No war no peace for Indigenous Peoples in Cauca

CRIC's peace navigation amidst post-settlement violence in Colombia

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<u>Acknowledgements</u>

<u>Abstract</u>

Since the 2016 peace deal with FARC, Colombia has seen increasing levels of violence particularly in the peripheral regions where indigenous populations face a very real threat of extinction. As a leading indigenous organization, CRIC has sought to navigate the new peace order to defend indigenous interests in the violence stricken Cauca region. This exploratory research seeks to examine the post-colonial debate on peace and problematize westernized approaches to peacebuilding in indigenous territories where distinct worldviews exist and contest peace from above. By taking the case-study of CRIC in Northern Cauca, I look into the subaltern sites of peacebuilding which contest dominant peace understandings. I focus on the regional context of Northern Cauca where there is a recurring cycle of violence, analysing how indigenous peoples have resisted the threats posed by armed actors in their territory during the war period and since the peace agreement. I examine the indigenous mobilization for peace in the years leading to the 2016 peace agreement, in which they had a limited input despite being key stakeholders. Specifically, parallels are drawn between CRIC's pre-settlement navigation of the conflict and their navigation of the post-settlement period. I conclude by stressing how the formal peace process has entrenched the indigenous communities in Cauca and how CRIC has had to relate to dominant peace discourses to ensure its political survival.

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Introduction

Soon after the adoption of the 2016 peace agreement with FARC, the illusion of an inclusive and holistic peace process in Colombia was burst. What was expected to be a transformative accord aimed to finally bring social change to the rural areas, was in most cases undermined on the ground by the reality of protracted violence which never truly ceased. Indigenous peoples were disproportionately affected by conflict violence, and hence constitute key stakeholders in the making of national peace. From the 120 indigenous peoples still present in Colombia, 64 are in risk of cultural and physical extinction as a result of conflict-violence and extreme poverty.[1] Yet, their limited participation in the peace talks, fostered indigenous skepticism towards the state peace which was perceived as an elite's agreement and hence a potential threat to their already war-torn communities. This thesis seeks to examine how the indigenous communities reunited under the umbrella of CRIC –Indigenous Regional Council from Cauca - in the south-western region of Cauca have navigated violence and related to peace through three different phases: during the war, in the 4-year peace talks with FARC and in the post-settlement. Both war and peace, are approached in this work as "external" political orders that are brought into the peripheral indigenous territories in Cauca, coercing the communities who engage in different meaning-making processes and governmentality forms.

Since its foundation in 1970, CRIC's achievements in advancing indigenous political aspirations and its capacity to ally with other left-wing social movements and subaltern voices, have helped the indigenous movement to gain national and international visibility for their ideals of a better world. By organizing road blockades, bringing their *minga* to the big cities and tearing down colonial monuments, they have become the forefront of the nationwide anti-government protests that are sweeping through Colombia since November 2020.[2] These current protests have also unfolded racist responses against CRIC members, with some protestors being shot by armed civilians.[3] In light of the state abandonment, the indigenous communities in Cauca who had to self-organise around the figure of CRIC to protect themselves from conflict violence, continue to do today in the aftermath of the agreement. The former events and the rise of post-accord violence particularly in the indigenous Cauca put the state peace at stake and demonstrates the significance of this research. The core question that drives this research is as follows:

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[1] "El 60% de los pueblos indígenas de Colombia en peligro de extinción", *Survival*, May 22, 2010.
 Available at: https://www.survival.es/noticias/5860

[2] The *minga* is a non-violent mechanism of resistance for indigenous protest or indigenous assembly which has a culturally reasserting character. Children, adults and the elderly all participate in the minga which can take many forms and last for months, with members often travelling together to the protest site.

[3] Palomino, Sally., "Understanding the Racism and the Classism at the Heart of Colombia's Protests", *El País,* May 17, 2021.. Available at:https://english.elpais.com/usa/2021-05-17/understanding-the-racism-and-classism-at-the-heart-of-colombias-protests.html

How has CRIC navigated the formal peace process with FARC in order to defend indigenous interests vis-à-vis the state in post-settlement Cauca, Colombia (2016-2021)?

By looking into CRIC's navigation of the peace terrain, this thesis aims to explore alternative sites of peace production which contest the liberal peace model and its focus on the state. This discussion is crucially influenced by the post-colonial rationality of the central state and how it alienates indigenous agency. I elaborate on this analysis through the lens of two main concepts that compose my choice of analytic frame: the notions of *peace formations* formulated by Richmond and Stepputat's *emerging governscapes*. For this purpose, the structure of this thesis is the following. First, a discussion on critical peacebuilding scholarship and their interrelation to post-colonial reflections on peace is provided on chapter one. In chapter two a closer look to the regional context of Cauca, key actors and the conflict dynamics that have paved the way for violence in the aftermath of the agreement is undertaken. Finally, on chapter three I look into CRIC's political leverage regarding peace at the meso-level, their problematic relation with the formal peace process and how they have attempted to advance their own peace paradigm in front of the state. The research sub-questions that guided my analysis through the different sections and helped me to operationalize the sensitizing concepts are the following:

1. *How has CRIC and the indigenous communities resisted conflict violence in Cauca?*

2. *How has CRIC related to the state peace process with FARC?*

3. *How is CRIC's peacebuilding role contesting state authority and formation?*

4. *How is CRIC carving out political space for their indigenous agenda and peace model?*

Methodology

Following on from the research statement, this constitutes a processual type of intellectual puzzle with an emphasis on agency and interactions. Significant attention is also paid to the regional context and its impact on the essence of inquiry that underlies this research.

There are different ways of defining agency in the literature. The consensus is that agency refers to our capacity to act. Political agency is related to the capacity to act in the 'common' exercise of political power. This relates to collective agency, where "the more a person is isolated from other people, the more her political agency diminishes".[4] Others have defined agency as the capacity to engage in the struggle to set the agenda and the models of a common life, highlighting the contentious dimension of politics.[5] Generally most definitions of agency are concerned with the question of power. Related to this issue, other concepts that helped me operationalize my analytical frame, were navigation and strategies. Navigations are identified in CRIC's shifting approaches to the political landscape and peace arena. Strategies are identified here as the plans to achieve and sustain political power. The strategies that CRIC has employed in its historical endeavors to ensure indigenous survival are traced, including where it has capitalized on national politics and conflict dynamics to pursue their political goals. Lastly, CRIC's agency is visibilized in their capacity to interact with other political actors and dominant discourses, such as peace discourses. Other relevant frameworks for this analysis relate to the local, the everyday, resistance and contestation.

Ontologically, this research interrogates the action and agency of CRIC as a political actor defending indigenous interests around the construction of peace in Colombia. The indigenous communities grouped under CRIC attempt to construct peace in a setting of political violence where they resist and interact with the very armed groups who threaten them. Therefore I concluded that my ontological standpoint was centred on agency as well as on interactions and processes, since I focus on the collective agency of CRIC and how is it enhanced or undermined by their changing relation and political encounters with other actors (state, guerrilla, paramilitary and drug-traffickers). Taking this into account, I aim to understand the everyday reality of peace in post-accord Colombia, focusing on the conflict-affected north of Cauca where the indigenous groups analysed in this research are located. Given the explorative essence of my analysis, the research methodology I followed is qualitative.

Intrinsic to this social reality is the perpetuation of post-accord violence and the impact it has on civilians, particularly on the indigenous populations who are most vulnerable. In this sense, I am especially interested in the different strategies and degree of agency which indigenous groups pursue when constructing peace in the face of political and structural violence. According to the extensive literature reviewed, the reality of peace beyond the

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[4] Sanchini, V., et al. "On the notion of political agency" *Phenomenology and Mind*, n. 16 - 2019, p.11.

[5] Mouffe, C. *On the Political*, London: Routledge, 2005.

absence of war in post-settlement societies is largely under-researched.[6] Thus, I am pursuing a positivist position which is mostly aligned with the actor-network epistemological stance which seeks to identify and analyse the agency of actors in an interconnected social world.[7] For the purpose of this research, I looked at CRIC as the main subject of my study. It is noteworthy to state that despite its long organizational history and wide support-base, CRIC is not the only actor representing the indigenous communities in Cauca nor the only political authority. And yet I chose to put the analytical focus on CRIC's agency because of their political relevance at the local and meso-level. There are numerous ways of looking at CRIC's agency in the peace terrain; here I concentrate on their peace practices, including discursive practices which illustrate their positioning and power.

In terms of data collection, I confronted some major limitations derived from the impossibility to travel and conduct field research due to the global pandemic. The lack of fieldwork research restrained the data I had access to and therefore, also limited the choices I could make in the research design. Researching on a largely neglected collective who has had a constrained voice in academia has proved challenging at times, especially when doing so from afar. Having lived and travelled around rural Colombia in 2019 when post-settlement violence was stark, I was able to incorporate some direct observation from my own experiences. It particularly helped to have spent a short time in Cauca where this research is focused. Whilst researching for this thesis, tensions once again erupted leading to a national strike *"paro nacional"* and deadly protests that continue at the time of writing (July 2021).

I was fortunate to gain access to a series of interviews with experts, institutional representatives and indigenous leaders on the implementation of the 2016 peace agreement in Cauca, where CRIC is located. This was possible thanks to the internship I realized at the University of Medellin in partnership with the Centre of Conflict Studies at Utrecht University, which vastly informed my empirical research on CRIC and the geopolitical complexities of Cauca. Additionally, I closely monitored the social media interactions of CRIC's and other relevant indigenous actors in the Colombian context (ACIN, MAIS, Feliciano Valencia and Aida Quilcué) in the period January-June 2021, when tensions over indigenous participation in the nationwide protests were running high on social media. I made use of open-ended sources to conduct document-analysis (CRIC's website and press releases, journalistic articles, interviews and film documentaries on CRIC) as well as virtually attending to CRIC's four-day commemoration of its 50 years in February 2021. Finally I consulted extensive academic literature regarding peace meaning-making, post-accord violence, post-colonial theory on peace, indigenous political history and cosmogony, particularly in the Andes. These academic sources helped me make sense of the empirical data and provided me with a helpful lens to analyse the case-study of CRIC. This is explored in-depth in the above theoretical chapter. The main themes I identified in the data collection process were the following:

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[6] Höglund, K., and Mimmi Söderberg, K., 2010 'Beyond the Absence of War: The Diversity of Peace in Post-settlement Societies'. *Review of International Studies,* 36.

[7] Mason, J. 2017, *Qualitative Researching*, SAGE Publications, University of Manchester, 3rd Edition, p.9.

- Peace conceptualization

- Post-settlement violence in Cauca

- Fragmented sovereignty in Cauca

- Indigenous resistance and political autonomy

- Strained indigenous-state relations

Who's speaking?

Positionality also touches on my own discursive formation – the everyday discourses that reproduce material life - as I write *from* where I stand, at the intersection of race, nationality, class, gender and culture and *about* a distant 'other' – the indigenous communities in the North of Cauca.[8] As Linda Alcoff claims, positionality is "epist emically significant" since truth and meaning-making process take place at this intersection of identity and are deeply impacted by our "context and location", leaving a blueprint on content.[9] I can only then red-flag the question of positionality in this thesis and critically interrogate my own regard and context, as a young Spanish woman. The very idea that we can speak *about* others without speaking *for* others is problematic because in both we have already begun to construct an 'other' as a subject worth examining.[10]

Establishing a group demarcation was useful for my research strategy. Despite being a multi-ethnic and culturally diverse sub-region, the indigenous north of Cauca is portrayed and analysed as a cohesive polity under CRIC's leadership. I am aware that despite CRIC's political visibility, theirs is just one of the many indigenous representations to look at. And yet, pretending this is well-demarcated group might be misleading. From state institutions to international NGOs and civil society groups, CRIC's agency and membership blur the boundaries of where one begins and another ends. Indigenous youth might alternate between studying at the Indigenous University in Popayán and joining the national educational system. Similarly, indigenous political representatives may bounce between *cabildos* – indigenous governments - and state positions.[11] For instance, the former Governor of Cauca, the indigenous Floro Tunubalá, became the president of the Misak people's *cabildo* afterwards.

Besides potentially engaging in othering processes, group demarcation may overlook heterogeneity and take on a reductionist lens. According to Spivak, the "self-abnegating intellectual" sees experience as transparent and refuses to acknowledge that oppressed

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[8] Foucault, M. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, Pantheon Books, New York. 1972.

[9] Alcoff, L. "The problem of speaking for others" *Cultural Critique*. No. 20 Winter, 1991, p.7.

[10] Alcoff, L. "The problem of speaking for others" *Cultural Critique*. No. 20 Winter, 1991, p. 9

[11] Rappaport, J. *La política de la memoria. Interpretación indígena de la historia en los Andes colombianos*. Popayán: Editorial Universidad del Cauca, 2000. Rappaport, Joanne and Gow David "Cambio dirigido, movimiento indígena y estereotipos del indio: el Estado colombiano y la reubicación de los Nasa". In María Victoria Uribe y Eduardo Retrepo (eds.), *Antropología en la modernidad*. 1997, pp. 361-399. Bogotá: ICANH.

people are ideologically constructed subjects.[12] In many ways, a conflicting feeling of translation accompanied me throughout this research, whilst I aimed to understand the indigenous ideas and practices conforming their worldview, I found myself bouncing between dialectics and ways of seeing. The western gaze envisages a monolithic indigenous world and assumes a single sub-altern 'other' who is unintelligibly different and disempowered. Nevertheless, it also fosters a humanistic curiosity that propelled me to question myself and my own regard of other worlds around me.

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[12] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, eds. C. Nelson and L.. Grossberg, Macmillan, 1988, p.75.

'The colonised refuse to accept membership

in the civil society of subjects.'[13]

Chapter 1:

Post-colonial approaches to peace

Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical debate on post-liberal peacebuilding, which is developed through two sections. First, I reflect on the post-colonial critique of liberal peace theory as the hegemonic discourse in both peacebuilding practice and academia. Second, I review the search for different types of peace, focusing on the importance of the local turn to peace and the notion of the everyday. This section aims to reconceptualise the notion of peace from a critical perspective. Third, I reflect on the peace worldviews of the indigenous 'other' and the implications of colonial processes for the field of peace studies, which have privileged the western worldview and imposed an epistemological supremacy over other models of thought. The contrast in worldviews is analysed through its impact on peace understandings and techniques. Finally, I look into the critical contributions of Richmond's *peace formations* and Stepputat's *emerging governscapes* which conform my choice of analytical frame.

1.1 The end of liberal peacebuilding

In the aftermath of the Cold War, the principles of liberal peace theory have come to dominate post-conflict peacebuilding praxis and scholar work. The liberal paradigm emphasises the role of the international in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, which operates through reinforcing the state. Sanctioned by UN interventions, liberal peacebuilding efforts are centred on promoting a free-market economy and establishing a liberal democratic system in war-torn states, often fragile or failing.[14] Recent years have witnessed the limitations of this state-centric peacebuilding model most notably in Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia. As a result, an emerging stream of critical approaches to peacebuilding has offered some insights into the main defaults of the liberal paradigm. Critiques incorporate post-colonial discussions on peace and violence and focus on two main problematic effects of liberal peace: firstly, its disregard of local dynamics and peace models, and secondly, the problem-solving rationale that underlies it.

The westernization of peacebuilding at the international level has contributed to the perpetuation of a colonial rationality in the Global South as the main site where

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[13] Bhabha, H. *The Location of Culture,* London: Routledge, 1994, p. 330.
[14] Paris, R. "Saving Liberal Peacebuilding." *Review of International Studies* 36, no. 2 (2010), pp. 337-65.

peacebuilding practice is undertaken. The dominance of western epistemologies in peace and conflict studies is not an isolated academic phenomenon. This hegemony of knowledge constitutes a key tenet of colonization, historically silencing and subjugating indigenous worldviews in regards to every field of thought: "the invaders penetrate the cultural context of another group, in disrespect of the latter's potentialities; they impose their own view of the world upon those they invade and inhibit the creativity of the invaded by curbing their expression".[15]

Furthermore, Nakayama and Krizek point to the intimate links of western epistemology, empire and race. These authors remind us we must decentralise the western perception, this is to say whiteness, to uncover the colonial rhetoric behind liberal peace. They describe the 'normative essence' of whiteness or the euro-centric portrayal as the benchmark from which other experiences are always marked.[16] This denies the reality of others' lived experiences as well as their capacity to operate within their own worldviews or cosmogony.[17] To deny indigenous realities is inherent to the problem-solving template that characterizes the universalist claim of the liberal peace enterprise.[18] The model is exported and transposed to very different contexts of conflict where violence is pictured as something to be minimized and "managed" from above and without addressing its roots.[19] The peace limbo in which most post-conflict societies live is marked by recurring violence and failed peacebuilding schemes. By looking into the international position of sub-Saharan states in regards to the world economy, Nkruma claims that the political and economic ambitions of post-colonial societies are largely restricted by ongoing colonial dispossession, since it is the western colonial powers and entities who dominate the international economic system.[20]

Jabri reminds us that the assumption underlying peacebuilding is that the question of state failure - either in consequence or as a cause of conflict – must remain central to the design of responses, not just to lessen conflict-violence but to create future peace prospects.[21] Thus, peacebuilding is understood by Jabri as a machinery of governance, internationally-driven and in a neo-liberal context.[22] As Jabri tells us, the colonial rationality behind peacebuilding is driven by "a wider global domain, where political agency as such is

[15] Freire, P. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*, Bloomsbury Academic & Professional, 2014. P. 152.

[16] Nakayama, T. and Krizek, R. "Whiteness: A strategic rhetoric", *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 1995, vol.81:3, pp. 291-309, p. 293.

[17] Walker, P. "Decolonizing Conflict Resolution: Addressing the ontological violence of westernization", *American Indian Quarterly*, 2004, Vol. 28, No. 3 and 4. p. 528.

[18] Walker, P. "Decolonizing Conflict Resolution: Addressing the ontological violence of westernization", *American Indian Quarterly*, 2004, Vol. 28, No. 3 and 4. p. 528.

[19] Walker, P. "Decolonizing Conflict Resolution…", p. 529.

[20] Kwame Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite,* New York: Praeger, 1963.

[21] Jabri, V. "Post-colonial peacebuilding: A Post-colonial Perspective on Peacebulding" *The Palgrave Handbook of Disciplinary and Regional Approaches to Peace,* edited by Oliver Richmond, pp. 154-167, Palgrave Macmillian, 2016, p.163.

[22] Jabri. V, "Post-Colonialism: A Post-Colonial Perspective on Peacebuilding", in *The Palgrave Handbook of Disciplinary and Regional Approaches to Peace,* edited by Oliver Richmond, pp. 154-167, Palgrave Macmillian, 2016, p. 155.

undermined in the name of technocratic proficiency".[23] However, in most post-conflict societies governance is undertaken by private actors, either local or international with the latter receiving more resources. She speaks of a peacebuilding paradox here, since the state seeks to reassert control and authority through peacebuilding but encounters itself and the communities it aims to govern held back by colonial continuities and neo-liberal concerns.[24]

1.2 The search for an alternative peace

Outside Beyond the post-colonial critique, other authors have studied the shortcomings of liberal peace theory in their search for alternative types of peace that pay more attention to the local level. However, the 'local turn' debate has remained mostly within the academic domain and little has permeated to practice, still broadly governed by liberal peacebuilding. Oliver Richmond and Audra Mitchell's work is a relevant tool to rethink peace arenas and international interventionism.[25] These interventions lack local understanding and may lead to the alienation of the affected populations, unfolding rejection.[26] Richmond underscores the uneven application of liberal peacebuilding strategies which mostly target the capital cities and the main economic centres, given its focus on fast economic development. In many cases, it is in the peripheral regions that the state control is weaker and the presence of international bodies is minimal.

As we shall see in this research, the unequal distribution of peace capital across rural regions in Colombia forces local communities to resort to their own protection mechanisms and peacebuilding strategies, what Richmond describes as 'pragmatic peacebuilding'. Therefore, the blatant inadequacy of internationally-designed programs in local contexts is likely to open up space for dissent and stimulate local agency.[27] According to Richmond and Mitchell, other obstacles to liberal peacebuilding can be found in its disregard of intricate local dynamics which instead are coerced and countered by international programs. This demonstrates how the marginalization of local voices in the name of peacebuilding can disrupt the social fabric of the communities and provoke more violence.

Drawing on Lederach's language, different narratives of local ownership and local constructions of authority and legitimacy have permeated the field since the early 2000s.[28] Seeking to conceptualize the local, MacGinty described it as "the range of locally based agencies present within a conflict and post-conflict environment, some of which are aimed at identifying and creating the necessary processes for peace, with or without international

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Richmond O, Mitchell A. "Peacebuilding and Critical Forms of Agency: From Resistance to Subsistence". *Subalternatives*. 2011, Vol. 36(4), pp.326-344.

[26] Richmond, O., "Resistance and post-liberal peace", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies.* Vol.38, No.3, 2010, p.667.

[27] Richmond, O., "Resistance and post-liberal peace", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies.* Vol.38 No.3, 2010, p.668.

[28] Lederach, JP, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*. Oxford, MA: Oxford University Press, 2005.

help, and framed in a way in which legitimacy in local and international terms converges".[29] This regard of the local implies that peacebuilding is not a vertical process but a bottom-up one which lies on continuous interactions, negotiations, resistances and accommodations. Much attention has been given to the everyday as a space where « peace » is questioned, and must be navigated and negotiated, away from institutionalized frameworks and hegemonic understandings. For MacGinty, 'everyday peace' seeks to consider the agency and actions of those who stand on the margins of deeply divided societies and use their experiences as the basis for a more context-specific and inclusive way of looking at peace.[30] These collectives are affected by conflict-violence in as much as they are prone to structural violence and political exclusion, as MacGinty underscores. This is the case of the indigenous peoples in Cauca examined in this thesis, whose territories were harshly raged by the war but also remain extremely impoverished and excluded from the agenda-setting in the Colombian peace process. Yet, the term peace appears as a rather abstract and distant idea that is seldom materialized beyond the absence of war in the local spaces. Instead, other more culturally-resonant terms better describe the indigenous navigation of the post-conflict reality, such as coexistence. In this regard, Richmond suggests that coexistence is possible "if certain modes of governance are adopted (…) its construction requires intervention by many types of intervening actors".[31] Other authors have referred to similar peace conceptions which highlight the everyday, the local input and the voice of the subaltern: emancipatory peace, hybrid peace and peace formations. As the above illustrates, critical approaches based on local understandings of peace are best fitted to understand the peacebuilding agency of the indigenous communities under CRIC vis-à-vis protracted violence and the precarious state peace process.

2. The local subaltern as a site of peacebuilding: Can the indigenous make peace?

As indicated above, there is a need for a distinct approach in what is considered the fourth generation of peacebuilding.[32] The search for peace beyond liberalism in post-conflict societies has shed light into other types of political agency that have long been in cultural, structural and physical denial, the 'Other". This subaltern agency offers an alternative peace that emerges on the margins of the state or from below- based on the everyday, the recognition of the Other, the particular social fabric of a region, a locality and a community, the culture and the traditions – which in most cases is silenced and restrained by the hegemonic liberal peace benefitting state-formation processes and the elites. Similar to

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[29] Mac Ginty, R. and Richmond, O. (2013) 'The Local Turn in Peace Building: a critical agenda for peace', *Third World Quarterly*, 34:5, pp.771

[30] MacGinty, R, (2014) 'Everyday Peace: Bottom-up Approaches and Local Agency in Conflict-affected Societies', *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 45(6), pp. 551.

[31] Richmond, O. *Maintaining Order, Making Peace.* Palgrave, 2002.

[32] "First generation approaches might be termed 'conflict management' in which a conflict was merely held in limbo (as with peacekeeping) in order to maintain the existing state. Second-generation approaches aimed at dealing with human needs or peacebuilding from the grassroots up and argued that conflicts could be resolved. Third-generation approaches attempted to achieve the latter through the construction of a liberal state. Fourth-generation approaches are concerned with emancipation and social justice beyond the state." Richmond, O. *Maintaining Order, Making Peace.* Palgrave, 2002.

Gayatri Spivak's work in India, Florencia Mallon shed light to the different subaltern practices and collective resistances that developed despite being historically masked and sometimes appropriated by the official discourses of the state and the academia in South America.[33]

In this regard, Donais speaks about "therapeutic governance" to describe the doctor-patient relation that the liberal peacebuilding model enacts in the Global South.[34] As Donais put it, liberal peace acts as a general 'prescription' while 'the doctors' are played by the international agencies and the state, 'the good nurses' are the international NGOs and the 'sick patient' is represented by the local communities – indigenous - who are unaware of why they are suffering or how to get better. In contrast to this infantilizing perspective, bottom-up peace seeks to place the indigenous communities at the centre of their own reality, where complex relations develop. In South American latitudes, Felipe MacGregor developed the impactful concept of 'peace culture' in the 1980s which resonated across multiple sites of conflict in the region.[35] Peace culture refers to the capacity and right of the individual and her community to embrace peace within the framework of her own cultural setting and belief-system which translate into actions and behaviours. MacGregor also questioned the interconnection of peace and security, which traditionally assumes the modern state as the legitimate provider of both.

The crises provoked by the US interventions in South America, the spread of dictatorships and the high cost of the military in poor societies, unveiled the flagrant exposure of the citizen and the necessity to shift the focus to a rather 'human' security.[36] MacGregor shed light on something obvious but long neglected: the subaltern's right to regain cultural awareness in order for her to navigate her own physical, social and economic environment – what he called 'cultural security'.

These reflections on "one's own peace and security" show the inadequacy of rigid discourses on state-centric peace, particularly in those settings where the state still employs a colonial rationality and its sovereignty is fragmented, such as Colombia. Including these historically silenced voices is fundamental to set the basis of a more solid peace culture that is sustainable on the ground and not just a façade of the elites. Victoria Fontan argues that decolonizing westernized peace practices and discourses is essential to let the subaltern speak and recognise the value of indigenous initiatives for the national process, their own peace.[37] Stark differences between western and indigenous approaches to peace evidence the contrasts that exist between both worldviews. Some of these revolve around the contrast between western individualism and collectivist cultures which

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[33] Mallon, F. "Promesa y dilemas de los estudios subalternos. Convergencia de Tiempos. Estudios subalternos /contextos latinoamericanos. Estado, cultura, subalternidad." Rodopi. 2001.

[34] *See* Donais, T. "¿Empoderamiento o imposición? Dilemas sobre la apropiación local en los procesos de construcción de paz en posconflictos."Rev. Relaciones Internacionales,N. 16, February. GERI-UAM.

[35] MacGregor, F. *Cultura de paz*. Comisión Permanente de Educación para la Paz. Lima: Ministerio de Educación; PNUD, 1991, p. 51.

[36] The 'Democratic Security' policy of total war against the guerrilla adopted by Uribe, the former Colombian president was launched in collusion with the US's 'Plan Colombia' on the basis of the ideas explored above.

[37] See Fontan, V. *Decolonizing Peace*, Dignity Press, 2012. P.43.

emphasize the importance of bringing harmony to the group when addressing conflict. In this sense, western conflict resolution techniques - the problem-solving rationale - is analytical, atomised and technique-focused.[38] Additionally, it accounts for a "unilinear, present-centered conception of time rather than the holistic conception of epistemology behind indigenous cultures" where there is a spiral or circular understanding of time and a visible focus on relationships, processes and the interconnectedness of everything in the world.[39] Also central to the indigenous peace ideal is the relationship of respect and care towards nature in contrast to the human-over-nature western worldview.

Fontan counterpoised the Cartesian predominant character of western epistemology and the relation between knowledge and power, similarly addressed by Freire and Foucault.[40] The Cartesian paradigm is characterised by the compartmentalization and division of knowledge – 'atomisation' - and its prevalence over other models of knowledge which are based on ecological and holistic worldviews and that are then homogenised and just labelled as "indigenous".[41] The western epistemological supremacy persists also within the peacebuilding scholarship, which fails to research and acknowledge worldview differences in conflict analysis. Fontan presents Galtung's dichotomy of negative-positive peace as an example of the Cartesian thinking which confines our peace imaginary. Upon this dominant worldview in academia, Fontan recalls Spivak and reminds us that we must decolonize the premises of *where, for and about peace* that the liberal discourse predicts. She encourages us to engage in a critical peace pedagogy, fomenting academic sensitivity towards different worldviews regarding peace and respect for indigenous mechanisms of resolving conflict that predate western approaches.

3. Pragmatic peacebuilding: Emerging Governscapes and Peace formations

Transiting from state-centric international assumptions of 'what should be' to 'what is' requires a closer look to the resistances and manoeuvres that emerge in the accommodations between international aspirations and non-state authorities. Stepputat suggests looking at what he called *emerging governscapes* to better grasp the dynamics of pragmatic peacebuilding. Stepputat defines governscapes as "landscapes with different constellations of authority and governance that form and spread unevenly within and beyond national boundaries across the globe". This constitutes the sensitizing concept I use as a lens to understand CRIC's agency regarding peacebuilding in the North of Cauca and the way it negotiates the peace terrain vis-à-vis the state agenda and that of other private actors. Stepputat draws on Appadurai's understanding of 'scapes' which he puts as perspectival rather than physical constructs that spread in post-national arenas where

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[38] Walker, P. "Decolonizing Conflict Resolution: Addressing the ontological violence of westernization", *American Indian Quarterly*, 2004, Vol. 28, No. 3 and 4. p. 201.

[39] Walker, P. "Decolonizing Conflict Resolution: Addressing the ontological violence of westernization", *American Indian Quarterly*, 2004, Vol. 28, No. 3 and 4. p. 199-204.

[40] Freire, P. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*, Bloomsbury Academic & Professional, 2014. P. 152

[41] Fontan, V. *Decolonizing Peace*, Dignity Press, 2012, p.46.

governance occurs in areas of limited statehood.[42] And yet, even if limited, the authority of the state prevails as the main organized polity.[43] This applies to the Cauca region which constitutes an area of limited statehood, particularly so in the highly disputed indigenous North where the implementation of the peace agreement is challenged not only by armed actors but also by the political agenda of the indigenous communities. Additionally, symbols and functions traditionally encompassed by the state – *uniforms, flags, anthems, special indigenous jurisdiction, indigenous guard, indigenous education and traditional medicine* - are now taken over by other territorial entities exerting control over 'governscapes' such as the indigenous *cabildos* – indigenous governmental authorities – that conform CRIC.

Stepputat's concept is particularly significant to my research when combined with notions pertaining localized practices of peacebuilding. Thus, it is noteworthy to link the concept of *emerging governscapes* with that of *peace formations*. Richmond described peace formations as emerging local infrastructures of peace critically aimed at "ending cycles of state formation, and related inequalities often where more formal peace processes have entrenched them".[44] These formations encapsulate the "resistant infrapolitics of peacebuilding" which represent "localized agencies and capacities, in a polity beyond the liberally projected artifice of elites and civil society".[45] Through this concept, Richmond draws on post-colonial notions in an attempt to understand how power circulates through peace and its impact on local spaces. In the case of CRIC, their agency is sourced from the communities that conform the organization, drawing historical socio-political processes and ethnic-affiliation. They challenge conventional sources of authority - the state, the elites, the international and armed actors - as well as normative frameworks of institutionalized peace. A closer analysis of indigenous *peace formation* in the territories affected by post-settlement violence and a fragmented peace in Northern Cauca is provided in chapter three.

An examination of CRIC's collective agency amid an ensemble of *emerging governscapes* is endeavoured in chapter two which looks at the 'ensemble' and the regional landscape surrounding CRIC, and then in chapter three where its changing governscape is further explored. In consequence, the construction of peace depends on the capacity of each society to define and develop their own collective project, and on the capacity to facilitate spaces where to encounter diverse views and recognise different interests that coexist in a given territory. This implies a deep comprehension of the problems and actors that exist as well as a consideration of the different cosmogonies, "decision-making centres" and processes that are simultaneous and often conflicting.[46]

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[42] Appadurai, A., 'Disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy', Public Culture 2:2, 1990, pp.295-335.

[43] Stepputat, F., "Pragmatic peace in emerging governscapes" *International Affairs,* vol. 94: 2, 2018, p.400.

[44] Richmond, O. "Peace Formation and Local Infrastructures for Peace", *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 2013, Vol. 38(4), p. 271.

[45] Richmond, O. "Peace Formation and Local Infrastructures for Peace", *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 2013, Vol. 38(4), p. 271.

Chapter 2:

No war no peace in the indigenous Cauca

Introduction

The Cauca region saw a dramatic conflict chapter marked by massacres, forced displacement and state abandonment which extensively affected the indigenous populations. As a historical bastion of FARC, the guerrilla's exit from the region in 2016 raised high hopes for peace. However Cauca is one of the most hit regions by post-accord violence in present-day, with indigenous groups being once again the most vulnerable to attacks. A number of key factors pertaining to the complex historical and political characteristics of this remote region in south-western Colombia underlie the continuation of violence after the peace agreement with FARC and its particular emphasis on indigenous people.

This chapter presents a contextual analysis of the consequences of post-accord violence for the indigenous communities in Cauca. This is undertaken through a regional focus on Cauca, primarily on Northern Cauca where most indigenous groups live and which today constitutes a disputed area. The rationale underlying the inclusion of this chapter is that a contextual understanding is needed in order to better grasp the historical complexities of the Caucan microcosm and the warlike environment surrounding the emergence of CRIC – Regional Council of Indigenous Cauca.

First, I map the historical conflict dynamics and armed actors which paved the way for the current cycle of post-settlement violence in Cauca. An exhaustive synopsis of the history of the Colombian conflict falls outside the scope of this thesis, however a review pertaining to the regional and national factors that determined the emergence and evolution of the indigenous movement throughout war and peace is considered in order to understand CRIC's agency today. The last section concerns the threats posed to the indigenous political project by the implementation of a contested peace process and the simultaneous reconfiguration of armed actors across indigenous semi-autonomous territories in Cauca. Subsequently this chapter evidences the unchanging violent context threatening indigenous populations in Cauca despite the shift from a national state of war to an official order of peace, which has forced them to continue their political struggle for survival.

1.1.   Indigenous Cauca

The Cauca region hosts the second-largest remain of indigenous population in the country, representing 25% of the total population in the region.[47] Mostly concentrated in the north, these populations coexist with afro-descendant communities in river-bordering areas,

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[47] According to the 2018 ethnic census realised by the Colombian government. Available at: https://www.dane.gov.co/files/investigaciones/boletines/grupos-etnicos/presentacion-grupos-etnicos-2019.pdf

while the mestizo majority inhabits the central and southern areas.[48] The largest ethnicity in number, the Nasa – formerly known as Paéz – have traditionally lived in the northeast part of Cauca, where most of the indigenous groups are scattered amongst *resguardos*, semi-autonomous administrative territories which extend over their ancestral lands. The indigenous fight to preserve and expand resguardos has been constant since these were first created by the Spanish colonisers in 1592.[49] Since then, most of the land has remained in the hands of a powerful landowning elite who, along with the church, benefited from quasi-slave labour until the indigenous uprisings of 1970s, when CRIC was born.[50] Amongst other extremely abusive forms of treatment, the indigenous communities were forced to do unpaid work for the landowners in exchange for cultivating their own ancestral lands for self-sustainment.[51] This practice, called *terraje*, illustrated the racial hierarchy and ostracism the indigenous populations were long been subjected to.


The Cauca region in red in south-western Colombia. Source: Wikimedia

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[48] The indigenous population in Cauca is mainly distributed into the following groups: Nasa (formerly known as Paéz) 65%, Yanaconas 15%, Misak (also known as Guambianos) 13%, Kokonucos 5% and Emberas and Ingas 2% (IGAC, 1992).

[49] Bonnett Velez, D., "De la conformación de los pueblos de indios al surgimiento de las parroquias de vecinos. El caso del Altiplano cundiboyacense" Rev. 10. 2006, p.9.

[50] Peñaranda. R, "La organización como expresión de resistencia", *Nuestra vida ha sido nuestra lucha. Resistencia y Memoria en el Cauca indígena*, Taurus, Bogotá, 2012. P.14.

[51] Amparo Espinosa, M., "Recuperación de tierras: una mirada desde la economía política" in *Nuestra vida ha sido nuestra lucha. Resistencia y Memoria en el Cauca indígena*, Taurus, Bogotá, 2012. p.87.
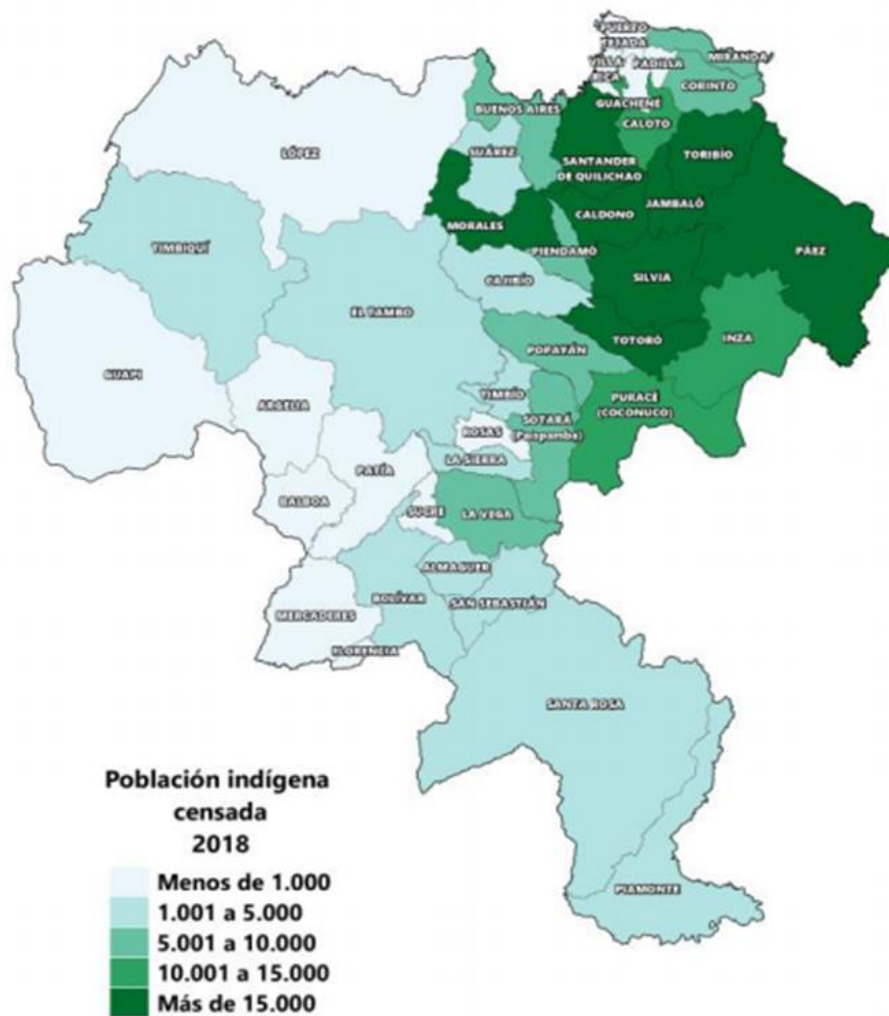
Indigenous population in the Cauca region. Source: DANE.

In 1821, a law aimed at dismantling the *resguardos,* and therefore indigenous land titles, was passed. The erasure of identity and political oppression that was inflicted upon indigenous populations led to the disappearance of some of their distinct cultures and languages and eventually to the extinction of a number of groups. Suffering from this colonial legacy, for the most part of the 20th century indigenous people in Colombia were not considered full citizens before the national law – until 1991 - and their scarce rights were disregarded by the elites but also the communities themselves were unaware. It is in this context that the country's first indigenous revolt was led by Manuel Quintin Lame between 1916 and 1919 in Cauca. This mobilization mainly aimed at derogating the *terraje* obligation and the conquest of land rights was soon crushed.[52] Consequently, the indigenous communities continued to be repressed by the elites in the coming decades, who made use of private squadrons - an early form of paramilitary militias then called

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[52] Peñaranda Supelano, D Ricardo. *Guerra Propia, Guerra Ajena: Conflictos Armados y Reconstrucción Identitaria en los Andes Colombianos. El Movimiento Armado Quintín Lame.* Bogotá: Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2015, p.120.

pájaros - and their ties to the police to sow terror.[53] Following Quintin Lame's struggle, the expansion of *resguardos* and the elimination of *terraje* were the main goals behind the creation of CRIC.[54]

Coercion against indigenous communities continued all throughout the 20th century, preventing further uprisings or other organised forms of resistance. In this sense, landowners' control of land has constituted a key vehicle for indigenous alienation. Evidently, colonialism is at the heart of land ownership conflicts that persist today.[55] In a predominantly rural region, only the northern Cauca - historically inhabited by indigenous groups - is fertile enough for large-scale agricultural production. In this battle for fertile soil, these populations have progressively been pushed towards more remote zones such as the highlands in the Andes and the Amazon rainforest bordering areas, where they have faced difficulties in cultivating the land and subsisting. At the same time, the rising prices of sugar after the Cuban revolution gave way to the expansion of sugarcane monoculture in Cauca, disturbing the fabric of existing indigenous communities.

Not only were the communities displaced by the spread of sugarcane but also by the arrival of internally displaced mestizo peasants in their far-fetched territories, who were fleeing from the civil war in the 1950s, *La Violencia.*[56] According to Fajardo, this peasant colonization process increased pressure on land, raised awareness about the uprooting of rural and indigenous populations, saw the formation of unions and therefore paved the way for the later expansion of Marxist ideas.[57] Generally speaking there is a consensus on considering the unresolved agrarian conflict, what has been called *la vieja Guerra* – the old war - as the underlying cause of the longstanding armed conflict in Colombia as well as the foundational underpinnings of the indigenous movement.[58] In the case of Cauca, the struggle over the land can be perceived in two ways: as an agrarian conflict that triggered a lingering crisis of the campesinado and gave way to the formation of Marxist guerrillas such as FARC, or as part of a violent colonial legacy against indigenous groups whose ancestral territories were stripped away by the landowning elite and the state, forcedly displacing and uprooting them.[59] As this illustrates, there are different constituencies and

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[53] Amparo Espinosa, M., "Recuperación de tierras: una mirada desde la economía política" in *Nuestra vida ha sido nuestra lucha. Resistencia y Memoria en el Cauca indígena*, Taurus, Bogotá, 2012. p.87.

[54] Gros, C., *Colombia Indígena. Identidad cultural y cambio social*, CEREC, 1991.

[55] González, Fernán et al. «Violencia y política en Colombia. De la nación fragmentada a la construcción del estado». *Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura*, n. 30, pp. 381-84.

[56] *La Violencia* makes reference to the civil war period between 1945 and 1965 during which armed confrontation between militants from the Conservative party and the Liberal party left about 300.000 dead. This period was marked by the killing of the liberal presidential candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in 1948, marking the initial outbreak of violence in what was known as *El Bogotazo.*

[57] Fajardo, Dario. "Estudio sobre los orígenes del conflicto social armado, razones de su persistencia y sus efectos más profundos en la sociedad colombiana" *Comisión Histórica del Conflicto y sus Víctimas,* 2015. P. 356.

[58] González, F, Vásquez, T, et al., *Una vieja guerra en un nuevo contexto : conflicto y territorio en el sur de Colombia,* Colección Poder y Territorio, Universidad Javeriana-Bogotá, 2011. P. 39.

[59] Villa, William and Houghton, Juan. *Violencia política contra los pueblos indígenas en Colombia 1974-2001*. Bogotá: CECOIN - OIA, 2005, p. 28.

different agendas in rural Cauca, with peasant and indigenous interests colluding in front of economic elites and the state, but also differing at times.

1.2.   Historical conflict dynamics in Cauca

The intimate links of the land question and violence in Cauca are illustrative of a nationwide phenomenon. In the 1970s, the arrival of drug-trafficking networks in the region saw the removed indigenous territories as a perfect sourcing site of illicit crops. Simultaneously, the first Marxist peasant guerrillas were taking shape across the country - derived from the liberal militias that fought in the civil war that had just ended - with FARC being founded in Cauca in 1967.[60] These two events galvanized the course of the agrarian problem and further hampered the state's already reduced sovereignty in the region, mostly performed in military terms or embodied in the landowning establishment who largely opposed the guerrillas. In consequence, the indigenous communities saw their interests absorbed by exogenous actors and the expansionist agendas of the state and the guerrillas in Cauca, with the latter being mostly composed by local indigenous men.[61]

Drawing on the National Centre for Historical Memory (CNMH), Cauca is also the region that registered the highest number of guerrilla attacks and sieges during the war period, most of them from FARC and particularly targeting a number of towns with an indigenous majority in the north where most coca crops are also located.[62] In general terms, the particular intensity of violence in Cauca during the war can be linked to a number of factors. First, the geostrategic value of this region which constitutes a land corridor connecting central Colombia with the southern Pacific coast, the Amazon rainforest and the Ecuadorian border, with all these geographic points representing key entry and exit sites for drug-trafficking and weapons smuggling routes. Secondly, it has been a site of prolonged warfare due to its density in natural resources, which have been seized by illegal mining and extractivist interests, jeopardizing the rural communities and aggravating social tensions over the access to land. Thirdly, the conflict has persevered due to a historical absence of the state - as in most of the peripheral regions - and to complex topography which has allowed pockets of war to persist easily.

Instead of referring to one sequence of conflict drivers that explain the Colombian war, González speaks of "amalgams of conflicts" that are interconnected.[63] Yet, given the intricate economic differences and great extension of the Colombian territory, certain conflict factors were more prominently decisive in some regions than in others. As shown above, Cauca remained highly disputed during the war for a number of reasons, but it was, foremost, the military expansion of FARC and the rise of other Marxist guerrillas what

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[60] Aguilera Peña, Mario. « Tomas Guerrilleras : 1965-2013 », *Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica CNMH – IEPRI,* Bogotá. 2014. P. 65.

[61] Villa, William and Houghton, Juan. *Violencia política contra los pueblos indígenas...,* p.28.

[62] Aguilera Peña, Mario. « Tomas Guerrilleras : 1965-2013 », *Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica CNMH – IEPRI,* Bogotá. 2014. Pp-64-71.

[63] González, F., Bolívar, I. y Vásquez, T. *Violencia política en Colombia: De la nación fragmentada a la construcción del Estado*. Bogotá: Cinep/PPP

fundamentally determined the course of the war, in contrast to other regions where different factors were more maximizing - such as in Boyacá where a historical privatization of violence led to the emergence of a ruling paramilitary.[64]

The recurrence of FARC's attacks in Cauca is explained by the pivotal crossroads character of the region, where its Western Block 'Alfonso Cano' exerted a major influence. First, FARC sought to maintain a free corridor from military forces connecting the north of Cauca with the neighbouring regions of Tolima, Huila and the Cauca Valley; second, it sought to capitalize on the large indigenous population, subscribing the communities to its political discourse and growing its membership. As part of the 'chronic insurgency' phenomenon described by Pizarro, an array of ideologically-similar guerrillas continued to emerge nationwide whose agendas were in practice not geared towards revolution.[65] This was the case in Cauca where other left-wing guerrillas appeared and challenged FARC's supremacy, most notably the ELN - formed in 1970s and which at the time of writing had not still signed a peace accord –, the now-extinct M-19, the indigenous Quintin Lame along with various paramilitary groups who had a limited presence since 1950.[66] The M-19 exerted significant leverage in the north of Cauca where it encouraged the formation of indigenous self-defense groups after the escalation of the war in the 1980s.[67] Subsequently, in 1984 these groups conformed the Quintin Lame following the political guidance of CRIC. Although its foundational aim was to defend indigenous territories before FARC and other armed forces hijacking their political autonomy, the Quintin Lame often participated in joint attacks with the M-19 and soon lost the support of the communities in consequence. For this reason, the two groups demobilized together in 1991 in a peace process mediated through CRIC.

Different patterns of violence against indigenous communities can be traced during the history of the conflict, however general assumptions can be made about the favourable initial relationship between FARC and the communities, who until the 1980s were more broadly repressed by the state forces and the paramilitary serving the landowning elite. The political growth of CRIC as an independent actor and the creation of Quintin Lame aggravated the relations with FARC who have since then coerced the communities in an attempt to impose its political agenda. By 2000, different far-right paramilitary groups joined forces nationally under the AUC - *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* – with a sight to expel the guerrillas and take over smuggling routes. The paramilitary incursion in Cauca generated clashes with FARC and ELN, attacking indigenous territories where the guerrillas were present, catching the communities in the crossfire and killing their leaders. Despite the national AUC demobilized in 2006, regional branches remained active such as the *Aguilas Negras* – Black Eagles - in Cauca who persecuted indigenous leaders accused of

[64] González, F., "¿Gobernabilidades híbridas o gobernanza institucionalizada en Colombia? Elementos para pensar la paz territorial en un escenario de transición" *Controversia 206*, 2016. P.32

[65] Pizarro, E., *Insurgencia sin revolución, la guerrilla en Colombia en una perspectiva comparada*,(UN), Bogotá, TM Editores, 1996. p. 267.

[66] Pizarro, E., *Insurgencia sin revolución, la guerrilla en Colombia en una perspectiva comparada*,(UN), Bogotá, TM Editores, 1996. p. 267.

[67] Peñaranda Supelano, D Ricardo. *Guerra Propia, Guerra Ajena: Conflictos Armados y Reconstrucción Identitaria en los Andes Colombianos. El Movimiento Armado Quintín Lame.* Bogotá: Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2015, p. 303

collaborating with the guerrillas. The presence of drug-trafficking interests is evident in the region, with key geostrategic corridors being fought over – from source to exit on the Pacific coast. An in-depth discussion on the relations between drug-trafficking actors with FARC and/or the indigenous peoples in Cauca is not included in this text for reasons of space. The Nasa, followed by the Kokonucos, constituted the most violence-affected indigenous group in Cauca during the conflict and suffered the 40% of the political violence registered nationally in between 1974-2004.[68]

In consequence the survival of the indigenous populations and their collective territories would remain at stake throughout the entire history of the conflict and as we shall illustrate in this thesis, inclusive once peace had been signed. In many ways, Cauca has been a condensate microcosm of the violence dynamics and variety of actors that wreaked the armed conflict across the country. This area is also the birthplace of other left-wing guerrillas such as the M-19 and the first indigenous armed movement in South America, the Quintin Lame. The region has also witnessed the disbandment of these two armed groups, a peace process which shed light into the political leverage of the indigenous communities in their bid for peace.

2. Protracted violence in the Northern Cauca

Since 2016, the fractured implementation of the peace agreement in Cauca has arisen tensions inside and outside the indigenous communities organised around CRIC. The state-led implementation has been perceived by some indigenous leaders as an external interference over the autonomous governance they long fought for. Furthermore, due to the high number of unfulfilled promises and defunding amendments to the agreement made by the central government, its will to safeguard the peace process is also seen with scepticism. This liberal peace disillusion is confirmed for CRIC and their communities by their unchanging violent reality. Indigenous distrust towards the state peace is aggravated by the current context of post-settlement violence, with indigenous leaders and members of the Indigenous Guard – non-armed indigenous police - being particularly affected.

It is important to highlight the systematic targeting of human rights defenders and social leaders across the country and predominantly, of indigenous authorities in the north of Cauca with violence against this collective rising by a 23% from 2019 to 2020.[69] Illustrative of this renewed cycle of violence in Cauca is the high number of homicides which went from 373 in 2015 - before the accord - to 278 in 2016 - the year of the peace accord - and 533 in 2018.[70] Consequently, a high rate of forced displacement, recruitment of minors, forced disappearances and killings is deeply affecting and uprooting the indigenous communities, regardless of the peace agreement. The communities are actively protesting about this

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[68] Villa, William and Houghton, Juan. *Violencia política contra los pueblos indígenas en Colombia 1974-2001*. Bogotá: CECOIN - OIA, 2005, p. 59.

[69] González Posso, et al. "Cauca y Nariño, crisis de seguridad en el posacuerdo", *Indepaz,* Special Report, December 2018, p. 23.

[70] Ibid.

violence in light of President Duque's minimizing attitude and have referred to the mass killing of their leaders as a new indigenous genocide.[71] The inability of the state to respond for the killings of social and indigenous leaders is manifested in the absolute impunity of these crimes, the racist covering of the mainstream media and the lack of effective protection mechanisms for the affected communities.[72] In consequence these are left to rely on their own self-protection resources, most notably the Indigenous Guard and the *mingas,* a cultural-asserting mechanism of mass gathering that is used as a collective action tool to organise protests and roadblocks.

When looking at those municipalities in Cauca where FARC exerted a major control before the Havana agreement – 25 out of 42 municipalities - these coincide today with the areas on which the new relations of territorial control are being forged by the different armed groups, old and new. The increased presence of both emergent and chronic groups is particularly critical in those northern indigenous municipalities who were historically hit by the armed conflict and where coca crops prevail. This new balance of power constitutes yet another challenge for the communities who unlike with the former FARC, now must chart new relations and bargains with the armed actors threatening their autonomy. This economic motivation is regarded as the main driver behind the killing of indigenous leaders and guards, who oppose the cultivation of illicit crops – although these are legal for their ritualistic use - and, install check-points obstructing some of the drug-trafficking routes. In this sense, the quick post-accord reconfiguration of armed forces in the north of Cauca is partly linked to the power vacuum left by the war economy FARC developed in the region. Apart from taking hostages – FARC called them 'economic detentions' - this economic system was based on drug-trafficking and the securitization of the routes, and to a lesser extent, on illegal gold mining.

Moreover, most authors stress the precarious society-state relation which characterized the war period and continues today when explaining the perseverance of violence in the post-settlement.[73] Countering the weberian-model, the Colombian state has never held a monopoly over violence. According to Pécaut, the state's failure to provide security and services has rendered it illegitimate in the eyes of society, which does not see itself represented in its institutions. Subsequently the state is not perceived as a public space where social conflicts can be regulated, leaving a social void capitalized by other actors.[74] This is most evident in rural zones such as Cauca, where state sovereignty is fragmented and contested by private actors and armed groups – extractivist companies, big

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[71] González Díaz, M. "Asesinatos de indígenas en Colombia: "Es un genocidio", 6 claves para entender los crímenes en el Cauca" *BBC,* 14th November, 2019. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-50341874

[72] Bossa, B. « Repudiemos los discursos de odio y violencia: un llamado de la CIDH a Twitter y al gobierno colombiano" *La silla vacía,* 16th June, 2021. Available at: https://lasillavacia.com/historias/historias-silla-llena/%C2%A1repudiemos-los-discursos-de-odio-y-violencia-un-llamado-a-la-cidh,-la-plataforma-twitter-y-al-gobierno-colombiano/

[73] González, F., "¿Gobernabilidades híbridas o gobernanza institucionalizada en Colombia? Elementos para pensar la paz territorial en un escenario de transición" *Controversia 206*, 2016, p. 35.

[74] González, F., "¿Gobernabilidades híbridas o gobernanza institucionalizada en Colombia? Elementos para pensar la paz territorial en un escenario de transición" *Controversia 206*, 2016, p. 37

landowners, guerrilla, paramilitary and drug-trafficking groups – as much as by civil society groups, most notably by CRIC who has brought forwards indigenous ideas of peace. Therefore a sharp unequal institutional presence is felt across the Colombian territory which clearly varies from central to peripheral regions, where it is precarious or inexistent.[75]

Drawing on Tilly's ideas of direct and indirect state formation processes, the Colombian state has historically exercised a more direct control in some central areas – main cities - whereas in peripheral regions such as Cauca it wielded control through proxy violent private actors exerting social coercion: landowning elites and paramilitary forces.[76] According to Das and Poole, the everyday experience of private forms of state control which uses violence when "necessary" leads the Colombian peasant to see the state as both "disinterested and corrupt, just and coercive, participatory and removed".[77] This necessitates a further exploration of the state question in the indigenous context of Cauca where a series of war territorialities and disputed sovereignties are identified after FARC's exit.

A number of FARC dissident branches who were never signatories of the agreement conform some of the armed groups who are most consistently threatening the peace implementation in the north of Cauca.[78] Without a clear political agenda, their incursions seem to benefit from the illicit economy – drug-trafficking, arms smuggling and illegal mining - or from providing violent private security. Subsequently they form alliances with either legal or illegal entities and tend to avoid confrontation with the public forces.[79] Since 2018, their actions have been focused in the indigenous territories of the north of Cauca, where rather than representing an armed threat against the state sovereignty – their operational and armed capacity is minimal compared to that of the extinct FARC-, these dissident groups target the indigenous population as a means to halt their opposition and non-violent resistance.

On a lesser scale, another historic guerrilla which has now entered the territory is the EPL – *Ejército Popular de Liberación*, also referred to as *'Los Pelusos '*- which have been traced in 11 municipalities in the north of Cauca. Additionally, different narco-paramilitary formations of looser hierarchy can be observed in the region, some of them answering to the *Clan del Golfo* based in the north of Colombia such as *Aguilas Negras*, while others are

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[75] Ruiz, G., "Representaciones del Estado colombiano y construcción de ciudadanía en los márgenes" *ERLACS* No. 104, 2017. P.6.

[76] González, F., "Espacio, violencia y poder. Una visión desde las investigaciones del Cinep". *Controversia* no. 189. 2007, p.30.

[77] Stevenson, L. "Review: Anthropology in the Margins of the State Veena Das and Deborah Poole" , *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* , May 2007, Vol. 30, No. 1 p. 141.

[78] Officially three FARC dissident blocks are active in the grey areas of the region: the block *Carlos Patiño* in central and southern Cauca where it has entered into confrontation with the ELN, and the blocks *Dagoberto Ramo*s and *Jaime Martínez* who are mostly clashing with paramilitary and drug-trafficking groups in the indigenous north.

[79] González Posso, et al. "Cauca y Nariño, crisis de seguridad en el posacuerdo", *Indepaz,* Special Report, December 2018, p. 24.

suspected to respond directly to international drug cartels such as the Mexican *Cartel de Sinaloa*.

Additionally, on an environmental level, pressure is rising from expanding monocultures, multinational corporations and extractivist interests in nature reserves as well as disputes over the use of water in the north of Cauca, confronting the agroindustry interests to the way of living of indigenous communities. In the middle of these territorial clashes, armed groups frequently intervene, coercing the presence of the affected communities in the territories in an attempt to bend their claims over the land. A tacit link is implied between the companies and the armed groups who would operate as private security cooperatives.

Furthermore, according to Indepaz, the indigenous communities have denounced the complicity of the state forces who tolerate the flows of the illicit economy in Cauca - according to the UN, as much as 36% of illicit crops across Colombia are grown in indigenous territories.[80] This situation further erodes the prospects of the peace process in Cauca and reaffirms the need for community-based frameworks of action and self-protection that CRIC and the Indigenous Guard represent. As this chapter has shown, the continuation of violence in the aftermath of the 2016 peace agreement has been translated in a no peace, no war impasse in the indigenous Cauca, where communities must confront the same - if not more - threats to their existence, with a state who minimizes the crimes inflicted upon them and who fails to protect them.

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[80] González Posso, et al. "Cauca y Nariño, crisis de seguridad en el posacuerdo", *Indepaz,* Special Report, December 2018, p. 26.

Chapter 3

A stalled peace process: The indigenous struggle continues

Introduction

As shown in the previous chapter, indigenous people in Northern Cauca have always confronted the armed conflict and its actors. Their resilient strategies have changed throughout time, war and peace, adapting their practices and discourse. Today these strategies revolve around the recent "peace order" in Colombia. The ways in which CRIC has navigated the formal peace process reflect the tension between the maximalist peace agenda of the state and the indigenous aspirations of liberation or self-governance in Northern Cauca. In many ways, the strained state-CRIC relations in regards to the peace process can be read from the post-colonial perspective towards peace, where a state-centric and westernized peace ideology is internationally sanctioned and enforced in areas of limited statehood, as explored in the theoretical chapter. This makes sense insofar as the emergence of CRIC and its collective agency are understood as a consequence of the historical violence inflicted upon them and the complex relation of the communities it represents with a state that subscribes colonial continuities, as discussed in the previous chapter. From this perspective, a peace from the communities can take on different directions: it can dialogue, oppose or become resistant to peace set from above.[81]

In this chapter I seek to analyse the political agency of CRIC in relation to a peace process they do not consider theirs, as they do not see themselves recognized as active agents in it. First, I overview CRIC's changing relations with armed actors during the war period and its transition to a peace positioning. Second, I examine the indigenous mobilization for peace in the years leading to the 2016 peace agreement and the undermined input which indigenous groups were conceded in the making of state peace. Third, I analyse CRIC's navigation of the peace terrain. I claim the formal peace process is strategized by CRIC in order to defend indigenous interests in front of the state and to bring in their own political agenda. I examine how CRIC attempts to relate to the dominant peace discourses while trying to carve out political space to develop and amplify its own peace language. Subsequently, CRIC's peace formation problematizes the very concept of peace, contests the national peace process and brings forwards its ideas regarding the nature of the state and a just society.

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[81] MacGinty, R., "Hybrid Peace: The Interaction Between Top-Down and Bottom-Up Peace." *Security Dialogue* 41, no. 4, 2010, p.391.

1. Indigenous resistance during the war period

CRIC was founded on the principles of 'Unity, Culture and Territory' of the indigenous peoples in Northern Cauca. As a self-proclaimed representative of indigenous interests, they established a political manifesto which has not changed since its inception in 1971. Of the seven key points composing their manifesto, I highlight their commitment to recover and strengthen the indigenous "life plans"- traditional ways of living - and to gain further autonomy to promote their worldview and develop their political project in their ancestral land. In 1991, after more than two decades of clashes with the central government, a new constitution finally recognised indigenous subjectivity and rights, allowing indigenous populations to legally claim ownership and self-governance over their territories. As illustrated in the previous chapter, the constitutional framework did not prevent land grabbing in their *resguardos* as neither did prevent the continuity of the violence raged by armed actors threatening their territories – state, guerrilla, paramilitary and drug-traffickers – which disregard their ethnic right to autonomy.

Consequently, CRIC has forcedly seen itself at the crossroads of multiple external agendas, where it has had to relate to other armed actors – private and public – and political processes driving the dominant society. Nowadays CRIC operates as an umbrella organisation with a sight to national social movements – they just opened a new community center in Bogotá - which includes 90% of the indigenous population in Cauca and 115 *cabildos*.[82][83] Thus far, the main success of CRIC as an organisation has been the recuperation of more than 80.000 hectares of ancestral indigenous lands.[84] Another important pillar of CRIC's organized resistance has been counteracting the economic exploitation of their communities, promoting collective ownership of the land and a mode of production consistent with their vision of sustainable progress against the coercion of the regional landowning powers.[85] These achievements shed light on the indigenous struggle and inspired other indigenous groups to self-organise nationwide, leading to the foundation of ONIC – Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia – in 1982 as the culmination of the indigenous awakening in Colombia.

The articulation of the indigenous Cauca, as a historically disempowered collective, around the figure of CRIC in 1971, is considered by Peñaranda, as the starting point of their modern organised resistance before the state apparatus and its vicars, the army and the big landowners.[86] Yet, this takes on a history of resistance against the Spanish colonialists in Cauca, in which symbols such as the female Cacique Gaitana and the warrior Juan Tama are much celebrated. Therefore this resistance does not stand in a void, but in an untold or

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[82] CRIC, *Estructura Organizativa,* accessed on 12th June, 2021. Available at: https://www.cric-colombia.org/portal/estructura-organizativa/

[83] CRIC comprises about 280.000 members, accounting for 20% of the total population in Cauca.

[84] Hristov, J. *Indigenous Struggles for Land and Culture in Cauca*, *Colombia*, The Journal of Peasant Studies, 2005, 32:1, p.110.

[85] Hristov, J., *Indigenous Struggles for Land and Culture in Cauca*, *Colombia*, The Journal of Peasant Studies, 2005, 32:1, p.97.

[86] Peñaranda. R, "La organización como expresión de resistencia", *Nuestra vida ha sido nuestra lucha. Resistencia y Memoria en el Cauca indígena*, Taurus, Bogotá, 2012. p. 173.

rather long unheard account of colonial violence and indigenous struggle, as implicit in the previous chapter. According to Peñaranda, how other groups perceived CRIC's development and the vast support base they had is key to understand its evolution in regards to the armed conflict in Cauca. Peñaranda claims that CRIC's political consolidation accelerated two opposing phenomena: it enabled and expanded indigenous mobilization to an extent never done before whereas it sharpened the opposition of armed groups.[87]

In advancing some of its objectives, CRIC also destabilize the regional balance of power and political status-quo, where power had been long monopolized by the traditional parties and the landowning elites.[88] As indicated in the previous chapter, the precarious presence of the state in the indigenous territories was facilitated by the two political parties – conservative and liberal. In a context of civil war (1946 -1958), the landowners who acted as "masters" for the indigenous populations, forced them to affiliate to the same party as themselves. Despite the initial opposition of the *cabildos* who were proxies of the landowners, the void in the indigenous political masse was largely capitalized on by the creation of CRIC, and to a lesser extent, by FARC. This provoked the criminalization of the movement which had to go clandestine at different times and was widely persecuted.

When the new-born FARC expanded across the northern Cauca in the 1970s, CRIC, as an offspring of the peasant-Marxist movement, saw them as a potential ally in their land struggle in front of the regional elites. Indeed, FARC profited from the dispossession of the indigenous communities who filled their ranks in great numbers. The good terms ended once CRIC gained leverage in Cauca, somewhat questioning FARC's stronghold. Additionally the transformation of FARC into a state-centric project of power also risked the autonomy CRIC sought for the indigenous process. CRIC started to see their cause as distinct from that of FARC and other Marxist guerrillas; theirs was not just a struggle over peasants' rights, theirs was fought from even further down the social scale and thus, theirs was a unique cause which could only be represented by a unified indigenous voice.

In an attempt to gain political traction amongst indigenous communities, FARC sought to create with CRIC a single popular front in Cauca.[89] In light of CRIC's rejection, the guerrilla launched a discrediting campaign against CRIC who in turn began to regard the guerrillas as a threat for the indigenous struggle, adding to their traditional opponents: the elites and the state-paramilitary. In 1981, FARC launched its first attack against CRIC leaders, killing 9 members and provoking a rupture with the indigenous struggle.[90] According to FARC, this attack was in retaliation for the indigenous occupation of agricultural lands that were already in used by a group of Marxist campesinos. This event is a good analogy of CRIC-FARC relations and the guerrilla's failure to recognise and capitalize on indigenous demands, or rather, its dispute over power with CRIC. This political breach would also be

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[87] Peñaranda Supelano, D Ricardo. *Guerra Propia, Guerra Ajena: Conflictos Armados y Reconstrucción Identitaria en los Andes Colombianos. El Movimiento Armado Quintín Lame.* Bogotá: Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2015, p.152.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Villa, William and Houghton, Juan. *Violencia política contra los pueblos indígenas en Colombia 1974-2001*. Bogotá: CECOIN - OIA, 2005, p. 13.

[90] Jaramillo, E., "El Cauca y el resarcimiento de la memoria", *Indepaz,* 2012, p.3.

visible throughout the peace talks in Havana (2012-2016) and the indigenous exclusion from the negotiating table; neither the state nor the FARC wanted active indigenous involvement.

The later was politically aligned to CRIC and conceived as the armed defender of the communities before their traditional enemies – landowners, paramilitary and the police – and hence before FARC and other guerrillas seeking to absorb the political potential of the indigenous movement.[91] In a way, the use of self-defence is still seen as a necessary and legitimate resort of protection for the communities, since 2001 re-conceptualized in a non-armed community police, the "Kiwe Thenas" or Indigenous Guard. This evidences the many ways in which CRIC has related to war and peace, with some of the practices and strategies they used to confront violence being indistinguishably used to navigate the 'threats' of peace today.

Peñaranda analyses the interrelation between the indigenous struggle, "*guerra propia*", and the outer conflict that confronts it, *"guerra ajena"* between the different armed groups and the state, which is alien to the local indigenous reality.[92] In the case of CRIC, this paradox is reflected in the use of coexisting war mod discourses, one centred on the indigenous struggle and the other on its position regarding the armed conflict. The escalation of the conflict with the state, its confrontation with FARC and the paramilitary forces, augmented the levels of violence raging the communities, who disenfranchised from the Quintin and accused it of causing more violence. In 1985, CRIC emitted the Vitoncó Declaration where for the first time declared its external position towards the conflict, refusing to become involved in the war of 'others'. This declaration was elaborated despite the attendance of FARC representatives to the Vitoncó Convention and it would forecast CRIC's line of action in the coming decades. According to this pronouncement, the guerrilla was jeopardizing indigenous interests and in MacGregor's words, cultural security, since they sought to fulfil their own agendas (war economy, regional alliances and their aspiration to take over national power) regardless of its devastating implications for the communities, victims of forced displacement.

More recently other peasant and afro-descendant communities in Colombia have followed their example, declaring themselves alien to the war and creating "peace alter-territorialities".[93] These local initiatives draw on notions of civilian agency, non-violence resistance in warlike contexts and the importance of local answers. Yet, due to the inescapable reality of war in Cauca, CRIC highlighted the capacity of indigenous peoples to fight their own battles and to use their own voice but "without denying the need for

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[91] According to various sources, despite the Quintin Lame being in essence conformed by Nasa men and women, numerous members of other national indigenous communities joined the armed group.

[92] Peñaranda Supelano, D Ricardo. *Guerra Propia, Guerra Ajena: Conflictos Armados y Reconstrucción Identitaria en los Andes Colombianos. El Movimiento Armado Quintín Lame.* Bogotá: Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2015, p. 175.

[93] This is the case of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó in Urabá, formed in 1999 by a number of returnees peasant that had been forcidbly displaced. Similarly, the afro-descendant Peace Community of CAVIDA in Carica, Chocó declared their territory as free from armed actors after suffering from massacres and internal displacement.

alliances with popular organizations as long as these are held in equal and respectful terms".[94] In this light, CRIC has engaged in different negotiations and truces with all armed actors in Cauca, particularly with FARC. In 1999, during the peace negotiations with FARC in Cauca, the government rejected CRIC from attending the negotiations. In response, CRIC organised a parallel peace dialogue that brought different civil society actors together to discuss their own roadmap for peace.[95]

Hereafter seeking peace would drive CRIC's political agenda, with peace serving as a bridge for the indigenous demands to reach the state peace efforts and other left-wing movements. In this regard, CRIC stated that "indigenous people share some needs with other social sectors such as ensuring our political participation outside of the traditional parties and find effective solutions to the social and armed conflict".[96] As this demonstrates, CRIC's alienated and external position towards the war seems to be adopted also towards peace. They search for a peace "other" which resonates with their worldview and unlike the formal process that entrenches them, yet they still must relate to it.

The presence of FARC as much as of other guerrillas was accommodated, resisted or to some extent negotiated depending on the period and the municipality.[97] More uncharted were CRIC's relations with paramilitary and drug-trafficking groups. The former widely repressed and coerced the indigenous communities who they saw as guerrilla collaborators. On the other hand, the interactions with drug-traffickers were rather coercive and of an economic nature. Growing illicit crops was often the only means of subsistence for the communities. However, CRIC always opposed the violence and clashes that drug-trafficking brought about. It is noteworthy to point at the difficulty of identifying "drug-trafficking actors" as distinct armed groups with a separate agenda, since all other armed actors engaged in drug-trafficking activities in the indigenous territories where coca crops were being fought over. Similarly today, these conflict-affected territories constitute highly disputed grey-areas with old and new actors seeking to gain control.

2. The indigenous mobilization for peace

After several rounds of failed peace negotiations between FARC and the government, in 2014 CRIC entered into secret dialogue with FARC and negotiated a humanitarian corridor to stop the killings in the Northern Cauca. Two indigenous guards had just been killed and the seven accused members of the guerrilla had been captured by the Indigenous Guard and condemned to 60 years of prison under the indigenous special jurisdiction.

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[94] Peñaranda Supelano, Ricardo et al. *Nuestra Vida ha sido Nuestra Lucha. Resistencia en el Cauca Indígena.* Bogotá: CNMH, 2012. p.319.

[95] CRIC, *La María, Piendamó: Territorio de convivencia, diálogo y negociación*. 2002, p. 16.

[96] ONIC, *Carta abierta del CRIC: la Resistencia indígena ante la actual crisis nacional.* Bogotá, 2002, p. 75.

[97] Barney. G., et al. "Reconfiguración de los órdenes locales y conflicto armado: el caso de tres municipios del Norte del Cauca (1990-2010)" *Sociedad y Economía* No. 26, 2014, p. 158.

Once the peace negotiations between Santos's government and FARC were made public, CRIC asked the government to include those collectives most affected by conflict violence in the process, particularly the afro-descendant and the indigenous populations.[98] Yet, the way the process was designed – confidential negotiations taking place abroad and without mediators – excluded them from participating. Anticipating that the process would not succeed without the inputs of these collectives, they organised hundreds of protests, conferences and forums to garner support for peace. The confidentiality of the talks further alienated the indigenous communities, who saw it as an agreement of the elites and feared their collective rights over the territory could be jeopardized.

Despite their rejection from the peace talks, CRIC and other ethnic organisations demonstrated their support for national peace. They mobilized their support bases in order to counteract the increasing opposition to the deal from the far-right under the former president Álvaro Uribe. In this sense, the indigenous mobilization for peace was essential in gaining popular acceptance towards the agreement, and slowly opening the door towards a new chapter apart from the culture of war which dominated the 20th century. CRIC and other indigenous organizations came together and started elaborating their own roadmap for peace which shed light on the indigenous peace model and their own cosmogony.[99] In an effort to force their participation in the talks in Havana, the afro-descendant and indigenous leaders joined forces and created the Ethnic Commission for Peace and Land Rights.[100] This is explained by the preoccupation ethnic leaders had towards the markedly peasant and rural character of the peace accords, brought forwards by FARC, which they saw as threatening their distinct territorial interests.

Political differences provoked a major crisis between the peasant and ethnic movement for peace, reflecting their uncertainty about what peace was going to look like. Inside *Marcha Patriótica* – Patriotic March, a national peasant movement demanding peace - two afro and indigenous committees were created, clashing with historical ethnic organisations such as CRIC. These emergent groups were seen as parallel groups organized under the auspices of FARC to delegitimize the demands of the ethnic organizations. This strategy was previously employed by Uribe's government in Cauca, where it incited a proxy indigenous organization called OPIC to counteract CRIC's mobilizing capacity.

Despite never becoming a real part of the peace talks, the Ethnic Commission (EC) held some preliminary meetings with FARC in Havana with the mediation of the church. A major turning point would be the accord reached between ONIC – National Indigenous Organisation of Colombia - and FARC in 2016, just before the ratification of the peace

[98] Semana, "Indígenas piden espacio en diálogos del Gobierno colombiano con la guerrilla", August 30th, 2012.

[99] Gutierrez León, E. "Foro regional indígena de paz "yo porto el bastón de la paz" Apuestas y propuestas de paz desde los pueblos indígenas". K*avilando*, January 15th, 2015, 7(1), 23-37. Available at: http://kavilando.org/revista/index.php/kavilando/article/view/29/18.

[100] Molano, A. "Indígenas y afros, unidos en la paz" *El Espectador*, March 6th, 2016. Available at: https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/indigenas-y-afros-unidos-paz-articulo-620621

agreement.[101] This bilateral accord expressed FARC's commitment to respect the indigenous and afro-descendant collective rights over the land in the agreement, without any reference to the worldviews of the indigenous peoples in terms of peace construction. Additionally the EC conducted an intense international lobbying campaign, particularly in Washington, pressurizing the Colombian government to accept their demands for inclusion. Another bilateral accord was reached with the government delegation in Havana, accepting to discuss some of the afro and indigenous demands just a few weeks before the agreement was finalised. Yet the choice of delegates joining the negotiations, whom the government and FARC insisted to nominate, would create further tensions. The Ethnic Commission understood this decision as a political move to keep them out of the process, instead inviting the parallel ethnic organizations that had just been created.

A similar accord was signed with the government just few weeks later. These accords made the inclusion of part of the ethnic chapter possible into the final agreement on the very same day it was signed, even if just for the photo. Because of their distrust of the government and FARC, the ethnic commission forced them to hold an open door meeting when ratifying the final peace agreement. They wanted to ensure that the indigenous proposal that had been previously accorded upon in bilateral pacts - first with FARC and then with the government – was actually being added. Yet, just a section of their proposal which reiterated the constitutional rights of ethnic collectives to own and control their territory was included. As we see, despite their final participation, the indigenous organisations were not considered a full third actor in the peace process.[102] On the contrary, they were seen as invitees to a process that keeps affecting them directly and that they perceived as a framework that is imposed from above. Ironically, this view is reversed by the international praise of the agreement, which is celebrated as an inclusive ground-breaking settlement.[103] The indigenous delegates welcomed a dialogued end of hostilities but affirmed their doubts and fears in regards to how peace was going to look like: "We don't want to be part of the official history which refused to recognize the peace culture of our peoples (…) We want to be recognized in our efforts to contribute to this peace".[104]

[101] ONIC. "Posición de las Organizaciones Indígenas sobre invitación a la Mesa de Conversaciones de La Habana" Bogotá, June 22nd, 2016.
[102] CRIC, ONIC. "POR UNA PAZ MÁS ALLA DE LAS NEGOCIACIONES ENTRE LOS ARMADOS." *Humanas Colombia*. December, 2016. Available at:
https://www.humanascolombia.org/archivos/5ponencia_de_la_onic.pdf
[103] Vulliamy, E., "Colombia peace deal with Farc is hailed as new model for ending conflicts" *The Guardian, 26th September, 2012.* Available at: *https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/26/colombia-farc-peace-santos*
[104] ONIC, « Inminente riesgo de exclusión del Capítulo Étnico del Acuerdo Final para la terminación del conflicto y la construcción de una Paz estable y duradera en Colombia." August 23rd, 2016. Available at: https://www.onic.org.co/comunicados-onic/1407-inminente-riesgo-de-exclusion-delcapitulo-etnico-del-acuerdo-final-para-la-terminacion-del-conflicto-y-la-construccion-de-unapaz-estable-y-duradera-en-colombia

3. Whose peace? Problematizing the formal peace: autonomy, land and security.

As these years of struggle show, CRIC had to relate to a formal peace process which not only largely overlooked their contributions and demands but also put their interests at stake. This explains the disaffection the peace agreement has produced across indigenous communities in Cauca, where they initially celebrated the end of hostilities but soon understood their struggle was far from being over, with old and new armed actors coercing them and an agreement whose implementation is both unsatisfactory and contentious. This presents a peace paradox for indigenous leaders, who have long strived for peace but now find themselves alienated by this new "peace order" which challenges their autonomous governance and fails to protect them.

This paradox relates to what Veena Das puts as the 'illegibility' of the state – in this case embodied by the agreement - for the communities.[105] Das argues that the state has a "double existence between a fiction mode and a rational mode" that is sustained due to its illegibility.[106] Since the provisions of the accord are not culturally-resonant and to some extent, disturb the indigenous social system, these feel detached and also, threatened. As this section illustrates, regardless of its alleged inclusiveness, the Havana accord was problematic from the very beginning, when it excluded one of the main victims in terms of numbers of the long-lasting conflict, the indigenous peoples. Drawing on Peñaranda, as much as it was not their war, now CRIC claims that this is not their peace.

Although there are certain lines of continuity between indigenous forms of governmentality in Northern Cauca and the state – political pacts, development plans, constitutional rights – their contact is rather based on suspicion and fear due to the historical social debt of the state and the ongoing colonial legacies of the official narratives. This is reflected on the problematic way it has related to the peace talks with FARC. Some of the outcomes of this process have been at odds with key interests of the indigenous Cauca: political autonomy, pressure on land and how to provide for security. The continuation of these issues demonstrate that not much has changed for CRIC since FARC's demobilization. Evidently, there is no such thing as peace in Cauca and therefore, the indigenous struggle over these interests that are vital for their survival and the construction of their own political project continues.

Moreover, CRIC saw indigenous self-governance contested when four social reintegration spaces of FARC ex-combatants were installed in indigenous lands. Similarly, the state's forced eradication policy of illicit crops is seen as an imposition in the indigenous territories, where CRIC denounces the lack of any other sustainable economic alternatives for the communities. According to the UN, Cauca received the smallest budgetary allocation of the PNIS program – illicit crop substitution - in 2020 despite it being one of the most affected

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[105] Das, V. *Life and Words : Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary,* California University Press*,* 2004. P.163.
[106] Das, V. Life and Words: Violence and the Descent…, p.167.

regions by illicit crops.[107] CRIC claims both the state forced eradication and the infiltration of drug-trafficking, are two sides of the same neo-colonial process which seeks to subjugate their political project and efface their cultural identity. Other issues have arose regarding competing jurisdiction between the Special Indigenous Jurisdiction - legally recognised by the Constitution in Northern Cauca - and the national competence of the JEP, the transitional justice court.

The protection of land rights generated heightened tensions amongst the communities who saw how the territory CRIC had recovered in the last 50 years – more than 80.000 hectares – could be now be taken back by the state under the premise of providing former combatants and peasant collectives with agricultural plots.[108] Furthermore, insecurity has worsened since 2016 with killings and open combats becoming the norm again. According to the peace agreement, community mechanisms of protection and security were to be strengthened by the state and funds and resources for capacity-building were promised in order to repel post-settlement violence.[109] Particularly in regards to the indigenous guard who were guaranteed more vehicles and better telecommunication networks. Evidently, the issue of land remains at the core of protracted violence in rural Colombia, particularly in Cauca where these are vital for indigenous survival and where the state is unable to provide security. In turn, in 2019 Duque's government asked the Indigenous Guard to collaborate with the army in order to deter the expansion of armed groups in Cauca.[110] The communities felt this petition fundamentally opposed to their mandate, which outlines a total rejection of the state´s military presence who has traditionally colluded with paramilitary interests in their territories – the para-state.[111] Hence, the indigenous populations face a new cycle of the 'external war', intending to co-opt the movement.

In an attempt to navigate these issues at a higher level, they related to other political actors and social movements in the years prior to the agreement. Yet, what the new arrangement previewed regarding the use of land and the strengthening of security capabilities unfolded more confrontation and more killings. CRIC needs to find new solutions for the challenges the peace order poses to the indigenous movement in Cauca, leading them to seek social support and visibility for their cause beyond group boundaries. I argue this is a core element

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[107] UNODC, Informe n. 23, Programa Nacional de Sustitución de Cultivos Ilícitos, December 31st, 2020. Available at:
https://www.unodc.org/documents/colombia/2021/Febrero/INFORME_EJECUTIVO_PNIS_No._23.pdf

[108] Peñaranda, R., *Guerra Propia, Guerra Ajena: Conflictos Armados y Reconstrucción Identitaria en los Andes Colombianos. El Movimiento Armado Quintín Lame.* Bogotá: Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2015 p.299.

[109] "The strengthening of those security mechanisms of the ethnic peoples will be granted and recognized at the national level, such as the Indigenous Guard and the Cimarron Guard"(My translation). Centro de Memoria Histórica, *Acuerdo Final para la Terminación del Conflicto y la Construcción de una Paz Estable y Duradera,* Bogotá, November 16th, 2016, p. 78.

[110] Arbalaez Jaramillo, N. "El llamado del Gobierno a coordinar con la Guardia Indígena desvirtúa su naturaleza" *La Silla Vacía*, November 1st, 2019. Available at : https://lasillavacia.com/silla-academica/universidad-los-andes-facultad-ciencias-sociales/llamado-del-gobierno-coordinar

[111] Arbalaez Jaramillo, N. "El llamado del Gobierno a coordinar con la Guardia Indígena desvirtúa su naturaleza" *La Silla Vacía*, November 1st, 2019. Available at : https://lasillavacia.com/silla-academica/universidad-los-andes-facultad-ciencias-sociales/llamado-del-gobierno-coordinar

of their peace agenda, where they have incorporated their political aspirations of state reform, a profound change of political order and indigenous worldview into a peace language, 'a road to peace'. Blatant corruption, police violence and neo-liberal policies that fail to benefit the lower classes have added to the already deceitful implementation of the peace agreement, provoking deadly protests in which CRIC has taken a protagonist role that reminds us of the Black Lives Matter protests in the US.[112] This illustrates CRIC's quest for a new strategy in the post-settlement phase that keeps their voice at the centre of the indigenous movement but that also resonates with national politics and other social movements.

4. Indigenous Peace Formations and Contestations

The above situations describe the power relations captured within peacebuilding and reflect the context in which the formal peace process clashes with local indigenous resistance, evidencing tensions over the overlap of sovereignty, authority and capacities. Richmond's *peace formations* constitute a relevant lens to analyse how these indigenous governmentalities take shape around peace and security arrangements in Northern Cauca and how they mobilize for peace in their own terms. Richmond reminds us that all societies have historically generated their own peace-making frameworks to deal with violence. Indigenous peace processes are constrained by state governmentality and international structures, which encapsulate the western hegemony over power and knowledge. These entities interact with CRIC, and the communities it represents in Cauca, to negotiate the construction of national peace and the obstruction of 'other' types of peace. In analysing these asymmetric power relations, the significance of language sheds light on these different or even, antagonistic, modes of navigating 'peace'. Indigenous "life plans" or what's been called elsewhere in the Andean World as *buen vivir*, "good living", are the most approximated to what we would translate as peace. This notion is based on the ideas of social justice, sustainability, cultural security and in particular, of 'harmony' which is understood in absolute terms – with the planet, with other living beings and humans, as discussed on chapter two.

CRIC practices have been a significant force in providing the communities with a security and peacebuilding framework that resonates with their way of living and deals with protracted violence – a culture of peace. There are hints of how the structural dimension of violence is addressed by CRIC, whose economic program based on the collectivization of land, communitarianism and self-subsistence is in tuned with their peace ideal. From this perspective, indigenous "peace" is rather an all-encompassing, holistic idea that goes beyond dealing with direct violence and touches on the relation with the environment, with the dominant society, with the post-colonial state and with the neo-liberal nature of the

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[112] Grattan, S.,"Cali emerges as the epicentre of Colombia's ongoing unrest", *Al Jazeera*, 11th May, 2021. Available at: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/11/cali-emerges-as-epicentre-of-colombias-ongoing-unrest

global economy. Therefore, its lack of liberal characteristics have prevented indigenous peace aspirations from gaining visibility and resonance within the state-led peacemaking process with FARC. And yet, CRIC has seized the process as an opportunity to advance its agenda for political reform and social change, implicitly questioning the nature of the state. Richmond argues these attempts are part of a complex hybrid peace assemblage that "bridges a range of ethno-national and international divisions and borders".[113] In this regard, CRIC has channelled indigenous dissent towards the state, generating an alternative space for political debate and critique beyond civil society.[114]

In this regard, Stepputat pays attention to the idea of sovereignty, which is interpreted here as something relational and performed "always in the name of a moral or political community" and therefore, ambiguously.[115] According to Stepputat, this ambiguity affects the "relations of authorities and governance in existing governscapes" which emerge through practices of pragmatic peacebuilding.[116] Taking his focus on sovereign practice, CRIC's claim of authority is likely to be seen as legitimate by local residents, since they appear as more trustworthy and committed in supplying security. Pragmatic peacebuilding, as Stepputat describes it, primarily incorporates non-state actors at the sub-national level, in this case CRIC, where they have a significant positive influence on peace processes.[117] This impact magnifies the political platform of CRIC, playing into the further construction of their de-facto authority or indigenous *emerging governscape.* In a bid for sovereignty and control, recognizing and working with the emerging governscape that CRIC represents "enables the state to claim a minimum of authority in an area that formerly escaped their political control".[118] And yet, supporting CRIC and the Indigenous Guard, as the main protection providers at the local level, endangers augmenting contestation, "complexity and competition". [119]

Even if 'peace' might not be the most accurate term, whether we can classify the indigenous paradigm of a better world as peace depends on the lens we take to conceptualize it. In this light, Richmond coincides with Stepputat that the indigenous is an autonomous, but "peace oriented and legitimate discourse" that arises through localized polities because "it respects socio-historical context".[120] Its implications are problematic though when trying to translate or connect them with international norms and western-

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[113] Richmond, O., "Peace Formation and Local Infrastructures for Peace", *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 2013, Vol. 38(4). p. 277

[114] Rappaport, J. « Utopias Interculturales », *Intercultural Utopias: Public Intellectuals, Cultural Experimentation and Ethnic Pluralism in Colombia*, Georgetown University, 2005, p.125.

[115] Stepputat, F., 'Pragmatic Peacebuilding and Emerging Governscapes', *International Affairs*, 2018, nº 94, vol. 2, p. 400.

[116] Stepputat, F., 'Pragmatic Peacebuilding and Emerging Governscapes', *International Affairs*, 2018, nº 94, vol. 2, p.402.

[117] Stepputat, F., 'Pragmatic Peacebuilding and Emerging Governscapes', *International Affairs*, 2018, nº 94, vol. 2, p. 409.

[118] Stepputat, F., 'Pragmatic Peacebuilding and Emerging Governscapes', *International Affairs*, 2018, nº 94, vol. 2, p.415.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Richmond, O., "Peace Formation and Local Infrastructures for Peace", *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 2013, Vol. 38(4),p. 273.

centric discourses considered universal, such as the liberal human rights regime and liberal feminism.[121] In analysing some of the types of sentences the special indigenous jurisdiction envisages, including public whipping as a form of punishment, a number of questions arise. These challenge our capacity to engage with 'alterity' and very different epistemic worlds.

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[121] Richmond, O., "Peace Formation and Local Infrastructures for Peace", *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 2013, Vol. 38(4),p. 275.

Conclusion

Scholarly debate has historically focused on state-centric approaches to peace. This research fits into a growing paradigm of looking into the subaltern sites of peacebuilding that contest dominant understandings and discourses of peace, taking CRIC and the indigenous Cauca in Colombia as a case-study of pragmatic peace production and governance in the midst of post-accord violence. These premises situate the research question that this thesis aims to explore: *How has CRIC navigated the formal peace process with FARC in order to defend indigenous interests vis-à-vis the state in post-settlement Cauca, Colombia (2016-2021)?*

A number of parallels are drawn from the war period - prior to the 2016 peace deal with FARC – as long-standing issues and structures which generated and sustained conflict in the peripheral regions continue to operate. This is shown through chapter two, where much attention is paid to the specific context of the indigenous Cauca region as one of the country's most conflict-affected areas, heavily affected by FARC. The creation of CRIC in Cauca catalyzed the political awakening of the communities who self-organized to resist the state and a conflict they considered external. Cauca remains highly disputed in the post-settlement era, given its geographic interest for drug-traffickers, the continued presence of dissident FARC groups who refused to demobilize and the inability of the state to establish authority after FARC's exit, creating a void filled by other armed groups. These groups fight to control the mineral and coca-rich territories, inhabited by the largest indigenous population in the country. These groups are coerced, their leaders persecuted and caught in the crossfire of open combat.

Significant attention is paid to the field of state and non-state actors engaged in the conflict, and their shifting relations with CRIC, from resistance, coercion and coexistence to even allyship with FARC. Thus, the ambiguous relations between CRIC and FARC are underscored in this analysis given the guerrilla's pivotal influence on CRIC's political evolution. Most importantly, this section sheds light on the persistent context of violence for the indigenous communities within CRIC, who despite the peace agreement must face the threat of violence posed by armed actors in their territories.

The violent impasse of no war no peace in the post-conflict setting dominates everyday life in rural Cauca and deeply hampers the indigenous order, which must rely on their own mechanisms of community protection. As demonstrated, CRIC's navigation of peace is, in many ways, similar to the way it navigated conflict throughout the 20th century. In the last chapter, CRIC's responses to the threats brought by the new peace order are presented as a continuation of their responses to war, highlighting the continuity of their precarious situation. Ultimately, the communities CRIC represents are victims of structural violence that has engulfed them in conflicts and indeed negotiations that neither take into account their demands and needs, nor correspond with their indigenous beliefs, societal structures or worldview.

Two issues of central importance for the indigenous movement are analyzed as they continue to disrupt peace: the pressure on land ownership and the provision of security.

As reflected upon in chapter two, these issues have created an intractable distance between the indigenous populations in Cauca and the state. Historical factors interplay here, with ongoing colonial legacies visibly permeating the official narratives and continuing to legitimize discrimination against indigenous peoples.

Yet they supported the state peace process with FARC, with the indigenous mobilization being crucial for the public endorsement of the Havana negotiations. As highlighted in chapter three, indigenous demands were not included in the peace talks until the very last minute. Their limited input in the final accord explains their current disaffection with a state peace that is already fragmented. Subsequently, in order to survive and to advance their political project, CRIC must engage with a peace that they do not consider theirs, as much as they related to a war that was not theirs.

After the 2016 peace deal, the indigenous peoples have seen the need to relate to the dominant discourses on peace and bring in their political aspirations and goals to the national peace conversation. This represents a paradox for them, since they simultaneously do not feel included in the peace process but are also reluctant to be involved in a peace that challenges their worldviews and whose implementation puts their political autonomy at stake. This illegibility of the peace agreement in the indigenous Cauca is illustrative of that tension and ambiguity that Stepputat refers to when analyzing opposing sovereign practices and *emerging governscapes*. Problematizing the limited statehood of Northern Cauca, characterized by myriad war territorialities and domination claims, is key to understanding the need for CRIC to strategize peace governance vis-à-vis the state as a way to produce authority.

In terms of generalizability, these reflections on a peace 'other' could be applied to other indigenous communities in Colombia where post-accord violence is acute and the presence of the state is minimal, since they all endured similar historical patterns of violence and operate in a context of 'alterity'. Indeed, several communities have sought to constitute governscapes with the aim of resisting the incursion of armed actors and avoiding forced displacement. An analysis of their practices and how those subscribe into a story of pragmatic peacebuilding would feed into the more theoretical and exploratory type of claims made here.

Regardless of their different use of language pertaining to peace, CRIC strives for 'harmony in the world', meaning a better world in a context of conflict and structural violence. As reflected upon in the previous chapter, the peace ideals of the peoples referred to in this analysis differ greatly from the institutional liberalism that dominates the field. The way the term 'peace' is conceptualized by the state as an intermediary of the international does not translate to what peace denotes for CRIC. Engaging with indigenous interests, agency and belief-systems is difficult for the western mindset as much as it is for the state-centric peace industry in Bogotá, since we read the world with different codes. Yet, the peace language used by the state and the international community is imposed upon the indigenous social paradigm, even though it is not inclusive of what peace means for them. Recognizing the epistemological limitations of the international peace production and the ontological instability of 'peace' is the first step to decolonize peacebuilding in the Global

South.[122] Further exploring these issues is paramount if we are to understand indigenous agency and capitalize on the *peace formations* of the subaltern, their processes and strategies in areas of limited statehood and protracted violence. These practices can prove difficult to reconcile with the "liberal human rights regime", liberal feminism and other discourses considered universal in the west. Furthermore, the reality of peace beyond the absence of war in post-settlement societies remains largely under-researched.[123] This is why prospective research is needed on the construction of peace from the margins, the everyday tangibility of peace in weak state frameworks where post-colonial framings interact with different coexisting societal forms and governscapes that are somewhat unnatural to the international order. This may not be the case of Western societies but it is the reality of most peacebuilding sites in the world. The recent shift in peace studies, from liberal peace theory to postcolonial considerations, might be the opening door to the decolonization of peace beyond the absence of war.

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[122] Espinosa, M., "Recuperación de tierras: una mirada desde la economía política" in
Nuestra vida ha sido nuestra lucha. Resistencia y Memoria en el Cauca indígena, Taurus, Bogotá, 2012.
[123]Höglund, K., and Mimmi Söderberg, K., 2010 'Beyond the Absence of War: The Diversity of Peace in Post-settlement Societies'. *Review of International Studies,* 36.

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