Developing Peace Education in Colombia: A qualitative enquiry of school practice

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities

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### Acronyms and Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>FARC or FARC-EP</td>
<td>Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People’s Army)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEN</td>
<td>Ministerio de Educación Nacional (National Ministry of Education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICBF</td>
<td>Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (Colombian Institute of Family Wellbeing)</td>
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Abstract

In 2014, the government of Colombia passed the 1732 Educational Law, establishing a Peace Core Subject in every educational institution in the country in order to create a culture of peace. The Law was framed during the peace negotiations between the guerrilla FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and the government of Juan Manuel Santos, and is part of an ongoing governmental effort to build peace through education. Schools are central to this process, and have been given the task of educating pupils by equipping them with the skills to build peace. My study is one of the first to analyse how the 1732 Law is being implemented in practice, and to examine the understandings of peace that underpin it.

Drawing upon findings from qualitative case study research in five schools in contrasting contexts in Colombia – Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, and Popayán – I explore how schools, and individual teachers, have interpreted and implemented the Law. I examine how schools and teachers teach peace, the understandings of peace they promote, and the ways families are (or are not) involved in the process of teaching for peace. I draw on global theorising about peace and peace education – specifically, ideas of imperfect peace, liberal peace, and peacebuilding, peacemaking and peacekeeping – to develop a detailed analysis of what schools and teachers hope to achieve, how and why, when educating for peace.

I demonstrate how, though the 1732 Law represents a top-down governmental approach to promoting a liberal form of peace, there is still considerable potential for grassroots initiatives to flourish. My study shows that teachers and head teachers interpret peace and peace education in relation to their schools’ contexts and their personal experiences; that they share common values, like inclusion and the promotion of loving relationships; and that in general, they focus on individual development, shaping behaviours and promoting individual empowerment rather than seeking to challenge structural and cultural violence. The insights my thesis generates are relevant not just for the context of Colombia, but internationally, because they demonstrate that global theorising about peace and peace education is useful for the analysis of educational practice.
Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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Dedication and Acknowledgements

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laugh, when to listen to me go on and on about my research and struggles, and for making dinner so many times. I love you with all my heart.

And to Amalia, for showing me that a simple smile can change everything in an instant. For inspiring me to finish this work and move forward to find new ways to work towards a more peaceful world. I can’t wait to see where our journey takes us. I love you.
Note on the Author

Maria Inés Romero has a BA in Anthropology from the Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá, Colombia. After working as a teacher for six years at the Colegio Hacienda Los Alcaparros, she studied an MA in School Leadership at Harvard University in Cambridge, MA in the United States. After finishing her MA, she went on to study an MSc in Research Methods in Education at the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom and continued to study a PhD at the same university.
Map of Colombia

Source: http://www.orangesmile.com/common/img_country_maps/colombia-map-1.jpg
1. Introduction

This research analyses the interpretation and implementation of the 1732 Educational Law of 2014, understandings of peace, and the ways different understandings are promoted by educators in Colombia. My research explores the Law and its tendency towards liberal peace – understood broadly as norms, liberal institutions, state sovereignty, free market, technical bureaucracy, democracy, human rights (Chandler, 2004; Mac Ginty, 2008; Richmond, 2006; Tadjbakhsh, 2011b) – which nonetheless leaves space for grassroots initiatives to develop peace education. I suggest that, when examining efforts to construct peace in practice, researchers should go beyond the two dominant analytical categories of peace as the absence of physical violence – i.e. negative peace – and peace as social justice and equality – i.e. positive peace – towards a notion of peace as imperfect, a broadly understood as a process (Muñoz, 2006). First, I unpack conceptualisations of peace as negative and positive, and propose viewing peace instead as an imperfect, but continuous line of possibilities for promoting peace as an absence of physical violence to achieving social justice. I argue that understanding peace as an imperfect process allows all initiatives of peace to be recognised, even in the midst of violence. Furthermore, I use the concepts of peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding in relation to imperfect, negative and positive peace in order to examine peace education in practice. Drawing from these global theorisations and debates on how education and peace interact, I critically analyse the potential and limitations of current peace education practice in the Colombian educational context.

1.1. Motivation of Study

‘Today I want to announce that the exploratory meetings have concluded with the signature of a framework agreement between the National Government and the FARC. It establishes [...] a roadmap to reach a final agreement that ends once and forever this violence amongst children of the same nation.’

(Professor Juan Manuel Santos announcing the beginning of peace dialogues with the FARC on August 26th, 2012)

My personal motivation for this research is rooted in a strong interest in education and a deep commitment towards contributing to the improvement of my country. My interest was fuelled in 2012, by the beginning of the peace dialogues between the government and the largest and oldest guerrilla group in Latin America, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de
Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People’s Army) - FARC-EP or FARC which was geared towards ending a 50-year armed conflict in Colombia.

At the time, I had just begun my MA in School Leadership at Harvard. I had decided to take a class called “School Reform” for which we had to write a “Purpose Paper”. This paper was famous around the Harvard Graduate School of Education and many, including me, felt it an impossible task. The assignment required us to declare what, according to us, the purpose of schooling was. I was pondering this question when, on August 26th, 2012, I heard President Santos’ announcement of the beginning of peace talks in Havana between his government and the FARC. The beginning of the peace talks gave me hope and the motivation to make my Purpose Paper an initial enquiry into how schools can contribute to the development of long lasting peace.

Before going to Harvard, I had worked as a teacher for six years at a private school in Bogotá, Colombia. The school had an active learning approach and a focus on conflict resolution. It championed horizontal relationships between teachers and pupils and paid special attention to the learning environment. I had graduated from the same school in 2001, and its pedagogical philosophy was part of me. In a way, a model of peace education had already been instilled in me. Nevertheless, the Purpose Paper made me question everything I thought I knew and deepen my knowledge of how schools contribute to peace. The paper turned out to be a personal pursuit that would go beyond getting an “A” as a final grade. It pushed me to apply to a PhD at the University of Manchester which would give me the chance and the privilege to change directions and explore an idea that had become a personal goal.

At the time, I was interested generally in the role of education in developing peace. However, in 2014, as I was just beginning my PhD, a law passed in Congress mandated a Peace Core Subject in every level, in every private and state school. This governmental move surprised me, as my experience as a teacher had taught me that schools in Colombia had always been engaged in educating people to develop peace. I wondered: why was this law necessary? What is this law demanding from schools? How will schools tackle the new demands, and how will this law change their practice? These initial questions are the ones that inspired my research.
1.2. Peace Education

Education as a means to achieve peace is not a new notion. It can be traced back to the seventeenth century, to the Czech educator Comenius, who first championed the idea (Burns & Aspeslagh, 2013; I. M Harris, 2010). During the nineteenth century, a new interest in developing attitudes towards peace through education became part of educational endeavours as a search for ‘internationalism’ predominated in Europe (K. E. Boulding, 1990; Burns & Aspeslagh, 2013). European nations began to be interested in promoting “international understanding” (Burns & Aspeslagh, 2013, p. 27). The beginning of the twentieth century was marked by the foundation of a network of teachers – the Société d’Éducation Pacifique – tasked with “bring[ing] peace education to classrooms in Europe” (K. E. Boulding, 1990, p. 57). The interest in internationalism continued throughout the first decades of the twentieth century; but the rise of fascism marked a new era in peace education, as the role of governments began to be questioned, and non-governmental organisations opened spaces to develop peace education (Burns & Aspeslagh, 2013).

According to Reardon (1988), the end of World War II was marked by a reform phase. This approach was characterised by “the prevention of war and control of arms races” (Reardon, 1988, p. xi). The emphasis at the international level was on pressuring nations to seek non-violent options to prevent war and to develop people as citizens who could make peace. As a result, peace education after World War II, rose to prominence (Kester & Cremin, 2017). Kester and Cremin (2017) explain that this time was marked by the need to prevent a third world war, which focused on teacher’s attitudes, pedagogy, and the environments that would better foster peace in schools. Some of these elements included “teachers who are self-aware; learning that is experiential, relevant, cooperative and creative; schools that are democratic; and discipline that is based on self-discipline rather than imposed from above” (Cremin & Bevington, 2017, p. 42). Perhaps one of the most important examples of this approach was Maria Montessori, who believed that “[t]rue peace […] suggests the triumph of justice and love among men; it reveals the existence of a better world wherein harmony reigns” (Montessori, n.d., p. 4). Montessori (n.d.) argued that this view of peace challenged education to renew itself, to create environments where children could naturally develop their individual selves and become better humans than the adults who were ready to make war. She promoted active pedagogies and proposed curricula that would give
children freedom to learn based on their interests as pupils; they were not trained to follow orders, and, as such, would not follow states into war (I. M Harris, 2010).

After World War II formal peace education programmes began to spring up in higher education in the United States and Europe as well. This time saw the beginning of peace research, which by the end of the twentieth century had already come into dialogue with peace movements and peace education (I. M Harris, 2010).

1.3. A Brief History of Peace Education in Colombia

Colombia’s attempts to include peace as a goal for education began with the 1991 Constitution (ACODESI, 2003; Villamil, 2013). The 1991 Constitution represented a drastic change from its predecessor, the 1886 Constitution. The 1886 Constitution had been the longest ruling Constitution in Colombia, at 105 years (Zuluaga, 2014). It was built on conservative Spanish principles, Catholicism and the Spanish language (Malagón, 2015). In contrast, the 1991 Constitution characterised Colombia as multicultural and multi-ethnic, and attempted to “re-establish peace and national reconciliation and modernize the state” (Pineda, 1997, p. 115). For instance, the 22nd article of the Constitution states that “peace is a right and a duty” (Constitución Política de Colombia, 1991). Moreover, this Constitution created structures to guarantee peaceful coexistence and equality of rights, and thereby achieve social justice (Villamil, 2013): it recognises diversity, plurality, and the role of the state in guaranteeing basic rights for all. In this endeavour, the Constitution of 1991 attributed education with the responsibility to “prepare Colombians to respect human rights, peace, and democracy” (Constitución Política de Colombia, 1991, Article 67). The fact that the most important legal and political document in the country established peace as a right and duty, and identified education as a means to achieve it, shows the importance of peace education to the nation-building project. The 14th article of the 115 General Law of Education of 1994 continued in this spirit, requiring all private and public institutions to educate students in human values like justice, peace, and cooperation (Villamil, 2013).

Since that time, every Decennial Plan of Education1 includes elements of peace education. The most recent one, for 2015-2025, sets as one of the challenges of education the

1 Defined as “the proposals, actions and goals that express the country’s educational will for the next 10 years” (MEN, n.d.).
goal of “build[ing] a peaceful society on the bases of equality, inclusion, respect to ethics and gender equality” (MEN, 2017, p. 6). To meet this goal, the Plan determined that the country’s overall post-conflict situation compels education to “close the [academic] gap” (MEN, 2017, p. 9) between different groups in society – e.g. rich and poor, indigenous, afro-Colombian and white, rural and urban, “demanding an education that contributes to developing good citizens, solving conflicts peacefully, strengthening reflection and dialogue, and stimulating healthy coexistence” (MEN, 2017, p. 9).

The educational system in Colombia has set guidelines for peace education which are flexible enough to allow schools to develop their own educational projects. The 115 General Law of Education of 1994 illustrates this flexibility, as it states that schools have the freedom to decide how to organise knowledge areas and subjects, optional programmes, and pedagogical approaches in order to make the necessary adaptations to their contexts and needs, and to fully develop their Proyecto Educativo Institucional-PEI2 (Institutional Pedagogical Project, Ley No. 115, Febrero 8 de 1994). However, this law delegates the design of general curricular benchmarks for all areas of knowledge to the National Ministry of Education (MEN). In the case of peace education, the MEN is commissioned to create benchmarks of “citizenship education for democratic participation, peaceful coexistence, and the recognition and respect of diversity” (Ley No. 115, Febrero 8 de 1994, Article 78). In this sense, Colombian law does not allow full autonomy to schools; it sets guidelines that schools must follow, but states that they have the autonomy to decide how to follow them.

In 2004, the MEN developed The National Citizenship Competencies Programme with the purpose of making educational institutions integrate a curriculum for citizenship development based on skills and not just knowledge (Jiménez, Lleras, & Nieto, 2010). The Citizenship Competencies were defined by the Ministry of Education as the “set of cognitive, emotional and communicative skills, that interconnected, make it possible for citizens to act constructively in society” (MEN, 2004, p. 8). This programme once again exemplifies the conviction that education is central to the development of peace in Colombia (see Mieles-

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2 Proyecto Educativo Institucional-PEI (Institutional Pedagogical Project) - the roadmap of schools that encompasses the vision and mission of the school, the theoretical framework that informs its pedagogical goals, the systems and structures that organise the school, and the overall values the institution strives for.
Barrera & Alvarado-Salgado, 2012); but, as Villamil (2013) points out, it was the only concrete effort to implement peace education in schools.

Villamil (2013) argues that this programme has failed to provide the expected results, and has not become an “instrument for cultural change and peaceful practices” (p. 32). The Ministry of Education assesses Citizenship Competencies in its national test aimed at students in grades 3, 5 and 9. The mixed results of the national assessment at the time the 1732 Educational Law was passed show several weaknesses in the citizenship education programme. Results from the assessment in 2013 show that 22% of pupils were victims of bullying and aggression within their schools; that more than a third of the students agreed with statements that justify the violation of laws and corruption in specific circumstances; and a large ignorance of the Constitution and existent mechanisms for citizenship participation. Only 11% of grade 5 students showed knowledge of the organisation of the state, and an understanding that it is the state’s responsibility to guarantee the rights of people. In grade 9, only 9% of students knew about structures designed for citizenship participation and that political participation is not necessary and/or does not work. However, results on plurality, identity and valuing of differences were more encouraging, since the majority of students stated that their classmates did not reject others. 71% of grade 9 students said they disagree with gender stereotypes, as did 86% of students in grade 5; and a majority from both grades stated that they would like people from different backgrounds, with different sexual orientations, and with disabilities to be included in their institutions (ICFES, 2013). The results of the national assessment widely support Villamil’s (2013) assertion, suggesting room for further development in the field of peace education.

In 2013, Congress passed the 1620 Educational Law, which created “the national system of coexistence and education for the exercise of human rights, sexual education, and the prevention and mitigation of school violence” (Ley No. 1620, 15 de marzo 2013, p. 1). The system was designed to coordinate those responsible for educating in the country: educational institutions (including those run by churches and other private groups), family, civil society, and state. The Law aimed to provide support and protection to students by establishing a Route of Comprehensive Attention to School Violence. The route is a series of actions pupils, educators, and parents can take in order to guarantee the well-being of

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students in matters of coexistence in schools. National institutions like the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, the Police of Adolescence and Infancy, the Ministry of Technology and Communications, and the Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (Colombian Institute of Family Wellbeing)-ICBF, among others, are summoned by the Law to support schools, parents and pupils at the national level in guaranteeing the protection of human rights; and specifically, to support processes of developing citizenship competencies, to improve sexual education, and to tackle bullying and cyberbulling.

As I will show in chapter 8, and the 1620 Educational Law above illustrated, the Colombian state includes the family as part of its strategy to educate for peace. The 115 General Law of Education names the family the main educator of underage children (see Ley No. 115, Febrero 8 de 1994) and calls for both schools and parents to work together to provide a comprehensive education for young people which includes peace education. As a result the 115 General Law of Education created the Parents’ Association and Parents’ Council (comprised of parent representatives of the whole parent community) to work directly with the school within the organisation (also see Decreto No. 1860, Agosto 3 de 1994; Ley No. 115, Febrero 8 de 1994). Later in 2010, the 1404 Educational Law created the Parents’ School with the purpose of reaching all the community of parents in every school and facilitate a space for schools and families to work together towards improving the quality of education (Ley No. 1404, Julio 27 de 2010). As I will show in later chapters, the Parents’ School became a strategy that some schools would implement to develop their peace education programmes specifically.

In 2014, the Congress of Colombia passed a new educational law that created an independent Peace Core Subject which is rooted on the previous legal framework presented here. However, the importance of the new Law lies in the fact that it was established during the peace negotiations between the FARC and the government of Colombia. Therefore, it is important to explain the historical context that led to the Havana peace talks and the genesis of the 1732 Educational Law.

1.4. The Colombian Context

The factors that fuelled the Colombian armed conflict were political, economic, social, and also a result of the phenomenon of drug-trafficking. Most of these causes have
deep historical roots that preceded the FARC. Historians tend to place the beginning of the war in Colombia in the decades of the 1940s and 50s, which earned the distinctive name of “La Violencia” (The Violence, see Bailey, 1967; Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013). The causes of armed conflict during this time were mostly political as the two traditional political parties – i.e. the Conservatives and the Liberals – used violence to gain political power, this was the beginning of the guerrilla warfare in the country. The army and police forces became “partisan political instruments” (Bailey, 1967, p. 566) of the Conservative government and the Liberal party created organised guerrilla groups, which caused the formation of anti-guerrilla Conservative groups (Bailey, 1967). Most of the violent conflict occurred in remote rural areas as a consequence of individual interests in land ownership and between 1949 and 1957 large extensions of territory were appropriated by wealthy landowners using violence (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013).

The strategy to end The Violence was to divide power between the traditional political parties and establishing a system in which every four years, they would alternate power. This era – from 1958 to 1974 – is known in Colombian history as the “Frente Nacional” (National Front). By the 1960s small guerrilla groups inspired by the Cuban Revolution began to organise to demand the right to participate in the political arena (Gutiérrez, 2003). Nevertheless, these groups were small and did not have the ideological drive that would characterise them in years to come. In the beginning the national government of the time implemented a military strategy and designed social, economic and political reforms to deal with the emerging guerrilla groups. However, the unequal distribution of land, the violent persecution of farmers at the hands of wealthy landowners to appropriate their lands, and the international pressure to end all communist outbursts, led the government to reinforce the military strategy to end the guerrilla groups and minimised all the political, economic and social reforms (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013).

The 1960s and 1970s were marked by the rise of guerrilla groups, namely the FARC, the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army) –ELN, and the Ejército Popular de Liberación (Liberation Popular Army) –EPL. At first, the guerrillas were confined in the countryside and their development was rudimentary which made violence less visible across the national territory and especially in the cities. This was also explained by the fact that the National Front had opened political participation in the local governments, allowed social mobilisation, and made advances in the industrialisation and urbanisation of
the country. As a result, the guerrillas were relegated and the National Army continued to fight them with complete support of the state (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013).

In 1974 Colombia had to deal with the end of the National Front in the midst of economic crisis and at this time, the guerrillas had also started illegal activities such as kidnapping, increased the amount of bank robberies, cultivated marihuana, and started running laboratories to process the coca paste coming from Peru and Bolivia (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013; Gutiérrez, 2003). Soon, local political groups financed by small mafias started surfacing and the government’s reaction was to use force and introduced the concept of domestic enemy that justified repressive actions under the pretence of maintaining social order. During this time, the war against drugs, merged with the military anti-communist campaign and by the end of the 70s paramilitary armed groups had appeared to defend farmers and private interests from the guerrillas. The new paramilitary groups were supported by the National Army by providing them with weapons, information and military training (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013).

The violent conflict in Colombia intensified in the decade of the 1980s. Several issues explain this phenomenon. First, the rise of the drug cartels motivated the control of land apt for coca plantations. The cartels financed private armies to take land from farmers and protect the coca crops from guerrilla groups which in addition to kidnappings and extorsion, had begun to exploit the drug market to finance the war (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013; Gutiérrez, 2003). Second, the beginning of peace talks between the government at the time and the FARC proved to be unpleasant for the Military Forces and other powerful groups who were afraid of the Unión Patriótica (Patriotic Union)-UP, a new left-wing political party that was rapidly gaining political presence (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013). The systematic assassination of members of the UP by paramilitary groups and state organisms led to the failure of the peace negotiations (Cepeda, n.d.).

By the end of the 1980s drug traffickers, paramilitary groups and guerrillas were all profiting from the illegal drug market, Colombia became the first producer of cocaine in the world, and the market found its way into political groups, becoming a major factor for corruption in Colombia from then on (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013). From 1991 to 2005 Colombia had its most violent chapter. The paramilitary groups decided to form a coalition and created the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (United Self-Defences of
Colombia) – AUC and used sanguinary practices such as massacres and dismembering bodies; the guerrillas changed their tactics from defensive to offensive; and the cartels declared war on the state which meant selective assassinations and started to use terrorist practices against the civilian population. During this time Colombia had the greatest volume of internally displaced people running from violence perpetrated by all the forces in dispute, including the National Army (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013; Gutiérrez, 2003).

In 1998 the then President of Colombia Andrés Pastrana began peace dialogues with the FARC and ELN. However, after the kidnapping of a senator, the peace dialogues ended (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013). At this point the United States’ war on drugs strengthened the Military Forces with the Plan Colombia (Colombia Plan), a financial aid plan of 7,500 million U.S. dollars (United States Embassy, n.d.).

After the peace processes Colombia was left with a cruel war in the rural areas between the guerrillas and the AUC and a national economic crisis. “The public opinion started to perceive how the armed conflict aggravated the economic crisis and that led to a political radicalisation and a change towards a military solution to the war” (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013, p. 178). This feeling led to the election of Álvaro Uribe who had a radical position of the guerrillas as narcoterrorist groups in a mission to overthrow the legitimate government (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013). He was elected President for two terms (2002-2010). His military strategy had positive effects in reducing the violence and criminal activities such as kidnapping and destruction of national infrastructure, and recuperated territories held by the guerrillas (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013). Nevertheless, in areas where the guerrillas had dominated the enforced displacement continued and the incentives given to the authorities to end the guerrillas produced false positives – where the public force claimed they had killed guerrilla members when in fact they were civilians – motivated arbitrary detentions, and espionage from state organisms to critics of Uribe’s government (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013).

Uribe was unsuccessful in ending the guerrillas using military force and began controversial peace negotiations with the paramilitary groups. Internal quarrels within the AUC and different standings about the peace process led to its separation and to a new and more violent era in paramilitary history (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013). In 2010, Juan Manuel Santos, Uribe’s Minister of National Defence, won the presidential
elections under the promise of continuing with Uribe’s legacy.

1.5. The Peace Dialogues in Havana and the 1732 Educational Law of 2014

The consequences of the war up to the point of Santos’ election were too big and difficult to assess, but to provide some understanding, the Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica (The National Centre of Historical Memory, 2013) found that between 1958 and 2012, 220,000 people died as a consequence of armed conflict, and 81% of those were civilians. The most visible non-lethal consequence of the armed conflict is the internal displacement (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013). Internal displacement in Colombia refers to the phenomenon of communities forced to leave their territories as a result of the disputes between illegal armed groups to appropriate land rich in natural resources that private sectors – e.g. wealthy landowners and drug-traffickers – seek to exploit for their own benefit (Lasso-Toro, 2013). Most of the internally displaced people in Colombia, which according to official sources between 1985 and 2013 amounted to 5,921,924 people are of indigenous ethnicity, afro-Colombian communities, and poor farmers (Luque-Revuelto, 2016).

The beginning of the peace conversations between the government and the FARC in 2012, two years after Santos was elected, promised to be “the end of the conflict as such, disarmament, and the reintegration of the FARC to civil life, together with measures taken by the government to end the conflict” (President Juan Manuel Santos as cited in Telesur, 2012, section Proceso comienza en octubre, para. 5). The complex peace dialogues, continued into the next Presidential election, and became a main campaign issue differentiating the President running for re-election and his major political contender (Política, 2014), Óscar Iván Zuluaga, who campaigned against the peace dialogues, and characterised the guerrillas as “a terrorist organisation and the main drug cartel in the world” (Política, 2014). In contrast, Santos defended the dialogues and affirmed that the conflict needed to be acknowledged as well as the victims (Política, 2014). The peace process led to the re-election of President Santos in an election with remarkably high voter turnout (El Tiempo, 2014).

The Agenda negotiated during a period of exploratory talks that took a year and six months before the official peace negotiations began, highlights democracy, social justice, environmental sustainability, human rights, and citizen participation as the foundations for peace in Colombia. The Agenda stated that:
The construction of peace is an issue of the society as a whole that requires the participation of everybody, the respect for human rights is a goal of the state that should be promoted, economic development with social justice and in harmony with the environment is a guarantee of peace and progress, social development with equality and well-being, including the great majorities, allows us to grow as a country, a Colombia in peace will play an active and sovereign role in regional and global peace and development, the amplification of democracy as a condition to achieve solid bases for peace. (FARC-EP, 2014, para. 2).

According to Gómez-Suárez and Newman (2013), observers and analysts of the Havana peace process believed

that the difference between the current and the previous peace talks was that the Santos–FARC talks were taking place in the context of structural reform and were restricted to the five points agreed in the agenda, namely agrarian development, political participation, end of the conflict, drug trafficking and victims’ rights (p. 820).

The five specific points agreed in the agenda spelled out the how of the structural reform. Broadly speaking, the five points meant to address the causes of the armed conflict discussed in section 1.4. Agrarian reform focused on land ownership, concentration and control over territories which has historically excluded farmers from accessing land and left the rural communities underdeveloped, by democratising land ownership. This point of the agenda also referred to integrating the rural and urban regions; and modernise agricultural techniques to promote the economic development of communities in a sustainable way (Mesa de conversaciones gobierno-FARC-EP, 2014).

The second point in the agenda, political participation, emphasised the need for Colombia to expand democracy “to allow more forces in the political scenario to enrich the debate and deliberation around the big national problems” (Mesa de negociación gobierno-FARC-EP, 2013, p. 1). Political participation as a negotiation point not only meant to find middle ground on how was the FARC going to become a legitimate political party, but also to open opportunities for popular mobilisation and participation on issues that matter for the development of peace, for example the distribution of economic resources (Mesa de negociación gobierno-FARC-EP, 2013).

The point of the end of conflict negotiated the route both the government and the FARC had to follow to achieve the bilateral cease-fire and establish the procedural safeguards for the process of disarmament of the FARC. This point also included a transitional justice system to clarify the truth of what happened and established ways for victim reparations, and alternatives to jail sentences (Mesa de negociación gobierno-FARC-
The step of the end of conflict was considered by both parties as a condition for the implementation of all the other points negotiated and to achieve peace (see Mesa de negociación gobierno-FARC-EP, 2016).

The fourth point of drug-trafficking framed the issue of this illicit activity more broadly than just a problem of the existence of criminal organisations, and more as a consequence of larger issues like poverty, marginalisation, the lack of state presence in all the national territory, and the weakness of the Colombian institutions. From this lens, addressing the issue of the production, commercialisation, and consumption of illegal drugs involved a more comprehensive solution. For instance, understanding the issue of drug use as a matter that involves the authorities, the communities, and the family around the promotion of public health like prevention, care, and inclusion of drug users in society; work towards some elements of the point on agrarian reform to provide governmental support to farmers who produce coca in the process of cultivating other products with better technology and in a sustainable way; protect the communities that have been especially affected by the production of drugs; and pursue and prosecute the criminal organisations that profit from drug-trafficking (Mesa de negociación gobierno-FARC-EP, 2014).

The last point of the agenda, victim’s rights, focused specifically on the recognition of victims as victims of the armed conflict and as citizens with rights; both parties, the government and the FARC, acknowledging their responsibility towards the victims; the participation of victims throughout the process of negotiation of peace between the FARC and the government; the clarification of the truth about what happened throughout the armed conflict and the recognition of the responsibility of each actor -i.e. FARC and government; victims’ reparation, meaning for victims to be compensated for the damages they suffered as a result of the armed conflict, and also having their rights re-established; protect the lives and integrity of victims; the guarantee no repetition to prevent more victims; and reconciliation to be able for the whole of Colombian society to move on (gobierno-FARC-EP, 2015).

The Havana peace talks proved successful in the end and a peace accord was signed by the then President Juan Manuel Santos and the leaders of the FARC on the 26th of September 2016. And a referendum was convened for the 2nd of October 2016 for Colombians to ratify or reject the accord. In the referendum only 37.43% of the population eligible to vote in Colombia voted and the results were 50.21% of votes rejecting the accord,
and 49.78% accepting it. As a response, the leaders of the “No” campaign led by former President Álvaro Uribe, demanded for the accord to be revised. The revision mainly focused on the issue of reintegration of the FARC to society and specifically on the topic of justice, which broadly meant to limit the time the FARC and other members of illegal groups had to surrender to transitional justice system and tell the truth (El País, 2016). After this extended negotiation, a final document was finally signed by President Santos and the FARC on the 24th of November 2016 and was ratified by the Colombian Congress.

Parallel to the process in Havana, a key governmental effort to achieve peace came on September 1st, 2014, when Congress passed the 1732 Law that decreed: "With the purpose of guaranteeing the creation and strengthening of a culture of peace in Colombia, a Peace Core Subject shall be established in every preschool, elementary, and secondary educational institution as an independent subject." (Ley No. 1732, 1 de Septiembre 2014, Article 1). The Peace Core Subject aimed to "create and consolidate a space for learning, reflection and dialogue about the culture of peace and sustainable development that contributes to the general well-being and the improvement of the population’s quality of life." (Ley No. 1732, 1 de Septiembre 2014, para. 2).

This Law, as part of a larger legal framework and embedded within a historical time of peace negotiations, shows that in Colombia, as some scholars like Ardizzoni (2001) and Peralta (2009) assert, education, including peace education, plays a crucial role in the development of societies and the construction of a culture of peace. This context makes the analysis of the 1732 Educational Law in theory and practice especially significant for identifying the potential and limitations of education in promoting structural transformation in the pursuit of peace.

1.6. Justification for Research and Research Questions

Having illustrated the history of the Colombian violent conflict and broadly explained the purpose and outcome of the peace negotiations between the government and the FARC, understanding in-depth any initiative to build long lasting peace in Colombia is worthy of study. Even more so, when the initiative, like in the case of the 1732 Educational Law of

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2014, is framed within a peace process that clearly aimed at developing peace by addressing deeply ingrained causes of inequality and violence to prevent violence to resurge and to build a more just society.

In section 1.2. I showed how education globally has been summoned to assist on process of developing peace, and section 1.3. revealed that Colombia has not been the exception. The 1732 Educational Law is the most recent attempt to build peace through education, which suggests that Colombia is searching for ways in which schools specifically can be more effective in teaching peace in the current context of Colombia, after the peace accord, when the stakes for successfully translating it into practice are high.

Through this study I intend to answer four research questions to understand the impact of the Law on the practice of peace education in Colombia, and also the understandings of peace that educators have and if, and how, these shape the peace education programmes in the schools. Finally, I analyse the actual practice of peace education, especially within challenging circumstances like that of schools embedded in violent settings. Therefore, I asked the following:

1. How is the Law implemented and understood?
2. How is peace taught in schools?
3. What kinds of peace are being promoted in schools?
4. How are families involved in the process of teaching peace?

This study will also show that although the case-study schools are located in Colombia, there are important lessons for other contexts. The Colombian case shows that there are important elements that should be taken into account when trying to implement any peace education programme in schools, for example the context and personal experiences of those teaching peace. Also, I will show that it can be valuable to learn about the risk of implementing a Law that is an attempt to build liberal peace but that notwithstanding leaves too much space for schools to, not only make choices that allow them to build the kind of programme they need, but also to not implement any real significant changes. This case located in Colombia will also prove valuable to wider audiences as it is the study of an effort of a nation to develop peace through education while trying to rebuild and enter a stage of post-conflict.
1.7. Outline of Thesis

After this introduction, there will be eight chapters. In Chapter 2, I unpack the key concepts of peace and peace education. In doing so, I create an analytical framework from which to look at peace education in practice in Colombia. Chapter 3 focuses on the methodology of the study, detailing the process of data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations. In Chapter 4, I analyse the 1732 Educational Law in light of the larger discourse of liberal peace and the nation-building project that began with the Havana peace negotiations. I examine how the specific law is being interpreted and implemented in schools. Chapters 5 and 6 explore the ideas of peace that elite participants – i.e. head teachers and teachers – and pupils have, and what shapes these notions. Chapter 7 delves into the actual practice of peace education in schools by exploring two specific exemplar projects that are shared across the schools in my study. In Chapter 8, I examine the role of the families in the process of teaching peace. Finally, Chapter 9 brings all the findings together to critically analyse current peace education practice in Colombia and determine its potential and limitations. I also present empirical and theoretical contributions of this study to the field of peace education in general.
2. Theoretical Framework

This chapter explains overarching conceptualisations in the literature of peace and peace education to build a theoretical framework from which to analyse peace education in practice in Colombia. After unpacking “peace” – i.e. positive, negative, and imperfect – I explore the concept of liberal peace and its relevance for the development of peace and peace education in practice. I also examine peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding as means of developing peace. Last, I explore how these global theories translate into practices of peace education.

Peace education means many different things to different people, groups (Salomon, 2004a), and organisations. UNICEF defines it as:

the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level. (Fountain, 1999, p. 1)

Reardon (1988) calls for comprehensive peace education, which is a form of formal education that includes every level and every sphere of knowledge. She considers it a form of peace studies that emphasises the process of learning, which includes specific curricula and pedagogy. Harris and Morrison (2013) characterise peace education as a philosophy and a process. The philosophical aspect of peace education consists in teaching “nonviolence, love, compassion and reverence for all life.” (p. 11). As a process, peace education’s aims are to develop a world where conflicts are solved peacefully and sustainably. Educators empower people by teaching skills like listening and problem-solving, and attitudes like cooperation, reflection, and knowledge (Harris & Morrison, 2013). What these scholars indicate is there is no singular understanding of what peace education is, what it should be trying to achieve, and how. There are instead many different ‘peace educations’.

Salomon (2002) claims: “neither scholarly nor practical progress can take place in the absence of clear conceptions of what peace education is and what goals it is to serve.” (p. 3). Other scholars (I. M Harris, 2004; Reardon, 1988; Snauwaert, 2011) add that how peace is defined shapes the actions political leaders and people in general take towards achieving or developing peace. However, trying to define different peace educations under an umbrella definition of Peace Education means losing the variety of actions taken in different contexts.
to develop peace through education (Salomon, 2002). Haavelsrud (2008) argues that attempting to find an ubiquitous definition of peace education is impractical.

In summary, while defining peace education is important, local actors embedded in specific contexts must be the ones defining it since a universal definition is difficult to impose because the context helps shape the definitions (see Salomon, 2002). The difference between peace *educations* is a result of distinct understandings of peace. Therefore, in order to look at peace education in-depth in any context, it is crucial to begin by analysing global debates about theorising of peace and peace education.

2.1. Positive and Negative Peace

First attempts at defining peace were made in the Enlightenment, amid ideas of a global order without war and real aspirations for peace on the part of political leaders (Howard, 2002). During this era, the desire for peace led to a first attempt to define it. Hobbes viewed peace as the mere absence of active war; he argued that there is peace when direct physical violence, which in extreme cases causes death, is not present (Howard, 2002). Much later in the 1970s Johan Galtung (1990a, 1990b) characterised the Hobbesian view as too narrow. Galtung’s (1990b) understanding is that peace is the absence of structural violence. In other words, he defines peace as the absence of economic, political, cultural and social practices that cause and normalise poverty, lack of education or any other issue that impedes human beings from achieving their own potential in life. Galtung (1990a) identifies cultural violence as particularly damaging, as it is “exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science […] – that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence.” (p. 291). This assertion highlights the fact that peace is more than the mere absence of direct violence and calls for a broader view. Galtung termed Hobbes’ narrow view as negative peace, and the broader, positive peace (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, & Miall, 2011). These terms have been widely adopted by theorists of peace and peace education, and I will use them as the two poles in a continuum of understandings of peace, which the following sections explore in more detail.

2.1.1. Peace as the End of Physical Violence

Negative peace incorporates what Richmond (2014) calls “an ‘inherency’ view of conflict. That is, violence is intrinsic to human nature, is part of our biology, and thus is endemic in society, history, and amongst states at the international level.” (p. 7). He claims
that this view persisted until the Enlightenment, and even as far as the emergence of fascism, and that it supported hierarchical relationships of power that were important to some sectors of society to justify the use of force and violence on others. The inherency view of conflict justifies achieving peace by suppressing violence which in turn suggests that peace can be ended through suppressive acts.

Furthermore, Richmond’s (2014) assessment is that a narrow understanding of peace as negative has the risk of creating a fragile state, where constant shifts of power can quickly force people to return to violence as the underlying systems that maintain that violence go unaddressed. For example, ingrained cultural practices such as religious beliefs, unequal gender relations, and racial or class discrimination, support violence and justify the re-emergence of violent actions. This narrow perspective which broadly understands peace as the absence of violence, makes the goal of peace too small to aim for (Galtung, 1990b) and allows the possibility of reaching unstable conditions. This limited interpretation ignores the deep underlying issues that cause violence, which are considered in the perspective of positive peace.

2.1.2. Positive Peace and Social Justice

In contrast with the inherency view of conflict, which is associated with ideas of negative peace as the absence of violence, a perspective of peace as positive understands that conflict and war are learned behaviours. Human action can prevent or mitigate conflict through institutions, compromise, agreement, redistribution of resources, and education. This view has shaped the attempt during the 20th century to build a positive peace, defined as long-term stability, sustainability, and social justice. (Richmond, 2014, p. 9)

Peace becomes something that, instead of being imposed, can be developed “by people, states, and institutions. Human beings have the capacity to understand why conflict arises and to develop a range of innovative responses to it” (Richmond, 2014, p. 11). The question of why conflict arises motivates a search for the underlying the unequal structures that fuel it. Richmond (2014) goes on to point out that working towards positive peace requires sophisticated knowledge of social justice in order to address the violence that stems from social, economic, ethnic, gender, and political inequalities, which is in itself problematic; as Hytten and Bettez (2011) emphasise, definitions of social justice, and means of achieving it, are ambiguous and contested.
One understanding of social justice is as redistribution of wealth which emphasises rights and social welfare. O’Connor (2001) and North (2006) argue that this approach ignores the relationship between poverty and underlying discriminatory race, class, and cultural practices. A second perspective, known as the politics of recognition, focuses on human relationships and understands injustice in terms of oppression and domination (North, 2006). In this model, the pursuit of social justice should seek to transform established structural and social practices that sustain oppression. North (2006, p. 514) explains that “[g]roups seeking recognition are [...] not defined by relations of production but rather by the respect, esteem, and privilege that they enjoy relative to other groups in society” (p. 514). Snauwaert (2011) argues that “justice is constitutive of peace” (p. 317), and the foundation of justice starts with basic moral equality:

the foundation lies even deeper [...] At its core is a fundamental belief in moral equality, a belief that all human beings possess an equal inherent dignity and worth [...] Moral equality is not earned or bestowed; it should be understood as inherent in our humanity. (p. 318)

Snauwaert (2011) relates moral equality to Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which asserts: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood” (United Nations, 1948). Justice thus carries the responsibility of treating others in truly humane ways, which means sincerely respecting and dignifying their human life (Snauwaert, 2011). He defines human life defined as “mortality, the human body and its sustenance, capacity for pleasure and pain, cognitive capability, early infant dependence, practical reason, sociability, humor and play, and separateness (individuality)” (p. 320), as well as the numerous networks that individuals have as they are part of a society. For Snauwaert to dignify human life would be to honour all of its elements – a view of a just peace akin to the politics of recognition.

The purpose of a just peace is “the actual quality of life of individuals” (Snauwaert, 2011, p. 323). Individuals have the responsibility to expose injustice and eliminate it by challenging oppression, marginalisation and inequality, and by advocating for everyone to have access to a good life. Sen (as cited in Walker & Unterhalter, 2007) describes justice similarly, in terms of the “opportunities or freedoms to achieve what an individual reflectively considers valuable” (p. 2). Nussbaum (2003) explains that the way to ensure rights “is to think in terms of capabilities” (p. 37). Meaning that to truly achieve social justice
and equality is not enough to consider that rights are given by society, but to also identify the extent in which individuals can successfully enjoy them, implying that for individuals to reach what they hold valuable, must transform structures and institutions that work against that purpose. The work of engaging with transformation of structures calls for Freire’s (1996 [1970]) concept of conscientização, or a “critical perception of reality” (Rivage-Seul, 1987, p. 160), which means acknowledging elements of oppression present in social, political and economic inequalities, and taking action to transform them. The development of conscientização is especially necessary since there are dilemmas around capability. People’s understandings of what they value may be constrained by their current circumstances. Therefore, to enable individuals to achieve what they value, can involve questioning the very same things they value within the larger structural limitations in order to challenge the system that determines what people should consider valuable.

Fraser and Honneth (2003) argue that there is a general tendency to emphasise one approach at the expense of the other, which results in “false antitheses” (p. 9). They stress that justice can only truly be achieved if there is redistribution and recognition, and they advocate for a more comprehensive view of justice and positive peace.

Nevertheless, understanding social justice as redistribution and recognition does not entirely solve the issue of what peace looks like and how can it be achieved. While it seems clear that negative peace is too narrow, the idea of positive peace and social justice is not without its critics. Scholars such as Muñoz and Martínez (2011) characterise positive peace as problematic, and have suggested an alternative view of peace as imperfect. Imperfect peace understands peace as a process rather than a finished goal. On the other hand, Dietrich (2012) suggests families of peace which he argues are present in every society simultaneously. The next sections examine in detail Dietrich’s families of peace to analyse the notion of peace as imperfect and the dominant view of peace and peace development currently in the world: liberal peace.

2.2. From Negative and Positive to Many Peaces

Dietrich (2012) classifies conceptualisations of peace into five overarching interpretations present in every society: energetic, moral, modern, postmodern, and

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transrational. The first family of peace is formed by interpretations which understand peace as harmony. Within this conceptualisation of peace, peace is viewed “in relation to other living beings and toward the universe” (Dietrich, 2012, p. 56). Energetic peace starts within the individual and radiates outward, peace exists when the inner and the outside world are in harmony. As a result, peace is never objective as it depends on the individual who perceives the world around him/her and on the necessary adjustments they have to make according to the ever-changing circumstances each person faces (Dietrich, 2012).

The second family of peace derived from moral interpretations of peace emphasise the norm (Dietrich, 2012).

“A moral image of peace is given whenever a norm that legitimizes itself through its sheer existence and social power also constitutes the ultimate explanation of this peace. [...] this occurs whenever peace is understood as a contract, as *pax*” (Dietrich, 2012, p. 112).

The contract or agreement around norms which constitute a moral peace, according to Dietrich (2012), has its roots in the past and the traumas that come from it. Therefore, a moral peace come with a secondary element which attempts to prevent future events that would repeat the pains of the past. Peace from a moral interpretation is usually seen, for example, as peace and justice, peace and truth, or peace and security. Words like justice, truth, and security make clear what is being tried to address in the future.

“The narrator can refer to the past situations during which the community was threatened in its security, during which it suffered injustices, or was caught in errors. The norm-setting declares peace to be the future salvation from those adversities and promises such a peace, if people follows its authority and its norms on this path” (Dietrich, 2012, p. 113).

As a result, moral peace relates to the past and the future, but not to the present. Some ideas of peace I discussed in the previous section such as peace as social justice and moral equality have similarities with this notion of peace.

Dietrich’s (2012) family of modern peace derives from an understanding of modernity not as a historical period, but as a mindset. The modern mentality blends the notion of One Truth with moral peace.

“The resultant concepts of peace can only be understood within those premises and exhibit many similarities in argumentation to the phobic logic of the moral peace.
Security, justice, truth, and norm as determinants for the moral peace [...] also penetrate the modern peace” (p. 148).

Modern peace derives from the conceptualisation of human nature, for example as negative like in the case of Hobbes who emphasised peace as security -similarly to the notion of negative peace discussed in section 2.1.1- or good in Marx’ perspective who viewed peace as social justice (Dietrich, 2012). These understandings “subject [...] peaces to an absolute dictate of truth” (p. 149). Peace from this interpretation, therefore, led to an understanding of society as something susceptible to be manipulated and transformed by experts. “The new experts not only claim to be able to interpret to be able to interpret the clockwork world and predict its movements, but furthermore, also maintain to be able to manipulate the cogs in a reasonable manner so that a more peaceful world can thereby arise” (p. 160). This understanding of peace is akin to the notion of liberal peace I will examine in detail in section 2.1.2.

In contrast, postmodern peace does not seek for One Truth, and allows for a multiplicity of peaces to coexist (Dietrich, 2012). Postmodern peace, as I will elaborate further in the next section where I analyse imperfect peace, is contextualised, relational, ordinary, and specific. This kind of understandings of peace do not look for a goal or look for an absolute solution, rather they seek to adapt to the context and propose temporary lines of action.

“They only form themselves [peaces] into imperfect and unfinishable connections, that is, to dynamic equilibrums, which in a momentary and perpectivistic manner can be perceived as certain, as long as their small truth is not elevated to the status of something permanent like security or justice. The moment this occurs they disappear again and new efforts for peaces are once more necessary” (Dietrich, 2012, p. 208).

The postmodern interpretation of peace allows for many understandings of peace to flourish and be acknowledged within society. In a similar way, Transrational peace, the fifth family of peace proposed by Dietrich (2012) also gives way to a multiplicity of understandings of peace. However, transrational interpretations of peace “do not decide between spirituality and rationality, but integrate both” (p. 266). Dietrich (2012) explains that from the perspective of transrationality, One Truth modern concepts like justice and security, become as relational as harmony, and therefore, relative. The notions of peace from the perspective of transrationality also integrate the aesthetic dimension “that is always inherent in interpersonal relations but that has not been observed that attentively by modernity” (Dietrich, 2012, p. 266).
From the perspective of transrational peace, society is viewed as a complex human system which can never be fully observed, therefore, just like the energetic peace, the individual’s perspective is considered limited: “The observation determines what is seen” (Dietrich, 2012, p. 268). In addition, the system is in constant change, which cannot support absolute truths. As a result, many notions of peace, including spiritual and aesthetic can be experienced.

Having established that more recent understandings of peace propose other notions which coexist within social systems, in the next sections I will examine an example of a postmodern peace, imperfect peace, which offers and alternative view from which to understand peace education in practice, and liberal peace, a modern view of peace which is the predominant approach to peace and vital for the analysis of the Law which mandates and regulates peace education in Colombia.

2.2.1. Imperfect Peace: A Postmodern Understanding of Peace

Critics of the notion of positive peace like Muñoz (2006) and Muñoz and Martínez (2011) argue that its result has been to turn ‘peace’ into a desired goal:

*positive peace* could be identified as an intended “total” or “perfect” peace where there would be no violence or probably even manifested conflicts. Furthermore, this utopian horizon could, on the one hand, be somewhat unrealistic and frustrating and, on the other, a source of justified violence for reaching the highly desired, yet incredibly difficult, objective. (Muñoz, 2006, p. 248)

Muñoz (2006) argues that positive peace “was the result of a conscious building of a peace based on justice as generator of positive and lasting values, capable of integrating both politically and socially, of generating expectations, and of contemplating the fulfilment of human need” (p. 248); and this resulted in turning positive peace into a utopian goal. He claims that this notion has had significant effects on the work human beings undertake when trying to build peace. For instance, a consequence of understanding peace as a finished and ideal goal is that human beings might feel disempowered and impotent as they try to achieve perfection (Muñoz, 2006). He suggests that peace should instead be understood as a process that happens in everyday relationships and actions (Muñoz, 2006; Muñoz & Martínez, 2011). A perception of peace as something unfinished and subject to change facilitates a “pacifist empowerment” (Muñoz & Martínez, 2011), which involves feeling capable of acting and exploring one’s potentialities to make peace, which otherwise are restricted by thinking of peace as a perfect goal.
A second argument against the notion of positive peace which directs efforts to achieving a perfect goal, is that this ambition generates a disproportionate interest on expressions of violence, and not on the practice of peace to try to identify why there is no peace. The historical emphasis on the study of peace in terms of its relationship to violence led researchers to put more efforts on analysing violence and identify its manifestations (Muñoz, 2006). When peace is seen as something perfect, any manifestation of conflict denies the existence of peace.

Muñoz (2006) suggests that a different notion of peace as imperfect “helps us to plan for conflictive and ever incomplete futures” (p. 259). This conclusion is the result of his analysis of the role of conflict in the development of human beings as a species. He argues that human beings are imperfect by nature and engaged in a constant struggle between pursuing individual goals and managing social conditions. This struggle between the individual and the social generates conflict.

However, in contrast to the negative peace view of the inherency of conflict, Muñoz’ (2006) argument is that conflict allows human competences – i.e. thought, imagination, communication, action – to flourish, giving people “an enormous capacity for productive action” (p. 260). Human beings’ development has depended significantly in the solution of problems and conflicts; and so, conflict could be considered a source of creative action. This view, akin to Richmond’s view of learned behaviours, suggests an appreciation of conflict as something positive, with more nuanced understandings of people involved in conflict, their personal realities and experiences, that “allows us to approach the humane, where positive and negative aspects, along with successes and errors, can coexist” (Muñoz, 2006, p. 260). A view of peace as imperfect, then, embraces the politics of recognition as part of the process of building peace, and acknowledges the existence of violence in the pathway to peace.

Dietrich (2006) asserts that “normally, if we talk about peace, we mean the relations between people and societies, not an absolute value. Therefore peace – however we define or perceive it – is about relations. It is relative and relational” (p. 45). Characterising peace as relational makes it subject to the context in which it is embedded, and definable by existing relations among the people developing it. Peace seen from the perspective of relations opens a new way to study and identify expressions of peace that can come from a multiplicity of experiences (W Dietrich, 2006), as well as including, in Sen’s (as cited in Walker & Unterhalter, 2007) terms, what individuals consider valuable. A single version or
understanding of peace, such as that advocated by both negative and positive understandings of peace, can leave out other *peaces*. Richmond (2014), for example, suggests that the next move for theory and practice of peace might be to move beyond positive peace to the existence of “multiple conceptions of peace across a range of cultures, states, and societies around the world. Many societies, however ‘modern’ or ‘traditional’, have their own version.” (p. 12).

In general, both positive peace and negative peace are too narrow and rigid to use as working concepts when trying to build peace. Both extremes reinforce an idea of peace as an end goal and a static state, whereas a notion of peace as imperfect allows many expressions of peace – even when violence is present and is more representative of the actual reality of processes of developing peace. I argue that the notion of imperfect peace, which can encompass different pathways and projects of peace, is of most value in the analysis of efforts to achieve peace, which allows for an understanding of peace as a constant process that moves along a continuum from negative to positive, as Diagram 2.1 illustrates.

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<td>Imperfect Peace</td>
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Diagram 2.1 Continuum of imperfect peace

Having established that peace is best understood as a process, it becomes necessary to examine the dominant view of how to develop peace in practice. Most efforts in developing peace in the West occur within a framework of liberal peace (Chandler, 2004; Mac Ginty, 2008, 2010; Richmond, 2006; Sabaratnam, 2011; Tadjbakhsh, 2011b). Therefore, the following section unpacks the concept of liberal peace.

2.2.2 Liberal Peace

Richmond (2006) affirms that liberal peace “is a discourse, framework and structure, with a specific ontology and methodology.” (p. 295), therefore, it is a predetermined formula for peace. The main purpose is to achieve “democratisation, the rule of law, human rights, free and globalised markets, and neo-liberal development” (Richmond, 2006, p. 292). Despite its formulaic approach, there are different shades of peace within liberal peace (Richmond, 2009).
The first gradation of an approach to liberal democracy is the most contested and classic view, it is a top-down approach that promotes a state-centred peace. It can be coercive, and can resort to force to maintain its hegemony and domination as it assumes “democracies are, in general, more peaceful than nondemocracies” (Chan, 1997, p. 62). This model of liberal peace can even enable military action in order to keep peace and to guarantee the suppression of violence. Its purpose is, usually, to advance external, international, interests (Richmond, 2006) like “a constitutional state, private property and the competitive market economy as the central mechanism for coordinating individuals’ interests” (Held, 2008, p. 59). This means that liberal peace is understood as a contract where liberal institutions and norms, including political, social and economic systems, are established (Richmond, 2012). Specifically, liberal peace is anchored in the principles of liberal democracy: legal frameworks able to regulate behaviour and that democracy and free trade are essential elements to achieving peace (Richmond, 2006). This model gives little importance to either redistribution or recognition, as the market plays the role of manager of individual interests, and thus regulates the needs and allocation of resources. Underneath it all, there is an understanding that the ‘natural’ competition of the market economy will guarantee a peaceful coexistence (Richmond, 2009). In addition, liberal democracy advocates for the “primacy of the individual, the belief in the reformability of individuals and institutions, pluralism and toleration, […] and the protection of property.” (Mac Ginty, 2010, p. 393). Achieving peace within this traditional model of liberal peace could be understood as achieving “state sovereignty, modern bureaucracy, written covenants, formal participation structures and linear, sequential notions of time” (Mac Ginty, 2008, p. 149).

A second approach, while continuing to be a prescribed model of peace as it is “also determined to transfer […] methodologies, objectives, and norms into the new governance framework” (Richmond, 2006, p. 300), is more responsive to critiques of scholars (see Chandler, 2004; Mac Ginty, 2008; Richmond, 2006, 2009, 2012) to the source of the model’s legitimacy. Concerns around local ownership opened the space for a different approach that combines top-down and bottom-up initiatives. The ‘local’ meaning “a range of contextual actors with fluid and multiple identities, rural, transnational, or transversal, some of which aspire to liberal peace/neoliberalism, others influenced by custom, religion, history, or other ideologies (socialism/social democracy).” (Tadjbakhsh, 2011a, pp. 3-4). This more open approach to liberal peace includes activities that involve civil society, however, top-down initiatives are given more importance, as liberal peace prioritises “technical superiority over
recipient subjects, as well as the normative universality of the liberal peace” (Richmond, 2006, p. 301). This type of strategy of liberal peace still accepts “that international peace and individual rights are best advanced through cosmopolitan frameworks whereby democratic and peaceful states take a leading responsibility for ensuring the interests of common humanity” (Chandler, 2004, p. 60). On this understanding, so-called peaceful states have the moral authority, and therefore the political and legal responsibility, and legitimacy, to impose international structures of peace on every human society (Chandler, 2004). Critics of this approach argue that these understandings of peace became the “concept, condition and practice whereby leading states, international organizations and international financial institutions promote their version of peace through peace-support interventions, control of international financial architecture, support for state sovereignty and the international status quo” (Mac Ginty, 2008). Developing peace in this form becomes a top-down imposition rather than a construction, and is characterised by its critics as “insensitive, parochial, narrow and even complacent” (Richmond, 2012, pp. 1-2). In addition, this view of peace as singular, utopian understandings of positive peace, may disempower individuals to take agency in developing peace (Muñoz, 2006; Muñoz & Martínez, 2011). Dietrich (2006) and Richmond (2014) also note that a single view of peace ignores other possible understandings of and efforts to building peace.

A third gradation of liberal peace gives the space for grassroots efforts from civil society, which suggests a concern for preparing an “active, informed and involved citizenry” (Held, 2008, p. 60). Schmitter and Karl (1991) affirm that although in modern societies there are no official restraints on whom is allowed to participate, in reality, informal methods of exclusion can restrict rights and participation. Richmond (2006) explains that a strand of liberal peace where civil society has more space for participation appeared as a result of the constant criticism to the model’s disregard for local agency and ownership, as well as the use of oppressive tools. This exclusion and lack of access to participation pushed different communities to mobilise and advocate for more participative models. Richmond (2006) states that “civil peace is derived from the phenomena of direct action, of citizen advocacy and mobilisation, from the attainment or defence of basic human rights and values.” (p. 294). Despite offering more opportunities for grassroots initiatives, this approach to liberal peace still advocates for the universal trait of liberal democracy understood as strong institutions and the rule of law. This model rarely encourages a profound transformation of underlying structures, it continues to be conservative and supportive of a single version of peace as
liberal democracy, which from the perspective of imperfect peace and Dietrich’s (2006) notion of peaces, limits the possibilities for acknowledging different expressions of peace and means of developing it.

Nevertheless, Mac Ginty (2010) and Tadjbakhsh (2011a) show that even within a rigid notion of peace, like liberal peace, local actors and organisations have spaces to develop their own understandings of peace and take action towards developing it. Mac Ginty (2010) speaks of hybridity to explain that groups have power to create peace at the local level, despite international organisations and governments having control over the structures that develop liberal peace. Hybrid peace move[s] us away from the binary combinations that can seem attractive in helping to explain the social and political world: modern versus traditional, Western versus non-Western, legal-rational versus ritualistic-irrational. Such binary combinations may simplify comprehension, but they risk projecting oversimplified notions of human societies that are divided into discrete compartmentalized units. (Mac Ginty, 2010, p. 397)

Mac Ginty’s hybridity model speaks strongly to ideas of imperfect peace, as they both criticise a binary view of peace and advocate for a more nuanced interpretation of what actually occurs in practice. Mac Ginty (2008, 2010) highlights that actors at the local level are not necessarily passive recipients or victims of liberal peace. In many cases, groups find ways to “resist, ignore, subvert, or adapt liberal peace interventions” (Mac Ginty, 2010), despite the model of liberal peace being very effective in creating the illusion of being the only way to develop peace (Mac Ginty, 2010).

What these scholars show is that liberal peace despite being an international framework and the dominant view of peace, has variation which can be interpreted as moving along the continuum of imperfect peace from negative to positive peace. The traditional top-down approach, clearly inclines towards negative peace by emphasising security as a condition of peace. Other more flexible approaches legitimise different degrees of participation and mobilisation which could be interpreted as moving away from just negative peace and sliding towards positive peace, although it is difficult to declare that these are efforts of positive peace since the intention is not to challenge the underlying structures that create inequalities. Diagram 2.2 illustrates how liberal peace is susceptible of moving towards either end of the spectrum depending on the scope of the model.
What the explanation of how the different approaches to liberal peace can move along the continuum of imperfect peace shows is that negative, positive, and imperfect peace on their own are not sufficient to accurately describe actual practice of peace. The following section unpacks three approaches to achieving peace: peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding, as more flexible concepts to characterise the practice of peace in general, and peace education in particular.

2.3. Means of Achieving Peace

As the previous sections show, there are different notions of peace which suggest that there are multiple ways to develop peace. In the field of international relations and peace studies there are three widely used concepts to describe different actions undertaken in order to develop peace: peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding. Scholars of peace education (see Cremin & Bevington, 2017; Johnson & Johnson, 2005b) have used these concepts to describe peace education in practice. In this section, I examine these approaches to achieving peace in relation to negative, positive, imperfect, and liberal peace.

2.3.1. Peacekeeping

The notion of peacekeeping relates fundamentally with the most conservative view of liberal peace. In broad terms, peacekeeping in the context of international relations and peace studies aims at ending direct violence by “[separating] the disputants and/or [providing] incentives to stop fighting […] hopefully without resorting to violence” (Johnson & Johnson, 2005b, p. 278). The underlying principle of peacekeeping is that “the best that can be done is to manage and contain [conflicts], and occasionally to reach a historic compromise in which violence may be laid aside and normal politics resumed” (Miall, 2004, p. 3).

Miall (2004) explains that a concern for managing conflicts stems from the underlying notion that conflict between communities is historic, deeply rooted in difference of interests and values, and therefore, impossible to solve. The target is reducing war because
the system is unchangeable (Beer, 1990). The understanding of conflict within a framework of peacekeeping is negative and falls in line with the view of the inherency of conflict, and the purpose of achieving negative peace, which is problematic. As I argued before, a view of conflict as negative and part of human nature strips individuals of their capacity to make peace; and the narrow understanding of negative peace can lead societies into unstable circumstances where sudden shifts can lead to violence again. Peacekeeping justifies imposing security by using force with the purpose of reducing physical violence. Richmond (2006) explained that this kind of view of peace has its genesis in the military language of victory, but has ‘disguised’ its military origins and transformed into more subtle ways of exercising power and force. When trying to achieve peace through force, it is assumed that when a victor imposes peace it tends to last, reinforcing the idea that ending direct violence and securing negative peace can achieve a static ‘peaceful’ state. Negative peace and peacekeeping, are often seen as legitimate and the basic standard of security, a precondition to achieve wider forms of peace (Richmond, 2006).

In contrast, other understandings of peace and conflict, like the Gandhian (as cited in Ambler, 1990), reject peacekeeping precisely because it can excuse the use of violence to achieve negative peace. From this perspective, peacekeeping can be interpreted as a struggle for power that will result in one party succeeding over the other, making peace an imposition, instead of something that has been developed. The Gandhian tradition holds that “[o]ur response to a conflict, whether we are directly involved or not, is partly determined by our understanding or perception of it” (Ambler, 1990, p. 199). Ambler (1990) argues that a Western view of conflict as a “clash of interests” (p. 199) results in power struggles from which only two outcomes can occur: one side winning, as in with imposing negative peace, or both sides reaching a “sine agreement” (p. 199). The Gandhian approach pushes to find the illusions that fuel violent conflict. This philosophy argues that a double exercise of evaluating the other’s and one’s own illusions is required to transform situations of conflict. Solving conflicts requires a constant effort to persuade the other to transform their illusions, as well as reflecting on the ingrained illusions that deceive us into continuing the conflict (Ambler, 1990). A profound politics of recognition, then, comes across in the Gandhian perspective of developing peace, as it has at its core the need to reflect upon and recognise the understandings of conflict held by the disputants.
This perspective critiques the justification of force in the pursuit of peace. The only action seen as appropriate is a non-violent response. As Carter (1990) asserts, the “belief in nonviolence in principle does involve rejection of any use of physical violence on moral grounds.” (p. 210). Non-violence also relates to the politics of recognition, as it gives people resisting without arms a position of higher ethical ground, such that the side that exercises power via violence loses legitimacy (Young, 1990). This position directly challenges, on moral grounds, the premise that basic security by any means must precede efforts to achieve peace; and, thus, it renders the peacekeeping approach flawed.

2.3.2. Peacemaking

Peacemaking establishes frameworks for negotiation and conflict resolution between parties that “may resolve the immediate conflict but often [fail] to deal with underlying issues that may reignite the conflict in the future” (Johnson & Johnson, 2005b, p. 278). Engaging in conflict resolution means that the parties involved are able to find ways to overcome their destructive habits and turn them into positive solutions (Miall, 2004). With peacemaking the assumption is that groups can “transcend conflicts if parties can be helped to explore, analyse, question and reframe their positions and interests” (italics in the original, Miall, 2004, p. 3). However, much like peacekeeping, peacemaking can lead to the reappearance of conflict, as it does not focus on structural violence (Johnson & Johnson, 2005b).

Peacemaking as conflict resolution is usually a prescriptive model of how to solve conflicts (J.P. Lederach, 1995). In practice, a more traditional model of peacemaking relies on an expert who knows what the people in conflict need and “is built on principles of transferability and universality.” (Lederach, 1995, p. 53). These two principles imply that conflict resolution can be a tool that can be applied to any conflict. This attitude towards developing peace relates to the approach of liberal peace. As I explained in section 2.3, liberal peace is a formulaic model of peace that prioritises expert knowledge to guarantee “democratisation, development, and economic reform, […] along with human rights reform, and legal processes” (Richmond, 2006, p. 299) as the means to build peace regardless of the context.

2.3.3. Peacebuilding

Finally, peacebuilding “underpins the work of peacemaking and peacekeeping by addressing structural issues and the long-term relationship between conflictants”
Peacebuilding represents a different view, shifting from a top-down institutional approach to a bottom-up participatory one, where civil society – meaning everything that is not part of the state and its institutions (Ruiz, 1999) – can build peace through mobilisation and active participation (Richmond, 2014).

In North’s (2006) and O’Connor’s (2001) terms, the individual who aims at social justice – i.e. peacebuilding – is the one who focuses on the politics of recognition and redistribution – economic resources and services, like education and health, to change the systems that perpetuate inequality, both locally and globally (also see Reardon, 1988) – to transform discriminatory structures, such as racism and poverty, that maintain privilege and exploitation of some human groups. Drawing upon Snauwaert (2001) and the Gandhian approach, the actions of this type of individual would also involve moral motivations. For Snauwaert (2011), achieving social justice is necessary to developing moral equality; similarly, the Gandhian perspective emphasises a moral belief in the other’s equal worth as a fellow human being (Ambler, 1990).

Peacebuilding relates to the theory of conflict transformation, which is the “process of engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests, discourses and, if necessary, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict” (Miall, 2004, p. 4). Lederach (2003) emphasises that conflict transformation as a form of peacebuilding is a proactive approach which cultivates a positive attitude towards conflict and a “willingness to engage [with it]” (italics in the original, para. 18). To transcend violence, Lederach (2005) argues that individuals must develop a moral imagination which complements the theory to conflict transformation. Moral imagination is

“the capacity to imagine ourselves in a web of relationships that includes our enemies; the ability to sustain a paradoxical curiosity that embraces complexity without the reliance on dualistic polarity; the fundamental belief in and pursuit of the creative act; and the acceptance of the inherent risk of stepping into the mystery of the unknown that lies beyond the far too familiar landscape of violence” (p. 5).

The cultivation of the moral imagination relies on three elements. First, an awakening, or attitude to go beyond what is evident by exploring reality deeply. Second, the creative act or imagination, which regardless of the field, entails starting something new. And third, what Lederach (2005) calls the “the quality of transcendence” (p. 27) meaning to separate from what is in existence today, and willing to explore new avenues. What moral imagination means in the context of peacebuilding specifically “is the capacity to imagine and generate
constructive responses and initiatives that, while rooted in the day-to-day challenges of violence, transcend and ultimately break the grips of those destructive patterns and cycles” (Lederach, 2005, p. 29).

The general attitude of conflict transformation fosters a constructive view of conflict, seeing it as natural, and as an opportunity for creativity. Conflict transformation also entails identifying and addressing “the greater pattern of human relationships” (Lederach, 2003, para. 19) which manifest in apparently isolated conflicts, in order to reduce violence. However, the task of increasing justice is advanced only when “people have access to political procedures and voice in the decisions that affect their lives” (Lederach, 2003, para. 22). This approach speaks to the understanding of the principles of imperfect peace, like a positive attitude towards conflict and the peaceful empowerment needed to be able to take on the challenge of developing peace.

Perhaps the best way to explain the fundamental skill needed to address the task of peacebuilding and justice is Freire’s (as cited in Blackburn, 2000) concept of conscientização. This theorist of education argued that conscientização entails exercising critical thinking when looking at oneself, one’s immediate communities, and society, to truly be able to take agency and mobilise to transform social structures and achieve justice, and thus peace.

Freire’s thinking emphasises the achievement of peace as the vocation of humanisation, demonstrating our power of creative thinking to change reality instead of simply adapting to it (Blackburn, 2000). This transformation cannot come if there is not an awareness of the actions and values that lead to de-humanisation (Freire, 1996 [1970]). Freire sees de-humanisation in two ways. First, he sees it in the oppressor’s violence by exercising injustice, oppression, and exploitation; but he also sees it from the perspective of the oppressed, who, as a consequence of the oppressor’s actions, lose their vocation of becoming more fully human, and fear freedom (Freire, 1996 [1970]). Nevertheless, human beings have the potential to transform their relationship with the world and its reality:

Animals, submerged within reality, cannot relate to it; they are creatures of mere contacts. But man’s separateness from and openness to the world distinguishes him as being of relationships. Men, unlike animals, are not only in the world but with the world. (italics in the original, Freire, 1973, p. 3)
From the Freirian perspective, the power to transform structures is within people, and change happens by awakening critical thinking. In this model, individuals concerned with justice are needed in the project of peacebuilding. This type of individual is expected to have the skills and knowledge to mobilise and seek transformation.

While this analysis implies a utopian, perfect peace, ideas about achieving peace through action can go beyond positive peace as an idealistic goal and relate to notions of imperfect peace and peace as a process. For Freire, as Blackburn (2000) states, it is impossible to achieve a perfect state of peace, as reality is in constant change. This view allows thinking about peacebuilding as a constant process that can be constantly reinvented. Therefore, embracing peacebuilding can lead to move away from liberal peace as citizens try to transform the patterns and structures that perpetuate violent conflict and inequalities and find other ways to define peace. Conflict viewed as constructive and “as a vital agent or catalyst for change” (Miall, 2004, p. 4) requires from everyone involved, either directly or by being part of the society in conflict, to participate in the process of transformation. If efforts of peacebuilding come from within the society embedded in the conflict, meaning to include everyone, creates a common vision, and has the potential of taking advantage of all of society’s available human resources (Lederach as cited in Miall, 2004).

2.3.4. Summary

Thus far, I have highlighted that different understandings of peace shape the aspirations people have as to what it should look like and the approaches that can be taken to achieve it. Diagram 2.3 summarises the discussion so far by locating these approaches along the continuum of developing peace.

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<tr>
<th>Negative Peace</th>
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<th>Positive Peace</th>
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<tr>
<td>Peacekeeping</td>
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<td>Politics of Recognition and Redistribution</td>
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Diagram 2.3 Peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding within the continuum of imperfect peace

In the discussion up to now, I have examined the potentialities and limitations of different notions of peace and understandings of how peace is developed. In the next section I
link my conceptual analysis to the practice of peace education. I examine education and its potential for building peace using theorisations of peace and approaches to peace. However, I emphasise the nuances and messiness that comes with the actual practice of peace education. I argue that, contrary to the theoretical discussion I have proposed so far, it is difficult to make clear cut distinctions when analysing practice.

2.4. Implications of Different Conceptualisations of Peace: Strategies to Achieve Peace in Peace Education

This section focuses on three core elements of peace education: curriculum, pedagogy and teacher practices and attitudes. I first explore the curriculum, understood as the content, skills and abilities students need to learn and develop. Secondly, I analyse in detail the pedagogy, which refers to the strategies and activities used in the classroom to facilitate pupils’ learning. Thirdly, I examine teacher practices, namely the behaviours and attitudes of the adults carrying out the programme of peace education. I will make links between the core elements of education, the concepts of negative, positive, and imperfect peace, and the approaches to developing peace – i.e. peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding. I build the case that education can develop different types of peace through its three core elements.

Several theorists of peace education (Cremin & Bevington, 2017; I. M Harris, 2004; Reardon, 1988; Salomon, 2002; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) have developed typologies to describe the general aims of different programmes that relate to peace education across the world: citizenship education, human rights education, environmental education, development education, international education, character education, service education, conflict resolution education, and new ones like “affect and care; spirituality and aesthetics; and postmodern peace education” (Cremin & Bevington, 2017, p. 39). I will draw from some of these examples to examine how each suggests different understandings of peace, and relate to different approaches to developing peace.

It is important to acknowledge the complexity and nuance of practice in peace education. In practice, some elements that might be categorised with one type of peace education project can interplay with the practice of another. For example, developing individual character traits such as honesty and tolerance, as well as conflict resolution skills could be part of the same educational endeavour. The subsequent sections should be understood as a theoretical exercise to illustrate how theory translates into practice.
2.4.1. Curricula

Curricula refer to all the contents and abilities a course is expected to cover and teach pupils in school. Curricula for peace education can be created to support efforts of peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding alike. In extreme cases, curriculum can be oppressive, and even used as a tool of war (UNESCO, 2011). However, for the sake of analysis, the focus on this section is on peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding, rather than on education as a tool of war.

Some schools give a lot of weight to norms and punishment to have strong disciplinary systems that focus on safety and security (Cremin & Bevington, 2017). Other programmes aim to nurture a sense of individual civic responsibility, and focus on monitoring individual behaviours like being responsible, honest, loyal, and obedient, and having good manners (Kohn, 1997; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). The purpose of these programmes is to develop values from which pupils can learn to monitor and regulate their behaviour towards others, and to cultivate self-discipline to prevent violence in schools, such as bullying (Bulach, 2002). This type of programme is especially concerned with explicitly teaching norms of behaviour for school, and the laws of society. Page’s (2008) explanation of virtue ethics education has points in common with this type of peace education, he argues that an approach that emphasises values has the potential to provide individuals with an ethical rationale that fosters personal integrity which gives them a basis from which to make ethical decisions.

Although, Bickmore (2016) asserts that there is not sufficient evidence to suggest that direct the teaching of values actually transforms behaviour, the curricula described might be understood in terms of negative peace because, if successful, they form individuals who understand their personal responsibilities – e.g. voting, being honest, behaving – and the impact individual behaviours may have on a community which mostly aim at preventing conflict, rather than engaging with it. This type of education can help maintain peace in the sense of peacekeeping, as the assumption behind it is that if individuals’ behaviour is controlled, learn to obey and comply there will be peace, there will not be direct violence (see Cremin & Bevington, 2017). This purpose has significant implications for pedagogy and teacher practices, to which I will return in sections 2.5.2 and 2.5.3.

Other school programmes look beyond developing individual character traits and obedience and focus on teaching pupils to see themselves as a part of a community to which they can contribute by putting their strengths at the service of others. For example, Dewey
(1916 [1966]) argued that schools are the perfect laboratories in which to develop the skills necessary for children to become good citizens. He thought that it was possible for adults to “create miniature communities in classrooms and schools that embody the ideals of participation, democracy, and community” (Kahne, Rodriguez, Smith, & Thiede, 2000, p. 317). Page (2008) argues that the appeal of this type of peace education for educators comes from “social concerns over a perceived loss of social civility, perceived increases in levels of personal aggression and violence, and a perceived diminution of an overall commitment to ethical conduct” (p. 25). The assumption is then that developing character and virtues will improve society as a whole (see Page, 2008). More recent theorists of citizenship education like Kahne et al. (2000) explain that some programmes concerned with nurturing pupils to become citizens in a society, prioritise teaching how governments work. A project undertaking this kind of education teaches about social norms and laws with the purpose of developing the “capacity for thoughtful analysis, synthesis, and evaluation”, working on the assumption that it “empowers and liberates citizens while improving the outcomes of democratic processes” (Kahne et al., 2000, p. 316). For example, well documented studies (Kahne, Chi, & Middaugh, 2006) find connections between education and the promotion of civic participation, which relates to peace education. Another example of this type of approach is service education, where children learn to care for others (Kraft, 1996) and work towards solving local needs (Bickmore, 2001; Kraft, 1996), and are instilled with the value of treating others with respect (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). A programme with these characteristics aims at developing a politics of recognition by including elements of multiculturalism and diversity. For example, in the case of approaches to civic education which closely relates to peace education, the purpose is to instil in children the duty and principle of respecting others and their views (Kahne et al., 2000). This interest is supported by the assumption that tolerating those who are different leads to peaceful coexistence. Such programmes look “to build on one another's abilities and to model the use of individuals' particular capacities as a means of realizing group goals” (Kahne et al., 2000, p. 317). These examples suggest a larger goal than that of monitoring and controlling own behaviours. These approaches to educating for peace understand individuals as part of a community and therefore, emphasise the relational aspect of building peace, which suggests leaning towards peacemaking.

The concern for the relational aspect of developing peace, usually involves the skills of conflict resolution and mediation skills. As I highlighted in section 2.3.2. when examining
peacemaking, conflict resolution attempts to transform negative patterns into positive outcomes by finding alternatives that help reframe the current situation. Conflict resolution and mediation can be implemented together or separately. Whatever the emphasis, Chaux (2012) argues that there are 8 civic competencies that belong to the set of emotional, cognitive, and communicative abilities that work together with knowledge and attitudes to give citizens the tools to contribute to society by knowing how to solve conflicts. They include: empathy, or the capacity to feel what others feel; anger management, the ability to identify this emotion and exert self-control in order to avoid harming others; analysis of perspective, an assessment of different perspectives, even if they are not shared; creative exploration of options, developing the skill to find alternative ways to solve conflicts; analysis of consequences, the ability to analyse the possible consequences specific behaviours may have in others; critical thinking, or the ability to analyse the situation before arriving at a conclusion; active listening, listening carefully in a way that is evident to others; and assertiveness, the skill to communicate needs and ideas in a manner that does not harm others. The major difference between conflict resolution and mediation is that in the first, pupils learn how to manage conflicts in which they are involved by applying these competencies, whereas when they are mediators, they apply them in a conflict in which others are involved and they are a third, uninvolved party (Chaux, 2005).

The main concern with schools focusing on just this type of content and abilities is that they do not necessarily lead students to question why structures are the way they are. For instance, if pupils are taught to respect norms as “natural”, and not to question if they are just, those pupils will contribute to maintaining the status quo, and may even help to reinforce it in their own communities – even if they are disadvantaged by inequalities in that structure. An emphasis on peacemaking alone inhibits the analysis of deeply ingrained injustices, which restricts options to negative models of peace and limits understandings of the dynamic process of moving towards positive peace.

In contrast, education that seeks to awaken pupils’ critical view of the world (Freire, 1996 [1970]; I. M Harris, 2004; Reardon, 1988; Rivage-Seul, 1987) have as a final goal the formation of activists who can transform reality as they try to solve the problems of the future (Kahne et al., 2000). Students not only learn how governments work, but also what it means to be actively involved in a social group, and how important it is for them to get involved (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).
A starting point for this type of education involves developing a view of the other as equal and worthy of recognition (Alvarado, Loaiza de la Pava, & Santacoloma, 2011; Hytten & Bettez, 2011). Although similar to the content described previously, in this educational project, the purpose is a politics of recognition that takes on a moral equality, in Snauwaert’s (2011) terms, where pupils value others as humans. Schools aim at awakening pupils’ *conscientização* to question relationships of oppression and domination. Controversial issues are frequently part of the curriculum (Jäger, 2014), and students are expected to deal with moral dilemmas, as the intent is to promote social awareness (Selman, 2003). Also, historical struggles for civic participation (e.g. the civil rights movement) are taught in this educational project as examples to help pupils uncover structural causes of injustice and think about ways to eliminate oppression (Hytten & Bettez, 2011), in part by challenging cultural practices and beliefs that threaten peace.

In the same way, when dealing with conflict, these programmes that aim at fostering critical thinking, push beyond conflict resolution. Jäger (2014) asserts that education for conflict transformation should “aim to empower people and strengthen their capacities to act as ‘changemakers’.” (p. 8). This thinking links with Muñoz’ (2006) and Muñoz and Martínez’ (2011) concept of imperfect peace and peaceful empowerment. As I examined in section 2.3.3, conflict ignites productive action and thus empowers humans to transform their reality. Dietrich’s (2006) conceptualisation of peace as relational and relative explains why, in this understanding of conflict, transformation is a possibility when relations and contexts are subject to re-examination. Jäger (2014) argues that education has the mission of preparing pupils to challenge the habits that normalise violence and perpetuate their “self-perception as a helpless victim or a powerless individual buffeted by the violent upheavals taking place in the locality or the world.” (p. 8). He argues that children must be able to create “counter habits” that transform the cycles that lead to violence into new ones with positive outcomes. Education for peacebuilding “considers as many perspectives on individual and collective learning as possible” (Jäger, 2014, p. 8), which means that pupils learn to identify their own unguarded sides and default mechanisms, as well as their community’s. This formulation aligns with the Gandhian perspective on ingrained illusions discussed in section 2.3.3, which argues that change comes from identifying ingrained illusions that fuel conflict and violence.

Some of these programmes include knowledge from other sources in their curricula, including communities and parents. Their knowledge is considered as valid as the academic
content that comes from schools and teachers (González & Moll, 2002), which promotes a politics of recognition that includes the communities of which the schools are a part.

Peace education with a focus on critical thinking about the structures that determine the status quo, can be associated with aiming at social justice and peacebuilding by facilitating pupils to be able to analyse their circumstances, but also understand macro-economic and political processes, as well as cultural practices to encourage students to transform the structures and work towards positive peace. These programmes usually understand peace as a process where the student is at the centre as an agent of change (see Jäger, 2014).

2.4.2. Pedagogy

Examining pedagogy is as important as examining content (Cremin & Bevington, 2017), as pedagogy moves beyond what pupils ought to learn, to explore how pupils learn the expected skills or information. According to Wringe (2012 [1984]), the strategies used in the classroom to teach “what is ostensibly the same piece of material is not simply a matter of recognised technical efficiency, but will vary from time to time and place to place.” (p. 2). The practice of education is full of complexities; it is possible to have a complete disconnect between the curriculum and the pedagogy, where for example the first aims at preparing pupils to take action, while the second follows a learning by rote tradition (Wringe, 2012 [1984]). Haavelsrud (2013) notes that teacher practice strongly relates to the teachers’ general interests. Teachers, on his account, may lean towards reinforcing, – i.e. maintaining the structure as it is; reforming, or attempting to achieve change within the current structure; or transcending, seeking to change the structure entirely. These goals can greatly influence a teacher’s pedagogical practice. Also, teachers work within greater or lesser constraints depending on their school, education system, culture, structure and accountability mechanisms – e.g. state exams, therefore, how they teach peace also depends of pragmatic elements.

Kohn (1997) critiqued some approaches to the teaching of individual character traits and values. The strategy he analysed was to make a particular value or character trait the focus by reading about it, discussing it, and practicing it in school. To encourage the practice, teachers use extrinsic motivation, rewarding pupils when they were seen exercising the desired value or showing the desired character trait. The assumption was that this reinforcement will embed values in students that they will then employ outside the
classroom. This approach is akin to Freire’s (1996 [1970]) view of traditional education as the “banking” model of education: a hierarchical structure where educators are the authority who transmit knowledge, turning education into “an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher the depositor.” (p. 53). This type of education is typical of an authoritarian school, and is “fairly straightforward evidence [that]... [s]uch schools are clearly inculcating docility and compliance” (Wringe, 2012 [1984], p. 41), and likely preoccupied with peacekeeping. This type of pedagogy favours maintaining the status quo, and thus tends to reinforce social structures (see Haavelsrud, 2013).

By contrast, some teachers strive to develop pupils’ capacities to work together with others who may be perceived as different. In the classroom, teachers may encourage students to develop group projects to understand social issues. However, some of these projects’ main purpose is not to analyse underlying inequalities and to transform them, but to see each situation from different views. Kahne et al. (2000) provide an example of how a topic like the death penalty could be discussed from this perspective. A teacher can start a rich conversation among pupils by inviting them to offer their points of view on the matter and encouraging them to listen to each other. The purpose of the activity is to find the value of the other’s perspective. Nevertheless, such an activity neglects ingrained inequalities that lead to issues like having more members of some racial minorities on death row than other racial groups. The pedagogical aspect of this example is the teacher’s framing of the question of the death penalty, and the control he/she maintains over the content and the management of the reflection on the topic.

As I highlighted in previous sections, conflict resolution is important for peacemaking. Some strategies to teach how to solve and how to mediate problems involve the practice of skills in real-life like situations. Group activities such as “role plays of conflict situations, cooperative learning activities, debates, coconstruction of class norms, narratives of personal stories, and analysis of hypothetical and real conflict and bullying situations” (Chaux, 2007, p. 81) may feature in more active pedagogies. The purpose of this kind of programme is for students to struggle with situations in a safe environment, where they can receive feedback from adults and from peers, in order to develop natural, useful reactions and attitudes for times when they have to deal with real conflict. In general, there seems to be an assumption on the part of educators that through practice, individual character traits, skills and values can become part of what pupils are, and can help them monitor their own
behaviour (Chaux, 2007; Chaux et al., 2008). This goal would contribute to the purpose of peacemaking, since pupils would regulate the attitudes they have in their school community and help them avoid expressing violence.

In contrast, other approaches to teaching peace attempt to move away from a traditional authoritative view of education in which the relationship between teachers and students is significantly asymmetrical (Wringe, 2012 [1984]), into one where teachers become facilitators and pupils are active participants. At the same time, it is important to emphasise that pedagogy for social justice involves more than the classroom. According to Clark (2010), schools educating for social justice must make justice the purpose of everything they do. Justice, which in Clark’s (2010) case leans slightly towards a politics of recognition, must be embedded in all of the interactions, relationships, discipline systems, classroom strategies, and everything related to the life of the institution.

According to Bates (2007), there are four central elements of pedagogy for social justice: 1) the intellectual quality of the interactions between teachers and pupils; 2) the relationship between classroom and context; 3) teacher support to pupils; and 4) inclusion in the classroom.

The first element refers to the status of the knowledge being dealt with in the classroom. For example, knowledge should be problematized and contextualised (Bates, 2007). For example Freire’s calls this process dialogue where “[t]he educator, rather than deposit ‘superior knowledge’ to be passively digested, memorized, and repeated, must engaged (sic) in a ‘genuine dialogue’, or ‘creative exchange’, with the ‘participants’ [Freire did not speak of pupils]” (Blackburn, 2000, p. 8). For Hytten and Bettez (2011) this intellectual quality refers to the teacher’s efforts to deepen pupils’ knowledge through discussion, and to “[conduct] artful facilitation that promotes critical thinking” (p. 13). The work of the teacher is to generate genuine dialogue with pupils, and is crucial when educating those with little power or low social status, though it is also vital in the education of other social groups. Freire (2001 [1998]), like Haavelsrud (2013), argues that the disenfranchised communities need opportunities to construct knowledge and incorporate their own knowledge, but that other social groups, including those with higher social status, need opportunities to evaluate their own knowledge as well, and gain conscientização of their role in society.
The second element of connectedness between classroom and context entails “a problem-based curriculum linked to the participants’ backgrounds” (Bates, 2007, p. 153), with the purpose of bringing other knowledges to the classroom, which requires a specific type of pedagogy. One strategy is to have collective civic projects and/or internships where students can work with effective role models on real issues and help think about them and offer solutions (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). These projects are shared with the community with the purpose of putting pupils’ ideas into action. For Hytten and Bettez (2011), this connection should enable students’ “engagement in explicit discussions of power, privilege, and oppression” (p. 13). This pedagogy requires the mastery of the teacher in including various sources of knowledge and in facilitating activities where students can interact, evaluate, and critique all of those knowledges to create “critical communities” (Hytten & Bettez, 2011, p. 13).

Thirdly, according to Bates (2007), pedagogy for social justice emphasises creating a learning environment that is supportive of students, which includes being explicit about expectations and “performance criteria”, concern with “academic engagement”, and facilitating “student self-direction” (p. 153). The latter is especially important in processes of peacebuilding. As I have highlighted before, for some scholars such as Jäger (2014), Muñoz’ (2006), and Muñoz and Martínez’ (2011), it is crucial for people in general to build an identity as “changemakers”, and, with pedagogical support, to “[believe] that change toward social justice is possible” (Hytten & Bettez, 2011, p. 13). Jäger (2014) asserts that an education for conflict transformation, as peacebuilding intends, benefits from having a “future-oriented approach” (p. 6) where pupils are invited to think up alternative futures they can actively build as agents of change.

Lastly, developing social justice and positive peace requires a pedagogy that includes and engages with difference. The purpose here is to facilitate activities where students learn about other cultures, their narratives, as well as “the representation of difference in those communities” (Bates, 2007, p. 153). This approach offers a profound politics of recognition. A focus on inclusion is also conducive to peacebuilding as it “[reduces] barriers to learning and participation for all students; addressing questions of equity, promoting understanding and valuing of difference; and thereby building a more cohesive community within and beyond the school” (Cremin & Bevington, 2017, p. 103).
It is important to highlight that, as pedagogy moves from a narrow purpose of negative peace to a broader one of positive peace, it blurs and becomes less formulaic, underscoring the complexity of teaching for social justice and peacebuilding.

2.4.3. Teacher Practice

Wringe (2012 [1984]) states that what “the teacher sees as desirable behaviour leading to the creation of a better world may be expected to affect not only what he teaches and how he teaches it, but also how he interacts with his pupils on a minute-to-minute basis” (p. 3). Teacher practice and attitudes are central to peace education. Research reveals that the attitudes and behaviours expected from teachers working towards positive peace are clearer than the ones of teachers who work with a model of negative peace.

Teachers that use pedagogical strategies in favour of maintaining and instilling certain character traits, values, and obedience may fall into the category of authoritarian. According to Chaux (2012), a teacher from this category would emphasise order and rules, and he/she would expect to have full control and power in the classroom. Some of his or her strategies for maintaining order could include punishing bad behaviour and rewarding good conduct. This model of education reflects Freire’s (1996 [1970]) concept of ‘banking education’ where the teacher is considered the only knowledgeable person in the classroom and with the authority to establish the rules. This of teacher practices and attitudes suggest an approach to peace like peacekeeping.

However, an alternative teaching practice, termed by Chaux (2012) as democratic-assertive, that models attitudes like tolerance, aiming at common goals, and respect, and is interested in sharing control by offering opportunities to establish group norms that everyone agrees with, by establishing loving relationships with his/her students, and by facilitating spaces where open discussion can happen (Chaux, 2012). However, the fact that in this approach despite taking pupil participation into consideration, the teacher continues to make the decisions on how and what is learned in the classroom could suggest an approach to peacemaking since knowledge stays on the side of the expert, who is the teacher.

Page (2008) explains that a nurturing relationship between teachers and pupils derived from the application of the ethics of care in peace education, seeks to “encourage the students to see that peace, in the sense of harmonious and co-operative relationships, is a practical possibility” (p. 182). This type of approach to peace education asks from the teacher to parent
pupils within the school to create an environment suitable to foster peace (see Page, 2008). According to Page (2008) the teacher attitudes based on the ethics of care have the potential of having great impact on the individual students on a daily basis which could translate into learning that others are worthy of care.

In contrast, the literature is very explicit about the type of teacher needed to succeed in an educational project that aims at positive peace. For Hytten and Bettez (2011), this educator needs to have strong pedagogical and philosophical grounding in social justice, which means mastering the

content in their discipline (including knowing factual information, having the ability to historically contextualize that information and being able to consider it in both micro and macro ways), tools for critical thinking and analysis, tools for social change and activism, tools for personal reflection (especially about one’s own power and privilege), and awareness of multicultural group dynamics. (p. 13)

However, these characteristics are not enough; they continue to list characteristics like “culturally responsive[…] critically pluralist and democratic, transformative, moral and ethical, feminist/caring, and spiritually/culturally responsive” (Hytten & Bettez, 2011, p. 13), as well as willing to change.

North (2006), citing Anyon, asserts that the educator aiming at social justice must see him/herself as a political actor, more than just a facilitator in the classroom. Similar to Haavelsrud’s (2013) assertion that teachers concerned with transformation must establish a dialogue with the macro context, the teacher as a political actor incorporates what happens in the world into the classroom and models the practice of reflecting on macro-scale contradictions.

Freire (2001 [1998]) states that educators need to have a universal human ethic that forces them to reject every expression of oppression. Therefore, the educator that teaches for social justice and positive peace must be curious, understanding

[curiosity as restless questioning, as movement toward the revelation of something hidden, as a question verbalized or not, as search for clarity, as a moment of attention, suggestion, and vigilance, constitutes an integral part of the phenomenon of being alive. There could be no creativity without the curiosity that moves, us and sets us patiently impatient before a world that we did not make, to add to it something of our own making. (Freire, 2001 [1998], pp. 37-38)
Willingness to collaborate with other educators is also a major attitude expected from this kind of educator (Hytten & Bettez, 2011) as collaboration supports their practice. The educator embarking into positive peace education requires special characteristics to be successful in the endeavour.

In general, peace education, understood as curriculum, pedagogy, and teacher attitudes, has the potential to support different approaches to developing peace. A detailed analysis through the lens of imperfect peace facilitates the recognition of ways in which peace education practice is conducive to different projects – i.e. peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding. Diagram 2.4 incorporates elements of the discussion developed throughout sections 2.5.1 to 2.5.3 into the previous analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Peace</th>
<th>Positive Peace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peacekeeping</td>
<td>Peacemaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on norms and behaviours</td>
<td>Conflict resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Character education</td>
<td>e.g. Service education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Banking” education</td>
<td>Active pedagogies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritative teacher</td>
<td>Democratic-assertive teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Peace</td>
<td>politics of recognition and redistribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacekeeping</td>
<td>Conscientização</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacekeeping</td>
<td>Peaceful empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacekeeping</td>
<td>Inclusion of the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacekeeping</td>
<td>Self-direction of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacekeeping</td>
<td>Teacher as political actor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diagram 2.4 Peace education within the continuum of imperfect peace

Ideally, the three core elements – i.e. content, pedagogy and teacher attitudes – work together in a direction towards positive peace. However, for peace education in practice, efforts of peacekeeping and peacemaking are sometimes necessary for the educational progress of pupils, and sometimes even for their protection. This necessity makes the lens of imperfect peace even more useful, as it makes visible those situations when different projects of peace occur simultaneously.

2.6. Peace Education: Examples from Colombia

Having discussed in the previous section the general core elements of peace education -i.e. curriculum, pedagogy and teacher practices and attitudes- in this section I explore specific empirical studies of peace education in Colombia.
As I examined at the beginning of this chapter, peace education has different meanings across cultures and communities because context plays a major role in defining what ought to be taught as peace (Bickmore, 2016; Salomon, 2002, 2004b). Colombia’s particular context of violence which, as I explained in section 1.4, is not a conflict that derives from religious differences or ethnic oppression, but from social, economic, and political inequality and is fuelled by drug trafficking (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013; Cepeda, n.d.) greatly determines the practice of peace education as well as the decisions policymakers make regarding peace education.

As I explained in section 1.3, studies conducted by ACODESI (2003) and Villamil (2013) argue that current peace education in Colombia is framed within the 1991 Constitution which aims at acknowledging diversity, prioritise peace as a right and duty, strengthen democracy, and therefore open new avenues for participation. Subsequent policies regarding peace education followed in the same line and allowing for flexibility for schools to adapt according to their contexts’ needs. In Colombia, peace education has been approached in two ways, one, where peace is taught directly, and two, where the topic of peace is embedded within existing curricula. The next section reviews empirical studies of peace education practice in Colombia.

2.6.1. Empirical Studies into Peace Education in Colombia

Several authors interested in peace education in Colombia (Diazgranados & Noonan, 2015; Jaramillo & Mesa, 2009) have focused their studies in the major initiative launched in 2003 by the Colombian government as part of its peace education endeavour: the National Citizenship Competencies Programme. This programme introduced a series of standards or learning goals for every child in the Colombian territory. Authors like Jaramillo and Mesa (2009), Diazgranados et. al. (2014), and Bickmore (2016) highlight that despite the flexibility of the Citizenship Competencies Programme which allowed other initiatives already in place developed by the different governmental institutions or even by people within educational institutions, the programme had clear aims of its own. The purpose of the programme was twofold, first to instil democratic principles and competencies in students, and second, to reduce the levels of violence at the interpersonal and community levels (Chaux, Molano, & Podlesky, 2009; Diazgranados & Noonan, 2015). The emphasis on peaceful coexistence and democracy are directly connected to the Colombian context of violence (Diazgranados & Noonan, 2015). The Citizenship Competencies Programme was framed around three
overarching themes: *peaceful coexistence*, which encompass the capacities people need to live with others in a peaceful manner, and recognise others as equal and worthy of rights; *participation and democratic responsibility*, to develop the necessary competencies to be an active participant in democratic processes; and *plurality, identity, and respect for differences*, which aims at instilling the capacities to value difference and identity, in order to stand against prejudice and discrimination (MEN, 2011).

The study of the National Citizenship Competencies Programme can be divided in two. First studies like the one conducted by Bickmore (2016), Bickmore, Kaderi, and Guerra-Sua (2017), Chaux (2009; 2014) have focused on the specific teaching of citizenship competencies. This kind of studies have found that the purposes of the National Citizenship Competencies programme rarely equip students with the necessary skills to take democratic action and be able to transform their reality. These authors conclude that although the programme includes some elements of peacebuilding, it mostly focuses on developing interpersonal skills to foster peaceful coexistence which is more akin to processes of peacemaking and are insufficient to support efforts of peacebuilding.

Other researchers like Diazgranados et. al. (2014), Chaux (2008), Chaux et. al. (2008), Jiménez et. al. (2010), McEwan and Benveniste (2001), and Colbert de Arboleda (2006) have looked in detail initiatives in the context of peace education and specifically the National Citizenship Competencies Programme: *Juegos de Paz* (Peace Games), *Aulas en Paz* (Peaceful Classrooms), and *Escuela Nueva* (New School). These programmes of peace education largely occur within formal education settings. Other authors like Cárdenas (2012) have looked at other programmes of peace education, for example *Goles para la Paz* (Goals for Peace) which are developed by community organisations to tackle issues of violence within neighbourhoods. Although the different programmes analysed by the different researchers have different goals like developing capacities for conflict resolution like in the case of *Aulas en Paz*, create formal educational spaces which are more democratic through implementing the programme of *Juegos de Paz*, or guarantee access to quality education in rural areas with *Escuela Nueva*, all the studies evidence the need to design or adapt peace education programmes to the context educators wish to transform.

Other studies have looked at experiences where peace education is embedded within existing curricula, especially in social studies and history. Some of these authors are Bickmore, Kaderi, and Guerra-Sua (2017), and Guerra-Sua (2019) who argue that social
studies curriculum and history curriculum are ideal to address issues of violence and peace. Nevertheless, the studies of the curricula of social studies and history conclude that in Colombia processes of peacebuilding are seldomly supported by these curricula, for example war and violence are exalted and military prowess admired. Curriculum tends to focus on past events under the lens of a single truth, rather than addressing current events where nuances and different perspectives could be analysed.

In general, what these empirical studies in Colombia show is that peace education in practice is mostly focused on peacemaking. In addition, these studies tend to focus on specific programmes or analysis of curricula (which in Colombia is not compulsory) rather than on teacher initiatives of peace education which is what my study focuses on.

2.7. Conclusion

The analysis of conceptualisations of peace and their linkages with processes of peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding, shows that a lens of imperfect peace and peaces can be useful for examining peace education in practice. Despite the fact that efforts of peace are generally understood/pursued within the framework of liberal peace, there is evidence of local initiatives which suggest other understandings of peace (Mac Ginty, 2008, 2010; Richmond, 2006). In the context of peace education, there seems to be further evidence that in practice there is potential for using different approaches to developing peace: peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding. By analysing the implementation and interpretation of the 1732 Educational Law, this dissertation aims to understand the notions of peace that impact the practice of peace education in Colombia and the types of peace that peace education programmes promote in schools.
3. Ways and Means: Methods and Research Design

The purpose of my research was to explore the implementation of the new government policy in five schools in Colombia, and the classroom practice of their peace programmes. I examined the factors that inform decisions on the design and practice of the peace education programme in each school – including educational policy, theories of peace education, the school’s social context, and teachers’ personal experiences – in order to identify educators’, pupils’, and parents’ expectations and understandings of peace and peace development.

The Colombian Ministry of Education (MEN) mandated that all schools should implement the Peace Core Subject in the 1732 Educational Law, from the 30th of December 2015. Napier (2003) argues that national educational reform, which often is influenced by global trends, is passed down to lower levels of policy administration – and ultimately to schools – in a “cascade”, generating processes of “creolization”, “re-creolization”, and “re-re-creolization”. This “transmission” occurs in a non-sequential manner, and is usually transformed and even obstructed, because “teachers, administrators, and other local actors sometimes resist, mediate, and transform the substance of the reforms into forms shaped by internal realities and contextual factors” (p. 52).

Different elements of the Law suggest different notions of peace, ranging from a narrow understanding of peace as the absence of physical violence (i.e. negative peace), to a broader view of peace as social justice and equality (i.e. positive peace). This variety invites further examination of the Colombian theory and practice of peace education. To this end, I asked the following research questions:

5. How is the Law implemented and understood?
6. How is peace taught in schools?
7. What kind of peace is being promoted in schools?
8. How are families involved in the process of teaching peace?

3.1. Research Design

Since the primary interest of my study is peace education in practice, and specifically the implementation of a new educational law, I chose the case study approach. Case studies are well-suited to exploring new phenomena (see Darke, Shanks, & Broadbent, 1998), and
especially useful in educational research, because they are process-oriented, malleable and adaptable (Anderson, 1993) – key characteristics for exploring a juncture in educational practice occurring at the national level, like the introduction of a new law. “In case study, the case is the situation, individual, group, organization or whatever it is we are interested in” (Robson, 2002, p. 135); and in this study, the interest, and therefore the units of analysis or cases (see R. K Yin, 2009), were the peace education programmes of each school. My study aimed to provide a “thick description” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Stake, 1995; R. K Yin, 2009) of the process of implementing a new educational law in schools that were navigating a transition from a 52-year conflict to a post-conflict era. My design and choice of methods permitted me to develop in-depth insight into the ways schools take on this task, as it unfolded in real time.

My research approach was qualitative, and naturalistic as my “interest was in the subjective, relativistic social world rather than an absolutist, external reality” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 6). I drew upon a variety of qualitative methods (semi-structured interviews, focus groups, observations, and document analysis) to gain an understanding of the decisions, beliefs, motivations and actual practice of peace education in schools as they made sense of the 1732 Educational Law. Different research methods facilitate gathering data from different views to unearth contradictions, points of convergence, and perspectives on the same issue which constitute the “complexity and particularity of the case” (Stake, 1995, p. xi).

3.2. School Contexts

In this section I will describe the more important elements of schools’ social contexts in understanding how some educators’ ideas about peace and peace education are shaped. I will develop this argument through the empirical chapters, but at this point, I want to situate my research by giving an overview of the general characteristics about the socio-political context of Colombia, and of the communities in which each school is located. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, internal displacement in Colombia is the most non-lethal consequence of the armed conflict and it affects public schools directly, since families seek education for their children in host cities (Lasso-Toro, 2013). Public schools, which serve most of the country’s low-income population, are also usually located in or near neighbourhoods highly affected by violence and criminality.
The *Liceo Alejandro de Humboldt* is located in Popayán, a city of approximately 280,000 inhabitants, which by comparison to the total population of 45.5 million in Colombia makes it a small city. Popayán is located in the Department of Cauca, historically a focus of the armed conflict. Its geography is unique, making it highly fertile not only for crops of corn, wheat, sugar cane, and coffee, but also for coca plantations, and mining. It also has large indigenous and Afro-Colombian populations, which have been subjected to acute levels of poverty (Luque-Revuelto, 2016). There are close to 210,240 internally displaced people in Cauca, and Popayán, as the capital of the Department, received approximately 5,355 people fleeing from violence in 2011 alone (Luque-Revuelto, 2016). As I will show in later chapters, these circumstances are relevant for the *Liceo*, because as a public school, it has a constant influx of pupils who have been internally displaced, and educators have had to make important adaptations to be able to deal with this particular issue.

Medellín is the capital of the Department of Antioquia, and is the second largest city in Colombia, with a population of approximately 2.4 million. Like Popayán and other major cities in Colombia, Medellín also has a high incursion of internally displaced population who move to the big cities seeking economic opportunities and anonymity (Luque-Revuelto, 2016). Two of my participant public schools are located in Medellín: the *Intitución Educativa Lola González* and the *Institución Educativa Antonio José Bernal*. Each is in a different *Comuna*, which is an urban division designed to distribute basic public services – e.g. electricity, water, etc. – across the cities. The *Lola* is in the *Comuna 13*, and the *Antonio José Bernal* is in the *Comuna 8*. Of the two neighbourhoods, the *Comuna 13* is internationally famed for being the place where Pablo Escobar would train and recruit hitmen for the purpose of building his own urban army (see Duncan, 2013). Drug trafficking was the major cause of violence in Medellín during the 1980s as a result of the rise of the Medellín Cartel. However, according to Giraldo-Ramírez (2008), the levels of violence and insecurity also relate to the context of armed conflict in Colombia broadly; by the end of the 1990s, with the strengthening of the FARC and paramilitary groups, the level of violence in the city escalated (Medina, Posso, & Tamayo, 2011). Between 1998 and 2005, the guerrilla groups and the paramilitary forces had urban wings that settled in the poorest neighbourhoods of Medellín

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7 Source: https://www.dinero.com/pais/articulo/numero-de-habitantes-en-colombia-segun-censo-2018/263907
(including the Comunas 13 and 8); and in 2002, Medellín was where 81% of the murders, 93% of the massacres, and 70% of the kidnappings of Antioquia occurred (Giraldo-Ramírez, 2008). This situation generated even higher levels of violence when the Police and Military Forces intervened in the early 2000s. The paramilitary groups and the authorities conspired to carry out violent operations against the civilian population (Giraldo-Ramírez, 2008) – the most infamous being the Orion Operation in 2002, which lasted four days and left an unknown number of victims (Ardila, 2017).

Cali, considered the third most important city in Colombia, is the capital of the Department of Valle del Cauca and has a population of approximately 1.9 million people. In general, this city followed the same pattern of violence as Medellín during the 1980s and 1990s, mostly as a result drug trafficking and the Cali Cartel (see Giraldo-Ramírez, 2008; Guerrero, 2006). However, the Colegio Ideas, the private school I studied in this city, is located in a safe neighbourhood outside Cali. Although the school enrolls some students from lower income families, its community is mostly affluent families, and 97% of parents in the community have postgraduate degrees. The general context of violence in the city does not affect most members of the school directly.

As the capital of Colombia, Bogotá is the largest city in the country, and its “financial and political centre” (Beckett & Godoy, 2010, p. 280; also see Guerrero, 2006). The growth of its population is perhaps the biggest impact of the armed conflict on the city, since it attracts people from every region (Beckett & Godoy, 2010). The total population of Bogotá is currently around 7,150,000 people. Like other cities in Colombia, Bogotá was also greatly affected by the escalation of violence during the 1980s and 1990s (Giraldo-Ramírez, 2008), with poor neighbourhoods in the city most affected by criminality and community violence (see Chaux, 2009). These circumstances pose important challenges for educators in public schools, like the Institución Educativa Divino Maestro, which have to deal with high levels of aggression among pupils as a result of being embedded in these type of contexts (see Chaux, 2009).

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10 Source: Colegio Ideas
Four of the participant schools are public, and one is private. This distinction matters because segregation and inequality in Colombia is reflected in education. Reimers (2000) found that “schools are highly stratified by the socio-economic level of pupils” (p. 28), and noted a significant variance in the results between schools. By 2008, UNESCO (as cited in Gaviria & Ospina-Serna, 2009) had concluded that 4 out of 10 children not attending school belonged to the poorest quintile of the population. Social stratification in Colombia is unique, and policy which mapped urban territories to manage public utility services in the mid-1990s (Uribe-Mallarino, 2008). In Colombia, this policy created six socio-economic levels or strata. The purpose of the policy was for the higher strata (5 and 6) to subsidise public services – including water, gas, energy, and so on – for the lower strata (1 and 2), making stratum 4 the only one paying the actual price of services. The strategy was geographical, so cities were divided by strata, making certain neighbourhoods more expensive than others. As the strategy involved a classification of residential neighbourhoods to determine how much people should pay for utilities (DANE, n.d.), those who were homeless were considered to belong to stratum 0.

The notion in Colombia of using strata as a means of political and economic organisation gradually moved towards other sectors of society, such as education, because it was seen to be less discriminatory and more flexible than the notion of social class (Uribe-Mallarino, 2008). This understanding of Colombian social divisions is important, because it is used in research and public documents to identify schools. In general, education in Colombia is segregated (García-Villegas & Quiroz-López, 2011; Gaviria & Ospina-Serna, 2009; Rossetti, 2014). Of the total population in public education, 77% belong to stratum 1, whereas just 0.8% belong to stratum 6. In stratum 1, there are 3 times more pupils in public education, whereas in stratum 6 there are 99 times more pupils in private schools. These data show that in general, affluent families send their children to private schools, whereas low-income families send their children to public schools (García-Villegas & Quiroz-López, 2011). The segregation of schools has implications for the quality of education. Reimers (2000) found that in 2000 in Colombia, the percentage of variance in student achievement as a result of the separation in schools in language skills was 17%, and 32% in mathematics at grade four level.12

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12 Typically children between 10 and 11 years of age.
The five participant schools follow the country’s general tendency, as table 3.1 shows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Strata of School Population</th>
<th>Tuition Fees</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institución Educativa Lola González</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>0,1,2,3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2341</td>
<td>Medellín</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institución Educativa Presbítero Antonio José Bernal</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>0,1,2,3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Medellín</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liceo Alejandro de Humboldt</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>0,1,2,3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1107</td>
<td>Popayán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Ideas</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,6,13</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>Cali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institución Educativa Divino Maestro</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>0,1,2,3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2554</td>
<td>Bogotá</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 Participant schools

3.3. Stage One of Data Collection

The first stage was exploratory fieldwork, and took place throughout November 2015. During this stage of my research, my main purpose was to recruit schools where there was exemplary practice of peace education, build an initial rapport with possible participants, and to understand the overall purpose of peace education in these schools specifically. For a summary of the data collected per research activity, please go to Appendix A.

3.3.1. Sampling Schools

Maruyama and Deno (1992) warn against the difficulty of accessing schools, so to overcome this obstacle, I took advantage of personal connections in Colombia. I was able to contact the Compartir Foundation, which became my liaison with individuals in schools. This foundation is broadly recognised for its efforts to improve educational quality in Colombia. One of its main accomplishments has been its work towards raising the status of teachers in the country.

The Compartir Foundation is a business foundation, with 35 years of experience in “putting its business capacity at the service of [Colombia] to promote and develop social programmes of high impact in education and construction aiming at low income families, to build a more equitable country” (Fundación Compartir, n.d., para. 19). The Foundation’s core

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13 Most pupils in the Colegio Ideas come from families living in areas of 5 and 6 strata.
conviction is that development and change is possible if all social actors take responsibility for solving the problems that society faces. Improving the quality of education is a priority in this process. Based on its research, the Foundation believes that the teacher is the main determinant in the quality of education. Therefore, in 1998, they launched the Premio Compartir al Maestro (Compartir Prize for the Teacher), which aims at acknowledging and celebrating those whose work helps schools provide education of excellent quality. In 2012, the Foundation created the Premio Compartir al Rector (Compartir Prize for the Head Teacher) to recognise the work of leaders in education who are also making a difference in improving education in Colombia. Both prizes are awarded every year.

For this study, I chose educators who had been awarded either of these prizes for their practices in peace education. The Compartir Foundation shared with me 8 essays they associated with peace education, submitted in the years 2013 and 2014 by prize winners, who had nominated themselves for the prize. With the help of the Foundation, I contacted all of them, and five agreed to allow me to visit their schools and conduct interviews with them. Three were winners of the Compartir Prize for the Teacher, and taught peace as part of their academic curriculum. Two of them worked in Medellín: an art teacher at the Lola, and an ethics teacher at the Antonio José Bernal; and another was an ethics teacher at the Divino Maestro in Bogotá. In the other two schools, the Colegio Ideas in Cali and Liceo Alejandro de Humboldt in Popayán, the head teachers had won the Compartir Prize for the Head Teacher for their whole-school approach to teaching peace.

The main criteria for choosing these individuals was the fact that they were already teaching peace in an exemplary manner, according to the Compartir Foundation. I chose schools with peace education programmes already in place to try to compensate for the newness of the 1732 Educational Law. My reasoning was that looking carefully at the implementation of the Law in these kinds of settings would allow me to see actual practices of peace education, which in schools where peace education was still in its infancy would not be so easy to observe. However, as I began my study, I quickly noticed that since the 1732 Law is not the first law to mandate peace education programme in Colombia, the uniqueness of these cases consisted mostly in the pedagogical tools used in the classroom by some teachers, rather than in underlying understandings about peace and peace education. In two schools – the Lola and the Liceo – more individual teachers joined the study in stages 1 and 2.
of the research, which provided other perspectives and examples of peace education practice beyond those that were prize-winning.

Other sampling strategies varied according to the stakeholder group – educators, parents/carers, or pupils – since the nature of each research method, the level of access to each group, and varying ethical considerations needed to be taken into account in recruitment. Below, I explain how I sampled for each research activity.

3.3.2. Interviewing Teachers

During the first stage of research, I used the snowball technique as a sampling strategy to identify other participants within the schools for interviews. This technique is applied when “subjects … recommend useful potential candidates for study” (Marshall, 1996, p. 523). The head teacher of the Liceo, who was the winner of the Compartir Prize for the Head Teacher, introduced me to four teachers of humanities at his school who agreed to be interviewed and to explain their perspectives on how the school implemented the 1732 Educational Law and developed its peace education programme. At the Antonio José Bernal, the teacher who had won the Compartir Prize for the Teacher encouraged me to speak to the head teacher to inquire about his efforts to implement the mandate in the school. All the additional participants at this stage were key to understanding peace education in practice. In this initial stage, I interviewed a total of 7 educators, illustrated in table 3.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Head Teacher</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institución Educativa Lola González</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institución Educativa Presbítero Antonio José Bernal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liceo Alejandro de Humboldt</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Ideas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institución Educativa Divino Maestro</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Participants Stage 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2 Teachers interviewed for stage one of data collection

I conducted semi-structured interviews with these participants, who have the advantage of having first-hand knowledge of their school’s peace education programme, the processes of how it came to be, and the broader context (see R. K Yin, 2009). Semi-structured interviews follow a question schedule but are also flexible.

Interviews are an essential source of case study evidence because case studies are about human affairs or behavioral events … The interviewees also can provide shortcuts to the prior history of such situations, helping you to identify other relevant sources of evidence. (R. K Yin, 2009, p. 108)
As the quote suggests, in the context of my study, interviews allowed me to understand the genesis of the peace education programmes, and the way the 1732 Educational Law fit in their trajectories. They also helped me explore what these educators thought they were doing to educate for peace, what motivations and factors shaped their programmes, and their understandings of peace more broadly. At this stage, I interviewed each participant once in 60-minute session, aware that less than 30 minutes would make it difficult to get meaningful information, and more than 60 would be asking too much from participants (Arksey & Knight, 1999; R. K Yin, 2009).

The interview is a special interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. Schostak (2006), for example, defines the interview as “individuals directing their attention towards each other with the purpose of opening up the possibility of gaining an insight into the experiences, concerns, interests, beliefs, values, knowledge and ways of seeing, thinking and acting of the other” (p. 10). This “encounter”, in Schostak’s (2006) words, occurs between two people who see each other as “the other”, and who by interacting start a “performance of identities through the medium of the interview” (p. 17). This interaction challenges the interviewer to constantly assess the relationship and “what is at stake” (Schostak, 2006, p. 2), as the interviewee may respond differently depending on the circumstances. Participants can stick to the rules and respond in a predictable way, deceive the researcher either willingly or unwillingly (Schostak, 2006), and be “subject to the common problems of bias, poor recall, and poor or inaccurate articulation” (R. K Yin, 2009, pp. 108-109). On the other hand, researchers are also subject to their own preconceived ideas, social class, emotions, interests, and so on (Wengraf, 2001), making rigorous preparation and piloting of interviews crucial to recognising and minimising these issues (Wengraf, 2001). The exploratory phase of my study allowed me to pilot questions, evaluate my own biases, and make adjustments in advance of the second stage of my research.

By interviewing the head teachers and teachers delivering the peace education programme, I sought to find out what factors informed decisions made in the school around teaching for peace, and how the mandate of the Peace Core Subject fit into this process. I also intended to explore what both teachers and head teachers expected of the programme, and how they were actually implementing the 1732 Educational Law: as part of other curricula – i.e. ethics, art – or a subject in itself; with which teachers, over what time allocations; with
what curricula, for which students, and with what level of parental involvement, for example. This exploratory phase of my research focused on three of my research questions:

1. How is the Law implemented and understood?
2. How is peace taught in schools?
3. How are families involved in the process of teaching peace?

Based on these aims, I designed an interview guide with key questions chosen to explore “the accounts of [the] behaviors, beliefs, feelings and actions” (Arksey & Knight, 1999, p. 4) of participants. In my interview guide, research questions were worded differently (Bell, 2010), since asking directly about beliefs, for example about peace, could be confusing and the interviewee might feel tricked (see Mason, 2002). Some of the questions I asked included, for example: How did the project of ecoimaginario start? Or How did you come to be a teacher of ethics at the Antonio José Bernal? These types of questions were designed to elicit stories, which allow people to “relive” the past by connecting to emotions and providing a “thick description” of events that are full of meaning (see Lawlor, 2000), from which deeper understandings of abstract ideas – like peace – could emerge. This approach required me to listen carefully instead of speaking (see Robson, 2002), and to find opportunities for follow-up questions like: What made the activity successful? Or What was achieved? This follow-up process drew out clearer articulations of what the educators thought were the purposes of the programme and insights into their understandings of peace. Other questions were more straightforward, for example: In your own words, what does the programme try to teach pupils? Or How is the programme implemented (hours per week, how many teachers, who teaches)? These types of questions provided explicit information about the programme, which was necessary to get a complete picture of the implementation of the programme and the Law.

There were seven individual interviews in total: three with head teachers and four with teachers. All of the interviews happened in the participants’ schools. All the educators seemed to be relaxed and comfortable, which was evident in their body language. They talked loudly and confidently, and the interviews became guided conversations, as Yin (2009) proposes should happen. As Stake (1995) argues, “the interview is the main road to multiple realities” (p. 64); and these interviews provided different perspectives on peace and peace education, and specifically on the implementation of the Law.
The second kind of interview was a group interview with four teachers from the Liceo. It began as an individual interview, when one teacher of the Peace Core Subject was referred to me when I first arrived, which required a little adaptation of my questions. After a few minutes, other teachers started to come into the classroom where we were talking, and joined the conversation. Two of the teachers were invited to participate by the head teacher, and another was looking for the interviewee to say goodbye and decided to stay. On both occasions I had to interrupt the conversation awkwardly to inform the new arrivals about their rights as participants and to get their consent to record the conversation. They were all happy to participate and be recorded, but three informed me that they wanted to remain anonymous. The questions followed the same structure as the previous individual interviews with the head teacher, though the interview quickly took on a more conversational tone.

3.3.3. Document Analysis

Document analysis is often used with other methods with the purpose of gathering “data on the context in which research participants operate” (Bowen, 2009, p. 29). In my research, I analysed governmental and legal documents that examine what Napier (2003) calls the “spirit” of the reform, and to understand what the government sees as peace, and the role of education in developing it, as a means to provide the necessary legal framework to understand what is demanded from schools. While conducting the exploratory phase of my research, I examined what the policy of the Peace Core Subject says about peace education in Colombia. The documents I looked at were the 1732 Law of September 1st, 2014, as well as other policy and legal documents, such as the “proyecto de ley” (law proposal) where legislators presented their motives for this educational reform; the Colombian Constitution of 1991; the 115th General Law of Education of 1994; the 1620 Educational Law of 2013; the 1038 Decree of 1994; and the 1860 Decree of 2015. Policies are tools that governments use in order to manage the population, so the analysis of policies “should … reveal the manner in which governments aim to channel the activities of the population towards goals that have been planned by the government” (Goodwin, 1996, p. 65). The analysis of these policies is essential as they reveal governmental goals for peace education. Specifically, by analysing policy documents regarding the peace core subject, I was able to find what the government takes as its primary goals in the process of developing peace, and what its aims for peace education are. This analysis of government goals also made for a useful point of comparison to the ways schools were interpreting and implementing the new educational mandate.
The result of the documentary analysis was elaborated in Chapters 1, 4, and 8. In Chapter 1 I focused on the revision of relevant documents to build the context from which the new mandate stemmed. The documents which allowed me to build the context were the 1991 Constitution of Colombia, the 115 General Law of Education of 1994, the latest Decennial Plan of Education pertaining the years 2015 to 2025, the 1620 Educational Law of 2013, the 1860 Decree of 1994, and the 1404 Educational Law of 2010. In Chapter 4 I looked at the 1732 Law and the 1038 Decree of 2015 more in-depth with the purpose of analysing the purpose of the Law and what schools are mandated to implement. The analysis also permitted me to understand how and why people in schools reacted to the Law the way they did. And in Chapter 8 I looked at the legal documents that referred to the interaction between schools and families. These documents were the 1404 Educational Law of 2010, the 115 General Law of Education of 1994 and 1860 Decree of 1994. By doing this analysis I was able to make evident the tension between schools and parents around the issue of whose job is it to educate for peace.

3.4. Stage Two of Data Collection

The second stage was between the 30th of March to the 15th of June, 2016, during which time I collected most of my data. During this stage, I visited each school for three weeks. By this point, the MEN’s deadline for schools to start implementing the Peace Core Subjects – 30th of December 2015 – had passed. The main purpose of this phase was to look at peace education in practice, and to explore how the 1732 Educational Law was being implemented and understood in schools. I used semi-structured interviews, observations and focus groups during this phase of the study to explore three core elements: a) curriculum – content, skills and abilities; b) pedagogy – the strategies and activities used in the classroom to deliver the curriculum; and c) teacher practice and attitudes – teachers’ behaviours towards their students when they teach. I also recruited pupils and parents, and included other educators who claimed to be teaching peace through other curricula, including social studies, physical education, religion, and literature.

To build up a thick description of the implementation of the Peace Core Subject, I continued to use semi-structured interviews with adults, including head teachers, teachers and parents. Semi-structured interviews proved to be appropriate because although this type of interview is guided by key questions planned by the interviewer, it allows for subsequent
questions inspired by the interviewee’s answers (Arksey & Knight, 1999). For a detailed summary of the data, please see Appendix B.

3.4.1. Interviewing Parents

In interviews with parents/carers, I expected to learn about their involvement in their school’s peace education programme, their views from a close yet external perspective, and their own expectations of what it meant for their children to learn about peace. Parent/carer perspectives are important since research on school-parent partnerships has shown that parental/carer involvement is key in the process of teaching for peace (see Dovey, 1996; Myers-Walls, Myers-Bowman, & Pelo, 1993). Interviewing parents helped answer research questions 2, 3, and 4, as they offered perspectives on how peace was taught in schools, how families were included (or not) in the process, and what ideas of peace were being shaped by their children’s education.

The most important criteria for sampling parents was that their children had to be learning about peace with one of the peace education programmes I was examining. At schools where the programme was part of the school ethos, this criterion meant that all parents could participate. However, in schools where the peace education programme was part of a specific subject, only parents whose children were in those classes were asked to participate.

The process of recruiting parents was different in each school. I knew that having access to parents was going to be difficult based on the information head teachers and teachers had given me during the first stage of the study. I had to be strategic, and so I relied on the teachers and head teachers. At the Liceo and the Lola, people from the school contacted parents directly. They recruited parents who lived close to the school and who had been actively engaged in school activities or the peace education programme in the past. Parents who were actively engaged with the school would be most likely to know what is happening on a day-to-day basis, which in the case of the implementation of a new mandate is more useful than parents who are rarely informed about what happens in their children’s school.

In the case of the Divino Maestro, the strategy was different. During the weeks I spent there, the school gave parents their children’s report cards, which was very useful timing for my research. On the days leading up to giving out report cards, when parents were going to
the school, I talked to the groups of students I had been observing. Pupils knew me, and I had built a rapport with them by then. I asked them to ask their parents if they would be willing to meet with me for an interview on the day they were coming to school to collect report cards and talk to teachers. Four parents agreed, and I set up meetings with them at the school before or after the time they were supposed to meet their children’s teachers. Another four parents I asked on the day while standing outside the classroom of a teacher I had been observing. At the Antonio José Bernal, the head teacher asked 5 parents who were usually available for school activities if they wanted to meet with me, and three agreed; however, none came to the school on the day of the meeting. At the Colegio Ideas, the head teacher invited me to recruit parents myself, but would not divulge contact information. Instead, he told me to ask parents who came to pick their children up at the end of the school day. I approached six parents, who were in a rush when they came to pick their children from school. I explained my research, but none agreed to participate.

I set up meetings with participant parents at the schools during a school day. All the interviews with parents were between 20 and 30 minutes long, mostly due to the fact that their time was limited.

3.4.2. Interviewing Teachers, Round Two

During this second stage of my research, I re-interviewed most of the educators who had participated in the first stage, to deepen my understanding of the process of teaching for peace. Only the two winners of the Compartir Prize for the Head Teacher had a difficult time fitting me into their schedule, and were not able to participate again. In addition to the winners of the Compartir Prize for the Teacher and the four teachers at the Liceo who had participated in the first stage, I recruited more teachers from different subject areas.

At the Lola, my initial interest was in the programme led by the winner of the Compartir Prize for the Teacher, so I explained this to all the teachers who were working in the teachers’ lounge one afternoon. Two more teachers volunteered to participate. However, during these interviews, I realised that they argued that they were also teaching peace as part of their own curricula – e.g. social studies and physical education – and that the school had implemented the Peace Core Subject as an independent subject. This realisation led me to want to recruit other teachers who claimed to be teaching peace through their curricula, as well as teachers who taught the Peace Core Subject. I explained to all the teachers that I was also looking for educators who felt they were teaching something related to peace, and I
asked two teachers of the Peace Core Subject directly. A religion teacher approached me because he was interested in participating, and one of the teachers of the Peace Core Subject also agreed to participate. Therefore, a total of 5 teachers from this school participated in the second stage.

At the *Liceo* the winner of the Compartir Prize was the head teacher for his whole-school approach to peace education, so all the teachers were part of the peace education programme. I asked all the teachers during a teacher meeting whether they would be interested in participating, and two more teachers agreed, making a total of six teachers.

At the other three schools it was difficult to find a time in which the teachers were gathered together, so my strategy was to explain my study to individual teachers and ask if they wanted to participate directly. At the *Colegio Ideas*, teachers in general told me that since it was the end of the school year (June) they did not have much time during the school day between preparing end of the year projects, report cards, and other necessary things. Similarly, at the *Antonio José Bernal*, teachers I asked directly seemed willing to participate, but in the end could not find the time to meet with me. Finally, at the *Divino Maestro* I recruited the head teacher, however, all other teachers whom I asked directly could not participate, making for a total of only two participants from that school. In total I interviewed 23 adults between teachers, head teachers and parents. Table 3.3 shows the distribution of participants by school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Head Teacher</th>
<th>Other School Leaders</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institución Educativa Lola González</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institución Educativa Presbítero Antonio José Bernal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liceo Alejandro de Humboldt</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Ideas</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institución Educativa Divino Maestro</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Interviewees Stage 2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3 Educators and parents interviewed for stage two of data collection
3.4.3. Observations

In this study, the purpose of observation and participant observation was to identify data that would answer research questions 1, 2, and 4. Specifically, I wanted to observe how the 1732 Educational Law was implemented or not in the classroom, what was being taught as peace (the curriculum-in-use), the pedagogy used to teach, and teacher attitudes and practice as they teach for peace. Hatch (2002) argues that “direct observation of social phenomena permits better understanding of the contexts in which such phenomena occur” (p. 72), because researchers can follow an inductive process to uncover what participants think and believe through their behaviour in a particular setting. As Hatch (2002) notes, “the researcher has the opportunity to see things that are taken for granted by participants and would be less likely to come to the surface using interviewing or other data collection techniques” (p. 72). I used both non-participant observation and participant observation of classes and activities related to the peace education programmes. The main difference between non-participant observation and participant observation is “the extent to which the observer adopts the role of member of the group being studied” (Verma & Mallick, 1999, p. 129). Observations can be defined as the systematic act of watching “people, events, behaviours, settings, artifacts, routines and so on” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 456), and can provide “faithful to the real-life [data]” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 298) – especially when systematic observation occurs over a period of three weeks, which is enough time to see teachers and pupils fall into their regular patterns.

Throughout my observations I took notes. My theoretical sensitivity, developed through my teaching experience and the literature I have read, informed my observations on the extent to which peace was being discussed. This sensitivity was important, as some schools had an overarching curriculum of peace, which meant that peace was taught through different subject areas and/or was considered integral to the school ethos. When recording ideas, the first principle was to write everything related to teachers’ or pupils’ mention of the word peace or violence. For example, “this school is a space free from violence” (Patricia, Medellín, November 2015). The second principle was to identify what was happening in the learning activity that might be related to broader ideas of peace and peace education I had studied before going on fieldwork. An example of this is, “Hey, is it normal for mother and father to stay together? … what is normal is for the mother to take on the responsibility” (Divino Maestro, Bogotá, May 2016). Although the word peace is never mentioned, in this
classroom, pupils were discussing issues of gender inequality related to social justice, which is a key concept linked to positive peace (Chapter 2).

Observations took place in classrooms or other spaces related to the teaching of peace, including a school outing designed to work on elements of the peace education programme. I followed a classroom observation guide I created based on the three core elements I identified in the literature on peace education: curriculum, pedagogy, and teacher practice and attitudes. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>- Objectives stated or implied for the class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Materials given to students (e.g. readings, video, pictures)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
<td>- Student organisation (e.g. group/individual work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Tasks given to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Questions made by the teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Teacher support for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Time allocation for activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Attitudes</td>
<td>- Language used by the teacher to address students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Language used by the students to address the teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Teacher-pupil interactions (e.g. questioning, joking)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Key vocabulary (peace, violence, inequality, norms)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other elements to observe</td>
<td>- Pupil-pupil interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Pupil-pupil language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4 shows the number of observations conducted in each school and how many teachers were observed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Number of teachers observed</th>
<th>Total number of observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institución Educativa Lola González</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institución Educativa Presbítero Antonio José Bernal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liceo Alejandro de Humboldt</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Ideas</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institución Educativa Divino Maestro</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4 Observations for stage two of data collection

The observation guide proved very helpful to focus my attention on different aspects of the lesson. During the process of observing a class, it is very common to focus only on what the teacher does and says. However, the observation guide reminded me to look at other elements that I might have not tried to identify otherwise, for example the lesson’s objective.
I noticed that very rarely did the teacher explicitly say what pupils should learn, and I had to infer it based on the classroom task.

Observations and field notes in general, mostly fed into Chapter 7, The Medium and the Message. In this chapter I focused on the actual practice of peace education in schools, therefore I contrasted what people in schools had told me in interviews and focus groups with what happened in the classroom. Observations allowed me to see how the ideas adults and pupils said about their peace education programmes (analysed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6) were enacted specifically around two projects which were people in schools related to the development of peace: Life-projects and early pregnancy.

3.4.4. Focus Groups with Pupils

Parallel to the interviews and observations, I conducted focus groups with pupils between the ages of 12 and 18. Each group was invited to participate in two focus groups, each 30 minutes long. My purpose for using this method of data gathering was to capture perspectives on the peace education programmes from those for whom it was designed. This method provided data necessary to answer research questions 2, 3, and 4, as it explored how peace is taught in schools according to pupils, how they see the role of families in the process of learning about peace, and the notions of peace promoted by their teachers.

The focus group is described as a “research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher” (Morgan, 1996, p. 130). Its biggest advantage is the group interaction and in-depth discussion in a safe environment (Gibson, 2007; Morgan, 1996; Sim, 1998) around questions or other stimuli. The focus group aims at developing a collective consciousness by providing qualitative data on opinions, attitudes and perceptions of a common experience. This method is very useful for exploring children’s views and perceptions about a specific topic. It also gives the possibility of integrating a creative activity that motivates the work, so participants can concentrate and be active for longer (Gibson, 2007).

Pupils who participated in the focus groups volunteered. After being at the school for three days, I explained again to each group in the classes I had been observing what my study was about and why I wanted to talk to students. I explained what a focus group was, and what was expected of the students who volunteered to participate. I said I was looking for groups to be of at least 6, and no bigger than 10, as a smaller or bigger group would have been less
likely to produce the desired interaction (Gibson, 2007). I also indicated that I would prefer the same number of men and women, and that if I had more volunteers I would choose among them at random. I answered all their questions and proceeded to circulate a piece of paper so those who wanted to participate could write down their names. In the cases where there were more pupils than the ones that I needed, I divided the names into two bags by gender, and randomly selected equal numbers from each bag. Although some groups were not exactly half and half, the overall participation of male and female participants was equal in most schools. The only case where I was not able to keep a balanced group between men and women was the Lola, where there were more women than men willing to participate, such that all the volunteer males were selected and the females were randomly selected. Table 3.5 illustrates the number of pupil participants by gender, and the number of focus groups in each school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Number of 30-minute Focus Groups</th>
<th>Male Pupils</th>
<th>Female Pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institución Educativa Lola González</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institución Educativa Presbítero Antonio José Bernal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liceo Alejandro de Humboldt</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Ideas</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institución Educativa Divino Maestro</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
<td><strong>59</strong></td>
<td><strong>95</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5 Focus groups with students for stage two of data collection

The focus groups took place in the school during school hours. I organised focus groups by age to make sure the interactions between peers was balanced. The group discussions concentrated on the pupils’ experience of the peace education programme: what they were learning about, what they were being prepared for, and what they understood by peace. Sensitive or controversial issues did not surface.

I opened each focus group with an explanation of what was going to happen throughout the session, and its objective. During this introduction, I reminded the students of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, noted that the discussion was going to be recorded, and assured them that their real names would never be used. The first focus group started with a 5-minute icebreaker to help create rapport with pupils. Then there was a 10-minute activity to introduce key norms for the group and allow them to contribute and discuss those norms. Afterwards, the students were asked if they had any questions, which I answered. Then I proceeded with the questions I wanted to discuss with them as a group. The
second focus group started with a short 5-minute introduction where the consent form and norms were revisited, with a reflection on what worked in the previous session and what needed improvement. Then, we continued with the discussion. I left 5 minutes at the end to summarise the discussion and thank the students for their participation.

I had planned, as an ethical consideration, to be accompanied by a teacher from every school, but none of the schools had a member of staff available to be present during the sessions. Perhaps the fact that I had been a teacher of adolescents for 6 years gave the head teachers and teachers the peace of mind to allow me to be alone with the groups. Most likely, as a result, pupils felt they could be more forthcoming with what they wanted to say, which led to rich data for my study.

3.5. Data Analysis

My study generated a large amount of qualitative data which I analysed using thematic analysis. The first objective was to fully appreciate the set of data to be analysed. Thus, the first reading focused on what the participants said and did, and on getting into the context that produced the data, while trying to hold back from finding codes (see Braun & Clarke, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Transcription and translation allowed me to go through all the data without assigning labels, although I noticed that I began to establish some patterns that I decided to record in my research diary to revisit once the actual coding began.

The second phase was open coding, at which point I started using the computer software Atlas Ti. Charmaz (2014) describes the process of coding as “naming segments of data with a label that simultaneously categorizes, summarizes and accounts for each piece of data” (p. 111). During this stage I followed an inductive approach, where the codes and themes were chosen from the data itself, and not from previous literature (see Braun & Clarke, 2006); however, previous experience with the literature and in the classroom had formed a theoretical sensitivity (see Corbin & Strauss, 2008) which influenced my coding process and the later themes that derived from the codes. Although reaching an ‘objective’ view of the data is impossible, I made an effort to keep an open mind and be conscientious of how the literature and prior knowledge influenced my analysis (see Dey as cited in Corbin & Strauss, 2008). My biggest concern was to be aware of when the literature was interfering with “reading data correctly” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 33), and when it allowed me to “understand the significance of some things more quickly” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 33).
As Corbin & Strauss (2008; also see Neuman, 1997) say, it found important to revisit constantly the initial codes throughout the process of analysis. At this point in the analysis the codes were more literal, for example: importance of programme or law. At the end of this phase I had 60 codes.

Braun and Clarke (2006) assert that a third phase of analysis begins when “you are starting to analyse your codes and consider how different codes may combine to form an overarching theme” (p. 89). At this stage I began to triangulate the data from different methods and participants, to develop broader thematic categories and try to establish the connection between codes and identified themes and subthemes. Some themes I identified during this stage were: inclusion, parental involvement, life-project. During the fourth phase, themes were constantly reviewed, and some were discarded, combined or divided (see Braun & Clarke, 2006). Some overarching themes I defined at this point included pedagogy, teacher attitudes, and content. Each theme was reviewed independently in relation to all its excerpts of data to assess if there was a coherent pattern. Afterwards, the themes from the previous review were compared to the entire data set to determine if it “accurately’ reflect[ed] the meanings evident in the data set as a whole” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 91). The process of coding unveiled patterns, unique cases or contrasting data, and tendencies.

The final phase was to develop “the ‘story’ that each theme tells … [and] to consider how it fits into the broader overall ‘story’ that you are telling about your data, in relation to the research question or questions” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92). My empirical chapters (Chapters 4 through 8) tell this story. Although I tried to let the participants narrate their own story, I am aware that in the end it is my own interpretation of the case. Nevertheless, to counteract this issue, I kept a research diary throughout the study and tried to maintain a reflexive attitude towards my own biases.

The next sections explain in more detail the process of data analysis during stages one and two to provide an overview of the data including themes and meta-categories in relation to the research methods and participants.
3.5.1. Data Analysis Stage One

As I explained in section 3.3., I conducted 7 interviews with teachers and head teachers, and analysed legal documents with the purpose of understanding the context in which schools had to design their peace education programmes. During this initial stage I engaged in open coding. Some of these codes came only from interviews, and some only from documents, however, I quickly noticed that codes like *peace* -referring to understandings of peace- were present in both. The following map identifies the preliminary codes and sub-codes in relation to the research method.

Diagram 3. 1 Map of emerging codes and sub-codes in Stage One of research

Diagram 3. 1 illustrates the emerging themes from Stage One. The green flag refers to codes from interviews and the orange flags to codes from policy documents. This map is the result of two steps of analysis. The first step comprised of merely naming the pieces of data with categories based on what people or the documents said. In the second step I attempted to group some codes under bigger ideas which helped me make sense of the initial data. This last step was also informed by key themes emerging from the literature, even though I strived to be open to new themes. For example, I identified in some interviews that teachers expected to develop in children the habit of solving conflicts peacefully, change their behaviours, and achieve a peaceful coexistence within the school. All of these codes in the end describe what teachers aimed for with their peace education programmes, therefore, I grouped them under a larger category of *purpose of peace education*. By doing so, I was able to identify that the policy documents also outlined what the state expected to achieve through peace education.
and in when did these coincide or not. Some key themes emerging from the literature were, for instance, democracy, liberal peace, and pedagogy.

3.5.2. Data Analysis Stage Two

In section 3.4, I explained how I expanded my research by including other research methods like focus groups and observations and recruited more teachers, parents, and students with the purpose of building a thick description of the process of implementing the Peace Core Subject. During this Stage, the result was a great amount of qualitative data which enriched the preliminary analysis done after Stage One. Diagram 3.2 shows how new methods resulted in a new process of open coding and provided evidence for the previous analysis.

Diagram 3.2 Map of emerging codes and sub-codes in Stage Two of research

In Diagram 3.2 the yellow flags refer to data from observations and the purple flags to data from focus groups. New codes are highlighted and show that new data opened more lines of analysis.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

My ethical reflections on the study began with the Research Risk Ethics Assessment (RREA). The University of Manchester’s ethics committee was very important to help me
anticipate and engage with any ethical challenges my research posed. The planning of the research was undertaken with an eye to the committee’s guidelines.

Before I set out on my initial phase of research, a Participant Information Sheet (PIS) and a Consent Form (CF) (see Mason, 2002) were sent in advance for the winners of the Compartir prizes to familiarise themselves with, and so that they could prepare any questions they might have. All participants gave consent during the data gathering activities, which meant they could ask any questions they had about the study or what their consent entailed immediately. I sought written or oral consent from each participant adult or child prior to every research activity. For interviews, I always explained my research clearly, and clarified that the interview would be recorded unless participants preferred not to be recorded. Of all the participants, only two mothers said they did not want to be recorded, and allowed me to take notes. I also made it clear to all participants that they could withdraw from the research at any stage with no consequences, explained that their privacy would be protected, and asked them if they wished to remain anonymous. Only three teachers and two parents asked to be anonymised, and I used pseudonyms.

I followed each school’s policy regarding parental consent for their children participating in this research activity. I also followed the guidelines from the Compartir Foundation, the MEN, and other national legal frameworks that refer to children in Colombia, and Colciencias’ Ethical Guidelines (the governmental body that funds my PhD), which is in charge of the public policies that promote research in Colombia. This entailed parents/carers being informed of when the observations would take place and the purpose behind the research. Parents/carers were given the choice to withdraw their child from the study at any point, but explicit consent was not necessary so long as the head teachers, teachers, and pupils agreed to being observed.

Conducting research with young participants entails some risks. According to Morrow and Richards (1996), the main issues with conducting social research with children, in a study like mine where it was very unlikely for sensitive issues to arise, are issues of consent and confidentiality. Nevertheless, as the ethical guidelines of the British Educational Research Association-BERA (2018) highlight, children and young people are especially vulnerable to structural inequalities which forces researchers in education to be especially aware of such inequalities and vigilant of not reproducing them. Therefore, necessary safeguards and considerations had to be put into place in order to prevent harm from
happening and plan what to do in case harm occurred (see British Educational Research Association [BERA], 2018).

Due to the general context of violence, some of the potential risks derived from my research were, in the first place, having students disclose information about their personal lives or their lives in school that related to issues of violence or abuse for which I do not have the professional preparation to handle. I also anticipated that issues of bullying or teasing might occur during focus groups. To prevent the first risk from happening I carefully planned my questions beforehand. Although I wanted to formulate open-ended questions which elicit conversation, rather than specific answers, the questions focused mostly on their experience in the classroom, what they learned, how they learned, and their thoughts on the impact the classes were having on their own academic and personal development. I maintained this consistency with my follow-up questions, especially when I saw the groups deviating from the main topic.

This strategy proved to be successful as there were not sensitive issues arising during focus groups. Secondly, to prevent issues of bullying amongst the groups, I started every focus group with a set of norms I expected to be respected during our time together. I allocated time to discuss the norms with the group and allow them to give suggestions. These norms were very useful as at times I could refer to them when I needed to. For example, when students were being too loud and not listening to each other, I pointed to the poster with the norms which pupils understood as a sign to come back to and focus on the person who was speaking.

Other unexpected harm was susceptible to happen, therefore I had thought a plan of action (see British Educational Research Association [BERA], 2018). For these cases I had decided to follow the schools’ protocols. This meant that I would consult the teacher or head teacher who was my first point of contact in the school and let the school determine whether families or authorities had to be involved. Even though none of these situation arose, these considerations were part of the research design.

In my research students were involved in the study both as active participants in focus groups and as part of the context, for example during observations (see British Educational Research Association [BERA], 2018). Following the BERA guidelines (2018) after analysing the rights of the children, I considered necessary to ask pupils to give consent in both
instances. To guarantee that such consent was informed I planned to be more careful and extensive in my explanation of what it meant to participate in this study, and to make sure to answer any questions clearly. I also reminded participants of their right to withdraw at any point in the study in every session (see British Educational Research Association [BERA], 2018). I allocated time during both sessions of the focus group for this and explained the purpose of the observations in each group I observed. For the young participants in focus groups I also sought consent from parents/carers as they are the main responsible for the children and could act as advocates for their children’s wellbeing, if necessary (see British Educational Research Association [BERA], 2018). I also understood that my responsibility as researcher in the context of schools was to minimise as much as possible the risks arising from my study, therefore as a norm anonymised young participants (see British Educational Research Association [BERA], 2018).

I believe my biggest responsibility when working with youth in the scenario of focus groups was to create and maintain a safe environment for discussion and conversation, so I planned to have a discussion at the beginning to establish some agreements as to how to make the conversation a safe one. I recorded on a large piece of construction paper what our agreements were, and we revisited them at the beginning and at the end of each session. There were no issues in any of the focus groups, and no one abandoned the study, even when they could have opted out of attending the second focus group.

When observing teachers, my biggest concern was to prevent them from feeling judged. I have been trained to observe teachers and therefore this is one of my strengths. I explained before my observations what my intention for observing them was, and ensured they understood I would not be assessing them in any way. I also offered to share my observation notes if they wished to know what I was looking at. My notes remained descriptive and non-judgemental, as I had learned in my training in School Leadership at Harvard University, and in my experience in Colombia as an academic coordinator (similar to a being a Middle School Principal).

I kept a research diary aimed not only at keeping what Burgess (1981) calls methodological and analytic accounts – i.e. my stance in the organisation and the methods used in the research, plus “hunches the researcher may hold, ideas for organizing the data and concepts employed by the participants that can be used to analyse materials” (Burgess, 1981, p. 76) – but also my own prejudices, preconceived ideas, and values and beliefs. This self-
awareness was important to develop trustworthiness, by making my biases and positions
evident, and helping me understand where I come from as a researcher (see Creswell &
Miller, 2000).

3.7. Trustworthiness

To establish trustworthiness, I focused on issues of credibility, transferability (or
generalisability), dependability, confirmability (see Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and
trustworthiness in translation.

To guarantee credibility, I combined research methods to increase validity, since “no
one kind of source evidence is likely to be sufficient (or sufficiently valid) on its own”
(Gillham, 2010, p. 2). Data triangulation from different methods and sources allowed me to
build a more complete picture of each case and a better understanding of the reality of the
events (see R. K Yin, 2009), and to “[improve] the probability that findings and
interpretations will be credible” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 305). I chose to conduct
observations, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and document analysis. I also chose to
triangulate different views from different stakeholders (i.e. head teachers, teachers, pupils,
and parents) because each participant had a unique view of the process of teaching and
learning peace (see Stake, 1995). Looking for different voices helped “to retain the holistic
and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (R. K Yin, 2009, p. 4). For example,
interviews allowed participants to openly express their views, while observation allowed
seeing them in a more natural scenario. This combination of methods helps reduce bias
which, as Yin (2009) points out, is a frequent criticism of case study research.

Another factor in building credibility was the principle of reciprocity (see Harrison,
MacGibbon, & Morton, 2001). Although member checks (see Lincoln & Guba, 1985)
throughout the research could not be done due to the fact that participants did not have the
time, I agreed with them that I would share my research with the schools and participants
once it is finished.

The nature of case-study research creates issues of generalisation. My study mainly
focused on exemplary practice of peace education to overcome the obstacle of the freshness
of the Law. One way to address the issue of generalisability is by looking at the cases as
examples of larger phenomena (Gomm, Hammersley, & Foster, 2000). Secondly, I chose five
schools in four cities of Colombia in order to collect data from different contexts. Yin (2003)
argues that multiple-case studies are stronger than single-case studies, and I chose this approach in order to get a broad and more nuanced perspective of how the Law was understood and implemented in Colombia. Thirdly, four of the five case-study schools are public, and public education in Colombia serves the majority of its youth population, who tend to belong to the lowest socio-economic classes (see section 3.2). Another way of addressing the issue of generalisability is that by providing a thick description of its cases, my research can be more easily compared to other contexts (Polit & Beck, 2010). The cases show patterns which may be similar to other contextual circumstances in other places (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Finally, I situate my research within wider theorising about peace and peace education, in order to draw more general conclusions as to how processes of implementing top-down mandates work in practice, and how processes of developing peace through education actually look in schools.

The third issue of trustworthiness is dependability. To establish dependability I relied on the process of triangulation again. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) point out, the demonstration of credibility is the demonstration of dependability. A second measure taken to establish dependability and confirmability was to conduct my own audit by following Braun and Clarke’s (2006) suggestion of slowing down the process of data analysis. Section 3.4. shows how the process of making sense of the data occurred.

Finally, to assure trustworthiness in translation – given all the research was conducted in Colombia, and all the raw data was in Spanish – I made the decision that all the transcription and analysis of the data would be done in Spanish, to guarantee the real meaning of what participants wanted to say. I only translated the pieces of data that I included in the thesis. I did all the translations myself, as Spanish is my first language and I am proficient in English. Also, since I collected the data, I had a sense of the context which informed the meaning of the quotes.

The translation process had advantages, such as having to make sure exactly what the participant or document was saying in order to translate it, which was a great gain for the research. On the other hand, it was difficult to convey in English everything that participants had communicated in Spanish. Some words or expressions in Spanish do not have exact translations in English. Two strategies helped to compensate for this difficulty: asking another Colombian postgraduate student bilingual in English to translate pieces of the data on his own, and for comparison to the researcher’s translations to try to find major
discrepancies; and using online fora where colloquial expressions in Spanish were discussed and translations in English suggested.

3.8. Positionality: The Research Process

Research is not a neutral activity (Mason, 2002) as it occurs in “a shared space, shaped by both the researcher and participants” (Bourke, 2014, p. 1). As Bourke (2014) explains, the researcher identities impact the research and every individual has a multiplicity of “overlapping identities” (p. 1). In my case, I hold several identities with which I came into the field. I am a Colombian woman in my thirties, an aspiring scholar, former school teacher and teacher leader, a Harvard and Manchester graduate, PhD students, a scholarship holder, and an individual who belongs to lucky upper middle-class family. All these identities clearly had an impact in my research both in negative, like having biases (Bourke, 2014), and positive ways, like helping me gain access (Mason-Bish, 2019).

Being a Colombian was very helpful. Although my country is very diverse, I conducted my study in urban areas where I was familiarised with the culture. Also, having complete control of the language was also invaluable, as there are subtle elements within every language which can convey complete ideas. Nevertheless, the fact that I was born and raised in Bogotá, the capital of Colombia had the risk of raising regionalist emotions that would lead my participants to close off to me. However, I maintained a learning attitude, I made it clear that they were the experts (see Mason-Bosh, 2019) in their peace education programmes and they knew the history of how they came to be what they are today. Nevertheless, my own internal biases which came from my own beliefs, political convictions, and personal background (see Bourke 2014) led me to judgements. For example, on one occasion a teacher was handling an issue of behaviour in class, his suggestion to the group was to have a round of “banquillo”, this meant that each individual would sit in the middle of a circle and the rest would tell him/her what they thought of them. I was not present when the activity took place and I am not sure if it even happened, however I felt it had the potential of being a very violent experience for the students. My approach was not to express my disapproval, but to take advantage of the many opportunities I had with that teacher to have a conversation and assume an attitude of curiosity. Therefore, I asked him how that activity would help him work issues of behaviour and how would the activity work. I was very conscientious of my body language and tone of voice because I did not want to sound judgmental. He really did not have a specific answer and said it was something he said at the
time to give options to his pupils and did not continue the conversation. His tone of voice did not show he was upset and he continued talking about other things.

I believe the element of belonging to a certain social class and being able to take advantage of my privilege (like going to some of the best universities in Colombia and the world) had the greatest impact on the relationship with participants. I was very aware of this issue from the beginning as classism in Colombia is so ingrained in our culture. I strived to be aware of my own discriminatory practices and biases, for example towards public schools. I thought these schools could be violent, unsafe (both in terms of security and physically), and ugly. To avoid having these feelings and prejudices from clouding my mind, I talked with people from the Compartir Foundation who had visited the schools before. I wanted to know which precautions to take and what I would find. These people had a large experience going to schools all around the country, therefore were less biased than me. They answered all my questions and helped me feel safe. I also think that having had the opportunity to begin building a rapport with participants before arriving to the school, via email and phone, helped me understand where I was going and confront my personal biases. Another element which helped me break some of the prejudices they could have against me was to be very aware of how I dressed, for example. I was very aware I needed to be seen professional, however, I also wanted to be approachable. Therefore, I used clothes which were not fancy (not that I am a fancy person), and simple, yet professional. I was also very aware of any opportunity to show that I am a simple and relatable person. For example, food was key. In one occasion a Head Teacher asked if I was hungry (I was) and said he would invite me to eat an “arepa de huevo”. This is a very popular dish which is a savory pastry filled with a fried egg. I honestly do enjoy it and my reaction was “I love it!”. His reaction was “You really are a simple person”. I believe that was an important moment. I also had lunch wherever people in the schools had lunch and ate what they ate, and gladly said yes to anything they would offer me (coffee, treats, candy). I also trusted them, for example if they told me it was safe to keep my coat and things in an open space, I left them. I believe these conscientious attitudes helped build trust between me and participants. I have also followed up with them throughout the years and we already started talking about returning to the schools to present my findings.

Lastly, I found that although my credentials could create distance between me and participants, I also found these could be beneficial in certain moments. Having important titles after my name and an interesting career in education both as a teacher and teacher
leader helped gain access with the schools and create rapport with participants. Head Teachers and teachers believed in my capacity to look at their programmes in-depth with different lenses. For example, teachers trusted me because I knew what it meant to be in the classroom dealing with the multiplicity of problems teachers deal with every day. Pupils saw me as a teacher, they even called me “profe” in all the schools which is an abbreviation of the word “profesora” or teacher. Head Teachers trusted me because I could relate with the issues of leading teachers and trying to make changes within an educational institution. And they all thought I had something to give back to the schools because of my academic preparation. For example, one of the Head Teachers in one of the schools asked me to lead a workshop with teachers. We talked about what he wanted and designed a workshop which I led on the last day of my visit. I did not want to do it before because I thought it would interfere with my research but doing it on the last day was a great way to give something back to the community who had been so open with me.

Throughout the whole research process I intentionally reflected on my own feelings and biases in order to try to maintain my prejudices at bay and understand where these came from. I learned that the best attitude was to be curious about me and others.

3.9. Limitations of the Research

The main limitation of my study related to the fact that I could not include schools in contexts outside of urban settings, which served other communities – e.g. indigenous groups, or groups embedded in violent contexts. A reason for this outcome was that the Risk Assessment was too high in some of these places, making it impossible to go. Nevertheless, I did try to contact some other winners of the Compartir prizes in smaller cities, including one in Cartagena working with an Afro-Colombian population, and another in Montes de María, which has been an important paramilitary enclave historically, to invite them to participate virtually. None of them returned my calls or emails.

I also think that including more private schools would have enriched my research, but very few private schools apply for the Compartir prizes, and where they did, winning teacher and head teacher practices focused more on the teaching of mathematics or improving the academic results of pupils. Most did not, at first glance, address issues of teaching peace directly. Success in the Compartir prizes was an important criteria to include, as I was interested in exemplary peace education practice. Still, I believe that the information
collected was enough to unveil some of the challenges and patterns of peace education practice in schools in Colombia.
4. Implementation and Reception of the 1732 Law (Peace Core Subject)

In Chapter 2, I explained that liberal peace is the dominant view of peace in the West. Most government-led projects for developing peace are situated within this narrow framework of peace (Mac Ginty, 2008, 2010; Richmond, 2006; Sabaratnam, 2011). Colombia is no exception. In the realm of education, most of its policies are influenced by the dominance of World Bank’s liberal peace vision in the Latin American region (Peralta, 2009). However, within the prescriptive peace model of liberal peace, local actors have found spaces to develop their own ideas of peace through resistance, flatly ignoring the approach, adaptation, or directly disrupting top-down impositions, resulting in forms of hybrid peace (Mac Ginty, 2010). Napier (2003) found that in education, “cascading” between levels – from the macro policy level, to the micro level of school practice – is shaped by local realities. I argue that, much like the global context, educators have found ways to interpret Colombia’s 1732 Educational Law according to their specific needs and understandings of their schools’ contexts.

In this chapter, I first explore the top-down mandate of the 1732 Educational Law and the 1038 Decree of 2015, which established and regulate the Peace Core Subject, and examine the kind of peace that it is promoting, using the framework developed in Chapter 2 and within the historical context. Secondly, I explain how the Law was received by elite participants – i.e. school leaders and teachers – in the schools, and analyse the extent to which the Law, as a governmental policy, impacts decisions made on whether and how to implement it. I examine three major stances towards the Law identified in the data I gathered for this study: one which takes the Law as a political strategy to support the Havana peace talks; one which views the Law as problematic; and one which sees the Law as an opportunity. I also show how people on the ground find ways to push their own agendas for peace education within the ambiguities of the Law, to address its perceived problems, and, more importantly, in response to perceived needs in the contexts they serve.

4.1. The 1732 Law

The 1732 Educational Law was passed in 2014, and proposed the introduction of peace as a core subject. It claimed that a culture of peace is necessary to support the consolidation of the peace process in Colombia. Furthermore, it asserted that education is the main course of action for a culture of peace:
A culture of peace must contribute to the strengthening of processes of integral democratisation, of political pluralism and real participation of civil society, implementing educational systems and of integrated communications that allow ethical values that sustain it to be embedded, in every level and sector, starting with early childhood. ("Proyecto de ley por el cual se establece la cátedra de la paz en todas las instituciones educativas del país," 2014, p. 3)

The concept of culture of peace can be traced back to 1989 when the International Congress on Peace in the Minds of Men, organised by UNESCO took place in Côte d’Ivoire (United Nations General Assembly, 5 August 1997). A United Nations’ 1996 resolution proclaimed that year the beginning of the decade for human rights education and called it “Towards a Culture of Peace” (see United Nations General Assembly, 27 February 1996). More specifically, in 1998, as the new millennium approached, a new resolution proclaimed the period between 2001 and 2010 “The International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World” highlighting the role of education in general and peace education in particular in developing a culture of peace and non-violence (United Nations General Assembly, 19 November 1998). In the same 1998 document, the United Nations specifies that a Culture of Peace “consists of values, attitudes and behaviours that reflect and inspire social interaction and sharing based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, all human rights, tolerance and solidarity” (United Nations General Assembly, 19 November 1998, p. 1) with the purpose of preventing war for future generations. In this endeavor, according to the United Nations, education is the ideal vehicle to promote a Culture of Peace and non-violence (also see United Nations General Assembly, 6 October 1999) since adults can teach children to practice these principles and learn “to live together in peace and harmony” (United Nations General Assembly, 19 November 1998, p. 2) and as a result, children can help reinforce international peace.

The 1732 Educational Law quoted before, reveals underlying assumptions about what peace is and how it is developed and shows similarities with the principles of Culture of Peace of the United Nations. The first assumption is that peace equates to the real democratic participation of civil society, which the Law does not explicitly explain. One possible interpretation is that knowing about democratic processes and having the skills and dispositions to participate in them is a key element of peace. Another assumption is that political pluralism, understood as the distribution of power across diverse groups (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2008), is also fundamental for a culture of peace. A third assumption is that to achieve the political participation of different groups, the education system must instil ethical values, specifically “cooperation”, “solidarity”, and “fellowship”
(Ley No. 1732, 1 de Septiembre 2014) – though no further guidance is provided as to which values must be included in peace education. Overall, peace is assumed to be developed by formally educating individuals in these values. The belief that children can be taught knowledge and skills which will support the development of a peaceful society, explains why the Peace Core Subject is obligatory in every school – state and private – and for every level, from preschool, through elementary, middle school, and high school. The mandate, although vague, clearly follows in the spirit of the United Nations justification for an education that promotes democratic principles and values that will contribute to the prevention of violence and war and thus, a “Culture of Peace”.

The Law, which is regulated by the 1038 Decree of 2015 also shows that it is rooted in a liberal model of peace — focused on state sovereignty, legal frameworks, and formal democratic participation (Mac Ginty, 2008; Richmond, 2012). Elements like political participation and pluralism are principles of liberal peace. Other components set out by the Law, which suggest a framework of liberal peace are the notions of a Culture of Peace – which includes Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law, democratic participation, prevention of violence and peaceful conflict resolution; Peace Education, understood to mean the skills and abilities necessary for peaceful coexistence, respect for diversity, and equality; and Sustainable Development, including economic growth, improvement of quality of life, and social well-being, in a context that preserves the environment for future generations (Decreto No. 1038, Mayo 25 de 2015).

The text of the 1732 Law also states that the objective of promoting knowledge and skills through an independent Peace Core Subject should be “related to the territory, culture, economic and social context, and historical memory with the purpose of rebuilding the social tissue, promoting general prosperity and guaranteeing the effectiveness of the principles and obligations embodied in the Constitution” (Ley No. 1732, 1 de Septiembre 2014, Article 2). Educators have the option to integrate peace as a subject within three existing compulsory curriculum areas, previously enshrined in the 115 General Educational Law of 1994: 1. Social Studies, History, Geography, Political Constitution and Democracy; 2. Natural Sciences and Environmental Education; and 3. Ethical Education and Education in Values (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2015). The Law also states that schools must choose two out of twelve possible topics in order to achieve the general purposes of the Peace Core Subject:
These topics give teachers and head teachers in schools a lot of freedom as to what teaching about peace and for peace could look like in their schools. The Law presents choices that expand the conservative notion of liberal peace towards other conceptions, which might be more in line with processes of peacebuilding, for example as social justice, a profound politics of recognition, and redistribution of resources, or inclusion. The Law also leaves space for schools to be responsive to the actual conditions in which schools are embedded. However, given that the Law and the subsequent 1038 Decree came to be in the context of the peace dialogues in Havana, it is important to question why some topics like political participation, diversity and plurality and historical memory, which suggest a connection with the five points of negotiation in the agenda — i.e. agrarian reform, political participation, end of conflict, drug-trafficking, and victims’ rights — were not prioritised by the State in its efforts to build peace through education. The government’s strategy gives educators the responsibility to decide what to teach in schools, how and in what depth. The peace talks, as I explained in Chapter 1, were an attempt to set a roadmap for structural reform and the Law by delegating some responsibility to teachers to decide whether to support societal transformation, potentially minimises the role of education in developing long lasting peace.

The fact that the Law allows schools to make so many choices, results in educators having to make their own decisions based on the interpretations of the Law amongst people in different schools. The next sections describe this range of interpretations and explain the reasoning behind them.

4.2. The 1732 Law as Political Strategy to Support the Havana Peace Talks

Data from interviews revealed that participants interpreted the actions of the government as a political move to achieve peace with the FARC. The Law was seen as a calculated action, possibly with hidden motives that were not entirely about peace. The following quote from Jose Alberto, an ethics teacher at the Divino Maestro, illustrates this stance towards the Law:
I know it has its [...] venom, I know and I am distrusting, and I am suspicious of everything that comes from the governmental track, I don’t believe that too much. And I know that many times the government is [...] [doing] things that are politically good, designed to look good, just like they did with the project of behaviour and sexual health, like it was with other things. (Bogotá, November 2015)

This position shows a view of governmental policy as a means for the government to ‘look good’ in the eyes of the public. But it has its ‘venom’, meaning that perhaps there are underlying interests that do not necessarily have the well-being of people in mind, which ultimately misleads schools. Jose Alberto continued by saying, “but this time I can see that we can take advantage of it” (Jose Alberto, Bogotá, November 2015). He argued that his life as a teacher had taught him not to be “so radical, let’s say, to feel that something needs to be sabotaged, on the contrary, my position has been: if it’s a menace, let’s turn it into an opportunity” (Jose Alberto, Bogotá, November 2015). Notwithstanding an initial suspicion of the government’s hidden agenda, this educator’s view was accompanied by a sense of hope that the Law can be turned into an opportunity as Jose Alberto suggests, and other teachers agreed with as I will explore further in section 4.3.

Others understood the Law as a strategy used by the government to legitimise their efforts to achieve an agreement with the FARC, but lacking the political will to properly implement it. One of my interview participants, Huberto, noted that in the 10 years he had been a head teacher at the Institución Educativa Lola González, there had been previous mandates related to peace education, like the Citizenship Competencies Programme – and that no one from the National Ministry of Education-MEN has ever made an effort to evaluate it. The reason for not overseeing the Citizenship Competencies Programme, according to him, was: “the state is afraid of having thinking citizens” (Medellín, May 2016). This head teacher’s view suggests that even though the text of the Law apparently seeks to promote ‘real participation’, political elites are not interested in developing a thinking citizenry, possibly out of fear of losing power. Indicating a governmental interest in promoting narrow ideas of liberal peace which do not seek to address the underlying structures of inequality and therefore are more conducive of peacemaking and perhaps even peacekeeping.

Another teacher from the Lola said: “You know what will happen with the peace core subject? I’ll tell you what will happen, nothing!” (Luz, Medellín, November 2015). She explained that in her years of experience working at the school, she had observed that people
had been cautious about having everything mandated by the MEN on paper, while in reality, many of the programmes were not actually implemented in the school. She explained: “[w]e do things without conviction. We do many things to comply, to do, to stand out […] without any conviction” (Luz Elena, Medellín, November 2015). This quote illustrates that in her view, previous mandates have been complied with on paper because the State’s supervision does not go any further. Hernán, the head teacher at the Institución Educativa Antonio José Bernal, explained that it is common for lawyers without any knowledge of education to be sent to schools to check formats and documents, rather than the actual quality of teaching. A move like implementing an independent Peace Core Subject is motivated by the historical moment of the peace negotiations, rather than by the state’s commitment to improving its educational system and actually building peace through education. This interpretation further explains the perception of educators of a lack of political will in actually implementing quality peace education.

In conclusion, participants perceived the 1732 Educational Law to be self-serving to the government. It was considered a political move which, for some participants, translated into little interest on the part of the government to really develop peace through education. As a consequence, educators understood that it is up to them and their capacity within organisations to carry out their project of building a culture of peace through education. Theirs was the perspective that generated a second view of the Law, as problematic, which I examine in the next section.

4.3. The 1732 Law as Problematic

The previous section demonstrated that elite participants agreed that the government’s primary goal with the 1732 Law was to gain support for the peace talks, rather than quality peace education. It was left for schools to sort out how to implement what was being asked of them in terms of peace education for their pupils, which presented schools with many challenges.

Education in Colombia is upside down, right? Upside down. First, because we have a stupid subjekticism (sic) [i.e. too many core subjects] and more than 20 obligatory projects. There is a barbaric ignorance of the epistemology of science, so everyone who wants to save the world comes up with a new subject. (Hernán, Medellín, November, 2015)
All of the head teachers who participated in the study shared the perception that the government’s strategy had always been to try to solve every issue by implementing a new mandatory core subject. Maria Luz, the head teacher at the Divino Maestro explained how:

They apply everything to schools. So, we have the Peace Core Subject, the Afro-Colombian Core Subject […] there are a thousand things. We even have the thing with pets. How to look after pets? Teach children how to care for pets. Absolutely everything, if they [the MEN] provide a snack, then we have to do the pedagogy of snacks […] So there are many elements that the school cannot really deal with.

(Bogotá, May, 2016)

These two quotes reveal that for the teachers, government appears to be treating issues separately and without connection. ‘Peace’ as an educational concern is not integral to everyday beings and doings, but is seen as an independent body of knowledge that needs to be taught on its own.

Despite criticism from teachers and head teachers of the government’s compartmentalised thinking in general, and about peace specifically, some educators felt compelled to comply by adding a separate subject to teach peace. Huberto, the Lola’s head teacher, mentioned that his decision to implement an independent Peace Core Subject cost him many fights with teachers and other leaders of the school, as it meant redistributing resources, time and people. Nevertheless, he implemented it because the Law established it. He explained:

The Law says an independent subject, there it says independent subject. And the girls who came from the Secretariat of Education gave us the idea that no, that it does not require a subject, that someone can simply include it within a subject as a theme, a [learning] unit. (Medellín, May 2015)

This experience illustrates the flexibility of the MEN towards the implementation of the Law. However, in this case, the head teacher preferred to prevent any possible sanctions by adhering to the letter of the Law – which his school’s teachers perceived as a problem, rather than an opportunity.

Luz Elena, the art teacher at the Lola, described the process of introducing the independent Peace Core Subject. Teachers were given the choice to teach the subject, but no one wanted it, not even the social studies department. Luz Elena said: “So we make sure we are, first, comfortable, well, that can be very human [meaning that teachers stay within their comfort zone]. Finally, the decision was made, and technology will take it [the Peace Core
Subject]. The technology teacher was reluctant” (Medellín, November 2015). This situation was also described by Mario, the religion teacher at the same school, who saw with great concern that in the end the subject was allocated to the only teacher with the time to teach peace as a subject, a technology teacher – even though it was not clear how peace related to the curricular area or the teacher’s expertise. However, as I found out when I returned to the school, a new teacher was eventually hired to teach grades 6 and 714 precisely for his expertise in teaching peace education in other schools in Medellín – a fact I will return to in Chapter 6.

Although the Law states clearly that the implementation of the Peace Core Subject should be responsive to the needs of the context, interviews with participants showed that people in the schools felt the 1732 Law did not speak to the reality of schools. Carlos (Popayán, April, 2016), a teacher from the Liceo, argued that the people from the MEN, who are based in Bogotá, the capital of Colombia, have little knowledge of what happens in the peripheries of the country because the contexts are very different. This disconnect was also expressed by Luz Elena from the Lola, who acknowledged the competency of the people who work at the MEN but noted: “from the pragmatic view, they don’t have any idea about many things” (Medellín, November, 2015). Participants indicate that this lack of knowledge about how things actually work in the contexts of schools, and even about geographical differences, hinders the implementation of governmental policies such as the 1732 Law. In addition, Hernán argued that frequently the MEN and the local Secretariat of Education do not coordinate their schedules.

That is not a minor piece of information. So, there are too many people giving orders on what to do in schools. So, the General Law [of Education] has a component of autonomy of schools, which doesn’t exist in reality because everything is already planned, everything comes with the book they said, everything comes with what has been determined by some experts, that you can tell have never been in the classroom, but planning and recommending everyone how to do things. (Medellín, November, 2015)

Hernán’s point of view establishes the paradox that the legal frameworks provide freedom to schools, while at the same time, government entities or experts generate materials like books and curricula, or pedagogical tools which limit schools’ autonomy. As I will explain at length in sections 4.5 and 4.6, schools do take advantage of the flexibility and

14 Typically students between the ages of 12 and 15.
ambiguity of the Law. However, the major criticism is that there is an absence of coordination across different levels of government, which puts people in schools in the difficult position of making sense of what is mandated on their own.

In contrast, educators at the Colegio Ideas, the private school, offered a different perspective on the manner in which they respond to governmental mandates. In the head teacher’s view, the focus is the school ethos and his own understanding of the purpose of education. Therefore, government mandates are adjusted to the school’s project. Jahuira, the head teacher, explained that when the school was founded, pupils were organised in “small villages” (Cali, November 2015) but since they have to respond to the national reality, they call it “preschool, elementary, high school”. However, within the school, the concept of “small village” remains predominant. He said that it is the same with the 1732 Law, as it fits into their educational project; he believes his school is already teaching peace, and therefore he has decided that the school does not need to make any changes in response to the mandate. Some head teachers in some public schools also establish direct connections between the Law and their current programmes, but they do feel the pressure of having to show explicitly how the Law is implemented within the school. As one of the head teachers explained: “from the [perspective] of state education we have to comply with requirements, with things that are above our heads” (John, Popayán, November 2015). For the private school, making the connections clear is not a major concern.

In conclusion, the problems educators perceived with the Law in state schools seem to echo general critiques of the approach of liberal peace. As Campbell, Chandler and Sabaratnam (2011) point out, a main observation coming from radical critics of liberal peace is that policymakers working from a liberal peace lens rarely support local ownership, since they are not sensitive to local needs and therefore cannot respond effectively to the context.

Notwithstanding this view of the Law as problematic, several people in all the schools argued that they had been teaching peace long before the Law had passed, turning the mandate into an opportunity to legitimise and showcase their practice. They saw the Law as an opportunity.

4.4. The 1732 Law as an Opportunity

As I explained in Chapter 3, all of the participant schools in this study won a Compartir Prize for their exemplary practice in peace education. This recognition was
received before the 1732 Law passed, and in the midst of the Havana peace process. Most
elite participants in my research viewed the new 1732 Law as an opportunity for their schools
and for Colombia, even though the Law caused concern and criticism. I found three
explanations as to why the mandate was seen with hope. First, teachers saw an opportunity to
reflect on the work they had been doing up to appearance of the Law and find ways to
improve. Second, they hoped to legitimise the efforts they had put into developing their own
peace education programmes. Third, they planned to incorporate new strategies and ideas
into their peace education practice. These schools had already established their own
programmes as a response to perceived needs imposed by the context in which the schools
were located and by the populations they served.

For example, Patricia explained in her interview that the school had had a peace
project for at least five years. She explained that the Law allowed them to

…revive some processes that we have already done, that I know that in the frame of
what Colombia is living would be worth doing. But not so much because we have to
create it, but because we have been doing it to produce contexts of peace for so many
years. (Medellín, November 2015)

Similarly, the head teacher of the Liceo explained: “This is a Law of this year, but we
have been doing it since 2008, 2009. Because our problem was a problem of coexistence […]
and our main concern was to transform the traditional ways in which pupils solved their
conflicts, through interesting exercises” (John, Popayán, November 2015). The Liceo had
already established a core subject called “conflict resolution” with its own curriculum. In the
same line, Hernán, the head teacher from the Antonio José Bernal, argued that as an
institution they had peaceful coexistence as their “horizon” (Medellín, November 2015),
which is why they value the national effort of creating something like the Peace Core
Subject. However, he and his team of teachers analysed the Law and concluded that elements
of it were already included within curricula for ethics, entrepreneurship, social studies, and
special programmes for conflict resolution and mediation. For Luz Elena, the art teacher at
the Lola – a school which ultimately added the new subject – the Law not only related to the
work she has been doing, but “the Peace Core Subject is important, Colombia needs it. Our
schools need it, the news about families speak to the need of peace, they speak! […] I tell my
students,[…] our reality tells us what we need” (Luz Elena, Medellín, November 2015). In
this view, the 1732 Law is necessary in the wider context of Colombia, not just the school, to
extend existing work on peace. By contrast, Jahuira, the head teacher of the Colegio Ideas,
said he understood the Law as an external effort that will not change his school’s ways because it aligns with his own view of education.

One of the head teachers was particularly keen on the implementation of the mandate. In his interview, John (Popayán, November 2015) explained that his role as head teacher of the Liceo is to take advantage of everything offered by the MEN, the local government, NGOs, private institutions, religious organisations, and so on, as long as they help him advance his own agenda for the school. He mentioned how specific programmes designed by the MEN have become pillars in the school and have helped him raise the quality of education, particularly at elementary levels. He argued that a mandate like the 1732 Law, with its materials and guidelines, provides opportunities to improve the provision of peace education within the school – which is why he decided to change the name of the subject “conflict resolution” to “Peace Core Subject”.

Evidence from teachers and head teachers suggests that the teaching of peace in schools is necessary because the contexts in which the schools are embedded demand it. Such is the demand that all case study schools had some kind of peace education programme predating the Law. Therefore, I argue that participants’ decisions on the type of peace education programmes they developed in their schools were not shaped primarily by the Law, but by their context. Educators in all the case study schools take advantage of the Law’s flexibility to push their own views of peace and peace education. The next sections illustrate that other elements, like the school ethos and individual teachers’ stances on peace, also shape the implementation of the Law.

4.5. Our School Ethos and How We Have Been Teaching Peace All Along

As I argued in section 4.2., head teachers in particular criticised the compartmentalised approach to knowledge the government has set out by creating many different core subjects. Maria Luz, the head teacher at the Divino Maestro, and Hernán, the head teacher at the Antonio José Bernal, argued that the Law would benefit greatly from an interdisciplinary vision of knowledge. It has been left to people in schools to create coherence between top-down mandates and their own objectives. In some of the schools, the coherence was mediated by their ethos. ‘School ethos’ is defined by Allder (1993) as:

the unique, pervasive atmosphere or mood of the organisation which is brought about by activities or behaviour, primarily in the realm of social interaction and to a lesser
extent in matters to do with the environment, of members of the school, and recognised initially on an experiential rather than a cognitive level. (p. 69)

A school ethos is the enactment of organisational values, which can be explicit or implicit in the day to day activities of a school. For other scholars (Childress, Elmore, Grossman, & King, 2002), *school ethos* is defined as the culture of the school: norms and behaviours shared by the members of the school community, and shaped by the school’s structures and systems that organise its work. School structures and systems refer to the management of resources, time, space, and people, which shapes school culture and explains “how things work around here” (Childress et al., 2002, p. 6). *Ethos* in this study is understood as the environment actively built through systems, structures, and relationships within the organisation, and the way in which people experience it.

Every organisation has an ethos, including schools. However, not every school ethos is purposefully designed to develop peace. Out of the five head teachers, three have interpreted the Law in line with their school’s prevailing ethos: *Liceo Alejandro de Humboldt*, *Antonio José Bernal*, and *Colegio Ideas*. In these schools, their ethos was explicitly intended to promote peace, even before the Law.

As I explained in Chapter 3, both the *Liceo Alejandro de Humboldt* and the *Antonio José Bernal* cater for similar populations and serve similar contexts, even though they are in different cities – Medellín and Popayán, respectively. These are both state schools which serve economically deprived communities, and their pupils are characterised by educators as internally displaced youth, children living in contexts of poverty, affected by gang violence, domestic violence, and living in dysfunctional families. They also describe having large numbers of students with distinct characteristics, like physical and/or cognitive disabilities, or addiction to drugs. The *Colegio Ideas* has very different contextual conditions, which create a significant contrast in its ethos with the other two schools. It is a private school, and caters to a very different population of students, since the school charges a substantial tuition. Tuition reduces the school population considerably, and targets mostly middle and upper-class families, although there is a small population of lower income pupils and some racial and religious diversity.

The next sections explain the ethos of each school, and establish connections to the Law to illustrate how the head teachers’ reason as to how they interpret what is mandated by the 1732 Law through the lens of their ethos.
On top of changing the name of an existing subject from conflict resolution to Peace Core Subject, the head teacher at the Liceo explained that his school was implementing the Law by directing their work to achieve two major goals: creating a Space of Opportunities and working Towards a School Culture of Well-Being. Towards a School Culture of Well-Being stems from the head teacher’s understanding of peace as well-being, as I will explain in detail in Chapter 5. This school’s culture of well-being envisions a school environment in which pupils feel loved, welcomed, and safe. By developing this type of environment, the school aims to strengthen the social tissue within the school – which is one purpose of the Law.

A Space of Opportunities is a programme put together in response to the school’s population, which aims to provide pupils with opportunities to help them succeed. These opportunities, according to several adult participants from the school, have a dual meaning. First, they offer the opportunity of education to those who are not accepted in other schools in the city – because of their age, the lack of academic records, academic level, etc.; and second, they offer opportunities within the school to support students’ success – e.g. special programmes, opportunities to recuperate failing grades, and so on. This programme has elements of equality and social justice at its core, which are both mentioned in the Law. Equality and social justice are evidenced in the programme’s goal of eliminating the barriers that keep young people out of educational opportunities, and also in its provision of the necessary support to help them be successful.

Both the Culture of Well-Being and the Space of Opportunities are built through principles: “Agradar en vez de agredir” (To Be Liked Instead of Attacking), “Aportar en vez de apartar” (Contributing Instead of Alienating), “Compartimos, no competimos” (We Share, We Do Not Compete), “Cualificamos, no calificamos” (We Qualify, We Do Not Grade), and “Si yo me quiero, yo me espero” (If I Love Myself, I Wait). In this section, I will delve into four of the five principles. The last one addresses the issue of teen pregnancy, and I will discuss it in depth in Chapter 6.

The principle of “Agradar en vez de agredir” (To Be Liked Instead of Attacking) is, according to John, the head teacher, the most important one, since it strives for peaceful coexistence. This principle speaks to the elements of peace education and culture of peace, which the 1732 Law assigns as elements of peaceful coexistence and prevention of violence.
He claims that what is natural for students is to attack. So, students need to learn “to unlearn that natural impulse, a product of so much stuff […] to know that is nicer to be liked, it is better to look at you nicely than to look at you like [makes ugly face] like they see on the street” (Popayán, November 2015). Amanda, a teacher, explained that what they do in the school is like a “social reintegration” (Popayán, April 2016), referring to the same issue as John: pupils arrive to the school with ingrained understandings and default behaviours that hinder their roles in society. The focus on individual behaviours suggest an approach to peace from the perspective of peacekeeping and peacemaking. The main goal is to transform those individual behaviours which threaten coexistence and generate some level of violence. This approach is also consistent with a view of liberal peace that gives preponderance to the individual’s capacity to reform (see Mac Ginty, 2010).

The type of social reintegration the Liceo aims for makes it the school’s job to deconstruct students’ understandings in order to prepare them for society through teacher-pupil relationships. In a group interview (Popayán, November 2015), Amanda, Adriana, Marina, and Elena, four teachers from different grades and disciplines, agreed that most of their work is not academic, rather it is to build emotional bonds with their students. In an individual interview, Adriana explained that the main purpose is to:

…create a welcoming place, a place where we all fit, without any distinction, where those individualities are understood, where all those young people can achieve those big life projects they have, and where all of us, teachers, leaders, students, understand each other as part of the problem and part of the solution. (Popayán, April 2016)

She claimed that this environment was a result of respectful relationships. Amanda said: “You know that human beings where they feel loved, embraced [makes a pause] we all love to be pampered” (Popayán, April 2016), implying that people do better in an environment where they have caring and loving relationships. These are part of the school’s ethos, rather than directly taught as content in the classroom.

This approach to building relationships is a response to what John, the head teacher, called “the phenomena of exclusion” (Popayán, November 2015). The principle “Aportar en vez de apartar” (Contributing Instead of Alienating) responds specifically to those phenomena. He explained that in the educational system there is potential exclusion, and it is crucial for the people in the school understand that “here we do not alienate, here we contribute” (John, Popayán, November 2015). Teachers contribute and stop alienation by creating close relationships and developing empathy and appreciation for their students.
The principles of “Compartimos, no competimos” (We Share, We Do Not Compete) and “Cualificamos, no calificamos” (We Qualify, We Do Not Grade) are those that, according to the school, translate the goal of inclusion into practice. The head teacher, John, understands grades and competition as examples of exclusion, and claims it harms the majority of young people. Dolly, the Liceo’s nurse, who is also a psychologist and an expert in topics of drug consumption in adolescents, explains that the issue with competition in schools is that it creates spaces she calls “elitistised” (sic), referring to schools that attempt to create an academic elite. She explains that people in these places choose if you are good academically you stay, you have the right to stay with us, but if you have academic or behavioural difficulties, you go. I consider that [an inclusive approach] is an interesting and important contribution to educate for peace. Without it being written in the PEI (Institutional Educational Project document) is part of the hidden curriculum. (Popayán, April 2016)

Dolly’s quote illustrates that for her, fostering relationships of cooperation and inclusion rather than competition are part of the Liceo’s hidden curriculum. The hidden curriculum encompasses those elements present in classrooms and characteristic of the relationships developed in schools. The hidden curriculum relates to the concept of ethos as it comprises the deliberate actions taken by teachers and adults related to values, norms, time use, self-control, manners, and so on, and as it is rewarded when students comply with expectations (Margolis, Soldatenko, Acker, & Gair, 2001). The hidden curriculum, therefore, has important repercussions for pedagogy, as I will explore in detail in Chapter 6. It is important to mention here that the people at the Liceo apply two concepts, qualification and valuation, in order to guarantee inclusion in the classroom. Qualification and valuation mean that teachers are expected to place the individual who struggles at the centre of the learning process, and to develop the structure and support which John, the head teacher, calls “the stimulus” in order to help the student move forward in his or her learning process. The concepts of valuation and qualification resemble the concept of scaffolding, which is the actions teachers take in order to help pupils until they are able to reach a learning goal independently that otherwise would be unachievable on their own (Pea, 2004, p. 425; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976).

Furthermore, as part of the Liceo’s strategy for inclusion, there are several interventions that target specific populations within the school and are part of the Space of Opportunities. This view is in line with the head teacher’s justification for focusing on those
“who are below” (John, Popayán, November 2015) by levelling the ground and helping them succeed. Maria Cecilia (Popayán, April, 2016), the psychologist of the Liceo, described the existing programmes at the school to explain how inclusion works. She mentioned the Proyecto de Convivencia (Coexistence Project), developed to address the issue of coexistence within the school, by teaching how to solve conflicts in a peaceful manner; the Escuela de Padres (Parents’ School), created to involve families and carers in their children’s school life, as well as to provide parenting support; the Programa de Inclusión (Inclusion Programme), to generate provisions to help individual students with cognitive and physical disabilities succeed in their academic development; the Opción Vida (Life Option), a special programme aimed at students with drug-addiction, behavioural issues, and academic difficulties; and the Proyecto de Sexualidad (Sexual Health Project), designed to lower the number of early pregnancies. All of these programmes were developed in response to the contextual needs of the school, and sought to retain pupils in schools regardless of the particular circumstances.

These programmes combined with the principles of qualification and no competition speak to important elements of inclusion, namely guaranteeing access and success in education while focusing on diversity (see Cremin & Bevington, 2017). Inclusion has the potential for peacebuilding when it “develop[s] a strong sense of identity, as well as a positive attitude towards difference” (Cremin & Bevington, 2017, p. 105).

4.5.2. Colegio Presbítero Antonio José Bernal

Like the Liceo, the Antonio José Bernal’s approach is responsive to the context of the school. The school was founded in the intersection of three rival neighbourhoods in the Comuna 8 of Medellín. According to Hernán, the head teacher, these neighbourhoods are considered abandoned by the State, and “many interests come together from different armed groups, from different criminal groups, different social actors that interact and who are enemies amongst them” (Medellín, November 2015). This context posed significant challenges for the people in the school in terms of how to respond to the violence that surrounds pupils. Therefore, they began their own peace education programme, which pre-dated the Law.

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15 An urban division set out by the Colombian Constitution in order to guarantee the delivery of basic public services at the local level.
The head teacher at this school explained in his first interview that every policy or programme that arrives to the school, or that is created within the school, is analysed from the perspective of the principles of coexistence and inclusion, which drive the school practice. He explained that:

There is a text that we wrote called “Giving Meaning” which means to give meaning to the actions carried out in the school. To not do just to do something, or else it would be activism [he meant many activities]. We have all the activities you want, but we had to organise what a project was, what was an activity and that’s why we speak of programmes. Programmes coordinate projects, projects coordinate activities. And that’s how we have matured in time to manage our efforts. (Hernán, Medellín, November 2015)

The search for meaning and coherence anchors the work at the Antonio José Bernal. An example is that teachers collectively discussed what they thought ought to be the axis of all their work within the school, and they decided it would be ethics. They placed the being at the centre of their whole pedagogical approach, meaning the integral development of the individual (i.e. cognitive, physically, emotionally) in the context of a group. From this approach, the principle of coexistence, “Ser Contigo” (Being With You), became the overarching principle of their work, a programme from which teachers derive projects and activities in the school. The attitude of collaboration relates to peacebuilding. In section 2.5.3. I explained that scholars of education for social justice (see Hyttén & Bettez, 2011) claim that teachers aiming at equality should make collaboration a foundation of their practice. Patricia (Medellín, November 2015) described how this approach led to a process in which the teachers created their own programmes, curricula, objectives, and grading rubrics in collaboration with one another – for example, about concepts of peace and peaceful coexistence – and determined that democratic participation had to be a central component in their curricula, especially since pupils struggle with communication skills. This explanation is an example of how teachers’ understandings of the school’s population and its needs led to identifying paths to develop peace which are in agreement with the spirit of the Law – meaning that both the school and the Law consider democratic participation essential to the development of peace.

Part of “Ser Contigo” was intended to educate within diversity, fostering inclusion. The ethos in this school relates to Hernán’s story, which will be featured in Chapter 5. His personal experiences of being a rural teacher during his last year of high school, as part of a school programme, and watching his cognitively disabled uncle being unable to access
education, shaped his understandings of peace as social justice, and motivated him to develop a school where young people had the potential of developing their abilities to transform their personal circumstances. He explained:

…the level of acceptance of the other, for us, is fundamental. We work with everyone, with everyone, it’s a commitment. […] I have always said, is that this is for the most vulnerable, or else, to educate those who already have all the abilities is very easy. So here we don’t select. But, the [General Educational] Law speaks of inclusion and pertinence, but people forget the second word, they remember inclusion, so people are enclosed in schools, but they are not catered for with pertinence. That is our question: pertinence. That is why one of the axes of ‘Community Management’ is ‘Education in Diversity’. How does a black person, a disabled person, a person diagnosed with whatever… And in that the ethics class and the coexistence project are fundamental. (Hernán, Medellín, November 2015)

Since inclusion is an essential piece of this school’s ethos, as it is at the Liceo, teachers are expected to use scaffolding as a strategy for their students’ success. Inclusion and pertinence are so important and part of the ethos of the school that, despite it harming their state exam results to some extent, and notwithstanding complaints from teachers, the head teacher continues to demand that those principles remain at the centre of the teachers’ practice. The focus on inclusion and pertinence shows that this school is also aiming at elements of social justice and equality by reducing impediments to accessing education and providing support for academic success, despite physical or cognitive disabilities, and racial divides. This approach suggests a purpose of peacebuilding, as I described it in the case of the Liceo, inclusion as access and success in education of diverse pupils can potentially instill feelings of identity and appreciation for others who are different (see Cremin & Bevington, 2017).

4.5.3. Colegio Ideas

The Colegio Ideas is located in Cali, a city that, as I described in chapter 3, follows the history of violence of the other major urban centres in Colombia. However, this school’s context contrasts with the Liceo’s and the Antonio José Bernal’s, the Colegio Ideas is located in a safe area outside the city and caters for a very different population – mostly affluent. The Colegio Ideas’ ethos stems from a sort of creational myth of the school. The head teacher, Jahuira (Cali, November 2015), told the story of how the school appeared “like the trees grow […] in an imperceptible manner[…] We started finding the way to behave in relationship with our surroundings, relationships amongst ourselves.” He explained that it was not a linear process, rather a “profundely emotional dimension which defined the
transcendence of understanding ourselves as individual, social and transcendent beings.” He said that just like the indigenous communities, people participating in the foundation of the school also valued their natural surroundings as they started recuperating a devastated area of the city.

The way things work around the Colegio Ideas is described by pupils as well. In a grade 11 focus group, a male student said: “just like they say, the essential is invisible to the eyes” (Cali, June 2016), meaning that values are not necessarily spoken, they are part of the experience of the school; he added, “through the environment, we get it like that” (Cali, June 2016), implying that values are almost absorbed.

Educators at the Colegio Ideas, led by their head teacher Jahuira, communicate values through rituals and ceremonies, which may help explain this student’s perception. A female student in the same grade 11 focus group talked about the “Native Song” and described it as a rhythmical song, a Dakota song, she thought, through which all the members of the school community learn to focus on what the Earth is to respect nature (Cali, June 2016). Pupils and teachers sing specific songs in particular moments, including on the “The Day of the Seed”, in which the school community symbolically re-enact the origin of the school. The school community recalls through rituals when they started planting native trees and plants that eventually led to the full environmental recovery of the area (Jahuira, Cali, November 2016).

Another important element in the construction of Colegio Ideas’s ethos is the existence of communal spaces. Jahuira (Cali, November 2015) explained that the indigenous communities have practices to take care of everyone in the community. For example, women know their children are catered for by the entire community, because the community feels responsible for every single member. To achieve something similar, the school has Collective Workshops in their schedule, where pupils of different ages learn together – music, dance, yoga, theatre – according to their personal interests. These spaces also try to establish a continuity with the origin of the school. At the beginning, the school did not have grade levels, so older and younger children learned together. Jahuira explained: “So, the older carried the young and if we went to the mountain to plant trees, well, we were all together” (Cali, November 2015). The purpose of the Collective Workshops is to maintain that feeling

16 Typically students between the ages of 17 and 18.
and to “guarantee that children of different ages admired each other, valued each other, and learned from each other” (Jahuira, Cali, November 2015). Pupils in all the focus groups mentioned the Collective Workshops as a key element to explain why they feel harmony in the school (Cali, June 2016). A grade 11 male pupil explained that they grow up knowing everyone at the school, and that makes them value each other, respect each other, and care for each other (Cali, June 2016).

Clearly this school is different to the other schools described. This school’s ethos and vision is designed around fostering meaningful relationships among human beings, and also with the natural environment that surrounds them. This principle speaks to Dewey’s (1916 [1966]) belief that schools have the potential to become micro-societies where ideal forms of relationships, among other things, can be fostered. The head teacher pointed out that the 1732 Law is already being implemented, as the school emphasises harmonious relationships, which could be argued to foster the ethical values present in the Law – like solidarity, cooperation and fellowship. Jahuira explained that pupils in this school already learn to recognise each other, and nature, and to behave ethically. The Law also mandates that knowledge and skills should relate to the territory, a mandate to which Jahuira’s vision for a school where the natural world is placed at the centre readily relates, as it does to the general topic of sustainable development, which emphasises environmental preservation, social well-being, improvement of quality of life, and economic growth.

4.5.4. Summary

This section has examined how three schools interpret and implement the 1732 Law from the principles of each school’s ethos. This comparison is made possible by the 1732 Law, because it provides general guidelines that are open to the interpretation of educators. Therefore, educators can establish the connections between the curricula and the Law according to their own beliefs and understandings. In the case of peace education, two elements become central to decisions made regarding the type of programme: the context, and personal biographies (which I will illustrate in Chapter 5).

In the same way, individual teachers had their own interpretations of the Law, and their own claims describing how they have already been implementing what the Law mandates in their individual practice. The next section examines how the interpretation and implementation of the Law happens at the classroom level.
4.6. Teaching Peace: Everyone’s Job

All of the teachers I interviewed believed that they were teaching for peace. The responsibility of teaching for peace related to the teachers’ beliefs about peace and their perceptions of their teaching context. Teachers claimed to be teaching elements of peace as part of their disciplines because of obvious connections they saw with their existing programmes, and in order to fulfil the needs of their schools’ context.

At the Institución Educativa Lola González, I found that despite having the Peace Core Subject as an independent subject, four other teachers in other disciplines also claimed to be teaching for peace. These teachers taught art, social studies, physical education, and religion. They all claimed that teaching for peace “made sense” from their discipline’s perspective.

Lina, the physical education teacher who has worked at the Lola school for 14 years, explained that although teaching for peace is not explicitly stated in her curriculum,

in my pedagogical practice I do work a lot with young people what is (sic) coexistence, ok? Respecting the other. In fact, during the work of sports training, the recreational aspect, since the work is always done in group, it is very important because there they learn to respect the other, respect diversity, accept the other despite the limitations she might have in relation to the sports they are practicing, because not everyone has the same abilities. (Medellín, May 2016)

Lina’s account of how peace is interpreted from her discipline includes diversity, coexistence, and teamwork. Both diversity and coexistence are mentioned by the Law as pillars of peace education. Coexistence conveys a peacemaking approach by emphasising the goal of developing community spirit through physical education and sports.

Erika, the social studies and political sciences teacher, characterised herself as a believer in education’s power to change the country’s circumstances, and so she includes elements of peace in the design of her programme’s curriculum. She explained that for her, peace

must be the backbone of education in a country like the one we live in where there is clear lack of the basic […] education of citizenry, a citizenry that can coexist, a citizenry that recognises institutions, the functioning of the State, so they can identify themselves, I consider it fundamental to give priority to this type of education. (Medellín, May 2016)
Thus, as part of her curriculum, Erika works towards developing in students the skills to transform society. Her department had started to alter the curriculum to develop transformative citizens because the country was preparing to enter a post-conflict stage. Her approach to peace relates strongly to the Law’s assertion that peace education must contribute to real participation, which suggests knowledge of the workings of government, its institutions and democratic participation. She called her students “the heirs of violence”, and therefore the ones responsible for transforming their surroundings, which in some way speaks to Muñoz’ (2006) and Muñoz and Martinez’ (2011) idea of the potential of individuals to transform and build peace through peaceful empowerment. Peaceful empowerment, in this teacher’s case, seems to be cast in the mould of Freire’s (1996 [1970]) educational purpose of empowering pupils to influence their society. This teacher’s attitude towards peace education leans towards peacebuilding. In her view, the liberty the MEN gives in its curricular guidelines, at least in the case of social studies, can be expanded, and contextualised, and is from that that we, that I do the curricular adaptations that let me establish relationships between all the obligatory guidelines and the context we live in and those approaches towards the peaceful lifestyles we want to achieve. (Erika, Medellín, May 2016)

This quote reinforces my argument that the context has a central role in shaping peace education and notions of peace.

Luz Elena, the art teacher at the Lola, explained that she had been working with her students on developing peace since she first started at the school 10 years ago. She said:

I would tell the kids: kids, did you know that we have been working on peace for 10 years? [...] 10 years ago when you decided you were going to inhabit this space differently[.] The anecdotes and the things young people say, when mothers say: My God, this girl won’t allow me to throw rubbish incorrectly. My God, this girl tells me ‘mum, there’s no need for you to yell at me. Mum, don’t mistreat that’[.] When we started building here, and things start taking a different shape at, at the house, the neighbourhood[.] That’s when we start building peace[.] When we start talking differently to young people, when the teacher arrives differently to the classroom, when they say today[...] what did you do? What was your decision? Why did you make that decision? That’s when we are building [peace]. (Medellín, November 2015)

The quote shows that this teacher’s approach to peace education involves caring for the environment and transforming individual behaviours to be more conducive to a sustainable life. She speaks to the goal of sustainable development, specifically to the aims of preserving the environment and improving life, present in the Law. The emphasis on
individual behaviour and on personal responsibility suggests a peacekeeping approach, as it mostly aims at self-regulation.

Teachers of ethics and religion from the *Lola*, the *Divino Maestro*, and *Antonio José Bernal* argued that because they were teaching ethical values like “active tolerance”, “self-governance”, “honesty”, and critical thinking and moral reasoning, they were teaching peace. As Jose Alberto from the *Divino Maestro* explained, pupils live in a context of moral ambiguity and need support to be able to discern when and how to make decisions that affect their lives – including around situations involving drug-use, or sex (Bogotá, November 2015).

As I stated in section 4.1., the 1732 Law emphasises education in values as an important element of peace education. Although the Law gives “cooperation” and “fellowship” as examples of values, it seems to use *values* as an all-encompassing term. This usage also provides leeway to individual educators to interpret which values must be instilled through education.

These examples illustrate how individual teachers justify implementing what the 1732 Educational Law mandates in their own curricula. However, the crucial lens through which educators interpret the Law and make decisions on what to implement, is the need to respond to the perceived contextual demands of pupils they have at their schools.

4.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I argued that the 1732 Educational Law is an example of seeking to build liberal peace. It emphasises democratic participation, and has a focus on the individual’s capability to reform via education, which speaks very strongly to principles of liberal peace (see Mac Ginty, 2010). Nevertheless, the Law includes other elements like ethical values, coexistence, respect for diversity, and equality, which give scope for interpretation. The Law also makes explicit that the implementation of the Peace Core Subject must respond to the needs of the context. I also highlighted that despite the fact that the Law’s genesis was embedded within the context of the Havana peace talks, there is little guidance to schools to work towards the larger purpose of the peace accord of addressing the causes of the armed and conflict and inequalities.
Despite the initial negative perception of the Law, and criticism which characterised it as demonstrating a narrow understanding of education as a sum of knowledges rather than a tool to expand interdisciplinary thinking, or as an all-powerful tool capable of fixing every major social issue, participants saw value on what the Law promotes and found congruent elements already in place at the school level and in individual classroom practice. The Law became an opportunity to legitimise and showcase their efforts.

Richmond (2006) and Mac Ginty (2008, 2010) pointed out that processes of liberal peace favour top-down approaches to developing peace, but that they can also be susceptible to including bottom-up initiatives which may result in a hybrid peace. The five school case studies above support that claim. While educators in schools prioritise their own visions of peace education over the nation’s, and claim their own views are more responsive to the contexts and particular needs of the populations they serve, the Law allows this flexibility. As such, peace education can be pursued in different ways. A lens of imperfect peace can be useful for analysing these different efforts of peace education, and identifying when elements of school practice are geared towards peacekeeping, peacemaking and/or peacebuilding, and therefore different peaces.

However, peace education is actually more complex and in ways that relate to what teachers and head teachers are saying about their own convictions about peace. It became very apparent in my research that teaching for peace has to do with personal beliefs, as well as with responding to the context. Although the bulk of peace education programmes in schools have not changed significantly, the conceptualisations of peace that pre-date the 1732 Educational Law are worth exploring as important examples of peace education. In the next chapter, I will explore how personal experiences and context shape notions of peace and peace education, and how these notions result in different proposals for peace education.
5. Peaces Instead of Peace

The previous chapter revealed how, even with a top down mandated law introducing peace education as a core subject, schools and teachers had considerable freedom to interpret it – both in light of individual experience, and in relation to their school ethos. In this chapter I explore how educators’ personal stories and beliefs about education, in dialogue with the contexts they teach in, shape what they teach as peace.

5.1. Impact of Individual Experiences in Shaping Conceptualisations of Peace and Peace Education

The following are the profiles of four participants who not only had a personal story to tell in relation to peace education, but also showcase the fact that there is a wide diversity of understandings of peace, which draw directly on personal experience. The profiles highlight that peace is understood in terms of other important concepts, like opportunities, inclusion, harmony, and well-being. The variation of opinion among my respondents show that teachers bring their own experiences and narratives to the ethos of the school, and to their teaching practice. Experience leads educators to certain beliefs about peace, which inform the school ethos – and which explains why educators in the same school may differ on their approaches to and aims for peace education. This finding is illustrated by the cases of John and Amanda, the head teacher and a teacher at the Liceo Alejandro de Humboldt, respectively.

5.1.1. Amanda: Peace as opportunities

Amanda is a teacher at the Liceo Alejandro de Humboldt with 26 years of teaching experience. She teaches language, literature and philosophy in grades 9 and 11 – typically students between the ages of 15 and 18. Throughout the interview, Amanda made reference to her personal experiences when explaining how and why she teaches peace.

Amanda had lived in Puerto Leguízamo, a municipality in Putumayo, a department in the south-west of Colombia at the border with Peru, and part of the Amazonian region. She had worked there for 25 years as a teacher. She decided to relocate her family in order to enable her daughter to pursue further educational opportunities. She explained: “I asked to be transferred for my children’s education because in Leguízamo, well, in Putumayo there is no
university and it was one of my goals that when my daughter finished grade 11\(^{17}\) we should leave Leguízamo” (Popayán, April 2016). However, being a public official, she had to go through the proper channels to request a transfer.

I asked to be transferred, first from Puerto Leguízamo to Puerto Guzmán [both towns in Putumayo]. But Puerto Guzmán is in the guerrilla zone. She [her daughter] stayed with me for 3 months and I had to send her away because the situation wasn’t too safe, so I had to send her away to Popayán alone. (Popayán, April 2016)

Amanda’s daughter and son moved on their own until Amanda’s transfer to Popayán came through. In Amanda’s situation, the context of violence and lack of opportunities motivated her to move to a bigger city. Popayán is the capital of the department of Cauca. It is a small city, but is well connected to the rest of the country and has the Universidad del Cauca, a prestigious public university. It is also safe, as it is an important urban centre and tourist site which is protected by the presence of the Police and military forces.

Amanda’s story reveals the search for two different notions of peace that are intertwined. The first notion relates to absence of war. This understanding of peace was evidenced by her need to physically extract her family from a context of violence. The second notion relates to issues of structural violence – i.e. underlying societal structures that generate inequalities – as her story revealed that the educational system denies opportunities for vulnerable or marginalised populations. Her experience shaped her decision of where to work in Popayán. She explained that she was offered several jobs, but she chose the one offered by the Liceo.

They told me that youngsters were troublesome there and I said: well, that’s where I want to go!… I come from a context where I’ve had to see all these situations, so it is not hard for me to work with this type of population. It is not difficult for me. I like it, I think I can contribute more from here. (Popayán, April 2016)

She claimed that a major determinant in her decision to work at that school was the fact that the Liceo Alejandro de Humboldt receives different kinds of populations, including internally displaced students and students with other vulnerabilities – e.g. physical and cognitive disabilities, drug-addiction, or a background of domestic violence. Throughout the interview, she was adamant about her potential as a teacher to make an impact on her pupils and help them navigate their situations to change their circumstances. She emphasised that

\(^{17}\) In Colombia, grade 11 is the last year of school.
because the school’s population was so unique, she could make a bigger contribution, as
compared to a school where pupils were more privileged. She explained:

I like the pedagogy, I like the fact that this school receives all kinds of populations. I
have always been the kind of person who thinks that you don’t have to throw
problems to society. If a child is doing drugs, if a child is making problems something
must be happening, and the educational work is not just to come and teach a class and,
I mean, that’s not my vision. (Popayán, April 2016)

For this teacher, education is the means through which society deals with its
problems, since, as she points out, negative behaviours come from somewhere, perhaps
hinting that from society itself. Amanda’s example shows how her contact with armed
conflict and her belief in education shape a notion of peace in terms of opportunities for the
most vulnerable and disadvantaged; and that she therefore understands education as a
determinant in the pursuit of peace. She explained that educating for peace involves more
than just teaching a subject, and that her vision of education encompasses other elements, like
figuring out what is happening beneath the surface of drug consumption and trouble making.

What matters the most is the person. If I care about the person, for the one who is
sitting there, learning starts from there. If I am feeling low, have economic problems,
I have problems in my neighbourhood, or society, all that, everything has an impact
on me and that blocks me. I must be calmed because when I am not calmed I can’t
pay attention. So, we work more in that area. At least that’s what I am most
committed to. (Popayán, April 2016)

In this quote, Amanda reveals that a major part of her work is dealing with individual
students to develop them as human beings and to support them through their troubles. This
emphasis suggests that in her understanding, peace also includes elements like individual
well-being. This conception of peace fills out a notion in which peace is not only the absence
of violence and the creation of opportunities, but also involves ensuring pupils’ well-being,
which will ultimately allow them to take advantage of those opportunities. This inference is
evident in her assertion that students are blocked, and that only calm permits them to remove
such blockages and take on what is being offered to them, especially given that taking pupils
out of their context is so difficult.

…since we can’t take them out of their environment, right? Because …there are
children who live in heavy neighbourhoods, with lots of violence, and who live in
difficult situations, but that has to give them strength to confront their reality. And
from the subject-area, I try to do that. (Popayán, April 2016)
Her work in class often includes topics that support students in dealing with their particular situations in a way in which they will be able to gain strength from their own reality. Amanda hopes this approach will help to bring them the tranquillity and strength needed to take advantage of opportunities like higher education. In the case of this teacher, peace is a sense of calm even within difficult circumstances, and education is a means to support pupils in achieving it. Peace is understood here in a micro sphere, something achieved at the individual level, but always in connection to the context and wider structures that generate the circumstances that affect children.

Amanda is trying to give her students the tools to navigate unequal and potentially violent contexts in which they may be marginalised, but she is not trying to change the structures which create these contexts directly. This priority is reflected in her own life story, in her choice to move away from a violent context to somewhere with more education opportunities. The understandings of peace education she is presenting appear to speak most strongly to notions of peacekeeping and peacemaking – i.e. her actions are directed at navigating the system, rather than transforming it. Her experiences of displacement underpin her views of what a more peaceful society would look like: feeling safe and being able to move within the system in order to take advantage of opportunities. This view translated into her teaching practice.

5.1.2. Hernán: Peace as inclusion

Hernán, the head teacher of the Institución Educativa Presbítero Antonio José Bernal, said: “I got into education because I wanted to change the world.” (Medellín, November 2015). He explained that his vocation came from his personal experiences growing up. He was born in Medellín, the second most populated city behind Bogotá, the capital of Colombia. Hernán explained that his contact with education began when he was finishing school.

I studied in a school called El Liceo Antioqueño... And the first conscientious experience of education was, what today is called social service, but in my time it was called literacy. So, I said: if we have so many people who need to learn to read and write, well, I want to work on literacy. But at the same time, I always wanted to know

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18 Literacy started as an educational initiative in Colombia where students in their final year of school taught reading, writing and basic mathematical operations. Today the programme has evolved and schools are obliged to design social programmes that go beyond reading and writing, which is why the name has changed to social service.
my country, I’m a geographer and at the Liceo [Antioqueño] there was the option to choose rural literacy… So we left to teach reading and writing and basic [mathematical] operations with farmers for 15 days. (Medellín, November 2015)

This quote illustrates that while growing up, this head teacher had concerns of his own. He worried about the fact that so many people in Colombia did not know how to read and write, nor how to do basic mathematics, and he had an interest in experiencing the country. This concern led him to volunteer to work in rural areas.

..it was the time of Belisario,19 the time of a programme called Camina (Walk), and that time coincided with the truce established with the FARC. That means that during the time I was in that area doing literacy, that 3 guerrilla members were verifying if the truce was working in the area… they took us out of the school to ask us what we were doing. In the contact we had with them days after, they were [there] in a football game and to build a community hut and after two minutes of talking to them we saw that they were normal farmers who were involved and armed, but farmers. (Medellín, November 2015)

The experience of travelling to a remote area of Antioquia in his final year of school, during a cease fire between the Government and the FARC, and in the midst of the peace negotiations (1982-1987) led by President Belisario Betancur, had a great impact on Hernán’s life. He called it a “reality blow” (Medellín, November 2015). His contact with actors in the armed conflict at a personal level, the terrible sanitary conditions he saw – including people sick with malaria – and the lack of infrastructure, led him to decide that his major concern was not to deal with his own financial situation, although he needed to, but to solve the problem of the economy for the people “of a country that makes me ache” (Medellín, November 2015). He viewed working in education as “a possibility to transform society” (Medellín, November 2015). He made the choice to get a degree in teaching with an emphasis in geography, which was his personal interest.

In contrast with Amanda, whose concern was the individual and at the micro level, Hernán’s is arguably more strongly located at the macro level, as he worried about transforming the conditions that led to vulnerability for certain sectors of the population. At the same time, they both agree on the issue of opportunities. However, Amanda’s approach is to teach pupils to navigate the system, whereas Hernán’s seems to lean towards transforming it. In contrast with Amanda’s inclination towards peacekeeping and peacemaking, Hernán’s

19 Belisario Betancur, President of Colombia between 1982 and 1986.
understanding is more akin to a process of peacebuilding, understood as a way to transform ingrained inequalities that perpetuate poverty, sickness and isolation, like those he experienced in the rural areas. This view is akin to Galtung’s understanding of positive peace as the absence of structural violence, or the economic, political, and social practices that perpetuate inequality (Ramsbotham et al., 2011). Hernán’s view also prioritises a redistributive approach, as he emphasises the importance of access to health care, infrastructure, and even knowledge (e.g. literacy and basic mathematics), which is similar to the 1960s understanding of social justice as a fair distribution of wealth, social welfare and rights (North, 2006; O’Connor, 2001).

Hernán also explained that he grew up with a disabled uncle. He never knew what type of disability he had, but he was referred to by people in the neighbourhood as “the crazy man in town” (Medellín, November 2015). In his interview, Hernán said, “I often wondered how much he could have been educated, how much he could have progressed, because he could barely write his signature, but I thought that he could have learned many things” (Medellín, November 2015). He also narrated how he suffered from seeing the abuse his uncle received from people in his neighbourhood. “It was supposedly funny to try to make fun of someone with limitations[.] So that broke me down in my heart” (Medellín, November 2015). This experience of watching his disabled uncle led him to ponder questions about education and inclusion. Specifically, this experience made him think about the role of education in developing people’s potential, regardless of their limitations.

Hernán’s questions about education and how it could provide the necessary skills and knowledge for individuals to fulfil their full potential relates to Galtung’s (1969) ideas of peace as the absence of violence. Galtung (1969) defines violence as “the cause of the difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what it is” (p. 168), meaning that violence is everything that prevents people from achieving their potential. In the case of Hernán’s uncle, for example, better education or better care could have given him more skills, and he could have lived a more fulfilled, dignified, independent life. Since those resources existed but he could not access them, he experienced violence, according to Galtung’s definition. For Hernán, inclusive education – i.e. education that can be accessed by all individuals– has the power to prevent that kind of violence.

In summary, Hernán’s life experiences impacted his view of peace and peace education. First, he saw education as a motor for change, and believed that education can
transform society by enabling marginalised groups to participate more fully. Secondly, he saw education as a means to develop people’s full potential, even for people with disadvantages; and he believed that schools can equip people with the knowledge and the skills to transform the system that oppresses them, and thus to develop peace. His life experiences contributed greatly to his view of education in general, and of peace education specifically. From his story it is possible to infer that he sees peace in terms of inclusion and social justice, and takes the role of education to be transforming people’s lives in order to impact society as a whole.

Hernán’s story led him to create a school ethos at the *Antonio José Bernal* that emphasises inclusion, loving relationships, and cooperative work. As I explained in the previous chapter, this ethos was the lens through which programmes, projects and activities were interpreted and implemented.

5.1.3. Jahuira: Peace as harmony

The head teacher of the *Colegio Ideas*, Carlos Duque, best known as Jahuira, lives in Cali, the capital of the department of the Valle del Cauca, which is the third biggest city in Colombia. Jahuira narrated a unique experience from the 1970s that had great impact on his approach to education. He explained that as a young man, he had had the opportunity to live with indigenous communities in Brazil as a part of a national programme where students were encouraged to learn traditional knowledge related to their own professional interest. He said:

It was [a programme] where students of every university in their 6th semester would nominate themselves and…the government would send them to the communities. So the architect could see how the communities built, the doctor…learned about plants, right?…But just to learn, to listen, never to tell them: *no, but why would you build like that?* No, no, no. And all that would be a travelling diary, a cassette [.] And these would be given to every school in the country… That was transformation… By managing to distribute all the information of what was there, what they did, what happened, here… music was enriched in a mind-blowing way, the art, intentions, desires, valuing… The idea was incredible. (Cali, November 2015)

As a result, he decided to embark on a journey around South America to visit many communities with the purpose of understanding them. During this experience, Carlos was renamed *Jahuira* by an indigenous community, a name he still goes by. The experience had long lasting impacts on his view of education. He wrote for the web page of the Compartir Foundation:
The ancestral memory, the ritualisation, the organisational structure of community character, the sense of belonging and the profound respect amongst each other, allowed me to see a new, fledgling pedagogical project with the natural order as a foundation for the understanding of everything, from which the bases of what today we call in the school Essential Pedagogy surfaced. (Duque, 2016, para. 2)

In the case of Jahuria, contact with diverse communities and their cosmologies led him to develop a pedagogical project that stemmed from the natural order. In his interview, Jahuria stated that peace is a natural thing; just as the elements, animals, and plants coexist in harmony in the natural world, human beings must do the same. He founded his own private school in 1979. Jahuria described how his school developed in parallel with his efforts to recover a natural area that had been devastated by human action. He explained that the school appeared in an organic way. He started planting native trees, recovering the land, and with time native species appeared again. Children and parents first came to take part in the recovery of the territory, and in the process, “we found our way of behaving in relation to the environment, in relation with each other, valuing also the feeling of ancient indigenous communities that had a deep feeling of appreciation for their natural surroundings” (Jahuria, Cali, November 2015). Jahuria’s experience of living amongst the indigenous communities of South America inspired his whole view of education, which places the relationship between human beings and the natural environment at the centre, creating harmony. He also teaches students to relate amongst themselves in a harmonious manner, with a peace that derives from the natural order. For Jahuria, peace involves cultivating an ancestral, indigenous way of living life in coexistence with each other and Earth. Jahuria explained how this way of living is seen in his school:

So, the tribal communities in those basic spaces live in a wonderful way, right? Where the woman had the certainty that when having her baby, the baby was everyone’s responsibility…Therefore, she could do other works. The same happens here, parents tell me, new people tell me: wow! *But with all the forests, how do children do it? My son might fall in the lake*.] With all those fantastic fears that we learn through radio or other places, not here. All the children know each other. We have obviously created lots of super beautiful strategies of connection, collective workshops, of children of different ages, they explore common activities. They all recognise each other, identify with each other [. ] So there is no such thing as the older ones and the younger ones, they all hold hands, together, right? (Cali, November 2015)

For Jahuria this sense of togetherness is part of the natural order, the principle that organises life and that generates a sense of belonging. He explained that when the school started, the students that first arrived were few and of different ages, and he was the only teacher. As the school grew, he felt it was important to maintain that initial feeling of
connection, where the older students helped the younger ones. He wanted to “[g]uarantee that the children of different ages admired each other, valued each other, respected each other, and that they learned from each other” (Jahuira, Cali, November 2015). This vision had significant implications for his educational proposal. It determined the school’s architecture—the classrooms are open, maloca20-style constructions, which are meant to blend with the environment—as well as his pedagogical vision, which places the pupil at the centre of the learning process, with direct practical implications. Jahuira explained that

if we observe a child from a young age, he is a potential explorer. Whatever he listens to, whatever he plays, whatever he touches… he is completely connected. So, we, human beings, come predisposed to adventure, to be amazed, to investigate. (Cali, November 2015)

Jahuira’s school aims at maintaining this “natural state”, as he calls it, creating a path that contrasts with traditional education, whose only purpose, in his view, is to generate “submissive children” and “cheap labour” (Jahuira, Cali, November 2015). The aim of maintaining the “natural state” and the “natural order” produced a school ethos where pupils, teachers, parents, and the environment are considered valuable and equals. Everyone has the opportunity to drive their own learning and the learning of others, and relationships are meant to be harmonious and positive, including with the natural world. All learning is organised as cross-curricular projects, where teachers and students work alongside each other and involve parents and community members in their learning. These projects are built around equalising power relationships, sharing, and establishing the harmonious relationships Jahuira sees as the basis for peace.

Jahuira’s approach to education is characterised by a search for coherence, evident in the way he organises his school to foster caring relationships towards the environment and each other. He claimed that, as the head teacher of a private school, he has more freedom than state schools in the way he implements educational policies, for example in matters of school organisation. According to Elmore (1992), “The way we organize schools heavily influences how we teach, what we teach, and how we expect students to learn.” (p. 44). Jahuira’s goal, of creating a learning community rather than a school, speaks to Elmore’s assertion. The way he organises the schools to balance power relationships in the process of teaching and learning has a direct impact in how teachers teach, what pupils choose to learn,

20 A maloca is the name given by the Amazonian groups to their communal house. It is round and open.
and the expected learning outcomes. Smith (2001, 2013) referencing Argyris, argues “that people have mental maps with regard to how to act in situations… it is these maps that guide people’s actions rather than the theories they explicitly espouse.” (Smith, 2013, para. 7).

Jahuira clearly has a map that derives from his personal experiences and shapes the school’s principles, as he tries to build everything around his core beliefs about education and peace. His personal experiences impacted his view of education immensely, and led him to want to recreate the same order he lived in when he lived amongst the indigenous communities. Jahuira’s approach is proactive, which is an important feature of peacebuilding (Cremin, 2016); its principles are not a response to particular situations of violence, but have the potential to reduce and even prevent conflict.

5.1.4. John: Peace as well-being

John, the head teacher of the Liceo Alejandro de Humboldt in Popayán, explained that the purpose of peace is to achieve a state of well-being. He explained that

[The] state of well-being is a promise. Is a biblical promise, it’s in Jeremiah 29:11, the Lord says: because in the plans I have for mine, for the ones I love, are plans of well-being and not of calamity. Which means that we were made to be well in this world. Which means that poverty is not a lifestyle, nor marginalisation either. That suffering is not essential; the central point it is to be well. And not in Heaven, that was invented I don’t know by whom to legitimise that some had to be poor. No sir, Jeremiah’s plans, plans of well-being and not of calamity. With two intentions, really beautiful, the intention of giving them a future! And hope. That’s what we do! (Popayán, November 2015)

John’s view of peace stems from his faith. John is a former seminarian whose religious beliefs permeate his stance on peace education. His view, as he clearly states in the previous quote, is that human beings are on Earth to live in a state of well-being. He believes poverty is not part of God’s plans, which has direct implications in the work he undertakes in the school: to build an environment of well-being for pupils, especially for pupils who cannot

…recognise each other as affectionate beings, which is perhaps the biggest disorder these people have. It’s hard to hug them, it’s hard for them to let themselves be loved, it’s hard to learn that they can forgive, it’s hard to tell them that it is brave to forgive, that reconciliation is vital to sustain peace. We drain away [the violence] from within them because violence is learned and has to be unlearned. (Popayán, November 2015)

John’s principle of well-being involves inclusion, a concern drawn from the school’s context. The Liceo is located in the city of Popayán, which is surrounded by territories that have been hit hard by violence historically, mainly over conflicts around land possession (“La
larga y cruel lucha por la tierra en el Cauca,” 2014, January 15). In recent years, these areas have been strategic for coca plantations, intensifying the conflict even more. This school is a state school, and therefore receives a large population of internally displaced people fleeing from violence who settle in the city. “Popayán is the second recipient city of displaced populations [in Colombia]. This population not only had to be catered for, but we had to give it an alternative that would guarantee a minimum success” (John, Popayán, November 2015). In thinking similar to Hernán’s and Amanda’s, John sees the school as having the potential to embrace everyone and offer opportunities that other spaces systematically negate.

The head teacher and teachers at the Liceo designed a programme called A Space of Opportunities as a response to the type of students they were receiving, which posed great challenges to the school. John suggested that well-being includes instilling feelings of hope for the future in students, which begins with a strategy of inclusion. He explained that it is normal practice in other schools to send away youngsters who do not comply with their criteria. He said:

We do the opposite. Do you have problems? There is someone here who wants to help. There is no admission test, nothing! So, the welcoming spirit is represented by easy access. All types of access, for example if you are displaced, a victim, you can start [school] at any point in the year, because… [there is] no [specific] time to expel people from their land, no! That happens at any point in time. And it happens, and there has to be someone who takes them in and who takes them in well[.] If they don’t have the paperwork, it doesn’t matter. If they are too old, it doesn’t matter, they don’t have uniforms, here is the uniform box. There is no transportation, here’s your transport. They don’t settle in quickly, here’s the psychologist. They have issues at home, here’s the social worker who works directly so we won’t lose them easily. So they won’t have an excuse[.] And also: we love you, come here, we will hug you[.] (John, Popayán, November 2015)

The school’s policy of inclusion fits neatly with John’s vision of well-being, as it prioritises students’ access to the school, from a principle of making no excuses. John claims that his school will do everything in their power to facilitate every student’s enrolment, so they will not lose them in the process. His aim was to make pupils feel welcomed and loved, so they can learn the skills and behaviours necessary to live peacefully in society.

And the new has to be learned, how to live in a new space, and the school tries to simulate a new society with our final product called Towards a School Culture of Well-Being. So, the child will understand that not all spaces generate violence. Not all spaces generate exclusion, lack of opportunities, but that they realise that there is a space which is the school, and the school can, it must show what it means to be well. (John, Popayán, November 2015)
Like Jahuira’s proactive peacebuilding approach, John attempts to create an ideal mini society within his school with well-being and inclusion as the central aims to be achieved. This view speaks to Dewey’s (1916 [1966]) view of schools as micro-societies, in which he claims that

The chief importance of … the educative process which goes on willy-nilly is to lead us to note that the only way in which adults consciously control the kind of education which the immature get is by controlling the environment in which they act, and hence think and feel. We never educate directly, but indirectly by means of the environment. Whether we permit chance environments to do the work, or whether we design environments for the purpose makes a great difference. And any environment is a chance environment so far as its educative influence is concerned unless it has been deliberately regulated with reference to its educative effect. (pp. 18-19)

As Dewey’s quote explains, the manner in which pupils are educated is greatly affected by the design of the environment they experience. The outcome of the educational process depends on the environment that surrounds pupils, so an intentional strategy will have greater implications for the type of education received by students. For John, as a head teacher of a school that receives a large student population in special circumstances – affected by internal displacement, family violence, and difficult neighbourhoods – creating an environment he believes is a peaceful one, and can produce a state of well-being, is paramount to transforming his pupils’ perception of the world and the way they relate with others.

5.1.5. Differences and Similarities Between Notions of Peace

The profiles illustrate the impact of personal experiences in shaping notions of peace and their relevance for peace education programmes. They also show that when personal experiences interact with the surrounding context, specific ideas of peace and peace education start to form. However, the results are complicated: different ideas of peace are woven together in the process of teaching for peace. Although the educational approaches are quite different, they share some core values – of being inclusive, of protecting the vulnerable, of building relationships; but they realise these in different ways, and with different emphases. A notion of peace as imperfect, and the concepts of peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding, helps to make sense of this complexity.

Some of the educators’ approaches to developing peace were focused more strongly on how to model an inclusive school – like John and Jahuira, who shared the intention of building a new environment. This goal appeals to Dewey (1916 [1966], p. 20), who claimed that schools should aim to reproduce what is best in society, and “eliminate, so far as
possible, the unworthy features of the existing environment from influence upon mental
habitudes. It establishes a purified medium of action.” (p. 20). The ethos at the Colegio Ideas
seemed to suggest that creating such environment was precisely what Jahuira was aiming for
in his school, as his model of education seemed to be offering an alternative society. By
contrast, John clearly has a focus on social justice in terms of inclusion and well-being, and
tailors it for underprivileged pupils. Neither of them, however, is challenging inequality,
which is more congruent with an approach to peacemaking.

By contrast, Hernán, who also spoke of inclusion, advocated for social justice in
terms of challenging the structures that generate inequalities. Though he also attempted to
create an inclusive school that could protect marginalised youth, much as John did, his
approach to peace education prioritises peacebuilding. His story reveals an interest in
engaging with the causes of inequalities, which is a principle of conflict transformation (see
J. P Lederach, 2003). His concern for discriminatory structures also demonstrates a view
aligned with a politics of recognition – the acknowledgement of the indisputable value of
every human being – and a commitment to guarantee access to education, which relates to a
redistributive principle of justice (Hytten & Bettez, 2011; North, 2006; O'Connor, 2001).

Though she also worked at the Liceo Alejandro de Humboldt, and shared John’s
principles of inclusion, loving relationships and concern for the disenfranchised population of
the school, Amanda was more focused on enabling students to navigate, more than to change,
their contexts. In her own way, and within her power – which, in contrast to John, was more
constricted to the classroom – she focussed on individual well-being. This emphasis
translated into practices of protection from violence and individual change. These elements
mark processes of peacekeeping and peacemaking, respectively. Her emphasis on the
individual also resonates with liberal peace, as individual reformation is one of its pillars (see
Mac Ginty, 2010).

These four profiles are examples of an array of understandings of peace and peace
education. They also illustrate how personal experience and interpretations of context
generate those understandings. The next sections continue exploring this issue of notions of
peace and peace education in relation to the context in which schools are embedded.
5.2. Impact of Context in Shaping Conceptualisations of Peace and Peace Education

Key characteristics of peace – like coexistence, tolerance, inclusion and personal responsibility – were deeply connected to teachers’ views of the contexts in which their schools were embedded. The surroundings influenced teachers’ ideas of what peace looked like at the school level, and determined the actions they took towards developing it. As the previous section began to explore, the context of where the school was located, and the local issues schools needed to manage, determined understandings of peace. Not only personal experiences affect notions of peace, but practical day to day situations also shape these notions. The importance of the context is key regardless of whether peace education practice is experienced as part of the school ethos or in individual classroom practice.

This section establishes the connections between context and the conceptualisations of peace educators have. As explained before, it is difficult to separate peace education practice from ideas of peace, and this section continues to establish links between them.

5.2.1. Peace as Protection

During interviews, a vision of peace education as a form of protection started to emerge. John, the head teacher at the *Liceo*, viewed the school as part of a “protective system”, which before anything else had to implement structures and procedures that keep pupils safe: “at first, we have not done anything. We have only protected them from all the vulnerability they might have out there” (Popayán, November 2015). Amanda explained that the school must feel like safe space where pupils can “retreat from everyday violence” (Amanda, Popayán, April 2016). This concern was also crucial for Hernán, the head teacher at the *Antonio José Bernal*. As I explained in the previous chapter, the school was deliberately built in the middle of three neighbourhoods which were divided into gang territories, as a strategy to create neutral ground where people from rival areas could come together.

This is why many questions came first, we needed to make this the place of encounter. Make it their [the pupils’] territory and then worry about academic stuff. So, our quest was for them to want to come here. These are traditionally enemy neighbourhoods. There were many reasons to do things differently. I should say, we were betting on this peace thing from day one. (Medellín, November 2015)

In 2015, a gang leader from *La Toscana*, one of the neighbourhoods the *Antonio José Bernal* serves, was killed on the street, and many pupils stopped attending school because of the fear of a gang war. The school played a crucial role in guaranteeing safe passage of
children to and from school. The school’s actions instilled in pupils and parents the notion that the school was a space of peace (Hernán, Medellín, November 2015).

These two schools illustrate how Dewey’s (1916 [1966]) notion of schools as laboratories could work for peacekeeping. As a protective environment, the school can extract pupils from their violent contexts and place them in an alternative setting where negative peace – i.e. an absence of direct violence – can be experienced.

However, other teachers create protective spaces in their own individual practice. The Lola González School is a school located in the Comuna 13 in Medellín. As I explained in Chapter 3, the Comuna 13 has a long history of violence due to the presence of urban guerrilla groups, paramilitary groups and drug trafficking. It has been the scene of various violent military interventions involving paramilitary forces, which have resulted in forced disappearances, the assassination of civilians passed as combatants, and mass graves (Corporación Jurídica Libertad, 2009). Luz Elena, an art teacher at this school, explained that she observes what is happening in her students’ life in order to make decisions about her peace education programme. She once started a campaign addressing the problem of drug consumption and micro-trafficking because she saw it as a major threat to her students’ lives, and therefore central to her programme. The slogan of the year was “Not in the School”. The purpose was to send a message, as she explained: “that outside was going to be their [pupils’] decision because there were things that we [educators] couldn’t take care of. That I protected life here [at the school], I took care of it here” (Medellín, November 2015). This quote shows how for teachers the school can become a bubble within which to protect pupils from harm and situations that lead to violence. It also places teachers’ responsibility beyond the role of teaching, and turns them into protectors of their students’ lives.

In general, people from the state schools describe their contexts as violent, uncertain, and dysfunctional; and as such, the school had to be the opposite: loving, reliable, understanding. Peacekeeping theoretically refers to separating parties involved in the same conflict using the strategy of conflict management (Johnson & Johnson, 2005b; Miall, 2004). However, in the context of the state schools – in urban settings and violent neighbourhoods – peacekeeping could be understood as creating a space, which Patricia, the ethics teacher at the Antonio José Bernal, characterised as “free from violence” (Medellín, November 2015). Such peaceful spaces allow youngsters to retreat from the direct violence they experience either at home or in their neighbourhoods. It protects pupils from real risks first. Framing
these efforts in the lens of imperfect peace allows us to identify them as initiatives of peace, and to understand the need for them in specific contexts.

5.2.2. Peace as Coexistence

The policy of inclusion leads to issues of managing coexistence in state schools. “When you work with a focus on inclusion, the first serious problem is coexistence” (John, November 2015). School strategies that are based on an understanding of peace in terms of inclusion rely on a parallel project of coexistence, which was the issue that stirred some schools to create their own peace education programmes – and even a type of peace core subject – before the 1732 Educational Law.

Because ours was an issue of coexistence and the problem of coexistence is based solely on the fact that our students solve their conflicts in the way they see how, if they see them [being solved] by yelling, they solve them yelling, if they see them [being solved] by hitting, they solve them hitting, if the see them [being solved] by intimidation, if they solve them by mistreating and everything else, that’s what they do. What was our objective, plainly? Transform those traditional ways in which they solve their conflicts. (John, Popayán, November 2015)

A major challenge for the Liceo, as John suggests, is to transform the attitudes and behaviours of pupils in the manner in which they solve their conflicts. Their default response depends on the ways they have learnt to solve them in the first place, which in many cases is in a violent manner. At the school level, the ultimate goal is to equip pupils with “the information, attitudes, values, and behavioural competencies needed to resolve conflicts without violence and build and maintain mutually beneficial, harmonious relationships” (Johnson & Johnson, 2005b, p. 276). As John explains: “And if we change [the way they solve conflicts], I think it stems from the emotional, to change the programming, to the cognitive, to learn new ways of doing things, to will power, to act differently” (November, 2015). This strategy of conflict resolution, which scholars like Chaux (2005, 2007, 2012) argue is central to peace education, aims to develop peace in ways congruent with peacemaking (see Cremin & Bevington, 2017). As Miall (2004) explains, in a peacemaking project, individuals attempt to transcend conflicts by assisting both parties in changing their positions through analysis and exploration of the conflict itself. In the case of the school, by developing students’ skills to do this on their own, teachers aim to transform their behaviour; and by transforming student behaviour, teachers aim to build peace at the school level, and eventually at the macro, societal level, as pupils become adults. This last assumption
connects with principles of liberal peace and the 1732 Law, which place emphasis on the improvement of the individual as a means of building peace in society.

The school’s potential for peacekeeping and peacemaking can transcend the school’s walls and also involve elements of peacebuilding. Hernán claimed that his school became a space of encounter between people from different neighbourhoods, who otherwise were not allowed to come near each other. The school became a space where they could recognise each other and coexist in harmony, regardless of which neighbourhood the pupils came from (Medellín, November 2015). In principle, this example illustrates how the physical space of the school not only shelters pupils from violence, but also communities – in a form of peacekeeping. The school also becomes a space for dialogue between people who, without the school, would not speak to each other, which is a form of peacemaking. Lastly, approximating Snauwaert’s (2011) and Gandhi’s (Ambler, 1990) views of social justice, the school offers a place for people to recognise each other’s self-worth and equal humanity, which is a means of peacebuilding.

5.2.3. Individual Change for Social Change

Throughout the interviews, participants described ideas about transforming individual behaviours and attitudes to achieve societal change as a means to build peace. Participants argued pupils were surrounded by violence (e.g. armed conflict, domestic violence, violent neighbourhoods, drug consumption), such that peace is the change in these circumstances. In their view, education is a major determinant in producing that change. For some teachers, this change comes from transforming individuals directly; they assume that when educating individuals and developing individual values, skills and abilities, will translate to society to ultimately transform it.

For Jose Alberto, an ethics teacher at the Colegio Divino Maestro, the relationship between building peace at the macro level and developing individual values to build peace is straightforward. This link was evident when he explained his view of the peace dialogues between the government and the FARC, and the challenges they posed to peace education:

…what is going to change is the new scenario of what can happen in Colombia. And that scenario is what makes me expectant, with a lot of hope of turning it into a possibility and it’s the scenario of forming [students] for a new experience of a different society. What makes my heart ache is to think that this thing [peace dialogues] could be another parody, and that war is being forged from now, again. And that we may have new wars and it will catch up to us, with kids who are now
school students but that later will be the youngsters who will participate in the processes that occur in society without any of the elements of that understanding of what peace is, peace as dialogue, peace as agreement, peace as tolerance, as everything that involves the set of values. (Bogotá, November 2015)

Despite his scepticism towards the peace dialogues, there is an underlying hope for a different scenario that might give educators the opportunity to teach students to experience and build a different and better society. This hope implies that education must play a major role in helping students navigate the new, and perhaps better, society that can be built as a result of the peace agreement. The former idea is reinforced at the end of the quote, when the teacher explains the ways that the macro context (e.g. wars) might work against individuals and catch them off-guard, without the knowledge or skills (i.e. set of values) to face it. In this sense, the macro state of peace stems from individual personal values like tolerance, honesty, and compassion. The assumption is that if citizens live under a particular set of values, there will be peace at the macro level – so everything begins with the individual, which gives education its critical role in building peace. This idea connects with liberal peace, and favours a of peacemaking approach, which emphasises encouraging individual behaviours which will ultimately impact the larger society.

Carlos, a social studies teacher at the Liceo, argued that building peace at the societal level starts by developing in students the individual skill of communicating effectively. He explained:

[B]ecause speaking about peace is not just to not hit each other, right? It is to teach them to respect the process, teach them to follow norms, to teach them to argue[.]
Yes, I think that for me peace is to be able to exchange arguments with another without the need to hurt them, in other words, to be able to reach an agreement. It isn’t the misunderstood issue of tolerance, right? Which, in general is understood as allowing the other to do whatever they want with me, it isn’t that either. (Popayán, April 2016)

In Carlos’ view, peace exists when there is a healthy exchange of ideas and arguments, when people follow norms and respect processes without letting others take advantage of each other, and when they can reach agreements. In principle, Carlos’ understanding is similar to Jose Alberto’s stance on changing individual behaviours to achieve societal transformation, and thus liberal peace. However, Carlos’ thinking derives from the idea that a major cause of conflict in Colombia is the disregard for difference. In his words:

Another problem, not just in the country, well, it’s in the country and somehow translates into the school, is that I can’t stand difference, right? So, if you have an
ideological problem with me and since you don’t share my ideology, then you are my enemy. (Popayán, April 2016)

For Carlos, then, a lack of respect for those who are different, and an unhealthy exchange of ideas, are major causes of violence. His concern is to instil in pupils the skills to have a dialogue based on arguments. His assumption is that by doing so, in the future they will grow into adults who will care about differences and argue their ideas respectfully, which will subsequently build peace.

If youngsters learn to argue and learn to solve their differences [using] dialogue, it is a huge way to advance towards peace. And specially to lose the fear of thinking differently, right? We cannot tell youngsters that they are the future of our country when we are not giving them tools, really. (Carlos, Popayán, April 2016)

Carlos’ conceptualisation of peace seems to go beyond an idea of liberal peace. It revolves around managing issues of difference in dialogue when trying to solve conflicts peacefully, and getting personal views across, which focus on the recognition of the intrinsic value of other human beings. Carlos encourages the development of effective communication as a means to build peace, which relates strongly to a principle of deliberation. Deliberation is a process in which citizens actively participate in the process of exchanging ideas in order to agree upon joint decisions and conclusions on matters that impact their lives (Bohman, 1998; Gutmann & Thompson, 2004). A skill such as deliberation is pedagogical in itself (Held, 2008), as citizens are constantly negotiating and acting and, in the process, learning from each other. In the micro setting of the classroom, Carlos understands deliberating as a process that develops critical perspectives, which help pupils re-think personal views in light of others’, and recognise that thinking differently is valuable. Critical thinking is also an element which theorists like Freire (1996 [1970], 2005 [1974]) and Westheimer and Kahne (2003; 2004) argue are central for the development of peace.

Erika (Medellín, May 2016), a social studies teacher at the Institución Educativa Lola González, agreed with developing individual skills in students to build peace. However, her understanding of peace related to democracy, engagement, and participation. Her thinking was analogous to scholars of citizenship education (Kahne et al., 2006; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) who advocate for the education of citizens to transform their realities. In her words:

…is through education that we develop the firm intent towards peace, and towards that citizen who is responsible, not just for himself, but also his surroundings, let’s
say, his social context, which is a matter of vocation and construction through the academic development, which I consider, is the path for that peace. (Erika, Medellín, May 2016)

Her reasoning was that peace education is the path to social transformation and thus, to building peace. Erika claimed that there are two main characteristics of education seeking peace in terms of democracy. First, schools must be concerned with informing students: “here there is such ignorance and lack of political knowledge, so terrible that leads us to not caring, to see everything as normal, corruption as a common thing, because us citizens don’t care, because we don’t have the knowledge” (Medellín, May 2016). According to Erika, ignorance is the cause of apathy towards deep-seated problems such as corruption. A way in which schools can contribute to the building of peace is by instilling the knowledge of phenomena like corruption and where it comes from. Erika’s assumption is that by knowing, citizens start caring and questioning. This understanding echoes ideas about the participatory citizen and social-oriented citizen, terms coined by Westheimer and Kahne (2004) to describe citizens who understand the manner in which government works and the mechanisms that exist for their participation, and citizens who seek justice, respectively. These forms of citizenship education, which relate to peace education, involve projects of peacemaking and peacebuilding. They are modes of peacemaking because, as in models of liberal peace and democratisation (see Chan, 1997; Richmond, 2006), individuals must know how institutions and norms work in order to behave correctly in society; and they are equally modes of peacebuilding, because individuals should also be equipped to find the causes of larger problems in society in order to feel empowered to create change. These perspectives appeal both to elements of conflict transformation (see J. P Lederach, 2003) and peaceful empowerment.

Erika, like Jose Alberto’s, expands the definition and includes values as part of the knowledge basis of citizens.

The second [characteristic a citizen should have] …is that, obviously through the development of ethics, that citizen who has the knowledge has, in some way, to show in their actions those behaviours which are correct. And the correct ones are those within the norms. If we know the norms which are determined in our society, well, [the actions] would obviously be the correct actions within the norm. (Erika, Medellín, May 2016)

Erika believes it is also necessary to develop students by instilling ethical values, creating personally responsible citizens – citizens who Westheimer and Kahne (2004) might
define as aware of their own behaviours, inclined to follow rules and aware that he/she has a personal duty towards society. Erika sees education as fundamental in the process of building peace by nurturing citizens who understand what the correct behaviours in a society and fair political processes are. She highlights the importance of individual behaviours and attitudes as pillars for societal transformation, a perspective akin to liberal peace.

5.3. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that there are many understandings of peace. This study offers insight into how teachers’ theories about peace and peace education translate into practice in schools. It is evident that factors such as personal experience and context play a major role in forming teachers’ ideas of what peace is and should look like in the context of their schools.

Clearly educators’ notions of peace move along the continuum of imperfect peace, from negative peace to positive peace. This analysis demonstrates that in the work of teaching for peace, at least at the conceptual level, participants aim at peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding, sometimes even simultaneously. At the same time, their work to develop peace has stretched its definitions beyond those originally attached to these terms. The original conceptualisations of these types of peace, taken from the context of international relations, referred mostly to attitudes towards conflict. As I explained in Chapter 2, peacekeeping aims at separating groups in conflict, or incentivising the end of conflict (Johnson & Johnson, 2005b); peacemaking favours conflict resolution, the search for solutions that derive from the examination of positions and interests, and the transformation of behaviours (Miall, 2004); and peacebuilding seeks to transform conflict by challenging discourses, relationships and even the very structure of society (Johnson & Johnson, 2005b; Miall, 2004). However, in this study, peacekeeping is understood as a reactive approach to current circumstances that generate direct violence. Some of the actions I have identified as peacekeeping in the context of schools include understanding the school as a space that shields pupils from violence, the management of individual behaviours, instilling the ability for self-regulation and self-awareness, and emphasising norms.

Peacemaking also emerges as a reactive approach, not only to conflict, but also to general contexts of violence, including direct, structural, and cultural violence. Educators strive to develop specific attitudes in pupils. For example, elements of peacemaking in the
context of schools include developing skills to navigate a system considered too difficult to transform, and creating opportunities that otherwise would have been impossible. In other cases, peacemaking is exemplified by a focus on teaching ethical values which are seen as the basis for societal change, or by an understanding of peace in line with liberal peace: focused on democratisation and the education of citizens who can make better choices.

Peacebuilding in this study has taken shape as a proactive approach that seeks social justice by creating alternative spaces where relationships, interests and discourses are re-imagined by educators in ways that are closer to ideal. It may involve favouring inclusion and effective attention to differences, or developing harmonious relationships amongst human beings and the environment. It also focuses on developing deliberative communication skills to create group agreements and foster recognition of differences.

Theorists of peace education, like Cremin (2016), argue that peacekeeping and peacemaking approaches are clearly more prevalent in the practice of peace education. In this chapter, educators’ beliefs about what ought to be taught as peace in schools bear out Cremin’s assertion.

In this chapter, I explained the theories head teachers and teachers have about what they teach as peace, and how these theories are shaped by ideas of peace formed through personal experiences and contact with the school’s context. However, it is also important to explore what pupils understand as peace, and analyse whether and how their ideas differ from their teachers’. The next chapter explores pupils’ understandings of peace in depth.
6 Pupils’ Understandings of Peace

In Chapter 5, I examined the notions of peace that educators hold, and the ways personal biographies and the contexts of their schools shaped those notions. In this chapter, I explore pupils’ understandings of peace, which show important differences and some similarities with those of their teachers.

When asked to define peace, in some cases pupils did not explicitly define it. Some pupils’ responses gave explanations of the causes of conflict with the purpose of illustrating what peace is, while others used their understandings of the causes of violence in Colombia to illustrate what peace is not. These findings support scholars (Muñoz, 2006) who argue that there has been an historical tendency to study peace in terms of violence or in opposition to violence, such that pupils’ definitions of peace are oriented towards its opposites.

6.1. Peace as a Result of Individual Change

In the previous chapter, I argued that educators considered individual change – i.e. transforming individual behaviours and attitudes – to be a condition for achieving societal change, and thus build peace. Pupils shared the view that peace begins with the individual. The assumption, as explained by pupil at the Colegio Ideas, is that “Everyone is participating and building peace from the smallest scale, which is peace with the other, peace with oneself, and if everyone does it, then we build peace in a country” (Cali, June 2016). If, individually, everyone worries about developing peace, then as a sum, there will be peace. In a way, this is a form of liberal peace, as it places most of the weight of making peace on the individual.

Echoing the educators’ stance on the importance of teaching values, a pupil at the Liceo claimed that values are important, giving the example of a video he watched that showed a person dropping money, others picking it up to steal it, and a homeless man returning it (Popayán, April 2016). His intervention showed that for him, cultivating personal values such as honesty are key to developing peace at the macro level. Just like the pupil before, the concern was for every individual to do their part.

Another pupil weighed in on the topic of sharing values as essential to developing peace: “we should all have the same values, at least the main one, which is respect. With respect there would not be all the evil there is. Because if you respect someone, you will not think you are more than him” (Popayán, April 2016). Other pupils from other schools agreed with the importance of respecting others, even when people are in disagreement, as a basis for peace. And this value, in the case of students at the Colegio Ideas, extended to the
environment. However, the notion of respect also speaks to a politics of recognition, going beyond individual behaviours or the enactment of values to achieve peace. Snauwaert (2011) argues that to achieve social justice there has to be moral equality, which in Gandhian terms is the moral belief in every individual’s self-worth (Ambler, 1990). Pupils, as the previous quote illustrates, explored an approximation to this notion, as they saw developing an appreciation for others as part of cultivating values in themselves.

6.2. Peace as Security

Pupils participating in the study experimented with defining peace in terms of security. Some pupils viewed security as something to be provided, which, when lacking, contributed to the absence of peace. For example, a female student at the Antonio José Bernal explained that Colombia is living under a peace treaty, but for her, that is stupid, because as the government and the FARC negotiate, they kill each other. She said, “there are criminals and thieves in every corner. Peace can not only be the peace dialogues” (Medellín, May 2016), emphasising the importance of putting the spotlight on the matter of security, as well as the peace process. More adamantly, another pupil at the same school stated: “the initial point of peace is dealing with the criminals and thieves” (Medellín, May 2016). This view could be interpreted as a call to provide security as the basic standard of peace. These students support Richmond’s (2006) assessment that peacekeeping and negative peace maintain their legitimacy as the minimum preconditions for peace, which is characteristic of a liberal peace model.

This basic need for security relates to the “‘inherency’ view of conflict”, an understanding of human nature as innately violent (Richmond, 2014). A female pupil from the Antonio José Bernal claimed that “…from my understanding peace never existed. Because no one will respect the other, no one will value the other” (Medellín, May 2016). A male pupil said, “It’s impossible for violence to disappear because of human beings’ instinct, and for the simple reason that being human, is violent” (Medellín, May 2016). The view of humans as inherently violent poses great challenges to the building of peace. These pupils see peace as impossible in these terms. A view like this one justifies the use of violence and force in order to suppress violence, since it considers violence a natural, not a learned behaviour (see Richmond, 2014). This stance does not acknowledge other underlying causes that may lead to individual expressions of violence, including resentment and exclusion, for example. Muñoz (2006) argues that an understanding of peace as a finished, perfect product often
disempowers the people trying to build peace, as they find their work impossible to achieve. However, I would argue that ideas of negative peace drawn from the inherency view of violence can have the same effect. People may find the work of building peace completely overwhelming, as they find themselves impotent to change human nature. This feeling of powerlessness happens especially since the two extremes of negative and positive peace hinder the recognition of expressions of peace in situations of violence. The presence of insecurity, as these pupils perceive, negates the possibility of peace, and thus negates peaceful empowerment.

6.3. Peace as More Than Negative Peace

In direct contrast to the teachers, a pupil at the Liceo claimed that in his school, “peace is understood as the end of armed conflict, so we learn about this. The school’s focus is on the end of armed conflict, not on the personal relationships between people and society” (Popayán, April 2017). As I explored in Chapters 4 and 5, the goal of the Liceo Alejandro de Humboldt was to create an environment of well-being and inclusion which prioritised relationships amongst students and between teachers and pupils. However, this pupil felt that the emphasis was placed on the end of armed conflict – very much in line with a peacekeeping model – rather than on relationships. This participant’s argument was that understanding peace as the end of armed conflict was a narrow understanding of peace. Similarly, another pupil said that he

…will always see ‘peace’ as the ‘good’ part, not just believe that it is the ceasefire, which is causing more [devastation] as the government only focuses on members of FARC, leaves out displaced people, the emerging violence, poverty, so this cannot be the way to a final concept of peace. (Popayán, April 2016)

These data suggest congruence with Galtung’s (1990a, 1990b) understanding of negative peace and positive peace, and they criticise the negative model of peace – i.e. as an end of armed conflict – considering it too narrow. They include elements such as poverty and relationships, and mention other kinds of violence beyond armed conflict. One pupil refers to engaging these issues as the ‘good’ part of peace. A 10th grade female pupil participating in the same focus group at the Liceo explained:

…the guerrillas were movements of farmers for farmers. But because no one paid attention to them [pauses] for example, [someone] ask[s] someone with three “fincas” (rural properties) to give one to people who didn’t have one. Because no one paid attention, they started to kidnap, kill. (Popayán, April 2016)
Her view of the causes of the emergence of the guerrillas as armed actors provides a deeper view of peace and violence. In her statement, there is an understanding of violence as a product of unequal distribution of property, hinting at a notion of peace as a matter of redistribution, even though she does not provide a definition of peace per se. This notion, also, implies what could be considered a view of peace as social justice, as it suggests that an equal ownership of things is necessary to build peace; however, it leaves out elements of equal rights and recognition, which scholars (North, 2006; O’Connor, 2001) suggest should be present when conceptualising a just society. Nevertheless, there is an awareness of exclusion, as she claims that “no one paid attention” to the farmers’ needs (Popayán, April 2016). This pupil’s intervention suggests an understanding of peace built on an equal distribution of things and acknowledgement of society members’ needs.

6.4. Peace and Violence: Two Sides of the Same Coin

In contrast, a 10th grade male student at the Liceo explained that “the root of violence is politics. Because those who can’t get power, form armed groups” (Popayán, April 2016). This example illustrates that for some pupils, the roots of the conflict are important when trying to make sense of what peace is. It also suggests that peace at the societal level relates to dealing with political conflict. Unlike the criticisms of narrow understandings of peace voiced by other participants, these interventions show little insight into structural issues that perpetuate inequalities and therefore structural violence. Another male student in the group said that conflict emerges from “the personal interests of individuals who want something very big and give that idea to other people who start dreaming about it and war begins” (Popayán, April 2016). He was suggesting that personal ambition is a cause of violence, which relates to other ideas of violence as a matter of disagreement or frustration about not being in power. These findings suggest idea of peace at the macro level that relates to the solution of political conflicts and dealing with individual ambition.

The previous discussion showed that in some cases, for pupils, the definition of peace derived from what they perceived to be its opposites: war or violence. Surprisingly, in other cases, pupils went so far as to claim that the possibility of peace exists only because its opposites (i.e. war, violence, conflict) exist. In these cases, peace was equated to ‘good’ whereas violence or war was linked to ‘evil’, and pupils argued that one cannot exist without the other. A 10th grade pupil from the Divino Maestro, for example, said:
…well, peace is everywhere, no, war is everywhere, and the duality, the contrary to peace is war, so if there is war, there has to be peace. There is war in the mountains, in neighbourhoods, in schools, there is war everywhere. But we know that there could be peace. Peace ends up being hope there will not be war anymore. (Bogotá, May 2016)

Similarly, while arguing about the existence of peace, a 9th grade student said “evil cannot exist without good, and good cannot exist without evil, just like women cannot exist without men and men without women. Everything complements each other” (Bogotá, May 2016). Another pupil from Colegio Ideas claimed, “I think there is a constant antagonism, the word peace exists because conflict exists. If not, there would not be peace because it would be constant, it has something that complements it” (Cali, June 2016). These quotes show that for some pupils peace and war/violence are complementary, and therefore exist only in relation with each other. An 11th grade pupil explained:

…peace is not about not having conflict, but the term peace only exists because there is a term called ‘conflict’. So what I think is that harmony is what exists[,] Conflict is chaos and it will always exist, because there is always movement, there is always change. So if peace requires that everything stays the same, always good, then peace doesn’t exist because that is impossible. But conflict does exist, therefore harmony exists which could be interpreted as several conflicts co-existing without hurting one another. (Cali, June 2016)

The thinking behind these quotes could be interpreted within the framework of imperfect peace. As illustrated in Chapter 2, Muñoz (2006) argues that a view of peace as positive can deny the existence of peace in contexts where violence is present, and distract the focus from expressions of peace by directing it towards violent actions. He also argues that an understanding of peace as positive creates a false ideal of a perfect state of peace. The quotes from the focus groups suggest that for pupils, a view of peace as imperfect works as a valid conceptualisation of peace. For a pupil, the mere existence of violence signifies the existence of peace, even if it is just the hope that war will end. For another pupil, peace can coexist harmoniously with conflict where people do not hurt each other. Peace can be present in the midst of war, violence and conflict.

Pupils in a grade 10 focus group at the Liceo agreed that there are many conceptions of peace. They saw this variety as important, because that way, “many people can feel good about it,” and people will not be excluded. Having one concept of peace carries a risk: “it would be very rare to find a concept that everyone feels they can identify with” (Popayán, April 2016). This reasoning around peaces is similar to the thinking of scholars (W Dietrich, 2006; W Dietrich & Sützl, 2006; Richmond, 2014) who suggested that the theory and
practice of peace might need to include different versions of peace, since conceptions vary across communities. Specifically, a male pupil said: “there is a coexistence of ideas. If we focus on one, there will be a solution for a part of the problem, but other problems will continue, but things can be done bit by bit” (Popayán, April 2016). He was suggesting that having many versions of peace means there will be many peaces, because as society solves one issue, others will emerge; but at least the first issue will be solved, creating opportunity to move on to the next.

6.5. Peace as Perfect

The idea of peace as a perfect state did come up in one focus group. A pupil from the Lola argued that “there will always be war, but from each war something new will be learned. Peace will be learned. If we are able to live that moment there will be an absolute peace. There will be no war” (Medellín, May 2016). This quote illustrates peace as an end result of a process of war from which human beings will be able to learn what peace is, and then relinquish the need for war. The pupil argued that conflicts that have existed for many years continue because we have not learned from our mistakes. Although this participant does defend an idea of peace as perfect and possible, he also sees is as the end product of a long process, where war is necessary in order to teach us what that perfect peace looks like.

6.6. Conclusion

As I illustrated with elite participants, context matters when defining what peace is. However, for students, the context that most influenced their notions of peace was the macro context. An explanation for this finding could be the fact that this study was conducted during the peace dialogues between the FARC and the Colombian government, which may have influenced pupils’ ideas about peace. This possibility would need further study.

What is worth highlighting is the fact that pupils view the macro context as somewhere where both violence and peace are present, and that that is their understanding of reality. Peace is not a “one or the other” situation, but a mixture of elements. For some, this understanding means that there is no problem with the fact that expressions of violence and peace can coexist in the same scenario. This connection could be an explanation as to why pupils’ understanding of peace is processual, and similar to imperfect peace, moving from negative peace to positive peace as presented in the continuum developed in Chapter 2. Pupils’ views have the potential of giving them an active role in the process of building
peace. Muñoz (2006) claims that this enablement is particularly important in the process of empowering human beings in order to build peace, as they will be able to see their efforts and will not be discouraged when violence is present.

For other pupils, the mere existence of violence excludes the existence of peace. As in models of liberal peace, for these students, issues like security and negative peace are basic preconditions for developing peace. Like the elite participants, some pupils also highlighted the importance of personal values and behaviours in order to build peace.

Some pupils, for example from the Liceo, seemed to contradict what the head teacher and teachers of their schools claimed to be teaching as peace, as I highlighted in section 6.3. At the same time, a pupil from the Colegio Ideas also argued that peace was harmony, which seemed to support the head teacher’s understanding. It is important not only to explore what teachers, head teachers, and pupils think ought to be taught as peace in theory, with what expected outcomes, but also to examining what is actually taught in the classroom.

Argyris and Schön (1974) differentiate between theory of action, theory of practice and theory-in-use. These concepts are useful to explain what I have explored so far, and how it connects to the subsequent chapter. A theory of action is an assumption people have about the steps that will deliver expected outcomes. A theory of practice refers to “a special case of theories of action that determine all deliberate behavior” (Argyris & Schön, 1974, p. 4), meaning that a theory of practice follows a logical sequence of actions that are expected to produce a specific outcome. Usually, theories of practice are easier to communicate; but theories-in-use are better understood through behaviours and actual classroom practice.

The difference between educators’ conceptualisations of peace and their pupils’ ideas speaks to Argyris and Schön’s (1974) suggestion that it is common for theories of practice and theories-in-use to be incongruent, such that there could be differences between what teachers and head teachers expect to accomplish and the actual outcomes. These findings call for further exploration as to what happens in the classroom. The next chapter delves more deeply into what teachers teach as peace, how they teach it, and what messages of peace can be inferred from their actual classroom practice.
7. The Medium and the Message

By analysing the implementation and interpretation the 1732 Educational Law in five schools in Colombia, I have so far explored a theory of practice (see Argyris & Schön, 1974): the ideas educators have about what peace is – shaped by individual biographies and beliefs in dialogue with context – and about how to develop it through education.

In this chapter, I examine theory-in-use, or the actual practice of teaching peace, which is where educators’ understandings of peace become clearer. Instead of focusing on things that are woven into the environment or part of the hidden curriculum of the school, which are hard to see, in this chapter I explore specific projects that educators across different schools are undertaking on early pregnancy and life-projects, which they say are about peace.

7.1. Professional Projection: A Path for Peace

Educators feed their own observations and perceptions about the needs of students, and about what occurs at the school, in the neighbourhood, and in families, into their peace education programmes. The process of defining a life-project was a pivotal topic for schools in the development of their peace education programmes. By ‘life-project’, schools referred mostly to the process of defining a path with a clear aim that would allow pupils to focus their efforts towards achieving it. Taking life-projects as a topic of peace education permits an analysis of how the same content is developed in different schools, and whether it can be drawn into different processes of peace.

7.1.1. Life-Projects in State Schools: Individual good choices to develop peace

In State schools, teachers saw facilitating the process of developing an individual life-project that responded to the flawed environments students came from – circumstances of deprivation, scarcity, and risk – as a main part of teaching peace. Teachers in the four state schools – Colegio Divino Maestro, Institución Educativa Presbítero Antonio José Bernal, Lola González, and the Liceo Alejandro de Humboldt – were actively teaching life-projects at the time of my study.

Amanda teaches language and literature at the Liceo, and introduces readings based on what she detects is a problem or risk:

For example drug-addiction, what are the effects on the brain of consuming cocaine, marihuana, alcohol … So they read everything, sometimes we have presentations,
discussions, ok? But it occurs as we learn about narrative, expository text, so, there! That’s where I introduce one of these things. (Popayán, April 2016)

Amanda’s curricular plan does not necessarily involve topics like drug-addiction; it is her choice to use what is mandatory as means to introduce topics into the curriculum that raise awareness about what she has identified as important issues in the context in which the school is embedded. Context and teachers’ perceptions of it influence the decisions they make about the topics they think are relevant to educating for peace. They seem to assume that discussing issues such as drug-addiction in a formal setting will raise sufficient awareness to transform students’ behaviours – a supposition which is also evident in the Divino Maestro. Students in Jose Alberto’s class had to make a poster that illustrated a phrase given by the teacher: “I, and only I, am the owner of my life” (Bogotá, May 2016). This activity was intended to raise awareness among students about their own autonomy, and their power to decide their own futures. The illustrations were diverse, but there was a motif that repeated in posters: of two paths, the “right” and the “wrong” path. In one of the posters, the right path led to school, had books, pencils, and was sunny. The wrong path was dark, led to prison and had syringes (representing drugs), bullets, and firearms. This representation shows that for some pupils, a life project is about choosing the right or the wrong path. Both of these classroom experiences show that the purpose of life project work is not to direct pupils’ attention to the macro-social structures which generate the conditions that limit their individual opportunities, but to emphasise the weight of making good choices is on their individual behaviours and decisions.

Adriana, an English teacher at the Liceo, explained that for her, language teaching is a means, not an end. The purpose of her class is not to produce bilingual students, but to use language education to support students’ individual development, including their professional trajectories – and a key piece of that development is life project work. During an observation of her class, pupils presented on their hopes, like travelling around the world, helping people, and making their families proud; their fears, which included parents dying, global warming, and war; and their future plans, for example, to study medicine, to become a congressman, or to become an architect (Popayán, April 2016). Adriana explained that classroom activities where pupils set goals help them make good decisions about their futures. She noted that the importance of raising awareness about opportunities is that it will steer pupils away from risks and towards changing their behaviours – encouraging them to study more, and avoid joining gangs or getting pregnant.
Another example comes from Patricia, an ethics and entrepreneurship teacher at the Antonio José Bernal. She explained: “I found that the vocational choice that I develop in ethics, now is an element for entrepreneurship because it involves revising all the economic factors of the social abilities involved in choosing a professional career” (Medellín, May 2016). This example illustrates that life-project work is mostly thought of in terms of professional or occupational trajectories, and helping students find what they want to do after they finish school. For example, in a grade 11 class where Patricia worked with a university student to develop a workshop as part of the student’s internship, I observed:

The intern… takes out some balls. The yellow one represents the ICFES, which opens the path to university or a scholarship. The intern explains that they must maintain eye-contact, remember who threw it at them and who they threw it to after … Both the teacher and the intern explain that they must throw it to everyone and they cannot repeat people … The intern says that they have established a path … and asks what will the other balls represent. She explains that they must be important moments. A student says, ‘to pass grade 11’, the intern says ok … There are no more suggestions. The intern says that it can represent a job, that maybe some of them might be interested in starting to work. The intern begins to throw the balls. She reminds them that they must follow the same order. They play for a while … When they finish, the intern says that it was a simple exercise. It was a random path that became fixed. (Medellín, May 2016)

A female pupil in a grade 10 focus group explained that in classes with Patricia, the teacher helps them “achieve everything we set our minds to. She has also helped us to free ourselves from the bad” (Medellín, May 2016). My observation, and the pupil’s quote, show how Patricia’s approach to life-project work relates to Adriana’s: it facilitates pupils’ visualisation of possibilities and choices for professional development, so they can avoid risks (e.g. gang violence). Like Adriana, this priority shows that Patricia’s concern is about guiding pupils towards making the safe individual choices.

The classroom experiences described so far had life projects as a learning unit embedded within key courses. However, for William, the teacher of the Peace Core Subject at the Lola, life-project work is the central element of his classes. This example is unique, as it is not the school’s aim to teach peace in terms of life projects, but an individual teacher’s priority for working with youth around Medellín. Throughout the years, William designed a

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21 Last year of school. Typically students between 17 and 18 years of age.
22 Common name for the country-wide exam every school graduate in Colombia needs to write in grade 11.
23 Typically pupils between 16 and 17 years of age.
project called “Mis Sueños y Recuerdos” (My Dreams and Memories). He decided to go from school to school with his programme. William claimed that the purposes of developing a life project were to change individual behaviours, to improve academic achievement and self-knowledge, and to open up possibilities for students to make different choices (Medellín, May 2016). Like the others, William’s aim was to raise awareness and transform individual behaviours and processes of decision-making, by undertaking activities such as those where pupils write a personal letter supported by their families. The students received their letters when they graduated in a special gathering, where the individual “demonstrates, opening the letter, what he promised, what he wrote and whether he is abiding by it” (William, Medellín, May 2016).

Pupils also participate collectively in creating a quilt, on which they draw where they see themselves after they finish school. This quilt is displayed publicly in the school so everyone sees the life-projects and dreams of pupils. Both the letter and the quilt aim at committing individuals to certain personal and professional paths, in order to change the behaviours that would otherwise hinder their futures. William says that this activity is accompanied by a blessing, where pupils march around their neighbourhoods where people “for whom peace is alien, see that the people they want to pluck [from schools] have dreams and life-projects” (Medellín, May 2016). The blessing refers to William’s ulterior motive of sending a message to gangs and criminals around the neighbourhoods who recruit young people in schools.

William’s purpose for “Mis Sueños y Recuerdos” seems twofold. One side is the individual aspect I mentioned before, of guiding pupils in making the best choices; the second involves the community, represented by families and neighbourhood. Involving the community suggests an interest in creating a web of support for pupils, or at least an interest in setting limits to the damage the community can do to pupils. Families participate in the writing of the letter to facilitate a conversation where pupils tell other family members what they want. Involving family may result in support, or perhaps in setting boundaries for the behaviours and attitudes of family members that get in the way of their children’s goals. In a similar way, the neighbourhood and gangs are made aware of pupils’ hopes and dreams in an attempt to awaken a concern for the success of pupils, or at least to send the message to stay away and let students achieve what they want. Although the main interest is still the individual, involving the community shows an interest in addressing larger societal elements.
which may hinder pupils’ futures. This approach may not transform the overall system or prove conducive to peacebuilding, but at least it aims at peacemaking by attempting to clear the way for pupils to be able to develop their life-projects as they struggle to navigate the system.

The classroom examples from the *Liceo, Antonio José Bernal, Divino Maestro* and the *Lola* illustrate some common ideas across the schools. First, the focus is on the individual, and the intention is to raise awareness about individual risks that hinder their futures – like drug-addiction and violence – with the hope of motivating individuals to identify interests, opportunities, and professional careers. This attitude towards peace education is geared towards processes of peacemaking. As I argued in Chapters 4 and 5, this approach shares with liberal peace the principle of emphasising the individual’s potential for reformation (Mac Ginty, 2010). The exploration of individual interests is also motivated by fears of the alternatives (i.e. violence, drugs, and pregnancy). Interests and goals are seen as possible solutions to problems. However, those problems are not framed within the macro sphere as the consequences of larger societal issues, but as individual obstacles which can be overcome by changing individual behaviours.

7.1.2. Life-Projects at the Colegio Ideas: Developing peace by exploring passion

By contrast, the *Colegio Ideas*, the private school, had a different narrative around life-projects. In this context, defining an individual life-project was not about evading risks and offering new possibilities and alternatives to violence, but about the pursuit of passion. The strategy is to offer a large variety of choices and opportunities for students to explore, in the end to choose what they are really passionate about. Jahuira, the head teacher, explained that one thing he values is that after pupils graduate, they choose many different disciplines to study at the university, which he sees as a result of the pedagogical project of the school that fosters passion (Cali, November 2015). Students expressed the need to do something in life that mattered to them. In a grade 9 focus group, a male student said, “here, they don’t expect us to be the same, and the things that we learn … we learn in a process driven by our own interest” (Cali, June 2016). The process of developing a life project is not simply part of a subject area, or even explicitly taught; it is part of the school’s ethos. The underlying assumption is that by providing several opportunities for pupils to explore their interests in a meaningful way, they will find their own paths and shape futures based on their passions.
The final activity of life-project work at the Colegio Ideas occurs when pupils in their final year present personal essays about what they want to study to the school. After researching a topic of their interest, pupils explain publicly why they chose to study that specific professional career and what they expect to be able to do once they have graduated from university. I observed four presentations: Vegetarian Food, Song-Writers, Dance as a Lifestyle, and Social Classes. Although the level of depth in the projects varied, there were some underlying themes. All the students presenting related their topics to what they wanted to study and become professionally. They also connected their personal interests with larger social issues they were concerned about, including, for example, how to feed people properly and in a sustainable way; how to transform society to eliminate the gaps between social classes; or how song-writing and dancing are expressions of sub-cultures that could use these channels to get their messages across. This linkages show some level of connection between the individual and macro structures – political, social, economical, as pupils are guided to think about how their own personal choices impact larger issues. This type of approach to life projects can be conducive to developing a process closer to peacebuilding, because it is proactive, and pupils are empowered to think about how their own personal choices are part of larger social dynamics. Pupils are expected to engage with an initial level of analysis of imbalances of power, as in projects like Song-Writers and Dance as a Lifestyle, where the students explored why certain creative expressions were developed by groups who have traditionally been marginalised.

One reason that this type of analysis happens in this school specifically, could be the fact that the Colegio Ideas is a private school for middle and upper-class families, which gives them the advantage of not having to deal with as many of the obstacles as the state schools do. The status of private school also gives the head teacher more freedom to interpret public policies. This freedom allows the school to educate for peace based on its own ethos, which attempts to create a new environment in Dewey’s (1966 [1916]) terms: as a miniature society where pupils can experience ideal communities. This ethos allows teachers in the private school to develop processes of peace education that use active pedagogical approaches where the learner is expected to build knowledge, as they did in their personal projects. These processes, in turn, seem to encourage students to develop some level of conscientização, generating awareness of some macro structures and the possibility of peacebuilding.
7.2. Teen Pregnancy: An obstacle for developing peace

Several people in the state schools where I conducted my research shared a concern with teen pregnancy – Jose Alberto from the *Divino Maestro*, John from the *Liceo*, and Luz Elena from the *Lola*. They justified focusing on the issue of early pregnancy as part of their peace education programmes by arguing that pregnancy tends to limit the opportunities of pupils, especially women, by keeping them from finishing school and/or pursuing university education, and therefore hindering their development as professionals. Early pregnancy can potentially tie women especially to menial jobs, in which social mobility is nearly impossible, and to relationships that in some cases are violent. In addition, the situation can becoming a cycle that will condemn their children to poverty and violence. This justification hints at a concern with addressing macro-social structures that produce inequalities. However, the next sections will show that the actual practice of peace education concerned with the question of teen pregnancy is limited to transforming individual behaviours and shaping processes of decision-making.

7.2.1. *Ecoimaginario*: An ecological view of peace

The project of “*ecoimaginario*” led by Luz Elena, the art teacher at the *Lola*, exemplifies how teachers’ perceptions of issues around teen pregnancy and personal beliefs inform the curriculum and lesson planning in the context of teaching for peace. Luz Elena explained in an interview that the overall purpose of *ecoimaginario* is to help students understand that the environment includes everyone and everything, and that actions, decisions, and attitudes have an effect in human ecology – which she defined as the interdependence between human beings and everything around them. Luz Elena described *ecoimaginario* as an octopus, a project that reaches out to apparently disconnected topics and issues, and “through art and new technologies tries to make visible the stereotypes, the imagined context” (Medellín, November 2015). She explained that these stereotypes, combined with human ecology, expand students’ understanding of their own roles in disturbing or maintaining the equilibrium. In her words:

So when my stereotype is biased towards, ‘I am very environmentalist when I pick up paper’ that stereotype is stretched when I realise that when I go to the store and buy certain things I’m helping the environment, or doing the contrary: devastating it. That it is all (sic) the actions that we take every day, the way we walk, the way we think, the way we obtain things, our order of things, our lives, the way we plan. (Medellín, November 2015)
The purpose of a project like ecoimangianario, then, is to raise awareness of individual behaviours and attitudes that hinder or nurture the environment. Through this process, students challenge their own understandings and enlarge their perceptions of their reality. A topic like teen pregnancy can be undertaken within this framework, especially as Luz Elena perceives it to be an issue harming the environment and harming pupils.

The trigger for the project was Luz Elena’s perception of an increase in pregnancies at the school. As part of ecoimaginario, Luz Elena and her students developed a project on this issue before I visited the school. The purpose was to make an “x-ray of teen pregnancy” (Luz Elena, Medellín, November 2015), involved students unveiling what caused teen pregnancy. Students searched newspapers, gathered data from other students, and shared their own experiences. The project allowed the teacher to discuss a current and relevant issue and raise awareness among her students, as well as the whole school, through a performance that aspired to sensitise the school community towards the situation.

So, I said: *I want to make an x-ray of teen pregnancy* … We knew that in that x-ray solitude is part of the experience, it is evident that girls who get pregnant during their teenage years, obviously without saying it is the truth, have a negative image of themselves. We found in that x-ray that there is a constant search for affection … We started talking about all that. (Medellín, November 2015)

The quote indicates that a major objective of the project was to generate concern within the group and the community about possible causes of teen pregnancy. Initially, these causes could be categorised as part of the individual sphere: circumstances shared by girls who get pregnant at a young age, which might include solitude and low self-esteem. However, the project acquired larger dimensions in discussions among teacher and pupils after the school performance. During the performance, young pregnant female students walked around the school to generate a reaction, and were insulted. Luz Elena explained:

So young pregnant female students took a risk and when they said ‘*teacher,[they told me I’m pregnant] because I’m a whore, because I’m a bitch*. And I said ‘Did anyone tell you: because you are being raped? Because your stepfather is abusing you? Because gangs are taking advantage of your need for affection?’ [Students said] ‘*no teacher*’. Because we discuss things about what is not named appropriately, about what is nameless. (Medellín, November 2015).

Luz Elena’s description shows how she leads self-discovery, and supports her students in the process of unveiling the school community’s discourse about teen pregnancy. In the discussion, the teacher led pupils to identify deeper societal issues as causes of early
pregnancy, by asking if anyone had heard comments from other members of the school community that acknowledged causes like sexual violence or abuse from the part of neighbourhood gangs. This example illustrates how within a school, students can be made aware of their own assumptions and question them, with the purpose of making transformations to their own thinking which may have larger implications for decisions they make in their future. In this exercise it is possible to infer an underlying message: early pregnancy relates to larger causes, such as gender violence, criminality, and inequality. In addition, the teacher discussed with her students that the Earth cannot support more human life. She said in her interview that she told her students, “never before have we asked if we should bring more children to this world. Perhaps Earth is telling us: hey! Stop! I cannot feed more people. Have you ever asked yourselves that?” (Medellín, November 2015).

This project clearly aspires to connect the individual, micro-social sphere to the macro-social sphere, which is part of the teacher’s purpose in including the topic of teen pregnancy in a larger peace education programme that understands peace as the equilibrium among living things and the environment around them. In this example, the topic of teen pregnancy as a part of the development of an individual life-project, where young women identify the things that put them at risk of getting pregnant and therefore derail their own aspirations of changing their circumstances, connects with underlying structures that perpetuate the issue of early pregnancy – e.g. gender violence. The topic has a larger purpose of creating a balance among human beings and the planet in order to develop peace at the macro level.

The teacher’s intention of questioning the discourses people in the school community hold about the issue of teen pregnancy, and of thereby connecting the individual to the macro, is akin to Haavelsrud’s (2013) understanding of transcending structures. This transcendence involves addressing contradictions that manifest at the local level and require overall structural transformation. It suggests a peacebuilding project, given that peacebuilding is a process that includes the transformation of relationships, discourses, and interests in order to transcend violence (Miall, 2004). This project also includes gaining some level of conscientização, which involves critically looking at oneself, one’s communities and society at large (Blackburn, 2000; Freire, 1996 [1970]), which Luz Elena does by guiding her pupils to be aware of the context of violence that surrounds them. According to Freire (2005 [1974]), being consciously aware has the potential of providing choice, where a lack of
conscientização leaves one with no choice but to follow the masses. Specifically, Luz Elena intended to develop such conscious awareness around the issue of teen pregnancy so young women could feel able to choose differently.

This teacher’s pedagogical method for raising awareness is project-based learning, which aims at developing deep understanding through a learning-by-doing approach. It is underpinned by a constructivist principle, where pupils are encouraged to construct understanding by working on meaningful problems in the same way real professionals do. In this approach, pupils engage with “investigative questions, propose hypotheses and explanations, discuss their ideas, challenge the ideas of others, and try out new ideas” (Krajcik & Blumenfeld, 2006, p. 318). The theory of project-based learning contends that pupils should be expected to solve a feasible problem in the process of developing their project, where the “driving question encompasses worthwhile context that is meaningful and anchored in a real-world situation” (Krajcik & Blumenfeld, 2006, p. 321). In ecoimaginario, pupils are not expected to solve a problem, but the teacher sets out a research task where pupils are invited to delve into an issue that is significant, as they themselves are pregnant or see pregnant young women within their school community.

The pedagogical approach of project-based learning has elements geared towards peacemaking, including active learning, where pupils shape their own learning; and cooperative learning, where individuals learn to negotiate and appreciate other people’s perspectives, creating horizontal relationship between the teacher and pupils (see Prince, 2004). Although it seems that it was Luz Elena’s initial question that motivated her students to look at the topic in-depth, clearly the students drive their own learning by researching the topic of teen pregnancy on their own. The performative aspect of the project, where the teacher facilitates spaces for female pregnant pupils to participate voluntarily and individually in parading around the school, creates the possibility of empowerment at the individual level in being voluntary.

24 The element of choice in Luz Elena’s classes was made evident in eight classroom observations in grades 7 and 10 (Medellín, May 2016), of activities led by the teacher where pupils were expected to perform songs about environmental responsibility. In most of these classroom activities, I heard the teacher say that participation in class was obligatory, but participation in public was voluntary.
However, the impact the project had on pupils differed from the teacher’s initial intention. Some pupils agreed that the project impacted them at the individual level, as students were called to identify their personal issues, so they could take action personally. For example, in a grade 10 focus group at the Lola, a female student said that the teacher helped them understand the consequences of their actions, and that was why that school year there were not as many pregnant female students – she noted there were “only” two, which was significantly “lower” than in previous years (Medellín, May 2016). Pupils pointed out that the project did make them aware of the negative consequences of getting pregnant at a young age, and that they felt they had the power to prevent it from happening, “like use protection or contraceptives”, as well as understanding that “if we want to be mothers … that we [should] reach our goals first, our objectives, become professionals,” because “if the mother is not educated she cannot educate him [her child]. So that becomes a chain of destruction” (3 pupils from the Grade 10 Focus group, Medellín, May 2016). Despite their reflecting on some links between individual behaviours and perpetuating inequalities – e.g. cycles of poverty – the impact of the project on pupils was mostly in creating awareness about individual actions. It fell short of the teacher’s intention of developing critical consciousness and establishing connections to structural and cultural violence.

A female student participating in a focus group of pupils who were not part of the project of *ecoimaginario* illustrated the view of spectators. Her understanding of the project on teen pregnancy contrasted sharply with the teacher’s intended message. She explained that she thought the project was meant to create awareness of how young couples in love get pregnant and usually the father abandons his responsibility, leaving the mother desperate. She characterised the project as the teacher’s criticism of these couples who find themselves in this situation without understanding the real consequences (Medellín, May 2016). For this pupil, the project only denounced a problem they often see, and perhaps served to shame young women and men who were expecting a baby.

Pupil perceptions, then, contrast with the teacher’s aim of peacebuilding through developing *conscientização* and raising awareness about structures of gender inequality and phenomena of gender violence. Ultimately, in the eyes of pupils, the project is one of peacekeeping and peacemaking; at the most, its impact is at the individual level, and
emphasises self-regulation and concern for individual behaviours as a means to avoid early pregnancy.

In fact, this project might also have had unintended consequences that exercise violence against individual pupils, which some scholars of peace education (Bajaj, 2008; Harber & Sakade, 2009; Johnson & Johnson, 2005a) identify as an intrinsic risk of peace education. The teacher explained that pregnant female students who volunteered to parade around the school heard insults and negative judgments from their peers. In class, they discussed the issue of early pregnancy as a matter relating to macro-social structures of gender violence and poverty, which led pupils to share personal information about violence against them — but no specific support was offered to help them change their circumstances. This potential consequence raises the question of how much an activity like making can “x-ray of teen pregnancy” might harm individual pupils and reinforce gender violence.

7.2.2. Si yo me quiero, yo me espero: Good decision-making to develop peace

In the Liceo Alejandro de Humboldt, the topic of pregnancy falls under the umbrella of the programme of “Educación Sexual y Construcción de Cidadanía” (Sexual Education and Citizenry Construction). The process of educating for peace in this school includes the topic of sexual development. As I have shown, this Liceo’s population has had a big influx of internally displaced young people. According to John, the head teacher, these students are deeply hurt and hopeless, and therefore in need of an escape, which can take the form of drugs, crime and sex. John explained that the main concern in relation to sexual education was decision-making. He explained: “first, informed decisions, for that we have a formative process to provide enough and necessary information with the appropriate methodology. Secondly, autonomous decisions” (Popayán, November 2015). John emphasised imparting knowledge as a starting point in a process of good decision-making, enabling students to make better decisions “based on myself [meaning that pupils should make decisions of their own]”, since “[pupils] are not favoured by their environments … not their familial environment, not their social environment, not even this one [the school] at times” (Popayán, November 2015). Teen pregnancy, he suggest, often happens because “if you got pregnant, then I’ll do the same” (Popayán, November 2015). Pregnancy was attributed to a lack of autonomy and information, rather than access to proper contraceptive methods or in connection to larger societal structures. In John’s understanding of how to develop autonomy in the context of sexual education, the foundation was principles:
We don’t base ourselves on a condom nor on methods of contraception or things like that, but on a decision that a person takes based on something: ‘If this is your lifestyle, well, you will delay it, wait, you will be giving yourself the dignity. Give yourself the time, the moment … make the decision when you think you are acting under that moment (sic): informed, autonomously, and under principles’. (Popayán, November 2015)

This quote reveals important assumptions the head teacher and other educators in the school have about young people and their attitudes towards relationships and sex. First, the teachers understand sex was a matter of decision-making which, depending on the timing, may be a good or a bad decision. A good decision is made when pupils make it on the basis of information, and specifically with an awareness about sex and pregnancy. Second, the teachers assume that by making pupils aware of the fact that they must wait, and providing them with basic information about pregnancy, pupils will be empowered to be autonomous in their decisions and not succumb to peer pressure, or pressure from their contexts – i.e. from family and their neighbourhoods – and the normalisation of early pregnancy in those circles. Finally, the teachers expect that awareness and empowerment are best developed through principles like “Si yo me quiero, yo me espero” (If I love myself, I wait), which become mantras that students should live by and should adopt into their lifestyles.

These assumptions suggest that at the organisational level, there is some understanding of the connection between the phenomenon of teen pregnancy and larger cultural elements, like the normalisation of teen pregnancy, which limit pupils’ potential. However, the programme is entirely devoted to changing individual behaviours and shaping their processes of decision-making based on a principle that deems any other piece of sexual education (such as contraception) unnecessary – a priority which could relate to the head teacher’s religious background, described in Chapter 5. Any further analysis of the inequalities that may lead to young women of that particular social group getting pregnant is missing. Eliminating these other factors results in an approach designed to teach pupils not to act, and to delay their sexual awakenings for when they are in “the right moment” and can avoid risks. This school clearly gave prominence to individual awareness, and focussed mainly on helping pupils understand that the ages at which they were having sex were not appropriate and that they should wait, because there would be negative consequences. This approach marked a narrow approach to peace education.

One male student described how they were taught about sexual health by recounting the visit of a guest to the school:
Well, she came to give us a talk about sex education … and instead of giving us solutions, she told us that everything was bad, that everything was going to kill us. So, when I wanted to intervene, the lady said ‘no, no, no, that is how you want to take it [the information]. Sit down.’ And she didn’t let me speak anymore. Then [continuing to quote the woman] ‘what I’m explaining is how it is because I am explaining what the people of the UN told me.’ And whatever. (Popayán, April 2016)

The student’s observation shows that at the Liceo, adults are expected to provide students with information – for example, about the consequences of decisions about sex – in order to promote abstinence or at least delay sexual initiation. Abstinence and delay are seen as matters of autonomy, self-control, and ethical existence, and pupils are being guided to live in a principled way.

The Liceo’s project has a more modest goal than that of ecoimaginario. As I showed in Chapter 2, an approach that contributes to peacekeeping and reinforcing structures attempts to shape individual behaviours, raising awareness about self-regulation and individual responsibilities. The pedagogical approach at this school relies on telling pupils information or reciting mottos aimed at demonstrating ideals by which people need to lead their lives. The topic of teen pregnancy is regarded as an individual problem, rather than part of larger societal issues, and there is a disconnection with the macro sphere. All decisions as to what should be learned about teen pregnancy, and about how to learn it, are made by adults, making the pedagogical relationship a vertical one. A vertical teacher-student relationship occurs when the teacher is the expert in the topic and “deposits” knowledge in pupils’ heads, a form of “banking” education (see Freire, 1996 [1970]). The hierarchy of the teacher-pupil relationship was especially evident in the pupil’s recollection of the informational talk they had at the school, where a one-way communication was established. In general, the Liceo’s approach to teen pregnancy evidences a narrow purpose for their peace education programme, which tends towards a project of peacekeeping.

7.2.3. Learning from Stories to Develop Peace

Jose Alberto, an ethics teacher at Divino Maestro, uses case studies and class discussions as pedagogical strategies to build peace by establishing meaningful dialogues around issues he identifies as important to address, including teen pregnancy. He explained that the case-study methodology begins with a story or case that students are asked to analyse by identifying a familiar situation, and the values that are at play, and by making a decision about how they would act if they were in the same position (Bogotá, November 2015).
A female pupil in a grade 9 focus group described a case discussed in class. It was about Maria Paula, a young woman who had a boyfriend who “only wanted her for one thing [sex], and she got pregnant”. She was poor, had a “brother with special needs”, and her mother was “a single mother” (Bogotá, May 2016). When Maria Paula confronted the boyfriend, he said that the baby was not his, and it was not his responsibility. Pupils had to discuss whether Maria Paula should abort or not. Another female pupil in the same focus group explained that cases like this teach them that they are too young to take on that responsibility. That we can’t tell the baby to hold until tomorrow because I don’t have money to buy a nappy. No, because we have to be responsible for that baby, even if we are young. (Bogotá, May 2016)

Another female pupil explained that this case made them reflect on whether they would be able to “live with the guilt” of abortion, as it violates the right to live, or if they would have the baby to feel happy and proud of “sacarlo adelante”25 (pulling him through), since a mother who is able to take care of her children on her own is a tough mother (Bogotá, May 2016).

Narratives and stories are useful in moral education, since they can describe reality, and thus provide a feeling of genuineness to the reader (Vitz, 1990). The value of stories for pupils was clear in every focus group conducted at the Divino Maestro, where pupils mentioned that the use of cases – stories – is important to understanding and thinking about their own circumstances. The use of cases is a constructivist pedagogical approach, which has the advantage of drawing out assumptions to be examined through effective class discussion, led by the teacher, where learners are forced to evaluate and defend viewpoints in the context of a group. This approach allows pupils to build new knowledge by ridding themselves of misconceptions which, left unchallenged, would otherwise block the development of knowledge (Merseth, 1997). Case studies also have the potential to raise student awareness about the ethical implications of their decisions and prepare them for situations they might encounter (E. Campbell, 1997). However, there are concerns with this approach, as it risks developing ethical relativism (E. Campbell, 1997); and I argue that there is also the potential

25 This expression is very common in Colombia, and encompasses many aspects of the responsibility parents have to provide education and guidance, to develop the child into a good person, and to strive for a child’s successful future.
of reinforcing traditional values that may harm pupils in the long run if preconceptions are left unchallenged.

The example of the grade 9 focus group reveals the risk of leaving preconceptions unchallenged. It shows that a partial examination of cases can reinforce social structures, for example by promoting traditional understandings of the role of women in ways that may exacerbate gender disparity when these preconceptions are not fully examined. Larger factors in cultural violence, like *machismo*, which perpetuate a culture of men abandoning women and women looking after children alone, are not weighed up by these pupils. The question in their minds seems to focus on the woman’s actions, rather than on cultural beliefs about men and women. This difficulty emerges in the fact that the case describes the man as “only want[ing] her for one thing”, and as ridding himself of the responsibility by saying the baby was not his, both of which premises were left unchallenged such that the students’ focus was entirely on what the woman should do. And this focus implied that she was the one to blame – highlighting the importance of pedagogy in the creation of the message of peace.

Jose Alberto’s theory of practice is that using case studies in class involves using real situations to assist students in identifying the dilemma, in developing moral reasoning, in justifying decisions with ethical arguments, and in imagining alternatives that would enable the characters in the story to transform their lives (Bogotá, November 2015). In this sense, case studies raise each student’s awareness of their own moral compass, and empower them to make adjustments at the individual level in order to act ethically. However, as I was able to observe, pupils received a different message than the one intended by the teacher – a message that not only emphasised individual behaviour, and therefore had a peacekeeping tendency, but also reinforced preconceived ideas, in this case about gender inequality.

The disparity between the teacher’s theory of practice and the outcome can be explained by a theory-in-use perspective. The following is an observation from a grade 9 class on the topic of teen pregnancy:

Pupils had taken 15 minutes to get ready. Pupils read the case (15 minutes). The teacher begins by introducing the topic: relationships of love. He starts probing for pupils’ thinking. The teacher asks: ‘*hey, and why do we learn about love so young? Before, it wasn’t allowed to have a partner being so immature. But today, many are in a couple. Have you seen pregnant girls?*’ Pupils answer that they have. The teacher then asks why they do it. Pupils answer: ‘*Because they like it*’ and ‘*for pleasure*’. The teacher then asks: ‘*How much do nappies cost? Do the maths. How much is formula*
milk? Wipes?’ He continues listing other necessary implements for babies. ‘So, do you want to have a baby?’ A male pupil replies: “no”.

The teacher continued by explaining that the class would discuss sexual relationships.

The teacher explains: ‘When there are sexual relationships, there is a commitment … there are different [ethical] values. There’s a 50% chance of getting pregnant, the pregnancy is not just hers. There is the responsibility to take care of her or him [meaning the future parents]. Let’s discuss life as a couple. Hey, is it normal for mother and father to stay together?’ Several students answer: ‘no’. One pupil says: ‘what is normal is for the mother to take on the responsibility’. The teacher asks: ‘If the salary needs to be divided, is that good for the country?’ Several pupils answer: ‘no’. The teacher changes the subject and asks students to continue working on their own. (Bogotá, May 2016)

This class observation suggests that the teacher was attempting to address issues of gender inequality by saying that pregnancy is both the woman’s and the man’s responsibility. He also tried to establish a connection with the macro-social structure by asking if dividing the salary – for example is a man has two families to support – is good for the country. However, discussion stopped after pupils answered “no” to the question, leaving it unknown how pupils are making that connection, and at what level of depth. Although this teacher believed that meaningful discussion based on stories can impact pupils’ development of moral reasoning, in most of the observations, discussion was mostly one-sided, where the teacher has the final answer and is the expert. The teacher seems to expect pupils to feed back to him what he wants to hear. This attitude suggests a model of “banking” education, which would be more conducive to processes of peacekeeping and negative peace.

Nevertheless, data from focus groups show that pupils feel that they are actively contributing to class discussion and being critical. For example, if a male student from a grade 10 focus group at the Divino Maestro said: “everyone can contribute to the class, everyone can contribute critically, the classes are dynamic, because everyone can participate and contribute with what they think” (Bogotá, May 2016). The pedagogical approach is valued because pupils believe that they can share and contrast their answers, which they feel is important in developing relationships amongst themselves:

In the other classes of ethics they only gave us the worksheets and we almost never talked to each other. But in this class, we share the point of view each student has of the case, because not everyone sees it in the same way. And everyone speaks to each other, we relate with each other. (Bogotá, May 2016)
For pupils, the teacher’s demeanour in class is important, because they feel that they do not have other spaces where they can discuss topics like pregnancy or sex in depth and safely. For example, a female pupil participating in a grade 11 focus group said: “we don’t have the freedom to discuss those topics with our families” (Bogotá, May 2016). Another female pupil in the same focus group explained that sometimes they do not trust parents enough to have conversations around issues like pregnancy. She said: “parents cannot ask: ‘tell me what happened’, because if you don’t talk to your parents about specific topics like pregnancy, you cannot tell your parents, ‘dad, I’m pregnant’, because for them it would be a catastrophe” (Bogotá, May 2016). Whereas in class, “we are young people, we are classmates, it is easier for us to talk about sex, but not with parents” (Bogotá, May 2016) – and that freedom is possible because “the teacher makes it easier to trust and discuss the topic freely. Because the teacher creates that environment of trust” (Bogotá, May 2016). Pupils explained that: “the teacher presents things the way they are, talks without mincing his words. Other teachers don’t do it because there is a difference between teachers who like their profession and those who do it for money or out of need” (Bogotá, May 2016). The teacher’s attitude towards discussing topics which are important for students proves crucial.

From the pupils’ perspective, the teacher’s attitudes and pedagogy foster participation and discussion, which they find stimulating and important. Pupils reactions suggest that this approach may be conducive to peacemaking, as it makes them aware of opportunities, teaches them how to navigate their own circumstances, and raises awareness about their contextual conditions through a participatory approach. In this particular classroom practice, pedagogy seems to have a great impact on pupils, and they highlight the teacher’s attitudes and opportunities to participate in class. From the students’ perspective, then, the teacher creates a horizontal relationship, which they find more beneficial for learning. Nevertheless, my observations showed that there is potential for reinforcing structures of inequality if cases cannot be fully explored, which is a significant risk for peace education efforts.

Once again, the example of the Divino Maestro illustrates the complexity of teaching for peace, but more importantly, shows how different core elements – i.e. content, teacher attitudes, and pedagogy – are vital for the construction of the message of peace. It also highlights contradictions between the teacher’s intentions and the actual practice in the classroom. Nevertheless, pupils have positive perceptions – perhaps because, as they described, in previous learning experiences they were expected to stay quiet and fill
worksheets. Still, the pedagogy and teacher attitudes fall into a pattern that has started to emerge: a tendency to focus on impacting individual behaviours, which can potentially support efforts of peacekeeping and peacemaking.

7.3. Conclusion: Developing Peace by Learning to Navigate the System

The classroom examples in this chapter show that the practice of peace education can look significantly different from classroom to classroom, and that different messages of peace are being delivered, even when the same topics are being taught. This finding agrees with Wringe’s (2012 [1984]) assertion that what can be characterised as the same content indisputably varies from context to context. The examples demonstrate that generally the intended message is interpreted quite differently by pupils, reinforcing the claim that there is discontinuity between purpose and practice (see Argyris & Schön, 1974).

The examples from the state schools show that they respond to the challenges of the contexts they serve by including topics like life projects as part of their peace education efforts, hoping to equip pupils to navigate the obstacles they encounter (i.e. drugs and violence). The central assumption is that by visualising, pupils will make better choices. A second assumption is that by raising awareness about the risks of drugs, for example, pupils will stay away from them, and also make better choices because of that avoidance. Educators proved more prone to equip their pupils with the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate the system and avoid the obstacles that limit their opportunities. With this approach to peace education, pupils are not made aware of the connections between their micro sphere’s issues of gang violence, or drug-use or micro-trafficking, and the macro context of structural and cultural violence.

In contrast, the private school’s purpose was not focussed on teaching pupils to avoid the same obstacles as the state schools. At the Colegio Ideas, educators provided students with a map of possibilities which, unlike pupils at the state schools, are within their grasp. At this school, navigating the system involved taking advantage of opportunities which the system has created for the privileged population the school caters for. The private school also focuses on the individual’s development, for example by exploring passions, which would explain why alumni go on to study a large range of professional careers. Although this school shows some efforts towards peacebuilding, the focus on navigating the system clearly leaves questions around the ingrained inequalities that perpetuate violence untouched.
In general, in none of the case-study schools is knowledge contextualised or problematised through the careful facilitation of dialogue, which is central to an education for social justice (Bates, 2007; Hytten & Bettez, 2011) – such that positive peace and peacebuilding prove elusive.

These projects clearly illustrate that pedagogical practices matter, even more than content (Cremin & Bevington, 2017). The practices used in the case-study schools, which in general establish horizontal relationships and foster participation in the process of learning, seem to have more impact in raising pupils’ awareness about their own behaviours. This type of approach to peace education practice supports Chaux’ (2007) claim that pupils benefit from practicing and being challenged in a safe environment, where they can develop skills and acquire knowledge. However, this type of pedagogy would most likely involve processes of peacemaking, since the social context is mostly used in the form of cautionary tales – as in the use of case studies for teen pregnancy – or as information to be considered when pupils design their life projects. Rarely the context is used as a matter to be reflected upon in order to discover the larger systems that generate the circumstances in which pupils live.

Classroom practice also reveals how education in general has the potential of reinforcing negative aspects of societal structures which perpetuate violence and inequalities, even, paradoxically, in programmes that aim at peace. Some radical views of peace education highlight this issue, understanding it “as an apparatus that reproduces social control by the dominant class” (Bajaj, 2008, p. 135), and therefore part of a system designed to maintain inequalities (Harber & Sakade, 2009; Johnson & Johnson, 2005a). This potential risk represents another challenge to educators seeking social justice and peacemaking, and highlights the importance of fostering a critical consciousness that prepares students to be analytical and critical of themselves and their contexts, thereby entering a “dialectical relationship with their social reality” (Freire, 2005 [1974], p. 30).

In general, the classroom experiences show, once again, that social context shapes peace education in schools. However, this chapter has demonstrated that there is little engagement with that context at the classroom level.

In the next chapter I analyse the relationship between schools and families. The reasoning behind it is because the Law, educators and pupils alike all mention families as both educators of peace and obstacles for the development of peace. As I mentioned in
Chapter 4, one of the Liceo’s strategies involved Parents School; and when I presented the legal framework for peace education in Chapter 1, I explained that the 1620 Educational Law declares that schools and families are partners in children’s education for peace. And yet, as section 7.2.3. showed, some pupils do not consider their familial contexts ideal for discussing topics they find important. Therefore, Chapter 8 explores in depth the relationship between parents and schools in the context of peace education.
8. School-Family Relationships

Across the empirical chapters of this thesis, it has become evident that social context shapes peace education programmes in schools. In the previous chapters, I discussed how schools attempt to ameliorate the effects of their contexts, for example by including topics like early pregnancy and life projects, by encouraging students to develop strategies to navigate the system; and I explained that educators attempt to foster loving relationships with their pupils, to ease the effects of what they perceive as dysfunctional or violent families. This chapter looks specifically at school-family relationships as a key element in the process of teaching peace. I will examine how the legal framework for peace education – e.g. the Colombian Constitution, the 115th General Law of Education, the 1620 Educational Law, and the 1732 Educational Law – and educators, pupils, and parents, imagine school-family relationships in the context of teaching for peace.

I will argue that educators in general establish a vertical relationship with parents, and give themselves the role of educating parents. They do so, first, because they find parents wanting in their parenting skills; and second, because children and youth are exposed to “pedagogies” that can be contradictory, and come from different contexts – e.g. school, home, church, media, and neighbourhood – (Cajiao, 1999), requiring educators to address the multiple messages pupils get. Educators are especially concerned with mediating messages coming from family, which they understand to be particularly influential.

8.1. Whose Responsibility is it to Teach Peace?

All nine parents who participated in the study, pupils and educators alike attributed families with the main role in cultivating peace. According to parents, this responsibility derives from understandings of peace in terms of personal tranquillity, and coexistence – i.e. a state in which individuals know how to relate with others in a peaceful manner – and requires instilling values and teaching specific behaviours conducive to peace. For most parents, pupils, and educators, the responsibility of teaching peace falls first on parents and families, and secondly on the schools. For some parents, this responsibility should not fall to schools at all, and should remain solely with parents.

Rosa, a mother with one of her children and a grandchild at the Liceo Alejandro de Humboldt, said: “peace starts at home” (Popayán, April 2016). Similarly, Luz, a mother of a
grade 11 pupil at the *Divino Maestro*, asserted that: ‘In the end, we can’t expect for some things to be taught by the school, because they belong to family values” (Bogotá, April 2016), implying that there are certain values that can only be nurtured by families, and that are not the teachers’ job to teach. For Aida, a mother at the *Lola González*:

I believe that peace starts at home. I have always said that. With values that we nurture in our children, also teaching them to be tolerant, because I think that if we are not tolerant, then, we will not have peace. We send [children] to school to educate them, to prepare them to be professionals, but I think that education as such, happens at home. Because many parents think that happens at school, but no, at school they come to learn maths, language, they also learn values, but values should be nurtured at home, to teach them to live in society. (Medellín, May 2016)

She continued to explain that the main values families ought to teach their children are honesty and respect. For this mother, the school plays a smaller role than that of parents in instilling the values that prepare pupils to develop peace. Another view of the inappropriateness of schools as peace educators was expressed by Sandra (Bogotá, April 2016), a mother at the *Divino Maestro*. She explained that the school actually practises violence, leaving families with the responsibility of reversing the damage done at school and instilling in children the values and behaviours necessary to make peace. Sandra noted that some teachers create a hostile environment by “bullying” individual pupils, who in return become bitter and aggressive towards their peers, as they cannot return their anger towards the teachers. The mother described teacher hostility and bullying in terms of being unfair with grades, withholding recognition of students’ work and individuality, making negative judgements about individual pupils, and not providing proper academic and emotional support. She suggested the damage can be significant, as children spend a large amount of their time in school. Although this view was not shared by other parents to whom I spoke in that school or any other schools, it stands out as the experience of a particular family that shapes their understanding of whose responsibility it is to teach peace. It also acknowledges the potential role of schools in the developmental process of pupils as good people, but critiques it according to Sandra’s experience of the actual pedagogical practice of some individual teachers: pedagogy that hinders peace.

26 Last year of school.
Pupils in all eighteen focus groups agreed that families had a major role in preparing them for peace. For example, a female student (Bogotá, April 2016) in grade 9 at the Divino Maestro suggested that what she learns at home has more relevance in her life than what she learns at school. At home, she explained, they *show* her what she needs to do and be, whereas at school they *tell* her about values like respect, tolerance, and so on. A female pupil participating in the grade 11 focus group at the same school also explained that peace is part of culture, and “culture is born at home, so if they teach you to be tolerant when you get to school you know how to behave. The school doesn’t educate you, it reinforces what you have been taught at home” (Bogotá, April 2016).

As these respondents suggest, both pupils and parents either assign schools a secondary role in preparing pupils for peace, or none at all. When schools are the secondary peace educator, the job of teachers and school leaders job is to support the efforts of families. And the medium families use, of *showing*, is regarded as better than the one at school: *telling*. This intervention adds a new dimension to my argument about the medium and the message, discussed in Chapter 7. According to pupils, the educator who embodies the knowledge or skill that is being transmitted is more effective in sending the message, whereas educators who only speak about such knowledge or skill do not have the same impact.

Notwithstanding this general consensus on the family being the main peace educator, there are three reasons given by participants that force a shift of responsibility for preparing pupils for peace from families to schools: the absence of parents or carers; violence; and dysfunctionality in families. These situations place families in the supporting role of educating for peace.

The explanations for why parents are absent vary. Some parents explain that they are not absent, since they believe they are taking part in their children’s lives, but that they have raised their children to be independent. The parents (Bogotá, April 2016) of a grade 10 male pupil, and the mother (Bogotá, April 2016) of two female pupils in the same grade at the Divino Maestro, emphasised that they have taught their children that school is “their job”, and that they have to answer for that responsibility. This understanding makes them less involved in school activities, but not in their children’s education.

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27 Typically pupils between the ages of 15 and 16.
However, teachers, head teachers, and even other parents, see a lack of participation in school activities as indicative of parents’ disinterest in their children’s academic and emotional development. Olga (Popayán, April 2016), a mother at the Liceo, said that: “there are parents for whom it is the same. Just like the head teacher says: … we have children of parents, orphaned, alive. They don’t come to meetings, or anything they have for us.” This parent was paraphrasing John, the head teacher of the Liceo, who explained that at the school they speak of the “orphan children of living parents” (John, Popayán, November 2015) – meaning that they have identified pupils at the school whose parents are alive but do not attend any meetings or activities led by the school to support families and the development of pupils. For Luz, a mother at the Divino Maestro, there is a real issue with parents’ commitment to their children’s education. She claimed that getting parents to attend school meetings takes convincing, and that it is hard work, as many prefer “having a beer the night before” (Bogotá, April 2016). This statement implies that parents prioritise other leisure activities over their children’s education. Another explanation for the lack of parents’ interest is that the “parents of these young people, many of them have little interest in the students’ progress because they think that they send the boy to school and we take care of him” (Erika, Medellín, May 2016). For these participants, absent parents have made the choice not to participate in their children’s education because they do not care enough. Although the problem of parent attendance and involvement is an issue for every school, it is important here because educators and parents identify parents’ absence as one main reason that schools have to take on the work of being primary peace educators.

Maria Cecilia, Marina, and Adriana, the psychologist and two teachers of the Liceo, explained that many parents at the school live off the rebusque, which means that their primary economic activity is informal labour. Every hour they do not work affects their weekly income, which makes it impossible for such families to attend meetings. Hernán (Medellín, November 2015), the head teacher of the Antonio José Bernal, explained that besides the lack of stable work, in other cases what prevents parents from being involved is that they are in jail or running from the police. While some teachers and school leaders understood that parents’ absence from meetings was sometimes justified, it still compelled them to assume the work of preparing pupils for peace. A grade 11 male student at the Antonio José Bernal said that he has “made himself on his own”, because his parents and his siblings have not been present. He is “free, from the streets” (Medellín, May 2016). In his
case, the student claimed that what he learns at school is very important, as it supports his
development in a way in which his family cannot do so.

The second reason participants gave to explain why the school becomes primarily
responsible for educating children for peace was violence. Participants referred to two
sources of violence: domestic violence and contextual violence (i.e. in the school,
neighbourhood, city, country). A female pupil at the Lola in a grade 11 focus group
(Medellín, May 2016) characterised domestic violence as a chain, where adults who mistreat
children and young people produce future abusive men and women, creating a cycle of
violence that is hard to stop. Rosa (Popayán, April 2016), a mother at the Liceo, asserted that
school is necessary to overcome the violence some pupils suffer at home. Pupils at the
different state schools highlighted the importance of the models of behaviour they get or do
not get at home. Like pupils who asserted that families are their main peace educators, this
group of pupils emphasised that abusive behaviours are easy to learn because parents, step-
parents, or other adults at home show them these behaviours, even though they might say
something different. Pupils agree that whatever behaviour is modelled at home has a larger
impact in shaping the type of person they become than the school.

Formal peace education in schools is seen as a necessary response to the violence to
which pupils are constantly exposed. Sandra, the mother of three students at the Divino
Maestro who critiqued teachers’ violent attitudes towards students, explained:

… to discuss more about tolerance amongst the students. Because what they see on
the streets, I mean, we all see intolerance in Transmilenios every day, intolerance on
the streets, at home, so we are burdened with things all around and contaminated with
all that violence. And we spread it to them and they spread it to their friends, and it
becomes difficult to manage all that anger and all that, I don’t know, all that violence.
(Bogotá, April 2016)

In this mother’s perspective, the violence that children and youth are permanently
surrounded by summons the school to take action, to teach tolerance and to provide tools for
managing the anger that stems from the students’ social context. Hernán (Medellín,
November 2015), the head teacher at the Antonio José Bernal, actually claimed that the
school’s mission of teaching for peace stems from the violence that surrounds the school. This
assertion reinforces the idea that peace education is a response to contexts in which the

28 A system of public transport in Bogotá.
schools are embedded, and explains why, for participants, peace should be a concern for schools to tackle.

Lastly, in interviews with teachers, school leaders and parents from the state schools, participants described families as simply “dysfunctional” – as the following quote from Maria Cecilia, the *Liceo’s* psychologist, illustrates: “… a population with so many factors against it like malnutrition, poverty, lack of money for transportation, for example. …the conditions, family conditions of dysfunctionality, abandonment ” (Popayán, April 2016). For Bilynsky and Vernaglia (1999), dysfunctionality in families means for family members to have and unclear or violent power structure, and low communication and negotiation skills. In addition, these families usually provide little emotional support for their members, and struggle with personal boundaries. Families characterised as dysfunctional can vary in the severity of dysfunctionality, so some families can be more dysfunctional than others. Marina, a teacher at the *Liceo*, explained dysfunctionality in families more specifically when she said:

> Here at the school we have a big issue, there are no norms at home… There, the youth does whatever he wants. So, in meetings with parents I ask: *Parents, by God, who has the power at home? Who brings the food home? Who answers? Who is the adult?* Here at the school, we don’t know who the adult is. So many [parents] allow [children] to do whatever they want. (Popayán, April 2016)

For this teacher, dysfunctionality relates to Bilynsky and Vernaglia’s (1999) description of disrupted power relations, which for her is represented by a lack of norms and limits for youth and children. For Jose Alberto from the *Divino Maestro*, the issue is not necessarily that families are dysfunctional, but that they are different to the traditional nuclear families the school used to work with. In his words:

> It is a bit difficult because today we have many internally displaced families, many situations of conflict within ordinary families. But also understand that we no longer have the typical family we used to have. Today families are formed with either the father and children or the mother and children, or the grandmother and her grandchildren … roles changed, they changed completely in this time in society. (Bogotá, April 2016)

According to this teacher, a change in familial roles has forced schools to adapt to provide appropriate support for pupils and fill the gaps left by the transformation of the family structure.

However, the shift in the responsibility to teach for peace from families to schools is not enough to equip students with the necessary skills to develop peace. Teachers still feel
that they fail with individual pupils because of the void left by families who do not assume the role of main educators of peace. Jose Alberto specifically refers to the family as “the fundamental axis of society” (Bogotá, April 2016), meaning that even if responsibilities are shifted, the school cannot entirely replace the family. Other participants from other schools agreed. The following quote from Marina, a teacher at the *Liceo*, explains this assertion:

> For example, the familial context, right? That familial context influences, it is determinant, that’s why we sometimes are not successful. We are not successful with some students because he comes here, he finds me, or other people like me, so he finds that there is space for him here, that there is a favourable environment, that there are some people interested in him learning. But when he gets back home and finds everything distorted, everything he has taken from here crumbles, and the next day he starts building something from scratch. You understand me? And some never build it. So, that is when we feel we have failed. (Popayán, November 2015)

The data from the state schools discussed so far show a narrative of deprivation regarding families. The narrative of deprivation pushes schools to activate and design strategies that respond to the familial context, and to satisfy the needs educators see as being most urgent. Where families are considered the main peace educator, but, at the same time, are not suited to that responsibility due to the lack of appropriate values and parenting skills, the role of schools as educators of families becomes central. Interventions are seen as justifiable, and some schools have developed their own strategies to force parental involvement in school activities and in their children’s education.

The most obvious strategy is to ask parents to take their children’s report cards at the school. However, parents’ poor responses to this request have pushed schools to develop other approaches. Two schools have established qualitative assessments for parents to guarantee their involvement, at least in attending the meetings designed to inform them of their children’s academic and emotional progress. John, the *Liceo*’s head teacher, explained that they started the “Support Network in Society for Orphan Children with Living Parents” (Popayán, November 2015) as a result of the fact that at the end of each school year between 120 and 160 parents did not show up to collect their children’s report cards. The teachers and head teacher at the *Liceo* expressed their concern for what they perceive as abandonment and lack of commitment from parents. Adriana, a teacher at the same school, explained that as educators they felt it necessary to create an assessment, where parents are told, for example: “You are a father who takes responsibility for your son or daughter. Congratulations” (Popayán, April 2016). For John, the assessment not only informs the parent of their level of
commitment, but also has the potential of activating other state institutions like the Instituto de Bienestar Familiar (Colombian Family Wellbeing)-ICBF, which has the power to take away parents’ custody for their children in extreme cases, or at least start an investigative process for abandonment. He claimed that although his intention is not necessarily to take children away from their parents, at least it might scare them into assuming their responsibility as parents.

Similarly, the teachers at the Antonio José Bernal have instituted a programme called “I Am My Parents’ Mentor”. Patricia explained that the purpose of the programme is for “the children to assess their parents on their accompaniment throughout the year. So, the idea is for the parent to look at that and realise where he or she is going wrong” (Medellín, November 2015). Although in this case, the power to evaluate parents is given to the children, parents are told where they are going wrong and what they need to improve through activities developed for the children to take home and work on with their parents. This strategy reinforces the idea that the school is the primary source of knowledge, and therefore, must educate parents who lack parenting skills.

This finding in the Colombian context connects to global understandings of children and parents, and the role of schooling. Vandenbroeck and Bie (2006) explain that current ideas about the inadequacy of parents to fully undertake the responsibility of their children’s well-being, are rooted in nineteenth-century constructions of the Fragile Child and the Responsible Mother. The Fragile Child, as a concept, was the result of concern for the protection of children in the context of industrialisation, poverty and the abolition of child labour. The construction of the Responsible Mother assigned mothers – understood as the main carers of children – the responsibility of her children and society. At the same time, societal problems started to be attributed to working-class mothers/families’ neglect and lack of knowledge.

Subsequently, the social problem is transformed into an educational problem and thus individualized. Consequently the parent (i.e. the mother) is constructed as inadequate and finally this constructs the child as an object of intervention. (Vandenbroeck & Bie, 2006, p. 131)

Thus, as parents and children were transformed into subjects of intervention, education and schools acquired a central role, legitimised by the power that educators’ knowledge and expertise convey. As the previous examples of teachers in schools assessing parents show, educators have attributed to themselves the power to pass judgment on parents’
commitment to their children’s education, and on their parenting skills. This type of relationship between schools and parents has important implications for the idea of peace education regarding parents. Data from my study suggest that educators practice a different kind of pedagogy than they do with pupils. In Chapter 7, I explained how most peace education efforts in schools were conducive to processes of peacemaking, since the pedagogy and teacher attitudes were participatory, loving, and attempted to share control with pupils. However, their work with parents seems to align more closely with a peacekeeping approach, since educators control what parents must learn, use an approach similar to “banking” education where parents’ participation is limited, and maintain their positions as experts on what constitutes good parenting.

This narrative did not emerge in the Colegio Ideas, the private school. Vandenbroeck and Bie (2006) argue that the global discourses that derive from the Fragile Child and the Responsible Mother are inseparable from gender and socio-economic status, suggesting one reason that this narrative would be more prominent in the contexts the state schools than in the private schools, where school-parent relationships are very different.

At the Colegio Ideas, as I have explained in previous chapters, everything is tied to the school ethos, which is very much connected to the school’s origin – according to Jahuira, the head teacher. He explained that his strategy for involving parents came from his need for parents’ support at the school when he went to participate in other activities, for example a music festival, or fundraising for the school. He said:

So, I would ask a father who is a carpenter: ‘Come, stay with the children’. Or a musician, whoever. With time it became a way of being in the school. So, nowadays parents come once a week to work with the children. They tell their life stories, their experiences, have workshops with the children. This opens an extraordinary range … for vocational education. (Jahuira, November 2015)

The space in which parents work with students and share their knowledge is called Extension Workshops. In these weekly workshops, parents with different professional backgrounds – e.g. architecture, engineering, and economics – come to the school to expose pupils to “larger cultural references” (Jahuira, November 2015), meaning that pupils are given more options and ideas as to what they can do in life. Students in the different focus groups explained that working with parents during the Extension Workshops was part of learning about peace, because they created close relationships within the school community, encouraging students to admire and learn from not only schoolmates and
teachers, but also their schoolmates’ parents. This contact with parents, according to a grade 11 female pupil, contributes to respecting each other as equals (Cali, June 2016).

Every year, the school has a Community Market which is part of the Barter Project. One day a year, parents offer help to each other. The example given by a male pupil and Jahuira was the same: a parent who is a dentist fixes the teeth of a cobbler, who in return fixes that parent’s shoes. According to Jahuira, for this project, “parents present their skills as a basis of entrepreneurship and they recognise, admire, value and support each other” (Cali, November 2015). This project fulfills a dual purpose: first, it shows children the different skills and professions they can strive for; and second, it creates a mutually respectful community where recognition and admiration are at its centre.

At the Colegio Ideas, parents participate in all of the rituals the school has each year, like The Day of the Seed, where all the members of the school community recreate the foundation of the school and the recuperation of the natural environment around it. A female pupil explained that these ceremonies “exist to integrate the whole family, so they can see the different celebrations like The Day of the Seed, the dances, shadows, the bonfire we always make in honour of fire. All these, unite us as a community” (Grade 10, Cali, June 2016).

Although the difference in narratives between the state schools and the private school needs further exploration, which goes beyond the scope of this study, the contrast between the two contexts is important. Families at the Colegio Ideas are not seen from a perspective of what they lack in knowledge and parental skills, but as a source of support and specialised knowledge that enriches the school’s vision and children’s education. A possible explanation is that parents from the Colegio Ideas most likely have formal studies, professional careers, and a higher social status than those at the state schools, which allows them to take time off work. Parents at the private school are seen as equal members of the community, and so they participate in many school activities and rituals, which are seen as essential to achieving harmonious relationships and a sense of belonging – both of which are part of Jahuira’s understanding of peace as natural order, as I explained in Chapter 5. What this approach to working with parents illustrates is that at the Colegio Ideas, there seems to be more coherence between medium and message across the community. As I explained in Chapter 7, the medium developed with pupils at this school seems more favourable for a process of peacebuilding, as it is participatory, establishes horizontal relationships, and pupils are active in determining what they want to learn and in building knowledge. The approach to parents is
similar, as they are also considered people worthy of sharing and developing knowledge with the rest of the community of the school. The attitude towards parents is not derived from a narrative of deprivation, or a focus on what they lack, but rather a recognition of what they have to offer. This approach is more likely to facilitate processes of peacemaking, as it does not necessarily attempt to address issues of inequality or transcend societal structures.

To summarise, from the perspective of the people in the private school, working with parents is natural because they are part of the community and equal partners in the education of children. This school’s approach to working with parents is congruent with its ethos. But from the perspective of educators in state schools, schools must work with families because parents are not able to fulfil their roles as primary educators of their children. In this case, schools must assume the responsibility to educate parents to fill the void. The answer educators in schools and the state have found is to formally devise educational spaces to instil family values in parents in order to contribute to societal improvement, especially in the context of teaching peace. These formalised spaces lead to an expert attitude on the part of people in schools, which establishes a vertical relationship with parents, and which may hinder processes of peacemaking and peacebuilding.

8.1.1. Peace as Knowledge

All of the parents I spoke to agreed teaching peace in schools was necessary, though they expressed different interpretations as to what should be taught in a peace education programme. Regardless of the specific topic or topics parents argued should be part of a curriculum of “peace” – e.g. values, coexistence, post-conflict – an underlying idea they held in common was that the school had to teach it because they did not have enough knowledge about such topics. Luz, a mother at the Divino Maestro who said that teaching peace related to ethics and post-conflict, stated that:

I don’t really think that many parents in this socio-economic and educational level that, I think we have, I don’t think that those [ethical] topics are very present at home. Or that people speak about that, I really don’t think so. I think zero. I don’t think there is education at home in that sense. (Bogotá, April 2016)

This quote shows that for this mother, ethical education demands specific knowledge that working-class families do not possess. Similarly, a grandmother of a grade 10 pupil answered the question of what pupils should learn in a class that teaches peace thus: “I don’t know … because, without knowing how to read, or anything. Because they never sent us to
school, we didn’t even differentiate ‘u’ for being round” (Bogotá, April 2016). Because she had no formal education, she felt she could not venture to say what should be taught in a school. Rosa, a mother at the Liceo, said that to make the peace education programme at the school more complete, “they should send people from Bogotá to teach them about peace” (Popayán, April 2016). These quotes illustrate that parents see “peace” as a subject of study requiring expert knowledge that must come from outside their families.

These parents connect their feelings of unpreparedness on topics of peace to not knowing the actual facts of issues in post-conflict politics or the peace dialogues. Luz, a mother from the Divino Maestro, argued that she felt the school should facilitate spaces where parents could be informed about the status of the peace negotiations between the government and the FARC in Havana. She felt that the news was not enough, and that children were better informed because the school was a resource that they could access but parents could not (Bogotá, April 2016). Similarly, Julio, a father at the Divino Maestro, said: “the knowledge that [teachers] have is being wasted. They only teach their class and nothing else” (Bogotá, April 2016). He meant that teachers – who have postgraduate qualifications and are professionals – are wasted because they do not educate parents on topics like peace.

For parents of children in state schools, ‘peace’ belongs to a realm of expert knowledge which schools ought to teach. Values, however, as I explained in section 8.1, are a point of tension, as families claim their right and responsibility to instil them in their children and see schools as secondary partners in that endeavour. A possible interpretation for this separation of knowledge is that parents claim a role as the primary educators their children as individuals – shaping their values and behaviours – and expect schools to focus mainly on social dynamics, like coexistence within the school and the macro sphere of post-conflict politics and peace dialogues.

8.1.2. Parents’ School

At three of the five schools – the Liceo Alejandro de Humboldt, the Colegio Divino Maestro and the Institución Educativa Antonio José Bernal – teachers, head teachers and/or parents specifically mentioned “Escuela de Padres” (Parents’ School) as one of the strategies they used to communicate and support parents in different matters, including those related to peace education. The Parents’ School is not an individual school initiative, but a governmental mandate that was introduced in 2010 with the 1404 Educational Law.
Despite the fact that *Parents’ Schools* exist in all the case-study schools, the level at which the strategy is used for their peace education programmes is different. At the *Divino Maestro, Parents’ School* as a channel they have to communicate with parents, but it was less essential for their peace education programme than at the *Liceo* and the *Antonio José Bernal*, where parents and educators both gave it more importance. At the *Lola González*, nurturing positive school-family relationships was important, but neither teachers or the head teacher emphasise *Parent’s School* as a key strategy. Those I spoke to at the *Colegio Ideas* – the head teacher and pupils – did not mention *Parent’s School* as being part of their peace education programme.

Notwithstanding this difference between *Parents’ Schools*, the fact that they are part of a top-down government mandate, and their significance for the development of peace education programmes in some schools, calls for an explanation of what they are and how they are implemented as part of a strategy of peace education.

The 1404 Educational Law of 2010 created the programme of “*Escuela de padres y madres*” (Fathers’ and Mothers’ School) or “*Escuela de Padres*” (Parents’ School) at every school level – preschool, elementary and high school – regardless of whether schools were private or state schools (*Ley No. 1404*, Julio 27 de 2010). The 1404 Law builds on legal articles of the 115 General Educational Law of 1994 and the 1860 Decree of 1994 (*Ley No. 1404*, Julio 27 de 2010). The 115 Law’s pertinent articles name the family as the first provider of education for all underage individuals, but also outlines how parents must participate in schools: by belonging to the *Parents’ Association*, seeking information about and actively helping to improve their children’s academic process and behaviour, including by asking for guidance from the school. The 115 Law also demands that parents educate their children, provide a safe environment for their integral development, and assist the school in their efforts to provide a comprehensive education (*Ley No. 115*, Febrero 8 de 1994). In addition, the 1860 Decree states that the school’s pedagogical project must be responsive to its social, economic, and cultural context. It also asserts that parents should constitute a *Parents’ Association* and a *Parents’ Council* to support the efforts of the school, oversee the work of schools, facilitate the participation of parents in general, and promote the education of parents to support them in the task of educating their children (*Decreto No. 1860*, Agosto 3 de 1994).
To this legal framework for schools, the 1404 Educational Law adds that a Parents’ School must be implemented to integrate mothers, fathers and carers into the school community, “assisted by specialised advisors, to think together, exchange experiences, and seek for alternative solutions to emerging problems in the education of their children” (Ley No. 1404, Julio 27 de 2010, Article 1) and in the recuperation of values. The Decree assigns social responsibility to schools under the concept of the “Social State”, which gives schools the task of building a “responsible society” (Ley No. 1404, Julio 27 de 2010) and striving to shape the values of its students through a Parents’ School.

The legal framework poses an interesting paradox. First, schools are assigned to educate parents, and are granted power to assist the Colombian State in the recuperation of those values the family is assumed to have lost. This goal focuses specifically on the microsphere. The Law gives the State the prerogative of influencing family environments through schools as part of schools’ role in contributing to the “Social State” – which refers to the state’s responsibility to guarantee minimal conditions for a good life and counterbalance social inequalities (“Significado de lo social en nuestro modelo de Estado,” 2014). Secondly, the legal framework gives families the responsibility of overseeing schools. The paradox emerges in the question of who answers to whom. It has the potential of creating balance, or of developing a hierarchy between family and school, where the power dynamics might be complex. The actual practice of Parents’ School, and other strategies in schools’ peace education programmes, tend to tip the power balance towards the schools.

At the Liceo, the Parents’ School is a project that consists of three meetings per school year, where “only the educational, formative, sensitisation aspects” of pupils’ development are discussed (Maria Cecilia, Popayán, April 2016). The school psychologist and the head teacher decide what should be discussed in those meetings with reference to the PEI29 and the school’s philosophy. John, the head teacher, explained that the Parents’ School is key to involving parents in their programme, Towards a Culture of Well-Being. The psychologist said that she also assesses the types of cases she has to handle to identify generalised problems, like drug-abuse, domestic violence, or the absence of limits and norms at home to “find the pertinent themes according to the community’s needs at a specific time.

29 Proyecto Educativo Institucional (Institutional Pedagogical Project) - the roadmap of the school, which includes the vision and mission of the school, the theoretical framework that informs its pedagogical goals, the systems and structures that organise the school, and the overall values for which the institution strives.
So, we keep an eye on the topic of peace, since relationships, communication, non-violence, are themes that relate to it, right?” (Maria Cecilia, Popayán, April 2016). Similarly, the head teacher at the Divino Maestro argues that Parents’ School is a strategy they use to involve parents “and give prominence to parents whom we require to support their children” (Maria Luz, Bogotá, April 2016). In these two examples, schools are placed in a position of power, as school leaders’ observations and perception of the reality of families drive decisions as to what parents need to learn in order to support their children. Families’ support is considered compulsory, and the school has the power to demand it from parents.

From the parents’ perspective, Parents’ School is also a valuable strategy; for some, its value comes from the actual experience of the meetings, and for others, from the potential such meetings could have. Olga explained that her understanding was that parents from the Liceo love the school; she even spoke well about the school because of the positive comments she had heard even before her children and grandchild studied there. Olga said that Parents’ School and other school strategies are important ways for parents to develop trust in the school, and to partake with teachers and school leaders in activities that are important for their children’s education. She said: “We are ready for whatever they ask from us, whenever they ask something from us, when they ask us to come to meetings, or to do some kind of job, we are ready to collaborate” (Olga, Popayán, April 2016). This mother’s explanation illustrates that even from the parents’ perspective, schools hold a position of power. Schools assemble parents, schools ask from parents, schools assign jobs to parents. Patricia, a teacher from the Antonio José Bernal, explained that parents give schools power to educate them in issues on which they feel they are not knowledgeable enough:

… in the survey we did among parents about family education, 20% of parents asked to be educated on domestic violence, drug abuse, sexuality, and life projects. So, parents are already conscientious about wanting to educate themselves on issues that will help mitigate those situations with their children. (Medellín, November 2015)

But for some parents, Parents’ School is currently a space that does not satisfactorily meet their expectations. They see it as something undertaken to comply with the Law, rather than a strategy to support parents, as one mother at the Divino Maestro explained:

I don’t see that [Parents’ School] really fills the purpose. They ask us to come to meetings and they speak to us about sexual education and I don’t think that the information is explicit [this participant used this word to mean pertinent]. I think it is generalised, and done to comply with the requirement, rather than to educate. (Luz, Bogotá, April 2016)
For others, including three parents from the same school, *Parents’ School* was not even acknowledged as a space provided by the school to work with parents, even when I asked after it specifically. Nevertheless, all the participant parents of the *Divino Maestro* thought spaces where the extended school community (i.e. parents, teachers, and students) could work together and discuss issues like peace would be valuable. Luz explained that it was important for “those processes not to be interrupted … and to have an outcome coming from that. And for that result to be shared outside, not just in our homes, but for that to be reflected in the community” (Bogotá, April 2016). Similarly, the parents of a grade 10 pupil said that activities facilitated by teachers would be wonderful; Julio, the father, said: “the idea would be that they would catch us up. Because we each have our own profession or occupation, so it would be great if they would place us at the same level they are” (Bogotá, April 2016). These responses suggest that parents acknowledge the power of schools in transforming them as families and as community, and trust the scholarship of professionals within the schools to determine what they should learn.

This section illustrates once again that in the context of developing a peace education programme, educators create a power imbalance between state schools and parents, establishing a vertical relationship that tends towards peacekeeping. Teachers, head teachers, parents, pupils, and the State agree that the family has a central role in preparing pupils for peace. However, consensus around the inability of working-class families to fully assume that responsibility, due to their lack of knowledge, economic responsibilities, or circumstances of violence, leads to a collective understanding that schools should take charge of educating children and families for peace. This attitude towards parents contrasts sharply with the attitudes educators have towards pupils, with whom they try to create more horizontal relationships.

8.1.3. Improving Families

The narrative of deprivation regarding families informs the work teachers do in their classrooms. In interviews, several teachers claimed that they include activities that involve families, sometimes directly, and others indirectly. The indirect ways in which teachers involve parents include classroom activities where families are the subject, but parents are not expected to participate in any way. Direct ways of participation, in contrast, are those in which classroom activities expect parents to take action, either by answering questions, coming to class, or doing specific work at home with their children. Teachers in different
schools considered this type of work with parents to be essential to heal or improve familial relationships. In schools where these types of activities do not exist, as for example at the *Divino Maestro*, pupils and parents expressed the need for them.

Patricia, from the *Antonio José Bernal*, explained that pupils are deeply hurt by the context in which they live, so a major part of her work is to heal them from within. “So, I understood that when we are not at peace at home, we can hardly be in harmony with everyone else” (Medellín, November 2015). She uses several therapeutic strategies, including family constellations, corporal exercises, theatre and art. These tools help pupils release their anger and address pain that stems from abuse, conflict, and abandonment. During a grade 11 school retreat, I observed and was asked to participate in a family constellation exercise. I acted as the father of two different female students. The following is a fragment from my research diary:

Each of them read to me letters they had written to their fathers. The first student explained why she was in conflict with him. She tells him (me) that she needs him to change first so she can change. She cries and makes me cry. The other female student has written a letter of admiration to her father. She reads it to him (me) and tells him how much she loves and admires his effort despite having a really difficult physical disability. She also makes me cry. (Medellín, May 2016)

The teacher later told me about the power of exercises like the one I experienced in transforming relationships. She described pupils who had not seen their fathers in years inviting them to their graduation ceremonies as a way to forgive them for their abandonment. Others are able to “thank them for their lives at least” (Patricia, Medellín, November 2015). According to Patricia, this process is crucial in beginning a life project that is the student’s own, and free from the burdens that keep them stuck.

Similarly, the following classroom observation illustrates how the teacher involves the topic of families in her practice. At the time I visited the *Liceo*, the students were working on a project in the Peace Core Subject, where the objective was “*Who am I? Getting to know each other and knowing myself*” (Popayán, April 2016). As part of this project, students were giving individual presentations of their auto-biographies. The purposes of the activity were to place the students and their families at the centre; to create a space where students can recognise themselves and their classmates; to strengthen their self-esteem, and to improve

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30 Last year of school, typically 17-18 year-old students.
their attitudes and performance. It was also a way in which the teacher, Marina, got to know her students better – something she mentioned in every conversation we had, both formal and informal, as key to getting through to them and providing support tailored to each student.

Marina explained that it was hard for students to recognise themselves and their families as valuable. She explained that when she started the activity with her students, it was not unusual for pupils to use pictures of famous people (for example the Queen of England or famous sports people) when they discussed their families. She explained that they were often ashamed of their heritage. She felt it was important for them to get to know themselves and others in a deeper way, so they could appreciate themselves and their parents or carers.

The following quote is taken from a class observation. The class happened in the school theatre, and presenters stood on the stage, each one giving a PowerPoint presentation with pictures and descriptions projected onto a screen. I observed ten grade 9 presentations, four from female students and six from male students. The following presentation, from a female student, illustrates the way the presentations were delivered, and the type of information provided.

She starts by introducing her family and shows pictures. Her mother has never lived with her. She had a brother who died violently, and he was the one she loved the most. Her sister gave her a nephew who has a heart problem and has had 3 surgeries. He is only 18 months old. He is very smart.

She shows a picture of herself and tells the group that she was born in Popayán. With her family they had to move from neighbourhood to neighbourhood because they were threatened because of her brother. She loves sports and singing, but there are few opportunities to sing. If God permits, she will be some singer’s back-up singer. She wanted to mention her cousin because she has been very important in her life, she shows a picture of her cousin.

She shows a slide with information and explains that she has had many difficulties, but she is still standing. However, she doesn’t like that she got hooked on drugs the year before. She tells her classmates because she trusts them all. She didn’t tell her mother, she told the school psychologist and she has been very helpful. The

31 Taken from the document Tejiendo Historias de Vida Familiar (Popayán, February 2015).
32 Typically 15 or 16 year-old students.
33 Emphasis mine, though the student used that word.
34 Direct quote.
35 Expression used by the pupil.
36 Direct quote.
psychologist told her not to be in the company of people who are involved with drugs. She thanks the psychologist.

She shows another slide with information and says she wants to be a police officer or a singer. (Popayán, April 2016)

Pupils’ presentations shared common themes. They mentioned their families and their relationships with individual members (if they were harmonious relationship or not, whom they loved the most); whether they had lost loved ones, and in what circumstances; their personal struggles (in relation to drugs, sexual orientation, school failures); their hopes and dreams (professional aspirations, personal goals); their personal successes (e.g. succeeding at getting over drugs, being part of a minor football league in the past); and how they feel about the Liceo, which most say they love because they have many friends, or because they feel welcomed after failing in other schools. Before the class started, Marina explained to me that the activity encouraged pupils to know who they are as individuals, who their families are, and to value themselves and where they come from, mostly because pupils rarely know their parents deeply.

Marina also facilitated conversations between parents and their children through different classroom activities where parents are expected to participate directly. In one activity, parents tell their children their life stories. She explained that the exercise “allowed to strengthen the ties of affection between parents [and children]” (Marina, Popayán, April 2016). Hearing their parents’ life stories, according to the teacher, drew children and parents closer and kickstarted a line of dialogue that rarely occurs at home. According to the teacher, this type of dialogue is essential to develop better relationships, and to create better and more peaceful environments at home. Another activity that facilitates conversations is to create a “home handbook”. The idea is that “this handbook that we make will help us to make things at home work better” (Marina, Popayán, April 2016). For this, parents and pupils write separately what they believe are their rights and duties, and what commitments they need to make within the home.

It’s … ‘what do I have a right to as a son/daughter?’ and also, ‘what duties do I have as a son/daughter?’ But the ones that they think they can comply with, ok? And that they can demand from their father. For example, ‘don’t get drunk’, right? ‘To be treated well’. They write for example ‘to have a space where I can put’ [she interrupts her own sentence] Imagine that, ‘where I can put my things’. They write things like that. So, the father, since I don’t want to call him to, well, because he has to work, he writes here and sends it to me in a closed envelope, right? Which is what I am showing you. [she showed me the letter sent by a father] He says, for example

Like Patricia, Marina involves parents in her classes in ways that respond to the perception she has of the families she deals with in the school. Both teachers have found that curricula can be adapted with the purpose of serving what they see as the deeper purpose of teaching peace, which is to heal families and strengthen family bonds to improve children’s lives. By including activities where pupils are able to heal an aspect of their family relationships, teachers attempt to ease the troubles they face and facilitate the process of navigating the system.

Pupils from the Divino Maestro, in different focus groups, commented that they struggle with their family members because they feel that parents especially do not trust them or do not know them. Since pupils participating in these focus groups ranged from 15 to 19 years of age, and, as adolescents, were pushing boundaries and becoming their own selves, these observations must also be understood from a developmental standpoint. Nevertheless, they show that these young people felt it was important for parents to truly understand who they are. For example, a female pupil explained that she felt the school should facilitate spaces where parents could really see them, “so they can realise that we are not the thugs or slackers that they think we are with our friends” (Grade 11 Focus Group, Bogotá, May 2016). Another female pupil said:

parents act from fear of seeing us like that [on drugs], because they expect the best of us, but they think that we are stupid and follow others, but they should think that I have a little self-government [referring specifically to the concept from ethics class], that if I don’t like something, I will not do it. (Grade 11 Focus Group, Bogotá, May 2016)

According to several pupils, particularly form the Divino Maestro, fear and judgement from parents about them doing drugs or getting pregnant closes down communication with them. The students claimed that it was much easier to talk to teachers in the schools who do not judge them, and, on the contrary, provide support. Similarly, Sandra explained that she felt it was important for the Divino Maestro to create spaces for her as a mother to improve the relationship with her children. She said in her interview that she knew that in a Catholic school, parents were asked to send letters to their children for a specific time during the school’s spiritual retreat, and the children recorded a video to send back to them. Afterwards, parents and pupils participate in a workshop together, and she said that “that changes the
relationship between parents and children a lot. It’s a different perspective of the family” (Sandra, Bogotá, May 2016).

In the case of the *Divino Maestro*, while Jose Alberto (the ethics teacher) and Maria Luz (the head teacher) both commented on the importance of families, they also said it was very difficult to get them involved. They pointed not only to the reasons I explained in section 8.1. – absence and domestic violence – but also to internal restrictions, like time. They both mentioned different initiatives with parents they had started that could not continue due to the lack of time and other resources, which forced them to prioritise their work with students.

In contrast, to the scope of the work with parents that individual teachers have, John, the head teacher of the *Liceo*, has developed a programme that aims directly at affecting the lives of parents. He explained:

Parents study with us … Since I also have a night school, so parents who didn’t study, come from rural areas, finish their studies with us and with [meaning that they achieve] some [of the technical] titles. And immediately they find jobs. But not anymore like “let me do anything” where they make her clean bathrooms, no. Now she is a nurse, she can look after a sick person. Or he is a mechanic … and the most important thing, above everything, is that it integrates the family [to the school]. And to also give them an economic solidness, of course, ok? We have this education for work, so they can fend for themselves. (Popayán, November 2015)

This example clearly aims at improving families’ lives by tackling a very different issue than that the teachers aim for. The *Liceo* has technical programmes – e.g. nursing, automobile mechanics, forensic science – for pupils. These programmes are available for parents as well, with an option to earn a school degree by studying at night. This programme looks to improve the livelihood of parents, and therefore, of their families in general.

Most of the examples in this section illustrate an approach that could be characterised as peacemaking. Examples like Patricia’s family constellations and Marina’s oral presentations, or “*home handbook*”, are approaches in which pupils are supported in personal healing, which is necessary for them to rid themselves of burdens that will otherwise trap them in circumstances that do not allow them to grow. These teachers see the healing process as something that can open possibilities and choices that may ultimately improve students’ chances of navigating the system and improving their personal lives. However, these approaches are not designed to challenge the structures that produce the negative impacts
pupils suffer. In contrast, John’s proactive approach has peacebuilding elements, as his concern is with giving parents the option to improve professionally at the Liceo, which can effectively improve families’ entire livelihoods.

8.2. Conclusion

In previous chapters, I focused on what peace education looks like within the school, and how this work relates to what educators in schools perceive as threats coming from the social context. This chapter furthers the argument that contextual conditions are central in the context of teaching for peace. I argued that it is very difficult to separate family from school in the context of peace education. However, this relationship is important mainly because educators see parents as unprepared to fully assume the role of parenting. I proposed that the narrative of deprivation turns parents, especially in state schools, into subjects and recipients of peace education. The narrative of deprivation, like the concepts of the Fragile Child and Responsible Mother from the nineteenth century, creates an unbalanced relationship between schools and parents: educators as knowledgeable, whereas parents are considered ignorant and in need of being taught. Parents arrive at a similar conclusion, as they understand “peace” as belonging to an expert knowledge they are not equipped to teach themselves. This conclusion is reinforced by the legal framework, which identifies means by which parents should participate in school life, and positions schools to educate parents in order to recuperate values.

In contrast, the work with parents at the private school seems to follow a different logic. Parents at the Colegio Ideas are considered partners in the education of pupils. Relationships are horizontal, and parents are seen as valuable assets with something to contribute to the whole school community. The difference in approaches with the state schools might respond to socio-economic characteristics, as Vandenbroeck and Bie (2006) suggest, but this possibility would need further study.

In general, educators in state schools approach the work they do with parents in a way that seems more conducive to processes of peacekeeping, mainly because of the expert attitudes they assume. Parents are assessed in terms of their commitment to their children’s education, and are seen as in need of education by schools. Educators make most of the decisions of what ought to be taught to parents, and how should they learn, establishing a one-way communication that hinders participation. These elements are very unlikely to
facilitate processes of reforming or transcending societal structures (see Haavelsrud, 2013), which are central to processes of peacemaking and peacebuilding.

Nevertheless, data from state schools and the private school show that other efforts targeting parents seem to have peacemaking and peacebuilding potential. The Colegio Ideas most clearly illustrates an approach geared towards peacemaking. Besides establishing horizontal relationships, their work with parents facilitates communication amongst people within the school community, where diversity is regarded as important and recognition is viewed as a major outcome of a process of fostering harmonious relationships. On the other hand, the Liceo’s policy of inclusion, discussed in Chapter 5, seems to extend to parents, as they are also given the opportunity to develop professionally and thus change their circumstances and their children’s. This approach could be interpreted as a proactive, which, while it does not tackle ingrained injustices, does provide a way to tackle inequality by offering professional opportunities.

This chapter established important differences between processes of peace education within the schools and their work with the community of parents, which have important implications for the type of peace developed in each context. Although there are exceptions, in general, the type of peace education targeted at parents seems to support processes of peacekeeping, which suggests that parents are rarely seen as assets in efforts to develop peace. Olga, a mother from the Liceo, is a victim of state violence. She fled her town after a massacre was perpetrated by the army. She is now an activist in the Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas de Estado (National Movement of Victims of the State)- MOVICE. She works directly with internally displaced people, to help them understand the system and access support provided by the State, including housing, government aid, and so on. She is clearly a person the school could integrate into their efforts of peace education. Like parents at the Colegio Ideas, parents in state schools have knowledge, interests, and experiences that could enrich their schools’ programmes. This type of opportunity could help establish more horizontal relationships, where cooperation could begin to foster systemic change, as Lederach (1995) argues. A transformation of the narrative of deprivation could greatly benefit processes of peacebuilding.
9. Discussion

This chapter reflects on the strengths and weaknesses of current theory and practice in peace education. Based on my analysis of the interpretation and implementation of the 1732 Educational Law in Colombian schools, I propose specific recommendations not just for Colombia, but for theorising on peace education more broadly. I examine the strengths and weaknesses of peace education in practice by discussing key themes that emerge from my research. I contend that educators’ understandings of their schools’ contexts and their own personal biographies, more than any other factors, shape their notions of peace and their peace education practice. As I showed in Chapter 5, peace education practice in schools derives primarily from educators’ understandings about peace – which is shaped by their own personal experiences and their views on the contexts in which their pupils live. Although some scholars (Salomon, 2002, 2004b) have highlighted the importance of social context in the design of peace education programmes and for educational reform (Napier, 2003), this study finds that it is educators’ personal biographies and teaching contexts that affects peace education in Colombia more than anything else. The next sections show how these two factors permeate the choices educators make about their peace education programmes. For example, educators drew on their teaching contexts and personal experiences to justify their choices about which elements of their pre-existing peace education programmes related to the new mandate, and in what ways. As I will show in section 9.1., these factors became crucial in the process of interpreting and implementing the 1732 Educational Law. Likewise, as I will show in sections 9.2. and 9.3., the dialogue between educators’ perceptions about what pupils need and their own experiences influence their choices of content, pedagogical approaches, and attitudes in the practice of peace education – which in turn define the type of peace promoted in schools. Finally, I argue in section 9.4. that in educators’ concern for addressing and ameliorating the contextual barriers pupils face, educators have taken it upon themselves to educate parents in parenting skills that the educators believe to be lacking.

Furthermore, in the next sections I examine the disjunction between the national socio-political context that framed the introduction of the Law, the Law itself, and the actual practice of peace education, including its pedagogy, teacher attitudes, and curricula. Though the Law calls for a form of peace education that contributes to the pursuit of social justice, and though many educators also think of peace in these terms, the everyday practice of peace education in Colombian schools promotes a much narrower view of peace. While these
practices illustrate an active and student-centred approach within schools, the schools’
engagement with the larger community, and in particular with parents, is too limited to build
peace meaningfully through education.

This discussion addresses each of my key research questions in turn:

1) How is the 1732 Educational Law implemented and understood?
2) How is peace taught in schools?
3) What kinds of peace are being promoted in schools? And
4) How are families involved in the process of teaching peace?

9.1. The 1732 Educational Law: A porous formula for liberal peace

Napier (2003) argues that there is a cascading effect when policy is passed from the
national (or even international) level down to classroom practice. She describes a process of
“creolization”, “re-creolization”, and “re-re-creolization” as a result of the contact and
influence different people have on the policy. People at different levels (national, provincial,
school) resist, transform, and adapt what is being mandated (Napier, 2003). Other authors
support this assessment, arguing that such processes are evident when initiatives of liberal
peace, like the one introduced in Colombia, are being implemented (Mac Ginty, 2010;
Tadjbakhsh, 2011b). My analysis of the interpretation and implementation of the 1732
Educational Law of 2014 adds further evidence to this reading, by showing how educators
interpret and implement the Law.

In Chapter 4, I argued that the 1732 Educational Law includes elements that
harmonise with the larger global discourse of liberal peace. First, the Law is a state-mandated
policy, and the usual strategy for developing liberal peace is top-down (Mac Ginty, 2008,
2010; Richmond, 2006; Tadjbakhsh, 2011a). Secondly, the Law emphasises the development
of the individual as a basis upon which to build peace in society, which echoes the focus on
what Mac Ginty (2010) calls the “reformability” of the individual in developing liberal peace.
And thirdly, the Law speaks to principles of liberal peace and liberal democracy, like
political participation, the supremacy of the Constitution, and international legal frameworks,
like International Humanitarian Law (see Chandler, 2004; Mac Ginty, 2008, 2010;
Richmond, 2009; Richmond, 2012). However, the Law in Colombia is flexible, and states
that peace education programmes should be responsive to their contexts and the local needs
of the schools’ pupils and communities. This flexibility means that the Law allows processes
of transformation by educators, such that peace education in practice does not necessarily conform to a liberal peace approach. While the focus on the ‘reformability’ of the individual pupil was very evident in the schools I studied, there was little or no focus on institutional structures and processes that characterise liberal peace.

As I showed in Chapters 4, 5, and 7, the practice of peace education rarely included elements of liberal peace and liberal democracy, and mostly focused on addressing what educators perceived the needs of their pupils to be which was largely informed by their personal stories. This focus was especially clear in the examples of teen pregnancy programmes and life projects, developed in Chapter 7. What these examples illustrated was that the emphasis on adapting peace education programmes to contextual needs came first, before anything else mandated by the Law. Thus, the interpretation and implementation of the Law depended mostly on educators’ contextualised understandings of peace, shaped by their personal biographies and the circumstances of the schools where they work. This finding adds weight to theorising on processes of transformation from state to school mainly because the implementation of the new mandate is justified by what pre-dated the Law. Specifically, educators identified what elements of the Law already existed in their peace education programmes to validate how they were implementing it.

Richmond (2009) points out that flexibility in laws is important as a means of enabling local ownership. This openness is certainly evident in the Colombian case. The mandate of choice in how to implement the Law (as an independent subject, or within existing curricula), in topics to teach as part of peace education programmes (historical memory, prevention of bullying, life projects or risk-prevention), and in prioritising the context of schools (see Decreto No. 1038, Mayo 25 de 2015; Ley No. 1732, 1 de Septiembre 2014) all allow for local ownership of peace education. Educators I interviewed explained that they were able to put their schools’ contexts first, and design their own approaches to peace education based on what they considered important for developing peace in their communities – such as promoting inclusion, teaching pupils to navigate the system, establishing core values, and so on, as I illustrated in Chapters 4, 5 and 7.

However, while choice and flexibility are strengths of the Law, they are also weaknesses when looking at the Law from the lens of a nation-building project following a peace accord. As I explained in Chapter 1, the genesis of the 1734 Educational Law was embedded in the historical moment of the peace dialogues in Havana between the
government and the FARC. These peace dialogues, which ended with both parties signing a peace accord, aimed to address structural reform and tackle inequality and social injustice (see Gómez-Suárez & Newman, 2013) – an approach that, as I explained, corresponds closely to the project of peacebuilding. However, although the 1732 Law and the 1038 Decree mention social justice as a possible goal for the Peace Core Subject, it was not a compulsory topic. The Law gives no clear goal for teaching about the ways the social system produces ingrained inequalities that can turn into the violence – structural, cultural and direct – that affects pupils and society as a whole. The flexibility of the Law therefore inhibits the larger purpose of national peacebuilding, as set out by the peace negotiations. The signed peace accord, the Law, and peace education practice speak to the non-sequentiality of the implementation of public policy (see Napier, 2003). My research shows that the implementation of the 1732 Educational Law has mostly to do with the pressing needs of the local context, especially since the government is vague about actually supporting structural change via policymaking strategies.

What peace educators in Colombia are doing is important, then, as they engage directly with specific contexts; but, as I will suggest in sections 9.2 and 9.3, it falls short of challenging and addressing structural change. Peace educators need to begin to work towards peacebuilding if they hope to fulfil the promise of the peace accords and the Law. Cremin (2016) argues that one reason peacebuilding is seldom undertaken is because it requires political will. This assertion suggests that if Colombia is serious about peace, what is happening now in peace education needs to be re-evaluated. While the state has shown commitment to peacebuilding in theory through the peace process and educational Law, there is less evidence of how it is being promoted in practice. One possible way forward is more effective oversight of peace education. While educators generally supported the flexibility of the Law, several also characterised the current oversight of state officials as inadequate, focused mostly on what is officially recorded on paper, rather than on actual practice in schools. A second possible course of action might involve facilitating spaces where educators, policymakers, and state officials can engage in meaningful dialogue about how to ground policy within local contextual circumstances, whilst also pursuing a national project of broader structural change. These conversations could chart paths to peacebuilding through education that still allowed for local contextualisation. In this sense, the Colombian case illustrates both the potential and limitations of state-mandated laws that aim to promote a
national project while simultaneously allowing for local ownership – and one that stands to inform debates on peace education policy more generally.

9.2. The Practice of Teaching Peace: Pedagogy, teacher attitudes and curricula

In exploring how peace education is taught in schools, my research revealed that actual practice varies sharply – reinforcing Salomon’s (2004b) assertion that peace education has different meanings and practice depending on the people who define it. The difference between programmes mostly derived from variations in educators’ definitions of peace, which produced many peace educations (see Harris, 2004; Reardon, 1988; Snauwaert, 2011). The fact that schools in Colombia have distinct notions of peace reinforces Muñoz’ (2006) theorising of peace as imperfect; because educators did not have clear notions of peace as negative or positive, their understandings were somewhere along the spectrum between the two, and were messy and nuanced. The case-study schools showed that looking in-depth at peace education practice reveals the richness of actions taken by educators in order to teach for peace (see Salomon, 2002), and that different notions of peace may coexist in harmony within individual schools (as I described in Chapter 5).

The multiplicity of peace definitions is a result of the dialogue between educators’ personal biographies and the contexts of the schools where they work. As I showed in Chapters 4, 5 and 7, school context determines curricula, teacher attitudes, and pedagogy. In general, educators in my study agreed on the importance of responding to the needs of the local context and designed their peace education programmes accordingly. In Chapter 2, I analysed how curricula can be geared towards processes of peacekeeping, peacemaking or peacebuilding, drawing upon previous theories of peace education, moral education, citizenship education and democracy education (see Chaux, 2005, 2007; Cremin & Bevington, 2017; Dewey, 1966 [1916]; Jäger, 2014; Selman, 2003; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). All of the peace education programmes I looked at in my research based their content on what educators identified as necessary for pupils to learn in relation to their contextual needs; like Bates (2007), they focused on establishing linkages between the backgrounds of students and the curriculum. However, the decisions made by these educators show that what marks the difference between peacekeeping, peacemaking or peacebuilding projects is not so much the content developed in the classroom, as the pedagogy used by the educators. In other words, even though different schools identified the same topics for their peace education programmes, such as the life project, educators’ diverse approaches resulted in practices that
can be associated with different modes of peace development. This finding reinforces the conclusions of Wringe (2012 [1984]), and Cremin and Bevington (2017), who argue that the *how* of peace education can be more important than the content being taught.

Encouragingly, the pedagogical approaches of educators in the case-study schools leaned towards being active and student-centred. As I showed in Chapter 7, teachers used methodologies like project-based learning, case studies, and experiential activities – games or art – to facilitate students’ reflection on their context and reality. Freire (1996 [1970]), Hytten and Bettez (2011), Haalvesrud (2013), and Bates (2007) agree on the importance of moving away from asymmetrical systems of reproducing knowledge for peace education pedagogy, rejecting models of the teacher as an expert who transmits knowledge in favour of approaches where students actively participate in building knowledge on their own with teachers’ facilitation. Most teachers I observed used different approaches to create spaces for pupils’ voices and to enable students to engage actively with the content. However, these pedagogical approaches did not support processes of peacebuilding, even when that was the teacher’s purpose. The example of the teen pregnancy programme in Chapter 7 was representative of this trend. Although some teachers attempted to establish connections between the phenomenon of teen pregnancy and larger societal issues, like gender violence, pupils’ comprehension of that connection stretched only to awareness of their individual behaviours and the way those behaviours might lead to negative consequences for their futures (a point I will explain further in section 9.4). I also identified pedagogical practices that could reinforce inequalities or structural violence – a risk some scholars (Bajaj, 2008; Harber & Sakade, 2009; Johnson & Johnson, 2005a) argue is inherent to peace education, because it is a product of the same society that produces and reproduces inequalities.

These findings show that peace education in practice generally supports processes of peacemaking, understood in terms of developing pupils’ awareness of their own behaviours and their abilities to navigate the systems that impose limitations on them, rather than transforming it. This conclusion suggests there is still room to develop peace education pedagogy that is more conducive to peacebuilding, perhaps by developing *conscientização* – the kind of critical view of oneself, one’s community and society that has the potential of liberating the individual to make real, free choices and thereby transform macro societal structures (Blackburn, 2000; Freire, 1996 [1970], 2005 [1974]). Freire (as cited in Blackburn, 2000) argued that the most powerful means of advancing pedagogical practice in the
direction of peacebuilding and awakening conscientização involves working with pupils to facilitate dialogue between action and reflection, where action elicits reflection, and reflection, in turn, provokes action. Raising conscientization sufficient to challenge the status quo is an ongoing process – as is peace, when it is understood as imperfect.

Scholars of education for social justice (Hytten & Bettez, 2011) and citizenship education (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) agree that educators ought to include projects that entail working directly with the community, social leaders, and other role models in order to generate critical communities that can discuss systems of power, privilege and oppression analytically. Freire (1996 [1970]) argued that approaches like this one are necessary for those who belong to disenfranchised communities; but Haalvesrud (2013) makes the point that people in positions of power or in privileged communities should also reflect on their own position within the social system. This work with privileged groups is especially important because they are often blind to their own power, which hinders efforts to address structural reform (see Kester & Cremin, 2017). The practice of peace education in the private school, for example, which mainly serves an affluent community of pupils, showed that despite the peacebuilding work done by acknowledging some power structures in society, students’ learning did not address their own role within the structure. This type of work with students from both state and private schools can potentially foster in pupils the development of an identity as changemakers, a form of peaceful empowerment which allows pupils to imagine possible futures to which they can contribute (see Jäger, 2014; Muñoz, 2006; Muñoz & Martínez, 2011).

Across the schools, educators also highlighted the importance of developing close relationships with their students. In the state schools, relationship-building was seen as a way to counterbalance the influence of hostile environments (home, neighbourhoods); and in the private school, it offered a way of developing the idea of peace in terms of harmonious relationships between all living things. This type of loving relationship manifested in the classroom as horizontal relationships, where teachers shared some control with their pupils by establishing safe spaces where active participation could occur. I found that educators in the case-study schools mostly retained control over the content and pedagogical decisions of their classrooms, a kind of teacher practice that tends to support processes of peacemaking. As Haalvesrud (2013), like Freire (1996 [1970]), points out, maintaining control over the production and transmission of knowledge (pedagogy) is not conducive to transcending the
structures that generate inequalities and violence, as it perpetuates, to some extent, a hierarchical relationship. Vertical relationships hinder processes where “authentic dialogue is the goal, involving critical analysis of one’s local context, seen subjectively, as well as the relationships of this micro context to the overall structure” (Haalvesrud, 2013, p. 108). In addition, maintaining control over the crucial element of knowledge production impedes marginalised communities (and pupils) from “creat[ing] their own knowledge based on their own premises” (Haalvesrud, 2013, p. 105). The process of producing knowledge entails reflection on the contradictions that stem from discrepancies between the micro sphere (in this case, schools and individuals) and the macro societal, political and economic structures (Haalvesrud, 2013). The skill of constant reflection fosters the critical consciousness Freire (1996 [1970], 2005 [1974]) argues is necessary to transform society, and peacebuilding.

In Colombia, and other contexts where peacemaking and peacekeeping are the major focus of peace education programmes, an evolution of peace education practice to facilitate dialogue between action and reflection and awaken conscientização will require the evolution of teaching practice. This study revealed several strengths among peace educators, including a conscientiousness about incorporating the context of their students’ lives in their class activities, and sharing part of the control they have in the classroom. However, educators who strive to advance peacebuilding as part of their everyday practice could include efforts to create critical communities of educators, where they can have reflective dialogue about their teaching practice, which would enable them to identify knowledge gaps, discover new pedagogical tools, and critically reflect on their own role as changemakers. In other words, use these communal spaces to raise their own conscientização and develop their own peaceful empowerment.

9.3. Peace Education Practice in Colombia: A narrow notion of peace

Exploring the way peace is taught in schools offers insight into the type of peace promoted in schools. As I argued in the previous section, though educators understand peace in terms of social justice and addressing inequalities, in practice, peace education promotes a much narrower view of peace, which focuses on the protection and development of the individual. This narrow understanding of peace has been identified by researchers as a generalised practice of peace education, grounded in an “assumption… that knowledge, rationality and an improved skill set among individual learners will lead to broader social change (i.e. cultural, political, and/or economic peace)” (Kester & Cremin, 2017, p. 1417).
Other researchers in peace and conflict studies have identified the same basic assumption, that individual improvement leads to societal change, within the model of liberal peace (see Mac Ginty, 2010). The tension between teachers’ understandings of peace and practices of peace education encourages a reframing of peace as imperfect since it demonstrates that the poles of negative and positive peace are not sufficient to characterise the practice of peace education.

Educators’ focus on the individual in the case-study schools suggests a peacemaking project. A concept borrowed from peace studies and international relations, peacemaking usually refers to conflict resolution and conflict mediation, and theorists of peace education have looked at these practices in schools in detail (see Chaux, 2005, 2007; Chaux et al., 2008; Cremin & Bevington, 2017; Johnson & Johnson, 1996). My research has shown that the same concept of peacemaking also animates a broader range of peace education practices, which go well beyond attitudes towards active conflict between pupils. I looked at specific practices outside the realm of situations of conflict, drawing from Galtung’s (1990b) definition of positive peace, which involves addressing the structural and cultural elements that produce and reproduce violence; and I recast conflict resolution, defined in the sphere of international relations and peace studies as an activity that guides people to reflect on individual interests, views and opinions, so they can move on from a situation of conflict (Miall, 2004). Based on these theories, I identified the pedagogical practices which attempted to address individual behaviours, processes of decision-making, personal interests, and opinions in order to improve the personal situations of pupils in relation to their contexts, but that did not attempt to challenge the underlying system which produces direct, structural and cultural violence, as efforts of peacemaking. The examples of life project and teen pregnancy education programmes showed that educators’ major concern was to equip pupils with the necessary skills and values to be able to transform their individual behaviours and make better decisions in navigating the system. This conclusion suggests that in schools, another notion of peace promoted by educators is one that could be described as personal success within the current system.

Like peacemaking, peacekeeping is a concept borrowed from peace studies and international relations, which researchers have used to identify practices within schools that attempt to maintain order and discipline by addressing unacceptable, and sometimes violent, behaviours – through, for example, norms, conflict management, and punishment (see
Cremin & Bevington, 2017; Reardon, 1988). Some educators in the case-study schools advocated for these practices, for instance by emphasising the importance of norms in addressing bad behaviour (Chapter 5). However, my empirical research revealed other practices of peacekeeping at work as well, like an emphasis on making schools spaces ‘free of violence’, and fostering loving relationships in order to give pupils a respite from everyday violence outside the school. This type of peace education practice, which clearly aims to maintain negative peace by shielding pupils from direct violence in the contexts that surround them (family and neighbourhood), and by protecting and keeping pupils safe from harm, is typical of a peacekeeping project.

The Colombian case supports the assertion that most peace education practice aims at processes of peacekeeping and peacemaking (see Cremin, 2016). Schools in Colombia also show that different practices of peace education with different purposes can occur simultaneously within the same school, often because of contextual circumstances. As I showed in Chapters 5 and 7, teachers and head teachers deal with issues of drug addiction, gang violence, domestic violence, sexual abuse, teen pregnancy, and many others among their students on a regular basis, such that they feel compelled to react to and design strategies to address these problems (whether in the form of life projects, instilling values, or making the school a space free from violence). This type of reactive approach to peace education pushes educators to work for the here and now, trying to affect the lives of the individuals they have in front of them. However, as I showed in Chapter 6, pupils expressed real interest in engaging with larger societal, political and economic issues that concern them (for example, the armed conflict or the government) – suggesting that the current reactive approach to peace education does not fully meet pupils’ interests. To be able to respond to pupils’ curiosity, peace education programmes in schools should work towards peacebuilding, for example by including practices of conflict transformation, which entail engaging directly with discourses and the overall patterns of human relationships that produce and reproduce inequalities (see Miall, 2004; Lederach, 2003). Peacebuilding is in essence a proactive approach geared to actively addressing social, economic and political structures in order to transform them – an approach which resonates most strongly with the government of Colombia’s stated aim of addressing the systemic causes of the armed conflict through the peace process.
9.4. Working with Families: A missed opportunity for developing peace

My research into the role of families in the process of educating for peace demonstrated that schools’ engagement with their communities of parents is limited. In Chapter 8, I showed that having parents, pupils, and educators working together in the context of peace education could be beneficial. Research shows that parent involvement in schools has an enormous impact on the development of children (Epstein, 1995), and educators in the case-study schools consistently highlighted that consistent parental participation in school activities was crucial for the development of peace through education. Parents’ involvement was especially important given that the focus of peace education in these schools was on the individual development of pupils.

However, scholars like Epstein (1995) have found that there are different kinds of school-family partnerships. My research showed an important difference between the type of partnership developed in the private school and that developed in the state schools. In the state schools, schools’ work with parents sought to ease some of the difficult conditions generated by the family as one element of the social context. As such, work with parents was mostly driven by educators’ perceptions of the inadequacy of families and their need to improve their parenting skills. Research into school-family relationships in the context of peace education has found that family can be a source of violence, for example when parents use violent disciplinary practices or authoritative educational practices (see Amamio, 2004; E. Boulding, 1972; Dovey, 1996; Myers-Walls et al., 1993). Similarly, as I explained in Chapter 8, educators in the state schools have identified violent child-rearing practices and characterise many of the families in their schools as dysfunctional. Concern over the impact these practices have on students has pushed the state and schools to include programmes like Parents’ Schools to enable intervention in what happens at home. Programmes similar to Parents’ Schools have also been implemented in other contexts, for example in Cape Town, South Africa, where Parent Centres have been used to promote healthy family relationships, train parents in conflict resolution, and develop better family communication (Dovey, 1996). Harris (2000) has also identified similar practices in schools in the United States, where educators “educate parents about the importance of not hitting their children” (p. 18) out of concern that “[p]hysical means of disciplining children provide bad models of conflict resolution, lower children’s self-esteem, and make it difficult for children to trust adults” (Harris, 2000, p. 18).
However, my research in Colombian schools revealed that when these programmes to educate parents are mediated by the school’s perception of what families are lacking, they can establish a power dynamic that places the school in a senior position (as expert) to families. In Chapter 8, I explained that educators, parents and pupils agree that families are the first peace educators, and that there is a consensus that the development of peace in society starts with instilling values like respect, honesty, and tolerance at home. However, there was also a perception among educators that families are not teaching core values, which forces educators to take on the role that families are not fulfilling.

This narrative of deprivation is not new. Vandenbroeck and Bie (2006) argue that current understandings of working-class families as inadequate have roots reaching as far back as the nineteenth century. González and Moll (2002) explain that this narrative of inadequacy often stems from schools’ unwillingness to consider families’ knowledge as valid, because it is not “the right” kind of academic knowledge. In my research, it became clear that parents from state schools also viewed themselves as having insufficient education to be able to teach peace, which they believed to be specialised knowledge that should be handled by experts. Myers-Walls et al (1993) have argued that the topics of war and peace are often difficult for parents to discuss with their children because they want to shield them from things that might harm them, leaving it to educators in schools to use their expertise to handle the topics. These assertions suggest that parents in the state schools might not necessarily avoid discussing topics of war and peace with their children because they do not have knowledge about these topics specifically (especially since some of them have been direct victims of the armed conflict), but because they do not feel they have the pedagogical tools to be able to discuss the topics with their children in a meaningful and appropriate way.

In contrast, in the private school, involving parents in school activities was perceived as a strategy to enrich pupils’ peace education. Parents at the Colegio Ideas were regarded as equals and actively engaged with the school community. Vandebroach and Bie (2006) argue that the global discourse of family inadequacy cannot be separated from elements of socio-economic status and gender. This discourse was directed at working-class families and women, which can help explain this difference between state schools and the private school to some extent. The socio-economic status of parents at the private school allowed them to take time off work to be present in school activities, which gave them access to better
educational opportunities, equipped them with the ‘right’ kind of knowledge, and made it easier for the school to engage with them.

In general, the pedagogy and ideal of peace promoted in peace education programmes designed for parents were different and narrower than those educators used with pupils. As I explained in Chapter 8, educators have adopted strategies like assessing parental engagement and relaying information to parents about parenting. This type of education resembles Freire’s (1996 [1970]) characterisation of ‘banking education’, where the teacher as the expert transmits information to the student (in this case the parent), and the parents have little or no power in the process of producing knowledge. However, González and Moll (2002) argue that “people are competent and have knowledge, and their life experiences have given them that knowledge” (p. 625). This competency and knowledge base of parents was evident in the fact that parents described very different ideas of peace than educators, which, like students, included macro-political elements like the armed conflict, the post-conflict era, and the government. And yet, schools did not mention any of these examples when they explained the type of themes developed in Parents’ Schools.

There are some issues with this type of pedagogy for schools’ work with parents. Educators in the state school criticised a lack of commitment on the part of parents with their children’s education, and while some acknowledged the socio-economic circumstances that kept parents from attending school activities, the blame was generally adjudicated to the individual. While teachers were aware of familial dynamics, which they characterised as dysfunctional and violent, they seldom acknowledged the possible connections between this dysfunctionality and poverty or armed conflict. ‘Banking education’ cannot help address the ingrained inequalities that poverty and a lack of education have produced among parents, restricting their opportunities in the labour market and also their ability to take part in school activities. Transforming the pedagogical approach to question why and what limits parents could help foster a profound politics of recognition, that would re-balance relationships between the school and parents. Seeking that type of recognition could also pave the way to a moral equality which entails treating and respecting others (in this case the parents) based on their intrinsic value as people (see Snauwaert, 2011).

Lederach (1995) understands the process of building peace as a systemic transformation, where interactions can potentially be “mutually beneficial and cooperative” (p. 18). I argue that this approach to working with families could not only influence and
change violent practices that affect pupils, but could create the kind of mutually beneficial relationships that transform social systems. Engaging with the underlying structural and cultural factors that drive inequality could involve creating critical communities which foster dialogue about structures of power, inequalities, and privilege (see Hytten & Bettez, 2011). In Freirian thinking, dialogue is essential to awakening *conscientização* by enabling critical thinking. Dialogue on this model involves educators who are authentic, sympathetic, loving, creative, and – crucially – willing to truly engage with students’ and parents’ realities, and to value the knowledge that families have as much as their own (Blackburn, 2000; González & Moll, 2002). Through this type of meaningful and balanced dialogue, schools could engage more effectively with families.

In this chapter, I summarised the answers to my research questions and discussed how these findings contribute to wider theorising on peace and peace education, in order to propose how peace education in Colombia might best move forward. I have argued that there are several strengths and weaknesses in the manner in which peace education practice occurs in Colombia today.
10. Conclusion

In this thesis I have identified some notable strengths including the centrality of the social context and educators’ personal biographies in the development of peace education programmes in schools. These two elements shape educators’ notions of peace, which in turn influence why peace is taught in schools, what is taught as peace, and how it is taught. This finding corroborates existing theories on the importance of social context in peace education, and reinforces conceptualisations of peace as imperfect by showing that peace can – and should – have different meanings depending on context. Though the 1732 Educational Law relates closely to a project of liberal peace, it maintains a significant degree of flexibility, which allows teachers to adapt it to their existing peace education projects – capitalising on the strengths described above. With this openness, the Law satisfies the drive educators have to respond to their students’ contextual needs. This understanding contributes to wider debates on liberal peace and the implementation of education reform, by showing that initiatives of peace education at the local level can lead processes of peace development more forcefully than state-mandated projects. A third strength of peace education practice in Colombia is the creativity of pedagogical approaches, which tend to share an active learning component, a concern for making activities student-centred, and a commitment to including the contextual circumstances of pupils. This finding speaks directly to wider theorising of peace education since most scholars agree with the need for peace education pedagogy to include those elements. Finally, I found that the schools’ will to engage with parents was a potential strength, and could improve their peace education programmes.

However, I also argued that there is space for improvement in Colombia’s peace education practice. In general, I found that an over-emphasis on responsiveness to the schools’ immediate context can have consequences for the evolution of peace education, especially within the macro socio-political context of Colombia. The fact that Colombia underwent a peace negotiation process that set itself apart from previous negotiations by aiming to address the social, economic and political inequalities that produced the 50-year armed conflict, and successfully signed a final Peace Accord on this basis, calls for all sectors in society – including education – to work towards active peacebuilding. Pupils and families expressed an active interest in engaging with larger socio-political questions, including how to contribute to a post-conflict society, which schools’ peace programmes would be well-positioned to nurture. I have argued that each step in the process of teaching for peace can
include elements of peacebuilding, from the Law to the pedagogy of peace, to the way in which schools establish effective partnerships with families. I showed how conceptualising peace as imperfect and processual can improve the practice of peace education, and pave a way to peacebuilding and positive peace. What this study shows is that schools in Colombia need to capitalise on the peacebuilding practice and potential they already have.

Having summarised the most important ideas in this thesis, the next sections explore the limitations of my study, implications for policy and practice of peace education in Colombia, and possible next steps for my work.

10.1. Limitations of My Study

The major limitation of my study was access at different levels. Since the first criteria to choose participant schools was to have access to exemplary practice of peace education, and I found the Compartir Prize an excellent starting point to identify and contact educators who fit such criteria. However, this choice meant that other exemplary teachers and head teachers of peace education who did not nominate themselves for the prize could not be identified. Secondly, most people who participate to win the prize work in public education, therefore, this meant that I had a bigger sample from state schools. As a result, I could only identify one private school who had a head teacher who had won the prize for peace education practice. I found that despite having a larger representation from state schools, my study suggests that there is an important difference between peace education practice between public and private education. The private school had different purposes and ways in which educators implemented peace education and worked with parents, for example. This difference is worth exploring further.

The second reason why I consider access a limitation of my study is because each school allowed me more or less freedom to interview children, teachers, and parents. Some schools were open to me having as many meetings with pupils during the school day, others actively helped me recruit parents, and some teachers in certain schools willingly participated, whereas in other schools, teachers found excuses not to participate. This meant that the differences from school to school did not allow me to build complete case studies, but to conduct a qualitative inquiry into the decisions, practice, and understandings of educators whose work in implementing the peace core subject has been acknowledged and awarded a prize.
Lastly, access to rural and minority schools was also limited because winners of the Compartir Prize for peace education were mostly located in urban settings, however, I did contact two other schools in rural areas. Although I identified a very interesting experience in Montes de María, the University Ethics Committee prioritised safety and even though I am a national of Colombia, meant I could not go to visit schools located in areas of the country highly controlled by paramilitary forces. Another school whose population is mostly of afro-Colombian descent, never answered my emails or phone calls, therefore, I could not invite them to participate in my study.

Despite the limitations explained above, my study draws important findings from which to make recommendations for policy and practice on the subject of peace education and opens important future avenues for future work.

10.2. Implications for Policy and Practice of Peace Education

A key finding from my study is that peace education in Colombia mostly focuses on education for peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Although this is a global tendency, Colombia’s particular context of armed conflict and having a signed peace agreement which clearly aims at peacebuilding by addressing deeply ingrained inequalities, has important implications for policymakers regarding peace education. In addition, the fact that the genesis of peace core subject occurred during the negotiations of such peace agreement, also calls for a more congruent policy of peace education with the national project of peace the peace agreement seems to aim for. However, the peace core subject’s flexibility which greatly allows educators to make the adaptations necessary to serve the community they work with, is a strength. These apparent irreconcilable positions of having flexibility and at the same time a clear purpose for peace education in Colombia, means that policies must strike a balance where peace education clearly aims at peacebuilding while having the openness for educators to adapt to the contextual needs and decide what peacebuilding looks like in their own settings. The reflective process should be a cooperative exercise, where different peace educators give each other feedback,

To achieve such balance means that the commitment to peacebuilding should lead to designing space where policymakers, educators, peace researchers and the community could come together to learn about peacebuilding and share what they perceive are the needs of the context in order to determine the curriculum necessary to address the structures that they
need to transform in order to build long-lasting peace. The decisions made derived from the meaningful dialogue could then guide to a more meaningful oversight of schools and educators on issues of peace education.

Nevertheless, curriculum is not the only core element which should be addressed. The practice of peace education which specifically entails pedagogy and teachers attitudes also play a central role when trying to take on processes of peacebuilding through education. In this study I found a wide array of very creative pedagogical strategies and educators who are deeply committed to teaching peace to pupils. However, most of these strategies tend also to support processes of peacekeeping and peacemaking. What this means for practice is that for teachers and educators in general who want to evolve their practice and form individuals who are able to bring about change, should become changemakers themselves. In order to do this, teachers should reflect continuously on their everyday practice and assess themselves as peacebuilders. However, the exercise of reflecting on practice could benefit from establishing critical communities where educators facilitate each other’s reflection to define, design, and identify new pedagogical strategies suitable for their specific context and that will foster peacebuilding. In addition, the constant process reflection within the context of critical communities could awaken educators’ conscientização so needed to become empowered.

10.3. Next Steps

Having explained in section 10.1 that access was an important limitation of my study, future research could benefit from including rural and minority schools. Looking into these other schools could inform how issues of race, language, and access to education are seen through a lens of peace education.

It would also be useful to explore the perspective of policymakers to understand how and if policies of peace education in Colombia relate to the peace agreement and the reasons why they do or do not. Moreover, examining the perspectives of policymakers could clarify further what Colombia as a nation expects from peace education programmes. Peace education research could also benefit from studying what the state does in order to support processes of peace education in practice by observing processes of oversight and teacher training.

Finally, this study showed that teachers from subject-areas which are not traditionally associated with peace education for instance, art and physical education, believe to be
teaching peace and for peace. Therefore, to further peace education research, an important avenue would be to look into these curricula and pedagogical practice.
References


DANE. (n.d.). Estratos Socioeconómicos.


El País. (2016). Las principales diferencias entre el primer y segundo acuerdo de paz con las FARC. El País.


La larga y cruel lucha por la tierra en el Cauca. (2014, January 15). *La verdad abierta*.


## Appendix A Stage One of Data Collection

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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Type of Data Collected</th>
<th>Data Collection Instruments</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>Popayán Liceo Alejandro de Humboldt</td>
<td>Winner of Compartir Prize for the Head Teacher: John Sandoval Teachers: Amanda, Marina*, Adriana*, Elena*</td>
<td>1 semi-structured interviews 1 group interview</td>
<td>Interview guide Recording device (iPad) Field notebook (iPad)</td>
<td>November 2015</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Cali Colegio Ideas</td>
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## Appendix B Stage Two of Data Collection

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<th>Location</th>
<th>Participants</th>
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</table>
| Popayán Liceo Alejandro de Humboldt | **School Leaders:** Maria Cecilia (psychologist), Dolly (nurse). **Teachers:** Amanda, Marina*, Adriana*, Elena*, Carlos  
**Parents:** Olga, Marta* | 8 semi-structured interviews | -Interview guide  
-Recording device (iPad)  
-Field notebook (iPad) | March 30th – April 12th 2016 |
| | **Teachers:** Amanda, Marina*, Adriana*, Elena* | 8 classroom observations | -Classroom observation guide  
-Field notebook (iPad) | March 30th – April 12th 2016 |
| | **Students:** 18 males, 18 females | 10 focus groups with students | -Focus groups’ questions guide  
-Field notebook (iPad)  
-Recording device (iPad) | March 30th – April 12th 2016 |
| Bogotá Institución Educativa Divino Maestro | **Head Teacher:** Maria Luz Rincón  
**Winner of Compartir Prize for the Teacher:** Jose Alberto Silva  
**Parents:** Luz, Sandra, Oscar*, Maria*, Silvia* | 6 semi-structured interviews | -Interview guide  
-Recording device (iPad)  
-Field notebook (iPad) | April 18th - May 6th 2016 |
| | **Winner of Compartir Prize for the Teacher:** Jose Alberto Silva | 36 classroom observations | -Classroom observation guide  
-Field notebook (iPad) | April 18th - May 6th 2016 |
| | **Students:** 14 males, 14 females | 6 focus groups with students | -Focus groups’ questions guide  
-Field notebook (iPad)  
-Recording device (iPad) | April 18th - May 6th 2016 |
### Stage Two of Data Collection (continued)

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<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Interview Guide/Recording</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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