Democracy, Dignity, Destiny: Inclusion in Post-Conflict Colombia

Amelia Rasmussen

Amelia Rasmussen is a Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy candidate at The Fletcher School, Tufts University, focusing on transitional justice and development. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Social Anthropology from the London School of Economics in 2013. Amelia spent the summer of 2016 in Colombia working with the National Center for Historical Memory (*Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica*) on the implementation of integral reparations, and *Circo Para Todos*, Colombia's National Circus School, on developing an arts hub in the underserved Los Mártires neighborhood in Bogotá.

Abstract

Recently, the international community has watched as the Colombian government struggles to gain popular support for a peace deal with the guerrilla group, *Las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC). The peace deal, four years in the making, purports to end more than half a century of an exceptionally violent conflict that has claimed the lives of more than 930,000 Colombians, and displaced a further six million since 1956. Not everyone is convinced that the peace deal will herald in a new era of peace in Colombia. This summer, a young man in Bogotá asked me skeptically if I thought that the peace agreement would really change anything. His view was that the peace negotiations were a game played out for the benefit of an international audience at the political level. *"Yeah, maybe Santos will win the Nobel Peace prize, but for us nothing will change. They [the politicians] don't care about us. They live in a different world from us on the streets and anyone who tries to change things for the poor gets kicked out of government. This peace deal won't end violence in Colombia."* This paper explores the nature of exclusion in Colombia, from political, economic and social perspectives, and the role that each has played in the causes and perpetuation of conflict in Colombia. The second half of the paper imagines what steps to inclusion would look like before arguing that a real, lasting peace can only be achieved once exclusion is addressed in a meaningful way.

Introduction

In 1887, Rafael Rocha Gutiérrez wrote a book called *La Verdadera y La Falsa Democracia* in which he discussed the plans to centralize the Colombian government put forward by Núñez, the president at the time. According to Gutiérrez, whether the government centralized or not would make no difference. The key to a true democracy was inclusion. Segments of society could be excluded under both a centralized or federalist system; continued exclusion under either would ultimately lead to violent revolution.

This analysis is revealed in hindsight as remarkably prescient. If one turns to reasons given by leaders of both the *Las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC-EP) and the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN) for the ongoing insurgency, political and economic exclusion is often given as a key cause of the conflict. Indeed, in a communiqué from 2014, FARC-EP leader, alias "Timochenko," wrote: "the most notable [cause of the conflict] is political intolerance, the persecution against those who pose alternatives to the current regime."[1] ELN leader, alias Antonio Garcia is quoted in an interview with the Venezuelan web portal *News 24* as having said that "it is very difficult to find a political solution if the economic model remains untouched, [as does] the social impact of the economic model."[2]

At this juncture in Colombia's history when negotiators are back in Havana trying to negotiate a peace agreement with FARC-EP to put an end to a long period of entrenched violence, this essay will look closely at the particular nature of exclusion in Colombia in order to better understand the causes of the conflict and possibilities for a more inclusive democracy post-conflict. The Colombian conflict itself can be used as a useful diagnostic to identify the fault lines in Colombia's democracy. Players in the armed conflict in Colombia operate under a discourse of political, social and economic exclusion and it is useful to analyze the real or perceived exclusion in order to start to think about how an effort towards greater inclusion of marginalized groups in Colombia could lead to a stable and lasting peace.

Political Exclusion

> *How difficult, how complicated it is to convince the Colombian State, its government, the ruling classes, that the half-century conflict that we seek to end with this process has some causes that originated and sustain it. And among these causes, ignoring a little bit the inequality and rampant injustice in the country, the most notable is political intolerance, the persecution against those who pose alternatives to the current regime.*
> - "Timochenko," FARC-EP leader, 2014

The history of Colombia is one of shifting, but persistent, patterns of political exclusion. The irony is that Colombia's democracy is actually the oldest democracy in the region, interrupted only once by the short-lived military dictatorship of General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla between 1953 and 1957. Colombia has been described as a country of lawyers and politicians. Political life in Colombia has been dominated by two main political powerhouses: the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party, both of which emerged in the 1840s and have remained the defining pillars

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[1] Jiménez, "Timoleón about the suspension of talks," November 24, 2014.
[2] "*Exito de dialogos*," April 6, 2016.

of the Colombian political system ever since. Though the parties resemble each other in many ways, their identities solidified in opposition to each other on a number of fronts.

The Conservative Party had close links with the Catholic Church and believed it to be central to the social fabric of Colombian society. Its members came from the wealthy landowning elites that advocated a centralized, hierarchical state. The Liberals, on the other hand, were traditionally drawn from a merchant class that opposed the idea of a centralized state, arguing instead for increased international trade and a secular, federalist government. However, the key is that despite these differences, the two ruling parties of Colombia were made up of elites and represented elite interests.

Much of Colombian history is simply the history of a back-and-forth battle between the two parties in which they alternated power. The Liberal Party dominated for 25 years in the mid-1800s, followed by a reign by the Conservatives who decided to consolidate their power by getting rid of the Liberal's constitution written in 1863, replacing it with another one in 1886, which would remain in place for the next 100 years.[3] It was this constitution, and the accompanying process of centralization, that Rafael Rocha Gutiérrez is responding to in his book. The state was centralized, and a large amount of power was granted to the president to deny political rights to those he deemed as threatening public order. This period came to be known as "The Regeneration" and was a systematic effort by the Conservative government to impose a conservative social and moral regime of order and progress on the country. In similarity to the Pinochet regime in Chile which engaged in methodical suppression and repression of the political left, students, social deviants, and those who opposed the regime in order to achieve success in a clear social and moral vision, James Sanders argues that the Conservative Party's vision for Colombia "could be accomplished only by severely reducing the political space open to subalterns."[4] In addition, the Liberal Party was effectively excluded from politics for the next 44 years.

Then, in the 1940s, emerged a Liberal politician who promised to be a breath of change. His name was Jorge Eliécer Gaitán and he spoke about land reform and social inclusion. His nationalist and populist agenda gained many supporters among those wishing for an end to four decades of conservative hegemony. However, in 1948, Gaitán was assassinated, and with him any hope of a political opening also died. Gaitán's death sparked the period in Colombia's history known as *"La Violencia"* in which Liberals and Conservatives formed peasant militias and slaughtered each other in the countryside. More than 200,000 were killed in the partisan battles before a political agreement was signed in 1956, taking effect in 1958.[5]

Finally, an end to the violence was brought about by a bipartisan political agreement between the two parties, known as the National Front. The National Front was the result of the two parties coming together to return to a democratic system of governance following the brief military dictatorship of Gustavo Rojas Pinilla. They negotiated a new format whereby the presidency would alternate between the two parties every four years and positions in the government and legislative bodies would be shared equally. This form of "pacted" democracy put an end to *La Violencia* and ushered in a new era of remarkable economic stability. However, by its very nature, the National Front era was exclusionary and static. No new parties could be formed and election results were largely predetermined. In actuality, the agreement consolidated the positions of the Liberal and Conservative parties, which were largely made up of white, upper

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[3] Rice, *Colombia: Violence, Drugs, and Democracy,* 218.
[4] Sanders, *Contentious Republicans*, 172.
[5] Rice, *Colombia: Violence, Drugs, and Democracy*, 219.

class Colombians. Rice identifies the newly disenfranchised as "the newly emerged middle class, intellectuals, the political left, and the poor."[6]

Denied access to political participation and without legitimate political avenues through which to make their needs heard, opposition groups were left with little choice but to resort to extra-systemic means of effecting change. Guerrilla warfare, which had become commonplace during *La Violencia*, now cemented itself as more formal opposition with the establishment of the FARC-EP and ELN in 1964 and M-19 in 1970. Since the 19th century, then, two forms of political exclusion were practiced which contributed to the conflict: the exclusion of majority by the elite and the exclusion of political opposition.

Economic Exclusion

Many of [us] fought, or joined the movement, because there was no dignity. Because there were a lot of people who felt that they had been deprived from the opportunity to live with dignity. So … what is peace? Peace is not just a simple state of mind – the absence of war – but I think peace is to grant the opportunity of life in which any one can live to the fullest and with dignity.
- Fidelis Manuel Leite Magalhaes, Senior Political Advisor to the President of
Timor-Leste, 2016

Lars Christian Moller, former senior country economist for the World Bank in Colombia noted that, "while the decades-long conflict in Colombia has many roots, most observers agree that the perception of inequality is an important factor."[7] This perception is grounded in reality. In 2010, the richest top 1 percent in Colombia held around 20 percent of the total national income.[8] According to the United States Development Agency (USAID), just 0.4 percent of the population owns 62 percent of the country's best land.[9] Oxfam reports that 80 percent of land in Colombia is in the hands of just 14 percent of owners and that this concentration is actually increasing.[10] Colombia is the world's 8th most unequal country, ranking more unequal than Guatemala and Brazil.[11]

An important factor to note in assessing the impact of inequality, and perceptions of inequality, on the conflict is the nature through which this inequality arises. The fact that much of Colombia's unequal distribution of land has to do with violent expropriations is important. Political scientist Charles D. Brockett points out that, "the most explosive situations arise when peasants believe that they have been 'unjustly' dispossessed of land."[12]

Landowners have used conflict situations to expand land-holdings to bolster their economic interests. For example, between the years 1946 and 1958, during *La Violencia*, "two million campesinos were displaced from their land, 200,000 were murdered, while sugar cane plantations expanded, cotton production increased fivefold and the coffee economy boomed."[13]

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[6] Ibid., 223.
[7] Moller, "Breaking with history," December 17, 2012.
[8] "Colombia: Selected Issues," 9.
[9] USAID *Country Profile: Property Rights and Resource Governance*, 3.
[10] "Working for the Few: Political capture and economic inequality," 7.
[11] Gillin, "Understanding the causes of Colombia's conflict: Inequality," January 7, 2015.
[12] Brockett, "Measuring Political Violence," 174.
[13] Mignorance, *The flow of palm oil Colombia- Belgium/Europe*, November 2006.

This pattern of land-grabbing during time of conflict has only deepened during the present conflict. In fact, it has been so pronounced that it prompted the historian Charles Bergquist to declare the process an "agrarian counter-reform of unprecedented proportions."[14] While some of the land thefts have been by guerrilla groups seeking to establish control of strategic areas and drug trafficking routes, the extent to which much of it is due to bald economic opportunism is striking. According to the journalist Joel Gillin, much of the land theft that has occurred in Colombia is connected to landowners and multinationals seeking to acquire or expand their landholdings.[15] By Oxfam's estimation, some 40 percent of Colombian land is under some type of contract with multinational corporations.[16]

In addition, similar to the political situation during the National Front era described above, there are very few avenues for redress. As a report by the IMF notes, fiscal policy is usually a key redistribution tool through progressive tax systems and/or social transfers.[17] However, in Colombia "direct taxes, indirect taxes, and monetary transfers have been ineffective in reducing income disparities."[18] For many years in Colombia, the richer you were, the lower your tax effective rate.[19] As late as 2012, the Santos government began to reform the tax system. Nevertheless, inequality remains consistently high, in part because of the lack of spending on the poor. The country only collects 1.1 percent of GDP in personal income taxes compared to 1.8 percent of GDP in the rest of Latin America and 9.0 percent of GDP in the OECD.[20] According to Lars Christian Moller of the World Bank, this explains the persistence of inequality in the country in contrast to the UK, which has a comparable income distribution generated by the market. However, once you take into account the effect of taxes and transfers, "the United Kingdom has reduced inequality by 16 points on the Gini scale, while government intervention [in Colombia] has [had] no impact on inequality in Colombia."[21]

Social Exclusion

Some of the most historically marginalized people in Colombia are indigenous or Afro-Colombian populations. They have been excluded economically, socially and politically. According to a 2012 UNDP report, almost 30 percent of Colombia's indigenous population is living in extreme poverty and 70 percent of indigenous children suffer from malnutrition.[22] A UN mission to the coastal department of Choco in February of this year determined that the health situation in indigenous communities was "evidence of grave deficiencies" in the country's commitment to providing clean water and health services that are "adapted to the rural and ethnic reality of the department"[23] and constituted a violation of the population's "rights to water, health,

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[14] Bergquist, "Violencia pública en Colombia," 723.
[15] Gillin, "Understanding the causes of Colombia's conflict: Inequality," January 7, 2015.
[16] *Divide and Purchase: How land ownership is being concentrated in Colombia*, 7.
[17] "Colombia: Selected Issues."
[18] Ibid.
[19] Moller, "Breaking with history," December 17, 2012.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Alsema, "Colombia's indigenous living in extreme poverty," August 26, 2012.
[23] "Experts Alarmed over Indigenous Child Health Crisis in Colombia," February 4, 2016.

and a dignified life."[24] Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities have filed a lawsuit against the government with the Supreme Court after thirty-seven children died in a year as a result of drinking contaminated water.[25]

The country's African diaspora dates back to the early sixteenth century and the northern city of Cartagena's heyday as a thriving slave trading port. Slaves were imported into Colombia to work on plantations and gold mines. Some managed to escape and established fortified towns in the coastal regions. Only one still exists, but by the time that slavery was abolished in 1851, Afro-Colombian communities were located throughout the Pacific coastal region, many developing their own distinctive cultures and traditions, in part through isolation. Brooke Larson notes that while the context in which black heritage was disparaged in Colombia shifted since the days of slavery and with greater legal rights following independence, stigma remained pervasive. "When Colombian elites constructed the new nation, they 'privileged' highland Indians as readily assimilable, and therefore civilizable." By contrast, she notes, blackness proved to be "the most intractable 'problem of race.'"[26]

Indigenous populations have, at various moments in Colombian history, mobilized to fight for their rights vis-à-vis the state, but Afro-Colombian populations have only recently begun organizing to claim rights. Interestingly, the form that their political action has taken resembles that through which indigenous populations have been relatively successful. Afro-Colombian communities are demanding special rights and communal land titles in light of their distinctive and unique cultures and traditions. Some have argued that this tactic has the effect of obfuscating race or class grievances under the less challenging rubric of cultural claims.[27] Nevertheless, Afro-Colombian communities gained unprecedented attention in the 1991 constitution, which has enabled them to make significant gains in protecting their rights and lands. The fact remains however, that despite their presence in the country for centuries, Afro-Colombians were largely invisible to the Colombian state before 1991.[28]

Building an Inclusive State

Nations and states are of our own making and can be remade according to other images.
- Richard Kearney, Postnationalist Ireland, 1997

One can look at the history of Colombia as a long, ongoing process of state-building that has not yet reached completion. Donald Herman has written of the role of elites in processes of democratization in transitional contexts:

Once they agree that democracy is in their interests and that violent conflicts between them should be brought to an end, they must be prepared to develop a long-term mutually beneficial relationship. Not only must they accept the idea of opposition as an abstract

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[24] Ibid.

[25] "Contaminated Water Kills 37 Kids in Colombia, Community Sues," February 4, 2016.

[26] Larson, *Andean Highland Peasants*, 581.

[27] Hooker, "Indigenous Inclusion/Black Exclusion," 285–310.

[28] Ibid.

principle but also the legitimacy of specific opposition groups and the interests they represent.[29]

In establishing the National Front, Colombian political elites enabled a transition from dictatorship and developed a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship. Their key oversight, however, was in being unable to really accept the idea of opposition as an abstract principle, specifically in regard to opposition groups or interests that they themselves deemed illegitimate. Thus, a cost-benefit analysis eventually comes to confront those in control of political, social, and economic capital.

The Colombian government has a monumental task before it to rebuild the legitimacy that has been eroded over time by violence, criminality, and impunity. As Carreras points out, crime and violence can affect regime legitimacy in a positive feedback loop. Increased crime makes strikingly clear the state's inability to provide security for its citizens which is seen as a breaking of the Hobbesian pact. People feel victimized as they are disappointed with the response from judicial institutions; this can lead to a lack of interpersonal trust, where people don't participate in civic associations, and retreat from public spaces. Fear and distrust replace confidence, reciprocity and common feeling. People are excluded and more likely to engage in criminal activities to protect their own interests.[30] The direct and indirect effects of violence can lead "disenchanted Latin American citizens to support extra-legal, quasi-authoritarian means to re-establish order."[31] Thus, the Colombian government needs to strengthen its democracy by (re-)establishing the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of force and simultaneously strengthening judicial institutions.

Political Inclusion

Many scholars have argued that Colombia's democracy was severely compromised by the structural exclusion consolidated by the National Front. Since the end of the National Front, new parties have emerged but true opposition to the Liberal and Conservative parties is not yet meaningful. The difficulties encountered by attempts at political opposition were exemplified by the attempt by the FARC-EP to express their opposition in political terms with the establishment of the Unión Patriótica in 1985 as part of the unsuccessful peace attempt at that time. According to most accepted estimates, between 2,000 and 3,000 Unión Patriótica members were murdered by paramilitary groups more or less linked to the government, in what has been deemed a political genocide.[32]

Arias and Goldstein have written about the quality of democracy in Latin America more generally. "In many ways the label *democracy* is itself of questionable merit in analyzing the quality of political democracy – including the existence of a rule of law, socio-political inclusion, and public fairness and transparency – in contemporary Latin American nations. Indeed, if one considers violence as a measure of democratic failure – with greater levels of violence indicating a breakdown of democratic institutions and values – the Latin American democracies would be

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[29] Herman, *Democracy in Latin America*, 1.
[30] Carreras, "The Impact of Criminal Violence."
[31] Ibid.
[32] Bargent, "A Rebirth of Hope in Colombia," March 30, 2014.

considered profoundly *un*democratic."[33] Can Colombia really be considered a democracy while it endures more than half a century of extreme internal violence, an ongoing guerrilla insurgency, and state retreat from vast swathes of the country?

Edward Banfield would argue otherwise. For Banfield, a country is not a democracy if the rights of its people are not observed, whether through human rights violations by the government or third parties.[34] Therefore, Colombia cannot be a true democracy because of the rate at which its citizens are killed, both by the government and third parties such as the *narco-trafficantes* and the *guerrilla*. Moreover, a regime can only be democratic if "rule adjudication" is carried out by the government independently of the influence of private groups.[35] In some areas, the state had never really been present at all until relatively recently, due to Colombia's varied geography and history of regionalism. In the 1990s the government ceded an area the size of Switzerland to the FARC in the southern provinces of Caqueta and Meta, as a way to open the door to peace talks.[36] This was reversed in 2002 with the election of President Alvaro Uribe who took a hard line towards fighting the FARC and worked towards extending state presence to previously ungoverned territory with assistance from the US under Plan Colombia.[37] Nevertheless, much work still needs to be done in this area.

There have been a whole host of democratizing reforms in Colombia since the mid-1980s to remove all vestiges of the democratic restrictions under the National Front. Some have argued that the decentralization process that accompanied the democratizing reforms came too early and further weakened the power of the Colombian state, when it most needed authority.[38] Burla and Espejo have argued for a cybernetic understanding of governance that takes as its starting point Colombia as an organizational system and then applies systems thinking in order to design democratic structures that increase active citizenship while reducing power imbalances that inhibit and restrict effective participation.[39] In their words, "Many of the problems that we experience [in Colombia] today are rooted in our practice of fragmenting that which needs to be connected as a whole."[40]

In 2013, the Unión Patriótica Party was re-established and announced its first political candidate since its legal status was revoked in 2002 due to lack of members. Colombia's Peace Commission decided to restore legal status to the party in light of the extraordinary circumstances of its troubled history.[41] The recent defeat of the Peace Accords in a national plebiscite had a lot to do with opposition to the inclusion of former FARC-EP members in politics, the government's concessions in this arena finally proving too difficult to swallow for many Colombians.

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[33] Arias and Goldstein, *Understanding the New Democracies of Latin America*, 2.
[34] Banfield, *Civility and Citizenship in Liberal Democratic Societies*, xi.
[35] Almond and Powell, *Comparative Politics: System, Process, and Policy*.
[36] "FARC profile," August 25, 2016.
[37] "Alvaro Uribe Velez (2002-2010)."
[38] Rice, *Colombia: Violence, Drugs, and Democracy*, 221-223.
[39] Bula and Espejo, "Governance and Inclusive Democracy," 339-347.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Freeman, "Patriotic Union," January 13, 2014.

Economic Inclusion

Before the surprise outcome of the October plebiscite in which the peace deal was defeated, the World Bank chirpily designated 2016 as "Colombia's year"[42] because of the expected conclusion of peace negotiations and an economy that is doing relatively well thanks to macroeconomic, fiscal and monetary policies that have allowed Colombia to dodge adverse global economic conditions and to maintain an economic growth rate of approximately 3 percent in 2015, exceeding the regional average for Latin America.[43]

According to The World Bank, for the first time in Colombia's history, the country has more people belonging to the middle-class than living in poverty.[44] Between 2002 and 2014, over six million Colombians (21.2 percent of the population) escaped poverty, while over three million (9.6 percent of the population) left extreme poverty, reducing that rate by half.[45]

However, despite these advancements there remains a land crisis in Colombia exacerbated by the millions of people displaced from the conflict. The Victims and Land Restitution Law (Law 1448) was enacted in 2011 in order to restore 8 million illegally stolen hectares to their rightful owners.[46] The process has come under fire for inefficiencies and corruption. Beyond returning the land to a status quo ante it will be necessary to address deeper structural inequalities that preceded the conflict and may have contributed to it though other redistributive measures such as reforming the tax system and increasing spending on service provisions for the poor.

Social Inclusion

In the past, emphasis used to be placed on assimilation of minorities in order to integrate them into a wider national polity. In Latin America in particular, the rhetoric has been one of "*mestizaje,*" meaning that all members of the country share a common history of a certain degree of mixing of indigenous and Hispanic pedigree. More recently, in order to recognize the constituencies that fall outside of this discourse, the trend has been on a form of multicultural citizenship, as recognized and codified in Colombia's 1991 constitution.

The 1991 constitution in Colombia reflected a region-wide shift from an assimilationist rhetoric of *mestizaje* to one of multiculturalism. However, multiculturalism has not always been a popular choice. John Stuart Mill famously opined in his 1861 treatise *Considerations on Representative Government:* "Free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities."[47] For Stuart Mill, a segmented society necessarily entailed a population "without fellow feeling."[48]

Other scholars have championed a diversity of voluntary associations within civil society, such as unions, clubs, or even churches as a check on the absolutism of the state, but remained

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[42] Corrochano, "Colombia's time has come," January 12, 2016.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Gill, "How Colombia's praised land restitution process is failing the displaced," April 20, 2016.
[47] Mill, "Considerations on Representative Government," 547.
[48] Ibid.

wary of what they see as involuntary associations such as national or ethnic, linguistic or racial attachments. For these commentators, the former result from freedom of choice and should therefore be valued and affirmed, whilst the latter are merely inherited and, as such, "constitute the legacy of a more primitive past."[49] Others have argued that multiculturalism is not in the best interests of the country as a whole because it obstructs attempts to promote economic equality or economic justice. In particular, recognizing cultural rights claims limits the scope of policies that might be best for the country in a utilitarian sense, for example, developing land or exploiting natural resources.[50]

However, the prevailing tendency towards adopting a multiculturalist view of the state in much of the world these days is due to a concurrent process by which democracy itself has been reconsidered, and indeed redefined, by scholars from a variety of disciplinary and methodological perspectives. In current socio-political thought "the underlying premise is that plural societies constituted by a variety of ethnic, cultural, religious, linguistic and other groups should properly be regarded as the norm and not the exception in political life."[51] Diversity is recognized as a permanent and enduring feature of human existence and not something to be overcome by processes of assimilation. As Preece notes, "In the last decade or two, many and various voices have argued that in our increasingly globalized world, the ideal of the unitary and monocultural nation-state is neither achievable nor desirable."[52] Whilst John Stuart Mill was concerned that pluralism would necessarily preclude a stable, free democracy, Rawls has argued that societies can, in fact, be just and stable over time if citizens share an "overlapping consensus" on a political morality.[53]

An important part of this will come at the conceptual level through a focus on historical memory by the *Centro Nacional de Memoria Historica* (CNMH) mandated through Colombia's 2011 Law on Victims and the Restitution of Lands[54] to lead the process of information gathering, truth-telling and memorialization. This presents a unique opportunity in Colombia's history to hear the voices and testimonies of some of the more marginalized sectors of Colombian society. Through the process of telling their stories and being listened to by the government, these historically excluded groups will be incorporated into the national imaginary in their own words.

Towards a "Real, Longstanding, and Structural Peace"

> *And that social and political conflict has to do with structural issues such as the territory, the economic model, the militarization policies. Those are topics that we have to solve here [in Bogota] and in which social mobilization plays a crucial role. We continue to be committed to a real, longstanding, and structural peace. A peace that, apart from solving the armed conflict, resolves a social and political one too.*
> - Luis Fernando Arias, National Indigenous Organization ONIC, 2016

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[49] Preece, "Democracy, Minority Rights and Plural Societies," 610.
[50] Preiss, "Multiculturalism and Equal Human Dignity," 143.
[51] Preece, "Democracy, Minority Rights and Plural Societies," 617.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Rawls, *Political liberalism*, 133.
[54] *Ley 1448 de 2011*.

As in the quote above by Luis Fernando Arias, from the National Indigenous Organization ONIC, a real, lasting peace in Colombia will only be achieved by conceptualizing the peace process more expansively than simply an end to the armed conflict. In order to be enduring, efforts need to be focused on bringing about "a peace that, apart from solving the armed conflict, resolves a social and political one too."[55] In order to do that, the Colombian government needs to take seriously the different types of exclusion: economic, political and social, as well as the real and perceived inequality in the country.

This paper has addressed three types of exclusion in Colombia: political, economic and social. History shows that these exclusionary practices are important in understanding the nature of conflict in the country. In the fragile post-conflict setting, the Colombian government has to take all three into account and take real steps to address them in order to ensure a real and long-lasting peace.

In addition to preventing further conflict by addressing the feeling of exclusion and inequality suffered by a majority of Colombian citizens, addressing these different types of exclusion are also essential to establishing Colombia as a true democracy and a legitimate nation. Though international attention is now overwhelmingly focused on the travails of negotiating a peace agreement with the FARC, with the defeat of the previously agreed upon accords being seen as a step backwards, action is already being taken across Colombian society to engage in post-conflict reconciliation and rebuilding. Though 2016 may not be Colombia's year, or even 2017, the focus at both a political and grassroots level on peacebuilding and post-conflict reconciliation should be seen as a great opportunity to engage in an active reimagining of the Colombian state as an inclusive democracy.

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[55] Arias, interview with author in 2016.

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