

## ¿La paz es ahora? Examining the question of peace and violence in Colombia

Newcastle University, 29 September 2017

Armstrong Building 2.16

### Keynote address

*Más allá del silencio de los fusiles – reflections on the continuum of violence*

Dr Rory O’Bryen, University of Cambridge

In its oscillation between the constative and the performative, the slogan ‘la paz es ahora’ demands vigilance with regard to the continuity of violence at a transitional moment – particularly in the ‘inter-messianic’ (Meister, 2011) invocation of peace as something that has already arrived and that has yet to reveal its face. At the same time, the identification of violence in so many areas of everyday life requires that we attend to the continuum of violence (Bourgois, 2001) as it transverses and unsettles distinctions not only between peace and war, rural conflict and urban crime, but also been between violence’s political, structural, symbolic and everyday manifestations in their differing levels of visibility. Engagement with this continuum through a selection of its concrete constellations will lead me to reflect on the risks and realities of violence’s continuation in post-acuerdo Colombia, and to flesh out Humberto de la Calle’s dictum, ‘La paz no es sólo el silencio de los fusiles’ (2016). It will take me through some of the ‘gray zones’ (Levi, 1986) that bind victims to perpetrators, and that becloud neat distinctions between good and evil. It will also lead me to explore the genesis of ‘epistemic murk’ (Taussig, 1986) as projections of ‘violence’ onto ‘others’ come back to haunt and undo political, ethical and identitarian imaginaries.

### **Roundtable 1** Victims, memory and human rights in the peace process

*Colombian contested Transitional Truths: Historical Dialogue in the Historical Commission of the Conflict and its Victims*

Maria-Teresa Pinto, University of Bristol

This chapter studies the emergence of the struggles over the truth about the war during the peace process in Colombia and the role of the intellectuals in this process. This chapter focuses on the Historical Dialogue promoted by the creation and operation of the Historical Commission of the Conflict and its Victims (2014) in which twelve intellectuals were invited to write individual reports that explained the origin of the war, the causes of its persistence, and the impacts on the population. The Commission under study will be analysed under a detail case study exploration that will contribute to understanding the circumstances under which this truth initiative operated.

The chapter argues that the objective of opening the historical discussion about the Colombian war was possible in the Commission thanks to the political equilibrium of the negotiation table that this space preserved. However, the paradox is that this same equilibrium brought tensions and contradictions to the Commission that prevented the emergence of a more genuine Historical Dialogue between the commissioners limiting the

possibilities of a more nuanced understanding of the war. This argument will follow three lines of reasoning. First, it will be analysed the ways in which the creation and purpose of the historical commission that explicitly respected the equilibrium and permitted the presentation of sundry narratives, maintained a clear division in the work of the commissioners accordingly to their selecting party. The internal influences used by both negotiation parties to select the intellectuals that reflected on a clear-cut distinction between the intellectual selected from different academic communities and its impact in the operation of the Commission will be the second claim. Finally, the manner of operation of the commission will, now again, express this distinction in the experts' work and results. Finally, this chapter will explore the role of the Colombian academic communities and their historical dialogue as a mechanism that may bring recognition on the contested historical narratives in post conflict scenario and support the emergence of the truth that may bring a more inclusive peace.

*The Past Is Not Past: Towards an Historical Memory of the Colombian Armed Conflict*

Cherilyn Elston, University of Reading

The peace agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC includes a series of transitional justice mechanisms which aim to deal with the legacy of mass trauma and human rights violations over more than half a century of conflict. The inclusion of these restorative mechanisms, such as the establishment of a truth commission and the unprecedented inclusion of victims in the Havana peace talks, demonstrate how the construction of an historical memory of the past is a crucial element of a society's transition from conflict. However, despite the "turn to memory" in Latin America (Hatfield 2014), Colombia's recent experiments with memory initiatives have received little scholarly attention, perhaps because they do not conform to the standard paradigm. Studies have focused on the experiences of violence in the Southern Cone, where memory debates arose after the end of authoritarian regimes and the transition to democracy. This paper will explore how Colombia provides an exceptional example of the use of memory work before the end of a conflict and outside the context of a clear political transition. Tracing the history of the emergence of historical memory practices since 2005, from the passing of the controversial "Justice and Peace" law and the creation of the Historical Memory Commission (later the National Centre for Historical Memory), I will illustrate how this has allowed for the construction of a new, public discourse of memory in Colombia even as the conflict raged. Unpicking the complexities of this discourse, its relationship and often disjuncture with victims and memory activists, I ask to what extent the production of official "memory" during war created the conditions of possibility for the Havana peace talks and for future political reconciliation.

Cherilyn Elston completed her doctorate in Latin American Studies at the University of Cambridge in 2015 and is the author of *Women's Writing in Colombia: An Alternative History* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). Since 2016 she has been working for the British solidarity organisation Justice for Colombia, who are official advisers to the Colombian peace process. From September 2017 she will be a Lecturer in Latin American Studies at the University of Reading.

## *Victim-Perpetrator Dialogue and the Possibilities for Peacebuilding in Colombia*

Roddy Brett, University of St. Andrews

This paper explores the relationship between victims of political violence and perpetrators, focusing on the role and impact of the five delegations of victims that participated in the peace talks in Havana (2012-2016) between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in 2014. The research is based on interviews with the majority of those victims that presented testimonies during the peace talks and with members of the international community and Colombian government.

Framed within recent transitional justice and peacebuilding scholarship (Bar-Tal; Staub; Aiken; Walker), the paper examines the degree to which formally organized dialogues between victims and perpetrators may wield an impact upon the dynamics and content of peace agreements, whilst also shaping the perceptions victims and perpetrators have of each other in contexts of intractable conflict. In this respect, the paper addresses the degree to which such encounters may transform the societal beliefs that undergird a 'conflictive ethos' (Bar-Tal) and thus represent a step towards sustainable peace and long-term reconciliation between social groups.

The paper examines the degree to which the participation of the victims' delegations – an innovative form of peace-making – shaped the dynamics and content of the peace accords, whilst analysing a series of key broader questions relative to victims and victims' rights: (i) what does the category of "victim" signify for those who have suffered violence exerted by state and non-state actors? (ii) what might victims expect from formal peace talks? (iii) how do victims shape the practice and discourse of transitional justice? (iv) how might victims shape formal peace negotiations?

### **Roundtable 2 Peace and post-conflict processes**

#### *Implementation of the Colombian Peace Accords: A Case Study of legal attitudes towards the Special Peace Jurisdiction (SPJ)*

Alun Gibbs, University of Southampton

Final ratification by the Congress of Colombia on the 24th November marked the conclusion of the complex negotiated peace settlement between the Colombian State and FARC-EP but opens the new challenge of implementing and safeguarding the transition to peace after years of armed conflict. At the centre of the transitional justice guarantees in the Peace Accords is the creation of the Special Peace Jurisdiction (SPJ) which has been established to determine and prosecute war crimes and serious violations of human rights (crimes against humanity) perpetrated by both sides during the conflict. Those parts of the SPJ which concern international humanitarian law are to be accorded constitutional status and rulings from the tribunals in the SPJ will be able to be appealed to the Constitutional Court of Colombia.

This paper will present the findings of interviews conducted in Bogotá regarding attitudes of judges; legal professionals who will work within the SPJ jurisdiction and campaign/reform groups towards the implementation and running of the SPJ. The interviews focus on the attitudes of legal actors in relation to: the challenges involved in the plurality of a separate transitional justice system running alongside the ordinary domestic one; the change (and tensions) in interpretive approaches that will be necessary to underpin both the domestic political goal of transitional justice as well as the proper implementation of international human rights standards. The qualitative empirical work provides important insights about the capacity of legal actors to engage and frame substantive meanings of transitional justice in such a way as to impact on the way that justice is delivered through the SPJ. It will be argued that engagement by the legal community in the wider meaning and goals of transitional justice are integral to the development of transitional justice in the specific context and circumstances faced by Colombia.

Dr. Alun Gibbs  
Lecturer in Public Law, University of Southampton.

### *Alternative confidence building measures and their impact on the Colombian peace process*

Allison Aylward, Queen's University Belfast

Existing literature on peace processes assumes it is only possible for peace processes to exist when a ceasefire, or a cessation of hostilities, is in place (Darby and Mac Ginty, 2008). However, the Colombian peace process from 2012-2016 defies this assumption. Not only did formal negotiations occur without the conventional confidence building mechanism (CBM) of a ceasefire, they resulted in a signed peace accord. The parties instead engaged in a series of alternative, context driven CBMs designed to address key issues of the conflict and transform the relationship between the FARC-EP and Santos administration. Colombia's peace process presents a timely contribution to scholarly research on war-to-peace transitions and peace processes. This research analyses the role of alternative CBMs in the Havana negotiations and urges us to reconsider our conceptualization of peace processes. This paper examines the impact that the Accord for the Creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace (SJP) had on the relationship between the FARC-EP and the Santos administration as well as on the peace process as a whole. The SJP functioned as a context driven alternative CBM and positively impacted the progress in Havana in the absence of a bilateral ceasefire. By closely examining confidence building in Colombia's peace process, this paper challenges existing assumptions about factors necessary to facilitate the existence of peace processes and our understanding of confidence building mechanisms.

Allison is a PhD candidate at Queen's University Belfast (QUB), researching the Colombian peace process and the Havana Negotiations from 2012-2016. Her work focuses on using alternative confidence building mechanisms during negotiations in the context of on-going violence. Her research interests include peacebuilding, conflict transformation, and political inclusion for armed actors in formal peace processes. Allison completed her MA in Comparative Ethnic Conflict in 2011 from QUB and received a BA in Spanish and a BA in International Studies from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in 2010.

*“I learnt to defend what’s ours, to defend our rights” : using Human Rights Education to reduce violence in Colombia*

Elizabeth Thomas, University College London

Colombia’s armed conflict is formally coming to an end. Violence, however, remains a problem for the wellbeing of its citizens and the country’s economic and human development. It particularly affects Colombia’s young people, in their communities, in their own homes and even in schools. Human Rights Education (HRE) has appeared as one response to this, in both the national curriculum and in non-formal educational settings across the country, complementing the discourses of human rights that have permeated the peace processes in Colombia. However, the relationship of HRE to nonviolence and peace – why it might be used, how it is expected to achieve these aims – is as yet little understood.

This study looks at how Human Rights Education (HRE) has been employed by grassroots organisations across rural and urban Colombia in order to prevent violence against the country’s youth population, or mitigate its effects. It identifies first the many types of violence Colombia’s youth experience drawing on concepts from various disciplines, in particular ethnographic ‘bottom-up’ approaches (Moser and McIlwaine 2004) and Galtung’s (1969) paradigm of personal and structural violence. It then analyses the intervention planning documents and materials produced by three Colombian NGOs from 2011 to 2016, using a mixture of discourse analysis and grounded theory to explore the different ways in which they incorporate HRE into their interventions and what this reveals about how HRE is expected to reduce violence in the lives of their beneficiaries. Finally, it considers questions this raises about how HRE may be used going forward, as Colombia continues to tackle evolving forms of violence affecting its youth.

This research was undertaken in fulfilment of a Master’s degree in Education and International Development at UCL (awarded ‘Distinction’).

Elizabeth (Beth) Thomas is a passionate educator with experience both teaching and researching educational interventions in disadvantaged communities of the UK and Latin America. She is particularly interested in how education might address issues facing children in marginalised urban communities, including violence and discrimination. Beth graduated from the University of Cambridge in 2012 (Modern and Medieval Languages) and completed her Masters at UCL in 2016. Currently based in Arequipa, Peru, she is planning a move to Los Angeles to continue research into education and urban latino communities.

### **Roundtable 3 Challenges to peace**

*The gold of the Colombian Conflict: Extractive economies, armed groups, youth and peace in Colombia*

Linda Sánchez Avendaño, University of Manchester

The exploitation of natural resources has become an important financial lifeline for Non-State Armed Groups (NSAG) in current internal conflicts. In Colombia left-wing guerrilla groups alongside criminal bands (BACRIM), have shifted their activities in the last decade

from drug trafficking towards the extortion and exploitation of mineral resources in order to continue fuelling the conflict. Even though the Colombian government signed a peace accord with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in 2016, the extortion and illegal extraction of gold are currently driving the reconfiguration and intensification of the levels of violence in areas where the presence of other NSAG's and mineral extraction have merged. In the performance of those extractive economies, boys and girls have been abducted and used as labourers in this illegal activity alongside other roles such as combatants, sex slaves, messengers as well as domestic workers. Although a body of scholars has increasingly paid attention to the experience of youth people during armed conflicts, more analysis is needed to understand the non-combatant roles performed by children especially in regard to extractive economies. Taking the Chocó region of Colombia as a case study, I discuss some of the practical and academic consequences of the current interpretation of child labour in the midst of protracted conflicts and I also analyse some of the existing challenges that the criminal extraction of gold is creating to the construction of peace and the agenda that the Colombian government and the National Liberation Army (ELN) are currently negotiating. I argue that the current policies to counter the illegal extraction of minerals are one of the main treats to peacebuilding and it actually contributes towards fuelling the internal conflict as it also overlooks the various roles that youth are performing in conflict-affected areas

I am a second year PhD student at the University of Manchester (UK) with a BSc in Political Science from The National University of Colombia and a MA in Post-war Recovery studies from The University of York (UK). I have seven years of experience working on diverse research projects and humanitarian relief programs with different governmental organizations, think tanks and NGOs in Colombia and Uganda.

### *Multinational Corporations: Friends or foes of peace? Multinational Corporations and state capture in Colombia*

Fabian Espejo, Queen's University Belfast

How does state capture influence the effect that multinational corporations (MNCs) have on countries emerging from conflict? There is a common assumption that business actors have a positive role to play in peacebuilding. However, state capture, a form of grand corruption, seems to suggest that this is not the case, and MNCs operating in countries emerging from conflict. In such context, the MNCs' engagement with the host country's government may be used by the former as a springboard to build the networks they require to capture the state.

During Uribe's presidency, there was a positive perception toward foreign direct investments (FDI). At that time, the government led a strategy focused on establish the necessary conditions to attract foreign investors operating in key areas of the economy. Such strategy was based on mechanisms such as aggressive FDI campaigns and promotion of corporate socio-political engagement aiming to satisfy the corporations' interests. It was supposed that the continuity of such liberal model of development will be granted by Juan Manuel Santos.

However, Juan Manuel Santos' government has been focused on achieving a peace agreement with guerrillas which necessarily has entailed to hear the civil society's views on MNCs' operations and balance the government's relationship with MNCs. Hence, nowadays, civil society is reluctant to accept mining and oil projects developed by MNCs. Moreover, MNCs operating in the oil and mining sector are uncertain about how their projects will be run in the future if civil society's reluctance persists. MNCs, particularly those operating the natural resources sector, miss the liberal model implemented by Alvaro Uribe. It increases the risk of MNCs developing strategies to influence the political system during peacebuilding to return to the old days.

This paper, draws attention to the process through which aggressive FDI and corporate socio-political engagement may facilitate MNCs playing the role of captors in societies emerging from conflict. It highlights how they may be used as mechanisms that allow MNCs to influence the state's decision-making system and shape the political and legal structure of the host country to obtain private gains at the expenses of the society's welfare, while communicating massively their positive interventions misleading consumers regarding their real commitment in peacebuilding.

*Colombian Non-State Armed Groups: Alternative systems of governance and contested sovereignty*

Tatiana Suarez, Regent's University London & ILAS- SAS- University of London

Guerrilla groups, paramilitaries, and drug cartels are Colombia's major 'illegal' armed groups and main protagonists in the country's 50-year old internal conflict. In scholarly debate, violent groups acting outside the effective command of states are collectively known as non-state armed groups (NSAGs). However, the term 'non-state' does not account for groups that operate with the support, complicity or tolerance of states thereby occupying a grey area between legality and illegality.

Due to the influence and power of NSAGs in many Colombian municipalities and the ambiguous relationship that they establish with local and regional state institutions, it can be argued that the monopoly on the legitimate use of force is an abstract representation rather than the underpinning of the Colombian state. Theories describing the Colombian state as weak, inefficient and even 'illegitimate' are often supported by the overlapping of various forms of governance and the erosion of sovereign state authority in NSAG's-controlled areas.

This paper analyses some of the alternative structures of governance that NSAGs have pursued, how they interact with state actors and the perceptions of communities of the state's responsibilities and obligations in conflict areas. Claims that NSAGs emerged in ungoverned spaces as the result of 'state absence' contrast with notions of a repressive and violent state, which under the façade of a civilian government uses violence to consolidate, protect and perpetuate its ideals of authority, order and security. This paper explores cases where having failed to control territory, resources and to establish the rule of law, the central state has outsourced violence to and tacitly 'shared' the provision of public goods with NSAGs. It also elucidates the ambivalent relationships that groups operating against the central state establish with local authorities in order to legitimise their claims.

Tatiana Suarez is a lecturer and researcher in the Institute of Languages and Culture at Regent's University London.

She has held teaching positions at the Diplomatic Service Language Centre of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (2003- 2007) and the London Metropolitan Police (2011-2012). Since 2008, she has also worked as a Lecturer in Spanish at Kings' College, LBS, LSE and the University of West London.

Apart from her language teaching qualifications, Tatiana holds an MSc in Globalisation and Latin American Development from UCL where she conducted research on Third Political Parties and Constitutional Reform in Colombia. Currently, Tatiana is a PhD candidate at the Institute of Latin American Studies-School of Advanced Study of the University of London. Her research topic is Non-State Armed Groups in Colombia as legitimate negotiators in conflict ending and potential peace builders.

#### **Roundtable 4 Everyday peacebuilding**

*Self-organization for everyday peacebuilding: The Indigenous Guard in northern Cauca*

Paola Chaves, Wageningen University and Research Centre

The Indigenous Guard (IG) is a non-violent self-protection strategy consolidated since 2001 in Colombia by the indigenous tribe Nasa represented by The Association of Indigenous Councils from Northern Cauca (ACIN). The primary goal of the IG is to protect indigenous people and their territories from armed groups such as guerrillas, paramilitaries, and also the official army. At the 5th of November 2014, in the Nasa Indigenous territory of Toribío, two members of this IG were shot dead by members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP). After the murdering, the IG managed to capture five rebels responsible for the crime. A few days later, indigenous organisations made a public trial and sent the FARC members to jail. The IG captured the rebels without the use of guns or any type of physical violence. The event took place while the Peace Talks were undertaken between the FARC and the Colombian government. In this article, we describe in detail the events of the 5th of November and we investigate how the IG managed to capture the armed FARC rebels and take them to trial without using arms themselves. We consider that the role of local initiatives like the IG is crucial for a sustainable peace. From an interactional perspective, we use the concept of self-organization to gain insights into the mechanisms and practices that the IG apply for managing violent situations in a non-violent way. We show that the IG mechanisms for non-violent conflict management include: particular social norms, shared historical memory and semi-decentralized organisation. By activating these mechanisms at carefully chosen moments, Nasa people organise themselves resulting in one collective movement that is powerful enough to manage the tense and risky situations without using violence. These results show that Nasa people can form a sort of superorganism in which the collective is more than the sum of the individuals, creating power and destabilise violence in a peaceful way. The IG represents a distributive network, a re-arrangement of the indigenous Nasa organisations in such a way that their interactions become "better" organised under peaceful criteria. Finally, we reflect on the implications of this for bottom-up and localised conflict de-escalation measures; in contrast with the top-down and institutionalised approaches to peace.

Paola Chaves

Social Communicator, Universidad del Valle, Colombia.

Master of Applied Communication Science, Wageningen University

PhD Candidate – Strategic Communication Group, Wageningen University

*From representation to interaction: Co-creation process through arts and collaborative strategies with communities in Colombia*

Alejandro Valderrama Herrera, Maynooth University

To whom does knowledge belong? Who's Knowledge Counts? For what and for whom does it count? There are many questions that have been raised and are still to be raised about our work as anthropologists and social researchers. For many years, Social Sciences have tried to overcome categories of theory/practice, subjectivity/objectivity, which have dominated research, studies and interventions.

Anthropology has been committed to attempting to go beyond theoretical re-creation through participatory methodologies in order to enhance the role of these in the multi-situated production of anthropological knowledge, in an endeavour to connect researchers, policymakers, practitioners and everyday people seeking to develop an "ecology of knowledges". How can we talk about peacebuilding if we continue to reproduce colonial practices of representation? How do we carry out epistemic decolonization? Are we ready to recognize other forms and places of enunciation?

This presentation is a methodological reflection that promotes co-creation, goes beyond the merely instrumental use of ethnography, and contributes to the centrality of the subject's voices. This is done by means of new supports that face the coloniality of the written word through new media, arts dialogue or design products amongst others, as a challenge in co-theorizing and co-authoring, as well as in the creative presentation of the results.

In particular, this exercise of collaborative ethnography with local, rural and Afro-Colombian communities affected by the armed conflict began in 2015 with the aim of bridge-building with effective methodologies to face suffering and supporting alternative models of economic development, education, human rights, peacebuilding and reconciliation from its own cultural knowledge. It's an opportunity to frame the interest of communities more from the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR) than the politics and civil rights, centred in truth, justice and reparations.

The experience can be seen in these videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qv5a8FuCr4o>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVwePhGnRZU>

*Beyond walls: rethinking graffiti, aesthetics and politics in Bogotá*

Fenna Smits, University of Amsterdam

I will talk about how graffiti artists in Bogotá use art in public space as a tool for social and political transformation in their own respective urban environments. As such, we will take a closer look at the social process that constitutes graffiti instead of analyzing graffiti in terms of representation (what the graffiti means, or says, about or social world). By means of ethnographic examples of small-scale graffiti projects in and around Bogotá I will discuss the social organization of the projects and argue that graffiti art in public space is a specific form of encounter between people with different socio-economic backgrounds.

Much of the imagery produced in these small-scale graffiti projects seem unrelated to political issues or themes such as La Paz. In contrary, the government-sponsored murals in the centrum of Bogotá explicitly address the violence of past times or a future society in peace. How to account for this difference? I argue that whereas the government mobilizes graffiti art to produce the official history of a “post-conflict” nation, explicitly mourning the violence of past times, the informal graffiti projects focus on structural problems that undermine a realistic peace construction, such as social exclusion and violence, exploitation of natural resources, and the neo-liberal society.

By drawing on Rancière’s notion of the politics of aesthetics, I will describe how small-scale graffiti projects in Bogotá challenge the neo-liberal dominant social order, not by its imagery, but by small-scale enactments of alternative forms of social order, of a society to be. As such, I will show with ethnographic examples how the social practices that constitute the projects challenge the dominant perception of (1) how to relate, (2) the division between work and play, and (3) what is common. By itself, the projects suggest a redistribution of what to care for in a neo-liberal war-inflicted society.

Recently graduated from the Social Sciences Research master, with a background in Cultural Anthropology. I specialized in visual anthropology and focus mainly on urban culture and politics. For my master’s final project I have done five months of ethnographic research in Bogotá, Colombia.

### **Roundtable 5 Cultural perspectives of peace and violence**

*Narratives of violence through the indigenous eyes - Arhuaco filmmaking as a response to forced displacement*

Agata Lulkowska, Birkbeck

This paper investigates the way violence and forced displacement among the indigenous communities of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta contributed to their self-representation initiatives. Using the case study of Amado Villafaña, an Arhuaco filmmaker and the leader of Centro de Comunicaciones Zhigoneshi y Realizaciones Yokosovi, I demonstrate how violence in the region contributed to his transformation from someone who does not speak Spanish, has no interest in art of any kind and no plans to leave his indigenous village, to an internationally recognised ambassador of the Arhuacos, charismatic promotor of indigenous filmmaking in Colombia and beyond, and an authority in indigenous representation (both in photography and film).

This paper draws on an extensive fieldwork in the Sierra which explored the indigenous filmmaking and resulted in a collaborative documentary made with the protagonists. In the course of this research it became clear that the film initiatives of Villafaña are not the fruit of any artistic ambitions among the Arhuacos, but a direct response to the brutal reality. The films made by the collective serve as a testimony, therapy, and a means of internal and external communication, with the intercultural ambitions. It is clear, that such ambitions would not even be considered should the violence never occur. After a period of films focused on bitter history, Villafaña and his team slowly shifts towards more universal topics relating to the Arhuaco values and things they want to communicate to the world. Could it be the expression of accepting the peace and starting a new chapter?

Agata Lulkowska is a PhD candidate at Birkbeck, University of London, finalising her practice-based research exploring the politics of visual representations among the indigenous communities of Colombia. Born in Poland, she holds a Master Degree in Film and Media Studies (Jagiellonian University in Cracow, Poland), unfinished MA in Film Direction (Silesian University, Katowice, Poland), and a First Class Honours degree in Digital Media Arts (London South Bank University). Alongside with her research work, she actively exhibits her visual work in wide international circles. Lulkowska's research is very interdisciplinary and addresses questions of representation, otherness and intercultural communication. She is particularly interested in the way film and video circulate in the international circles, and how the aspect of communication transcends the cultural barriers.

*The 'everydayness' of political violence and the politics of everyday violence in Bogota's urban visual landscape*

Alba Griffin, Newcastle University

This paper explores urban imaginaries of violence in Bogota through the lens of graffiti and street art. I argue that graffiti and street art are widely interpreted as cultural forms which unveil everyday realities of violence excluded from mainstream representations, and I draw on the perspectives of those who paint on the street as well as members of the wider public. People's interpretations of the role of graffiti as a means of engaging with discourses of violence (especially in comparison to dominant state and media outlets) relate to a perceived struggle over the visibility and recognition of violence in public space and offer an insight into their expectations and experiences of the institutions and figures of authority ostensibly there to resolve issues of violence, as well as their expectations of the potential transition to peace.

The paper focuses specifically on calle 26 and the representations of violence within the very different forms of aesthetic intervention that can be found there: from the state sponsored murals to remnants of protests and marches to the more independent street art and graffiti writing subcultures. I explore the ways in which political violence is understood to be part of everyday life, arguing that disenchantment and discontent with the representatives of power mark the narrated experiences of living in the city and infuse the interpretations of graffiti and street art. But I also argue that graffiti and street art engage with the politics of everyday structural and symbolic violence to explicitly question the role of urban society in reproducing violence in significant ways, especially in relation to

indifference, social hierarchies and the notion of the ‘right to the city’. As such, the paper will attempt to illustrate the complexities and subtleties of different perceptions and understandings of violence and suggest that by focusing on the aesthetics of urban space we can gain a greater insight into the textures of violence in everyday urban life.

Alba Griffin is an ESRC-funded PhD candidate in the department of Modern Languages at the University of Newcastle, exploring social imaginaries of violence in Bogota through the perceptions and experiences of graffiti and street artists.

*‘That peace is not for me’: Exploring marginalised youths’ perceptions of peace and violence in post-conflict Colombia*

Elena Butti, University of Oxford

The peacebuilding literature has long emphasised that youth involvement is key to ensuring long-term peace. In the aftermath of the ‘no’ victory in the Colombian peace plebiscite, great emphasis has been placed on youth movements’ push for peace. However, statistics on violent groups in Latin America show that these groups are largely made of young people. The position of young people at the crux between peacebuilding and perpetuation of violence needs to be contextually unpacked.

While studies have tended to focus on youth movements, the question of how non-organised, (self-)marginalised youths relate to peacebuilding is largely unaddressed. Based on 9 months of ethnographic fieldwork with outcast adolescents in the conflict-affected town of San Carlos and marginal neighbourhoods in the close-by city Medellín, this paper addresses this gap. The country’s dominant discourse around “stable and lasting peace” starkly contrasts with these youths’ conceptions of peace and violence. Their daily experiences of interpersonal physical and symbolic violence within their families and communities lead them to continue seeing violence as a legitimate mean of interaction. Feeling rejected by the rest of society, they reject any form of civic engagement in turn. Rather, they opt for moving from the town to the city and getting involved in the micro-traffic business and joining urban gangs, contributing to perpetuating some of Colombia’s most pressing threats to peace.

Rather than simplistically framing engagement in violence as an inherent tendency of Latino masculinities, the aim is to understand these young people in their own terms, exploring how social marginalisation relates to engagement in violence. Giving voice to the narratives of these ‘other’ youths, that are not captured by the dominant media discourse, this paper contributes to broader debates intersectional identities and exclusionary dynamics in post-conflict societies, aiming to bright theoretical and policy-relevant insights to peacebuilding in Colombia.