

Dynamics of collective action in post-conflict settings: Coffee growers associations in Southern Tolima, Colombia

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INTRODUCTION

When a civil war finishes, major challenges arise on how to prevent armed confrontations in the future and make the transition as smooth as possible for the actors involved. Since most of the civil wars occur in rural areas, it is also necessary to account and cope with the agrarian roots of the conflicts (Cramer and Richards, 2011). Moreover, an understanding of the dynamics in which the armed conflict developed is crucial for designing and implementing peacebuilding strategies.

However, simplistic views considered war areas as merely chaotic ignore the complex relations among the civilians, institutions, and armed actors (Collier *et al.*, 2003). Since war areas are portrayed as chaotic, it is assumed that all these areas are devastated after an armed conflict (Arjona, 2016). Collective action and social capital, thus, seem inexistent or seriously damaged in post-conflict. Consequently, with few exceptions, for the post-conflict stage, the research is focusing on top-down policy recommendations based on analyses of the conflict stage.

Recent research, however, is unveiling both the existence of order in war areas and the variety of behaviors deployed by the same-armed actor amongst its different territories of influence (Mampilly, 2012; Arjona, Kasfir and Mampilly, 2015; Arjona, 2016). Therefore, accounting for both the strategies that local communities are developing in post-conflict settings and the ways in which order in wartime and the behavior and relations among the different actors involved in the war are actually influencing post-war scenarios is still necessary. This endeavor would facilitate the crafting of peacebuilding strategies tailored to the capabilities of local communities since war usually differs in intensity and dynamics across territories even in the same country.

Colombia is facing this kind of challenges. In 2016, the communist guerrilla Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia- People's Army – FARC-EP signed a peace agreement with the

government. Since the peace talks, which started in 2012, the orders created in wartime to regulate the relationship between the guerrilla and civilians gained attention to grasp better the challenges of a possible demobilization of the FARC-EP (Espinosa, 2016; Gonzalez, 2016; González, Castañeda and Barrera, 2016; Valencia and Avila, 2016; Urdaneta, 2017). The research conducted concluded that the demobilization would lead to an enormous power vacuum not only in military terms, but also at the communitarian, economic, environmental, security, and justice levels. Indeed, major problems related to dissidents, disputes among non-state armed groups to occupy areas former controlled by the FARC-EP, and the skyrocketed assassination of community leaders arouse after the ceasefire in 2016 and are affecting the peace efforts that seem insufficient. (Defensoria del Pueblo, 2018; Fundación Heinrich Böll, Indepaz and cumbre agraria, 2018). Additionally, after 53 years of war, the restoration of the relationship between the State and the local communities, affected by the mediation of armed actors, has been difficult in several territories.

In this context, the reactivation dynamics of the armed conflict are gaining attention and peacebuilding strategies are at the top of the research and development agendas of many civil society organizations (Avila and Londono, 2017; Álvares Vanegas, Pardo Calderon and Cajiao Vélez, 2018; Gonzalez-Posso, Gonazalez-Perafan and Espitia-Cuenca, 2018; Salas Salazar, Wolff and Camelo, 2018). At least two aspects are considered. First, why this reactivation has focused on certain territories associated with land-grabbing, drug trafficking, natural resources extraction, and smuggling corridors. Second, public policy recommendations based on the analysis of the conflict stage. Despite the local, territorial, and community focuses of some of these efforts, there is not a clear understanding neither on why collective action is easier in certain post-conflict contexts than in others nor on how the local communities are effectively managing the vacuum left by the FARC-EP in their areas of influence.

In general, violence is increasing in these areas and some of them are facing even harder situations than in wartime. Additionally, deforestation is escalating to rates never seen before, especially in the southeastern part of the country (Armenteras *et al.*, 2018; IDEAM and MADS, 2018).

However, in Planadas, southern Tolima, the situation is different. The disproportionate attack of the army to a peasant settlement in Marquetalia, rural area of Planadas, in 1964 is held by the FARC-EP as their leitmotiv for the creation of the rebel group (CNMH, 2014). Since then, the presence of the FARC-EP in the municipality was permanent. Nowadays, while misdemeanors are increasing in Planadas, both the degree of violence compared to other FARC-EP territories and the deforestation rates are low¹. If Planadas was also a guerrilla territory, something is happening to prevent this area to deal with the same kind of challenges than other areas former controlled by the FARC-EP.

We found that coffee associations are playing an important economic, social, and environmental regulation role, particularly after the initiation of the peace talks between the government and the FARC-EP in 2012. Planadas is a place of thriving coffee cultivation. Around 6.000 peasants grow coffee in a municipality of 30.000 inhabitants, where 75% of the population lives in rural areas (Alcaldia Municipal Planadas, 2016). At least 12 coffee associations are active in Planadas, which seems to be a special feature since in the bulk of coffee growing municipalities the National Coffee Growers Federation – FEDECAFE stirs coffee growing and commercialization. FEDECAFE is a powerful guild founded in 1927 and is in charge of the Coffee Fund (public funds for the sector) and regulates commercialization and exports of the Colombian coffee (FEDECAFE, 2016). Additionally, FEDECAFE has a purchase guarantee for all the producers through its cooperatives at the local level (FEDECAFE, no date).

In this scenario, we were wondering how is possible that in a municipality of historical FARC-EP presence and the strong role of FEDECAFE in coffee's value chain the coffee associations as a specific form of collective action are successful. Therefore, we organized the research into two parts. The first one aims at disentangling particularities in the relationship between the FARC-EP and the local community in Planadas, to identify the specific challenges resulting from wartime

¹In 2018, while the number of homicides in Planadas was nine, in municipalities such as Tumaco (236 homicides), San Vicente del Caguan (35), and the region of El Catatumbo (six municipalities – 168 homicides) was much higher (DIJIN POLICIA NACIONAL, 2018). Regarding deforestation, in 2017 almost 220.000 has. of rainforest were affected countrywide. In Tolima, the department where Planadas is located, the deforestation reached 419 has, contributing to less than the 0.2%, while the department of Caqueta of historical FARC-EP presence, is contributing with 63% of the deforestation countrywide (IDEAM and MADS, 2018).

that the civilians must deal with in the post-conflict stage, focusing on the period between 1990 and 2017 when the FARC-EP combatants demobilized. The second part analyzes the associativity in Planadas, to answer how the coffee growers overcame collective action problems in an area highly affected by the FARC-EP and the presence of FEDECAFE.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology applied is case study working with a sample of six associations and one in the process of formation. We selected the cases according to the stage of the association (three pioneer associations (formed in the early 2000s), the main association created in 2014, two followers and one group of coffee growers in the process of formation). For the data collection, we conducted a timeline exercise with 10 coffee growers in Planadas (from different associations), 19 semi-structured interviews, and 5 group interviews in October 2018 and January 2019.

We based on the collective action theory developed by Ostrom and others to organize and analyze the data, grouping the information according to a categorization of the variables for collective action efforts, identifying six main variables (reciprocity, reputation, networks, institutions, problem, and contextual variables) and 19 qualitative indicators, used as the critical variable trust building. (Ostrom, 1993, 2000a, 2000b, 2004, 2007, 2010; Ostrom & Ahn, 1990; Ostrom, Ahn, & Olivares, 2003; Ostrom & Basurto, 2011). According to those variables and indicators, we analyze the rules enforced by the guerrilla, selecting those that we consider affected collective action endeavors in both wartime and post-conflict. Additionally, we identify other contextual variables prompting the formation of associations using multi-causal analysis.

RESULTS

The War in Planadas

Planadas is a municipality in southern Tolima with 97 rural districts, one main urban area, and two villages (Gaitania and Bilbao). The municipality spreads on more than 175.000 ha. Additionally, the indigenous community Páez has a territory protected by the Colombian state, with their own jurisdiction and organizational forms, the Resguardo Indígena Páez de Gaitania (with almost 4.000 ha.). The Forest Reserve of the snowy mountain El Huila occupies 57.921 ha (MDAS and Instituto Alexander Von Humboldt, 2012). Planadas is a corridor between the southeastern part of the country to the Pacific Ocean, connecting the departments of Caquetá, Huila, Tolima, and Cauca. Additionally, the FARC-EP used this territory to hide Chief Commanders, condition explaining the military value of the municipality (FIP, USAID and OIM, 2013b). Since 1985, the armed conflict left 28.456 victims (RUV, 2019b). Between 1990 and 2013, 236 armed conflict-related events occurred in Planadas (IGAC, 2016).

From the formation of the FARC-EP to their demobilization, Planadas experienced the continuous presence of the guerrilla. While the rebel group had other stronghold territories, Planadas was special because the FARC-EP acknowledges the army attack to Marquetalia as their foundational myth, meaning that Planadas had both strategic and symbolic value for the guerrilla. According to the locals, this led to strong stigmatization of the *planadunos* of being guerrilla sympathizers or even “warriors”.

The peasants pointed out three major periods in the relationship between the FARC-EP and the communities since 1990: 1. Consolidation of the FARC-EP governance (1990-2003). 2. The Democratic Security policy and the war (2003-2010). 3. The peace talks and the relaxation of the guerrilla presence (2012-2017).

In the mid-1990s, “Jerónimo” arrived in the area as the commander of the Front 66 (operating in northern Huila and southern Tolima), strengthening the dominion of the FARC-EP after attempts of right-wing paramilitary forces to dispute the area in the 1980s. During the peace talks in El Caguán (1998-2002), the guerrilla dominion consolidated and even was fraternizing with the police officers. “What could the police officers do? Nothing. They were playing soccer together

and the police officer did whatever the guerrilla said. The guerrilla, at least here, was definitely stronger than the police” (Community leader Gaitania, 2018).

In 2002, the president Alvaro Uribe Velez (2002-2010) enacted the public policy “Democratic security” to counteract the guerrilla actions, implementing the Patriot plan and the military operations Liberty I and II in southern Tolima. One of the military targets of this policy was Planadas due to the strong presence of the FARC-EP, under the operation Liberty II, which started in 2005 (FIP, USAID and OIM, 2013a). The peasants named the period from 2003 to 2010 as “The War”.

The forced displacement increased during this period due to the clashes between the army and the guerrilla and the intensification of the FARC-EP efforts to recruit young people. Several families fled from their homes or sent their children to the cities. The FARC-EP implemented two strategies of recruitment: pedagogy (for voluntary recruitment) and forced recruitment. However, the local population perceived the displacement as individual events, not as massive as in other areas of the country. “Here we did not have “peaks” of forced displacement. It was gradually. For instance, someone left and four or five months later another person was forced to leave” (Community leader Gaitania, 2018). However, according to official records, during the 8 years of this period, Planadas presented 2.459 persons declared as victims of displacement (RUV, 2019a).

Additionally, civilians were afraid due to incriminations made by the army and former guerrilla members to obtain legal benefits for collaboration with the authorities. Simultaneously, the executions of civilians by the guerrilla increased as a control to prevent any kind of collaboration with the army. According to the locals, many innocents were killed during this period.

In 2012, the initiation of the peace talks between the national government and the FARC-EP had significant consequences for Planadas. On the one hand, the municipality opened to foreigners and this boosted the local economy. On the other hand, the guerrilla dominion relaxed. However, petty crimes have increased since 2017 because the guerrilla used to develop police functions.

While the locals are relieved of the end of the war, they are also concern about the security conditions in the area.

Another fear is the increasing intimidation to community leaders due to their political affiliation. Particularly, the leaders of left-wing political parties have received threats, including members of the political party founded by the FARC-EP after the demobilization. Nevertheless, this phenomenon is completely different for the local population from the assassination of community leaders in other regions of the country. Some of the interviewed coincide that there is not a clear environmental nor an economic conflict in Planadas, such as illegal crops or extractive economies involving community leaders defending their territories as in other regions of the country seriously affected by the assassination of their leaders.

The FARC-EP governance in Planadas

Despite being a war zone and the weak state presence, different aspects of daily life in Planadas were very organized. The FARC-EP created a regime of governance based on a set of institutions, or “different configurations of rules and norms that shape human interactions” (Ostrom and Basurto, 2011, p. 2) to manage civilians’ affairs, including domestic violence, petty crimes, rapes, and even gossips.

While the elections were taking place regularly and the municipality has public officers and services, the State presence was weak, unable to provide services considered as basic such as justice, security, and infrastructure. Instead, the guerrilla developed parallel services considered very effective by the local population.

Even the local officers related to the guerrilla because it was the most powerful actor in the area. While police, the mayoralty and other state agencies in Planadas were functioning, the rulers de facto were the FARC-EP, mainly because they were holding the monopoly of violence.

Even in the period of war (2003-2010) the FARC-EP still kept the governance of civilians. While the FARC-EP governance institutions had different scopes, mainly communal, environmental,

and economical, we identify a specific set of rules that affected the ulterior post-conflict setting and the formation of coffee associations.

First, the guerrilla regulated the land market in the area, approving or rejecting transactions considering both the buyer and the property. Before selling land, the peasants should ask permission to the FARC-EP, enabling the preservation of a land tenure structure based on smallholders, which are the social basis of the associations (according to the representatives of the associations, on average, the members have 5 ha.).

Second, the guerrilla enforced a crucial rule that was not applied in other regions: the ban on opium growing. From 1998 to 2003, the opium cultivation spread in the rural areas of Planadas. While the main illegal crop countrywide is coke, opium was the main one in Tolima. In 2003, 1.359 ha. were cultivated with opium in Tolima. However, in Planadas the FARC-EP prohibited to grow opium after 2003, even when they were taxing opium production. “In other areas, the peasants didn’t have a choice. They must grow coke or opium and we allowed this. But here they have coffee, plantain, red beans” (Former commander of the FARC-EP, 2018). Currently, Planadas had 14.193 ha. under coffee production and the cultivation of illegal crops is inexistent (Alcaldia Municipal Planadas, 2016). During the opium bonanza, according to the official records on average 60 hectares were cultivated with opium each year (ODC, 2019). However, unofficial records and the peasants themselves recognized that at least 2.000 hectares were cultivated with opium (Gonzalez-Arias and Briceno, 2002).

Third, the FARC-EP banned deforestation, burnings, and hunting. The guerrilla approved timber extraction only for domestic uses and the peasants had to cultivate other trees to compensate for the ecological damage. Additionally, during the opium boom in the municipality the guerrilla prohibited the encroachment of the forest reserve for opium growing. According to the peasants, the relaxation of the guerrilla dominion since 2012 incremented the deforestation in the area.

The guerrilla relied on the rural committees Juntas de Accion Comunal – JAC to implement and legitimize their governance system. The JAC are voluntary civilians’ organizations to manage different affairs at the local level (in both urban and rural areas). The government created and

regulated the JAC in the 1950s, but they do not receive public funds for their functioning (Ministerio del Interior, no date).

The strong presence of the FARC-EP, simultaneously, was inhibiting organizational processes. The guerrilla requested the Presidents of the JAC to intervene from 15 to 30 minutes during the monthly meetings of the JAC, using this opportunity to promote the formation of peasants' organizations. However, the FARC-EP forced cooperation. The community work was organized and environmental rules enforced by the FARC-EP. The guerrilla, for instance, established a mandatory civic day in rural areas, urging the civilians to devote monthly one day to maintain the earth roads in good conditions.

Additionally, the FARC-EP controlled the population mobility preventing the locals to develop necessary market relations and partnerships for the associations to thrive. For instance, to grant territorial control, the guerrilla issued identity cards for the local population. Controls applied especially for rural workers during the harvest and for all the outsiders coming to Planadas. If a local wanted to invite a foreigner, he/she should inform in advance to the JAC. Additionally, when a stranger arrived in Planadas, the guerrilla asked for the purpose and duration of the visit, and the acquaintances/relatives in Planadas. Since one of the funding sources of the FARC-EP was extortion and kidnapping, the foreigners were afraid to go to Planadas. In addition, the controls on public officers, project assistants, and consultants, whether private or public, were strict and most of the time they were not allowed to work in the area. Therefore, for the peasants was difficult to access to training processes and development projects that became important for the formation of the associations.

“THE REVOLUTION OF ASSOCIATIONS IN PLANADAS”

Factors influencing the creation of associations in Planadas

Local factors

The peasants argued different causes for the formation of the coffee associations in Planadas, emerging from the local, national, and global contexts.

While not directly related to the forming process of the associations, peasants stated as the first reason their perseverance in coffee growing despite the war. “As long as the guerrilla knows that you were working, they would not bother you. If they knew that you were neither a whistleblower nor a *sapo* (toad) they would not bother you” (Group interview ASOPROCAFEES, 2018). According to a peasant, “the peace shielded behind the coffee trees” (Community Leader, 2018), meaning that in spite of the difficulties coffee growing allowed them to remain in the zone and has been the key to overcome war.

Another factor was previous experiences in association processes. Organizations such as Asociacion de Trabajadores Campesinos del Tolima - ASTRACATOL, according to the peasants, were less successful due to their stigmatization as guerrilla sympathizers, preventing it to grow in Planadas; still several peasants were associated. Another experience was the Community shops around 1995 where the peasants were in charge of slaughtering to keep the price of meat between \$3.000 - \$3.500 COP (1 euro) per pound.

Moreover, the peasants formed the first coffee associations around 2003, such as Association of Panela Producers of Planadas – ASOPAP and ASOPROGREM not for coffee but for other staple foods, such as panela (row sugar, very important for the local diet) and poultry. Only Café El Macizo was created for coffee growing, paradoxically, promoted by FEDECAFE. The peasants formed the firsts associations that evolved into coffee associations to access to funding opportunities, in the context of the impulse given by the national government to the model of solidarity economy, particularly since 2002.

“It was strange because the one that promoted our association was the Coffee Growers’ Committee of Tolima [the branch of FEDECAFE at the departmental level]. The committee provided training [with the purpose] of asking things, believing that we could go to the Governors’ office to ask for infrastructure for the farm, or to the Ministry of agriculture... But they never thought that we would sell coffee in the future, that we would become their rivals. The association was like that for 10 years, only for development

projects, with Colombia Responde, with the FAO (...) only with that, we were not commercializing coffee” (Member of Cafe El Macizo, 2019).

However, FEDECAFE played another role in the formation of associations. FEDECAFE encourages and supports the formation of coffee growers’ cooperatives in every municipality, as long as they act under the Federation standards and regulations. 24 departments grow coffee in Colombia and Tolima is the third department with more cultivated land (111.710 ha) (DANE, 2016). Most of the peasants were associated with FEDECAFE, but they considered that FEDECAFE was controlling them all the time, especially regarding the commercialization process. Furthermore, according to the peasants, the cooperative representing FEDECAFE at the local level, Cooperativa de Caficultores del Sur del Tolima - CAFISUR, did not pay the Fairtrade premium.

However, the associations became widespread and relevant for the local economy since 2014, the year when an entrepreneur formed the main association: Asociación de Productores Ecológicos de Planadas - ASOPEP. ASOPEP created a successful model that other peasants wanted to imitate. Moreover, several members and directives of other associations were former members of ASOPEP (at least in the cases of ASOBRIS and ASOPROCAFEES), but they had confrontations due to accountability issues that generated distrust. Therefore, ASOPEP boosted the conformation of coffee associations whether by imitation or conflict.

Lastly, the *planadunos* coffee growers were making with regularity to the finals of the national contest Cup of Excellence since 2006 (FEDECAFE, 2014). We found that this particular event convinced the local growers of the quality of their coffee and motivated them to form the associations.

National factors. The peace process and the coffee crisis

In 2012-2013, the price slumps prompted the formation of peasants’ movements (Cruz-Rodriguez, 2013; Restrepo, 2013). In 2013, several strikes took place countrywide, including Planadas. While many peasants involved in the strikes, others seek for alternatives to compensate

the losses. The farmers realized that if they strengthen or form the associations they could access to the premium that they were not receiving through CAFISUR.

Additionally, the initiation of the peace talks in 2012 favors the coffee growers to establish relations with potential partners, especially, with exporters. Even in 2014, some partners were reluctant to visit Planadas for security reasons, a situation that gradually changed. For instance, the first association certified, ASOPAP, had the first meeting with LOHAS Beans, its main partner, in 2014 in Coyaima and the second meeting in Chaparral (municipalities three hours away from Planadas). This was a regular situation for the associations. They were meeting their partners outside the municipality until the representatives of the export companies began to trust in the security conditions, a process occurring after 2014. Therefore, for the managers of the associations, the initiation of the peace talks in 2012 was pivotal for the creation of commercial relations that allow the associations to sell coffee. Moreover, the training specialized in soft-skills for coffee growing intensified, largely favoring the associations.

Additionally, the peace talks enabled the associations to use technology. At least, two associations (ASEMPROGROPE and ASOPROCAFEES) used drones for the maps of the farms of their associates.

“In [guerrilla] times it would be impossible to use the drones if we would do that would mean a complete sacrifice. When we started with the process of the maps, I said, God, I beg you that we won’t have any troubles because it is true that we are in a peace process, [...] but it is also true that there are dissidents, that ideology is preserved by some former members [of the FARC-EP]. So it was definitely a risk but we did not have any kind of troubles” (Group interview ASEMPROGROPE, 2019).

Global factors. Standards and certification processes

While the standards are market-based governance mechanisms oriented by the global demand, professionals such as agronomists and different institutions incepted the standards at the local level.

CAFISUR inserted Fairtrade certification in Planadas. However, the cooperative was purchasing the coffee at the price defined by FEDECAFE, which stipulates the minimum price for coffee on the domestic market. Therefore, the standard did not have any impact on the local growers' income.

The first certified association is ASOPAP, which in 2003 changed its social reason for Asociación de Productores de Cafés Especiales de Planadas, keeping the acronym. In 2006, ASOPAP obtained both Fairtrade certification and USDA Organic. However, it was not until 2014 when different development projects (one from USAID, other from the mayoralty, other from the national government) granted both certifications for several associations in Planadas that the standards became important for the coffee growers associations. The main standards are Fairtrade (which certifies the whole association and not a particular producer, granting a minimum floor price and a social premium² (Fairtrade International, 2019b)) and organic (which certifies each farm). In the case of organic certifications, the two most important are USDA and the Japanese Organic Standards – JAS, since these countries are the main buyers of Colombian coffee (FNC, 2017). However, after those projects, the associations are in charge to pay the certification, an investment according to them ranging from \$3.000 to \$6.000 euros.

The standards are an enormous motivation for the coffee associations, especially Fairtrade, considered as the basic certification that an association must have. Fairtrade urges the growers to form associations and allocate together the social premium (Fairtrade International, 2019a), enabling the associations to respond efficiently to the necessities of their members, because they can allocate funds, for instance, for improving the households. Additionally, the bulk of the associations bought a warehouse and they are building or improving public goods such as roads and bridges.

However, the market for conventional coffee with Fair Trade certification is small. Therefore, as a marketing strategy, all the associations participating in the study are certified with organic or

² The minimum floor price for washed arabicca coffee in Colombia that Fairtrade grants is USD 1.40 per pound and 0.30 cents in addition if is organic coffee (Fairtrade International, 2019b).

are selling micro-lot coffee. Since the associations have also conventional growers that are in transition to organic, a process that takes 3 years, they have also conventional coffee. Only one association of the six formed associations that we consider in the research, ASOPEP, has not its entire members certified as organic or in the transition to.

In the case of organic, despite the initial slumps in the yields, the peasants consider that it is better to have organic not only due to the high international demand for organic products that can increase their income but also for raising concern about the environmental degradation that conventional coffee growing can generate. Different agronomists that were advising the associations to make the transition spurred organic practices as early as 2006. However, it was not until 2013-2014 that the bulk of the associations began with the conversion, coinciding with both the increasing prices of fertilizers for conventional production and the countrywide coffee growers' strike (2013). Since for organic is necessary a transition period of three years for each farm, most of the associations were certified organic around 2016-2017.

“In one hectare you can produce 30 bags [60 kg each] of conventional coffee. To produce that amount I must fertilize three, four times per year. Additionally, I must be very organized. The cleaning, the fertilization, and if I calculate, the profit of those 30 bags are 10 bags. But if I'm organic, first of all, I'm taking care of myself because I'm eating healthier, no polluted products. Second, let us say that my yield reduction is 12 bags. But I can sale the remaining 18 bags for a better price than the 30 bags of conventional coffee, and if is high-quality coffee [micro-lots] my earnings are going to be even better. Then I will have at least the same income as if I grow conventional coffee. Moreover, I am leaving a better world for my children. If I am obsessing applying poisons, applying agrochemicals, is going to happen what is happening in other regions of coffee growing. You go to Huila, to Caldas, to Quindío, and the land is done, those are lands that if you do not apply huge amounts of fertilizer you will not grow anything, and you have to apply high-quality fertilizer. 10 years and those lands are going to be a desert. Therefore, if I want to provide a better future for my children, I have to become organic. Otherwise is going to happen

what is happening in Antioquia, of course, they have the boom of conventional coffee but they are ruining the environment” (Member of ASOPEP, 2019).

Organic certifications influenced greatly the practices of the farmers, mainly at the associations level. Under what the peasants called “the Federation system” (FEDECAFÉ – before 2000), the extension services visited them once per year or even two years, because one agronomist was in charge of the technical assistance of 1.200 producers in Planadas. Additionally, FEDECAFÉ fostered both practices of conventional coffee (with agro-chemists) and deforestation because they were spurring the cultivation of in-light varieties (at least before the 2000s). However, while conventional coffee growing requires the application of fertilizers four times per year, the bulk of the peasants could afford only once or none at all. For the peasants, this situation explains the easiness to change the production system from conventional to organics.

“We were already organic” (Timeline, 2018)

With the organic standards, the peasants received monitoring visits from the associations at least 4 times yearly, while other associations visit the farms monthly. Additionally, the supervisors of the certification companies, in this case, BIOTROPICO and MAYACERT, visit the farms for the annual visit (10% of the associates but when the number is below 100, the supervisors visit 10 farms), randomly for “surprise visits”, and due to complains (usually anonymous) made by other farmers or associations to verify the observation of the standards. Therefore, the associations forbid burnings, deforestations, pollution of water sources, application of agro-chemicals (or poisons, as several associations’ members call them) and promote recycling, for instance of honey water. While the state agency in charge of the environmental protection in Tolima, CORTOLIMA, offered training to the peasants, they feel that it was through the associations that environmental care practices are enforced

“Planadas is a town with more than 7 associations, most of them certified, and at this moment we feel responsible for climate change, the standards oblige us to control the use of natural resources, the burnings (...) therefore, we are controlling this by ourselves. The

FARC influenced these practices, but most of all it was because of us, because we became aware (...) about the consequences of climate change” (Member of Cafe El Macizo, 2019).

Associations that are in the process of formation are, however, skeptical about the organic certifications. For instance, the members of Corporación de Productores de Cafés Especiales - CORPCAES are reluctant to transform their practices because they are afraid of the yield slumps. “If we would receive two, or three million for each bag of coffee that would worth, but the prices are the same... Then is better not to decrease the yield, to sell a lot and not a little bit” (Member of CORPCAES, 2019). Therefore, this group of 18 producers, which does not have certifications, are more interested in produce specialty coffee and get the Rainforest Alliance Certification—RFA, which enforces environmental protection as well.

Nevertheless, only two associations are RFA certified, Café El Macizo and ASOPROCAFEES. Both associations recognize that this certification is the hardest regarding the standards. For ASOPROCAFEES, RFA is a marketing strategy, while the members of Café El Macizo decided to hold this certification because they were feeling that Organics was limited regarding environmental protection.

“With RFA we observe the same agricultural practices than other standards, but RFA helps us to preserve better the environment, the animals, many thinks, we are not only selling and selling coffee, we are rescuing the environment as whole, the soil minerals, the water, the animals, everything” (Member of Cafe El Macizo, 2019).

Additional services of the associations

The associations also hold meetings for recreational purposes and create opportunities for the young population to stay in rural areas. The associations offer training (cropping, quality assessment, and job training) and job opportunities (monitoring the farms, as assistants, as baristas) for their associates’ children. Some of them have subsidies for formal education of the associates’ children, have internship programs, and support the farmers for access to health

services.

While the coffee associations are oriented to increase the income of the members through commercialization of the product, they can benefit from development projects. Several associations receive through specific projects both public funds with the chance to freely allocating them and training offered by NGO's and state agencies. However, since the associations rely on their own resources are becoming self-sufficient and empowered in front state agencies and NGO's that want to use them for development projects. "Now we can say what we need and how the projects are going to be. The mayoralty or the governor office cannot tell us what to do" (Member of ASOPEP, 2019).

Due to this change, some associations are affiliating members of the high part of Ataco and northern Huila, because they were constrained to the municipality if they wanted to benefit exclusively from public funds and projects. Since they became self-sufficient, they can overlook this regulation, spreading its services to other communities close to Planadas.

With the support of the state agency Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje – SENA, ASOPEP host a training program in the coffee drying for the demobilized members of the FARC-EP and help them to process the coffee in the mills of the association. While other associations do not have specific programs for former rebels, they declare that they do not mind whether it was rebel or not. As long as the person wants to work, they would receive them in the association.

Formation and Governance aspects inside the associations

The founders of the associations tell the story on how they created the organization arguing the factors stated above, but also as a spontaneous process where they gathered one day, discussed the situation of the coffee sector, and decided to form the association. However, the founders knew each other in this initial group. Some degree of trust led them to invite certain persons to

join the first meetings. Nevertheless, the process of formation and running the associations depurate both members and representatives. In the case of ASEMPROGROPE, for instance, the associates removed the legal representative due to lack of trust.

The associations went through a learning path. In the beginning, there was a lot of frustration because the results were not instant. They faced challenges regarding trust building. In the case of ASOPAP they have initial problems with their partners.

“It was 2006 (...) we received the payment after 6 months of granting the product. The payment was below the price stated by FEDECAFE [the minimum price for coffee on the Colombian market]. Since then, the association decided not to continue with this partner and the decline of the association began, it was standby until 2010. That year the 19 members of the association gathered to liquidate the association, but someone said: “it would be better if we change the managers and see if within one or two years they could run the business. Otherwise, we would gather again and completely liquidate the association”. Mr. Ermides Quiroga assumed the legal representation and in 2014 the association was certified organic. The production of the members was at that time 3 containers. Then the associates decided to sell only one to see how the payments evolved, to not repeat the mistake they made in 2006. If they receive good payment for the container, then they would negotiate the other two” (Member of ASOPAP, 2018)

After learning from their mistakes, they were able to find the way for stabilization, learning how to negotiate with the exporters, how to deliver the coffee, and how the payments have to be done. Additionally, one of the most precious learning for the associations is accountability, which implies being able to control and monitoring their members. On the side of the growers, it means to know what is happening in the association. Therefore, on average, the associations have 65 members (only ASOPEP has 129 members). Colombian law allows membership to only one association on the same product (in this case, coffee), which facilitates for the association the enforcing of the rules and accountability. Every association has monitoring systems of their

associates, including in-situ visits to check the compliance with the standards, quality control (in the farm and in the laboratory at the warehouse), and controls on the amount of production and sales to the association, mechanisms align with the certification process. Each association has a board of directors and managers democratically elected. Additionally, the managers of the associations hold meetings and assemblies with their associates to allocate the social premium (Fairtrade) and to share the information about other premiums, finances, negotiations, and internal procedures. Thus, according to most of the associations, it would be impossible to manage a greater number of members.

Besides accountability, regulating the size of the associations allow them to avoid free riding. In the beginning, the associations dealt with producers that were not selling a single coffee bag to the associations. Since the associations must reinvest the social premium in all the producers, the active members were feeling discontent. From this kind of experiences, the associations developed strict controls. Regularly, they are verifying that the producers are participating, not only selling the coffee through the association but taking part in the meetings and receiving the monitoring visits, for instance. They have penalties according to the offense that ranges from fees to suspension, to expulsion. ASEMPROGROPE, for instance, at some point had 98 members but due to the enforcement of rules reduced the number to 67. Only ASOBRIS has a blacklist of nine producers that are taking part neither on the sales nor on the meetings, but the association does not want to expel them until these growers submit their resignation. However, this association during the data collection did not have Fairtrade, which supposed a share premium.

Another standard to avoid free riding is the affiliation fee, which varies according to the associations. Some of them ask for an initial fee (e.g. ASEMPROGROPE - around 200 euros) and a monthly fee (e.g. ASOPEP - around 17 euros). Other associations request only the initial fee, while others charge the sales (e.g. ASOPROCAFEES - 8 euros per coffee bag) without any additional fee.

Other associations, additionally, in order to admit new members, develop procedures regarding a personal assessment of the candidate. For instance, ASOPROGREM, interviews the candidates and if considers that it would be a problematic person, the association prefers to decline the application. These controls are becoming stricter since for the associations is important to regulate the size of the organization.

Why not a union of associations in Planadas?

The associations have collaboration activities among them, especially regarding the conformation. For instance, ASOPAP helped three other associations for their conformation processes, while ASOPROCAFEES supported other two. This collaboration includes the information on how they work (main functions, organizers, rules), and the use of the coffee laboratories while the other associations can have their own laboratory.

However, a one-body association in Planadas is inexistent. The difficulties for the conformation of a union of all associations relates most of all with accountability issues linked to the regulation on the number of members, but also with one particular episode. In 2016, the associations already formed tried to create a union, representing more than 800 producers under the leadership of ASOPEP's main founder. The union participated in a coffee fair in 2016, and the members of the other associations decided to share all the clients' information to ASOPEP. When they returned to Planadas, ASOPEP kept the information for itself. This particular event, from the standpoint of the associations, discouraged the conformation of one body association or second level associations in Planadas.

Additionally, former members of ASOPEP created ASOPROCAFEES and ASOBRIS, adducing accountability issues.

“In 2014 a German guy came to Planadas with two Koreans to buy coffee (...) and they settled a price of \$780.00 COP, at that time the coffee sale price was around \$500.000 COP (...) we brought the coffee here, and when we were about to claim the payment [at ASOPEP], the prices were other (...) and always with that association was the same. They

told us a price, afterward they said another price, and we were standing firm with the association, until one day, I said no more if this is an association we have to share the information and the leaders must show the contracts of the negotiations. They never showed us a contract (...) after that we decided to form another association” (Group interview ASOBRIS, 2019).

However, they recognized the effectiveness in the social and economic sense of what they call the “ASOPEP Model” and how it motivated the formation of other associations.

Besides the role of ASOPEP preventing the formation of an umbrella organization, the peasants stated that at some point they expected to collaborate with CAFISUR for exporting Planadas’ coffee. CAFISUR, however, declined the offer made through a development project in 2015 aiming at improving the commercialization channels. Since then, the associates have not considered any kind of partnership with CAFISUR.

Only three associations are working on the formation of a cooperative. ASOPAP, ASEMPROGROPE, and ASOPROCAFEES, are trying to form the Cooperativa Multiactiva de Planadas y del Sur del Tolima – CMS, not only for coffee but for other products such as avocado, and with a complete portfolio, including financial, export, and product registration for the sanitary certificate services. Nevertheless, during the data collection, this was only an initiative without any concrete result.

Regarding new associations (in the process of formation), they prefer to “walk the path by themselves” (Member of CORPCAES, 2019), because they are afraid that the leaders of the current associations take advantage of them. In the case of ASOBRIS, besides the lack of trust, the legal representative argues that competence is good for the associations, therefore, many associations for her is a necessity.

Changes in the value chain

There is a “before” and “after” in coffee commercialization. Before the associations, the main commercialization channels for the peasants were three. 1. CAFISUR paying the minimum price

for dry coffee on the national market. 2. A Street the peasants called “El Cartucho” or “El Comercio” (the Trade Street) where they used to sale natural coffee, below the price settle by FEDECAFÉ for washed coffee. 3. Buyers from the department of Huila. The presence of buyers from Huila was possible because the main road to Planadas before the 2000s was in poor conditions. Right-wing paramilitary militias controlled the second road and for the *planadunos*, belonging to a municipality controlled by a communist guerrilla was very risky to take this road. Therefore, they traveled through northern Huila, an adjacent department. The traders of Huila took advantage of this situation and went to Planadas to buy the coffee (especially to Gaitania).

However, with the associations and certification processes, the coffee growers were motivated to find new commercialization channels, collaborating with export companies. Most of the associations are working with LOHAS Beans and Selecto. Other holds partnerships with CARAVELA Coffee, RACAFE, EXPOSURCA, Amor Perfecto, and Holland Coffee. Each association has between 5 and 11 commercial partners. While the purpose is to sell all the production through the association, according to their own estimations at least 25% of the production is still commercialized through CAFISUR and the trade street, because the associations cannot grant the negotiation of the whole production with their partners. Moreover, low quality coffee (pasilla or low cup profile) is sold to CAFISUR. The strongest association regarding commercialization is ASOPROCAFEES, which progressively marketed all the production, increasing its participation from 22% in 2016, 75% in 2017, to 99.6% in 2018.

For the associations, these processes were possible due to the standards. As said, the associations are Fairtrade and Organic certified (all of the associations at least have USDA and JAS, while others have Canada Organic, Korean Organic Certification, and Organic Farming, for the EU).

These generate four types of markets: 1. Fairtrade + Organic. The most important one. The premium was \$140.000 COP (per 60 kg – 40 euros) above the price of FEDECAFE in January 2019. 2. Fair Trade + Conventional. 3. Fairtrade + Organic + Micro-lots (specialty coffee. Cup above 83). 4. Fair Trade + Conventional + Micro-lots. Only two associations, ASOPROCAFEES and Café El Macizo, are RFA certified. In this case, they have an especial niche, which has been

very rewardable: Fair Trade + Organic + RFA. However, both associations recognized that RFA alone is not profitable. They implement RFA more for the added value, in terms of creating a unique product than for the premium itself, which is around \$25.000 COP (7.14 euros) per coffee bag.

However, while the certification process has been rewarding, the associations are seeking for more specialization. The micro-lots for them are the logical next step and some of them are already selling specialty coffee. Since is extremely work- demanding the associations encourage the micro-lots instead of the complete conversion of the farms. In this case, the associations seek special buyers willing to pay a higher price, providing the laboratory services to assess the cup profile. Therefore, even when the growers can be tempted to overlook the association and negotiate the coffee by themselves, they still need the association.

Another approach is the direct negotiation with importers in the consumer countries. However, only one association, ASOPEP, is going to start the process without the mediation of the exports companies in Colombia, trading coffee through a partner in France.

The role of FEDECAFE under the Associations' model

While CAFISUR did not grant the premium to the producers, refused to collaborate with the associations, and for some of the interviewees is seen as an obstacle (especially regarding exportation), FEDECAFE is still important for the peasants. All of them have the Coffee Growers ID issued by FEDECAFE, they participate in the elections for their representatives at the local level, and they receive the visit of the extension service. FEDECAFE also has the purchase guarantee providing an additional commercialization channel for low quality coffee and the coffee not negotiated by the associations. Moreover, FEDECAFE stipulates coffee minimum price for the local market, used by the associations as a reference for their own transactions.

Challenges

Coffee growers recognized three major challenges, namely, the impossibility to guarantee the purchase of all of the production to the associates, climate change, and the slow restoration of the relationship with the State, related to an eventual FARC-EP dissidents' rearming.

The associations do not have enough financial resources to purchase all the coffee produced, mainly for two reasons. Firstly, the export companies pay the coffee after 2 or even three months, creating a problem with the cash flow of the associations. Secondly, the financial services for this kind of associations are inexistent. Neither the banks nor FEDECAFE offer credit lines to the associations. Consequently, most of the associations are ignoring the rule obliging the members to sale all the coffee to the association but a minimum amount (e.g. in the case of ASOPEP 1.500 kg/ producer).

Climate change is another major threat to coffee production. While usually, the coffee grew above 1.200 meters, nowadays to obtain high-quality organic coffee it must be grown at 1.500 meters at least. That means that farmers below 1.500 meters are leaving coffee growing and diversifying the production with other crops, particularly cacao. Consequently, at least ASOPEP is expanding their portfolio to include this product and the associations are promoting intercropping, as a strategy to dealing with climate change, diversifying the income sources, or provide shadow to the coffee trees (especially below 1.500 meters).

Finally, the *planadunos* are feeling frustrated regarding the presence of the State in both senses social investment and security. The peace process for them has consisted of workshops and meetings where officers promise them that several investments will be done, but they do not see those investments. "If the State gives us the opportunities, the infrastructure we need to commercialize our products, we will not need anymore. We have ourselves" (Businnessperson, 2018).

Rumors about a possible rearming of dissidents increased in Planadas and we received a pamphlet

from FARC-EP dissidents during the second visit stating rules for the local population concerning “the incompetence of the local authorities” to control petty crimes. When inquired about the possible reactivation of the conflict and the effects it might have on the associations, the bulk of participants declared that they feel prepared, especially regarding two possible practices of the guerrilla, namely, extortions and isolation of the municipality. If the dissidents' groups request extortions, the associations generate enough income to pay them. Other peasants declared that extortion is unlikely because the guerrilla targeted wealthy people, not peasants. Secondly, the associations proved to their commercial partners outside the municipality that they are trustworthy and the partnership can continue regardless of a rearming. However, this scenario is optimistic as long as the non-armed state group is the guerrilla. Under other groups (e.g. right-wing paramilitary militias), the peasants are less positive.

DISCUSSION

Legacies of war for collective action in Planadas

Collective action is undertaken when actors face a problem only possible to solve through long-term collaboration. However, collective action is a problem itself (Ostrom, 2010). Actors must consider the problem at stake as an important one and have enough incentives to embark on collective action efforts (Ostrom, 2004). Since the solution relies on collaboration among them, the trust-building becomes the major challenge (Ostrom, Ahn and Olivares, 2003; Ostrom and Ahn, 2007; Ostrom and Basurto, 2011).

Planadas is an area highly affected by the presence of the FARC-EP. According to widespread assumptions, a collective action effort, whether in wartime or post-conflict would be particularly difficult because the argument follows, war creates chaos and devastation. Therefore, the factors building trust among the actors is seriously compromised. Recent research, however, has shown the probability for rebel groups to install a sort of order in war areas mainly for conflict resolution among civilians, in order to increase their legitimacy and eventually integrating new combatants.

The establishment of order links to the possibility for the rebel group to hold the monopoly of violence in a specific territory (Arjona, 2016). This was the case in Planadas. Even when the army disputed the monopoly of violence to the FARC-EP, the rebels devoted efforts to enforce their governance system. Since Planadas was a stronghold both strategically and symbolically, for the FARC-EP would be extremely costly the military but also the political loss of this territory.

Therefore, while war affected Planadas, only a period of around eight years felt chaotic. Moreover, due to specific rules that the guerrilla enforced in the area, the deactivation of conflicts affecting other areas under the FARC-EP ruling was possible. Simultaneously, the FARC-EP restricted autonomous collective action due to the isolation of the municipality and the imposition of collaboration through the JAC (which does not mean that these organizations are illegitimate).

This compelled us to bring together wartime and the post-conflict setting in Planadas, two stages usually treated as disconnected moments. While war inhibited collective action efforts as successful as the ones started by the coffee growers associations, most of all affecting the autonomy of the peasants and impeding the connections to the outside world, the possibility of collective action in Planadas lays in certain legacies of war.

Firstly, the ban on opium growing deactivated a source of conflicts that areas formerly occupied by the FARC-EP are facing. The peasants were discouraged to continue or to dabble into the opium growing cultivation, strengthening coffee growing, which became a strategy to stay in the area in spite the difficulties and challenges posed by war, especially under the democratic security policy. Secondly, due to the control of the land market but also for the isolation, the land remained in hands of peasants, reinforcing a sense of equity among them.

We find, thus, that the analysis of the specific historical circumstances is necessary toward a better understanding of collective action efforts in specific contexts. In the Colombian case where the armed conflict has differentiated effects among different territories and communities is an unavoidable endeavor. In this sense, it is crucial to understand that the power vacuum generated by the FARC-EP exceeds their military power.

Another major task is to assess what is really happening in post-conflict settings and not simply assume that all of them collapsed (Collier *et al.*, 2003). In this regard, we found that coffee associations are a major player in Planadas, contesting the idea of collective action as inexistent or difficult in post-conflict areas.

How are coffee growers associations in Planadas as a specific form of collective action possible? The problem, incentives and trust building

Some works have pointed out the importance of social capital, cooperatives, and associations to overcome war, focusing on the macro-level or on individual organizations at the local level (Cox and (Ed), 2009; Utting, Chamorro and Bacon, 2017; Cooperatives Europe and CEDP, 2019). While this research is confirming the role of associations in peacebuilding, in Planadas there is not a single thriving organization as shown in other works. At least 12 coffee growers associations are active and the tendency toward the increment of the number of associations continues, generalizing collaboration in the municipality. Why?

The problem at stake for the associates is their livelihood. The income of the peasants in Planadas depends on coffee growing and the price slumps in 2013 were definite to explain the emergence of the associations after this period. While other associations were created before, they were not successful due to different contextual factors, mainly, the isolation of the municipality due to the strong presence of the FARC-EP, a problem that the Peace talks allowed the peasants to overcome. However, the belief that they were growing quality coffee and most of all, the standards, provided the necessary incentives to form the associations. Concurrently, the raising awareness of climate change and environmental protection gradually became more important for the associations already consolidated.

Nevertheless, there was still the problem of building trust, which is the major challenge of collective action, especially if considering an area affected by war.

Following Ostrom and Ahn (2007), trust is “a particular level of the subjective probability with which an agent assesses that another agent of group of agents will perform a particular action”

(p.9), verified by the behavior of the trusted and involving the opportunity for both the trustee and trusted to enhance their welfare. In collective action situations, trust is the expectation that someone will collaborate, especially when one already collaborated. Therefore, trust involves also an expectation of reciprocity. In long-term relations, experience adjust that expectation, creating a reputation of the actor (whether is trustworthy or not) (Ostrom, 2000; Ostrom, Ahn and Olivares, 2003).

To consider trust building in this case, it is important to stress that war did not injure relations among the civilians. Therefore, the coffee growers associations built trust based on the networks the individuals already had, which allowed them to gather an initial group of entrepreneurs. However, the growers went through a learning path, involving evolution and sophistication of rules and practices to verify which individuals and partners are trustworthy and which are not. Democratic mechanisms to make decisions gradually became important, urging the associates to influence the decision-making process and supervising the associations' leaders. The associations consider transparency pivotal from both the managers and the associates. Since the certifications imply standards to observe, the associations developed complementary monitoring systems to verify the compliance with the standards and at the same time avoid free riding. Therefore, the size of the group became a major mechanism for trust building, because what some called “a reasonable number” (Group interview ASEMPROGROPE, 2019) is necessary to remain accountable. Additionally, social and sometimes the territorial proximity of the associated peasants make defection costly not only in terms of the sanctions defined by the associations but also morally.

Additionally, among the coffee growers not associated, imitation processes are taking place, generalizing practices of collaboration. An open question is if the associations will maintain the small size model or evolve into larger associations, whether unifying with others or accepting new members massively.

Standards, beyond profits

While the farmers decided on which certification would fit better their needs and capacities, the standards enforce several rules to access the premium. Moreover, Fairtrade urges farmers to form associations. Additionally, the rules for managing the resources and their interactions are complementary between the standards and the farmers' self-governance mechanisms, with different variations according to the association. This is expanding narrow views only focused on the economic effects of the certifications (van Rijsbergen *et al.*, 2016; Snider *et al.*, 2017). In the case of Planadas, standards are providing the incentives for collective action, having important social effects (strengthening social capital) and facilitating the appropriation by the peasants of discourses related to environmental protection.

Regarding this point, we also found that while rules and accountability are critical, also the discourses underlying collective action. While the main objective of the associations is coffee selling, it is important to remark the role that the members believe the associations are playing in environmental protection, which relates to one of the main aspects of the power vacuum left by the FARC-EP. While the associations cannot take responsibility for the municipal level, they are contributing within their associates fostering practices of environmental care, similar to the rules enforced by the guerrilla, but even more strict and with a sense of self-governance, believing in the necessity of this kind of practices and with economic benefits granted through the certifications. The associations feel empowered to be in charge of the environmental protection controlling deforestation, hunting, and pollution, believing that they have a key role in leaving a "better world" for the generations to come.

Changes in the value chain and empowerment

Besides the empowerment in front of environmental protection, the associations allowed the peasants to break the monopoly held by CAFISUR (in the case of washed coffee) and the Trade Street (in the case of natural coffee). Through associativity, the growers increased their negotiation power with the exporters and intermediaries because they are specialized in offering unique certified coffee with high cup profile. Bridging capital with partners outside the municipality has been critical.

Additionally, the associations can freely decide whether they want to include peasants from other jurisdictions (Huila and Ataco mainly) and the allocation of resources received from both the coffee selling and development projects.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the results, this paper advocates for a strong inclusion as factors influencing collective action, on the one hand, the history and trajectories of particular communities, and on the other, the interactions between third-party rulers and the self-governance processes.

Regarding the first point, the case of coffee growers associations in Planadas stresses the importance of the context and history of particular communities to assess collective action efforts, particularly in post-conflict settings. An area highly affected with armed conflict is not necessarily devastated. The behavior of the guerrilla in this specific territory, while generated difficult conditions, particularly regarding the forced recruitment, population control, and the relations with the exterior, also deactivated social, economic, and environmental conflicts. Consequently, the power vacuum left by the FARC-EP exceeds their military power. Policy makers at the national, departmental, and municipal levels must consider that they are not dealing always with a wrecked area. The peacebuilding strategies must take into account the capacity of the community in Planadas, providing the justice, security, and infrastructure services needed, taking care of including the associations but without any kind of external imposition that can damage the current collective processes.

Concerning the second point, the benefits of the certifications in different sectors have been highly debated and the results are not conclusive. However, for the associations in Planadas, we assessed their impact in terms of collective action. Certifications provided the incentives to form associations and to state environmental protection as one fundamental goal, at least for the associations already formed. Additionally, through the certifications, the peasants were able to break the monopoly of CAFISUR. In this regard, the evaluation of standards must expand economic analysis and include social aspects, especially taking into account that they are

providing alternatives in terms of commercialization channels and are motivating collaboration in rural areas. Therefore, standards (whether focusing on social justice or environmental protection) can potentiate peacebuilding, improving both the capacities of rural communities to act collectively and their livelihoods. This is crucial considering that Colombian civil war, defined as a class-based struggle, has deep agrarian roots. Therefore, to strengthen the peasants' economies have effects for creating and managing resources and enhancing social capital in rural areas.

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