

Let's talk about peace

*A research on discourses concerning women and peacebuilding in
Colombia*



Fleur van der Meer

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Supervisor: Dr. ir. M van Leeuwen



Radboud Universiteit



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Executive Summary

In a large portion of the academic debate, women are perceived to be ideal peacebuilders due to their nurturing nature. This is because of the roles they assume when men leave for conflict, their low key status, being the educators of future generations, and their willingness to create peace in order to secure the safety and security for their children and communities (Guhatakurta 2004; Goetz and Jenkins, 2005). Furthermore, they deal with conflict differently and it has been established that in a period of post-conflict, they have different needs than men. (Mazurana and Proctor, 2015). This has resulted in an international discourse that emphasises that in conflict-affected settings women should be attributed important roles in negotiating peace and post-conflict governance but also be key partners in re-establishing livelihoods and sustainable development.

When reading about Colombia it appears as if this discourse was followed in practice. Female FARC fighters managed to claim a seat during the peace negotiation, wanting to represent Colombian women but also to assure women's involvement in politics and development in a post-conflict Colombia.

Upon arrival in Colombia, it quickly became clear to me that there is a variety of discourses concerning women and peacebuilding in Colombia. UNOCHA, a large funder of projects and intergovernmental representatives, wields a discourse focussing on the vulnerability of women in Colombia, quantifying their many issues, the different types of violence they endure and what type of humanitarian aid would best fit their needs. CIASE, the local organisation had a different feminist approach with a discourse focussing on the fortification and representation of women's rights in the political sphere.

Interpretations of conflict and the discourses that follow have great consequences for intervening practices. (Autesserre, 2009; Gasper and Apthorpe, 1996). When the international community, including funders and implementers of peacebuilding projects, focuses on a certain perspective in the peacebuilding process which does not correlate with what is necessary at grassroots level, interventions are not as effective as when these interventions better fit to context.

This diversity of discourses on women's roles in conflict-affected Colombia at the intergovernmental level led me to investigate the discourses from all actors involved, including the women targeted in peacebuilding projects by a local peacebuilding organisation. In doing so, I learned that there is indeed a discrepancy between the international community, local partners, and the needs of local women. Where the intergovernmental organisation UNOCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) portrays Colombian women as victims, I discovered that the women's concerns focus on development issues, having trouble guaranteeing their livelihood and facing gender issues in their local communities.

Despite an international discourse on the different roles of women in conflict-affected settings, peacebuilding in Colombia still starts from a limited perspective on these roles due to the discourse the representative of the international community (UNOCHA) wields. As a result, interventions seem to miss their point, and risk not working on development issues that are important for women. This does not contribute to the effectiveness of post-conflict peacebuilding: real challenges of women are not seen; while their opportunities to contribute are also lost.

As a concluding discussion, I consequently recommend the international community and local peacebuilding partner in Colombia CIASE to gain a better understanding of what is necessary in peace-building for Colombian women in order to create a clear and effective direction of intervening practices.

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List of abbreviations

CCONG - Confederación Colombiana de ONG

CIASE - Corporación de Investigación y Acción Social y Económica

CONAMIC - National Coordination of Indigenous Women in Colombia

ELN - Ejército de Liberación Nacional

FARC - Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia

FOSPA - Foro Social Panamazónico

GNWP - Global Network of Women Peacebuilders

HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus

ICAN - International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

IFPMA - International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & Associations

LGBTI - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Intersex

LWI - Liberia Women Initiative

NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation

OSCE - Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

UN - United Nations

UNOCHA - United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

I. Introduction

"Peacebuilding stories have allies, villains, heroes and enemies. Storytelling is not used only to talk about the past, but also the present and the future. Past experiences feed into plans, and different visions and future scenarios can be confronted, compared and collectively developed." Sanz, 2012.

Peace building is a coined term within the international sphere of conflict resolution. Its modern practices can be traced back to after the Second World War within the Marshall Plan, an economic designed plan, aiming at rebuilding western Europe (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2018). The mentioning of the term peacebuilding, however, is to be traced to sometime later, the 1970's, when Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung was one of the first to use the term as to describe systems that needed to be created in order to obtain sustainable peace.

The concept of peacebuilding was further popularised and developed at the end of the Cold War. After the fall of the Soviet Union, fifteen heads of state came together in a UN meeting discussing the limitations that existed about peacebuilding at that time. It was felt that the absence of war and military presence does not automatically ensure security and stability, and that instability in the fields of economy, sociology, humanity and ecology can present a big threat to security and peace. As a result, UN secretary Boutros Boutros Ghali produced in 1992 the well-known report "An Agenda for Peace" outlined in it how the UN should respond to conflict and how they should act in post-conflict situations (An Agenda for Peace, 1992).

Since the report, as many as 55 peace operations have been undertaken by the UN and its member states, in the name of peacebuilding. From 1992 up until now the discourse on peacebuilding has taken different shapes and forms which will be reviewed in-depth later in this research. The definition Boutros Boutros- Ghali gives for peacebuilding is "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict."(An Agenda for Peace, II.21, 1992).

Within the development of peacebuilding discourses, a search for alternative forms of peacebuilding emerged. With it, the discourse on including women in peacebuilding efforts gained popularity (Kumalo, 2015). The academic debate claims that women are more effective peacebuilders for their local communities due to their social and biological roles as nurturers for both their families and communities (Guhathakurta, 2004). Women assume the role as a future educator for following generations and have a low-key status (ibid; Goetz and Jenkins, 2005)

With this academic debate in mind, my curiosity was sparked to evaluate how this applies to the case of recently post-conflict Colombia. When doing research before my departure I ascertained that for the case of Colombia, the meaning and narratives on peace-building seemed to follow the international academic debate as described above. When FARC women and other Colombian women's organisations noticed, a year into the peace talks, that women's concerns were not mentioned in the peace accords, they began to push for greater inclusion. Not only did they manage to get a direct say in drafting up the accords, but at times they also represented one-third of delegates, a number high above global averages (Kumalo, 2015).

Early on during my time in Colombia, I quickly noticed that the aforementioned discourse on women and peacebuilding was not shared by different actors in the same peacebuilding process. Where some painted the picture of strong women involved in their local communities, others painted them as victims of the conflict who needed aid and were not capable of assuming the role of peacebuilder. This triggered several questions. What are all these different discourses? On what assumptions are they based? How do they contradict or complement each other?

The differences between discourses on women and peacebuilding depicts a research puzzle which is worth examining. It is interesting to consider whether there are differences in discourses on women and peacebuilding, what they entail and moreover, if this might affect fieldwork and the targeted women on the ground. Interpretations or framing of a post-conflict situation can have great implications on the effectiveness of future peace processes. Autesserre (2009) conducted extensive research on why international peacebuilders continue to fail to address the local causes of peace process failures in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Her research demonstrates that "discursive frames shape international intervention and preclude

international action on local violence"(p.249, 2009). Hence, discourses shape the manner in which peacebuilding operations are conducted. A discourse, as Gasper and Apthorpe state is the "ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categories through which meaning is given to phenomena" (Gasper and Apthorpe, 1996, p.2). A discourse is, therefore, a set of instruments that shape how one perceives the world around them. It is therefore utterly necessary that the international discourse aligns with local discourses. A discrepancy in discourses would fail to address local needs and challenges in peacebuilding efforts. Therefore, the central research question of this thesis is:

"What are the disparities in discourses on women and peacebuilding in Colombia?"

To answer this main question, I will look into several sub-questions:

- How do different actors talk about peacebuilding when referring to women in Colombia?
- What do they consider to be the role of women in this process?
- How do these discourses contrast or complement each other?
- What are the needs of local women?
- Are potential differences in discourses hindering the peacebuilding process or is it a logical division?

To fully grasp the different discourses on women and peacebuilding, I apply a qualitative content analysis: it analyses literature on the development of the narratives and practices that surround peacebuilding since the end of the Cold War, to present different streams of thought and ideas. In the qualitative content analysis, I also present the current discourse on women and peacebuilding and its criticisms. Furthermore, research for the case study was conducted by using the participant observation approach through meetings with international donors and agencies. The data is further completed by interviews conducted with local young women in the field, who already participated in a peacebuilding project with a local peacebuilding organisation. The interviews will provide insights on educated local young women who are still planning their future and who want to incorporate peacebuilding efforts into their adult lives at some point. These interviews will demonstrate whether the reviewed discourses (by

intergovernmental, international and local organisations working with these women align) with the women's own local discourse. Finally, I will provide the reader with a concluding discussion on the topic, opening up possible areas for further investigation.

1.1 Scientific relevance.

Current and past literature surrounding peacebuilding is extensive and complex, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter. Research in the name of improving the processes of peacebuilding, with the aim for a better society, for establishing peace, and for improving human rights, is an ongoing process in which both scholars and the international community continue to look for the right approach.

During my time in Colombia, working with the organisation, through talks with international donors and simply observing, I noticed that the concept of peacebuilding shifts in meaning. It is used with different adjectives, just as is done in academic literature. This made me curious to evaluate what women and peacebuilding means for the case of Colombia. Following Autesserre's (2009) research on framing conflict and post-conflict in the Congo, this research conducts its own smaller case study on discourses and peacebuilding specified on the case of Colombia and Colombian women. In doing so, it investigates whether Autesserre's claim is applicable in other case studies and whether it contributes to the debate on the necessity for correctly framing a post-conflict situation before addressing it.

The narratives and the consequential processes in the new post-conflict era in Colombia could be instrumental in the implementation of the agreements where discourse influences the practice. There is a difference in approach within the different discourses: when discourse surrounding women is non-existent, when the discourse does involve women in the process but in the role of victims who need aid, when the discourse considers women to be actors of the conflict who should be tried for their crimes, or even when the discourse considers women to be equal actors in their societies. The discourse of an actor such as UNOCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), who serves as an advocate and advisor, could potentially influence the course of action in the process of peacebuilding for women in Colombia. Local organisation CIASE (Corporación de Investigación y. Acción Social y

Económica) is likewise involved in many governmental committees, and their discourse on women and peacebuilding is directly expressed in government through their local representation (CIASE, 2018). It is therefore relevant to evaluate and contrast these discourses as to contribute to the debate on the effect of peacebuilding discourses on practices in the early stages of a possibly lengthy peacebuilding process, and also to contribute to the greater debate on discourses concerning women and peacebuilding.

1.2 Societal relevance.

Highlighting the different discourses used in the academic field of peacebuilding and the international community, and by using the narratives of the women targeted in the field could lead to contributing to future discussions on how to bridge possible gaps between how non-profit organisation currently target local women in Colombia and what these local women need. Moreover, an overview of the current practices and the feedback from the targeted groups could provide future motives from local organisations to present to international donors and to explain the needs of the women targeted in peacebuilding projects. Through researching and presenting these findings, a clearer image of peacebuilding practices - and needs - presents itself. Hence, future processes or projects in Colombia, or elsewhere, might benefit from such information when establishing new peacebuilding projects with the intention of being more efficient and effective. Understanding how discrepancies in discourses might affect the process of peacebuilding hopefully helps to better it for the future.

This research will identify discourses on women and peacebuilding by different actors involved in the peacebuilding process in Colombia, including the targeted group. By highlighting potential differences in discourses, this research aims to contribute to a better understanding of different perceptions and to provide a clear image of what is relevant for local women in Colombia. This will help to establish more effective peacebuilding interventions.

II. State of the art

As mentioned briefly in the former chapter, the last decades have seen considerable development in the field of state and peacebuilding in post-conflict regions or countries, starting with the leftovers of fragmented state prone to conflict at the end of the Cold War. This development has triggered a substantial amount of literature in the field of state-building, community building, peacebuilding and other sorts of researches aiming to build a strong society and state free of conflict (Paris, 2010; Abiew, 2012; Chandler, 2010; Herbst, 2003; Weinstein, 2005)

To clarify as to how different discourses concerning women and peacebuilding are presented in Colombia, it is necessary to explore the existing body of literature. Consequently, this chapter is devoted to the discussions within some of the main debates on peacebuilding. First, it elaborates on the narratives and literature that emerged after the Cold War and the dissolution of the eastern bloc, leaving many fragmented and undefined states open for any type of conflict. Second, it will demonstrate the criticisms that emerged on the type of peacebuilding from that era. Third, it will present several different models of peacebuilding. Lastly, it will describe a more specific area of peacebuilding relevant to this thesis: the development of the concept of women and peacebuilding, and the criticisms this has received.

2.1. Democracy is the answer.

In order to understand the discourses and practices concerning peacebuilding after the Cold War, it is essential to grasp the shift in conflict that occurred first. Before the 1990s and Cold War-era, conflict was perceived and handled differently. There was a clear division between two blocks and their respective powers. Any type of conflict that occurred in the eastern bloc was perceived as a rebellion against the communist system, rather than an as internal conflict with their endogenous reasons (van Leeuwen, 2016).

In the years following the dissolution of the Soviet Empire, the world witnessed a pivotal change in the global system when fifteen new states were presented with the complicated assignment of state-building (Wallensteen & Axell, 1993). As a result,

ethnic and nationalist sentiments that were formerly suppressed under the communist system emerged ever so abundantly (Kaplan, 1994).

A similar shift in war and armed conflict developed simultaneously. In the four years after the Cold War alone, between 1989 and 1992, a total of 82 conflicts were recorded as being armed conflicts. In quantitative research conducted by Wallensteen and Axell, the biggest shift in these 82 conflicts is the increase towards "minor armed conflicts, i.e. armed conflicts which have resulted in less than 1000 battle-related deaths during the course of the conflict" (Wallensteen and Axell, p.332, 1993). These conflicts resulted in more civilian deaths than any conflict before. Not only did the Eurasian continent experience new types of conflict, the African continent experienced additionally a wave in conflict under new forms and shapes in the decade following the end of the Cold War. To name a few; the two civil wars of the Republic of the Congo, respectively in 1993-1994 and 1997-1999; The Rwandan Civil War (and genocide) from 1990-1994, and the Liberian Civil Wars from 1989-1996 and from 1999 to 2003. The plurality of wars in the 1990s was therefore distinctive for the disintegration of the state institutions, with states sometimes taking part in violence against its citizens and without any control over groups of organised crime (Kaldor 2000). As a consequence, most peacebuilding operations were deployed in states or regions recently emerging from civil wars (Paris, 2002).

The aforementioned launch of the UN Agenda for Peace by Boutros Boutros Ghali in 1992 is often seen as the starting point of the debate and the development of the narrative on peacebuilding post-Cold War. The Agenda for Peace expresses the need for democracy after the fall of authoritarian regimes and claims that "many States are seeking more open forms of economic policy, creating a worldwide sense of dynamism and movement" (Agenda for Peace, 1992). It was widely believed by scholars and the international community that these wars occurred due to the collapsing of weak states, or due to the non existence of strong state structures, thus allowing an open field for the strongest party to take control. Kaplan portrayed state failure in Africa as portending a "coming anarchy" that would engulf much of the post-Cold War developing world (Kaplan, 1994). A frequently used example in this theory is Afghanistan, where after the retreat of the Soviet Union, the Taliban seized power and exercised control over the area (Richards & Helander, 2005) (Hallpike, Ferguson & Whitehead, 1994).

Additional to the belief that these failed states would pose a threat to their citizens or direct state neighbours, the international community was also convinced this would pose an international threat to their own security (Stewart, 2011). It was often argued that democracies would not go to war with each other (Weede, 1984; Oneal and Russett, 1999; Doyle, 2005).

As a result of this international discourse on peacebuilding and failed states, most peacebuilding operations deployed in war-torn states were not only based on managing conflicts through diplomacy and peacekeeping missions but also aimed to lay the groundwork for stable and strong states (Stewart et al, 2011). This meant regular and fair elections, strong state institutions, a liberal and open market as the main driver for development, an incorrupt judiciary system and respect for civil and political rights, amongst others. In practice, this translated to missions from the UN such as overseeing elections Angola in 1992, the plans for economic liberalisation in the Dayton Accords in Bosnia Herzegovina in 2005, or organising elections in Cambodia in 1993 (Paris, 2010).

In this discourse of failed states, the concept of strengthening civil society arose. A strong civil society would function as a check and balance system for building a democratic government. As van Leeuwen et al state "peacebuilding discourses emerging over that period thus emphasized the important role of civil society in contributing to (liberal) peace"(van Leeuwen et al, 2012, p.297).

The concept of 'fragile states', as witnessed in the 1990's, slightly faded after criticism emerged due to the resurgence of conflicts, which will be reviewed in-depth in the next subchapter. However, it revived after the 9/11 attacks when debates on failed states and international security found a new stage. Fragile or failed states now became the centre of attention of, mostly, the United States and its national security as "they were perceived to be the breeding grounds for terrorism" (ibid). The Bush administration therefore justified the invasions in Iraq and Afghanistan as to provide democracy, overthrowing its oppressive regime. In doing so, "elections, market-oriented economic adjustment and institution-building were central to the US plan in Iraq and also part of the standard formula for UN-mandated peace operations" (Paris, 2010, p.345). Peacebuilding, quickly became a component of 'state-building'.

A large and trending discourse in peacebuilding both the 1990s as well as post 9/11 was centred upon the ideology that failed or weak states would pose an

international security threat and therefore needed basic democratic and liberal elements as to maintain their peace and to prevent entering into war with other states. Therefore, many peace operations from that time following this discourse were centred around doing exactly that: bringing democracy and opening the economic market to the world.

2.2. Criticism on the 'Liberal Peacebuilder'.

In the beginning of the 2000's, a new discourse on peacebuilding emerged. Peacebuilding efforts were not as successful as hoped, with in some cases heavy resumes of fighting such as in Angola in 1992 (Paris, 2010). This caused the international academic community to evaluate the ideology and practices of peacebuilding efforts. In this subsection I will present the criticisms of Mac Ginty (2008), Paris (2005) and Abiew (2012) as they are complete and well-explained articles on the shortcomings of liberal peacebuilding following post 9/11 interventions. However, multiple authors have written about their concerns on liberal peacebuilding using similar arguments such as Chandler (2010), Cooper, Turner and Pugh (2011) or Barnett, Fang and Zurcher (2014).

The main and overarching argument is that the practices of peacebuilding are liberal and designed from a western perspective for mostly non-western countries. Author Roger Mac Ginty (2008) highlights that the sustainability of most of these projects was short term and that it needed longer or more effective interventions in the long run. He further claimed that in the case of liberal peacebuilding, its assumed superiority is rarely questioned in the form of evaluating other forms of peace-making. The liberal peacebuilding model is so standardised in its format, that there is no space for alternative models. Furthermore, in the field of liberal peacebuilding, the peacebuilding model is "not just a framework, it is also a mechanism for the transmission of western specific ideas and practices whereby its local agents are not merely compelled to receive, they must also transmit" (Mac Ginty, 2008, p.144). In essence, according to Mac Ginty, non-western societies are now not only compelled to receive aid in the form of liberal peacebuilding but should also construct their communities in this form and reproduce its values.

Roland Paris' critique on liberal peacebuilding compares the current practices of liberal peacebuilding to the *mission civilisatrice* during colonial times when it was the duty of imperial powers to bring civilisation to the uncivilised communities of its colonies. According to Paris, the organisation involved in the practices of liberal peacebuilding have western and liberal political values, whilst most of the countries who are receiving their peacebuilding efforts are situated in "poor and politically weak periphery" (Paris, 2002, p.638). Furthermore, Paris concurs with Mac Ginty in the sense that he acknowledges the belief by liberal peacebuilders that only one model of domestic governance, that of liberal market democracy, is felt to be superior to others.

Paris continues to make four claims about how liberal peacebuilders are currently involved in the liberal peacebuilding process. First, he argues, external peacebuilders have helped shape the contents of peace agreements. By being involved in this process early on, they have a big influence on how the state should organise itself and how peacebuilding should be conducted (Paris, 2002). Second, peacebuilders assume the role of experts, giving advice to local parties during the implementation of these peace agreements. Paris uses the argument of Namibia to illustrate his point. In Namibia, country officials had the task of drafting a new constitution. Officials from the UN served as experts in helping them draft the document. However, they pushed for "specific language emphasising free and fair elections, civil liberties, judicial independence and due process" (Paris, p.644, 2002). Third, international agencies often pose certain conditionalities for providing economic aid. Both the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank have requested states to "undertake market-oriented reforms, including the privatisation of state-owned enterprises, the lowering of government subsidies, removal of wage and price controls, and the lifting of regulatory controls and barriers to foreign goods and investment" (ibid). Paris uses the example of Cambodia to illustrate his case, where even though its peace agreement did not include any market reform, the IMF and World Bank requested Cambodia to put a market reform in place after the signing of the treaty, which the new government did. Fourth, Paris accuses peacebuilders to assume roles of proxy governances, standing in when local authorities cannot perform the governmental tasks themselves. As to illustrate his claim, Paris makes use of the case of Kosovo where in 1999 the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) was involved in many aspects of

the rebuilding of the state. They "control local government, conduct economic policymaking, register motor vehicles, and even issue postage stamps"(p.645). The state was run by external liberal actors, rather than it being designed and run by local authorities.

The criticism on the liberal peacebuilder marks a shift in discourses concerning peacebuilding. It demonstrates that due to the discourse being too liberal and western-oriented, the consequential peacebuilding practices are similarly western and liberal, based on the construction and control of democracies rather than exploring different models. Most of the previously reviewed criticism is based on the practices of intergovernmental organisations such as the UN or the OSCE. Additionally, the critical discourse on the practice of peacebuilding by NGO's is also discussed. Both Paris and Mac Ginty argue that NGOs are similarly involved in liberal peacebuilding even though they "may be expected to act as a critical bulwark against the liberal peace framework, have been co-opted as agents of the liberal peace" (Mac Ginty, 2008, p.144). In fact, many NGOs have been involved in the transformation of post-conflict areas into liberal economic markets (Paris, 2002). Paris continues to argue that "the most radical part of the NGO discourse is their emphasis on grassroots participation. This terminology is always to be understood entirely within Western preconceptions of social, political and economic organisation." (Paris, p. 640, 2002).

Francis Kofi Abiew offers a complementary view on the role of NGOs in the critical discourse on peacebuilding. The author's main argument is that NGOs are suffering because western governments, in particular the United States, are making NGOs part of their agendas. The incorporation of NGO's into political and economic agendas of western nations has great implications for the validity of their discourses and efforts. Abiew continues to explain that this is clearly shown through a significant rise in the attacks on humanitarian aid workers, a breach of the international humanitarian law and Geneva Conventions. These attacks occur due to the issue that combatants do not view NGOs as neutral any longer, but as an extension of external intervening powers. Abiew continues his article by explaining how this shift in perception about humanitarian workers occurred. Along the many peace operations by intergovernmental organisations in the 1990s, humanitarianism experienced a likewise transformation. In fact, the "humanitarian sector became bureaucratized and

professionalized with the development of doctrines, specialized areas of training and career paths" (Abiew, p.207, 2012). As a consequence, the aim of both international interventions and humanitarian aid were mainstreamed into common objectives, namely "that of peace-making, peace-maintaining or peacebuilding and establishing security based on justice, democracy and sustainable development"(ibid). Governments and international agencies started to perceive humanitarian organisations and workers as partners in their efforts to bring peace to conflict or post conflict areas. The example Abiew gives to illustrate this is that of Iraq and Afghanistan. The announcement of the invasion of both countries by the United States was paired with an announcement that humanitarian agencies would be working closely with the government as to bring peace. This approach does not only put local humanitarian workers in danger, it also diminishes the neutrality of any aid organisation, an essential component of their *modus operandi*. NGO's are therefore perceived as another tool instead of a neutral aid relieving agency of western organisations and governments to control developing societies.

In this section, the dominant critical discourses on liberal peacebuilding were briefly reviewed, with the main argument that many peacebuilding practices are too liberal, too western, without any room for alternative practices. The criticism calls out for a system with alternative ideas and concepts. The risk of a predominantly liberal discourse in the field of peacebuilding translates to practices that might not fit local customs or needs. It is therefore, once more, highly important to evaluate current discourses as to understand its influence on peacebuilding practices. This will be done in this research for the case of Colombia in the field of women and peacebuilding.

2.3. Calling for alternative models of peacebuilding.

The previous section presented the critical discourse on peacebuilding, namely it being too liberal. With this discourse on criticism came a call for alternative models of peacebuilding that would be more fitting or different from the liberal practices. The following section will present several suggestions for alternative models in peacebuilding as presenting all would be too extensive.

Herbst (2003) and Weinstein (2005) both offer one the most straightforward solutions to the challenges of modern peacebuilding and oppose the very idea of intervention by international missions in war-torn regions or countries. According to Herbst, it would be best to 'let states fail' as it would allow new political authorities to emerge through the process of negotiation without any outside aid (Herbst, 2003). Weinstein respectively, shares this view and believes a strategy of autonomous recovery would allow states to "achieve a lasting peace, a systematic reduction in violence, and post-war political and economic development in the absence of international intervention" (Weinstein, p.5, 2005). Both authors construct their discourse on the perception that current peacebuilding efforts are unlikely to succeed due to its validity and that in this manner, one creates a peace that lasts longer.

Mac Ginty, presenting not only his critique, also offers an alternative model of liberal peacebuilding, namely the incorporation of indigenous peacebuilding. As conflict is often "culturally located, then it is sensible that attempts to ameliorate and manage conflict are respectful of culture" (Mac Ginty, p.141, 2008). ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution) is a product of this discourse and has gained much attention. It respects the qualities found in indigenous practices of reconciliation and highlights the importance of local practices rather than intervening external parties having a monopoly in the peacebuilding practices. Much of the indigenous and traditional approaches "placed an emphasis on dialogue, social justice and conflict transformation (rather than resolution)" (ibid, p.142). However, arguing for the incorporation of indigenous practices in peacebuilding, Mac Ginty also warns for the total application of indigenous practices as they might enforce certain authorities who are causing harm, or who fail to include women. The authors therefore loosely conclude that a combination of both indigenous and international practices is recommended (Mac Ginty, 2008).

Michael Barnett argues that a much-needed alternative for the liberal peace model is the 'Republican' approach to peacebuilding (Barnett et al, 2006). The Republican approach to peacebuilding should not be confused with the political Republican party. Republicanism in this sense can be translated to a representative democracy, in which all nations would be Republics and all citizens would have a right to vote for issues such as going to war. According to Barnett, Republicanism offers a space of deliberation and discussion amongst members of societies. It would encourage

"the individuals to consider the views of others, generalize their positions to widen their appeal, find a common language, articulate common ends, demonstrate some detachment from the self, and subordinate the personal to the community"(Barnett, et al, p.96, 2006). This type of peacebuilding would allow a certain stability and create a legitimate state restrained in its power due to the high influence of its citizens in the decision-making.

Van Leeuwen, Verkoren and Boedeltje share much of the criticism on liberal peacebuilding, however their argument states that much of the current criticism is not so much based upon the idea of liberal peace, but "the manner in which it is pursued" (van Leeuwen et al, p. 293, 2012). The authors claim that the explanation for the scarcity of alternative models in the field of peacebuilding is due to its difficulty in finding a different approach due to the dominance of the liberal peacebuilding discourse. Therefore, they propose that one should stop searching for a single answer to all, the utopia, but rather should open up the possibility of alternative options and ideologies that they name, in the spirit of Foucault, 'heterotopias'.

Heterotopias they claim, can "be regarded as spaces of difference and otherness"(ibid, p. 308). Where Utopia is a desired outcome and is never real, heterotopias are real places in society that offer an alternative or complementary outlook on the liberal peacebuilding discourse and can take multiple forms and shapes.

In this section, following the critique on the liberal peacebuilding strategies, I reviewed some discourses on alternative models on peacebuilding. These models aim to step away from current liberal peacebuilding practices and offer different strategies on how to make peacebuilding less liberal but also more effective and lasting. Following the critiques on liberal peacebuilding and the suggestion of alternative models, the consecutive section will discuss the development of another type of discourse in the field of peacebuilding, namely that of the involvement of women in the field of peacebuilding.

2.4. "Men make war, women make peace."

The discourse on women as effective local peacebuilders has several components. First, it is based on the experiences of armed conflict affecting women and girls differently, which should deserve proper care and attention. Second, it presents women as natural peacebuilders due to their social roles and their biological capacity for maternity (Goetz and Jenkins, 2015; Guhathakurta, 2004; UNWomen, 2015).

With the new wave of conflict in the 1990's, new courses on conducting war developed simultaneously. Rather than having opposing armies fight each other on a battlefield, most armed conflict now happened in the heart of communities amongst civilians. As women are perceived to be "the preservers of the bloodline" (Goetz and Jenkins, p.215, 2015), so does their vulnerability to conflict related sexual violence becomes apparent.

Sexual violence in the context of conflict has been on policy agendas as to prevent it as well as recognise it as an official tactic of war. A paper by the World Peace Foundation identifies seven categories of violence against women during armed conflict:

1. *Male exchanges through violence toward women and girls.*

Much of the violence against women and girls during armed conflict concerns men who communicate with other men, about their masculinity (and the presence or absence of masculine skills of other men). Gang rape is a specific instance of how men challenge each other's 'manhood' (Mazurana and Proctor, 2015).

2. *Symbolism of gender and punishment of Women's transgression.*

When the sexual purity of females and girls defines the honour and integrity of social groups, the breach of their bodies by external forces acts as a direct assault on and 'staining' of the whole community. Men who fail to safeguard their females and girls have failed in their male responsibilities and are more likely to try to avenge this by subjecting females to the same in the opposing society (ibid).

3. *Sexual harm, torture or mutilation.*

Much reported sexual violence has instrumental aims — terrorising, subjugating and demoralising females and their groups and, punishing females (or members of their masculine family) for political or independent activity (ibid).

4. Targeting mothering.

Various types of coercion and infringement of reproduction are part of many modern disputes. Among the types of reproductive abuse reported in conflict situations are compelled pregnancy, forced abortion or sterilisation, and compelled cohabitation/'marriage' with the almost inevitable consequence of pregnancy (ibid).

5. Women, productive labour and property.

Women are key to the workforce: they are vital to their families and communities' survival and well-being. Women also own and regulate assets and resources, and in many local economies they are a major force. However, they often do not enjoy the same control over land and wealth as men of a similar class because of law, custom and/or faith. Violent conflicts that interrupt and transform traditional divisions of labour, authority and ownership, or require displacement or relocation, often lead to drastic economic losses for women, or to women's incapacity to assert their rights and access to land (ibid).

6. Women and social capital

Women are indispensable when it comes to maintaining a communal order, both materially and socially. This is done through work, the maintenance of daily cooperative interactions, and social networks. "This makes women prime targets during conflict, where the goal is the disruption of social arrangements, activities, and institutions that give people a sense of belonging and meaning is served by targeting women for killing, social disgrace, and communal exclusion." (Mazurana and Proctor, p.7, 2015)

7. Gender multipliers of violence.

The various dimensions of the hardship experienced by women and girls — physical, psychological, spiritual, financial, social, and cultural — and their already marginalized position in families and communities mean that some severe crimes effectively make women and girls more exposed to successive violations and/or abuses of human rights.

The way women experience conflict is different than men. They are often targeted sexually and/or emotionally. This targeting correlates with their perceived value by opposing parties. By targeting women, warring parties hope to break opposing societies. This implies women are the heart and core of most communities. This is relevant for the discourse on women and peacebuilding. If women are the vulnerable

heart and core during conflict, they can possibly become the heart and core of a peacebuilding community.

In light of the multiple and severe implications armed conflict can have on local women, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325. This Resolution not only acknowledged the impact of armed conflict on women, but also calls for the women's participation in peace negotiations and post conflict reconstruction. Besides from being perceived as targets of war or as victims, the discourse on including women in the efforts of peacebuilding has with and since Resolution 1325 gained popularity.

In building peace practices, both scholars and the international community stepped away from the traditional notions of building peace from a top down approach, reviewed earlier. Rather, it is argued, in order to build a lasting and stable peace, it should be built from society, and the communities itself (Mazurana and Proctor quoting Maha Abud Dayyeh Shamas, 2013). In these local (war-torn) communities, women are considered to be key actors in building peace. This consideration is based on the notion that women are considered to make ideal peacebuilders due to their social and biological roles as nurturers for both their families and communities (Guhathakurta, 2004). Women are considered to be not only living within conflict zones, but to also be the ones that cope with the ramifications of conflict on a regular basis. Ranging from fragile to inexistent health and education systems, to assisting one another in displaced and refugee camps, to reacting to the horrors and the daily drain of violence. (Mazurana and Proctor, 2013, Khodary, 2016). Furthermore, in areas of conflict between ethnic groups or opposing parties of any kind, women have been noted to create alliances with other women from 'opposing parties'. This is based on the starting point that being a woman in the centre of conflict is a better basis for collective identity than the ideologies that separate them (Khodary, 2016). This demonstrates that women's peace activism continues to emphasize the significance of gender as a starting point for collective identity, with both parties agree that being women are the most significant factor in deciding on shared values (Cockburn, 2014).

Several successful case studies reinforce and confirm the added value of involving women in peacebuilding efforts. In Liberia, a group of women released a campaign that called for peace and non-violence and created the Liberia Women's Initiative (LWI). Its leader, Leymah Gbowee stated that they were tired of the killings,

rapes, dehumanisation and being infected with diseases (Leymah Gbowee, 2003). The LWI played a decisive role in arranging talks with the rebel leaders and speeding up the disarmament process. It proved to be vital in bringing about the beginning of a peace process in the first place, eventually even earning them the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 (Bekoe & Parajon, 2007).

In a similar context the *Four Mothers Movement*, consisting mostly of soldiers' family members, successfully fought for ending Israel's war in Lebanon (Lieberfeld, 2009). This further argues that women have played a crucial role in crafting agreements which reflect the concerns of more vulnerable and marginalised parts of the population. Other examples of this can be found in El Salvador, Northern Ireland, the Philippines and South Africa (Bouvier, 2013).

Even though there is an overwhelming amount of evidence about the perks of including women into peacebuilding efforts, both in literature and grassroots practices (Goetz and Jenkins, 2015; Guhathakurta, 2004; UNWomen, 2015; Mazurana and Proctor, 2015; Lieberfeld, 2009; Bouvier 2013) realities show that there continues to be a low proportion of involvement of women in peace negotiations. "Between 1992 and 2018, women constituted 13 percent of negotiators, 3 percent of mediators and only 4 percent of signatories in major peace processes" (Kumalo, 2015) Furthermore, there appears to be a continuous lack of funding in the fields of advancing gender equality. The consequence of this is that there is little attention to the situation of women in post-conflict situations (ibid). Author Karam argues that due to the victimisation of women in post conflict situations, their possible strength in peacebuilding efforts is overlooked, and hence they are excluded from the negotiation process and the implementation (Karam, 2000).

As the peace treaty in Colombia was recently signed at the moment of my research, there is little previous academic literature to be found on discourses concerning women and peacebuilding in Colombia. Julieta Lemaitre (2016) wrote an extensive article on the discourses of internally displaced women in Colombia, focussing on how they rebuild their lives after displacement. Lemaitre questions the "limitations of transitional justice regimes and peacebuilding efforts that ignore concerns with the loss of moral agency and community during civil war as well as the role of ordinary ethics in peacebuilding at

the grassroots" (Lemaitre, 2016, p.545). The author claims that in order for grassroots reconstruction to have its effect, the state should first address the needs of victims and survivors of war. Lemaitre conducted her research between 2010 and 2013, seven to four years before this research. It is therefore relevant and interesting will to analyse whether her findings are still relevant. It will reveal whether the discourse of rehabilitation is one that is missing from the current discourses, or if it has been adopted since.

In this chapter, I presented and reviewed academic discourses concerning several aspects of peacebuilding. Initially, after the dissolution of the Soviet Bloc, creating democracies was perceived to be a solution to many state failures and internal conflicts (Wallensteen & Axell, 1993; Kaplan, 1994; Kaldor, 2000; Paris, 2012). However, after much of these efforts failed to produce democracies and prevent conflict, researchers dove into presenting the shortcomings of this particular discourse. The discourse, according to its critics, was considered too liberal, with little room for alternative practices. Furthermore, it seemed to be posed upon by western states involved in peacebuilding efforts in these states (Paris, 2002; MacGinty, 2008; Abiew, 2012; Chandler, 2010). The call for alternative models produced several ideas presented previously, such as heterotopias or the inclusion of indigenous practices (van Leeuwen et al, 2012; MacGinty 2008). With the stream of discourses on alternative approaches, the discourse on women and peacebuilding simultaneously emerged. In this discourse, women were presented as particular victims of armed conflict, experiencing conflict in their communities different than men. Women are also presented as ideal peacemakers due to their caring nature and their ability for mediation. Several successful case studies were presented in which women originated or contributed very effectively to a lasting peace (Goetz and Jenkins, 2015; Guhathakurta, 2004; Mazurana and Proctor, 2015). Finally, I reviewed an article on the discourse of women and peacebuilding in Colombia, zooming in on the case study. Lemaitre (2016) claims that for grassroots peacebuilding to have effect in Colombia, the needs of female survivors of war and internally displaced should first be addressed.

III. Research Methodology & Case Selection

This chapter will give an overview of the different methods used during this research. It will explain the choice of the methods used, to gain a better understanding of the research question: "what are the disparities in discourses on women and peacebuilding in Colombia?". The following paragraph will provide the reader with an explanation and justification of the decision to use a qualitative ethnographic case study approach with participant observation and several interviews; an insight into the data collection process; and an overview of the analytical methods applied for this particular research.

3.1. Qualitative research

The following paragraph provides the reader with a better understanding of the definition of qualitative research, the advantages in using its methods and the limitations it could possess whilst conducting research. Moreover, it will explain the motivations for choosing a qualitative research approach to best answer the research question.

Academic research is dominated by two streams of conducting research: quantitative and qualitative research. Research following the quantitative approach is often used to generalise its results from a large sample, such as a section of the population in the form of an ethnic or age group for example. It is the empirical investigation of phenomena using statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques. The objective of using quantitative research and analysis is to develop hypotheses, mathematical models or theories. It is often expressed in the form of statistics or percentages (Given, 2008).

Qualitative research presents data in a more descriptive form. The samples in qualitative analysis are therefore considerably smaller, but they do give precious insights into details that would otherwise not have been expressed. With this background and detailed information, they also open up the debate about the problem. Understandably, the collection of data is different from that of quantitative research as it wants to discover the *how* and *why* phenomena or situation occur. The responses are more descriptive as a result (Ghoris, 2007).

To best answer the research problem, I chose to use a qualitative research approach. Being interested in how these discourses differed from one another, qualitative research would be most fitting as I wanted to understand *how* one understands women and peacebuilding in Colombia and constructs a consequential discourse. Furthermore, qualitative research provided me with the liberty to have an open-ended view that could be adapted due to unforeseen circumstances when conducting fieldwork, which proved to be the case. Before going to Colombia, I had some prior knowledge about the country, the conflict, the peace treaty, the organisation and more importantly, of peace-building. However, I desired to get more insight in the stories of the women working with the internship organisation, and the women targeted by it, through peacebuilding programs. In quantitative research and analysis, there would be less room for rich backstories or for understanding certain insights. To reduce the stories of the women I met to a statistical analysis and numbers was not in my desire and would not benefit the research. Moreover, realistically, the big sample a quantitative research requires would have proven to be too difficult to obtain due to limitations such as security restrictions and availability

Ultimately, the biggest gain in conducting qualitative research for me personally, is to hear what these women involved in peacebuilding programs have to say without limiting their stories by quantifying them into data. Assisting to meetings at the highest level such as at the UNOCHA, listening to the narratives around women and peacebuilding, following the NGO's projects, and reading endlessly on the matter made me eager to finally hear what these women thought of all the narratives and how they imagined the subject 'peacebuilder' themselves. Qualitative research made it possible to let them share their stories freely and provided me with rich data and new insights.

3.1.2. Ethnographic research

An additional advantage of conducting qualitative research is the vast amount of different methods that can be employed to conduct research. In the following section an explanation of this qualitative method will be provided for the reader. Additionally, a claim on why this method was the most fitting for the research will follow.

Qualitative research employing an ethnographic method is most often used in the fields of anthropology and social studies. Ethnography is the study of cultural

phenomena from the point of view of the subject in the researched group (LeCompte Schensul, 1999). Ethnographers gather their information, or data, through interactions with the people they study. This is not always a given, as will be revealed in the section on participant observation and limitations within this research. Data is usually collected in the field, through ethnographic fieldwork in the midst of the subjects studied. It requires a researcher that continuously adapts and shifts in focus due to the change in surroundings or expectations.

Personally, I believed that this type of research was the best fitting for the direction of research I wanted to conduct. Before I left for Colombia, I knew I wanted to do research in the field of women and peacebuilding, but the exact research question came much later. It was necessary for me to go to the source as to see and understand for myself what it was that I felt was necessary to research. There is much literature to be found on women and peacebuilding, however, they all have been written in other times and places as previously reviewed in the chapter on state of the art. The newly signed peace treaty in Colombia would mark a new era in peacebuilding and that there was much more to find than has been documented before. This case, as reviewed before, is quite particular when it comes to the role of women in the post conflict setting. Women have been fighting within the conflict, but also greatly suffered from it. Furthermore, they have been highly involved in the peace negotiations after they noticed they were not represented.

Colombia is a specific case study and the discourses concerning women as peacebuilders in Colombia might be different than other case studies could produce. However, this does not mean that this research is fruitless. It contributes to the debate on discourses in peacebuilding and, through highlighting different discourses, reveals consequences for intervening practices. That does not mean the results of this research could apply for women in, Morocco or Sudan, to name some examples, but there could indeed be similarities. This research will therefore pave the ground for further investigation in overlapping specificities in this particular area.

3.1.3. Discourse Analysis

This thesis aims to explore and understand different discourses in Colombia in the field of women and peacebuilding. In the previous chapter, I reviewed the different discourses that dominate past and current literature on peacebuilding, and on women and peacebuilding. Before moving on to the analysis of the discourses of the specific case study, I will answer the question: what is a discourse, and why do I use it?

A discourse, as Gasper and Apthorpe (1996) state, is the "ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categories through which meaning is given to phenomena" (Gasper and Apthorpe, 1996, p.2). A discourse is therefore a set of instruments that shape how one perceives the world around them. However, apart from it being a manner in which we talk about certain ideas, it is also a social practice and a tool (van Leeuwen, 2016). A discourse can have the power to canalise ideas and perceptions and even justify actions in the advantage of the ones that use it. Negative discourses surrounding racism for example perceive the world to be better off with less coloured people. The discourse is the perception that there is a certain superiority to the white race. However, it ignores the discourse on science or any other type of evidence proving the contrary, thus mainstreaming the discourse and legitimising it.

In the field of development, multiple authors have explored the influence of discourses (Hobart, 1993; Escobar 1995; Fairhead 2000 in van Leeuwen, 2016). Hobart, as many authors reviewed before, identifies how the dominant discourse of development from western countries and organisations overshadow local practices and discourses. Analysing different discourses can therefore provide precious insights into case studies. Understanding how different organisations operating in Colombia make sense of the post conflict situation and the women operating in it, and how they frame their discourses, makes us understand better what the course of practices are that follow these discourses.

3.1.4 Case studies

This thesis makes use of a (qualitative ethnographic) case study to best answer the research question posed. In the following section, the concept of case studies will be clarified, accompanied by an overview of the advantages and disadvantages when using this type of research. Therefore, I will first argue how a case study was the most suited approach when answering the main research question: "What are the disparities in discourses on women and peacebuilding in Colombia?" Secondly, I will highlight how this research is limited due to the selection of a single case study.

In the field of qualitative research, case studies account for a large portion of the research conducted in medicine, history, social studies, education, and more. Over time, it has developed into a very popular method of qualitative research. The definition by Yin (1984) is one that is most used when defining case study as a type of qualitative research method. He claims that "a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (1984, p.23). Using a case study allows the researcher to really focus on one particular case of observation in its own context, producing a less 'spoiled' examination. The added value of using a case study in research is to answer investigative questions and to find out *how* and *why* things occur the way they do. When researching, and hence answering, the how and why of phenomena, case studies open up the way to developing relevant theories (Meredith, 1998). Multiple case studies in different areas or countries might confirm the same outcome, hence concluding that there is a nation or worldwide phenomenon happening.

With these ideas in mind, I chose to use a case study for the research question and the field I wanted to observe. As I wanted to know how narratives on women and peacebuilding differ, it was best to use a single case study for this particular research. Multiple case studies would have been interesting, but less feasible. Furthermore, wanting to make a contribution to the debate, I believe the research opens up the way for a more intensive study which could use several case studies to compare and to hopefully develop a theory on narratives and practices for women and peacebuilding.

Regrettably, there was only a possibility to research the problem presented in a single case study due to several limitations that will be presented in an upcoming

section. This thesis will therefore present in the concluding chapter suggestions for further research.

3.1.5 Interviews

Interviewing is a qualitative research method which requires “conducting intense individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation” (Boyce & Neale, p.3, 2006).

The advantage of using interviews in research is the ability to gather detailed information about the research problems. In addition, the investigator has immediate control over the process flow in this sort of primary data collection and, if necessary, has the opportunity to clarify certain problems during the process. Disadvantages on the other side, include longer time demands and problems connected with arranging a suitable time for interviews with members of the perspective sample group (Bernard, 2000)

Semi-structured interviews have predetermined questions set by the interviewer. At the same time, the interviewer has space to ask more questions or clarifications as to gain a broader comprehension of the answer. One should have an open mind when conducting interviews and refrain from showing differences in any form when interviewed viewpoints contradict one's own thoughts. In addition, it is necessary to efficiently schedule the timing and environment for interviews. Specifically, interviews need to be conducted in a relaxed environment, free of any forms of pressure for interviewees whatsoever (Bernard, 2000).

3.1.6. Participant observation

A qualitative research method which requires low input and high outcomes is participant observation. As Boeije (2010) states, participant observation “describes what happens, who or what are involved, when and where things happen, how they occur, and why things happen as they do from the point of view of the participants” (Boeije, 2010 p.59). Participant observation, or observational research, is conducted in a natural environment. It is not staged and the observed situation would have occurred even without the researcher's presence, contrary to interviews. With this type of research,

the researcher gets to catch a glimpse into the lives of the group of people researched and gets a more complete and fuller image of its study subjects.

Even though participant observation seems as a quick and simple method of research, there are subtle differences that can affect the collection of data. The role of the researcher is central and essential in the collection of data. There are four types in participant observation that the researcher can assume or simply finds itself due to circumstances. This research used the following two types:

1. *Observer as participant*

In this scenario, the researcher and observer is known by the participant and they have knowledge of the research goals or question of the observer. There is some interaction with the participants, but this is limited. The goal of the observer is to remain as neutral as possible as to limit its influence on the observations (ibid).

2. *Complete participant*

Also referred to as the "spy method". The researcher is fully involved and engages with the participants in all of their activities. This method is sometimes also referred to as 'going native' when conducting research in indigenous societies (ibid).

All of the roles as an observer that I fulfilled were never decided upon beforehand, these came due to circumstances and natural settings. It was never thought out upfront. This is also why they overlap and complement each other. The observer as participant method was used mostly in meetings with international donors and CIASE, or in meetings with fellow NGO's at the UNOCHA headquarters. In these meetings, participants were aware that I was an intern for CIASE and conducting some sort of research on women in Colombia, but I had no real participation in these meetings. I listened, observed body language, took notes, and reviewed the situation over and over in my head. The complete participant observer method was used during the rest of my time. When living, working, shopping, and existing in a city or country, the researchers hat never really comes off. I befriended several colleagues and talked with them outside of work, but also met many other people at the gym, or in stores or even in the shared house I stayed at. All this information through observing proved to be relevant for my research in understanding different discourses, or at least for the understanding of the environments in which my research is embedded.

Personally, I found the participant observation method one of the best approaches for conducting research. Especially when a researcher is unsure of the exact direction of their research, it is a fantastic manner to gather information and observe the discourse that needs to be addressed and highlighted, reveal itself. However, it is an intensive method, where it is necessary to immerse oneself with the participants for a significant period of time at least, and where speaking the language is a large advantage.

3.2 Limits to the research

As in any research in the field, the researcher might find itself in situations out of his or her control, that limits their research. For this thesis, multiple limitations caused the sample of collected data to be much smaller than what was initially set out.

3.2.1. Security.

When planning my research and internship in Bogota, the situation in Colombia was relatively calm. The peace treaty had just been signed six months prior and it became a tourist hotspot. However, due to it being a post-conflict country where small armed groups were still operative, Radboud University required me to sign a security protocol promising I would not conduct research in the zones marked as 'dangerous' by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Because of these security measures, I contacted an agency who helped me find a safe housing situation in a safe neighbourhood in Bogota, with transport waiting for me at arrival.

Before leaving for Colombia, I was not scared or maybe not aware of the security risks in Bogota. My only knowledge of security risks was related to armed guerrilla groups and drug related crimes in tropical forests in areas where I would never go. Of course, I knew about petty crime and robbery, but I did not realise that robbery in Bogota could mean more than just losing your belongings. The constant presence of violent robbery led me to become afraid to leave the house I lived in. Furthermore, I could not tell my family or friends about it, they would urge me to come home.

The constant state of fear led me to work more and more from home, doing research, or sometimes nothing at all. Margriet Goos, my thesis supervisor at the time, was very understanding and helped me in finding ways to manage my stay.

Luckily, I managed to push myself through the situation and lose the constant state of anxiety. Traveling outside of Bogota made me see that there are many areas in the country where you don't constantly have to look over your shoulder and that Colombia is a beautiful country with very friendly people. In retrospect, if I were to do this again, I would move to a neighbourhood that is safer and where I would feel at ease, maybe living with other European interns that would be going through the same. Despite it all, I am glad I stayed and finished the internship.

3.2.2. The organisation

Before leaving for Colombia, the agreement with CIASE was that I would work for them, do research on some issues for them, and that in return they would provide me with information and contacts about the targeted women from their projects so that I could interview them. In terms of security, the organisation was not willing to take any responsibility for my safety. This was quite limiting as I was promised several field trips into more secluded areas where I could possibly interview, which never occurred.

The stance of the director of the organisation, Mrs Salamanca, was unfortunately quite hostile. There were three European interns at the time I was working there. We were very shielded from all of the activities, were called names such as 'Nazis' or 'Conquistadores' (being from Europe). As Mrs Salamanca is a very internationally known advocate for women in Colombia and as she enjoys much status, the entire office culture was set out this way, with everyone following her attitude and no one to question or object her.

At first, I was Mrs Salamanca's personal assistant. This was not really the aforementioned agreement, but I figured that assisting her and thus being able to follow her to all sorts of meetings would pay out for me in the end. Unfortunately, it did not. I was only 'allowed' to assist to meetings at the office with Oxfam and meetings with international donors. I overheard her saying she did not want to be seen with a foreigner in governmental meetings where everyone would be Colombian. Her strong and negative character pushed me into a corner for a long time, until I had 6 weeks left with zero interviews conducted. I threatened to leave the organisation if they would not hold up their end of the agreement, and I finally got my interviews after this.

Looking back on this experience, I should have been more assertive and should have stood up for myself earlier on. I did try and search for other organisations that could help me, asked around if they could introduce me to women I could interview but either I did not get a straight reply or they simply wouldn't help me as they already had enough volunteers or interns. Furthermore, I was continuously kept on a leash by CIASE. Every week they would promise me interviews, meetings or other interesting things, and there was always a reason why it fell through or why I could not assist.

3.2.3. Physical boundaries

This is an obvious limitation. However, one that should be mentioned and acknowledged. Aside from security, Colombia is quite hard to navigate. The bigger cities such as Medellin and Cali or Cartagena are relatively easy to get to by plane, but anything in between takes a very long time. The country is very large and more often there is only one road that is not in the best condition. Getting from Bogota to Villa de Leyva takes over 4,5 hours for just 165 km. These physical boundaries make it hard to conduct interviews in several locations for the sake of comparison.

3.2.4 Limitations to the research design

The current research design presents some challenges and biases. First, the semi-structured interviews provided me with interesting and rich background stories of the interviewees. However, it is time consuming and I experienced it to be exhausting at times. Both sets of interviews in Bogota and Villa de Leyva were done in a matter of several hours on the same days. For me, it was hard to focus after the third interview and still be as alert for moments to jump in the conversation and ask more questions about a topic. For the quality of the interviews, I would therefore suggest spreading the interviews out over several days or use structured interviews to have more guidance.

Second, the participant observation methods can be perceived as methods of data collection that occurred involuntarily. Especially the complete participant methods is somewhat biased. One could wonder how ethical it is if subjects are used as data without their knowledge. For my particular research, everyone in my direct

environment was aware of my purpose in Colombia, that I was doing fieldwork and looking for sources of discourse on women and peacebuilding.

Third, the limitations in terms of physical and emotional directly limited the collection of data for this research. Many of these limitations were outside of my control, but I believe that without these limitations I would have been able not only to collect more data, but also gain even more insight in different discourses on women and peacebuilding in other parts of Colombia.

IV. Discourses on women and peacebuilding in Colombia

In Chapter II, I presented and discussed the changing discourse in the field of peacebuilding in literature. The following chapter is an analysis of the different discourses from an intergovernmental, international, local organisations present during my internship. It is also an analysis from those women targeted by peacebuilding practices in Colombia. As to gain a clear overview, it is necessary to divide the analysis in several subcategories and sub questions.

How do these different actors talk about conflict when referring to women in Colombia? How do they understand and describe the conflict? How do they believe one could overcome this conflict? What do they consider is the role of women in this process? How does this translate into intervention? How do these discourses contrast or complement each other? Finally, are potential differences in discourses hindering the peacebuilding process or is it a logical division?

4.1. The intergovernmental organisation.

CIASE (Corporación de Investigación y Acción Social y Económica) has multiple alliances with different donors and partners. Some are solely donors or partnerships, some both. The extensive list can be found in Appendix 1. Ranging from intergovernmental and international organisations to local partnerships for the wellbeing of the Amazon and its people, CIASE is involved in many facets of the peaceful rebuilding of Colombia. Due to its wide variety in areas of intervention, the discourses of these donors and partners can be assumed to be consequently disparate, having different interests and objectives in the field of peacebuilding. To better understand the complexity of the work CIASE executes with all these different branches, and to understand its own discourse similarly, it is essential to dive into the discourses of the donors and partners separately.

Starting the discourse analysis from the intergovernmental organisation cooperating with CIASE, UNOCHA (United Nation Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) located in Bogota, Colombia. UNOCHA's mandate is to organise

and monitor humanitarian funding, exchange information and coordinate rapid response in case of emergencies (UNOCHA, 2019).

How does UNOCHA understand and describe women and peacebuilding?

When researching information concerning Colombia from UNOCHA, several reports on humanitarian overviews emerge. These reports are written by UNOCHA as to gain insight into "the most urgent humanitarian need and estimates of number of people needing assistance" (Humanitarian needs overview of Colombia, 2019).

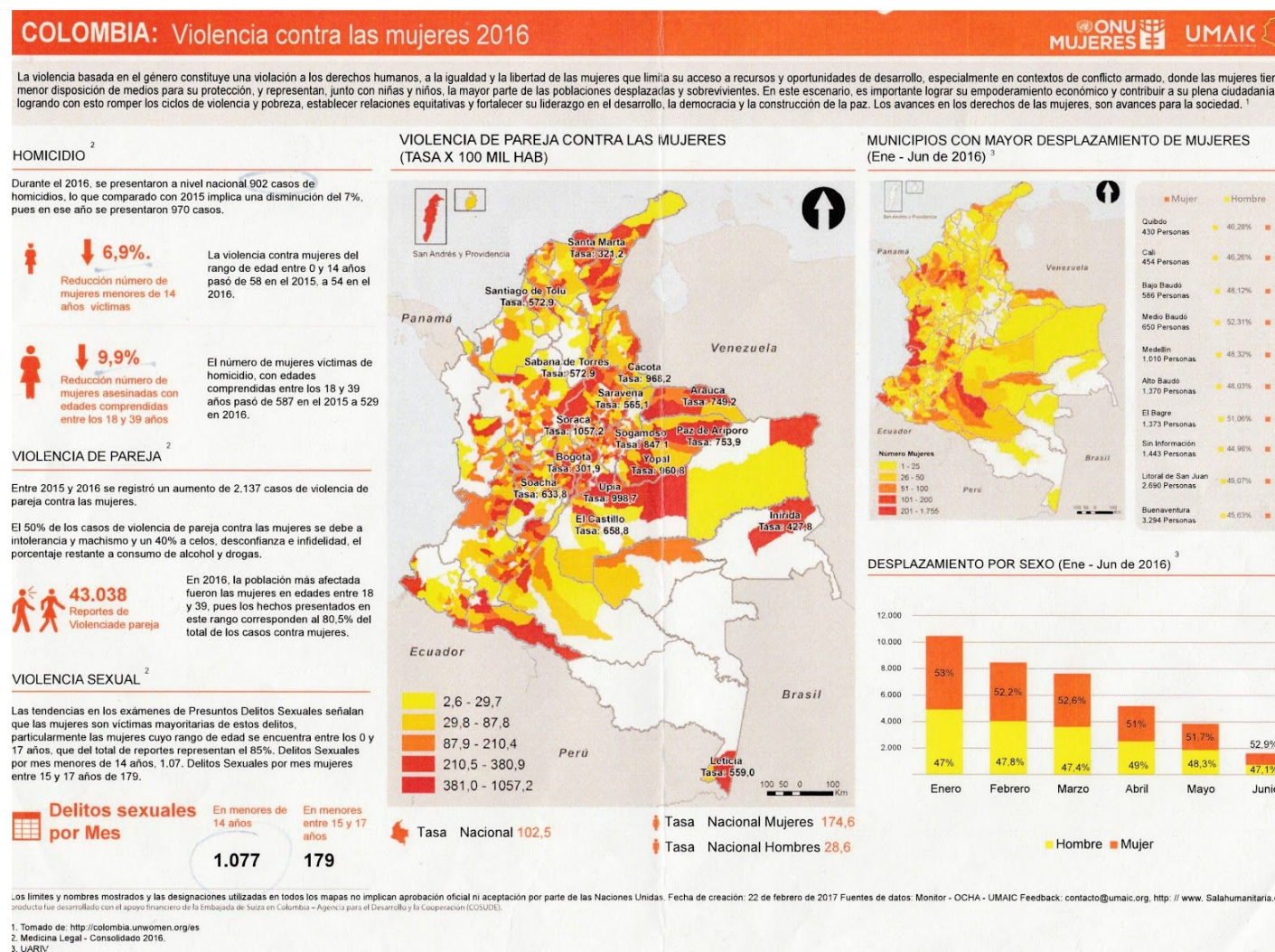
For the analysis, three reports from UNOCHA will be used to answer the sub questions in this chapter: The Humanitarian Dashboard (June, 2017); Situación Humanitaria Enero-Diciembre 2018 vs 2017 (2018); The Humanitarian needs overview (2019). The use of different reports over the last three years will gain a full insight into what the UNOCHA believes the conflict consists of.

When reading and analysing these reports, several areas of concern are highlighted and mentioned. Attacks against civil society; internal displacement; armed actions; natural disasters; confinement; mine victims; restriction on access and mobility of civilians, crops of illicit use, ethnic minorities; gender-based violence, recruitment of adolescents for armed groups in rural areas, venezolan immigration (2017, 2018 & 2019). However, some areas of concern are mentioned more frequently than others. Internal displacement, confinement, natural disasters and armed actions are four topics that are mentioned in all three reports and have a high priority of concern in these reports. Interestingly, UNOCHA uses manifestations of different types of violence to describe the situation for Colombian women in post conflict Colombia. Rather than highlighting opportunities for Colombian women to be involved in the process of peacebuilding, UNOCHA is in the process of identifying which group suffers the most, and who needs its aid. In that analysis, women are centrally identified. Purely based on these reports, UNOCHA's perception of the role of women in Colombia is based on its suffering through multiple types of violence.

Meetings I attended with UNOCHA during my time in Colombia portrayed a similar discourse. The focus was on the vulnerability of women, adolescents and LGBTI in Colombia. It is remarkable that there were such high levels of attention for the topic of LGBTI at those meetings and that this high emphasis cannot be traced back into a

discourse in official documents and reports. The topic on violence towards LGBTI, or the respect of their rights, is not mentioned at all in any report. The manner in which UNOCHA understands and describes the situation of women in Colombia is an essential component of their discourse and the discourse they wield towards international and national organisation operating in the field.

During the meeting a hand out report was given, similar in style to the reports and overviews that can be found on UNOCHA's website mentioned and analysed previously. However, this particular document cannot be traced back in UNOCHA's online report database. Nor in the UNwomen database from which they claim to have used it.



This document illustrates UNOCHA's discourse during meetings, with topics concerning violence against women. Homicide; violence in couples; sexual violence; internal displacement of women.

How does UNOCHA believe they can overcome the aforementioned challenges?

The structure and purpose of the UNOCHA is to organise and monitor humanitarian funding, exchange information and coordinate rapid response in case of emergencies (UNOCHA, 2018). This means that, for UNOCHA, overcoming the aforementioned challenge(s) can be done through the gathering of information, drawing reports and raising awareness. Their mandate in Colombia is based upon humanitarian response and raising awareness.

The humanitarian needs overview of 2019 further claims to have the "goal of prioritising, planning and managing resources for an adequate humanitarian response, (...) describes needs and identifies locations where there is a cross-over between different internal and external impacts in the country, leading to double and even triple affectation" (Humanitarian needs overview, 2019). Hence, by emphasising the areas of conflict, UNOCHA also makes recommendations which demographic group or region has the highest priority, but also which procedures are best for overcoming these conflicts.

Considering the discourse on violence against women during the attended meetings, there is no discourse that can be traced back on how UNOCHA believes to overcome the established forms of violence in any practical or theoretical approach. There is no mention of a strategy to elevate women in their socioeconomic positions or secure them of their rights. At the moment of my presence and with the analysis of the handout document, inventarising the issue appeared to be the first step in involving women in a post conflict Colombia. By highlighting violence by itself, a more political analysis may therefore not be necessary anymore. Focussing on technicalities such as violence rather than on the political narrative could be considered as a clearly chosen discursive practice by the UNOCHA. Their discourse on how they believe to overcome this particular type of violence is based on awareness and advocacy.

UNOCHA's data gathering as to support their humanitarian claims was conducted during meetings with large organisations operating in the field (UNOCHA

Meeting Bogota, May 2017). These meetings would be held on a regular basis and their stories, information, experiences, examples and other data would serve as source for the analysis of UNOCHA. During meetings, frustrations arose from the invited international and local organisations. Many organisations present had different targets and angles in the field of women, adolescents, and LGBTI. These different interests clashed with the overseeing UNOCHA, and with the other organisations.

Doctors without borders were mostly concerned about the spreading of HIV through underage sex workers, whereas IFPMA, for example, pressed for the agenda of education of young girls, without further giving any explanation as to how they believe this would decrease the types of violence mentioned. The organisations expressed their concern that the UNOCHA was oversimplifying the multitude of threats surrounding women in Colombia by neglecting the specificities of different areas or subgroups of women. UNOCHA's response to these concerns was that it shouldn't be too extensive as no one would read a report that is too voluminous (UNOCHA Meeting Bogota, May 2017). This struggle illustrates the difficulties UNOCHA encounters in its modus operandi. It aims to gain maximal attention but is bound to the role of monitor. Furthermore, it also demonstrates the type of discourse the UN wields, namely short, simple, powerful, and aspiring to gain maximum attention.

What is the role of women?

With a lack of clear strategy of involving women in the peacebuilding process, UNOCHA's main focus is on the plight of women than on their roles in building peace in society. Rather than considering women to be related, or even part of a post conflict society, and hence with the ability to play a role in the change of this society, UNOCHA portrays in its discourse local women in Colombia as separate victims of different types of violence, and the conflict. In its documents, it presents data on the multiple atrocities and the amount of women affected by them, rather than presenting possible projects or solutions on how to incorporate women into the peacebuilding process. This discourse makes for an interesting reflection on the current situation in Colombia. It might suggest that women in Colombia are seen as weaker, having to be taken care of rather than as active participants in the process.

How does this translate into intervention?

UNOCHA uses advocacy and creating awareness as method of intervention. It is a strategy that is not involved in the daily operations in the field as with other international and local NGO's. However, it does have its effects. Raising awareness and advocacy on issues in Colombia can produce funding for projects, lead to possible sanctions from the UN or even create new legislation to address these issues. Therefore, even though advocacy doesn't appear to be as practical and tangible as a method of intervention, it does have its effects and consequences.

UNOCHA, following their mandate, is therefore a humanitarian agency that wields a discourse on identifying in which women are victims of the conflict. The agency tries to identify which women in what part of the country need most aid or help. This type of discourse has been reviewed before, when with the adoption of Resolution 1325, women got a place in the resolution of conflict due to the different experiences they had during the time of conflict. Furthermore, LeMaitre(2016) called for this type of discourse when she claimed that first the needs of women victims of war and internal displacement should be addressed in order for a grassroots peacebuilding to emerge.

4.2. Donors and partnerships

4.2.1 The donor: Oxfam International- Field Office Canada.

Oxfam International is a well-known large NGO, operational in many parts of the world, with multiple offices in different countries. The field office responsible for Colombia is located in Canada, as there is no local office in the country. Oxfam often engages in partnerships with local organisations as they believe "that for development to work it must be owned, driven and led by local people themselves. Oxfam's role is to assist people in their own development, helping them build on their capacities and assets." (Oxfam Canada, 2018).

Admittedly, it is difficult to answer the posed questions and identify a coherent and strong discourse from Oxfam on local women in Colombia. As discussed in the subchapter on limitations in data collection, the only information that can be analysed is what can be traced to their website, where challenges are often generalised, and no concern is really explicitly mentioned. However, between the lines, one can observe

what Oxfam believes the challenges are in Colombia. From this interpretation and angle, one can distinguish a type of discourse nonetheless. Furthermore, during my time in Colombia with Oxfam, I observed another interesting type of discourse that will be discussed additionally.

What are the challenges according to Oxfam?

In general, Oxfam International claims to have one main goal: to end global poverty (Oxfam International, 2019). Oxfam's main goal therefore would suggest it is mainly a development organisation rather than a peacebuilding organisation. When zooming in on the case of Colombia, a different concern emerges.

According to their country page on Colombia, Oxfam is most involved with "active citizenship: meaning a broad movement of citizens capable of making proposals, taking democratic decisions in a responsible and informed manner, and demanding compliance with the Colombian constitution and Colombian state accountability" (Oxfam International, Colombia, 2019). This quote could be interpreted as an assessment of what Oxfam considers the main challenge in Colombia is at the moment: namely, the country needs to take better account of citizens interests. Furthermore, the website of Oxfam Canada (the field office working in Colombia) yields the slogan "ending poverty begins with women's rights" (Oxfam Canada, 2019).

Three different types of objectives within the same organisation. This might seem odd, however it can be explained through the divisional structure of the organisation itself. Country offices within Oxfam have their own mandate and operate independently (Oxfam, 2018). Nonetheless, in none of these official websites are there mentions of peacebuilding concerning (local) women in Colombia. The country of Colombia is not even mentioned on the page of the Canadian field office, the field office which works with CIASE, a local and feminist Colombian organisation.

In its mandate, both globally and on Colombia specifically, Oxfam appears to portray itself as a development organisation instead of a purely peacebuilding one. Its focus is on active citizenship involved in democratic decisions. Nonetheless, these aspects can very well be considered part of peacebuilding efforts in colombian society and should therefore be included in the discourse on peacebuilding in Colombia.

How does Oxfam believe they can overcome the aforementioned challenge(s)?

Without explicitly mentioning what the challenges in Colombia consist of, Oxfam appears to be more focused on expressing how one needs to overcome certain issues. According to the website on Colombia from Oxfam International, Oxfam believes that supporting civil society initiatives aiming at active citizenship, can be applied in three different areas.

These areas can be described both as a conviction in how to overcome the conflict, as a method of intervention. First, Economic Justice. Oxfam believes that through their support of alternative economic models promoting rural development in Colombia, changes in local public policy on market access and food security and sovereignty will occur (Oxfam Canada, 2018). Second, Rights in Crisis. Rights in Crisis is a five-fold program that aims for citizens and civil society organisations "affected by the crisis in human rights and international humanitarian law, and also by natural disasters, contribute towards the Colombian State's fulfilment of its duty to protect and guarantee their fundamental rights and to resolve the structural causes that fuel the crisis" (Oxfam International, 2019). Third, Women's Rights Program. Oxfam mentions it as a program. However, with a lack of mentioning any real project or intervention, it can be qualified as a strategy rather than intervention. With the Women's Rights Program, Oxfam believes it can overcome the conflict of active citizenship through aiming for women's organisation to be more involved in decision making in political, economic and social fields. Furthermore, they aim at the recognition of their rights in the legislative field, to be involved in designing policies, but also in social and family matters. When reading these three convictions, indirectly an image of what the current challenges are begins to take form. Rural development and food security, protection of human rights, and the promotion of women's rights in the public sphere.

What is the role of women?

The role of women is not mentioned in these three strategies or programs. However, when searching further on the website of Oxfam Canada, the field office operating in Colombia, one can find a conviction on the role of women in the area of fighting poverty.

Oxfam Canada claims that women are the "powerhouse of developing countries"(Oxfam Canada, 2019). They state that women produce most food, make up a third of the labour force and are generally the caretakers of their families and communities. By stating so, Oxfam Canada links their development mandate to building communities and hence, building strong and equal societies.

It is interesting that despite the strong claim on the role of women on their website from the field office in Canada, there is no real mention of this in the Colombian context. The discourse appears to be follow a more passive discourse on the role of women in Colombia, possibly following UNOCHA's discourse in which women are victims seeking aid rather than participators in building peace in post conflict Colombia.

How does this translate into intervention?

As mentioned anteriorly, the three programs aimed at overcoming the challenge on active citizenship, are strategies rather than projects or methods of intervention. However, the Rights in Crisis program does present five areas of intervention and one project.

- 1.The Campaign against Rape and Other Violence – Leave My Body Out Of the War.
- 2.Territorial Rights of ethnic-territorial, indigenous, and Afro-Colombian organisations.
- 3.Adaptation, Risk Reduction, and Humanitarian Response.
- 4.Right to the City: for participatory and inclusive citizenship.
- 5.Civil and Political Rights: fighting against impunity.

When reviewing these sub-questions, it is noticeable that Oxfam yields a discourse that is particularly general in its denomination of their work in Colombia. There is little mention of their strategies or convictions in the Colombian context in the specific area of women. It is therefore difficult to draw any conclusion on how they perceive women and peacebuilding on such little and general information. However, they do clearly mention how to define the challenges. These projects can therefore help us shape an image of what Oxfam believes the challenges are. Taking account of citizens' rights and interests

is a dominating theme in these projects. Therefore, without explicitly mentioning it, one can assume that their view on conflict in Colombia is based on these topics.

Aside from the aforementioned topics on women and peacebuilding, Oxfam's discourse towards their partners and donors is centred around accountability. On their websites, Oxfam is very transparent with its activities, the spending of donations and funds, and one can even report misconduct by Oxfam employees. As a result, Oxfam works hard to avoid and overcome possible misconduct or misuse by them or their partners. This desire for transparency and accountability was highly present and noticeable during meetings I witnessed with Oxfam Canada. The majority of these meetings were about installing processes of accountability. These meetings did not focus on their goals and objectives for Colombian women, or discussions on the content of funded projects. Oxfam demanded field reports on projects, collective memories, a detailed overview of activities, its costs and possible yield, and more. CIASE as a partner and receiver of funds had to adhere to these processes if it wanted to continue its partnership with Oxfam and receive funds for their projects. When assisting in meetings with Oxfam, I had no prior knowledge on the aforementioned issues.

Honestly, I could not claim with certainty where this discourse on accountability and transparency originated from. Was it because there was a lack of confidence between Oxfam and CIASE due to past experiences? Was it because Oxfam is generally pushing and promoting for accountable governments as a key concern in conflict affected societies like Colombia and wants to set the right example? Or is it due to past reports on social workers abusing their position? (Van Schie, 2018). Or maybe a combination of multiple of these assumptions. It is too uncertain to tell, and was not clear to observe at the time.

However its origin, the strong aspiration for accountability led to conflicts between CIASE and Oxfam. CIASE had no system of operation for their projects and operated as they pleased, having operated in this manner for decades. The novelty of installing all these processes was considered to take too much of their time which they believed could be spend more effectively (Luisa Fernanda Gonzalez, 07/2017). They did not see the importance of having a system of operation and accountability. Furthermore, CIASE argued that it is virtually impossible to measure how much a project could yield.

How does one measure the economic or financial yield of women's rights classes for indigenous women?

Whilst the discourse on accountability from Oxfam does not fall into the same categories as other discourses concerning women and peacebuilding, it is still worth mentioning. The repetition and strength of this discourse is susceptible to leave its mark on cooperation with local organisations and will also influence the discourse on women and peacebuilding in their projects. During the five months I spent with the organisation, all projects were put to a hold until CIASE had its internal system in order. Oxfam appears to be moving towards a revenue-based system where it needs to evaluate results right away, when these results may only appear after a certain amount of time. In applying this type of system, long term projects, or projects in which yield cannot be measured right away, may therefore not be initiated.

4.2.2. The environmental and indigenous partners.

Local organisation CIASE works in close cooperation with two partners involved with the indigenous lands and people of Colombia, namely FOSPA (Foro Social Panamazónico) and CONAMIC (Coordinación Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas en Colombia). Their discourses on women and peacebuilding in Colombia will complement the discourse by local agency CIASE as both of these organisations work in close cooperation, but in different fields.

What are the challenges according to FOSPA and CONAMIC?

According to FOSPA, the biggest challenge within Colombia and the Panamazonic region, is the destruction of the rainforest, the disrespect of indigenous people, and the destruction of ancient tribes (FOSPA, 2019).

CONAMIC believes that indigenous communities were amongst the worst affected by the armed conflict that lasted over 50 years. Women of these indigenous communities were most touched by violence and internal displacement (CONAMIC, 2017). With the development and signing of the peace treaty, CONAMIC claims that indigenous women, contrary to their male counterparts, are "unable to participate in formal political debate and the post-conflict governance and monitoring processes"

(CONAMIC, 2019). As a result, CONAMIC believes the biggest challenge consists of a lack of involvement of indigenous women in the Colombian peace process.

How do they believe they can overcome the aforementioned challenges?

FOSPA claims the challenges are what they believe their constituency is facing. In this train of thought, FOSPA believes in the creation of a Utopian land without borders. A land which comprises the entire amazon region and in which indigenous rights are recognised, with equal rights for all, without imperial or colonial power, and where there is no exploitation of natural resources (FOSPA, 2019).

CONAMIC believes that overcoming the lack of involvement of indigenous women in the peacebuilding process can be overcome through their support of women from indigenous communities and securing that their concerns and needs are recognised and included in the processes and decision making. (CONAMIC, 2019).

What is the role of women?

FOSPA is not concerned especially with local Colombian women, therefore there is little to be found of their role(s) in a post conflict Colombia. However, they do mention that "the full and equal participation of women is a fundamental condition in the construction of the new companies" (FOSPA, 2019)

For CONAMIC the role of, in this case indigenous women, is to get involved in public and political spheres and discussions, hence contributing to the national peace process and standing up for their rights and those of their communities. The indigenous women serve as spokespeople for their different tribes and the challenges they face (CONAMIC, 2019).

How does this translate into intervention?

FOSPA's methods of intervention are to unite the different indigenous tribes across the panamazonic region and to discuss similar challenges the tribes face. Furthermore, they create awareness through demonstrations, call to the boycotting of Chinese companies exploiting natural resources in the amazon. Finally, they write reports and bulletins on the conflict of the Amazon. (FOSPA, 2019) The writing of reports and bulletins are comparable to the methods used by UNOCHA based on advocacy, raising awareness.

Their method of intervention is thus centred around raising awareness and advocacy, but they employ more and different methods than UNOCHA.

CONAMIC created the network CONAMIC as a project. They intervene by training 100 indigenous women to participate in political spheres and to monitor the protection of their own rights (CONAMIC, 2019). They do so in cooperation with CIASE, who houses these women in Bogota and teaches them on how to represent their communities in public political spheres.

Other partnerships with CIASE are focused on advocacy. Latindadd, Red de Mujeres, GNWP, ICAN, and CCONG are all organisations involved in advocating and discussing challenges ahead, post signing of the peace treaty. CIASE is mostly involved in meetings with these partners where they try to press their agenda for the inclusion and rights of women.

While all of these organisations claim to be contributing to the peace process in Colombia, their identification of what the challenges are and how to solve it with the help or support of women can vary from one organisation to the other. The differences in discourses consequently define in how organisations believe these challenges should be targeted and what they believe the role of women should be in rebuilding peace in Colombia. The difference in their discourses will therefore affect their peacebuilding strategies and projects.

4.3 The local organisation - CIASE.

CIASE (Corporation for Research, Social and Economic Action) claims to be a "co-ed organisation with feminist approach" (CIASE, 2017). They are located in the city of Bogota in Colombia and operate uniquely in the country of Colombia. The analysis of their discourse will be based upon an informational booklet on the design of their organisation, and their website, for lack of other documentation. You can find the booklet in Appendix 2 for reference.

What are the challenges according to CIASE?

When analysing the website or the informational booklet, there appears to be no strong claim or statement on what CIASE believes the challenges are. Rather than identifying

these challenges, they refer to what they "promote" or "contribute to" (ibid). These are terms that are repeatedly used in their declarations. The declarations centre around two big subjects, "Feminism and peacebuilding" and "Living Economics". On their website, CIASE claims to be a "mixed feminist organisation, which promotes the permanent enforceability and comprehensive realization of Human Rights, in particular economic, social, cultural and environmental rights." (CIASE, 2019).

In Feminism and Peacebuilding, CIASE claims to "contribute to the recognition and analysis of discrimination and violence, bringing in its transformation to a culture based on fairness, full citizenship, and peace building, from innovative approach inspired by full respect for human rights and gender" (ibid). In Living Economics, CIASES states that they "contribute to the promotion and protection of autonomy and economic agents from a comprehensive perspective of human rights, based on the development of viable alternative proposals, with theoretical and practical proposals to deepen the relationship between Social and Social Economy and Feminist Economics" (ibid).

The wording in these contributions that CIASES claims to make, need further clarification. Without knowing its context, it is difficult to decipher what CIASE believes the challenges are. However, some topics can be distinguished, such as the high respect of women's rights, creating a "culture of fairness" (ibid), and equal rights for both men and women.

How does CIASE believe they can overcome the aforementioned challenge(s)?

In each section, CIASE identifies two "Axis strategies" (ibid), which should ideally overcome the aforementioned challenge(s). In Feminism and Peacebuilding, CIASE identifies the strategy "Peacemaker Women" and "Women and Security". Peacemaker Women is centred around initiating dialogues with women from all backgrounds as to construct collective peace proposals. Women and Security follows Resolution 1325 of the UN Security Council, participating with local women and authorities. In Living Economics, CIASE identifies the strategies "Economy for Peace" and "Feminist Economics". Economy for Peace is based upon sustainable agriculture centred around the reinterpretation of indigenous practices. Feminist Economics is the "positioning of

CIASE economic approach from feminist analyses, on Public Policy of Human Rights and gender, at national and local level".

However, apart from these Axis Strategies, CIASE identifies four other strategies.



The document does not provide the reader with a lot of context and is centred around many general terms. It is once more difficult to comprehend what the exact conviction of CIASE is, and how they believe the problems in Colombia and concerning Colombian women should be tackled. However, one strategy can be identified more clearly than others. "Training social actors to strengthen leadership, the exercise of active citizenship and contribution to building democratic societies" (ibid).

What is the role of women?

In the analysed sources, there is no specific mention of what CIASE believes the role of women is. This is what one would expect from a self-proclaimed feminist organisation. One can assume that since their ideology is feminist, they believe women should play a more active role in peacebuilding in Colombia, rather than portraying them as victims. This appears in some of the strategies they apply. For example, CIASE mentions in one of their strategies that they provide the "training of social actors to strengthen leadership"(CIASE, 2017).

How does this translate into intervention?

In the picture shown before, CIASE identifies three strategic programs: feminism and peacebuilding, living standard, and institutional management. However, there is no further elaboration on what this entails, or on the content of these programs. On their website, CIASE refers to a singular project, virtual schools for indigenous and young women. These schools are designed to teach indigenous and young women about their rights, through the education on Charter 1325 from the UN Security Council (CIASE, 2018). Furthermore, these virtual schools aim at breaking traditional gender barriers and fight discrimination (CIASE, 2018).

The vagueness of the aforementioned strategies makes it hard to fully grasp what CIASE perceives to be the conflict. It seems that there is not a clear message in their mandate, nor how they believe they could overcome this conflict or even how they perceive the exact role of women in overcoming it. However, they do state what CIASE believes are current needs in Colombia and Colombian society. Indirectly, one can therefore understand that CIASE believes that there is a lack of equal rights for women, of equal participation in citizenship, and that they aim at protecting women in their socioeconomic positions (CIASE informational booklet, CIASE, 2017).

Moreover, I noticed overarching recurring discourses in some projects which might bring to light a deeper insight into the discourses CIASE wields. The project on young women in cooperation with Oxfam centres around organising classes for young women between the age of 14 and 18, in which a project leader outside of their schools will talk about their rights, their future, but also gives them sexual education and

teaches them about how and which contraceptives to use. This same ideology is applied in their project with indigenous women. CIASE believes that women, and indigenous women in particular, are in need of female leaders in their communities. This belief stems from Miss Salamanca, the head of the organisation, who has lived amongst indigenous tribes for many years (Luisa Fernanda Gonzales, July 2017). More than in regular Colombian culture, women in indigenous communities assume traditional gender roles and have little to no autonomy (CONAMIC, 2017).

CIASE claims "Indigenous as well as Afro-Colombian women have been especially marginalised in Colombia and have been unable to benefit fully from the broader women's rights movement. The primacy of collective indigenous identities and rights has often precluded them from accessing rights both within their own community and wider Colombian society, including women's rights and citizens' rights" (Accord Report, 2017). In doing so, rather than applying western visions about women, their roles in society and how female peacebuilders should act or organise themselves, CIASE focuses their projects on indigenous rituals and concepts.

The discourse on including indigenous and local practices is similar to that of Mac Ginty (2008) which I reviewed previously. Mac Ginty criticised forms of liberal peacebuilding where local and indigenous practices were neglected or replaced with western forms of peacebuilding. CIASE has also adopted this criticism and put this discourse into practice in their project with indigenous women.



This picture shows the circle of life composed of fruit, flowers and vegetables the earth blesses the indigenous tribes with. By honouring the earth and treating her as a giving woman, CIASE empowers women to become one with their earth, feed it, live off it and sustain it (Luisa Fernanda Gonzalez, personal communication, July 2017). In fortifying indigenous women in their local and indigenous practices, CIASE demonstrates a clear example on how a discourse on women and peacebuilding is the source of a project or practice.

To conclude, CIASE seems to project a broad and multi applicable type of discourse based on very general concepts: equal human rights for men and women, equal participation in citizenship. Only when diving into their specific projects does it become clear what they identify as the challenge for that particular group or cause. It is understandable that they adapt this broadness as a strategy. In this sense, they can cooperate with many different partners and sponsors in different areas. However, the vagueness and broadness can also lead to a chaotic and uncoordinated style of modus operandi, without a clear focus point.

4.4. Local young women.

This last section in analysing the discourse on conflict and peacebuilding of local Colombian women, consists of that of the beneficiaries of the young women's project by CIASE, located in Villa de Leyva and Bogotá. The young women's project is nationwide and targets two schools per region, one that is mostly upper class, such as the British School in Bogotá, and one that has more socioeconomically challenged students.

The goal of the project is to overcome socio-economic boundaries between young women, create understanding and share similar experiences (Luisa Fernanda Gonzales, personal communication, July 2017). CIASE believes that the gaps between socio economic classes in Colombia is an obstacle to a wholesome and nonviolent society (Luisa Fernanda Gonzalez, personal communication, July 2017). In order to overcome this particular issue, CIASE organises workshops where they bring these two groups in contact with each other. The workshops consist of classes on women's rights, sexual education, the peace process and, more importantly, of entering into discussions on these topics with girls their own age they usually wouldn't associate with.

Following the objective of getting the most diverse samples, the interviews took place in both a rural area, Villa de Leyva, and in a less fortunate neighbourhood in the city of Bogotá. The girls that were interviewed already participated in this project six months prior to the interviews and hence had some knowledge about peace, women's rights and empowerment.

What are the challenges for local young women in Villa de Leyva?

Rather than asking about armed conflict in their country and talk in terms of conflict, I wanted to get to know the girls on a more personal level. I asked them what they believe peace is, and what they see as obstacles in attaining that peace. What are they afraid of in their daily lives for example? What obstacles do they face? Who are the strong women they admire? How do they think they contribute to peace? By posing the questions in this manner, I gained an understanding of what they believe peacebuilding could mean for them on a personal and local level and what they believe should be done to overcome the issues they face.

When asked what these young women in Villa de Leyva perceive as an obstacle to their development, security and education were recurring topics (Tania Martinez, personal communication, July 2017; Natalia García, personal communication, July 2017). The police and military that are present in the region and town are known for sexual intimidation and harassment. None of the girls I interviewed were actually raped by the police but had friends or relatives who had been. Some of these young women had gotten pregnant. When I asked if they could report these issues, they claimed this was futile as the force as an institute would cover for its agents, hence no action would be undertaken. "Instead of giving us a feeling of trust, they give us fear" (Tania Martinez, personal communication, July 2017). There is a culture in law enforcement in this particular region, or perchance in more regions, which makes the population intimidated and mistrustful of those who should enforce rules and regulations and protect society. The young women of Villa de Leyva feel that they cannot be in a park with their friends or walk home to their parent's farm in the late afternoon after school, afraid of being targeted by these officials.

Moreover, these young women express feeling subordinated and disadvantaged by the men in their surroundings. In school, they experience this through a lack of gender-targeted education such as sexual education and knowledge about contraceptives, but they also experience it in regular classes. In gym, they are often put on the side lines. When raising their hand in math, the turn is almost always given to the men in their classes. In the streets, men whistle and call them sexually charged names, and in their families, men are either absent or dominant.

For local young women in Bogota?

The women I interviewed at the high school in the south of Bogotá appeared to be more hardened and edgier than the ones in Villa de Leyva. One could easily perceive they were better at expressing themselves, were not afraid to ask questions back, and were very talkative. In general, they were not convinced that they were inferior to men as much as their counterparts did in Villa de Leyva. When I asked them about possible dangers and limitations in their lives, they deemed most dangers 'normal'. They were aware they can be robbed, stabbed or even kidnapped, but they have learned to avoid these dangers as much as possible and cope with this on a daily basis. Instead, they

believed that the biggest conflict, in this case vulnerability, for young women is teenage pregnancy, or being put on social media due to having send confidential pictures to a boyfriend or love interest (Nicole Guerrero, personal interview, July 2017).

How do they believe they can overcome these challenges?

All of the young women who were interviewed in both Bogotá and Villa de Leyva, had already participated in the aforementioned project "young women peacebuilders" (mujeres jóvenes constructoras de paz) with CIASE. I was therefore very interested in finding out what they believe a female peacebuilder is, if they perceive themselves as female peacebuilders and if so, why? How do they believe they can make a contribution to the aforementioned challenges or obstacles?

When asking how they see their ideal future, education and career seemed to be the most important. Remarkably, almost all of them have big aspirations for when they grow up. Professions such as doctors, psychologists and lawyers are mostly mentioned (Tania Martinez, personal interview, July 2017; Laura Cardenas, personal interview, July 2017; Tania Martinez, personal interview, July 2017). Their future is meticulously thought out, considered, researched, and they are willing to apply themselves fully to study and have a strong career. They don't speak of the desire of raising families or having children, but of studying and working hard.

However, this does not mean that they are only focussing on themselves and their future for financial benefits. When asked if they consider themselves peacebuilders, they believe that they are building peace by helping their friends and family around them. Furthermore, their desire for the aforementioned jobs is with the aim to help society. To mention an example, Tania mentioned wanting to become a psychologist with musical therapy for displaced people of the conflict who have been traumatised (Tania Martinez, personal interview, July 2017).

The young women in Villa de Leyva believe they can overcome their conflict with law enforcement and the gender gap through pursuing an education, a career, all with the aim of being self-sufficient and independent and helping others whilst doing so. Only by acquiring a similar and equal role as men can they contribute to an equal society. In Bogota the answers were similar. However, they believe that both these topics are the responsibility of the young girls themselves. They are focussed on their

futures, but not as strongly as the young women in Villa de Leyva were. Furthermore, they did not mention wanting to help their society as much. This is understandable. City dwellers (and especially in a city the size of Bogotá) tend to be more individualistic and their communities are not as visible and present as those in small countryside towns. In Bogotá, young women believe that overcoming their possible conflicts and limitations is a responsibility that lies within them. Women can be equal to men if they take care of themselves and make smart decisions.

Evaluating these answers, the topics mentioned by these young women can be categorised in the field of women's emancipation, rather than peacebuilding. The organisation CIASE refers to it as peacebuilding efforts, but in essence, overcoming gender gaps and being sexually educated falls mostly into the norms of emancipation. This was particularly noticeable when I pushed for the answer in *why* they see themselves as female peacebuilders. "Because I follow the program with CIASE" is an answer that was often given. It is interesting that the discourse is thrown upon the "peacebuilding" pile by CIASE in their project. Nonetheless, it can be argued that when these women are well-educated and important exemplary pillars in their communities, that this could have a rippling effect for future generations. It is difficult to decipher the line between emancipation and peacebuilding. One could wonder if peacebuilding is always an active form of building peace, and if so, how? Could it be that peacebuilding starts with women's emancipation first, and building peace later? Or do they represent the same goals and objectives for a community but have different wording?

Referring back to the literature on LeMaitre (2016), who claims that for grassroots peacebuilding to set in, the state of Colombia should first address the needs of victims and survivors of war. The young women I interviewed were never a direct victim of the armed conflict and do not have the same needs as those who were victimised or internally displaced due to the armed conflict. Nonetheless, the essence of her research does apply in this particular case study. In order for grassroots peacebuilding to take place, a wave of emancipation might be needed as a first stepping stone towards it.

VI. Concluding discussion

The concept of peacebuilding is one that has been widely used in many fields and practices. It was popularised after the end of the Cold War with the Agenda for Peace by Boutros Boutros Ghali (1992). Many peace operations followed the report. Over time, discourses on peacebuilding developed and modified. Amongst criticism and the need for different approaches, the discourse on women and peacebuilding emerged (Guhathakurta, 2004). This discourse claims women to be ideal peacemakers and peacebuilders due to their social and biological roles as nurturers for their communities.

During my time in Colombia I noticed different discourses on women and peacebuilding from different sources. I remember wondering during debates and speeches from the local organisation, its partners or UNOCHA, if the women these organisations targeted would understand and identify with the discourse on peacebuilding that concerned them. I wanted to know how they thought about concepts such as peace and peacebuilding as in comparison, contrast, or addition to these organisations. Did it coincide with what was being said in the offices of the people funding, designing and promoting peacebuilding efforts? If there would be any discrepancies, does this have an influence, does it present obstacles in the peacebuilding effort? All these questions and wonderments sparked my curiosity to investigate how different operational levels define peacebuilding, what their discourses on women and peacebuilding consist of. Therefore, I set out to answer the following question: are there disparities in discourses on women and peacebuilding in Colombia?

Prior to this research, my personal point of view on women and peacebuilding was based upon the same assumptions and convictions several authors (Guhathakurta, 2004; Goetz and Jenkins, 2005) and Oxfam International claim. Namely, that women are considered better peacebuilders than men, due to their position in their local communities, their softer and compromising nature, the fact that they care and desire to protect their children from any armed conflict. They would ideally be better negotiators, protectors and providers for their families and community. CIASE seemed to embody that same idea, being a feminist organisation advocating for women's rights. However, I quickly noticed that this model cannot be simply be applied in any case and in any

situation. The information gathered during meetings with UNOCHA and other NGO's revealed that not only do women need help in gaining confidence in this role, the traumas of the past can limit them in becoming this type of peacebuilder.

The discourse of the young women in both Bogota and Villa de Leyva were not as grand and abstract as I expected. These women were not referring to peace or peacebuilding as such, but associated peace with good and higher education, emancipation in schools and the public sphere, well paid jobs, doing sports at a high level, and feeling safe in their neighbourhood or village. This is not entirely unexpected. Even though these young women participated in peacebuilding courses with the local organisation, their perception of peace is what they perceive around them. One could argue that this might not even be a discourse on peace but rather a discourse on obstacles and opportunities for young women in Colombia.

The discourse of the local organisations are not always clearly defined in traceable sources. Limited information can be found on what local organisations believe peacebuilding consists of, what the perceived role of Colombian women should be and how they portray this in their projects or strategies. A tentative conclusion that can be drawn from this is that local organisations function as some sort of mediator, translator into practices.

Despite the priorly discussed limitations, a conclusion can be drawn. There are indeed discrepancies in discourses on women and peacebuilding in Colombia. These discrepancies can be justified, understood, and relatable. However, the discrepancies can limit the effectiveness of the local fieldwork and projects. As Autesserre (2009) claims, interpretations of a post-conflict situation can have great implications on the effectiveness of peacebuilding. In the current structure of peacebuilding in Colombia, UNOCHA is the biggest advocate and fund of peacebuilding projects. Its discourse is based on presenting women as victims of war, illustrating the multiple ways in which Colombian women are suffering due to the armed conflict. With this discourse, UNOCHA asks local and international organisations to design projects tackling and aiding Colombian women. However, when looking into the discourse of young women in urban and rural Colombia, there is no need for such projects. Many of the young women interviewed were looking for means of emancipation, needing classes on sexual

education, on their human rights and how they can help their communities. In conclusion, the discrepancies between discourses of different actors involved in the peacebuilding process harms the effectiveness of peacebuilding efforts.

6.1 Discussion and recommendations

As in any research, this research does have limits. First, the limited volume of interviews and data in the form of assisting in meetings makes it difficult to gain a deeper insight into the discourses. If I were to conduct this research again, I would get a better idea of the outset of my research before conducting fieldwork. As a result, the interviews I designed would have been more precise, targeted, and potentially have a deeper value. The data collected by the interviews were set out to portray and contrast living situations of young women. This does not imply that the data is useless, but that it could be collected more efficiently and adequately. Moreover, I would extend the number of interviews with young women. Additionally, I would conduct in- depth interviews with representatives of the intergovernmental, international and local organisations as to get a better insight in their discourses on women and peacebuilding in Colombia. At this moment there exists a difference in analysis. Whereas I analysed the discourse on women and peacebuilding from different actors, I interviewed a very specific subgroup of women, namely teenagers.

Secondly, the situation in Colombia is rapidly changing. The moment the dataset was collected, the rise of the ELN was noticeable but not a national danger yet. However, if one could believe the newspapers, the safety in Colombia is deteriorating: an increase of violence, multiple disappearances of social and peace workers, an increase of drug traffic. All of these factors would shape the discourse in all levels discussed. This research is a snapshot in a relatively peaceful post treaty time in Colombia before other paramilitary groups installed themselves in the vacuum left by the FARC.

My recommendation towards the different peacebuilding organisations operating in Colombia is to align discourses and start analysing from different subgroups of women in Colombia. Due to the generalisation of discourses on an international level, many subgroups of women are inadequately targeted with

peacebuilding projects that miss the mark. Peacebuilding efforts are consequently lost due to their inefficiency.

For future research, it would be interesting to do a more extensive case study on the discourses of different subgroups of women in Colombia. It would contribute to the effectiveness of peacebuilding strategies and projects for local peacebuilding organisations. Gaining a full overview of different discourses of women in the field, and not just that of young women, will also help general peacebuilding efforts in Colombia.

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VIII. Appendices

Appendix 1: List of known donors and partnerships of CIASE.

ACCD - Agencia Catalana de de Cooperación al Desarrollo
British Academy Conference
CCONG - Conferencia Colombia de ONG
CONAMIC - Coordinación Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas en Colombia
FOS - Foundation of Success
FOSPA - Foro Social Panamazónico
Franco- Colombian Initiative
GNWP - Global Network of Women Peacebuilders
ICAN - International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear weapons
IOM - International Organisation for Migration
Latindadd- Red Latinoamericana por Justicia Económica y Social
Oxfam Canada
UNOCHA - United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
Red de mujeres Colombianas

Appendix 2: Questions for interview (Spanish).

1. Que significa la paz para ti?
2. Qué piensas del proceso de paz en Colombia?
3. Crees que va tener éxito? Por qué sí o no?
4. Cuales son los más grandes desafíos por el gobierno para obtener paz?
5. Cómo te sientes en términos de seguridad? Existen peligros para ti?
6. Que limita la seguridad para ti o otras chicas en Villa de Leyva/ Bogotá?
7. Piensas que las chicas de tu edad en Bogota o Villa de Leyva, viven los mismos peligros que ti? Que piensas que viven como peligros?
8. Te ves como mujer constructora de paz? Por qué y cómo?

9. Tienes un ejemplo que sea cerca, nacional o internacional, de mujer constructora de paz? Alguna mujer que admires?
10. Cuales son tus sueños para el futuro?