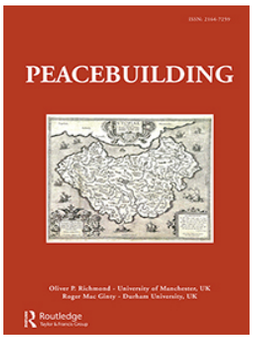

Peacebuilding

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rpcb20

Navigating colonial debris: structural challenges for Colombia's peace accord

Claire Wright, Bill Rolston & Fionnuala Ní Aoláin

To cite this article: Claire Wright, Bill Rolston & Fionnuala Ní Aoláin (2023) Navigating colonial debris: structural challenges for Colombia's peace accord, Peacebuilding, 11:1, 62-77, DOI: 10.1080/21647259.2022.2027153

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/21647259.2022.2027153

Published online: 24 Jan 2022.

PEACEBUILDING
2023, VOL. 11, NO. 1, 62–77
https://doi.org/10.1080/21647259.2022.2027153

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Navigating colonial debris: structural challenges for Colombia's peace accord

Claire Wright [a], Bill Rolston [b] and Fionnuala Ní Aoláin [c]

[a]School of Law, Queen's University Belfast Jordanstown,Northern Ireland; [b]Transitional Justice Institute, Ulster University Jordanstown,Northern Ireland; [c]School of Law, The Queen's University, Queen's University Belfast & University of Minnesota United States

ABSTRACT

In recent years, interest has grown in how Transitional Justice (TJ) can approach colonial harms and their long-lasting effects, because of a lacuna in both TJ practice and academic research . Scant attention has been paid, particularly, to how peace processes themselves can be undermined by ongoing colonial legacies. In this article, we offer an in-depth case study on Colombia, particularly the Havana Peace Accord of 2016, and discuss how the debris – to use Stoler's term – of Spanish colonialism relating to land, ethnicity and gender have become evident throughout the process: during the negotiations, in the campaigns prior to the referendum, and while undertaking its implementation. We argue that peace processes must account for ongoing harms rooted in colonial projects; in the first instance, to provide structural justice for those who suffer these harms in a broader sense and, also, to protect the specific aims of the peace process in question.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 24 May 2021
Accepted 23 December 2021

KEYWORDS
Colonialism; peace process; Colombia; Havana peace accord

Introduction

It is broadly agreed globally that redress for systematic harms experienced by groups and individuals should be sought. Transitional Justice (TJ) is widely seen as an important mechanism of redress.[1] The tools TJ has at its disposal, from hard (e.g. truth commissions) to soft (cf. official apologies) measures can go some way to achieve this. However, peacebuilding processes can easily be de-railed or completely undone, for many reasons, including a lack of political will,[2] funding,[3] a top-down rather than bottom-up approach,[4] prioritising the state's needs over victims'[5] and – we argue – ignoring important structural limitations beyond the specific instance or process of harm under scrutiny. There is emerging research interest in the deep structures falling beyond the immediate

CONTACT Claire Wright claire.wright@qub.ac.uk

[1]Ann Laura Stoler (2008) 'Imperial Debris: Reflections on Ruins and Ruination', *Cultural Anthropology* 23(2) (2008), 191–219.

[2]Phuong N. Pham; Niamh Gibbons; & Patrick Vinck 'A framework for assessing political will in transitional justice contexts', *The International Journal of Human Rights 23(6)* (2019), 993–1009.

[3]Charles T. Call 'Is Transitional Justice Really Just?' *The Brown Journal of World Affairs 11(1)* (2004), 101–113.

[4]Patricia Lundy & Mark McGovern 'Whose Justice? Rethinking Transitional Justice from the Bottom Up', *Journal of Law and Society 35(2)* (2008), 265–292.

[5]Simon Robins 'Failing Victims? The Limits of Transitional Justice in Addressing the Needs of Victims of Violations', *Human Rights and International Legal Discourse 11(1)* (2017), 41–58.

reach of TJ – regime change and peacebuilding – which must be transformed if social justice is to be achieved. This broadening of the TJ frame,which particularly addresses socio-economic rights,[6] has found an echo in the concept of Transformative Justice, which is more holistic in its scope and approach.[7] As several scholars have noted, one of the key structures that needs to be dealt with in transition is colonialism;[8] all the more so, given that mechanisms of TJ may reproduce colonial relationships and power dynamics.[9]

We argue that, as well as constituting an area for intervention, colonial legacies can create difficulties in peacebuilding efforts. To do so, we engage Stoler's concept of 'debris',[10] referring to what remains of colonial projects long after they have officially been formally abandoned. These structures continue to organise social life and experience, underpinning present-day inequality and injustice. We argue that peace processes must acknowledge and deal with the colonial debris in which they are immersed, including the structures of governance on which they are based. A conscious effort to do so will not only offer an opportunity to suppress ongoing colonial harms but also ensure that peacebuilding efforts are not undermined.

Specifically, we focus on the Peace Accord of La Havana which sought to end Colombia's decades' long armed conflict, showing how the ongoing effects of Spanish colonialism have muddied the waters of what is widely considered a ground-breaking agreement and genuine attempt at peacebuilding. While it is certainly not the first peace process in Colombia – for instance the 2005 agreement with paramilitaries is an important precursor[11] – it is perhaps the most significant, given that it led to the official demobilisation of the FARC-EP and adopted a truth-telling approach.[12] The Havana Peace Accord has led to a plethora of academic analysis and narratives, both within Colombia and elsewhere.[13] Within that literature, the relevance of colonial legacies has been noticeably absent, notwithstanding some important reflections on the need to decolonise both the peace process and TJ institutions in a broader sense.[14]

[6]See Amanda Cahill-Ripley 'Foregrounding Socioeconomic Rights in Transitional Justice: Realising Justice for Violations of Economic and Social Rights', *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights, 32*(2) (2017), 183–213.

[7]See Paul Gready & Simon Robins. 'From Transitional to Transformative Justice: A New Agenda for Practice', *International Journal of Transitional Justice 8(3)* (2014), 339–361.

[8]See Carsten Stahn (2020) 'Reckoning with colonial injustice: International law as culprit and as remedy?' *Leiden Journal of International Law 33(4)*, 823–835.

[9]See e.g. Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im 'Editorial Note: From the Neocolonial "Transitional" to Indigenous Formations of Justice', *The International Journal of Transitional Justice 7(2)* (2013), 197–204 and Jeffrey Atteberry 'Turning in the Widening Gyre: History, Corporate Accountability, and Transitional Justice in the Postcolony', *Chicago Journal of International Law 19(2)* (2019), 333–374.

[10]Stoler 'Imperial Debris'.

[11]On this process, see Kimberley Theidon's study 'Transitional subjects: The disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants in Colombia' (2007), *The International Journal of Transitional Justice 1(1)*, 66–90.

[12]Saskia Nauenberg Dunkell 'From global norms to national politics: decoupling transitional justice in Colombia' (2021) *Peacebuilding 9(2)*, 190–205.

[13]The literature is too vast to be fully referenced here but we engage with relevant works throughout the text. For an excellent overview of the Peace Process, see Angelika Rettberg 'Peace-making amidst an unfinished social contract: the case of Colombia', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding 14(1)*, 84–100 (2020).

[14]See Diana Gómez Correal 'El encantamiento de la justicia transicional en la actual coyuntura colombiana: entre disputas ontológicas en curso'. In *Víctimas, Memoria y Justicia: aproximaciones latinoamericanas al caso colombiano*, eds. Neyla Graciela Pardo Abril & Juan Ruiz Celis (Bogotá: Empresa Editorial Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2016), 125–166; Belkis Izquierdo & Lieselotte Viaene 'Decolonizing Transitional Justice from Indigenous Territories', *Peace in Process 34* (2018), 11–19; and Roxana C. Krystalli (2021) 'Narrating victimhood: dilemmas and (in)dignities', in *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 23(1), 125–146.

This article offers a scoping overview of the pervasiveness of different colonial legacies at different stages in the life of the Havana Peace Accord. It is based on 20 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with Colombian academics, carried out between May and July 2020. Those interviewed include university professors and researchers working at different institutions throughout the country (Universidad de los Andes, Universidad del Rosario, Universidad del Norte, Universidad Tecnologica de Pereira, Universidad del Cauca, Universidad Autonoma de Bucaramanga, Color Tierra, Centro de Estudios Independientes), the United States (New York University, University of Virginia) and France (Sciences Po). They also belong to different disciplines (history, political science, law, sociology, philosophy, anthropology, Latin American Studies, economics, Art), but share expertise in colonialism and/or the Havana Peace Accord. By speaking with a diverse group of scholars, we can account for different perspectives on the complexity of colonial legacy.[15]

The interviews were based on 13 pre-established questions on the armed conflict, the Havana Peace Process, and colonialism; however, given the semi-structured nature of the conversations, other topics and questions emerged. The interviews were conducted on-line, given the travel restrictions in place during the global Covid-19 pandemic, lasted on average 45 minutes, and the vast majority (18) were carried out in Spanish. The recordings were transcribed, and then analysed with a qualitative content analysis supported by NVivo11, and key quotes were selected. In keeping with the advice of the Ethics Committee at our institution, interviews were anonymised, to safeguard participants from harms associated with discussing political violence in Colombia.[16] However, information on the position and institution of all interviewees is included, to give the reader some background context. The study was subject to an Ethics Review by the School of Law, Queen's University Belfast and consent was obtained either in writing or verbally prior to the interview. Our intellectual debt to the interviewees is considerable given that they led us to many of the written sources we cite, including government reports, media, and academic literature. Any shortcomings or misinterpretations are the sole responsibility of the three authors.

The article is organised as follows: in the first section, a brief discussion of the literature on TJ and colonialism is offered, and our approach established; next, we explore Colombia's colonial past and present silences on colonialism; and in the third and final section, we show how colonial debris relating to ethnicity, gender, and land have created difficulties at different stages in the life of the Havana Peace Accord. In the conclusions, we offer some reflections on the study's key findings, as well as its implications for other cases.[17]

Part 1: colonial legacies and transitional justice

Colonialism is a slippery concept, that is applied to disparate phenomena[18] and which has an untidy relationship with postcolonialism, settler colonialism, imperialism, neo-colonialism, coloniality, and internal colonialism.[19] Nevertheless, it can be understood as

[15]Initial recommendations and contacts were made by colleagues at the Universidad de los Andes.
[16]Over 220 social leaders in Colombia were murdered in 2020; see Joe Parkin Daniels, '"We're being massacred": Colombia accused of failing to stop murders of activists', *Guardian*, 8 October 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/oct/08/colombia-activists-murder-amnesty-international
[17]All quotations from interviews or texts in Spanish have been translated by the authors.
[18]Ronald Horvath 'A Definition of Colonialism', *Current Anthropology 13(1)* (1972), 45–57.
[19]Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question. Theory, Knowledge, History*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles California, University of California Press, 2005).

a process by which one group has invaded and dominated another, and such processes have undoubtedly shaped the way the world is structured and thought of.[20] As some scholars have noted,[21] TJ has paid scant attention to colonialism, but in recent years two clear concerns have been raised: on the one hand, how and why TJ should approach colonial harms; and on the other, how TJ can operate as a tool of (neo)colonialism.

In relation to the former, there has been a discussion of how far back TJ needs to go (including colonial times) in order to deal with contemporary structural problems,[22] the ways in which law can be used to address past harms,[23] the appropriateness of soft measures of TJ (including apologies), and the possibility of restitution for colonial wrongs. The literature highlights solutions and several difficulties, particularly the issue of who can be considered a survivor or victim of colonialism, particularly when formal decolonisation occurred many decades past. This situation is perhaps clearer in the case of Indigenous Peoples who are able to make strong claims based on colonial logics and harms; indeed, in countries including Australia and Canada, TJ mechanisms have offered some redress to these peoples, e.g. via Truth Commissions and official apologies.[24] Augustine S.J. Park goes as far as to argue that 'within the context of settler colonialism, the goal of transitional justice must be decolonisation'.[25]

Addressing TJ as a tool of neocolonialism, some argue that countries once responsible for inflicting harms on colonised bodies now use democracy and human rights as tools to gain access to lucrative markets for economic expansion.[26] These processes are imposed externally and designed to set countries back on the 'right' path, overlooking self-determination and local concepts of justice.[27] As Tom Bentley argues,[28] European states take an elevated position when offering apologies and give scant opportunity for those harmed to participate, and are often ambivalent about their colonial pasts. Furthermore, TJ has employed countless organisations and consultants from the Global North commenting on the Global South and is a multi-national industry, well-illustrated by the case of Colombia.[29]

All this has furthered our understanding of colonial harms and how they relate to TJ; however, several questions remain unanswered. Here we shall ask just one: how do the deep-set legacies or aftermaths of long-ago colonialism become evident in and affect contemporary peacebuilding processes? To answer this, we turn to the study by Hakeem O. Yusuf, who analyses colonial structures of governance underpinning TJ instruments in Nigeria, and argues that 'efforts to institute redress in the postcolony have been largely

[20]Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*.
[21]Jennifer Balint, Julie Evans & Nesam McMillan 'Rethinking Transitional Justice, Redressing Indigenous Harm: A New Conceptual Approach', *International Journal of Transitional Justice 8(2)* (2014): 194–216; Stahn 'Reckoning with colonial injustice'.
[22]Hugo Van der Merwe & Annah Moyo 'Transitional Justice for Colonial Era Abuses and Legacies: African versus European Policy Priorities,' in *Colonial Wrongs and Access to International Law*, eds. Morten Bergsmo, Wolfgang Kaleck & Kyaw Yin Hlaing (Torkel Opsahl Academic EPublisher. 2020), 41–67.
[23]Augustine S.J. Park (2015) 'Settler Colonialism and the Politics of Grief: Theorising a Decolonising Transitional Justice for Indian Residential Schools.' *Human Rights Review 16(3)*, 273–293.
[24]Balint et al 'Rethinking Transitional Justice'.
[25]Augustine S.J. Park 'Settler Colonialism', 23.
[26]Jeffrey Atteberry 'Turing in the Widening Gyre'.
[27]Ahmed An-Na'im 'Editorial Note'.
[28]Tom Bentley 'Colonial apologies and the problem of the transgressor speaking', *Third World Quarterly 39(3)* (2018), 399–417 and 'The sorrows of empire. Rituals of legitimation and the performative contradictions of liberalism', *Review of International Studies 41*, (2015), 623–645.
[29]Diana Gómez Correal 'El encantamiento de la justicia transicional'

captured and neutralied by the agency of colonial-style governance'.[30] We take up this idea and turn to Colombia to examine how pervasive colonial legacies have affected peace-building efforts. These are not colonial remains hidden at the bottom of the ocean, but the contemporary debris of colonial power that muddy the contemporary waters of justice.

The concept of the debris of colonial[31] projects is attributable to Ann Laura Stoler, who refers to what societies are left with, long after formal processes of decolonisation end. This debris – she argues – constitutes the foundations of present-day injustices, built on the scaffolding of ethnicity and gender, among others. In her words:

> This is not a turn to ruins as memorialized and large-scale monumental 'leftovers' or relics (. . .) but rather to what people are 'left with': to what remains, to the aftershocks of empire, to the material and social afterlife of structures, sensibilities, and things (. . .) The question is pointed: How do imperial formations persist in their material debris, in ruined landscapes and through the social ruination of people's lives?[32]

Park likewise notes that colonialism is not 'an event with a definite historical end wherein destruction-replacement is either total or complete, but rather a structure that continuously organises settler society' and – we would add – colonial projects in general.[33] Thus, the logic and tools of colonialism persist and are employed by actors other than the original colonisers – including the independent state – long after decolonisation has taken place. As Zinaida Miller notes, this can be seen in practical terms in formally post-colonial contexts, where there is both political and legal grappling over whether colonial harms are located in the past or continue to manifest themselves in the present day.[34]

The notion of ongoing harms and colonial structures has been approached by Global South scholars and movements led by postcolonial studies and, in Latin America, with the notion of modernity/coloniality.[35] The way in which colonialism and formal Independence have been experienced and thought of in Latin America is quite distinct from that of postcolonial scholars elsewhere, for example in Africa, given the overarching process of *mestizaje* and the fact that these processes occurred in different centuries. For its part, the modernity/coloniality perspective focuses on the global, Eurocentric and capitalist matrix of power, beginning with the Spanish conquest, which continues to organise society today, particularly through hierarchies based on race and extractive processes, in the context of globalisation. Faced with this, the ultimate goal is to decolonise Western ways of doing and thinking. One of the interviewees made a helpful distinction between coloniality and colonialism:

[30]Hakeem O. Yusuf (2018) 'Colonialism and the Dilemmas of Transitional Justice in Nigeria', *International Journal of Transitional Justice 12*, 258.
[31]Stoler in 'Imperial Debris' uses 'imperial' but we opt for 'colonial' as it provides the relevant frame for this project.
[32]Stoler 'Imperial Debris', 194.
[33]Augustine S.J. Park 'Settler Colonialism', 278.
[34]Zinaida Miller 'The Injustices of Time: Rights, Race, Redistribution, and Responsibility', *Columbia Human Rights Law Review 52(2)* (2021), 647–737.
[35]Key readings include: Arturo Escobar 'Mundos y conocimientos de otro modo. El programa de investigación modernidad/colonialidad latinoamericano' *Tabula Rasa 1* (2003), 51–86; Aníbal Quijano *Cuestiones y horizontes: de la dependencia histórico-estructural a la colonialidad/descolonialidad del poder* (Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2014); Santiago Castro-Gómez & Ramón Grosfoguel (eds.) *El giro decolonial. Reflexiones para una diversidad epistémica decolonial mas allá del capitalismo global.* (Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre Editores, 2007); Walter D. Mignolo 'Delinking. The rhetoric of modernity, the logic of coloniality, and the grammar of decoloniality' *Cultural Studies 21 (2–3)* (2007), 449–514; Catherine Walsh 'Other" Knowledges," Other" Critiques: Reflections on the Politics and Practices of Philosophy and Decoloniality in the" Other" America', *Transmodernity 1(3)* (2012), 11–27.

> From the decolonial perspective, we understand colonialism as a policy of expansion, colonisation as a process of territorial occupation, and coloniality as a pattern of power that is established and goes beyond the time of colonisation; that is to say, it transcends the time of occupation.[36]

In this study, we acknowledge the considerable contributions made by modernity/coloniality scholars in highlighting and understanding contemporary expressions of colonial power in Latin America, and the important role Western powers continue to play. Simultaneously, we strive to link these contemporary structures of oppression back to their historic roots in Spanish colonialism and continuing presence *within* domestic State structures. Given our own positionality as researchers from the Global North, we are cautious about presenting our work as decolonial, but refer to this powerful concept and agenda throughout the study.[37] We ground our analysis in Stoler's concept of 'debris', which captures the present-day manifestation of ongoing colonial harms, whilst underlining their historical foundations, and – we believe – this sits comfortably with the decolonial approach. Colombia is a particularly interesting case, given its deep colonial past, extremely violent and drawn-out armed conflict, and intense efforts at peacebuilding, including the Havana Accord of 2016.

Part 2: colonial silences in Colombia

What is now Colombia came under Spanish rule with the establishment of the New Kingdom of Granada, under the Viceroyalty of Peru, in the mid-16th century. Throughout Latin America, the colony revolved around the *encomienda* system, with the extraction of resources and manpower from Indigenous lands. In our on-line fieldwork, it was confirmed that ethnicity, gender, and land were organising structures of Spanish governance and the institution of the Catholic Church was identified as a key actor.[38] Despite Colombia's declaration of Independence in 1810, these structures continue to be present in Colombian politics and society, with ethnicity – reflected in the continuing presence of Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples – being the most evident legacy and the dispossession of land, through acts of 'internal colonisation', being a reiterated occurrence.[39] Indeed, the entire contemporary Colombian state is built on the foundations of Spanish colonialism.

[36]Interview with Artist/Latin Americanist, Universidad del Cauca, 8 June 2020.
[37]Bueno-Hansen shows how scholars working in the Global North can successfully employ a decolonial perspective when approaching TJ: Pascha Bueno-Hansen, *Feminist and Human Rights Struggles in Peru: Decolonizing Transitional Justice*, (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2015).
[38]Interview with Artist/Latin Americanist, Universidad del Cauca, 8 June 2020.
[39]Interview with Historian/Anthropologist, Universidad del Rosario, 1 July 2020. See further, Catherine LeGrand, (1988) *Colonización y protesta campesina en Colombia (1850-1950). (*Bogotá: Centro Editorial Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1998). This idea was discussed further with a researcher and professor from the Centro de Estudios Independientes, Color Tierra, Tejido de Colectivos Universidad de la Tierra Bioregiones Kumanday, Valle Geográfico del río Cauca and Campaña Hacia Otro Pazífico colombiano, on the 23 June 2020. The interviewee belongs to the Group of Academics in Defence of the Colombian Pacific and Afrodescendant Communities, and – faced with recurrent academic extractivisms in Western academia – Color Tierra keeps and safeguards collective writings and the concepts that emerge from socio-territorial theories in social movements, millenia-old philosphical practices, collective biographies, and the word of peoples in autonomous re-existences.

Despite this, and notwithstanding some noteworthy exceptions (see below), neither colonialism nor coloniality feature strongly in contemporary public discourse. For its part, the Colombian state has established the erasure of its relationship with colonial powers as one of its founding myths and consequently the idea of legacies fits uncomfortably.[40] One interviewee explained this as follows:

> ... the Colombian nation-state, like other Latin American states, has tried to erase the relationship with the colonial powers and their responsibility in these legacies. After the creation of the Republic, there are several historians who underline this; [there was] a project of concentrated nationalism that tried to break with the colonial past, to say that nothing of that remains. We liberated ourselves and, given that ... what is Colombian is Colombian.[41]

Simultaneously, the creole elite continued to behave as the Spanish colonists had done. One interviewee described it in the following terms: 'So the change from the colony to independence was ... like "we want to be like you but govern ourselves"'.[42] And another: 'Well, let's say that the state does not talk about [colonialism] but it practices it'.[43]

Likewise, colonialism is not a mainstream frame for claims-making by social movements in Colombia, and interviewees confirmed that the term is generally limited to the academic sphere. However, there is a notable exception with regard to Afro-descendant and Indigenous Peoples, who refer to 500 years of resistance.[44] As one interviewee noted, a range of national and local indigenous organisations

> ... refer to colonialism, as do the Afro-descendant organisations, which in fact point to colonialism precisely to demonstrate that mechanisms of exclusion such as slavery did not end with the abolition of slavery in the 19th century but persist.[45]

In that sense, Colombia's ethnic groups would appear to be unique in terms of their denouncement of colonial legacies.[46] Beyond this, there is a noticeable elite and public silence on Colombia's colonial past.

Moving on to the decades-long armed conflict, colonial redress has not figured as a TJ demand and the conflict is not considered a postcolonial one.[47] While Quintin Lame – the inspiration for the eponymous armed movement – referred to the scourge of colonial legacies in his writings,[48] they were never a primary grievance. At certain times, the FARC-EP guerrilla talked of US neocolonialism or imperialism[49] but cannot be considered a postcolonial liberation group. Rather, they referred to the context of the cold war,

[40]This is a common feature of postcolonial nation-building, see Raymond F. Betts, *Decolonization*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1998).
[41]Interview with Human Rights Lawyer and academic, 4 June 2020.
[42]Interview with Anthropologist, Universidad de los Andes, 5 June 2020.
[43]Interview with Artist/Latin Americanist, Universidad del Cauca, 8 June 2020.
[44]This slogan is used throughout Latin America, see Alison Brysk *From Tribal Village to Global Village. Indian Rights and International Relations in Latin America*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).
[45]Interview with Expert in Indigenous Rights, 7 July 2020.
[46]Interview with Historian/Latin Americanist, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 15 June 2020.
[47]Interview with Anthropologist/Historian, Universidad del Rosario, 1 July 2020; Interview with Anthropologist, Universidad de los Andes, 15 June 2020.
[48]See Mónica Espinosa Arango 'El indio lobo. Manuel Quintín Lame en la Colombia Moderna', *Revista Colombiana de Antropología 39* (2003), 139–172.
[49]Interview with Anthropologist/Historian, Universidad del Rosario, 1 July 2020. The party representing the demobilised FARC-EP seems to be interested in coloniality (Anthropologist/Expert in Gender and Politics, Universidad Autónoma de Bucaramanga, 17 July 2020).

with its global economic processes, including the reorganisation and industrialisation of agriculture.[50] Several interviewees highlighted the importance of historical context when identifying the root causes of political violence, without referring to colonialism specifically.[51] Again, there is a noticeable silence on Colombia's colonial past within the context of the armed conflict.

More recently, redress for colonial harms was not a central claim articulated by the different actors involved in the Havana Peace Accord, except, again, Indigenous organisations (see further below). Notably, the question of 'how far back to go' was asked during the negotiations and a historical commission created. The commission brought together a group of 12 intellectuals – an even mixture of pro-FARC-EP and pro-government representatives – to determine the conflict's starting point, giving rise to a 800 page document.[52] While some pointed briefly to colonial roots (specifically land and social structures),[53] others referenced events in the 1960s when the guerrillas were formed, or the 1930s to contextualise their grievances. It appears that the government itself wanted the timeframe to be as recent as possible, to avoid recognising reparations for people who experienced violence a long time ago.[54] This disagreement over when the violence began is a reflection of myriad narratives and interpretations of the conflict in Colombia.

Despite these conversations, only in the ethnic chapter of the final document is there a clear reference to Spanish conquest. However, this is a general reference to the root causes of the situation of Indigenous and Afro-descendant Peoples, rather than in relation to the conflict itself:

> The National Government and the FARC-EP acknowledge that the ethnic peoples have contributed to the construction of a sustainable and long-lasting peace, progress, the country's economic and social development, and they have suffered historic conditions of injustice as a result of colonialism, slavery, exclusion, and the dispossession of their lands, territories and resources . . .[55]

Beyond this, as elsewhere, there is a resounding silence on colonialism within the Havana Peace Accord.

Consequently, it becomes difficult to imagine a scenario whereby the Colombian state would deal with the harms of Spanish colonialism, particularly in the framework of a peacebuilding process. One interviewee put it in the following terms: 'many people do not seek to understand colonialism as the connection that exists between the behaviour of our institutions and our culture today with the legacies of what was the despotic exercise of power of Spain in Colombia'.[56] We go further, arguing that, by not naming colonial legacies, these structures will continue to negatively define people's lives in the long term and undermine peacebuilding efforts in the short term. This is particularly important for

[50]Interview with Historian, Universidad de los Andes, 1 July 2020.
[51]Interview with Economist/Anthropologist, Universidad del Cauca, 19 June 2020.
[52]Comisión Histórica del Conflicto y sus Víctimas (2015) *Contribución al entendimiento del conflicto armado en* Colombia, https://www.humanas.unal.edu.co/observapazyconflicto/files/5714/6911/9376/Version_final_informes_CHCV.pdf
[53]There was also discussion of coloniality as a key motivating factor behind the conflict but a general rejection of US imperialism as a root cause.
[54]Interview with Human Rights Lawyer and academic, 4 June 2020.
[55]El Gobierno de la República de Colombia y las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo *Acuerdo Final para la Terminación del Conflicto y la Construcción de una Paz Estable y Duradera* 2016, 205 https://www.jep.gov.co/Normativa/Paginas/Acuerdo-Final.aspx
[56]Interview with Human Rights Lawyer and academic, 4 June 2020.

the descendants of those directly affected by colonialism and who continue to refer to it – in this case, Indigenous and Afro-descendant Peoples – but also in subtler and equally pernicious 'colonial structures of governance' – to borrow the expression from Yusuf[57] – and patterns of interaction that underpin society as a whole, including the distribution of land and ideas about gender.

Part 3: colonial debris and the Havana peace accord

The 2016 Havana Peace Accord is not the first attempt at peacebuilding in Colombia but it is perhaps the most significant: with negotiations stretching back to 2012, the final result was the official demobilisation of FARC-EP, a series of provisions on rural development, participation, illicit drugs and victims, and a set of highly innovative TJ institutions. However, the peace process has now been undermined, particularly after the NO vote in the 2016 referendum, which was galvanised by ex-President Alvaro Uribe, and the opposition to its implementation by current President Ivan Duque. Furthermore, levels of violence in the country – including assassinations of social leaders and human rights activists – are alarmingly high, to an extent that it is difficult to talk of a 'post-conflict' or 'post-transition'[58] scenario. While there are many narratives and explanations for these difficulties, in this study we point to the importance of colonial legacies which – we argue – have constituted stumbling blocks at various stages of the process, including the negotiations, the referendum and, finally implementation.

Colonial debris at the negotiations: ethnicity

One of the biggest limitations of the peace process was the initial exclusion of Indigenous and Afro-descendant Peoples from the Havana talks. Although they had officially sought representation in the negotiations right from the start, they were only given a seat at the table in the final months of the process (June/July 2016). Significantly, Indigenous and Afro-descendant organisations framed their demands for inclusion in terms of colonial harms. Right at the start of the Peace Process, the National Indigenous Organisation of Colombia (ONIC) and other indigenous organisations explained: 'For indigenous people, peace entails, inevitably, the acknowledgement and enjoyment of our territorial rights, given that the war against us has been waged in order to dispossess us of our ancestral territories, ever since the Spanish arrived . . . '.[59] One interviewee put it in the following terms: ' . . . indigenous peoples do say it clearly, for us this is the same conflict of 500 years ago, for us it is the same fight, it is the same experience . . . '.[60]

In this sense, the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous and Afro-descendant territories, specifically, constitutes a clear continuation of colonial practice.[61] Indeed, for pre-conquest cultures, there was no concept of land ownership but

[57]Yusuf 'Colonialism and the Dilemmas'.
[58]This term is borrowed from Rodrigo Uprimny Yepes, Maria Paula Saffon Sanin, Catalina Botero Marino, Esteban Restrepo Saldarriaga (Eds). *¿Justicia transicional sin transición? Verdad, justicia y reparacion para Colombia*. (2006) Bogota: DeJusticia.
[59]Servindi (2012) *Por una paz más allá de las negociaciones entre los armados*. 17 December 2012 https://www.servindi.org/actualidad/79079
[60]Interview with Anthropologist, Universidad de los Andes, 15 June 2020.
[61]Interview with Artist/Latin Americanist, Universidad de Cauca, 8 June 2020.

rather a collective, inter-connected relationship with territory. And yet, agrarian conflict is no novelty for these peoples and it is no coincidence, for example, that the highest levels of violence have occurred in the Pacific belt, where there is a high concentration of Afro-Colombians.[62] In the same way, indigenous peoples in the Cauca region have historically lived in areas that are subject to violence, from the Spanish conquest up until the present day – both as a result of the armed conflict and the menace of extractive industries.[63] In turn, all of this must be understood as a result of the process of Spanish colonisation which meant that large areas of land (particularly the hot, lowland areas) were left void of sizeable settlements or fully functioning state institutions.[64] The contemporary consequence is that official state presence continues to appear weak in what are described as 'untameable' regions.[65] Both indigenous and Afro-descendant communities still fight for land titles and must prove a historical continuation in inhabiting, owning, and/or exploiting their lands (or territory).[66]

As well as the dispossession of land, indigenous and Afro-descendant Colombians continue to be affected by the colonial legacy of racism. Race was used as a mechanism to consolidate power and wealth, first by the Spanish and then by creole leaders, with descendants of African slaves at the bottom of the pyramid, indigenous people next, then mestizos , with creoles at the top. This colonial system of racialisation has been maintained – often with force – throughout Independence until the present day.[67] The manifestation of this is a (sub)conscious effort to dehumanise indigenous and Afro-descendant people, which is reflected in the armed conflict by the apparent ease with which they were killed or disappeared.

In this context, the fact that Indigenous and Afro-descendant organisations were excluded from the three-year-long negotiations until the final months reflects continuity with exclusion from colonial governance and a clear oversight of their specific victimisation within – and beyond – the armed conflict. Ultimately, the last-minute Ethnic Chapter has led to some important innovations within the Truth Commission (CEV)[69] and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP),[70] offering up important spaces for Indigenous and Afro-descendant voices.[71] However, the extent to which this window of opportunity compensates for the initial exclusion of this sector of Colombian society, which continues to suffer colonial harms, remains to be seen.

[62]Interview with Human Rights Lawyer and academic, 4 June 2020.
[63]Interview with Artist/Latin Americanist, Universidad del Cauca, 8 June 2020.
[64]Interviews with Historians from the Universidad de los Andes, 4 June and 1 July 2020.
[65]Interview with Legal Scholar, Universidad de los Andes, 11 June 2020. On Colombia's state at the margins, see Margarita Serje 'El mito de la ausencia del Estado', *Cahiers d'Amérique Latine 71* (2012), 95–117. Serje argues that the notion of these areas as wild, untameable "frontiers' or wastelands stems from colonialism.
[66]Interview with Historian, Universidad de los Andes, 4 June 2020.
[67]Interview with Artist/Latin Americanist, Universidad de Cauca, 8 June 2020; Interview with Historian, Universidad de los Andes, 4 June 2020; Interview with expert in Indigenous Rights, 7 July 2020.
[69]See https://comisiondelaverdad.co/en-los-territorios/enfoques/etnico on the Commission's work on ethnicity.
[70]The JEP's internal regulations include a perspective of ethnic difference, see https://www.jep.gov.co/salaplenajep/Acuerdo%20ASP%20001%20de%202020.pdf For an excellent decolonial analysis of the JEP, see Belkis Izquierdo & Lieselotte Viaene 'Decolonizing Transitional Justice'.
[71]The institutions comprising the System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and non-Repetition (SVJRNR) were subject to a prior consultation, see https://www.jep.gov.co/DocumentosJEPWP/protocolo.pdf

Colonial debris at the referendum: gender

In contrast to the initial experience of indigenous and Afro-descendant leaders, women's and LGBT organisations participated throughout the discussions. Intense lobbying led to the creation of a sub-commission on gender, which became a transversal issue throughout the Accord. Special considerations were included regarding women's access to land, political participation, protection from criminal organisations, alternatives to livelihoods based on illicit activities, and affirmative action measures. Crucially, the accord acknowledged that women and LGTBI citizens had been affected in specific ways by the armed conflict.[72] Both the inclusive process and the agreement signed in August 2016 have been hailed by many analysts as an achievement for the promotion of women's and LGTBI rights in Colombia.[73]

And yet, at the time of the referendum, colonial debris surrounding gender threw a real spanner in the works. Indeed, the reaction from conservative sectors – including, particularly the landowning elite – to the Accord's gender perspective was less than enthusiastic; a key issue mobilised during the referendum by the 'NO' campaigners were criticisms of so-called 'gender ideology', understood broadly as women's and LGTBI rights.[74] While there had been some denouncements of this 'ideology' in Colombia, the discussions over the peace talks operated as a political opportunity to galvanise the agenda.

'Gender ideology' can be understood as 'a sufficiently unspecific term, and consequently it refers to a considerable number of theories and movements (feminists, LGBTI [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex], queer, sex-dissident etc) and at the same time creates the rejection of a broad spectrum of society'.[75] Discussions over 'gender ideology' have been held throughout Latin America, particularly driven by powerful campaigns by anti-abortion[76] and other counter-movements.[77] The immediate roots of this discourse go back to the 1990s, with the rejection of human rights gains by Catholic and conservative sectors of society and, recently, to the role of evangelical churches.[78] Nevertheless, tracing the roots back further, it is clear – as one interviewee noted – that ' … heteronormativity and patriarchy in such an exacerbated way that pigeon-holes women is an inheritance [of colonialism]'.[79]

There has been considerable discussion over whether patriarchy is a Spanish invention or if pre-Conquest societies and cultures also promoted male dominance.[80] Where there is perhaps more agreement concerns the creation of gender binaries, a system which is both a product and tool of colonial power. For instance, Maria Lugones notes that many

[72]See Diana Gómez Correal 'Mujeres, género, y el Acuerdo de la Habana', *Lasa Forum XLVIII(1)* (2017), 13–17.
[73]Angelica Rodríguez Rodríguez & Alejandro Jose Vidal Charris 'El movimiento de las mujeres y su aporte al proceso de paz en Colombia,' In *Actores no estatales. Grupos al margen de la ley, movimientos sociales y partidos políticos*, ed. Angelica Rodríguez Rodríguez (Barranquilla: Editorial Uninorte, 2017,) 34-58.
[74]Gómez Correal 'Mujeres, género, y el Acuerdo'.
[75]Diego Bernardo Posada Gómez. 'La emergencia de la ideología de genero en Colombia: preferir un hijo muerto que marica'. *Cuadernos de Música, Artes Visuales, y Artes Escénicas 14(2)* (2019), 78.
[76]See Paola Bergallo; Isabel Cristina Jaramillo Sierra; & Juan Marco Vaggione (eds) *El aborto en América Latina. Estrategias jurídicas para luchar por su legalización y enfrentar las resistencias conservadoras*. (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editores, 2018).
[77]Elizabeth S. Corredor. 'Unpacking "Gender Ideology" and the Global Right's Antigender Countermovement,' *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 44*(3) (2019), 613–638.
[78]See Gómez Correal 'Mujeres, género, y el Acuerdo' and Posada Gómez 'La emergencia'.
[79]Interview with Anthropologist, Universidad de los Andes, 5 June 2020.
[80]Interview with Feminist Geographer, Universidad de los Andes, 23 June 2020. See Rita Segato 'El sexo y la norma: frente estatal, patriarcado, desposesión, colonialidad', *Revista Estudios Feministas 22(2)* (2014), 593–616.

Native American tribes recognised more than two genders, including a third gender, and accepted homosexuality.[81] Freya Schiwy argues that 'The notions of femininity and masculinity are themselves colonial constructs that have pressed more complex notions of gender, sexuality, and desire into a binary'.[82] This binary continues to organise States to the present day, including Colombia, where a hetero-normative, patriarchal structure permeated what is often regarded as a ground-breaking, multicultural constitution of 1991.[83]

Referring to the 'NO' campaign in the referendum of 2016, Diego Bernardo Posada Gomez dedicates a paragraph to the colonial origins of gender ideology, which is worth citing here:

> . . . when the term *gender ideology* first appeared in our context, it could be used quite easily, as if it were an objective fact that had always posed a threat to our society. Sex, as a means of production and reproduction of life and culture, has always been present in our territory as a field of political and violent dispute since colonial times. The heinous (unmentionable) sin against nature or sodomy, appears in the very first colonial chronicles of the Americas, referring to uncivilised practices of Indians, to underscore the just causes for Spanish colonialism (Garza 2002).[84]

Ultimately, it was this aspect of gender ideology – that is to say, relating to LGTBI rights – that was mobilised in Colombia by the detractors of the Peace Accord.[85] The result was that in the revised version of the accord, many rights-affirming clauses were changed or removed.[86]

In sum, the question of gender is still central to the final agreement, which can be understood as dealing with colonial legacy to the extent that it opens up pathways for the emancipation of women from patriarchal structures.[87] However, this emancipatory potential is only partial given the narrow understandings of women's participation and, particularly, in relation to LGTBI rights, which were one of the casualties of the final cut. This was undoubtedly taken to appease modern-day defenders of ideas rooted in and sustaining colonial ideologies surrounding gender and sexuality.

Colonial debris at implementation: land

Colombia's decades-long armed conflict is ultimately agrarian in nature, with the FARC-EP claiming – since the 1960s – that peasants' scarce access to land was one of their motivating grievances.[88] The dispossession that was a root cause of the conflict has become exacerbated over the last decades, with land becoming increasingly concentrated

[81]Maria Lugones 'The Coloniality of Gender'. *Worlds & Knowledges Otherwise 2* (2008), 1–17.
[82]Freya Schiwy 'Decolonization and the Question of Subjectivity. Gender, race, and binary thinking', *Cultural Studies, 21(2–3)* (2007), 271.
[83]Ochy Curiel . *La Nación Heterosexual. Análisis del discurso jurídico y el régimen heterosexual desde la antropología de la dominación*, (Bogotá: Ediciones En la Frontera- Brecha Lésbica, 2013).
[84]Posada Gómez 'La emergencia', 78.
[85]Matthew Bocanumenth 'Los derechos LGBT+ y la paz en Colombia: La paradoja entre el derecho y la práctica,' *WOLA*, 16 July 2020.
[86]Gómez Correal 'Mujeres, género, y el Acuerdo'.
[87]We take this idea from Akhona Nkenkana 'No African futures without the liberation of women,' *Africa Development 40(3)* (2015), 41–57.
[88]Interview with Artist/Latin Americanist, Universidad de Cauca, 8 June 2020. See, on land violence Alejandro Reyes Posada, 'La violencia y el problema agrario en Colombia', *Análisis Político 2* (1987), 30–46.

in the hands of powerful landowners, in an accelerated process of internal colonisation. It is estimated that between 6.6 and 8 million hectares of land were taken from their owners during the first fifty years of the armed conflict.[89] Likewise, the displacement of people goes hand in hand with this process, with the Centro Nacional de la Memoria Histórica calculating that well over 6 million Colombians have been forced to flee their homes due to violence.[90] Recent dynamics include the cultivation of illegal crops,[91] and a highly unequal land tenure system, which can be understood as a product of Spanish colonialism, particularly the *hacienda* system.[92]

The way in which land was negotiated in Havana goes some way to substituting the profound agrarian reform that Colombia has never had. The first item in the agreement is, presciently, comprehensive rural reform and development, which includes a series of measures to open up land use and ownership and reduce poverty.[93] Consequently, as one interviewee argued, the agreement could also 'be considered a decolonial exercise insofar as . . . it seeks a democratisation of wealth in Colombia . . . People need land and that in itself is a decolonial process because that is exactly what colonisation and coloniality has done, . . . dispossess people's land'.[94]

However, in the process of implementation this effort has faced considerable opposition from powerful land- and cattle-owners, who were a driving force behind the NO vote in the referendum.[95] A particularly controversial aspect of the peace agreement is a property registry, which – as a basic tenet of liberalism – goes against the interests of the conservative rural elite. As one interviewee put it: ' . . . it seems to me that [this system] is actually pre-liberal and operates under the rules of the colony, the protection of the properties of the colony, and the system is not even open to basic liberal principles'.[96] These landowners can be traced back to powerful Spanish and European families and have permeated the entire state with ultra-conservative ideologies that have persisted until today.[97] This sector is largely responsible for contemporary acts of internal colonisation, either through extractive industries or paramilitary activity, the latter of which one interviewee described as a 'despotic feudal power', continuing:

> I believe that the whole creation of paramilitarism is based on . . . all that legacy of how to exploit the land, how I create my own army and defend myself, [how] I build let's say my castle to keep the other despotic powers out; it's based on that.[98]

[89]Oxfam (2013) *Divide and purchase. How land ownership is being concentrated in Colombia*. Available at https://www-cdn.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/rr-divide-and-purchase-land-concentration-colombia-270913-en_0.pdf
[90]Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica. *Una nación desplazada. Informe nacional del desplazamiento forzado en Colombia*. (Bogotá: CNMH-UARIV, 2015).
[91]Interview with Historian/Latin Americanist, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 15 June 2020.
[92]Interview with Anthropologist/Historian, Universidad del Rosario, 1 July 2020; Interview with Economist/Anthropologist, Universidad del Cauca, 19 June 2020.
[93]El Gobierno de la República de Colombia y las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo, *Acuerdo Final*.
[94]Interview with Artist/Latin Americanist, Universidad de Cauca, 8 June 2020.
[95]See further Michael Albertus 'Even with a new Colombian peace deal, what happens in the countryside?' 13 November 2016. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/11/13/even-with-a-new-colombian-peace-deal-what-happens-in-the-countryside-2/
[96]Interview with Human Rights Lawyer and academic, 4 June 2020.
[97]Interview with Historian/Latin Americanist, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 15 June 2020. See further Carlos Fajardo 'Colombia y su interminable paternalismo feudal', *Artelogie 9* (2016), 1–18.
[98]Interview with Human Rights Lawyer and academic, 4 June 2020.

Consequently, despite important developments in the final agreement relating to land tenure, in practice they have been very slow to materialise. As Sandra Botero explains: 'Turning territorial peace into a reality means giving access to lands, renouncing privileges, redistributing resources, prioritising investment in conflict areas, accepting the political participation of the FARC-EP, and negotiating. These are pills that many people are simply not prepared to swallow'.[99] Implementation has been slow, particularly under the government of current President Ivan Duque, whose commitment to the Peace Accord has been questioned and who notoriously reported to the UN General Assembly that the agreement was 'weak',[100] much to ex-President Santos' chagrin. Worse still, there are rising levels of violence, particularly against social leaders and human rights defenders, in post-Accord Colombia[101] which have been linked to powerful landowners, a sector of society whose lineage can be traced back to Spanish colonisers.

Conclusion

The Havana Peace Accord has been hailed as a considerable step forward in the path towards peace in Colombia. As well as formalising a ceasefire with the FARC-EP, it has an emancipatory potential in the way it unpacks land, prioritises gender, and creates TJ institutions with an intercultural perspective. However, at the same time, the pervasiveness of colonial legacies – the initial exclusion of Indigenous and Afrodescendant peoples, the staunch defence of conservative gender binaries by many voters, and the feudal power of the landowning elite – has undermined the process at different stages. The fact that this debris of colonial power has become salient in such an important context offers a unique chance to grapple with it. One of the key features of these colonial legacies as evidenced in the process is how they work as a matrix – to borrow the term from the modernity-coloniality group – with the concentration of land dovetailing with ethnic inequalities, which in turn are a stomping ground for the imposition of heteronormativity, which in turn is taken up by those who concentrate land. Uncovering and dealing with this matrix of colonial legacies should be seen as another, necessary, step forward in the path towards peace.

Consequently, we find that, for peace processes to be successful in formerly colonial contexts, they must first acknowledge and navigate the colonial debris in which they are immersed, including the very structures of governance on which they are based and the broader socio-political context in which they are located. Otherwise – as Rodrigo Uprimny et al noted in relation to the 2005 peace process to demobilise paramilitaries[102] – there may be the paradoxical situation of trying to implement Transitional Justice without a *transition*. From our perspective, such a transition would go beyond the recent past of violence to deal with the historical structures underpinning that violence. Confronting colonial debris – including inequalities relating to land, ethnicity, and gender – in such a context may give Colombia (and other Latin

[99]Sandra Botero 'El plebiscito y las dificultades políticas de consolidar la paz negociada en Colombia', *Revista de Ciencia Política 37(2)* (2017), 386.
[100]https://www.elpais.com.co/colombia/ivan-duque-destaco-avances-del-debil-acuerdo-de-paz-en-intervencion-ante-la-onu.html
[101]See further Maria Victoria Uribe (2020) 'Violencia mutante y paz esquiva en Colombia.' *Sortir de la Violence. (*Paris: Editions des sciences de l'Homme, 2020)
[102]Rodrigo Uprimny Yepes et al 'Justicia transicional sin transición?'.

American States)[103] a unique opportunity to come face to face with what still remains of the colonial past and to think of creative ways of dealing with these issues. A conscious effort to do this will not only offer an opportunity to stop colonial wrongs in their tracks but ensure that peacebuilding efforts are not undermined or thrown off course as a result. As this study has shown in the case of Colombia, even when an agreement may go some way to unpacking colonial legacies, deep-set colonial attitudes and powerful elites of colonial origin may still confound and prevent profound changes.

Of course, our reading of colonial legacies is just one of the many interpretations and frames through which to understand the path towards peace in contexts such as Colombia. Likewise, it is only important if those who are affected by colonial legacies consider that dealing with them *as such* is useful and consequently make claims within the colonial frame. Despite the significant silences surrounding colonial legacies in Colombia, there seems to be a burgeoning awareness of the need to decolonise certain areas of social life. As one interviewee explained:

> . . . it has gradually been understood . . . people are now talking about the need to decolonise, the need to face the colonial effect . . . in the communities . . . it is a discourse that little by little has been gaining traction and you already see people from the communities who talk about ownership of those issues and use . . . those categories.[104]

This self-reflexive process may begin to touch the contours of peacebuilding and TJ efforts in Colombia and beyond, and offer some hope for radical transformative change.

Acknowledgments

This publication is based on activities and research supported by the GCRF Gender, Justice and Security Hub. We are grateful to Kimberly Theidon and Pascha Bueno-Hansen for their very insightful comments on a previous version of this article, and for the support of our colleagues at Universidad de los Andes.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This work was supported by the Global Challenges Research Fund [AH/S004025/1].

Notes on contributors

Dr Claire Wright is currently a Research Fellow with QUB's School of Law, having worked for several years as a Lecturer in Mexico. Her research focuses on politics in Latin America, particularly the role of emergency institutions and ethnic difference. On the GCRF Hub, Claire is working with Professor Fionnuala Ni Aolain (QUB) and Professor Bill Rolston (Ulster) on a project that

[103]The rejection of the 1996 Peace Accords in Guatemala, via a public referendum in 1999, offers a useful parallel with the Colombian case.
[104]Interview with Artist/Latin Americanist, Universidad del Cauca, 8 June 2020.

seeks to determine the relevance of colonial legacies to processes of transitional justice, comparing the cases of Colombia and Northern Ireland. The project is being carried out within the Transformation and Empowerment stream.

Professor Bill Rolston is an emeritus professor with and former director of the Transitional Justice Institute at Ulster University. . He has researched and written widely on legacies of conflict and on post-conflict transformation, mainly but not solely in relation to Northern Ireland. Issues researched have included: truth commissions, the contribution of politically motivated prisoners to conflict transformation, victims and memory, and political wall murals.

Professor Fionnuala Ní Aoláin is concurrently Regents Professor at the University of Minnesota Law School and Professor of Law at the Queens University, Belfast. She is the recipient of numerous academic awards including the Leverhulme Fellowship, Fulbright scholarship, ASIL Certificate of Merit for creative scholarship, Alon Prize, Robert Schumann Scholarship and Lawlor fellowship. She has published extensively on issues of gender, conflict regulation, transitional justice, and counter-terrorism. She has held academic positions at Columbia Law School, Harvard Law School, Princeton University, and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Ní Aoláin is currently the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Counter-Terrorism. @UN_SPExperts @just_security

ORCID

Claire Wright http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7789-8838
Bill Rolston http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6266-7394
Fionnuala Ní Aoláin http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5909-8976