Community radio and peace building in Colombia. Communication, interaction and participatory planning for the post-conflict

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Abstract

This article discusses some structural elements affecting spaces for social interaction within community radio processes, such as spaces for participatory planning and interpersonal communication that could be considered as a crucial contribution to the construction of peace in Colombia. **Methodology:** The study used two ethnographic vignettes to investigate these spaces: (i) the "Programming Boards" of community radio stations in the Caribbean, and (ii) the "Local Thematic Committees" of community radio stations in northeast Antioquia. Literature on participatory intensities frame this research providing a historical and critical perspective of community communication for peace. **Discussion and conclusions:** We concluded that it is necessary to strengthen participatory planning with a political emphasis and that interpersonal communication should form the basis of a radio designed to call and engage civil society to meet, share, and dialogue towards the collective construction of peace.

Keywords

community radio; peace; participatory planning; post-conflict; interaction; interpersonal communication.

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Translation from **Camilo Pérez Quintero's** abstract
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1. Introduction

Promise me not to go silent all of a sudden!
Bertolt Brecht

In a post-conflict context, "Shall not kill" means with Lyotard, *you will not deny others the condition of the interlocutor*. After the signing of the peace agreements between the Colombian State and the FARC-EP guerrillas, one of the scenarios designated for the construction of peace, for the meeting of interlocutors beset by violence in local contexts, is assumed by community radios. Since 1997, with Decree 1447, the Colombian State had said that community radio should be a space for community reflection, consultation, and conflict resolution in the country. As a result, during the last 20 years, community radio stations emerged and generated popular and citizen reflections on peace and conflict, which translated into communicative processes with the capacity to foster diversity, intercultural dialogue, and tolerance. As a consequence, community media became privileged partners in conflict resolution and reconciliation (Pereira and Cadavid, 2011). Previous studies investigated the community media (Downing, 2001; Gumucio-Dagron, 2001) and others also showed that these media enhance the capacity of citizens to express their opinions during the conflict (Atton, 2002; Rodríguez and El'Gazi, 2005; Rodríguez, 2008).

In Colombia, three classic processes show that community radio stations provide spaces that contribute to heal the wounds caused by war: (i) the Communication Colective of Montes de Maria (*Colectivo de Comunicaciones Montes de Maria Linea 21*), explained in "Gaining ground to fear" (Vega and Bayuelo, 2008); (ii) the Magdalena Medio Community Radio Network (*Red de Radios Comunitarias del Magdalena Medio* - AREDMAG), which provided rare evidence of the community media central role in the fight for peace in the midst of the conflict (Cadavid and Moreno, 2009); and (iii) *Radio Andaquí*, from Belén de los andaquíes (Caquetá department), a communicative process where those who could not speak before, can do it now, and feel good doing it (González and Rodríguez, 2006). Internationally, in East Timor, the youngest nation in the world with an armed conflict, community radio was an important tool used by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (UNDP 2009). A case closer to the Colombian experience also occurs in Cyprus, where Carpentier & Doudaki (2014) showed that community media played a central role in the resolution of armed conflicts at the local level.

However, research still knows little about the specific role of interpersonal communication as a participatory communication tool for the territorial and collective construction of peace from community media. Territorial, because the conflict affected some territories more than others; Collective, because that change will not be achieved if efforts are not articulated, and the population is not mobilized in those territories around peace (Jaramillo, 2013); and Participatory, to recognize communities as political agents (OACP, 2017). To explore this subfield of communication for peace (Gorsevski, 2014) in the Colombian context, we analyzed several experiences of Caribbean community radio stations grouped in *RedeMediosCaribe*, departmental networks in Guajira, Cesar, Magdalena, Atlántico, Bolívar, Sucre, and Cordova; and of the *RedeNorte*, the community radio network in northeastern Antioquia, municipalities of San Pedro de los Milagros, San José de la Montaña, and Briceño. The purpose was to account for participatory planning processes, in the spaces of interaction and interpersonal communication that community radio had in these areas of the country.

In this article, (i) we present a brief synopsis of the development of community radio in Colombia, after that (ii) we point out how community radio strengthen the peace agreements with the FARC_EP, regarding the vision of the National Government about territorial peace, and then (iii) we examine the meetings of the programming boards and thematic committees, such as the specific social spaces that support the communication processes that are proposed to build communication for reconciliation. In the end, (iv) we close with the discussion about the problems that involved the participation and commitment of community actors proposing possible solutions with what is found in the field.

1.1. What is and what is not a community radio?

There is no single definition. The basic premise focuses on nonprofit, participatory, and media made by and for a local audience, providing a variety of educational and entertainment programs to facilitate community development. This type of radio proved to be a sustainable and interactive space for poor and marginalized populations to be heard and informed, form their opinions, and become more decisive agents in their development (see McKay, 2010; Wabwire, 2013).

In many countries, community radio belongs to the regulatory sector of broadcasting policy and, even so, it is a form of "emancipatory communication" (Bruck and Raboy 1989). Its programming offers crucial spaces for the empowerment of gender and youth; for the resolution of conflicts between local groups; to develop skills; for personal and community empowerment (Lewis, 2008; Howley, 2005). In this context, the Colombian researcher Clemencia Rodríguez (2009) proposes the global term "citizens' media" (citizens' radios in our case), based on what they generate: change processes caused by their participants, while they acquire citizen competencies. The concept made possible to differentiate community service stations, which favor the consolidation of a vital public sphere, constituted by a diversity of counter-publics, from processes of self-recognition and self-reflection premises (González and Rodríguez, 2006).

In the current article, we highlight the communication made by local communities, whom by freely talking, contribute to the constitution of public opinion and enable the subsequent participation of citizens in democratic structures (Dahlgren 2009). These community radios are citizens' media from the moment their communication processes begin, and they are crucial on consolidating, completing, constructing peace. However, we continue to use the 'community' qualifier, because that is how the analyzed experiences are defined, and because the State (depending on the licenses) name them as such in their contracts and agreements. The use of the term has, however, three levels of support:

1. The opening of the medium so that everyone and any member of the community can participate in the production of the programming and the management of the medium (Gumucio-Dagrón, 2001).
2. The access of different ideas in programs that respect all opinions; that stimulate cultural diversity, without discrimination or censorship; with women as actors in communication and not merely as advertising tricks (*Asociación Mundial de Radios Comunitarias* - AMARC).
3. The empowerment of community media that must be open to the participation of community members in the creation and management of programs "(European Parliament, 2007: 1).

1.2. The raising of community radio in Colombia

Before the first legal community radio station made its appearance in Colombia in 1997 (Pereira,

2001), a handful of government, private and international organizations, led important processes to accompany social movements thorugh the development of local media. The efforts of several entities are highlighted, such as the work of the Social Foundation (*Fundacion Social*), the Liaison Project of the Ministry of Communications, the National Learning Service (*Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje -* SENA), and UNICEF, which provided training and support to youth and communication groups in Bogotá, the Colombian Pacific, the Santanderes, Caquetá, Montes de María, and some neighborhoods of Medellín between 1990 and 1995 (Gómez & Quintero, 2001).

Although in 2017 the community radio in Colombia celebrated 20 years of its legal recognition (EEColombia2020, 2017), its roots date back to the experiences of alternative radios such as *Radio Sutatenza*, which appeared in 1947 (Rodríguez, 2011), to military radios that operated since 1981 in the department of Caquetá, together with the illegal radios that existed since 1987 in towns such as Tamalameque, Cesar, and in some municipalities of Cauca, Nariño, and Guajira (Cadavid, 2011), along with some of insurgent political nature such as guerrilla radios (Espinoza 2010). Some indigenous communities also transmitted not only in their own language but under their own definitions and conditions (Rodríguez and El´Gazi, 2005), together with popular communication practices such as the use of billboards and megaphones used by Churches and Circuses to summon faithful and neighbors to meetings and shows (González and Rodríguez, 2006). Therefore, the appearance of these community radio stations is part of processes that increasingly seek the direct presence of the voices of various sectors in public settings; in this case, in the media spaces of communication (El'Gazi, 2011).

According to Pereira (2001), at the beginning of the 21st century, approximately 550 community radio stations existed in Colombia. Fifteen years later, according to data from the Santander Community Radio Network (*Red de Radios Comunitarias del Santander -* Resander), 650 were already running, some of them with technical and economical difficulties, especially to meet the requirements that regulations require:

> "Of the 650 community radio stations [licenses] in the country today, 261 are expired by the end of 2017, while in 2018, another 160 will have the same problem. That is, we are talking about more than 50% of those who are licensed". Fernando Tibaduiza (1) (EEColombia2020, 2017)

1.3. Peacebuilding in a context of violence

The war has not only been present in many stages of Colombian history but also formed the country (González, 2003; Pardo, 2004). The most renowned and studied moments of Colombian history are the Independence and the period of violence during the middle of the last century. The studies of Uribe de Hincapié (2008) explored the civil wars during the nineteenth century between the different federal governments and their reforms. During the 20th century, the thousand-day war and especially the last quarter-century stand out. However, as far as this century goes, little is known about the peace dialogue processes. The first one dates from 1974 between the Government of López-Michelsen and the National Liberation Army (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional -* ELN), with whom, paradoxically, even in 2019, a peace agreement is still being attempted. During these 45 years, the government negotiated with different armed groups. The agreements with the M19 and other leftist guerrillas in the 1990s, with some paramilitary groups in 2007, and with the FARC-EP in 2016 stand out. There were several

attempts at peace between the State and the FARC-EP guerrilla: the 1984 negotiations with the Betancurt's Government; in 1990 with the Gaviria's Government; in 1998 with the Pastrana's Government; and finally a peace agreement was reached with the Santos' Government in 2016 after four years of dialogues. It goes without saying that at the close of this second decade of the 21st century, there are other armed organizations in the Colombian territory, which except for the ELN, are more linked to drug trafficking than with political causes.

The last agreement with the FARC-EP was relevant not only because it involved one of the oldest guerrillas in the world, but because it linked victims and local communities, and made a gender approach explicit. In this scenario, to strengthen community radio build a place of peace. This is written in point 2.2.3. of the final agreements

Citizen participation in community media also contributes to the construction of a democratic culture based on the principles of freedom, dignity, and belonging, and to strengthen communities with neighborhood ties or mutual collaboration (2).

Undoubtedly, the agreements go in the direction of some academic and activist sectors, convinced that the media could become an actual agent to achieve a sustainable peace (Rodríguez, 2004; Vega and Rodríguez, 2009; Laplante & Phenice, 2009; El'Gazi, 2011; Gorsevski, 2014). Since the armed conflict in Colombia affected a large portion of rural communities, these communities must be actively involved in the design of apporaches to overcome the consequences of violence, especially women, who suffered differently from violence and marginalization (Romero, 2012). This is how the leaders of these radios tell it: "The violence we experienced occurred in the province, and it is in the province where community radio is located. Therefore, community radio is the main vehicle for building peace." (J. González, personal communication, October 23, 2017)

For this reason, the Colombian State initially created spaces in community broadcasters and institutional and regional channels through which to disseminate the agreements, and subsequently, the work of social organizations and movements. As a complementary step, at least 20 radios must be created over the next two years (2018-2020) as agreed initially in Havana, and reinforced at the renegotiated agreement in Bogotá, requiring a joint administration of these new community radio stations that include former FARC_EP combatants, local organizations, and victims. The role of communication in this regard is defined in *Chapter 2 of the peace agreements*, wherein the construction of a culture of reconciliation, coexistence, tolerance, and non-stigmatization is proposed, which involve a language and behavior of respect and dignity in the exercise of political and social mobilization.

All this demonstrates the commitment of the parties to the construction of a peace built from below, from the local territories, by the community and not only from above, between the armies or, between the institutions and the guerrilla movement. Here it is essential to distinguish between two types of peace, according to Galtung (1996), 'negative peace' and 'positive peace'. The first is the absence of an armed confrontation in the solution of existing conflicts. The second refers to the result of the peace build by local people, the generation of a more harmonious relationships (see, Martínez, 2001; Jiménez, 2009).

1.4. Community radio in the construction of territorial peace

Thinking about how to make community broadcasters contribute to the peace process beyond the dissemination of the agreements, several state institutions such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (*Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz* - OACP), the Ministries of Culture and Tics, and the Presidency of the Republic, created the Project *Community Radios for Peace and Coexistence* (*Proyecto Radios comunitarias para la paz y la convivencia* - RCPC). The project received financial support from the European Union (EU), and was operated by the community radio network of Santander (REDSANDER).

In fact, between 2015 and 2017, the project (RCPC) was carried out to strengthen Colombian community broadcasters on reconciliation, coexistence, and peace issues through training in communication for peace and radio production processes, and the subsequent national circulation of the contents produced at the training workshops by participants. In this way, 50 community radio stations committed themselves to actions of participation, production, broadcasting, and circulation of content as a contribution for the construction of peace, which was later broadcast by 400 community radio stations along the country. Thus, RCPC, not only boosted citizen's participation with these new spaces; but it proposed that the community media must not only inform about the agreements and their implementation but also identify and consolidate local peace efforts, involving the community, and organizing public conversations, which at the end, as we shall see, played an important role in the reform of the Colombian political system.

The main antecedent of something similar was the project of Citizen's Radios: spaces for democracy (*Radios Ciudadanas: espacios para la democracia* - RCED), created in 2004 by the Radio Unit of the former Colculture (3). This project aimed to strengthen local democratic processes through the production and broadcasting of community radio programs that promote human rights, citizen's training, local public debates, and the consolidation of community broadcasters, improving their production capacity and strengthening of radio networks at the departmental level (Buendía and Pino, 2008; Giraldo, 2010).

Returning to the experiences of RCRD, RCPC, an important aspect is that it put into practice the so called: *Local Thematic Committees* (LTC), a social space for the encounter of communities, created to expand community participation in community radio stations. In fact, citizen's participation on the community radio stations was initially regulated by Decree 1982 of 1997, with which the Ministry of Communications created the so called *Programming Boards* (PB) as a tool to guide the programming and production of programs, and stimulate citizen's participation in local media. In fact, the PB was in charge of formulating the style manual and the programming grid of each community radio station. However, after 20 years of implementing this proposal, it became evident the non-compliance of some stations in the conformation of these social spaces or PB. "There are very low records of citizen participation in community radio stations, both in the programming boards of the stations designing and planning and in the dayparting, developing ideas (Durán, 2011, 321).

Similar comments were made in an interview by Liliana Ramírez, the first coordinator of the RCPC Project, from where the role of community radio in peacebuilding was configured:

> "In their desire to look more and more like commercial radio, many community broadcasters instrumentalized the *Programming Boards*, reducing them to a group of local organizations that

annually endorsed the programming of the station, through an act, which supported the renewal of licenses; Therefore, the *local thematic Committees* (LTC) were implemented for the participatory construction of themes." (L. Ramírez, personal communication, February 13, 2018)

Whether the community radio is a subject that participates in political spaces such as assemblies, community action meetings or accountability of public servants (Vega and Rodríguez, 2009); or a scenario for the encounter, dialogue, conversation and debate between different local actors, it is important to explore it from a participatory approach (Gou, 2015) to see these interaction spaces (El'Gazi, 1999), as public spheres (Gitlin, 1998), or projection platforms of differentiated citizenships (Moore, 1999) or unlimited (Cammaerts and Carpentier, 2007) who want to build peace from their condition, position and interest. All this fits into the idea of communication to constitute democracy, this implies, according to Jeanine El´Gazi (2011) "that the voices speak when they can, and once they can, stimulate and allow their access, their elaboration and the qualification of the dialogue with others "(p. 325). In this way, PB and LTC constitute small spheres where various local actors participate in promoting the construction of active citizenships; that is reflective subjects (Thiebaut, 1998) assuming the commitment to build (radio for) peace.

2. Methodology

The purpose of this methodological strategy is to inspect participatory intensities in political terms. This requires seeing the PB and LTC as open dialogues between actors representing broader sectors of the local community. To account for this communicative interaction and its participatory commitment, a methodology was designed involving three key aspects: Observation, Interviews and archive analysis.

I. Observation and registration of these social spaces for meeting, negotiation, and interaction in community radio stations, from a dialogic perspective. Dialogue with radio presenters through an accompanying observation that consists both in being - in the double sense of attending the events and being with social agents - as in conversing with them, while doing daily activities at the station, which they are photographed (Greiner, 2012).

II. Comprehensive interviews, an adequate tool in exploratory phases when the researcher does not know the social context and cultural frameworks involved in structuring the observed reality (Kaufmann, 1996).

III. Ethnographic analysis of the archives, that although with a series of limitations, ethnographers are prepared to face them, asking about the processes of cultural production (Stoler, 2002; Manoff, 2004).

Thus, an ethnographic perspective supported this work in the discussion and analysis of materials with which two ethnographic vignettes were created: the first around the Programming Boards in the Caribbean stations, and; the second around the local thematic committees of the stations of northeastern Antioquia. Both resulted from the use of various information-gathering techniques such as collective interviews, workshops, field visits, and archival consultation.

Summary of the research methods and techniques used			
Method	Techniques	Quantity	subtotals
Ethnography	Community radio observation	1	7
	Memory workshop	1	
	Conversation interviews	5	
Interviews	RedeMediosCaribe	10	16
	Redenorte (Antioquia)	5	
	other networks	1	
Document Review	File Folder Query (RedSander) RCPC project	120	135
	Minutes of Programming Boards	5	
	Minutes of Local Thematic Committees	10	
cases	Programming Boards	3	6
	Local thematic committees	3	
Total of people	Interviewed	22	22

3. Results

In this section, we illustrated through testimonies, document fragments, and theoretical support regarding participation, the way in which the work in the two meeting spaces: (i) the programming boards that must approve the programming grid of citizen radio stations and (ii) the local thematic committees that decide on the contents of strips to consolidate construction processes peace. We addressed how these two platforms of citizen participation became determinant for the construction of territorial peace, using interpersonal or dialogic communication.

3.1. Vignette one: Programming Boards

The programming board (PB) created 20 years ago by the Colombian Ministry of Culture guarantee the participation of different "sectors" of the community, whether private, public, community, or institutional, in the design of the Programming of community radio stations within a strategy called *Citizen Radios* (Cadavid; El´Gazi, 2011). But, over the time, the existence of the PB became a condition for the granting of broadcasting licenses. The producer of the urban community radio *Voces de Santa Marta* confirmed this situation, when he said that the PB exist on the station "because it is a requirement of the ministry". (G. Orozco personal communication, October 23, 2017)

A similar situation also occurs in the rural community station *Ecos del Rio* in the Piñón, department of Magdalena. According to its director, during 14 years of the station existence, there is a PB in which representatives of "all" the existing sectors in the Municipality participate:

> "There we deliberate what is the conduct that we should carry out when we are conscientizing the community as a means. As proof, a record is taken and signed by the attendees". (L. Gómez, personal communication, October 23, 2017)

In a third station, *Sitio Nuevo estéreo*, of La Loma in the department of Magdalena, we found that, although its PB is also made up of leaders of the different guilds that have their settlement in the municipality, they have a difference: in addition to an annual meeting,

> "...we also have meetings agreed at the last minute for some eventualities that are given, for example, ideas to collect funds ... all aware of what happens on the station and ready to provide help." (A. Lopez, communication personal, October 23, 2017)

These interventions account for spaces wherewhere several actors meet to approve the plans of the Directors Board of the broadcasters. There are no records of follow-up, evaluation, or monitoring of the programming grid or any editorial or political issue. After the meetings, there are only minutes with the lists of several people who approve the program. Neither is it mentioned that they present proposals for radio programs, nor do they discuss existing ones. However, the vice president of the Community Radio Network of the department of Atlántico, a member of *RedeMediosCaribe*, says that the PB could even solve problems of economic sustainability:

> "...it could mean fewer responsibilities for the director of the radio station if those who, when participating in the PB, took over spaces or zones that would guarantee the participation of the different communities present in the municipality. (J. Medina, personal communication, October 23, 2017)

This idea, expressed by a Radio presenter leader, requires distinguishing active participation in these communicative processes. From a sociological perspective, there are people who belong to groups; but from a political perspective, the question arises about what is the power to decide or influence decision-making of those who participate on the PB. The president of the Magdalena Community Radio Network illustrated the social space of the PBs from a political aspiration in line with the historical event in the country of the post-agreement:

> ... I wish that the same actors who participate in the PB could be part of the program. For example, can you imagine a radio program where there is a former paramilitary, a former guerrilla, a victim, a sponsor? That is, where the project to build peace, build real spaces for dialogue (S. Pertuz, personal communication, October 23, 2017)

The reflection of this Radio's leader is advanced in conceptual terms and generates concerns in pragmatic terms. By proposing a PB as an alternative public sphere, as a space for dialogue between political opponents who prefer to exchange words; but among those that do not include the forces of the state. This testimony showed that a communication action is required to transform society, but not as the act of informing but as the transformational social action of communicating.

In reality, it is required that *all strategic social actors* be gathered behind the communication action: designing it in function of the political project which is to build peace as a real mechanism for the transformation of society, as a collective action and a scenario of 'imperfect peace' and boosting of a pacifist empowerment (Hernández, 2009). It is important to insist on the action of empowering, understanding this as proposed by Levy (2004) in his text of 'Collective Intelligence', when he says that "the political problem is no longer to take power but to increase the powers of the people, or any human groups." (p. 54).

What the experiences recorded in this first vignette teach us is that the PB offers the possibility for different social actors to meet, even when they have different perspectives and interests. That there is a possibility of constructing spaces for discussion and decision-making about community radio, about identity or local development, and that this possibility implies interpersonal communication as a potentiator of a much more dynamic, contingent and critical participatory process. The question that arises is: What could prevent these communicative possibilities from materializing as effective transformational mechanisms?

3.2. Vignette Two: Local Thematic Committees

In this vignette, we will see the cases of the community radios of the northeast of Antioquia grouped in the Redenorte network, such as *stereo Briceño*, *stereo Paradise* and *the voice of San Pedro*.

Although the Local Thematic Committee (LTC) emerged in the Citizen's Radio program, to renew the PB, here the leaders representing several local organizations will define the contents of the specific radio shows produced on the RCPC project. In fact, in the RCPC project, the LTCs should, in addition to designing contents of the radio series called "That's how peace sounds in the territories" *(Asi suena la Paz en los Territorios), they* should monitor the execution of the episodes and make visible the practices and processes that social organizations in the territories developed around peacebulding:

The LTC of Briceño and the productive sector of the municipality
The Municipality of Briceño, with about 10,000 inhabitants, is located north of the department of Antioquia and is one of the so-called peace laboratories, where the demining of fields and roads were carried out among other tasks. Its community broadcaster existed since 2006, and in addition to having its PB, as a regulatory requirement, they formed a LTC, due to their participation in the RCPC project. In this Committee, social organizations and economic unions grouped together, such as the association of community action boards (*Asociación de Juntas de Acción Comunal* - ASOCOMUNAL), the Briceño multipurpose transport cooperative (*Cooperativa Múltiactiva de Transportadores de Briceño* - COOTRABRI) and the Association for Productive, Economic, Social and Ecological Development of Briceño (*Asociación para el Desarrollo Productivo, Económico, Social y Ecológico de Briceño* - ASDESEBRI), who built or generated peace actions on a daily basis. None of these actors participated in the PB, but in the LTC, they promoted an ideal selection of important issues from the daily life experiences of a municipality that tries to see its social problems from an alternative perspective to the military.

> "These organizations are those who have lived in a war-torn Briceño, and now they are permanently looking for ways to contribute to make their municipality a territory free of violent acts. (B. Agudelo personal communication, October 05, 2017)

The creation of this LTC allowed to identify as participating actors of the radio, specific collective subjects such as dairy, coffee growers, transporters and builders; as well as women, youth, and local communication groups. The analysis of the LTC conformation act archive showed that on the first meeting, after the presentation of all the attendees, the coordinator explains that the project aimed to "make visible the peace and coexistence actions" that the organized communities in Briceño are developing. The LTC minutes No. 1 gives an account of facts that bring us closer to the issue of communication for peace, from an interactive and participatory perspective that supports media

communication, because as we will see, each member was proposed to write a commitment and share it with others,

"Yorley Echavarría, I represent communal action. I pledge to support the project in the execution and collection of information, since I have the experience of working with the community".
"Lina Rodríguez, from my previous and professional knowledge, also from my work in Coovialco, I pledge to help with issues of social and community interest, especially on the sidewalks".
"Fanny Díaz, from Asomubri I can contribute to the project telling our story, of the productive units, of the trainings".
"Julián Torres, from the Voices Communication Corporation that Transform, we can support all social activities aimed at communicating with the community."
"Medardo Ramírez, from the Mayor's Office I can continue supporting the project with participation, dissemination, and making available my experience as a community leader and as a briceñita".

This commitment strategy was highly motivating with regard not only to a technical, but to a political interest, to integrate the LTC with representatives of some associations of the Briceñita community and make them part of the radio station. This is to say, that while the radio station initially summons them to the collective action of building the contents, speeches and narratives of peace to favor all communities, the LTC became quickly an exemplar of local peacebuilding, from which not only ideas for peace emerge, but through which a participatory radio is co-constructed.

The CTL of Paraíso estéreo and social organizations
San José de la Montaña, a municipality in northeastern Antioquia with 4,000 inhabitants, experienced more than 12 years of post-conflict, but now they do not kill or kidnap anyone there, nor there are any gunshots. The peace of the territory is a consequence of the agreement between the Colombian State and multiple self-defense armies in 2007. The LTC of the station that was created for the RCPC project, turned out to be an interdisciplinary, intergenerational, and broad-based group of women. Formed more by people than associations, the priest of the municipality also participate in the LTC; the municipal representative, the leader of the association of communal action boards of the municipality and a representative of the teachers. In a collective interview with some committee members, we obtained among others, these testimonies:
"In the committee, we discuss between us, about the times of violence, not only to talk about the absence of war, peace was approached as a spiritual matter (B. Rodríguez, personal communication, December 03, 2017)

> "If I want to live in peace, I avoid setbacks, mistreatment, fights with my children, with my husband... with the neighbors, if we greet each other and look at each other well, we are radiating peace. (N. Avendaño, personal communication, 03 December, 2017)

> "In our meetings, we evaluated the situation of the Municipality as a society, and from there, select the stories. We defined the themes, and then the production group went out to look for

information, testimonies, interviews, of those who would tell us those stories. A. Rodríguez, personal communication, December 03, 2017)

"We adopt multiple approaches because the concept of peace is not unique, many people understand it in different ways, we try to show all those concepts of peace there were, recognize them, so I think there was a dialogue between the meanings of peace, what I wanted the project, and what ends up happening in the municipality - JL Pérez, personal communication, December 03, 2017)

This LTC proposed among others, an episode about and with the *victims (Mesa de victimas)* of the municipality, which was then transformed into a series of joint actions that were called "the Peace and Memory Celebration", an act of symbolic reparation to the victims that had as its center, a march that crossed the streets of the municipality for two (2) hours, and which was broadcasted live with comments of guest speakers, by the community broadcaster, and by social media networks.

The LTC of San Pedro de los Milagros and the region

San Pedro de los Milagros has a population of 25,000 inhabitants, and, like the previous two municipalities, its main economic activity is farming and livestock, place of the dairy companies in the region. In the radio station *La Voz de San Pedro* even before the RCPC project, work about the peace agreements was already carried out jointly with the other stations of the network. María Noemí Ríos, director of *la Voz de San Pedro* and *RedeNorte*'s representative, told us:

"The local thematic committee of San Pedro was very symbolic and significant for the 18 participants. This committee led a series of vox pop programmes, i.e., street testimonies to gather people's impressions about the main points of the peace agreement, and interviews with the participation of external advisors. In addition, the production was very feminine, thought and made by women, although in the LTC we had participation of young men who also offered their perspective, so there were different participations at the gender level ... (MN Ríos, personal communication, 25 January 2018)

The experiences recorded in this vignette teach us is that with the LTC participation is more effective and achieve more tangible results in terms of meeting and decision-making, which shows, the political component of participation. The question that arises is why the creation of these LTCs is not encouraged instead of the PB?

4. Discussion

But what is the novelty of the LTC, if they are spaces that like the PB are linked to a regulatory requirement (EE / RCPC, 2017)? What to do if in both (as administrative processes) the formats that certify their conformation wears down social processes?

One of our findings reflected the need to distinguish in conceptual terms between the sociological level of participation (that according to Azurmendi et al., (2015) lies in the reception) from the political level of participation (described by Carpentier (2016), and that is verified in terms of citizen formation and community building of democracy). Thus, there is a critical difference between going through the (empty) ritual of participation, being summoned to listen to a series of ideas and signing meeting

minutes that certifies having participated in the dissemination of those ideas; and on the other hand, to have the real and effective power to influence the results of that process, that is, to reconstruct the ideas. In all the observed cases, the radio stations disagreed with the processing of minutes and listings that hindered the articulation with the community. Even so, the LTCs reached higher levels of participation than the PB, according to the Arstein scale (1969), the theoretical parameter with which we will establish differences between the social spaces discussed.

In 2016, Carpentier took up the classic Arnstein participation ladder in whose words we could say that participation in the analyzed PBs "offers no assurance that citizen concerns and ideas will be taken into account." (As cited in Carpentier, 2016, p. 219) These PBs appear as a group of people who advise but do not decide. If it is the director of the station who finally approves the proposals that come from the PB, the role of the participants is nothing more than a technical requirement.

Arstein thinks that participation and power are divided into three levels:

● Power of association
● Delegated power
● Power of *citizen's* control.

At the first level, the responsibilities of the associated citizens are shared through "joint policy boards, planning committees and mechanisms for resolving impasses" (p. 221), as is the case with the PBs of the *Caribbean community broadcasters*. The majority of these PBs work at the level of *consultation or advice* and composed of local organizations representatives, associations, and institutions, which give their opinion on the radio programming of the stations.

In the *delegated power,* where citizens obtain authority to make decisions, we do not find references in the radio stations analyzed in the Caribbean; much less, compared to the level of *citizen's control*, where the position of citizen's power increases. Only in the LTC could we find examples of citizens participating in community radio with decision-making authority. The participants decide on the contents produced for the series, become protagonists of their stories, and even manage to integrate themselves into the production team, as is the case of the LTC of the radio station *Paraíso estéreo.*

Regarding the level of *citizen's control*, where the power position of citizens increases, it is interesting to see how each LTC develops several activities with the purpose of guaranteeing a commitment of its participants: the Briceño pact, for example, or the involvement of specific entities in the case of *Paraíso estéreo* with the *Mesa de victimas* in San José de la Montaña. The power of decision and citizen control is finally evidenced in the public events with which these radios closed the series *'This is how peace sounds…'* ('*Así suena la paz...*') of the RCPC project. As mediators, community broadcasters became mobilizers.

Moreover, these social spaces of participation, and their visibility, are in line with the possibility of seeing community radio from an interactional perspective that claims communication as a constitutive act of the social and, not only as a message transmission action. This occurs when, as a citizen's communication, it calls for the meeting and the dialogue of citizens to think together about public space, identities, and peace. Clemencia Rodríguez (2011) says: "Instead of transmitting messages to the public about peacebuilding, Colombian community media involve audiences in the felling and embodied experience of peace " (p. 69)

However, to think of interpersonal communication as a support for communication for peace, requires defining three structural elements that would affect that possibility or, that purpose of contributing not only in the consolidation of a stable and lasting peace, but in the transformation of the community radio in a citizen's radio, as a space that calls for social communication and deliberative democracy (Lippmann, 2003).

First, that community communication in itself is not participatory communication, much less citizen-based. As social spaces or platforms for community participation and interpersonal communication, both the PB and the LTC are essential to present public community opinion on the public agenda, and to do it as an alternative to the hegemonic visions of authorities and elites. Even in contexts of violence that threaten peace agreements, these platforms, as spaces for citizens with delegated and control powers, remain the possibility of building the post-agreement country. Now, the absence or limitation of these spaces limits not only the citizen status of community radio, but also the possibilities of peace as a construction from the social bases.

Second, some of the analyzed participatory processes remain as consultation spaces without decision-making capacity. The opinions of PBs on programming grids are not binding. Part of the problem is the limited participation of institutional sectors such as the mayor's office or the local church, which delegate their functions. As an alternative, the LTCs offer to create social spaces for the meeting of citizen's groups, for example, the association of Community Action Boards, the women's network or merchant associations, which means a broad social dialogue between communities that have power over its means and its narratives. The hope represented by this kind of peace and agreement is what should strengthen the commitment of the participants in the construction of a community public opinion.

Third, although the normative requirement of documented participatory planning processes makes sense of the commitment of that participation, a situation clearly observable in the PB; neither the LTC manages to be an alternative to this aspect, since both spaces share the administrative gene of formats and paperwork that alter the spontaneity of communicative processes that should be evaluated more by their mobilizing capacity, than by convocation.

However, what will make it possible to distinguish between PB and LTC is perhaps the advice and support provided by professionals who have promoted these processes in projects such as RCED and RCPC. The PBs were neglected as a space for discussion or interpersonal communication based on more technical-administrative tasks than policies, so the LTCs gained great momentum in recent years. Although these committees had been considered as a participation tool since the same project of RCED 2002 and 2010 (Giraldo, 2010), it is from the 2014 RCPC project, where they were configured as a space for participation in political terms, for community organizations in community radio stations.

5. Conclusions

Despite so many difficulties and challenges, the Colombian community radio flourish as spaces to build peace. The PB and the LTC, as spaces for the meeting of social diversity and, as platforms for launching their voices through radio, are both scenarios of interpersonal communication and the basis of communication for peace. Therefore, the community radio that wants to contribute to peace

consolidation, must begin by strengthening those spaces from the preproduction or design phases of specific contents.

The administrative logics remain as one of the difficulties that end up compromising the social processes that these meetings make possible. We must rethink the criteria for evaluating the participation of community diversity in radio for peacebuilding, and better monitor the mobilization that it promotes and not just the number of participants it achieves as meeting attendees.

It is crucial that the communities most affected by the war become part of the processes aimed at building peace and that the participating community radios are transformed into citizen's radios as they convene public dialogue not only to promote coexistence and respect among their audiences, but to generate co-creation processes from the dialogue, and the participatory content construction. The worrying issue remains on the limited community participation, not only in terms of access but of commitment. However, the research reveals methodological innovations such as the commitments that in *Briceño stereo* are formulated autonomously by its participants and then shared as a control measure.

In fact, it is positive to see the presence of multiple voices in these social scenarios of participation, although in the PB they were almost always institutional voices such as the mayor's office or the local church; It is interesting to note that commercial and even social associations participate in the LTC: youth, victims, dairy, and teachers. We believe that in the combination of the experiences of PB and LTC with their failures and successes, it draws on the horizon the community radio for the implementation of the agreements, a radio managed by second-level organizations, that is to say organizations that group other organizations, not only of institutional or economic actors in the region but social and political.

It is also crucial that in these experiences of community participation achieve the theoretical commitment to a peace built from the social bases, that is, communication for reconciliation, confirms from practice, the need of scenarios for the construction of new agreements of those bases. However, the uncertainty in the changes of the Colombian government and even worse, the limitations of the institutionality that implements peace, jeopardize the possibility of creating meetings between victims and perpetrators at the head of communicative projects.

The Colombian experience in attempts to resolve their conflicts constitutes conceptual and practical analysis material for peace studies, but specifically through the study of the social spaces of community participation mentioned. We see that the subfield of communication for peace has interpersonal and intersubjective interaction, exits for the challenges imposed by reconciliation.

6. Notes

(1) President of the Community Radio Network of the department of Santander, interviewed by the newspaper El Espectador.

(2) Peace Agreements of the Teatro Colón, between the Colombian State and the FARC_EP guerrillas. Obtained from: http://www.altocomisionadoparalapaz.gov.co/procesos-y-conversaciones/Documentos%20compartidos/24-11-2016NuevoAcuerdoFinal.pdf

(3) National Institute of Culture that preceded the Ministry of Culture

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