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Using landscape approaches to understand peacebuilding policy coherence: a case study of Caquetá, Colombia

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ABSTRACT. We analyzed policy coherence within the Colombian Integrated Rural Reform (Reforma Rural Integral; RRI) peacebuilding policy, using landscape approaches (LAs). Landscape approaches link agricultural practices, institutions, and policies, providing an effective conceptual framework for coherence in policy objectives, instruments, and implementation for effective landscape governance, a key driver of stability in post-conflict areas in which competing demands for land use and natural resources require strategic management. We empirically examined coherence, or consistency, across and within the RRI, as well as the extent in which the RRI is consistent with LAs. The RRI is one of six parts of the 2017 Colombian peace agreement, whose objectives and instruments are designed in a cross-sectoral manner, recognizing that single sector approaches are inadequate for resolving Colombia's post-conflict complexities. We analyzed the programs with a focus on territorial development (PDET), and the RRI's implementation mechanism in four municipalities in the Department of Caquetá, Colombia to examine coherence between the PDET's problem and vision statements and PDET initiatives, as well as PDET coherence with the RRI's objectives. The PDETs and the RRI were then qualitatively compared for consistency with the 10 LA principles. The study identified incoherence within PDET initiatives and problem and vision statements, specifically regarding land initiatives, although stronger coherence was noted between the RRI and PDET vision statements. Our findings show that the current peacebuilding policy instruments in Colombia fall short of being consistent with LAs. Evidence suggests that the policy is especially lacking in LA principles concerned with participation and rights in implementation, two areas that are often fraught in post-conflict landscapes. Aligning policy instruments, budgets, and territorial decision making with LA principles is essential for translating peacebuilding commitments into effective landscape governance.

Key Words: *Colombia; landscape approaches; peacebuilding; policy analysis*

INTRODUCTION

Landscapes have been defined in a myriad of ways, either encompassing only spatial and ecological characteristics, or governance and social mechanisms over a geographic area (Redford et al. 2003). Rather than being clearly defined terms, integrated landscape approaches (ILAs) or landscape approaches (LAs) are described in the literature as conceptual frameworks (Pedroza-Arceo et al. 2022). Landscape approaches link agricultural practices, institutions, and policies to activities within a defined physical space, therefore allowing better management of competing demands for land uses (Reed et al. 2015). Thus, landscapes operate as social-ecological units in which governance, ecological processes, and human activity interact (Pedroza-Arceo et al. 2022).

Latin America provides a critical testing ground for the application of LAs, due to its persistent rural inequality, overlapping sectoral mandates, territorial conflict, and high ecological value. In Colombia, these conditions converge uniquely within the 2016 Peace Agreement, making it a globally relevant case for assessing whether peacebuilding policy instruments embody LA principles.

Sectoral approaches to policymaking, while still common practice, have been acknowledged to be inadequate for landscape governance (Sayer et al. 2013, Reed et al. 2015, Pedroza-Arceo et al. 2022). When applied to policy analysis, LAs conceive policies as a landscape with contrasting and competing priorities. Landscape approaches are inherently linked with territorial sovereignty, an important underlying condition of LAs. In fact, Urquijo Torres (2014) stressed the important link between *pais* (country, in Spanish) and *paisaje* (landscape, in Spanish).

Landscape approaches provide a logical analytical entry point for policy coherence as well as the tropical forest, post-conflict context in which this case study is situated, considering that LAs are primarily concerned with improving the governance and sustainable and equitable use of natural resources within a landscape (Reed et al. 2020).

Our research examined policy coherence within a peacebuilding policy implementation mechanism that was subsequently compared with the peacebuilding policy's objectives. Next, consistency between LAs and the peacebuilding policy was examined. We analyzed the integrated rural reform (*reforma rural integral*; RRI), the first section of the Colombian peace agreement passed in 2017, which addressed land use, access, infrastructure, and social development (Graser et al. 2020). Development programs with a territorial focus (*programas de desarrollo con enfoque territorial*; PDETs) were created and embedded within the RRI to implement RRI objectives in municipalities with a high historic incidence of conflict. The PDETs aim to be an LA by building territorial peace through participatory processes to balance development and peacebuilding priorities.

Policy coherence analysis with landscape approaches in peacebuilding

The degree to which a policy or set of policies is consistent with LAs has not been explored in the literature, yet policies are an important part of the enabling environment for successful LAs. Several challenges in policymaking and policy implementation may impede policies from meeting LA principles, including sectoral approaches, power contestation within the government and among stakeholders, and the lack of coherence with other policies.

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Policymaking is often simplified to enable rapid solutions; however, these do not acknowledge the complex nature of messes within which policy solutions are designed (Ramalingam et al. 2008). This simplification is effective in reaching solutions quickly, but results in a siloed approach (Schapendonk et al. 2023). Policy coherence analysis in a post-conflict setting is especially relevant considering that policy incoherence may be a catalyst for conflict while conflict can weaken institutions and increase policy incoherence (van Leeuwen 2016).

Policy analysis relies on an understanding of how policy objectives, instruments, and implementation practices are developed. It also considers the incentives, relationships, distribution, and contestation of power between the institutions and actors that influence the policy agenda (McCloughlin 2014). Policy coherence refers to synergies and the absence of contradictions between policies at the same level of government or at different levels in the same domain (Fopa Tchinda and Talbot 2023). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines policy coherence as an approach and policy tool for integrating the economic, social, environmental and governance dimensions of sustainable development at all stages of domestic and international policy making (OECD 2017).

Our case study aligns closely with the evaluation of processes category of LA evaluation described by Chervier et al. (2020), which looks at intermediate outcomes and processes to link governance interventions (policies) with LA outcomes. Coherent governance interventions are described as an important component of LAs (Chervier et al. 2020).

In a review of 104 LAs applied in Latin America, Carmenta et al. (2020) characterized these LAs into 4 groups: (1) improving food production, biodiversity, or ecosystem conservation, and rural livelihoods; (2) planning, policy, or activities at the landscape scale; (3) inter-sectoral coordination across stakeholder groups; and (4) highly participatory and support adaptive, collaborative management. The authors found that LAs supporting agriculture or conservation are less likely to address structural changes than those supporting inter-sectoral coordination.

Much of the work on LAs and conflict discusses the potential for LAs to be applied in post-conflict settings, but provides little evidence of their application. Schure et al. (2022) conducted a literature review on LAs in displacement settings and found that virtually no studies on displacement referred to LAs. Although there is evidence linking landscape governance to peace and conservation in trans-frontier conservation areas (Kotru et al. 2014, Chitakira et al. 2022, Mpofu et al. 2023), these areas merely encompass two or more countries and are therefore not equivalent to a post-conflict or peacebuilding context. Sylvester et al. (2020) applied LAs to restoration in peacebuilding contexts, but did not examine whether LAs had already been applied, while Calvao et al. (2021) suggested that LAs can improve responses to conflict, but these were not analyzed. Clay (2016) studied LAs in a conflict setting but not the link between LAs and peacebuilding. Castro-Nunez (2018) demonstrated that LAs combining climate and peacebuilding goals are possible through a case study analysis in Colombia, however the extent to which this case study follows LAs was not explored.

THE CASE OF COLOMBIA

Reform of land ownership is an inherently political effort, and nowhere more so than in Colombia, one of the least equitable countries in the world in terms of land distribution (Massiris Cabeza 2015). Inequitable land distribution has been a driving force behind and a result of conflicts over the past century. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*; FARC), the largest guerrilla group in the country, was a rural group whose agenda was initially driven by land tenure inequality. Although the founding of FARC coincided with the Agrarian Reform Law of 1966, this was the last major national attempt at land redistribution and formalization (Velasco 2015). Land ownership concentration then increased precipitously in the 1990s and 2000s, coinciding with the displacement of more than four million people (Portafolio 2005).

Analyzing the coherence of peacebuilding policies in Colombia is timely and urgent, considering that conflict resurgence is likely if peacebuilding is not effectively implemented in the years following a conflict (Cairo et al. 2018). In 2018, the year following the 2017 peace agreement, deforestation spiked in the Colombian Amazon, leading to allegations that peace was harmful to forests (Clerici et al. 2020, Mendoza 2020, Ganzenmüller et al. 2022). Most landscape-level policy analyses in Colombia have been narrow in scope, focusing on protected areas (Bonilla-Mejía and Higuera-Mendieta 2019) or ensuring food security (Mutis 2017).

Caquetá

The Department of Caquetá is currently one of the Amazon region's deforestation hotspots (Sánchez-Cuervo and Aide 2013) and the department with the largest amount of deforested land in Colombia during recent decades (Nature Conservancy and Gobernacion de Caqueta 2017). Historically, coca cultivation and cattle grazing were important to Caquetá's economy, and the department has been heavily impacted by conflict through displacement and violence (Perez-Marulanda 2023).

Landscape approaches have been identified as particularly beneficial for the forest sector (Pedroza-Arceo et al. 2022). Considering its confluence of high deforestation rates, large areas of primary forest, and high levels of historic conflict, Caquetá is a logical choice for the application of LAs in peacebuilding contexts. The four municipalities in this case study form a reasonable bound on the spatial and governance characteristics of a landscape (Nielsen 2016), considering Caquetá's vast size (86,200 square kilometers, equivalent to approximately twice the size of Denmark).

Integrated rural reform

The integrated rural reform (RRI) is part of the Colombian peace agreement and is designed to be cohesive and cross-sectoral. It is a timely and logical choice for analyzing LAs and policy coherence, given that attempts at measuring policy coherence more broadly are difficult to replicate and are not always reliable (Mele et al. 2020). The RRI is particularly relevant considering that it is a priority for the current government administration under Gustavo Petro (Botero et al. 2023). Several RRI policies are reflected in the development plan from February 2023, for example the plan to redistribute three million hectares of land (Reuters 2023).

The RRI has three main objectives: (1) the creation of a land bank with millions of hectares of land for distribution to landless peasants (*campesinos*); (2) the creation of PDETs in areas that have experienced heavy conflict; and (3) the execution of national sectoral reform plans to stimulate rural economies (Chavez Chaves 2018). The RRI seeks to provide subsidies and credits for landless victims and campesinos (Gobierno de Colombia y FARC-EP 2016). It lays out a plan for formalizing small landholdings and updating the rural cadaster to help with property tax collection (González Borrero 2022). To meet these objectives, eight decrees were included in the RRI. See Appendix 1 for a complete list of all eight decrees included in the RRI.

The RRI was designed with landscape or *territorio* approaches in mind. The concept of *territorio* encompasses social-ecological land uses and stewardship that combine environmental considerations with community well-being (Pedroza-Arceo et al. 2022). The RRI implements reforms through territorial approaches that prioritize municipalities most affected by conflict through municipal-level PDETs (Jaramillo Caro 2021).

Development programs with a territorial focus

Colombia's territorial development programs (PDETs), policy mechanisms through which the RRI is implemented, are part of a long-term policy process implemented over 15 years by municipalities that were heavily impacted by the armed conflict. Each municipality considered in this case study completed its PDET in 2018. The PDETs are a useful and timely mechanism through which to analyze how implementation aligns with RRI design.

The PDETs “were created by RRI Decree 893 as an instrument of planning and management to implement, in a high-priority manner, the sectoral plans and programs of the RRI” (Gobierno de Colombia y FARC-EP 2016:11). Each PDET document includes a table listing the PDET development consultations, a municipal vision, a list of initiatives, and a diagnostic. The initiatives are specific goals listed in each PDET. The PDET consultation procedures varied by municipality, but in one of the municipalities they consisted of three separate meetings with the mayor's office, the victims of the conflict, and women. However, there is no information about whether participation was meaningful and how decisions were made following these consultations (Parada-Hernández and Marín-Jaramillo 2021).

Our study, therefore, sought to answer three research questions:

1. As the national peacebuilding policy implementation mechanism, to what extent do each of the PDET initiatives effectively apply their individual problem and vision statements?
2. How well do each of the municipal PDET initiatives align with the RRI decrees?
3. Are both the Colombian peacebuilding policy (RRI) and its implementation mechanism (PDETs) consistent with LAs?

METHODS

This research examines (1) the coherence of a peacebuilding policy (RRI) and its implementation mechanism (PDETs), and (2) the consistency of this policy and its implementation

mechanism with the 10 principles of LAs: (1) continual learning and adaptive management; (2) a common concern or entry point; (3) multiple scales; (4) multifunctionality; (5) multiple stakeholders; (6) negotiated and transparent change logic; (7) clarification of rights and responsibilities; (8) participatory and user-friendly monitoring; (9) resilience; and (10) strengthened stakeholder capacity (Sayer et al. 2013). Two levels of analysis were conducted. The first level addressed research question RQ 1 on coherence within PDET initiatives and problem and vision statements, and RQ 2 on measuring coherence between the PDETs and RRI. The second level addressed RQ 3 on RRI and PDET consistency with the 10 principles of LAs. Content and document analysis were employed (Pedroza-Arceo et al. 2022, Kefeli et al. 2023) to conceptualize the problem, objectives, and instruments identified in the RRI and PDETs. Measuring implementation and outcomes of the PDETs was not considered because it goes beyond the scope of this paper.

The PDETs were analyzed in the municipalities of Florencia, Belén de los Andaquíes, El Paujil, and El Doncello in the northwest region of the Department of Caquetá, Colombia (see Fig. 1). These four municipalities encompass more than half of the departmental population and are representative of the ethnic makeup of Caquetá, accounting for over half of the Afro-Colombian population and a quarter of the Indigenous population residing in Caquetá. The municipalities were chosen as a reasonable conceptualization of a landscape because they have similar ecosystems and socioeconomic characteristics and are not so extensive to go beyond the “scale of human experience” (Vaccaro and Norman 2008), or beyond the reach of local organizations and social networks. All four municipalities had a high incidence of historic conflict. Apart from Florencia, each municipality is predominantly rural. Figure 1 and Table 1 provide further information on each municipality.

Nilsson et al. (2012) developed a framework for identifying three levels of policy coherence: policy objectives, policy instruments, and implementation practices. Our study follows this framework by comparing (1) the policy objectives of the RRI and PDETs, (2) the policy instruments by examining the PDET as an instrument, and (3) implementation practices through the initiatives designed in each of the PDETs.

Fig. 1. The municipalities of Belén de los Andaquíes, Florencia, El Paujil, and El Doncello, from left to right, outlined in red. The location of Caquetá within Colombia is presented in the smaller map. Source: authors' elaboration.

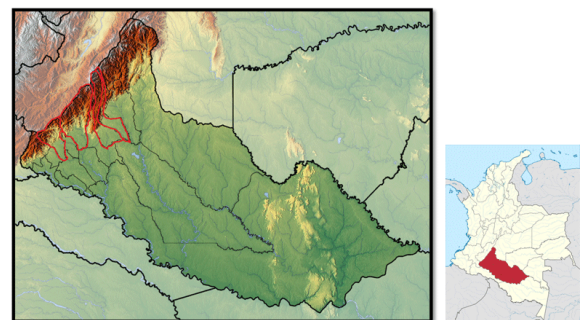


Table 1. Background Information on selected case study municipalities in the Department of Caquetá. Data source: The Nature Conservancy and Gobernacion de Caquetá (2017), further elaborated by the authors.

Municipality	Total population	Percent of population displaced	Percent of territory with coca cultivation	Percent of population with basic needs unmet
Belen	11,541	62.80%	0.08%	47.80%
Florencia	172,364	16.23%	0.01%	26.90%
El Paujil	20,224	41.21%	0.07%	54.20%
El Doncello	22,137	43.57%	0.08%	42.30%

Coherence within the development programs with a territorial focus (PDETs)

To address RQ 1, coherence within each PDET was measured by examining each problem and vision statement and whether PDET initiatives were linked to addressing the corresponding problem and vision statements. Common themes identified in the problem and vision statements were land tenure formalization, sustainability, gender, equity, conservation, and basic services for residents. The problem and vision statements were equally important in our analysis for defining the PDET initiative priorities and were therefore weighed equally. The PDET initiatives were analyzed to identify the common themes being addressed, and whether they linked to the themes described in their corresponding municipal PDET. We considered the common themes mentioned above as important to analyze across each PDET for measuring the consistency of each PDET with LAs. For a detailed explanation of this analysis see Appendix 1.

Coherence between PDETs and the RRI

To address RQ 2, we evaluated coherence between the PDETs and RRI decrees by studying how each PDET is linked to the decrees contained in the RRI. All decrees were analyzed, apart from decree 893, which created the PDET system. Coherence within PDETs and across PDETs and the RRI was determined by performing a word search among PDET initiative descriptions to determine the focus of each (for more detailed information see Appendix 2). For example, to determine coherence between the PDETs and RRI in terms of Decree 902, initiatives were searched using the Spanish words *formalizacion, formal, formalizar, acceso, acces, fondo, and banco*, consistent with the wording in Decree 902 (Gobierno de Colombia y FARC-EP 2016). Information on budget and progress on PDET implementation was sought, but data could not be disaggregated by initiative or by PDET. Each PDET was also analyzed to determine to what extent it referenced the RRI by name.

PDET and RRI consistency with landscape approaches

Finally, to address RQ 3, we analyzed the consistency of the RRI and PDETs with LAs. To guide our qualitative analysis, we used the 10 principles of an LA, which are: (1) continual learning and adaptive management; (2) a common concern or entry point; (3) multiple scales; (4) multifunctionality; (5) multiple stakeholders; (6) negotiated and transparent change logic; (7) clarification of rights and responsibilities; (8) participatory and user-friendly

monitoring; (9) resilience; and (10) strengthened stakeholder capacity. We considered the coherence analysis to be relevant to principles 2 and 3, common entry points, and multiples scales, respectively. Our assessment of whether the RRI and PDETs were consistent with these two principles was informed by our findings on RQs 1 and 2.

RESULTS

Coherence within the PDETs

In assessing the level of coherence between the PDET problem and vision statements and initiatives (RQ 1), we found that many PDET initiatives did not address the topics referred to in problem and vision statements with the frequency we would have expected. Three of the four PDETs (all but El Paujil) defined their problem statement around improving access to land, formalizing land tenure, improving land restitution, and facilitating the multipurpose cadaster. El Doncello described environmental problems, including forest fires and extensive cattle grazing as a threat, while Belen mentioned the importance of protected areas. Florencia focused on problems related to land access, tenure formalization, and restitution.

Each PDET described a vision for the next 10 years. All municipalities mentioned topics such as agriculture, economic development, equity, education and health, and environmental protection. However, Belen focused on its role as a protector of water and biodiversity, while Florencia focused on sustainable land use, development, and tourism. El Paujil and El Doncello described how the formalization of land tenure would be improved. El Paujil stressed the role of sustainable production, agriculture, and economic development while El Doncello highlighted the importance of stopping hydrocarbon fuel extraction.

Although Belen is the smallest municipality in both size and population, it had more initiatives in its PDET than the other three municipalities, with 252 total initiatives. Although Florencia has the largest population, it had the smallest number (122) of initiatives. El Doncello and El Paujil had an almost equal number of initiatives and an almost equal population size. Even though both El Doncello and El Paujil mentioned the importance of land formalization in their vision statement, they only had three and two initiatives focused on land, respectively, while Belen had eight focused on land and Florencia had two.

Belen, while having the strongest focus on the environment in its vision, only had three initiatives mentioning forests or ecosystem services, compared with two in Florencia, one in El Paujil, and none in El Doncello. Each vision statement mentioned equity and inclusion, and although many initiatives focused on ethnic groups in each municipality, very few initiatives mentioned women.

Ultimately, we considered only Belen to have a relatively coherent vision (see Box 1) and problem statement with its PDET initiatives. Even though El Paujil did not mention land in its problem statement, the strong focus on land in its vision statement, coupled with only two initiatives on land implies incoherence, whereas both Florencia and El Doncello had low numbers of initiatives on land (two and three, respectively), while highlighting land in both their vision and problem statements.

Box 1: Excerpt of Belen de los Andaquies' vision statement. "In the year 2028, Belen de los Andaquies, as a 'Green Municipality, Protector of Water' is a model of territorial management from the tenure formalization of its rural areas, the conservation of biodiversity of natural renewable resources, and non-renewable resources, sustained in dialogue, sustainability, and active community participation and coordination as a basis of governance" (translation by authors).

Coherence between PDETs and the RRI

In addressing RQ 2 on the coherence between PDETs and the decrees in the RRI, we found that certain decrees were represented in PDET initiatives more than others. For instance, RRI Decree 870, promoting and maintaining ecosystem services, was only reflected in 6 out of 717 initiatives examined. Decree 892, which creates a system for the accreditation of undergraduate programs, was only included in five initiatives across the four municipalities. Decree 896, promoting alternative livelihoods to coca planting (PNIS), was similarly underrepresented in the PDETs. El Paujil and El Doncello each only had one PNIS initiative, while Florencia had none. Belen had seven PNIS initiatives and was the only municipality that mentioned coca by name (see Table 2 for the number of initiatives per municipality that we considered coherent with each decree).

The most surprising incoherence between the RRI and PDETs was the low number of projects directly relating to land access and/or tenure formalization, especially in Florencia, El Paujil, and El Doncello. This implies that very few initiatives in the PDETs are supporting Decree 902, which defines the procedure for formalization of the land bank to facilitate land restitution. None of the municipalities directly mentioned the land bank in their initiatives, which is one of the three objectives of the RRI. El Doncello mentioned the land bank in its diagnostic, but it was the only municipality to do so.

This lack of focus on land tenure formalization, restitution, and access is surprising, considering its importance in the RRI. A further understanding of the PDET development and consultation process will be important to understand this lack of inclusion. Considering that very few initiatives focus on this topic, it is unlikely to be a budget constraint, and more likely a topic that was not prioritized by at least one stakeholder group, one with enough power to impact the initiatives. Several land initiatives referenced specific paragraphs in the RRI; two initiatives in Florencia, one in Belen, and one in El Doncello. There was no mention of the RRI in the PDET of El Paujil.

PDET and RRI consistency with landscape approaches

To address RQ 3 on whether the PDET and RRI are consistent with LAs, we observed a high level of consistency between the RRI and PDETs and the 10 principles of LAs. In their design, the RRI and PDETs meet several of the LA principles, which we describe with the LA principle met in parentheses. The "common concern" (2) of the RRI is clearly articulated around supporting

peacebuilding and rural development. However, we see that the common concern of PDETs as expressed in problem and vision statements are not equally addressed in initiatives, so we consider common concern to be limited. The RRI works at both the national and municipal scales, but the municipal scale is not coherent with the national scale, in terms of the municipal lack of attention to land tenure. Both the RRI and PDETs (3) cover a range of topics relevant to rural development (3 and 4). There are multiple stakeholders involved (5) in PDET development. Principles that are less clearly met are how continual learning and adaptive management (1) are embedded in the RRI, the negotiated logic of change within the RRI (6), and the participatory monitoring involved (8). Clarification of rights (7) was one of the central pieces of the RRI, but as we've seen, has not been prioritized in all PDETs. The PDETs are meant to strengthen both resilience and stakeholder capacity (9 and 10).

These results show that current peacebuilding policy instruments being applied in Colombia fall short of being consistent with LAs. By analyzing a peacebuilding policy in terms of its national design, sub-national design, and implementation at the municipal scale, we identified where and how this policy is consistent with LAs. Our findings suggest that this policy is especially lacking in the LA principles concerned with participation and rights in implementation, two areas that are often fraught in post-conflict landscapes (Johnson et al. 2025).

DISCUSSION

This study contributes both conceptually and methodologically to understanding the intersection of LAs and peacebuilding through policy coherence analysis. It offers a practical and scalable method to assess whether peacebuilding policies are consistent with the principles of LAs. Furthermore, it reinforces other study findings that landscapes in post-conflict settings are not simply ecological or economic assets but deeply contested socio-political spaces (Del Río Duque et al. 2022), whose governance must be deliberate, inclusive, and coherent to foster long-term peace and meet LA principles.

Our findings illustrate that despite Colombia's commitment to peacebuilding, policy implementation falls short of creating the enabling conditions necessary for LAs. Post-conflict policy efforts to transform landscapes must acknowledge the systems and structures that were in place during times of conflict, and that often restrict the participation and rights of community members. The lack of focus on land tenure reform is especially concerning given the central role of land in Colombia's armed conflict (Castro-Nunez et al. 2017). Our findings echo concerns raised by Morales-Muñoz et al. 2022, who argued that failure to address structural drivers such as land tenure insecurity limits peacebuilding efforts. Löhr et al. (2022) also highlighted the need for sustainability interventions to incorporate effective peacebuilding and post-conflict governance.

Understanding the PDET development process, and how to include the interests of local actors is crucial (Graser et al. 2020) to understanding the barriers to policy coherence and consistency with LAs. The degree to which local stakeholders were involved, why budget considerations were not included, and why initiative descriptions often lacked specificity will help answer how future policy implementation can overcome these barriers.

Table 2. Programs with a focus on territorial development (PDET) initiatives by decree in the four municipalities. See Appendix 1 for description of each decree.

Municipality	Initiatives mentioning electrification (Decree 884)	Initiatives mentioning housing (Decree 882)	Initiatives mentioning forests/ ecosystem services (Decree 870)	Initiatives mentioning land access/ formalization (Decree 902)	Initiatives mentioning tertiary education (Decree 892)	Initiatives mentioning PNIS/coca (Decree 896)	Initiatives mentioning mining (Decree 883)	Total number of initiatives
Belen	5	9	3	8	3 (1 mentioning university)	7	0	252
Florencia	1	2	2	2	5 (1 mentioning university)	0	0	122
El Paujil	2	10	1	2	12 (0 mentioning universities)	1	1	176
El Doncello	2	8	0	3	12 (3 mentioning university/superior education)	1	1	167

An unknown aspect of PDET development was the degree to which it was decentralized. The interdependence of the policy process is a key component of maintaining coherence (Buritica et al. 2023). Each of the four PDETs exhibited a high degree of consistency across their problem and vision statements, which were of similar lengths and contained many of the same themes. Knowing which institutions were responsible for guiding PDET development would be crucial to understanding how the process impacted the content of the final document. The lack of qualitative information, specifically on participation and motivations behind the 717 PDET initiatives is a limitation of this study and has been noted as a problem by others in policy coherence analysis (Botero Blandón and Serrano Ávila 2021). However, this dearth of publicly available information on participatory processes highlights a need for increased transparency to facilitate operationalizing LAs in peacebuilding contexts.

A crucial piece of data lacking in the PDETs was the budget allocated for implementation of initiatives. According to the National Department of Planning (Departamento Nacional de Planeación), \$1.6 billion Colombian pesos (2016 value; US\$391,083.2) have been invested in implementing PDETs in Caquetá as of January 2024 (Agencia de Renovación del Territorio 2024). However, it is not clear how much of these funds will be used for the initiatives themselves, and in which municipalities. Neither the RRI nor the PDETs mentioned budgetary considerations, beyond PDETs describing that the initiatives would be implemented “given budgetary availability.” Without understanding how and by whom these decisions are made, policy (in)coherence at a landscape scale cannot be fully understood.

Another limitation of this study was the process for identifying PDET initiative focus. Initiative descriptions were one or two sentences and varied in their level of specificity, therefore it is possible that our study excluded some of the initiatives due to vague descriptions. Initiative descriptions did not include who would be involved and over what time frame.

There is evidence of peacebuilding policies in other post-conflict countries that did not follow LAs. In post-conflict Liberia, the government took ownership of most of the country’s forests without acknowledging the use of forest resources by local communities (Burgess et al. 2015). In contrast, the peace process in Colombia was a pioneer in coining the term “territorial peace”

(Cairo et al. 2018), and has aimed to implement this through the multiple uses and priorities of municipalities as represented in the PDETs.

Finally, LAs have often been referred to in a broad sense, without clear and defining characteristics, which many argue is necessary. This research does not challenge this notion and instead asks if a peacebuilding policy can be consistent with LAs. Landscape approaches have traditionally focused on biodiversity conservation or land use planning (Reed et al. 2020), while our work demonstrates their relevance as analytical frameworks to assess multi-sectoral policy coherence in peacebuilding. This research applies the 10 principles of LAs (Sayer et al. 2013), the closest set of defining characteristics of LAs so far in the literature, to understand the extent to which this peacebuilding policy can be considered an LA; still, this type of analysis is subjective and difficult to systematize.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Colombia’s national peacebuilding policy (RRI) and its implementation mechanism (PDETs) analyzed in this study provide an opportunity to evaluate how LAs can support peacebuilding and sustainable development in Colombia’s post-conflict zones. This study finds a high level of coherence between problem statements among policy mechanisms; however, our findings also show that PDET initiatives were not always consistent with their own vision statements and did not systematically reflect the importance of land tenure reform as expressed in the RRI.

These findings highlight the challenges with ensuring policy coherence across and within peacebuilding policies. Overall, we found that policy actions designed within landscapes did not fully reflect problem conceptualization at higher levels. There was a tendency to focus on providing services through infrastructure, primary education, and health, all undoubtedly important in rural reform as conceived in the RRI, but reflecting a tenuous link with land reform, one of the three overarching goals of the RRI. This gap between design and action suggests that key structural drivers of conflict, particularly land access and tenure security, remain under-addressed in implementation.

This research contributes to the ongoing discussion on defining and characterizing LAs. It provides a granular analysis of the consistency of a peacebuilding policy with LAs, differing from the literature characterizing large sets of LAs, which are often

one-off projects. This study provides a unique perspective on peacebuilding to the work on LAs, a link that has only been referenced in the context of displacement. It employs a policy coherence framework as an important consideration in analyzing LAs through policy design and implementation. Landscape approach principles on participation, common entry points, and strengthened stakeholder capacity are weak areas that could be strengthened within this peacebuilding policy. Incoherence between land reform in policy design versus implementation suggests that a deeper understanding of the participatory processes in designing the implementation instrument is crucial to equitable and sustainable peacebuilding in Colombia. Aligning policy instruments, budgeting, and territorial decision making with LA principles is essential for translating peacebuilding commitments into effective landscape governance.

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Data Availability:

The data and code that support the findings of this study are available from the Colombian Government at <https://centralpdet.renovacionterritorio.gov.co/micrositio-caguan-y-piedemonte-caqueteno/>. These data and code were derived from the following resources available in the public domain: Each PDET can be found at the following links: https://centralpdet.renovacionterritorio.gov.co/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/FLORENCIA-ACUERDO_compressed.pdf, https://centralpdet.renovacionterritorio.gov.co/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/PAUJIL-ACUERDO_compressed.pdf, https://centralpdet.renovacionterritorio.gov.co/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/EL-DONCELLO-ACUERDO_compressed.pdf, https://centralpdet.renovacionterritorio.gov.co/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/BELÉN-DE-LOS-ANDÁQUIES-ACUERDO_compressed.pdf.

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Annex 1 – Table of Decrees in the Integrated Rural Reform Policy (RRI)

Decree	Date	Description
Decree 870	May 25, 2017	established a payment for ecosystem services and other incentives for conservation
Decree 882	May 28, 2017	formulation of the National Plan for Construction and Improving Rural Social Housing
Decree 884	May 26, 2017	Issue rules pertaining to the implementation of the National Plan for Rural Electrification and the framework of the final agreement for the termination of the conflict and construction of a stable and lasting peace
Decree 892	May 26, 2017	creates a temporary system for the high-quality accreditation of undergraduate programs in departments with municipalities that are prioritized for the implementation of the Development Programs with a Territorial Focus (PDETs)
Decree 893	May 28, 2017	creates the Development Programs with a Territorial Focus (PDETs)
Decree Law 902	May 29, 2017	adopt measurements to facilitate the implementation of the Integrated Rural Reform Policy (RRI) considered in the agreement with regards to land and specifically the procedure for access and formalization of the land bank
Decree 896	May 29, 2017	creates the Integrated National Program on the Substitution of Illicit Crops (PNIS)

Decree law 883	May 26, 2017	modifies law 1819 of 2016 to include companies dedicated to mining and the exploitation of hydrocarbons in the form of work payments for taxes
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Table 1. The eight decrees included in the Integrated Rural Reform Policy. Summary descriptions elaborated by authors.

Annex 2 - Detailed methodology coherence between PDETs and RRI

Below we describe our coherence methodology by showing the text of each decree we checked in the RRI and the text of the PDET initiatives. We identified key words in the text of the decrees and then searched for these key words in the text of the initiatives to look for coherence between the two. Below, we show the text of each decree in both Spanish and English (translation by authors), and then we provide examples of words (in Spanish) searched by decrees. We considered an initiative to be coherent with a decree when it had one or more key words present in its text.

Decree 870: “Por el cual se establece el pago por servicios ambientales y otros incentivos a la conservacion”

“By which payments for environmental services and other incentives for conservation is established.

Initiatives were searched using the words “servicios ambientales”, “conservacion”, “ambiente”, “ambiental”.

Decree 902: ““Por el cual se adoptan medidas para facilitar la implementación de la Reforma Rural Integral contemplada en el Acuerdo Final en materia de tierras, específicamente el procedimiento para el acceso y formalización y el Fondo de Tierras”

“By which measures are adopted to facilitate the implementation of the Integrated Rural Reform contemplated in the final agreement on land, specifically the procedure for access and formalization of the land fund.”

Initiatives were searched using the words ‘formalizacion’, ‘formal’, ‘formalizar’, ‘acceso’, ‘acces’, ‘fondo’, and ‘banco’ and ‘tierra’, ‘predio’, ‘propiedad’, ‘resguardo’, or ‘area’.

Decree 892: “Por el cual se crea un regimen transitorio para la acreditacion en alta calidad de los programas academicos de licenciaturas a nivel de pregrado que son ofrecidos en departamentos en los que se localizan municipios priorizados para la implementacion de los Programas de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial (PDET)”

“By which a transitional regime is created for the high-quality accreditation of academic programs at the undergraduate level that are offered in departments in which the prioritized municipalities for the implementation of the Development Programs with a Territorial Approach (PDET) are located.”

Initiatives were searched using the words “programas academicos”, “Universidad”, “educacion”.

Decree 896: “Por el cual se crea el Programa Nacional Integral de Sustitucion de Cultivos de uso Illicito (PNIS)”

“By which the National Integrated Program for the Substitution of Illicit Crops (PNIS) is created”

Initiatives were searched using the words “sustitucion” and “cultivos ilicitos” or “coca”

Decree 883: “Por el cual se modifica la Ley 1819 del 2016 para incluir a las empresas dedicadas a la mineria y a la explotacion de hidrocarburos en la forma de pago de obras por impuestos”

“By which law 1819 of 2016 is modified to include companies dedicated to mining and the exploitation of hydrocarbons in the form of payment for tax works”

Initiatives were searched using the words “mineria” or “hidrocarburos”

Decree 882: “Por el cual se dictan disposiciones para la formulacion del Plan Nacional de Construcción y Mejoramiento de Vivienda Social Rural”

“By which provisions are issued for the formulation of the National Plan for the Construction and Improvement of Rural Social Housing”

Initiatives were searched using the words “contr” or “mejorar” or “mejora” and “Vivienda” or “casa”

Decree 884: “Por el cual se expiden normas tendientes a la implementacion del Plan Nacional de Electrificación Rural en el marco del Acuerdo Final para la Terminación del Conflicto y la Construcción de una Paz Estable y Duradera”

“By which norms are issued aimed at the implementation of the National Rural Electrification Plan within the framework of the Final Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace.”

Initiatives were searched using the words “electr” and “energia”

Decree 893: Not covered here because this is the creation of the PDET system

Annex 3 Visual representation of Coherence Analysis

Types of Coherence measured across PDETs and RRI. Each arrow implies a measure of coherence, which ultimately feeds into the analysis on LAs. Elaboration: Authors.

