

Colombian Youths' Reasoning About Retributive and Restorative Justice in the 2016 Peace Accord: Associations With Trust

Angelica Restrepo¹, Laura Pareja Conto¹, Holly Recchia¹, Roberto Posada-Gilede²,
Gabriel Velez³, and Cecilia Wainryb⁴

¹ Department of Education, Concordia University

² Department of Psychology, Universidad Nacional de Colombia

³ Department of Educational Policy and Leadership, Marquette University

⁴ Department of Psychology, University of Utah

This study investigated Colombian adolescents' evaluations and expectations about different solutions to seeking justice in the aftermath of group-based harms and how their judgments of solutions were associated with self-reported levels of trust. In individual interviews, 74 adolescents ($M_{\text{age}} = 16.48$ years; 36 girls, 38 boys) in Bogotá, Colombia, were presented with scenarios depicting two forms of group harm (involving damage to infrastructure and loss of life) based on events relevant to the Colombian armed conflict. For each scenario, adolescents rated the desirability and likelihood of five solutions (apologies, compensation by the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC), compensation by the government, punishment, and a combination of compensation and punishment). Participants also completed a questionnaire assessing their general levels of trust. Compensation by the FARC and the government were more strongly endorsed in the context of damage to infrastructure, whereas punishment was endorsed more in response to loss of life. Youth also expected compensation by the FARC to be more likely to occur for damage to infrastructure, while they believed punishment was more likely for loss of life. Higher levels of trust were associated with support for restorative solutions, particularly in response to loss of life. Youths' open-ended justifications for their evaluations of different solutions to address the harms reflected varied concerns, including their perceptions of how to meet the needs of victims and communities, ensure accountability for the harms committed, and achieve revenge.

Public Significance Statement

In this study, we examined how urban Colombian adolescents reasoned about different solutions to address harms committed within the context of an enduring armed conflict. Youths' responses varied based on the type of harm, such that punitive solutions were more favored for loss of life. Our findings also uncovered beliefs and concerns that guided youths' reasoning, such as their beliefs about the trustworthiness of individuals and their social environment, as well as their restorative and retributive concerns.

Keywords: restorative justice, retributive justice, armed conflict, adolescence, peace education

Supplemental materials: <https://doi.org/10.1037/pac0000721.supp>

This article was published Online First February 26, 2024.

Laura Pareja Conto  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2578-4038>

Holly Recchia  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9490-6430>

Roberto Posada-Gilede  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3671-7276>

Gabriel Velez  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9128-156X>

Cecilia Wainryb  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6031-4330>

ANGELICA RESTREPO completed her master's degree in child studies at Concordia University in 2019. She is interested in the moral and social development of children growing up in challenging familial and societal conditions, such as civil unrest and protracted violence.

LAURA PAREJA CONTO recently completed her master's degree in child studies at Concordia University. Her research focuses on youths' perspectives on retributive and restorative justice models in schools and beyond. In various qualitative and quantitative studies conducted with adolescents in Canada and Colombia, she examines how youth interpret harm in different relationships, evaluate varied disciplinary approaches to address peer harm in schools, and make judgments about forms of restorative and retributive justice within the 2016 peace accord in Colombia.

HOLLY RECCHIA (PhD, Concordia University, 2010) is a professor of

education at Concordia University. Her research concerns children's and adolescents' social and moral development within the context of their relationships with parents, siblings, and peers. Her program of work examines how children's sociomoral learning is shaped by their everyday experiences and the role of socialization agents such as parents and teachers in guiding children's development.

ROBERTO POSADA-GILEDE (PhD, University of Utah, 2008) is a professor of Developmental Psychology at Universidad Nacional de Colombia. He is the leader of the research group, Social Development, Community, and Health (ScienTI-Minciencias, Colombia). His research focuses on moral development in contexts marked by adversity, sense of moral agency, sociomoral education, and moral reasoning in environmental awareness.

GABRIEL VELEZ is an assistant professor in educational policy and leadership at the College of Education at Marquette University. He studies identity development in adolescents, particularly in relation to citizenship, human rights, restorative justice, and peace.

CECILIA WAINRYB (PhD, University of California Berkeley, 1989) is a professor of developmental psychology and director of the Tanner Center for Human Rights at the University of Utah. Her research examines how children

continued

For more than 60 years, Colombians have been caught in the crossfire of a deadly internal conflict between leftist guerrilla groups, right-wing paramilitaries, and the government. This protracted violence has resulted in the uprooting of approximately 8 million people and the loss of more than 450,000 lives (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022). In 2012, the Colombian government and the guerrilla group *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) began peace negotiations that, 4 years later, culminated in the signing of a peace agreement. Nevertheless, in a plebiscite that followed, Colombians narrowly rejected (50.2%) the agreement (Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil, 2016). Arguably, at the heart of this divide lie variations in views of justice and forgiveness. For instance, supporters of the treaty applauded its emphasis on restorative justice in the form of reparations to affected communities, while those opposing it raised concerns about the amnesty granted to FARC members and the possibility of reduced jail time for leaders convicted of crimes against humanity (Tellez, 2019).

As Colombians attempt to overcome this divide and transform their society in the wake of armed conflict, youth are important actors in efforts to create a stable and lasting peace (Velez et al., 2019). Indeed, as the next generation of voters, adolescents' beliefs and values represent potential sources of social continuity and change that are likely to inform the future of the peace agreement. Thus, the aim of this study was to document how youth reason about issues of justice, fairness, and equity that are central to the treaty and ongoing peacebuilding efforts. Specifically, we examined Colombian youths' prescriptive evaluations concerning the desirability of different solutions to address harms that occurred within the armed conflict, such as damage to infrastructure and the loss of life, as well as their descriptive expectations of what is likely to occur. We also investigated whether Colombian youths' preferences for varied solutions to harm were linked to their tendency to trust others and their social environment. Finally, we sought to document the restorative and retributive concerns that guided adolescents' prescriptive evaluations of different solutions. Overall, this study adds to existing scholarship by exploring adolescents' reasoning about solutions to harms within the armed conflict. Although some research has explored adolescents' perspectives on the peace treaty (e.g., Velez et al., 2019), we aimed to expand our understanding of youths' justice beliefs in the context of a protracted conflict by exploring how their personal experiences and resulting viewpoints on the trustworthiness of their social environment are linked to their judgments about two types of harm.

The 2016 Peace Accord and the Colombian Context

By the end of 2017, the FARC had demobilized, except for small dissident groups, and created their own political party (Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, 2019; United Nations Mission in Colombia, 2017). Yet the implementation of the peace treaty faced

several obstacles, such as a new wave of violence in territories traditionally neglected by the state, where the FARC's demobilization left a power vacuum (Piconne, 2019). In 2018, when we conducted this study, researchers documented a climate of polarization among Colombians: those supporting the peace agreement reported feelings of security, trust, and hope, while those opposing the agreement expressed feelings of anger, impotence, mistrust, and disappointment (Rico & Barreto, 2022). Colombians also reported minimal support for the institutions responsible for overseeing and implementing the agreement; disapproval ratings for Congress, the judicial system, and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (mandated to investigate and adjudicate crimes in the context of the conflict) ranged between 52% and 74% (Gallup Colombia, 2019). Overall, Colombians believe corruption is on the rise and widespread among public servants (Sanchez et al., 2015). Importantly, however, despite its ubiquitous presence in their country, Colombian youth judge corruption as morally wrong (Martínez & Posada, 2022). As such, low levels of perceived institutional legitimacy may not only constrain the pace for acceptance of the peace accord but may also play a role in determining whether the agreement will be conducive to peace and reconciliation.

Approaches to Justice in the Colombian Peace Accord

After Colombians narrowly rejected the peace agreement, the Colombian Congress approved a revised version of the accord that sought to address the concerns raised by its detractors. The present study was based on the latest version of the accord.

According to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA, 2006), reparation broadly refers to the wrongdoer's actions to redress the damage caused. This takes different forms, including restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, and guarantees of nonrepetition. In the 2016 peace accord, the benefits of restitution are most clearly articulated in terms of the displacement caused by the conflict. Specifically, in addition to returning property to its rightful users, families and communities may receive technical and financial assistance to resume their lives and generate income (Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz, 2016). This form of restitution seeks to restore victims to the situation that would have existed had the harm not been committed. To help them cope with the consequences of the harm (e.g., costs related to funeral services), victims may also seek monetary compensation for economically assessable damages. In turn, measures aiming at victims' rehabilitation include services for vulnerable populations who were disproportionately affected by the conflict and the creation of safe spaces for dialogue to facilitate social healing. Finally, satisfaction measures and guarantees of nonrepetition include the creation of the Truth Commission and the display of public apologies and commemorations for victims.

Although the agreement was not weighted heavily toward retributive measures, some judicial sanctions were nonetheless stipulated for individuals liable for violations. Specifically, those found guilty of

and adolescents make sense of interpersonal and group conflict situations and how their understandings further or hinder their moral development.

This article is partly based on a master's thesis (2019) conducted by Angelica Restrepo. The authors thank the participating adolescents and schools, as well as Angelica Alvarez for her assistance with data collection and Sandra Silva Latorre and Vilma Escorcía Vera for their help with coding. This work was supported by a graduate fellowship from the Social Sciences

and Humanities Research Council of Canada to Angelica Restrepo as well as funding from the Concordia University Research Chairs program to Holly Recchia.

CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING THIS ARTICLE should be addressed to Holly Recchia, Department of Education, Concordia University, 1455 de Maisonneuve West, Montreal, QC H3G1M8, Canada. Email: holly.recchia@concordia.ca

crimes against humanity, genocide, and war crimes were restricted from moving beyond a designated geographical area for 5–8 years. To respect the accord's emphasis on reparative measures, those found guilty of these crimes also had to engage in some type of victim-oriented sanction while completing their sentence (e.g., construction of infrastructure; *Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz*, 2016). Punishment was waived for political crimes (e.g., rebellions) and offenses committed to advance governmental changes. To receive amnesty, FARC members had to provide truthful accounts of their crimes and offer reparations to victims. In this way, inasmuch as the Colombian peace accord followed a restorative approach to justice, it is aligned with other peacebuilding efforts (such as in South Africa) that share a commitment to truth and transparency, community involvement, restoration, and accountability (Llewellyn, 2006).

Overall, the peace accord's approach to criminal sanctions and its emphasis on victims' restoration seem to pave the way toward the construction of a postconflict period that is based on eliminating the causes of the conflict and providing rural communities with the tools to evolve at the same pace as urban centers. However, while the restoration of shattered social bonds is a central component of a society's transition toward peace, the perceived lack of criminal retribution has been denounced by some members of Colombian society (e.g., Tellez, 2019). Specifically, while truth-seeking and remembrance actions aim to impede future violence and psychologically relieve victims, the lack of traditional sanctions may not fulfill everyone's desires for justice and may be seen as failing to offer proportional punishments (Krotoszyński, 2016). This divide also signals the juxtaposition of retributive and restorative justice orientations. Following from retributive notions of accountability, justice is obtained when sanctions are proportional to the magnitude of the crime (Ball et al., 2021). Conversely, restorative justice involves repairing harm, resolving conflicts with dialogical approaches, as well as promoting and reestablishing respectful relationships among all community members (Zehr, 2002). Protracted armed conflicts are a particularly interesting context to study varying justice orientations given the complexities that these bring to light, such as the multifaceted roles of different conflict antagonists and the difficulties with restoring crimes against life (e.g., Baines, 2009).

Youth as Critical Actors in Peacebuilding

Social domain theory (Turiel, 1983) provides a framework for considering intersections between adolescents' prescriptive evaluations centered on justice and their beliefs about the world, such as perceptions of political instability and corruption, as well as the trustworthiness of others. When youth reason about how to address harm, they may draw on moral concerns with welfare and justice but also on understandings of social-conventional norms and pragmatic or prudential considerations (Smetana et al., 2014). For example, adolescents may endorse punishments for moral violations based on utilitarian concerns to prevent future harm, retributive concerns with deservingness, or a mixture of both (Barreiro, 2012). Variations in how youth make judgments and coordinate competing concerns in complex situations of harm may also reflect differences in youths' understandings of the nature of reality and their beliefs of what they think will actually occur (i.e., their informational assumptions; Wainryb, 1991). Informed by their previous experiences with their social environments, youths' perceptions and attitudes about society, civic institutions, and authorities may thus critically guide their conceptualizations of the issues at the core of the peace accord.

In environments fragmented by violence and injustices, youth may come to different understandings of how the world is organized (Arsenio & Gold, 2006). Thus, we sought to examine how youth apply civic principles (e.g., equity, fairness) in contexts where their concerns with justice may conflict with aspects of their lived experiences. Importantly, despite living in a country affected by protracted conflict, Colombian children do not differ from youths exposed to less violence in their overall views about the legitimacy of violence (Ardila-Rey et al., 2009; Posada & Wainryb, 2008). Differences do arise when conflicting considerations are made salient. For instance, displaced Colombian children are more likely to condone moral transgressions in situations of retaliation, despite negatively evaluating these behaviors when presented in the abstract (Ardila-Rey et al., 2009; Posada & Wainryb, 2008).

Beyond youths' reasoning about and evaluations of retribution, less is known about how youth evaluate more restorative responses (e.g., compensation, apologies) to others' harmful behavior. Overall, research with young adults suggests that retribution is endorsed more for severe harms, whereas restorative goals are favored for less severe harms (Gromet & Darley, 2006, 2009). Nonetheless, in the context of violent and prolonged intergroup conflict, individuals may more often make rigid condemnatory judgments of others' behaviors, especially outgroup members (Bar-Tal & Hameiri, 2020) and, thus, support more retributive responses to harm (Rasmussen et al., 2018). For instance, Colombians are less likely to support the peace process and the FARC's reintegration when they believe that FARC members are unable and unwilling to reintegrate into society and give up violence (Bruneau et al., 2022). Yet, in previous research, Colombian youth reported endorsing both retributive desires to hurt FARC members as well as restorative responses involving dialogue and community building (Velez et al., 2019). In line with this, research conducted with North American samples also underlines that children and adolescents endorse both retributive and restorative approaches in the aftermath of harm, and that they also value symbolic forms of reparation, such as apologies, when more direct forms of restoration are not possible (see Ball et al., 2021; Recchia et al., 2022).

Connections Between Trust and Youth Perspectives on Justice

Theory regarding links between youths' informational assumptions and moral judgments suggests that beliefs about whether others are trustworthy (i.e., honest, reliable, fair, and benevolent) may inform adolescents' descriptive expectations and prescriptive evaluations, particularly in situations involving harm (Wainryb, 1991). Considering that adolescence is a critical time during which youth are increasingly exposed to other institutions beyond their family, their experiences with these authorities may serve as a basis for their beliefs about punishment and the trustworthiness of authorities (Oosterhoff et al., 2018). In this study, we focused on participants' views of the trustworthiness of their fellow citizens and various social authorities (including teachers, police, and the government) that collectively aimed to capture youths' trust in their social environments.

Across different contexts in South America, trust in institutions has been associated with more favorable opinions toward truth commissions created to address political violence and other human rights violations (Mathias et al., 2020). In Colombia, trust in ex-combatants and the government increases the likelihood of believing that the

agreement will be implemented and of supporting reconciliation and the peace process (Casas-Casas et al., 2020). More generally, higher levels of trust are associated with perspective taking (Fett et al., 2014), which is, in turn, positively correlated with adolescents' restorative justice attitudes and negatively correlated with the endorsement of punitive measures (Rasmussen et al., 2018). Relatedly, beliefs about rehabilitation have been linked to endorsing more restorative responses (Bruneau et al., 2022; Gromet & Darley, 2006), whereas when youth doubt others' potential for positive change, they tend to endorse more punishment for transgressions (Erdley & Dweck, 1993). In sum, although the extant literature lays an important foundation for the present study, there is still a need to further illuminate the varied concerns underlying youths' reasoning about different types of harm in the context of armed conflict and how their evaluations of solutions are related to their lived experiences and levels of trust.

The Present Study

The present study examined Colombian youths' viewpoints on different solutions to harm within the 2016 Peace Accord using an embedded mixed-methods design. Specifically, we used quantitative rating scales to assess adolescents' perspectives on both the likelihood and prescriptive desirability of different solutions. These ratings were complemented by open-ended follow-up questions to provide qualitative data on the forms of reasoning underlying youths' prescriptive evaluations. Our first goal was to examine their evaluations of two salient forms of harm within the armed conflict: damage to infrastructure and loss of life. We hypothesized that adolescents would endorse more retributive solutions, such as jail sentences, in response to loss of life (H1a) and more restorative solutions, such as compensation, in response to damage to infrastructure (H1b; Gromet & Darley, 2006, 2009). Our second goal was to assess how youths' descriptive expectations and prescriptive evaluations of different solutions were associated with their perceptions of the trustworthiness of their social environments. We expected that higher levels of trust would be generally related to higher descriptive ratings regarding the likelihood of different solutions (H2). We also expected that youth reporting higher levels of trust would evaluate punitive solutions more negatively (H3a) and restorative solutions more positively (H3b), particularly in response to vignettes depicting loss of life (Fett et al., 2014; Rasmussen et al., 2018). Our last goal was to document, in an exploratory way, the different concerns that guided participants' prescriptive evaluations of solutions.

Method

Participants

In April to June of 2018, 77 Colombian adolescents were recruited from Grades 10 and 11 in two urban high schools in Bogotá, Colombia. Three participants were excluded due to incomplete interviews; the final sample comprised 74 participants (36 girls, 38 boys) between the ages of 14 and 19 years ($M = 16.48$, $SD = .91$). Colombia uses a 6-point socioeconomic stratification system to rate neighborhoods on a scale from 1 (*low*) to 6 (*high*); the public schools participating in this study served communities in Strata 2 and 3. This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee at Concordia University and by relevant school administrations. Written informed

consent was obtained from parents, and participants provided written assent. Youth received a cafeteria voucher in appreciation for their participation.

Procedure and Measures

Audiotaped 1-hr individual semistructured interviews were conducted in Spanish by the first author or a second Colombian graduate student in a private location at the participants' schools. Interviews were transcribed verbatim for analysis by native Spanish speakers. This study formed part of a larger investigation; below, we describe only the portions of the interview protocol relevant to the current aims (see also Pareja Conto et al., 2023, for additional details).

Harm Vignettes

Two vignettes were newly developed for this study to depict harmful events similar to those that took place in the context of the armed conflict (see Table A1 in Appendix A). The two vignettes were presented in a counterbalanced order. One vignette described harm to people resulting in the loss of life, while the other depicted damage to infrastructure, such as hospitals and schools. Previous research supports the use of vignettes to elicit adolescents' thinking about sensitive topics (see Bradbury-Jones et al., 2014).

After reading each vignette, the interviewer presented participants with five possible solutions (in a counterbalanced order): apology, compensation by the FARC, compensation by the government, punishment, and a combination of punishment and compensation (see Table A2 in Appendix A). These alternatives were chosen following the peace accord's guidelines for reparation. In the case of public apologies, FARC members were described as apologizing for their actions and showing remorse. Solutions depicting restitution and compensation (by the FARC and by the government) were based on reparatory measures for victims. In this study, the term "compensation" is used to describe material and monetary restoration. Solutions depicting punishment were informed by Colombia's Penal Code. For both types of harm, the punishment involved restriction of liberty (e.g., 30 years to life in prison for loss of life). Finally, the peace accord's combination of retributive and restorative approaches to justice was depicted in the adjusted solution. For loss of life, this consisted of restricting FARC members' liberty while also providing restorative measures for victims (i.e., 5–8 years of house arrest if FARC members tell the truth and compensate their victims). For damage to infrastructure, jail sentences were waived contingent on FARC members providing a full account of the events and offering to compensate victims.

After reading each solution, the interviewer asked participants, "Do you think this is a good way or not such a good way to handle the problem?" to assess their prescriptive evaluations on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from *not good at all* (1) to *really good* (6). In line with our embedded mixed-method design, quantitative ratings were complemented by asking participants to provide open-ended explanations of their prescriptive ratings to examine the beliefs and concerns underlying their evaluations of different solutions.

Then, the interviewer assessed participants' descriptive expectations about whether they believed the solution was likely to occur (e.g., "In your view, how likely is it that the FARC will actually pay the victims?") on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from *very unlikely* (1) to *very likely* (6). Importantly, descriptive expectations for

compliance with the adjusted solution were assessed using two questions (i.e., "In your view, how likely is it that the FARC will actually tell the truth?" and "How likely is it that the FARC will actually make it up to the victims?"). In the interest of parsimony, the ratings obtained from these questions were combined to create a composite score for each vignette.

Measure of Trust

Following the interview, participants also completed a trust scale adapted from previous research (e.g., Johnson et al., 2014; Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994). A Colombian graduate student adapted and translated items for this study by focusing on aspects of trust and mistrust that were relevant to the goals of the project and that were deemed ecologically valid for Colombian high school students (see Table B1 in Appendix B). Another Colombian graduate student verified the translated items for accuracy and relevance to participants. Nineteen items were used to measure three aspects of trust: trust in distal authorities (e.g., government officials), trust in proximal authorities (e.g., teachers, police), and trust in others (general).¹ Ratings were recorded on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (6). Higher scores indicated higher levels of trust. Three statements were removed from the final measure due to low item-total correlations, resulting in a 16-item scale (see Table B1 in Appendix B; Cronbach's α for the final scale = .79).

Coding of Justifications

After the quantitative ratings were analyzed, we used qualitative data to address our last research goal of understanding participants' reasoning underlying their prescriptive judgments. Spanish-speaking research assistants coded participants' open-ended justifications for their prescriptive evaluations of the five types of solutions. The coding scheme for justifications was predominantly deductive, based on previous research (e.g., Gromet & Darley, 2009). Coders first discussed the categories and their definitions and then trained by jointly coding a subset of 10% of the narratives. Participants' responses were coded for the presence or absence of four overall categories (see Table 1). We further specified whether each justification was used to support a solution (e.g., it benefits victims and communities) or to criticize a solution (e.g., it does not benefit victims and communities). Responses that referred to multiple concerns could be coded into more than one category. Interrater reliability was established between two independent coders based on 25% of the responses, with disagreements resolved via discussion and consensus. Cohen's κ s are reported in Table 1.

Results

Statistical significance for analyses was assessed using two-tailed tests at $p < .05$. For each significant omnibus effect in analysis of variance (ANOVA), effect size is reported as partial η -squared (η_p^2). When sphericity assumptions were violated, degrees of freedom were adjusted using the Huynh-Feldt correction when $\epsilon > .75$ and the Greenhouse-Geisser correction when $\epsilon < .75$.

How Do Youths' Prescriptive and Descriptive Ratings Differ Across Types of Harm?

We first examined youths' prescriptive and descriptive ratings of different solutions in relation to the two vignettes. To examine prescriptive evaluations, we conducted a 2×5 ANOVA with two repeated-measures factors: type of harm (infrastructure, loss of life) and type of solution (apology, compensation by FARC, compensation by government, punishment, adjusted solution). The outcome variable was the ratings for prescriptive evaluations, which ranged from 1 (*not good at all*) to 6 (*really good*). The analysis revealed significant main effects for type of harm, $F(1, 73) = 15.17, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .17$, and solution, $F(3.40, 248.32) = 12.20, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .14$, qualified by a two-way interaction, $F(4, 292) = 23.80, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .25$ (see Table 2). Partially in line with our expectations (H1b), compensation by the FARC ($p < .001$) and the government ($p < .001$) was more endorsed for damage to infrastructure than loss of life. Also as expected (H1a), punishment was endorsed more for loss of life than damage to infrastructure ($p < .001$). No significant effects of type of harm were found for apology ($p = .262$) or the adjusted solution ($p = .514$).

To examine descriptive expectations, we also conducted a 2 (type of harm) $\times 5$ (type of solution) repeated-measures ANOVA. The outcome variable was the ratings for descriptive expectations, which ranged from 1 (*very unlikely*) to 6 (*very likely*). The analysis revealed no significant main effect for type of harm, $F(1, 73) = .01, p = .902, \eta_p^2 < .01$, but a significant main effect for solution, $F(3.49, 254.45) = 6.05, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .08$, qualified by a two-way interaction, $F(4, 292) = 5.18, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .07$ (see Table 2). Specifically, compensation by the FARC was rated as more likely for damage to infrastructure than loss of life ($p = .005$). Conversely, punishment was rated as more likely for loss of life than infrastructure damage ($p = .013$). No significant effects of type of harm were found for apology ($p = .442$), compensation by the government ($p = .390$), or the adjusted solution ($p = .828$).

How Are Adolescents' Prescriptive and Descriptive Ratings Related to Trust?

Participants' average trust rating was 3.28 on a scale from 1 to 6 ($SD = 0.61$, range = 1.38–4.33). Trust ratings tended to decline with age ($r = -.37, p < .01$) but were not significantly associated with gender or school. As such, age was controlled when examining associations with trust ratings (see Table 3). Notably, for loss of life, as expected (H3b), prescriptive evaluations were significantly positively correlated with levels of trust for apologies, compensation by the FARC, compensation by the government, and the adjusted solution. Conversely, trust was not significantly associated with prescriptive evaluations for restorative solutions to infrastructure damage. Partially in line with our expectations (H3a), prescriptive evaluations of punishment were significantly negatively associated with trust, but unexpectedly, only for infrastructure damage. As expected, ratings of descriptive likelihood expectations were significantly associated with levels of trust (H2). Specifically, across both types of harm, participants' levels of trust were positively correlated with their

¹ Reliability analyses for each subtype of trust within the scale yielded low Cronbach's α values (trust in government authorities, $\alpha = .67$; trust in school authorities, $\alpha = .71$; and trust in others, $\alpha = .51$). As such, analyses were based on an overall trust score for each participant.

Table 1*Justifications for Prescriptive Evaluations of Solutions*

Category	Definition	Example
Benefiting victims and communities (κs = .87–.92).	Supporting a solution because it would benefit the victims/community or because it would repair the consequences of the harm, or criticizing a solution because it would not do so.	<i>To support:</i> “It would help as most of the people who are taken there are men ... and men are the ones who practically work in the fields, so that would be like an aid for [the mothers and children] to be able to eat, to be able to survive.” <i>To criticize:</i> “The emptiness that one is left with will not go away with money or apologies. It is a void that will always be there.”
Achieving revenge (κs = .78–.83)	Supporting a solution because of its negative effects on FARC members, such as explicit desires to see them suffer, or criticizing a solution because it would not fulfill desires for revenge.	<i>To support:</i> “Because one in prison lives badly and it is not good ... they would be suffering as the mother did for how their dead son suffered” <i>To criticize:</i> “You can say ‘Yes, I forgive him’ but there will always be that grudge. They will want them to pay. Always. Have them pay for what they did. An apology is not enough.”
Obtaining justice and accountability (κs = .73–.81)	Supporting or criticizing a solution due to concerns with fairness, proportionality, deservingness, and/or accountability for the harms caused.	<i>To support:</i> “Because they help rebuild what they themselves damaged ... they promise not to do it again and they are telling the truth, so they assume what they did. They are assuming that they made a mistake by damaging that. They have consequences because just like they did it, they must rebuild it.” <i>To criticize:</i> “They [the government] are not directly the ones who caused the damage, they are not directly the ones who left many populations without electricity for a period of time. It was the FARC. Then, the FARC should also contribute to rebuilding those educational institutions or hospitals.”
Teaching/learning a psychological lesson (κs = .79–.84)	Supporting a solution because it would help FARC members understand the consequences of the harm and teach them and/or other community members to not commit future similar harms. Alternatively, criticizing a solution because it would not offer opportunities for learning or reflection. This code also included supporting (or not) a solution based on beliefs about FARC members’ capacity or willingness to change.	<i>To support:</i> “They will get like a little flame in their hearts. They will feel bad and all that for what they did to the victims.” <i>To criticize:</i> “Because, well, they are going to continue doing those kinds of thing ... They’re not going to think about the consequences”

Note. FARC = *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*.

expectations of the likelihood of compensation by the FARC and by the government, punishment, and the adjusted solution.

What Concerns Did Adolescents Bring to Bear When Justifying Their Prescriptive Evaluations of Solutions to Harm?

To examine the use of different justifications, we computed the proportion of times each justification was referenced for each solution;

as such, values ranged from 0 (i.e., never referenced) to 1 (i.e., referenced across both vignettes). A series of one-way repeated-measured ANOVAs with type of solution as the independent variable revealed differences across solution types for all eight categories of the justifications (see Table 4). Follow-up pairwise comparisons (with a Bonferroni correction) were then conducted separately for each justification to compare how often it was used to explain prescriptive evaluations for the five different solutions (e.g., do participants refer significantly more to benefits to victims and communities for one

Table 2*Prescriptive and Descriptive Ratings of Different Solutions by Type of Harm*

Solution	Type of harm	Prescriptive ratings			Descriptive ratings		
		<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI
Apology	Loss of life	3.51	.19	[3.14, 3.89]	4.24	.20	[3.84, 4.64]
	Infrastructure	3.72	.17	[3.37, 4.06]	4.07	.21	[3.65, 4.48]
Compensation by FARC	Loss of life	3.91 _a	.20	[3.52, 4.30]	3.26 _a	.19	[2.87, 3.64]
	Infrastructure	5.40 _b	.09	[5.21, 5.59]	3.87 _b	.20	[3.48, 4.26]
Compensation by government	Loss of life	3.39 _a	.22	[2.96, 3.83]	3.50	.20	[3.13, 3.87]
	Infrastructure	4.61 _b	.20	[4.22, 5.00]	3.65	.18	[3.28, 4.01]
Punishment	Loss of life	4.96 _a	.16	[4.63, 5.29]	3.68 _a	.19	[3.30, 4.05]
	Infrastructure	4.09 _b	.18	[3.72, 4.45]	3.18 _b	.20	[2.78, 3.57]
Adjusted solution	Loss of life	3.88	.17	[3.53, 4.22]	3.58	.16	[3.27, 3.89]
	Infrastructure	4.00	.20	[3.60, 4.40]	3.55	.16	[3.24, 3.87]

Note. Values on different rows with dissimilar alphabetic subscripts (i.e., a, b) indicate differences between prescriptive ratings or descriptive ratings across vignettes depicting loss of life versus damage to infrastructure (e.g., prescriptive ratings of compensation by the FARC were more positive in the case of damage to infrastructure than to loss of life). *SE* = standard error; *CI* = confidence interval; FARC = *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*.

Table 3
Partial Correlations Between Trust and Prescriptive and Descriptive Ratings

Type of harm	Type of rating	Type of solution	Partial correlation with trust
Loss of life	Prescriptive	Apology	.34**
		Compensation by FARC	.31**
		Compensation by government	.27*
		Punishment	.09
		Adjusted solution	.28*
	Descriptive	Apology	.19
		Compensation by FARC	.33**
		Compensation by government	.39**
		Punishment	.53**
		Adjusted solution	.56**
Infrastructure	Prescriptive	Apology	.19
		Compensation by FARC	.19
		Compensation by government	-.02
		Punishment	-.24*
		Adjusted solution	.10
	Descriptive	Apology	-.02
		Compensation by FARC	.42**
		Compensation by government	.36**
		Punishment	.34**
		Adjusted solution	.44**

Note. Partial correlations controlled for age. Exact age was not reported by one participant, and thus multiple imputation (based on pooled estimates across five data sets) was used to estimate partial correlations. FARC = *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*.

* $p < .05$ (two-tailed). ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

solution over another?). Details of these pairwise tests are outlined in Table 4, and overall patterns are summarized below.

As compared to some of the other solutions, apologies were favored for teaching/learning a psychological lesson and criticized more than other solutions for not benefiting victims and communities. Compensation by the FARC was favored more than some other solutions to benefit victims and communities and obtain justice, although participants also criticized this solution more than some others for not benefiting victims and communities. Compensation by the government was also favored more than some solutions to benefit victims and communities but, unlike compensation by the FARC, was often criticized for not obtaining justice and accountability. In comparison to other solutions, punishment was more often viewed as achieving revenge, obtaining justice and accountability, and teaching/learning a psychological lesson; however, this solution was also criticized more than some others on the same bases (in that it failed to achieve revenge, obtain justice and accountability, or teach a psychological lesson). Finally, the adjusted solution was favored more than some other solutions to benefit victims and communities, obtain justice and accountability, and teach/learn a psychological lesson; however, it was particularly criticized on similar bases and because it failed to achieve revenge.

Importantly, some of these patterns were qualified by meaningful differences across harm types. We conducted McNemar's tests to explore these differences further; of 40 possible differences, 10 were significant (see [Supplementary Material](#)). In particular, youth were more likely to criticize apologies, compensation (by FARC and government), and the adjusted solution for failing to benefit victims and communities for loss of life. This pattern underscored their doubts about whether the harm of losing a loved one could ever be fully repaired. Similarly, participants endorsed compensation by the government for its capacity to benefit victims and communities more for damage to infrastructure than loss of life, emphasizing how the

quality of individuals' lives could be improved if the government restored institutions such as hospitals. Conversely, participants were more likely to criticize this response for not obtaining justice and accountability in response to loss of life. Regarding punishment, youth were more likely to criticize it for not obtaining justice and accountability in the case of damage to infrastructure, as they were concerned with how the FARC could repair infrastructures from jail and the shorter jail sentences for harms that impacted entire communities. Youth also endorsed compensation by the FARC for its capacity to obtain justice and accountability and teach a psychological lesson significantly more in the case of damage to infrastructure. For instance, participants highlighted that it was fair to restore services to impacted communities and that participating in programs to repair infrastructures could help FARC members realize the depth of the harm they had caused. Finally, youth endorsed apologies to obtain justice and accountability significantly more for loss of life, as some deemed that this was one of the only ways that FARC members could acknowledge and address the harms they had caused.

Discussion

In this study, we examined urban Colombian youths' prescriptive evaluations and descriptive expectations of different solutions to address harms that occurred within the armed conflict. Furthermore, we documented how their evaluations and expectations were associated with their beliefs about the trustworthiness of their social environments. Finally, we explored their reasoning underlying their prescriptive evaluations. Overall, our findings provide new insights into the ways that youth grapple with responses to address harmful acts in the context of protracted armed conflict and as societies work toward promoting accountability, restoration, and ultimately peace. Our embedded mixed-method design provided insight not only into

Table 4
Justifications for Prescriptive Ratings of Different Solutions

Type of justification	Apology (APO)	Compensation by FARC (COMF)	Compensation by government (COMG)	Punishment (PUN)	Adjusted solution (ADJ)	Univariate effect for type of solution
	<i>M</i> (<i>SE</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SE</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SE</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SE</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SE</i>)	
Benefiting victims and communities	.43 (.05)	.70 (.04)	.69 (.04)	.30 (.05)	.64 (.04)	$F(3.43, 250.26) = 19.23, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .21$ (COMF = COMG = ADJ) > all $F(4, 292) = 41.43, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .36$ APO > COMF > all $F(4, 292) = 98.96, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .58$ PUN > all $F(2.37, 173.33) = 38.54, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .35$ (ADJ = PUN) > all $F(3.78, 275.66) = 18.19, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .20$ (COMF = PUN = ADJ) > all $F(3.49, 254.58) = 21.29, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .23$ COMG > all except ADJ, APO = PUN = ADJ, all > COMF $F(3.06, 225.21) = 14.95, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .17$ (APO = PUN = ADJ) > all, although (COMF = ADJ) > COMG $F(3.00, 218.74) = 8.27, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .10$ (ADJ = PUN) > (COMF = COMG), APO = all
Does not benefit victims and communities	.63 (.04)	.41 (.03)	.16 (.03)	.16 (.03)	.19 (.03)	
Achieving revenge	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.45 (.04)	.03 (.02)	
Does not achieve revenge	.05 (.02)	.00 (.00)	.02 (.02)	.27 (.04)	.38 (.05)	
Obtaining justice and accountability	.14 (.03)	.41 (.04)	.12 (.03)	.43 (.05)	.30 (.04)	
Does not obtain justice and accountability	.22 (.04)	.01 (.01)	.45 (.05)	.29 (.04)	.35 (.05)	
Teaching/learning a psychological lesson	.26 (.04)	.14 (.03)	.00 (.00)	.31 (.04)	.19 (.03)	
Does not teach/cannot learn a psychological lesson	.08 (.03)	.03 (.01)	.03 (.01)	.15 (.03)	.18 (.03)	

Note. Means are expressed as the proportionate use of a justification for a solution across types of harm. >denotes significantly greater than, <denotes significantly less than, and =denotes not significantly different ($p < .05$ following a Bonferroni correction). Commas separate different comparison statements (e.g., for achieving revenge, “PUN > all” indicates that revenge was used as a justification for punishment more than for any of the other solutions). *SE* = standard error; FARC = *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*.

how these youth rated different possibilities but also why. Our findings thus contribute to the peace psychology literature by elucidating adolescents' understandings of different approaches to dealing with the complexities of peace in a postconflict context, as well as offering applicable insights for peace education.

As expected, youth reported greater endorsement of compensation by the FARC and government in response to damage to infrastructure (H1b) and punishment in response to harming loved ones (H1a). Thus, predictable differences arose between types of harm—youth endorsed more retributive solutions for loss of life and more victim-oriented solutions for damage to infrastructure. Inasmuch as youth may have judged harms that result in the loss of life as more severe, these findings are in line with previous research with adults (Gromet & Darley, 2006, 2009). While it is not possible to entirely disentangle judgments about the severity and reversibility of the harms, it may be useful for future research to further delineate the psychological processes underlying these patterns. That is, punishment may be endorsed for the loss of loved ones because of the pain and outrage that tend to promote retributive motives, and it may also be the case that restorative solutions are viewed as less desirable when harms cannot be undone.

A similar trend emerged in adolescents' beliefs about the likelihood of each solution; youth expected the FARC to be more likely to repair damage to infrastructure than to offer monetary compensation in response to loss of life. They also believed that punishment would be more likely to be imposed when lives had been lost, in comparison to infrastructural damages. The overlap between participants' prescriptive and descriptive ratings suggests that adolescents' expectations of their environments may be related to their prescriptive evaluations. Although additional analyses would be required to explore associations between youths' expectations and evaluations, it is possible that adolescents considered the likelihood of a solution to occur, and that this bore on their evaluations (Wainryb, 1991). However, discrepancies were also evident between what youth considered the most desirable solution and their expectations of it occurring. For example, despite endorsing punishment (for loss of life) and victim compensation by the FARC (for infrastructure damage), youth were less confident that these would actually occur. These findings are consistent with research indicating discrepancies between Colombian adolescents' moral evaluations and their expectations of others' actions based on their lived experiences (Posada & Wainryb, 2008). This finding also provides important lessons for peace education broadly, as well as specifically in the case of Colombia. Peace education initiatives in similar transitioning contexts should attend to how young people's understanding of the sociopolitical realities of their society may come into tension with their moral reasoning. This is particularly problematic if possible avenues toward forgiveness or reconciliation feel cut off to them, as this study and others conducted in the Colombian context seem to imply (e.g., Velez, 2021; Velez et al., 2019).

We had expected that trust would be inversely related to prescriptive evaluations of punishment (H3a) and positively to evaluations of restoration (H3b), particularly for loss of life. Consistent with the latter hypothesis, support for more restorative solutions following loss of life (i.e., apology, compensation, and the adjusted solution) was positively associated with trust. Having a general belief in the trustworthiness of others and institutions may have allowed youth to endorse solutions that emphasized rehabilitation and restoring victims. Based on previous research, adolescents with higher levels of trust

were perhaps more likely to consider varied perspectives on the conflict, thus supporting solutions to harm that could be beneficial for multiple parties (Fett et al., 2014; Rasmussen et al., 2018). This finding can also inform peace education programming, as it points toward the need to build trust as a foundation for fostering young people's perspective taking and cognitive flexibility—key elements with youth in transitional contexts (Harris, 2004).

Also partially in line with our expectations (H3a), youth with lower levels of trust endorsed more punitive responses to harm, but unexpectedly, this association was evident only in response to infrastructure damage, rather than loss of life. While punishment was often rated positively in response to loss of life, it may be that adolescents with higher and lower levels of trust explained their positive ratings of punishment in different ways. For instance, believing that individuals may change through instrumental punishment may also underlie the endorsement of punitive solutions (Marshall et al., 2022). Thus, differences in adolescents' informational assumptions about the goal and efficacy of different solutions may help explain some of the variability in their views of punitive approaches (Barreiro, 2012; Oosterhoff et al., 2018; Wainryb, 1991). This insight can help develop pathways toward further engaging youth in peacebuilding by exploring their understandings of human nature and how it intersects with their endorsement of different solutions to addressing harm and ending armed conflict (e.g., McEvoy-Levy, 2011).

Regarding adolescents' descriptive expectations, we found that for all solutions (except apologies), their likelihood ratings were positively associated with trust across both types of harm (H2). This finding further highlights that when youth are more trusting of their environments, they also have more optimistic expectations about how others will behave. The one exception was for expectations surrounding the likelihood of apologies, which were not significantly linked to trust. One possible explanation for this null effect is that, at the time of data collection, members of the FARC had already publicly apologized. Thus, youths' ratings may have reflected their knowledge of current events in addition to expectations of future behavior.

Finally, we explored participants' open-ended justifications for their evaluations of different solutions. When the proposed solutions had a restorative component that allowed for the material compensation of the harms (i.e., compensation by the FARC or the government and the adjusted solution), adolescents were more likely to endorse these to benefit victims and communities (e.g., "They would repair what they damaged, all the infrastructure, the roads, and all that ... Other people would have the benefit of using these"). However, when discussing compensation by the government, adolescents endorsed this solution to benefit victims and communities particularly in relation to damage to infrastructure. Youth were also critical about whether apologies and compensation by the FARC could benefit victims and communities, especially in response to loss of life (e.g., "I would not receive the money, even if I'm in financial need, because money is not going to fill the void that family fills," "They could apologize to me, but that wound would remain and having killed my son or someone close, it hurts you a lot, and an apology could not heal that"). In this way, youth not only demonstrated a restorative orientation to harms that prioritized the needs of victims and communities (Gromet & Darley, 2009), but they also showed critical reflection about the consequences of the harm and whether some damages could, in fact, be repaired.

Adolescents also expressed desires to obtain justice and accountability for the harms committed by FARC members. To

this end, they supported compensation by the FARC, punishment, and the adjusted solution. Interestingly, adolescents were more supportive of using apologies to obtain justice and accountability for loss of life, whereas they endorsed compensation by the FARC for this same goal more in the case of damage to infrastructure. Thus, youth were not indiscriminately endorsing solutions but rather weighing how justice could be best achieved for different types of harm. For peace education, this finding suggests the need to provide spaces and support for youth to work through these questions critically and in ways that take account of the unique considerations in specific contexts.

Participants also endorsed prison sentences to achieve revenge for the harms committed by the FARC. Their justifications seemed to underline that punishment was the only path to achieving this goal. Conversely, some youth also criticized punishment and the adjusted solution for failing to achieve revenge. These concerns highlighted adolescents' retributive desires as they sought to address harms with responses that would negatively impact FARC members (Darley et al., 2000). Since polarization and delegitimization have been identified as psychosocial barriers to peace in Colombia, validating adolescents' desires for revenge within restorative conversations can be a first step to unpacking these and the idealized notion of peace as the absence of conflict and contradiction (Recchia et al., 2022; Villa-Gómez et al., 2023). Although restorative processes do not imply or require forgiveness, inclusive conversations with youth that acknowledge and incorporate varied perspectives can provide a foundation for peacebuilding initiatives that pave a path toward the possibility of forgiveness or, at minimum, peaceful coexistence. As above, this finding also has implications for peace education in schools in that it underlines the importance of cultivating spaces for dialogue that safely allow for complexity and diversity in youths' concerns and motivations.

In addition, adolescents reasoned that punishment, apologies, and the adjusted solution were desirable responses for their potential to teach a psychological lesson to FARC members or support them in learning such lessons. Nonetheless, participants also criticized punishment and the adjusted solution on the same basis. In the context of infrastructure damage, youth also supported compensation by the FARC to teach or facilitate a learning opportunity for them. Overall, the forms of reasoning underlying youths' evaluations emphasize that participants were weighing the value of different solutions in relation to both retributive and restorative concerns, as well as wrestling with the best means to find a way forward and prevent similar harms from reoccurring. For instance, these competing concerns are evident in this participant's reflection about the value of punishment to address infrastructure damages:

[For the impacted families], it is a form of justice because of what they did to them. But, first, I do not think that by going to jail the FARC is going to understand, rather, they are going to be filled with more hatred towards society, so I do not think they will ... reflect on their actions. And second, sending the FARC to jail is not going to solve anything. I mean, it is going to make society "feel a little safer," in quotation marks, but in reality, it is not going to give them anything back at all.

Some limitations of this study and recommendations for future research should be noted. The results of this study are based on a community sample recruited from two low socioeconomic status schools in Bogotá, Colombia, and may not generalize to Colombian youth from different socioeconomic backgrounds or those residing in other regions of the country. Previous work has underlined the

importance of examining the perspectives of youth from different regions, given the variability in their exposure to the armed conflict (e.g., Velez et al., 2019) and their differing positions toward the peace agreement (e.g., individuals from rural areas mostly voted in favor of the peace accord in the 2016 plebiscite; Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil, 2016). In particular, although there was a migration movement to urban areas such as Bogotá to escape violence, people living in rural areas in Colombia were the most impacted by the armed conflict (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022). Additional work is needed to better understand how socioecological milieus inform youths' reasoning about these issues.

Using hypothetical vignettes to examine how youth perceive harm within a specific political context allowed us to ensure that all participants reasoned about comparable events. Nevertheless, this methodology did not take into account participants' unique personal experiences with the political conflict and how these may have shaped their reasoning. That is, while a few participants described having been directly exposed to conflict-related violence, not all youth provided details about their own experiences with the conflict, if any. This variability may contribute to individual differences in youths' reasoning about the different actors in the conflict; different areas of the country have been affected to various degrees by armed groups (e.g., paramilitaries, guerrillas) and government intervention. Since the 2016 peace treaty was signed by the Colombian government and the FARC, this study focused on youths' perspectives on harms committed by the latter. Although we aimed to center adolescents' reasoning about one set of actors, it will be critical for future studies to examine youths' understandings and judgments of harms committed by different actors in the conflict. Finally, we were not able to differentiate between links with generalized trust, trust in social authorities, and trust in distal authorities due to the low reliabilities of the subscales. Previous research has suggested that youth perceive the two latter differently (Fine et al., 2019), and thus it will be important for future studies to examine separate associations with these different forms of trust.

Despite these limitations, our findings emphasize adolescents' nuanced reasoning about different solutions to address harms committed within an enduring armed conflict. Aligned with theorizing within the social domain tradition, our analyses suggest that specific features of harms guided participants' evaluations of different solutions (Smetana et al., 2014). Specifically, adolescents endorsed more punitive strategies for loss of life, whereas they supported more restorative solutions, such as compensation, in the context of damage to infrastructure. This finding contributes to moral-developmental scholarship in that most studies examining youths' thinking about restorative justice have not considered these variations across types of harm (see Recchia et al., 2022). Participants' reasoning also further emphasized their sensitivity to context, in that they highlighted how the same solution could not benefit victims and communities in all situations. For instance, they were more skeptical about the potential of using restorative solutions such as apologies and compensation by the FARC to benefit victims and communities in the aftermath of loss of life. Overall, this inclination to favor punishments following loss of life is in line with the criticisms that have been raised by opponents of the 2016 peace treaty (e.g., Tellez, 2019). While past research has documented children's evaluations of retaliation in response to others' harmful behavior (Ardila-Rey et al., 2009; Posada & Wainryb, 2008), this study builds on this work by juxtaposing youths' reasoning about retributive courses of action with more restorative approaches.

Additionally, our work contributes to the literature examining the role of informational assumptions in guiding adolescents' reasoning about solutions to harm (Oosterhoff et al., 2018; Wainryb, 1991). That is, our findings reveal an association between youths' endorsement of restorative solutions, particularly when harms result in the loss of life, and their beliefs vis-à-vis the trustworthiness of others and their social environments.

Following the signing of the accord, Colombia has faced a climate of polarization and division between proponents and detractors of the agreement, with limited communication between the two sides (Villa-Gómez et al., 2023). In this study, we went beyond these categorizations to explore the nuances in youths' evaluations of restorative and retributive solutions to address harms committed in the context of the armed conflict. In addition to addressing overt forms of violence, we propose that a promising pathway to build a sustainable culture of peace can be the acknowledgment of and willingness to interrogate these competing concerns, particularly as a means for pushing back against polarization and radicalization (see Christie et al., 2008).

Ultimately, youth can play a critical role in peacebuilding efforts and have been held up as a central part of this work in Colombia (e.g., Velez et al., 2019). Still, their engagement and collaboration with these initiatives will be influenced by their understanding of the peace process, the armed conflict, and the different actors involved. This study thus contributes to peacebuilding initiatives by highlighting the beliefs and concerns that guide youths' reasoning and offering concrete lessons for peace education to engage with adolescents' perspectives in transitional contexts. Beyond their endorsement of punishment in response to loss of life, youth also expressed a variety of concerns with justice, accountability, learning, and restoration. As Colombians strive for reconciliation and peace, schools can provide critical spaces for youth to safely express and reflect on their competing concerns. Peace education in Colombian schools and beyond must not simply transfer knowledge or assume young people will adopt certain perspectives on the armed conflict, but create space to engage with this complexity. In this way, our findings have implications for understanding how youths' perspectives bear on processes whereby peace education can affect change. For instance, by confronting predominant narratives about different conflict parties, such as FARC members' capacity to learn from their mistakes, schools may be able to help youth see similarities between themselves and "the other" as human beings with needs and desires, and who are also capable of moral wrongdoing as well as of growth and redemption. An increased awareness of others' divergent perspectives on the conflict can also promote acceptance of diversity, which is ultimately conducive to a democratic environment in which different ideologies can coexist and productive dialogue across the political spectrum is possible (Opatow et al., 2005). While we acknowledge that systematic, large-scale societal change may take years, even decades, the future of the peace accord in Colombia must be guided by the incremental efforts of individuals of all ages.

References

- Ardila-Rey, A., Killen, M., & Brenick, A. (2009). Displaced and non-displaced Colombian children's evaluations of moral transgressions, retaliation, and reconciliation. *Social Development, 18*(1), 181–209. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9507.2008.00483.x>
- Arsenio, W. F., & Gold, J. (2006). The effects of social injustice and inequality on children's moral judgments and behavior: Towards a theoretical model. *Cognitive Development, 21*(4), 388–400. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cogdev.2006.06.005>
- Baines, E. K. (2009). Complex political perpetrators: Reflections on Dominic Ongwen. *The Journal of Modern African Studies, 47*(2), 163–191. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X09003796>
- Ball, C. L., Smetana, J. G., Caporaso, J. S., Boseovski, J. J., & Marcovitch, S. (2021). Normative changes and individual differences in retaliation judgments: A constructivist developmental perspective. In H. Recchia & C. Wainryb (Eds.), *Revenge across childhood and adolescence* (pp. 37–75). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108776684.003>
- Bar-Tal, D., & Hameiri, B. (2020). Interventions to change well-anchored attitudes in the context of intergroup conflict. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 14*(7), Article e12534. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12534>
- Barreiro, A. (2012). El desarrollo de las justificaciones del castigo: ¿conceptualización individual o apropiación de conocimientos colectivos? [The development of justifications for punishment: Individual conceptualization or appropriation of collective knowledge?] *Estudios de Psicología, 33*(1), 67–77. <https://doi.org/10.1174/02109391299803845>
- Bradbury-Jones, C., Taylor, J., & Herber, O. R. (2014). Vignette development and administration: A framework for protecting research participants. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 17*(4), 427–440. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2012.750833>
- Bruneau, E., Casas, A., Hameiri, B., & Kteily, N. (2022). Exposure to a media intervention helps promote support for peace in Colombia. *Nature Human Behaviour, 6*(6), 847–857. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-022-01330-w>
- Casas-Casas, A., Méndez, N., & Pino, J. F. (2020). Trust and prospective reconciliation: Evidence from a protracted armed conflict. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development, 15*(3), 298–315. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1542316620945968>
- Christie, D. J., Tint, B. S., Wagner, R. V., & Winter, D. D. (2008). Peace psychology for a peaceful world. *American Psychologist, 63*(6), 540–552. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.63.6.540>
- Comisión de la Verdad. (2022). *Hallazgos y recomendaciones de la Comisión de la Verdad de Colombia*. <https://www.comisiondelaverdad.co/hallazgos-y-recomendaciones-1>
- Darley, J. M., Carlsmith, K. M., & Robinson, P. H. (2000). Incapacitation and just deserts as motives for punishment. *Law and Human Behavior, 24*(6), 659–683. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1005552203727>
- Erdley, C. A., & Dweck, C. S. (1993). Children's implicit personality theories as predictors of their social judgments. *Child Development, 64*(3), 863–878. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1131223>
- Fett, A.-K. J., Shergill, S. S., Gromann, P. M., Dumontheil, I., Blakemore, S.-J., Yakub, F., & Krabbendam, L. (2014). Trust and social reciprocity in adolescence—A matter of perspective-taking. *Journal of Adolescence, 37*(2), 175–184. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2013.11.011>
- Fine, A. D., Kan, E., & Cauffman, E. (2019). Adolescents' confidence in institutions: Do America's youth differentiate between legal and social institutions? *Developmental Psychology, 55*(8), 1758–1767. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0000760>
- Gallup Colombia. (2019). *Gallup Poll*. <https://imgcdn.larepublica.co/cms/2019/03/07181304/017100190000-GALLUP-POLL-129.pdf>
- Gromet, D. M., & Darley, J. (2006). Restoration and retribution: How including retributive components affects the acceptability of restorative justice processes. *Social Justice Research, 19*(4), 395–432. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-006-0023-7>
- Gromet, D. M., & Darley, J. M. (2009). Punishment and beyond: Achieving justice through the satisfaction of multiple goals. *Law & Society Review, 43*(1), 1–38. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5893.2009.00365.x>
- Harris, I. M. (2004). Peace education theory. *Journal of Peace Education, 1*(1), 5–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1740020032000178276>

- Johnson, D., Maguire, E. R., & Kuhns, J. B. (2014). Public perceptions of the legitimacy of the law and legal authorities: Evidence from the Caribbean. *Law & Society Review*, 48(4), 947–978. <https://doi.org/10.1111/asr.12102>
- Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. (2019). *Washington DC seminar: The Colombian peace process after two years*. https://kroc.nd.edu/assets/327728/190724_final_kroc_seminar_outcome_document.pdf
- Krotoszyński, M. (2016). The transitional justice models and the justifications of means of dealing with the past. *Oñati Socio-Legal Series*, 6, 584–606. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2832294
- Llewellyn, J. (2006). Justice for South Africa: Restorative justice and the South African truth and reconciliation commission. In C. M. Koggel (Ed.), *Moral issues in global perspective—Volume 1: Moral and political theory* (2nd ed., pp. 274–289). Broadview Press.
- Marshall, J., Gollwitzer, A., & Bloom, P. (2022). Why do children and adults think other people punish? *Developmental Psychology*, 58(9), 1783–1792. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0001378>
- Martínez, C. A., & Posada, R. (2022). The influence of sociocultural beliefs on adolescents' moral and tolerance evaluations toward corruption. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 32(4), 1515–1529. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12729>
- Mathias, A., Páez, D., Espinosa, A., Sandoval, S., Alzugaray, C., Arnos, M., Cárdenas, M., da Costa, S., Reyes, C., Rimé, B., & Zubieta, E. (2020). The association between Truth Commissions evaluation, emotional climate and institutional trust: Comparison and meta-analysis of surveys in six South American countries. *International Journal of Social Psychology*, 35(2), 203–245. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02134748.2020.1721053>
- McEvoy-Levy, S. (2011). Children, youth, and peacebuilding. In T. Matyok, J. Senehi, & S. Byrne (Eds.), *Critical issues in peace and conflict studies: Theory, practice, and pedagogy* (pp. 159–176). Lexington Books.
- Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz. (2016). *Acuerdo final para la terminación del conflicto y la construcción de una paz estable y duradera*. <https://www.jep.gov.co/Documents/Acuerdo%20Final/Acuerdo%20Final.pdf>
- Oosterhoff, B., Shook, N. J., & Metzger, A. (2018). A matter of fact? Adolescents' assumptions about crime, laws, and authority and their domain-specific beliefs about punishment. *Journal of Adolescence*, 62(1), 87–95. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2017.11.007>
- Opatow, S., Gerson, J., & Woodside, S. (2005). From moral exclusion to moral inclusion: Theory for teaching peace. *Theory Into Practice*, 44(4), 303–318. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4404_4
- Pareja Conto, L., Restrepo, A., Recchia, H., Velez, G., & Wainryb, C. (2023). Adolescents' retributive and restorative orientations in response to intergroup harms in schools. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 33(1), 92–107. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12785>
- Piconne, T. (2019). *Peace with justice: The Colombian experience with transitional justice*. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/FP_20190708_colombia.pdf
- Posada, R., & Wainryb, C. (2008). Moral development in a violent society: Colombian children's judgments in the context of survival and revenge. *Child Development*, 79(4), 882–898. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2008.01165.x>
- Rasmussen, H. F., Ramos, M. C., Han, S. C., Pettit, C., & Margolin, G. (2018). How discrimination and perspective-taking influence adolescents' attitudes about justice. *Journal of Adolescence*, 62(1), 70–81. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2017.11.005>
- Recchia, H., Wainryb, C., & Pareja Conto, L. (2022). Taking a developmental perspective on restorative justice in schools. In G. Velez & T. Gavrielides (Eds.), *Restorative justice: Promoting peace and wellbeing* (pp. 23–43). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-13101-1_2
- Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil. (2016). *Plebiscito 2 octubre 2016*. https://elecciones.registraduria.gov.co/pre_plebis_2016/99PL/DPLZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ_L1.htm
- Rico, D., & Barreto, I. (2022). Unfreezing of the conflict due to the peace agreement with FARC–EP in Colombia: Signature (2016) and implementation (2018). *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 28(1), 22–33. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pac0000545>
- Sanchez, M. G., Montalvo, J. D., & Seligson, M. A. (2015). *Cultura política de la democracia en Colombia, 2015: Actitudes democráticas en zonas de consolidación territorial*. <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/colombia/Colombia-Informe-Especial-2015-070915-W.pdf>
- Smetana, J. G., Jambon, M., & Ball, C. (2014). The social domain approach to children's moral and social judgments. In M. Killen & J. Smetana (Eds.), *Handbook of moral development* (2nd ed., pp. 23–45). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203581957.ch2>
- Tellez, J. F. (2019). Peace agreement design and public support for peace: Evidence from Colombia. *Journal of Peace Research*, 56(6), 827–844. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343319853603>
- Turiel, E. (1983). *The development of social knowledge: Morality and convention*. Cambridge University Press.
- United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). (2006). *Basic principles and guidelines on the right to a remedy and reparation for victims of gross violations of international human rights law and serious violations of international humanitarian law (A/RES/60/147)*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/basic-principles-and-guidelines-right-remedy-and-reparation>
- United Nations Mission in Colombia. (2017). *The UN mission finalizes activities of neutralization of the FARC-EP armament*. <https://unmc.unmissionns.org/en/un-mission-finalizes-activities-neutralization-farc-ep-armament>
- Velez, G. (2021). Learning peace: Adolescent Colombians' interpretations of and responses to peace education curriculum. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 27(2), 146–159. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pac0000519>
- Velez, G., Ballesteros, A., & Sanchez Meertens, A. (2019). La voz de la juventud: Perspectivas juveniles sobre la guerra, la paz y la reintegración en Colombia [The voice of youth: Youth perspectives on war, peace and reintegration in Colombia]. In E. McFee & A. Rettberg (Eds.), *Implementación del acuerdo de paz con la(s) FARC y reintegración: Un balance e implicaciones para política pública* (pp. 225–240). Universidad de los Andes. <https://doi.org/10.30778/2019.53>
- Villa-Gómez, J. D., López-López, W., Oliveros, J. F., Quiceno, L. M., & Urrego-Arango, E. M. (2023). Polarization and fatalism: Social beliefs in Colombian citizens regarding the political negotiation of the armed conflict. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pac0000698>
- Wainryb, C. (1991). Understanding differences in moral judgments: The role of informational assumptions. *Child Development*, 62(4), 840–851. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1131181>
- Yamagishi, T., & Yamagishi, M. (1994). Trust and commitment in the United States and Japan. *Motivation and Emotion*, 18(2), 129–166. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02249397>
- Zehr, H. (2002). *The little book of restorative justice*. Good Books.

(Appendices follow)

Appendix A

Harm Vignettes and Solutions

Table A1
Harm Vignettes

Type of harm	Description
Damage to infrastructure	The FARC have been accused of taking down electric towers and water aqueducts, as well as damaging roads, schools, and hospitals in cities and villages. In remote areas, many people had to live without electricity and water, while also being exposed to unsafe roads or not having access to schools and hospitals.
Loss of life	The FARC have been accused of committing very severe crimes against other people. Many people have lost loved ones that they will never see again.

Note. FARC = *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*.

Table A2
Solutions

Type of solution	Description
Solutions for Damage to Infrastructure	
Compensation by government	In the Peace Accord, the government proposed to build and repair damaged infrastructures such as roads, schools, and hospitals. It was also proposed that the electric and water systems will be made functional in areas affected by the conflict.
Compensation by FARC	The FARC are asked to participate in programs to rebuild infrastructures and to help pay for the damages caused.
Apology	In the Peace Accord, the FARC can perform symbolic actions to repair victims. A symbolic reparation action can be an apology. As such, the FARC apologize to the victims and their families for all the harm they did. They say that they feel bad for what they did and are sorry for the suffering that their actions caused.
Punishment	In the regular justice system, the FARC would be sent to jail for 10 years.
Adjusted solution	Alternatively, the Peace Accord says that if members of the FARC confess the truth about everything that happened, help rebuild what was destroyed, and promise not to do it again, they will not go to jail.
Solutions for Harms Involving Loss of Life	
Compensation by FARC	In the Peace Accord, the FARC are asked to give victims and their families monetary compensations.
Compensation by government	Another point of the Peace Accord says that if the FARC do not have the money to compensate victims, the government will pay the victims instead.
Apology	In the Peace Accord, the FARC can perform symbolic actions to repair victims. A symbolic reparation action can be an apology. As such, the FARC apologize to the victims and their families for all the harm they did. They say that they feel bad for what they did and are sorry for the suffering that their actions caused.
Punishment	In the regular justice system, the FARC would be sent to jail for 30 years or more.
Adjusted solution	Alternatively, the Peace Accord says that if they confess the truth about what happened and offer to make it up to the victims, members of the FARC will be sentenced to 5–8 years of house arrest. An example of how they could make it up to the victims is by participating in programs that help families find their loved ones.

Note. FARC = *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*.

(Appendices continue)

Appendix B

Trust Scale

Table B1*Items for Trust Scale*

Item	Omitted from final scale	Reverse scored
I can rely on the promises made by the government.		
The adults in charge at my school are honest.	Yes	
When dealing with strangers, it is better to be cautious before trusting them.	Yes	Yes
Most of the teachers at my school are dependable.		
Generally, the only thing that elected officials care about is money.		Yes
The law represents the values of the people in power rather than the values of people like me.	Yes	Yes
Most people in Colombia are trustworthy.		
People in power use the law to control people like me.		Yes
Nowadays, you can't rely on anybody.		Yes
In general, the police cannot be trusted.		Yes
Most people try to take advantage of you if they have the chance to do so.		Yes
Most people are helpful.		
I can trust most of the teachers at my school.		
Elected officials take into account the needs of people like me when making decisions.		
The police are good at dealing with problems that concern those around me.		
Generally, people tell a lie when they can benefit by doing so.		Yes
Before sentencing people, the courts listen to all sides of a conflict.		
Society is set up so that people usually get what they deserve.		
At my school, when students break the rules, they are treated fairly.		

Received June 28, 2022

Revision received November 9, 2023

Accepted November 14, 2023 ■