

Transformation of livelihoods and experiences on social justice in conflict-affected settings. The case of the rural community of Pitacapacho, in Montes de Maria, Colombia

In the last decade, a growing recognition has been appointed to the victims of violence as a direct ramification of the Colombian armed conflict—a regime that has afflicted the territory of Colombia since the 1960s approximately. Historically underrepresented, victims of violence from the Colombian armed conflict have gradually gained visibility through engagements with justice laws, policies, and initiatives of the peace process' with Paramilitaries and Guerrilla groups from the mid-2000s onwards. Such initiatives have been oriented towards the reparation of rights, socio-economic improvements and cultural practices of people that have suffered immediate effects of conflict; namely peasants and inhabitants of rural areas. However, many victimized groups still await reparation and continue to experience the absence of the state. Therefore, the livelihoods of those are still being influenced and problematized by conflict-related reverberations, a concept that remains largely unexplored by academia. Hence, this research aims to unravel the ways the ways in which the effects of conflict have shaped victims' livelihoods and their experiences with social justice. More specifically, this research focuses on residents of Pitacapacho, a rural community in the Montes de Maria sub region, who are returning without support from the State after having been internally displaced. Utilizing a mixed methods design, this dissertation combines a variety of interviews, focus groups, and surveys conducted among rural families and key stakeholders. This research reveals how conflict impacts the transition from self-consumption to wage labor, the change of agricultural land use to the development of extractive industries, the intensification of limited statehood, and the worsening of public infrastructure. As a consequence of the armed conflict, the Pitacapacho people's livelihoods have suffered from a decline of peasant living conditions, the proletarianization of the peasantry and the partial loss of its primary goods. The approach followed in this paper provides an argument to explore the scope of long term effects of conflict in regards to people's livelihoods, and whether reparation policies of rural victimized groups do or do not address matters of livelihoods and social justice in regards to the Colombian armed conflict.

Keywords: Victims, internal displacement, post-conflict, livelihoods, social justice, Colombia, Montes de Maria