

**BETWEEN DESIRES OF LOVE AND STRUGGLES OF SURVIVAL**

A study of the *Meterse al Rancho* Model of intrafamily violence transformation in Colombia

Juanita Rojas Palacio

Master's Thesis

Major Social and Public Policy

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*“El Tiempo nos ha vaciado de fulgor  
Pero la oscuridad sigue poblada de  
Luciérnagas”*

Gioconda Belli

Time has dimmed our brilliance  
But darkness is still inhabited by  
fireflies

Gioconda Belli

*A las luciérnagas que siguen iluminando  
los días y las noches  
y que a pesar de muchas dificultades  
continúan tejiendo vida.*

To the fireflies who still illuminate  
days and nights  
and despite all difficulties  
continue weaving life

## SUMMARY

### **Between desires of love and struggles of survival: A study of the *Meterse al Rancho* Model of intrafamily violence transformation in Colombia**

Juanita Rojas Palacio  
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 University of Jyväskylä  
 Instructor: Tiina Kontinen, Marja Järvelä, Jeremy Gould  
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This Master's thesis is a study of the *Meterse al Rancho* model of intrafamily violence transformation in Colombia. It critically analyses the pedagogical model and operational strategy developed by the *Observatorio para la Paz*, to explore its significance in the development of public policies regarding intrafamily violence in Colombia and Latin America. Based in the decolonial option, critical theory, constructivist and constructivism theories, it is argued that *Meterse al Rancho* model is an alternative pathway to the traditional punitive and psychiatric approaches to tackling family violence. By linking family and peace, *Meterse al Rancho* focuses on cultural aspects of violence and grassroots education to prevent violence and promote healthy relationships and well-being in families and communities. This model is an innovative example of collaborative work with families, community leaders, universities and the government in processes of cultural transformation based in community education and civic participation. It is revealed, however, that the short-term policy, *Haz Paz* that supported the development of *Meterse al Rancho* model does not implement the permanent mechanisms required to produce enduring changes. Furthermore, it is concluded that it is necessary to promote a multi-ethnic and multicultural perspective in public policies so they can go beyond academia and take as a starting point the singularities of all ethnic and cultural Colombian groups. This investigation draws to a close by conjecturing that even though people in contexts vulnerable to violence have strong desires of love, struggles of survival carry weight, and therefore educational projects that do not involve structural transformations might lack substance to effect family transformation processes.

*Key words:* Colombia, family public policies, intrafamily violence, intrafamily violence transformation, *Meterse al Rancho*.

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## GLOSSARY

*Haz Paz* (Make Peace): A Colombian public policy created in 2000 to tackle intrafamily violence. It focuses on grassroots education and cultural transformation to prevent and transform violence, and to contribute to the construction of a peaceful society.

*ICBF*: *Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar* (Colombian Institute for Family Well-being).

*Madres Fami* (Fami Mothers): Leaders of Colombian communities involved with the ICBF. *Madres Fami* are women who work locally as community educators with pregnant and lactating women, as well as babysitting children under 2 years of age. Currently there are 69,000 *Madres Fami* in Colombia serving 1,077,000 children.

*Meterse al Rancho* ('Get into the Ranch'): Reclaiming the expression 'to meddle in other people's business' to mean 'let's talk about this at my house'. A Colombian family peace education strategy designed by the OPAZ to overcome intrafamily violence, especially in vulnerable contexts.

*OIM*: *Organización Internacional para las Migraciones* (IOM; International Organization for Migration).

*OPAZ*: *Corporación Observatorio para la Paz* (Peace Observatory Corporation).

*Pacicultura* (Culture of Peace): The methodology created by the *Observatorio para la Paz* to work with families (and other populations, such as students outside of the mainstream education system) in processes of individual and community transformation towards peace.

*USAID*: United States Agency for International Development.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In Colombia, after more than 50 years of internal conflict, the signing of a peace treaty with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC; *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*) appears closer to becoming reality. A peace agreement with one of the country's largest guerrilla groups, however, will not guarantee peace. Agreements such as those in Esquipulas, Guatemala, and the agreements with The 19th of April Movement (M-19; *Movimiento 19 de Abril*), the Workers Revolutionary Party of Colombia (PRT; *Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores de Colombia*), the Quintin Lame Armed Movement (*Movimiento Armado Quintin Lame*) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Colombia, have left a legacy of hard lessons. These two decades of experience show that so-called peace processes can frustrate society, especially the poor. Since peace agreements were made in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Colombia, inequity and injustice have worsened, crime and corruption have permeated the social fabric and the public institutions, violence has increased, and the apathy of the people towards politics has grown, which has led to a lack of exercise of citizenship and a sense of hopelessness. Therefore, in spite of the peace agreements, violence is threatening the consolidation of democracy in Latin American countries.

According to *Grupo de Memoria Histórica* (2013), “in Colombia 54 years of armed conflict have generated more than 6 million direct victims—killed, missing, displaced, disabled by bombs and landmines, threatened, (women) raped and recruited” (p. 25). Violence has affected different spheres of society; e.g., infrastructure and the national economy. Furthermore, according to Martín-Baró (1990), “one of the effects of the conflict and war is the *Psychosocial Trauma*, the militarization of the collective soul that internalizes violence and makes it neutral, meaning the proliferation of individualism and the legitimization of the use of force” (p. 82).

There is a dearth of research on the relationship between intrafamily violence and social violence (Viveros, 2002, p. 98). The family is a microunit of social coexistence and it is the primary environment where values and beliefs are learned and practiced (Klauf & Maurás, 1998, p. 16). Thus, family plays a central role in the transformation of violence. Research suggests that the proliferation of violent values, beliefs and everyday practices in the family contribute to the expansion of violence in the society, and vice versa (Benjamin & Fancy, 1998; Galtung & Jakobson, 2000; Jimeno, 2001b; Viveros, 2002). Efforts to break the cycle of violence are important in the promotion of human rights and sustainable development in Colombia and across the world.

Public policies concerning intrafamily violence in Latin America have been developed traditionally from two perspectives, with an emphasis on individuals: a punitive approach that focuses on prosecuting offenses, mostly those against women, and a psychological approach in which the causes of intrafamily violence are in the psyche of individuals and thus the emphasis is in the psychological or psychiatric treatment of perpetrators (Rioseco, 2005). There is a lack of study on the prevention rather than the treatment of violence in a social and cultural framework. Prevention involves working with the transformation of violent ideas,

values and beliefs that influence the way individuals interact and influence the proliferation of a culture of violence. This approach demands working not only with individuals but also with groups of people, such as families, where individuals could engage in the transformation of relationships that are based on violence (Duque & Peña, 2004, p. 29).

In Colombia there have been no systematic studies exploring the cultural aspect of intrafamily violence and the relationship it has with social violence, particularly in regard to the violence originating from the armed conflict. This gap in knowledge is not difficult to explain because until very recently, as Tortosa (1999, 2000) indicates, the treatment of intrafamily violence was of the perpetrator only.

Only since 2000 has intrafamily violence in Colombia been considered a phenomenon with sociocultural components. In this year *Haz Paz* was created, the first public policy of intrafamily violence prevention and transformation. In this dissertation, a critical reading of the case study *Meterse al Rancho*—reclaiming the expression ‘to meddle in other people’s business’ to mean ‘let’s talk about this at my house’ (literally, ‘Get into the Ranch’)—is presented. This is a model of intrafamily violence transformation, which was the pedagogical strategy developed in the *Haz Paz* policy, developed to work with families in the transformation of daily violence.

The purpose of this study is to determine the significance of the *Meterse al Rancho* model of intrafamily transformation in the development of public policies regarding intrafamily violence transformation in Colombia and surrounding Latin America. It also aims to answer the following questions:

- In what academic and ideological context did *Meterse al Rancho* approach evolve?
- What strategic choices did the founders and organisers of *Meterse al Rancho* make?
- How do *Meterse al Rancho*’s operational modalities, specifically, the pedagogical approach, relate to conventional social work methodologies in Colombia?
- Why did *Meterse al Rancho* fail to institutionalise itself in a sustainable way?

After the Introduction, chapter 2 presents the main concepts that will be used in the study, as well as the case study in the context of intrafamily violence policies development in Colombia and the Latin American region. Chapter 3 presents recent contributions of the social sciences to the intrafamily violence theoretical debate. It discusses postulates of authors of the fields of sociology, psychological and social theories as well as those of Latin American academics identified with the decolonial option. The theories discussed are those used by the researcher to approach *Meterse al Rancho*. In Chapter 4 the methodological path that guided this qualitative case study is described. Chapter 5 discusses the findings using the theoretical lenses and the questions that guided this research. Finally chapter 6 gives the author’s conclusions and recommendations for practice and future research.

From this research, it is concluded that *Meterse al Rancho* is a viable alternative to the traditional punitive approach to addressing family violence. Furthermore, the focus on the cultural aspect of violence through participatory pedagogies and the collaborative work of families, community leaders, universities and the government in processes of cultural transformation will likely contribute to family public policies not only in Colombia but also in the Latin American Region.

Nevertheless, the weak policy that supported the development of the *Meterse al Rancho* model, *Haz Paz*, demonstrates a need to implement reliable and permanent mechanisms of support for this type of initiative to realise enduring changes. Finally, from a decolonial standpoint, this thesis concludes that, even though people vulnerable to violence have strong desires of love, struggles of survival do matter. Therefore, educational projects that lack structural transformations may be weak as sustainable family transformation processes.

## **2. *METERSE AL RANCHO* IN THE CONTEXT OF INTRAFAMILY VIOLENCE PUBLIC POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN COLOMBIA AND LATIN AMERICA**

This chapter introduces the phenomenon of intrafamily violence in Colombia and Latin America and the policies that have been developed both in the country and the region to tackle this type of violence. The objective is to contextualize the case study and the main concepts that will be used throughout the research prior to introduce the reader to the academic debate on the issue which is presented in chapter 3.

### **2.1. Intrafamily violence policies in Latin America**

#### 2.1.1. Public policies on intrafamily violence in Latin America

Historically and internationally, intrafamily violence and specifically that against women has been considered a private issue and therefore a reality where states should not intervene. It has only been in recent decades that powerful international regulatory frameworks (conventions and instruments) have been developed in relation to the impairment of certain rights as a result of intrafamily violence<sup>1</sup>: Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, or Convention of Belem do Pará (OEA, 1994); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW; ONU, 1979, 1999); American Convention on Human Rights (OEA, 1969, 1988) and its Additional Protocol in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (OAS, 1988); International Pact on Civil and Political Rights (ONU, 1966) and its

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<sup>1</sup> Right to a life free of violence (Convention of *Belem do Pará*); Right to life (American Convention on Human Rights, International Pact on Civil and Political Rights, Convention of Belem do Pará); Right to physical, mental and moral integrity (American Convention on Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Convention of Belem do Pará); Right to health, defined as the highest level of physical, mental and social wellbeing (International Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, American Convention on Human Rights and its Additional Protocol of San Salvador); Right to personal liberty and security (American Convention on Human Rights, International Pact on Civil and Political Rights, Convention of Belem do Pará); Women's right to be free from all forms of discrimination (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention of Belem do Pará); Right of women to be valued and educated free of stereotyped patterns of behaviour as well as social and cultural practices based on concepts of inferiority or subordination (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention of Belem do Pará); Right to the respect of the inherent dignity of a person and the protection of the family (American Convention on Human Rights and the Convention of Belem do Pará); The right to a simple and prompt recourse to a competent court for protection against acts that violate rights (American Convention on Human Rights, Convention of Belem do Pará); Right to equal protection under the law and from the law (American Convention on Human Rights, the International Pact on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention of Belem do Pará); Right to equal treatment in the courts and justice and the right to a correct process (American Convention on Human Rights and International Pact on Civil and Political Rights); and the general obligation to respect and ensure the exercise of the rights enshrined in the American Convention.

Optional Protocol (ONU, 1966); International Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ONU, 1966); Universal Declaration of Human Rights (ONU, 1949); and the Platform for Action of Women (UN, 1995).

As noted by Rioseco (2005), the increasing trend for the ratification of international instruments (such as those cited above) that pertain to human rights, which could be violated by states, undoubtedly has been enhanced by the international women's movement. The women's movement began in the late 70s and 80s with the Conference of Women (Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985, Beijing in 1995). Since then, the movement has continued to grow, becoming more visible in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the 90s, events such as the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993), the World Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994) and the World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) addressed the common theme of the struggle for the recognition of women's rights as human rights and the visibility of emblematic cases of violation of these rights.

In Latin America, most efforts concerning family public policy have taken the form of economic policies related to poverty reduction (commonly used by political parties to gain office). The intrafamily violence public policies began in the early 90s (Rioseco, 2005), which corresponds to when most Latin American countries changed their penal codes, introducing intrafamily violence as a criminal act. In some countries, intrafamily violence was considered to be a failure to comply with obligations and in others as a breach of ordinary law, but both types with diverse sanctions; e.g., in Nicaragua (1996), Panama (1995) and Puerto Rico (1989). Other countries passed special protection laws in place of punitive sanctions; e.g., Argentina (1994), Chile (1994), Bolivia (1995) and Colombia (1996). Several countries chose to implement both approaches—to introduce specific legislation for protection and to incorporate a criminal figure into the penal code; e.g., Honduras and Puerto Rico. Most countries with common law systems have passed protection laws to protect individuals from intrafamily violence; e.g., Barbados (1992), Jamaica (1995) and Dominican Republic (2001). There remain some countries, however, such as Guyana and Antilles, that have neither introduced special legislations nor modified their existing rules; they thus rely on the limited possibilities offered by the general criminal law.

Table 1 presents the approaches used in the understanding and transformation of intrafamily violence. For each approach, the cause of violence and the tools used to transcend it are described.

Table 1  
*Approaches of public policies on intrafamily violence*

<b>Approach</b>	<b>The causes of violence</b>	<b>Tools used to transcend violence</b>
<b>Punitive</b>	Perpetrator commits an action against the order	Punishment (payment or jail) for the perpetrator of violence
<b>Psychological</b>	Perpetrator is sick from violence	Psychological or psychiatric treatment (neurological drugs, if needed)

**Socio-cultural**

Violent cultures influence the way people interact, reproducing those representations, ideas and values

Pedagogies in which individuals and families could transform violent ideas, imaginaries, ancestral practices in which there is violence included

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Note: Personal elaboration

Regarding intrafamily violence, research shows that policies on its prevention are not effective in most countries, as the majority of work has focused on the punitive aspect of violence. As Rioseco (2005) suggests, although efforts have been made in preventive interventions, the lack of resources and lack of importance allocated by the states hinders the development of a systematized process and thus the development of effective public policies regarding the issue (p. 35).

### 2.1.2. Public policies on intrafamily violence in Colombia

In Colombia, intrafamily violence has been confronted as a public health problem only very recently, which is a late start compared with other countries. Whereas countries such as Canada and The United States began addressing intrafamily violence in the 70s in the context of women's rights struggles, in Colombia it was not until the 90s that the State began to consider the need for joint initiatives to eradicate intrafamily violence in a consistent manner (Traverso, 2009, p. 7).

The 1991 Colombian Constitution (*Constitución de la República de Colombia*, 1991) was the first Colombian primordial law/Carta Magna in which the issue of intrafamily violence emerged as a reality that the state should intervene on. In this document, the idea of family was enlarged and diversified to declare the need of a law to prevent, punish and redeem any type violence within the family. The Law 294 of 1996 was developed according to Article 42 of the Constitution of 1991. It declared that, by violating fundamental human rights, domestic violence was a crime. Thus, the 90s are marked by a State response to the phenomenon with an emphasis on the punitive aspect. From this time, the Colombian state began working to protect victims and prosecuting perpetrators of intrafamily violence.

The aforementioned change of the Colombian law was an important advancement in punitive terms to intrafamily violence. The increasing number of victims of such violence and the development of international discussions signalled the need to broaden this perspective. Law 294 was amended by Act 575 of 2000, which led to the *Haz Paz* policy. This initiative consolidated the desire of creating a new and more complete legal framework and action against what was beginning to be perceived as a more complex problem. This policy from the year 2000 was built on pillars of human rights, gender equality and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. For the first time in Colombia, the social and cultural aspects of violence were being integrated as important components in the institutional work to combat intrafamily violence.



There have been changes in Colombian law because intrafamily violence has come to be understood as a complex phenomenon that cannot be approached only from a punitive point of view, or treated as a product of individual choices and behaviours. Today, it is widely recognized that there are other factors contributing to this type of violence, such as psycho-emotional limitations, sociocultural and/or economic factors, and in recent years—most prominently—the close relationship between armed conflict, violence culture and intrafamily violence has been implicated (Jimeno, 2001; Traverso, 2000).

Most conflicts occur in everyday interpersonal relations, in settings such as homes, the workplace, schools and neighbourhoods, and often are resolved without State intervention. Therefore, today it is acknowledged that there is a need to recognise not only the multiple causes of intrafamily violence but also the importance of developing comprehensive strategies from the State and institutions to support the development of effective interpersonal skills to allow families to foster the transformation of violent relationships in their homes and their communities.

The understanding of the family as an actor that can impel a social transformation has been growing within the social sciences. In their study of family and public policies in Latin America, Kaluf and Maurás (1998) showed that the family, despite modernisation, remains one of the most important, if not the principal, agents in the process of people's socialisation. They suggest that “social change towards peace cannot occur if family is not taken into account as one of the basic living units. Family has been an object rather than a subject of social development, which explains why social change has been limited and has not enhanced social interaction” (Kaluf & Maurás, 1998, p. 47).

As Larraín (2002) suggests, Latin America is still in need of building a comprehensive and multisectoral approach to intrafamily violence prevention policies. By doing so, these policies could address different risk factors to intrafamily violence besides simple awareness of the issue; e.g., poverty, job instability, migration processes, lack of social networks, history of violence in the family as well as in the social and cultural contexts, alcohol and drug consumption, cultural and/or social values permissive towards abuse of power and violence.

Furthermore, research shows that intrafamily violence interventions and policies continue to focus on work with women; very little attention has been given to men and families, limiting the scope of violence prevention. Sayem (2012) made a similar finding in an investigation of the Asian region.

## **2.2. Intrafamily violence in Colombia**

Colombia is a country where, every day, thousands of people suffer diverse types of violence. Paradoxically and, contrary to what one might expect, the prevalent type of violence is not the result of the armed conflict. In 2009, the *Instituto Nacional de Medicina*

*Legal y Ciencias Forenses* (National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences) reported 138,617 known cases of violence, which affected mostly men and women between 20 and 24 years of age. Of these, 69,158 cases resulted from street and domestic fights (social violence), while only 800 were cases related to the armed conflict (Appendix A).

The World Health Organization (Organización mundial de la salud, 2002), although acknowledging the complexity and the various possible meanings of violence, understands it as the intentional use of physical force or power, whether in degree of threat or effective, against oneself, another person, group or community, that causes or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation (p. 15). Interpersonal violence is understood in the same report as the violence that occurs within households or families and in communities, e.g., in streets or neighbourhoods.

Intrafamily violence is defined by the State as the abuse exerted by family members on one another, be it physical, sexual or psychological, causing injury or death (Presidencia de la República, 2000). It is a complex phenomenon in Colombia that has been increasing at an alarming rate. The observed consequences of intrafamily violence include physical and psychological injury of the victims, perpetrators, their families and communities, as well as difficulties for the human, social, and, as noted by Traverso (2000), the economic development of the country.

This is a reality in Colombia that, according to *Ley 575 del 2000* (Law 575 of 2000), affects spouses or permanent companions, the father and mother (even if not living in the same household), the ascendants or descendants and previous adoptive children, and all the other persons that shall be found permanently integrated into the household. As shown in Figures 1 and 2, Carreño (2009) found that in 2009, Colombia had 93,859 victims of this violence, spanning all generations and both sexes. It is alarming that women are the most affected by this type of violence—of the violence reported between couples in 2009, 54,192 were cases of violence against women while only 6,947 cases were against men. Although violence against women is significantly more prevalent, the National Demographic and Health Survey conducted by *Profamilia* in 2000 and again in 2005 (Profamilia, 2005) showed that abuse against men in Colombia is also increasing.



Figure 1. Cases of intrafamily violence in Colombia 1999–2009 (Carreño, 2009).

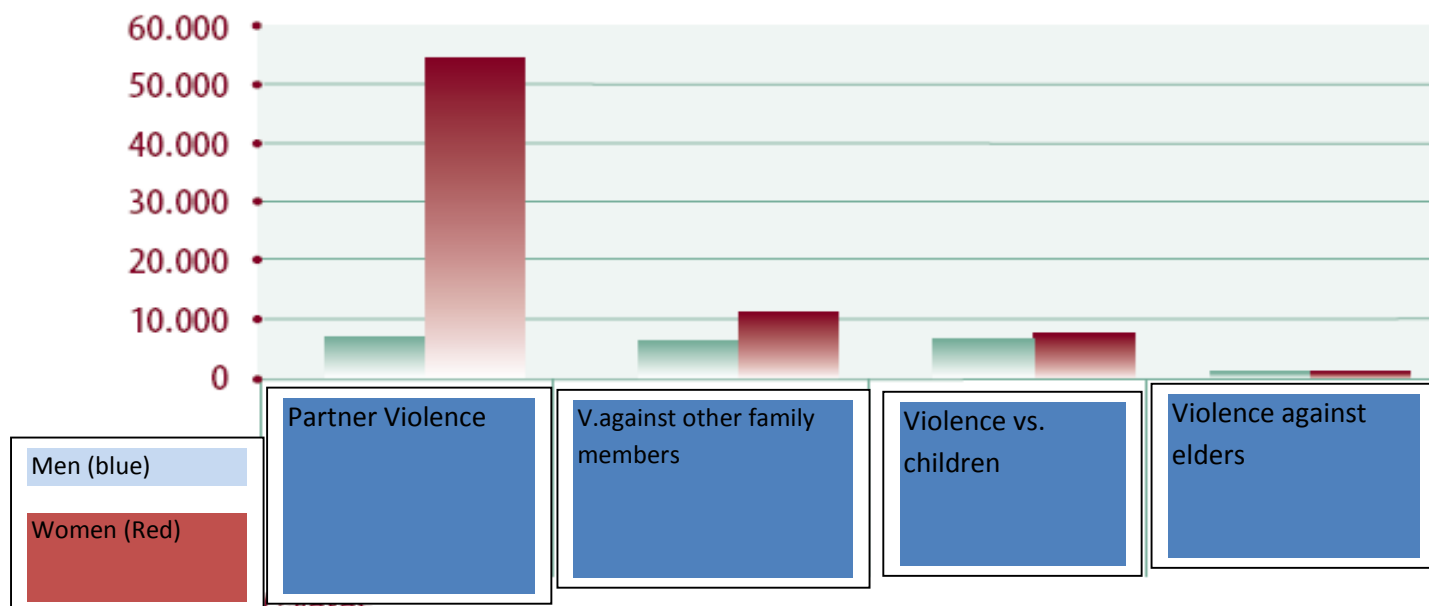


Figure 2. Intrafamily violence incidence in Colombia 1999–2009, differentiated by gender (Carreño, 2009).

One of the main problems in the last decade resulting from the Colombian armed conflict is the incidence and persistence of displacement (Appendix D). According to the *Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento* (The Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement; CODHES, 2008), in the year 2008, approximately 380,863 people and 76,162 families were forced to leave their homes. These internally displaced people, generally located in rural areas, leave because of consequences of

the armed conflict. Most of these families move to urban areas where the arrival is a difficult process. After the displacement, these individuals face conditions of extreme poverty and they often struggle adapting to the new urban values.

Even though the displaced family is not homogeneous, as Benjamin and Fancy (1998) document, within displaced families violence increases astonishingly, not only because of precarious living conditions but because traditional values change, generating profound feelings of affective emptiness. Thus, the phenomenon of displacement clearly shows how social violence produces migration that increases violence within the displaced families. This specific situation shows how intrafamily violence cannot be approached from a punitive or pathological standpoint.

Duque and Peña (2004) have found that intrafamily violence occurs in developed and developing countries and within well-off as well as poor households. Therefore, in the literature, it has been argued that there is no direct relationship between poverty and intrafamily violence. Duque and Peña (2004) suggest that there has been a “lack of consideration to the cultural constructions surrounding domestic violence” (p. 28), an argument that could be extended to other of the aspects of violence, such as the structural factors mentioned by Galtung (2000); e.g., inequality or lack of civic participation.

The Colombian cultural anthropologist Myriam Jimeno has researched the phenomenon of violence in Colombia, particularly the anthropology of emotions and the relationship between culture and violence. Jimeno believes that human beings consciously and unconsciously learn cultural models: “Ways of thinking and perceiving are part of the motivation and orientation of our actions” (2001b, p. 30). Therefore, if a person grows up in a violent environment then it is very likely that the person will develop violent values, attitudes and behaviours. In the case of displaced families, migration changes traditional values. According to the *Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Refugiados* (ACNUR, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), 83% of displaced peoples are women, and 43% of displaced households are female-headed. When families change, values change and the whole family has to build a new set of relationships, which are built in extreme conditions of poverty and danger (ACNUR, 2009).

### **2.3. *Meterse al Rancho*: the case study**

The *Observatorio para la Paz* is a non-profit organization, formally established in 1996 as part of a Colombo–Spanish meeting of reflection on low-intensity conflicts. It was originated as a people’s initiative—veterans of organizations, institutions and students of peace and conflict issues—responsible for the development of the Colombian Peace Treaties of the 90s. The confluence of men and women, actors of the mentioned process and from various areas of society—civil, state, academia—created a space of reflection and knowledge production to address issues related to peace, conflict, violence, democracy, security, disarmament and the possibility to make peace a social, political and cultural choice.

Since 2000, the organization directed by Vera Grabe, former guerrilla leader of the M-19 movement, began working on the issue of peace as culture and started developing different educational strategies aimed at promoting the culture of peace in Colombia. The purpose of this work has been to build and develop a peace–education pedagogy oriented towards formal and non-formal education processes involving institutions, universities and communities with the belief that building peace comes from a cultural transformation.

In 1998, under the development plan *Cambio para Construir la Paz 1998–2002* (Change for Building Peace 1998–2002), the Colombian national policy for peace-building and family coexistence was created. The main objective of this policy was to promote Colombian economic development in a climate of peace and social harmony, understanding peace not only as it relates to the negotiation of the social conflict and creation of security, but also as the result of improved civil and family coexistence practices.

One of the strategies devised under this plan was the intervention in intrafamily violence, which historically has exacerbated violence and led to more victims in Colombia. For this purpose, the plan set out a policy of peace building for family coexistence with the components of prevention, detection, surveillance and attention. In a second stage, another component was included—the institutional transformation. In 2003, under the development plan of the president Álvaro Uribe, *Hacia un Estado Comunitario* (Towards a Communitarian State), the *Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar* (ICBF, Colombian Family Welfare Institute) became responsible for coordinating the National Policy on peace building and coexistence within the family, an office previously held by the *Consejo Presidencial para la Política Social* (Presidential Council for Social Policy). Following a review of progress and challenges of this policy in 2005, the ICBF made a public call to civil organizations seeking to provide and develop the various components of the national plan *Haz Paz* (Make Peace) 2005 to 2015. The *Observatorio Para la Paz* won the application and therefore was the organization in charge of developing the strategy under the above policy.

In the context of the aforementioned call, between April 2005 and April 2006 the *Observatorio para la Paz*, with support from the *Organización Internacional para las Migraciones* (IOM, International Organization for Migration), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the ICBF, began contacting people from vulnerable communities, including those formed by internally displaced people, in three regions of the country to consolidate a pilot project in three cities: Cúcuta, Neiva and Bucaramanga. This first interaction with the reality of individuals and families, as well as ownership of the project being agreed with ICBF–IOM–USAID, helped to consolidate *Meterse al Rancho*.

The *Observatorio para la Paz* began planning a national pedagogical strategy from the tenet that underlying all acts of violence there is a cultural content that cannot be changed through psychological therapy, punishments or laws only, rather such change will occur through daily practices that must be accepted socially. *Meterse al Rancho* emerged within a multidisciplinary team as a pedagogical proposal to work with the more vulnerable peoples to overcome intrafamily violence. *Meterse al Rancho* began as a

proposal to work with families and the individuals most vulnerable to intrafamily violence, which were mainly families from the first, second or third income levels<sup>2</sup>, with an emphasis on displaced populations. The model was created by a multidisciplinary team at the offices of the *Observatorio para la Paz* in Bogotá, the Colombian capital. From there it was taken to different communities throughout the country (Fig. 3). From within this strategy, peace in the family was understood as a culture to be constructed by transforming violent practices—related to cultural representations of violence—into practices of peace.

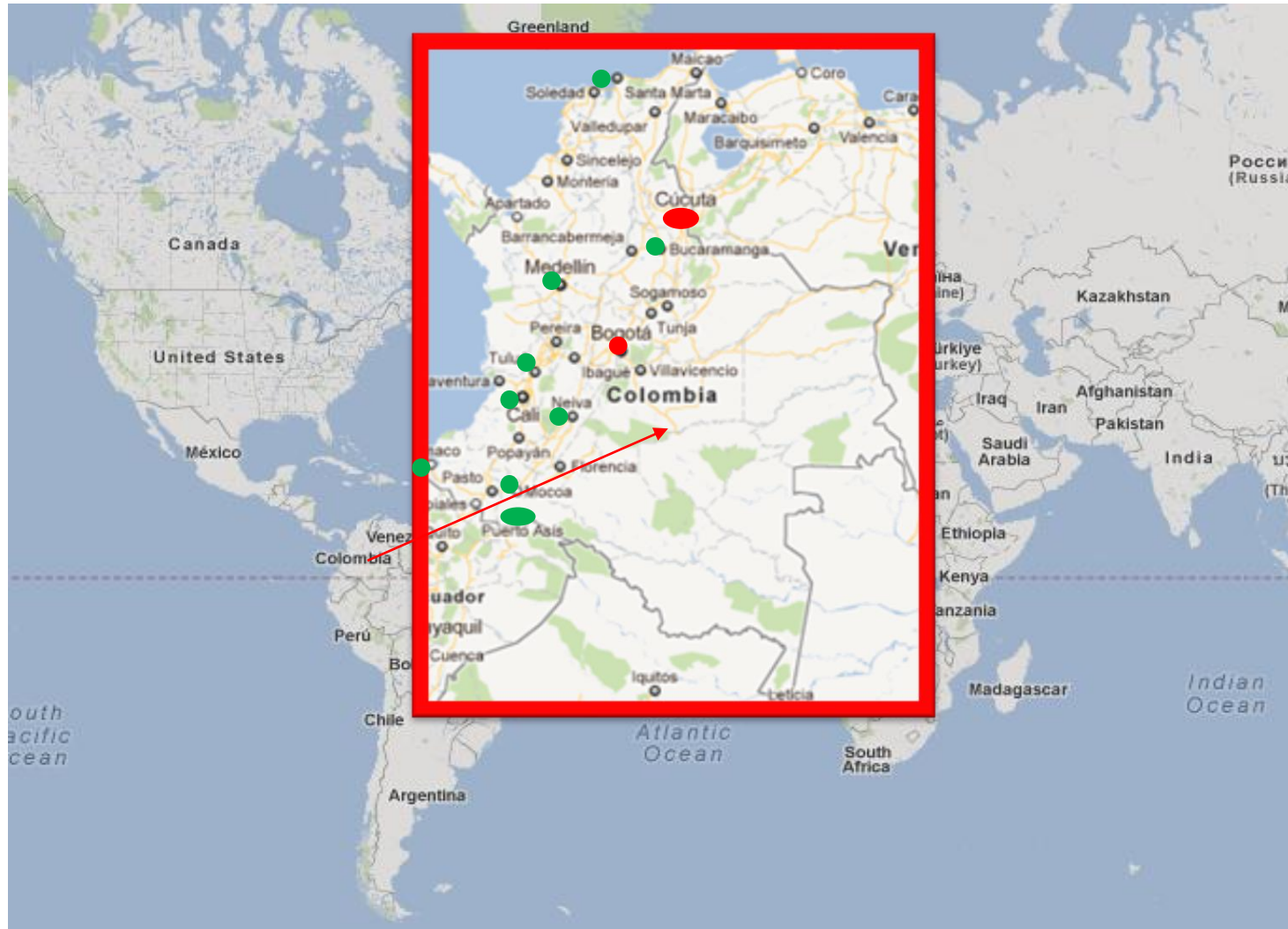


Figure 3. *Meterse al Rancho* contextualization map.

- Cities where this research was conducted
- Other Colombian cities where *Meterse al Rancho* was developed

<sup>2</sup> In Colombia there is a stratification of neighbourhoods according to the level of income. The scales 1 to 6, spanning the poorest to the wealthiest, respectively, were designed to make taxation a process related to the level of income.

### **3. INTRAFAMILY VIOLENCE TRANSFORMATION IN CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT: A CULTURAL EXPLORATION**

This chapter discusses the contributions of contemporary thought to the theoretical debate on intrafamily violence. The beginning contrasts ideas from decolonialism with contributions of contemporary psychology, sociology and social theories. Later, contemporary research on the relationship between culture and development is explored, paying attention to the role that culture might play in the transformation of violence within the family. The objective of this chapter is to critically present recent theories and perspectives that will be used to analyse *Meterse al Rancho* in Chapter 5.

#### **3.1. Intrafamily violence in contemporary thought**

As it will be shown in the following pages, the vast majority of the work dismantling intrafamily violence has focused on individuals. Until very recently, intrafamily violence was understood from a psychological perspective in which physical, cognitive, emotional, behavioural and relational dysfunctions were thought to be the causes of violence. In this approach, the dismantling of violence was needed to restore the ‘normal’ psychological conditions of individuals ‘sick from violence’ so that they could reintegrate into family and social life.

Current sociological approaches explore intrafamily violence as an event that affects individuals and their social networks. From such a perspective, transcending this type of violence requires not only psychological work with the perpetrators of violence but also with individuals who have suffered violence within their everyday social micro-spheres; e.g., parent groups, families, schools. Therefore, this strategy—which considers community spaces crucial in the transformation of individuals and their violence—goes beyond the psychological approach, which only analyses the individual, regardless their space, time and sociocultural and economic activities.

The decolonial option vindicates ways of thinking and living that have been relegated in western thought, such as those of the indigenous or Afro communities. It submits that intrafamily violence is related to the colonial matrix in which we live, sustained by a patriarchal system in which the prevailing relationships are based on superiority–inferiority in the categories of, e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, class and age. According to this ideology, the decolonization of these categories and the resurgence of other types of relationships based on affection, diversity and complementarity will allow life to flourish.

### 3.1.1. Social structure legitimises inequality of power

The critical approach, a paradigm of some feminist movements, acknowledges the historical context and provides an explanation of intrafamily violence based on a social structure built from patriarchal patterns that legitimise gender inequality, justifying and maintaining the exercise of power by men over women (Mullender, 2000; Velázquez, 2003). The critical paradigm considers that overcoming intrafamily violence is only possible if the power structure is transformed, recognizing the equal value of men and women.

The main advantage of the critical approach is that it has enabled the visualisation of male violence against women, a central aspect of family violence (Montecino, 1996). At the socio-political level, feminism invites actions that bring about changes in the social relationships defining and maintaining the patriarchal culture. It also calls for the cohesion of women to fight for recognition of their rights and calls for attention to the use and abuse of power of men over women. This approach, however, cannot enter family micro politics to confront the daily practices of violence. Nonetheless, it should be recognized that feminism has brought to attention weaknesses in various government initiatives for combating gender violence; e.g., programs that had not included means to address social structural issues, which is where such problems reproduce. Therefore, the importance of feminism has been its emphasis on the need to change (or replace) patriarchy.

As noted by Montecino (1996), the domestic sphere must be promoted and developed. Therefore, it is necessary that initiatives for change occur in the public and private sectors to bring about substantial change<sup>3</sup>. As noted by Galdames and Aron (2007), The domestic space is perceived as private and belonging to the family, which has been more difficult to enter because it remains a stronghold of the exercise of power of men over women (Galdames & Aron, 2007). This patriarchal power abuse is treated by states with indifference or hypocritical actions, a situation maintained by the existence of belief systems that valorise and validate violence.

The disadvantage of the feminist critical approach is that at the preventive and therapeutic level, the man stays trapped in the position of perpetrator, and the woman in the position of victim. The preventive way to escape from violence is defined in terms of assertiveness of the victim to break away from the violent man. The therapeutic benefit is defined in punitive terms, offering little hope of success. Consequently, the resolution of the violence relies on the destruction of the relationship, even for those who would like to stay together, which can lead to women assuming a submissive position, becoming servile, insecure and not wanting to be separated for the same reasons outlined above (Méndez, 1995).

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<sup>3</sup> A central aspect of the *Meterse al Rancho* proposal is the promotion of changes in everyday life within every household, and the promotion of policies that allow the learning of coexistence to empower families to overcome and resolve violent practices within their homes.



### 3.1.2. Intrafamily violence is created in the space of interchange between people

The social constructionist approach is engaged with the belief that ideas, concepts and memories arise from social interchange and are mediated by language. All knowledge, according to constructionists, is evolving in a space between people, within the ordinary world, and it is only through constant conversation with his intimates that the individual develops a sense of identity or inner voice (Hoffman, 1996). According to Gergen (1996), however, concepts such as individual subjectivity and social structure are displaced to the margins in the constructionist approach. I submit that constructionist and constructivism terms, often used interchangeably, have deep and important differences. In contrast to constructivism approaches, constructionist theories are based on the genetic theory of Piaget, who emphasises the individual's construction of reality, and that through the process of accommodation the cognitive system comes to fit the structure of the world. Thus, the constructivist approach states that it is the individual who privately builds, knows and interprets the world, not individuals collectively as constructivism argues.

Social constructionist theory is based on four assumptions. First, the process of understanding the nature and society as an active and cooperative process, which people develop when they interact. Second, that knowledge of the world is shaped by culture, history and social context. Third, that the degree to which a given form of understanding of natural and social life prevails depends on the vicissitudes of social processes rather than empirical or theoretical validity of the perspective in question. Fourth, that negotiated understandings are connected with many other social activities, and thus form part of various social models, which serve to support certain models but exclude others.

Contrary to the critical approach, which emphasises power as being primarily responsible for the expressions of gender violence, constructionists reject power as a fundamental concept for a theoretical framework. The social constructionist approach does not necessarily add a harmful meaning to power by assuming that power is responsible for the violence perpetrated by men against women. It does not imply ignoring the possibility that situations of power and the way people use it are plausible explanations in a given context and situation. On the contrary, this approach states that situations of power may be necessary and favourable for certain social purposes if they are accepted and shared by all members of a community. Therefore, power is not at the core of this approach but rather understood as a construction, the importance of which will depend on the context.

The perception of the community as one of the main drivers for change may be the most important contribution of the social constructionist approach. From a collective point of view, it understands and allows changes in everyday life that will permit progress in overcoming intrafamily violence. Unlike the critical approach, this perspective does not assume academic explanations made prior to contact with the community where the situation of violence occurred and where the community could be engaged in the healing process. It starts, though, from a systematic methodology that will promote critical construction of the reality that has

been naturalized by finding the mechanisms that produce and reproduce, and preparing, therefore, for a transformation into everyday life.

The explanation that the constructivist approach gives to the phenomenon of intrafamily violence cannot be objective or be developed by specialized intellectuals. According to Gergen (1996), the constructionist approach does not deny the existence of intrafamily violence, but nor does it specifically address it. Rather, intrafamily violence is a collective construction in which the intellectual, a community worker, has the potential to create learning contexts for the reflective questioning of institutions and cultural practices.

Similarly, Domènech and Íñiguez (2002) note that the constructionist approach allows the tackling of the violence phenomenon from an interest in understanding the processes by which societies are provided with certain interpretive resources and the ensuing consequences. Thus, constructivism emphasises in its explanations that community members are used to define violence, being interested in the discourses of the aggression, including those that arise from science and institutions. Therefore, one of the main contributions of this approach is to enable transformation to make visible the possibility of new ways of action.

The criticism of the constructionist approach mainly arises from authors such as Ibañez (2003), who questioned the methodology for its methodological and discursive laxity and the loss of critical sensibility. From a political standpoint, this approach is less theoretical and has less argumentative force to draw out the social issues, gain consensus spaces within specialised media, and understand the dynamics of production and reproduction. The critical approach, however, has extensive academic spaces for broadcast, is discursive and methodologically more consistent, rigorous and systematic in its argument. This is explained by its ability to show a reality in a way that is, academically, more accepted, and closer to the positivist view that still prevails.

### 3.1.3. Knowledge and actions to move from a culture of violence to a culture of responsibility

The concept of constructivism has been understood in multiple ways. However, Rosas and Sebastián (2004) recognized three essential characteristics of the ideology's position. First, it rescues the cognitive subject, which refers to the special relationship between the subject and the stimulus. This contrasts more traditional epistemological positions within psychology, where the context of the relation between the subject and stimulus is a conditioned reaction. Second, it seeks an explanation for the subject development as it attempts to elucidate the construction of certain cognitive structures. And third, as evident from the above observations, the constructivism position has a strong interest in epistemological issues.

Maturana (1995), representative of radical constructivism, when referring to the violence, says that when we talk of violence in everyday life we refer to situations in which one person is moving in relation to another—at the limit of the demand for obedience

and submission—regardless of how this happens in terms of smoothness or roughness and the relational space in which it occurs. He also points out that the patriarchal culture, focused on domination and subjugation, hierarchies, mistrust, control, struggle and competition, generates a culture of violence because it lives in a relational and unconscious space where the other is denied (p. 68).

Maturana (1995) argues that the human being is dynamic and thus is constantly modulated within the flow of life. The behavioural domains occur in the relational space, which Maturana terms “psychic space” because it is the relational living meant when we refer to the psychic, the mental or the spiritual. The behavioural style in which people live (and children are raised) is that of violence, demanding to the limit on the relationship with the other, to its destruction. According to Maturana, theories that explain violence are no more than explanations and thus are relationship styles. The acceptance of an explanation reveals the psychic space of the person who accepts it. To understand the reason why we live in violence, we should look at the explanations that we accept when we try to explain violence, look at the psychic space of our culture and its background, and for that we must look at the emotions from which it is constructed.

Maturana (1995) maintains that cultures are closed networks of conversations, psychic spaces that generate invisible behaviours to the people who perform in them. In this sense, violence is an invisible cultural construct, thus it is not straightforward for people to criticize it. All that is generated by individuals are explanations to justify violent behaviours. Consequently, for a member of a culture to reflect on their own behaviour signifies an emotional conflict, which generates an intense contradictory behaviour that would lead other people to doubt the legitimacy of their actions. From this perspective, the possibility of change does not occur through an explanation of the phenomenon—it requires reflection on our own living. Reflection is an operation in language that deals with every circumstance as an object that can be observed and judged, and on which one can act. To allow that reflection to happen, an emotional change must occur. Thus the attachment to one’s circumstances can be released and the reflective thought becomes possible.

Routes of change, according to Maturana, should be viewed by answering the following question: “What to do in order to change the psychic space of violence?” (2005, p. 76). The answer given by Maturana is simple and obvious in its words, yet complex in its action: “Moving from a culture of violence to a culture of responsibility, understood as an ethical act from being aware of the consequences of their actions” (Maturana, 1995, p. 4). Maturana’s reflection on the possibility of this change is based in the culture we live in. It is my view that in our childhood we live in a matristic culture based on the biology of love, a culture that can be lost as we grow older but a culture that could be recovered. This would require educating the new generations in that culture, with the ultimate aim of promoting the acceptance of others as a legitimate other (Rose & Sebastian, 2004). To achieve this action, at least three elements are needed: knowledge, understanding and possible actions at hand. Knowledge, to know what it is; understanding, to know the area in which knowledge acquires human sense; and possible action, because if it does not exist the change makes no sense.

### 3.1.4. Decolonizing power and liberating love

Contrary to social critical paradigms as theoretical proposals, such as constructivism and constructionism, that arise in the West, the decolonial option seeks to vindicate other positions of thought and life choices which were invisible in the western view. This position arises from pre-90s research by academics mainly from Latin America, based in different parts of the world, working on issues such as dependency theory, world system analysis and liberation theory. The *Proyecto Modernidad/Colonialidad/Decolonialidad* (Project of Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality), a multidisciplinary and plurinational group (formed by Santiago Castro Gomez and Arturo Escobar from Colombia, Catherine Walsh from Ecuador, Edgardo Lander from Venezuela, Nelson Maldonado from Puerto Rico, Anibal Quijano from Peru, and Silvia Wynters from the United States, among others) invites us to extract ourselves from the matrix of thought that the West has built to observe other cosmovisions, thereby making visible other worldviews and life choices so that every being is able to choose that which most closely matches their lifestyle.

Quijano (2001) and Mignolo (2005) cite four dimensions that allow them to identify how colonialism was established, forming the colonial matrix in which we all are still engaged: the coloniality of power, of knowledge, of being and of nature. For the topic that interests us—violence in the family—this phenomenon would result from family forms in which dominates the idea of superiority–inferiority among its members, lifestyles where there is no harmony nor dialogue between people, educational systems where reason prevails with little room for emotional development and moral growth (Mignolo, 2005).

The transformation of family violence would search for balance, what the decolonial option refers to as decolonizing the four dimensions (mentioned above). This would mean that individuals, families and communities—when not immersed—would be involved in the search for harmonic life forms, not only between people but also with their environments (Quijano 2001). The decolonial option, as will be seen below, is related to the postulate of Maturana, the biology of love, which is not a theory but an ethical attitude towards life in which the horizontal dialogue in relationships is particularly important.

Specifically, the idea of coloniality of power that is raised in the decolonial option is very important for the issue addressed in this thesis because it is one of the fundamental pillars on which the colonial matrix is built, which results in violent relationship forms.

The existence of hierarchies of power, for instance, those within the categories of race, gender, age, or class, legitimize a modern world order where human relations are based in ideas of inferiority–superiority according to the category to which each person or group belongs. These divisions established from the expansion of European colonialism, mark a clear superiority of heterosexual white males of urban middle class over blacks, women, Indians, migrants, mestizos, homosexuals, farmers and other minority groups (Mignolo, 2005, p. 30).

According to the decolonial option, since the heterosexual monogamous family is the predominant idea of family in the western world, social policies, for instance, would privilege this type of family over others, such as monoparental or polygamous families predominant in poor urban areas or in Afro or indigenous communities, where the children belong to the community more than to the couple.

Furthermore, in terms of gender, Mignolo (2007) discusses the relation of colonial power to the patriarchy, one of the pillars of the colonial matrix. Some actors and institutions legitimise a world order that is organized around the superiority of one gender over the other (male over female), likewise there is a marked superiority–inferiority relationship between people and groups for their sexual preferences (queer, lesbian, homosexual).

According to Mignolo (2005), the man and woman categories exist only in the epistemological structure of Christianity (since the creation of the world from Adam and Eve), which then is extended and secularized with colonialism. In the Pop Wuj (‘The book of the community’ that collects mythical stories of the Maya K'ich'e people), such conceptualisations and organisations of patriarchal power relations did not exist. No woman or man existed; rather, a complementary energy was at the origin of the generation and regeneration of life. According to the authors of the decolonial option, their hierarchical forms of knowledge are imposed with the expansion of the West, generating colonial wounds that are racial and patriarchal (Mignolo, 2005).

Decolonial thought has the objective of the decoloniality of power; that is, “the colonial matrix of power” (Mignolo, 2007). This would require what the group calls the ‘decolonial turn,’ an epistemic, ontological and practical decolonisation. “The decolonial turn is the openness and freedom of thought and other life forms (economies–others, political–theories–other, thoughts–other, relationships–other); the cleaning of the coloniality of being and knowing; the detachment of the rhetoric of modernity and its imperial imaginary articulated in the rhetoric of democracy” (Mignolo, 2007, p. 29–30). That turn, as Maldonado Torres suggests, implies a change in the attitude of practical subject and knowledge to the modernity/coloniality, which is based on the cry of terror of the colonised subject to the Discovery, doubt and/or the recognition of colonialism and modernity/coloniality (2007, p. 159–160). From this argument, the ways of decolonial life and thought, e.g., the diversity present in the familiar world and its ways of understanding violences and its resolutions, are put into dialogue with other forms of thought as the westerners search for the flowering of life in the fullness of its diversity on the planet.

### 3.1.5. Towards a social psychology of affection

To address intrafamily violence necessitates a comprehensive approach to this type of violence because, in general, it is the culmination of successive acts of violence. Social psychology has made numerous contributions to the addressing of intrafamily

violence. One of the most important corresponds to the theoretical and academic findings, from which it has been argued that intrafamily violence radiates to the rest of the community.

What has been mentioned above is paradoxical because to realise and strengthen the contributions of psychology in overcoming intrafamily violence, instances of the use of power are required. This leads us to reflect on the demonization of power, which is often present in arguments explaining gender issues, for instance, from feminist perspectives or the decolonial option. Power itself is not the problem. The problem is the way power is exercised, meaning the emotion from which it is derived. In this sense, what has to be understood is that, within the patriarchal model (matrix within the decolonial option), power is a concept built on differences and thus to maintain that order it legitimises the abuse of power (what the decolonial option calls the coloniality of power). This situation affects everyone who does not belong to groups of power, which is dramatic in the case of women because the exercise of power by men has a higher coverage within the economy, the military and religious groups.

In Maturana's view of intrafamily violence he suggests that violence is generated by the way we interact. In practical terms of the visibility of the problem, however, the evidence shows the importance of the role played by the critical approach, expressed through feminism (as explained above). As for the constructionist arguments, Gergen (1996) states that even though its explanation in regard to intrafamily violence might seem unclear or non-existent, these positions open up numerous possibilities that arise in each moment, because there is no one objective truth to it, such as empiricist and rationalist approaches might have, and thus there are always possibilities for building new understandings based on the direct work with every community. The great potential of the social psychology rooted in the social constructionist or constructivist approach but not on the critical paradigm, is therefore that we can grow processes of change by reflecting doubts on current situations.

In this regard, Gergen (1996) argues that the critical traditions, although valuable in their ability to cause unrest, are insufficient because of their symbiotic nature, as their intelligibility depends on what they oppose. For social transformation, new visions are required and this is where the decolonial option might have a role in being the possibility for different thoughts and cultures to recognise their valuable visions on families, violences and its transformations, and to start building dialogues between them. The possibility of transformation in the constructionist approach suggests that the principal objective of the research consists in visualising which states include the possibility of generating new modes of action, thereby providing research-relevant imagery for new possibilities.

In conclusion, the discussed theories seem to suggest that to transform the culture of violence that we live in it is necessary to overcome the current patriarchal model/colonial matrix in the decolonial option into a harmonious culture based on affection, for which a cultural change is required. Societies must maintain visible the effects of concentrations of power, authoritarianism and lack of respect for others, because the move and power shift from a patriarchal to a matriarchal society (based on the biology of

love, as Maturana suggests) may involve a shift of power. Furthermore, it is necessary to change the emotions from which we interact, meaning that we need a new way of living and sharing, which will require changes to each one of us.

### **3.2. Culture, development and intrafamily violence transformation**

As with the public policies regarding intrafamily violence, its academic discussion encompasses diverse viewpoints. Within peace research culture, intrafamily violence has become an important topic in the discussion of violence and the possibilities of its transformation. Johan Galtung theorised the origins of conflict and peace. According to this Norwegian academic, there are different types of violence at the origin of conflict: structural, cultural and direct violence. In his *Transcendence Peace Theory*, Galtung claims that because violence is a multi-layered phenomenon, overcoming it requires an integrated approach aiming equally to defeat all violences, with the engagement of individuals, communities and the entire society (Galtung, 2003). In the present research and drawing from Galtung's studies on peace (2000), there is a focus in the cultural component of this type of violence. The objective is to explore one aspect of intrafamily violence, the cultural aspect, to analyse its relevance in the understanding and transcendence of this phenomenon.

Even though in anthropology the concept of culture has been subjected to critical examination, in social theory and in cultural studies, especially, there has been a rediscovery of the concept. As Clammer (2005) suggests, within development theory the relationship between development and culture has been debated heatedly, and today we are facing what Clammer terms a "cultural turn" in which there is a valorisation of the role culture plays in development. From this perspective, culture is not the classical idea of the structure in which societies are organised as a functionalistic whole, rather it embodies an ever-evolving and dynamic process, negotiated and constructed rather than given, a narrative constantly influencing the human subjects and their actions.

Reinserting culture into development engages people in the development process with their emotions, values and their capacities. According to David Kleymeyer, culture is a "central aspect of human experience. Culture is an important force that influences the behaviour of the social structure, while being formed and reformed by the cumulative effects of such behaviour and structures" (1994, p. 18). Kleymeyer believes that development must be understood not as a need for overcoming physical and material demands, but as a means of reassessing the role that culture plays on this need.

The previous discussions have been incorporated into analyses of practical problems. For instance, in Colombia, Arellano (2004) analysed the relationship between security policies and the phenomenon of child soldiers. I argue that the use of children as soldiers is a clear example of how a given culture can determine the growth of violence. In particular, national security policies, such as the one that has been in development by the Colombian government since 2002, legitimise war and therefore have a strong impact on culture and the increase of violence.

According to Arellano (2004), all the values and symbols of war, such as uniforms, weapons, honour, courage and strength, persist within the societies where military has been strengthened, affecting children in particular because “it creates a view that part of it is natural and necessary” (p. 128). Arellano also connects Galtung’s analysis of violence to the child soldier case. I believe there is a circular relationship between structural, direct and cultural violences. Thus it is worth considering what Arellano seems to suggest. First, that violence has cultural components not only in its origins but also as its consequences. Second, that if violence is not considered as a cultural issue then the circle of violence persists because the violent society is not working towards a new society of peace.

Evidence appears to confirm that the permanence of violence in Colombia is a confluence of different elements. The phenomenon of child soldiers and intrafamily violence worsens within displaced peoples, which are two aspects of the Colombian violence that have been increasing recently. Colombian social researchers have been arguing that those are two phenomena related not only to poverty and social exclusion but also to the violent culture in which they originate (Arellano, 2004; Benjamin & Fancy, 1998).



#### 4. STUDYING THE CASE OF *METERSE AL RANCHO*

The case study was designed to analyse the relevance of *Meterse al Rancho* in the development of family public policies in Colombia and Latin America, which traditionally have been focussed on the individual rather than on culture. *Meterse al Rancho* was approached through the lenses of the social and development studies definition of culture (Clammer, 2005; Kley Meyer, 1994), the decolonial option (Mignolo, 2005; Walsh, 2005; Castro- Gómez, 2005), contemporary sociological, psychological and sociopsychological approaches to intrafamily violence (e.g., the critical paradigm, the constructionist approach, the constructivism approach and social psychology of affection), and the categories of analysis (family, intrafamily violence, intrafamily violence transformation, coexistence, popular education, culture).

This study aims to answer the following questions:

- In what academic and ideological context did *Meterse al Rancho* approach evolve?
- What strategic choices did the founders and organisers of *Meterse al Rancho* make?
- How do *Meterse al Rancho*'s operational modalities, specifically, the pedagogical approach, relate to conventional social work methodologies in Colombia?
- Why did *Meterse al Rancho* fail to institutionalise itself in a sustainable way?

This research began in Finland when I started the Master's program in Development and International Cooperation at the University of Jyväskylä. As a woman, I was interested in studying gender in development contexts, and the relationship between gender and violence transformation in Colombia, my home country, which has been affected by a long-term social conflict.

Upon commencing the literature review, I realised that within the development field there was a growing interest in working for the improvement of the lives of women around the world. For instance, the 1325 UN Declaration on Women, Peace and Security<sup>4</sup> shows that in the last two decades, the gender approach to development focused on women's empowerment, rather than taking a holistic approach to engage everybody in the process of building peaceful and equal societies.

During the fall semester of 2009 and the spring semester of 2010, a large part of the literature review and research design was carried out. Throughout that time I had the opportunity to speak with development and peace experts at academic seminars. During one such conversation, the Gender Specialist from the Crisis Management Centre, Finland, agreed that there was a need to move beyond the 1325 UN Declaration on the role of women in peace building. Like me, he was convinced that, even though it is true that women have historically been excluded and mistreated, building new equal and peaceful societies requires the participation of

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<sup>4</sup>1325 UN Declaration aims to promote the goal of gender equality and recognize the central role of women in conflict prevention, peace negotiations and the processes of peace building.

both men and women. This was how I came to look into the family as a possible unit of study of violence transformation in which men and women interacted.

This investigation was granted a time extension because after the field work in the *Observatorio para la Paz*, I became engaged in my career and professional development. This extension enriched my thought process through experiences working in Colombia and Guatemala, ranging from local projects to international organisations, which were related to the subject of this thesis.

After the fieldwork in Colombia, which was carried out mostly in Bogotá, I collaborated for a year with an indigenous community of the ethnic Maya Chuj in the mountains of Guatemala; working as a teacher in a rural school and with a group of youths and grandparents in the creation of the Mayan Chuj curriculum from the community Cosmovision, and in art projects to revitalise the knowledge of their ancient culture. I spent the following year working in Colombia, where I commenced studies in art as an actor and investigator of the *Teatro de la Memoria* (Theatre of Memory).

In 2013, I returned to Guatemala. Since then, I have been involved with diverse people and projects that are engaged in the development field and are working with communities from academia, social movements and the arts. I believe that my experience living in Guatemala has greatly enriched this research. I share the perception of Victor Barillas (director of the most prominent Mayan dance–theatre–music group, Sotz´il Jay) of the country as “a lake of mud filled with roses growing from it” (personal communication, August, 2014). I believe that Guatemala, being the second poorest country in Latin America (after Haiti), is akin to Juan Monsalve’s (Director of *Teatro de la Memoria* in Colombia) description as a place of hard social, economic and cultural context, which “ironically is where aesthetic and life proposals arouse in such a profound beauty and inexplicable way” (personal communication, July, 2012). As will be discussed, in Guatemala, local proposals of life and transformation, such as that of Sotz´il (2015), have inspired the reflections on the model that is presented in this research.

This research proceeded in the following steps: a reading of the theories and public policies regarding intrafamily violence transformation and social research methods; the online reading of the case study of the peace methodology and of the available documents of the organization; the elaboration of the research plan draft, including a proposal of questions and methods; one month of participant observation at the *Observatorio para la Paz* headquarters (delimitation of the research plan, methods and instruments with the key actors of the organization); the second part of the field work (development of the research plan for the research carried out in Bogotá and Cúcuta); the data analysis of the categorised information; and finally, the writing of the thesis.

#### 4.1. Research approach and methods

An interpretive and qualitative methodology was chosen (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). This research is a perspective that seeks to understand the experience of *Meterse al Rancho* by considering the factors that influenced its creation and implementation in the context of the development of family public policies that concern intrafamily violence in Colombia and Latin America (Yin, 2009). Moreover, the researcher has been the main instrument for obtaining and analysing data, pursuing a strategy of inductive research, so the study is richly descriptive (Merraim, 2009).

This research is an interpretative case study because it has carried out a rich description of the phenomenon in question and of *Meterse al Rancho* as an innovative and dialogued alternative of intrafamily violence transformation (Ander, 2003). The study not only presents a detailed description of what has been observed and the background information about the phenomenon, but through the central questions of the investigation and the theoretical framework and categories of analysis (family, intrafamily violence, intrafamily violence transformation, coexitance, popular education, culture ), it critically examines the model. The analysis debates what was found in the discussion groups with families in the fieldwork, the methodologies, the model relationships with stakeholders (State, communities, families, universities), the theoretical model, as well as the results reported by the *Observatorio para la Paz*. Theories and categories have then been fundamental tools for analytical and critical understanding of the data and the studied model and what it represents in the development of family public policy and what might move forward.

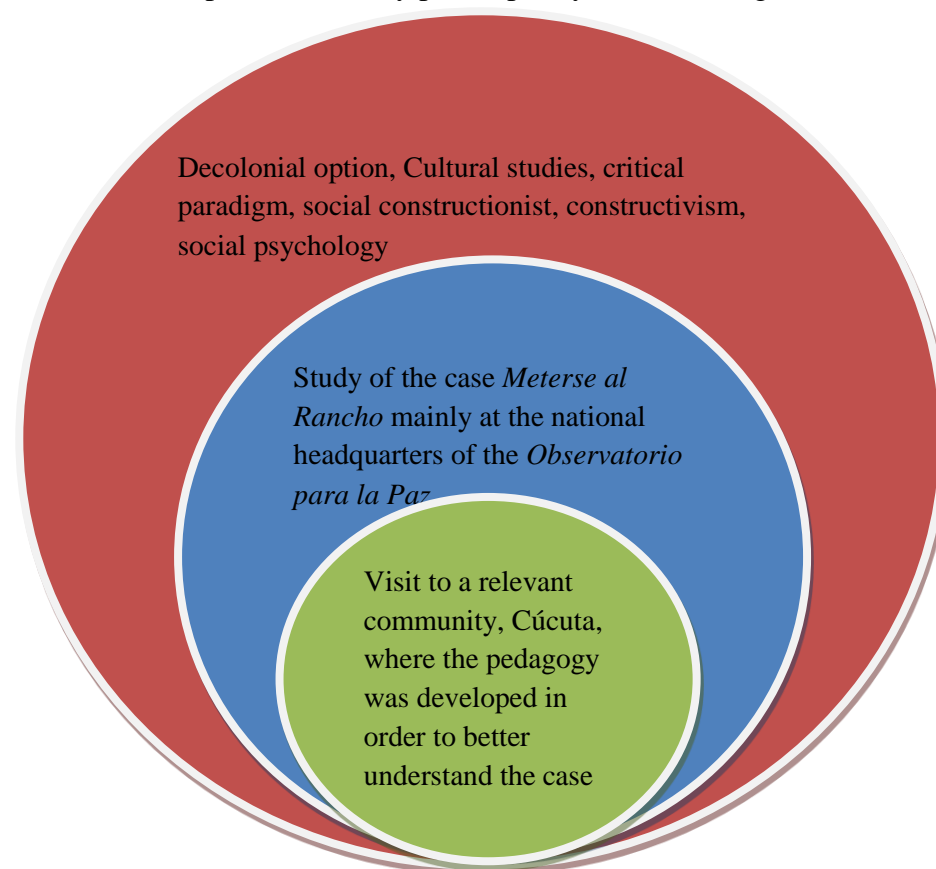


Figure 4. The study of the case *Meterse al Rancho*.

Figure 4 shows how the case study was carried out using different theories and approaches of contemporary thought (in red). It also shows the two sites where the research was conducted: Bogotá (in blue), six months at the offices of the *Observatorio para la Paz*; and Cúcuta (in green), a one-week visit to understand the model better in a community where it was successfully developed.

The research tools varied with each stage of the investigation. In Bogotá, the research involved participant observation, literature review, field diary and interviews with key players; in Cúcuta, a concrete work plan was designed (Appendix B), which included in-depth interviews, especially with key informants, and focus groups.

Table 2.

*Methodological tools used to study the case.*

<b>Instruments</b>	<b>Number of applications</b>	<b>Duration of application</b>	<b>Source of information</b>
<b>Document review</b>	50	3 months	- Project design, proposals, reports, systematisations - Colombian theoretical and methodological authors - Research, books, magazines
<b>Semi-structured interviews</b>	30, men and women	60 min	- Civil society leaders (some former guerrilla leaders) - Functionaries from the ICBF - Communitarian Mothers (communitarian women leaders who work for the ICBF in poor neighbourhoods providing information about women's reproductive health) - Other community leaders, vulnerable families from Cúcuta who had participated directly and indirectly in family peace education (within this group, women of different age were the ones willing to participate) - University professors and students - Human rights advocates and activists.
<b>Focus groups</b>	4	One week all, 3 hours each.	- <i>Madres Fami</i> , ICBF workers - Former <i>Observatorio para la Paz</i> workers
<b>Field observation</b>	1	- One week in Cúcuta - Six months attending the <i>Observatorio para la Paz</i> Offices, Bogotá	- Vulnerable neighbourhoods in Cúcuta. - <i>Observatorio para la Paz</i> national pedagogy team
<b>Narratives</b>		6 months	- <i>Madres Fami</i> , people engaged directly with the experience <i>Meterse al Rancho</i>

Note: Personal elaboration

As shown in Table 2, the data (primary and secondary) were obtained during a six-month stay in Bogotá (June to December 2010) and during one week in Cúcuta. One of the first tools for conducting the case study was the documentary review of 50 sources, such as project proposals written between 2005 and 2007, and archival documents, including experience reports, blogs, dossiers and diagnoses, which were made before the process started in every community. Secondary literature sources included magazines and newspaper articles from the Colombian ICBF and various Colombian organizations, such as *Fundación Rayuela*, *Corporación Observatorio para la Paz*, *Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular* (CINEP, Center for Research and Popular Education), and *Centro Internacional de Educación y Desarrollo Humano* (CINDE, International Center for Education and Human Development). Particular attention was given to written material from Colombian scholars and experts in general education, peace education, family and gender studies, and peace building.

In this case study, 30 semi-structured interviews were conducted with men and women working in peace-building in Colombia; half of them were directly involved in the work with *Meterse al Rancho*; each interview lasted 40–120 min. The interviewees included the following groups: civil society leaders (some former guerrilla leaders), functionaries of the ICBF, Communitarian Mothers (communitarian women leaders who work for the ICBF in poor neighbourhoods providing information about women's reproductive health), and other community leaders, vulnerable families from Cúcuta (women of all ages willingly participated), university professors and students, and human rights advocates and activists.

Other tools used to collect oral information were focus groups, which were held in Cúcuta with people from different neighbourhoods where *Meterse al Rancho* was implemented, and a field diary, which included impressions of the fieldwork process carried out in Bogotá and Cúcuta. I also analysed texts on the work of the organization in various projects focused on processes of building peace, specifically those related to *Meterse al Rancho*.

During the internship at the *Observatorio para la Paz*, I participated as an observer of the organisation's work, attending meetings and becoming involved in workshops and colloquia. This was beneficial in enriching my reconstruction of the lived collective peace-building process that was recorded in a field diary.

The most important component of the fieldwork in Bogotá proved to be the interaction with the organization where the model was created, to obtain an understanding of the academic and ideological context in which the model was created and developed; the fieldwork with families and communities was complementary. For this reason, I spent six months in a middle-class neighbourhood in the northern part of Bogotá (the wealthiest part of the city), where the offices of the organizations were located.

One week of the fieldwork was undertaken in Cúcuta where, according the *Observatorio para la Paz*, the model was successful because people took ownership of it. Cúcuta is located in the northeast of Colombia and is the capital of the *Norte de Santander*

department. In recent years, the city has faced problems related to its border location—e.g., the growth of poverty, marginalisation, violence and the massive influx of displaced people—and a lack of resources to address them (Junta Metropolitana de Cúcuta, 2008–2011).

The objective of visiting Cúcuta was to gain a better understanding of the operational part of the pedagogical model through direct contact with the actors. It was also an opportunity to interact with one of the communities in which it was developed. I developed focus groups with community mothers who were part of the workshops hosted by the *Observatorio para la Paz*.

In-depth interviews with key informants were conducted in Cúcuta. Also, discussion groups were held with government officials (mainly from the ICBF, including Fami Mothers) and the people who assisted the project from Francisco de Paula Santander University. It was intended to hold additional discussion groups with families from the neighbourhoods in which *Meterse al Rancho* had a presence. Notwithstanding, Beatriz Zuluaga (former ICBF official and a friend of the *Observatorio para la Paz*), who assisted with the organising of the discussion groups, spoke to the Fami Mothers coordinators and was told that collaborating with families would not be possible for this research as *Meterse al Rancho* was not working in these neighbourhoods.

The first interviews in Cúcuta showed clearly the difficulty in bringing together all groups that were invited, mainly because of their remote and isolated locations and their work situations. For this reason, it was decided that focus groups would be formed only by Fami Mothers linked to the ICBF zonal centres and the coordinator of each zonal centre. This was made possible through the assistance of Beatriz Zuluaga, and also because these Fami Mothers were the key informants in the field. Table 3 shows how the focused groups were formed.

**Table 3.**  
*The composition of the discussion groups in Cúcuta*

Group	Location (neighbourhoods in Cúcuta)	Participants
Fami Mothers Zone1 ICBF	Santo Domingo, Santander, Los Patios, Belén	8 women, 1 girl
Fami Mothers Cumbres. Non-participant in <i>Meterse al Rancho</i>	Los Patios	8 women, 1 girl
Fami Mothers Zona 5. ICBF All participants in <i>Meterse al Rancho</i>	Motilonos, Atalaya, Villas del Rosario	8 Fami Mothers, 2 public servants

Note: Personal elaboration

The activities with the focus groups were conducted in a workshop format, which was organised as follows. The first part of the workshop was a warm-up exercise in which the objective of the exercise was explained—to have a space to discuss the experience

Cúcuta women had as key actors in the implementation of *Meterse al Rancho* in Cúcuta, what they knew of the pedagogical model and if and when they used it. In this part, participants were also encouraged to undertake a theatrical exercise to represent, spontaneously, situations lived within their families. Afterwards, to get to know the practices of peace and violence within participant's families and their perception of what was happening in their surroundings, we dramatized the scenes that were presented. This socialisation was thought to be an opportunity to establish whether situations of love or anger prevailed within participant's households, and to determine if there were specific people in the family to whom feelings could more easily be expressed and who were able to resolve conflicts from violence.

The second part of the workshop explored the *Meterse al Rancho* model by analysing the tools used by the Fami Mothers who participated directly or indirectly in the development of the model in Cúcuta. The aim of this exercise was to observe what participants knew about *Meterse al Rancho*, their knowledge, use and perception of the tools and if they were still using them in their day-to-day life. In some groups this process became an open discussion, while in others the dialogue was very focussed on characterising the main tools used.

#### **4.2. The invisible threads of the research: reflexivity and ethics**

*“Our job as musicians and dancers is mainly a personal, collective, communal, and the Sotz’íl group search of our culture. As artists we have explored, investigated in the different forms of expression of music and dance trying to create, build and rebuild artistic proposals from our own language.”*

(Sotz’íl, 2015)

In the Mayan culture, dance is a commitment of a dancer and his entire family to the universe, which implies a responsibility with the dancer community. Similarly, this research has also been my quest not only as a scholarly project, but to find my language as a researcher and a development practitioner, which is fundamental to my life path/fabric<sup>5</sup>. For this reason, integral to the investigation were the personal experiences that occurred around the academic work, which involved community responsibility and that intentionally offer a subjective and political viewpoint. This means that there has been a challenge to critically analyse the phenomenon in question, during which I have grown through my practical work within the development field. This experience has invited me to live in other areas, such as in an indigenous community, to know different ways of understanding and living development, processes of creation, love, family, dialogue, and also anger, fear, and sadness but above all—the beauty of life. This was, perhaps, to me the most important objective in this work and for my life—to find my own language to share with the world.

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<sup>5</sup> In the Mayan culture, a fabric is like dance and music; it reflects a way of seeing the universe. A fabric is mathematical, the colours reflect the architecture of the cosmos, the motives are inspired by the mountains, animals, plants, and our feelings (Sotz’íl, 2015).

The Social Research Association (2003) provides guidelines on ethics, principally in regard to informed consent, data protection, confidentiality and anonymity, monitoring of the research, and the dissemination of findings. These guidelines were adhered to in this project. Throughout the research, people who participated directly or indirectly in the investigation were always explained its purpose and the way the information was going to be used, for which their consent was obtained. I also respected individuals' right to identity protection; some of the names have been changed, particularly those of the Fami Mothers. Furthermore, to ensure transparency, I informed participants that they would have free and straightforward access to the research findings after the project was complete. Thus, I plan to share the results with the ICBF and the *Observatorio para la Paz* to make the data accessible.



## 5. *METERSE AL RANCHO* AS A STRATEGY FOR INTRAFAMILY VIOLENCE TRANSFORMATION IN COLOMBIA



Figure 5. Fami Mothers Cumbres sharing their experience in *Meterse al Rancho*.

This chapter analyses the data collected in Bogotá and Cúcuta, Colombia, between June and December 2010. The objective is to understand the academic and ideological context in which *Meterse al Rancho* approach took shape, the strategic choices made by the founders and organizers of the model, how its pedagogical approach relates to conventional social work methodologies in Colombia, and why it failed to become institutionalised in a sustainable way.

### 5.1. The academic and ideological context in which *Meterse al Rancho* approach takes shape

This investigation, bibliographical and in the field, has shown that the pedagogical model *Meterse al Rancho* is built using elements of various contemporary sociology and psychology approaches. Following the critical theory (Méndez, 1995), the model considers the patriarchal culture as the cause of violence. But the model is not trapped in the structural change that the critical approach demands in order to overcome violence (Montecino 1996). Close to constructivist theories, the model has a positive approach towards the transformation of violence as it understands family relationships as social constructions that can be modified through socio-educational processes involving the families (Gergen, 1996). Furthermore, following constructivism, *Meterse al Rancho* perceives that violence results from more than just the traditionally ascribed mechanisms (punitive, biological, moral) and takes into account the important role that primordial emotions, such as love, play in human relationships (Maturana, 2006).

*Meterse al Rancho* follows the idea that social patterns—understood by social constructivism to be the result of the historical process of a culture, social vicissitudes and behaviours (Rosas and Sebastián, 2004)—can be learnt again. Therefore, *Meterse al Rancho* creates a pedagogy as a tool to prevent violence within families, which is associated with violence transformation and peace promotion. Vera Grabe, Director of the *Observatorio para la Paz*, defines *Meterse al Rancho* as a pedagogical model for cultural change aimed at breaking cultural violence and strengthening families' living practices from a perspective of peace. She states:

This model trusts in people as actors of their own transformation of its practices, beliefs, relationships ... in this sense, themes and tools used in the model are oriented to work from a cultural perspective. This proposal was consolidated in four years because of the alliance of the IOM, USAID, ICBF and various universities, but mainly through the support and ownership of community workers and leaders, those who have shown the impact it has made.

Luis Alberto Torres, member of the national pedagogical team at the *Observatorio para la Paz*, believes that the starting point of *Meterse al Rancho* was the pedagogy developed by the mentioned organization called *Pacicultura*. He argues:

The pedagogical team saw in the *Pacicultura* an opportunity to start a pedagogical work with families. *Pacicultura* concept is based in the concept of peace as a culture. Peace as a culture is different from the culture of peace. Peace and culture lead to work from the emotions, feelings. We work on beliefs, we change the imaginary. We propose an interaction with families and the communities, not an intervention or transmission of ideas.

Beatriz Zuluaga, coordinator of one of the zonal centres of the ICBF in Cúcuta, shared that historically the ICBF has offered many workshops and, above all, speeches to its employees about their work. She submits that *Meterse al Rancho* was a different process because it was experiential, it allowed people to feel. Zuluaga also voiced:

I went reluctantly because the ICBF sends me to many different courses and workshops. But I was captivated. From 2005 to 2008, I was in charge of this project's logistics. In 2009, I became a member of the *Observatorio para la Paz*. The main objective of the *Observatorio para la Paz* was to create and develop a Culture of Peace in Colombia, transforming the culture towards the peaceful resolution of conflicts through the use of the tools which were taught, tools that sometimes did not even have to be explained because we could intuitively understand them.

According to Beatriz Zuluaga, the meaning of *Meterse al Rancho* comes from a popular Colombian saying that means 'let's talk about this at my house.'

*Meterse al Rancho* has taught us to enter others ranch or home to understand and to be able to give part of ourselves. Because when I enter another's home, I'm not a stranger, I am part of the group and they transform me and I can help in transforming them. *Meterse al Rancho* is getting into others home with the hat in the hand, to bring flowers, joy, solidarity, and commitment to change.

However, interpreted from the decolonial perspective (Mignolo, 2005; Walsh, 2005; Castro- Gómez, 2005) *Meterse al Rancho*, in its epistemological foundation, however, is immersed in the colonial matrix in the sense that it creates a method, a way of working in the transformation of intrafamily violence through a homogeneous pedagogy. This pedagogy is developed nationally, regardless of the diversity of local contexts, which are constructed from the multiple forms of family that form the Colombian family pluriverse. Therefore, the many forms of violence and traditional ways of containing it become diluted. For these reasons, it is concluded that *Meterse al Rancho*, while attempting to transform violence according to its principles, appears to do so from an understanding of culture that is universal, rather than pluriversal, meaning that family is not understood in its diversity.

Perhaps the most obvious question that arises when analysing the data is how can one work with a standard model when families in Colombia are so diverse? For example, within the Kogi people (one of 62 Colombian indigenous groups), the Mamo, spiritual leader of the community, is the person in charge of educating children and deciding the type of family that each child will have. It is the Mamo—not a man or a woman—who decides how many women a man can have, according to his intelligence (Colajanni, 2009). In other communities, such as those in the Afro Pacific, a man can have more than 10 women and it is common to have children with many of them. In some cases, perhaps derived from situations of extreme poverty, one of the women takes care of all the children, maintaining a relationship of friendship with all the other women (Hoffmann, 2007). In the case of the peasant family, Catholicism has been very influential, which has led to the idea of the family as the union of father, mother and their children; this is the idea of family that was found in Cúcuta (Castañeda, 2012).

The idea of the family as a heterosexual and monogamous institution is the most prevalent in the discourse of the Colombian State, on which it has developed family policies (Article 42 of the 1991 Colombian constitution). This concept is problematic because each of the various familial forms (e.g., the indigenous and afro families that were mentioned above) face unique challenges and ways of understanding them that the heteronormative scheme does not address. Furthermore, issues such as gay marriage and same-sex families are not considered yet by the Colombian State. From Maturana's concept of culture as "Closed networks of conversations, psychic spaces that generate invisible behaviours to the people who perform their living" (1995), it appears that *Meterse al Rancho* closes the space of conversation with the communities with which it interacts, or at least the homogeneous dialogues that it offers do not recognise the particularities of the community.

*Meterse al Rancho* was designed by a circle of intellectuals who met in Bogotá around an NGO, the *Observatorio para la Paz*, composed of ex-militants and sympathisers of the guerrilla movement M-19. From Bogotá, this group designed training processes for displaced people, victims of violence policy (usually farmers), whose concept of family could be quite homogeneous. It was from this concept that the model spread throughout the country as the State's response to intra-family violence.

Although *Meterse al Rancho* was created from Freire's oppressed pedagogy (2000), meaning it seeks to generate dialogue from the questions that it takes to families and communities, *Meterse al Rancho* does not recognise the cultural diversity of Colombia, which is defined by the Constitution as a multi-ethnic and multicultural country. The model language makes no reference to Colombian cosmovisions other than the Colombian urban contemporary intellectual world, in which it is common to encounter exercises and materials based on the symbology of other cultures; e.g., Eastern mandalas<sup>6</sup>, tarot.

In summary, what the data seem to reflect is that the *Meterse al Rancho* pedagogical model falls into the trap of the Western Eurocentric standard (the colonial matrix described by Mignolo, 2005), in which models are designed to replicate preconceived ideologies in a multi-ethnic and multicultural reality. This means that, despite the desires of the *Observatorio para la Paz* to design a participatory and community-based model (based on Freire, 2000), the model approach and tools developed remain being those of the bourgeois circles in the capital city. Therefore, from an epistemological standpoint, I conclude that the *Meterse al Rancho* model fails to incorporate local ways of knowing and conceiving the world outside those known in these elite circles.

## 5.2. Strategic choices made by *Meterse al Rancho* founders and organisers

*Meterse al Rancho* is part of the commitment that the *Observatorio para la Paz* made in the 1991 Colombian peace treaty. This NGO formulated a peace methodology based on popular education to bring peace into the local context, promoting peace as an individual, family, community and social practice. This led to the M-19 making the decision to lay down arms and deciding to start building peace in the country from an educational–cultural approach.

Some of the *Observatorio para la Paz* members underwent ideological and military training during the period of the guerrilla movement. They made peace a commitment to society (perhaps as a compensation for damage that the war had done to the country) that sought to rescue experiences of peace; i.e., they went beyond previous studies centred in violence. These members chose to observe peace to develop a strategy to promote peace, which became the origin of *Meterse al Rancho*—using education as a tool for peace building.

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<sup>6</sup> A circular figure representing the universe in Hindu and Buddhist symbolism.

The *Observatorio para la Paz* decided on two strategic paths. The first was research and communication on peace, and the second the promotion of peace from education. The latter was based on the hypothesis that the Colombian culture—understood as cultural habits and ways of being—has been marked by the polarization of the social sectors, a warlike spirit, drug trafficking and individualist values. The *Observatorio para la Paz* understands peace as a pedagogy, a tool that can transform the culture to become more civic, in which the citizenry participates and is capable of creating a just society based on democracy.

### 5.2.1. *Meterse al Rancho* foundations

The pedagogical model was formulated from the second strategy of the organization and developed by members of the *Equipo Pedagógico Nacional* (National Pedagogical Team) from the *Observatorio para la Paz*.

When preparing the model, each of us contributed the knowledge we had, developing themes and designing a series of tools from them, which gave strength to the model. For example, Luis Alberto Torres worked on the development of the tool ‘Memory’, Gonzalo Jimenez in the development of the ‘Language’ tool, Violeta Osorio in ‘The skin of the other’, Jaidivi Nuñez in the ‘Base line’, which allowed people to feel the beginning of their peace attitudes before taking part in the pedagogical experience, and also ‘Ethics of Care’, and ‘*Meterse al Rancho* family game’. That is how collectively the model was created.

The model that was called *Pacicultura* aimed at working from pedagogy, understood not in its conceptual meaning, nor as the science of education, but as the science of life and humanity. Ivonne Guzman referred to this point as follows: “That is why those are educational processes, because they are about changing human beings lives, doing it from the very lives of human beings.”

Understanding that conflict is an essential part of human life and therefore that conflicts are a common trait of societies, the *Observatorio para la Paz* began to study the contradictions found in the relations between individuals and groups. Those contradictions, according to the organization, have different motives and interests: economic, political, religious, ethnic, family and personal. Thus, the *Observatorio para la Paz* concluded that Colombian society is permeated by war, thus there is a tendency to resolve conflicts by force, aggression and violence. Furthermore, these conflicts occur when at least one of the parties does not know their rights or what the rival party is demanding. The organisation believes, however, that civil conflicts could be handled in a peaceful manner.

The *Observatorio para la Paz*, inspired by Gandhi, conjectures that conflict has the potential to be transformative, a way of achieving civilian peace. This involves two principals. First, the recognition and respect that the parties in dispute have equal fundamental rights.

Second, that opponents mutually recognize any legitimate claims of the counterparty and, therefore, through dialogue and negotiation are able to reach an agreement.

Through reflections on conflicts, the *Observatorio para la Paz* began to understand peace as a pedagogy—a strategic process of civic education and cultural change through which citizens understand the importance of the civilian handling of disputes, the relevance of standards and institutionalism, and promoters make coexistence in diversity and non-violence a core value, which leads to the strengthening of democratic culture and sustainable peace. Pedagogy for peace, according to the *Observatorio para la Paz*, includes a set of deliberate actions for communication, education and social mobilisation aimed at distorting and dismantling the imaginary representations and the practices that make use of force, violence, illegal behaviour and aggression.

### 5.2.2. *Meterse al Rancho* training process

The training component of *Meterse al Rancho* was designed to last 8 months. Between 5 and 6 months were assigned to the training of future family workers, and the last 2-3 months were for the replication process in the communities. According to Ivone Guzman, member of the Pedagogical team at the *Observatorio para la Paz*, the training process was as follows:

There is an initial one-month training process where people identify with which families they could multiply their knowledge, where they could enter other families' homes [as in the spirit of *Meterse al Rancho*]. Then a period of two to three months of training and the rest is the multiplication process that follows. Formation processes were designed so that members of the *Observatorio para la Paz* could develop sessions—workshops—on the tools that gave strength to the model: ‘*La piel del otro*’ [The skin of the other], ‘*Memoria*’ [Memory], ‘*Ética del cuidado*’ [ethics of care], and the other mentioned tools. A couple of sessions were needed to develop each tool through different activities<sup>7</sup>.

Most of those who participated in the formation process of *Meterse al Rancho* were public officials, members of the ICBF (such as Madres Fami or Unidades Móviles), community educators, and students. Even though *Meterse al Rancho* was conceived as a socio-educational process that would involve families, in all regions it was mostly women who attended. Soacha, a municipality located at Bogotá's southern border, was where more men attended, although they totalled less than half of the group. Children and young people participated very little, which made the process oriented towards adults and women, in particular.

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<sup>7</sup> *Observatorio para la Paz* has published literature on the activities, tools and workshops, but most of this literature was designed according to popular education precepts, where the objective was to develop critical thinking in the people participating in the games and activities used in the workshops.

Luz Marina Villamizar, an ICBF Cúcuta Official, thought this was a valuable experience because the academy, institutions and communities were allied. What she questioned, though, which we questioned also, was the lack of continuity. Alexandra González, Coordinator of *Haz Paz* at the Zonal Centre 3 at the ICBF Cucuta, made the following comments:

The peace culture, it's beautiful because it helps everyone to see us as equals. As a public servant, I never thought the experience could change me that much." [She entered the ICBF in 2005.] "As an educative agent, I have reciprocated the process. It gave me many tools and thus my work has become more enjoyable. From *Meterse al Rancho*, the work with communities has taken other dimensions.

Among Madres Fami, the majority held the belief that tools were very valuable within the model. A Fami Mother shared the following:

Today we still use them, for instance, when we show girls in our communities how to breastfeed. It would be great if all *Madres Fami* could have attended the *Meterse al Rancho* trainings. The social abilities of those who participated on the process are very high today.

The facilitator visits each home and *Meterse al Rancho* process is shared and practiced with the family. The idea of *Meterse al Rancho* is not to develop a psychosocial therapy; rather it is intended to participate in a methodology that promotes peace. Violence cases that required legal treatment were referred to the competent institution. The project proposes a route of interaction to promote a cultural dialogue that would disband violence to rescue peace within families. The goal of *Meterse al Rancho* is to develop pedagogical processes that involve training, personal experience and psychology.

Jurys Labastidas, a facilitator of the *Observatorio para la Paz* processes in Northern Colombia, is convinced of the advantages of *Meterse al Rancho*:

There are many laws about many things but treating prevention is something different. For example, displaced people are giving thousands of benefits, money and all different things ... But, emotionally they are not given assistance.

Jurys shared that she was very impressed with the follow-up work done with the families of the region with whom she was involved (Magdalena). For example, she told of one family that was living in a location so remote that she had to travel by donkey and by boat to reach their house. Jurys expressed her feelings of powerlessness when she realised that the family was only the mother and daughter because the husband was killed a couple of months earlier:

The wife was very ill, but the daughter, who had been raped more than five times, did not even speak. This type of violence and gendered violence are not directly addressed by *Meterse al Rancho*. There is a need to investigate how to deal with such situations, which are very common in our country today. In the coastal Colombian zone, gender-based violence is enormous. It is also the result of the armed conflict. It is important to establish how to work with displaced persons and all those people affected by this violence. These are the greatest needs which must to be addressed and which need to be improved in the model.

According to Luz Marina Villamizar, the degree of ownership of the model was high. She added the following:

The pedagogical model was easily understood and responded to the problems it was meant to address. It was also a strategy that was easy to put into practice, it attended the reality. We got empowered through an intense process of five or six months. We got some good tools, materials,... it was a very practical experience. The community work was not easy but the strategy was good because the main goal is to reach families.

Beatriz Zuluaga emphasized the power the process had in consolidating human growth. In relation to this point she said:

I remember, in particular, the truck game. First I was the car. I had to drive the other person with whom I was developing the exercise. That person had their eyes closed and trusted me. But when I had to be guided, I grabbed my car very tightly. There was no explanation, but I remember that this exercise reached the bottom of my soul. I understood that I can follow but I am supremely authoritative. It's something I must change. This experience changed me to my roots. I became part of the streamline of the process. *Meterse al Rancho* and its tools enriched my job within the ICBF.

Every time that a training process started there was a call for participants to contact families with whom they could multiply their knowledge. Families with difficulties and displaced families were the main target of the multiplication process. Later on, the person who had received the training with the *Observatorio para la Paz*, the *Formador Comunitario* (Community Trainer), would go to the house of the identified family, would present himself and *Meterse al Rancho* (which was supported by the ICBF), and would begin working with them. The trainers were accompanied by members of the *Equipo Pedagógico Nacional* (National Teaching Staff) of the *Observatorio para la Paz* (as well as by other trainers), who put together ideas, posed questions and raised difficulties in the spaces provided by the training process of *Meterse al Rancho*.

Usually the person who opened the family home to the trainer was the woman. In the first session, the trainer would bring something to cook or eat with the family, something simple like a snack. Then the whole family and the trainer would begin building a friendly environment as the visit was about sharing time around a text, the Mandala, which was a useful tool to explain



what *Meterse al Rancho* was about. People were very open and willing to work with the community leader, who entered the house as a guest. In the second session, a game was presented, which was one of the main tools developed by the *Observatorio*. During the tarot-like card game, everything that was occurring in the family was revealed. From that point onward, the family and the trainer would develop the exercises the trainer had learnt during the training sessions. The trainer was the person who decided which exercises were relevant to the chosen family.

### 5.2.3. Taking *Meterse al Rancho* to the communities

The multiplication processes were designed so that families who received the information in *Meterse al Rancho* could share their knowledge with their communities. In these processes, all family members were involved. According to Jaidivi Núñez, member of the pedagogical team at the Observatorio para la Paz:

There were even places where the whole neighbourhood got involved. For example, in Tumaco, there was a very large party in a neighbourhood where families decorated a soccer field and invited all the neighbours to come listen and take part in what the *Observatorio* organized, as the socialization session at the end of the multiplication process.

Deysi Karima, a woman who participated in various processes developed by the *Observatorio para la Paz* (she is a graduate of the *Bachillerato Pacicultor*, a high school diploma of peace culture programme, and served as a volunteer for *Paciliteracia*, Peace literacy for elder people), added that *Meterse al Rancho* is way of being received in others' houses:

In the *Bachillerato Pacicultor* it was the same. The 'teachers' (multipliers) came to our houses to teach. For example, they were also very alert on one's relationships at home, whether we had problems or not, for instance, with our husband, mother, children.

The work with the families was not very complicated. It consisted in using the model tools (for further understanding of the model tools see Appendix f) to identify violence and conflicts to disarticulate them, while also promoting patterns of coexistence and peace. Although each family was different, the work was guided by the same tools. Ivonne Guzmán commented:

That is why tools are very important. They showed us how to work. Tools encourage people to talk freely. Things like the '*Los pies del otro*' [The others' feet] and other tools were developed over time. The radio barely worked, except in Neiva, where there was a local initiative to develop this tool. There was a lot of theatre, and the body became a teaching tool. Internal trips and language revision were other strategies used.

The encounter with families lasted 1–3 hours. The facilitator, the person who attended the formation workshops arranged by the *Observatorio para la Paz*, would be in charge of providing tools to the family to promote dialogue. Every region had monitors, people from the *Observatorio* who would arrange short follow-up visits to every family. The monitors would not stay long to ensure that they would not interfere with the process developed by the facilitators. Therefore, the monitors would visit families only two or three times for a few hours at a time throughout the learning process. They would take photos and give copies to the families.

### 5.3. Living *Meterse al Rancho* with families in Cúcuta

To explore how *Meterse al Rancho* was lived in families, some of the field research was carried out in Cúcuta. Visits to the city and neighbourhoods were undertaken to interact with *Meterse al Rancho* in a community to understand the model better (its strategies, methodologies) and to observe the way it worked with the families and how they perceived it. The following is an account of the salient parts of the process that was lived with the families in Cúcuta.

#### 5.3.1. Family dynamics in Cúcuta: the patriarchal unity questioned?

The field work showed clearly that families in Cúcuta are diverse. As noted by Yolanda Puyana (2007), the family in Colombia has changed from predominantly traditional nuclear families (mother–father–children) to include single-parent families (especially mother–children) and extended family situations (e.g., brothers and sisters and their families, grandparents living with grandchildren). During the focus groups, it became obvious that a unique characterization of families in the city would be impossible because of their diversity. In every focus group, however, ‘union’ was the word participants used to define family, no matter what type of family to which they belonged. Figure 6 shows two human sculptures that portray the concept of ‘family as unity’ (Mothers Fami, Zone 5).



Figure 6. Family meaning represented by Mothers Fami.

When Fami Mothers were asked to represent the meaning of family through a living sculpture, they hugged each other, laughed and projected closeness. They explained that their representations intended to convey that, despite the diversity of their families and of the families from Cúcuta and Colombia in general, family is a group of people who share the same space. Therefore, according to these women, family signifies union.

The interaction with families in Cúcuta encouraged me to find changes promoted by *Meterse al Rancho* within families in the process of *Meterse al Rancho*. This goal was achieved using two exercises. First, participants were invited to think about the situations of love and anger that arose within their homes and their immediate environment. Second, they were encouraged to make representations of relations between members of their households or other households they knew—between mother and father, between parent and children (female or male), between grandparents and grandchildren.

The first exercise showed that love situations were associated with times of economic stability: “working again,” “when we get our salary,” “the opening of the border with Venezuela when it has been blocked” (because it encourages trade, one can make more economical purchases). Love was also associated with success and the presence of children: “knowing that my children are there,” “when my kids are excellent pupils,” “when my kids come to hug me.”

In contrast, the situations of anger that were discussed were associated with abuse of power: “disrespect,” “when someone contradicts me when I give my opinion or lacks respect or equality,” “when someone does not allow me to speak out”, “when my husband whistles at me,” “when someone in my family is unappreciative of the food I prepare for them”; acts of family members associated with psychoactive substance abuse and lateness: “my child arrives home at 6 am and does not answer his cell phone the entire night,” “people drink and party too much”; disobedience of children: “disrespect as teasing,” “they through objects,” “my son does not like what I do”; and lack of understanding and dialogue: “there is a lack of understanding between us,” “when they scolded me in front of other people,” “they me yell at me,” “when I can’t speak out.”

The above descriptions of loving and hateful situations show that Colombians still live in a patriarchal culture where the man is the provider, the protector and the procreator (Montecino, 1996). Meanwhile, women are submissive: “I cannot speak out”. According to the focus group participants, women are the ones who cook and take care of the housework, but are also the ones who are humiliated the most within the family: “our kids prefer to stay with their father as we are the ones correcting them”, “We work all day at home but it is as if our family cannot see that”.

Within the focus groups, women protested that machismo culture was a problem in the city. They also expressed that although machismo was not acceptable, it would be very difficult to change. Comparing stories of the women who worked in the focus

groups revealed that not all Cúcuta women have the same mind-set. The vast majority of women in the focus groups question the roles of men. For example, there was a group representing a woman who was defending her ability to play soccer and her femininity against the social perceptions of soccer being a male game and her very short hair not being suitable for a woman. Another woman voiced that she taught her kids how to clean when they were young and soon after the father joined in the cleaning.

Thus, Cúcuta women have begun to disagree with the submissive role that has traditionally been assigned to women. Many are working and simultaneously are housewives and heads of families. Within the Fami Mothers Cumbres group, for example, a discussion was held with one of the younger Fami Mothers who shared that her husband would not allow her to wear tight pants, short skirts or makeup. After some silence, the women began to express their disagreement: “That should not be, because one must be as one wants. You should kick him out of the house”. Following this situation, women reported having learnt how to claim authority within their households.

Furthermore, some women appeared to have assumed traditionally masculine attitudes: “sometimes I don’t know how to make my children understand”, said Beatriz, adding that she punishes her kids with blows; Mary adds: “sometimes I have to shout them because they do not listen”. It seems that questioning the traditional roles of men and women in Cúcuta does not guarantee that relations within households are more respectful and peaceful.

### 5.3.2 Family diversity and *Meterse al Rancho* within families

The second exercise, developed during the fieldwork in Cúcuta, encouraged the focus groups to produce theatrical images of the types of relationships that occur within Cúcuta families; i.e., between mother and father, mother and father and children, grandparents and grandchildren, and between siblings. Considerable differences were found between people who had been close to *Meterse al Rancho* and those who did not know anything about it.

The representations of family relationships differed according to the focus group in which the exercise was developed. Each group was formed by people from different neighbourhoods, and people’s experiences with *Meterse al Rancho* varied across the city. Table 4 compares the representations made by the group who were knowledgeable about *Meterse al Rancho* with those who were less familiar with the peace education model.

**Table 4.**

Summary the results gathered from the exercise “Representing imaginary family relationships”.

Family relationship to represent	Situations represented by Fami Mothers Zone 1 (Group with a medium-level knowledge and ownership of <i>Meterse al Rancho</i> )	Situations represented by Fami Mothers Zone 5 (Group with a high-level knowledge and ownership of <i>Meterse al Rancho</i> )
<b>Father and Mother</b>	<p><b>Father:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-has a relationship of inequity</li> <li>-blames others</li> <li>-is permissive with the wife</li> <li>-wishes to be served by women (enslaver)</li> <li>-provides the money (provider)</li> <li>-is always right (authority)</li> </ul> <p><b>Mother:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-lacks communication with husband (passive)</li> <li>-(indifferent) to husband</li> <li>-(jealous)</li> </ul>	<p>-all represented different situations in which there was a scene of joy of having known <i>Meterse al Rancho</i></p> <p><b>Father:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-has a relationship of equity</li> <li>-tries to be with the children</li> <li>-is no longer at home but is aware of his responsibilities as a father</li> </ul> <p><b>Mother:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-always tries to decide with the father</li> <li>-is affectionate with the family</li> <li>-calls for dialogue and good treat within the family</li> </ul>
<b>Father/mother and son/daughter</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-there is more respect between father and son than between mother and son</li> <li>-They are friends (parent/child)</li> <li>-generations have changed; children do not like to spend time with their parents</li> </ul> <p>Respect for the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-parents threaten children</li> <li>-mother has more authority over the children than does the father</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-mother talks to and advises the children: “Mum, I don’t want to go to school”, “Son, it will be good for you”</li> <li>-father does not talk to his children as much, but he is present</li> </ul>
<b>Grandfather and grandson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-grandparents are very permissive and loving but have preferences</li> <li>-grandsons love their grandparents but discriminate between them, and do not visit them because they are old people</li> <li>-there is emotional distance between grandparents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-grandparents love their grandchildren</li> <li>-sometimes families become distant from grandparents and forget them</li> </ul>
<b>Brother and sister</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-brothers are dreamers; they respond calmly to each other’s nagging, are more disorganized and detached than their sisters, and scold their sisters</li> <li>-sisters fight frequently between themselves but also have friendship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-relationship represented as a ball game: the girl is defending herself from the brother saying that women do play football</li> <li>-conflicts about clothes between sisters</li> </ul>

Note: personal elaboration

Table 4 demonstrates that those who knew more about *Meterse al Rancho* were closer to attitudes of peace—in the description of the relationship between the mother and the father, the women’s role was not as submissive as that of women who had not been part of peace education processes. ‘Women calls for dialogue’ suggests a more active women who has a voice within the household. On

the contrary, the group of Fami mothers who did not know about *Meterse al Rancho* depicted women's role as submissive, jealous and powerless—closer to what has been described as a patriarchal culture (Montecino, 1996).

In relation to gender roles, the exercise described above shows that families who have not worked with tools of peace are more likely to represent family relations in which gender roles follow traditional patterns: the man has the authority, is the provider and the procreator, while the woman is the submissive who is performing the housework. On the contrary, people who were close to *Meterse al Rancho* questioned traditional gender roles. For example, women talked about the importance of managing time so there is always time for themselves and for the family together: “I have been trying to ask my husband to spend time with the kid, I have prohibited my husband to shout at home, I have been trying to distribute household duties”.

In regard to education, women who have been close to *Meterse al Rancho* refer the possibility of implementing more assertive ways to reconcile and punish:

I do not hit my children until I have used all other possibilities to solve our conflicts; for instance, dialogue—I always tell my kids to spend a little bit of time with us (me and my husband), so we have time to share what we have done during the day. I have been helping my daughters with their assignments since I found out that we could talk about things that before were harder to share.

On the contrary, the group which was not close to *Meterse al Rancho* had less assertive communication tools: “I cannot find a way to make my kids understand what they have to” “They never pay attention and that is why they are always doing things that they don't have to,” “The new generation do not like to spend time with their parents,” “When we are together, we usually watch television.”

The analysis of the sibling relationship was surprising. In the families that were part of *Meterse al Rancho* educational processes as well as in those that were not, the brother held authority and protection over the sister. This suggests that it is easier to change attitudes and behaviours in adults than in children; the sexist behaviour patterns came from their culture as well as their home. Going further, this result also implies that the level of transformation produced by *Meterse al Rancho* is limited, as adults and children still replicate patterns of parental behaviour involving unequal power relations in which the woman has a submissive role and has less power to speak and decide.

The overarching conclusion from the above analysis is that in Cúcuta the traditional cultural model of the family is still prevalent. Punishment is ingrained in education and discrepancies are solved through force rather than dialogue. Families have hierarchical relationships where submission and obedience are assumed. On the other hand, people who have been close to *Meterse al Rancho* are more aware of the macho culture and sometimes are able to use what they have learned: “I have been trying to defend dialogue

at home,” “I have tried to keep the family together. I take the kids to their grandparents whenever I can,” “I have been trying to teach Marc how to cook and clean and he has been engaging our kid in the house cleaning.” Nonetheless, the exercise suggests that the level of changes is not very deep as the children’s relationships still reflect inequality and traditional gender roles.

The work with the focus groups also showed that there are differences between what people know, what they feel and what they do. This was evident in an exercise called ‘the sun of every day’ that was performed in all discussion groups. Each person was asked to think about and express what they were used to in their everyday life. Although the work was performed in groups, the results were shared out loud with all participants. It was evident through participants’ drawings that they shared essentially the same habits (Appendix C).

In the group Fami Mothers Cumbres, one of the women shared: “I believe that one has to change. What one learns is that one becomes the example in the neighbourhood and the family. If one is working in *Meterse al Rancho*, it is not correct to enter the house and hit the children, or insult them.” Another Fami Mother added: “*Meterse al Rancho* changes people and the way we perceive things. One becomes more tolerant and is able to understand many things.” Beatriz Zuluaga said that through a game she realized that she had an authoritarian character and she had to work on that.

Fami Mothers Cumbres also commented on more obvious reflections: “We have no time for ourselves even though we are the ones who work the most in our homes.” They were also the lowest paid, and their spare time was used for exercising, watching TV or making crafts. They reasoned that their lack of spare time was a result of their occupations: “We do not have time to spend with others.” One of the participants who had done this exercise previously with the *Observatorio para la Paz*, expressed that it should not be this way, one has to take care of oneself to be able to care for others. Several other women from the Fami Mothers Cumbres focus group reached similar conclusions. This was the most motivated group.

The exercise was enriching because for many participants who already knew *Meterse al Rancho* it was an opportunity to meet again in a situation similar to what they discovered years ago and which they did not like very much—the situation of being at home all day, working for everyone but themselves. Women who had known about *Meterse al Rancho* expressed their understanding of the importance of taking time for themselves but also of the difficulty in making changes within their homes. One of them protested that in Cúcuta’s households, ‘everything revolves around the mother,’ despite their desire to take time for themselves; their habits are culturally ingrained.

The ‘sun of every day’ tool showed that changes within households could happen but are very slow and require reliable accompaniments on a continuing basis. As Montecino (1996) suggests, one of the aspects of daily life that must be promoted and developed is the domestic sphere, initiatives for change to bring about a real change in the public and private sectors.

This analysis has showed that *Meterse al Rancho* creates spaces where people can learn about themselves and how they can develop other skills, which form what the *Observatorio para la Paz* termed the ‘School of life’. For some this represents a unique opportunity for learning; e.g., the recognition and management of emotions, tools for better living through social interaction—by simply acknowledging the importance of developing healthier dialogue with all family members, friends and neighbours. In summary, *Meterse al Rancho* becomes a way of life that becomes part of the people who know it well.

As discussed previously, *Meterse al Rancho* could be read from a theory that assumes working from culture to dismantle violence and promote peace could effect peace in individuals, families and communities. Although analysing other experiences of violence prevention and peace promotion was beyond the scope of this research, it is acknowledged that this would have helped identify the strengths and weaknesses of *Meterse al Rancho*. Nonetheless, in the four years in which *Meterse al Rancho* operated, it enhanced social interaction within families and neighbourhoods. During this time, tools, knowledge, values and ideas were created with and for many people, who now promote and peace and nourish it with their every day practices.

*Meterse al Rancho* in families encouraged changes in ideas, perceptions and mentalities of those people who were involved in the training process guided by the *Observatorio para la Paz*. For example, the people’s narratives demonstrated that patriarchal ideas are questioned after taking part in the model. There was always a smile and a good memory of change that moved people emotionally. The field work illustrated that people— government officials, community mothers, teachers or other community leaders—always reported having realised that peace could be made a way of life. They also asserted the need to monitor daily behaviour patterns in parenting and their ideas about living so they could start living better within themselves and with others.

The level of the changes produced merit deep analysis. It is clear that *Meterse al Rancho* led to personal changes, especially in beliefs, ideas, attitudes and values. As was evident through the work with Fami Mothers, however, the practice of these new attitudes and values was more difficult, which appears to be related to lack of support from people who can help reinforce the peace processes, whether they received education in *Meterse al Rancho* or not. It appears that not having a network of *Pacicultores* (peacemakers) makes it difficult to build peace in contexts in which people automatically reinforce conflict and avoid dialogue in their interactions (e.g., following ingrained patterns that come from mass media). Therefore, *Meterse al Rancho* needs to strengthen its networks, which can not only be achieved by having more resources but also, for instance, by using alternative media (television, radio, blogs) managed and developed by local communities.



#### 5.4. *Meterse al Rancho* operational modalities and conventional social work methodologies in Colombia

*Meterse al Rancho* was designed to reinforce the strategy and policy created by the Colombian State Institution, the ICBF to guarantee the human rights of children and other members of the household vulnerable to intrafamily violence (women, elderly, disabled or displaced people.) Luz Marina Villamizar, ICBF official in Cúcuta, remembers that the increase in forced displacement was associated with an increase in intrafamily violence across the country. According to her,

It was for that reason that the Colombian government thought of developing a strategy for empowering people in peace, to involve every person in resolving and dismantling intrafamily and other types of social violence. The worst wars occur within families. Thus what was intended was to strengthen peaceful family coexistence.

*Meterse al Rancho* was consolidated as a community-based peace education pedagogical model for working with families based on three components: i) Strengthening a group of regional operators: The contact with local authorities (ICBF, municipalities, universities and other interested organizations) was fundamental to creating a local project committee who would identify the area where *Meterse al Rancho* would work and be responsible for ensuring the operation and sustainability of the project. The idea was to guarantee the permanence of the project in the region or municipality. ii) The training of trainers (generally local authorities, communitarian leaders, or government officials, e.g., Fami Mothers) in conflict management and *Meterse al Rancho*: These trainings were supposed to be followed by the formation of mixed groups. The intention was that these groups of trainees would take ownership of the peace making process by identifying vulnerable families within their own communities. Once they were trained, they had approximately three months to work directly in their neighbourhoods, where vulnerable families and peoples were located. This was called the ‘multiplication process.’ iii) Working with families through a pedagogical approach that was built and developed with families: This pedagogy was chosen to facilitate the appropriation of foundations and tools that enable empowerment towards the cultural change for peace, which was seeking to overcome violence and strengthen the practice of peace as individuals and families, spreading *Meterse al Rancho* throughout communities. For further details, see Appendix E.

From the ICBF, *Meterse al Rancho* was lived in a particular way. Esperanza Rojas, official of the ICBF Bogotá, shared that:

*Meterse al Rancho* was borne out of a proposal made by the IOM and ICBF to develop the *Haz Paz* [Make Peace] policy. The proposal emerged at the national level because the ICBF Cúcuta is not able to manage resources and make such decisions. The commitments agreed by the actors were: the NGO *Observatorio para la Paz* would be allied in Cúcuta with the University Francisco de Paula Santander, which was committed to develop the education strategy in neighbourhoods such as Bethlehem and the Divina Pastora. In Cúcuta the ICBF task was to increase the number of community workers and

to empower *Madres Fami* and other experts in family issues. There was also collaboration from the IOM, as well as from community leaders.

Once the *Observatorio* won the ICBF Call, the model began operating in 2005, funded by the ICBF and partners IOM-USAID, and continued until 2009. In the first stage (February–August 2005), the *Observatorio* led the *Meterse al Rancho* pilot project at institutional and community levels, and validated the model in a process of trainer education and work with families in 9 *Comunas* (poor neighbourhoods, slums) in three cities in Colombia: Neiva, Cúcuta and Bucaramanga. In the second stage (October 2005–April 2006), the model was consolidated and expanded. The emphasis in this stage was on the ownership of peacemaking tools and the multiplication of knowledge with families from the cities in Stage 1; a pilot Municipality in Soacha was developed, where the *Observatorio* led a project called Itinerant Schools (2004–2005). At this time the *Observatorio* was looking to increase its capacity in the cities in which the model was established and expand into new regions, which meant incorporating Afro-Colombian communities in the pacific region.

In 2007, the *Observatorio para la Paz* and the ICBF sought to implement the Action Plan Goal of the *Grupo de Atención a la Población Desplazada* (Care Group for the Displaced Population) using qualified professionals from the social offices of the *Centros Zonales* (Zonal Centres) and *Unidades Móviles* (Mobile Units; two Colombian Institutions). This was to be a formative process to improve and provide timely and effective support to displaced families, victims of natural disasters and other vulnerable people. The goal was to influence displaced and vulnerable families to transform their violent relationships, to promote a change in their values, behaviours and attitudes, which were contributing the perpetuation of violent behaviour. The means of change was an education that promoted and strengthened protective factors within individuals and communities in which the *Observatorio* was working. At this stage, the model was extended to include another five departments and eight municipalities in Colombia: Huila (Neiva), Norte de Santander (Cúcuta, Los Patios, Villa del Rosario), Santander (Bucaramanga), Nariño (Tumaco) and Valle (Cali), working with approximately nine thousand people.

During 2008, the emphasis was on institutional strengthening and the development of ownership of the model, particularly in the programs of the ICBF attended by displaced populations. This involved the training of public servants who worked at *Centros Zonales* and *Unidades Móviles* in the ICBF, and of other educational agents who worked in the macro-regions; South West: Nariño, Putumayo, Cauca, Valle; Caribe: Bolivar, Magdalena, Sucre, Córdoba; Centre: regional Bogotá, Chocó, and the National Headquarters of the ICBF located in Bogotá. In February 2008, a new pilot project aligned with *Meterse al Rancho* was developed, but with young people in the city of Medellín (rather than with families), where youth violence was increasing tremendously. The problems with funding the model began at the end of this year. The ICBF, which was in charge of maintenance and sustainability at the time, suspended the project. The operation, monitoring and tracking of the model became problematic, leading to the *Observatorio* also suspending its activities. Although it was difficult to follow what happened after *Meterse al Rancho* was stopped,

it is known that the mobile schools formed by local groups (to keep up self-training and knowledge multiplication) continue operating intermittently in the regions (this was clear during my work in Cúcuta). These groups all had difficulties arising from lack of institutional support: e.g., lack of funds, which limited mobilization and capacity to develop workshops with families at a community level: lack of training and monitoring support, which has weakened the motivation of families, thereby diminishing the impact of the model in the transformation of intrafamily violence.

After a meeting about political and educational similarities between the Director of the Department of Human Sciences (Jesús Urbina), Vera Grabe and the ICBF (represented by Beatriz Zuluaga), the Director made the following comment regarding the emergence of the model in Cúcuta in 2005:

Between March and April of that year, we signed an academic agreement in which all of us made the promise to develop the pedagogical model of Peace culture offered by the *Observatorio para la Paz* within and with families.

The actors of *Meterse al Rancho* were: beneficiaries of the formation program (mostly members of the ICBF), the IOM-USAID (the financial supporters of the project), the *Observatorio para la Paz* (designers of the pedagogical model), and Universities in every region (in the case of Cúcuta, the University Francisco de Paula Santander). According to Urbina, the university offered institutional as well as academic settings, which enabled teachers and students to get involved in the project. He stated:

The University also created a *Meterse al Rancho* diploma to give official credit to participants. This university took the work for peace very seriously. During *Meterse al Rancho*, the Master's on 'Peace culture and investigation on Education' was created.

Beatriz Zuluaga recalls in 2005 the introduction of the certified diploma developed by the *Observatorio*. This became the pilot experience of *Meterse al Rancho*.

In this first phase, each person was committed to meet and replicate the knowledge acquired during the formation process with at least five families. That's where I fell in love with this. I stayed until 2008 when I became part of the *Observatorio*. In a second phase, *Meterse al Rancho* was also developed with displaced families. As the displaced are everywhere and not all of them have a visible status, then we decided to have a *Madre Fami* who took care of them specifically. In this second phase we had poets, dancers, singers, theatre people and different kinds of artists.

Zuluaga remembers that, even though she could never go to the neighbourhoods, she did generate and maintain the ambience of peace. The *Unidades Móviles* and people from the *Centros Zonales* (both of the ICBF), for instance, were those who made reports

and detected vulnerable families in neighbourhoods. Afterwards, the *Madres Fami* were responsible for disseminating what was learnt in replicating within their own working groups.<sup>8</sup>

According to Jesús Urbina, the pedagogical orientation of the *Observatorio para la Paz* was well received, especially within *Madres Fami*:

We held workshops, meetings and carried out field work in Comunas 8 and 9. Teachers were trained in peace education and humanity. We would ask for 30 [to be trained] and 100 would appear.

In other regions of the country, the process was experienced in a similar way. Jurys Labastidas, coordinator of the *Bachillerato Pacicultor* (Peace culture high school program) in the Magdalena region in 2010, shared her experience as a former leader of *Meterse al Rancho*:

*Meterse al Rancho* was a very positive experience in the sense that the program really got into people's lives through one main tool: dialogue within families. There was a training process, which was carried out through a participatory diploma, and afterwards multiplication processes of the experience were conducted with families in the neighbourhoods. Monitors were in charge of visiting families to see how these processes were propagated and how was the development of the program within families. Each family was given tools with which they could work themselves, a candle and a game were given to remember that peace is something that needs to be constructed every time.

Also important to review for *Meterse al Rancho* and for other initiatives of intrafamily violence transformation would be the way all family members could be engaged in transformative processes. *Meterse al Rancho* demonstrated that there are ways of preventing and dismantling intrafamily violence. The success of these changes, however, might be greater if every family member were involved in the change process. The absence of men, and sometimes children, in the processes of formation and multiplication of *Meterse al Rancho* (bearing in mind that intrafamily violence is mostly perpetrated by men) is poignant. The impact on cultural change is more immediate and profound when working with everyone in a family, their neighbourhood and their community. Therefore, an investigation into the equal empowerment of all ages and genders in *Meterse al Rancho* is wanting.

Nevertheless, even after a year of facing financial difficulties, people in the Cúcuta neighbourhoods were using what they had learnt from *Meterse al Rancho* with their families and neighbours. Furthermore, this initiative was able to be developed in the Colombia because it had a sound strategy for intrafamily violence transformation and peace promotion.

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<sup>8</sup> The *Madres Comunitarias* are community leaders who work in teams in their neighbourhoods. The ideas of *Meterse al Rancho* were intended to form part of the knowledge base used by these leaders, who were willing to replicate their knowledge with other leaders in their communities.

Cúcuta proved to be an example of cooperation between different institutions that showed a strong commitment to peace. The ICBF and the University Francisco de Paula Santander, in particular, created a space inside their institutions for *Meterse al Rancho*. Therefore, Cúcuta showed that teamwork produced a synergy that allowed individuals, families and communities to start working passionately from violence towards its transformation without denying the existence of conflicts, but instead, appropriating tools for dealing with them.

The operative model was developed on three concepts: strengthening *Meterse al Rancho* skills in local teams (operators), training trainers, and reinforcing the value of family community work. It was thought that the model would succeed only if all commitments became part of the collective peace work with families. The evidence supports this prediction—when the ICBF did not make good its commitments the model entered a serious financial crisis.

### **5.5. *Meterse al Rancho* institutionalisation process**

This investigation showed that putting the theory into practice was problematic. One of the difficulties was in maintaining the stakeholders' commitments. Since 2009, the establishment of Grupos Operador Local (GOLs; Local Operator Groups) has not been sufficient as these groups themselves failed to generate sustained capabilities that would have eventually allowed the continued *Meterse al Rancho* development. The collective work is what gives meaning to *Meterse al Rancho* family model. Therefore, when an actor moves away from the synergy that gives life to the model, it weakens the development of *Meterse al Rancho*.

Thus, although *Meterse al Rancho* was designed to be very participatory in nature and despite the success of the collective work, this investigation has shown the need to strengthen communication between stakeholders to facilitate ideological consistency. The work in Cúcuta demonstrated that many of the actors were unclear on what *Meterse al Rancho* development was about. For instance, Luz Marina Villamizar said openly that she was not clear about what should have happened after the multiplications and how people should continue cultivating *Meterse al Rancho*, especially those who earned their *Meterse al Rancho* diploma. The question remains how to guarantee a permanent and continuous development of *Meterse al Rancho*.

Thus there is a need to seek different strategies that ensure that the collective work does not dissolve, because it would seem that the Colombian government does not offer guarantees to make certain that these type of processes are sustained. It appears also that the institutionalisation of the project would be complicated because *Meterse al Rancho* required changes within the Colombian institutions; e.g., the creation of networks between different institutions such as the ICBF and the universities.

Considering what has been said, the recommendation would be that the *Observatorio para la Paz*, the organization that designed the model, could analyse very carefully whether it is appropriate to change or adapt the model for the ICBF to contract it again or, if it would be more positive to evaluate other possibilities to redirect *Meterse al Rancho* towards a more self-sustaining practice<sup>9</sup>.

In Colombia, working for the equilibrium between individual, family and community is not new. Throughout history there have been ancestral forms—which still exist—in which caring the balance is very important from the Eros referred above. In many communities, mostly indigenous but also mestizo, the *malocas*—traditional houses—are ancestral ‘baskets of life,’ places where the knowledge and wisdom of a family and a community is weaved and protected (Ministerio de Cultura, February 2015).

Usually one of the houses of the community that belongs to grandparent(s) are ceremonial houses, as they are examples of life care and therefore become spaces where the community gathers to remember the individual–family–community balance through the word of grandparents. These are the places where the community works in the resolution of conflicts as well as on plans for a family or the community. In some houses, sacred plants, such as coca leaves, Tabaco or Yahe, are used variously for cleansing, healing, work on the balance of the word, increasing attention span, or even for creating a festive coexistence based on the sacred Eros of the community. Many members of the *Observatorio para la Paz*, myself included, have visited these places looking for their own balance; e.g., the house of Lucho Flórez in El Putumayo (southern Colombia). What can the *Observatorio para la Paz* learn from the *malocas*?

The *malocas* are not institutions financed by the state. Somehow, though, they have endured and passed from being a practice of indigenous communities to become part of the mestizo world. Without be provided resources, grandparents constantly exchange their experiences with other *malocas*, nationally and internationally. Their methodology is ancient: from the festive gathering with music, songs, dance, food, stories, contemplation of nature, poetry and theatre to a cleansing of the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. As a grandmother in charge of conducting a *maloca*, Beatriz Camargo says that “to the *maloca* one comes to remember, to pass through the heart to liberate the Eros and love.”

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<sup>9</sup> For example, it would have to be determined if there are mechanisms for regions to become more independent in decision making. This would give more independence to each Local Operator Group to manage its resources and to avoid stagnation of the processes that take place at local levels. Consider, for instance, the project in which the researcher works presently, SERVIME II of HELVETAS Guatemala. There is a similar operative model in which local groups are formed to replicate their knowledge within communities. To make the process independent and sustainable after two years of close accompaniment the groups have the possibility to apply for funds to develop projects they consider to be appropriate for strengthening the group and the community. Instead of staying as ‘students’ or ‘multipliers,’ the group gains independence and agency within the community (Helvetas, n.d.).

Did *Meterse al Rancho* work with families who wanted to heal? To what extent were the spaces created recognised by the people as their own? It would appear that the model worked this way for people who were directly involved in the initial design workshops, but not for those who participated in mechanistic multiplication workshops of *Meterse al Rancho* model.

The decolonial project sees the need to move towards a decolonial heterarchical thinking with the possibility to conceptualise the socioeconomic and cultural realities with a language that goes beyond the modern/Eurocentric paradigm, and which allows a better understanding of the historical and contemporary realities (Castro- Gómez, 2005). This thinking articulates genealogies and epistemology scattered across the planet: socioeconomic, political and cultural—other modalities. *Border thinking* is an option, and a salient example of this is the theorisation of participatory democracy from the indigenous world in which it is understood as the cosmic dance to the fullness of life that some scholars have called *Plenitud de vida* (Fullness of life; Mignolo, 2005; Quijano, 2001).

Has the *Observatorio para la Paz* considered the Decolonial understanding of intrafamily violence transformation from the perspective of *Plenitud de Vida*? In this thinking, it is important to facilitate the democratic spaces in which individuals and communities could move towards the socialisation of power and the democratisation of control of key areas of socio-natural existence (work, sexuality, collective authority, subjectivity and nature). The difficulties in maintaining the local networks might suggest a need to reflect on this crucial point.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

### 6.1. General considerations

The pedagogical model *Meterse al Rancho*, was created in Colombia as a strategy for intrafamily violence transformation by the *Observatorio para la Paz* in alliance with the ICBF. The model evolved within a circle of intellectuals who met in Bogotá around an NGO, the *Observatorio para la Paz*, which was composed of ex-militants and sympathisers of the guerrilla movement M-19. Between 2005 and 2009, the model was implemented throughout eleven Colombian regions as part of the *Haz Paz* public policy. This research has shown that *Meterse al Rancho* is an innovative example of intrafamily violence prevention and transformation. It goes further than traditional approaches that have been developed in Colombia and the surrounding Latin American region, in which the treatment of the perpetrator of the violence (either punishment or psychological therapy) was thought to be the route to overcoming intrafamily violence (Rioseco, 2005; Lerrain, 2002).

Approaching elements of critical theory the model considers the patriarchal culture as the cause of violence (Mullender, 2000; Velázquez, 2003; Montecino, 1996). But being close to constructionist postulates (Hoffman, 1996; Gergen, 1996; Domènech and Íñiguez 2002), *Meterse al Rancho* understands family relationships as social constructions that can be modified not only through structural change (Montecino, 1996) but through socio-educational processes involving the families. Moreover, taking elements of constructivism (Rosas and Sebastián, 2004; Maturana, 1995) the model gives importance to primordial emotions, such as love, in the transformation of the violence for the central role they play in human relationships. Furthermore, being close to culture and development theories (Kleymeyer, 1994; Clammer, 2005), *Meterse al Rancho* emphasizes the cultural aspect of violence and its transformation and thus signifies a new approach in tackling intrafamily violence. Therefore, as well aiming to transform violence within families, this model constitutes an effort to break the cycle between social violence and family violence needed for the consolidation of peace and sustainable development in Colombia (Benjamin & Fancy, 1998, Galtung, 2000; Jimeno a, 2001).

Additionally, based in Freire's pedagogy (2000), *Meterse al Rancho* became a model in which individuals, families and communities create dialogues about practices of violence and build together new and healthier possibilities of coexistence. Thus, *Meterse al Rancho* is one of the first attempts in Colombia and Latin America to work not only in the treatment of the violence but also in its prevention, using pedagogy as a tool to produce a cultural transformation that intervenes in violent practices within families. However, interpreted from the decolonial perspective (Mignolo, 2005; Walsh, 2005; Castro- Gómez, 2005) *Meterse al Rancho*, in its epistemological foundation, however, is immersed in the colonial matrix in the sense that it creates a method, a way of working in the transformation of intrafamily violence through a homogeneous pedagogy. This pedagogy is developed nationally, regardless of the diversity of local contexts, which are constructed from the multiple forms of family that form the Colombian family pluriverse. Therefore, the many forms of violence and traditional ways of containing it become diluted. For these reasons, it



is concluded that *Meterse al Rancho*, while attempting to transform violence according to its principles, appears to do so from an understanding of culture that is universal, rather than pluriversal (Mignolo, 2005), meaning that family is not understood in its diversity.

The Cúcuta fieldwork demonstrated that this model of community socio-educational action from peace empowers mainly those who have been part of the learning and multiplication processes and who have committed to becoming peacemakers within their families and communities. Furthermore, the data collected in this research seem to suggest, in agreement with Kleymeyer, that “the cultural energy helps people find, within the very depths of themselves, the strength and the resolution they were not sure they owned” (1994, p. 301). Therefore, *Meterse al Rancho*, as pedagogy and an art of living, empowers people and communities to find strength and abilities for conflict resolution within themselves.

*Meterse al Rancho* was designed as a series of strategic choices. Once the *Observatorio para la Paz* was created, one part of its strategy was the work in peace research. The other part of its organizational strategy was to develop a peace pedagogy to work with families, illiterate people, people who did not complete high school, and those willing to strengthen their abilities in peace. The research data showed that by assuming conflict as a challenge and a possibility of transformation, *Meterse al Rancho* developed tools to facilitate collective dialogues within families and communities more vulnerable to violence, who were mostly poor people. Furthermore, as national pedagogical strategy, *Meterse al Rancho* developed educational processes mainly with public servants of the ICBF and with Madres Fami, in particular, who were in charge of the multiplication process within their families and communities.

Moreover, this research has concluded that the *Observatorio para la Paz* has managed to operationalize a model that has not only been an abstract and academic research and conceptualization process. The organization has developed an agile, efficient and likely sustainable operative system, focused on the partnership between stakeholders in the regions: The State, through the institution in charge of the issue in Colombia, the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF), and the municipal governments; operators of the ICBF in the field, the *Madres fami* and local leader; and finally the University as a center of reflection and thought.

However, the research has shown that even though *Meterse al Rancho* was designed to be very participatory in nature and despite the success of the collective work, there is a need to strengthen communication between stakeholders to facilitate ideological consistency and what is more important guarantee the sustainability of the project. Although the process of implementation of *Meterse al Rancho* has been a very successful partnership between different actors, *the Observatorio para la Paz* has not managed to decentralize its operation. The model development remains dependent on the organization, preventing its consolidation from the local organizations and regions with a ‘bottom up’ approach, and thus ensure a grassroots sustainability.

## 6.2. Lessons learned about the model as public policy

*Meterse al Rancho* proposes an innovative conceptual approach to the phenomenon of intrafamily violence that recognizes the socio-cultural component of the violence. This pedagogical model becomes part of the innovative public policy, *Haz Paz*, which goes beyond other intrafamily violence policies. Previous public policies in Colombia focused on the punitive and psychological aspects of violence (Rioseco, 2005). The novelty of the *Haz Paz* policy is that it opens a space for families and communities to work in the prevention of intrafamily violence using education as a tool for its transformation. Furthermore, the research of family public policies in Colombia and surrounding Latin America has shown that *Haz Paz* is the first policy in which intrafamily violence is linked to social violence, and thus *Haz Paz* has become a strategy of family and social peace that aims at supporting the consolidation of peace and democracy.

*Meterse al Rancho* has become a pedagogical model in which each participant becomes an educator of his own family and their living environments, a facilitator to make visible the possibility of transformation of violence in family life. Pedagogical tools such as the “skin of the other”, “game of *Pacicultora* family” and “memory of peace in family” allow participants to explore their reality, recognise their past, present and future, so that they can see healthier relationships as a way of life.

The model was implemented mainly by the ICBF in alliance with community leaders enrolled in the institution (Fami Mothers), the academia and the government. The IOM in partnership with the USAID, were the international cooperation agencies which supported financially the implementation of the model between 2005 and 2009. Local universities such as the Universidad Francisco de Paula Santander, Surcolombiana and Open and Distance University (UNAD), were also very important actors in the implementation of the strategy, for instance offering location and academic support for the training processes. The difficulty of the alliances was that, as demonstrated by experience in regions such as Cúcuta, partnerships by themselves without economic support do not lead to sustainable processes. It was thought that through the Gols (operative local groups) that the local encounters would endure. But the field work showed that local encounters within families and communities with no funding or educational accompaniment, despite the model having had ownership in the local contexts, were unsustainable.

The biggest difficulty in the sustainability of the model has been the lack of continuity in the ICBF. The ICBF changes its staff every 4 years with the term of the Colombian Government, which has resulted in policy changes. In 2009 when the institution replaced all their staff, there were no more funds going to this initiative. Another factor that has limited the sustainability of *Meterse al Rancho* is that, in the framework of public policies for the family, little importance has been given to the cultural aspect of the violence. This might have contributed to the institutional apathy and subsequent lack of interest in making *Meterse al Rancho* part of the development of the *Haz Paz* public policy only five years into its ten-year tenure (2005–2015). This research urges the

*Observatorio para la Paz* to improve sustainability by strengthening institutional commitments and exploring traditional forms of conflict resolution.

### 6.3. Recommendations for the practice

The present findings show that *Meterse al Rancho* has the potential to transform family public policy in Colombia and Latin America. Yet, as borne out in this investigation, a pedagogy having no structural transformation will not produce healthier personal relationships in the lives of (the mostly poor) families vulnerable to violence.

The fieldwork showed that despite people attending the pedagogical processes and being engaged with the transformation of violence in their households, their poverty meant stress and difficulty. Following Galtung's Transcendence Peace Theory (2003), *Meterse al Rancho* confirms the need to understand peace as transforming three types of violence: direct, structural and cultural. From a public policy perspective, there is a need to find connections between these three types of violence, especially in regards to Colombia's negotiations of the Peace Treaty.

Since 2009, *Meterse al Rancho* pedagogy has been adapted to different scenarios, such as high school processes for people outside the formal education system, literacy processes, and processes of non-formal education in emergencies. Thus *Meterse al Rancho* has survived through the *Observatorio para la Paz*, an organization that has understood the necessity to adapt the model to different scenarios. For example, in 2012 and the beginning of 2013, the *Observatorio para la Paz* in alliance with the ICBF under a public policy different to *Haz Paz*, "*Familias con Bienestar*" ("Family well-being") developed *Meterse al Rancho* in four Colombian regions. In 2014, the model was adapted to another strategy with Afro-Colombian families in Nariño, a department of Colombia.

Finally, it has to be added that in a post-conflict Colombia, from this research it is recommended that intrafamily violence transformation be put on the public agenda in the form of policy. Furthermore, there is a need to review experiences such as the one of this case study and see how those have to be improved and included in a public policy. In the case of *Meterse al Rancho* for instance, the decentralization of the model is required in order to understand family and violence transformation, taking into account ethnic and cultural variables, to respect the constitutional mandate that defines Colombia as a multi-ethnic and multicultural state (Constitution, 1991).

### 6.4. Recommendations for further study

Family public policies in Colombia need to be more effective in preventing intrafamily violence. To this end, there is a need for a deeper understanding on the role of culture and ethnicity in specific types of violence in families. Similarly, there are numerous

variables that affect the family that warrant further investigation, such as poverty, displacement, war and peace negotiations. Finally, more research is needed on extreme forms of intrafamily violence, such as femicide, which may provide concrete case studies to elucidate the more subtle day-to-day aggression that commonly occurs in Colombian families. Fostering research and policy development in those directions will influence not only families but also social wellbeing.

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## APPENDICES

**Appendix A. Social and political violence incidence in Colombia in 2009. Carreño (2009)**

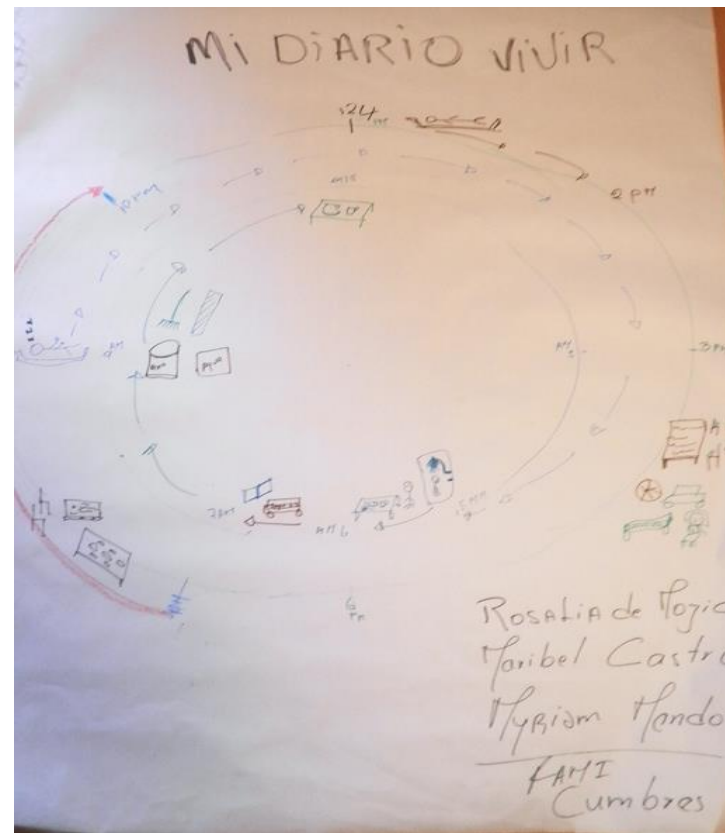
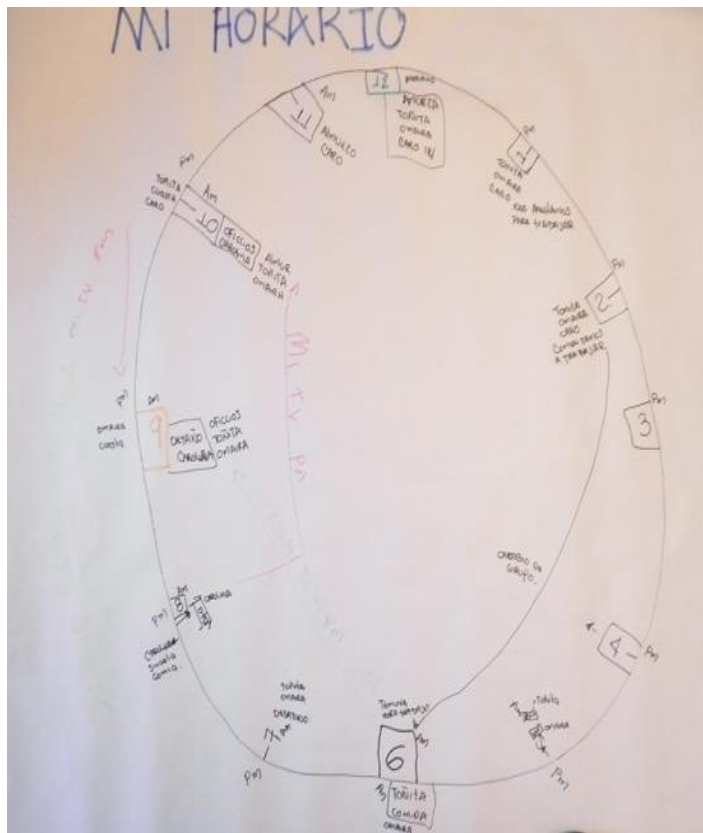
Circumstance	Women	Men	Total (for each circumstance)
Social violence (fight, legal, intervention, with no motive, theft, theft to a bank, etc.)	27.177	41.981	69.158
	10.984	20.130	31.114
	1.202	9.377	10.579
	1.510	4.603	6.113
	1.009	2.164	3.173
	790	1.275	2.065
	238	442	680
	156	346	502
Political violence (military action, action from the guerrillas, terrorism, kidnapping, paramilitary action, violence against marginal groups, etc., public murder, etc.)	43	341	384
	37	185	222
	18	190	208
	42	115	157
	21	122	143
	30	44	74
	17	44	61
	10	49	59
	2	22	24
	2	3	5
	4.947	8.949	13.896
	48.235	90.362	138.617

**Appendix B. Summary of the fieldwork plan for Cúcuta: August 2010**

Actors to work with	Topics to investigate	Tools to use	Required time	Place of application
1. ICBF <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beatriz Zuluaga</li> <li>• ICBF Director</li> <li>Zonal Coordinators</li> <li>• Community Mothers (women who work as social workers hired by the ICBF within their low income neighbourhoods)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem of family violence in Cúcuta</li> <li>• Policies and programs in place</li> <li>• <i>Meterse al Rancho</i> experience: strengths, weaknesses and recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with Directors.</li> <li>• Possibility of focus groups with community mothers?</li> </ul>	1 day	ICBF Offices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regional</li> <li>- Zonal</li> </ul>
2. Local Operative Group (Technical assistance group) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Francisco de Paula Santander University:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jesús Urbina (Group Coordinator)</li> <li>- Facilitators</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem of family violence in Cucuta</li> <li>• University experience in <i>Meterse al Rancho</i>: strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-depth interview with Director</li> <li>• Focus group with facilitators of the methodology</li> </ul>	1 day	University offices and classroom
3. Mayor Ministry of Social Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayor</li> <li>• Ministry of Social Development</li> <li>• Family counselling office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem of family violence in Cucuta</li> <li>• Policies and programs in place</li> <li>• <i>Meterse al Rancho</i>: strengths, weaknesses and recommendations.</li> </ul>	Interviews with key functionaries	1 day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayor of the municipality</li> <li>• Family counselling offices</li> </ul>
4. People from the communities who participated in <i>Meterse al Rancho</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant women</li> <li>• Participant men</li> <li>• Children and youth</li> <li>• Communitarian leaders</li> </ul>	Problem of family violence in Cucuta: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do families solve their problems?</li> <li>• ICBF or other institutional programs which the community recognized.</li> <li>• Peace within families</li> <li>• <i>Meterse al Rancho</i>: strengths, weaknesses, recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with key informants</li> <li>• Focal groups organized by age: adults, youth, children</li> </ul>	3 days	Community spaces
5. People from the communities who did not participate in <i>Meterse al Rancho</i> :	Problem of family violence in Cucuta: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ¿How do families solve their problems?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with key informants</li> <li>• Focal groups organised by age: adults, youth,</li> </ul>	2 days	Community spaces

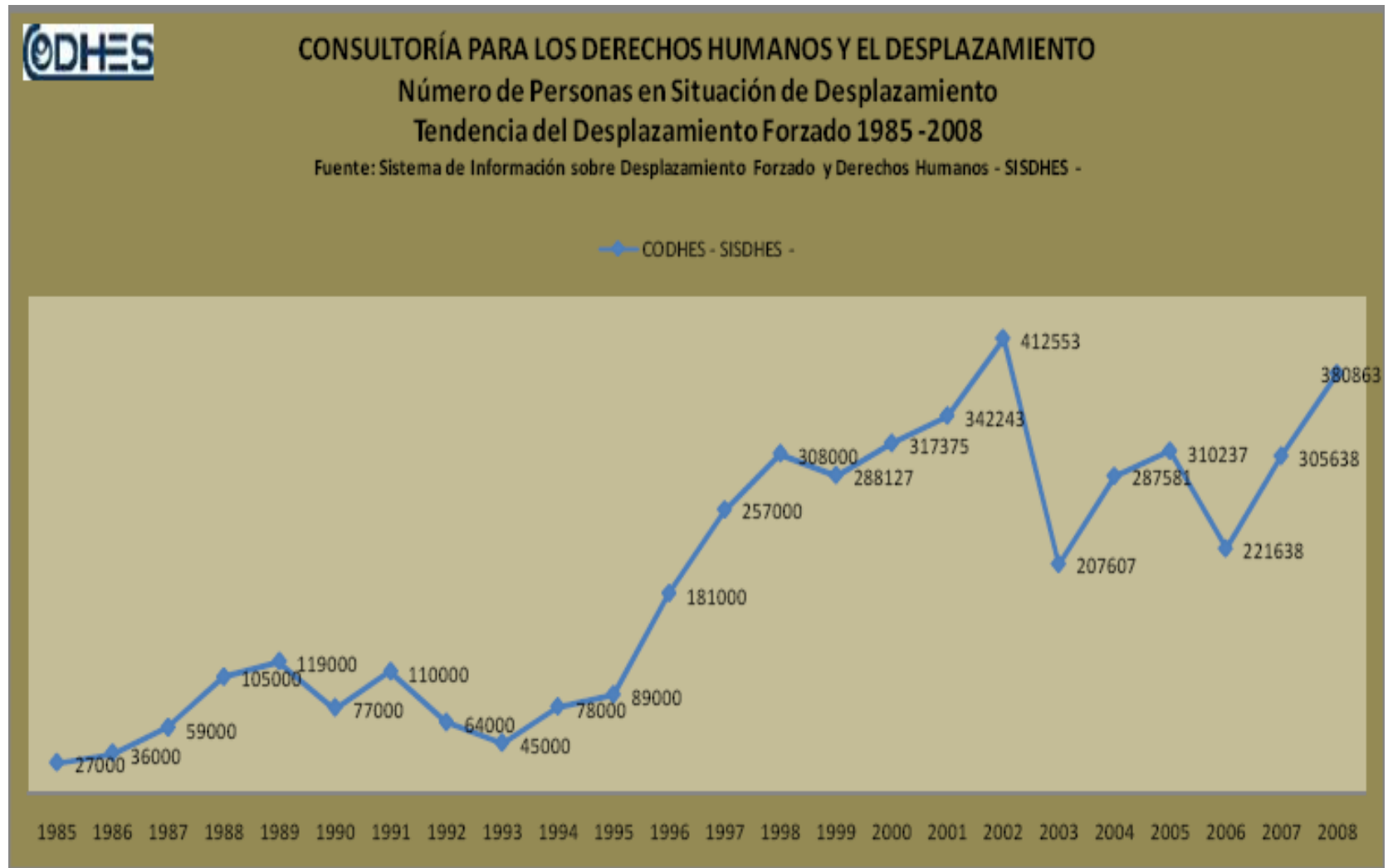
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-participant women</li> <li>• Non-participant men</li> <li>• Children and youth</li> <li>• Communitarian leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICBF or other institutional programs which they recognised</li> <li>• Peace within families</li> <li>• <i>Meterse al Rancho</i>: strengths, weaknesses, recommendations</li> </ul>	children		
6. Library visits and other documentation funds			1 day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library</li> <li>• ICBF</li> <li>• Family counselling office</li> </ul>

### Appendix C. Samples from the exercise “Everyday Sun”

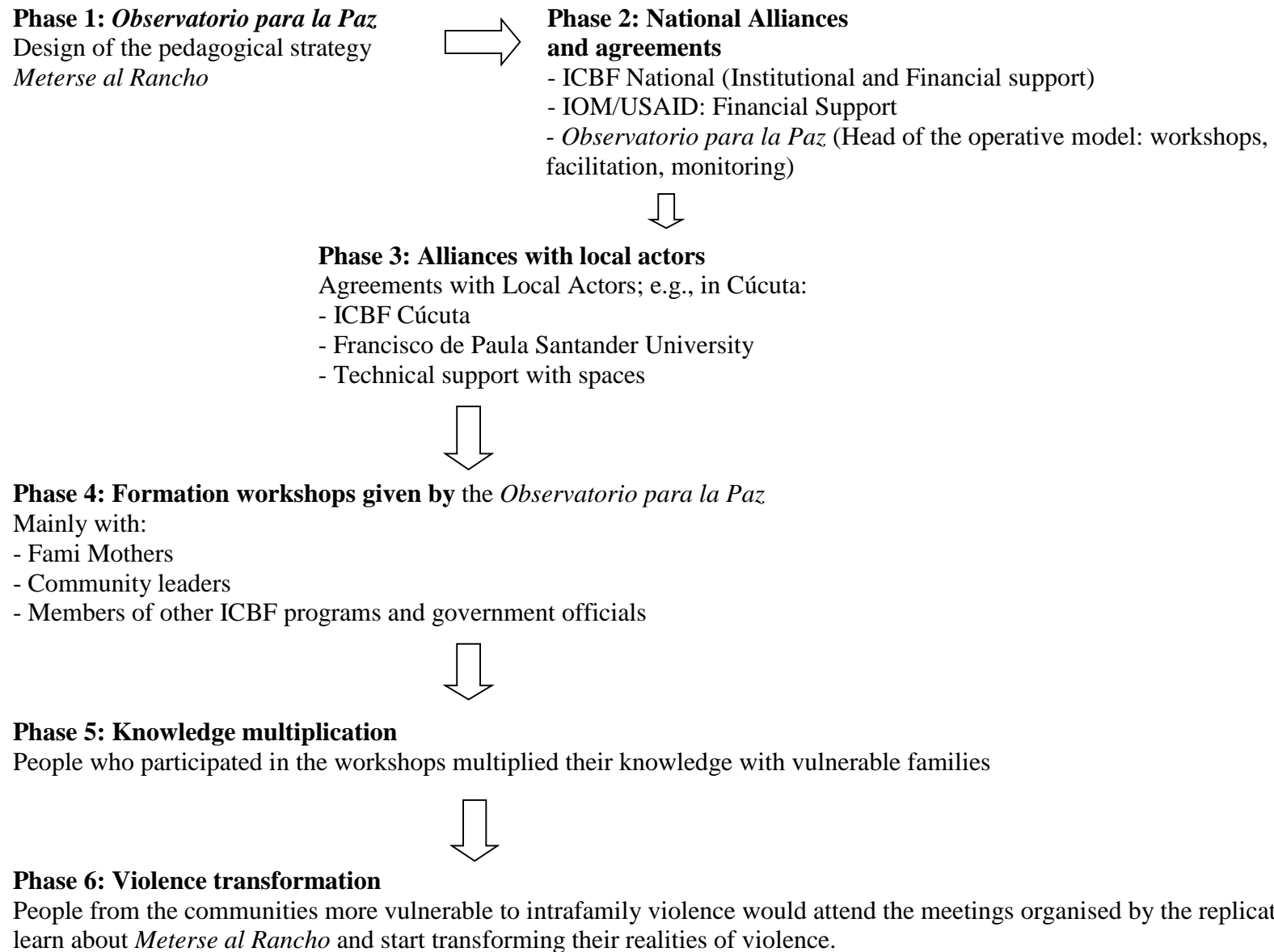


Throughout this exercise each woman reported on her everyday routine. It is concluded that these women, even after having been part of a *Pacicultura* process in which they started an empowerment process, still have difficulties managing their own time. In general, all fami mothers wake up very early to attend to their family and clean the house, which takes until midday, when they prepare lunch for the entire family. In the afternoon they work as communitarian mothers with other mothers from the community; thus their free time is in the evenings. When the children are at home they need help with their clothes, homework, etc., and the husband typically asks for company. For these reasons, the women's spare time is usually spent with their family in front of the television.

**Appendix D. Forced Internal displacement in Colombia with numbers CODHES (2008).**



**Appendix E. *The Scope of Meterse al Rancho as defined through the reading of the operative model in phases***



*Figure X.* The six phases that comprised this research project. Phases 1 to 4 included fieldwork, while Phases 5 and 6 did not, hence their lack of primary data.



## Appendix F: Meterse al Rancho tools rebuilt and used in Cúcuta, 2010

- *Meterse en la piel del otro* (To put oneself into another's skin): To walk in another's shoes.
- *Memoria e Historia* (Memory and History): To remember not to get stuck; one must overcome problems and be more; to find peace in one's memories; to evoke and live processes with the *Meterse al Rancho*.
- *Juego* (Game): To help identify and understand all things that happen within the family, especially beneficial for those who do not speak. This game is very participatory.
- *Cambio de mitos y creencias* (Change of myths and beliefs): In men (young and old) and women.
- *Teatro* (Theatre): Young people were provided with *Pacicultura* knowledge through theatre as a way to express themselves.
- *Dar ejemplo* (To give an example): To be a guide for others; to act as a mirror.
- *El compendio de juegos* (The compendium of games): These were games on the published texts. They provided fun, humour and laughter to share within families and to reflect upon.
- *El diálogo* (The dialogue): The means by which individuals and families move through conflict; to be tolerant.
- *Las metáforas* (The metaphors): Sayings and images to evoke points of view.
- *La cocina Pacicultora* (The Peace culture kitchen): A place to cook in a relational climate of coexistence.
- *Ética del cuidado* (Ethics of care): Considers the questions "How much time do I dedicate to myself?" and "How much time do I share?"; and gives importance to the recognition of the other and to early childhood experiences.
- *El sol del tiempo* (The sun of time): A means of becoming aware of the amount of time spent on a given task.
- *Termómetro* (Thermometer): Identifies the baseline that tells us where we started and where we are in terms of conflict, violence and peace.