The London School of Economics and Political Science

Societal Reconciliation in Post-Accord Colombia: A Psychosocial Investigation of Knowledge Encounters

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A thesis submitted to the Department of Psychological and Behavioural Science of the London School of Economics and Political Science for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, London, April 2024.

Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

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I confirm that Chapter 4 was jointly co-authored with Prof. Sandra Jovchelovitch, and I contributed 80% of this work.
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Laura Fonseca

Abstract

This thesis investigates the role of knowledge encounters in prefiguring societal reconciliation in post-conflict Colombia. Drawing on theories of social representation and social identity, the thesis expands the social psychology of peace and reconciliation to elucidate how everyday encounters between historically and geographically distant actors reshape understandings of Self and Other, change representations about peace and conflict and build novel alliances and partnerships. The research design is a multi-method psychosocial ethnography comprising three empirical studies investigating an educational partnership between a rural community of former guerrilla members who are reincorporating into society, and an urban private university in Bogota. Study 1 investigates the transformation of social representations about self, other, peace and reconciliation held by urban students living with former guerrilla members. It finds that for urban youth, encountering guerrilla members for the first time presents an opportunity for self-reflection and transformation of conflict-related narratives and identities. Study 2 studies the process of collective reincorporation of former guerrilla members through the different identity positions they adopt and the changing representations they hold about peace and reconciliation. It finds that the journey of reintegration engenders a polyphony of selves in dialogue and tension, as they develop new ways of managing identity to become citizens while maintaining the integrity of their biographical history as 'farianos'. Study 3 explores the potential of the educational partnership between former guerrilla members and academic researchers for promoting societal reconciliation and collaborative peacebuilding. It finds that the partnership builds trusting relationships and shared intentionality that enables an expansion of identities where former guerrilla members become community teachers, and teachers see themselves as agents of peace. Combined, these findings highlight the potential of educational safe spaces for promoting transformative knowledge encounters that prefigure dialogical social interactions among cultural, social and politically opposed social groups. A focus on everyday encounters and multisector partnerships shows that sustainable peacebuilding is inseparable from processes of community development, institutional and individual transformation.

Acknowledgements

The completion of this PhD thesis is the result of more than four years of living like a nomad and moving from site to site. Partly because of the pandemic, I had the unique opportunity of spending half of my PhD living in Colombia, more than a year living with the community that embraced me as part of their family in Agua Bonita, Caquetá, and the rest of the time between the UK and Colombia. All these movements and multiple sites of engagement were filled with special people who supported me through this journey.

I would first like to thank my supervisor, Sandra Jovchelovitch. Thank you, Sandra, for always being there for me, for your continuous support, and for taking the time to discuss with me all the nuances of reincorporation and reconciliation in Colombia. I will be forever grateful for your thorough reading of my texts and for teaching me what an academic mentor is. To Rochelle, my sister in the UK and the source of multiple and delicious home-cooked meals, thank you for your love and support, for offering your home and for believing in me as your academic colleague throughout the years. To Natalia Concha, for all the discussions and comments on my project, as well as the laughs and Colombian meals. To Maria Cecilia Dedios, for her constant support and words of reassurance. To Flora Cornish and Ilka Gleibs for their very useful comments during my upgrade session, especially Flora, whose approach to research has inspired me throughout my career. An additional thank you to my committee, Charis Psaltis and Alex Gillespie, for taking the time to read the thesis, asking the tough questions and inviting me to reflect on my own work.

I would also like to thank all the people who were part of this long journey in Colombia. To my former students and now academic colleagues, Maria Alejandra, Mónica, Sebastián and Mónica C, for sharing their stories with me and for their support during fieldwork. To my academic colleagues and friends Natalia Reinoso, Germán Hernández, and Rocío González, for their encouragement every step of the way. To Universidad de La Sabana, for allowing me to take time to complete my doctoral studies.

To the community in Agua Bonita, for opening their doors and trusting me with their stories. I would like to thank especially Federico, Liceth and Sami Eluney, for opening the doors of their home and treating me like family. Thank you, Federico, for always giving me alternative views on peacebuilding, for questioning research processes and for being a partner

in this long collaboration. My gratitude goes to Yas, Tatiana and Esperanza, for the “tintos”, the juices, the conversations and the laughs in the middle of the Amazonian Piedmont while thinking about the community's future.

A las personas de Agua Bonita, por abrir las puertas de su casa y confiar en mi para compartir sus historias. Especialmente, quiero agradecerle a Federico, Liceth y Sami Eluney, por recibirme en su casa y tratarme como parte de su familia. Gracias Federico, por siempre darme miradas alternativas sobre la construcción de paz en el país, por ser crítico de los procesos de investigación y por ser un aliado en esta larga colaboración. Mi gratitud eterna para Yas, Tatiana y Esperanza por los tintos, los jugos, las conversaciones y las risas en la mitad del piedemonte amazónico mientras hablábamos sobre el futuro de la comunidad.

To my family, for their patience and unconditional love despite my nomad self. To my mum, who has always been there to make me laugh, to ask about my well-being, and to make sure I enjoy myself. To my dad for teaching me the importance of hard work and the role of academia as part of a political commitment to transform and contribute to our country. To my auntie for checking on me every day and for her short visits to bring all the warmth and love from Colombia to London. And to my grandparents, whose presence in my life is a source of inspiration and unconditional love.

A mi familia, por su paciencia y amor incondicional a pesar de mi ser nómada. A mi mamá, quien siempre ha estado ahí para hacerme reír, estar pendiente de mi bienestar y asegurarse de que disfrute la vida más allá de lo académico. A mi papá, por enseñarme la importancia del trabajo duro y el rol de la academia como parte de un compromiso político para transformar nuestro país. A mi tía, por estar pendiente de mi todos los días y por sus visitas que traían todo el amor desde Colombia al Reino Unido. Y a mis abuelitos, cuya presencia en mi vida fue, es y será una fuente de inspiración y amor incondicional.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband, William. Thank you for nourishing and taking care of me throughout this PhD, for all the late-night *tintos* that kept me going in the final months of writing, for understanding the constant back and forth between Colombia and the UK, and for making me laugh even in the most stressful moments. Thank you for understanding the importance of community engagement as part of my academic and personal path, and for joining me in this nomadic journey.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"La paz, la paz con Z profe, está quebrada"
"Peace, peace with a C is broken, prof." (Mariana, Former guerrilla member)

1.1. Background and Motivation

I live in two Colombias. I was born in a city with access to private education, health services, and the possibility of deciding my future. I did not have to face the bombings of the cartel leaders (drug traffickers) in the 90s across the cities or experience threats against members of my family or me, nor was I displaced or kidnapped by the multiple armed groups present in the country for decades. The accounts of violence and the internal armed conflict were presented through mass media or through stories told by my grandparents, who lived in rural areas before settling in Bogotá, Colombia's capital city. Even though my interest in the armed conflict led me to ask questions about its roots, the different actors, and the differences between all the armed groups, this was not a common practice. Instead, efforts to ask questions about armed groups and discuss the conflict were seen with suspicion, as those topics were off-limits in most of the conversations in the city. As I grew up, I was able to thoroughly study and engage with the other Colombia, the one suffering from constant and diverse forms of violence(s). Throughout my career as a social psychologist, I encountered many conflict-affected actors, including victims of displacement either by armed groups or by the state itself, who came to the city or its surroundings to settle in.

However, it was not until 2018 that I truly met the other Colombia in geographic terms. For the first time, I was travelling to a previously forbidden area of the country: the Caquetá Department. This region was well known for the presence of illegal armed groups, in particular the *Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, People's Army* (FARC-EP), a leftist guerrilla who signed the Final Peace Agreement with the Colombian Government in 2016. The reason for my visit had to do precisely with the peace agreement. After four years of an intense and divisive peace process (Gomez-Suarez, 2017), the final peace agreement with the oldest and largest guerrilla in the Americas was finally signed. I was invited to visit the public university in Florencia, Caqueta's capital, with a group of researchers who, like me, were interested in peace and conflict studies. We also visited one of the Territorial Spaces for Training and Reconciliation (ETCRs in Spanish) designed to support former guerrilla members' reincorporation process. As I was preparing for the trip, multiple questions arose: my family was concerned about my safety, my colleagues joked about me converting to communism, and some of my friends were curious about the experience.

When I arrived at the ETCR Héctor Ramírez, located in a rural and remote area of the Caquetá Department, I spent the whole day learning about former FARC-EP members' experience as *Firmantes de Paz* (Peace signatories) and how they were building their community. This community of guerrilla members had reencountered with their families; others had new ones and had decided to settle in that ETCR and develop their community from scratch. The dialogues we held that day with peace signatories and other academics led to a big question about the role of academia in supporting conflict transformation and peacebuilding efforts (Milton, 2018). This community was experiencing high levels of stigma and marginalisation, as the government had failed to provide the material support they agreed upon from the beginning. Despite the numerous visits they received in 2017 as they settled in the ETCR, universities were only there to observe and "test their hypothesis," as one of the leaders mentioned in our discussions. As I went back to Bogota, I reflected on the profound disconnection between academia and rural communities, but also, in general, between rural and urban settings. In a country driven by conflict precisely due to stark inequalities, unbalanced land distribution and the exclusion and marginalisation of social groups (Molano, 2015), reflecting on this disconnection and creating mechanisms to transform it could be a first step towards conflict transformation.

Reflecting on these "two Colombias", I could see the effect of the sociopsychological infrastructure of conflict (Bar-Tal, 2007) that was keeping these realities apart. Concerns about my safety, the risk of being "contaminated" by the ideology of the unknown other and the overall reluctance to support the peace agreement were examples of the interplay between collective memory, the ethos of conflict and affective collective orientations (Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2014) held by urban citizens who had not been directly affected by conflict. Contrary to rural and marginalised areas in which victims and former combatants are already coexisting and finding ways to reconcile despite their differences (Prieto, 2012; Taylor et al., 2016), urban citizens who have not been directly affected by it are, paradoxically, the ones least willing to reconcile, in particular with former guerrilla members (Pineda-Marin et al., 2023).

Studies on peace and conflict agree that reconciliation involves restoring relationships among antagonistic actors that involve extensive changes in the socio-psychological repertoire of their members (Bar-Tal, 2009; Lederach, 1997). This is based on the premise that conflicting groups live in close geographical proximity (Lederach, 1997). While this is true in specific conflict-affected settings, Colombia presents an interesting case to examine reconciliation on a broader scale that moves beyond the victim-perpetrator binary. This is

particularly relevant for three reasons: 1) this is not an ethnic or religious conflict, but instead, it is permeated by socioeconomic and ideological differences that have kept people apart for decades, and 2) even actors considered perpetrators have been victims themselves of different modalities of violence before, during or after joining the illegal armed groups, and 3) not everyone has been affected equally by the armed conflict. These conditions blur the deep-seated division between victims and perpetrators that sustain antagonistic views in this context.

For this reason, this thesis aims to examine reconciliation as the process of building new relationships between historically and geographically distant actors who encounter the knowledge of the other and move from a culture of conflict to a culture of peace. The emphasis here is not only on rebuilding broken relationships but on creating platforms for the encounter and re-presentation of different social groups: Urban youth and academics and rural former guerrilla members reincorporating into society.

In this polarised and divided society, Higher Education Institutions (HEI) are part of the urban landscape and could play an essential role in supporting peacebuilding efforts in the country. Historically, HEIs have been ambivalent in conflict-related topics and peacebuilding efforts (Delgado Barón, 2010), which can be linked to being part of a context of protracted conflict (Bar-Tal, 2007) sustained by negative representations of former guerrilla members, the reincorporation process and the possibility of coexisting with previously armed actors (Cortés et al., 2016). This condition remained unchanged over time, and private universities, particularly those most privileged, abstained from engaging in this arena, concentrating efforts on knowledge production detached from the realities faced by the country (Delgado Barón, 2010).

However, after the signing of the peace agreement, new possibilities for the involvement of HEI and education institutions in peacebuilding efforts emerged. HEIs have consolidated theoretical courses that open the space for discussion and dialogue among students themselves about the peace agreement (Corredor et al., 2018; Gomez-Suarez, 2017; Oettler & Rettberg, 2019), and in the case of school settings, history education is being included as part of their curriculums (Gordillo, 2021). However, there is still a concern among urban students as they fail to understand the complexity of the war from a classroom (Gordillo, 2021). These different approaches highlight the persistent difficulty of an urban-rural dialogue where social actors recognise each other and the vital role of HEI in supporting these efforts by combining teaching, research and service (Milton, 2018) to critically think

about ways to overcome division and develop specific actions to engage with former armed groups reincorporating into society.

It is at this intersection that this thesis makes its contribution. It explores the consolidation of a platform for encounters between historically, ideologically and geographically distant groups: urban students and academics and former guerrilla members (also known as peace signatories) reincorporating into society. In doing so, it analyses the transformation of representations of self, other, peace, and conflict as participants reflect on their own process.

1.2. Research Problem

Sustainable peace remains a challenge in the contemporary world. The end of the Cold War was followed by the emergence of intrastate conflict that resulted in more than 50 internal armed conflicts around the world (Teitel, 2003). Currently, there are over 52 active armed conflicts in the world, and only one has concluded in a peace agreement in the last 20 years: the Final Colombian Peace Agreement between the Colombian state and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army (FARC-EP in Spanish) in 2016 (Pettersson et al., 2019). Research studies in conflict-affected societies have focused on understanding the mechanisms that can promote sustainable peace in post-conflict settings. After decades of protracted conflict, restoring relationships and transforming conflict-related narratives have been central to reconciliation between antagonistic groups, an essential element for sustainable peace (Bar-Tal & Cehajic-Clancy, 2014; Cehajic et al., 2008).

While a large body of literature has explored reconciliation in post-conflict settings from various angles (intergroup contact, transitional justice, forgiveness and reparations), much of this literature has tended to focus on the division between antagonistic groups. This literature has explored the psychological consequences of intergroup contact of clearly demarcated groups based on their involvement in conflict (victim/perpetrator) or socio-demographic characteristics (ethnic, religious background) from a cognitive and emotional approach (Čehajić-Clancy et al., 2016; Shnabel et al., 2023; Shnabel & Ullrich, 2016). Methodologically, while research using surveys (Rettberg, 2014), questionnaires (Noor, Brown, & Prentice, 2008), and experiments can offer valuable insights, it tends to treat reconciliation as a short-term process, establishing beforehand who are the victims and perpetrators (Fergusson et al., 2018) and which two groups engage in intergroup contact (Dyrstad et al., 2011; Ugarriza & Nussio, 2017). Experimental designs to assess intergroup

reconciliation in a lab setting (Ugarriza & Nussio, 2017) follow the same logic of binary juxtaposition of victims and perpetrators.

In Colombia, this division is far from settled, and it would be almost impossible to reach a consensus on which actors will occupy each position. Given the complexity of these distinctions and identification processes, more needs to be done to understand reconciliation properly. Peacebuilding is a piecemeal and long-term process that requires a middle-ground approach comprising a diversity of actors with multiple positions in the conflict. A growing literature has begun to take a more socio-cultural approach to the study of reconciliation (Nicholson, 2019; Psaltis, 2012b, 2016; Uluğ & Cohrs, 2019) by addressing the intersection between the social and the psychological processes that mediate the social encounter and questioning a two-group approach (Kerr et al., 2017) that focuses solely on conflict-affected actors.

The current thesis builds on this literature and argues that part of the journey of conflict transformation in conflict-affected settings involves opening the black box of contact (Psaltis, 2012b),focusing on encountering the knowledge of the other (Jovchelovitch, 2007) and analysing encounters through a genetic perspective (Psaltis, 2015b) as a pathway to transform representations of self and other and prefigure societal-level reconciliation. A genetic focus on knowledge encounters introduces the in-between as the main unit of analysis (Jovchelovitch, 2019) and opens the psychosocial infrastructure of conflict to inquiry, shedding light on transformations required for moving beyond conflict towards sustainable peace. To this end, this thesis explores transformations in representations and self-other interactions at three dimensions of the encounter: 1) urban youth as they travel to rural areas and partake in the everyday of former guerrilla actors in their new communities, 2) the identity struggles of former combatants' journey of reintegration as they encounter civil society, academics and state institutions, and 3) the making and consolidation of a partnership that can prefigure the microgenetic, ontogenetic and sociogenetic transformations needed to support reconciliation efforts.

What can we do as researchers to support conflict transformation efforts? Chapter 4 explores longitudinally the microgenesis of the transformation of representations about self, former guerrilla members, and peace and reconciliation as urban youth participate in a Critical Service-Learning course that sets a platform of encounter with a rural community of peace signatories and their families in the south of Colombia. This study is the first step

towards considering a more active role of HEI and researchers when considering conflict transformation in conflict-affected societies.

However, it is essential to note that reconciliation implies not just re-building past relationships but also consolidating a new social fabric that is inclusive and able to integrate formerly conflict-involved actors who are developing new societal roles (McFee & Rettberg, 2019). Reincorporation poses a challenge as the FARC - a previously closed and isolated social group - now encounters different and new worldviews and knowledges (McFee & Rettberg, 2019) as well as stigma and exclusion. Historically, this guerrilla group was created and consolidated through a structured organisation and a communist doctrine that guaranteed their social cohesion and group identity (Ugarriza & Quishpe, 2019). After the signature of the peace agreement, the different subgroups (fronts) distributed in the remote, rural areas were reallocated. They had to move to the Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation (ETCRs). This geographical movement (Gillespie et al., 2012) began an encounter with state institutions and citizens, which involved social contact with new public spheres where their identity and beliefs could be challenged. The same can be said for the communities that interact with them daily (campesinos-peasants, reincorporation agents) or for the specific purpose of visiting (organisations and universities). The intersection of these contesting knowledge systems as they relate to reconciliation processes is the basis for Chapter 5. By examining their journey of reincorporation from an ethnographic perspective, we analyse the microgenetic and ontogenetic processes underpinning the internal struggles and dialogues they face when encountering civil society and state institutions.

Finally, research on partnerships is an emerging field focused on understanding the potential of collaborative alliances for the education, health and economic sectors (Campanella et al., 2022; Fransman & Newman, 2019). In the case of peacebuilding and reconciliation in conflict-affected countries, studies have examined partnerships at the school (Roulston et al., 2023) and community levels to support inter-group encounters (Broome, 2004) in post-conflict settings worldwide. However, most of the efforts have focused on funding agencies with the private and business sectors and, in minor proportion, academia to deliver services, activities and workshops to conflict-affected communities (Kolk & Lenfant, 2015; USAID & ACDI/VOCA, 2021). Chapter 6 examines the partnership between researchers and former guerrilla members as a concrete example of the prefiguration of reconciliation. By analysing the Education, Land and Reconciliation (EDUCARE in Spanish) project, we examine the role of partnerships as transformative knowledge encounters that

enable the transformation of symbolic, material and relational contexts that can support reconciliation processes, which in this case, include not only former guerrilla members but also researchers who participate in the encounter themselves.

Researching reconciliation in post-accord Colombia is challenging due to the myriad of obstacles, tensions and difficulties in implementing the peace agreement. Nevertheless, consolidating the CP-HR as a community of former guerrilla members and their families committed to peace can shed light on the potential of new dynamics and social interactions within the community and with external actors. Prefigurative praxis (Cornish et al., 2018) is the overarching framework that unpacks this potential for peacebuilding and reconciliation. Prefigurative social change examines the reconfiguration of social relationships based on critiques of the dominant structures and the acknowledgement of alternative pathways to create societal structures (Cornish et al., 2018). As such, the process of prefiguration is developed within particular communities that resist those dominant structures and promote structural changes at the local level (Boggs, 1977). In the case of post-accord Colombia, a partnership between a private university and a community of former guerrilla members has the potential to challenge reified notions of "the other" and be a platform for encountering and recognising the plurality of understandings of peace, reconciliation.

1.3. Research Context

1.3.1. Overview of Colombia's Peace Process

Colombia is a South American country that has endured cycles of violence ever since colonial times. Currently, there is no consensus on the root of the conflict in the country (Jaramillo, 2017; Pizarro Leon-Gómez, 2015). However, research suggests that critical factors are a result of an economic model that favours urban elites over the most vulnerable actors (*campesinos*-peasants, ethnic and rural communities) (Comisión para el esclarecimiento de la verdad, 2022), unequal land distribution and the marginalisation and exclusion of specific groups such as *campesinos* (rural dwellers) and indigenous populations (Molano, 2015; Pizarro Leon-Gómez, 2015). Leftist guerrillas, right-wing paramilitary, the National army, drug traffickers and criminal bands have been the main armed actors in a country with more than 220.000 deaths and nine million internally displaced people, among other forms of violence (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2018; Comisión para el esclarecimiento de la verdad, 2022). As a result, the Colombian conflict makes establishing

clear binary lines between opponents difficult, as it does not have an ethnic or religious differentiator. Instead, it is based on profound socio-political and economic divisions, inequality and power asymmetries.

The *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, Ejército del Pueblo* (FARC-EP) was the largest and oldest guerrilla group in the Americas. It was an insurgent group created by *campesinos* (rural dwellers) running away from chronic political violence in Colombia in the 60's. The armed group was aligned with a communist ideology[1], and combined political and military actions to fight against inequality and class division (Lizarazo Vega, 2022). FARC-EP had a presence in most of the rural areas in the country and acted as a para-state in regions that did not have a State presence (CNMH, 2018). As an illegal armed group, it targeted primarily State Institutions and focused on kidnappings as its preferred form of victimisation (CNMH, 2013).

The peace agreement signed in 2016 between the Colombian Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, People's Army (FARC-EP in Spanish) is not the first attempt to achieve peace in the country. Demobilisation processes have been reported since the '50s, with guerrilla groups reaching agreements with the government but then being betrayed and murdered (Molano, 2015). Notably, during the 80s and '90s, the start of peace talks with the FARC-EP resulted in the consolidation of a political group, Unión Patriótica (UP, Patriotic Union), as well as peace agreements with guerrilla groups M-19 (19th of April Movement), EPL (Popular Liberation Army) and Quintín Lame (indigenous guerrilla) (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2018). In the case of UP and M-19, most of their leaders were systematically assassinated (in the 90s), mainly as a result of the rejection of left and communist ideology by the public sphere (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2018), which exacerbated the tensions and mistrust between insurgent groups and the government for decades.

After more than five decades of internal armed conflict in Colombia, in 2012, the Colombian Government initiated the long journey of reaching a peace agreement with the FARC-EP. The four-year duration of the peace process (2012-2016) marked the start of academic discussions around the role of Education Institutions in peacebuilding efforts, particularly amidst the emergence of societal division between those in favour and those

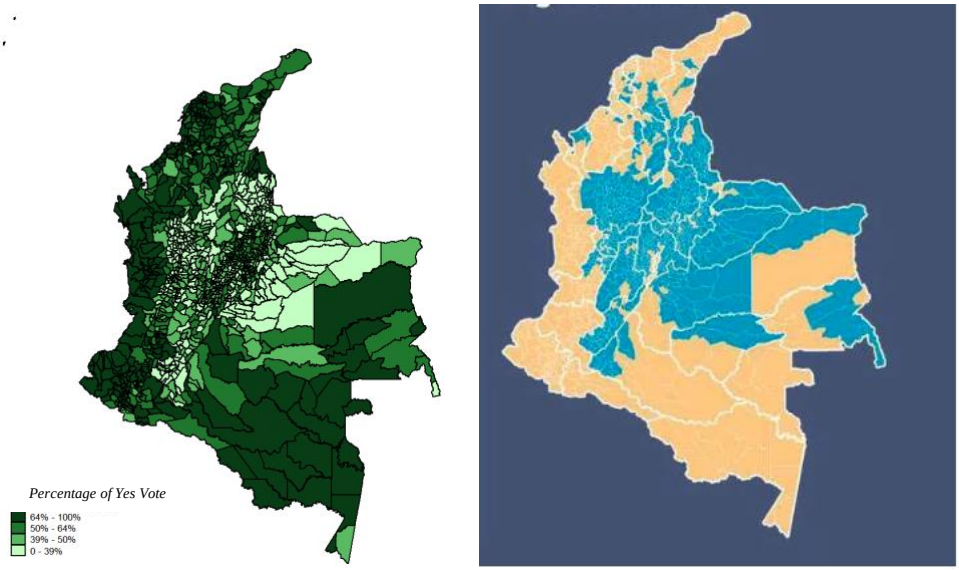
[1] Colombia had a longstanding relationship with the United States, which set grounds for a strong counterinsurgent and anti-communist doctrine, which influenced deeply the way in which guerrilla groups were targeted and the general view of them by civil society (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022).

against the peace process with the armed groups. This division was heightened in 2016 when the Colombian government called a referendum to ratify the peace accord with the citizens, and the No vote was won by a slight majority (50.2%) (Burnyeat, 2020). These results, along with the high abstention rate (62.57%), reveal the failure of the Colombian education system as it has not been able to transform students' cognitive and moral structure (Gomez-Suarez, 2017).

The marked urban-rural division among the voters was essential to these results. Most rural areas, particularly those most affected by conflict, voted in favour of the peace agreement. In contrast, urban areas, which had not been directly affected by the war, voted against it. Even though the peace agreement was eventually signed in November 2016, this division profoundly affected reconciliation efforts in the country, as usually, those against the signature of the accords occupy privileged positions in the country and are in charge of decision-making (Álvarez Vanegas & Garzón Vergara, 2016). For instance, in the following government, after the signature of the peace agreement, President Duque (2018-2022) won under the promise of going against the implementation of the peace accords. This led to an overall delay in its implementation (Echavarría Álvarez et al., 2022), which created mistrust among former guerrilla members, fuelled the polarisation in the country and increased the levels of violence that had diminished dramatically in 2016 (Indepaz, 2022). Despite the election of Gustavo Petro in 2022, the first leftist President in Colombia for over 200 years, trends in voting were similar to those in the peace accords referendum: rural, peripheric and marginalised areas supported Gustavo Petro under the promise of implementing the agreement, while urban, privileged regions voted against him (Figure 1).

Figure 1.

Comparative Map of Colombia (Plebiscite and Presidential Elections 2022)



Note: This figure presents two maps of Colombia with results from the plebiscite in 2016 (left) and the Presidential elections in 2022 (right). In the plebiscite election, the Yes vote is the darker yellow and in the presidential election, voters for Gustavo Petro are light yellow.
Source: Juan David Herreño y Juan Sebastián Muñoz and El Espectador.

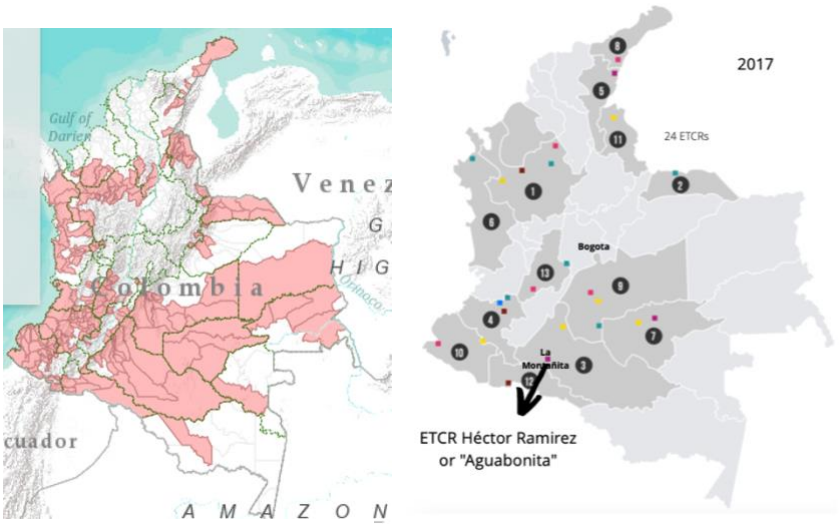
The agreement was adjusted to incorporate some of the opposition's requests and has been deemed one of the most comprehensive peace accords worldwide. It has five chapters focused on 1) land reform, with a specific emphasis on rural development, 2) political participation and democracy, 3) collective reincorporation, 4) illicit drugs and 5) victims' reparations (Alto Comisionado para la Paz, 2016). Contrary to previous processes naming former combatants as "demobilised" or "reinserted" (in the case of paramilitaries or FARC members who surrender before the peace accord), FARC-EP negotiators defined themselves as reincorporados to highlight their willingness to keep mobilising politically and be active participants in the public sphere (BPAC, 2022).

Considering the historical mistrust between insurgent groups and the Colombian State, chapter three of the agreement focused on setting the ground for a collective reincorporation process. According to the agreement, reincorporation, or reintegration, is the transformation of guerrillas into unarmed political actors in a democratic, participative and inclusive society. To this end, specific areas were created to facilitate the reincorporation of more than 13.000 guerrilla members. These spaces, initially known as the *Zonas Veredales Transitorias de Normalización (ZVTN)* and currently denominated as Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation (ETCRs in Spanish), were selected by delegates from the

government and the FARC-EP as part of the agreement. There are 24 territories[2] in areas close to the historical spaces occupied by the FARC-EP, which were initially empty lands in which temporal housing was built (Figure 2). Gradually, these spaces have evolved into communities where people find work and everyday interaction with surrounding towns and rural workers. The leaders of the ETCRs (former guerrilla members) have promoted the implementation of income-generation projects. Some have started to build alliances with different societal actors to support their reincorporation process (McFee et al., 2019). This has led to economic and social partnerships and the possibility of direct encounters between historically distant groups, such as entrepreneurs and universities, as well as local rural dwellers and new neighbours: the *campesinos* (rural dwellers).

Figure 2.

The transition from FARC-controlled areas to the consolidation of ETCRs



Note: The map on the left presents the distribution of FARC-EP before the signature of the peace agreement. The map on the right shows the location of the original 24 Territorial Spaces for Training and Reconciliation (ETCRs).
Sources: Comisión de la Verdad and Agencia de Reincorporación y Normalización

Nevertheless the achievements of the peace accords, the socioeconomic and political context surrounding the reincorporation process is full of tensions, including internal struggles of identity and transformation of roles (Nussio & Quishpe, 2018), as well as external pressures to accommodate civil society.

[2] Due to high levels of violence towards former guerrilla members, three of these spaces have been reallocated.

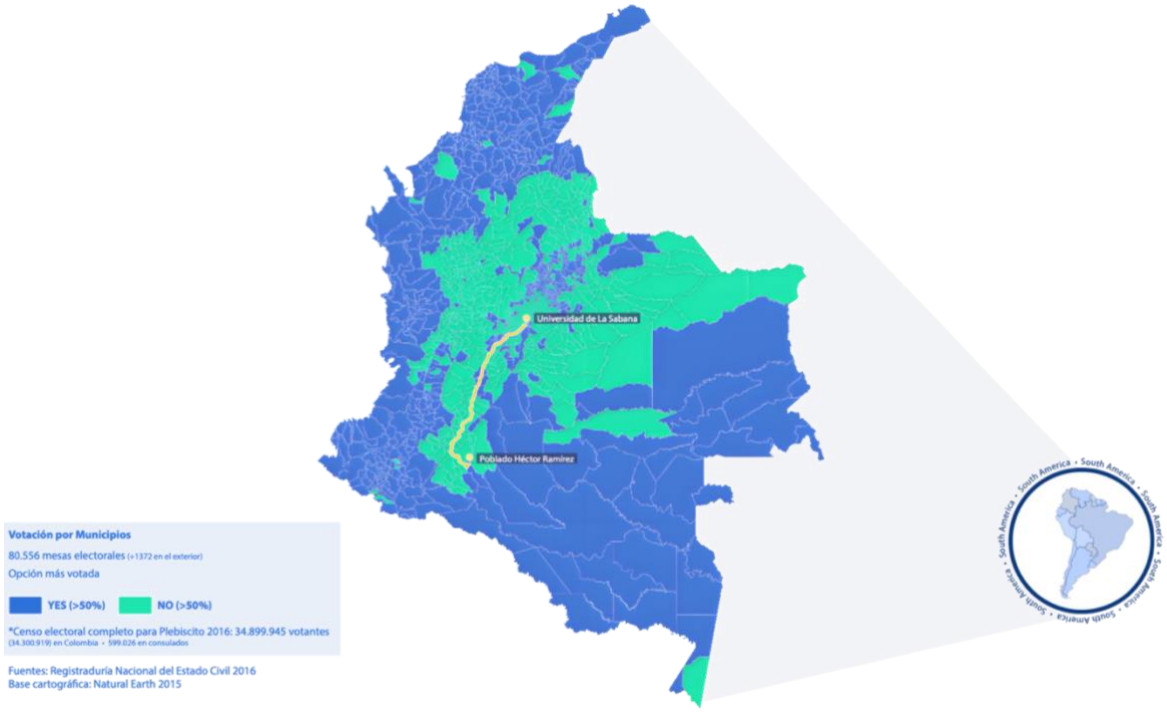
Despite the signature of the agreement with the FARC-EP guerrilla, which has become a political party, society still has a strong division (Ugarriza & Nussio, 2017b). Ex-combatants, victims and *campesinos* usually live in marginalised areas or violence-affected territories (Rettberg & Ugarriza, 2016), while urban citizens remain far away from the direct implications of the armed conflict (Cole et al., 2022). These social categories (rural/urban) imply not only a geographical division but a process of identity formation, with a solid in-group identity and the "othering" of out-groups, as they face different identity challenges. It is in this intersection that the present thesis makes its empirical contribution.

1.3.2. A Rural Community of Former Guerrilla Members and a Private Urban University as the sites for encounter

This PhD studies the encounters between three natural groups formed around different projects, or social milieus (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999): a group of students, a group of researchers from a private urban university in Chía, Cundinamarca and a community of former FARC-EP members reincorporating into civil society members in the Caquetá Department. In particular, it brings together social groups living in two distinct regions and ideological positions about peace and conflict. While most of the Caquetá Department, primarily rural areas, voted yes for the signature of the Peace Agreement, most municipalities in Cundinamarca, including Chía, voted against it (Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil, 2016). Figure 3 shows the geographical and ideological distance (seen in the vote for the plebiscite) of the two organisations that were part of the encounter: The Centro Poblado Héctor Ramírez (La Montañita, Caquetá) and Universidad de La Sabana (Chía, Cundinamarca). Bringing together these two different organisations and its members was an opportunity to explore the socio-psychological impact of the encounter with alterity (Gillespie et al., 2012), both in terms of social contact and movement between contexts (Kadianaki & Gillespie, 2015) and its potential to transform the ethos of conflict in post-accord Colombia.

Figure 3.

Map of Colombia locating the two study sites



Note: Map of Colombia and the division of voting in the plebiscite. The yellow line shows the distance between Universidad de La Sabana and the Centro Poblado Héctor Ramírez (677 Km).

The *Centro Poblado* (small village) Héctor Ramírez (CP-HR) is one of the Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation in which a community of former guerrilla members and their families are reincorporating into society. The CP-HR is located in Agua Bonita II *vereda* (area), municipality of La Montañita, in the Caqueta Department[3] (South of Colombia) (Figure 3). According to their last census[4] (2022), the community has 251 members, of which 138 are former guerrilla members (59 women and 79 men), 41 community members who are not in a reincorporation process (usually family members who moved in to be with their relatives) and 72 children and adolescents (49% are toddlers and

[3] Caquetá is a Colombian region that has been assigned PDET status (Territorially Focused Development Programmes), given its history of ongoing conflict, poverty and state absence. PDET is a policy developed in conjunction with the implementation of the peace accords, prioritising Colombian municipalities most affected by poverty, institutional frailty and conflict.

[4] This is a local census conducted by the community in alliance with academic institutions.

their parents are former guerrilla members). The community is organised around three instances: 1) a cooperative (economic component), 2) a local community council (social component), and 3) a political party group (political component). These components regulate and set the basis for the community's functioning.

The research team is part of the School of Psychology and Behavioural Sciences at University of La Sabana. It is a catholic, private, urban university located in Chía, a municipality close to Bogota, Colombia's capital city. The university had no direct contact with the armed conflict and, until the signature of the peace agreement in 2016, had no specific agenda related to peacebuilding. The alliance, led by the School of Psychology, started in December 2018 with a pedagogical project to enable psychology undergraduate students to meet and experience the reality of conflict-affected actors. The Critical Service Learning (CSL)[5] course "Community Psychology Applied to Post-conflict Settings" was co-designed with psychology professors from La Sabana and social leaders from the CP-HR (Trigos-Carrillo et al., 2020). This was the first step towards a consolidated partnership that led to the participation of four cohorts of students taking the CSL course and the subsequent co-development of a research-practice project to design a local educational model (Chapter 6). The partnership allowed many students from Bogota, who would not otherwise travel to territories such as the CP-HR, to be exposed to the reality of the broader Colombian context.

The programme started in December 2018 and consists of a two week visit of undergraduate students to the CP-HR, where they live with former guerrilla members in their households and share their daily activities (Trigos-Carrillo et al., 2020). The course aimed to engage students and former guerrilla members in dialogical interactions to create a platform for open discussions and sharing everyday activities (this is the focus of chapter 4).

Implementing the CSL course allowed me to engage in open conversations with former guerrilla members about their reincorporation journey. Each visit and an ongoing ethnographic approach enabled me to understand the complexity of collective reincorporation and the impact of encounters with civil society and state institutions on their identity (this is the focus of chapter 5).

[5] Critical Service Learning is a teaching strategy where students share everyday experiences in a community that is different from their own, which in turn is linked to a process of individual and social transformation derived from this experience. Additionally, there are regular and structured spaces for reflection and meaning attribution to unknown cultures (Trigos-Carrillo et al., 2020).

Consolidating a partnership between a private university near Colombia's capital city and a community of former guerrilla members is arguably beneficial for both parties. What started as a curricular experience evolved towards co-designing a research-practice partnership to consolidate an educational model that recognises their local values and practices. The development of the Education, Land and Reconciliation project (EDUCARE in Spanish) involved the participation of former guerrilla members and researchers, who worked together since 2021 to contribute to chapter one of the peace agreement: the transformation of rurality and access to fundamental rights such as education. This project is the culmination of years of ongoing collaboration and presents an example of prefigurative social change to support societal-level reconciliation in post-accord Colombia (focus of chapter 6).

1.4. Overview of Aims and Chapters

This PhD has been prepared in the Thesis-by-publication format under guidelines established by the Department of Psychological and Behavioural Sciences at the London School of Economics and Political Science. The thesis comprises an introduction, a theoretical framework and a methodological framework chapters, three empirical studies presented as academic journal articles (Chapters 4-6), a discussion and conclusions chapter (Chapter 7), references and appendices. The organising theme across chapters is the analysis of knowledge encounters to uncover the sociopsychological infrastructure of reconciliation and its prefiguration, addressing specific questions about the transformation of social representations of self and other, peace and reconciliation resulting from encountering the unknown other. To allow continuity across chapters, each journal article has a preface where I outline the connection of the study with the overarching theme of the PhD. I was the principal investigator, data analyst and primary author of each paper. Sandra Jovchelovitch provided theoretical and methodological guidance and was the secondary author for papers 1 and 2 and the third for paper 3.

Based on a psychosocial ethnographic design, the project examines the sociopsychological infrastructure underpinning the encounter between members of an urban private university and a rural community of former guerrilla members in the south of Colombia. Drawing on theories of social representations (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999, 2008; Jovchelovitch, 2007), knowledge encounters (Jovchelovitch, 2007; Jovchelovitch & Priego-Hernández, 2015), social identity and dialogicality (Gillespie & Cornish, 2009; Marková, 2023; Reicher, 2004; Tajfel, 1975) and prefigurative social change (Cornish et al., 2016; Yates, 2021), it explores the transformation of social representations of self, other and peace

and reconciliation as these different social actors share, work together and reflect on the potential of conflict transformation in post-accord Colombia.

This PhD thesis explores the potential of societal-level reconciliation beyond the traditional understandings of reconciliation as exclusive to victims and perpetrators. Instead, it includes civil society, particularly urban youth and researchers from a Higher Education Institution, to examine their role in the reconciliation process with former guerrilla members reincorporating into society. In addition, it involves former guerrilla members reincorporating into society in a self-reflecting journey to understand the struggles and tensions that are part of encountering society and the implications of reconciliation.

In doing so, it offers a new theoretical framework to understand societal reconciliation. It moves beyond the contact hypothesis and introduces knowledge encounters as a useful model to analyse the microgenetic, ontogenetic and sociogenetic processes that underpin moving from a culture of conflict to a culture of peace. These processes are followed longitudinally and examine social interactions over time, to understand the lived experience of participants and how the encounters alter those perspectives beyond the reified view of the other as a generic out-grouper (Psaltis, 2011, 2012).

Table 1 presents the overview of the thesis.

Table 1.

Overview of the thesis

Central Question	What is the psychosocial infrastructure underpinning reconciliation processes in community encounters in post-accord Colombia?			
	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Chapters
Theoretical Framework	Social Representations Theory	Dialogical Self and Social Identity	Partnerships as Knowledge Encounters and Prefigurative Praxis	Chapter 2
Empirical Focus	Urban youth experience in the ETCRs	Former guerrilla members' journey of reincorporation	Partnership between former guerrilla members and academics	Chapter 3
Sub-questions	1. What are the social representations of peace and reconciliation of a group of urban youth from a private university before and after the encounter with former guerrilla members? 2. What are the representations of self and other of a group of urban youth from a private university before and after the encounter with former guerrilla members?	1. How is identity negotiated in a community of peace signatories as they encounter new social representations about themselves and the other as part of the reincorporation process? 2. What is the link of identity positionings with representations of peace and reconciliation efforts?	1. What is the role of partnerships as knowledge encounters as platforms to prefigure reconciliation in post-accord Colombia? 2. Are there instances of prefigurative collaboration towards social change in the encounters?	Chapters 4, 5, 6

Chapter 2: Developing a Theory of Reconciliation

In Chapter 1, the context of this research project was outlined, showing the importance of developing a socio-cultural, psychological account to understand reconciliation as a broader process beyond victims and perpetrators. This chapter aims to discuss the key concepts and phenomena relevant to this research and to propose a theoretical framework emphasising a socio-cultural approach to reconciliation which places self-other encounters across time as they encounter in a specific context.

It does so by first introducing the conceptual framework of the PhD in section 2.1; the main definition and studies on reconciliation, and the sociopsychological infrastructure of conflict and peace. Section 2.1.1 examines the different approaches to reconciliation and presents the main critiques of the intergroup reconciliation approach. Based on this initial conceptual framework, Section 2.2 focuses on the theoretical framework of the thesis: Social Representations Theory (SRT) as an overarching framework to understand societal reconciliation from a genetic approach (2.2.1); Knowledge Encounters as a model that allows to examine the microgenesis of the encounter between different social groups (2.2.2); dialogicality and social identity theory to explore the ontogenetic processes derived from the knowledge encounters (2.2.3); and prefiguration as a conceptual platform to understand the potential of small-scale initiatives such as the one we are exploring to promote social change and contribute to peacebuilding (2.2.4). The concluding section argues that the triadic nature of social representations provides a sound theoretical framework to understand the transformation of societal beliefs about self, other, peace, and reconciliation, which requires suitable longitudinal methodological tools to understand its developmental nature.

2.1. Conceptual Framework

2.1.1. From Cultures of Conflict to Cultures of Peace: Sociopsychological Infrastructure of Conflict and Reconciliation

Understanding how historically distant social groups can reconcile after the signature of a peace agreement is the first step to contribute to sustainable peacebuilding. Even though reconciliation is still a complex phenomenon with multiple definitions (Rettberg & Ugarriza, 2016), most authors agree that it involves a positive affective change (Čehajić-Clancy et al., 2016), creating or restoring positive relations (Lederach, 1997; Shnabel & Nadler, 2015), promoting mutual acceptance (Lederach, 1997; Staub & Bar-Tal, 2003), learning to live together (Kelman, 2008) and securing a trustful coexistence (Bar-Tal, 2013).

Lederach's (1997) conceptualisation of reconciliation is useful to frame critical dimensions of the construct. For the author, this concept has three main elements: 1) relationship building, 2) encountering with others and acknowledging them, and 3) focus towards a shared, interdependent future. This definition offers an interesting perspective as it presents reconciliation as

> …a place, the point of encounter where concerns about both the past and the future can meet. Reconciliation-as-encounter suggests that space for the acknowledging of the past and envisioning of the future is the necessary ingredient for reframing the present. For this to happen, people must find ways to encounter themselves and their enemies, their hopes and their fears (Lederach, 1997).

Even though Lederach's conceptualisation was developed more than 20 years ago, it still provides a solid background for researchers and practitioners. In particular, the role of the encounter has been explored to understand its potential to foster reconciliation processes.

A second line of conceptualisation involves the sociopsychological infrastructure that must be transformed to achieve reconciliation. This is particularly important in countries engaged in *intractable conflict*, a long-lasting and severe process that lasts for at least one generation (protracted); involves frequent and intense physical violence by different groups, is not perceived as resolvable, is central to the lives of the society and demands extensive material and psychological investments (Bar-Tal, 2007, 2013). Under these conditions, conflict-supportive narratives (Bar-Tal, Vered, et al., 2021) remain even after the signature of peace agreements, challenging societal peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts.

Intractable conflicts are sustained over time and pose difficulties to reconciliation and peace-building efforts by a social-psychological infrastructure comprising collective memory, societal beliefs about conflict (ethos of conflict) and a collective emotional orientation (Bar-Tal, 2007; Bar-Tal et al., 2014). Collective memory refers to how a group understands and communicates its history in a helpful way to the present existence of society and its future aspirations (Bar-Tal, 2013). The ethos of conflict is based on eight societal beliefs (Bart-Tal & Avrahamzon, 2016) related to 1) the justness of the ingroup's goals, 2) security, 3) the positive ingroup image, 4) victimisation of the ingroup; 5) patriotism; 6) unity; 7) peace as an ultimate goal; and 8) delegitimising the out-group's humanity. Finally, the collective emotional orientation refers to the emotions linked to the conflict, usually fear or hate (Bar-Tal, 2007). Whereas each element of this social-psychological infra-structure needs to be understood in its own right, they are mutually interrelated and contribute to the social identities present in society.

Conflict-supportive narratives are based on the continuum from past to present in society and are outlined by the sociopsychological infrastructure of the conflict model. Nevertheless, conflict-supportive narratives have been developed as a one-sided master narrative widely shared and enacted by society, helping adapt to the complex realities experienced (Bar-Tal et al., 2014). In particular, the ethos of conflict element has been deemed as an ideology that informs how social groups understand their conflict without however guiding the perception of other conflicts (Bar-Tal, Trew, et al., 2021), which highlights the locally situated nature of the concept.

Juxtaposed to the ethos of conflict, Bar-Tal has also examined the ethos of peace (Bar-Tal, 2000). According to Bar-Tal (2000), an ethos of peace is linked to five specific beliefs that need to be transformed: 1) societal goals oriented towards coexistence, 2) moving from delegitimisation of the adversary group to recognition and humanisation, 3) the ingroup's acknowledgement of its role in the conflict, 4) conceiving the encounter with the other as a possibility and 5) analysing the conditions necessary for living in peace. This introduces peace-supporting narratives (Bar-Tal et al., 2014) as "counter-narratives" that emerge from different groups and local organisations, challenging and negating the conflict-supporting narrative. These counter-narratives can be the starting point for reconciliation and peace-building in conflict-affected societies (Bar-Tal et al., 2014).

How can we transform entrenched conflict-supportive narratives after decades of conflict? Bar-Tal (2009) has suggested combining methods to promote and facilitate reconciliation can support these efforts. Among those methods, peace education, focusing on joint projects, and cultural exchanges are some examples of the potential of encountering others as a first step towards this transformation. In particular, the education sector can be a starting point to counteract rigid conflict-supportive narratives (Bar-Tal et al., 2021; Psaltis et al., 2017).

2.1.2. Different Perspectives on Reconciliation

Because of its conceptual and empirical emphasis on reducing prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), contact theory has been the theoretical base of reconciliation from a sociopsychological perspective. This body of research has informed our understanding of the potential of encounters between antagonistic groups to improve trust, acknowledgement of past wrongdoings and forgiveness (Bar-Tal & Cehajic-Clancy, 2014; Cehajic et al., 2008; Čehajić & Brown, 2010; Shnabel et al., 2023; Shnabel & Nadler, 2015).

Contact theory, initially formulated by Allport (1964), highlights four necessary conditions for intergroup contact to reduce prejudice between groups: Equal status between groups, the pursuit of common goals, intergroup cooperation and support from authorities. Two systematic reviews on the contact hypothesis demonstrate its positive effects in reducing prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) and changing attitudes towards the out-group (Davies et al., 2011). Contact hypothesis draws heavily from Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorisation Theory to understand social categorisation processes among different groups and their impact on conflict (Riek et al., 2008).

Studies exploring intergroup contact's role in promoting reconciliation have found positive results in post-conflict settings. Quality contact, measured in terms of closeness and friendships among antagonistic groups, has been identified as a major antecedent of perspective-taking (Tam et al., 2008) and empathy (Cehajic et al., 2008; Tam et al., 2008). Additionally, it promotes trust-building and positive perceptions of outgroup intentions (Tropp et al., 2017). The mediating effects identified in this process have been forgiveness (Cehajic et al., 2008) and socio-emotional processes such as reduced anger, hatred and group-based guilt (Čehajić-Clancy et al., 2016). In this same line of research, models such as the needs-based (Nadler & Shnabel, 2015) emphasise the importance of understanding identity development for reconciliation. In particular, the model explains the different needs of either

agency or moral recognition that groups have to be able to reconcile with the other group. These models highlight the deep psychological process that intergroup contact entails and the importance of identity transformation as a result of encountering "the other".

Nevertheless, intergroup contact has received specific critiques when discussing its potential to promote reconciliation in protracted asymmetrical conflict (Maoz, 2011, 2016), particularly highlighting the limits of this approach when the conditions of equal status among groups are not met (Schreiber et al., 2024; Uluğ & Cohrs, 2017). For instance, failure to address the unequal status of the groups can prevent disadvantaged/oppressed groups from openly discussing the power asymmetry (Maoz, 2011; Schreiber et al., 2024), increase prejudice (Gibson & Claassen, 2010), or promote the acceptance of an unjust status quo by disadvantaged groups (Uluğ & Cohrs, 2017). For this reason, a new trend of research stresses the importance of re-examining the roots of intergroup contact as a theory initially conceived to promote institutional change and social justice as the basis for reducing prejudice among conflicting groups (Durrheim & Dixon, 2017).

A second line of critique highlights the limitations of the theoretical approach, referring to it as the "black box of contact" (Psaltis, 2012b) that reduces reconciliation into a psychological and individualistic process and prevents the acknowledgement of structural elements that are needed for societal transformation (Psaltis et al., 2017). For instance, common indicators of reconciliation, such as relying on cognitive-rationalist models, fail to understand the contextually situated nature of intergroup relations (Gillespie, 2012; Psaltis, 2012b). Additional limits of the theory to understand trust-building involve its reliance on cross-sectional studies and the use of surveys and questionnaires, which prevents an in-depth understanding of the contents of the representations held by each group in a divided society (Gillespie, 2012).

An emerging line of research on reconciliation has incorporated these criticisms and focused on the *content* of narratives around conflict and peace and the structural conditions that maintain the ethos of conflict. These studies have explored specific narratives that sustain the ethos of conflict (Cohrs et al., 2015) and combined the theory of social representations to examine the transformation of narratives through encounters among conflicting groups (Nicholson, 2019; Psaltis, 2016). However, a question remains to the extent to which encountering the other without a structural transformation of unequal conditions that sustain conflict can address conflict transformation at the societal level (Maoz, 2016). Even though the answer is unclear, a growing number of academics have stressed the critical role of

educational institutions in peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts and the transformation of conflict-supportive narratives (Bar-Tal, Vered, et al., 2021; Nasie et al., 2016). For instance, Psaltis and colleagues (2017) highlight the role of social representations of the past in transforming conflict as they are discussed, negotiated and debated in the present in education settings.

Based on the previously outlined criticisms of the mainstream approach to reconciliation, this thesis aims to provide an alternative model to understand reconciliation. Following a genetic sociocultural perspective, it analyses the role of knowledge encounters as a model to explore representational change over time in a concrete place.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

2.2.1. Social Representations Theory: A Genetic Perspective of Social Transformation

One of the conditions for moving from a culture of conflict towards a culture of peace involves the transformation of societal beliefs about the in-group, the out-group and peace and conflict (Bar-Tal, 2009). Even though this transformation was conceived as a cognitive psychological outcome, it was also defined as a slow process facilitated through structural change that involves policies and strategies focused on fostering the inclusion and integration of groups in society (Bar-Tal, 2009; Bar-Tal & Bennink, 2004). These two elements of reconciliation highlight that the transformation of societal beliefs does not occur in a vacuum but, instead, in social life.

Social Representations Theory provides a sound theoretical framework for understanding societal beliefs as reified representations formed in social interactions in a specific context and culture (Jovchelovitch, 2007) of (post) conflict settings. It addresses the construction and transformation of social knowledge, particularly those produced in everyday life. Moscovici originally defined them as:

> a system of values, ideas and practices with a twofold function: first, to establish an order which will enable individuals to orient themselves in their material and social world and to master it, and second, to enable communication to take place among the members of a community by providing them with a code for social exchange and a code for naming and classifying unambiguously the various aspects of their world and their individual and group history (Moscovici, 1973, p. xii).

An important aspect of this definition is the emphasis on social interactions (Jovchelovitch, 2007). For SRT, its basic unit of analysis is a triad that comprises self-other-object (Jovchelovitch, 2019; Moscovici, 2008; Psaltis, 2012a). This triadic epistemological model of knowledge is a function of practical action (relating to the object) and communication (relating to the other) (Power et al., 2023). This consideration is important in contexts of protracted conflict in the process of reconciliation as it can provide a robust theoretical understanding of the sociopsychological processes involved in the building and re-building of relationships and how they can be linked with the transformation and emergence of alternative representations. This, as altering the dynamics of self-other-object relation alters the knowledge produced (Jovchelovitch, 2007; Power et al., 2023).

Emerging research has pointed out the importance of a genetic social psychological framework to explore the transformation of social representations in (post)conflict settings (Psaltis, 2015b, 2016). For Duveen and Lloyd (1990/2013), "a genetic perspective is implied in the conception of social representations given that the structure of any particular social representation is a construction and thus the outcome of some developmental process" (p. 177). This approach considers the articulation of microgenetic, ontogenetic and sociogenetic processes that can be applied to examine social interaction in conflict-affected societies (Psaltis, 2015b, 2015a). Microgenesis involves the evocation of social representations in social interaction, ontogenesis refers to the development of individuals in relation to social representations, and sociogenesis is linked to the transformation of the representations held by social groups about specific objects (Duveen & Lloyd, 2013; Psaltis, 2015b, 2015a). Based on this approach, researchers have argued for a particular focus on the actual microgenetic process of interaction to examine how it shapes the content of social representations (Gillespie, 2015). This, taking into account that a microgenetic interaction involves an encounter with alterity and a clash of representations, can, in turn, promote ontogenetic and sociogenetic changes (Kadianaki & Gillespie, 2015).

This approach highlights the flexibility of social representations and how representations transform in the process of shaping the context and events within which they emerge (Howarth et al., 2014). To understand this transformation, it is important to note the distinction between representations formulated by Moscovici. For the author, there are three types of representations: Hegemonic, Polemical and Emancipated (Moscovici, 1988). Hegemonic representations have been conceptualised as reified representations as they are based on beliefs, are deeply embedded in the practices of everyday life and are extremely resistant to change (Psaltis, 2012a). Polemical representations are generated in the course of

social conflict, are passionately opposed by some groups (Castro, 2015) and strive to become hegemonic (Psaltis, 2012a). Emancipated representations are the outgrowth of the circulation of knowledge and ideas belonging to subgroups in more or less contact (Moscovici, 1988). They are renegotiated and resignified in subtle, constant, small, creative ways for a long period of time (Castro, 2015). An important aspect of this distinction highlights that the encounter with alterity mediates representational change (Kadianaki & Gillespie, 2015). It is this encounter which creates alternative representations as a simplified version of the social representations of other groups and can serve to destabilise or stabilise their core (Gillespie, 2008). This dynamic relationship between stability and change makes SRT appropriate for the study of social change (Howarth et al., 2014).

To understand this dynamic process of representational change, Kadianaki and Gillespie (2015) present self-reflection as a process that enables people to reconsider their own representations as they become the object of thought and action. For the authors, four processes enable self-reflection (rupture, social contact, movement and semiotic dialogicality). For this PhD, social contact and movement between contexts are useful to understand how a physical encounter with the other triggers processes of perspective-taking and cognitive polyphasia (Jovchelovitch, 2007; Kadianaki & Gillespie, 2015). These processes are intrinsic to encountering the knowledge of the other, constituting a central concept for the present PhD thesis.

As social processes immersed in institutions, everyday life and social actions in particular contexts, we argue that SRT can contribute three important elements to Bar-Tal's model of the psychosocial infrastructure of conflict: 1) genetic analysis of the transformation of social representations and therefore of the societal beliefs that underpin conflict, 2) the cycle of representational change from hegemonic to emancipated representations (Moscovici, 1988; Castro, 2015) to conceptualise in further detail the transition from an ethos of conflict to an ethos of peace, and 3) research the microgenesis of dialogical knowledge encounters (Jovchelovitch, 2007), the meeting point through which the transformation of representations takes place and prefigure an ethos of peace.

One of the challenges in post-accord Colombia is recognising and acknowledging the social actors that enter the public sphere and the way new representations enter the debate. Bearing in mind the importance of social interactions to the construction, maintenance, and transformation of social representations, knowledge encounters can provide a useful framework for understanding the transformation of social representations as a result of dialogical interaction among social groups. I present the model in the next section.

2.2.2. Knowledge Encounters

As we have argued in the previous sections, there is a consensus on the importance of social relations to transform societal beliefs about the self, the other and conflict to achieve reconciliation. These social relations have been conceptualised through intergroup contact and operationalised through quantity and quality of contact, namely how often people from different groups see each other and how close those relationships are (friendships). While this approach has highlighted the need to think about both contact effects and the social representations of contact (Psaltis, 2015b), I argue that the model of knowledge encounters provides a more comprehensive framework for understanding the microgenesis of social representations, due to its emphasis on exploring the process of communication involved in their transformation. Additionally, the model can offer insights into how identities and social representations are negotiated, contested, and transformed as a result of the encounter, providing an ideal framework for understanding the ontogenetic and sociogenetic processes linked to peacebuilding and reconciliation.

Knowledge encounters are defined as the "point at which two or more representational systems meet, expressing different subjective, intersubjective and objective worlds" (Jovchelovitch, 2007, p. 129). This model explores the *point* of an actual encounter in a concrete space and time (Caillaud et al., 2021) at which representational systems meet and engage in communicative activity (Jovchelovitch & Priego-Hernández, 2015). In particular, it focuses on encounters among social actors who hold different social representations of themselves and others (Aveling & Jovchelovitch, 2014). This involves a process of coexistence of different ways of reasoning in the same group and the same individual, which has been conceptualised as cognitive polyphasia (Moscovici, 1961/2008; Jovchelovitch, 2007).

Cognitive polyphasia involves the coexistence of multiple representations about the same object. According to Jovchelovitch and Priego-Hernández (2015), this coexistence can take different forms: 1) *selective prevalence*, which involves the recognition of multiple knowledges that are used alternatively depending on the situation; 2) *Hybridisation*, in which contradictory representations are combined to create a new form of knowledge, and 3) *Displacement*, in which there is a lack of mutual recognition and exclusion of the knowledge of the other (p.174). These varieties of cognitive polyphasia are the result of styles of communication (dialogical-non-dialogical) (Jovchelovitch & Priego-Hernández, 2015) and

have been explored in situations of actual physical contact (social contact or movement between contexts) that enable a psychological process of self-reflection based on the encounter with alterity (Kadianaki & Gillespie, 2015).

Two interrelated processes are linked to the process of self-reflection: perspective-taking and recognition. Perspective-taking involves a decentred perspective (Jovchelovitch, 2007) and taking the position of the other, which has its own social and structural configuration (Gillespie, 2006). While perspective-taking can be linked to a broader representational landscape about different objects, recognition involves the affirmation of one's identity by others (Hopkins & Blackwood, 2011) or how the self thinks is seen by others (Amer, 2020; Amer & Obradovic, 2022). The following section will explore these two conditions, given their direct link with identity management.

To understand the coexistence and contradiction of multiple representations, the model analyses the communicative dynamics that mediate how the knowledge of the other is perceived and treated in the knowledge encounter (Jovchelovitch & Priego-Hernández, 2015). Encounters can either recognise or deny the knowledge of the other (Jovchelovitch & Priego-Hernández, 2015) and can affect how knowledges communicate, allowing both dialogical and non-dialogical outcomes (Jovchelovitch, 2007).

A dialogical encounter involves, among other elements, recognising the other as a legitimate actor and understanding the plurality of perspectives within the intersubjective space (Jovchelovitch, 2007). It uses styles of communication related to transformation (Aveling, 2011), consensus (Batel & Castro, 2008), semantic promoters and polyvocality (Jovchelovitch & Priego-Hernández, 2015) which allow the de-centration and mutual recognition among individuals and collectives. Through this process, hybridisation, a variety of cognitive polyphasia takes place, in which representations are not just combined or applied simultaneously but create a new form of knowing (Caillaud et al., 2021; Jovchelovitch & Priego-Hernández, 2015). This has been identified as a critical element for the emergence of emancipated representations (Castro, 2015) and can be linked to social relations of cooperation (symmetrical) that lead to innovation, conversion and collective action (Psaltis, 2015a).

On the contrary, non-dialogical encounters are characterised by a lack of recognition and denial of the knowledge of the other (Jovchelovitch, 2007). Non-dialogical encounters aim to exclude and displace minority groups and their associated representations (Jovchelovitch, 2007). Contrary to dialogical encounters, styles of communication linked to

the use of semantic barriers (Gillespie, 2008, 2020), reification (Batel & Castro, 2008) and monologising (Aveling, 2011) prevent the transformation of social transformation. In (post) conflict scenarios, failure to engage in meaningful encounters can prevent the transformation of societal beliefs aimed at delegitimising the enemy and removing their humanity (Bar-Tal, 2007; Bar-Tal & Avrahamzon, 2016). This can be explained by the absence of contact or the presence of negative quality communication not based on mutual respect, which directly relates to the adherence to official narratives (Psaltis, 2015b).

Emerging research has used the knowledge encounters' model to examine social issues linked to disability laws (Caillaud et al., 2021), sexuality education and reproductive health interventions (Coultas et al., 2020; Priego-Hernandez, 2017) and multi-racial identity construction (Reddy, 2019). These studies have explored the meaning-making process of local communities facing the implementation of new laws or interventions (Caillaud et al., 2021; Coultas et al., 2020), as well as the impacts of encountering the knowledge of the Other in the consolidation of emancipated social representations (Caillaud et al., 2021) or hybridised identities (Reddy, 2019). However, to the best of our knowledge, no studies are using this model to explore the intra and inter-psychological processes involved when antagonistic groups engage in social contact in conflict-affected societies.

In this regard, examining cognitive polyphasia through a microgenetic perspective (Psaltis, 2015a) can elucidate a central aspect of social representations: the intertwining of social representations, identity and community (Jovchelovitch & Priego-Hernández, 2015, p. 169). This consideration is essential in conflict-affected societies, particularly those trying to reconcile, as new actors and representations about peace, conflict and the involved actors enter into the public sphere and need to be negotiated at the macro level between groups and micro level between individuals and within the self (Priego-Hernández, 2011). For instance, hybridisation, as a form of cognitive polyphasia, is one of the possible outcomes of the encounter and could be seen as the basis for sociogenesis through the consolidation of alternative and emancipated representations and ontogenesis through the transformation of self. In the next section, we discuss the role of identity transformation from a social and dialogical perspective.

2.2.3. Understanding Identity: Dialogicality and Social Interaction

As mentioned in the previous section, knowledge encounters refer to the point of encounter between different representational systems (Jovchelovitch, 2007). This

microgenetic process allows the evocation and reconstruction of social representations in the micro-time of social interactions, which impacts the identity construction of the individuals and social groups involved (ontogenesis) (Psaltis, 2015a). This section focuses on the ontogenetic processes triggered by knowledge encounters, examining the impact of social interaction on the construction of identity. In particular, it examines the role of alterity (Kadianaki, 2014; Kadianaki & Gillespie, 2015) in the transformation of representations of self and the strategies groups use to challenge or resist stigmatising ones (Gillespie et al., 2012; Howarth, 2002).

An important disclaimer is in order here. While there is extensive literature examining the role of identity in conflict-affected settings (Čehajić & Brown, 2010; Riek et al., 2008; Taylor et al., 2022; Uluğ et al., 2023), the emphasis on these approaches has been on exploring in-group identification and the prediction of trust and adherence to master narratives of conflict (Taylor et al., 2022; Uluğ et al., 2023), or how official narratives influence feelings of symbolic and realistic threat, increase prejudice and reduce the willingness to coexist (Psaltis & Cakal, 2016). This research provides important and useful information that underscores the interaction between self and context. However, there is still an open space to understand how groups position and re-position themselves (Psaltis & Cakal, 2016) in terms of the social interactions and microgenetic process that shape their adherence to master narratives of the other and of peace and conflict.

In particular, post-conflict societies experiencing the reintegration of former combatants can provide a nuanced view of the link between identities and adherence to master narratives following the inverse logic: how the encounter between self and other in specific contexts can transform how each group represents the other and the implications it has at the ontogenetic and sociogenetic levels. For this reason, in this section, I will use primarily studies related to immigration, ethnicity and, in a minor proportion, the identity of former combatants to elaborate on how social identities can be transformed as a result of the encounter through intra and inter-psychological processes.

Researchers have conceptualised identity as built through and against the representations held by others and bound to particular social contexts (Howarth, 2002). This definition highlights the dialectical relation between self, social others and social knowledge (Duveen, 2001/2013; Howarth, 2002; Kadianaki, 2014) in constructing social identity. In addition, it locates this construction in specific social contexts that can provide frames of action that can give stability to the self (Moore et al., 2011). This means that both identity and

social representations are socio-psychological processes through which meanings are constructed and organised, enabling individuals to relate to different social contexts and social others (Renedo, 2010). An important element to emphasise is that this interplay between self and other involves being identified and categorised by others (Blackwood et al., 2015) as well as a process of identification (Duveen, 2013).

Bearing in mind that the construction of identity is linked to interactional contexts (Amer, 2020), moving to different contexts or engaging in social contact with others can trigger processes of self-reflection (Kadianaki & Gillespie, 2015) as people encounter new representational systems. Movement between geographical contexts has been studied through identity negotiations related to migration processes (Gillespie et al., 2012; Kadianaki & Andreouli, 2017; Mahendran et al., 2019), as they are paradigmatic cases that illustrate the alterity within the self as it moves. For example, Gillespie et al. (2012) explore the impact of geographical movement as an example of a physical encounter with alterity among immigrants living in Ireland and Greece and the "local" citizens. A central aspect of the study is the self-reflection process of both migrants and local citizens regarding their own representations of self and other, as well as the alternative ones brought by each. In the case of social contact, studies have focused on the role of ethnicity and how it is negotiated in different contexts (Amer, 2020; Reddy, 2019). For example, Reddy (2019) explores the identity construction of racialised communities in Malaysia and Singapore. In particular, she analyses the role of static racial categories imposed by the State (public sphere) and the negotiation of those identities in the private sphere. What these studies have in common is the emphasis on place and social interaction in the construction of identity and how individuals deal with stigmatising representations of self by other as they coexist with them. These approaches are particularly useful in (post) conflict settings such as Colombia, where new actors are reincorporating into civil society, and the possibility of encountering the other in specific places is re-opened.

Two different but complementary approaches have been used to understand how identity is negotiated in these scenarios: dialogicality and the social representations approach. Dialogical approaches to identity formation examine the multiplicity and complexity of positions emerging from the self-other encounter (Marková, 2003) and how the constitutive alterity of the self (Grossen & Orvig, 2011) is linked to historically, culturally and socially situated knowledge (Marková, 2000). These positions, often referred to as I-positions (Hermans, 2012), arise from the encounter with other individuals, social environments, institutions (Grossen & Orvig, 2011; Marková et al., 2020) and generalised entities (Grossen

& Orvig, 2011). Encountering alterity involves meeting unfamiliar representations of self held by others and engaging in processes of identity negotiation (Gillespie et al., 2012; Kadianaki & Gillespie, 2015). This negotiation does not involve discarding previous identities, but on the contrary, internalising new ones, which can coexist either in tension or harmoniously (Gillespie et al., 2012). The polyphony of selfhood makes visible the contradictory and non-linear relationship that the self sustains with itself over the life course. Its internal dialogicality is a central feature of the dialogical mind (Marková, 2016) that expresses how selves change themselves as they change their representation of situations and situations themselves change.

The link between representations and identities has been established by the Social Representations Approach (SRA), which argues for the need to analyse social identities as social representations, subject to the dynamics of representation (Elcheroth et al., 2011, p. 735). In particular, this approach sees Social Representations Theory and Social Identity Theory as the general mechanisms governing how people co-ordinate to understand and transform their social worlds (Elcheroth & Reicher, 2017). The basic premise of the approach is that social behaviour is linked to a shared knowledge (social representations) that the person is aware that others have (meta-representations), is mediated by specific practices nested in social institutions (enacted communication - joint performance), and creates realities as frames in which they position themselves and others (Collective agency) (Elcheroth et al., 2011; Elcheroth & Reicher, 2017).

In both approaches, the interaction between self and other in specific contexts is the trigger for the negotiation of identities. In the case of the dialogical approach, this division is done by using the I-position as the position in which the self speaks, and the inner voices are the ones attributed to Others (but are distinct from the voices of the actual others), referred to as inner voices (Aveling et al., 2015). In the case of the social representation approach, the voice of the other is present through the concept of meta-representations, which relates to what the self thinks others are thinking as about her (Elcheroth & Reicher, 2017). Even though in both approaches the outcome of this interaction is the multiplicity of the self, each one has explored how the intra-psychological process takes place differently.

Management of Identity: Intra-psychological processes

Studies based on a dialogical approach have examined the intra-psychological processes taking place as the result of intercultural encounters through analysing semantic

strategies. Semantic strategies are meaning complexes used to negotiate and give new meaning to experiences and regulate thoughts (Kadianaki, 2014). These meanings are used to reinforce the semantic boundary between the self's view and the views of others (Gillespie, 2020, p. 22), which serves to dismiss and delegitimise an unwanted perspective (Kadianaki, O'sullivan, Gillespie, 2015), and silence, resist or challenge alternative social representations (Gillespie et al., 2012). For instance, "local" citizens use such strategies as essentialising difference on the basis of nationhood (essentialising sameness) to reinforce ingroup identities and justify discrimination against immigrants (Kadianaki & Andreouli, 2017). On the contrary, immigrants use strategies of essentialising sameness by stressing similarities and superordinate categories (we are all human beings) to resist the way they are presented by others (Gillespie et al., 2012; Kadianaki, 2014). Other strategies used by immigrants to resist stigma are isolating stigma (not everyone is like this) (Gillespie et al., 2012), or disregarding them as ridiculous and nonsense (Gillespie et al., 2012; Kadianaki, 2014).

Studies using a Social Representations Approach framework focus on performative strategies as a response to misrecognition or nonrecognition of self (Amer, 2020; Blackwood et al., 2015; Osbourne et al., 2023). Performative strategies are defined as the intentional expression or suppression of behaviours associated with a salient identity (Klein et al., 2007), which serve as communicative acts to influence identity recognition (Amer, 2020). These actions are linked with meta-representations as they are oriented to a particular audience holding specific stigmatising representations of self (Klein et al., 2007). These strategies can be divided in three categories: distancing, highlighting and transforming. Distancing is linked to performative public distancing to avoid stigmatisation, for example, by not identifying as a refugee in public (Mahendran et al., 2019); physically removing themselves from the stigmatising context, performing normative behaviours as part of "playing the game" in case of racialised identities (Osbourne et al., 2023); or concealing identity as former combatants in processes of reintegration (González & Clémence, 2019a; López et al., 2015; McFee, 2016). Highlighting ingroup identity refers to making their identity visible using specific markers like wearing a hijab (Amer, 2020; Chapman, 2016; Hopkins & Greenwood, 2013), or speaking a different language in public (Osbourne et al., 2023). A third category involves combining identity markers of dual identities, for example, re-fashioning hijabs (Amer, 2020; Chapman, 2016), or pairing the use of hijabs with western acceptable behaviours (Hopkins & Greenwood, 2013). Through these strategies, people actively seek to shift the power dynamics linked to recognition or misrecognition and take control over how they want to be represented and recognised.

While these studies have explored the psychological process of identity negotiation, only a few describe its outcomes in terms of specific identity re-positionings as a result of social interactions. Studies exploring migration, for example, have identified counter-positions taken by participants to resist stigmatised representations of self. I-positions as travellers and cosmopolitans instead of immigrants (Kadianaki et al., 2015); or counter-position from helped to the helper (Mahendran et al., 2019) in the case of refugees, are specific instances in which studies have explained the identity outcomes of the intra-psychological level of identity negotiation. In the case of former combatants, only one study provides an in-depth, longitudinal description of the transformation of I-positions experienced by a former combatant in Portugal, and the coexistence of positions linked to social justice and as a mother (da Silva et al., 2020). In addition, only one study, explores the consequences of cognitive polyphasia in the identity construction of racialised communities (Reddy, 2019). Using the knowledge encounters model, Reddy (2019) explains how mixed-race individuals use strategies of selective prevalence according to the identity that serves the context, hybridisation in cases in which they can mix their identities or the racial negation of the stigmatised identity (displacement). Arguably however, this model needs further development when it comes to the polyphonies of the self, because as selective prevalence works very well when it comes to the coexistence of cultural identities (i.e. pick and choose specific identities to adjust themselves to contexts), in the case we are discussing there is a tension between these identities and an attempt to use social creativity to destroy stigma.

Even though these studies provide detailed analysis of the intra-psychological processes of identity negotiation and, in some cases, its outcomes, they focus on individual-level changes. This is in line with a wider and broader conceptualisation of community that is not linked to a specific geographical space and instead recognises how people are shaped by their mobility (Howarth et al., 2015). As a result, sampling procedures include people who identify as part of a specific community or social category but do not necessarily live in the same geographical space. This presents a challenge in understanding identity management strategies both at the semantic and performative levels in people who are dealing with stigma, exclusion and marginalisation and are living as a collective in a specific place. This is particularly relevant given that the core principle of identity presentation and performance, for example, is based on the possibility of creating conditions for social creativity and social change (Klein et al., 2007).

Strategies of social creativity and social change were initially theorised by Tajfel (1975) as mechanisms that individuals can use to improve their position in a social situation

where they are perceived negatively. In cases where it is not possible to move away from the in-group, group members engage in active processes of constructing and re-constructing social identities, which can shape the world in different ways (Reicher, 2004). These strategies are considered useful for mobilising group action and demobilising outgroup opposition and presuppose mutual visibility between ingroup members, copresence and effective communication, which can create a sense of empowerment and facilitate coordination (Klein et al., 2007). These identity management strategies can be potentially explored in (post) conflict settings in which former combatants engage as a collective in processes of conflict transformation (Flack & Ferguson, 2021) or reincorporation in the same physical place (Gluecker et al., 2022). Previous studies have also highlighted the potential of exploring the consolidation of an in-group identity and its impact on social change as mutual actors come together to engage in collective action for the mutual benefit of both groups (Psaltis & Cakal, 2016).

For the purpose of this thesis, combining a dialogical and social representations approach can offer important tools to explore both intra-psychological and inter-psychological processes related to identity transformation as a result of the encounter between historically and geographically distant groups. In particular, I focus on a specific and delimited geographical space, the ETCR, as a safe space where social groups holding different social representations of self, other and peace and reconciliation come together and re-present each other.

2.2.4. Prefiguration

Societal reconciliation is a complex long-term process in which multiple actors participate in the construction and re-construction of a tarnished social fabric. As we have outlined in the previous section, it involves dialogical encounters in which the self recognises and is recognised by the other and through that microgenetic process, representations about peace, conflict, self and other become the object of self-reflection and transformation. This process, however, does not occur in a vacuum and "almost never begins with a large-scale change by the majority of society members. Rather, it begins with a small minority and continues with a slow process of unfreezing and changing beliefs and attitudes*"* (Bar-Tal, 2009, p. 372). For this reason, this thesis uses the concept of prefiguration and prefigurative politics to further understand the intersection between knowledge encounters and social change.

Prefigurative politics refers to the small-scale (Guerlain & Campbell, 2016), future-oriented construction of political alternatives (Yates, 2021) to promote social change by enacting alternative social relations as though they had already been achieved (Yates, 2015). In particular, prefiguration involves promoting equal participation, the emergence of leadership and empowerment of those who are not leaders (Yates, 2021), as well as the reconfiguration of social relationships, new forms of social engagement and egalitarian relations desired of a future society (Cornish et al., 2016). Moreover, prefiguration involves five processes: 1) experimentation, in which community members have the opportunity to explore potential futures by carrying out new practices through their everyday interactions, 2) spaces for debate and discussion, to develop and critique political perspectives, ideas and social movement frames 3) establishing new collective norms drawing on experimental performances and political perspectives or ideas; 4) intervention or consolidation in material environments or social orders, which can be seen on specific actions such as how people are seated in a debate, how land is used or cultivated, and how physical infrastructures were altered; and 5) diffusion of practices and perspectives, which allows prefigured 'alternatives' to persist beyond the present for groups and collectives (Yates, 2015, p. 15). Together, these processes open the possibility to create a safe space for the development of group identities, the negotiation of dilemmas and relational aspects of group life (Cornish et al., 2016).

Even though the majority of studies have focused on social movements and protests (Acar & Uluğ, 2016; Maeckelbergh, 2012), there is a line of research that combines prefiguration with a social representations approach to explore grassroots initiatives that aim towards social change. These studies explore how grassroots initiatives can promote social change (Guerlain & Campbell, 2016) and become spaces for the imaginative construction of alternative selves and communities (Biddau et al., 2016). What these studies have in common is the analysis of concrete community-building practices rooted in physical spaces. By focusing on the physicality of the encounter, these ethnographic studies highlight the potential of the collective, everyday practices that can inform social change. For instance, in their study of participation in community gardens in East London, Guerlain and Campbell (2016) explore the relational, symbolic and material dimensions of participation of asylum seekers and refugees in these settings and identify the potential of these spaces to *enable* experiences of dignity, mutual respect and equality that people don't usually get in their own contexts. Moreover, the study by Biddau et al. (2016) analyses the potential of a sustainability initiative in Italy in which participants experiment with different systems of

supply and consumption and of relationships and community living and its impact on identity construction and social transformation. In both cases, the emphasis lies on the process of relationship-building and transformation of self and other, which can inform the microgenesis, ontogenesis and sociogenesis of knowledge encounters.

An additional line of research is on the potential of partnerships between communities and academia to prefigure social change by tackling racism (Campanella et al., 2022) exclusion (Ko et al., 2022), and promote peacebuilding in the classroom (Kester et al., 2023). These studies, mostly based on theoretical frameworks linked to education sciences and from decolonial and participatory research methodologies, explore the potential of collaborative alliances with indigenous (Ko et al., 2022) and black communities (Ko et al., 2022) to co-construct knowledge, discuss the everyday dilemmas faced by their groups and design alternative ways to challenge them. In these cases, the central element is the need for academics to be self-aware of their own role in knowledge production and, from a horizontal approach, prefigure social change *with* the communities who are experiencing stigma, exclusion and marginalisation. Even though these studies use theoretical frameworks from the education field, the model of knowledge encounters, specifically the theoretical conceptualisation of partnerships as knowledge encounters, can inform the microgenesis of these collaborative alliances.

Bearing in mind that reconciliation involves relationship and trust-building, as well as a collective envisioning of the future (Lederach, 1997), I argue that prefigurative politics can be a useful platform to study how and in which ways social groups with different life experiences, access to resources, and worldviews come together to consolidate new ways of understanding peace, reconciliation, and collaborative alliances.

2.2.5 Conclusion: Opening the Black Box of Societal Reconciliation

This thesis explores reconciliation from a socio-cultural and genetic approach. It argues that the triadic model of self-other-object as a semiotic and symbolic process that generates social representations and communication (Marková, 2023) can contribute to further expanding Bar-Tal's (2009, 2013) socio-psychological infrastructure of conflict and reconciliation. In doing so, it introduces the Knowledge Encounters model (Jovchelovitch, 2019) to understand the microgenetic, ontogenetic, and sociogenetic processes (Duveen & Lloyd, 2013; Psaltis, 2015b) involved in concrete, physical spaces where conflict-affected

actors meet. This approach allows to explore the complex process of encountering alterity (Kadianaki & Gillespie, 2015) as people engage in social interactions with unknown others.

It highlights the importance of concrete physical spaces for encountering the other, and introduces the concept of prefiguration (Yates, 2015) to understand the potential of knowledge encounters to promote social change in conflict-affected societies. Combining the concept of prefiguration and the knowledge encounters model offers a useful theoretical approach to understanding how the transformation of social relations in specific places can lead to transformation at the individual, relational and representational level. It contributes to the social identity approach by connecting prefiguration and performative strategies to identity management by highlighting the dynamic relationship between practice (identity performance), social context (constituted by others' practices), and social identity (Klein et al., 2007).

In doing so, it establishes a clear theoretical route to provide the missing content of contact theory (Gillespie, 2012). This is the case in particular because it explores how people intentionally create spaces to engage in relations of equal status between groups, pursuit of common goals (joint intentionality), intergroup cooperation and support from the authorities (bridging social capital), all conditions outlined by Allport (1964) as part of the contact hypothesis.

2.2.6 Research Questions

The empirical studies of this PhD were designed to explore the role of knowledge encounters between different societal groups to transform social representations of self and other and prefigure peace and reconciliation processes. To do so, it draws on a social constructionist perspective that assumes that psychological activity is always the product of communication between different voices (Duveen & Psaltis, 2013) and an understanding of contact as a social interaction between varying positions and perspectives in the representational field (Psaltis, 2012a).

To explore this in more detail, the present thesis is guided by the following questions, first outlined in section 1.4:

1. What are the social representations of peace and reconciliation held by a group of urban youth from a private university before and after encountering a community of former guerrilla members? (Chapter 4)

2. What are the representations of self and other of a group of urban youth from a private university before and after a encountering a community of former guerrilla members? (Chapter 4)
3. How is identity negotiated in a community of peace signatories as they encounter new social representations about themselves and the other as part of the reincorporation process? (Chapter 5)
4. What is the link of identity positionings with representations of peace and reconciliation efforts? (Chapter 5)
5. What is the role of partnerships as knowledge encounters as platforms to prefigure reconciliation in post-accord Colombia? (Chapter 6)
6. Are there instances of prefigurative collaboration towards social change in the encounters? (Chapter 6)

The methodological design of the project is outlined in Chapter 3, discussing the potential of a qualitative, ethnographic approach to exploring the transformation of representations of self, other and object. Then, I turn to the empirical papers that address specific research questions. Chapter 4 focuses on the representations of self, other and peace and reconciliation of undergraduate psychology students participating in a Critical Service Learning course. By looking at the CSL course as a knowledge encounter, the paper examines the representational transformation before, during and after the encounter. Chapter 5 examines identity negotiation of former guerrilla members as they transition from being *guerrilleros* to becoming citizens as part of the reincorporation process. Using a dialogical analysis, it examines the different I-positions that mediate the reincorporation process and how each one of them is linked to their understandings of peace and reconciliation. Chapter 6 is the last phase of this longitudinal qualitative study and focuses on the consolidation of the partnership between the CP-HR and researchers from Universidad de La Sabana in the design and implementation of an educational initiative that recognises their values as *campesinos* (farmers) and *farianos* (FARC related). By thematically analysing the interactions of the two groups throughout the implementation of the project, the paper highlights the potential of transformative knowledge encounters to create enabling spaces that prefigure reconciliation and the transformation of representations of self, other and peace and reconciliation among historically, geographically and ideologically divided social groups.

Chapter 3: Methodological Design

3.1 Research Design

Researching social representations as a genetic theory (Duveen & Lloyd, 2013) involves considering the three interrelated levels of ontogenesis, sociogenesis and microgenesis, in which representations are constructed and re-constructed (Flick et al., 2015). To understand the genetic process of social representations and their transformation as a result of the encounter, research has suggested the importance of direct observation of interaction or meaning-making processes (Duveen & Psaltis, 2013; Psaltis, 2015a), in addition to other qualitative research strategies focused on asking directly what people think through the use of interviews or focus groups (Flick et al., 2015).

Based on these theoretical considerations, I conducted a psychosocial ethnography. This approach allowed a specific communicative process within the community, between the researcher and the community and wider interlocutors in the public sphere that has enabled critical reflection about the self, the other, and the object (Jovchelovitch, 2007). The ethnographic approach fits the purpose of the project as it provides access to non-tangible or hard-to-reach social phenomena and gives access to people's practices (Bauer & Gaskell, 2008; Buscatto, 2018). As a multi-method form of research (Griffin & Bengry-Howell, 2017), it involved a combination of participant observation, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and dialogue meetings to explore the transformation of social representations through time (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999, 2008b) (Table 2).

Using ethnography to study social representations has proven a useful strategy for mapping representational systems (Jovchelovitch, 2007). This qualitative approach entails a dialogical process in which the researcher is aware of their role in transforming local realities and engage in critical dialogue with communities to explore their local knowledge about a specific issue (Jovchelovitch, 2007). Moreover, and in line with the aims of this thesis, it provides tools to understand the semantic (Gillespie, 2008) and performative strategies (Klein et al., 2007) for identity negotiation taking place during a knowledge encounter, an understudied focus in peacebuilding and reconciliation studies from this methodological approach.

The ethnographic approach seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the socio-psychological infrastructure of reconciliation, through the in-depth study of representational change in different social milieus (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999). Social milieus are natural groups formed around a common project and carry systems and functional references of

representations (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999). This PhD studies three social milieus: a group of students from a private university participating in a CSL course, former combatants building community after the peace accords and the workings of a partnership between academic researchers and the community of former guerrilla members. Segmentation based on this concept provides insights into how each group thinks about a particular object based on their common project and the *lifeworld they inhabit*. The concept of lifeworld is drawn from a long-standing phenomenological tradition that thematises the specific systems of meanings, practices, values and objects that construct the background in which people experience their lives and has been used by social and cultural psychologists conducting psychosocial ethnographies for community development (Jovchelovitch & Priego-Hernández, 2013; Schutz, 1967).

The ethnographic and longitudinal approach used in this PhD thesis aligns with the conceptualisation of reconciliation as a *process* rather than an outcome. Combining a Social Representations perspective with an ethnographic approach to study reconciliation provides a useful framework to understand that social transformations in research require time, relationship and trust-building. In this sense, the study of societal reconciliation can benefit from this developmental approach as it brings to the fore additional considerations, such as the role of the researcher, participants and the meaning of this type of research projects for conflict-affected communities. These considerations will be fully developed in this chapter and can inform mainstream approaches to the study of reconciliation.

3.1.1. Gaining Access and Entry.

Conducting research in a conflict-affected setting involves a process of trust-building that requires time (Millar, 2018) and engaging in critical conversations about potential collaborations even before they start. For this reason, this project started a year before my formal PhD start date. It involved setting up a platform of collaboration and trust-building with former guerrilla members who were at first sceptical of working together with academics from private universities. A crucial gatekeeper and one of the main partners in this journey was one of the leaders of the CP-HR. A peace signatory for more than 20 years, he was in charge of the local cooperative when I met him and together, we designed the CSL course that started this research journey. A second step of trust-building and consolidation of a partnership was the consolidation of the proposal for this PhD. This involved other community members who were part of the conversations about a potential research project to

understand their reincorporation process. This process required ongoing discussions about research, researchers and a clear understanding of the potential benefits or implications for the community.

For me, this was an important step, in line with democratising research methods (Edwards & Brannelly, 2017), particularly in a context of mistrust and a representational landscape of stigma and exclusion, which former guerrilla members were experiencing and still experience seven years after the signature of the peace agreement. For this reason, throughout the implementation of the project, I was intentionally keen on acknowledging and including participants' perspectives alongside my own interpretations to understand what people were collectively and individually thinking and doing to transform their realities (Power et al., 2023) as a result of the encounter.

3.1.2. Ethnographic Approach and its Progress through Time

The three empirical studies conducted for this PhD project reflect my own relationship with the field, participants and the context of peacebuilding and reconciliation in this case. This consideration is necessary as this is a study focused on understanding the role of the encounter in the transformation of social representations, and therefore, an ethnographic approach needs to recognise that the researcher is part of the encounter and enters into the intersubjective and, through being part of it, comes to understand it (Gillespie & Cornish, 2009).

Study 1 focuses primarily on urban youth's perspectives about their own process of transformation as they encountered former guerrilla members. This initial stage of the project resulted from a pre-established trust-building process with participants, a shared experience in the CSL course and the possibility to engage in informal conversations once the course finished. As presented in Table 3, fieldwork in study 1 involved specific visits to the CP-HR as part of the implementation of the CSL course and an emphasis on students' experience while having parallel discussions with community members about their own process of reincorporation. This was the platform for having preliminary conversations for study 2.

In study 2, a longer period of ethnographic fieldwork was necessary to engage in deep conversations about the experience of reincorporation with former guerrilla members. This process required stepping out of the comfort zone of short visits with participant observations and instead presented the challenge of following the everyday lives of peace signatories. In addition, it was an opportunity for peace signatories to reflect on their own stories and

reincorporados. As a result, peace signatories requested to go beyond an academic paper and a long PhD thesis written in English as the outcome of my ethnographic study. For this reason, one of the products derived from this ethnographic study is a non-academic book written with former guerrilla members based on their interviews[6]. During this time, and as part of our discussions of the challenges of reincorporation, we also set up a larger project to consolidate an educational model that recognised their principles and values as *farianos* (FARC-related) and *campesinos* (farmers), which was the basis for Study 3.

Study 3 focused on an ethnographic analysis of the implementation of the Education, Land and Reconciliation (EDUCARE in Spanish) project, a Participatory Action Research Project co-designed between researchers from La Sabana University and the community from the CP-HR. In this study, I was able to further explore the potential of knowledge encounters after years of collective work and the consolidation of a partnership. In this case, an ethnographic approach facilitated a critical look at the role of each participating group (researchers and peace signatories) in the knowledge encounter. In the case of La Sabana researchers, they were colleagues with no prior experience of working with former guerrilla members and who consider its implementation a challenge to themselves as well. In that case, I participated as a "hinge" between these two life worlds coming together to collectively think about education and peacebuilding.

Table 2 presents the main research questions and methodological approach. Table 3 presents the timeline of fieldwork and the context of each visit.

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[6] Construyendo Comunidad. Experiencias desde la Reincorporación.

Table 2

Research Questions, Participants and Research Methods

Research Questions	Participants	Data collection	Analysis	Paper
1. What are the social representations of peace and reconciliation of a group of urban youth from a private university before and after the encounter with former guerrilla members? 2. What are the representations of self and other of a group of urban youth from a private university before and after the encounter with former guerrilla members?	Undergraduate students (n=24)	Pre-departure Narratives T1 Narratives, diaries and videos (during) T2 Focus groups (T3) Focused Interview with visual elicitation (T1-T2-T3 retrospective)	Thematic Analysis	Published in European Journal of Social Psychology (2024)
1. How is identity negotiated in a community of peace signatories as they encounter new social representations about themselves and the other as part of the reincorporation process? 2. What is the link of identity positionings with representations of peace and reconciliation efforts?	Former Guerrilla Members (ETCR Community) (n=24)	Interviews (T1-T2-T3 Retrospective)	Dialogical analysis	Submitted to Journal of Peace and Conflict
1. What is the role of partnerships as knowledge encounters as platforms to prefigure reconciliation in post-accord Colombia? 2. Are there instances of prefigurative collaboration towards social change in the encounters?	Former Guerrilla Members (ETCR Community) (n=10) Researchers (n=9)	T1: 2 Focus groups (dialogue meetings) T2: 8 Focus Groups (dialogue meetings) T3: Semi-structured interview	Thematic Analysis	In preparation. Abstract accepted for Special Issue Journal of Political Psychology

Table 3.

Ethnographic fieldwork

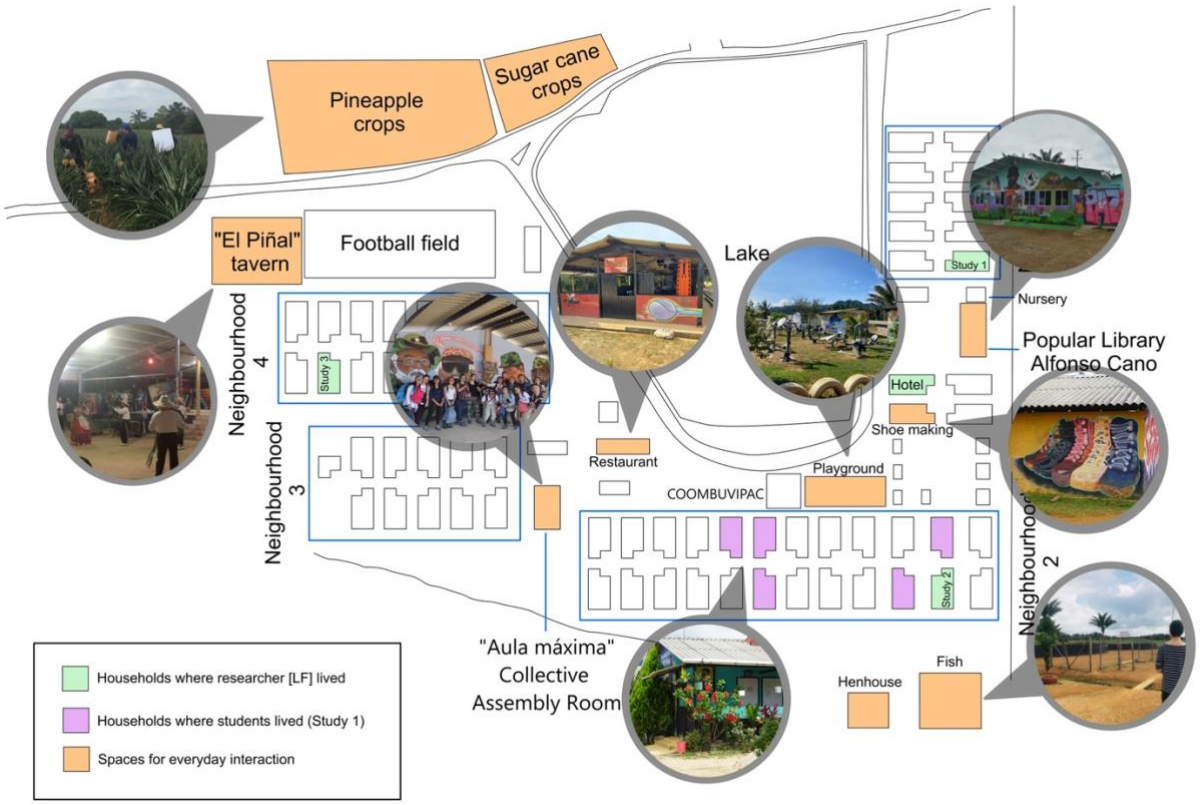
Study	Visit	Duration	Context
Study 1	July 2018	1 day	First visit to the Centro Poblado Héctor Ramírez. Academic visit with other researchers as part of the IV Seminar on Historical Memory (Universidad de La Amazonia). Initial conversations with the Community Leader about potential collaborations.
	December 2018	14 days	Cohort 1 of the CSL course "Community Psychology Applied to post-conflict Settings". In this second visit I observed the interactions between urban youth and former guerrilla members as they shared households and everyday activities. I also held informal conversations with community leaders about their experience of reincorporation and their views about the CSL course. Identification of potential collaborations to support their local needs.
	April 2019	6 days	Academic visit with undergraduate students and a colleague. This visit was the first official meeting to explore collaborations towards consolidating a local educational model. We had formal and informal conversations of their ongoing initiatives and ways to support those efforts.
	June 2019	14 days	Cohort 2 of the CSL course "Community Psychology Applied to post-conflict Settings". This third visit focused on consolidating the alliance with the community and involving undergraduate students in systematising the educational initiatives developed locally.
	September 2019	6 days	Academic visit with undergraduate students and a colleague.
	April 2020	4 months	Zoom interviews and focus groups with urban youth as part of the process. We created a WhatsApp group to facilitate everyday communication.
Study 2	October 2020	12 months	Fieldwork for Study 2 during the pandemic. I travelled when domestic flights were available and stayed there consolidating the research-practice partnership (study 3) and conducting interviews and observations for study 2. I lived in the household of one of the Community Leaders for 8 months. I lived in rented accommodation the final 2 months of my stay. Formal and informal conversations about the reincorporation process. Fieldwork for study 3
	December 2021	5 days	Fieldwork for Study 2 and 3 During this visit I continued with participant observation for study 2 and conducted dialogue meetings for study 3. I started living in a rented household in a different neighbourhood.
Study 3	January 2022	10 days	Fieldwork for Study 3
	April 2022	10 days	Fieldwork for Study 3
	August 2022	15 days	Fieldwork for Study 3
	November 2022	5 days	Fieldwork for Study 3
	January 2023	5 days	Fieldwork for Study 3
	May 2023	5 days	Fieldwork for Study 3
	August 2023	5 days	Fieldwork for Study 3
	October 2023	5 days	Fieldwork for Study 3

A ‘thick’ description of the two main sites of the PhD project

Following Geertz’s (1973) notion of thick description, I present an interpretive description of the two main sites of the PhD project based on the long-term fieldwork conducted in the CP-HR and my own role as a researcher and member of Universidad de la Sabana. This description aims to provide enough context of the social discourses and the symbolic elements present in each site to understand the subsequent chapters. Given that the encounters mostly took place in the CP-HR, the complete landscape of the community and the spaces that were central to the ethnography, are portrayed in Figure 4.

Figure 4.

Map of the CP-HR community and the ethnographic sites



3.1.3. The Centro Poblado Héctor Ramírez (CP-HR)

The Centro Poblado Héctor Ramírez, or Agua Bonita II (as it is also known by its inhabitants), is located, in a remote rural area in the municipality of La Montañita in Caquetá, an Amazonian province of Colombia. Getting to the CP-HR from Bogota requires a 90-minute journey by airplane to Florencia (the Capital city of Caquetá) and 40 minutes by car to

the urban area of La Montañita. Even though the CP-HR is only 11km from La Montañita, the precarious roads make this a one-hour-long journey through an unpaved road up to a hill in the middle of the Amazon Piedmont. This long journey limits the visitors, as well as the possibility of easily getting out of there. As a result, visiting the area involves a planned journey, considering weather conditions in case the road is blocked because of heavy rain, which can also limit access to basic services such as electricity and water. This is a common condition in most of the ETCRs, which further marginalises the communities in the process of reincorporation.

After the signature of the peace agreement in 2016, FARC-EP members who operated in the southern bloc, specifically the third, fourteenth and fifteen fronts[7], moved from their historical sites in the Amazon jungle to the ETCR Héctor Ramírez in La Montañita Caquetá. This journey involved long hours and a long caravan of buses of former guerrilla members, and governmental and non-governmental organisations. Once there, they had to live in improvised houses made of plastic while waiting for the government to build the official prefabricated households. After several negotiations, discussions and lack of state presence, former guerrilla members finished building their own houses and collectively thinking about the future of their community.

As they settled, they divided themselves into committees to coordinate specific actions for community building. They created a cooperative using the seed money (200 GBP) provided by the government once they surrendered their weapons. With the initial money, they started a pineapple crop, their first productive project for economic sustainability. Along with their national political party (Comunes) and the local council, these were their organisational pillars, which have sustained the community through the years. This was the seminal story of the origin of the community, told by every peace signatory in the CP-HR[8]. Theirs was a story about self-determination and collective work, whose journey had been supported or hindered by civil society and state institutions.

Throughout this time, they met numerous visitors, including families looking for their relatives who joined the guerrilla, others in search of disappeared citizens and others: youth

[7] FARC-EP was divided regionally in blocs (southern, Eastern, western, northwestern, Caribbean, Magdalena medio) and each bloc was subdivided in fronts.
[8] The complete story of the community, narrated by them as part of a narrative project that was initiated as part of this PhD and the commitment to support former guerrilla members in telling their own story is available in the book: *Construyendo Comunidad: Experiencias desde la Reincorporación*. [Building Community. Experiences from the reincorporation]. (BPAC, 2022)

and academics from public and private universities curious about the *reincorporados*. In this context of multiple encounters with civil society members, this PhD is located.

The CP-HR is a small village designed by former guerrilla members to live with their families and provide access to basic services. It has 58 prefabricated modules divided in four different areas that function as neighbourhoods and mirror peace signatories' division in fronts. Area 1, for example, is made up of former guerrilla members from the 14th front, which operated in the south of Caquetá. These houses have been adapted and re-modelled by peace signatories, especially the ones with families with specific needs (creating new bedrooms, bigger kitchens, and additional bathrooms). The remodelled houses changed the drywall materials for bricks, which gave a sense of permanence and stability in the construction of this community. These houses usually have spare rooms for visitors, either their extended families who come and visit or external actors who wish to stay with them. Both students participating in study 1 and myself, during different phases of fieldwork, lived in the homes of community residents.

An important aspect of this community is the representational landscape portrayed in murals throughout the walls of the buildings. This is the result of the annual festival *Agua Bonita se pinta de colores con manos de paz y reconciliación* (Agua Bonita is painted with colours of peace and reconciliation), in which peace signatories invite muralists to paint their walls and civil society in general to engage in dialogues about their process of reincorporation. These murals are in all the public spaces in the community and in some of the households. Most of them have messages related to their *campesino* (peasant) and *fariano* (FARC-related) roots, reconciliation, or their connection with nature (Figure 5). This colourful setting is combined with a mountainous landscape and a tropical climate in the middle of the Amazon Piedmont.

Figure 5.

Murals in public buildings of the community

The collective life of the community is developed through productive projects and local spaces for sharing. Community members lead productive projects, which are in line with their philosophy of good living, "Buen Vivir"[9]. Through this philosophy, they aim to demonstrate the potential of sustainable agriculture, as well as highlight the power of the collective to transform their community. Among the productive projects are pineapple and sugar cane crops, fish and poultry farming, shoe making and a football pitch. Local places for sharing include the *Aula Maxima*, a space for formal reunions for decision making; the local tavern, called "El Piñal", in honour of their famous pineapple crop; a restaurant open for visitors; a local popular library and a park for toddlers. The Popular Library Alfonso Cano is one of the main landmarks of the community as it contains the books they had during their time in the "*monte*" (jungle) as part of their mobile library, and it has also been turned into a museum of their FARC history. Additional areas in the community include a health centre (closed due to lack of personnel), small shops, a bakery, a kindergarten run by the state and an area for humanitarian demining training (loaned to an NGO).

3.1.4. Universidad de La Sabana

Universidad de La Sabana was created in 1971 as a private university located in downtown Bogota. In 1988, with the support of a catholic organisation (Opus Dei), the

[9] According to one of the participants, *Buen Vivir* is: *"having a harmonious relation with nature, animals and people, it is about having your basic needs covered, to have a proper house of my own, access to services, to education, health, that everyone in the community has equal access to services and their rights guaranteed, it is having what you need" (Juana, Focus Group, 2022).*

university relocated to Chía, a municipality north of Bogotá, about 20 minutes by car. One of the reasons for its reallocation was to have a bigger, greener campus for students and to build a university in line with Catholic values. The university offers a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programmes, including engineering, law and political science, economics, philosophy, education, and psychology. According to the national rankings, the university is in the 9th position.

While the university is recognised for its academic excellence and considered an up-and-coming Higher Education Institution, it is also well known for its conservative and often right-wing position. Given that this institution is supported by Opus Dei, its religious and catholic values are a central element for decision-making and the university's ethos. Although a majority of the university staff and students are openly religious, there is a minority of the academic community who do not affiliate with a religious community. As a result of this affiliation, the university has historically been more inclined towards conservative positions against controversial topics that are still under debate in the country.

Its location in the country, close enough to the capital city but far enough to distance itself from more progressive politics, is also a mirror of its role in society. While most of the universities in the city are located downtown, and its students are active participants in protests or current debates, La Sabana has been particularly keen to locate itself outside of these discussions, both geographically and ideologically.

The signature of the peace agreement with the FARC presented a big challenge for the university. The university had some research projects related to peace, mainly focused on victims, child soldiers or transitional justice, but none of them translated into specific efforts to involve students and other conflict-affected actors. Even though a few of their staff had participated in the discussions of the agreement, most of the staff, students and their families were still very wary and against its signature. As a lecturer in social psychology during that time (2016), I had several conversations with colleagues and with students about their views on the agreement. For most of them, the FARC-EP deserved to be in prison, with no opportunities for political participation. Those arguments were similar as the ones used to justify the "no" vote in the plebiscite: "*we would become like Venezuela*"[10], *"the FARC will take over power".* However, after the peace agreement was signed, La Sabana could not keep the same position.

[10] Venezuela's political history linked to communism has been an antagonist in Colombia's politics ever since Hugo Chávez was elected.

The School of Psychology of Universidad de La Sabana has 22 permanent position professors and lecturers and is divided into four departments: Development and Education; Clinical, Neuroscience, and Social and Organisational. The Department of Social and Organisational Psychology has one associate professor and two lecturers in organisational psychology, two assistant professors and two lecturers in social psychology. This department has been in charge of creating the link between psychology and peacebuilding. In this context, consolidating the CSL course "Community Psychology Applied to Post-Conflict Settings" involved a continuous conversation within the Psychology School with students and even their parents. This was the first time that the University had contact with leftist organisations and with former guerrilla members in particular. On top of that, it involved a trip of hundreds of kilometres to get to a place that was not in the landscape of any of them. Those discussions were mediated by academic arguments, linked to the competencies that were to be developed by the course and its link to the curriculum, but also by hegemonic representations of the other and the peace process: "Was it safe?" "Were the students actually going to be living with *them?*" "How are we going to explain this to the parents?". Over the course of a month, these were the discussions held in the School of Psychology, mainly with the directors but also among staff who were wary about the CSL course.

The approval of the course involved not only academic conversations about it but also a clear pathway for setting up the university's commitment to peacebuilding. From that moment onwards, the CSL course became part of the curriculum as an optative course and the possibility to continue a research project materialised years later with the partnership between the Social Psychology Department and the CP-HR. Throughout this time, this has involved further conversations about peacebuilding in the country, and even professors from different departments joining the project as consultants.

3.2. Study 1

Study 1 focused on understanding the microgenetic process involved in the transformation of the representations of self, other and peace and reconciliation as undergraduate psychology students (referred to as urban youth) encountered with former guerrilla members as part of their enrolment in the CSL course "Community Psychology Applied to Post-Conflict settings". The course involved a two-week visit with students, during which they had to live with former guerrilla members, share their everyday jobs, and engage in a process of self-reflection about their experience of the encounter. Chapter 4

explores the microgenesis of the encounter and its impact at the ontogenetic and sociogenetic levels.

My visits involved immersing myself in the experience as well as the students, by living in a household of former guerrilla members, participating in the activities, and leading the processes of self-reflection with the students, usually when we shared our meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner). In Study 1, the main spaces that enabled social interaction were the households and the productive projects (pineapple crops, fish, shoe making) in which students engaged in informal conversations about each other's livelihoods (Figure 4, purple and orange markers).

A second moment of the ethnographic process followed a digital approach. This was due to the global health emergency related to the COVID-19 pandemic. which started in March 2020 and prevented face-to-face data collection strategies. This process took place between April 2020 and July 2020. This approach allowed me meet online with students to collectively reflect on their experience as part of the encounter and conduct interviews focused on their experiences before, during and after thir participation in the course. During those sessions, re-connecting with the students, some of whom had already graduated and continued their journey as (social) psychologists, offered the unique opportunity for them to bring objects, photos, and tangible memories to the conversation about the encounter, as well as discussing in the safety of their households, the emotional landscape that surrounded their experience as part of the CSL course. We were also able to reflect on their initial written stories about the encounter, and work on them to be published in the book *"Punto de Encuentro: reflexiones sobre la construcción de paz en el Centro Poblado Héctor Ramírez"* [Point of Encounter: Reflections about peacebuilding in the Centro Poblado Héctor Ramírez].

3.2.1 Participants

Participants were students in the CSL course, an elective course offered by the Psychology School at Universidad de La Sabana. They were invited to participate in the study after the CSL course ended, through a WhatsApp message. Of the 25 students who participated in the CSL course, 24 agreed to participate. Table 4 presents the demographics of the participants. Participants signed an informed consent and gave permission to use their field notes, videos, original written narratives and recordings from the experience (Appendix 1).

Table 4.

Participants Demographics Study 1

Age range: 19-23 years old	
Female	**Male**
Mariana	Antonio
Cristina	Simón
Merida	Sergio
Lucía	Joaquín
Anastasia	Daniel
Jimena	Nicolás
Siena	
Olivia	
Maria José	
Diana	
Amapola	
Liliana	
Nicole	
Micaela	
Julia	

*Note: P*articipants' names are pseudonyms

3.2.2. Data Generation

Data generation was divided into three moments of the encounter to account for the representational change in time (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999, 2008). Data was collected to explore students' expectations before the encounter (Time 1), narratives of the encounter (Time 2), and reflections after the encounter (T3).

An important source of data for study 1 was the process of self-reflection recorded by students through fieldnotes, video diaries, written narratives and photo essays which were part of the tasks of the CSL course. Students were trained in the use of field diaries as part of the CSL course, and these diaries, either video recorded or written, were the basis for the development of written narratives of the encounter or photo essays about their experiences. This material is useful for two reasons. First, it provides a nuanced, fresh and intimate perspective of the students' experience, combined with detailed descriptions but also with their own interpretations of the encounter (Tjora, 2006). Second, it is a useful platform to engage in self-reflection that enables students to reflect on their own representations as a result of the encounter with other representational systems.

Field notes and diaries were written daily by students in specific moments created in the CSL course, mostly during the evenings after the collective discussion of the day held

with their classmates and the teachers. The field notes and diaries were the main source for the construction of written narratives and photo essays as a result of the encounter. These manuscripts were written in parallel with the activities in the CP-HR and were discussed among classmates in workshop designed to promote dialogue and discussions about the experience. These narratives were handwritten in a mock book or in a photo essay which were later shared with the community of peace signatories in a symbolic event at the end of the CSL experience.

Focus groups were conducted two months after the CSL experience. Focus groups serve as tools for producing knowledge, which depends on the prior beliefs (representational systems) of participants, as well as the interaction (Morgan & Hoffman, 2018) , which can trigger processes of self-reflection. This is important in the study of the transformation of representations of self, other and peace and reconciliation. Focus groups were held as informal conversations about the experience with the participants, with an emphasis on their arrival back home and the interactions with peers and families.

The focused interview (Merton & Kendall, 1946) was used to understand the experiences linked to the process of encounter. This type of interview is useful as it requires that 1) people have been involved in a specific social situation, 2) the researcher has done a previous analysis of the situation, 3) there is a pre-designed interview guide and 4) the focus is the subjective experience of the people involved in the social situation. Following the intersubjective relations model (Gillespie, 2020), the interview explores direct and meta perspectives in the representational triad – self, other, object. The two objects to be explored 1) peace and reconciliation (Object 1) and 2) the encounter between students and former combatants (Object 2).

The interview used two forms of elicitation, the timeline and written texts, to understand the process of the encounter. Timelines are a useful strategy to elicit biographical data in interviews or focus groups and have been also used as part of longitudinal research (Bagnoli, 2009). The aim of this visual elicitation method was to invite participants to reflect on the transformation of their timeline after the experience of encounter, as well as a short text, written before the visit. In the second part of the interview, the elicitation was based on a text written by the participant during the visit to the CP-HR. The objective of this second part was to use the text as a vehicle to remember what the participant was thinking in the past and how it has transformed in the months after the experience. (The topic guide and excerpt of the transcribed interview are available in Appendices 2 and 3)

3.2.3. Analysis

I conducted a thematic analysis to identify the transformation of representations over time. The use of this analytic technique for exploring social representations is well-established (Flick et al., 2015). Following the same temporal division in data collection, the analysis focused on understanding the different representations of self, other and peace and reconciliation and how they were transformed over time. This involved the consolidation of a coding frame (Appendix 4) that guided the consolidation of results.

3.3. Study 2

Study 2 focused on exploring the journey of collective reincorporation of former guerrilla members through the different identity positions they adopt and the changing representations they hold about peace and reconciliation. This involved an ontogenetic analysis of the encounter with civil society and state institutions as part of their process. An initial approach to this analysis was to focus on the specific encounter with urban youth and the impact it had on the representation of self and other. However, as fieldwork evolved, the everyday conversations held with former guerrilla members in this second phase, made it evident that, contrary to the case of urban youth, this societal group faced multiple encounters with different social actors at the same time and their struggle involved an internal negotiation of the representation of self. Chapter 5 fully explores the ontogenesis of reincorporation and the challenges and opportunities faced by former guerrilla members as they encounter civil society and state institutions.

During the second phase of the Ph.D. project, I lived for a year in the CP-HR (see table 3) as part of the ethnographic approach. I arrived in September 2020, after one year without any visits to the CP-HR due to the start of my PhD and the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though I had been in the community before, I was formally introduced to the community as a researcher by one of the community leaders who acted as a gatekeeper. This was a key action to begin fieldwork, as all community members were aware of the reason of my visit, which ensured transparency and facilitated the dialogue with former guerrilla members. In order to comply with biosecurity measures, I initially lived in the recently inaugurated local hotel, where I stayed in isolation for a week after testing negative for COVID-19, as a precaution, given the lack of access to health care in the community. During the first month of my visit, I re-connected with community members, visited their households and engaged in informal conversations about their process of reincorporation, the impact of

the pandemic in their lives, and general topics. Given that the restaurant was closed because of lack of visitors due to the pandemic, I had my meals prepared by one of the community members, who later invited me to stay with her and her family. This allowed me to be part of the everyday interactions of a *fariana* family. This house was located in a different "neighbourhood" from my first house during study 1.

Through this phase, I had regular meetings with community leaders who were interested in developing an educational initiative to provide basic education for the "hijos de la paz" [children of peace], a denomination for the sons and daughters of peace signatories. In the mornings, I worked at the Popular Library Alfonso Cano, supporting their education initiative and also discussing ways to make visible their efforts for peacebuilding, a concern that was set from day one through our conversations. I also visited households of peace signatories who invited me to have *tinto* (coffee) and to talk in the afternoons. During the weekends, I was invited to swim in the nearby rivers, walk to the "manigua" (as they referred to the jungle) or visit the small lands they bought near the CP-HR, which showed me other facets of the reincorporation process. Throughout this time, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with some community members.

3.3.1. Participants

Twenty-four former guerrilla members participated in the semi-structured interviews. Additional informal conversations and ethnographic interviews were held with other community members to further understand the process of identity negotiation taking place in the CP-HR. Participants in the interview gave oral consent after discussing the participant information sheet and the overall aim of the project (Appendix 5). I contacted participants directly in their households and I selected them following two considerations: 1) to have a wide sample with different demographic characteristics (Age, gender, role in the community) and 2) to interview former guerrilla members that had a close relationship with me to facilitate open discussions about their struggles as part of the reincorporation. In some cases, former guerrilla members did not want to be recorded either because they were wary of the use of information or they were shy and felt intimidated by the voice recorder. Those participants were part of the project in informal conversations. Table 1 in Chapter 5 presents the demographic characteristics of participants in the semi-structured interviews that were recorded and later analysed. The names have been changed to pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality.

3.3.2 Data Generation

Study 2 used two main data generation methods: participant observation and semi-structured interviews. Participant observation is a key element of the ethnographic approach (Coffey, 2018) and was systematically recorded using field notes (Appendix 6), photographs, videos, and audio recordings. Bearing in mind that this study aimed to explore the identity negotiation process of former guerrilla members, fieldwork entailed more than specific visits and instead, was planned for a longer period of time to generate rich, layered data (Buscatto, 2018; Coffey, 2018). This approach enabled the observation of performative strategies of identity management, which have been understudied in everyday interactions in specific communities.

An additional data generation strategy was the semi-structured interview (Appendix 7). This tool included a timeline as the visual method to explore the life pathways of former guerrilla members as they settled in the CP-HR. Timelines are a useful strategy to elicit biographical data in interviews and have been also used as part of longitudinal research (Bagnoli, 2009). Interviews were conducted in Spanish by me in participant's households. They were conducted months after the beginning of fieldwork in 2020. This was a strategy to build trust with participants and facilitate the interview process.

3.3.3. Analysis

Following a theoretical framework of dialogicality and dialogical self theory, in study 2, I conducted a multivocedness analysis (Aveling et al., 2015) to identify and unpack the multiple voices of Self and inner-Others within the discourse of former guerrilla members and the semantic and performative strategies used in their internal dialogues. This analysis was complemented with fieldnotes to provide concrete examples of the different positions through everyday activities and interactions and performative strategies of identity management as part of the reincorporation process. The coding framework is available in Appendix 9.

3.4. Study 3

Study 3 focuses on understanding the potential of partnerships as knowledge encounters that prefigure the transformation of the symbolic, relational and material dimensions of reconciliation after four years of collaborative work between researchers from Universidad de La Sabana and the community of the Centro Poblado Héctor Ramírez (CP-

HR). By exploring the implementation of the Education, Land and Reconciliation project (EDUCARE), Chapter 6 explores the nature of research-practice partnerships and its potential to transform representations of self and other, representational projects and styles of communication of former guerrilla members and researchers themselves.

This final empirical study analyses the partnership between academics and peace signatories as an example of a strong social milieu (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999) in which both social groups come together in the development of a common project. The Education, Land and Reconciliation project was launched in 2021 as a research-practice partnership to develop a local educational model for children living in the community, based on *campesino* (peasants) and *fariano* (FARC-related) values. The project was co-constructed with community leaders and academics from La Sabana University (me included) and officially launched in 2021.

My ethnographic presence in the field for study 3 involved living for six months (January to July) in the household of one of the peace signatories (see Figure 4) and then moving into a rented house for three months that I shared with junior researchers. As most of community leaders are involved in several projects, living in one of their households gave me a privileged position to have informal discussions about the implementation of the project and to have open conversations about the challenges and opportunities of these types of projects for the community. This was particularly useful as it provided unstructured sites of encounter between peace signatories and me, which enabled a different positionality as a researcher beyond the formality of meetings in the Popular Library. Official meetings were held most of the time at the local library (Popular Library Alfonso Cano), which became the epicentre for the implementation of the project. It was the place of reunion for community teachers, leaders and field coordinators, as well as the research team.

The second part of my ethnographic journey involved sharing a rented house with junior researchers by the end of my long stay in the community (July-October 2021). This house was in a different neighbourhood than the one I initially lived in (see Figure 4) and allowed me to have a different interaction with other community members and the research team as well. It was located in front of another leader who participated in the project, who frequently visited the house. In addition, it allowed me to engage in conversations with junior researchers who were starting their journey in academia and were living for the first time in the CP-HR. The house became a second epicentre of the project and was also the site for additional meetings and even social events where project members shared informally outside the project. As I went back to the UK to live permanently, I continued visiting the CP-HR for

shorter periods of time as part of the follow-up of study 3. In these visits, I stayed in the same rented house and spent time with junior researchers who were living in the household at the time.

3.4.1. Participants

Participants in the study comprise a group of researchers and undergraduate students from La Sabana University, and a sub-group of community members from the CP-HR who were involved in the EDUCARE Project. In the case of the CP-HR, participants include 1) community leaders who were part of the project in its design and participated as supervisors of the process, 2) peace signatories who worked as community teachers in the project and 3) community members (not peace signatories) who participated as field coordinators. Participation in the study was voluntary. Table 5 presents participants' demographics.

Table 5.

Participants demographics Study 3

Site	**Demographics**		
	Role	**Age**	**Gender**
Centro Poblado Héctor Ramírez (N=10)	Community teachers (n= 3)	33-45 years old	Women
	Community coordinators (n=3)	22-36 years old	Women
	Community leaders (n=4)	34-50 years old	2 Women 2 Men
Research Team (N=9)	Undergraduate students (n=3)	22-23 years old	2 Women 2 Men
	Junior Researchers (n=3)	24-26 years old	2 Women 1 Man
	Senior researchers (n=3)	33-49 years old	2 Women 1 Man

3.4.2. Data Generation

In line with a longitudinal design, data generation for this study is segmented in the three years of the project's implementation. These included dialogue meetings, focus groups and a final semi-structured interview (Appendix 10) in year 3 to specifically discuss participants' views on the implementation of the project. As part of the ethnographic

approach, I also kept a field diary with a focus on the interactions between project's members. A complete overview of the data is available in Chapter 6.

3.4.3. Analysis

Data was analysed following Braun and Clarke's (2022) thematic analysis. All the transcribed data was fully read and annotated by first author. The annotations were the basis for identifying patterns of meaning across the data set, which were subsequently contrasted with the theoretical model of knowledge encounters (Aveling & Jovchelovitch, 2014) to allow for both an inductive and deductive theme generation. The complete description of the process is available in Chapter 6.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

This project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the London School of Economics and Political Science in 2019 (Reference # 1061). As part of the official process involved in ethical guidelines, urban youth from Study 1 were given a participant information sheet and signed an informed consent (Appendix 1). In the case of former guerrilla members who participated in studies 2 and 3, I designed a participant information sheet using their local language and pictures that illustrated the aim of the study and the methods employed (Appendix 5). They did not sign an informed consent and instead gave oral consent after discussing the participant information sheet, which was printed and given to each participant. Oral consent, in this case, was an important element, as there was still mistrust towards civil society at the beginning of the project, and they were wary about signing any documents given their status as *reincorporados*.

3.6. Positionality: A Colombian Researcher Studying Post-Accord Colombia

Conducting research in post-conflict settings requires being conscious of the way in which the research is perceived by its participants (Uluğ et al., 2021) and the role that the researcher may had (or not) during times of war. In my case, while I was born and raised in Colombia, I have not directly endured the protracted conflict in the country, and despite having the label as a Global South academic, I have had different levels of privileged access to higher education in elite universities, which is a marker of difference when working with communities living in rural, impoverished areas. This position, far from positioning me as an "objective" researcher, has historically and spatially located me in post-accord Colombia (Lederach, 2016), which had to be acknowledged from day one.

My first official visit to the Centro Poblado Héctor Ramírez began a long journey of collaboration with former guerrilla members. At that moment, I was a lecturer at Universidad de La Sabana, which as discussed above is a private, urban university located in a municipality near Bogota, the capital city of Colombia. Bearing in mind the ambivalent presence of private higher education institutions (Delgado Barón, 2010), I reflected on the need to move beyond one-time academic visits and the role of universities in this new scenario of post-accord in the country. This was a difficult process as the academic community was also embedded in a country of protracted conflict (Bar-Tal, 2007) sustained by negative representations of former guerrilla members, the reincorporation process, and the possibility of coexisting with previously armed actors (Cortés et al., 2016).

A first concern was the role of academia in peacebuilding research and the lack of critical awareness of our own process as researchers and the topics we choose. This is one of the reasons why pushing against the victim/perpetrator divide allowed me to think beyond traditional categories and instead develop a project that understood that social relations occur on multiple fronts (Uluğ et al., 2021). This involved going beyond cross-sectional studies that further ratified the unwillingness to reconcile of urban citizens in contrast to conflict-affected populations (Cortés et al., 2016; López López et al., 2018; Pineda-Marin et al., 2023) and instead exploring how to move from a culture of conflict to a culture of peace that included urban citizens as key actors in the process.

A second concern I had was to impose a research agenda that was not of the interest of former guerrilla members who were themselves in the middle of reincorporation and facing numerous challenges. This involved constant conversations with community leaders who acted as gatekeepers and who were open about their concerns with researchers coming and "extract" their knowledge and/or contribute to maintaining negative representations about them. To mitigate these concerns, I positioned myself not only as an academic, but also as a Colombian supporting the peace agreement implementation and aligned with their values of community engagement and collective action. Disclosing my values and political position (Uluğ et al., 2021) was the first step towards creating a partnership involving a long-term commitment, including practices of care and respect among its members (Lederach, 2016).

To do this, I embarked on a long journey of collaboration, co-construction and reflection with academics and former guerrilla members to envision what peacebuilding and reconciliation should look like. The co-design of the CSL course was the cornerstone of the ongoing alliance with the CP-HR. This course enabled open discussions and actions towards community development and also to reflect on the importance of urban citizens' involvement

in peacebuilding efforts. For peace signatories, this was an important element of the partnership, as they wanted to understand the effect of the encounter on the narratives of urban youth about conflict and peace. As a result, study 1 (Chapter 4) is not only an academic product for an academic audience but part of the enactment of the value of reciprocity in conducting peace-related research (Lederach, 2016). Its results were shared with community members and provided evidence of the need to continue the efforts of societal reconciliation, including "non-victims". They have also been shared with participating students and the academic community to highlight the potential of these types of initiatives to bring Higher Education Institutions closer to peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts.

A second moment involved creating a platform for a critical understanding of the journey of reincorporation of former guerrilla members. This moment of the research process involved even more discussions about how the interviews would be used and the ethical responsibility of telling the story of a marginalised and stigmatised community. Following Lederach's (2016) proposal of ethical peace research, I was aware of the impact of academia in constructing and sharing representations of "the other", and the potential harm it can entail to communities. For this reason, Study 2 (Chapter 5) was conducted only after a long period of ethnographic research, of formal and informal conversations about studying peace signatories' experiences and stories of reincorporation and designing a clear methodological route shared with them as part of the collaboration. These conversations were initially held in-person, particularly during the year I lived with them as part of this PhD project (2020-2021) and remain as part of the implementation of subsequent projects as part of the long-term nature of our collaboration. For me, this was also an important step to prefigure engaged practices of research in which the researcher is aware of its impact on the community and is willing to think through *with* community members. Reflecting on participants' understandings of research process and the importance of disclosing researcher's identity and positionality is an emerging field (Uluğ et al., 2021) to which I hope to contribute with this thesis as well.

A third moment involves moving beyond the initial research agenda to support local initiatives as part of the partnership. In 2020, we applied and were awarded a research-practice partnership grant by the Spencer Foundation (USA) to fund the design and implementation of a local education project. This project, currently known as Education, Land and Reconciliation (EDUCARE in Spanish), has been a collective endeavour in which the research agenda is collectively set and is informed by their local practices, principles and values. It has also been the site of working *together* to think about peacebuilding and

reconciliation through community development and education. What this means for the present PhD is a third step towards re-thinking research with conflict-affected communities that involves a reflection on the transformation of researchers themselves as part of a long-term partnership for reconciliation. This is one of the aims explored in Study 3 (Chapter 6).

It is in this interface where my role as a teacher, researcher, and PhD candidate merge and support the development of this PhD project. On one side, I was the lecturer in charge of the students while they were participating in the CSL course, which allowed me to create teaching strategies to record the process the students were experiencing throughout the encounter (Study 1). On the other, my role as a researcher has supported the trust-building process and the design of a research agenda in which education and peacebuilding are the core elements (Study 2 and 3). These two roles and positions support the development of a PhD project that explores the potential of the encounter for reconciliation and peacebuilding in the country.

Further reflections and a process of co-production derived from my involvement in the EDUCARE project have been published elsewhere in a joint effort with peace signatories and academic researchers (Reinoso-Chávez et al., 2023).

Chapter 4: The Long Hard Road of Reconciliation: Prefiguring cultures of peace through the transformation of representations of former combatants and identities of urban youth in Colombia

Preface

This chapter focuses on the transformation of representations of self, other and peace and reconciliation of undergraduate students as they encounter for the first time with former guerrilla members reincorporating into civil society as part of the CSL course Community psychology applied to post-conflict settings. It focuses specifically on the processes of self-reflection of urban youth before, during and after the encounter with peace signatories in the Territorial Space for Training and Reincorporation (ETCR in Spanish) Héctor Ramírez. While the representations of conflict and reconciliation of urban dwellers have been documented in the country, to the best of my knowledge, this is the first time a study follows longitudinally the encounter among historically, geographically and historically distant groups and the associated representational transformation.

Following a social representations perspective, it examines the microgenesis of the knowledge encounter between these two social milieus and identifies the emergence of emancipatory and alternative representations that challenge hegemonic ones about conflict, peace and reconciliation. In this chapter, the analysis is exclusively centred on urban youth's perspectives of the encounter to provide a detailed account of their lived experience in the CSL course and the potential of these types of initiatives to prefigure reconciliation. The chapter follows an ethnographic, longitudinal approach to explore practices, experiences and beliefs linked to the encounter using secondary and primary sources. A methodological innovation in this case is the use of students' field diaries and narratives instead of relying solely on traditional data collection strategies such as interviews and focus groups.

Check for updates

Received: 29 November 2022 | Accepted: 12 May 2023

DOI: 10.1002/ejsp.2967

RESEARCH ARTICLE

EASP WILEY

The long hard road of reconciliation: Prefiguring cultures of peace through the transformation of representations of former combatants and identities of urban youth in Colombia

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Abstract

The Colombian peace accords of 2016 involved a formal commitment to peace between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP in Spanish) and the national government. Despite this advance, societal reconciliation and sustainable peace remain key challenges. Through a longitudinal qualitative design, we investigate the encounter between former guerrilla members and urban university students in a community-based educational space in rural Colombia. Drawing on a social representational approach, we focus on youth's representations of self (students), the remote other (former guerrilla members) and peace and reconciliation as they are produced before, during and after the encounter. Participants were 24 students enrolled in a service-learning course at an urban university in Bogotá. Data collection included written narratives, audio-visual material, focus groups and interviews. Thematic analyses show that as urban youth meet, spend time, and share space and common activities with the former combatants, both representations and identities are transformed. These transformations in self–other understandings unsettle hegemonic narratives supporting an ethos of conflict and introduce alternative representations that prefigure the consolidation of peace-supporting counternarratives. Our results highlight both the resilience of hegemonic narratives and the long-term effects of small-scale educational knowledge encounters for producing agents of peace, recognising the other and prefiguring social change. Reconciliation as process must be thus understood as the uneven development of meaningful self–other interactions
that recasts the social fabric as interdependent and builds shared intentionality for achieving sustainable peace.

KEYWORDS
encounters, former combatants, reconciliation, social representations, urban youth

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1 | INTRODUCTION

The Colombian peace accords of 2016 involved a formal commitment to peace between one of the oldest guerrilla groups in Latin America, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP in Spanish), and the national government. This was a significant step in breaking the historical cycles of violence that produced 450,664 deaths, with more than 7 million internally displaced (IDP) and 121,768 'disappeared' people (Comisión para el esclarecimiento de la verdad, 2022). However, as in most post-accord societies, one of the main challenges faced by Colombia is to achieve intergroup reconciliation. Even decades after the signing of peace accords, conflict-affected societies struggle to overcome division, tensions and disputes between different social groups (Hart & Tamayo Gomez, 2022). In Colombia, it is not different. One key challenge is how to reincorporate former guerrilla members, also known as peace signatories,[1] into society and overcome the high levels of stigma and discrimination that continue to operate as obstacles for implementing sustainable peace.

Recent studies on pathways to reconciliation highlight not only the division between victims and perpetrators (Taylor et al., 2016a, 2016b) but also the disconnect between the urban elite and rural conflict-affected populations (Cole et al., 2022). This is a central feature of the Colombian conflict, where there are historical and geographical divisions between urban and rural dwellers (Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, 2021; Rettberg, 2020). This division was also evident in the ratification of the peace agreement by Colombian citizens,[2] and more recently, in the presidential elections of 2022.[3] In both cases, urban citizens mainly voted against the peace agreement and supported rightist candidates (except in Bogota), whereas rural dwellers voted yes and primarily supported the leftist candidate. In addition to remoteness and distance, social inequalities and lack of opportunities interact to exacerbate the problem. Urban citizens are less likely to engage in conversations with conflict-affected populations (either victims or perpetrators) and are therefore vulnerable to stereotyped mass media portrayals of the unknown other (Gordillo, 2021). Stigma also plays a significant role, with a recent national survey finding that almost 40% of respondents consider that being a former guerrilla member is a cause for discrimination (ACDI/VOCA, 2019).

A first step in the implementation of Colombia's peace agreement was to facilitate the reincorporation of former guerrilla members who signed the accords into economic, political and social life by creating Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation (ETCR, in Spanish). These actors were initially located in designated territories through a policy that aimed to provide means and resources for the country to achieve the promises and responsibilities that were set out in the formal peace accord, including wide-ranging humanitarian aid through national and international organizations (Barrios et al., 2019; García Duque & Martínez, 2019). Today these territories are known as the Former Territorial Spaces for Training and Reconciliation (AECTRs in Spanish) and have become small rural communities where former guerrilla members live with full rights of citizenship and movement. Yet, despite efforts to reincorporate these actors into society and much international support, high levels of stigma remain in the country (Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, 2021). Social inequality continues to be high and is accentuated by the scarce presence of state institutions. Most of the AETCRs are located in remote rural areas with very sparse institutional coverage and a lack of basic services such as health care and clean water, and constant threats to their security.[4] In combination, these factors intensify marginalisation and the distancing of these communities from the main fabric of Colombian society (Hart & Tamayo Gomez, 2022).

Creating scenarios for dialogue and reconciliation among historically and geographically distant social groups can be important in promoting tolerant and respectful social interactions among citizens (Rettberg, 2020). Youth can be a particularly relevant group in developing these efforts. In highly polarised and divided societies it is second or third-generation groups who are most likely to promote or be open to intergroup engagement (Cole et al., 2022). Mobilising educational institutions to support the reconciliation process, reach new generations and create novel ways of understanding the outgroup to build peace is well established (Bar-Tal et al., 2021; Čehajić-Clancy & Bilewicz, 2020; Psaltis et al., 2017). Research with youth has been primarily linked to understanding the impact of interethnic contact in school settings (Loader & Hughes, 2017) or at the university level (Čehajić & Brown, 2010). However, less is known about initiatives that create actual encounters between urban youth and former combatants and the potential of these encounters to promote reconciliation.

In this article, we investigate the encounter between former guerrilla members and urban university students propitiated by a curricular initiative in undergraduate education: the critical service-learning (CSL) course '*Community Psychology Applied to Post-Conflict Settings*' (Fonseca & Reinoso, 2020; Trigos-Carrillo et al., 2020). We focussed in particular on the perceptions and identity transformation of urban youth as they experience the encounter with former combatants. Many universities across Colombia have designed theoretical courses that open the space for discussion and dialogue among students about the peace agreement (Corredor et al., 2018; Gomez-Suarez, 2017; Oettler & Rettberg, 2019). However, these courses are mainly theoretical, involve students' reflections amongst themselves and remain based in the cities. Alternatively, in the Community Psychology Applied to Post-Conflict Settings course students travel to a Former Territorial Space for Training and Reconciliation and for 2 weeks live side by side with former guerrilla members, sharing everyday practices and participating in shared spaces for reflection about their encounter

[1] From 2021 onwards, former FARC-EP combatants self-denominate '*firmantes de paz*', which in English means 'peace signatories'. In this article we will use these terms interchangeably.

[2] In the referendum of 2016, 51% voted against its signature with a clear urban-rural division of the vote. While most of the urban citizens, located in the centre of the country, voted no, rural dwellers, mostly affected by the internal armed conflict voted yes. After numerous protests by citizens who supported the peace agreement and meetings with the parties that opposed it, a revised version of the peace agreement was signed in November 2016.

[3] On 19 June 2022, Gustavo Petro was elected President of Colombia. He is the first left-wing president in the country in over 200 years and Vice-president Francia Marquez the first afro-Colombian woman to have this position.

[4] For more information about the current state of the Former Territorial Spaces for training and Reincorporation: https://www.reincorporacion.gov.co/es/reincorporacion/Paginas/AETCRs.aspx https://www.cnrfarc.co

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(Fonseca & Reinoso, 2020; Trigos-Carrillo et al., 2020). To the best of our knowledge, this is a unique undergraduate curricular experience which combines disciplinary training and everyday encounters with peace signatories.

We explore the psychosocial processes underpinning this encounter through a qualitative longitudinal approach that investigates the transformation of representations and identities as students leave their known environment and come to meet, spend time, and share space and common activities with former combatants, who are for the students the unknown other. Drawing on a social representational approach (Bauer & Gaskell, 2008; Castro, 2006; Jovchelovitch, 2007; Moscovici, 1988), we focus on the microgenetic process of representational change taking place in the knowledge encounter (Jovchelovitch, 2019; Kadianaki & Gillespie, 2015; Priego-Hernández, 2011) between students and former combatants. Microgenetic processes are defined as 'the genetic process in all social interaction in which particular social identities and the social representations on which they are based are elaborated and negotiated' (Duveen & Lloyd, 1990, p. 8). Our aim is to examine processes that can potentially transform the social representations and identities underpinning an ethos of conflict and move these towards an ethos of peace, and in so doing be a starting point for reconciliation and peacebuilding in conflict-affected societies (Bar-Tal, 2000; Bar-Tal & Cehajic-Clancy, 2014).

We examine reconciliation as a process (Bar-Tal & Cehajic-Clancy, 2014) and as encounter between self and other (Lederach, 1997). We conceptualise such encounters as pre-figurative praxis, that is, instances of small-scale, alternative interactions that can create and anticipate new representations, identities and social actions (Cornish et al., 2016; Guerlain & Campbell, 2016). Social-psychologically, the idea of pre-figurative practice (Guerlain & Campbell, 2016) is related to the concept of prefigurative politics, a framework that provides a zoom on the micro-relations that can serve as counter-hegemonical social projects to promote social transformations (Trott, 2016; Yates, 2015). Rather than considering reconciliation as a finished outcome at the end of social change, this conceptual field enables us to move from noun to process to suggest that reconciliation is an evolving space of encounters between self and other in which the prefiguration of potentially reconciled futures anticipates the experience *before* social change actually occurs.

1.1 | Revisiting the psychology of reconciliation

Reconciliation is a complex phenomenon with multiple definitions (Cole et al., 2022; Rettberg & Ugarriza, 2016), It has been conceptualised as a process and an outcome (Bar-Tal & Bennink, 2004; Nadler & Shnabel, 2015). As an outcome, reconciliation brings about the restoration of positive relations (Lederach, 1997; Nadler & Shnabel, 2015), the achievement of mutual acceptance (Lederach, 1997; Staub & Bar-Tal, 2003), learning how to live together (Kelman, 2008), the security of a trustful coexistence (Bar-Tal, 2013); and changed perceptions of self (Cohrs et al., 2015) and other (Staub et al., 2005). Both relational and identity-related changes are associated in reconciliation (Nadler & Shnabel, 2015). As a process, reconciliation involves structural and psychological changes (Taylor et al., 2016a, 2016b). Promoting partnerships and cooperation, as well as understanding and experiencing changes in motivations, goals, beliefs, attitudes and emotions is part of the process of reconciliation (Bar-Tal & Bennink, 2004).

Lederach (1997) frames reconciliation as 'a place, the point of encounter where concerns about both the past and the future can meet' (p. 27). It comprises three main elements: (1) relationship building, (2) encountering with others and acknowledging them and (3) focus on a shared, interdependent future. This definition emphasises the temporal dimension of reconciliation as well as its requirement for changing self and other through an encounter where people re-visit themselves, their enemies, their understandings of each other and their conflict, their fears as well as their hopes. As a result, understanding reconciliation as a process highlights the slow course of unfreezing and changing societal beliefs about self, other and conflict, which generally starts with a small minority (Bar-Tal & Bennink, 2004), particularly in settings which have experienced intractable conflicts.

Countries around the world have experienced some form of conflict in their history, but only some countries have been involved in *intractable conflict*, a long-lasting and severe process that is sustained by a deep-rooted social-psychological infrastructure that is founded in collective memories, societal beliefs about the conflict (ethos of conflict) and a collective emotional orientation (Bar-Tal, 2007, 2013; Bar-Tal et al., 2021; Bar-Tal & Cehajic-Clancy, 2014). Under these conditions, conflict-supportive narratives (Bar-Tal et al., 2021) remain even after the signature of peace agreements, challenging societal peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts. Central to transforming an ethos of conflict into an ethos of peace (Bar-Tal, 2000) is the emergence of peace-supporting 'counter narratives' (Bar-Tal & Cehajic-Clancy, 2014) that develop from different groups and local organisations. These counter-narratives challenge and negate the conflict-supporting narrative and can be the starting point for reconciliation and peace building in conflict-affected societies (Bar-Tal & Cehajic-Clancy, 2014). Counter-narratives challenge the hegemonic representations and identities that reify divided societies and dominant versions of the past (Psaltis, 2012) and introduce polemic alternative representations (Gillespie, 2008), which are orientated to representations held by others (Gillespie, 2008) and emerge in societal sub-groups (Uluğ & Cohrs, 2019). In a conflict-affected society, aiming for peacebuilding, the emergence of alternative representations can be an important element in the consolidation of counter-narratives and the reconstruction of the societal ethos towards peace. They can be an initial sign of recognition of representations held by antagonistic social groups.

Recent approaches to reconciliation recognise the potential of social representations theory to explore local beliefs, practices and understandings of conflict and peace (Cohrs et al., 2015; Psaltis et al., 2017). However, to the best of our knowledge, there is no longitudinal study exploring the microgenesis (Psaltis, 2012) of the processes that generate counter-narratives and challenge the societal ethos in post-conflict settings. This involves a focus on the interactions taking place between divided groups in post-conflict settings. Microgenetic

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processes contribute important elements to Bar-Tal's conceptualisation of transformation in societal ethos and shed light on the self–other interactions that in time can transform social representations and official hegemonic narratives (Psaltis, 2015) as well as rigid and divided social identities. We explore these processes through the social psychology of representational change (Jovchelovitch, 2007) and in particular the microgenetic processes that may enable or disable the movement of societies from a culture of protracted conflict to cultures of peace and reconciliation.

1.2 | Prefiguring reconciliation: The socio-cultural psychology of knowledge encounters

Social representations are formed in social interactions (Jovchelovitch, 2007; Marková, 2003; Mouro & Castro, 2012), where the self–other relationship is central towards understanding the meaning of a particular object (Jovchelovitch, 2019; Moscovici, 2008; Psaltis, 2015). Therefore, social transformation involves a *self*, interacting and communicating with an *other* about a particular *object* (Marková, 2003; Marková, 2016). This representational triad highlights the dialogical nature of knowledge construction (Marková, 2003; Psaltis, 2012), which also includes constructing social categories that position self and other (Obradović & Draper, 2022; Reicher, 2004). The intersubjective nature of social representations immerses them in continuous knowledge encounters, that is, the 'point at which two or more representational systems meet, expressing different subjective, intersubjective and objective worlds' (Jovchelovitch, 2007, p. 129). These intersubjective encounters are immersed in a particular time; involve a commonly recognised object that can be disagreed upon; take place in a specific context and can be dialogical or non-dialogical, depending on the recognition or denial of the perspective of the other (Jovchelovitch, 2007).

Bauer and Gaskell's (2008) wind rose model expands the dialogical model to include the dynamic interaction between social representations constructed in different social milieus through time. The temporal dimension sheds light on how the introduction of new interactions between self and other in time can result in the transformation of hegemonic social representations or the appearance of emancipated ones after the implementation of new norms or a new law (Castro, 2012, 2015). Emancipated representations (Moscovici, 1988) emerging out of subgroups that are in contact puts forward the potential of knowledge encounters between diverse groups to challenge dominant and constraining representations in conflict-affected societies. This model includes the multiplicity of social representations in society as well as the differing 'weight' (i.e., power) they hold within a particular context. When new systems of knowledge enter the public sphere, there are struggles, polemics and opposition due to the transformation of knowledge and the birth of a new social representation (Moscovici, 2000). Despite resistance and semantic barriers (Gillespie, 2020) to new ways of understanding the world, it is the tension produced in the encounter with the other's narrative and representational system that can potentially transform social representations (Jovchelovitch & Priego-Hernandez, 2015). Uncertainty about one's knowledge and reflection about it (Kadianaki & Gillespie, 2015) can be the first step to recognising alternative representations (Gillespie, 2008). This is a particular challenge in post-conflict settings, where there are master narratives of the conflict (Bar-Tal, 2007) that reproduce hegemonic representations and serve as barriers to acknowledging other perspectives.

1.3 | Current study

Our research goal is to examine how microgenetic processes at the level of self–other interactions generate wider societal changes in representations and identities that can challenge an ethos of conflict and create cultures of peace. We investigate urban youth's representations of self (students), the remote other (former guerrilla members) and peace and reconciliation as they are produced before, during and after the encounter between students and former guerrilla members in a small-scale, community-based educational space. We focus on the experiences and representations of young university students who live in the capital city Bogotá and its surrounding areas and who tend to belong to an affluent socio-economic environment. They rarely meet Colombians who were once engaged in the armed conflict and experience the social conditions of rural communities in the country. By examining the development of self–other understandings in an encounter we aim to map out how master narratives of conflict are challenged by alternative representations that can contribute towards consolidating counter-narratives of peace.

Research has shown that service-learning and education initiatives are an important platform for prefigurative praxis (Trott, 2016) and for transforming stereotypes, prejudice, and essentialist beliefs about the unknown other in historically, geographical and culturally divided groups (Bar-Tal et al., 2021). Self–other interactions in small-scale education initiatives of this kind can provide useful insights into the potential of prefiguring reconciliation in post-accord settings. Prefigurative social change, understood as the development of practices and social relations that build a transformed alternative future in the present (Guerlain & Campbell, 2016), can serve as a theoretical platform to explore the *process* of reconciliation and the transformation of social representations and identities that support peacebuilding in a society.

2 | METHODS

2.1 | Setting

The present study was conducted in the context of the optative course Community Psychology Applied to Post-Conflict Settings created in 2018 in a private university in Chía, a municipality located near Bogota. The course was developed as a strategy to promote a dialogical encounter between two historically distant social groups: urban youth and former guerrilla members (Fonseca & Reinoso, 2020). It is

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available biannually to all psychology students in this university, and it is a CSL experience (Trigos-Carrillo et al., 2020), that is, it involves not only learning in class but also field trips and direct engagement with communities and Colombian social reality. Students have 2 days of training on campus, and an 11-day field visit to a Former Territorial Space for Training and Reincorporation, the Centro Poblado Héctor Ramírez (CP-HR), where former FARC-EP members are currently living. The CP-HR is located in the south of Colombia, in La Montañita, a municipality of Caquetá Department (2 h from Florencia, Caquetá's capital city) and more than 16 h by road from Bogotá, the capital city of the country. Caquetá has had a long history of violence and armed conflict and was considered a red area during conflict times. The CP-HR is a small village, home to almost 300 people, including 126 peace signatories, 90 children and their extended families (Educación, 2021).

This course is part of an alliance between the university and the CP-HR. The course was co-designed between two university teachers and one of the community leaders (a former guerrilla member), which facilitated the encounters in the community. Former guerrilla members were informed about the visit, and they voluntarily offered their households to host the students. Participation in daily activities was also approved by the leaders of the CP-HR. In total, 26 former combatants participated actively in the encounters. Seven households hosted the students (rooms were shared among students), who were also included in the everyday socio-economic activities of the community (e.g., pineapple production and harvesting, fishing and cobblery). Research on former combatants' experiences of the encounter has been completed and is currently being analysed in a subsequent article.

2.2 | Participants

Participants in the study were undergraduate students enrolled in the CSL optative course. These students are in the final, 4th and 5th, years of their degree (note that in Colombia the BSc in Psychology is a 5-year degree) and already have a considerable knowledge of psychological science. Twenty-four young people between the ages of 19 and 24 years ($M = 22$) participated in the study. Most participants identified as female (17 females, 7 males). Participation was voluntary, and all of the students participating in the experience agreed to share written texts, diaries and audio-visual material produced before, during and after the course and their visit to the community.

2.3 | Procedure

The study deployed a longitudinal qualitative design combining narratives, audiovisual material, focus group discussions and interviews. Participants were involved in three moments of the process: T1, before the encounter; T2, during the encounter and T3, post encounter. In Time 1, which took place 1 week before the visit to the CP-HR, students had sessions on campus for three days, with discussions about the armed conflict, the peace agreement and their expectations about the visit. In T1, students were assigned the task of writing about their expectations and general feelings about the forthcoming encounter and their motivation for taking the course. Time 2 encompasses the encounter itself, when students lived for 11 days in the CP-HR. During that time, they stayed in former guerrilla members' households and joined local productive projects, working with the community in fishing, harvesting crops, shoemaking and cooking. They also shared meals, looked after children, gave lectures and socialised with members of the community. In the evenings, participants had a space for discussions with the teachers supervising their stay to review highlights of the day as well as to reflect upon their experience (the first author was one of the teachers). Specific moments were given to the students to reflect on the experience through written texts and audio-visual production, such as photography and videos and students were assigned the task of producing a photo essay or a chronicle on a topic of their choice. Throughout the stay students ask questions to former combatants, share their own ideas and in the final day of their stay, they presented either their written chronicles or photo essays to the community of former guerrilla members. This last moment of the encounter serves as a closure of the visit and a way to engage in conversation about the experience. In Time 3, which takes place once the course is finalised, students were invited to participate in focus groups (2 months after the visit) and focused interviews to reflect about their experience (16 months after the visit). Data collection took place between December 2018 and June 2020. The research was reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the London School of Economics and Political Science. Table 1 presents the design and data collection.

TABLE 1 Design and data collection

Pre-departure (T1)	During the encounter (T2)	Post-encounter (T3)
Short written narratives	Written narratives (Chronicles) diaries Photo essays Video presentation of photo essays	Focus groups Focused Interview with visual elicitation (T1-T2-T3 retrospective)

2.4 | Instruments

2.4.1 | Written narratives

Narrative-based instruments were designed to capture students' representations and self-reflection throughout the course: (a) a short, written narrative before the visit, which invited students to narrate their feelings and expectations about the forthcoming visit; (b) field diaries and a chronicle of the encounter during the visit, which instructed students to write about a particular topic of their choice that resonated with their experience of the encounter. These narratives were collated and stored in NVivo for analysis.

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2.4.2 | Photo essays

Students used their phones and, in some cases, professional cameras to produce photo essays, which were focussed on a topic of their choice and presented to classmates for discussion. The final versions of the photo essays were presented and discussed with the whole community at the end of students' visit. These final presentations were video recorded and the photo essays stored in NVivo as images.

2.4.3 | Focus groups

Focus groups were designed to elicit reflection and capture students' experiences, feelings and thoughts after the encounter. Probing questions included: (a) what are your general reflections about your experience during your stay; (b) what interactions did you have with former combatants; (c) what did you think of the combatants when you came to meet and know them; (d) how did your family and friends receive you and discuss your experience upon your return. The discussions took approximately 2 h, were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis in NVivo.

2.4.4 | Focussed interview

This was designed to capture students' reflections about the process before, during and after the encounter with former combatants. The interview starts by asking participants to draw a timeline of their experience. This is then followed by a series of questions designed to facilitate participant's reflections as they revisit their predeparture narratives and the chronicles/photo essays produced during the encounter (Merton & Kendall, 1946). The topic guide is available in supplemental materials. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

2.5 | Data analysis

The complete corpus of data was analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This included texts (written diaries, chronicles, transcribed focus groups and interviews) and audio-visual products (video-diaries, photo essays). Data were transcribed and anonymised using pseudonyms, often selected by the participants. The corpus of data was then uploaded to qualitative software system NVivo 1.6 and organised into folders according to the temporal dimensions—before T1, during T2, and after T3—of each data set. An initial inductive analysis involved reading and annotating through memos in the first five documents of each time (T1, T2, T3) to identify possible codes. We created codes after a second read of the initial memos and annotations. To account for the temporal dimension of representations, the analysis followed a sequential process, starting with data from T1 and ending with T3. Each code was named with initials (T1, T2 or T3) corresponding to the data from which it was drawn. The overall coding frame was developed inductively and deductively taking into account the research aims. Themes were created to account for the main investigative categories of the study: representations of self, representations of other, and representations of peace and reconciliation. These themes contain sub-themes that give nuance to the content and timing of the process of encounter. Once the complete corpus of data was coded, and the coding framework was finished, the coding framework was jointly revised with the second author. Any discrepancies were discussed, text-units were recoded to improve coherence and adjustments were made to the coding framework. The coding frame is available in supplemental materials.

2.6 | Researcher role (Reflexivity)

Doing research in conflict-affected settings requires a rigorous analysis of the role of the researcher, particularly addressing the possible barriers and mistrust that can emerge between researchers and participants (Uluğ et al., 2021). In our case, we are Latin American researchers who have first-hand experience with the divisions and tensions in our countries. The first author is a Colombian citizen, born and raised in an urban area, distant from a conflict that has affected millions of people but with long experience working in rural communities most affected by it. This position enables her to identify the nuances of urban youth discourses around conflict and provides contextual knowledge that allows a fluid conversation with the participants. To avoid oversimplification or undermining certain accounts, the codes were revised and adjusted by the second author, who is not a Colombian citizen. This enabled a combined emic and etic approach (Berry, 1989) to the experience and data analysis.

3 | RESULTS

We found that participation in the encounter offered an opportunity for self–other reflexivity and transformation of beliefs about self, other (former combatants) and objects related to peacebuilding (peace and reconciliation). We also found that these changes were associated with socio-emotional processes that evolved through time. Here we present findings according to the overall four themes yielded by the analysis. Table 2 below presents the themes and sub-themes found.

3.1 | Representing and transforming self: From isolated, uninterested, and distant to agents of peace

Across the three different stages of the experience, we found a strong prevalence of themes related to students' own identities, including how they were represented by others (meta-representations). Before the encounter, key sub-themes were isolation and disconnection of the students from the reality of the country and their privilege and lack of interest. This disconnection was related to their lack of knowledge about conflict and peace, as stated by one of the students: '[the course]

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TABLE 2 Themes and sub-themes related to the self–other-object triad

Themes	Before (T1)	During (T2)	After (T3)
From isolated and distant to agents of peace (Self)	Isolated and disconnected Privileged and disinterested	Finding commonalities and differences Self-reflection about privilege Advocates of reincorporation	Critical agents of peace Supporting peace efforts Guerrilla supporters
From cold-hearted to developing a culture of peace (Other)	Representing other: cold-hearted criminals Societal representations: Mistrust and the danger of communism	Warm and welcoming Symbolically constructing peace Rigid worldviews	Legitimate actors committed to peacebuilding Mistrust (societal)
From the victim-perpetrator dyad to a collective construction (Peace and reconciliation)	Peace and reconciliation as conflict between victims and perpetrators Difficult to achieve	Peace as a societal process Reconciliation as recognising the other Forgiveness	Collective Construction Encountering the other Complexity of historical conflict dynamics
Socio-emotional Processes	Anxiety Fear Excitement	Anxiety Surprise Hope Happiness	Hopelessness Fear (societal) Gratitude Surprise (societal)

is *an opportunity to leave the bubble that is Bogota and the University and being able to understand other realities*' (Sergio, Pre-departure narratives). In addition, students showed awareness that former guerrilla members perceived them as privileged: '*I imagined they thought of us as spoiled, weak and unaware of class differences because we were in our own bubble of privilege*' (Antonio, post-encounter interview).

During the encounter, sub-themes evidence a nuanced identification of both similarities and differences between self and other and the realisation that representations held by former guerrilla members about the students were undergoing transformation. During their stay, students reflected on their backgrounds, which entailed common roots and history as well as opposition to those of the CP-HR community: '*The daily life here is exactly the same as with my family. We have coffee every morning, afternoon, and evening, the complicit smiles, and the willingness to keep living and have a good life*' (Amapola, Chronicle). Students were able to link many of their personal experiences with the everyday actions and practices found in the community. Exploring and understanding similarities and differences enhanced self-reflection and the possibility of dialogue between self and other: '*This made me think again about our privilege. Those exercises were very basic things, you don't need a PhD to do it, but that was for me, I was very privileged in my context, the education I had, but then that was also a chance to realise that I also had to re-learn other things*' (Sergio, focused interview). This process of self-reflection is enabled by the multiple conversations and encounters with former combatants, who engage in dialogues with them about class and privilege but also share everyday actions where similarities arise. In this case, self-reflection arises when students internalise the perspectives of the other (former combatants) and observe themselves from their stand point (Kadianaki & Gillespie, 2015).

Similarly, an important sub-theme of the encounter was the realisation of changes in the representations held by the community about the students. Through their everyday interactions, students experienced the change in these meta-representations, reporting how they felt were now seen beyond their position of privilege. '*Maybe the encounter made them see that even though we are not the same, we have the capacity, the humility and the overall willingness to join them in their activities, so maybe they also deconstructed some of the ideas they had about us (…)*' (Julieta, focused interview). They also realised that although former combatants initially thought of them as inexperienced, this changed to the recognition of the potential of students as advocates of peace and reincorporation of former combatants into society. By considering this alternative meta-representation of self, students are able to experience and behave differently based on this newly identified perception of former combatants, which has a positive impact on their group membership.

After the encounter, the central sub-themes about the self present the students as agents of peace and supporters of the peace process. Through the process students report an identity of peacebuilders and a commitment to engage this identity in their professional career as practising psychologists: '*We are part of a book club with the elderly. We used the book they wrote about their experience during war [Inside the guerrilla] with them. We read them some poems that were in the book and shared our experience in Agua Bonita; they were very interested (…) the leader of the group was especially shocked by our experience. She said we were going to be the generation of change*' (Milena, Focus groups). Therefore, the potential of alternative meta-representations lies in their possibility to create new meanings and become powerful guiding tools for sense-making (Amer & Obradovic, 2022) in a peacebuilding context.

Overall, the sub-themes point to a process of self-learning and transformation. Nevertheless, as they return home after their visit, students also become aware of identity-related tensions. One sub-theme of importance refers to being perceived by some family members and close friends as guerrilla supporters after returning from the community: '*a member of my family said, this is stupid, why do you want to become "guerrillera"?*' (Julia, focused interview). This new representation put forward by interactions with family and friends after the visit to the community points to persistent hegemonic representations of the guerrilla movement and the broader ethos of conflict that

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continues to be relevant in Colombian society. Referring to urban youth as supporters and/or promoters of the guerrilla movement and affirming that they would be brainwashed and become communists after the encounter exemplifies resistance to alternative representations by using semantic barriers that delegitimise a prefigured culture of peace and signal the experience as dangerous (Gillespie, 2008, 2020).

However, the possibility of change and counternarratives is highlighted by the majority of participants who referred to positive feedback from their close network and a new identity as supporters of peacebuilding efforts by former guerrilla members: '*I think that, when they think about our group, a group of private university students in a bubble of privilege, they also think they have a voice, they have been heard and that we are now contributing towards peace*' (Antonio, focused interview). Creating spaces for contestation of representations of self and other opens the possibility of being re-presented (Howarth, 2006) from disinterested urban youth towards agents of peace. These spaces can be seen as an example of prefigurative praxis (Cornish et al., 2016; Trott, 2016), where students begin to challenge hegemonic narratives about conflict and actively engage in discussions, groups and activities to present alternative representations about former combatants, peace and reconciliation.

3.2 | Representing and recognising the other: From cold-hearted, inhuman and savage perpetrators to citizens developing a culture of peace

A recurring aspect throughout the three moments experienced by the students was the transformation of the representations they held about the unknown other. Before the encounter, students thought of former guerrilla members as cold-hearted criminals and experienced tensions with their families due to the dominantly negative representations of the community: '*[I imagined them] bitter and without any love for society or family, colder than ice and hard as rocks*' (Anastasia, Chronicles). They also reflected upon the lack of humanity, education and the 'macho-like' behaviour of former combatants. These notions are aligned with wider social representations of former combatants (Hart & Tamayo Gomez, 2022). They reflect the persistence of an ethos of conflict, the de-humanisation of the Other and the apprehensiveness of students' families and friends before the visit. A general mistrust of the Other and the closeness of the Others to ideas seen as 'communist' were associated with these themes.

During the encounter, novel categories emerged to refer to former combatants. Sub-themes highlight former guerrilla members as warm and welcoming, constructors of a culture of peace, upholders of a profound sense of community and their role as family members. In their descriptions, peace signatories were depicted as hard-working, dedicated to everyday activities such as harvesting, fishing, caring for children and studying, environmentally aware, respecting and preserving nature and as emotional beings capable of suffering and loving, developers of their small communities through symbolic and tangible efforts. In addition, they reflected on the collective nature of their efforts: '*The CP-HR is the example of a dream come true. It is a space where the community works united against a myriad of challenges but demonstrates a complete determination to fight for their dreams and those of their children*' (Alvaro, photo essay).

TABLE 3 General topics in the final products (chronicles and photo essays)

General topics	Number of documents
The humanity of former guerrilla members	8
Building community ethos Peace building 3	5
Self–other similarities	5
Transformed stereotypes	2

Note: themes obtained from the final products of the service-learning experience (chronicles and photoessays).

These categories were the main topics in the chronicles and photo essays developed throughout the service-learning experience (see Table 3 and Figure 1).

Whereas the majority of themes during the encounter indicated transformed representations and recognition of the Other, one important sub-theme referred to the former combatants as having rigid worldviews. This sub-theme emerged in the context of direct conversations between students and former combatants about the involvement of the latter in the armed conflict. Normalisation of violence produced tensions at several moments during the experience and created a sense of unease among students who felt conflicted about the new reality of peace signatories as committed to peace but at the same time unable to recognise their role in the past: '*There were very clear contradictions and justifications, sometimes their discourse justified killings, they just said: we were at war, or I didn't know if I killed someone because I was far away*' (Siena, focused interview).

Despite these tensions, after the encounter, the central sub-theme is former combatants as legitimate actors willing to reconcile and support peacebuilding efforts:

> '*A lot of them have many projects that are recognised in the society, they have been recognised in different scenarios, we even see them in the news now, and they keep doing things, their projects and they feel good about it, because they are not building peace for themselves, they are building peace for everyone, they just need to keep their strength and belief to keep building the country*' (Amapola, focused interview).

At the same time, the persistence of societal mistrust as a sub-theme is present again, as students return home and microgenetic processes of self and other shift towards interactions with their ordinary network of family members and friends. These interactions reveal the resilience of the ethos of conflict and of negative representations in Colombian society, which associate former combatants with criminality, insecurity and inhumanity. They can be seen in the semantic barriers (Gillespie, 2008) that undermine the lived experience of the encounter and avoid

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FIGURE 1 This mural represents the dream of a better country, with more participation, opportunities and equality. Moving from weapons to tools to work the fields (Lisa, photo essay)

the alternative representation presented by participants: '*[after the encounter] my mom told me I had to understand, that once people steal, they will always be thieves, and that I shouldn't trust them*' (Olivia, focused interview). In this case, we observe a delegitimising barrier (Gillespie, 2020), in which stigma remains, and there is still distrust and dismissals of positive remarks about former combatants.

However, there are also sub-themes of curiosity and reflection about the conflict and the need to have open discussions about the encounter with the former combatants:

> '*I was telling my family about my experience, and suddenly, my uncle started telling me: "but you can't forget all of the other things…"., and I just told him I wasn't. I was only acknowledging their presence, and that we shouldn't be thinking about removing them from society, everyone makes mistakes, and that is not the solution… and then everyone was silent for a while. Afterwards, my uncle told me: well… they are people too, I have also made mistakes… and I am not a bad person*' (Julieta, Focus groups).

This excerpt exemplifies a typical conversation reported by students and the potential of these encounters to move from monological to dialogical ones (Jovchelovitch, 2019). The central element here is the effort of both parts to take into account different perspectives and acknowledge them as legitimate.

3.3 | Expanding representations of peace and reconciliation: From the victim-perpetrator dyad to a societal construction

Before departure, dominant sub-themes were the normality of the conflict and the dyad victim-perpetrator. Even though there were no direct questions about the Colombian conflict in any of the instruments, it is of importance that the conflict and its 'normalcy' emerged as central themes in the representations of the students: '*When I was born, the guerrilla had more than 40 years, so when I saw the news about deaths of people, of military men, I said… well, this is what happens, we are in the middle of a conflict*' (Antonio, focused interview). These representations emphasised the difficulties in achieving a peaceful society and the externality of the conflict to the students, which they located in the victim-perpetrator dyad and stories related their past experiences of victimhood: '*Around 2018, I thought that maybe reconciliation was possible if you ask for forgiveness like if a guerrilla man hurt a lot of people, he might have killed, in cold blood killings, and I think these people had to reconcile with their victims*' (Nicole, focused interview).

During the encounter, sub-themes account for the societal and constructed nature of peace and reconciliation and the importance of recognising the Other. Listening to the stories of former combatants, students problematised what they understood as conflict and started to rethink the multiple narratives about Colombia's history: '*I found this other part of the history, which is also my history, and I managed to organise the puzzle in my head, there were a lot of missing pieces, and I could only complete it by being here, spending time with the people*' (Anastasia, focused interview). Sharing daily activities, being part of households and having the possibility to engage in dialogue with former combatants changed the representation of peace and reconciliation from conflict to peace as human action, actively constructed by the community of former guerrilla members. Throughout the different texts and audio-visual products developed during the encounter, there was constant mention of peace and reconciliation as a collective construction (Figure 2) of the CP-HR community. Murals, an adaptation of war equipment (bags) to support harvesting efforts, were some of the examples used. In particular, peace is recognised as embodied in children and the education processes in the community. A central sub-theme emerging in students' reflections about reconciliation was

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FIGURE 2 Transformation of life (Liliana, photo essay)

the need for recognition of the Other. Students emphasised the importance of removing barriers to promote encounters that enable knowing and recognising the Other. Forgiveness appeared as an important sub-theme of reconciliation, understood as going beyond apologies between victims and perpetrators. After listening to the stories of former combatants, and also reflecting on their own knowledge of the armed conflict, there was a nuanced view on forgiveness. On one side, students recognised peace signatories' willingness to be open to civil society and ask for forgiveness through their everyday actions. On the other, they argue for bilateral forgiveness, as former combatants had also experienced loss, and torture by the state:

> '*Reconciliation… I think they are also willing to… as [name of former combatant] mentioned, she accepted the apologies by one of the soldiers [about killing a beloved companion], but it is difficult. I don't think it is as simple as asking for forgiveness and that's it. I think it is a process. I think they were also willing to reconcile the damage they had done, by letting us go and visit, to allow other people to visit, organizing events and asking for forgiveness, to heal all the wound*' (Merida, focused interview)

After the encounter, sub-themes point to the recognition of the complexity of the historical dynamics of conflict, developing representations of peace as a societal process and a collective construction which involves removing stigma about each other. This new representation links peace to dialogical encounters and reconciliation, forged in novel forms of recognising the Other and relocating the Self from a defensive position away from the conflict to an understanding that the conflict pertains to the totality of society and that peace must be a shared commitment and societal construction of all, as mentioned by one of the students:

> '*If we want it [peace] to be possible, everyone, and I mean, absolutely everyone has to be involved. Being an observer is not enough. You must be able to act either way. In our case, we need to keep going with projects, promote encounters, and so on, and we all have to create processes of forgiveness and reconciliation*' (Antonio, focused interview).

3.4 | Socio-emotional processes

Throughout the experience, students reported multiple emotions. Before the encounter, fear, anxiety and excitement were prevalent. Students feared the encounter with former FARC-EP members and were anxious about the interactions they might have: '*I was very afraid, but I didn't tell anyone at home. I think it is different to go to jail and visit people, we were actually going to spend time with them, not like in a hotel, going for a second then going back, we were staying with them, even sharing the bathroom*' (Olivia, focused interview).

However, albeit less frequently, there was also a sense of excitement about the novelty of the experience and the possibilities involved in the encounter: '*I didn't know a lot of things, of how it was going to be, but for me it was like an adventure, or a new experience, so I was excited about these new opportunities to get to know them*' (Merida, focused interview).

During the encounter, new emotions emerged, such as surprise, hope and happiness. Anxiety was dominant when students prepared to share the households with former combatants, but once they were living with them, there was an overall sense of positive surprise and hope. These were linked to feelings of empathy and facilitated by conviviality and conversations about their lives, dreams and hopes: '*we are very surprised, I think I speak for everyone, we are surprised, this is very hopeful, it is confusing, it is mysterious, it is a lot of things*' (Liliana, video diary).

After the visit, both negative and positive emotions coexisted, mainly related to the reactions of family members and close friends. There was mainly curiosity and surprise but also fear on the part of some members of their family and friends. As a result, hopelessness emerged as an emotion that some students experienced when referring to reconciliation:

> '*Reconciliation is not that easy, and I think I've lost a bit of hope, because of how my friends and family reacted, to see that they still think of them [former combatants] as the complete enemy*' (Julia, interview).

However, there were feelings of gratitude and surprise about encountering and recognising the other as well as being recognised by them beyond rigid stereotypes: '*I think some of them [family and friends] were in shock, they kept asking for more information, as if they didn't*

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believe me, I think they were disoriented, and I think that it is important to feel like that, when you have new information, you can feel surprised by all the particularities of the people' (Lucía, focused interview). This dual transformation of identities as an outcome of recognition (Amer & Obradovic, 2022) was experienced through positive emotions such as gratitude: '*He [former guerrilla member] thanked me for everything we did, but I also thanked him, I had the opportunity to see him in a different light, and that is very special*' (Olivia, focused interview).

4 | DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore the transformation of representations of self (students), other (former combatants) and peace and reconciliation held by urban youth through time (before, during and after the experience), seeking to understand the microgenetic processes (self–other interactions) underpinning reconciliation and changes from ethos of conflict to cultures of peace. We investigated the prefigurative potential of knowledge encounters to renew interactions between historically divided social actors and generate in the present experiences of what a future ethos of peace between self and other could be.

Our results indicate that as urban youth meet, spend time and share space and common activities with the former combatants, both representations and identities are transformed. Through self–other interactions before, during and after the actual encounter, urban youth experience a rich psychological process of self-reflection and exposure to the meta-representations of former guerrilla members that moves their self-understanding from being isolated and uninterested in the reality of the country to agents and supporters of peace. At the same time, the encounter enables a renewal in the representations of the former combatants, whose identities are transformed from criminal and cold-hearted to warm, welcoming and constructors of peace. Throughout the experience, urban youth also change their conceptions of peace and reconciliation, which move from being focused on the conflict and the opposition victim-perpetrator to a more nuanced understanding of societal construction in which combined self-reflection and recognition of the Other (Jovchelovitch, 2007) can build reconciliation as a process that must involve the whole of society. These transformations in the socio-cognitive content of representations and identities are associated with socio-emotional processes that include fear, anxiety, surprise, hope, gratitude and despair. It was clear that during the encounter the ethos of conflict was questioned and an emerging ethos of peace was prefigured. However, this prefiguration was contested when students returned home to their family and friends and were confronted with the hegemonic representations of Colombian society about former guerrilla members, the conflict and the (im)possibility of peace (Figure 3).

The dynamic between hegemonic narratives of the conflict and its actors and the alternative representations carried by the students demonstrated on the one hand the psychosocial resilience of ethos of conflict and on the other hand the potential of new self–other interactions for introducing alternatives that can potentially move societies towards an ethos of peace. These findings corroborate Bar-Tal's (2007) conceptualisation of the sociopsychological infrastructure of protracted conflict and what is required for transforming an ethos of conflict into a culture of peace, namely changing a collective memory that normalises conflict, frozen social identities, a focus on delegitimising the adversary group and a collective fear that prevents any potential conversation about peace and reconciliation. These insights are well-established in the literature. However, what our study highlights are the microgenetic interactions that through novel and unlikely self–other relationships initiate change in this infrastructure and bring to the fore the 'long and hard road' of reconciliation as a process.

Our results indicate that *in and through* the concrete experience of the encounter a transformation of representations of self and other takes place through time and these changes are carried forward towards society even after the encounter has ended. In this sense, microgenetic transformations are important components of societal-level transformations and corroborate insights from socio-cultural developmental psychology that social change involves and requires microgenetic change (Duveen & Lloyd, 1990; Gillespie, 2012; Psaltis, 2015). In the present study, self-reflection was triggered by dialogical interaction with the meta-representations of the hitherto unknown other, the former combatants. The students' self-understanding became an object of thought for itself (Gillespie, 2006), and by taking the perspective of former combatants, students were able to manifest self-doubt about themselves and their role in society (Kadianaki & Gillespie, 2015). In synchrony with self-reflection, alternative representations of the Other were forged. Sharing households and daily activities with the other provided a unique opportunity to engage in perspective-taking and learning, which led to the deconstruction of previous negative representations and produced novel categories to describe former combatants. The lived interactions enabled by the encounter and the internal uncertainty about one's own knowledge as it encounters the knowledge of others are a mechanism that allows the construction of new knowledge (Kadianaki & Gillespie, 2015; Jovchelovitch, 2019).

In the case of post-accord societies, new knowledge can bring the internalised Other to consciousness (Gillespie, 2020), change perceptions about outgroups and even about one's own identity (Čehajić-Clancy et al., 2016), which has been reported as a precondition for social change (Brasil & Cabecinhas, 2019). During and after the encounter, students re-signified representations of both self and other as committed to peacebuilding efforts and sharing a critical perspective about conflict. These changes unfreeze rigid social identities and facilitate listening so that dominant narratives carried by social actors become reflexive and open to new meanings. This is an important first step towards understanding the microgenesis of reconciliation through an encounter (Psaltis, 2012) and even more so in post-accord settings, as the question of the roots of conflict and the possibility of peace emerges into the public sphere.

Our findings indicate that the possibility of self-doubt and self-reflection can be the basis for a renewed critical awareness (Freire, 1973) of the structural elements of conflict, as well as the possibility of action and agency in the peacebuilding process. They reveal something important about the dynamic of cultural change and the

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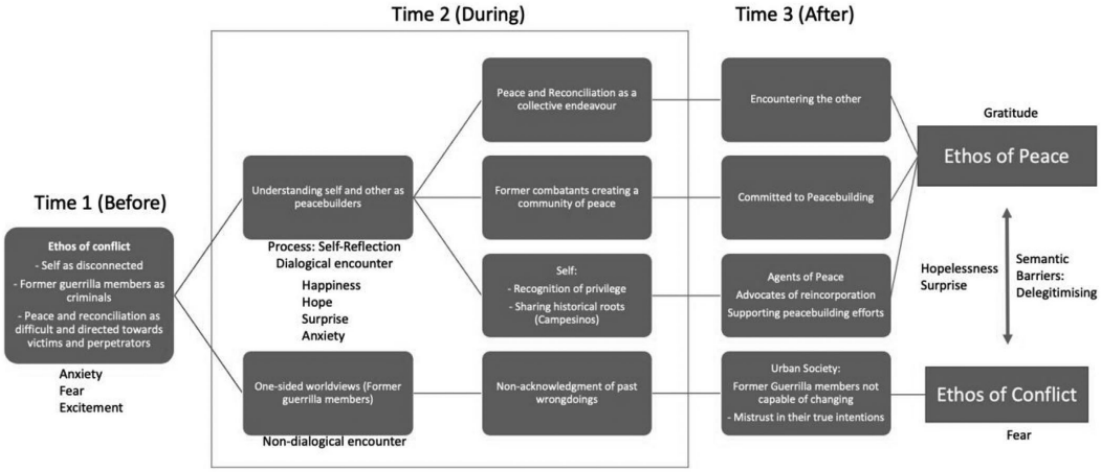

FIGURE 3 Transformation of self–other-object over time

uneven process whereby hegemonic narratives start to shift in the public sphere. First, the change in networks of social influence produced by novel self–other interactions changes understandings of the conflict and its actors. Before the encounter, students' representations of former guerrilla members were directly linked to their primary societal context: middle-upper class, urban setting. However, during the encounter, former combatants became part of their context and everyday interaction and this change had a direct effect on students' representations.

Second, there are tensions and ambivalence in these novel interactions. Even though they challenge hegemonic patterns and create counternarratives to dominant representations of conflict they also trigger the use of semantic barriers (Gillespie, 2020) to delegitimise the encounter and the new representations being formed. For example, during the encounter, students felt uneasy with the need of former guerrilla members to rigidly defend their understandings of the conflict and justify violence without fully acknowledging their part. This is an ongoing challenge for reconciliation, as acknowledging past wrongdoings is a central element of the reconciliation process (Staub & Bar-Tal, 2003) and failing to do so can be a barrier to transformation in knowledge, identity and emotions.

In the period after the visit, as students returned to their primary context, despair co-existed with hope as they were confronted again with the well-established hegemonic representations of family and friends. Yet, in post-conflict settings, it is important to recognise reconciliation as a slow developmental process that starts with the actions of minorities (Bar-Tal & Bennink, 2004) and needs continuous elaboration, negotiation and supportive spaces. The very presence of semantic barriers has been also considered as an indication of the transformative potential of prefigurative encounters that nurture alternative representations (Kadianaki & Gillespie, 2015). In our study, open discussions among students, former combatants, family and close friends created opportunities for new beliefs about the peace process and former guerrilla members. Post-encounter interviews conducted 16 months after the encounter evidenced the continuity of this process and the resilience of the negotiations, interactions and questioning that was opened up by the experience.

Our findings reveal that perspective-taking and self-reflection are psychologically and socially challenging, but nevertheless foundational elements to support reconciliation processes. They require follow-up, engaged and continuous discussions and enabling spaces (Guerlain & Campbell, 2016). Numerous studies have outlined the potential of intergroup friendships to promote perspective-taking and empathy (Cehajic et al., 2008; Noor et al., 2008; Tam et al., 2008); however, our study highlights the potential of safe spaces to produce meaningful encounters with others who are not considered a friend. Personal experiences spending time in safe spaces with antagonist groups can change attitudes towards the outgroup while also highlighting the importance of prolonged interactions and the need to move beyond traditional victim-perpetrator dyads (Bruneau & Saxe, 2012; Ugarriza & Nussio, 2017).

Novel representations of peace and reconciliation as a collective endeavour of all resonate with Lederach's definition of reconciliation as the sharing of an interdependent future and add to it by making peace and reconciliation its shared motivation. In living with former combatants and their families, students could encounter alternative knowledge of peace and reconciliation as well as appreciate the interdependence of different social groups in the making of Colombian society and its conflicted past. In particular, students reflected on their own role in this collective construction and potential as agents of peace, which signals the prefiguration of an ethos of peace (Bar-Tal, 2000). Reflections about the importance of the encounter, challenging stigma and recognising the humanity of the other emphasise the potential of microgenetic transformations for wider societal change and align with reports by similar groups in other post-conflict contexts (Karić & Mihić, 2020; Nicholson, 2019).

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Changes in representations of self and other for urban youth and former guerrilla members are seen as directly linked to peacebuilding efforts both in the present and in the future. This finding is a key element to understanding reconciliation not only as related to a superordinate category of identification such as 'being humans' (Čehajić-Clancy et al., 2016), but as a process founded on the building of a shared intentionality in post-conflict societies: achieving sustainable peace.

4.1 | Limitations and future directions

Our analysis revealed that the encounter between students and former combatants in the safe space of a service-learning initiative can produce remarkable transformations in representations of self, other and peace and reconciliation. However, it is important to approach these results with caution. First, the research relies on one single cohort of students and it would therefore be necessary to expand the investigation into future cohorts as well before we can be confident about making general claims about the microgenesis of reconciliation in these encounters. Second, participation in the service-learning experience is voluntary and as this is an optative course, students self-select for travelling to the field and spending time with former combatants in the community. This poses questions about their individual cognitive and emotional predisposition to peace. However, it is worth noting that this particular university is considered one of the most conservative in the country, and, as seen in the results of this study, even if students were predisposed towards peace, the findings demonstrate their fear and dilemmas before and after the encounter.

Another limitation is that our study focused on representations held by students only. Further research should also examine 'the other side' of the encounter, namely the former combatants who participated in the experience. This also applies to the study of representations held by privileged urban society. These complementary perspectives would enable a better understanding of the dynamics underpinning the maintenance of hegemonic representations related to the ethos of conflict as well as how alternative representations challenge them over time.

Despite these limitations, our study sheds light on the microgenesis of societal change and points to the importance of aligning desired changes at the societal level with the development of supportive and safe spaces where micro-interactions between conflicting and divided social actors can take place. Previous research on prefiguration has focused on analysing social movements and its role challenging capitalism or neoliberal politics (de Coster & Zanoni, 2022; Yates, 2015). However, this study goes beyond social movements and focuses on transforming self–other representations in the small-scale, everyday community space of an educational initiative. It also innovates by researching a hard-to-reach, unresearched community of former combatants in rural Colombia. It highlights the potential of education and the contribution of the psychology curriculum to prefiguration in post-conflict scenarios, encouraging the interactions and dialogues that need to be established in a country still struggling to overcome conflict. This can inform as well as support national policies and the future-oriented construction of political alternatives related to peacebuilding and reconciliation.

5 | CONCLUSIONS

Through the analysis of the microgenesis of reconciliation efforts in an educational initiative, this article demonstrated the role of knowledge encounters (Aveling & Jovchelovitch, 2014; Jovchelovitch, 2007) to understanding the tensions and struggles that mediate moving from an ethos of conflict to one of peace (Bar-Tal, 2000). Identity and representational struggles linked to the emergence of alternative representations (ethos of peace) as they clash with hegemonic ones (ethos of conflict) shed light on the potential of prefiguration to support counter-hegemonic projects (Trott, 2016). They demonstrate that transforming the cultural ethos of conflict requires alignment for changes at the societal, interpersonal and individual levels. Here we have shown that wider societal narratives and counter-narratives linked to ethos of peace and conflict change in parallel with changes experienced in supportive and safe spaces for novel self–other dialogues between historically divided social groups.

Small-scale education initiatives have a long-term effect on the transformation of representations of self and other and open a new avenue for current discussions about prefigurative social change. They highlight the potential of educational safe spaces for promoting transformative encounters that prefigure dialogical social interactions among cultural, social and politically opposed social groups and challenge hegemonic representations related to the ethos of conflict. This can be the first step towards a critical view on education and its role in both transforming conflict-supporting narratives and supporting peacebuilding efforts (Bar-Tal et al., 2021; Čehajić-Clancy & Bilewicz, 2020).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the students who participated in this self-reflecting journey. Peacebuilding efforts in the country need committed young community psychologists willing to be part of reconciliation processes. We are also grateful to Federico Montes, a *firmante de paz*, former FARC-EP member and Natalia Reinoso, an independent scholar, for their continuous support in the design and implementation of this CSL experience from the start as part of their commitment to peacebuilding in Colombia. This work was funded by MINCIENCIAS (Colombia) scholarship for Doctoral Studies.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The author reports no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Complete coding framework with excerpts is available as supplementary material. The complete data set is not publicly available, given the sensitive information regarding former combatants and conflict in Colombia. Research data are not shared. cd_value_code=text

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ETHICS APPROVAL

This research project was reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the London School of Economics and Political Science (Reference # 1061).

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How to cite this article: Fonseca, L., & Jovchelovitch, S. (2023). The long hard road of reconciliation: Prefiguring cultures of peace through the transformation of representations of former combatants and identities of urban youth in Colombia. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2967

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Chapter 5: Identities in Transition: Re-presenting selfhood in the journey of reincorporation of former FARC-EP combatants in Colombia

Preface

This study focuses on the journey of reincorporation of peace signatories living in the CP-HR. It presents a zoom into the identity negotiation and processes of re-presentation of former guerrilla members who are following a path of collective reincorporation. Bearing in mind the unique scenario of collective reincorporation taking place in the Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation (ETCRs in Spanish), Chapter 5 explores the opportunities of these communities to be safe spaces for the encounter between former guerrilla members, civil society and the state. Even though there is an emerging literature exploring identity negotiation in processes of reincorporation (either collective or individual), less is known about the internal dynamics, practices and opportunities for re-presentation of the self as a performative practice to promote social change.

This chapter combines dialogicality with a social identity and social representational approach to examine the complex interplay of identity positionings of former guerrilla members as they engage with alterity. Using a combination of participant observation and semi-structured interviews, it analyses how and in which way peace signatories are dealing with stigmatising representations of self and the strategies they employ to challenge, resist and transform them. In particular, it uses a multivoicedness analysis (Aveling et al., 2015) to identify the multiple I-positions that are present as peace signatories encounter with civil society and state institutions as part of their reincorporation process.

The focus on identity is paired with an analysis of how each position is associated with representations of peace and reconciliation. It offers insights into the potential of the CP-HR as a safe space that is prefiguring reconciliation through the transformation of the self without denying its past and enabling a continuity of their biography as FARC members, crucial elements in a collective reincorporation process.

This paper was co-authored with Prof. Jovchelovitch, who provided key theoretical insights, supervisory assistance and editorial suggestions. The paper was submitted to the Journal of Peace and Conflict on April 23rd, 2024.

Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology

Identities in Transition: Re-presenting selfhood in the journey of reincorporation of former FARC-EP combatants in Colombia

--Manuscript Draft--

Manuscript Number:	PAC-2024-0448
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Abstract:	The peace agreement between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, People's Army (FARC-EP) and the Colombian state guaranteed territorial settlements for the collective reincorporation of former combatants. Unlike other agreements, this pathway involved community building and re-joining civil society without identity concealment. This paper draws on ethnographic fieldwork and interviews with former combatants living in a Territorial Space for Training and Reincorporation to investigate the I-positions that unfold in the journey of collective reincorporation of former guerrilla fighters in post-accord Colombia. A multivoicedness analysis was deployed to examine the positions and representations of peace and reconciliation adopted during the journey of collective reincorporation. Results show that former guerrilla members are polyphonic selves that combine "we" and "I" positions linked to their roots as FARC members and transitioning towards individual citizenship. These positions are linked to contradictory representations of peace and reconciliation as normative ideals of social justice and good living and continuing stigma, state absence and physical threat. The paper shows that collective reincorporation produces a hinge identity that supports biographical continuity through performative strategies that challenge stigmatising representations and conflict-related narratives. These findings show that the identity of actors involved in violence evolves as a function of the dialogicality of selfhood and its capacity for social creativity. Creating safe spaces for community building and changing socio-cultural conditions for selves that were once part of violence is an important step in building reconciliation and sustainable peace.
Article Type:	Empirical Study
Keywords:	Social Identity and Social Representations; Dialogical Self; Reincorporation; Former combatants; Peace and Reconciliation
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Manuscript Classifications:	Peace building; Psychological consequences of conflict; Qualitative research methods and conflict

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Abstract

The peace agreement between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, People's Army (FARC-EP) and the Colombian state guaranteed territorial settlements for the collective reincorporation of former combatants. Unlike other agreements, this pathway involved community building and re-joining civil society without identity concealment. This paper draws on ethnographic fieldwork and interviews with former combatants living in a Territorial Space for Training and Reincorporation to investigate the I-positions that unfold in the journey of collective reincorporation of former guerrilla fighters in post-accord Colombia. A multivoicedness analysis was deployed to examine the positions and representations of peace and reconciliation adopted during the journey of collective reincorporation. Results show that former guerrilla members are polyphonic selves that combine 'we' and 'I' positions linked to their roots as FARC members and transitioning towards individual citizenship. These positions are linked to contradictory representations of peace and reconciliation as normative ideals of social justice and good living and continuing stigma, state absence and physical threat. The paper shows that collective reincorporation produces a hinge identity that supports biographical continuity through performative strategies that challenge stigmatising representations and conflict-related narratives. These findings show that the identity of actors involved in violence evolves as a function of the dialogicality of selfhood and its capacity for social creativity. Creating safe spaces for community building and changing socio-cultural conditions for selves that were once part of violence is an important step in building reconciliation and sustainable peace.

Keywords: Social Identity, Dialogical self, Reincorporation, Former Combatants, Peace and Reconciliation, Social Representations.

Public Significance Statement

This study highlights the way in which former guerrilla members re-present themselves to civil society as part of the reincorporation process through performative strategies that allow them to transform negative representations about themselves and conflict. It also suggests that identity transformation is a collective endeavour resulting from the interaction between civil society, the state and former guerrilla members.

Introduction

In contexts of protracted conflict, the reintegration of actors previously involved in violence is widely acknowledged as an important step towards building reconciliation and cultures of peace. Reintegration takes former armed actors out of warfare and places them back in civil society, where they engage with actors and institutions that operate within the framework of citizenship and its rules. In Colombia, seven years after the signature of peace accords between the government and the FARC-EP (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army), the successful reincorporation of former combatants remains a central challenge for sustainable peace. By November 2016, when the peace accords were signed, 13,190 guerrilla members were formally recognised as former combatants (Garzón et al., 2019), and as of May 2022, 12,788 were still in the process of being reincorporated.

Identity negotiation and political recognition were key components of the Colombian peace agreement. FARC-EP negotiators included a specific denomination for former combatants returning to civil society: *reincorporados* and *firmantes de paz* (peace signatories[11]) to emphasise their willingness to keep mobilising politically as active peacebuilders (BPAC, 2022). Recognition and political participation in the public sphere were central for reintegration and, by the same token, reconciliation. Before the 2016 accords, the reintegration of those who demobilised voluntarily was an individual process (López et al., 2015) that left individuals on their own to face discriminatory practices and negative representations held by the majority of Colombian society (González & Clémence, 2019b). A common response was social mobility (Tajfel, 1981) through the concealment of the ex-combatant identity and distancing oneself from the stigmatised in-group. Reincorporating individually and "passing" as regular citizens was instrumental to find employment (González & Clémence, 2019b).

The FARC-EP deliberately challenged these pathways and opted for a strategy of *collective* reincorporation and maintaining collective identity (Zambrano Quintero, 2019). This was supported by the creation of *Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation* (ETCRs in Spanish), recognised by the accords as important supportive environments strengthening family ties and psychosocial well-being (ARN,

[11] Peace signatories is how former guerrilla members often refer to themselves. It is linked to being the ones who signed peace and symbolises their commitment to peace.

2022), where former combatants could settle with full citizenship rights. They enabled peace signatories to re-enter civil society in a manner purposefully distinct from previous processes of individual reincorporation.

Twenty-four territories were allocated to peace signatories across Colombia in rural regions where the FARC-EP historically held a strong presence[12]. Yet, these spaces still face numerous challenges. Many peace signatories left because of barriers to state benefits, lack of employment, threats to their lives and stigma associated with being a former combatant (Gluecker et al., 2022; Lopera-Arbeláez et al., 2023). Despite these difficulties, ETCRs remain important spaces for maintaining an ingroup identity that promotes feelings of pride based on group membership and the values associated with group history (Gluecker et al., 2022). As a contradictory space that is both safe for the continuity of the self and a source of stigma and threat to the self, the ETCRs offer a unique real-life context to understand how peace signatories who have decided to stay in the territorial spaces negotiate their identities and conflict-related narratives.

This paper investigates the journey of collective reincorporation of peace signatories as they settle in an ETCR space and develop new interactions with multiple societal actors and state institutions. Integrating dialogicality and a social representational approach (Elcheroth et al., 2011; Marková, 2023), it investigates the I-positions and internal dialogues that unfold in the transition from being a guerrilla fighter to becoming a full citizen in post-accord Colombia. Identity negotiation is an important aspect of the reincorporation process and studying it in this contradictory context illuminates how members of social groups with strong subjective bonds of attachment preventing them from moving to another group, challenge their stigmatised status and engage as a collective in active processes of re-constructing their social identities (Tajfel, 1981). Understanding how individual selves face the challenge of biographical discontinuity and the task of both encountering and reshaping social representations about themselves and others is central to understanding social change.

Social representations play a constitutive role in processes of framing and redefining selves (Oyserman & Markus, 1998). As widespread forms of societal thinking, they attach meaning to social identities and invest selfhood with definitions that shape the self-understanding of actors about themselves, who they are and who

[12] Of the original 24 ETCRs created as part of the peace agreement, three have been relocated due to high levels of violence and constant threats to the peace signatories living there.

they want to be. By centring the inter-relations between self and society, the article studies how social identities and social representations built by a transitioning culture are implicated in the evolving I-positions of former combatants, and how this process transforms conflict (Lederach, 1997) and potentially prefigures reconciliation.

Reconciliation from a social-psychological perspective

Reconciliation is a necessary pillar of sustainable peace, yet it remains an elusive target in most post-accord settings (Cole et al., 2022). This is in part because it involves a difficult and hard-to-achieve social psychological process of transformation of conflict-supportive narratives and encounters with past enemies (Bar-Tal, 2007). According to Lederach (1997), it requires three elements: relationship building, encountering and acknowledging others, and focusing on a shared interdependent future. This definition emphasises the psychology of self-other relations and the importance of considering how social actors navigate the ruptures required for changing social representations of peace and conflict as well as social identities, both their own and those of others. The journey of reincorporation is, at the same time, a journey of identity management and changing social representations, in which former combatants start to delineate the contours of an entirely novel position and redefine how they understand themselves and others (Fonseca & Jovchelovitch, 2024).

This is particularly relevant in a context where previous participation in an armed group has led to high levels of stigma, exclusion and marginalisation. How selves rethink themselves as agents of peace against a biography of heavy involvement in conflict and stigmatised social identities is a less studied but important dimension of reconciliation processes. Previous studies highlight strategies of identity continuity (Flack & Ferguson, 2021) and the broadening of I-positions in armed groups that transition back to civil society (da Silva et al., 2020). Militants of armed organisations can experience biographical disruption resulting from the clash between older I-positions related to conflict participation and new identities questioning the need for violence (da Silva et al., 2020). This process is complex and hard to elaborate, as former selves invested in social justice and collective principles start to place importance on values of formal society, such as family-oriented ideals and sustaining livelihoods (da Silva et al., 2020).

The transformation of societal beliefs about peace and conflict and the transformation of selves and social identities (Elcheroth et al., 2011) are inter-related dimensions of the same process of cultural change. In this sense, understanding the internal dialogicality of how selves use and transform extant societal representations about the conflict, as they work through their own social identities, is an important step to forge the novel self-other relations required for sustainable peace and reconciliation.

The Dialogical Self and the Management of Identity

Dialogical approaches to identity formation examine the multiplicity and complexity of positions emerging from the self-other encounter (Marková, 2003a) and how the constitutive alterity of the self (Grossen & Orvig, 2011) is linked to historically, culturally and socially situated knowledge (Marková, 2003a). These positions, often referred to as I-positions (Hermans, 2012), arise from the encounter with other individuals, social environments, institutions and generalised entities (Grossen & Orvig, 2011). Through the encounter, representations about self and Other become the object of discussion and the perspective of others is internalised, allowing individuals and groups to see themselves from the perspective of alter (Kadianaki & Gillespie, 2015). As a result, meeting unfamiliar representations of self held by others challenges the stability of the self and its perceived reality (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999), leading to processes of identity negotiation and transformation (Kadianaki & Gillespie, 2015)

Social representations theorists have focused on the microgenesis of this transformative potential, showing in detail how social groups use different strategies to actively re-present themselves and assert identity markers that resist and challenge negative representations of self (Amer, 2020; Chapman, 2016). These strategies have been analysed extensively, with a main focus on how they appear discursively in individuals' accounts. The present paper adds an ethnographic approach to study performative strategies, defined as the intentional expression or suppression of behaviours associated with a salient identity (Klein et al., 2007), which serve as communicative acts to influence identity recognition (Amer, 2020).

In uncovering the journey of reincorporation through the journey of the dialogical self, we aim to better understand the potential for change in social identities and collective master narratives about the Colombian conflict (Fonseca &

Jovchelovitch, 2024). The transformation of societal beliefs about peace and conflict and the transformation of selves and social identities (Elcheroth et al., 2011) are inter-related dimensions of the same process of cultural change and our aim is to show how it underpins a new repertoire of identities and representations that work as foundations for cultures of peace and reconciliation (Bar-Tal, 2009; Fonseca & Jovchelovitch, 2024).

Methods and context

Study setting

This study is based on the Centro Poblado Héctor Ramírez (CP-HR), in La Montañita, a small municipality in the south of Colombia and one of the three Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation (ETCR in Spanish) in the Caquetá Department. Given its history of ongoing conflict, poverty and state absence, Caquetá was assigned PDET status (Territorially Focused Development Programmes). As we write, the CP-HR is a small community, comprising 138 peace signatories and their families (251 inhabitants in total).

Participants

Participants were recruited following two years of collaborative ethnographic work in a joint project with the first author. Twenty-four peace signatories, who were actively involved in the armed struggle and are now living in the CP-HR as part of the reincorporation process, were interviewed (Table 1).

Table 1.
Participants' Demographics

	Gender Distribution	
	Female (n=12)	**Male (n=12)**
Age		
29-39	4	2
40-49	6	4
<50	2	6
Time in FARC		
15-24	11	7
<25	1	5
Position in FARC		
High-Rank	1	4
Middle-rank	3	3
Low-Rank	8	5
Role in the community		
Leadership	5	5
Community member	7	7
Children		
Yes	5	8
No	7	4

Data collection

The first author carried out ethnographic research for 12 months between September 2020 and October 2021, when semi-structured interviews were conducted. Participant observation explored the journey of reincorporation and the encounters with different actors visiting the community. Observations were collected in field diaries and photographs compiled by the first author. This work was approved by community leaders.

The semi-structured interview guide included a timeline (Bagnoli, 2009) inviting participants to think about past, present, and future in the journey of reincorporation (full guide available on request). Long-term collaboration with the first author facilitated open discussions resembling everyday conversations. Interviews were conducted in the participants' homes and lasted 45-60 minutes. They were audio

recorded and transcribed. All names used in this paper are pseudonyms. All participation was voluntary.

Data analysis

A multivoicedness analysis theoretically grounded on dialogism was deployed to unpack the multiple voices of Self and inner-Others within Self's discourse and their interactions (Aveling et al., 2015). It followed a three-step method to identify 1) the multiplicity of I-positions from which the Self speaks; 2) the voices of inner-Others within the discourses of the Self that speaks, and 3) the interactions among the different I-positions and Inner voices (Aveling et al., 2015). To identify I-positions, we coded all the utterances with first person pronouns or group names (I, we, me, our) and assigned labels to groups of utterances that had a common voice (e.g. 'We-as-*reincorporados'*). To identify inner-Others, we coded all sentences with named Others or third person pronouns. Coding took place in three phases: the initial phase created categories for I-positions and inner-Others; the second phase analysed interactions between internal and external voices in the self, and the third phase identified links between I-positions and social representations of peace and reconciliation. A draft version of the analysis was shared with a community leader to avoid misrepresentation (Lederach, 2016), and ensure ecological validation (Montero, 2006). The community leader's comments and observations were useful for engaging critically with results and clarifying specific concepts. The final phase involved revising and contrasting identity positions in light of ethnographic field notes, with a focus on performative strategies deployed in identity negotiation. Data was analysed using NVivo 14.

Reflexivity and positionality

We are aware of our position as researchers and the power dynamics it entails a community of former guerrilla members. The first author is a Colombian national who has been working closely with this community of former guerrilla members since 2018. As a researcher, critical social and community psychologist, and a Colombian who believes in social justice, her work with this community of peace signatories is based on the belief that knowledge is built collaboratively and each group has specific and valuable contributions. The second author is a British-Brazilian national with a long-standing trajectory of socio-cultural and community psychology work in Latin America.

Results

Across the dataset, the collective journey of reconciliation entails the co-existence of different I-positions, in which the self moves between the 'We' and the 'I', between a collective social identity and an individual self. We-positions comprise all the utterances in which participants referred to themselves using the collective "we" and are primarily linked to the social identity of belonging to FARC-EP, '*we-as-farianos'*[13], and the social identity linked to the reincorporation process, '*we-as-reincorporados'*. I-positions comprise all the utterances in which participants refer to themselves using the individual 'I' and are presented as the '*I-as-citizen',* being related to the demands and requirements of being an individual citizen in society. Both 'I' and 'We' positions correspond to personal and societal demands of reincorporation and are linked different representations of peace and reconciliation, offering peace signatories lenses to make sense of their social identities and their position in society (Table 2).

[13] "Fariano" is the demonym for people that belonged to the FARC-EP.

Table 2.

I-Positions, inner others and representations of peace and reconciliation

Internal positions I-Positions (Self)		**Inner Voices (Other)**	**Representations of peace and reconciliation**	**Interactions Self-Inner voices**
Collective "we"	*We-as-farianos*	• FARC-EP as a 'mother', as family • State as absent • Civil Society as reminder of negative gaze and wrongdoings	• Peace as '*vida digna'* and social justice • Reconciliation as forgiveness and acknowledgement of past mistakes	• Dialogue: We-as-Reincorporados • Tension: I-as-citizen
	We-as-Reincorporados	• State as absent • FARC as enduring source of values • Civil society as supporters versus civil society as stigmatising	• Peace is not real, real peace is linked to safety • Reconciliation as encountering the other	• Dialogue: We-as-farianos and I-as-citizen
	I-as-citizen	• Civil society as individualistic • The individual's family	• Peace as feeling safe, living without fear	• Dialogue: We-as-Reincorporados • Tension: We-as-farianos

We-as-Farianos

As *farianos*, peace signatories build identity based on their sense of belonging to FARC-EP, even though they have formally left it as an armed group. The organisation remains the first identity marker across all interviews, centrally linked to their rural (*campesino*) origins, which was the starting point for joining the armed group:

> *There were no education opportunities, a lot of poverty, of needs, you saw the guerrilla as the best option, we preferred joining rather than end up in prostitution, or mugging, or become a drug addict, it was a fair fight for everyone"* (Angélica, 42 years old).

> *We were the ones who controlled the territories, made sure there were no burglars, no domestic violence, we were the authorities in those regions, and when we left [as part of the peace agreement], in a way, they [rural communities] resented us because they felt abandoned again* (Lucrecia, 33 years old).

'*We-as-farianos'* draws on a narrative of origins that includes a history of escape from hardship and the potential for becoming agents for change. Lucrecia highlights the state-like role of the FARC in supporting local communities against the backdrop of an absent state. Being a *fariano* entails identity markers that resist and challenge negative representations of self and affirm control and strength in opposition to conditions of vulnerability and lack of state presence.

This is actively re-presented in the landscape of the CP-HR through murals painted in households and public places, a performative strategy to highlight the *fariano* identity. Figure 1 presents shows portrayals of known leaders and tangible artefacts to communicate chosen symbolic aspects of their identity as *farianos*: the jungle in the back, the use of uniforms, the rose symbolising their political party, and "Bolivar's eyes"[14]. Together, these symbols work as visible reminders of the group's history and as tools for its re-presentation, reasserting the historical identity of the community.

[14] Simón Bolívar was the leader of the independent movement of Colombia in the 1800s. He is a historical leader taken by leftist guerrillas, in particular FARC-EP as a symbol of liberation.

Figure 1.

Murals in public spaces depicting we-as-farianos position

Inner others: the FARC, the state and civil society

The FARC, the state and civil society comprise the inner voices in this position. The FARC is centred as family, a scaffolding institution that fulfils multiple roles of sustenance and care in direct tension with an absent state. The neglect of the state is recurrent in participants' narratives and a source of tension in facing the challenges of being a person in the process of reincorporation. Participants refer to FARC as family and draw on metaphors of motherhood to describe it:

> *The organisation, that for better or worse, has been the mother imposed to us by the state* (Mariana, 43 years old).

Mariana makes clear the inner dialogical tension by highlighting the role of the state in 'imposing' the FARC as a mother. Like all other participants, she engages the collective voice of FARC for its culture of guaranteeing basic rights that would otherwise be inaccessible because of a neglectful and absent state. This highlights the collective nature of the organisation and its role as proxy for both family and state. The powerful metaphors of family and motherhood are complemented by referring to the FARC-EP as a school and a learning site. As Miguel and most of the participants mention, being *fariano* involves all the supporting roles of a state in modern society: a supportive family, access to education, technical training, and health services.

> *We all went to the same place, we were part of the same school, because the guerrilla was like a school for us, I didn't know how to read and write until I was there* (Miguel, 52 years old).

Civil society is the third voice present in former combatants' narratives; they are aware of its negative representations and recognise how they relate to the violence that pertained to the actions of FARC, which are part of their own selves as *farianos*. Although not frequently mentioned, former combatants are able to acknowledge the harm they did as part of their collective identity. This is challenging for the *fariano* self because such negative representations of civil society clash with their own understanding of themselves as social justice fighters and affect their collective identity independently of any individual participation in direct acts of violence. As Pablo says: *"They [civil society] are coming to give us a hard time"*, as he recognises their past wrongdoings. Here it is clear how meta-representations of the *fariano* identity trigger both self-reflection and perspective-taking, introducing other identity positions in the dialogical self of former combatants.

Representations of peace and reconciliation

The representation of peace and reconciliation aligned with position '*we-as-farianos'* refers to the meeting of basic needs and having a "*vida digna*" (dignified life). This definition was frequently linked with the idea of "peace with social justice", which originates in their historical roots and experience of rural life, where poverty and marginalisation intersect with the idea of revolutionary struggle:

> *We have always understood peace, as people having a roof over their heads, having access to schools and possibilities to learn and study, where there is a health centre to care for everyone without any discrimination, where we all have those basic things* (Mariana, 43 years old).

The interaction between *'we-as-farianos'* and civil society elicits a challenging representation of reconciliation that acknowledges violence and the harm perpetrated by FARC-EP. Reconciliation in this position is directly linked to seeking forgiveness from victims and acknowledging their role in the conflict:

…we made mistakes in the past, we were responsible for victims, we caused pain and we knew, and we were aware, and we were all saying, we can't repeat this and we need to ask for forgiveness to the victims (Pablo, 42 years old).

We-as-Reincorporados

Peace signatories speak lengthily about being a *reincorporado,* invoking the potential of their values and campesino roots for their practices in the ETCRs: work hard, build a community from scratch and enact a model of solidarity and social justice in the village in which they live. This resembles what they have been fighting for historically, the philosophy of '*buen vivir'* (good living) and is narrated with reference to the uniqueness of the collective values they bring from their history with FARC and their strong identification as *campesinos* (peasants):

It hasn't been easy, even from the start, we started every day at 5 am until 5 or 6 pm. Women, men, pregnant women, even the women who had recently given birth, with their children around them, were all helping, working. This is why we have our small village like this, it was not something we did to get paid or have individual economic retribution, but it was an effort to strengthen our community and as a strategy to be prepared to mitigate the future neglect from the government" (Lucrecia, 33 years old).

This extract, common across the data, highlights the values peace signatories wish to project and attach to their identity through the consolidation of the CP-HR as a 'community of peace'. They emphasise how they have built their small village following their principles of collective work and, at the same time, adjusting new values and aspirations of citizenship coming from the reincorporation process.

Throughout the interviews, participants also refer to their economic activity and the importance of their campesino roots as an addition to their *fariano* selves:

Besides being guerrilleros, we have never stopped being campesinos (peasants). People from urban areas didn't understand this, some did. This is a way to integrate with them, to be able to show them who we are, that we are normal people, and that we are not stigmatising anyone, even though we are being stigmatised, but we are trying to articulate with everyone […] we are the same, we

have a different history, and this is something we must acknowledge (Orlando, 57 years old).

In this excerpt, Orlando's association of being a *reincorporado* with being a campesino (peasant) serves as a strategy to re-present the group beyond the *fariano* identity, which is still there but is linked to a superordinate category recognised by the same core values of hard work and community cohesion. Using the social category 'campesino' for the work of re-presentation strategically highlights other components of their history.

In this way, former combatants build a hybrid identity that works as a hinge (Sammut et al., 2014), emphasising *fariano* values and belonging to rural areas as well as active citizens developing a fair society. This hinge identity sustains former combatants in building their new lives while countering the negative representations that are still directed at *reincorporados*. These lines of contradiction and continuity between being a *fariano and* being a *reincorporado* drive former combatants' motivation to be part of Colombian society as citizens.

Inner others: The importance of civil society and academia

Civil society, including NGOs and in particular academia, is a central inner voice in the identity work of the *reincorporado* position. It coexists with the FARC and the absence of state institutions in the voices of participants, but it is the encounter with 'people from other areas' that appear as central to the development of the identity of *reincorporado*.

Civil society is seen as an important source of meta-representations about the journey of *reincorporados* and over half of participants mention the benefits of interacting with people from different regions to transform negative stereotypes. Sharing knowledge and becoming visible in a previously inaccessible public sphere contribute to changing global narratives and the stigma still directed at the identity of '*reincorporado*':

[..] when people from urban areas come and face all the complexities and difficulties we endure: rain, muddy terrains, that is not even a quarter of everything we have endured, and we are not ashamed of it, we are glad to be a link between that Colombia and this deep Colombia […]Youth is not only

transformative, they are also learning as they go… learning and contrasting all the information they get, so when they come here they are able to challenge all the discourses of their right-wing teachers, in the school, in mass media, in society in general, they are able to put all the information together and reflect about this other story they didn't know about (Francisco, 42 years old).

Francisco's narrative foregrounds the importance of presenting to external actors this 'deep Colombia' which they represent and the transformative potential of youth and education to transform society through such re-presentations. He highlights how concrete interactions afforded by 'coming here' can challenge societal hegemonic narratives about the community and the conflict. As Orlando above, Francisco sees urban youth as ignorant of the realities of rural areas. Nevertheless, he engages in interaction and multiple exchanges, building the ETCR as a site of encounter that can contribute to their education.

The encounter with urban youth from universities triggers renewed awareness of the negative representations about '*reincorporados*' held by civil society. Juana's excerpt reflects this awareness as well as a desire to counter these representations:

[…] we always wanted to get closer to people who didn't know us […] and we were aware that some of them would feel afraid of us, because they don't know who we really are. People who come here, students as well, they always tell us: oh, my mum is now praying for me because she is afraid I get kidnapped or killed, because she thinks you are killers… and they came to find out whether this was true or not (Juana, 40 years old)

As *reincorporados*, former combatants show an in-depth understanding of how presenting themselves and encountering others has the potential to mitigate the negative representations held by Colombian society. These encounters enable them to demonstrate performatively who they are, challenge negative representations and make visible their current beliefs and efforts.

Representations of peace and reconciliation

Representations of peace and reconciliation in this position involve contradictory elements, which reflect the hinge character of this position between f*arianos* and citizens. Peace signatories see peace and reconciliation as a process that develops through

encounters with different social groups as well as an absent, not-yet reality, despite their efforts to make it happen. Given assassinations of fellow comrades and social leaders, they feel unsafe and under threat, which creates a representation of peace as non-existent:

> *A lot of people can come and say, yes, this has worked [peace agreement] because a lot of the people are calm, but if you really think about it, when we were talking about peace, do you know what is happening? Do you know about all the deaths of former combatants? If we really had signed the peace, this shouldn't be happening* (Miguel, 52 years old)

Despite these tensions, all participants linked peacebuilding to changing representations of social groups, highlighting the importance of presenting alternative narratives of themselves in the many murals that are painted on the walls of the village:

> *Murals are the testimony of the different visions of the peace process and the reconciliation efforts, and a space to talk to people from different communities, academia, and institutions* (Francisco, 42 years old).

These murals are painted by local artists in an Annual Festival of Muralism and Graffiti that evolved to become a well-known public space open for society at large. A public festival open to all and murals with messages of peace is an example of how *'reincorporados'* create alliances in which the work of outsiders helps to perform and project important identity markers of the community.

Figure 2 shows two murals painted in public buildings. The first highlights the continuity between the *fariano* and *reincorporado* identity, where peace and reconciliation intersect with 1964, the foundational year of FARC-EP. The second symbolises ethnic

Figure 2.

Murals in public places

and rural roots, juxtaposing an indigenous person and corn, and next to it, the name of the ETCR paired with a graffiti of FARC. These intersections are systematically repeated in public buildings, emphasising continuity between past and present and between the different identities of the polyphonic self. These murals perform identity by making visible community building and commitment to peace, sharing stories and alternative representations of the *reincorporado* self working with civil society.

I-as-citizen: constructing an individual journey

This I-position highlights the transition from a collective "we" towards an individual "I", where peace signatories encounter the reality of an individualising structure, with a limited safety net. It reflects a new tension between the collective "we" and the individual "I", with growing social divisions among former combatants and feelings of hopelessness associated with individualism:

> *…it is very hard, we are starting to change now, because now everyone is buying their own land, and some people are moving out, we don't work every day for the collective, we have had to reorganise our community days*[15]*, initially to a weekly basis but now it is even three months apart* (Mariana, 43 years old).

Despite the challenge of individualism for peace signatories, they do begin to pursue individual interests linked to family and immediate community. The family becomes an important and highly valued motivation for the '*I-as-citizen'* position. As they reconnect with family members and have their own children, former combatants embrace citizenship as workers and parents, finding job opportunities and prioritising working hours that prevent community participation. It is a process that re-writes the self and recentres the personal world as a fundamental right:

> *My deepest dream is to be a certified professional, to be able to work and to give study to my child, having a house that I can say it's mine* (Teresa, 34 years old).

The need to support and guarantee a peaceful future for children is a central motivation here. Working is also a performative strategy that enables blending in, sharing the traditional concerns of Colombians with having *"casa, carro, beca"* (home, car and

[15] Community days are mandatory spaces for all community members where they contribute their workforce towards improving the CP-HR.

education), while resisting the "over visibility" of being a former combatant. This position does not conceal identity, but rather reaffirms multiple positionings to project a nuanced representation that retains but goes beyond the former combatant identity, aligning instead with being a citizen who works and holds similar concerns as all Colombians.

Inner Others: Family and civil society

In this position, the central voices defining the self are the family, as a major driver of decision-making and identity construction, and an individualistic civil society that does not offer a cohesive social body and welfare. Contrary to previous collective positionings, becoming an individual citizen confronts peace signatories with the need to protect themselves and their families and to think about a future, amidst the uncertain implementation of the peace agreement. While in the '*we-as-fariano'* position the self saw FARC as family, in the '*I-as-citizen*' position, it is family and specifically children that take the place of the most significant other. This is visible in the reflections offered by Deimar when asked about the possibility of returning to dissident armed groups:

> *I wouldn't do it now, and the first thing that prevents me from doing it is my daughter, she would suffer […]but I think that if things get very unsafe, we need to run and hide to avoid any problems […] What I hope for the future is to see this child growing up, and take advantage of the fact that I can work and I'm alive so I can work very hard to provide for us and get us covered for when we are old (Deimar, 42 years old)*

Representations of Peace and Reconciliation

Representations of peace in this position are directly linked to the importance of family life and building a future for their children. Peace signatories who have children mention that peace is:

> *[…] to be able to live in tranquillity, that if I have a child, I can raise them, and to know that I will have a life to spend with that little person and that I can give them my love. For me, peace is tranquillity* (Pablo, 42 years old)

In this excerpt, Pablo emphasises the constant threats received by *reincorporados* and tranquillity as a key element defining peace, which can be linked to their past as guerrilla members living under constant alert. For participants with families, and

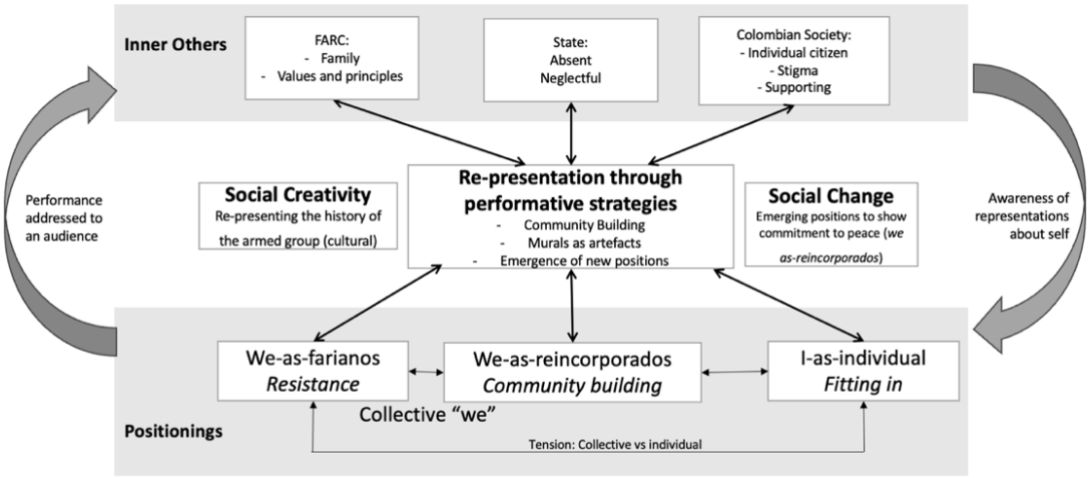
particularly when discussing the future, consolidating a family and supporting individual and family journeys are some of the biggest accomplishments of the peace process.

Discussion

This paper investigated the journey of collective reincorporation of former guerrilla members in Colombia, focusing on the I-positions and social representations of peace and reconciliation that emerge as they encounter new actors and state institutions. Contrary to individual forms of reincorporation, we found that former combatants involved in collective reincorporation do not hide, deny or discard identities related to past participation in the armed conflict. Instead, these identities are creatively re-presented and co-exist with others in the internal dialogues of former combatants' selves. More specifically, we found a polyphony of I-positions and voices (Renedo, 2010) linked to multiple and at times contradictory understandings of peace and reconciliation. *We-as-fariano, we-as-reincorporados* and *I-citizen* are integrated in dialogue with the State, FARC, civil society and one's family creating a productive tension between the collective 'we' and the individual 'I'. The *reincorporado* position operates as a flexible hinge (Moore et al., 2011) to re-present and sustain *fariano* roots while simultaneously embracing the novel challenges of becoming a citizen in a rural context.. This polyphony enables selves to change themselves as they change their representation of situations and situations themselves change. As different but integrated social identities, they are drawn upon to regulate self-understanding and self-representation, and project new ways of thinking about the Colombian conflict (Figure 3).

Figure 3.

The polyphonic self in the journey of reincorporation



Narratives of social justice and *buen v*ivir (good living) linked to *fariano* roots co-exist with ideas of peace as the individual right of citizens to a life without violence, with one's family and children. Collective struggles co-exist with a novel logic of individual rights and responsibilities, linking the collective elements of FARC to individual citizenship and commitment to peace and reconciliation for the whole of Colombia. For the *reincorporado* position, these notions are ambivalently held, and peace is seen as a developmental concept that needs to be constructed because it is still experienced as non-existent, given the constant threats and systematic killings. These representations of peace are built in concrete self-other experiences of encountering the Other and constitute important drivers of collective action towards reconciliation, which include the need for forgiveness and the acknowledgement of past mistakes.

One central contribution of this study is to show that the identity of actors involved in political violence is situated and evolves as a function of the dialogicality of selfhood. The internal polyphony of the dialogical self enables former combatants to manage a contradictory continuity in which old selves integrate and merge with new ones, carving a continuous biography that both sustains and renews past selves based on lived experiences and changing representations about conflict, peace and reconciliation. Together, these identities and representations operate as a social and psychological resource for thought and action, in a context where novel opportunities of being co-exist with historical stigma and

the harsh social conditions that created previous combatant selves in the first place. Previous research has shown that former combatants are committed to narratives highlighting biographical continuity (Flack & Ferguson, 2021). In the present study, we found that the tensions in this continuity are worked through performatively in practices of self-reflection (Kadianaki & Gillespie, 2015) and perspective-taking (Jovchelovitch, 2007) afforded by direct dialogue with other actors from the proximal and distal environment. Understanding these forms of identity construction moves research in (post) conflict contexts beyond static divisions and avoids the hardening of identity positions in which violent actors are essentialised and the victim-perpetrator dyad is fixed.

A second important contribution of this study is to show that former combatants creatively manage how they are seen by others. They re-present themselves collectively through performative strategies of social creativity (Tajfel, 1981) that change both the self and how the self is perceived by others. Instead of distancing from a stigmatising category, as described in previous research (López et al., 2015; McFee, 2016), peace signatories retain key dimensions of their prior combatant identity and put them to use to transform how they are seen by Colombian society. They recover the values and experiences of insurgency and integrate these into practices of peaceful community building to challenge stigmatising representations and re-present past struggles as an honourable fight. These practices are developed in collaboration with audiences identified as a source of either support and/or stigma to re-present themselves beyond hegemonic representations of FARC members as murderers and killers. In the context of reincorporation, identity is sustained and transformed through enactment, in collective actions of community and peacebuilding that build alternative representations of themselves and the social identities they value, setting the ground for sociogenetic and ontogenetic changes (Kadianaki, 2014). Our results show that social creativity is implemented through performance and in dialogue with others, further expanding Klein et al.'s (2007) proposal of identity performance as a mechanism for social change and social creativity.

As well as corroborating theoretical research on the relational nature of identity construction and the importance of others in defining the self (Elcheroth et al., 2011), our findings reveal something of great practical importance for peacebuilding: in (post) conflict settings, the relational nature of identity construction can be facilitated by safe spaces that enable concrete encounters with alterity, fostering day-to-day co-construction of shared intentionality between historically divided social groups. This is particularly relevant in the

case of the ECTRs, where former combatants encounter civil society and state institutions under new dialogical conditions related to community building. Throughout these encounters, peace signatories constantly take the perspective of others about themselves, reflecting on negative meta-representations and engaging in self-reflection. ETCRs support relational processes that enable former combatants to engage in strategies of identity performance for re-presenting the self. Despite internal struggles and conflicts lived in the ETCRs, they allow former guerrilla members to manage their identity without denying continuity to their biography and their future as citizens. However imperfect, they are enabling environments that can support community mobilisation (Campbell & Cornish, 2012) and prefigure (Yates, 2015) reconciliation. By providing a safe space for identity reflection, positive self-other encounters and the transformation of conflict narratives, ECTRs facilitate some of the most important elements implicated in building an ethos of peace and societal reconciliation (Bar-Tal, 2009).

Practical Implications

This study shows that community building and collective action can support processes of reincorporation and peacebuilding. Collective reincorporation is a valuable strategy for enhancing interaction and elaboration within the group of former combatants and with external actors (civil society and the state). It promotes re-presentation of self as a response to stigmatising representations and supports self-reflection and perspective-taking, which contribute to transformed self-other relations and reconciliation. In the context of the ETCRs, it also provides a safe space for former combatants to embrace the polyphonic nature of their identity and performatively integrate different aspects of their biography. Negative representations and life-threatening conditions still shape the meaning-making process and the identity struggles of former guerrilla members, but as *farianos, reincorporados* and citizens, they work to resolve these tensions by re-enacting in their collective living values of social justice and social solidarity that reaffirm who they are and prefigure novel representations and experiences of what peace and reconciliation could look like: a tranquil environment for working, raising children and having a family, while collectively seeking wellbeing for themselves and their community.

States in post-conflict societies should support experiences of collective reincorporation. In Colombia, the state is a central inner voice in the collective journey of reincorporation, seen as an absent and neglectful actor in tension with all three identity

positions of former combatants. State neglect is seen as the root of armed political struggle, its continuous absence from territories of poverty a source of mistrust and a barrier to the implementation of the peace agreement. Developing institutions that support collective reincorporation and creating shared intentionality which further acknowledges former combatants as partners in the peace process will be central for the reconciliation process. Recognising peace signatories as legitimate actors and moving beyond antagonistic relationships is thus an important route for achieving sustainable peace in Colombia.

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Chapter 6: Prefiguring peace and reconciliation through research partnerships: The case of the Education, Land and Reconciliation Project

Preface

This chapter focuses on the potential of partnerships as knowledge encounters that can prefigure societal reconciliation. As part of the ethnographic approach of the PhD, this Chapter explores the implementation of the Education, Land and Reconciliation (EDUCARE in Spanish) Project as an example of a small-scale initiative that promotes reconciliation by engaging different social milieus working together towards the same project. The study offers an alternative perspective on intergroup contact by introducing partnerships as concrete spaces where groups reflect on their own positionalities and representational projects in the efforts of support peacebuilding efforts.

In particular, it offers a dual analysis of the experience of peace signatories and researchers working in the EDUCARE project to understand the impact of the partnership in the transformation of the representational landscape. In doing so, it goes beyond focusing on one side of the conflict and brings to the centre the alliance between groups that had been historically, geographically and ideologically distant. Contrary to previous studies asking participants to imagine possible scenarios of encounter, Chapter 6 presents a longitudinal approach to understand the microgenesis of the encounter and expands the model of partnerships as knowledge encounters with the notion of enabling spaces to discuss the potential of concrete physical spaces to promote reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts.

Chapter 6 was written in collaboration with Prof. Sandra Jovchelovitch and Diego Ferney Tovar. Prof. Jovchelovitch provided key supervisory assistance, editorial suggestions for the article and the theoretical framework. Mr Tovar is a peace signatory, and one of the leaders of the CP-HR community. His participation in the paper is part of the long-term alliance research-practice partnership and an effort to engage in co-production practices. The manuscript was translated from English to Spanish to enable opportunities for discussion and commentaries about the document.

The abstract of this paper has been accepted for the special issue of the Journal of Political Psychology: *Advancing the Interface between Research and Practice in Sustainable. Development for Political Psychology*. The final version of this manuscript is to be submitted on May 1st for peer review.

Prefiguring peace and reconciliation through research partnerships: The case of the Education, Land and Reconciliation Project

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Abstract

Reconciliation efforts in post-conflict settings are a long-term process which involves moving from a culture of conflict to a culture of peace. This requires novel representations and practices as well as reconstructed relationships between actors who have been historically apart. This paper addresses the practice of partnerships and their transformative potential for promoting societal reconciliation and collaborative peacebuilding in Colombia. Drawing on a partnership between academic researchers and former FARC-EP members who signed the peace agreement in 2016 and are in the process of reintegration (the EDUCARE project), we examine the role of knowledge encounters to prefigure cultures of peace and build capacity at multiple levels, including transforming and expanding the knowledge and scientific approach of academics themselves. Through a psychosocial ethnography, this paper follows the implementation of the project longitudinally from 2021 to 2023. Nine focus groups with members from both teams (FARC community and researchers) took place between from 2021 to 2022 and 18 semi-structured interviews were conducted in 2023 (10 community members and 9 researchers). Results highlight 1) the transformation of asymmetrical representations of self and other, as both groups recognise the value and importance of different forms of knowing for the successful implementation of education (lived experience, community knowledge and scientific knowledge); 2) the construction and consolidation of trusting relationships as the basic process and outcome of dialogue and concrete collaborative action between historically distant groups; and 3) the importance of daily interactions and practices for building shared intentionality and joint representational projects that enable expanded identities, i.e., former guerrilla members become community teachers and researchers see themselves as agents of peace. The implementation of the EDUCARE project is a powerful example of how reconciliation can be prefigured in academic and community settings by engaging in meaningful collaborations that allow encountering the knowledge of the other, transforming stigmatising representations and working together towards social change. Research partnerships challenge assumptions, identities and closed knowledge practices, introducing new voices and relationships in which community actors are recognised as co-producers and key players in the process of creating new knowledge and transforming practice.

Introduction

The signature of the peace agreement between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP in Spanish) and the Colombian state in 2016 created a new framework for consolidating peace and reconciliation in Colombia. The accords sought to address the main drivers of conflict: land distribution, improving the conditions of rural areas and their inhabitants (*campesinos*), political participation and democracy, collective reincorporation, a new policy on illicit drugs, and the reparation of victims (Alto Comisionado para la Paz, 2016). However, seven years after its signature, and despite the comprehensiveness of the agreement, its full implementation remains a challenge (Gallón Giraldo & Ospina, 2021). Barriers include an atmosphere of fear, hopelessness, and mistrust among former guerrilla members (Fonseca & Jovchelovitch, under review), victims, and most civil society (Tellez, 2019), and deep divisions between urban and rural citizens, which was one of the roots of conflict in the first place (Dávalos et al., 2018).

After several decades of political violence, entire generations of Colombians were born and socialised into an ethos of conflict (Bar-Tal, 2007), but affected very differently by its consequences, depending on class, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, and geographical location (Dávalos et al., 2018; Hernández Reyes, 2019; Sarmiento-Marulanda et al., 2021). The separation between urban and rural populations remains a central division of post-accords Colombia, as most conflict-affected actors, including former guerrilla members, live in rural settings, which are politically, socio-economically and culturally distant from urban centres. Urban citizens still express negative attitudes towards encounters and everyday interactions with former combatants (Ávila García et al., 2023; Unfried et al., 2022), are less willing to support peacebuilding efforts and are more polarised in their preferences (Tellez, 2019). Rural dwellers, usually the most affected by war, are, in contrast, more supportive of peacebuilding efforts, as it directly affects their livelihoods (Tellez, 2019), but are separated from urban areas by historical inequalities that characterise Colombian society. This is also the case with many former guerrilla members, also known as peace signatories, who are actively engaging in peacebuilding processes in rural areas but still feel excluded and stigmatised by state institutions and civil society (Fonseca & Jovchelovitch, under review).

In this scenario, reconciliation and sustainable peace are challenged by a wider societal dynamic that extends beyond victims and perpetrators and includes sectors of

society that have been indirectly affected by conflict (i.e. through mass media and external narratives of conflict) and rarely, if ever, encounter those Colombians considered 'the enemy', or the 'Other'. Until now, research has focused on the reconciliation of conflict-affected actors, mostly between victims and armed actors (both legal and illegal), or general perceptions about reconciliation with an imagined other (Shnabel et al., 2023). However, we need to know more about interactions between actors directly involved and affected by the conflict and ordinary citizens, who only experienced it indirectly, but who are nevertheless key for moving societies past an ethos of conflict towards a culture of peace. In the Colombian context, these encounters are being supported by partnership experiences that play an important role in enabling urban and rural citizens with different historical, cultural and socioeconomic conditions to work together to promote social change and reduce inequality, all necessary conditions for reconciliation and sustainable peace. Examining the role of these partnerships provides insights into the long-term process of reconciliation, specifically in terms of relationship building (Lederach, 1997), the consolidation of trust (Psaltis, 2012b) and the re-presentation of self and other (Fonseca & Jovchelovitch, 2024).

Partnerships are collaborative alliances for dialogical interaction that can potentially create spaces for encountering the knowledge of the Other (Aveling & Jovchelovitch, 2014; Jovchelovitch, 2007) and transform institutions, practices and identities through an engaged long-term process (Fransman & Newman, 2019). Emerging research has explored the potential of partnerships for co-production, collaborative sense-making and rethinking the role of higher education institutions as they work with International Non-Governmental Organisations (Fransman & Newman, 2019) and local schools (Campanella et al., 2022). Education institutions provide an important approach to studying reconciliation efforts as they have been identified as central socialisation agents in post-conflict settings. Even though these institutions can reinforce conflict by insisting on one-sided victimisation (Psaltis et al., 2017), they can also support critical thinking and challenge common assumptions and beliefs, question ideologies and overcome stereotypes and prejudice against antagonistic groups (Bar-Tal, Vered, et al., 2021; Datzberger & Donovan, 2020).

In this paper we focus on a small-scale Research-Practice Partnership (RPP) in post-accord Colombia to examine the transformative potential of a long-term working relationship (Sjölund et al., 2023) for promoting societal reconciliation and collaborative

peacebuilding. Drawing on a longitudinal psychosocial ethnography, we follow a team of former guerrilla members, non-combatant rural dwellers and psychologists at different stages of training and research career as they implement an educational project (EDUCARE) in a Territorial Space for Training and Reincorporation (ECTR as in the Spanish acronym). ECTRs are areas, where former combatants live with their families, reintegrated as citizens but still experiencing stigma and marginalisation. Focusing on this partnership experience, we examine the role of knowledge encounters and collaborative alliances to prefigure cultures of peace and build capacity at multiple levels, including transforming and expanding the knowledge and scientific approach of academics themselves. In doing so, we contribute towards the aims of sustainable development (SDG 16), including the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies and the consolidation of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions.

Reconciliation: restoring social fabric through partnerships

Reconciliation has been conceptualised as both an outcome and a process (Bar-Tal & Cehajic-Clancy, 2014; Nadler & Shnabel, 2015). In this paper, we define it as a process that involves relationship-building, the encounter among conflicting groups and working together towards an interdependent future (Lederach, 1997). Previous studies have demonstrated the link between reconciliation and the transformation of views about antagonistic groups, the conflict and the collective self (Cehajic-Clancy, 2015). This is in line with Bar-Tal's (2009) conceptualisation of the ethos of peace, in which the emphasis is on the transformation of societal beliefs about peace and conflict, the outgroups, and the role of the ingroup itself in conflict. An important element in this process is achieving mutual acceptance and mutual trust, which implies transforming the relationships towards a partnership based on reciprocity (Kelman, 2008, p. 25). It is in this partnership-building aspect that this paper makes its contribution.

Emerging studies have demonstrated that simply experiencing positive intergroup contact is insufficient to reduce prejudice (Schreiber et al., 2024), highlighting the potential of high-quality encounters to encourage involvement in reconciliation efforts (Tropp et al., 2017). High-quality encounters must go further and consolidate spaces for discussion about differences in power and status, which can be difficult but necessary for working through differences and fostering sustainable social cohesion and social change (Schreiber et al., 2024). In the case of conflict-affected actors, reconciliation efforts

involve re-gaining acceptance to the community from which they feel excluded and restoring levels of agency, power and status (Schnabel & Nadler, 2015). Previous studies have confirmed the need for empowerment and recognition as key identity restoration factors that promote reconciliation among groups with dual identification (both as victims and perpetrators) (Shnabel et al., 2023). However, the majority of these studies have examined these processes in a lab setting, which limits the analysis of the microgenesis (Psaltis, 2015b) of identity restoration and the social interactions and contexts in which recognition and empowerment develop.

In this paper, we argue that the development and consolidation of partnerships between different naturally occurring groups, also known as social milieus (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999), can be an example of such high-quality encounters as they involve specific spaces and concrete actions for building shared intentionality among participants who under different circumstances would never meet. In conflict-affected societies, partnerships can create spaces for dialogical interaction between actors who have been exposed to conflict in different ways, enabling different perspectives and projects to meet and be negotiated.

Partnerships as transformative knowledge encounters

Research on partnerships is an emerging field focused on understanding the potential of collaborative alliances for the education, health and economic sectors (Campanella et al., 2022; Fransman & Newman, 2019). Much of the impetus for building partnerships derives from an understanding of integrating community participation (Campbell & Jovchelovitch, 2000) for increasing inclusivity, institutional resilience and human development. In the case of peacebuilding and reconciliation in conflict-affected countries, studies have examined partnerships at the school (Roulston et al., 2023) and community levels to support inter-group encounters (Broome, 2004). Much of these efforts have focused on delivering services, activities, and workshops to conflict-affected communities in which funding agencies work with business and private sectors and, in a smaller proportion, academia (Kolk & Lenfant, 2015; USAID & ACDI/VOCA, 2021). Even though the outcomes of these partnerships have been positive, the sustainability of these actions is not necessarily so (Korum & Howell, 2021). This is because communities are not always asked about their needs, local initiatives, or what they want to accomplish (Kolk & Lenfant, 2015). Additionally, this top-down approach to partnerships focuses on

'receiving' communities and prevents exploring the potential of collaborative alliances for *all* stakeholders in the partnership, including those in more advantaged positions.

In contrast to a top-down approach to human development, this paper proposes a bottom-up conceptualisation that builds on Aveling and Jovchelovitch's (2014) framework of partnerships as knowledge encounters and the concept of enabling spaces (Campbell & Cornish, 2010, 2012; Guerlain & Campbell, 2016) to understand the role of partnerships in prefiguring peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts. Partnerships are understood as situated encounters between different knowledge systems (Jovchelovitch, 2007), which are shaped by material, institutional and socio-economic contexts and entail processes of representation and communication between all stakeholders involved. Derived from social representations theory (Marková, 2003b; Moscovici, 2000), this framework offers insights into the socio-historical, cultural and psychological processes that mediate knowledge construction and the role of social communication in shaping it in different ways (Castro, 2015; Jovchelovitch, 2019).

There are three interrelated dimensions involved in partnerships as knowledge encounters: how each partner represents themselves and each other (representations of self and other), how they communicate (styles of communication) and the interests and aims of each other (representational projects). This model, traditionally used in the health sector (Aveling, 2011), has emphasised the important role of the institutional context in shaping the limits and possibilities for implementing projects in partnerships (Aveling & Jovchelovitch, 2014). We argue that the potential of partnerships in conflict-affected settings lies in the process of relationship-building and the transformation of representations and representational projects for all participants involved, including the institutions that are supporting the implementation of research-practice partnerships. Mutual transformation of this kind develops actors' capabilities and institutional resilience, by embedding in organisational protocols novel communicative practices with local systems of knowledge and practice.

To examine this model for reconciliation, we investigate the transformative potential of the spaces that are consolidated and enabled through the partnerships. Originally conceptualised as health-enabling social spaces (Campbell & Cornish, 2010), enabling spaces are community contexts most likely to enable and support behavioural change. In particular, the concept involves three dimensions: 1) symbolic, referring to worldviews and ideologies; 2) relational, which emphasises the importance of internal

(bonding social capital) and external (bridging social capital) alliances and democratic participation of members; and 3) material, focusing on the resources available to realise projects. This conceptual framework emphasises the importance of working *with* communities to promote social change, integrating grassroots initiatives and institutional-level actions for sustainable development (Campbell & Cornish, 2012).

Prefiguring societal reconciliation: the role of partnerships for peacebuilding

To understand the potential of partnerships for reconciliation and peacebuilding, we use the concept of prefiguration (Boggs, 1977) to explore how the consolidation of collaborative alliances between antagonistic social groups, can serve as a concrete case of overcoming division and restoring the tarnished social fabric resulting from conflict. Prefigurative politics refers to the small-scale (Guerlain & Campbell, 2016), future-oriented construction of political alternatives (Yates, 2021) to promote social change by enacting alternative social relations as though they had already been achieved (Yates, 2015). It involves promoting equal participation, the emergence of leadership and empowerment of those who are not leaders (Yates, 2021), as well as the reconfiguration of social relationships, new forms of social engagement and egalitarian relations desired of a future society (Cornish et al., 2016). In the context of this research, prefigurative politics operates as an important normative guidance to study how and in which ways social groups that have different life experiences, access to resources and worldviews come together and engage in partnerships to for trust-building and collective envisioning of the future (Lederach, 1997). We argue that this is essential to consolidate new ways of understanding peace, reconciliation and collaborative alliances.

The Education, Land and Reconciliation (EDUCARE) project as a Research-Practice Partnership

The Education, Land and Reconciliation project (EDUCARE in Spanish) is a research-practice partnership between the Centro Poblado Héctor Ramírez (CP-HR) and Universidad de La Sabana (ULS). The CP-HR is an ETCR located in La Montañita, a rural remote municipality in the Caquetá Department, in the south of Colombia, where former FARC-EP members have collectively reincorporated and built their community since 2017. ULS is an urban private university in Chía, a municipality nearby Bogota, the capital city. The research team is part of the Psychological and Behavioural Science Department, with an emphasis on community and educational psychology.

EDUCARE was developed on the basis of an ongoing educational initiative by former guerrilla members and external volunteers, and co-designed by community leaders and researchers. It aimed to support the implementation of the peace agreement, through strengthening rural education (first chapter of the peace agreement) and providing platforms for effective collective reincorporation for peace signatories and their families (third chapter of the peace agreement). Central to the project was the consolidation of an educational model that recognised campesino and *fariano* (FARC-related) values and supported rural community development and reintegration of former combatants through capacity building. It was officially launched in 2021 after receiving external funding from an international agency (Spencer Foundation).

The project involved the consolidation of an Education Committee with the participation of former guerrilla members who were community leaders and women who wanted to participate as community teachers. Capacity-building strategies were implemented to train the Education Committee and other interested actors throughout the implementation of the project. Three community-led educational programmes were co-developed with the Education Committee and the Research Team: Guardians of the Mountain (focused on food sovereignty, recognising the importance of the territory they inhabit and eco-farming), Little Reporters (focused on a critical view of social realities and finding alternative ways of presenting news), and Popular Sports (focused on bringing back traditional games and sports focused on collaboration rather than competition). Female former guerrilla members ran these programmes, which were available as after-school activities to support the maintenance of local values and practices related to their philosophy of *Buen Vivir* (Good Living), the recognition of ancestral knowledge, the importance of the collective and a critical view on history and how to write about their experiences.

Method

Participants

Participants in this study include adult community members from the Centro Poblado Héctor Ramírez who participated in the consolidation of the EDUCARE project (n=10) and the research team that was involved in its development (n=9). Details about their demographics and role in the community and the institution are available in Table 1. In the CP-HR, one of the community leaders [second author] invited a group of seven

women to participate as community teachers at the start of the project, which included three former guerrilla members with a year 11 degree and three young women from allied social organisations based in Caquetá with a bachelor's degree. Four additional community leaders and former guerrilla members were invited and agreed to participate in the project as part of their role as representatives of the decision-making instances of the community.

The research team included researchers at different levels of their academic careers (undergraduate, master and PhD). Undergraduate participants joined the project as part of a research group, junior researchers were graduate students supporting the alliance since their BSc, and senior researchers were part of a research group interested in social, community and educational psychology. As part of the project, junior researchers lived at least a year in the CP-HR, supporting the project's development and for data collection purposes. Senior researchers also visited the CP-HR three times per year as part of the data collection phase and the development of capacity-building activities to support the community's education in pedagogy, critical education and participative methodologies. Table 1 presents demographics and profiles of each social milieu involved in the project.

Table 1.

Participants' Demographics

Social Milieu		Participant Profile
Urban	Senior Researchers	Raquel, 45, Cultural and Educational Psychologist
		Gabriel, 49, Senior Researcher, Philosopher
		Laura, 33, Senior Researcher, Social and Community Psychologist; Lived 12 months in the CP-HR
	Junior Researchers	Nicolás, 26, Junior Researcher, Psychologist, Lived 24 months in the CP-HR
		Olivia, 25, Junior researcher, Social Psychologist; Lived 4 months in the CP-HR
		Maria José, 24, Junior researcher, Educational Psychologist; Lived 16 months in the CP-HR
	Undergraduates	Simón, 23, Undergraduate student, Psychology
		Lisa, 22, Undergraduate student, Psychology
		Julieta, 22, Undergraduate student, psychology
Rural	Peace Signatories/Former guerrilla members	Juana, 43, peace signatory, community teacher of the EDUCARE project, mother of three
		Teresa, 32, Peace signatory, community teacher of the EDUCARE project, mother of two
		Cristina, 43, Peace signatory, community teacher of the EDUCARE project, mother of two
		Francisco, 42, peace signatory, Community leader, Co-investigator EDUCARE project
		Esmeralda, 50, Peace signatory, Community leader, Member of the EDUCARE project
		Tamara, 34, Peace signatory, Community leader, Directive of the Local Cooperative
		Pablo, 46, Peace signatory, Community leader, Directive of the Local Cooperative
	Community members – Non-combatants	Margot, 22, political party member, non-combatant, Community coordinator of the EDUCARE project (2023)
		Paloma, 23, non-combatant, Community coordinator of the EDUCARE project (2022)
		Jazmín, 36, Political Party member, non-combatant, community coordinator of the EDUCARE project (2021)

Note: All the names used are pseudonyms.

Procedure and data collection strategies

Data was collected over a period of three years (2021-2023) by the first author through a longitudinal psychosocial ethnography. The first author lived in the community in 2021 and visited the community three times a year during 2022 and 2023. During her time in the CP-HR, the first author carried a field diary focusing on the interactions

between community members and the research team, in particular, the everyday encounters that mediated the design and implementation of the project. Each year, members of both sites held in-person dialogue meetings at the CP-HR to discuss the project's progress, as well as the tensions and difficulties experienced throughout the year. In addition, each year, at least two focus groups were conducted by junior researchers with community participants and the research team to explore their experience in the implementation of the project, their personal journey and expectations for the future. In the final year, semi-structured interviews were conducted by the first author with all participants of the project. Interviews were designed following Aveling and Jovchelovitch's (2014) model of partnerships as knowledge encounters and focused on the representations of self and other, styles of communication and representational projects throughout the project, as well as additional questions on peacebuilding and reconciliation as part of its implementation. During the interviews, participants were asked to draw a relational map identifying the different connections and groups involved in the project. All the data collected was audio-recorded and transcribed for data analysis.

Table 2.
Data Collection

Year	Data Collected	Number of sessions	Number of participants	
			CP-HR	Research Team
2021	Dialogue Meetings	1	10	10
	Focus groups Community	1	8	-
	Focus Groups Research team	2	-	8
2022	Dialogue Meetings	1	10	10
	Focus groups Community	5	6	-
	Focus Groups Research team	3	-	7
2023	Dialogue Meetings	1	10	10
	Semi-Structured Interviews	16	8	8

Data Analysis

Data was analysed following Braun and Clarke's (2022) thematic analysis. All the transcribed data was fully read and annotated by first author. The annotations were the basis for identifying patterns of meaning across the data set, which were subsequently contrasted with the theoretical model of knowledge encounters (Aveling & Jovchelovitch, 2014) to allow for both an inductive and deductive theme generation. Overarching themes were created based on the dimensions of the knowledge encounters model:

- Representations of self and other: We divided this into two themes: representations of self and representations of other. We coded specific mentions of identity transformation and how participants saw the other project members.
- Representational projects: This theme explored the consolidation of new agendas, practices and worldviews that oriented each partner organisation.
- Styles of Communication: We coded the type of communication that mediated the encounter into two sub-themes: asymmetrical (Drew, 1991) and mutual (Kepler & Luckman, 1991; Krauss, Fussell & Chen, 1995).

Documents were analysed in chronological order, which allowed for a longitudinal analysis of each dimension. Themes and sub-themes were developed, adjusted and refined by discussions between first and third authors. A final version was discussed with the second author, who provided more nuances to the themes based on his experience as a community leader. Data was analysed using NVivo 14 software.

Reflexivity

Analysing the implementation of a research-practice partnership requires a reflexive account of how knowledge is constructed and who should be involved in the process. This paper was written in collaboration between two members of the research-practice partnership (First and second authors) as part of the EDUCARE project and an external academic (Third author) who has followed the implementation of the project since it started. The first author is a Colombian researcher finishing her PhD studies after four years of living between Colombia and the UK. She has supported the implementation of the project from a community psychology perspective and as a citizen involved in peacebuilding efforts in her country. The second author is a former guerrilla member, leader of the CP-HR, and co-investigator of the EDUCARE project. The third author is a Brazilian-UK academic with a long-standing trajectory of socio-cultural and community psychology work in Latin America.

Results

This study aimed to explore the role of partnerships as knowledge encounters to prefigure reconciliation in post-accord Colombia. Three theory-driven overarching themes were defined: 1) Representations of self and other; 2) Representational Projects; and 3) Styles of Communication (Table 3).

Table 3.
Themes and Sub-themes

Theme	Sub-theme	Topics
Representations of self and other	Representations of self	Becoming a teacher Becoming a researcher-partner Becoming citizen researcher-peacebuilder
	Representations of Other	Researchers as allies for community development Community members as respected partners
Representational Projects	A community committed to peacebuilding and identity transformation	Peacebuilding Challenging Stigma Education and personal qualifications Recognition
	Higher Education Institution re-thinking their role	Transforming teaching, research and institutional frameworks
Styles of Communication	Asymmetries in the dialogical interaction	Knowledge hierarchy Misunderstandings
	Mutualities in dialogue	Setting the bases for a shared social world Everyday interactions Knowledge exchange

Representations of self and other: Embracing difference and nurturing positive visions of the other

This theme explores the potential of identity transformation that the EDUCARE project partnership provided. Former guerrilla members explored new versions of themselves as community teachers and community researchers. The research team explored the nuances of the involvement in a participatory action research project and its impact on becoming reflexive citizens and peacebuilding researchers-psychologists. Through everyday interactions and getting to know the Other, partnerships become a safe space where participants expand and re-configure the self.

Representations of self

Becoming a teacher: negotiating local and scientific knowledge

For peace signatories[16], specifically the women in charge of the educational programmes, the process of becoming a teacher involved two interrelated elements: legitimised knowledge and recognition of their new role in the community. One of the main difficulties in the initial stage of becoming teachers was dealing with their values as *farianas* (FARC related identity) and the respect they had been taught towards academic knowledge:

> *Well, at first, I felt embarrassed because my knowledge is not that broad, and I didn't know how I was going to contribute to the project […]There were even times were I knew something [during meetings and sessions with the research team] but I didn't want to speak because they (FARC) had taught us to respect our teachers and they had always told us that people from universities had a very valuable knowledge and I always admired them […] So when we started here [in the project], I was embarrassed because I had just finished high school as part of the reincorporation process (Juana, peace signatory, Interview, 2021)*

This hierarchical view of knowledge created internal tensions as peace signatories were frequently questioning their knowledge, their contribution to the project and highlighting the responsibility they had with their community. However, during years two (2022) and three (2023), they started to bring more of their *fariano* roots to think about their new role in the community. As the project continued, and they embraced their role as community teachers, the idea of a 'school of life' emerged in the reflections, indicating a new confidence about the knowledge constructed as FARC members. Despite the evident tension between academic and local knowledge, former guerrilla members merge both in their journey to becoming teachers. Learning specific tools and concepts of pedagogy, education and strategies for working with children sets a good platform for their everyday practice. As one of them mentions: *"we have now a lot of experience, all the discussions, the diplomas, the information that we have also gathered from the community, the events we have participated"* (Teresa, peace signatory, Interview, 2023).

[16] This term will be used interchangeably with former guerrilla members when referring to former FARC-EP members who signed the peace agreement in 2016 and are part of the reincorporation process.

The second element present in all the interviews from peace signatories is the importance of being recognised as "profes" (diminutive of teachers in Spanish) by their community. This was a challenge for them, as they considered the label related to specific knowledge and status that they did not consider they had initially:

> *Well, at first, it was difficult because they were calling me 'teacher' and I had never been a teacher before, and it sounds so important, you know? I was used to be called comrade, partner, friend, but to be called teacher, I felt a very big responsibility and commitment to my community* (Cristina, peace signatory, Focus Group, 2022).

It is worth noting that during their time in the guerrilla, these women were low-rank fighters, and their participation in the project enabled the emergence of leadership roles and a valuable position in their community. An important aspect of this journey is the solidarity and support among each other to feel safe throughout the project, as well as the recognition they started to get from their leaders: *"I value the possibility that members of our community have to become teachers, to learn and to be leaders of our education because it means we already have our own teachers who know how to work with our children, this is what we need"* (Tamara, community leader, Interview, 2023). Moreover, the possibility to represent their community at national and regional events as part of the project is deemed a good example of recognition by community teachers, who feel that the project provided the platform to share their education initiative worldwide.

Becoming a research-partner for peacebuilding

Community leaders supported the implementation of the project from the beginning. They became partners in the design, implementation and evaluation of the project. They acted as gatekeepers and *"guardians of community knowledge"* (Francisco, community leader, interview, 2023), which created spaces for dialogue with the research team, community teachers and the community in general about the limits and possibilities of the project. The process for community leaders involved becoming researchers and partners for peacebuilding with the research team.

In this role, leaders re-affirmed their identity as *farianos* by bringing their values and practices to the table, sharing the importance of re-presenting themselves as committed to peace; while at the same time learning practical skills for conducting research and monitoring the project. The EDUCARE project is a source of pride and concrete evidence to challenge and resist the stigma towards former guerrilla members. As one of the leaders explains:

> *one of our functions is to follow up on the day-to-day needs of the project, but also, and using the connections with external actors [decision-makers], we are showing the world about the process of reincorporation, we are making a process of incidence, relationship-building and imagination of what can be done* (Pablo, Community leader, Interview, 2023).

Becoming a community researcher is a process in which community leaders move from feelings of distrust towards academia to creating spaces for mutual acceptance and open dialogues. For them, *"building close relationships, or becoming friends, without even considering a project at first, just getting to know each other"* (Pablo, Interview, 2023) was the initial step to discuss and agree on the community's priorities and possible collaborations with the university. Being recognised by researchers as potential partners was the starting point of a reconciliation process in which they engaged with private, urban universities and opened their community to them.

Becoming a community researcher was also a way to engage in dialogue with former enemy groups, to discuss ideas and to develop a project that fits with the needs of the community. This was the case with one of the community leaders, who was actively involved in co-production activities and whose knowledge was valued and deemed central to the development of the project. In one of the dialogue meetings, he asserted:

> *Being a co-investigator involves unlearning and re-learning. In my case, I bring the knowledge from my own process as a reincorporado, a process we are trying to revindicate and make visible, to be part of history; we are building memory when we write books and documents about our experience, and that is why I think the idea of creating a multidirectional model of education is so powerful* (Francisco, Dialogue meeting, 2022).

Becoming a citizen-researcher-peacebuilder

For the research team, the project consolidated an identity of the researcher as citizen, created through the experience of living and constantly visiting the CP-HR and scaffolded by the academic and community interactions of the project (Jovchelovitch & Priego-Hernández, 2013). Junior and senior researchers were involved in an intergenerational support system, mutually helping each other as they contributed to the implementation of the project. This process of constant collaboration and collective learning led to a reflexive process that was both professional and personal. Training young psychologists to become researchers following a community psychology approach is

experienced by undergraduate students and junior researchers as the starting point for their involvement in the project and the guiding framework that orients their practice. For senior researchers, the ability of junior researchers to understand the everyday dynamics of community members created spaces for reflexivity and transformation of their research practices:

> *It started as an academic interest, participating in the service-learning course, our research group and supporting the grant-writing* (Nicolás, Junior researcher, Interview, 2023).
>
> *We were trained differently, now they [junior researchers] are the ones that are constantly reminding us about the importance of an active participation of community members, to include them even in academic events* (Senior researcher, interview, 2023).

Community scaffolding involved mutual support and collaboration in implementing the project, particularly between peace signatories and junior researchers who were directly in the field:

> *We were constantly learning and supporting community teachers to understand the project and also with capacity-building strategies […] I think neither of us [community teachers and junior researchers] had been in a project like this, so it was a process of learning together and sharing each other's knowledge* (Maria José, Junior researcher, Interview, 2023).

Community leaders' accounts corroborate these experiences, recognising the ongoing learning process of all project members, including the research team, who were open to learn from former guerrilla members and their experiences during the conflict and in their journey of reincorporation back to civil society:

> *We have had different challenges because we came up with the idea of creating sort of a patchwork quilt of our stories and we trusted this process to the junior researchers, who were in the process of learning how to do it, and it worked* (Francisco, community leader, focus group, 2022).

Personally, researchers were able to reflect on the urban-rural divide that characterised their experiences of the conflict. They spoke openly about coming from a privileged urban background and not having been directly affected by conflict as well as the wider impact the partnership had on their lives:

> *For me, it has been absolutely transformative, beyond the academic and research process because working with them [former guerrilla members] has allowed me to*

have a bigger picture of what violence and peace has been in Colombia (Raquel, senior researcher, interview, 2023).

This type of reflection was recurring over the course of the project, as researchers were able to identify the potential of the participatory process, the importance of active engagement and mutual acceptance for the consolidation of peacebuilding efforts in academia. It involved negotiating identity positionings and moving from being recognised as researchers to becoming partners in community development efforts. This movement did not lead to full agreement and alignment with their values, on the contrary, to the embracing of differences and acknowledging their role in the process:

I don't have to become a communist to be part of the project, but what I've learned is that you have to be able to recognise other points of view and to be coherent with a participatory and collaborative framework (Olivia, Junior researcher, interview, 2023).

As a result, when considering their journey, researchers recognise their role beyond data collection or capacity-building and identify how their actions are also supporting larger processes of peacebuilding in the country:

Well, sometimes when you think about peace and peacebuilding, you think is a big thing, outside of our reach, like it is the State's or governmental institutions responsibility, but then you lose track of your role in peacebuilding. So I think this project makes this very explicit, that you are indeed a peacebuilder, you are making things happen (Maria José, Junior researcher, interview, 2023).

Representations of other

Researchers as allies for community development

In this sub-theme, community members highlight how they see academic researchers throughout the consolidation of the partnership. In their descriptions, they mention their role in capacity-building, supporting community efforts and the potential of the partnership to transform stigmatising narratives about former guerrilla members held by urban dwellers.

For community members, the research team was a source for capacity-building and academic support through their journey of consolidating an educational model: *"they [researchers] made us feel safe, they supported us and told us all the time that we were capable, that we had multiple qualities that even I didn't know we had"* (Cristina, Interview, 2023). In addition, community members highlight the involvement of academic

researchers in community efforts and see them as partners in the development of outputs and in supporting their everyday struggles: *"they are always looking for ways to help us and they don't just come to do their job and that's it, they have been able to relate with us, get to know us, there is a harmony there"* (Teresa, peace signatory, Interview, 2023).

This contrasts with previous representations held by guerrilla members, who fought against private, wealthy and urban social groups, represented as the "oligarchy". Through the partnership, community leaders acknowledge the importance of reconciling with former "enemies" and how they have changed the way they see these types of organisations:

> *After so many years against private organisations … now we are allied with one. And we need to understand that they are not the enemy anymore; there are still differences, of course, but you reconcile with the person you have differences with, not with your friends […] you need to be able to reach a consensus even in the difference. If we were to continue like that, we would soon disappear as a group* (Pablo, interview, 2023).

Community members as respected partners

Throughout the implementation of the project, the research team reflected on the transformation of former guerrilla members as part of the project. In particular, they reflected on how the women in charge of the educational programmes (community teachers) were able to re-present themselves beyond their label as former guerrilla members:

> *For me, one of the most special moments in this project was participating in a national conference with [name of peace signatory], I never imagined I would ever present in an academic event with a former guerrilla member […] to see her discussing our project is something I will never forget* (Olivia, Junior researcher, Interview, 2023).

Similar accounts by other members of the research team emphasised the agency and leadership of peace signatories as part of their participation in the project. Additionally, they reflected on specific moments of collective decision-making where they were leading the development of specific outputs as part of the collective efforts of the project.

Representational Projects: Prefiguring social change at the institutional and community levels

This theme explores the project's impact on the transformation/consolidation of the representational projects for both groups. Two sub-themes explore its impact on each group. In the case of the CP-HR, it enabled them to find a pathway to reaffirm their identity as peacebuilders through education initiatives, challenge stigma and focusing on learning and qualifying themselves to enact other roles as teachers and community researchers. For the research team, it was an opportunity to re-signify the role of academia in peacebuilding efforts and the implications of these partnerships in conflict-affected settings for the academic community.

A community committed to peacebuilding and identity transformation

The implementation of the EDUCARE project was the first step towards creating specific sites for discussion about the importance of education for peacebuilding at the community level. All the community members who participated in the study mentioned the importance of the recognition of their identity as *farianos* and campesinos as part of the consolidation of an educational model:

> *If we are the ones here in the territory and the ones interested in social change, then we need to say what we want, not rely only on external actors, because we come from a long process, we have suffered, we have had a lot of different experiences, and I think that external actors are here to help us but can't be the ones leading our own process. We need to build our own education model, with our worldview, with our values, because what we have been doing is unique, I don't see this anywhere else [referring to other ETCRs], and it is good for our children but also for the people to recognise our effort, our process and our history* (Juana, Community teacher, Focus group, 2022).

This excerpt was a recurring aspect when former guerrilla members described the EDUCARE project, as a source of acknowledgement and maintenance of their values and overall identity, and a site for reaching social justice through community development. What started as a project to support education initiatives, evolved to become a marker of their identity as *reincorporados* and their personal and collective journey to reintegrate to civil society:

> *The importance of this project is that it promotes self-recognition and invites people to see our approach to reincorporation, that our children and youth are not peace signatories but are the children of peace and we are all part of this challenge* (Esmeralda, Community leader, interview, 2023).

Moreover, community members also agree on the importance of consolidating collaborations with external actors to support their local initiatives. For instance, a community teacher mentions*:*

> *The university has the knowledge, including different theoretical and practical knowledge, and we also have knowledge that we can contribute to move this project forward. Not only with this university but with other universities that are willing to work with us and recognise that we also have knowledges, local educational initiatives, and people who want to continue learning and to become professionals* (Cristina, Interview, 2023).

This distinction is important, as they are clear on the importance of recognising their own knowledge as a pre-requisite for any potential collaboration. Additionally, collaborations are seen as opportunities *"to repair the tarnished social fabric and promoting the encounter between academia and rural territories"* (Francisco, Community leader, interview, 2023).

It is important to note, however, that this representational project is still contested by some community members. All the participants in the project (community teachers, community leaders and researchers) mention the constant internal tensions experienced in the community regarding the implementation of the project:

> *Our biggest accomplishment was also our most difficult one: to work with a private university. But it is an accomplishment because it created negative opinions for some [community members] because people come with a logic of friend or foe and think we are betraying our principles by doing this* (Community leader, interview, 2023).

Higher Education Institution re-thinking their role

All the participants of the project (Research team and community members) identified the transformation of academic practices and institutional frameworks for conducting academic research as one of the main outcomes of the project. However, this process evolved as the partnership was consolidated. In year one, both community members and researchers emphasise the capacity-building and academic support role of the research team: *"our main goal is to have monthly reports about the development of the*

project to understand what is happening in the community and design new strategies to support them, all in accordance with the indicators we designed" (Senior researcher, workshop, 2021). In this line, the research team focused on developing a timeline for the completion of the project and involving as many students as possible as part of the training and teaching goals of the university. For community leaders, their expectations were linked to having "professional knowledge" to support their local initiatives.

This initial project was transformed in year two as researchers continued their work with the community and reflected on the importance of promoting local agency and active participation of community members:

> *when we were writing the book [about their journey of reincorporation] we had agreed that we were going to support the writing process while maintaining their voices. Still, it was a constant discussion about how to achieve that, how to guarantee that our academic voice did not obscure their story. We managed to discover how to do it with them, as we did it* (Nicolás, Junior researcher, focus group, 2022).

The co-construction of written products (books and papers) was a particular milestone for the research team and the community as it was a way of recognising their authorship and participation. This enabled further discussions about finding innovative methodological strategies for collaborative actions with community members beyond capacity-building or systematising the experiences to add another layer to support the sustainability of local initiatives.

As a result, in the final year, reflections of the research team were linked to the potential of the research partnership to transform research practices at the institutional level. All the participants mention specific national events held at the university and in other institutions, where community teachers and leaders were invited to participate to present the results of the project:

> *I have a very clear image of all of us [researchers and community members] on stage, sharing our experiences in the project and finding a common language to engage in the conversation […] because it was a another way of knowledge production that is not about bragging about working with a community of former guerrilla members but actually engaging with them and providing platforms to be heard that were previously unavailable for them* (Nicolás, Junior researcher, interview, 2023).

These platforms for open and public dialogues between academics and community members are tangible examples of new ways of understanding traditional research committed to peacebuilding. Senior researchers identified this process as a first step that the university is starting to understand:

> *I think that the university finally understands that problem-solving is not a unilateral endeavour; it is not about data collection, reaching conclusions and designing an intervention. That approach is from a different generation, and the university is still figuring out what to do. I know that the university wants to move beyond that, and I think the project has provided in-depth evidence of the potential of these partnerships* (Gabriel, senior researcher, interview, 2023).

When asking community members about their views on the project's impact on the university as an institution, all of them highlighted the potential of the partnership to transform not only researchers but also how universities' approach to fieldwork and peacebuilding. They specifically mention how, through the project, the university has begun to understand that research and interventions need to move beyond urban space and for peacebuilding to occur, more projects need to think *with* communities, as *"education needs to come to the territory and not forcing us to move outside our household to be able to support our communities"* (Teresa, community teacher, Interview, 2023). As a result, peace signatories reflect on how the research team moved from the "theoretical approach" towards learning with them and learning from practice:

> *well, this has allowed researchers to stop just theorising everything and to start to build from practice itself […] it is very different to sit on a desk and write about communities, but it is when you actually go to the territory and start facing the lived realities, that you realise that practice goes way beyond the theory"* (Margot, Community coordinator, Interview, 2023).

For them, dialogical interaction between researchers and community members allows researchers to understand their political views and the importance of social justice to guarantee sustainable projects.

Styles of communication: Recognition as the basis for self-transformation and relationship building

Interactions between the community and the research team evolved through the project following the same ethos: open discussions and collaborative action between

community members and the research team. However, there were still asymmetries in dialogue worth exploring.

Asymmetries in the dialogical interactions

This sub-theme encompasses three forms of asymmetries: authoritative sources of knowledge (Drew, 1991), misunderstanding between parts (Drew, 1991), and not being recognised as knowledgeable agents. An initial asymmetry identified, primarily during the first two years of the partnership, is at the level of knowledge and the clear hierarchy between the different knowledges held by scholars and the community. For instance, one of the community leaders mentions:

> *I know that most of you have the theory, but we have the practical element, and I've been in processes with other academics that just come and don't take into account our practical knowledge. They just come thinking they know everything. I hope this doesn't happen here because it is very bad when there is a contradiction like that* (Pablo, Community leader, Dialogue meeting, 2021).

In this excerpt, the community leader is recognising a disparity in the recognition of knowledge by academics and presents it as a barrier to collaborative work. This signposting in year one of the implementation is frequent by peace signatories who express the importance of sharing their own knowledge with academics.

However, knowledge hierarchies are internalised at the community level, and there are internal divisions when it comes to the recognition of community knowledge and whose knowledge counts. Despite the journey towards becoming teachers, former guerrilla members still express difficulties in being recognised as legitimate sources of knowledge by certain community leaders*:*

> *This person [high profile leader] has been, I don't know how to call him, I don't know if it is machismo or just being critical of us as community teachers, because he doesn't value our knowledge, he is always saying the community should bring external actors to teach* (Juana, Peace signatory, Semi-structured interview, 2023).

What this excerpt highlights is the contested nature of knowledge and how well-established hierarchical representations of knowledge (Jovchelovitch, 2019) find their way inside the community, preventing the emergence of new leaderships or roles among them.

These processes of misrecognition of knowledge were particularly evident at the beginning of the project, in which peace signatories shared their role as community teachers with women who were part of local organisations. While this collaboration was

thought of as an initial scaffolding for peace signatories to support their process of becoming teachers, they felt their own knowledge was disregarded and silenced:

> *There were external people who knew a lot of things, well, not a lot; I mean, everyone has some sort of knowledge. But when they came, we had just started to reincorporate; we didn't know how to handle a computer, not even a phone, and we had a lot of knowledge from our time in FARC but not about technology and other things. We also didn't know how to plan or do an activity with children, and because of that we were excluded* (Peace signatory, Semi-structured interview, 2023).

Mutualities in dialogue

This sub-theme presents instances in which community members and the research team engage in mutual recognition and reciprocal interactions amidst the identified asymmetries in dialogue. We identified a process of perspective-taking (Keppler & Luckman, 1991) within a mutual commitment to a shared temporary social world (Krauss, Fussell & Chen, 1995).

Setting the basis for a shared social world

Contrary to the traditional approach of external interventions bringing their own labels and dynamics, community members highlight the value of incorporating their own words, practices and dynamics into the development of the project:

> *I like how you named this space as a 'balance', because this is how we named our discussion meetings back then* (Esmeralda, Community leader, dialogue meeting, 2021).

An important milestone during the first year was to set the grounds for direct and open interaction between the research team and community members in general, which involved acknowledging local denominations of practices and including them in the everyday interactions between researchers and community members. Similar accounts are referred by community members and the research team, who respected the local instances of decision-making and worked together to present annual reports: *"we rehearsed the presentation for the assembly with community leaders and teachers, each one chose a slide to present, and we were in charge of the final administrative details, then we listened to*

community's suggestions and answered their questions" (Olivia, Junior researcher, field diary, 2022). The recognition of local practices and the incorporation of their decision-making structure in the development of the project was, therefore, a first step towards consolidating enabling spaces for sharing, relationship and trust-building:

> *I think that one of the things we did was trust-building. That has been a key factor because, without it, we wouldn't be able to communicate […] at first, we were more directive, and they were more passive, but that's why I think trust-building is important because now they can say if they don't agree with something, they can actively participate and feel comfortable if they have a suggestion (*Nicolás, Junior researcher, semi-structured Interview, 2023)

Throughout the project's implementation, two platforms promoted mutual recognition: sharing everyday activities not linked to the project and instances of knowledge exchange. This involved a dialogical process in which the research team shared everyday activities outside the formal spaces for the project and engaged in conversations about worldviews, expectations, and personal and collective values.

All community members mentioned at least one instance of teaching, sharing or having a close relationship with research team members, which created spaces for trust and mutual acceptance. For them, through the everyday interactions, the research team was able to learn *"how to be critical and self-critical, practice the value of camaraderie and understand what it means to work towards buen vivir [good living]"* (Cristina, Community teacher, interview, 2023). As mentioned in the excerpt, sharing *fariano* (FARC-related) values with the research team served as a strategy to consolidate a space of shared understandings and common ground set in orienting principles. By sharing them, former guerrilla members ensured that their interactions followed their principles and promoted a safe space for engaging in conversations and developing the project.

In this same line, capacity-building strategies were part of the knowledge exchange process and the complementary process to engage in mutual dialogue. For both community teachers and leaders, the courses, diplomas and constant academic support were valuable resources that enabled discussions about their own education goals and how they envisioned their community. In particular, they highlighted the potential of the partnership to make bridges between different knowledges, closing the gap between academic, urban and "legitimate" knowledge and local, campesino and rural ones: *"What have we achieved? We have managed to bring the knowledge from academia to be of service to the*

community and to promote capacity-building for our teachers, but we have also managed to teach the researchers about our popular education" (Community leader, Interview, 2023). As mentioned by the community leader, learning from the research team was also the basis for a bidirectional engagement in which there is a mutual commitment to build a shared world that recognises the knowledges, practices and values of each party as complementary and part of the process of reconciliation and peacebuilding.

Discussion

In this paper, we have examined three dimensions of partnerships that can support and enable societal reconciliation in post-accord Colombia. The partnership between a community of peace signatories and a research team from an urban private university in Colombia prefigures a transformative knowledge encounter, enabling spaces that build, develop and consolidate the trust and the relationships that sustain and strengthen institutions and reconciliation processes. As initially proposed by Lederach (1997), we have demonstrated how reconciliation is enabled as a *place* and the point of encounter where concerns about the past and the future can meet (p.27). The project presented in this paper showcases the potential of partnerships as encounters forging alternative routes for historically distant and antagonistic groups to engage in shared intentionality (Jovchelovitch, 2019) to destabilise the rigid structure of the dominant socio-psychological representations of conflict (Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2014) and create new repertoires aligned with a culture of peace (Bar-Tal, 2011). In this section, we discuss the main implications of transformative knowledge encounters following Campbell and Cornish's (2010) dimensions of enabling spaces and their potential to prefigure cultures of peace and societal reconciliation (Table 4). We then offer insights into the potential of these transformative knowledge encounters for institutional transformation and how they contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 16.

Table 4.

Transformative Knowledge encounters to prefigure cultures of peace

Enabling Spaces Dimensions	Knowledge encounters dimensions	Cultures of peace and reconciliation
Symbolic: Transformation of world views	Re-presenting the self Transformation of hegemonic representations of the other	Societal beliefs about the past opponent and own group (Bar-Tal, 2011)
Material: Building partnerships based on reciprocity and transforming institutional beliefs about peace	Consolidating community and institutional practices towards peacebuilding	Societal beliefs about peace as a goal (Bar-Tal, 2011)
Relational: finding new ways of working together	Styles of communication	Societal beliefs about relationships between groups (Bar-Tal, 2011)

Symbolic dimension: Changing societal beliefs about past opponents and own group.

The implementation of the project enabled former guerrilla members and researchers to re-present themselves as they worked together and transformed stigmatising societal beliefs about each other. For peace signatories, moving beyond the label of former armed actors and transitioning towards other positionalities allowed them to re-present themselves to civil society as competent and moral agents. While this identity transformation journey has been reported elsewhere (Fonseca & Jovchelovitch, under review), in this study, we highlight how new positionalities, such as teachers or research partners, are built as part of the partnership and give conflict-affected actors a sense of moral acceptance and agency, both elements that have been identified as central elements for reconciliation (Shnabel & Nadler, 2015). As seen in previous studies, the partnership enabled a change in the sense of self, by recognising the legitimacy of their knowledge, values and practices (Aveling, 2011; Fransman & Newman, 2019).

In the case of researchers, becoming active citizens involved in peacebuilding efforts allows participating scholars to move beyond the dichotomy between scholarship and practice (Lederach, 2016) and enables them to take perspective on the lived experiences and realities of reincorporation, as well as embracing a shared responsibility in which they are also agents of peace (Fonseca & Jovchelovitch, 2024). Transforming representations of self and other is an important indicator for reconciliation (Cehajic-Clancy, 2015) because it allows moving beyond stereotyped versions of the other while

also re-presenting (Howarth, 2006) the self as different from hegemonic narratives supported by the ethos of conflict (Bar-Tal, 2007) and move towards a culture of peace (Bar-Tal, 2011). It is worth noting, however, that while the transformation representations of self and other is an important part of accepting the other's identity, it does not mean that each group has to fully agree with each other (Kelman, 2008).

Material dimension: Building partnerships based on reciprocity and transforming institutional beliefs about peace

The consolidation of the partnership through time enabled the two participant organisations to work together towards an interdependent future (Lederach, 1997), where peacebuilding was one of the goals (Bar-Tal, 2011). Bearing in mind that one of the preconditions for reconciliation is the improvement of socioeconomic conditions of conflict-affected actors (Bar-Tal & Cehajic-Clancy, 2014), the consolidation of a partnership aiming to support local education initiatives can be a pathway to addressing the pressing inequalities and disparities faced by peace signatories reincorporating to civil society. The co-construction of an educational model that recognises their past as *farianos* and supports values of *buen vivir* (Good Living), involved high levels of cooperation and trust-building among peace signatories and researchers. This included national-level platforms to share the experience, which creates spaces for wider recognition of peacebuilding efforts and has the potential to promote positive narratives about the encounter between the two groups (Bar-Tal & Cehajic-Clancy, 2014).

This partnership was also an important platform to prefigure (Yates, 2015) alternative research and teaching pathways in higher education institutions. Universities have been identified as important institutions in transforming societal beliefs (Bar-Tal, Vered, et al., 2021), even though in some scenarios, this has not been the case. For a private university in Colombia, this partnership has meant joining the discussion about collaborative work with former armed actors and working towards supporting social justice efforts, which is not usually the focus of these institutions (Brewer, 2018). This study also shows the potential of a middle-ground approach (Campbell & Cornish, 2010) in which grassroots organisations' needs and visions are met by higher education institutions that can support their efforts while also reflecting on their own processes as a higher education institution. This is important in a divided country in which urban/rural disconnections are still present, and usually, urban dwellers are in positions of advantage.

In this case, the role of universities is even more pressing, as their role in closing this urban/rural gap can be one of the pathways taken to support peacebuilding efforts. In this line, this type of prefigurative praxis can be the first step towards the promotion of sociogenetic changes in higher education settings, moving away from a monoperspectival official narrative (Psaltis, 2012) held by majorities in urban settings towards a wider narrative that incorporates new representational projects of conflict-affected actors and transforms research agendas.

Another important layer of this process involves processes of capacity-building in (post) conflict societies. In the case of this research-practice partnership, we have shown how the identity transformation journey is paired with instances of training, accessing education opportunities, and learning from each other as the partnership evolves. Community-level capacity building creates an opportunity for social change (Klein et al., 2007; Tajfel, 1981) as former guerrilla members continue their journey of re-writing the self, including new positionalities linked to specific professions such as becoming teachers or researchers and being recognised for their role not only at the community level but also in national settings. This process of capacity-building is, therefore, a pathway towards challenging stigmatising representations of self and diversifying identity positions (Fonseca & Jovchelovitch, under review) that can transform societal narratives about conflict, peace and conflict-affected actors' roles in peacebuilding efforts. Additionally, this training is not focused on peacebuilding but based on local needs, linked to education and pedagogy to sustain their own educational initiatives, which stresses the importance of capacity-building aimed for long-term benefits and not only specific skills for peacebuilding (Burke & Millican, 2018).

In the case of researchers, we have demonstrated that capacity-building is not solely a process at the local level but also involves a self-reflection process about the research itself and understanding and engaging in horizontal dialogical relationships. For researchers participating in these types of alliances, an important condition is to be flexible enough to question mainstream approaches for community work and establish new frameworks of community participation where local knowledge is valued (Campbell & Jovchelovitch, 2000) and included as part of the peacebuilding and social change endeavour.

Relational dimension: finding new ways of working together

An important condition for partnerships as transformative knowledge encounters is the ability of both groups to recognise each other. In the case of the EDUCARE project, this involved changing traditional beliefs about relationships between antagonistic groups (Bar-Tal, 2011): establishing friendly relationships, promoting equality of relations and having mutual sensitivity to each other, which occurred in parallel to a trust-building process. These elements of relationship-building between researchers and former guerrilla members are concrete instances of prefiguration of reconciliation through partnerships, as it is through knowledge exchange, everyday interactions and the recognition of each other as valuable and knowledgeable actors that the transformation of hegemonic beliefs and practices takes place.

The identity transformation journey experienced by both researchers and peace signatories involves a dialogical relationship in which life experiences, knowledges and practices are not dismissed but, on the contrary, included as part of the conversation. As a result, the consolidation of trust among the two groups occurs as part of the relational process and is visible in the "readiness to think about both self and other perspectives on the basis of mutual respect" (Psaltis, 2012b, p. 99). As a result, there is a socio-psychological restructuring of the relationships between the two social groups (Bar-Tal & Cehajic-Clancy, 2014), which enables open conversations about the past, present and future. This involves an interplay of asymmetries and mutualities (Marková, Graumman & Koppa, 1995) in the dialogical interaction that brings about tensions and opportunities to build new understandings of what peace and reconciliation mean for each actor. In this same line, working together to consolidate an educational project, as in the case of EDUCARE, opens the opportunity of a high-quality encounter in which actors from different groups and socio-economic and cultural conditions engage in critical understanding of each other's role in peacebuilding efforts and a process of shared intentionality (Jovchelovitch, 2019). This involves the recognition of each other as legitimate actors with legitimate knowledge and building a coordinated representation of the joint goal (Jovchelovitch, 2019).

Implications for the Sustainable Development Goal 16

This paper has also highlighted the potential of higher education institutions in the advancement of Sustainable Development Goal 16. Previous research has emphasised the

importance of universities in developing curricula, extra-curricular activities and mobilising youth for sustainable development (Akhigbe, 2021; Milton, 2021); however, their focus has been mostly unidirectional and can easily instrumentalise local universities in a technocratic exercise of achieving specific indicators rather than focusing on social transformation (Milton, 2021). Our results highlight the bidirectional nature of a research-practice partnership that focuses not only on improving the conditions at the community level but also involves a self-reflexive process of the institutional-level changes required to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. To achieve this, a horizontal, dialogical process of communicative action (Jovchelovitch, 2019) is developed between researchers and community members in which local knowledge is the motor for critical reflexivity and social transformation. Key in this process is to understand that sustainable development requires structural changes at the institutional level in which the role of universities is not focused on the unidirectional transmission of information, or "banking education", as denominated by Paulo Freire (1973) but an ongoing communication between self and other as the path for the development of personal, social and material resources (Jovchelovitch, 2007, p. 152).

In this regard, the recognition of local knowledge is a crucial element to inform processes of social transformation. In the case of local communities, peace is not seen as merely the absence of war, on the contrary, peace is considered as having access to basic services, the guarantee of human rights, and being in line with a philosophy of good living (Buen Vivir) (Fonseca & Jovchelovitch, under review). Our results show that high-quality encounters involve the acknowledgement and recognition of local perspectives, as well as critical dialogues about inequality, experiences of disadvantage and barriers faced by rural dwellers that need to be addressed in the design and implementation of community-led projects. This involves a "pedagogy of peace" that requires the integration of community and grassroots functioning with the functioning of institutional frameworks. In the case of former guerrilla members, this is directly linked with ensuring a transparent and ethical alliance where the aim of the project is agreed with community members and has an integrated system of collective follow-up, ensuring their recognition as active and respected partners.

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Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusions

7.1. Aims and Findings

In this thesis, I examined the role of knowledge encounters as an alternative theoretical model to understand societal reconciliation. I did so by focusing on the encounters between peace signatories and urban academics and students from a Higher Education Institution (HEI), taking place at the Centro Poblado Héctor Ramírez (CP-HR), a Territorial Space for Training and Reincorporation (ETCR). The focus on these social milieus was motivated by a desire to move beyond the traditional victim/perpetrator division in conflict-affected societies and instead include civil society actors historically and geographically distant from the everyday struggles of the country's internal armed conflict. As discussed in Chapter 1, one of the main challenges faced by Colombia is the high level of division and polarisation among citizens, particularly with urban citizens, who are less willing to coexist with former guerrilla members.

More specifically, the thesis focused on investigating the consolidation of a platform to promote transformative knowledge encounters as the microgenetic motor of (ontogenetic and sociogenetic) processes of representational change from a culture of conflict to a culture of peace. This theoretical framework contributes to Lederach's conceptualisation of reconciliation as a *place* of encounter and zooms in a concrete physical space where people from different social milieus come together and negotiate their representations of self, other and peace and reconciliation. It also contributes to the theory of knowledge encounters by introducing a geographical and performative dimension that expands its semantic focus. This focus on place and performance goes hand in hand with a focus on time. Research on reconciliation has predominantly studied cross-sectionally intergroup contact using surveys and questionnaires without explaining the contact conditions or the dynamics involved. Therefore, one of the aims of this thesis was to provide a longitudinal, qualitative and ethnographic approach to understand how identities and representations are negotiated and re-presented through encountering the knowledge of the other through time.

With this focus in mind, it adds the conceptual framework of prefiguration to understand social groups as active actors in the reconciliation process. This conceptualisation allowed the understanding of knowledge encounters as a prefigurative model that can be transformative in itself as it builds a platform for encountering others

and engaging in democratic, participative and reciprocal interactions among different social groups.

7.2. Summary of Findings

The research questions guiding this thesis were:

What is the psychosocial infrastructure underpinning reconciliation processes in community encounters in post-accord Colombia?

1. *What are the social representations of peace and reconciliation held by a group of urban youth from a private university before and after encountering a community of former guerrilla members? (Chapter 4)*
2. *What are the representations of self and other of a group of urban youth from a private university before and after a encountering a community of former guerrilla members? (Chapter 4)*
3. *How is identity negotiated in a community of peace signatories as they encounter new social representations about themselves and the other as part of the reincorporation process? (Chapter 5)*
4. *What is the link of identity positionings with representations of peace and reconciliation efforts? (Chapter 5)*
5. *What is the role of partnerships as knowledge encounters as platforms to prefigure reconciliation in post-accord Colombia? (Chapter 6)*
6. *Are there instances of prefigurative collaboration towards social change in the encounters? (Chapter 6)*

7.2.1. Summary of Study 1 (Chapter 4)

Study 1 comprised a multi-methods approach (field notes from participants, written narratives, qualitative interviews, focus groups) with undergraduate psychology students engaged in the CSL course "Community Psychology Applied to Post-Conflict Settings". The study followed the transformation of representations of self, other and peace and reconciliation of twenty-four urban youth before, during and more than a year after participating in the course. Findings reveal that the knowledge encounter between participants and former guerrilla members enabled a process of perspective-taking and self-reflection that allowed students to move from a position of disconnection and "in a bubble" regarding the armed conflict, to considering themselves as agents of peace in post-

accord Colombia. Through everyday interactions with peace signatories, participants were able to discuss, challenge and negotiate hegemonic representations about the armed conflict and its actors. This process allowed the emergence of emancipatory representations of peace and reconciliation, as well as the recognition of former guerrilla members as committed to peacebuilding. Despite the recurring presence of semantic barriers (Gillespie, 2008), emancipatory representations were still present in the public sphere one year after the participation in the CSL course. The ongoing discussions among friends and families about these representations show that the transformation of societal beliefs is a slow process but that educational initiatives such as the one we analysed enable microgenetic interactions that can trigger sociogenetic change that is emerging through the consolidation of emancipatory representations.

7.2.2. Summary of study 2 (Chapter 5)

Study 2 explored the process of identity negotiation as part of the reincorporation journey of former guerrilla members reincorporating into society. It entailed qualitative interviews with peace signatories (n=24) and one-year ethnographic fieldwork in the CP-HR. Through a multivoicedness analysis (Aveling et al., 2015), the study identified three identity positionings (*we-as-farianos*, *we-as-reincorporados* and *I-as-citizen*) and three inner others (state, FARC and civil society) that are in constant dialogue through their journey. The we-as-farianos and we-as-reincorporados are "we-positions" that reflect the collective reincorporation process and a search for a degree of continuity and coherence in the polyphasic self (Renedo, 2010). As part of this process, these we-positions use performative strategies such as the highlighting of identity markers, for instance, through artistic interventions in their community (murals) that are visual reminders of their history and their commitment to peace.

The study also identified the I-as-citizen position as a visible marker of the emergence of an individual "I" in the process of reincorporation into civil society. This position evidences the struggles suffered by most rural dwellers (i.e. access to basic services) and the individual goals and dreams linked to having a family and a stable job to provide for them. In this intersection between the *We* and the *I*, we identified how the CP-HR in itself is part of the performative strategies of identity negotiation linked to processes of social creativity and social change in a context in which their belonging to the FARC-EP is not concealed but on the contrary, embraced and re-presented. In doing this, *we-as-*

reincorporados serves as a hinge (Sammut et al., 2014) between the we-as-farianos and I-as-citizen positions as it brings together the continuity of the fariano roots and intersects it with the needs and struggles of rural dwellers and re-present themselves as active citizens, committed to peacebuilding.

In terms of peace and reconciliation, the study highlights how different positions reflect differently on the meanings of these concepts. For the *we-as-farianos* position, peace is defined as linked to social justice and *vida digna* (i.e. access to basic services and human rights). In contrast, for *we-as-reincorporados* position it is non-existent given the multiple assassinations and stigma faced by their comrades in different areas in the country. All positions see reconciliation as the possibility of encountering the other, and the collective reconstruction of the tarnished social fabric.

7.2.3. Summary of study 3 (Chapter 6)

Study 3 moved from studying groups separately and instead analysed the development of a joint project between peace signatories and academic researchers. The three-year ethnographic study focused on the implementation of the Education, Land and Reconciliation project (EDUCARE), a research-practice partnership among a sub-group of peace signatories interested in the preservation of the *fariano* and *campesino* values, with a research group of Universidad de La Sabana supporting their efforts to design a local educational model. Results highlight the potential of this partnership as a transformative knowledge encounter that provides a safe and enabling space for the transformation of self, other and representations of peace and reconciliation. It shows the identity transformation process of all participants, highlighting the development of new positions through "becoming" teachers, research partners and peacebuilders in the case of peace signatories and "becoming" active citizens in the case of academic researchers. These new positions align with the transformation of the representational projects of each group, in particular the research team and the private university they are part of, as they recognise the importance of local knowledge, as well as the potential of HEI to amplify the voices and grassroots initiatives such as the one in the CP-HR.

7.3. Discussion

The research conducted in this PhD provides evidence of complex and diverse representations about peace, reconciliation, self and other and how they are transformed

through time as a result of dialogical and transformative knowledge encounters. The thesis incorporated new actors (urban academics and students) as part of the landscape of the variety of actors present in protracted conflict-affected settings. In doing so, it aligns with Ulug & Cohrs' (2019) proposal of identifying potential sub-groups to avoid over-simplification of the social reality and includes students and researchers as active agents in the process of reconciliation and peacebuilding in the country. In this regard, it analyses the *lifeworlds* (Jovchelovitch & Priego-Hernández, 2013; Schutz, 1967) of specific communities instead of broader social categories aiming to represent society in general. This offers a nuanced view on the systems of meanings, practices and values in specific territories at the psychological and spatial levels. This distinction was transversal in the thesis and informs a new approach to knowledge encounters.

Even though there is a large number of studies on reconciliation that include undergraduate students as participants (Cehajic et al., 2008; López-López et al., 2016; Oettler & Rettberg, 2019), they have focused on general understandings of peace and reconciliation and attitudes towards the outgroup, mostly using hypothetical scenarios. The ones that focus on actual encounters (Schroeder & Risen, 2016), do so in artificial settings and only a few of them provide longitudinal accounts of its effects over time (Schroeder & Risen, 2016). Chapters 4 and 6 offer a novel approach to Higher Education Institutions as social milieus (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999) that need to be included as part of the reconstruction of a tarnished social fabric in a (post) conflict setting (Bar-Tal, Vered, et al., 2021).

Previous research on identity negotiation and representational change from a social representations approach has focused on processes of migration (Kadianaki, 2014; Kadianaki et al., 2015; Mahendran et al., 2019), ethnicity (Reddy, 2019) and religious affiliations (Amer, 2020). This PhD makes a contribution to this theoretical approach by introducing an in-depth analysis of the role of social interaction (either moving between contexts or social contact in general) as part of the reconciliation and peacebuilding process. This is different to other studies that have used the same model but do not take into account identity re-presentation as a collective project and instead focus on individual-level negotiations.

7.3.1. Transformative Knowledge Encounters as Safe Spaces for the Microgenesis of Reconciliation

The empirical studies of this thesis provide an in-depth analysis of the importance of place (Lederach, 1997) as a physical and concrete space where transformations at the representational level develop. A transversal site for analysis, the Centro Poblado Héctor Ramírez (CP-HR) functioned as an enabling space (Campbell & Cornish, 2012; Guerlain & Campbell, 2016) where historically, geographically and ideologically distant groups meet and, through encountering alterity, engage in processes of self-reflection which trigger representational transformation (Kadianaki & Gillespie, 2015). As part of its enabling function, the CP-HR worked as a safe space in which peace signatories were able to negotiate their identity, discuss how to re-present themselves, share their process with external visitors and feel valued and recognised beyond stigmatising labels. For researchers and urban youth, the CP-HR became a safe space constructed through time which allowed them to engage in meaningful conversations, discuss conflicting perspectives and share everyday practices. In both cases (peace signatories and university members), the CP-HR provided a safe encounter preventing feelings of exclusion or judgement and instead promoted trust and feelings of support even during difficult conversations. These findings add to an ongoing discussion about the limits of safe spaces created as part of research projects that can be blurred when projects end (Vaughan, 2014). Instead of creating artificial spaces for the encounter, this PhD thesis has explored the consolidation of a safe space within a community that engages with external actors and in doing so, creates an enabling space for reconciliation. In the three studies, the CP-HR was a concrete geographical space/territory where individuals met, and this *enabled* embodied and performative dialogical interactions that triggered processes of perspective-taking and recognition of the other.

In addition, the triadic nature of the social representational approach provides a theoretical framework to move beyond reductionist and individualistic approaches to reconciliation (Psaltis et al., 2017). The three empirical studies explored self-other-object as the constitutive elements of the representational triad to explain the interdependent nature of peacebuilding and place social interaction as the basis for the negotiation of identities and representations, moving from a culture of conflict to a culture of peace. On one side, self-reflection is triggered as urban youth and academics physically step out of their representational landscape (move between contexts) (Kadianaki & Gillespie, 2015) when visiting the CP-HR and encounter alternative representations of peace, conflict and

reconciliation. On the other, former guerrilla members' process of self-reflection is more involved with the "reverse gaze" (Gillespie, 2006) they have from the multiple visitors they encounter (social contact) (Kadianaki & Gillespie, 2015) as their *fariana* culture becomes an object of discourse, one they realise has to be preserved and made sense of in this new space they are settling in.

In this line, this thesis offers an in-depth analysis of the potential of the encounter to promote a positive spiral of change (Psaltis, 2015b) by explaining the specific dynamics of contact required to transform social representations of self, other and peace and reconciliation. In particular, it expanded the content of the representational landscape of each group before, during and after the encounter, and the implications it had for the negotiation of identities and representations. Contrary to other studies that have examined cross-sectionally and individual accounts of intergroup contact (Uluğ & Cohrs, 2017), this thesis follows the lifeworld of different social milieus engaging in social interactions in a specific place that *enables* them to safely discuss and debate stigmatising representations of each other. This is important, as studies have pointed out the barriers to the encounter derived from adhering to the master narrative of conflict (Smeekes et al., 2017; Uluğ & Cohrs, 2019). This thesis offers a different approach by exploring how through social interactions those master narratives can be transformed and the impacts it has on identity positionings of specific social milieus. In doing this, it uncovers the intra-psychological and inter-psychosocial processes linked to the encounter and the implications for reconciliation and peacebuilding.

7.3.2. Selves in Transition: Ontogenetic Changes through Encountering Alterity

As mentioned in the previous section, transformative knowledge encounters act as enabling spaces that allow the recognition of the other as part of the social interaction. The three empirical studies add to the emerging literature on recognition from a social psychological perspective (Amer & Obradovic, 2022; Osbourne et al., 2023) by providing a clear view of the dialogical nature of recognition processes (Amer & Obradovic, 2022). In particular, they show how changes in the social and political environment, namely the signature of the peace agreement and the reincorporation of former guerrilla members into civil society, require a process of re-cognition of the self and the role each group has in society (Amer & Obradovic, 2022). Chapter 4 showed how the social interactions between urban youth and peace signatories enabled students to re-cognise themselves as social actors and move from a position of "distant youth" towards one of "agents of peace"

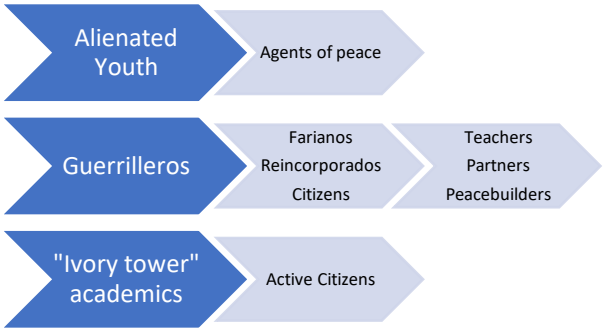
(Figure 6). A similar process was outlined in Chapter 6, as academic researchers' involvement in the research-practice partnership created a space for dialogical interaction with former guerrilla members, which enabled a process of conscientisation moving beyond the label of academics towards recognising themselves as active citizens. An important contribution of this thesis is the "two sides of the mirror" perspective, as identity negotiation is analysed based on how participants see themselves, think they are seen by others (meta-representations) and how they are actually seen by others.

Identity negotiation in the case of former guerrilla members adds another layer to understand the polyphonic self (Renedo, 2010) in processes of reincorporation. Contrary to previous studies emphasising concealment of identity as a strategy used by former combatants (McFee, 2016), Chapter 5 showed the impact of collective reincorporation in the identity management of former guerrilla members. In particular, it revealed how peace signatories are organising the continuity of their biography by using the polyphony of selves as able to coexist and integrate. These results support studies arguing for the importance of collective continuity as defensive strategy against threatened identities (Smeekes et al., 2017), but offer a nuanced understanding by explaining how peace signatories expand their identities and present a hybrid one that allows to keep their roots as farianos while at the same time embracing a new self as citizen.

In this case, the CP-HR functions as a safe space where they engage in constant social contact (Kadianaki & Gillespie, 2015) with a multiplicity of actors and look for ways to demand recognition and challenge stigmatising representations of themselves as *farianos.* As a result, they engage in performative strategies (Amer, 2020) to manage how they see themselves and re-present to civil society. While previous studies have focused on understanding semantic strategies as part of identity negotiation, Chapter 5 contributes to an emerging field of performative strategies for identity management and its link to processes of social creativity and social change (Chapman, 2016; Klein et al., 2007).

Figure 6.

Identity transformation throughout the encounter process



Identity performance, in the case of peace signatories, is a collective endeavour aligned with the emergence of new identity positions in the context of the reincorporation process. By combining a dialogical approach with Social Identity Theory, we identified how peace signatories re-present their hybridised identity as *farianos, reincorporados* and *citizens*, which shows a strategy of preserving their biography even though they are changing trajectory. This process, contrary to other studies focusing on individual strategies of identity performance (Amer, 2020; Chapman, 2016; Osbourne et al., 2023), advances the understanding of identity construction as a collective process where individuals act together to challenge stigmatising representations of self.

As a result, and based on an ethnographic approach that allowed a longitudinal observation of practices and local infrastructure, we see the performance of this hybridised identity through concrete practices of community-building, which are visible throughout the landscape of the CP-HR (e.g. murals, paintings, productive projects). The importance of these tangible and concrete performative actions is linked with the self-society dialogue, as peace signatories' performance is directed towards an audience (civil society, state institutions, among others) that they feel misrecognises them. As such, the hybridised identities, or polyphonic selves (Renedo, 2010) emerging as part of the reincorporation process are performative and aim to challenge and resist the negative representations about themselves by assuming positions that show their commitment to peace through specific actions.

The link between social identities and forgiveness and reconciliation has been widely studied (Cehajic et al., 2008; Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, et al., 2008). However, through the three empirical studies, we expand the role of social identity in processes of reconciliation by analysing the content of each identity and exploring the nuances and internal multiplicities experienced by social actors as part of a knowledge encounter.

Previous studies have argued that higher ingroup identification in an ethnopolitical post-conflict setting is related to stronger endorsement of the dominant narrative of one's own group even after the conflict ends and lesser endorsement of the others (Uluğ et al., 2023), which can decrease willingness to forgive and reconcile (Taylor et al., 2022). This thesis extends these studies by exploring identity from a dialogical perspective that allows identifying multiple positions within the same social group. In doing so, it discusses how the polyphasic self can have multiple representations about peace and reconciliation and the role of knowledge encounters as safe spaces to negotiate identities *and* representations.

7.3.3. Sociogenetic changes: Challenging hegemonic and creating emancipatory representations

This PhD has explored the transformation of representations about self, other and peace and reconciliation in three social milieus. Methodologically, the segmentation of the participants as social milieus was a form of identifying relevant social groupings with a sense of self-reference related to a common project (Bauer & Gaskell, 2008), which carry systems and functional references of representations (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999). By doing this, the transformation of representations studied in the three empirical chapters referred to social groupings that act as sub-groups of society (Uluğ & Cohrs, 2019) and convey different views about a particular object, based on the different projects each one has. Chapter 4 understands urban youth form a private university as a social milieu in itself as participants self-identified as privileged psychology students working towards completing their degree and finding ways to understand the post-accord Colombia's landscape. Chapter 5 presented a detailed account on peace signatories living in the CP-HR as a social milieu of former guerrilla members collectively building their community and engaging in processes of re-presentation and peacebuilding from their territory. Chapter 6 introduced an additional social milieu: academic researchers from a private university at different moments of their careers, who worked together to support a grassroots initiative. These different social milieus, each based on a particular *lifeworld* (Jovchelovitch & Priego-Hernández, 2013) come together as part of the encounter and through their interaction, alternative representations (Gillespie, 2008) emerge and challenge hegemonic representations.

Bearing in mind the different *lifeworlds* inhabited by participants, the process of representational change taking place as part of the encounter involves altering the

dynamics of the self-other-object triad, which, in turn, alters the knowledge produced (Jovchelovitch, 2007). Of particular importance is the shared lifeworld of urban youth and academics, whose main frame of reference (Moore et al., 2011) are state institutions. In this case, urban youth and academics come from an urban, privileged background, sustained by a historical view of conflict linked to a doctrine of the internal enemy, where the idea of "communist danger" was part of a politic that justified counterinsurgent practices and overall suspicion against people who had leftist ideas (Comisión para el esclarecimiento de la verdad, 2022). However, once the agreement was signed and the encounter with peace signatories became real (in the form of the transformative knowledge encounter), new frames of reference that contradicted the logic of the internal enemy arose. The instability of being embedded into different frames (Moore et al., 2011) involved a dialogical process of negotiation and the emergence of emancipatory representations.

The communication between urban youth, academic researchers and former guerrilla members foregrounds the hegemonic representations of peace and conflict, which are subject of re-negotiation and discussion. In this case, particular social identities are brought forward to mediate the interaction (Duveen & Lloyd, 2013) as students locate themselves beyond being urban youth and instead opt to interact from a position of curiosity and a real interest in going outside the bubble of urban life, and academics move from the "ivory tower" position to genuinely recognise the knowledge and practices of the CP-HR community. Chapter 4 presented a clear account on the discussion of hegemonic representations as a result of the encounter. The CSL course offered an opportunity to actively examine and reflect on hegemonic representations of former guerrilla members, peace and reconciliation.

Previous research has shown how adherence to beliefs that are aligned with the official narrative promotes feelings of symbolic or realistic threat by the outgroup, which in turn prevents the willingness to coexist (Psaltis & Cakal, 2016). The three empirical studies present a reverse model, which starts with consolidating a safe space for encountering the Other, which enables the reflection and transformation of societal beliefs. This is not a one-off encounter, as presented in many studies, but instead a long-term process in which conviviality, informal conversations and self-reflection enable sustained interactions, extended dialogues, making divergences explicit (Grossen & Orvig, 2011), and multiple, continuous discussions about the representational landscape linked to peace,

conflict and reconciliation. For urban youth, for example, this involved an awareness of their own views of reconciliation and peace as a difficult process and directed towards victims and perpetrators. In the case of former guerrilla members, their ideological frame sustained a view of urban citizens, in particular those from privileged backgrounds as "oligarchs", enemies of *el pueblo* (the people) and extractivist academics. These competing representations and frames of reference (Moore et al., 2011) were made visible, spoken of openly and negotiated as part of the encounter.

It is important to note that the representational change and the emergence of emancipatory representations do not automatically and completely replace the hegemonic representations linked to a culture of conflict. What the three studies show is that the transformative knowledge encounter is an enabling platform: it enables the emergence of emancipatory representations that enter into the public sphere and become thereafter part of the discussion. They are actively discussed, which opens the possibility for the consolidation of emancipatory representations aligned with an ethos of peace (Bar-Tal, 2009). Emancipatory representations were present throughout the studies with different emphases but highlighted the move from an individualistic position towards peace and reconciliation in the case of urban youth and academics, towards understanding reconciliation as a collective endeavour that requires encountering the unknown other and transformed relations between self and other. In the case of former guerrilla members, polyphony of selves evidences a polyphasic conception of peace and reconciliation. Peace as social justice, for instance is more linked to the *farianos* identity, which maintains their ideological biography but at the same time clashes with considering peace as non-existent and linked to the recurrent conflict and assassination of their fellow comrades. What this multiplicity of representations shows is how in current reality, the clash of the lifeworlds, the interaction among social milieus, and the opportunity to openly discuss what is happening gives rise to polyphasic selves (Renedo, 2010) in which representations about peace, conflict and reconciliation vary depending on the context and the audience.

This negotiation and discussion of emancipatory representations against hegemonic ones is part of the three studies. Chapter 4 explicitly shows the clash of emancipatory representations as urban youth share them with family and friends who still adhere to societal beliefs linked to an ethos of conflict. Even though participants experience hopelessness as they face the semantic barriers (Gillespie, 2008) that aim to delegitimise their encounter with former guerrilla members, the emancipatory representations are part

of the everyday discussions and, can act as alternative representations that, with time, can destabilise the core of the hegemonic representations aligned to a culture of conflict. A similar process is presented in Chapter 5 and 6. Peace signatories actively challenge the negative representations of urban academics held by some of their fellow comrades and show the importance of collective work and collaborative alliance to achieve social justice, their main goal as *farianos*. For academic researchers, particularly coming from a social milieu linked to a religious, conservative project, the challenge is to bring emancipatory representations to the academic public sphere and presenting a new way of understanding research in conflict-affected communities in which dialogue, encounter and recognition of peace signatories as legitimate actors is crucial.

Previous studies highlight the importance of researching natural microenvironments of lived realities to understand the multiple social representations that act as frames to organise and construct social knowledge in context (Nicholson, 2019). This thesis provides a view of the lifeworlds of social groups encountering as part of the peace agreement and adds the variable of place and time to see how social representations evolve, are negotiated and challenged as part of the encounter.

7.3.4. Prefiguring reconciliation: Closing the gap between urban and rural settings and engaging in horizontal dialogues

As we mentioned in Chapter 2, while the contact hypothesis provides an important contribution to understanding social interaction and the reduction of prejudice, there are several critiques of its use in the field of reconciliation. One of them highlights the potential of intergroup contact to promote the acceptance of an unjust status quo by a disadvantaged group (Durrheim & Dixon, 2017; Saguy et al., 2009). To overcome this critique, this thesis combined the model of knowledge encounters to illuminate the dynamics of social contact between different social milieus, with the conceptualisation of prefigurative politics to address the asymmetries between groups throughout the studies. This involved an in-depth analysis of the lifeworlds of each social milieu and moving away from the binary victim/perpetrator traditionally used in conflict and peacebuilding studies. By bringing together two subgroups of urban society and examining the reincorporation process of a community of peace signatories, this thesis poses new challenges for understanding asymmetries and the overall complexity of categorisation in

post-accord Colombia. In doing so, it adds to an emerging line of research that studies third parties and their role in conflict transformation (Kerr et al., 2017).

In this line, asymmetries in this thesis were not addressed using the dichotomy of the victim/perpetrator dyad, but looked for a deeper understanding of how the socio-political and economic differences between groups shapes complex social identity positionings that cannot be reduced to one single aspect of this dyad. On the one hand, peace signatories can be categorised as perpetrators, however, in their process of reincorporation, they face numerous challenges linked to living in remote rural areas and experiencing high levels of scarcity, stigma and marginalisation due not only to their condition as former guerrilla members, but also to the fact that they are rural dwellers. On the other, urban students and academics have been indirectly affected by the armed conflict but do not self-identify as victims, and their relative affluence means that they have not endured barriers accessing basic services or experienced a constant threat to their lives. In this case, moving beyond the two-group paradigm (Kerr et al., 2017) involved exploring the different positions that a social milieu could have in the interactions as part of the knowledge encounter. Urban dwellers, for instance, due to their socio-economic conditions, can be seen as a majority and as an advantageous group when compared to peace signatories. However, peace signatories are also in a position of power when receiving urban dwellers, as they are sharing their stories and their conflict narratives as the true ones.

In this context, this thesis explored the way in which the dynamics between these social milieus unfolded and the potential of the encounter to create spaces for self-reflection about each other and their representational landscape. To overcome the sedative effect of upward contact with a historically advantaged group (Cakal et al., 2011), combining the knowledge encounters model with a prefigurative lens (Yates, 2015) actively set up specific dynamics for the participating social milieus. For instance, the work between peace signatories and urban researchers (the advantaged group) did not promote the acceptance of an unjust status quo, as in other studies (Maoz, 2011), but instead, opened the possibility to work towards prefiguring social change together. For the "advantaged" group, it also served to reflect on their own privilege and historical disconnection, which can serve reconciliation pathways by changing the narrative about conflict.

It is important to note that prefiguration was a meta-conceptual framework that guided the methodological design of the studies and was also used as an analytical tool.

Chapter 4 unpacked the experience of undergraduate psychology students in a CSL course and argued that this small-scale initiative prefigured reconciliation by setting up a safe space for encounter and identity and representational negotiation. In addition, the course was co-designed *with* a community leader (peace signatory) who wanted to create a space where urban dwellers could see the "other side of the conflict". Working together to create alternative spaces for transforming representations and negotiating identities can be a first level of prefigurative praxis that has evolved through time and has permeated the curricular infrastructure of the psychology undergraduate programme.

In Chapters 5 and 6, prefiguration was a parallel process that enabled the construction of a community of peace signatories and building alliances with external actors to support their process. Specifically, in Chapter 6, we critically examined the research-practice partnership as an example of prefiguring reconciliation through the consolidation of material environments (Yates, 2015) of mutual recognition and active engagement in the development of an educational model. In this sense, we contribute to a line of research that explores how to bring back the social justice and social change roots of contact theory (Dixon et al., 2012; Durrheim & Dixon, 2017) to understand its potential for societal reconciliation. Participants in Chapter 6 are not only peace signatories but also academic researchers who embody a different positionality beyond researchers by "becoming active citizens" and being aware of their power and using it to amplify the voices of peace signatories and scaffold local initiatives to demand change at the national level. This entails a paradigmatic shift in research as well, as researchers are prefiguring an academic infrastructure in which working *with* instead of *on* conflict-affected communities can be a first step to recognise their struggles beyond official reports outlined in documents.

Finally, an important aspect of this process, which is part of transformative knowledge encounters, is that the ultimate goal is not to promote identification with superordinate categories to decrease prejudice (Dovidio et al., 2008). Instead, the aim is to recognise the different identity positions and representational projects of each social milieu and work together towards social change and transformation of societal beliefs linked to an ethos of conflict. This recognition, as outlined in Chapter 6 involves a transformation of the representational projects of each group through time, which the case of this thesis, are oriented towards a collective view of social change. This is achieved by subverting traditional interactions based on hierarchies, a constant self-reflection of the power

symmetries present in the encounter, and finding creative ways to overcome them, all of which central elements of prefigurative politics (Cornish et al., 2016).

7.4. Contributions

7.4.1. Empirical/methodological contributions

This thesis offers methodological contributions to unpack social representations and identity transformation from a developmental perspective. While ethnographic designs have been a common tool to examine social representations, less so has been a longitudinal psychosocial approach focused on specific social milieus over time. This approach offered insights into the long-term nature of reconciliation as a process that involves a constant dialogue between self, other and society and entails discourses, practices, and actions that evolve and clash over time. Following the knowledge encounters in the CP-HR for more than three years from a psychosocial ethnographic approach provided clear accounts of the use of performative strategies for identity negotiation, particularly in the case of peace signatories (Chapter 5). Moreover, this methodological approach enabled an in-depth understanding of the dynamics within knowledge encounters beyond self-reports and the use of interviews or focus groups, which offered an additional layer of representational change and identity construction as a collective process in which actors are continuously re-presenting themselves (Chapters 4, 5 and 6), finding creative solutions as a group to overcome stigma (Chapter 5) and prefiguring reconciliation through their own practices (Chapter 6).

Empirically, it addressed Maoz's (2011) concerns about the limits of structured and planned encounters between asymmetrical groups. Setting up curricular and research agendas *with* peace signatories and consolidating long-term alliances between local communities and Higher Education institutions can be a first step towards structural transformation, a necessary component for conflict transformation (Maoz, 2016). Moreover, a clear account of reflexivity was introduced as part of the design of the studies, in which participants, and also the researcher, had to reflect on their own roles in reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts, which worked as a way of tackling hierarchical relationships and instead, consolidating a team working towards achieving social change in the form of a local educational initiative (Chapter 6). In particular, Chapter 6 presented partnerships as transformative knowledge encounters as a type of encounter that involves

the consolidation of a safe space that enables constant processes of self-reflection and dialogical interactions among partners.

7.4.2. Theoretical Contributions

At the theoretical level, this thesis makes a contribution to two lines of research on reconciliation. Through a genetic perspective, it 1) opens the black box of contact and addresses some of its critiques, and 2) unpacks the psychological infrastructure of reconciliation, contributing to elucidate the conditions of an ethos of peace presented by Bar-Tal (2000, 2009). In addition, it expands the model of knowledge encounters by combining it to prefigurative politics.

A microgenetic approach to the encounter provided a nuanced view on relationship-building as part of the reconciliation process. Previous studies have examined cross-sectionally the link between quality contact, perspective-taking and empathy (Cehajic et al., 2008; Tam et al., 2008) through questionnaires measuring friendships and closeness. This PhD conceptualised contact as intentional social interaction aimed towards a dialogical encounter and showed that shared intentionality and partnerships towards social change are better indicators for understanding the potential of social contact for conflict transformation. As such, the three empirical studies provide in-depth accounts of how a dialogical encounter between these social groups allowed participants to evocate and re-construct representations about self and other in the micro time of their social interactions (Duveen & Lloyd, 2013; Psaltis, 2015b), which facilitated trust-building, recognition of the other and, as shown in Chapter 4, moving from emotions as fear and anxiety to hope. It also confirms the potential of knowledge encounters to create conditions for cooperative relations, as seen in Chapter 6, which opens the possibility for intellectual exchange (Duveen & Psaltis, 2013), and a critical consciousness (Freire, 1973) about the roles of each social milieu as active agents in peacebuilding and reconciliation in post-accord Colombia. This approach aligns with an ongoing line of research aiming to recognise the importance of structural transformation and societal-level changes to overcome prejudice and to promote conflict transformation (Durrheim & Dixon, 2017).

Regarding the psychosocial infrastructure of reconciliation and Bar-Tal's (2009) proposal of an ethos of peace, a genetic social representational perspective contributed to unpacking the representational triad self-other-object (Jovchelovitch, 2007) associated to moving from a culture of conflict to a culture of peace. In particular, this thesis focused on

understanding the *process* of reaching the conditions outlined by Bar-Tal regarding an ethos of peace. Through the model of transformative knowledge encounters, the three studies show the potential of partnerships, collaborative alliances and societal infrastructure to act as microgenetic motors of ontogenetic (ingroup's acknowledgement of their role in conflict and the legitimisation of the outgroup) and sociogenetic (societal beliefs about the history of conflict and new beliefs to describe the multidimensional nature of peace) changes that are central elements of Bar-Tal's proposal. In particular, it introduced the dynamic relationship between self-other-object to understand the dialogical and continuous process of identity and representational change that requires social interaction. As a result, it brings the concept of cognitive polyphasia (Jovchelovitch & Priego-Hernández, 2015) to explain and explore the long-term process of representational change that involves the constant clash and coexistence of representations as part of encountering with alterity. In (post) conflict settings, this means that before a complete culture of peace is achieved, we need to understand how and if emancipatory representations are circulating in the public sphere to challenge hegemonic representations aligned to an ethos of conflict.

In this line, the findings of this thesis expand the model of knowledge encounters to consider its transformative potential. Transformative knowledge encounters were originally introduced by Aveling and Jovchelovitch (2014), referring to the potential for transformation of all participants in the knowledge encounter and as a consequence, a more equitable redistribution of power among them. This thesis combines the model of knowledge encounters with prefigurative politics (Yates, 2015) to account for the potential of knowledge encounters as small-scale initiatives that can inform processes of societal reconciliation by prefiguring dialogical encounters between historically, geographical and ideological opposed actors. To do so, this thesis uses the concept of enabling spaces (Guerlain & Campbell, 2016) to refer to the physical and concrete space in which people encounter and negotiate who they are, how they are seen by others, and how they see each other. Even though the concept of enabling spaces has been mostly used in the health sector to refer to spaces that support health-enabling practices (Campbell & Cornish, 2012), this thesis presents transformative knowledge encounters in post-accord Colombia as reconciliation-enabling spaces. Reconciliation-enabling spaces are initiatives that bring together different conflict-affected actors and provides a platform for self-reflection in a concrete physical safe space for experimenting and exploring new ways of relating to each other and to other audiences (performative), discussing and debating hegemonic

representations of conflict, peace and reconciliation and finding common projects oriented towards social justice and conflict transformation. Moreover, reconciliation-enabling spaces are sites designed between the involved actors, require a clear understanding of each other's representational projects (Aveling & Jovchelovitch, 2014) and involve the consolidation of long-term partnerships among the social groups involved. Further development of this model is still necessary and is part of my research agenda.

7.5. Limitations and further research

The research work presented in this thesis has a number of limitations, which can inform opportunities for future research. The first limitation lies in the focus on only one ETCR to explore the process of reincorporation and the encounter among different social milieus. Despite the in-depth analysis provided by the psychosocial ethnography over more than three years, a similar but less specific approach in at least two more ETCRs could have provided more nuances on the encounter of different social actors. This is particularly the case as the CP-HR is recognised as one of the successful cases of reincorporation in the country, which can prevent an understanding of other struggles and identity negotiation processes in Territorial Spaces where there is not a strong sense of community or peace signatories are experiencing additional threats to their lives. Further research is required on other types of ETCRs.

In this same line, this thesis focused on the experiences of peace signatories living in a rural community, given the emphasis on collective reincorporation as part of the peace agreement signed in 2016. Nevertheless, the current realities in the country, linked to the lack of state support in most of the ETCRs has led to an individual process of reincorporation in urban areas, which was not considered from the beginning and poses new challenges to understanding identity negotiation and reconciliation as former guerrilla members decide to move away from their collective. Future research could address the identity management strategies held by peace signatories reincorporating individually and having a more "natural" coexistence with urban citizens.

Finally, the three studies focused on exploring the encounter between different social milieus. However, they did not include other members of those social groups or people that were part of the discussions of the new representational landscape after the encounter. Including parents, friends, or other members of the academic community can provide valuable insights to understand to what extent emancipatory representations

brought by participants are still (or not) being debated in the public and private spheres and what are their implications for transforming hegemonic representations linked to an ethos of conflict into new ones linked to an ethos of peace.

7.6. Societal Relevance

The current thesis has illustrated the socio-cultural psychology of reconciliation in post-accord Colombia. Even though it took the specific perspective of a small-scale initiative to promote transformative knowledge encounters among different social milieus, its results can be seen as a metaphor for other forms of polarisation worldwide that are milder but not less serious. In this line, this PhD contributes a specific view on the potential of transformative knowledge encounters that enable processes of self-reflection, promote perspective-taking and recognition of the other, and are maintained through institutional support to prefigure social change through the consolidation of partnerships.

A second important aspect of this thesis is the emphasis on the role of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts. As shown throughout the empirical studies, HEI can play a crucial role in setting up institutional platforms to support representational change and place reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts at the centre of the academic agenda. In doing this, it can leverage grassroots initiatives and include research-practice partnerships as part of its curricular approach. This institutional change can have ripple effects in other areas of the institution and the representational landscape it influences (Althusser, 1970). Moreover, this thesis has uncovered the importance of incorporating practical courses that provide psychologists in training, the tools to understand their own history and their role as citizens and active agents for change in a context of protracted conflict. Moving from a position of bystanders for both academic researchers and urban youth to a position of agency and critical engagement in processes of social change and conflict transformation can be a first step towards consolidating pathways for reconciliation from an institutional level.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Participant Information and Informed Consent Study 1

Encountering the knowledge of the other(s): Societal Reconciliation in post-accord Colombia

Laura Fonseca
Department of Psychological and Behavioural Science, LSE

Information for participants (Students)

Thank you for considering participating in this study which will take place between April 2020 and May 2021. This information sheet outlines the purpose of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant, if you agree to take part.

1. What is the research about?
The purpose of this project is to examine the encounters between different societal groups in a post-conflict setting as a strategy promote sustainable reconciliation in post-conflict settings. This project is part of the alliance between the Territorial Space for Training and Reincorporation Hector Ramírez (ETCR-HR in Spanish) and Universidad de La Sabana. This is a research project that will involve focus groups and workshops with you and your classmates to explore your ideas, practices and beliefs before, during and after visiting the ETCR as part of your undergraduate psychology training.

2. Do I have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. You do not have to take part if you do not want to. This means that you can visit the ETCR-HR and be enrolled as a student, but you do not have to participate in the interviews or specific focus groups related to the project. If you do decide to take part, I will ask you to sign a consent form which you can sign and return in advance of the first focus group or sign at the meeting.

3. What will my involvement be?
You will be asked to take part on workshops to share your experiences and practices while being part of the course. You will also be asked to write short paragraphs about your experience before and during the course. Usually, the course you are enrolled in involves writing a narrative or constructing a photo-essay to portray your views over the fieldwork. I will ask your permission to read or observe your final product when you are presenting it. You will also be invited to participate in focus groups that will take approximately one hour and a half and will be held three times after the end of the course, usually every 4 months.

4. How do I withdraw from the study?
You can withdraw from the study at any point until April 2021 without having to give a reason. If any questions during the focus groups or workshops make you feel uncomfortable, you do not have to answer them. Withdrawing from the study will have no effect on you. If you withdraw from the study I will not retain the information you have given thus far, unless you are happy for us to do so.

5. What will my information be used for?
I will use the collected information for a research project that is part of my PhD Thesis in Psychological and Behavioural Science Department at the London School of Economics and political Science. This information will be part of the research reports and future publications in peer-reviewed journals.

6. Will my taking part and my data be kept confidential? Will it be anonymised?

The records from this study will be kept as confidential as possible. Only myself and my supervisor will have access to the files and any audio tapes. Your data will be anonymised – your name will not be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. All digital files, transcripts and summaries will be given codes and stored separately from any names or other direct identification of participants. Any hard copies of research information will be kept in locked files at all times.
Limits to confidentiality: confidentiality will be maintained as far as it is possible, unless you tell us something which implies that you or someone you mention might be in significant danger of harm and unable to act for themselves; in this case, we may have to inform the relevant agencies of this, but we would discuss this with you first.

8. Who has reviewed this study?
This study has undergone ethics review in accordance with the LSE Research Ethics Policy and Procedure.

9. Data Protection Privacy Notice
The LSE Research Privacy Policy can be found at: https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Secretarys-Division/Assets/Documents/Information-Records-Management/Privacy-Notice-for-Research-v1.1.pdf

The legal basis used to process your personal data will be *Students* "Legitimate interests". The legal basis used to process special category personal data (e.g. data that reveals racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, health, sex life or sexual orientation, genetic or biometric data) will be for scientific and historical research or statistical purposes.
To request a copy of the data held about you please contact: glpd.info.rights@lse.ac.uk

10. What if I have a question or complaint?
If you have any questions regarding this study please contact the researcher, Laura Fonseca on l.m.fonseca-duran@lse.ac.uk
If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the conduct of this research, please contact the LSE Research Governance Manager via research.ethics@lse.ac.uk.

If you are happy to take part in this study, please sign the consent sheet attached.

CONSENT FORM

Encountering the knowledge of the other(s): Societal Reconciliation in post-accord Colombia

Researcher: Laura Fonseca

PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY IS VOLUNTARY

I have read and understood the study information dated [__/___/___], or it has been read to me. I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.	YES / NO
I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and that I can withdraw from the study at any time up until April 2021, without having to give a reason.	YES / NO
I agree to the focus groups and workshops being audio recorded.	YES / NO
I agree to maintain the confidentiality of the focus group discussions	YES/NO
I agree to share the final product of the course (photo-essay, narrative) to be included as part of the research project.	YES / NO
I understand that the information I provide will be used for the PhD Thesis of Prof. Laura Fonseca and her subsequent publications and that the information will be anonymised.	YES / NO
I agree that my (anonymised) information can be quoted in research outputs.	YES / NO
I agree to joint copyright of the final products of the course (photo-essay, narratives) to Laura Fonseca.	YES / NO
I understand that any personal information that can identify me – such as my name, address, will be kept confidential and not shared with anyone beyond the study team.	YES / NO

Please retain a copy of this consent form.

Participant name:

Signature: _____ Date _____

Interviewer name:

Signature:_____ Date _____

For information please contact: Laura Fonseca l.m.fonseca-duran@lse.ac.uk

Appendix 2: Topic Guide Study 1

Interview Urban Youth

Introduction to the activity
Welcome and thank you very much for agreeing to participate. The aim of this activity is to think about your process before, during and after the experience you had when you visited Aguabonita. This activity will be recorded and transcribed for the purposes of the research project but remember that your name will be anonymised, and this information will be confidential. Are you ready to start?

Part 1. Individual Timeline.

Please draw a timeline of your experience in Aguabonita. It can start from the moment you thought about visiting Aguabonita or even before that if you consider it important as part of your process. The timeline can be a line of any shape, to represent your journey. You can also use different colours to mark special dates, draw symbols or important people or groups in your life. You will have around 20 minutes to do this individually and then we will share what you did.

Please read the paragraph you wrote before you travelled to Aguabonita. Feel free to stop at any moment to explain or to tell me more about what you were thinking when you wrote it.

Questions to guide the discussion:

Level		Question
Identity (subjectivity)		What are the highlights of your timeline? What are the main actors? What does this timeline say about you? What does it say about your journey?
Direct	Object 1	What did you think about peace and reconciliation before you arrived there?
Direct	Object 2	What did you think about the encounter between yourself and former combatants before you arrived there?
Meta	Object 1	What did you think they thought about peace and reconciliation before you arrived?
Meta	Object 2	What did you think they thought (before you arrived) about the possibility of getting to know you?

Part 2. Narratives of the encounter. A post-analysis

This second activity aims to explore the process of encounter when you were in Aguabonita based on the text you wrote when you were there. I would like you to read it aloud with me and to stop if you want to talk about what you were feeling at the moment and then we can have a small discussion after you finish.

Questions to guide the discussion:

Level		Question
Identity (Subjectivity)		Why did you choose this particular subject to write about? What does it say about you?

Direct	Object 1 (T2)	What did you think about peace and reconciliation during your visit?
Direct	Object 2 (T2)	What did you think about the encounter with the community once you were there? What do you think now, after reading what you wrote? Would you change anything to this text?
Direct	Object 1 (T3)	What do you think about peace and reconciliation after reading this text and after your experience in Aguabonita?
Direct	Object 2 (T3)	What do you think now about that experience of encountering with a community of former combatants?
Meta	Object 1 (T2)	What do you think they thought about peace and reconciliation while you were in Aguabonita?
Meta	Object 2 (T2)	What do you think they thought about encountering with you once you arrived to Aguabonita?
Meta	Object 1 (T3)	What do you think they think about peace and reconciliation today?
Meta	Object 2 (T3)	How do you think the former combatants remember the encounter with you ?

Appendix 3: Transcript of qualitative interview (excerpt) Study 1

Interviewer: What did you imagine about that encounter with them? How did you imagine it would be?

María José: I was expecting to learn a lot and to be able to encounter those things that I felt so distant from, you know? Things that I felt were so different and distant from me, and that suddenly I had never even been close to experiencing. Also, we had been working with conflict victims, and we had known one side of the conflict, so I felt like this was an opportunity to know something else, to learn from a different perspective.

Interviewer: And how did you imagine they imagined the encounter with you and that group of students before going?

María José: I thought they might think we were snobbish or something like that... as in, they might think we hadn't faced any challenges in life and had everything handed to us. And maybe that could have been a barrier between us and them because, you know, the prejudices people might have about those who study at a university like La Sabana, which has a reputation for rich kids and all. So, I thought they might have that prejudice. It happens a lot.

Interviewer: Yeah. And what did you believe they thought about peace and reconciliation before going?

María José: Well, honestly, I thought they were people committed to the process because if they were in that place in the ETCR and were doing what we knew they were doing, living together and doing activities to make it work, I thought they were committed to the process. And maybe they could give me their perspective on how everything had happened since the peace talks.

Interviewer: Now I'm going to invite you to read another thing you wrote for that moment. Something called "things to chat about," which ended up being called "the tiger's stripes." But I'd like us to do the same exercise, meaning you start reading it, stop wherever you want, and tell me what was happening there, what comes to your mind. Okay?

María José: Alright. So, I'll start. "Days before coming to the ETCR, my dad told me several times that I was going to see a bunch of murderers. I came with high expectations of learning, but I didn't know what to expect about the people I was going to meet. I imagined them as quiet, serious people, maybe tough." And here comes what I said about prejudices, I thought that maybe because of what they thought of me, they wouldn't be so open to... sharing, you know? Maybe also because we were younger, they thought we were just kids or something like that. So, that's what I thought at that moment, and also because they are people who have

been in war and have had military training, so you think, "they must be really tough" (laughs). That's what I thought before.

"Well, instead, I found cheerful, kind, and tremendously welcoming people. Although some were more talkative, even the most serious and distant person had beautiful gestures of care and concern for our well-being, in all the contexts where we were sharing." And it's true, for me, it was a bit unexpected, I mean... I expected them to be kind and all, but just in terms of courtesy, very...

Interviewer: Normal.

María José: Yeah. So, but they really were very... as I say there, very welcoming, they really made you feel comfortable, so it was very nice.

"So, in Doña Angelica's house, coexistence was very simple from the beginning, morning greetings, calmness, and silence. The few words exchanged remained in morning comments about how we slept, how we were, and what we were going to do that day, small sporadic chats. However, this pattern was broken one night when my friends and I sat outside the room with Doña Angelica. Some on chairs and some on the floor, we managed to make conversation flow. We talked about the phases of the moon, the university, Bogotá, and the people from Bogotá who don't pay attention to you because they're always in a hurry. Doña Angelica's cell phone ringing interrupted the conversation late into the night and was the perfect excuse to go to sleep with the pleasant feeling of a good chat."

Yeah, I remember that was really cool, we felt like wow because Doña Angelica was always... at first, she was very serious, very... well yeah, just as I imagined her, very polite but very distant. Like, she would leave early because she had to go to her sewing workshop. She would leave, and we wouldn't see her until night ime when we said goodbye. But from that day we talked, it changed a lot because then, as the walls were thin, she could hear us and would respond to our conversations (laughs).

Interviewer: Really?

María José: Yeah. So, afterwards, the dynamic changed a lot, and she managed to get closer to us, and we to her, and it was very nice.

Interviewer: How do you think they managed to achieve such a close interaction? How did they get to that conversation one night, where they even talked about the moon?

María José: Yeah because she was teaching us about which moon phases were good for cutting hair or taking care of plants, things like that. So, we started talking about plants, we started talking about random stuff, like... plants and the rooster and stuff because she had a rooster, so... and now I heard it got killed in a fight, poor thing. And well, we were talking

about that, so she was explaining how she took care of the rooster and stuff. And we started a very... a very random conversation. And then we started talking about ourselves, and she told us some things about herself and her time in the FARC. She told us where her war name came from and how she met Enrique, her partner. So, she started telling us more personal things, and we did too, so that's when we broke a barrier that had been there.

Interviewer: Yeah, because Angelica is quite serious.

María José: Yeah, she is serious (laughs). But really, when you realize it later, she's very sweet, it's just... I imagine that... well, there are probably things she's been through that have made her... maybe she's very selective about the people she lets into her life. That's the feeling she gave me. Actually, now sometimes we talk on the phone with her and Enrique and on WhatsApp, we ask how she's doing and stuff.

Interviewer: That's nice. Do you talk often?

María José: No, only sometimes, especially on WhatsApp, or sometimes when she can... when we want, we call her. Sometimes she tells us on WhatsApp to call her, asking why we haven't said hi.

Interviewer: That's interesting, because then that relationship is maintained.

María José: Yeah, it has really been maintained. And Enrique is also very sweet, actually, he's even sweeter than her (laughs).

Then it says, "The next day we were running late and we were getting ready, almost ready to rush out, but then we were surprised by three 'tintos,' served in such small and curious cups that made us smile. It was the first time someone offered us 'tinto' in the morning and it felt like closeness with panela (sugar)." That was the first time it felt closer to us.

"On the first day of work, I was assigned to the fish committee with Olivia, a colleague. Together we met Darío, who is very talkative (laughs), and with him, we headed to the geomembrane, but as there wasn't much to do, we started talking. First about fish, how they're taken care of, how long they last, how much they're worth, and many other aquaculture data. Then the conversation shifted to other topics, founded on mutual curiosities, and among the fish and under the scorching sun, we ended up talking about the FARC and their dynamics after a long time. Seeing that it was going to take a while, Darío proposed that we go sit in the shade of a palm tree. Because that day the sun was very strong. And there he apologized for the smell of the fish food he offered us to sit on. That was a sack that was the fish food, I don't remember it smelling particular, but he apologized for the smell.

After downplaying his concern, we settled in and shared for hours both his experiences and ours. The next day... yeah, we talked about his time in the FARC and he also told us that he was just starting, he was taking courses at Sena and stuff because he had finished high school and was learning more, so he asked us about university, and we talked a bit about that. And that day, I feel like we talked the most about... yeah, when you tell something and the other person responds, "yeah, the same thing happened to me," very much on a personal level, like that. Because Darío was very serious, as I said, very talkative, he loved to talk, so that day we had a really nice conversation with him. And he was very open to questions. So, it was really nice.

"The next day, I went to help with the eggs, and there I met Jeff, a sunburnt man who always goes shirtless because that's how he's used to live. He explained to us how the eggs should be cleaned and classified. There was a lot to do, so much so that I had time to break two eggs, because of my clumsiness, which made Jeff laugh (laughs).

Between jokes, we had a very interesting conversation about the organization and the time he was active, although he doesn't remember anymore. He told us about what they ate, what they did, their actions... He mostly talked about what they ate, he talked a lot about what they ate and about the little animals and all. And the animals that would appear to them. Yeah, because he talked a lot about his little animals, with weird names.

Then it says, "In the end, we ended up talking about the sick hens they have in the egg cleaning room and how he takes care of them to see if they feel better. Yeah, so sweet, like taking care of them, instead of killing them, because some are really sick."

Interviewer: And let's say when you were already there, María José, what did you think of that encounter, meeting them and being with them like that? What were you thinking?

María José: Well, I don't know, I don't know how to explain it, but let's say it was very different from what I expected, like what I said, I expected people to be very rough maybe. Like very quiet, tough. And let's say that, no, you find everything, like anywhere and in any context, you find everything, people who chat, people who are tender, people who are tough. So, it was like, well, yes, it was like a certain imaginary I had, so when I was getting to know the different people I could share with there, it was like, I don't know, I was very open to see

what I would find, so it was very gratifying to find well, people who seem so lovely, I remember them with a lot of affection, really. They made me have good times. (laughs)

Interviewer: And what do you think they... What do you think they thought about that encounter with you, when they arrived and all the time they were there, what do you think they thought about that?

María José: Well, one of two things, maybe they thought that we didn't really... well, I don't know because I don't know if they actually had that prejudice that I thought of about the rich kids, but yes, it could be that they thought like: "the rich kids got their hands dirty" because well, as we were going to all the tasks they did and everything, well, I imagine that if they had that prejudice, they would be surprised right? Like seeing that we got involved in that way and if not, well, I don't know. I think we always tried to be very... close, but also respectful, like with those levels of being able to talk and share things, it didn't happen equally fast with everyone right? like anywhere. So, I feel that although we tried to be able to chat and everything, like we also respected the rhythms and spaces of the different people and like when they gave us the space to be able to talk we took advantage of it, but if we saw that it was better not to then we respected it, so I feel they could think that we were, well, people who wanted to learn because we asked many questions and also like... I feel they could have thought that we were young and came from a context like well, Bogotá and that in reality we are kind of rich kids (laughs): Well, it could also be hopeful, right?, to see that people are interested in getting to know and to know and to let themselves be taught. So, I was left...

Interviewer: It's that the previous one ended in... did I get the order wrong? Let me check if the next one is that one.

María José: After a lot of chatting, laughing, and breaking eggs, in the little room it started to get very hot and Jeff, excited, told us: "I have some pineapples for us to eat. He climbed the structure of the water tank and brought down two very yellow pineapples. He came out with a wheelbarrow full of eggs that he had to deliver and returned with a knife for peeling that barely had an edge. It served us well to eat so much pineapple that we didn't even want to think about lunch. Yes, among the three of us, we ate the two pineapples, that was too much pineapple, besides, they were very big pineapples.

Interviewer: Was that the first day? No, that was like the second, right?

María José: The second day and apart from the fact that we were going to eat and they gave us so much food and that man filled us with pineapple (laughs) It was very delicious but oh my god and he kept eating and eating and we, oh no, I'm already full and he's like "eat, eat" (laughs)

Well then it says: On Tuesday, community work day, I met Darío again, this time in the coffee plantation where we were going to help fertilize the sticks, they gave us a bucket and a little measuring cup, the instruction was for the little ones half a cup and for the big ones a whole cup. That day was very heavy (laughs). I remember that day as the heaviest of all, because that day... every day was very hot but that day there, like bending down and walking. Because besides, we fertilized the whole coffee field (laughs) and we were... let's say we were like, Darío, Amapola, it was just her and me, Darío and there were like three other people and among us, well, we fertilised all of them, but I remember I got very tired. (laughs) Well, it says: The sun was big and potent, the work was hard and we were already tired, so Darío asked us to make some water. I went with a girl, I think she didn't even tell me her name, she was there fertilizing and I went with her and we made the water we made with panela and water we got from somewhere in a house of one of them (laughs). Because that was also something that seemed cool to me, because they like all know each other and all... share, like they don't have a problem with that.

So, well. We went to make the water, there was only half a pound of panela, but that's enough, we didn't get lemons, we put sugar because it was very simple. After a bad calculation, the water turned out very sweet, but in the shade of the trees, it tasted like glory to everyone. Yes, I remember because we were... almost finishing and we were all exhausted, even they were really tired because it was very hot and we were all sweating a lot, so we drank that water and it was heavenly.

Another day when I was assigned to the kitchen, apparently an easier job, I was running all day, helping here and there because there were many people and we didn't even have time to talk, we only had enough time for small comments and short anecdotes. The two women in charge of the kitchen, laughed because none of us had had it so hard, they said referring to our companions who had come on previous days and they offered us water frequently because we were all very rushed. Once we finished washing the lunch dishes, they told us that if we wanted we could leave and I decided to go help in another committee. They were very, very quiet, they hardly... well, it was also because we were busy but with them we hardly talked, it was only like very little, but still like they joked, like with us.

I decided to help in another committee while my companion Siena stayed a little longer. At night she gave me an apple and said: "here they sent you from the women. I felt it as a subtle but immense gratitude that took away the tiredness of the day.

That seemed very nice to me because let's say they were very serious, but when they sent me the apple it was like: "oh how nice" (laughs).

Appendix 4: Thematic Codebook for Study 1

Theme: From isolated and distant to agents of peace				
Timeframe	**Sub-themes**	**Codes**	**Freq**	**Excerpts**
Before	Representing self: Isolated and disconnected	Disconnected social worlds	9	"I was very distant from all that, I mean, you heard about the peace process, about the agreement, but it was not really directed to me, I was not very interested in that" (Lorena, post-encounter Interview).
		Living in a bubble	17	Ever since the teachers told us about the course "Community Psychology applied to Post-conflict settings", I was very excited because it is an opportunity to leave the bubble that is Bogota and the University, and being able to understand other realities" (Sergio, written narrative)
	Meta-Representations: Privileged and disinterested	Privileged youth	16	"I imagined they thought of us as spoiled, weak and unaware of class differences because we were in our own bubble of privilege" (Antonio, post-encounter interview);
		Academic Tourists	14	Before I think that I thought they wouldn't care much, or they wouldn't be interested. Thay they would say, oh, great! More external people to see us, only visiting for entertainment, for curiosity and just like tourists (Merida, Interview)
		Disinterested in peacebuilding	6	That the revolution was only concerning those who had fought it, and the ones who could help were the ones who agreed with the revolution, as if 99.5% of the revolution was from the people who had suffered it and us, would defend our privilege, or by any reason would try to stop it, or get in the way, basically not helping their efforts" (Joaquín, Interview)
During	Representing self: Finding commonalities and differences	Different Backgrounds	13	I arrived in this small village with great expectations of its inhabitants and their whole experience. As I am the son of a person linked to the armed forces, and I grew up with opposite experiences to the people living here, so I thought of this opportunity as a learning process, a process that was not easy at all but left an unexpected mark in my life" (Daniel, Photo-essay)
		Self-reflection about privilege	12	But also, it made me realise of how much privilege I had, because those workbooks were pretty basic, right? You didn't need a post-doctorate in engineering to do this. And then I realised how privileged I was because of the context I grew up in, for the education I had, but then I also thought that it was not a barrier to learn new things, re-learn from the world. (Sergio, focus group)
		Identification	10	The everyday life of these people is just the same as the people I grew up with. From the coffee in the mornings, afternoon and evening, to the frowns in the faces and the smiles and also the willingness to change their lives, to have a good living that they already have inside themselves. (Amapola, written chronicle)

		Evocative personal memories-roots	9	"This made me think again about our privilege, those exercises were very basic things, you don't need a PhD to do it, but that was for me, I was very privileged in my context, the education I had, but then that was also a chance to realise that I also had to re-learn other things" (Daniel, Interview)
	Meta-Representations: Nuanced understanding of urban youth	More than privileged	11	I feel that… for them, having people from a private university, from a super privileged area, super expensive, they thought people who study there must be, mmmm, like rich kids, who are not worth anything, but maybe the encounter, help them to see, that even though we are not the same as they were, we have the capacity, the humility and the overall willingness to join them in their activities, so maybe they also deconstructed some of the ideas they had about us, like, look at her wearing wellies and with a machete" (Julieta, Interview)
		Unexperienced	6	At first, he [peace signatory] made us feel like we were children, unaware of real life, inexperienced about life" (Siena, Interview)
		Advocates for reincorporation	4	"After presenting our photo essays, the community mentioned they really liked them, because we had captured their commitment to peace, and that was very important for them" (Nicolás, interview).
After	Representing self: Critical Agents of peace	Peacebuilder	10	I would love to have this experience just as it was. It was very transformational, both at the personal and professional level, I realised I could support much more this dream of peace. And after the trip to Caquetá, I know believe that peace is possible, it is not utopic but it is a challenge we should all be willing to support" (Sergio, Interview)
		Committed practitioners	10	"It helped me to understand what I wanted to do with my life, what I like to do, and now I think I should explore much more social and community psychology" (Simón, Interview)
		Critical Perspective about conflict	8	"I understand much better what is going on. The conflicto dynamics, not completely, but from a more holistic approach, I think this served to change perspective and also to keep learning and doing" (Cristina, Interview)
		Learning about self	6	"For me, it was a trip that offered the opportunity not only to learn about the world, or about psychology, it was also about learning about myself and I think it made me think about myself, it allowed me to change certain things and re-think other aspects of myself" (Jimena, Interview)
	Meta-self: Supporting peace efforts or terrorists?	Guerrilla supporter		"A member of my family said, this is stupid, why do you want to become "guerrillera"?"(Julia, interview).
		Supporters of peacebuilding efforts		"I think that, when they think about our group, a group of private university students in a bubble of privilege, they also think they have a voice, they have been heard and that we are now contributing towards peace" (Antonio, Interview)

Theme: From Cold-hearted to developing a culture of peace				
Timeframe	**Sub-theme**	**Code**	**Freq**	**Excerpts**
Before	Representing other: cold hearted criminals	Cold hearted	13	I imagined them bitter and without any love for society or family, colder than ice and hard as rocks (Anastasia, Interview)
		Criminals	8	Here in Colombia, we consider them as guerrilla, terrorists, drugdealers, this is part od the imaginary. No one imagines guerrilla as farmers, no one imagines them as victims, which can happen sometimes, but only terrorists, drugdealers, this is the concept that people have here (Antonio, Interview)
		Inhuman savages	4	Because I also had this prejudice, because people in general keep telling you they are savages and also this prejudice is linked to, for example Disney films, present indigenous people as savages, people living in the mountains are savages (Merida, Interview)
		Machistas	3	I had this preconception, this stereotype. I thought there was going to be a lot of machismo, like a lot. I thought, well, this is going to be a challenge (Anastasia, Interview).
		Poor and without resources	3	At the beginning, I thought, I know it will sound bad, but I thought they were people without education, without communication abilities, that they didn't know how to express themselves (Olivia, Interview)
	Societal representations: Mistrust and the danger of communism	Untrusworthy	12	Everyone in my family was super afraid, they would say, they will kidnap you all and you are never coming back!" (Siena, interview)
		Communists-dangerous	7	And my mum was like: what are you going to do over there? You will be brainwashed (Micaela, Interview)
		Segregation	5	Some of the people I know said the people that were part of the guerrilla only know how to live in the mountains and they hardly pictured themselves sharing any activities with former guerrilla members, they said they should stay were they belong (Mariana, interview).
During	Representing other: Moving beyond labels	Sense of Community	50	The CP-HR is the example of a dream come true. It is a space where the community works united against a myriad of challenges but demonstrates a complete determination to fight for their dreams and those of their children (Alvaro, Photo Essay).
		Warm and Welcoming	40	While we laugh and cry, we started to realise the kindness and love we received from the people living there. Right when we were about to leave, one of our landlords came with a final present, a keychain with an inspirational word, that inspired us all (Olivia, Interview)
		Developing a culture of peace	35	This mural represents the dream of a better country, with more participation, opportunities and equality. Moving from weapons to tools to work the fields (Lisa, Photo Essay).
		Hard working	29	Everyday, dozens of people are part of the daily chores in the community. No one can say there is anything they can't help, as taking care of the crops, and even children requires commitment, cooperation and all the inhabitants of the village (Simon, interview)

		Political	27	After 20 years of armed fight, today, he talks with me from his house at the CP-HR and now, he fights with his ideas and political action, after a peace process (Christina, chronicle)
		Emotional beings	23	I also saw how they took care of their babies, and carried them around. Their gaze transmitted love, care, and resilience, they are also funny and patient.
		Environmentally aware	21	They took us for a tour and show us the lagoons they are recovering after they moved in to this territory (Mariana, written diary)
		Gender equality	11	Abilities and capacities are not gender-related, men and women take on labours of care and force equally.
		Rigid worldviews	8	There were very clear contradictions and justifications, sometimes their discourse justified killings, they just said: we were at war, or I didn't know if I killed someone because I was far away (Siena, Interview).
After	Representing other: Commited to peacebuilding	Willing to reconcile and support peacebuilding	13	They are aware of their impact. With small or big acts, for example, they have created this brand to sell clothes and it is now very famous, so it is good to know that they continue with the process (Siena, Interview).
		Feel recognised	6	I think that [name of peace signatory] thinks "I can't believe that everything I said, was worth writing a story about me" I don't think he really expected this recognition as part of his life. And now he feels worthy (Joaquín, Interview).
	Meta-Representations: Mistrust	Dangerous	7	My mom told me I had to understand, that once people steal, they will always be thieves, and that I shouldn't trust them (Olivia, Interview).

Theme: From external processes to a societal construction				
Timeframe	**Sub-theme**	**Codes**	**Freq**	**Excerpts**
Before	Peace and reconciliation as external and difficult to achieve	A concern for victims and perpetrators	13	Around 2018, I thought that maybe reconciliation was possible if you ask for forgiveness, like if a guerrilla man hurt a lot of people, he might have killed, in cold blood killings, and I think these people have to reconcile with their victims (Nicole, Interview)
		Difficult to achieve		The person who got into the plane towards Caqueta did not believe at all that peace was possible (Diana, Interview).

During	Peace as a societal process	Actively constructed by firmantes de paz	25	In Agua Bonita, thousands of stories come together to tell a new story, a story of peace, a story where all of the hands share and build this tricolour land (Julia, photo essay).
		Encountering-recognising the other	14	To give them voice and to be able to tell their side of the story, to understand their motives, not this black and white, right or wrong thing, but understand their ideas about Colombia and their fight (Antonio, Interview).
		Embodied in children and education	7	I consider that everything you are doing here with children's education with the spaces you give them is an example of peacebuilding (Julieta, Photo essay).
	Reconciliation as recognising the other	Removing barriers for the encounter	11	Reconciliation has to do with the tension among differences, but which work as hinges that send messages with different views and open the horizon, the challenge is to be able to give yourself the opportunity to ger to know the other, to remove the lock to your window and the hinges will determine how much it opens (Mariana, Interview).
		Recognition	9	I think reconciliation is possible when you can experience with the others what it is like to live on the other side of the story, no? To discover other types of experiences and how everyone is touched by them, it is like creating a reconciliatory bridge (Joaquín, interview).
		Forgiveness	5	It is not only about asking for forgiveness to the victims, but also about forgiving the country, and what the country had done to them (Jimena, Interview).
After	Peace	Societal process-collective construction	21	If we want it [peace] to be possible, everyone, and I mean, absolutely everyone has to be involved. Being an observer is not enough. You must be able to act either way. In our case, we need to keep going with projects, promote encounters, and so on, and we all have to create processes of forgiveness and reconciliation (Antonio, Interview)
		Removing stigma about each other	6	I think, that peace has broadened, it is important to understand there are different ways to live too, right? It is important to see that peace is not equal, and maybe we don't always think the same, or share the same experiences but there are more things that unite us and not divide us (Milena, Interview)
		Social change	3	After this visit, I know believe that peace is possible, it is not utopic but it is a challenge we should all be willing to support (Sergio, interview).
	Reconciliation	Recognise the unknown other	10	I realised that for reconciliation to happen it is important to listen to the other. I feel that this is the biggest learning from all of this, to learn to listen to the other, and not to assume the other is static (Diana, Interview)
		Dialogical encounter	5	There are many people who are not interested in these things, they just don't care, they are a little indifferent to all of this (Peace and reconciliation), but I think those people are the ones who we should be working with in order to achieve a full reconciliation, it is about

				integration and collaborative work among everyone, and that is what I saw there (Sergio, Interview)
		Difficult-monologue	5	Reconciliation is not that easy, and I think I've lost a bit of hope, because of how my friends and family reacted, to see that they still think of them [peace signatories] as the complete enemy (Julia, interview).

Theme: Socio-emotional processes				
Timeframe	**Sub-Theme**	**Codes**	**Freq**	**Excerpts**
Before	Collective emotions: Afraid of the unknown other	Anxiety	14	To think about the first time I was going to meet them made me feel very anxious because I didn't want to say something inappropriate or feel I was not going to fit in the community (Anastasia, Interview).
		Excitement	15	I didn't know a lot of things, of how it was going to be, but for me it was like an adventure, or a new experience, so I was excited about these new opportunities to get to know them (Merida, Interview)
		Fear	18	I was very afraid, but I didn't tell anyone at home. I think it is different to go to jail and visit people, we were actually going to spend time with them, not like in a hotel, going for a second then going back, we were staying with them, even sharing the bathroom (Olivia, interview).
During	Collective emotions: Surprise of the unexpected	Surprise	30	We are very surprised, I think I speak for everyone, we are surprised, this is very hopeful, it is confusing, it is mysterious, it is a lot of things (Liliana, video diary).
		Anxiety	15	The first thing they did was to tell us we will be staying in groups of 3 in households of former guerrilla members, which initially caused much unsettlement and anxiety for most of us. We thought we would stay in separate houses and only interact with them in daily activities. Now we would live in house of people that had weapons in the past, and even shot people (Mariana, written chronicle)
		Happiness	6	It is amazing being here, I feel a lot of tranquillity and a lot of happiness, I am super happy because it is an amazing place, it is indescribable because everything is pretty, very tranquil and the energy is completely different (Julieta, video diary)
		Hope	30	"we are very surprised, I think I speak for everyone, we are surprised, this is very hopeful, it is confusing, it is mysterious, it is a lot of things" (Liliana, video diary).

After	Collective emotions	Fear	10	my mum was still very scared, I asked her what her thoughts were, and she said I couldn't go again because she was afraid of my safety" (Lorena, Focus Groups).
		Gratitude	6	I want to highlight this feeling of gratitude. They were very welcoming when we were there, and they remembered us afterwards. I thought they would forget us but they didn't" (Simon, focused interview)
		Surprise	22	I think some of them were in shock, they kept asking for more information, as if they didn't believe me, I think they were disoriented, and I think that it is important to feel like that, when you have new information, you can feel surprised of all the particularities of the people (Lucía, Interview).
		Hopelesness	4	"Reconciliation is not that easy, and I think I've lost a bit of hope, because of how my friends and family reacted, to see that they still think of them [former combatants] as the complete enemy" (Julia, interview).

Appendix 5: Participant information sheet Former guerrilla members

RECONCILIACIÓN SOCIAL COLOMBIANA EN EL PERIODO DEL POST-ACUERDO DE PAZ

Investigación sobre el encuentro de conocimientos

LSE

¿DE QUÉ SE TRATA LA INVESTIGACIÓN?

El Centro Poblado Héctor Ramírez ha sido ejemplo de articulación con diferentes sectores del país y como resultado ha contado con la visita de diversas organizaciones que apoyan los esfuerzos de construcción de paz de sus habitantes.

En particular, se han consolidado dos iniciativas que son el eje de este proyecto:

1) El curso Psicología Comunitaria aplicada al postconflicto, que ofrece la Universidad de La Sabana (Bogotá) en el centro poblado desde Diciembre de 2018.
2) El Festival Anual Aguabonita se Pinta de Colores de Paz y Reconciliación, que se realiza desde el año 2017.

Estas dos iniciativas han permitido construir espacios de interacción entre grupos de personas que históricamente han estado separadas y no se conocen desde su cotidianidad.

El objetivo de este proyecto es analizar los encuentros entre diferentes grupos sociales alrededor de estas iniciativas, con el fin de entender cómo se dan los procesos de reconciliación de manera sostenible en el tiempo después de la firma del acuerdo de paz en Colombia,

¿CÓMO SE HARÁ LA INVESTIGACIÓN?

El Centro Poblado Héctor Ramírez será el epicentro de esta investigación. La investigadora a cargo vivirá en Aguabonita desde Abril hasta Junio de 2020 y durante los meses de Septiembre y Octubre de 2020. Se realizarán los siguientes estudios:

ABRIL A JUNIO 2020

ESTUDIO 1

Análisis de las interacciones entre estudiantes universitarios de la Universidad de la Sabana que visitan el Centro Poblado y sus habitantes durante dos semanas y acompañan las labores cotidianas de la comunidad.

Actividades

- Participación y observación de actividades cotidianas
- Entrevistas con miembros de la comunidad
- Grupos de discusión con estudiantes

JUNIO 2020 Y SEPTIEMBRE A OCTUBRE 2020

ESTUDIO 2

Análisis de las interacciones entre el Centro Poblado Héctor Ramírez y las comunidades vecinas para el desarrollo del Festival Anual Aguabonita se Pinta de Colores de Paz y Reconciliación

- Participación y observación de actividades de planeación, ejecución y evaluación del Evento.
- Entrevistas con miembros de la comunidad
- Grupos de discusión con coordinadores de las actividades

ABRIL-JUNIO 2020 Y SEPTIEMBRE- OCTUBRE 2020

FOTOGRAFÍA DE LA COTIDIANIDAD

En los estudios 1 y 2 se invitará a participar a miembros de la comunidad para que hagan un registro fotográfico del proceso de encuentro con miembros de otros grupos sociales (estudiantes, vecinos de otras veredas, agentes externos). Estas fotos serán analizadas en conjunto con los participantes y serán parte de una exposición fotográfica durante el Festival Aguabonita se Pinta de Colores.

¿POR QUÉ ES IMPORTANTE?

En el marco del acuerdo Final para la Terminación del Conflicto y la Construcción de una Paz Estable y Duradera, los procesos de reincorporación de la comunidad no han sido sistematizados para comprender los avances, desafíos y oportunidades en escenarios de post-acuerdo. Es deber de la academia desarrollar investigaciones que sean útiles para la consolidación de los centros poblados y sus proyectos actuales.

En este sentido, uno de los desafíos en una sociedad dividida geográfica, política y socialmente, es encontrar caminos de reconciliación a nivel social y estructural entre los diferentes grupos sociales del país.

Este proyecto busca visibilizar los esfuerzos de la comunidad que habita el Centro Poblado Héctor Ramírez para encontrarse con otros colectivos sociales y aportar a la construcción de una paz estable y duradera. Esto, a pesar de las dificultades y obstáculos que ha tenido la implementación del acuerdo a nivel nacional.

¿QUIÉN ESTÁ A CARGO DE ESTA INVESTIGACIÓN?

Laura Fonseca, profesora-investigadora de la Universidad de La Sabana y actualmente es estudiante de Doctorado en Psicología Social del London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) en Inglaterra, Reino Unido será la persona a cargo.

Laura Fonseca será la responsable de todo el proceso de investigación y estará en contacto con los líderes del Centro Poblado en todo momento.

PRODUCTOS DERIVADOS DE LA INVESTIGACIÓN

- Exhibición de fotografías de los estudios 1 y 2 en el Festival Aguabonita se Pinta de Colores de Paz y Reconciliación
- Documento de sistematización del proceso de planeación, ejecución y evaluación del evento Aguabonita se Pinta de Colores de Paz y Reconciliación
- Documento de resultados sobre los mecanismos psicológicos y sociales que promueven la reconciliación en el Centro Poblado

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Appendix 6: Fieldnotes (Excerpt) Study 2

October 2020

I arrived at the airport and Celio [former guerrilla member] was waiting for me. I felt happy to see him again after almost a year of not seeing anyone from the CP-HR. As we drove to Agua Bonita, Celio started telling me about his life, the recent events in the village and some of his concerns with the peace agreement. He started telling me about the difficulties they were experiencing in the community. He told me how they are not now the community they used to be, mostly because now everyone is working for themselves and not for the community. He himself was working in the Humanitarian Demining organisation located in the community, and had very specific schedules that prevented him to participate in a lot of the activities. He also had his car, which he used to pick up people from the airport as a side job, because the money was not enough.

As we continued our journey Celio told me about his concerns about the peace agreement. He was concerned about the possibility of truth and he felt betrayed when the leaders started to open up about polemic practices such as kidnapping, forced recruitment and, most recently, the acceptance of murdering high profile politicians such as Alvaro Gomez Hurtado. He was a conservative politician who was murdered in 1995 and his death was a big mistery, with a lot of people believing it was ordered by the president and the mafia. This acceptance by the FARC was very polemic in the country, as no one believed it was an assassination by the guerrilla. Indeed, a lot of politicians (right wing) refused this version and contested FARC's confession, assuring that if it was true, then they had to be held responsible and go to jail, which was against the peace agreement. This is one of the examples of the tensions in executing the accord: truth is of the outmost importance but at the same time the truth creates external and internal tensions. Internally, for Celio, for example he was afraid they will start going to jail, something that is not part of the agreement but that they now see as a threat. In

that conversation, I just thought about the likelihood of going back to “el monte” and the thin ice we are walking right now.

The moment I arrived, I saw how they have definitely settled. Almost all of the houses have been remodelled and what was drywall is now bricks, [a symbol of permanence, and definitely settling in]. But how are they settling? What remains?

I went to say hi to the people I knew from my past visits. In each household the story was different but the same: They were moving on with their lives.
I ran into Tulio at the local shop, who was sitting down and drinking a beer. He was happy to see me. When we met in 2018, he was in charge of the local carpentry, he was making all the beds and furniture for the houses and he even worked with my students during their visit as part of the CSL course. However, he told me the carpentry was now closed. That it was a decision made by the Cooperative. Apparently, it was not cost-efficient. He is now waiting for a job as a construction worker to build the football field in the community. He asked me about the students who had visited last time, in particular one young man who had spent a long time with him at the carpentry while sharing their life stories. When he finished his beer, he left and he invited me to visit him and his family later.

As I walked the CP-HR, I realised an important landmark of the community had changed as well. La “rancha is gone”. Originally, rancha was the name of the kitchen when they were in the jungle, and “ranchar” was the verb of cooking for all the people in the guerrilla. When they moved to Agua Bonita, they built their rancha, as the original houses did not have kitchen. They had this communal kitchen which was one of the places of gathering and sharing. However, with time, people started building kitchens in their households, and even

in 2018, during my first visit, some of them had stopped going to the rancha because they had different schedules. However, up until this visit, the rancha remained as an important building for the community. A once symbol of community, camaraderie is not forgotten and in its place the headquarters of the cooperative is being built. They know that they are losing their practices, and that the discourse is fading into the daily needs that have to be met. What to do?

As I was walking, I also ran into women. I saw Teresa, who was working in 2018 in the local shop. She invited me to her home. This was one of the houses in which the students were hosted during the CSL course. The house was remodeled as the other ones I had seen when I first arrived. Teresa told me they saved some money with her husband [he is in charge of the pineapple production] to expand a bit their house. This house has now a living room, a dining room and they are building a kitchen. The original ones were thought as a line of 4 bedrooms and a bathroom at the end of the hall. They were not conceived to be permanent. They made them permanent. Teresa offered me a *tinto* (coffee) while she updated me on more news about the community. She was pregnant when I met her in 2018 and now she had a toddler. Teresita [Teresa's daughter] was there as well, sitting in the ground playing with some toys. Teresa also told me she was working in a programme of early childhood education funded by an external organisation. She said she and other four women were in charge of toddlers during the week. This was due to the high number of children being born in the community. Teresa joked and said she was part of the "baby boom fariano", which was an increased rate of births since the signature of the peace agreement. She told me she had always wanted to have a child, but she was unable to because it was forbidden during war times. Now, she had her daughter, a job and a husband and she was starting to think about the future for them. As I finished my tinto, I left to find the person in charge of my logding.

Mirena was waiting for me at the local hotel. This was a new building right in front of the Popular Library Alfonso Cano. It was under construction the last time I was there. Mirena opened my door and gave me instructions on how everything worked. She would replace my towels and clean every day. The room had the furniture built by Tulio years ago. It had a double bedroom, a mosquito net and a bathroom. Once I settled, I went out to continue saying hello to everyone.

I then went to Emilia's house, a peace signatory I had met once. She invited me to drink a tinto (coffee) and we started talking in her kitchen, which is also a study and a living room. She lives in front of Francisco and her house is under construction as she recently moved in with Miguel, also a former guerrillero. They are now a couple and are building a kitchen outside the house. In the meantime, she cooks, works and eats in the same space. These conditions are different in households where there are children. Our conversation was about the transition of FARC-EP as part of the reincorporation process. From the beginning, she was clear about the commitment with FARC-EP. At the service of what FARC needs. It stroke me how being a member of FARC implies following every single order in spite of what you want. To serve. FARC as that family that you belong to and you also are a big body and you are part of it. She says she is "committed to the cause", is now the head of the education committee and is well recognised and respected by the community. Perhaps it is because she is so "entregada a la causa".

Appendix 7: Topic Guide Study 2

Introduction to the activity
Welcome and thank you very much for agreeing to participate. The aim of this activity is to explore the process of reincorporation and the lived experience in the Centro Poblado Héctor Ramirez, the interactions with different actors, and particularly with university students visiting. For the next hour, we will work drawing a timeline of the reincorporation process. I will ask you questions about the timeline and I will record this conversation so I can focus on what you are telling me instead of making notes all the time. I will then transcribe this, not using your name at any moment. Do you agree? Let's start.

We are going to start thinking about your experience in the reincorporation process. Please draw a timeline of this process, timelines can have multiple shapes and colours, and they serve to identify key moments and actors throughout a particular experience. In this timeline, I would like you to focus on the first 2 years of your experience living in the Territorial Space, and to identify specific people and events that have shaped your experience when you started living here. You can use different colours for each actor or draw symbols to highlight events. If you want, you can draw while you describe it, or after you are done you can explain it and then I'll ask you some questions.

Questions to guide the discussion:

Level		Question
Direct	Object: peace and reconciliation	1. What did you think about peace and reconciliation at that moment?
Direct	Object: Encounter	2. What did you think about a possible encounter with university students from the capital city?
Meta	Object: Peace and reconciliation	3. What did you think young people from the capital city think about peace and reconciliation?
Meta	Object: Encounter	4. What did you think urban youth would think about the possibility to meet you?

Now, based on this initial timeline, could you think about the moment when the students from Universidad de La Sabana arrived at the Centro Poblado? Can you continue drawing the timeline explaining the process of getting to know them throughout the two weeks they lived here?

Questions to guide the discussion:

Level		Question
Direct	Object: Peace and reconciliation	1. When the students arrived, and throughout the days you spent with them, what did you think about peace and reconciliation?
Direct	Object: Encounter	2. Once you met the students, what did you think about the encounter with them?
Meta	Object: Peace and reconciliation	3. What did you think that the students thought about peace and reconciliation once they were sharing daily activities with you?
Meta	Object: Encounter	4. What did you think that the students thought about the encounter with you throughout the days?

Finally, I would like to ask you to finish your timeline on what has happened in the last years, specific events and actors that have shaped your experience of reincorporation. Remember, you can use different colours and shapes to represent key actors or elements in the timeline.

Questions to guide the discussion:

Level		Question
Direct	Object: Peace and Reconciliation	1. Thinking about your process and everything that has happened in the past years, what do you currently think about peace and reconciliation?
Direct	Object: Encounter	2. What do you think about the encounter you had with university students from Universidad de La Sabana?
Meta	Object: Peace and Reconciliation	3. What do you think the students that visited the Centro Poblado think about peace and reconciliation?
Meta	Object: Encounter	4. What do you think the students think and remember from the encounter they had with you?

Appendix 8: Transcript of qualitative interview (excerpt) Study 2

Interview: Dimar (pseudonym)
Location: Household, CP-HR

Interviewer: Well Dimar, I have several questions, but the first one is if you remember how was the process of settling in this territorial space. What have been those key moments within the process from when you arrived until before the students from La Sabana arrived here? How was it?

Dimar: How was the process? Well, we arrived here almost a year after being up there.

Interviewer: In the *zona veredal*

Dimar: Do you want me to tell you about there or here?

Interviewer: Here

Dimar: Well, the process from there [zona veredal] to here was a bit more pleasant, let's say, because back then it was very different there because of the weather. It was very hot, here it also gets hot but you feel better because, well, the house, indoors, the little rooms, well, it does get quite hot and everything, it's not one of the most comfortable ways, right? But well, you feel a little safer, a little more secure because there the walls were nothing (laughs), right? In contrast here, well, at least it's... not much different but at least safer. And in that regard, the change brought more tranquillity and everything was better organized, the work and everything, a good change, here you feel better.

Interviewer: And when you were in that process of coming here and being here and everything, what did you think peace was? What was peace for you, back then?

Dimar: Before what? In the process?

Interviewer: When the peace agreement was signed and you started to come here and live here. What was peace for you?

Dimar: What was peace for us?

Interviewer: For you.

Dimar: Here in this case? Well, peace... when we just arrived here or when I arrived here, I only thought that... I mean, that they would implement the accord as it was agreed so one could live more peacefully and everything. Because at first, you would hear an airplane, a helicopter, and you always got a little nervous.

Interviewer: Of course.

Dimar: And yet until now you see that it is still dangerous out there, we are always on alert because we don’t know… so many things that have happened, so at first we didn't feel very safe, now a little more, right? But still, I mean, we didn't feel so sure about things and well,

we already felt happier because it's a big change, a big change and thinking that well, hopefully peace would be achieved, of course.

Interviewer: And what did you think about reconciliation? What was reconciliation for you?

Dimar: Reconciliation, well, that's a very big step for us because one is reconciling, well, as I told you... reconciling, I mean, we were exchanging opinions like when the students came, exchanging opinions and everything and well, yes, with some comrades who have been affected themselves or their families by the war, well, there has been reconciliation there, they would ask you, look why this and that, and then you would give them your explanations. Look, it's because of this and this, not because we were maybe as the media portrayed us, as murderers, as rapists, no, it's not that, but because well, in the midst of war... where the confrontation of the war we all practically suffered because if we are in the midst of the war then we will also suffer the consequences, but not because we started it or because we were as some media portrayed us.

Interviewer: And when you were told that some students from a university in Bogotá were coming, what did you think?

Dimar: At least in my case, I was happy, first because... it allowed us to interact with others and talk and learn many things from them and they from us as well... the students were very formal, very kind, and curious to know about our situation, how it has been, and well, what I thought is that... in this case, I was happy, although from here... when we arrived here, there were already many people coming here, a lot, students...

Interviewer: So, before the students from La Sabana arrived, others had already come...

Dimar: Yes, of course, and a lot of people because when we were here many people came, people with the aspiration to get to know us, to see how we were, what we were... and then we had to talk to many civilians, many comrades, and they would tell you, no, we are very surprised because you are not at all like they say you are, that this and that, and there we even talked to some ladies who told us, "look when we were organizing to come some relatives and friends told us don't go there because those murderers will kill you, so we came with fear and thinking about what could happen but then we arrived and we saw that it's a change, like a big change", because at that time we had... people welcoming all the visitors, and we had food, water, and we had at least four comrades who were in charge of preparing food daily, every day. A lot of people came for that and also many relatives of ours.

Interviewer: And how did you feel when all those people started to arrive, people from all over that you had no idea were coming?

Dimar: Well, I wasn't scared because…. well, first I felt happy because as I said, you can talk to them, interact, and ask them things and they also ask you, and well, I felt happy and most of the people, my fellow comrades were happy to interact with them as well, others... I, at least in my case, felt happy talking to people and there were also many events in which a lot of people came and participated and everything, we even had a party once (laughs).

Interviewer: And what did you think those people, including the students from La Sabana, thought peace was before coming?

Dimar: What do you mean?

Interviewer: Yes, sometimes one says, before they arrived here thought peace was X, before coming and being here with you and getting to know you, what do you think they thought about peace.

Dimar: Well, one imagines that people came with a lot of curiosity, like I said before, very curious to see... well, let's see, we're going to get to know those people, how they live because practically they looked at the community and everything, how they live, how they act when one arrives, well, all that, and well, also when we wanted things to go well then we tried to be welcoming and treat them the best as we could, contribute the best we can following what we learnt and all the principles we had back then, they taught us to be always very respectful towards the civilian population. In my case, I thought and still think that with the good image of us towards the civilian population it helps to support us with the process because if well, people may want peace a lot but peace is achieved from the government itself, the population may like us a lot but if the government doesn't fulfil anything, then others will keep killing us. Recently, someone else was killed, another one was buried, and so on. And it seems to me that the comrades from the Political party, over there, are organizing a march or something like that for the problem of so many killings of ex-combatants. Of course, that's worrying, we think and want that our relationship with the population, can serve to put pressure on the government to really fulfill what was agreed upon so that we can feel safer. At least I get on that motorcycle and go to La Montañita and when I go alone I'm always concerned, because one never knows, any paramilitary out there might... not just anyone, the enemies of the FARC, say, might want to kill one, an ex-combatant.

Interviewer: And in this area, is there a risk of that happening?

Dimar: No, look here until now there hasn't been much concern because here there has been a good relationship with..., with the police there has been a good relationship with them, they come and greet us too and when there is an opportunity, when we were in the *zona veredal* there and had the opportunity we would give them a glass of water or whatever, and even when you pass the checkpoint, they say good afternoon, and they ask you…

Interviewer: Where are you going?

Dimar: Yes, where are you going or where are you coming from or sometimes they look at you to see what you're carrying and that's it. And well, they also look at you sincerely, one day I was carrying a basket full of garbage there and he asked me what I had there, and I said, no, I have some vegetables and some things, he said oh yes? I said do you want to check it? And he said no, no worries, go ahead. But well... this is what is happening with the army, they are changing as well, we thought they wouldn’t understand this process, but fortunately until now there haven't been threats or anything.

Interviewer: Okay. And when the students arrived, what happened, how was that encounter with these students from La Sabana who came from Bogotá, who were going to stay a long time because, because the others I know have come but it's like they leave quickly whereas these students stayed like two weeks here sharing with you. How was that process?

Dimar: Oh no, well for me it was very good with all those students. The ones who stayed here were very cool, I speak for those who were here because I had more opportunity to get

to know them because they stayed right here and everything. They were very well behaved, because here some others have stayed who have come from different universities but they were totally messed up.

Interviewer: Really?

Dimar: Yes, they didn't let us sleep all night. But the ones from la Sabana if we talk about them, they behaved well and were very diligent, some even helped with mopping, organizing the bathrooms, washing, well, very diligent. And for me, I like when a person comes and talks to me and asks me questions and engages in conversation. At least, I don't mind at any moment when someone asks me questions and all, what bores me is when I don't know how to answer them (laughs), otherwise, I'm not a person who... and well, no, the students who were here were very nice, the exchange with them was very good and everything. Now when they went over there to help us work, they were also doing a task or something, well, very good, all very cool, diligent.

Interviewer: And do you think the idea these students had about peace changed when they were here with you, staying with you for those weeks?

Dimar: Did it change?

Interviewer: Yes.

Dimar: I don't understand.

Interviewer: I mean, if, let's say, they had an idea of what peace was, what do you think happened to that idea of what peace was when they were here?

Dimar: Well, with the students I talked with, they said that we had to be very positive because, they told me, "*Compañero,* you must be positive, you need to think that peace is possible, we also have faith and we are supporting a lot in the peace being achieved, in the government fulfilling its part because if they do, there will be peace", and well, very positive and at least after those conversations, we felt a lot of encouragement because they gave us a word of encouragement to trust the process.

Interviewer: Okay. And what do you think they thought about reconciliation while they were here living with you?

Dimar: What I believe is that with us there was, well, of reconciliation, they... I think they felt secure that from our side there was no sign of grudges or anything. Yes, there were some but not from La Sabana, there were some as I told you at some point in the exchange of opinions where they told us things as I told you a while ago, some affected by the war and everything, told us things, in conversation at least when there was an exchange of opinions and everything, they told us that we were murderers. But we didn't feel bad because well, that's not the truth because we weren't all... and we were against all those things, right? Because what we fought for was for there to be equality of rights, that human rights weren't violated so much, that this and that and sometimes I sat down to talk with some of the comrades and they would ask you, the students, what do you think about this, well, we think or in this case what I think is this and this, since we always... the struggle was mainly for that, we fought for there to be equality of rights, for there not to be so many injustices, for there

not to be so many abuses against the civilian population and more or less from there this situation arose, otherwise not. So, we explained this to them and some would be happy, others with doubts but we saw that they were understanding and that we weren't there because we liked the war but because... we were fighting against those things, right? And what was I going to say? No, and apart from that, going a little off topic from the issue, well, all that, what you're asking me, we experienced it, we did it up there because they arrived here and this... we made a... as I say, a circle and each one had a piece of paper, with little papers to answer each other's questions, all that. Yes, I tell you all that because in that time there were a lot of opinions exchanged. It's just that after we were here many university students from various places have come, from universities.

Interviewer: What about the little papers?

Dimar: Well, questions more or less like the ones you're asking me now (laughs) at that time we were still at the disposal of... as of the regulations, our comrades told us "today we have to go to the classroom to meet with such and such *compañeros"* and well, you had to do it. Well, let's do this and that and well, most of us were still very subordinate, we were but now it's a little different.

Interviewer: You don't follow the same rules anymore, right?

Dimar: No, because now we are leaders, we already make decisions, and some have leadership roles as part of the boards of our organisations.

Interviewer: And what do you think about that?

Dimar: Well, in my case, it seems a bit crazy to me because in my case, I still think, right? that I'm still subordinate, they tell me to go and do this and I do it, but at least, and I speak for myself, even here, at the beginning in this ETCR, I asked for permission to leave the village.

Appendix 9: Coding Framework Study 2

I-Positions	Codes	Frequency	Excerpts
We-as-Farianos	We have unique values and principles (farianos and campesinos)	84	"We didn't come from an individualist family, we come from a very colective family, a family in which you share, you live together, and share the most intimate things and also the most important political and social aspects" (Bibiana)
	We are social justice fighters	30	"[…] and truly contribute and think that tomorrow there would be a twon where everyone is welcome, where everyone lived well and not some people living well over the others. That was our main principle when we were fighting" (Angelica)
	We are seen as killers	24	"A lot of people thought that the guerrilla was a monster, that we were long-haired, rapists and killers" (Angelica)
	We are aware of our mistakes	11	"Not everything was perfect, that's true, and I know there were some mistakes but we are also willing to be accountable for them, and that is exactly what we have been doing over the course of the agreement, and we are still willing to do so" (Darío)
	We suffered as well	9	"But what happened was not because it was a FARC policy to kill people, that is just what happens during war. And you understand the pain of people whose relatives were murdered, because the same thing happened to me, they murdered my uncles" (Miriam)
	We didn't want the conflict	9	"Then it is a very complex thing that we lived, because we didn't have any other opportunity other than war" (Darío)
We-as-Reincorporados	We are a collective	100	"First we started building our houses. Then, our neighbour lent us a bit of land and some comrades started to grow plantain and cassava, they started working. They began their day at 5am every day to clean and to organise. And then we asked the owner of this land, who was a priest, to give us another piece of land to continue our crops of plantain, and he said yes" (Pablo)

	We are getting divided	39	“Well, we’ve always have thought about moving forward, together, although we have started to realise is that not everyone thinks the same, and then some people start going towards one direction, and others in other direction, all to move forward but not in the same collective way” (Lucrecia)
	We are at risk (safety)	33	“All those deaths, mora tan 200 deaths of our comrades, they are killing us slowly, as always, it is the “gun plan” and we are always concerned thinking that it could happen to us one day” (Tomás)
	We are welcoming and hardworking	24	“We’ve always been used to deal with people, even when we were in the jungle, we used to greet peasants, we gave them food, water, and activities with them, and the same here, we said we were going to do the same here” (Alma)
	We are humans – good people	11	“We are people just like the others, for some reason we had to carry a gun and join the fight, to claim our rights, but otherwise, we are human people and we care for others, just like any other person” (Tomás)
	We are learning new things	19	"When I first arrived here, my first job was using the camera and editing. While we were in the jungle, they taught us how to do it and then here I had more courses about it. That is how we started” (Juana)
I-as-citizen	Family person	22	“And then it is important to study and to take care of one’s family, thinking that they don’t have to live the way I lived” (Darío)
	Individual worker	27	“If I work, I Benefit from my job, I have my own earnings, because it is my effort. I do it, get a salary, but what happens with the other people who don’t have a job?” (Celina)
Internalised others			
Farc as Family		18	“This organisation, who for good or worse, has been the mother imposed by the state” (Mariana)

Civil Society	Civil society as Stigmatising	50	"Well we've been here for more than 4 years, and I think that there are still people who don't accept us, people are still taking their time. Out of 100, I think half still don't believe in us, don't trust us" (Miguel)
	Civil society will change their mind when they get to know us	49	"They come from high society right? Sometimes people from the oligarchy come and see something completely different, and then they realise they had been lied to by mass media, that we are not what they thought we were" (Tomás)
	Civil society as Supporters	24	"when we are in meetings, we don't talk as much, it is the people who talk, the communities that live closeby, and not only representing them, but also including us as part of the larger community, and we are only the hosts, but people look up to us, they acknowledge that our arrival to this land has been positive for them as well. And that is a source of pride, because you see a lot of people coming to help, to support our efforts. We would be nothing without their help" (Juan)
	Universities as supporting	34	"But is also allowed us to reflect that we were doing an exercise with students, with academics, with researchers, with local organisations, when we brought around 40 people from those local organisations, super hippies" (Francisco)
State as Absent	Government is neglectful	83	"What is hard is that the governement has had as its main priority to shred the agreement. And everyone is aware of that challenge, even though they don't talk about it, or explain it, but the peace process has been modified, they are not fulfilling what they promised" (Angélica)
	Mistrust in state institutions	21	"Well I followed our leaders into the peace agreement, but I think it was more because I was subordinated, because I really didn't trust in the government, I still don't trust them" (Miriam)
Representations			
Peace (I-as-Citizen)	Living without fear		"Well, I think the meaning of war changes, because you are not thinking about the soldier chasing you 24/7 as it used to happen, we had to live on alert everyday, so that

			tension is starting to dissipate, but not completely" (Tomás)
Peace (We-as-farianos)	Social justice – vida Digna	23	"Peace… well, we always talk as a collective, but we have always understood peace as… well with simple words, peace is where people have a roof to live under, where people have a school to learn, where there is a health centre and everyone has access to it, where everyone has a job" (Mariana)
Peace (We-as-reincorporados)	There is no peace	17	"There is no peace because throughout these years, we've had fights, deaths, disappearances, massacres, the murder of so many social leaders and ex-combatants" (Angelica)
	Collective endeavour	10	The peace process… Well, I think that if the Colombian people as a whole doesn't collaborate well then the agreement is not going to be fulfilled, because peace is not only to silence the weapons, it is to achieve the six points of its implementation. So I think everyone has to be thinking about how to contribute to this endeavour, if people have understood what peace is" (Emilia)
Reconciliation (We-as-farianos)	Acknowledging past mistakes	8	"That process of encounter with them had to pass from a reflexive and self-critical view of our own process as guerrilla members, and we are seeing this now at the national level, right? The last official statements by our leaders are directly linked to a reflexive view of all the mistakes we have made in the past but also our aim to move forward and consolidate spaces for reincorporation and reconciliation" (Francisco)
Reconciliation (We-as-reincorporados)	Dialogical encounters	28	"To start making these friendships and all that, to explain certain words and ideas we had, to explain what we were thinking at the moment, to be able to shake hands with them, particularly with the people who don't like us" (Angelica)
	Societal forgiveness	11	"Well reconciliation is to be reconciled with the Colombian people, because until they don't forgive us, until there is forgiveness… we need that t olive the true peace" (Deimar)

Appendix 10: Topic Guide Study 3

What is the role of partnerships as knowledge encounters as platforms to prefigure reconciliation in post-accord Colombia?

History	1. How did you join the EDUCARE project?
	2. What were you doing before joining the project? (role in the community)
Representations of self and other	3. Can you tell me about your journey as part of this project? • Can you tell me about your role in the project? How has it changed over time? 4. Can you tell me about the people you work with? (relational map) • How are those relationships? Have they changed from the start of the project to now? 5. What do you think about working with La Sabana in this collaborative alliance? 6. What do you think la Sabana considers this alliance with the community? 7. What has been La Sabana's role in this partnership? 8. What has been the Education Committee's role in this partnership? 9. What has been the role of the community in general?
Styles of Communication	10. Can you tell me how are the dynamics within the project? • How are the spaces available for discussion and planning of activities in the project? How do they resolve tensions? How were they at the beginning of the project? How are they now? • Can you give me an example of the type of interactions you have with the research team? How were they at the beginning of the project? How are they now?
	11. What have you contributed as part of the EDUCARE project? • What type of knowledge, practices and values do you bring to everyday interactions, including your work with children and with people from La Sabana Research team? • Where do these knowledges, practices and values come from? • What have you taught/shared with the people from La Sabana? 12. Can you tell me about moments in which you felt acknowledged and recognised as a member of the project? 13. Can you tell me about moments in which you felt excluded or misrepresented as a member of the project?
Representational Projects	14. What were the expectations of the implementation of the EDUCARE project? Have they changed over time? • Why do you think an alliance between community and academics in this project is important for the community? • Why do you think alliance between community and academics in this project is important for La Sabana University? • What are the aspects of the project you value the most? What is the link between this project and peacebuilding in Colombia? 15. Why do you think it is important to have this project as part of the implementation of the peace agreement? 16. What has this project meant for you?

Appendix 11: Transcript of qualitative interview (excerpt) Study 3

Juana: Well, profe, I joined the EDUCARE project in 2021, but the invitation was actually made at the end of 2020 by Prof. Laura and Federico. They told me about two projects that were going to come to this territory, I think one was Mental Health and the other was EDUCARE. Prof. Laura explained both projects to me well, and despite having some knowledge in nursing, I leaned more towards the opportunity EDUCARE offered me for the children. So, in February 2021, we started working there. And that's how I got involved in EDUCARE, through an invitation.

Interviewer: And what were you doing before joining EDUCARE?

Juana: Well, before EDUCARE, when we first arrived here, I worked in all the community jobs, voluntarily, in everything that needed to be done here, because we were just starting out. We started building the village and everything. Then I started studying.

Interviewer: What did you study?

Juana: I finished high school and started to homologate as a nursing assistant, a technician, and took different communication courses, also design courses, and worked in the community store as a saleswoman, and also worked in the variety store as a saleswoman. And in 2020, I had to migrate to Paujil, Caquetá. The pandemic hit and it became difficult to work here. So, I left and was offered the opportunity to work as a COVID nurse at the Paujil town hall, so I went there.

Interviewer: Ok. And what has been your role in the community? How have you seen it evolve over time? Can you tell me what you have worked on collectively? But could you tell me a little more about how was that transition?

Juana: Well, my role in the community, first of all, is being a member of the cooperative, of which I have served two terms as secretary. And I am a member of the Community Action Board... I am a member of the Community Action Board. And there I have been... Since 2017, when the Board was founded, I have been part of the Women, Gender, and Diversity Committee.

Interviewer: Is that all? (laughs)

Juana: Yes. I have... I'm not... I must be very good, because they don't want me to go. Well, I did submit my resignation, but it wasn't accepted. And there I am, but... I also participate in the Childhood Committee. I work as a representative. I am a delegate of ASOJUNTAS at the municipal level. I am part of the Business Committee of the Community Store, which is an entrepreneurship of women from the community and also of peace signatories. So, my role has mainly been, well, community-oriented, I mean, working in social matters. And I have always worked in that environment. From meeting to meeting, from learning to learning. But, learning is something that you do throughout your life, as Comrade Manuel used to say, in the school of life, which has no certification, but still, the little knowledge one acquires there stays with them.

Interviewer: Ok, great. And could you tell me a bit about your participation in the project? What has been your role in the project?

Juana: Well, my role in the project has mainly been as a community teacher. I also play a role as... What's the word? Co-coordinator, something like that. So, when we were with Prof. J, who was pregnant, and when it was time for her to give birth, during her postpartum period, I was in charge of the tasks, more or less what I could do in the library, and the other teachers who were there.

Interviewer: And how did that go?

Juana: Well, prof, I mean, I received a lot of support from the junior researchers who were here from La Sabana at that time, and from the other teachers from La Sabana, too. The field coordinators gave me a lot of support because, as it's no secret to anyone, one of the skills they have, well, they are more field-oriented, right? More like peasants. Well, for example, in administrative matters, there are things that are too much for me, not to say all of them, let's say a part, they're too much. So, that's where I needed support, and that's what Maria José, Nicolás, helped me a lot with back then. I received a lot of support, and I think, well, I did well because, well, I didn't receive any criticism for the work, for something that went wrong, and, well, I got along well with my colleagues here in the field. So, I think that what's important for me is that, I mean, in my case, I consider it successful when I work well with others, when there are no difficulties, and for me, that's already a gain.

Interviewer: Ok. And you have remained as a co-coordinator since then. How do you see that role?

Juana: Well, I think it's an important role, well, I don't know much about it profe, but I try to, as I said, to contribute as much as possible. Because I know that I have that role, and I don't forget that, from the beginning, from the moment I was appointed, I have to fulfill that, and that's why I try to support the field coordinator a lot in the tasks. In what I know, for example, I tell the teacher, whoever it may be, because we've had several coordinators, I always tell them, teacher, if there's something to be done, for example, so they don't get overwhelmed, because you know they get more work than we do, and after I can do it, I tell them, teacher, just tell me what needs to be done, as the saying goes, give the orders and I'll obey. Yes, one supports what one can, and, for example, I also like to support a lot what the other two community teachers have to do, that if they can't be there, then, because they're not there, then there's no program, after that, it's done. The only thing I abstain a little from is sports, because there are a lot of kids there, and, well, they're very demanding, I mean, they really like to run, so I have a problem with my knees, but I do the Guardia del Monte, and I have to go alone with the kids, because the other... well, I do it. In fact, in, when we started in 2022, well, J was with her little boy, and Teresa also started working with the little girl just out of diapers, and I didn't let them go to the Guardia del Monte Programme. Because, well, I felt sorry for the kids over there, for example, Teresa holding her daughter's hand and carrying the other one. I mean, not because she couldn't do it, because I know she can, but because I felt sorry, so I would tell them, you carry out any task here in the library, you know what tasks there are, delegate them to Teresa, and I'll go, well, I'll go with the kids to Guardia del Monte. So, I think I have tried to, as, to maintain that role, and more than that, to be that role, I do it because I like it. I mean, I really enjoy working in the field, what has to do with working the land, working with the children, teaching them, because I always, ever since we were in the guerrilla, Comrade Wilmer used to tell us that knowledge is not meant to stay with us, knowledge must be passed on, because if you want it to endure over time, you have

to do that, because it's useless if I only learned it halfway, if it's not going to continue with them, I mean, you can't be selfish with knowledge.

Interviewer: Ok. And how has your role evolved since you started, since Juana started until now? What has changed the most?

Juana: Well, teacher, everything. Because, for example, I think that, well, I don't know if the others have noticed, but I think I have, in myself, I have noticed that I have kind of woken up a little, I mean, even though when I was in arms, I had to help organise meetings and talk to the people, they were peasants just like me, I mean, you understand, you say, well, we're among, like they said, among firefighters, we don't step on hoses, we're among ourselves, even if it was a village where you knew the people, but you knew that, but for example, now in the project that I've been involved in, I mean, moving in different fields, well, when it came to going to Bogotá, when it came to doing those things over there, and now you know that... You know, you know that, you're kind of like thinking in the beginning, because you know that, they're educated people and you can't mess with anyone, I mean, you have to be sure and clear about what you're going to say, and also about what they're going to respond. So, I think that, yes, I mean, as a person, I have progressed, I have progressed in knowledge, I mean, in learning how to express myself, in front of other people, for example, like when I went to Bogotá, when I went to Bogotá to the ceremony at the Justice Palaca, at first, I was afraid, but I felt a little more secure because I thought that the students would be right there beside me, and then Alvaro told me, no, now it's your turn, we're going to be around you, but then downstairs, and I got nervous, I mean, but I was given a little security, because at least I saw their company there, and so I think it's a great support, I mean, what the project has given me, besides, I have really liked it, too, because it has been a project that has allowed me to be with my son right by my side. When I move, I move with more security because he's with me... as the other person said, the little calf by my side. When you leave him, you leave more thoughtfully. Even if you try to concentrate on doing activities over there, you're always thinking, well, the child, have they given him lunch, will they give him dinner, did they bathe him, how is he doing with his homework. But when you have him by your side and for example, there have always been young people who are willing to support you in taking care of him.

Interviewer: Ok. Very interesting. And now I would like... you have already been commenting on how the relationships are between the teachers. If I asked you, for that, I gave you the little sheet to draw... you have already done this exercise too, like the different people who are in Educaré and their relationships. How they relate to each other. How would you draw it?

Juana: Well, teacher, I'm going to draw a little house here and here I'm going to draw another one because I don't know how to draw.

Interviewer: Don't worry, just sticks and circles. (Silence while drawing).

Juana: Well, teacher. So, I think that the relationship that we as people have had, have felt... here is La Sabana University and here is the cooperative. Here, let's say in this part we are... I didn't draw more but I want to say that here are the children, the teachers, and here is the community. So I think that part we have felt the closest support from La Sabana, despite the fact that there is an agreement here that has to come here but then the cooperative has been more distant, I mean, the support we have had from the cooperative in the project has been

very distant, and, well, the community I leave it as, I mean, I put a small barrier, because it's like the barriers we have found with the community for the project's development, for its purpose, right? because we have encountered many barriers, I mean, the community took, let's say, a long time to accept the project, I mean, not to accept it, but to really understand what the project wanted to do for the community, so I think it's a very good relationship with La Sabana, not because you are present, but because it's the truth, the support we have had from that university, both in training us, as in what is needed, not so much logistically, but, let's say, morally, like they are watching out, well, like asking what happened to so-and-so, how is so-and-so, are the children participating, whereas here in the cooperative, which should, should be more focused here, well, it has been more, more distant, until recently, about four or five months ago, that Tamara got involved, for example, the group and everything, but then, before that, they never cared to say... and also, I think here, for example, the president of the cooperative has been a bit, I don't know how to call it, if macho or a bit tough, with us as community teachers, because he doesn't, he doesn't value the knowledge we have, he's always talking about bringing from I don't know where, bring I don't know what else. So, for example, what day was it, it was simple, I am the secretary of the cooperative, and, well, we were reforming the statutes, so, well, he said... he said right away, no, well, bring someone else, that, that, that writes fast, because that's already, so, why appoint me? if they're not going to have patience with me, right?, well, then, the next day, that day, well, I went and told Margot, and she helped us, the next day, well, Margot was sick, and so, we started writing, and well, we were correcting, so, Pablo said no, this... and it's just that Margot is not here, I told her, Margot, here it is, look, it's me, I told him, it's me, so, he kind of, instead of saying, well, I'm going to support, because I remember when we had the meeting with Professor Laura, also with the cooperative for the change of land, he said yes, that they were women with children, so, why commit to work, I mean, a little discriminatory, because just because you're a mother, you can't perform another role, he wants to have her just as he has her, practically, for himself, so no, I mean, I didn't like that, I mean, that's something I feel as, as a lack of support from the, on the part, and more so, he is the president of the cooperative, he should provide more support.

Interviewer: Ok, then, you mentioned Tamara and Pablo. Tamara is closer.

Juana: Yes, because she is already in the group and is aware of... she participates in the meetings and everything, and, well, La Sabana, well, has always been there, and the children, well, they're yes, as the other person said, they're always there, even though when you need them, you look for them, and they're there, because they're lazy to go, the older ones, yes, but you go and look for them, and they come. You tell them, look, we're going to do such and such thing, and well, I have always made it my task to maintain that, they tell me that I'm the punctual teacher, the teacher of discipline, they tell me.

Interviewer: Really?

Juana: Because, I mean, I tell them, and it's what I tried to, to, to instill there, at Educaré, in the children in that sense, discipline, because if the parents let them go, it's like when you send your child to school, you give them, I mean, you teach them values and principles at home, and you send them to strengthen them. But if the teacher lets them do whatever they want, then the child comes home the same way, right? So, what I used to say, if we're going to train young people for life, why not start now? It's not that discipline, we're not going to give them military discipline, we're going to give them children's discipline. Well, you have to arrive early, you have to be this, because that's how they stay. Yes, we say, I used to tell

them, the program is at three, and at three-thirty we're still getting children, so when they grow up, they're told to be at work at eight and they arrive at eight-thirty.

Interviewer: Of course, it's part of life training.

Appendix 12: Coding Frame Study 3

Themes	Subthemes	Topics	Excerpts
Representations of self and other	Representations of self	Becoming a teacher	I think that there are big differences now, because, as I told you, I didn't know much. I didn't know how to work with children, how to deal with youth. So everything has been part of a learning process, because you get here and see how children behave, right? I didn't know how to deal with any of that. So it has been a journey, everyday learning new things, learn from other people, watching videos. All the experience we have had working here… we still have lots to learn but our change has been enormous. (Teresa, peace signatory)
		Becoming a researcher-partner	I think that this is an interesting exercise where I have been forced to grow and learn many things, an experience that has allowed me to grow personally, but also politically and at the community level. But even with that, you become more ambitious over time, don't you? So I say, if we have reached here so far, if we are about to consolidate the school for our community, then there are lots of things to do in the future (Francisco, Community leader)
		Becoming a citizen-researcher	When we are there, we stop looking through a barrier and actually get involved. And this involves a transformation at the human level, because it allows you to understand the point of encounter. So we are following the same process as the students did, but with much more depth. I realised that when we got to the community, we tried to understand them, to see how we could be of service, how to advance on the project, but then it completely changes when peace signatories start asking you about yourself, they asked me: Are you married? How many children do you have? What do you do? So I think it is a mutual transformation (Raquel, Senior Researcher).
	Representations of Other	Community members as respected partners	So something that worked and that was very positive is to see the progress of Juana, and see how she has taken a much more clear leadership role in different scenarios and to be able to plan together and see her in the decision making process (Nicolás, Junior Researcher)
		Researchers as allies for community development	Well, I think that the role of La Sabana has been very important, because we are good in many things, but the problem is that we know so much that in the end, we don't know anything, why? Because we have everything but in the end, we don't focus on one thing, so our alliance with the university is very important to focus, to really learn and to focus on our training and capacity-building, to learn what we need for our community (Juana, Peace signatory)

Representational Projects	A community committed to peacebuilding and identity transformation	Committed to peacebuilding	The university has knowledge… a lot of theoretical knowledge, but we have specific local knowledge and wisdom that we can also bring and use to contribute to the progress of the project. And we are not only working with this university but with a lot of universities that also come to the territory to support our efforts. And they come and also get to know us, and understand that we are people who want to learn, to study, to become teachers, there are people interested and vested in the education process (Cristina, Peace signatory).
	Higher Education Institution re-thinking their role	Transforming teaching, research and institutional frameworks	Every time I introduce EDUCARE, I ask other scholars: Would you be willing to engage in co-production processes with people who don't have the same academic background? What happens if they are the ones who know about their realities? It is a very different process and I think that's where the role of the university is, that is what our directives call a concrete impact, but this can't happen if there is no collaborative work and I think that is what we are trying to change with this project (Raquel, Senior Researcher)
Styles of Communication	Asymmetries in the dialogical interaction	Knowledge hierarchy Misunderstandings	Teresa: Well, I worked most of the time during the first year with [name of non-combatant living in the community], and I never imposed things, I obeyed what she said, she used to take the computer and do most of the things, and I didn't say anything… Researcher: And when you say you obeyed, do you see it as a difficulty, or as something positive? Teresa: Well, I think it is a bit of both, because sometimes you have ideas and proposals, right? But if someone, for example with a higher degree tells you to do something differently, then you agree because the important thing is that the children have a good activity, so I think that they have more studies, so they are the ones who know, right?
	Mutualities in dialogue	Setting the bases for a shared social world	Then I think that teachers have learned that, and also, I think all the people that have come here have learned about being comrades to one another, to care for each other. Because if that wasn't true, then when you come here, you would just focus on doing your job and wouldn't bother asking about our lives, or coming to our houses, you don't just focus on your workshops and meetings here. I think you have also learned our principles and how to bring them back to the university. I think we are both strengthening and improving our communities (Cristina, Peace signatory).