

# Absent Peace in Colombia: A Study of Transition Discourses in Former Combatants

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[Ver número de ResearchID y ORCID de Web of Science](#)

PEACE ECONOMICS PEACE SCIENCE AND PUBLIC POLICY

Volumen: 26

Número: 4

Número de artículo: 20190042

DOI: 10.1515/peps-2019-0042

Fecha de publicación: DEC 2020

Tipo de documento: Article

## Abstract

The Colombian State and subversive groups have made attempts to build peace by the establishment of accords since the 1980s. Recently, the signature of a peace accord by former president Santos and the FARC-EP leadership in 2016, has come along with changes in the interpretative frameworks of the conflict and the emergence of new institutions, forms of subjectivity and collective meanings around peace. Nowadays, Colombia is in the transition from being a country at war to a peaceful nation. In this transition, the discourse of victims and state representatives about peace and conflict are predominant in the literature. This article characterizes the simultaneously coexisting discourses about peace and conflict in former combatants. We conducted a discourse analysis of 19 semi-structured interviews with former members of paramilitaries and guerrillas. The results are clustered into two categories: absent peace, in which peace is seen as the lack of something that was missed and lost; and the indefinite war, where peace can be hardly imagined due to the permanence of conflict and longevity of violence. The overlooked angle of the narratives of combatants about peace and conflict is discussed, and the findings are suggested as potential guidelines to navigate displaced and divergent accounts of peace and conflict in transition societies.

## Palabras clave

**Palabras clave de autor:** [peace](#); [Colombian armed conflict](#); [transitional societies](#); [social imaginary](#); [former combatants](#)

**KeyWords Plus:** [EX-COMBATANTS](#); [CONFLICT](#); [VIOLENCE](#)

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### Financiación

Entidad financiadora	Número de concesión
CONICYT-FONDECYT Postdoctorate 2017 at the Department of Psychology of the Faculty of Social Sciences (FACSO) University of Chile	3170814

[Ver texto de financiación](#)

### Editorial

WALTER DE GRUYTER GMBH, GENTHINER STRASSE 13, D-10785 BERLIN, GERMANY

### Categorías / Clasificación

Áreas de investigación: Government & Law

Categorías de Web of Science: Political Science

### Información del documento

Idioma: English

Número de acceso: WOS:000599748800001

ISSN: 1079-2457

eISSN: 1554-8597