community Christmas celebrations, and *romerías*[317].

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[314] Colombian Law 743 of 2002, Rule 2350 de 2003, Article 1.
[315] Interview with resident in San Francisco, San Luis. 22 March 2014.
[316] "Danceable Bingos."
[317] A romería is similar to a convite, except that it is organized in service of a private good, such as a community member's home. The person who benefits provides sancocho and aguapanela for the volunteers. "Romería" and "convite" can be used interchangeably, but a romería is more informal, not necessarily through the junta, and often takes on a festive atmosphere. Participant observation in Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 23 March 2014.

Residents described the time before the war as time when they lived as a "macro-family,"[318] with good community and familial relations, and when residents felt safe traveling between villages and visiting their neighbors, even long after nightfall. A group of residents of Buenos Aires described the pre-war context:

> We were happy and we lived without fear between families. There was a permanent health clinic, we had a priest, and there was a church in Villa Nueva. There was a pharmacy and consistent transportation between Buenos Aires and the municipal center. There was a police station and school in Buenos Aires… The relationship between neighbors was good and we were very unified. There was a good social fabric before the violence.[319]

This depiction is representative of many descriptions of the corregimientos before the war: tight-knit communities with strong social fabric and trust between residents. Despite these rosy descriptions, there was also a recurring theme of state abandonment, making it necessary to work and live together as described, in order to survive isolation and extreme poverty. Also, although the interviewees described a time period of "calm" and of feeling safe in their communities, they also acknowledged that two insurgent groups – the FARC[320] and the ELN[321] – had been present in the area since the early 1990s. Many interviewees noted the sporadic appearance of combatants in rural areas, at the same time they emphasized that the groups "did not bother us" until the late 1990s.[322] According to resident testimonies, the guerrillas initially respected the rhythms and the autonomy of their residents. Violence was only employed in rare cases and usually not

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[318] Interview with resident in Buenos Aires. 24 February 2014.
[319] Participant observation in Collective Reparations workshop. 25 January 2014.
[320] 9th and 47th front of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia.
[321] *Carlos Alirio Buitrago* front of the National Liberation Army.
[322] Interview with resident in San Carlos. 5 December 2013. Interview with resident in Buenos Aires. 24 February 2014. Interview with priest in San Carlos, 3 December 2013.

directed at community members,[323] but rather used against "politicians and rich

landowners who exploited rural farmers." [324]

As the guerrillas began to expand their presence and influence in Eastern

Antioquia at the end of 1997, they built mobile encampments in the most mountainous

and densely forested areas. From there they began to consolidate control over the

strategic corridor holding some of Colombia's most important infrastructure: the

hydroelectric complex and the paved highway linking Medellín and Bogotá.[325] In

response, multiple paramilitary blocks advanced a counterinsurgent campaign in 1998 to

cripple the insurgents and lay the groundwork for the eventual Colombian military

offensive in 2002.

Conflict and its Impact on a Community's Social Fabric

Despite their pre-conflict similarities, El Jordan, Buenos Aires, and Santa Ana's

experiences began to diverge as a result of the conflict. Specifically, the geography of

the corregimientos dictated the location of different armed groups, the extent to which

they fought to maintain control over the land and civilian population, and the specific

sites of the most intense combat between insurgents, paramilitary forces and the

Colombian state. Armed groups gained control over particular swathes of land as a result

of topography and the corregimientos' geo-strategic positions within the dynamics of a

national-level armed conflict.

El Jordan was a logical placement for the paramilitaries' regional headquarters.

Because its landscape featured open pastures where cattle grazed, it was difficult for

insurgents to find forested areas where they could remain camouflaged for long periods

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[323] Interview with resident in El Jordan. 14 December 2014 and priest in San Carlos. 3 December 2013.
[324] Interview with resident in El Jordan. 9 December 2013.
[325] Interview with Colombian journalist in el Peñol. 27 March 2014.

of time. Consequently, paramilitaries could more easily "recover" El Jordan from the insurgents than they could in Buenos Aires or Santa Ana.[326] Also, in the years preceding the paramilitary offensive, insurgents had successfully carried out a string of attacks on Colombia's largest hydroelectric complex[327] – infrastructure located in El Jordan – cutting off electricity throughout the region, including some neighborhoods in Medellín.[328] This made El Jordan invaluable to the Colombian state, and consequently to the paramilitaries who "cleared the way" for the army's subsequent advancement.[329]

In contrast, Buenos Aires and Santa Ana provided the ideal location for insurgents to remain hidden, carry out guerrilla-style attacks on infrastructure, and sustain their armed organization financially and logistically. Both corregimientos offered dense forest cover and mountainous terrain, allowing insurgents to hide from ground troops and helicopters. Despite their unpaved roads, which made it difficult for large motorized vehicles to enter, Buenos Aires and Santa Ana were connected by a network of footpaths that were difficult to navigate for those who were not from the region. This prevented graceful movement of paramilitary combatants and Colombian army soldiers, most of whom were not from Eastern Antioquia, while insurgents could easily navigate the familiar territory.[330]

Specifically, Santa Ana offered four important access points. In just three hours, insurgents could reach the Medellín-Bogotá highway on foot, while still remaining

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[326] Interview with Colombian journalist in el Peñol. 29 October 2013. Interview with resident in El Jordan. 15 November 2013.

[327] The San Carlos hydroelectric complex is composed of three dams "Jaguas," "Calderas" and "San Carlos" all of which are powered by the dammed Punchiná River and feed into the San Carlos River. Infrastructure and corresponding electrical towers are located in El Jordan. The complex is currently Colombia's largest and is owned by the private company, ISAGEN.

[328] "Continúa 'guerra' en El Oriente Antioqueño," *El Tiempo*. 25 April 1998. "Pérdidas Asciendan a \$5 mil millones," *El Mundo*. 7 August 1998. P. 6; "Traslado de la IV Brigada tardaría Cinco Años: Guerrilla atacó central Calderas." *El Colombiano*. 7 August 1998. P. 10A. "Los Embalses en la Confrontación," *El Tiempo*. 26 October 1998. P. 10A.

[329] Interview with resident in El Jordan. 9 December 2013.

[330] Interview with Colombian journalist in San Luis. 21 January 2014.

camouflaged by the forest cover. At the highway, insurgents carried out *pescas*

milagrosas[331], setting up temporary checkpoints to kidnap passengers for ransom or to

confiscate goods from commercial trucks.[332] These tactics allowed insurgents to fund

and sustain their organization even in the face of paramilitary attacks. Three other

walking paths provided easy escape routes and secluded areas where insurgents could

transport kidnapped passengers undetected: a path through village of Galilea, the village

of El Oso, and a path to Buenos Aires' town center. Buenos Aires served as a sister

stronghold of the insurgency, where combatants could retreat to a rear-guard.

A local council member of San Luis explains Buenos Aires' unfortunate

geographic position with respect to the Colombian civil war:

All the difficulty that we had was due to our geographic location. We form part

of the highway between Medellín and Bogotá, which is the artery of our nation,

connecting its two principal cities. But additionally, because of the hydroelectric

projects that the state has invested in.[333]

A journalist supports this explanation in an article about the level of contestation

witnessed in Santa Ana:

There appear to be various motivations for why these groups arrived in this

particular location: their strategic location, the difficult access, the proximity to

the Medellín-Bogotá highway, and according to some researchers, the

construction of the hydroelectric damn paired with the almost total abandonment

of the Colombian state.[334]

[331] "Miraculous catches."
[332] Interview with resident in San Francisco. 7 February 2014. Interview with priest in San Carlos. 3 December 2013.
López Quiceno, Fernando. "Santa Ana: drama humanitario." *El Espectador*. 7 January 2011.
[333] Interview with resident in San Luis. 21 February 2014.
[334] López Quiceno, Fernando. "Santa Ana: drama humanitario." *El Espectador*. 7 January 2011.

Consolidated Paramilitary Control in El Jordan

Paramilitaries invaded El Jordan on March 23rd, 1998. They gathered residents in the town square and read off a list of names identifying supposed FARC collaborators who were then publicly assassinated. Before departing, the paramilitaries announced the names of other suspected civilians, warning them to leave El Jordan in the next 24 hours or be killed. Although the paramilitaries did not return for nine months, when they arrived on December 19th, 1998 they carried out a second massacre. As before, they read off a list of suspected guerrilla collaborators, killing those named before retreating again towards their stronghold in Magdalena Medio.[335] This included both men and women in the corregimiento.

Nearly a year later, on Halloween night in 1999, the paramilitaries invaded the town center of El Jordan for a third time. A resident recalls seeing dozens of men he didn't recognize causing a scene in the town square. "They were riding motorcycles, shooting guns in the air, and handing out candy to the children. That night they killed the presidents of the juntas de acción comunal."[336] The group was the *Autodefensas Unidas de Cordoba*[337] *(AUC)* and formed the *Bloque Metro* under the command of Gabriel Muñoz, alias *Castañeda.*[338]

The following day, after Sunday mass and when the majority of farmers had come into town for church, the paramilitaries gathered residents. They announced that from that point forward, their group would serve as the only authority in El Jordan. Over the loudspeaker, a paramilitary commander explained that the previous massacres and

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[335] Interview with resident in El Jordan. 15 November 2013. Interview with resident in El Jordan. 9 December 2013. Interview with Pastora Mira in San Carlos. 10 December 2013.
[336] Interview with resident in El Jordan. 9 December 2013.
[337] "United Self Defense Forces of Cordoba."
[338] Interview with Pastora Mira in San Carlos. 30 January 2014. Interview with Colombian journalist in el Peñol. 27 March 2014.

selective killings were a necessary means of "cleansing" the town of guerrilla sympathizers. It had been done on behalf of the people of El Jordan and the paramilitaries intended to protect residents from guerilla expansion and future incursions. Boasting that they had over 280 armed men at their disposal, the paramilitaries explained that they would govern according to a specific set of rules and norms. There would be a strict curfew of 6:00 p.m. and civilians were not to leave their homes before 6:00 a.m. during this time. Residents would have to formally request permission for travel and register and receive approval before having visitors from outside the territory.[339]

In the months after the paramilitaries arrived, selective violence was used against "undesirable" members of the community, such as prostitutes, drug addicts, and thieves. Suspected FARC collaborators were also killed, although many were simply community leaders who represented an alternative source of authority. Warnings and ultimatums were delivered in a very public fashion. At the time, a single telephone existed in El Jordan, located in the kiosk in the town square. When it rang, a combatant answered and demanded that a particular person come to the kiosk and pick up the phone. On the other end of the line was a message, warning, or directions. Some residents were told they had 24 hours to leave. Others were given news about family members who were accused of being guerrilla collaborators. "Many people left the kiosk crying," a resident explained.[340]

The presence of paramilitaries became permanent and El Jordan's town center became the group's regional headquarters. From there, they expelled guerrillas from their encampments in surrounding rural areas and successfully consolidated control over

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[339] Interview with resident in El Jordan. 15 November 2013.
[340] Interview with resident in San Carlos. 3 December 2013.

the eight remaining villages in El Jordan. In the village of *La Cascada*, paramilitaries established a training camp where paid recruits came from as far away as the urban slums of Medellín. Using El Jordan as a launching pad, paramilitaries pushed further into guerrilla controlled territory, committing mass killings elsewhere in San Carlos and in neighboring municipalities including San Rafael, San Luis, and Puerto Naré.

The majority of recorded displacement in El Jordan occurred during this time period, early in the war. Some residents fled the town center, fearing they would be accused of collaborating with insurgents. Others who lived far from the town center – sometimes a five- to six- hour journey on foot – abandoned their rural farms. It was in these remote locations where the only massive displacements were recorded, however most[341] were not permanent population movements. Rather, in villages such as Portugal and Santa Isabel, temporary displacements reflected an attempt to avoid the crossfire of armed clashes on the outskirts of the corregimiento as paramilitaries consolidated control over the remaining territory. After this initial wave of displacement, the population of El Jordan remained relatively stable throughout the remainder of the war.[342]

Low levels of displacement had two important consequences for El Jordan. Many of the pre-war social networks between friends, neighbors, and colleagues were retained and the majority of nuclear families remained intact. Also, because there was self-selection out of El Jordan, it created a collective sense among residents that the people who remained were part of one's in-group. As one resident explained, "the first days under their control were really bad, there was a lot of fear. It was difficult to adapt to

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[341] There are two exceptions: first, the village of Tinajas, which bordered the contested village of la Horlanda and held a paramilitary commander 's home– alias *Doble Cero*. Second, the village of la Ilusion on the border with another municipality, Caracolí. Interview with Pastora Mira in San Carlos. 30 January 2014.

[342] Interview with resident in El Jordan. 15 November 2013.

them at first. But then I realized, if they are here and they haven't done anything to us, it's because thankfully we are fine. We haven't done anything."[343]

People who lived within the official paramilitary zone felt they had been "vetted" by the paramilitaries. It was a different story, however, when people spoke of those who lived outside controlled territory. The official boundaries of the paramilitary zone began at the village of La Horlanda and extended east toward the municipality of Caracolí. "That territory was ours,"[344] explains one interviewee from El Jordan. But to the west of la Horlanda, the territory remained contested and was forbidden to El Jordan residents. Accordingly, after 1999 there was essentially a "Berlin Wall" between the municipal seat of San Carlos and the corregimiento of El Jordan.[345]

The corregimiento's boundaries marked not only the edges of geographic space under paramilitary control, but also delineated the boundaries of "us" and "them." Both sides assumed that those living in the other territory were inherently loyal to the rival occupying armed group. For example, according to those from the municipal seat of San Carlos, everyone in El Jordan was considered *paracos* during the conflict, while those in El Jordan considered anyone living west of La Horlanda, *guerrillas*.[346] A Colombian scholar describes how this process unfolded: the conflict "further deepened the separation of the corregimiento and San Carlos, assigning El Jordan the label of 'that far off

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[343] Interview with resident in El Jordan. 9 November 2013.
[344] Interview with Pastora Mira in San Carlos. 30 January 2014.
[345] Ibid.
[346]Interview with Pastora Mira in San Carlos. 30 January 2014. Public presentation by Claudia Giraldo Gomez and Sandra Patricia Duque at George Mason University in Arlington, VA. 10 September 2015.

paramilitary base and the source of violent perpetrators,' and San Carlos the 'axis of evil of subversion and insurgency.'"[347]

The territorial division separating El Jordan from the rest of the municipality created a deep mistrust of outsiders, at the same time it strengthened trust and relationships between those living *within* the corregimiento.[348] This not only applied to civilians, but also extended to the relationships forged through daily interactions between civilians and combatants. Paramilitary members took on multiple and multi-faceted roles in El Jordan. While some were stationed in *el Monte*, patrolling the area for insurgents and protecting the boundaries of regional headquarters, others sat behind a desk and did paperwork. At the same time, paramilitaries assigned civilians to certain jobs within the paramilitary structure, but also in the local government, public schools, the *Casa de Cultura*, and even negotiated with the employees at the hydroelectric dam of Isagen.[349] This dynamic blurred the lines between "civilian" and "combatant," as official members of the paramilitary group took on non-violent roles, while civilians inevitably became part of the very fabric and functioning of the paramilitary group.[350]

The paramilitaries enforced a strict set of rules and intervened in the day-to-day affairs of civilians. This included, but was not limited to, rules about domestic violence, adjudicating disputes over land or property, overseeing marriages, and recording births

[347] Osorio Campuzano, Ramiro, "Paramilitarismo y la Vida Cotidiana en San Carlos (Antioquia): etnografía desde una antropología de la violencía." *Boletín de Antropología.* Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín. Vol. 28, N° 45. 2013: 134.

[348] Public presentation by Claudia Giraldo Gomez and Sandra Patricia Duque at George Mason University in Arlington, VA. 10 September 2015.

[349] Interview with resident in El Jordan. 9 December 2013. Interview with Pastora Mira in San Carlos. 10 December 2013.

[350] Sanchez, Gonzalo ed., "San Carlos: Memorias del Exodo en La Guerra." *Grupo de Memoria Historica.* Bogotá, 2011: 95.

and deaths.[351] "One had to adjust to what they (the paramilitaries) wanted. If there was a problem with a business and they wanted it to close, you had to close it because they were the authority there. If there was a problem within the family, they resolved it by saying 'either you get your act together or we will kill you.'"[352] This practice of enforcing rules included the collection of *vacunas* or "taxes" in exchange for combatants' protection of El Jordan from guerrilla forces.[353] Within the corregimiento, residents and small business owners were expected to "pay what they were able." However, as the paramilitaries gained partial control of San Carlos' municipal seat, they extorted businesses in the town center for higher sums of money, as an additional source of funding for their organization in El Jordan.[354]

Although the community in El Jordan was essentially living in the very heart of the national-level war, their day-to-day lives were not chaotic or ruled by uncertainty and fear. The clearly communicated and strictly enforced rules under paramilitary control created a context that was akin to a micro-authoritarian regime. Routines and interactions were predictable and stable, and most of the time, civilians were not directly affected by violence, as paramilitaries conducted incursions, massacres and assassinations outside consolidated territory. Although the strict paramilitary regime was established and maintained through coercion and the threat of violence, in most cases, civilians could avoid sanctions by obeying the rules.[355]

[351] Osorio Campuzano, Ramiro, "Paramilitarismo y la Vida Cotidiana en San Carlos (Antioquia): etnografía desde una antropología de la violencía." *Boletín de Antropología.* Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín. Vol. 28, N° 45. 2013: 147.
[352] Interview with resident in San Carlos. 9 November 2013.
[353] Interview with resident in El Jordan. 15 November 2013.
[354] Interview with resident in San Carlos. 3 December 2013.
[355] Osorio Campuzano, Ramiro, "Paramilitarismo y la Vida Cotidiana en San Carlos (Antioquia): etnografía desde una antropología de la violencía." *Boletín de Antropología.* Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín. Vol. 28, N° 45. 2013: 147.

Civilians learned to adapt to the paramilitary presence. As local youth were recruited and paid to join the rank-and-file or to fulfill non-combat roles in service of the paramilitary cause, relationships and interactions between civilians and combatants were increasingly normalized. A resident corroborates this sentiment when asked about his interactions with the paramilitaries while they lived in the town. "There was empathy there. I guess it was something like a friendship. I would address them with respect and affection, saying 'Yes, my commander' and they would treat me respectfully as well."[356]

According to a Colombian anthropologist, Ramiro Osorio Campuzano, "the social dynamics began to change with the armed presence, including the introduction of romantic relationships and friendships."[357] One young woman describes her experience in a town controlled by paramilitary troops:

> At first we were very scared. No one left their houses, and at about six in the afternoon there was no one in the street and the stores were closed, while they (paramilitaries) did their rounds in their cars or walking. It was total fear. Then, after a while, it became very normal. All my friends had paramilitary boyfriends, many kids are the children of paramilitaries that were here. We all became accustomed and accepted that they were here in the town, and that they were the ones in charge.[358]

The area also did not suffer the level of destruction and collateral damage that contested areas suffered. Because paramilitaries held consolidated territory and guerrilla forces could not enter, landmines were not used in urban or rural areas. Much of the

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[356] Interview with resident in El Jordan. 15 November 2013.
[357] Osorio Campuzano, Ramiro, "Paramilitarismo y la Vida Cotidiana en San Carlos (Antioquia): etnografía desde una antropología de la violencia." *Boletín de Antropología.* Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín. Vol. 28, Nº 45. 2013: 145.
[358] Translated from an interview in El Jordan 2012 from Ramiro Osorio Campuzano's "Paramilitarismo y la Vida Cotidiana en San Carlos (Antioquia): etnografía desde una antropología de la violencia." *Boletín de Antropología.* Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín. Vol. 28, Nº 45. 2013: 145.

basic physical infrastructure remained open and functional during the war, with few exceptions. Most of the primary schools in the rural villages never closed. In the few cases that they did, it was due to a population decrease, rather than landmines or other immediate effects of the violence.

In multiple interviews, community members from El Jordan described the time period when the paramilitaries had full control as a time "when the violence ended"[359] or as a "period of peace,"[360] despite the continued active presence of combatants in the town. Perhaps most telling was the sentiment that many residents of El Jordan expressed in response to the collective paramilitary demobilization of 2005: they did not want them to leave. Residents expressed concern about their security in the absence of paramilitary forces, and asked, "Who will protect us? What will happen to us if we are left exposed to the guerrillas?"[361] Community leaders wrote a letter petitioning the mayor's office of San Carlos, the ombudsman, and Colombian Observatory of Human Rights to send army troops to El Jordan in the wake of the paramilitary demobilization.

Contestation in Buenos Aires and Santa Ana

In contrast to El Jordan, Buenos Aires and Santa Ana were contested between 1998 and 2006. By 1998, both the FARC and the ELN had set up mobile encampments in the forested areas outside of the towns. Most of the time insurgents did not use violence against residents, a feasible strategy because they did not depend on communities as their primary resource base.[362] Instead, they sustained their organization through extortion, kidnappings, and the confiscation of material goods from vehicles

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[359] Interview with resident in El Jordan. 15 November 2013.
[360] Personal Testimony of civilian in Gonzalo Sanchez' "San Carlos: Memorias del Exodo en La Guerra." *Grupo de Memoria Historica*. Bogotá, 2011: 261.
[361] Interview with resident in El Jordan. 15 November 2013.
[362] Interview with resident in San Francisco. 7 February 2014.

stopped along the Medellín-Bogotá highway. After stealing resources – ranging from televisions to fresh produce – the guerrilla forces would also distribute "gifts" to the communities in Santa Ana and Buenos Aires. They justified the armed checkpoints along the highway by only kidnapping wealthy people in nice cars from Bogotá or Medellín or targeting trucks belonging to the large companies that had originally extracted natural resources from Eastern Antioquia without compensating the communities.[363]

Given the insurgents' discourse and respect for civilian autonomy in the territory, the FARC and the ELN were able to project an image of legitimacy among the residents of Santa Ana and Buenos Aires. Further, to a certain extent, the Marxist ideology of the guerrillas was appealing to many *campesinos*.[364] From the perspective of some residents, the guerrillas provided needed resources and protection to the rural corregimientos in the historical absence of the Colombian state's institutional or military presence.[365] During fieldwork when I asked civilians whether their community had initially supported the guerrillas before 1998, the answer was often a very tentative and nuanced "yes."[366]

It is important to note, however, that the process by which guerrillas became embedded in the territory was gradual and at first comprised of only sporadic visits to the villages from encampments deep in el Monte. Because the guerrilla groups at first did not use violence against – or instill fear among – the community members, most residents simply carried on with their daily lives. Many interviewees compared the process of

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[363] Interview with Colombian journalist in San Luis. 21 January 2014.
[364] Interview with former governor of San Luis in Medellín. 28 October 2013. Interview with Colombian journalist in San Luis. January 21, 2014 and March 27, 2014.
[365] Interview with resident in Santa Ana. 22 January 2014.
[366] Interview with priest in San Carlos. 3 December 2013. Participant observation. Resident testimonies during the Collective Reparations workshop. 13 March 2014.

guerrillas engaging in the social landscape of Santa Ana and Buenos Aires to a "slow seduction," especially with respect to the youth.[367]

In the majority of cases, civilians were able to avoid any direct involvement with the armed groups and had simply become accustomed to their occasional presence in the region. At this stage civilians could remain neutral or uninvolved as the guerrillas conducted offensive operations elsewhere, expanding outside of the corregimientos' boundaries. This fragile equilibrium shifted dramatically when the paramilitary incursions began in 1998.[368] With access to the highway cut off and violent attacks on encampments resulting in casualties in their ranks, insurgents were suddenly forced to defend their most valuable territory. Both the FARC and the ELN faced mounting pressure for weapons, materials, and able-bodied young men.

This dynamic changed two aspects of the previous coexistence between guerrillas and civilians in Santa Ana and Buenos Aires before 1998: the guerrillas' non-violent treatment of civilians and civilians' ability to remain neutral in the process of war.[369] For the first time, the FARC began forcefully recruiting children to their ranks. A mother from Santa Ana explained, "They (the insurgents) announced that when children turned 12, the group had a right to them. If they wanted to recruit them, that was their prerogative and the parents can't do anything to stop them."[370] "The war started when they (insurgents) started trying to recruit our children," said a resident of Buenos Aires.

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[367] Some young men and women voluntarily joined the group, while still maintaining a "normal life" in the town centers. As a priest who worked in Santa Ana explained, these voluntary recruits were farmers during the day, grinding sugar cane with the rest of the residents at the communal *trapiche*, and then serving as combatants at night. Interview with priest in San Carlos. 3 December 2013.
[368] Interview with resident in Santa Ana. 9 March 2013. Interview with priest in San Carlos. 3 December 2013.
[369] Interview with resident in Santa Ana. 22 January 2014.
[370] Interview with resident in Santa Ana. 22 January 2014.

"All of a sudden they were taking our sons to war."[371] Coercive recruitment – and in some cases kidnapping – of minors began to undermine trust between neighbors, as previously "neutral" families were now linked to armed groups.

Guerrilla forces also began using selective violence against community leaders, identifying and killing local council members, the presidents of the juntas and local health promoters.[372] People naturally shied away from leadership positions and associative activities in the community, as the FARC and the paramilitary groups targeted individuals who represented alternative sources of authority and organization. As one returnee in Santa Ana describes this shift, "people were scared, scared of so much war, they (the armed groups) just killed and killed."[373] A resident of Buenos Aires echoed this sentiment, "The people didn't know where to turn. They were killing the leaders of the villages."[374]

Insurgents also placed landmines throughout Santa Ana and Buenos Aires to prevent ambushes by the paramilitaries and to stop the Colombian army from advancing in the paramilitaries' wake. Landmines were not only placed in remote wooded areas, but also in public spaces, such as primary schools, walking paths, civilian homes, and farmers' fields. Insurgents warned villagers to stay in their homes between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., as combatants set up bombs or installed landmines during those hours.[375] By 2006, unexploded landmines were identified in every village in Santa Ana and Buenos Aires.

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[371] Personal testimony from Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 25 January 2014.
[372] Personal testimonies from Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 28 February 2014.
[373] Interview with resident in Santa Ana. 22 January 2014.
[374] Interview with resident in Buenos Aires. 24 February 2014.
[375] Interview with resident in San Luis. 22 March 2014.

A Colombian scholar, Marisol Grisales Hernández, explains the extent to which the community was impacted by the change in guerrilla protocol:

> Many of the spaces that were used by the residents, like schools, the hospital, the ecological park, and even their homes, were transformed by the guerrilla groups into encampments and hideouts. Their homes were used as trenches and in many of these locations, explosives and landmines were installed.[376]

The rate of civilian casualties rose steeply, as residents were literally caught in the crossfire during armed battles between the insurgent and counterinsurgent forces. Whereas previously armed clashes were deliberately carried out in remote forested areas or around the Medellín-Bogotá highway, now bullets flew through public spaces – between the houses, schools, and soccer fields of the villages. No location was safe for the civilians living in Buenos Aires or Santa Ana. Resident testimonies recalled times when civilians could not leave their homes because rival groups would shoot any moving target that appeared in the contested territory.[377] Furthermore, guerrillas began to use civilians as physical protection from paramilitary and army attacks. A resident of Buenos Aires explains, "we were in the trenches, we were a human shield."[378]

Not only did the guerrillas ignore international human rights norms in the context of war, counterinsurgent forces took the same brutal approach. They frequently fired on houses or schools where insurgents took shelter, while the Colombian Army rained bullets from helicopters above.[379] The Army also fired into public spaces, without

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[376] Grisales Hernández, Marisol. "El Espacio Roto: Entre la Violencia y el Retorno." *Universidad de los Andes*. 2012: 50.
[377] Personal testimonies from Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 28 February 2014.
[378] Interview with resident in Buenos Aires. 24 February 2014.
[379] Personal testimonies from Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 25 January 2014 and 5 February 2014.

distinguishing between armed combatants and civilians.[380] During this time many

civilians were killed in the crossfire, as armed groups continually gained and lost ground

in the villages.

The official notes[381] from a meeting between Santa Ana's Asocomunal, the

municipal government of Granada, two human rights NGOs, and a priest illustrate the

severe dynamics within a contested group of villages:

> This letter is written in reference to the norms of international human rights on the
>
> part of the actors of the armed conflict, in aspects such as the arbitrary retention of
>
> farmers, the use of civilians as guides and human shields, encampments placed in
>
> schools, health centers, and population centers, the restriction of movement,
>
> commerce, and the acquisition of medicines, as well as the constant shooting at
>
> and bombing of crops and cattle…[382]

The instability and chaos that resulted from the confrontation between multiple

armed groups made it nearly impossible to carry out even the most basic daily activities.

With new landmines buried into the ground every night, residents did not know which

areas were safe to traverse, nor were they able to plant or harvest their crops, on which

their livelihoods depended. Many residents of these areas lost their lives or limbs as they

attempted daily tasks.[383] Armed actors emptied the stores of their supplies, in an attempt

to prevent the rival groups from accessing food. One resident describes the scenario, "By

2002, you couldn't find even a half-empty bottle to wet your lips in Buenos Aires. The

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[380] Personal testimonies from Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 25 January 2014 and 5 February 2014.
[381] Written on August 7, 1998.
[382] Please see Appendix.
[383] Personal testimonies from Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 19 February 2014.

local market was controlled. We had to walk through the cemetery to buy groceries in the town center of San Luis. But on the way, the paramilitaries would ration our food."[384]

The arrival of the paramilitaries not only changed guerrilla treatment of civilians, it also forced civilians out of their roles as neutral observers or innocent bystanders of the armed conflict. Ironically, as civilians withdrew any explicit or tacit support that they previously offered to the insurgents, they became increasingly enmeshed in the dynamics of the war. The testimony of one resident is particularly compelling:

> For us – civil society – all the groups caused the same amount of harm. The guerrillas came, and asked who the informants were and then killed them. The paramilitaries also arrived and killed people. If they didn't like the look of someone, they killed them right there. All the groups had informants in the community.[385]

When speaking about this time period, civilians in Buenos Aires and Santa Ana described a sensation of being *entre la espada y la pared* – between a sword and the wall. No matter what they did, they were at risk of being killed. Civilians could not interact with members of any armed group without being accused of *sapos*[386] or "collaborators." They were killed based on rumors or for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Sometimes they were forced at gunpoint to serve food or provide shelter to a combatant, only to be confronted by his rival the next day and accused of helping the enemy.

> We didn't want to help them, it's that we didn't have any idea what to do. It's not that we liked them, it's that if we interact with one, then the other will kill us. We were between a sword and the wall. We couldn't stay calm or leave our homes,

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[384] Interview with resident in Buenos Aires. 24 February 2014.
[385] Personal testimonies from Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 5 February 2014.
[386] Literally, "frogs." It is another name for a "snitch."

because if we did something to help one group, we would have to do it for the other. Anyone could be killed.[387]

All the groups were operating. When one group arrived, if they were paramilitaries, we were accused of being guerrillas. If the guerrillas arrived, then we were accused of being paramilitaries… A guerrilla member would come to your house and say, "make me breakfast" and then my wife would ask "what do I do?" and I would say, "We have to." Then another group would arrived and accuse us saying, "You gave them food to eat."[388]

A resident testimony in Santa Ana is nearly identical,

We were between a sword and the wall. What could we do? If you have a gun, you are the one in control. If you tell me to make you lunch, I have to do it, whether I like it or not. Then the other group comes and accuses you of helping the opposing group.[389]

Residents began to avoid all public spaces, for fear of unintentionally ending up in the middle of combat. This undermined the willingness of residents to engage in community activities– ranging from cultural events to community milling of sugar cane – and interrupted communication between neighbors. Feelings of solidarity were undermined by fear and neighbors stopped trusting one another, as they couldn't accurately identify who was aligned with which group.

Experience of Residents in Contested Territories Begins to Diverge

Although since 1998, the conflict dynamics of the Santa Ana and Buenos Aires had been similar, in 2002 their stories began to diverge. That year, the entire community

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[387] Interview with resident in San Luis. 5 February 2014.
[388] Personal testimonies from Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 25 January 2014.
[389] Interview with resident in Santa Ana. 22 January 2014.

of Santa Ana was forced off their land, while the FARC forbade residents of Buenos

Aires from leaving and trapped them in the crossfire. Thus, although data on conflict

dynamics between 2002 and 2005 show a comparable level of clashes between insurgent

and counterinsurgent forces in the two corregimientos, this does not reflect the

experience of civilians on the ground.

Massive Displacement in Santa Ana

The first massive displacement in Santa Ana occurred in on August 6th, 1998,

when the paramilitaries invaded the corregimiento town center. That day, a total of 2,200

civilians displaced to the municipal seat of Granada.[390] Three days later, with the help of

the municipal government and the Red Cross, residents returned to Santa Ana. However,

four years later, on April 4th 2002, a second massive displacement occurred. Two weeks

prior to that date, the FARC had given a public ultimatum to all civilians living in Santa

Ana, telling them they had 15 days to either join their ranks or to leave the territory.[391]

The punishment for disobeying would be assassination. In a single day, 1,600 people

displaced[392] and the majority migrated out of the contested municipality, to cities such as

Medellín or Cali. Of the few civilians who remained behind, many were killed, and by

the end of the year the corregimiento was almost entirely abandoned. The town center

was referred to as a "ghost town"[393] where only three senior women and one Catholic

priest remained.[394] The church, homes, and stores in the town square had been destroyed,

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[390] "Mas desplazados llegan a Granada," *El Colombiano*. 6 August 1998, p.2; "Critica situacion en Granada" *El Mundo*. 7 August 1998, p. 6.
[391] Gomez-Duque, Juan Alberto. "Santa Ana." *Observatorio de Paz y Reconciliación del Oriente Antioqueño*. 2008.
[392] "Campesinos abandonan tierras en Granada." *El Colombiano*. 11 April 2002. p.12A.
[393] López Quiceno, Fernando. "Santa Ana: drama humanitario." *El Espectador.* 7 January 2011; Juan Alberto Gomez-Duque. "Santa Ana." *Observatorio de Paz y Reconciliación del Oriente Antioqueño*. 2008: 58.
[394] Grisales Hernández, Marisol. "El Espacio Roto: Entre la Violencia y el Retorno" *Universidad de los Andes*. 2012: 59.

and schools had long been empty of their pupils. Landmines littered the territory and the sub-tropical climate spurred dense overgrowth in bombed out buildings.

Confinement in Buenos Aires

In 2002, the corregimiento of Buenos Aires confronted a very different challenge: forced confinement. The first armed blockade began in the wake of a paramilitary massacre carried out on November 29th, 2002, in which 11 civilians were indiscriminately killed. This massacre was followed by a retaliatory FARC massacre a few days later in which four civilians were killed.[395] Paramilitaries publicly ordered residents to evacuate the corregimiento if they wanted to avoid more casualties, while at the same time, the FARC forbade civilians from leaving the territory[396] by creating an armed blockade surrounding populated areas.[397]

In an effort to remove civilians from the line of fire, the municipal government of San Luis sent two buses to take people to safety in the municipal seat. Residents boarded the bus, but while en route, the FARC attacked and forced residents off, setting the bus on fire.[398] After the residents were forced back to Buenos Aires, some tried to escape on their own. Many left on foot in the middle of the night, bringing only what they could wear to avoid alerting the FARC as they escaped the village. They did so secretly and on an individual basis, sometimes without even telling their family. Those who displaced left "everything, their animals, their *fincas*, everything."[399]

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[395] "Massacre en San Luis: Presuntos Guerilleros de las Farc asesinan a tres hombres y una mujer" *El Mundo*. December 1, 2012. P. A6.
[396] Ospina, Elizabeth Yarce. "Se mueren si se van o si se quedan" ("They die if they leave or if they stay") *El Colombiano,* 3 December 2002.
[397] "Masacre en San Luis" ("Massacre in San Luis") *El Mundo*, 1 December 2002.
[398] Interview with resident in San Luis. 23 March 2014.
[399] Interview with resident in San Luis. 24 February 2014.

Most people were not able to escape. According to a newspaper report,[400] 1,000 people remained trapped in Buenos Aires, creating a humanitarian crisis. Civilians tried to survive in the middle of the crossfire, while paramilitary and guerrilla forces carried out continuous attacks and counter-attacks. A resident of Buenos Aires was quoted in a newspaper article saying, "We are like prisoners. They are killing us for any reason. They won't let us leave and they won't let us live."[401]

Civilians were forced to stay in the contested territory of Buenos Aires as the conflict degraded further. The residents described the conflict between 2002 and 2005 as "irregular" in which all armed groups acted similarly.[402] Civilians could no longer distinguish which combatants belonged to which armed group. A resident explained that after paramilitaries consolidated a parcel of land, the guerrillas in that area would switch sides and become informants rather than being killed or taken as prisoners of war.[403] In exchange for their spared lives, former-insurgents denounced civilians who had previously given them information, shelter, *aguapanela*, or simply a friendly greeting. The mixing of the groups not only led to a high death toll, it also caused psychological trauma among the residents.[404]

The guerrilla defection degraded trust between neighbors and combatants alike and ruptured previously strong bonds of solidarity between neighbors. Resident testimonies reflect this sentiment, "We lost our freedom and the trust we had between us.

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[400] Ospina, Elizabeth Yarce. "Se mueren si se van o si se quedan" ("They die if they leave or if they go") *El Colombiano,* 3 December 2002.
[401] "Piden que Cese la Violencia" ("They Ask that the Violence Stops") *El Pais*, 3 January 2003.
[402] Resident testimonies from Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis, 5 February 2014.
[403] Interview with resident in El Prodigio. 6 February 2014.
[404] Resident testimonies from Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 19 February 2014.

We lost loved ones, neighbors, and now we are incomplete families… there was a complete rupture of our social fabric."[405]

Finally, nearing the end of the war, when paramilitaries threatened to take over the Buenos Aires town center, the insurgents demanded that residents join their ranks or abandon the area. Residents were told, "you are either with us or against us" or "you either live to serve us, or you don't serve to live"[406] by the guerrillas. At this point, people began to displace "gota a gota" (drop-by-drop), rather than on a massive scale. This process resulted in many communities "dissolving," as everyone was forced to "go in a different direction," breaking up the tight networks of the villages as everyone "went on their own path."[407] This led to the "disintegration of families"[408] and a "rupturing of the social fabric"[409] in the corregimiento.

In 2005, after the paramilitaries had successfully consolidated control over Buenos Aires' villages, the Colombian army entered the territory. "The dirty work had already been done,"[410] explained one resident. The arrival of the Colombian army introduced yet another repertoire of violence that traumatized the remaining residents in Buenos Aires and destroyed any faith or trust they had left for the institutions that were supposed to protect them. The Colombian army accused all remaining residents of being undercover members of the guerrilla forces. This resulted in physical and psychological abuse of civilians, rape of women and ransacking of the homes of those still left living in their villages.

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[405] Resident testimonies from Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 25 February 2014.
[406] Resident testimonies from Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 25 January 2014.
[407] Resident testimonies from Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 19 February 2014.
[408] Resident testimonies from Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 19 February 2014.
[409] Resident testimonies from "Weavers" workshop in San Luis. 23 March 2014.
[410] Resident testimonies from "Weavers" workshop in San Luis. 23 March 2014

In the most extreme cases, the Colombian army killed civilians, dressed their bodies in camouflage and then presented them as a guerrilla members who had fallen in combat. This practice was confirmed in 13 of the 16 villages in Buenos Aires according to the CINEP database and the Noche y Niebla human rights database, and was also corroborated by residents.

> In the village of San Francisco the Colombian army killed three as 'false positives' on the boundary between San Francisco and el Socorro. They captured them in Manizales and afterwards they killed them in San Francisco. Two were killed on the bridge and one in the school. They took off their shoes and put on the boots that the guerrillas wore.[411]

Eventually nearly everyone abandoned the corregimiento. When the final residents left, "the schools, the crops, everything was destroyed."[412] Even the town center of Buenos Aires, where guerrillas desperately attempted to prevent residents from leaving, 344 of the 374 families eventually displaced.[413]

After the War: Social Fabric and Peacebuilding

Post Conflict in El Jordan

The case of El Jordan illustrates how communities within consolidated territory were able to retain a baseline of social fabric despite their geo-strategic position at the very epicenter of Colombia's irregular civil war. Although residents were exposed to violence during the paramilitary invasion and the process of consolidating territory, the civilians who remained in the years thereafter enjoyed a certain level of stability in their day-to-day lives. Social fabric and stability persisted in the wake of paramilitary

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[411] Interview with resident in San Luis. 5 February 2014.
[412] Resident testimonies from Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 25 January 2014.
[413] Resident testimonies from Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 19 February 2014.

demobilization, which brought an end to armed occupation at the same time it disrupted the corregimiento's status quo. The trust between residents and intact social networks have not only helped facilitate El Jordan's recovery, but have also produced associative mechanisms and transformative peacebuilding activities in the post-conflict context.

One indication of an area's post-conflict recovery is whether forced migrants voluntarily return to their place of origin after the violence subsides, even in the absence of support from the government. This was indeed the case in El Jordan. Although levels of displacement were much lower there than in Buenos Aires and Santa Ana, 60% of displaced persons returned to their place of origin after the war.[414] The return process has been facilitated by resistentes – the community that remained living in El Jordan through the duration of the conflict. One family of resistentes in El Jordan explained:

> Our family stayed. So it was complicated afterwards to see how we were going to organize these (displaced) families. We started to encourage them to come back and to contact institutions. We started amongst ourselves, with those of us who remained here in El Jordan, and we had already brought four families back when we started to formally organize with the Medellín-San Carlos Alliance.[415]

There are now residents living in every village within the corregimiento of El Jordan. Additionally, each village has either maintained or re-established a legally-constituted junta, making it possible for villages to contract with the municipal or departmental governments, as well as NGOs or private companies such as Isagen. A young resident in El Jordan explained his motivation to re-establish the junta in his village after the conflict, "I have never liked politics, but I realized the social engagement

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[414] Results from original survey.
[415] Interview with resident in El Jordan. 9 December 2013.

dimension of the junta. We started to lead the junta in the village of Las Frias which had

stopped functioning" due to the conflict.[416]

The juntas also provided the framework through which convites were organized

in rural areas of El Jordan after the war. The village of Portugal provides a good

example. Here the primary school closed early in the conflict when 15 families

massively displaced from the village, abandoning the school and the rural roads passing

through their town. Since the end of the conflict, eight families have returned. They

have organized to re-establish a junta and again taken up the practice of convites, which

they have used to repair and re-open the village's primary school. They have also used

convites to repair the rural paths that had become impassible due to the seasonal rains and

abandonment during the conflict.[417]

The village of *Tinajas* is another salient example of the use of convites in the

post-conflict context. Due to its proximity to the heavily contested village of La

Horlanda, Tinajas was one of only two villages in El Jordan that suffered a permanent

massive displacement. Before the conflict, 26 families lived there, while only two

families remained during the conflict, living without electricity, running water, or a

primary school for their children. After the violence ended, eight families returned to the

village and re-established their junta. They then organized convites to restore the

aqueduct and to reopen the school. Additionally, although they didn't have the technical

know-how to reestablish electricity on their own, they organized and petitioned the

electric company *Empresas Publicas de Medellín* (EPM) to connect their village to the

electrical grid. In the letter they explained that they would be "willing to install the

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[416] Interview with resident in El Jordan. 9 December 2013.
[417] Interviews with residents in El Jordan. February 13 and 14, 2014.

wiring themselves," if it were provided. After three years, the lights went back on in

Tinajas, before the municipal government began programming to help rural areas in their

post conflict recovery process.[418]

Now in El Jordan there is a robust population of both resistentes and returnees,

the juntas have been reinstated, basic infrastructure has been repaired, and schools are

back up and running. Furthermore, El Jordan residents have begun to form new

associative organizations in the post-conflict period. The young president of Las Frias

was one of the civilians who helped to create the first cacao grower's cooperative in the

municipality. He explained, "we started the cooperative informally in 2010 and by 2011

we were a formal organization that was connected to the Chamber of Commerce."[419]

Recently, the cooperative presented a project to the Colombian Ministry of Agriculture,

securing needed financial resources to buy its own piece of land. The cooperative has

also established a system of barter with a large Colombian grocery store chain – *Exito* –

exchanging their primary product for household goods, which are prohibitively expensive

in rural areas. Noting the cooperative's success, the municipal and departmental

governments have also contributed resources. The young junta president enjoys being

part of an organization that contributes to his community, "Maybe people will look at

what we have done and say 'if they are improving their quality of life, why don't we also

give it a try?'"[420]

El Jordan has also addressed issues that normally fall within the category of

transitional justice, such as the reinsertion of armed combatants, reconciliation, and

collective memory. According to interviews in – and scholarship on – El Jordan, there

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[418] Interview with resident in El Jordan. 14 February 2014.
[419] Interview with resident in El Jordan. 9 December 2013.
[420] Interview with resident in El Jordan. 9 December 2013.

has been a purposeful and public reinsertion of ex-combatants in the corregimiento after the collective demobilization of 2005.[421] Although some ex-combatants committed crimes and were sent to jail after they demobilized, there are still half a dozen demobilized combatants living and working in the town center.[422] According to resident testimonies, there aren't any problems with residual anger or resentment among the community, "they have their house, their wives, some even work for the local government here. Those that are still here are very responsible and hardworking."[423]

Additionally, the many people who were peripherally involved with the paramilitary organization have normal relations with the rest of the community through simple, daily gestures. People greet one another on the street, make conversation, and interact in public spaces, stores, and social scenarios. This is true even if they had different levels of power with relation to the paramilitary group – and hence with respect to the rest of the community – during the conflict.[424]

While reconciliation within the community of El Jordan was perhaps less difficult to achieve than it would be in a contested territory, its community has had to reconcile with residents in the rest of the San Carlos municipality and local leaders have organized with leaders in the municipal seat to facilitate this process. For example, El Jordan's high school teacher helped to design a pedagogical tool for her classroom, in order to teach the history of the conflict in San Carlos, while attempting to heal the divisions between the

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[421] Osorio Campuzano, Ramiro, "Paramilitarismo y la Vida Cotidiana en San Carlos (Antioquia): etnografía desde una antropología de la violencía." *Boletín de Antropología.* Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín. Vol. 28, Nº 45. 2013:145. Interview with resident in El Jordan. 15 November 2013.
[422] An indicator embedded in the research process itself, was also the willingness of people to publicly discuss the topic of demobilized combatants, to name specific examples, and do so without fear of repercussions. This was evidence that the underlying paramilitary power structure no longer dictates the rules for those living in the territory.
[423] Interview with resident in El Jordan. 15 November 2013.
[424] Interview with resident in El Jordan. 14 February 2014.

corregimiento and the rest of San Carlos.[425] She also organized an educational trip to the municipal seat of San Carlos. There, her students participated in a *Ruta de Memoria*[426] which led them through the sites where specific conflict events occurred – a car bomb set off in the square, an old movie theater used for kidnappings, a narrow side street where paramilitaries had patrolled. At each location, students were offered an explanation of the broader dynamics of the war, with time for questions or a peacebuilding activity. For instance, in the narrow side street, students learned to make colorful paper cranes, which were hung from the ceiling as a symbol of peace and reconciliation.[427]

The memory route ended at San Carlos' *Centro de Acercamiento y Reconciliación*[428] (CARE), which had previously been Hotel Punchiná and was used as a site of torture by paramilitaries during the conflict.[429] Here, teenagers from El Jordan – some of whom had lost their parents in the conflict or whose parents had been paramilitary members – participated in memory and reconciliation activities. They toured the museum, participated in a healing exercise in the library, and wrote their vision for the future of the municipality on a large chalkboard. The activity ended when they wrote about their anger or desire for revenge on a piece of paper and burned it to symbolize a new beginning. Volunteers from San Carlos poured water over their hands to wash them clean, as a healing ritual.

Finally, the community in El Jordan has organized activities to acknowledge the atrocities of the war, while also allowing the residents to process their experiences.

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[425] Participant observation in "Memory Tour" in San Carlos. 15 November 2013. The textbook was jointly designed with the Historical Memory Group and the municipal government of San Carlos.

[426] "Memory Tour."

[427] Participant observation in "Memory Tour" in San Carlos. 15 November 2013. Activity inspired by the historical fiction, "Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes," about peacebuilding activities among children after the atomic bombing in Hiroshima, Japan.

[428] "Center for Engagement and Reconciliation."

[429] Sanchez, Gonzalo ed., "San Carlos: Memorias del Exodo en La Guerra." *Grupo de Memoria Historica*. Bogotá, 2011: 77.

During fieldwork, I attended an evening of performances and activities focused on El Jordan's collective memory. The youth from the corregimiento wrote and performed an original theater production for the community, both from El Jordan, but also from San Carlos and other locations in Eastern Antioquia. The performance depicted the history of the war in San Carlos, touching on the role that paramilitaries and the community had played in the violence. It ended with a peaceful scene in which violence was eschewed as a means of conflict resolution. After the performance, a candle lighting ceremony was held in the public square and the youngest children of the corregimiento lit candles to symbolize peace and finding light out of darkness.[430]

Post-Conflict Social Fabric in Contested Territory

Although the data on patterns of armed actor control indicates that Santa Ana and Buenos Aires suffered from similarly high levels of contestation, their distinct displacement dynamics created different post-conflict trajectories. Because residents of Buenos Aires were forced to stay on the land, they lived through more years of violence and abuse than the communities in Santa Ana. Additionally, when residents finally displaced from Buenos Aires, they did so gradually and separately, in contrast to the massive displacement in Santa Ana. These two dynamics ruptured the social fabric and dissolved social networks, with ramifications for the post-conflict period. In the next section, I compare the post-conflict trajectories of Buenos Aires and Santa Ana, while also drawing some contrasts to El Jordan.

Buenos Aires

Buenos Aires residents find themselves early in – and challenged by – the process of endogenous recovery and rebuilding. The community has not achieved the

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[430] Participant observation in peacebuilding activity in El Jordan. 15 November 2013.

baseline of the restoration dimension of peacebuilding. Nearly a decade after armed

actors departed, Buenos Aires has not recovered its pre-conflict population, security,

basic infrastructure, or social services. This stagnation has also precluded the

communities from working on more transformative peacebuilding, such as memory or

reconciliation activities.

Although people have started to trickle back to their homes and villages, four of

Buenos Aires' 16 villages are still completely abandoned. Residents now describe these

villages as, "pure mountain,"[431] and explain that the villages of La Merced, Minarrica, La

Aurora, and San Antonio have essentially "disappeared."[432] The school is closed, the

plaza is gone, the infrastructure destroyed, and the roads are grown over. An additional

three villages of Buenos Aires, although they have formed new juntas, are not inhabited

consistently.[433] Rather, returnees live in San Luis' municipal center and travel to work on

their farms during the day, an important detail not reflected in the survey data. The

proportion of Buenos Aires' villages where people have returned with the intention to

stay permanently is still small. Of the nine villages *with a permanent population*, the

average proportion of displaced persons returning to their place of origin is only 15%.[434]

According to interviews, the principal reason that people have not returned is due

to a lack of basic security. There are still landmines in the villages of La Estrella, Los

Planes, La Merced, Minarrica, and La Aurora, although in many official documents they

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[431] Interview with resident in San Luis. 5 February 2014.
[432] Interview with resident in San Luis. 5 February 2014.
[433]The juntas are not yet legally constituted, because there need to be at least 20 people living in the town. At the time of fieldwork these villages were: La Gaviota, Los Planes, and El Socorro.
[434] Resident testimony from Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 13 March 2014.

are labeled as "free from the suspicion of landmines."[435] A man currently living in La Estrella insisted, "There are still landmines. Yesterday the kids of the villages grabbed an unexploded grenade and were playing with it. People are still returning with a lot of fear."[436] Many people also don't want to reveal that they know the location of unexploded landmines – as some residents have done in San Carlos and Granada – as they fear the Colombian army will accuse them of being guerrillas. A resident explains, "There is now a certain level of distrust within the residents of Buenos Aires, we are scared of the army and we can't still trust them. It is very difficult for us."[437]

The lack of security was also reflected starkly in the research process. Throughout the course of nine months of fieldwork, I was able to stay overnight for a total of five nights in El Jordan. Residents told me to "speak freely, as if I were in my own home."[438] In contrast to this experience, I was discouraged from spending the night in the town center of Buenos Aires, and spent only one night in the village of San Francisco, the closest village within the corregimiento to the municipal seat. Most of the interviews with community members were conducted in the municipal seat of San Luis and visits to Buenos Aires were carried out with the accompaniment of a local resident who did not leave my side during a single interview.

Basic infrastructure in Buenos Aires remains in a dire state. During the Collective Reparations workshop, residents emphasized the importance of repairing unpaved roads in order to restore basic mobility and to address their isolation from the rest of the municipality. For example, the village of Popal remains isolated as the 7.5 km stretch of

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[435] This is due to the fact that municipalities cannot receive funding and support from national-level programming for return programs unless they demonstrate that it is "safe" for people to return, so they lie on the forms. Participant observation in the "inter-institutional committee meeting" in San Luis. 13 March 2014.

[436] Testimony of resident during the Collective Reparations workshop, San Luis. 13 March 2014.

[437] Testimonies during the "Weavers" workshop in San Luis. 8 February 2014.

[438] Interview with resident in El Jordan. 9 December 2013.

road connecting it to the municipal center is too run down to use. Similarly, the villages of Sopetran and Los Planes cannot use the 13 km of unpaved road connecting them to San Carlos. El Porvenir is cut off from the town center of Buenos Aires, as the road connecting the village to the center of the corregimiento is destroyed.

When asked if road maintenance and repair weren't the responsibility of the municipal government, participants answered "No!" They explained, "These are not the paved roads. We have to be responsible for repairing them, if no one repairs them, if no one is paying attention, then they get damaged. The community repairs them, we are the ones who organize to fix the roads."[439] Residents maintained that this type of road should be repaired by convites. Unfortunately, as the president of Asocomunal lamented, "people don't want to do convites anymore. They don't trust one another and they are still scared of landmines along the unpaved roads."[440]

In four of the 16 villages of Buenos Aires, there are still no juntas. Residents explained that they have lost leadership capacity within the villages and even in those villages that have reestablished their juntas, "many of the previous members of the juntas have either been killed or disappeared."[441] Similarly, the economy remains in a dire state, and residents explain that although they have been willing to return to their fincas, it is increasingly hard to make a living off of agriculture and the youth prefer to stay in the cities, rather than return to the countryside.[442]

Meeting basic needs such as health and educational services has also been a challenge for Buenos Aires. In addition to the health clinics closing or being destroyed,

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[439] Resident testimony during Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 19 February 2014.
[440] Resident testimony during Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 19 February 2014.
[441] Interview with resident in San Luis. 15 February 2014.
[442] Interview with resident in Buenos Aires. 24 February 2014.

the murder of local health workers during the conflict has left the corregimiento without access to health care. One resident explained, "Before the conflict health workers were required to live in the village, but the way they work has changed. A visiting nurse comes now and then, but because of the lack of security, we have lost health services."[443] Displacement in the rural villages surrounding the town center of Buenos Aires has once again put residents between a sword and the wall. In many of the villages there are not enough children for the Colombian government to pay for a teacher,[444] but at the same time, village residents are not willing to return unless there is a school for their children. Half of the 16 villages in Buenos Aires still do not have open schools, and only high school in the town center lacks a principal.

Buenos Aires residents have shied away from activities related to memory or reconciliation. In contrast to the villages in El Jordan, communities have not organized around memory activities or the purposeful reintegration of ex-combatants. Many people expressed an opinion that it was "better to keep quiet" because it is too painful to remember all the "brothers, uncles, children" that were killed, "there are people that suffered so many things that it is better to keep quiet. Bringing up these things, this pain, from the past is too hard."[445]

Although there are ex-combatants living in the villages, there is a sensation that "although they don't cause problems," and there isn't explicit hostility towards them, "one is never capable of pardoning the things that they did."[446] There are no "officially" demobilized ex-combatants living in Buenos Aires, rather they are ex-guerrilla members

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[443] Resident testimony during Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 13 March 2014.
[444] Ten children are required for the Colombian state to place a teacher in the village.
[445] Resident testimony during Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 5 February 2014.
[446] Interview with resident in Buenos Aires. 22 March 2014.

who fled the group as it was pushed off the territory or demobilized paramilitaries who the community did not name. Residents still expressed a certain degree of fear when speaking about this topic and many refrained from answering the question at all, an indicator in and of itself.

Santa Ana

Many aspects of the post-conflict trajectory of Santa Ana mirror the challenges of Buenos Aires and are also a result of decreased social fabric. Although all villages within Santa Ana have re-established their juntas in the post-conflict period, not all the juntas are legally constituted and are, in many ways, ineffective. For example, the presidents rarely attend meetings, and when they do, they express resentment and mistrust.[447] A report on Santa Ana written by a group of social workers from the University of Antioquia discussed "the difficulties with reconciliation and living together because of the lack of commitment and interest in participating in the junta de acción comunal, which is compounded by rumors and problems of envy."[448] The president of Santa Ana's Asocomunal is a young woman. She explained the difficulty of being a community leader and trying to work on behalf of a collective good, "People don't want to attend meetings, they don't want to put forth effort."[449]

The organizational structure of the juntas in Santa Ana has a direct impact on the community's ability to organize around its collective interests and in service of reconstruction. Santa Ana faces similar challenges to Buenos Aires in the organization of convites to maintain basic infrastructure in rural areas. As one woman explains, "Before

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[447] Participant observation at two Asocomunal meetings in Santa Ana. 9 February 2014 and 9 March 2014.
[448] Agudelo, Yohana Andrea, et al. "Acompañamiento Social Para la Construcción de Acuerdos de seguridad ciudadana y Convivencia con población retornada de 12 veredas del correigmiento de Santa Ana del Municipio de Granada," *University of Antioquia, Department of Social Work.* 2011: 24.
[449] Interview with resident in Santa Ana. 9 March 2014.

people maintained the roads through convites. Unfortunately, now they don't do it anymore. People don't want to voluntarily spend their free time to reconstruct or repair public spaces that were destroyed by the conflict."[450] Another interviewee explains, "Before the conflict people lived in a less selfish way. Now we are more solitary. We don't visit our neighbors. Before, our neighbors were our family, but now we don't even know how our neighbors are doing." When asked why that was now the case, she responded, "Lack of trust. We no longer know who is who or what they are doing, understand?"[451]

Like Buenos Aires, Santa Ana is much less safe than El Jordan, something that is most accurately captured through informal conversations with residents and through the fieldwork experience. I visited Santa Ana on three occasions and stayed overnight twice. As a safety measure, I spent the night the Catholic priest's guest quarters. I was also told after that visit that I should not return to the area, because there were *gente que andaba por ahi*,[452] around the time of the elections. I was later told that a guerrilla front had appeared in its historic territory near Santa Ana.[453]

Like Buenos Aires, although there are some ex-combatants living in Santa Ana, their demobilization was not officially organized by the government or supported by the community. There is also the sensation that it is not appropriate to speak about the topic, although a few interviewees identified an ex-FARC member living in the area. In reference to these topics, people spoke in hushed tones and used euphemisms, which is in stark contrast to El Jordan, where people talked openly about ex-combatants and the

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[450] Interview with resident in Santa Ana. 22 January 2014.
[451] Interview with resident in Santa Ana. 22 January 2014.
[452] "People are around there," which is a euphemism for "armed groups in the territory."
[453] Conversation with residents in Santa Ana and Granada. March 2014.

reinsertion processes. One woman's response was telling, "I don't really have much of an idea. I don't pay attention. Wherever I am going, I go, and that's it. For that reason, I didn't have problems during the conflict. I haven't heard of conflicts (with the ex-combatants), they live here OK, but I don't really know."[454] Another woman echoed a similar type of response, "Truly, sincerely, you really can't trust anyone, do you understand? So much violence, so many attacks, I already learned how to live, how to speak, what I shouldn't say, and what I can say, because what else can you do? To live in Santa Ana, this is how you have to behave."[455]

Like Buenos Aires, Santa Ana has not engaged in transformative activities such as memory or reconciliation activities. In fact, when municipal government employees from Granada's town center have attempted to organize these types of initiatives in Santa Ana, the community members have failed to attend meetings or refused to participate. When asked why this was the case, explanations emphasized two characteristics of the post-conflict context in Santa Ana: a problem with *asistencialismo*[456] and a lack of social fabric.

With respect to the first problem, residents and local government employees explained that people have begun to expect handouts due to the fact that Santa Ana has recently become a symbol of collective return and reconstruction in the post-conflict period. One woman who works for Granada's municipal government explained that the institutions that have supported Santa Ana are "simply putting out fires and have not created a sustainable processes. The institutions should be local, with someone local in charge. It shouldn't be the attitude of 'they need to give us handouts because we

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[454] Interview with resident in Santa Ana. 9 March 2014.
[455] Interview with resident in Santa Ana. 9 March 2014.
[456] Literally translates as "welfare-ism". A desire or dependence on assistance from outside entities.

suffered.'"[457] When asked about organizing memory activities locally, people have countered with "the state should do it," while she disagrees, "We are the state."[458]

Although Buenos Aires and Santa Ana are similar in the difficulties they face in organizing around local peacebuilding activities, Santa Ana's unique displacement pattern has facilitated some aspects of the corregimiento's recovery. Although massive displacement in Santa Ana forced migrants to confront new hardships in the urban slums where they arrived, the collective nature of the displacement had two positive outcomes. First, trust, solidarity and social networks were retained among the migrants who settled collectively outside of Santa Ana. "There are a lot of people who left here and formed their cliques again there… In other words, we all arrived in the same neighborhood in Cali and then just brought our local customs to the city."[459]

Second, due to the collective settlement, the *colonias* – or diaspora communities – could locate and attend to the large groups displaced persons soon after they arrived. As one former resident of Santa Ana explains, "our social fabric was transferred to the city. I went to Cali and the first thing I did was organize 400 people in Cali. We did two events and when 23 people arrived from the village of Galilea, it was the colonia who helped them."[460]

Santa Ana's urban diaspora communities have became the primary link between the displaced population and important institutional resources. They connected displaced persons to two cooperatives – *Granada Siempre Nuestra* ("Granada, Always Ours") and *la Corporación Amigos por Santa Ana* ("Friends for Santa Ana"). Both of these

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[457] Interview with resident in Santa Ana. 22 January 2014.
[458] Interview with resident in Santa Ana. 22 January 2014.
[459] Interview with resident in Santa Ana. 22 January 2014.
[460] Interview with migrant from Santa Ana in Medellín. 11 March 2014.

organizations were formed by migrants from Granada, working on behalf of other migrants and for the good of their place of origin or "home town." These organizations not only helped displaced people get back on their feet in the cities, they also organized the first collective return processes to Santa Ana.

The first collective return to Santa Ana was organized and supported by *Amigos por Santa Ana* in 2005. The organization offered free transportation and meals and organized a caravan of 19 buses to take displaced persons that had settled in different Colombian cities. The buses departed from Medellín and arrived in Santa Ana, staying only for 24 hours as part of the first symbolic return. The organization also petitioned the army to accompany the caravan, as armed actors were still operating in the area at the time. The trip offered people the opportunity to assess the state of their abandoned properties and the current security situation in the corregimiento.[461] When people first arrived in Santa Ana, many cried upon seeing the bombed out or overgrown houses. One woman described how she kept her young son in her arms the entire time, fearing he would toddle over to an abandoned house and set off an unexploded landmine.[462]

This first collective return initiated a tradition of an annual collective return and laid the groundwork for people to return permanently. Since 2005, there have been nine consecutive collective returns to Santa Ana, which are no longer "symbolic," but rather have become a means to accompany people who want to return to the territory permanently. In total, 200 families have returned to Santa Ana, the majority of whom have used their own resources and did so before the initiation of the official demining

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[461] Interview with Dorys Arias in Medellín. 6 March 2014.
[462] Interview with resident in Santa Ana. 9 March 2014.

program began the 10th of August, 2010.[463] In 2014, 24 families were living in the urban

center and 1,000 people in the rural areas. "This makes us very happy," the director of

Amigos por Santa Ana explained, "because every week we see a few more families

return."[464] This organization has also organized and funded the physical reconstruction

of the destroyed town square and Catholic Church, and priest's home in Santa Ana.

Conclusion

From an outside perspective, it is easy to view Eastern Antioquia as a sub-region

that was uniformly hard hit by violence and displacement. It was the site of many

emblematic events of the Colombian civil war, producing a high death toll among

civilians and causing thousands to flee for larger cities such as Medellín and Cali. On a

local level, however, the conflict experiences of communities were quite distinct from

one another, which has consequently defined their post-conflict trajectories. Specifically,

the residents of El Jordan lived under armed occupation with a stable set of rules and

comparatively less violence against civilians, as well as lower levels of forced

displacement. This allowed the community to retain a baseline of social fabric,

facilitating a faster and more complete recovery after the violence subsided.

In contrast, residents of Santa Ana and Buenos Aires confronted the challenges of

life in a contested territory including a breakdown in social fabric. The unpredictable and

unrelenting violence against civilians either forced them off their land *en masse* or was

used to trap civilians in the crossfire. As a result, Santa Ana and Buenos Aires trail

behind El Jordan on their path to recovery and between the two contested corregimientos,

Buenos Aires has fared worse. While the civilians in Buenos Aires were forced to remain

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[463] Matta, Nelson C. and Donaldo V. Zuluaga, "Desminadores borran el miedo que fue sembrado en Santa Ana." *El Colombiano*. 24 September 2013.
[464] Interview with Dorys Arias in Medellín. 6 March 2014.

on the land and endure countless atrocities, those in Santa Ana massively displaced three

years earlier, initiating two different social processes that still have ramifications a

decade later.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Colombia is currently negotiating peace with its longest-lasting and largest

insurgency – the FARC. As I write this concluding chapter, Manuel Santos' government

and the FARC have negotiated five[465] of the six points on the peace agenda and have

agreed to sign a final deal sometime in March 2016. After three previous attempts, and

fifty years of civil war, many speculate that Colombia is the closest that it has ever been

to reaching a peace accord with the FARC. However, despite the optimism, some are

concerned that even after peace accords are signed, there could be continued violence.

The FARC's mid-level leadership could ignore the accords, and move the group's

historically rural insurgency to Colombia's urban slums, re-arm and become more deeply

embedded in the drug trade.[466] This would follow the lead of many demobilized

paramilitary members who have formed part of the *Bacrim*[467] that controls territory in the

slums of Bogotá and the *invasiones* surrounding Medellín. Another possibility is that

when FARC commanders agree to peace in Havana and demand that their rank-and-file

lay down arms, some insurgent fronts may simply refuse to do so and continue operating

on a regional level.[468]

These concerns reflect a key challenge that Colombia – and all countries

transitioning from war to peace – must address: how to build peace on the ground after

formal negotiations have ended, legislation has been passed, and armed groups have

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[465] **Land reform** in rural Colombia, political participation of rebels after peace accord, **illegal drugs trade** will be stopped, **transitional justice measures**, including disarmament of the insurgency, reparations for victims, and amnesty measure for rebels accused of political crimes, and **end of the conflict** (including reintegration of demobilized combatants). The last point that must be agreed upon is **implementation**.

[466] Interview with consultant for the *Agencia Colombiana de Reintegración* (Colombian Agency for Reintegration) in Medellín. 17 March 2014.

[467] *Bandas Emergentes Criminales* or "Emerging Criminal Bands."

[468] Interview with Antioquia's Peace Advisor, Ivan Marulanda, in Medellín. 14 May 2014.

officially demobilized. As many people that I interviewed in Colombia articulated, the signing of the peace accords is not equivalent to peace.[469] Peace accords initiate the beginning of a peace process, and peace will flourish or fail among the ordinary people who lived through the horrors of the conflict. A community leader from San Carlos, Pastora Mira, explained it simply: "Peace cannot be decreed," she said, "it must be built."[470]

This dissertation demonstrates that peacebuilding in the rural and impoverished areas of Colombia cannot be led only by elite actors or peace practitioners, but must also include the agency and ideas of ordinary people. As Autesserre articulately explains, "wars only end when hostile parties at the local, national, and international levels agree to stop using violence to resolve their differences, and when their fellow citizens concurrently strive to establish and maintain lasting solutions to the conflict" (2015: 7). Indeed, my empirical observations show that community actors in Eastern Antioquia have taken steps to build peace after the violence subsided in their villages, even in the absence of state assistance, and that much can be learned from a close examination of how their grassroots peacebuilding process unfolded. Additionally, generalizable lessons can be gleaned from an analysis of how their peacebuilding outcomes vary, illuminating why some areas of a country recover more quickly from conflict, while other areas stagnate or relapse into violence.

Grassroots Peacebuilding is Unique and Impacted by Local Conflict Dynamics

This dissertation argues that grassroots peacebuilding can and should be examined as a separate phenomenon from external interventions. It is only by understanding how

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[469] Interviews with residents in Santa Ana, Granada. 22 January 2014. Interview with Antioquia's Peace Advisor, Ivan Marulanda, in Medellín. 14 May 2014.
[470] Interview with resident in San Carlos. 30 January 2014.

ordinary people rebuild their communities after an irregular civil war – separate from the dynamics introduced by comprehensive post-conflict programming – that we can examine this process' potential intersection with, or divergence from, top-down peacebuilding practices.

This dissertation was inspired by inductive fieldwork in Colombia that began in the summer of 2011, and a few seemingly straightforward ideas presented in Kalyvas', *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (2006). Kalyvas called on scholars to address elite (10), political (38), and urban (44) biases in the civil war literature. He also emphasized "the importance of systematic research at the micro-level" (2006: 6), showing that historically, the "experience and perspective of ordinary people is remarkably absent" (2006: 39). After re-reading the book's introductory chapter, I had a "light bulb moment," and realized the same points are also true for the *post*-civil war context.

This dissertation addresses elite, political, and urban biases, among other shortcomings, in the existing approach to studying post-conflict contexts and peacebuilding. As a researcher, I attempted to enter the space that ordinary people inhabit in the wake of an irregular civil war. Through extensive fieldwork in rural areas of Colombia, I focused on how variation in armed group control and contestation during the conflict – and the accompanying strategies of violence against civilians – continue to have important repercussions for the local post-conflict landscape.

Ordinary people can and do organize to rebuild and reconstruct local collective goods – both material and non-material – destroyed by the conflict. Since as early as 2005, residents and returnees in Eastern Antioquia have led initiatives to address a legacy of violence in their towns and villages through artisanal demining efforts, mutual

workdays to rebuild or restore public infrastructure, by conceiving of and building local memorials and museums, and designing reconciliation activities between demobilized combatants, victims, and other community members. These initiatives have been part of a grassroots peacebuilding process that was not designed or guided by elite actors and that emerged independent of any national or internationally led peace process.

Yet, witnessing grassroots peacebuilding empirically was in some ways easier than fitting it into the broader peacebuilding theory and literature. This is because previous studies have been limited to an examination of elite-led peacebuilding and/or local participation in UN peacebuilding operations. Therefore, I needed to re-conceptualize "bottom-up" peacebuilding before I could fully develop and test a causal theory. Having done so, I argue, along with other scholars,[471] that the local dynamics of a civil war have a causal relationship with the local post-conflict landscape. Specifically, I show that patterns of armed group territorial control impact the likelihood that a community will organize to rebuild after the violence subsides.

The Findings

Chapter 2 argues for a new conceptualization of grassroots peacebuilding and offers a theoretical framework to situate local peacebuilding processes within the literature on peacebuilding and transitional justice. It demonstrates how local instances of post-conflict reconstruction may be small-scale, informal, and led by ordinary people. Additionally, this chapter explains why grassroots efforts may be hard to recognize empirically, as the local actors who guide them do not necessarily use technical frames or call their efforts "peacebuilding," and their activities may diverge from the accepted normative frameworks of democratization and market liberalization.

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[471] See Wood 2008, Moore 2013.

Chapter 3 is a case study of a grassroots peacebuilding process in the municipality of San Carlos in Eastern Antioquia. This chapter uses careful case selection, process-tracing, and extensive qualitative research that began in the summer of 2011, including participant observation in peacebuilding activities, ethnographic observation, and a total of 248 semi-structured interviews. Through process-tracing, I demonstrate how local reconstruction processes in San Carlos – collective return, artisanal demining, rebuilding of basic physical infrastructure – began *before* implementation of Colombia's national-level post-conflict legislation. Additionally, Chapter 3 explains the local community's role in transitional justice activities, such as reconciliation tables, a memory museum, a public memorial, and locally-led exhumations. In San Carlos, the efforts of ordinary people have resulted in support from external entities on the regional and national level and in some cases informed the design and implementation of Colombia's first comprehensive post-conflict legislation: the 2011 Victims Law.

Chapter 4 presents my dissertation's causal theory: areas under consolidated control of a single armed group are more likely than those in contested areas to organize around grassroots peacebuilding and to be receptive to external interventions after the conflict ends. In controlled areas, a social contract is established, and the community experiences less random violence and displacement. As a result, the community retains its social fabric, facilitating organization and openness to outsiders. Conversely, in an area that was highly contested – and where violence is wielded frequently, yet in an unpredictable way – trust is diminished and social networks are diluted through high levels of displacement. This undermines social fabric and the likelihood that a

community organizes around grassroots peacebuilding practices or is receptive to an outside entity seeking to help rebuild.

Chapter 5 tests the main observable implication of my causal theory: areas where there were high levels of armed group contestation should be associated with lower levels of grassroots peacebuilding, while areas that were under consolidated control should exhibit more comprehensive peacebuilding efforts. I analyze this in three neighboring municipalities in Eastern Antioquia – Granada, San Carlos, and San Luis – using an original village-level database (182 villages) of conflict dynamics between 1998 and 2006 and grassroots peacebuilding activities since 2006. Using regression analysis, I evaluate whether there is a correlation between levels of contestation, violence during the conflict, and grassroots peacebuilding since the conflict ended. In line with my theory, I find a strong, statistically significant, negative relationship between contestation and the level of grassroots peacebuilding in a village.

The process of data collective for this chapter involved mapping and coding villages according to local conflict dynamics and peacebuilding activities. To code patterns of territorial control, as well as patterns of violence and displacement, I used a combination of sources: information gleaned from nearly 500 news articles gathered from a national press archive[472] in Colombia and a Colombian human rights database,[473] mapping exercises with rural residents in the three case municipalities and over 100 in-depth interviews with residents and displaced persons from the case area. To measure grassroots peacebuilding activities on a village level, I used a simple survey with 182 village presidents.

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[472] CINEP - "Center for Popular Research and Education" (http://www.cinep.org.co/).
[473] "Noche y Niebla" (http://www.nocheyniebla.org/).

Chapter 6 provides a case-study comparison of three *corregimientos* ("groups of villages") that were purposefully selected to leverage variation on the independent variable of contestation in order to show that the relationship found in Chapter 5 is indeed causal. In-depth qualitative methods allowed me to delineate the process by which the local dynamics of a civil war affected a community's social fabric, which then impacted its propensity to organize around local reconstruction after the war ended in this region of Colombia. I demonstrate that because of the stability of norms and informal rules under consolidated paramilitary control in El Jordan, social fabric was maintained and consequently, the community has organized around peacebuilding initiatives. In contrast, in the two highly contested corregimientos – Buenos Aires and Santa Ana – the community has had trouble organizing around rebuilding their villages due to diminished social fabric. The second part of the causal theory outlined in Chapter 4 – communities that experienced higher contestation will be less open to peacebuilding intervention – remains untested, a point I discuss in the Future Research section below.

The Contributions

This dissertation makes empirical and theoretical contributions. Empirically, my research provides information about the ways in which communities organize in the post-conflict landscape. This dissertation is one of the only fieldwork-based studies that compares peacebuilding outcomes on a subnational level and, to the best of my knowledge, the only project (academic or otherwise) to collect a large-n sample of village-level data on post-conflict outcomes in rural Colombia.[474] Scholars that have used a subnational research design and mixed methods to study post-conflict outcomes have done so primarily in urban locations, as "the absence of an active state and recurring

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[474] Ana Arjona systematically examines village level trends of *conflict* dynamics in Colombia (2010).

conflict dynamics barred the possibility of including rural areas" in their analyses (Prieto 2012: 534).

These insights should be especially important to both Colombian policymakers and international peace practitioners. Although Colombia has designed legislation to deal with the impacts of conflict, all of it has been drafted, passed, and implemented in the context of an ongoing civil war, making implementation ad-hoc in many cases and uneven across geographic space. Variation in the roll out of the programming provides an opportunity to better understand peacebuilding as a process, rather than a decree.

It is my hope that the information shared in this dissertation will help Colombian and other policymakers, as well as scholars and international peace practitioners, recognize and understand the efforts of ordinary people to rebuild in the wake of a country's irregular civil war. My theoretical framework in Chapter 2 is designed to help outsiders identify, as well as to see the value in understanding and supporting, local efforts to build peace. On the other side of the coin, I'd also like for the ordinary people who act as their communities' peacebuilders and activists to use the framework as a tool to "legitimize" their actions in the eyes of the state, NGOs, or international organizations that support peacebuilding.

My second hope is that this dissertation helps scholars and policymakers see how variation in a community or locale's receptivity to outside peacebuilding interventions relates to designing an effective implementation strategy for post-conflict programming. For example, in a community like San Carlos where the community was already organized and had some remaining social fabric, a national level intervention will have more impact if it supports existing initiatives that residents view as relevant and

legitimate. In a case like San Carlos, external resources should not be used to start programming from scratch, but rather should be spent to expand or improve existing community efforts.

On the other hand, in a place like San Luis where the levels of contestation and incidence of civilian abuse by the Colombian army were much higher, the community is likely less receptive to outsiders. External interventions may require a different approach that places emphasis on both building trust *within* the community and with Colombian state (or another external organization). It is important for outsiders to understand that although San Luis and San Carlos are neighbors within the same part of Eastern Antioquia, the former is not as far along on the path to recovery as the latter. San Luis requires help addressing lingering security issues – landmine removal and recurring violent actions by demobilized combatants in isolated villages – and meeting the basic needs of its victimized and returnee populations.

Finally, this dissertation contributes empirically by demonstrating the need for peacebuilders to take into account the specific conflict legacies of the locales where they operate. Subnational variation in armed group territorial control in other countries may not be as extreme as in Colombia – indeed, I argue that these patterns are driven by exogenous variation in geography caused by the mountainous terrain in my case areas – but special attention should still be paid to distinct patterns of violence and displacement within a region. This will require the more nuanced understanding of local contexts advocated by other peacebuilding scholars (Pouligny 2006; Autesserre 2010, 2015; Moore 2013).

My theoretical contributions are twofold: First, I challenge the conventional

wisdom about what constitutes "peacebuilding" and include the activities of ordinary people. Accordingly, I offer a new conceptualization of the grassroots peacebuilding process and situate it within the literature on peacebuilding and transitional justice. I show that these three bodies of literature provide an area of research that is ripe for cross-fertilization and theoretical expansion. The second theoretical contribution is causal and outlined in Chapter 4. Here, I delineate the specific causal path through which the local conflict dynamics impact social fabric in a village and its subsequent relationship with the likelihood that a village will organize around peacebuilding.

Future Research

I hope that my dissertation helps prompt further research on grassroots peacebuilding – in Eastern Antioquia, and elsewhere in Colombia and the world. I consider my findings important, but only part of an initial foray into a topic that requires considerable further research. Specifically, I hope that scholars identify and examine additional instances of grassroots peacebuilding in Colombia and elsewhere, and that they collect more information to test the second facet of my causal theory – that social fabric impacts a location's receptivity to external interventions. I was not able to test this facet of my theory using original empirical data, as this idea came to me after field work ended.

The municipality of Granada is among those in Colombia that are ripe for further examination of grassroots peacebuilding activities. There, displaced women founded the United Victims Association of Granada (ASOVIDA) in 2007 and launched a local memory museum – *El Salon del Nunca Más* ("The Hall of Never Again") – in 2009. The museum features stunning conflict photographs on the walls. The images depict

incredible scenes, such as a march for peace through the rubble left in the town's center after it was bombed, and a bride in a white dress on her wedding day amidst the destruction of the conflict. One entire wall is covered with portraits of people disappeared from the municipality. Open notebooks have been placed under the portraits for friends and family to "visit" their disappeared loved ones by writing them messages.

The museum's aim is to recognize and dignify the victims through "memories, lived experiences, and stories,"[475] and ASOVIDA leaders believe the wall of photos adds a more human dimension to the conflict, which is often depicted only with statistics and alarmist headlines.[476] Interestingly, the museum does not bring attention to other post-conflict activities that have occurred in Granada –voluntary return,[477] convites organized by some villages,[478] or the physical reconstruction of some schools and roads.[479] Similarly, there are no images of local efforts to uncover truth, exhume bodies, remove landmines, or reconcile with demobilized members of any armed groups. It is unclear whether this reflects a perceived absence of these activities in Granada – indeed, they have been less frequent than in San Carlos – or a deliberate decision to focus the museum's content on the more distant, conflict-ridden past.

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[475] This statement was displayed as part of the Salon del Nunca Más' permanent exhibit.

[476] For example, during the worst of the violence, the regional and national media published titles about Granada such as the following: "Desolación y muerte por culpa de las Farc" ("FARC responsible for desolation and death") *El Espectador*. August 8, 2000. "Masacre de 9 personas en Granada" ("Nine people massacred in Granada")*El Colombiano*. May 21, 2001. "Mascares en Granada y Guarne" ("Massacres in Granada and Guarne") *El Mundo*. June 6, 2002. "Granada: Entre más horas, más muertos" ("Granada: The more hours go by, the more deaths") *El Espectador*. September 12, 2003. "Asesinaron a 8 personas" ("Eight people assassinated") *El Mundo*. November 26, 2002. "Centro de muchos ataques armados" ("Center of many armed attacks") *El Colombiano*, October 20, 2002. "Granada no aguanta más" ("Granada can't take any more") *El Mundo*. May 1, 2002. "FARC secuestraron a 3 personas" ("FARC kidnaps three people") *El Mundo*. January 8, 2003. "Combates en Granada" ("Armed clashes in Granada") *El Tiempo*. January 15, 2003.

[477] For example, Granada declared its own "Return Emergency" on January 27th, 2013. Interview with then mayor, Freddy Castaño in Granada. 14 November 2013. Interview with then Secretary of Granada, Claudia Giraldo Gomez, in Granada. 7 March 2014.

[478] Multiple interviews with the residents of the village of La Cascada, Granada. 26 March 2014.

[479] For example, the unpaved road between Granada and San Carlos – abandoned during many years of the conflict – was under construction during fieldwork 2014 and was in the process of being expanded, reinforced for landslides, and paved.

I believe additional valuable research could also be conducted in San Luis, as the municipality offers an interesting case to examine post-conflict receptivity to external peacebuilding intervention. My own preliminary empirical observations allow me to speculate on why it has been more difficult for San Luis to connect to extra-community resources and state support than in San Carlos or Granada. Specifically, San Luis residents harbor a profound sense of mistrust of the Colombian state. There are two reasons for this. First, there were frequent cases of civilian abuse carried out by the army during the conflict in San Luis.[480] Second, residents feel that both the army and the police abandoned the community during the conflict. Indeed, both groups left their posts in San Luis – leaving the community "without state presence"[481] – for five years. Further, despite the proximity of the Medellín-Bogotá highway, it took the army an entire night and day to arrive to the municipality after it was bombed and taken over by the FARC in December of 1999.[482] Residents still express bewilderment at this delay, and lament the legacy of destruction still visible in buildings and the town square.[483]

The resulting lack of trust in the state and outsiders has made it difficult for federal authorities to extract information about the existence and location of landmines, illicit crops, and the renewed presence of armed actors, which has stalled the demining process. Mistrust was especially noticeable in the areas of San Luis that were most

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[480] According to information gathered from the human rights' database, "Noche y Niebla" and CINEP's newspaper archives, these types of abuses were recorded in 13% of the villages in San Carlos versus 27% of the villages in San Luis and 25% in Granada. Additionally, the instances were most frequent in San Luis.

[481] Interview with Migdonia Perez in Medellín. 20 October 2013.

[482] "San Luis: Historia Local." *Empresas Publicas de Medellín. Alcaldia de San Luis.* 2004. Interview with former mayor Hernando Martinez in Medellín. 20 November 2013. Interview with Edwin Gutierrez in San Luis. 4 February 2014.

[483] Interview with Edwin Gutierrez in San Luis. 4 February 2014. Interview with resident in Prodigio, San Luis. 6 February 2014.

highly contested during the war,[484] where civilians accused of being "sapos" had been systematically killed. Residents in San Luis continue to employ a cautious strategy with respect to outsiders who arrive in the post-conflict context: to remain anonymous, neutral and silent.[485]

I describe the municipalities above because I know them, and am hopeful that other scholars will visit them and conduct research. However, my greater hope is that, whether in these communities, Colombia, or elsewhere in the world, scholars and peace practitioners continue to expand our understanding of grassroots peacebuilding. I have witnessed what ordinary people have done to rebuild their communities in Eastern Antioquia and – on any scale – it is impressive and important.

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[484] Testimony of resident during the Collective Reparations workshop in San Luis. 13 March 2014. Participant observation.
[485] Many residents mentioned the same strategy: "ver, oir y callar" or "look, listen, and shut up." Interview with resident in San Luis. 5 February 2014. Interview with resident in Prodigio. 6 February 2014. Interview with resident in Prodigio. 6 February 2014. Interview with resident in Buenos Aires. 24 February 2014.

Appendix

Quantitative Results from Chapter 5:

Robustness Checks

Table 9. Descriptive statistics of reduced sample of villages in Granada, San Carlos, and

San Luis

VARIABLES	(1) N	(2) mean	(3) sd
Strategic Location	133	0.451	0.499
Proportion Returnees	133	0.314	0.298
Landmines	119	0.689	0.465
Security Problems	133	0.970	0.171
Destroyed Basic Infrastructure	119	0.916	0.279
Forced Disappearances	119	0.798	0.403
Grassroots Peacebuilding Ratio	133	0.640	0.312
Massacres	133	0.338	0.475
Massive Displacement	133	0.639	0.482
False Positives	133	0.248	0.434
High Contestation	133	0.128	0.335
Medium Contestation	133	0.474	0.501
Low Contestation	133	0.398	0.491
More Counterinsurgent	133	0.293	0.457
More Insurgent	133	0.218	0.414

Table 10. Models 1-3: Linear Probability Model (LPM) of Conflict Outcomes using only

reduced sample

VARIABLES	(1) Massacres	(2) Mass Displace.	(3) False Pos.
Med contestation	0.347***	0.485***	0.417***
	(0.0865)	(0.0860)	(0.0664)
High contestation	0.0117	0.496***	0.362***
	(0.111)	(0.115)	(0.119)
Strategic	0.0226	0.0562	0.0407
	(0.0871)	(0.0795)	(0.0718)
Constant	0.162***	0.321***	-0.0138
	(0.0603)	(0.0716)	(0.0245)
Observations	133	133	133
R-squared	0.139	0.261	0.224

Robust standard errors in parentheses

Table 11. Models 4-9: Linear Probability Model (LPM) of Additional Conflict Outcomes

using reduced sample

VARIABLES	(4) Infra	(5) Landmine	(6) Security	(7) Disappear	(8) School	(9) Excomb
Med contestation	0.128**	0.441***	0.0339	0.132	-0.137*	0.00237
	(0.0525)	(0.0814)	(0.0291)	(0.0828)	(0.0813)	(0.172)
High contestation	0.0748	0.429***	0.0617*	0.0647	-0.154	0.129
	(0.0958)	(0.111)	(0.0366)	(0.139)	(0.141)	(0.251)
Strategic	0.0238	-0.147*	0.0231	0.146*	0.133	-0.192
	(0.0488)	(0.0758)	(0.0247)	(0.0789)	(0.0851)	(0.166)
Constant	0.838***	0.512***	0.936***	0.661***	0.882***	0.548***
	(0.0562)	(0.0752)	(0.0390)	(0.0713)	(0.0514)	(0.121)
Observations	119	119	133	119	101	53
R-squared	0.055	0.211	0.021	0.075	0.061	0.045

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 12. Models 10-13: Multivariate Regression Model of Peacebuilding Outcomes

using reduced samples

VARIABLES	(10) Peace Rat.	(11) Peace Rat.	(12) Propreturn	(13) Propreturn
Med contestation	-0.114**	-0.172***	-0.138**	-0.194***
	(0.0577)	(0.0627)	(0.0531)	(0.0610)
High contestation	-0.237***	-0.264***	-0.194**	-0.207**
	(0.0867)	(0.0912)	(0.0876)	(0.104)
Massacres		0.0914		0.128**
		(0.0585)		(0.0526)
Mass Displace.		0.0530		0.0244
		(0.0636)		(0.0661)
Strategic	0.108*	0.103*	0.0353	0.0311
	(0.0561)	(0.0544)	(0.0493)	(0.0477)
Constant	0.676***	0.644***	0.388***	0.360***
	(0.0432)	(0.0506)	(0.0491)	(0.0504)
Observations	133	133	133	133
R-squared	0.095	0.120	0.065	0.104

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 13. Models 14-17. Multivariate Regression Model of Peacebuilding Outcomes

(Alternative Hypothesis) using only reduced sample

VARIABLES	(14) Peace Rat.	(15) Peace Rat.	(16) Propreturn	(17) Propreturn
More counterinsurgent	-0.0392	-0.0366	0.0901	0.0941
	(0.0604)	(0.0604)	(0.0613)	(0.0617)
More insurgent	-0.191***	-0.181**	-0.144**	-0.125**
	(0.0691)	(0.0730)	(0.0611)	(0.0613)
Massacres		0.0489		0.0804
		(0.0607)		(0.0583)
Mass Displace.		-0.0101		-0.0375
		(0.0614)		(0.0539)
Strategic	0.120**	0.114**	0.0274	0.0200
	(0.0518)	(0.0529)	(0.0505)	(0.0498)
Constant	0.639***	0.629***	0.307***	0.301***
	(0.0450)	(0.0511)	(0.0424)	(0.0554)
Observations	133	133	133	133
R-squared	0.087	0.092	0.079	0.093

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

Semi-Structured Interviews: I carried out a total of 248 semi-structured over the course of 13 cumulative months of field research between 2011 and 2014. Each interview listed below was "on the record" and I received either written or oral consent following IRB approval and protocol. However, I did not to list the majority of participants' names in the case areas for security reasons, unless they were an activist, public figure, or explicitly asked me to use their full name.

Table 14. Interviews Summer 2011

Data Collection	Name (Organization)	Location	Date
Interview	Ana Maria Ibañez (Universidad de los Andes)	Bogotá	22 June 2011
Interview	Hugo Gomez (Mercy Corps)	Bogotá	23 June 2011
Interview	Marina Cristina Moreno Forero (Mercy Corps)	Bogotá	23 June 2011
Interview	Karina Rios Canos (Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento - Codhes)	Bogotá	24 June 2011
Interview	Andrea Naletto (Norwegian Refugee Council – NRC)	Bogotá	28 June 2011

Interview	Adria Armbrister (Inter-American Development Bank)	Bogotá	28 June 2011
Interview	Diana Gomez (Accion Social)	Bogotá	30 June 2011
Interview	Nathalia Romero (Fondo Financiero de Proyectos de Desarrollo – Fonade)	Bogotá	30 June 2011
Interview	Paty Padilla (Fondo Financiero de Proyectos de Desarrollo – Fonade)	Bogotá	30 June 2011
Interview	Hugo Gomez (Mercy Corps), second interview	Bogotá	30 June 2011
Interview	Juan Mauricio Torres Jaramillo (Accion Social)	Bogotá	1 July 2011
Interview	Stella Duque (Taller de Vida, NGO)	Bogotá	5 July 2011
Interview	Jattan Mazzot (National Association of Displaced Afro-Colombians – Afrodes)	Bogotá	5 July 2011
Participant Observation	Forum on the Colombian Peace Negotiations at Arco Iris, NGO.	Bogotá	5 July 2011
Interview	Thea Villate and Angela Suarez (USAID, US Embassy)	Bogotá	6 July 2011
Interview	Juan Vargas (Universidad de Rosario)	Bogotá	7 July 2011
Interview	Flor Edilma Osorio Perez (Universidad Javeriana)	Bogotá	7 July 2011
Interview	Laura Marcela Diaz Vargas (Universidad de Rosario)	Bogotá	8 July 2011
Participant Observation	Forum: Ley de Victimas y la Comunidad Afrocolombiana	Bogotá	12 July 2011
Participant Observation	Mercy Corps and UN distribute information to communities about the Victims Law and the Collective Right to Land	Apartadó (Antioquia)-	13 July 2011
Participant Observation	Mercy Corps and UN distribute information to communities about the Victims Law and the Collective Right to Land	Turbo (Antioquia)	14 July 2011
Interview	Resident	Turbo	14 July 2011
Interview	Resident	Turbo	14 July 2011
Interview	Resident	Turbo	14 July 2011
Interview	Resident	Turbo	14 July 2011
Participant Observation	Mercy Corps and UN distribute information to communities about the Victims Law and the Collective Right to Land	Ungia (Chocó)	15 July 2011
Interview	Resident	Ungia	15 July 2011
Interview	Resident	Ungia	15 July 2011
Interview	Resident	Ungia	15 July 2011
Interview	Maria Josefina Muskus (Agencia de Cooperación e Inversión de Medellín - ACI)	Medellín	19 July 2011
Interview	Cesar Moreno (Unidad de Atención y Reparación a las Victimas, Municipal Government of Medellín)	Medellín	21 July 2011
Interview	Giovanna Perez (Unidad de Atención)	Medellín	21 July 2011
Interview	Gloria Araque (Unidad de Atención)	Medellín	21 July 2011
Interview	Luz Patricia Correa Madrigal (Director, Unidad de Atención)	Medellín	21 July 2011
Interview	Olga Ramirez (Vamos Mujer, NGO)	Medellín	23 July 2011
Interview	Adriana Gutierrez (Unidad de Atención y Orientación de las Victimas –UAO)	Medellín	23 July 2011
Interview	Internally Displaced Person (IDP) (at UAO "el Palermo")	Medellín	23 July 2011
Interview	IDP (at UAO "el Palermo")	Medellín	23 July 2011
Interview	IDP (at UAO "el Palermo")	Medellín	23 July 2011
Interview	IDP (at UAO "el Palermo")	Medellín	23 July 2011
Interview	IDP (at UAO "el Palermo")	Medellín	23 July 2011
Interview	Adriana Gutierrez, second interview	Medellín	25 July 2011
Interview	Ana Maria Jaramillo (Unidad de Atención)	Medellín	25 July 2011
Interview	Johana Roldan (Mayor's Office of Medellín – Medellín-San Carlos Alliance)	San Carlos	26 July 2011
Participant Observation	Inter-institutional Meeting on Landmine Removal in San Carlos	San Carlos	26 July 2011
Interview	Resident	San Carlos	26 July 2011
Interview	Residents	San Carlos	26 July 2011
Participant Observation	Psychosocial Support and Memory Workshop as part of the Medellín-San Carlos Alliance	San Miguel, San Carlos	27 July 2011
Interview	Fany Lopez (Local consultant for Medellín-San Carlos Alliance)	San Miguel, San Carlos	27 July 2011
Interview	Paula Alape (Mayor's Office of Medellín – Medellín-San Carlos Alliance)	San Carlos	27 July 2011
Interview	Resident	San Carlos	28 July 2011
Interview	Resident	San Carlos	28 July 2011
Interview	Santiago Burbano (Ministry of the Interior – Consultant for Land Restitution)	Medellín	28 July 2011
Interview	Alyssa Bryson (MIT)	Bogotá	2 August 2011
Interview	Luis Eduardo Celis (Director of Arco Iris, NGO), second interview	Bogotá	2 August 2011
Interview	IDP (UAO "Kennedy")	Bogotá	2 August 2011
Interview	IDP (UAO "Kennedy")	Bogotá	2 August 2011
Interview	Maria Angelica Alvarado (NRC)	Bogotá	3 August 2011
Participant Observation	*Conversatorio* on democracy and conflict	Bogotá	4 August 2011

Interview	IDP (UAO " Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	8 August 2011
Interview	IDP (UAO " Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	8 August 2011
Interview	IDP (UAO " Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	8 August 2011
Interview	IDP (UAO " Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	8 August 2011
Interview	IDP (UAO " Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	8 August 2011
Interview	IDP (UAO " Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	8 August 2011
Interview	IDP (UAO " Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	8 August 2011
Interview	IDP (UAO " Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	8 August 2011
Interview	IDP (UAO " Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	8 August 2011
Interview	IDP (UAO " Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	8 August 2011
Participant Observation	National Congress on Reconciliation and Land Restitution The UN Refugee Agency – UNHCR	Bogotá	10 August 2011
Participant Observation	National Congress on Reconciliation and Land Restitution The UN Refugee Agency – UNHCR	Bogotá	11 August 2011
Participant Observation	National Congress on Reconciliation and Land Restitution The UN Refugee Agency – UNHCR	Bogotá	12 August 2011
Interview	Santiago Burbano (Ministry of the Interior), second interview	Bogotá	12 August 2011

Table 15. Interviews Summer 2012

Data Collection	Name (Organization)	Location	Date
Interview	Secretaria de Bienestar	Medellín	29 May 2012
Interview	Gloria Araque (Unidad de Atención y Reparación a las Victimas, Municipal Government of Medellín)	Medellín	29 May 2012
Interviews	Office of Human Rights, Victims, Reintegration at the Governor's office of Antioquia	Medellín	30 May 2012
Interview	Luz Patricia Correa Madrigal (Director, Unidad de Atención y Reparación a las Victimas, Municipal Government of Medellín)	Medellín	30 May 2012
Interview	Gina D'Amato (ACI)	Medellín	30 May 2012
Interview	IDP (UAO "Belencito Corazón")	Medellín	1 June 2012
Interview	IDP (UAO "Belencito Corazón")	Medellín	1 June 2012
Interview	IDP (UAO "Belencito Corazón")	Medellín	1 June 2012
Interview	IDP (UAO "Belencito Corazón")	Medellín	1 June 2012
Interview	IDP (UAO "Belencito Corazón")	Medellín	1 June 2012
Interview	IDP (UAO "Belencito Corazón")	Medellín	1 June 2012
Interview	IDP (UAO "Belencito Corazón")	Medellín	1 June 2012
Interview	Mario Vargas (Universidad de EAFIT)	Medellín	4 June 2012
Interview	Adriana Gonzalez (Universidad de Antioquia)	Medellín	4 June 2012
Interview	Juan Esteban Lopera (Academic Consultant, Medellín-San Carlos Alliance)	San Carlos	5 June 2012
Interview	Maciel Echavarria (Consultant, Medellín-San Carlos Alliance)	San Carlos	5 June 2012
Interview	Resident	San Carlos	6 June 2012
Interview	Resident	San Carlos	6 June 2012
Interview	Resident	San Carlos	6 June 2012
Interview	Resident	San Carlos	7 June 2012
Interview	Resident	San Carlos	7 June 2012
Interview	Resident	San Carlos	7 June 2012
Interview	Andrea Ortiz (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica)	Bogotá	11 June 2012
Interview	Camilo …	Bogotá	11 June 2012
Interview	IDP (at UAO "Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	13 June 2012
Interview	IDP (at UAO "Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	13 June 2012
Interview	IDP (at UAO "Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	13 June 2012
Interview	IDP (at UAO "Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	13 June 2012
Interview	IDP (at UAO "Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	13 June 2012
Interview	IDP (at UAO "Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	13 June 2012
Interview	IDP (at UAO "Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	13 June 2012
Interview	IDP (at UAO "Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	13 June 2012
Interview	IDP (at UAO "Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	13 June 2012
Interview	IDP (at UAO "Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	14 June 2012
Interview	IDP (at UAO "Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	14 June 2012
Interview	IDP (at UAO "Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	14 June 2012
Interview	IDP (at UAO "Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	14 June 2012
Interview	IDP (at UAO "Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	14 June 2012
Interview	IDP (at UAO "Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	14 June 2012
Interview	IDP (at UAO "Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	14 June 2012

Interview	IDP (at UAO "Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	14 June 2012
Interview	Santiago Burbano (Mayor's Office)	Bogotá	14 June 2012
Interview	Martha Acosta (Social worker at the UAO at "Puente Aranda")	Bogotá	19 June 2012
Interview	Luis Eduardo Celis (Director of Arco Iris, NGO)	Bogotá	20 June 2012
Interview	Ana Maria Ibañez (Universidad de Los Andes)	Bogotá	21 June 2012

Table 16. Interviews September 2013 – May 2014

Name	Title	Location	Date
Participant Observation	Public forum at Arco Iris, NGO - "First Year of Negotiations Between the Government and the FARC."	Bogotá	9 Sept. 2013
Interview	Luis Eduardo Celis (Director of Arco Iris, NGO)	Bogotá	16 Sept. 2013
Interview	Johanna Castro (Director of Collective Returns at the Land Restitution Program in the Mayor's Office of Bogotá)	Bogotá	17 Sept. 2013
Interview	Andrea Ortiz (Consultant on the Transitional Justice at the National Center for Historical Memory)	Bogotá	17 Sept. 2013
Interview	Johanna Castro (Director of Collective Returns at the Land Restitution Program in the Mayor's office of Bogotá), second interview	Bogotá	19 Sept. 2013
Interview	Denise Cook (Consultant for the Resident Peace and Development office at the UN Development Program – UNDP)	Bogotá	1 October 2013
Interview	Fernando Sarmiento (Center for Research and Popular Education for Peace – CINEP)	Bogotá	2 October 2013
Interviews	Consultants at USAID (U.S. Embassy)	Bogotá	15 October 2013
Interview	Diego Molano (Director of Fundación Bavaria and former director of Acción Social)	Bogotá	17 October 2013
Interview	Mery Rodriguez (Universidad Javeriana)	Bogotá	18 October 2013
Interview	Carlos Rios (International Red Cross)	Bogotá	18 October 2013
Interview	Migdonia Perez (Regional Director for *Familias en su Tierra,* DPS)	Medellín	20 October 2013
Interview	Colombian Journalist	Medellín	25 October 2013
Interview	Luz Patricia Correa (Director of the Unidad de Victimas at the Mayor's Office of Medellín)	Medellín	25 October 2013
Interview	Carlos Ivan Lopera (UNDP, Regional Director for Eastern Antioquia)	Rionegro	28 October 2013
Interview	Hernando Martinez (Former mayor of San Luis)	Medellín	28 October 2013
Interview	Fabio Nelson Ciro Restrepo (Municipal government of San Rafael)	San Rafael	29 October 2013
Interview	Carlos Mario Zuluaga (Director at Cornare, former mayor of Granada)	Santuario	29 October 2013
Interview	Eduar El Urrea (City manager, Municipal government of San Rafael)	San Rafael	29 October 2013
Interview	Colombian Journalist	El Peñol	29 October 2013
Interview	Javier Ignacio (former director of Prodepaz, NGO)	Medellín	2 November 2013
Interview	Carlos Mario Zuluaga (Director at Cornare, former mayor of Granada), second interview.	Santuario	5 November 2013
Interview	Former Mayor of San Francisco	San Francisco	5 November 2013
Interview	Resident	San Francisco	5 November 2013
Interview	Colombian Journalist	San Francisco	5 November 2013
Interview	Resident	El Jordan	9 November 2013
Interview	Colombian Journalist	Granada	14 November 2013
Interview	Freddy Castaño (former mayor of Granada)	Granada	14 November 2013
Interviews	Gloria Elsy Ramirez and Nohra Ossa Hoyos (ASOVIDA)	Granada	14 November 2013
Interview	Resident	Granada	14 November 2013
Interview	Resident	Granada	14 November 2013
Participant Observation	Memory Activity – "Ruta de Memoria" with students from El Jordan	San Carlos	15 November 2013
Interview	Resident	El Jordan	15 November 2013
Participant	Multiple peacebuilding activities	El Jordan	15/16 November

Observation			2013
Participant Observation	Community meetings with DPS	Topacio, San Rafael	26 November 2013
Interview	Priest	San Carlos	3 December 2013
Interview	Resident	San Carlos	3 December 2013
Interview	Rogelio "Roca" Cardona (President of Asocomunal)	San Carlos	4 December 2013
Interview	Resident	San Carlos	5 December 2013
Participant Observation	Asocomunal in San Carlos	San Carlos	7 December 2013
Participant Observation	Asocomunal in Granada	Granada	7 December 2013
Participant Observation	Christmas celebrations	Granada	6-8 December 2013
Interview	Resident	El Jordan	9 December 2013
Interview	Priest	El Jordan	9 December 2013
Interview	Resident	El Jordan	9 December 2013
Interview	Resident	El Jordan	9 December 2013
Interview	Local Consultants for DPS	El Jordan	9 December 2013
Interview	Resident	El Jordan	9 December 2013
Participant Observation	Peacebuilding Activities - International Human Rights Day, Historical Route through San Carlos, CARE, etc.	San Carlos	10 December 2013
Interview	Marly Rodrigo Yepez (Ombudsperson	San Carlos	10 December 2013
Interview	Pastora Mira (council member and local peace activist)	San Carlos	10 December 2013
Participant Observation	Individual Reparations Process (DPS)	Cocorná	11 December 2013
Interview	Johanny Zuluaga (Halo Trust – Demining Program)	San Rafael	12 December 2013
Participant Observation	Asocomunal in San Rafael	San Rafael	13 December 2013
Interview	Local consultants for DPS	San Rafael	13 December 2013
Interview	Luzidalba Gomez de Duque (former mayor of Caldas)	Aguadas, Caldas	15 January 2014
Interview	Resident	Marmato, Caldas	17 January 2014
Interview	Colombian Journalist	San Luis	21 January 2014
Interview	Local Cornare Director	San Luis	21 January 2014
Interview	Resident	Santa Ana	22 January 2014
Interview	Colombian Journalist	Santa Ana	22 January 2014
Interview	Priest of Santa Ana	Santa Ana	22 January 2014
Interview	Resident	Santa Ana	22 January 2014
Interview	President of Asocomunal in Granada	El Concilio	23 January 2014
Interview	Resident	Granada	23 January 2014
Participant Observation	Collective Reparations Workshop	San Luis	25 January 2014
Interview	Local consultants for DPS	San Rafael	29 January 2014
Interview	Resident	San Rafael	30 January 2014
Interview	Pastora Mira (council member and local peace activist)	San Carlos	30 January 2014
Interview	Resident	San Carlos	30 January 2014
Participant Observation	Asocomunal in San Carlos	San Carlos	1 February 2014
Participant Observation	Collective Reparations Workshop	San Luis	5 February 2014
Interview	Resident	Prodigio	6 February 2014
Interview	Resident	Prodigio	6 February 2014
Interview	Resident	Prodigio	6 February 2014
Interview	Resident	Prodigio	6 February 2014
Interview	Resident	San Luis	7 February 2014
Interview	Carlos Bermudez (President of Asocomunal)	San Francisco	7 February 2014
Participant Observation	Tejedores Workshop/Peacebuilding	San Luis	8 February 2014
Participant Observation	Asocomunal in San Luis	San Luis	8 February 2014
Participant Observation	Asocomunal in Granada	Granada	8 February 2014
Participant	Asocomunal in Santa Ana	Santa Ana	9 February 2014

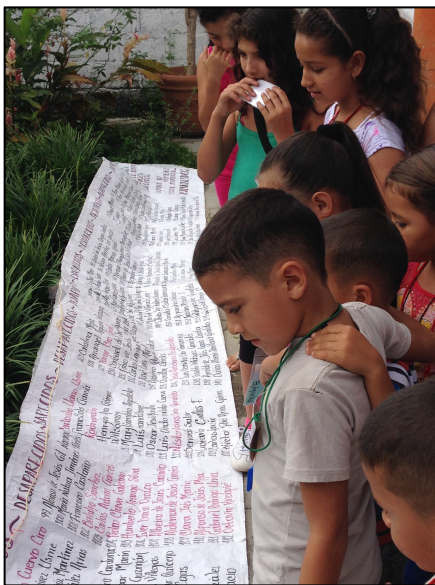|			
Observation			
Interview	Marciel Echevarria (Mayor's office of Medellín)	San Carlos	13 February 2014
Interview	Resident	El Jordan	13 February 2014
Interview	Resident	El Jordan	14 February 2014
Interview	Resident	El Jordan	14 February 2014
Interview	Resident	El Jordan	14 February 2014
Interview	Resident	El Jordan	14 February 2014
Interview	Resident	El Jordan	14 February 2014
Interview	Resident	El Jordan	14 February 2014
Interview	Resident	El Jordan	14 February 2014
Interview	Resident	El Jordan	14 February 2014
Interviews	Residents	San Carlos	14 February 2014
Interview	Pastora Mira (council member and local peace activist)	San Carlos	15 February 2014
Participant Observation	Public Meeting – Alianza Medellín-San Carlos	San Carlos	15 February 2014
Interview	Resident	San Rafael	15 February 2014
Interview	Rubiela Zuluaga and Yaqueline Hincapie (Director and Educator with Granada Siempre Nuestra)	Medellín	17 February 2014
Participant Observation	Collective Reparations Workshop	San Luis	19 February 2014
Participant Observation	Asocomunal in San Luis	San Luis	20 February 2014
Interview	Resident	San Luis	20 February 2014
Interview	Resident	San Luis	21 February 2014
Interview	Resident	San Luis	21 February 2014
Interview	Resident	San Luis	21 February 2014
Interview	Resident	Buenos Aires	24 February 2014
Interview	Resident	Buenos Aires	24 February 2014
Interview	Resident	Buenos Aires	24 February 2014
Interview	Resident	Buenos Aires	24 February 2014
Participant Observation	Workshop with Universidad de Antioquia, National Center for Historical Memory, Corporación Region (NGO), and Cociudadania (NGO),	Medellín	26 February 2014
Participant Observation	Collective Reparations Workshop	San Luis	28 February 2014
Interview	Dorys Arias (Director of Amigos por Santa Ana	Medellín	6 March 2014
Participant Observation	Memory Workshop - Mayor's office of Medellín, University of Antioquia, Asovida, Corporación Region, Granada Siempre Nuestra, National Center for Historical Memory	Granada	7 March 2014
Participant Observation	Tertulia ("salon") about Memory in Granada	Granada	7 March 2014
Participant Observation	Asocomunal in San Luis	San Luis	8 March 2014
Interview	Resident	Granada	9 March 2014
Interview	Resident	Granada	9 March 2014
Participant Observation	Elections in Santa Ana	Santa Ana	9 March 2014
Interview	Resident	Santa Ana	9 March 2014
Participant Observation	Asocomunal in Santa Ana	Santa Ana	9 March 2014
Interview	Resident	Santa Ana	9 March 2014
Interview	Resident	Santa Ana	9 March 2014
Interview	Resident	Santa Ana	9 March 2014
Interview	Gisela A. Aguirre G. (Regional Coordinator of Antioquia for the Director of Truth Agreements)	Medellín	10 March 2014
Interview	Carlos Arturo Giraldo (Director of Amigos por Santa Ana)	Medellín	11 March 2014
Participant Observation	Collective Reparations Workshop	San Luis	13 March 2014
Participant Observation	*Transitional Justice Meeting:* army, ombudsman, mayor's office, Cornare, Incore, Victim's Association, DPS, and Corporación Region,	San Luis	13 March 2014
Interview	Resident	San Luis	13 March 2014
Interview	Edwin Gutierrez (Municipal Government San Luis)	San Luis	14 March 2014
Participant Observation	Meeting with directors of ASOVIDA	Granada	15 March 2014

Interview	Resident	Granada	15 March 2014
Participant Observation	Asocomunal in Granada	Granada	15 March 2014
Interview	Andres Mauricio Ponce (Agencia Colombiana de la Reintegración (ACR)	Medellín	17 March 2014
Interview	Maria Antonio (CEPAR -Centro Educativo de Paz y Reconciliación)	Medellín	18 March 2014
Interview	Resident	Medellín	20 March 2014
Participant Observation	Ceremonial Return of the identified remains of disappeared persons (Attorney General's Office of Medellín)	Medellín	21 March 2014
Interview	Resident	San Luis	22 March 2014
Interview	Carlos Bermudez (President of Asocomunal)	San Luis	22 March 2014
Interviews	Residents	San Luis	22 March 2014
Participant Observation	Tejedores workshop	San Luis	23 March 2014
Interview	Resident	San Luis	23 March 2014
Participant Observation	Community Sugar Milling in La Cascada, Granada	La Cascada	26 March 2014
Interview	Resident	La Cascada	26 March 2014
Interview	Resident	La Cascada	26 March 2014
Interview	Resident	La Cascada	26 March 2014
Interview	Resident	La Cascada	26 March 2014
Interview	Peace Consultant at Medellín's Governor's office	Medellín	27 March 2014
Interview	Colombian Journalist	El Peñol	27/28 March 2014
Interview	Rogelio "Roca" Cardona (President of Asocomunal)	San Carlos	4 April 2014
Participant Observation	Asocomunal in San Carlos	San Carlos	5 April 2014
Participant Observation	Asocomunal in Granada	Granada	5 April 2014
Interview	Ex-combatant (AUC)	Medellín	6 April 2014
Interview	Ex-combatant (AUC)	Medellín	6 April 2014
Interview	Ex-combatant (ELN)	Medellín	6 April 2014
Interview	Ex-combatant (FARC)	Medellín	6 April 2014
Participant Observation	Asocomunal in San Luis	San Luis	12 April 2014
Interview	Ex-combatant (FARC)	Medellín	13 April 2014
Interview	Ex-combatant (AUC)	Medellín	13 April 2014
Interview	Jaime Fajardo (Governor's Office of Medellín)	Medellín	22 April 2014
Participant Observation	Memory Workshop with Corporación region, Mayor's office, University of Antioquia, Memoria Historica, Asovida, Salon del Nunca Más	Granada	25 April 2014
Public Presentation	Ivan Marulanda (Peace advisor of Antioquia), Granada Siempre Nuestra, Rector of University of EAFIT	Granada	26 April 2014
Interview	Ex-combatant (ELN)	Medellín	27 April 2014
Interview	Ex-combatant (FARC)	Medellín	27 April 2014
Interview	Ex-combatant (AUC)	Medellín	27 April 2014
Presentation	Corporación Region (NGO) and Cociudadania (NGO)	Medellín	28 April 2014
Interview	Carlos Mendez (Manager of Social Programs at EPM)	Medellín	29 April 2014
Interview	Humberto Restrepo (Former mayor of Santuario)	Medellín	30 April 2014
Interview	Francisco "Pelufo" Alvarez (Former mayor of San Carlos)	San Carlos	2 May 2014
Interview	Ivan Marulanda (Peace Advisor of the Governor's office of Antioquia)	Medellín	14 May 2014

Figure 1. Origami Peace Cranes in a Former Paramilitary Alley

Figure 2. Children View Names of Disappeared Victims

Figure 3. Washing Hands Clean of Trauma

Figure 4. Chalkboard of Hope

Figure 5. Pastora Mira Showing Children Their History

Figures 6 and 7. Garden of Memory 2011 (Left), and 2014 (Right)

Figure 8. Symbols in the Garden of Memory

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