Fostering guarantees of non-recurrence

How humanitarian action can strengthen the Colombian post-conflict process

This thesis is submitted for obtaining the Master's Degree in International Humanitarian Action. By submitting the thesis, the author certifies that the text is from his/her hand, does not include the work of someone else unless clearly indicated, and that the thesis has been produced in accordance with proper academic practices.

Abstract

After more than 50 years of internal armed conflict, Colombia has entered into a stage of post-conflict after a peace agreement was signed in 2016. This process will be challenging for the country, as the conflict has created increased poverty and segregation as well as a lack of opportunities for those that have been affected by the conflict. This thesis collects perceptions of international humanitarian actors working in the Colombian context, and their perception on how humanitarian action can be used to strengthen the Colombian post-conflict process. Through a theoretical standpoint of Institutionalization Before Liberalization (IBL) theory by Roland Paris (2004), the findings were collected. Key findings include the need to recognize the humanitarian needs in Colombia despite the conflict ending, the importance of building knowledge in society about the peace agreement and make room for transition of experience and knowledge from the humanitarian field to the government and development actors.

Analysing the findings, it shows that Colombia's current peace transition would be furthered by strengthening the nation's institutions and making long-term strategies on how to create electoral and societal systems that would unite and reconcile the population. It also shows that while the IBL theory is applicable to the Colombian post-conflict process, it fails to capture educational components that are deemed essential by the interviewed organizations. The thesis concludes that humanitarian organizations should be viewed as pivotal actors for the implementation of the Colombian peace agreement and that the Colombian government and international donors needs to put aside long-term resources and time to create a post-conflict society that will foster guarantees of the armed conflict not returning to Colombia.

Key words: Post-conflict process, Colombia, peace transition, peacebuilding, humanitarianism, humanitarian action, institutionalization

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Julle Bergenholtz
The 23rd of May 2018

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Abbreviations

ELN – The National Liberation Army

FARC – Revolutionary Alternative Force of Colombia. Formerly: The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

HDI – Human development Index

IASC – Inter Agency Standing Committee

IBL – Institutionalization Before Liberalization

IDEA – International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

NGO – Non-governmental organization

NWoW – New Way of Working

OECD – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

SDG – Sustainable Development Goal

UN – United Nations

UNDG – United Nations Development Group

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNOCHA – United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

US – United States

WHS – World Humanitarian Summit

1 Introduction

At the first World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), held in Istanbul in 2016, multi-state actors, state actors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and practitioners within the field of humanitarian assistance met with the goal of finding new and more effective ways of jointly combating the humanitarian needs around the world. From this summit, several work streams were formed within the deal that became known as the Grand Bargain (IASC 2018a). One of the work streams developed was one about enhancing the engagement between humanitarian and development actors, often called the humanitarian-development nexus, in matters such as peacebuilding, natural disasters and post-conflict processes. The work stream's goals encompass prevention of humanitarian disasters, strengthening national coping mechanisms and creating space for joint multi-hazard risk and vulnerability analyses (IASC 2018b).

Accompanied with this work stream is also the concept New Way of Working (NWoW), which gathers actors across the developmental and humanitarian field in order to work with the challenges of the humanitarian field and also to reinforce the actors' ambition to carry out the post-2015 agenda. As UNOCHA (2017b:4) writes in a handbook about NWoW, it:

> Frames the work of development and humanitarian actors, along with
> national and local counter-parts, in support of collective outcomes that
> reduce risk and vulnerability and serve as instalments [sic!] toward the
> achievement of the SDGs.

Thus, there is a priority from the humanitarian community, both regarding state and non-state actors, to continue broadening what humanitarian actors shall work with in order to decrease suffering and enhance resilience for beneficiaries. This motivates including humanitarian assistance within the rebuilding of a nation after a violent conflict, as the contextual knowledge and trust that they often have been able to create can be instrumental in this work.

Within this realm, there is a necessity to identify in what way humanitarian actors through their specific competence can support peace and post-conflict processes, as this could enrich the development actors' work and contextual knowledge. This will be an important process in order to make this collaboration and its outputs efficient and more holistic for the context in which the collaboration takes place, but also to make efficient the relationship between humanitarian and development actors.

In 2016, the armed conflict between the government and the leading guerrilla group The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in Colombia came to a close after more

than 50 years of violence, murders and forced disappearances (Reuters 2016). While the peace process and the peace agreement that came out of it are signs of great progress for the Colombian state in terms of stability and security, much is still needed to be done in order to ensure that the transition to peace from violent conflict is going smoothly, and that all issues that need to be straightened out during the post-conflict are addressed properly. Importantly, the political context faces both a congressional and presidential election, where the different parties' perspective on the peace process and peace accord differs greatly. Adding to the situation is also the Venezuelan refugee crisis, which since 2017 has put a strain on Colombia from both a political and economic perspective (UNHCR 2017). All put together, these issues are presenting the current government with many challenges that are all risk factors concerning the implementation of the peace accords.

Although most of the responsibility of carrying out the peace accord lies with the government, humanitarian organizations are still important in order to address humanitarian needs and increase stability and resilience within the population. This is especially true in rural areas of the country according to UNHCR (2017), where the guerrilla groups' presences as well as forced displacement, the recruitment of children into armed groups and the influx of Venezuelan refugees are key challenges. Not to be forgotten is also the long time period in which humanitarian actors have been active in Colombia, which has led to an understanding of the struggles the supported communities have faced and are facing in the current situation.

Seeing this situation, the humanitarian sector has an important mission to provide methods to increase resilience within its beneficiary group and to minimize the risk of humanitarian disasters occurring. The humanitarian sector could however also contribute in strengthening the post-conflict process by not only performing short-term activities, but also be a resource for assisting the government in disaster risk reduction activities, context analysis and other activities which could benefit the post-conflict process. With this in mind, this thesis takes the perspective on the connection between humanitarian assistance and the post-conflict process in Colombia, in order to identify if and how humanitarian action can be a tool to strengthen the post-conflict process of Colombia and thereby play a role in creating sustainable peace.

1.1 Aim and purpose of the thesis

This research aims to look at post-conflict processes and how/if organizations within the field of humanitarian action can be supporting the path for a sustainable peace in Colombia. The purpose is therefore to look at the post-conflict setting in Colombia, with special emphasis on

what kind of activities and priorities that are and can be carried out within the frame of humanitarian action, and see how these priorities can be of benefit to the post-conflict process. Based on this, recommendations will be provided to international humanitarian organizations, humanitarian donors and the Colombian government on actions that could be taken based on the results of the study. Data will be gathered by in-depth interviews with humanitarian actors operating in Colombia, in order to get a collective perception of this group regarding the research topic (See Chapter 4 Methodology for more information).

The reason for choosing Colombia is due to its ongoing post-conflict process after more than 50 years of war, which means that the post-conflict process will be active for several years in order to resolve the stipulations from the peace accord. There is therefore room for analysis on how to carry out this process, and construct recommendations for how to improve it and identify areas where humanitarian actors can play a key role within this endeavor.

1.2 Research questions

Based on the premise above, the main research question for this thesis is the following:

- Can humanitarian action strengthen the Colombian post-conflict process and the implementation of the Colombian peace agreement? If so, in what ways?

To complement the main question, a set of sub-questions have also been created to ensure that answering the main question will be possible. These are the following:

- What humanitarian actions are currently being carried out in Colombia to strengthen the implementation of the Colombian peace agreement?
- What are the main challenges from a humanitarian perspective in Colombia after the end of the internal armed conflict?
- What are the perceptions of international humanitarian actors operating in Colombia regarding the role of humanitarian action in the Colombian post-conflict process?

1.3 Relevance for the humanitarian sector

The aim and purpose of this thesis is deemed applicable for the sector of humanitarian action for several reasons. First, the post-conflict process in Colombia is still in its start, meaning that there are still many implementations within the peace accord that needs to be carried out. Thus, there is a need for production of documents with recommendations on what can be done to strengthen the post-conflict process, to ensure that it does not result in renewed conflict.

Second, the subject of the thesis will shine light on the nexus between post-conflict processes and humanitarian action that up until now have had limited research conducted on it. By analyzing if and how humanitarian action can play a role in strengthening the Colombian post-conflict process, this can be a guideline for humanitarian actors within Colombia to see if and how they can impact the context, and show possible benefits of involving humanitarian actors within the implementation of the peace accord. This goes in line with current trends within the humanitarian sector of discussing the humanitarian-development nexus and the broadening of the scope of humanitarian action.

Lastly, by analyzing and concluding the possible connections that humanitarian action and post-conflict processes can have in Colombia, this study can also be an instigator to analyze other post-conflict processes, present or former, in order to determine the value of humanitarian action in supporting and strengthening post-conflict processes.

1.4 Outline of thesis

This thesis consists in total of seven different chapters, where the first one has introduced the research subject, as well as the aim and research questions of the thesis.

The second chapter presents the conflict and post-conflict process of Colombia and the circumstances challenging the success of the post-conflict process. It also provides an academic insight into post-conflict processes, humanitarian action, reconciliation and the amount of humanitarian finances towards Colombia. The third chapter presents the Institutionalization Before Liberalization (IBL) theory, its origins and how it will be used within the thesis. The fourth chapter delves into the methodology of the thesis, including how interviews have been conducted, for what purpose and the reliability, validity and limitations of the thesis based on the gathered data.

The fifth chapter presents the findings from the interviews conducted within the frame of this thesis. The sixth chapter analyses the findings by help of the theoretical framework. Finally, the seventh chapter concludes the findings and analysis, and provides recommendations for the actors involved in the context and for possible future academic research.

2 Background and previous research

This chapter will provide a presentation of the Colombian conflict, its peace process and the first year of its post-conflict process. It will also present research within the topics this thesis touches upon, as well as an overview of the humanitarian situation of Colombia as of 2018.

2.1 The Colombian conflict and peace process

The Colombian conflict has been one of the most outdrawn, violent and complicated conflicts of our time. Starting in 1964 with the founding of the guerrilla group FARC intending to overthrow the Colombian government (BBC 2016), the conflict has until 2017 lead to the death of more than 220 000 people and forced more than 5.7 million persons to flee their homes (CFR 2017). This was however not the first major internal conflict in Colombia, since a ten year long political conflict posthumously named *La violencia* (the Violence) had been impacting the country between 1948 and 1958 and led to the eventual organization of FARC and second largest guerrilla group in Colombia, The National Liberation Army (ELN) (ibid).

During the years of the civil conflict starting in 1964, the level of violence from all sides of the conflict has been staggering, which is partly attributed to the conflict's expansion during the 1980's as para-military groups took up arms to counter the prevalence of the guerrilla groups (CFR 2017). Because of this situation, Colombia has for many years been a key country of activity for the UN, states as well as international and national organizations, where these bodies have been active in providing support for peace measures, aid or to strengthen capacities within the country. This has been done through long-term measures, such as supporting the building of the country's institutions and initiating multilateral trade deals (ibid) but also through major humanitarian operations concerning internal displacement or natural disasters, which are prone to Colombia due to its geography (PreventionWeb 2014).

The situation however changed dramatically in 2016, when a peace accord (Government of Colombia and FARC 2016) between the government and FARC was presented, listing 558 stipulations on how to address issues within the country to stop the violence (Reuters 2016). This peace deal was brought forward into a referendum in October 2016, where the Colombians were to vote if they wanted the peace deal. While many were sure that there would be a yes for the peace deal, the referendum ended with 50,2% of the voters voting no and 49,8% yes (The Guardian 2016a). This turn of events however did not stop the parties from their commitment to the peace deal, and on the 24th of November 2016, the government and FARC signed the peace accord (The Guardian 2016b). This process was a major reason

for choosing president Juan Manuel Santos as the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2016, as the organization wanted to "encourage continued dialogue (…) for peace and reconciliation" (Nobel Prize 2016).

Since the signing of the peace deal, the government has continuously worked with implementing the many action points within the accord. This include instituting FARC as a political party (Government of Colombia and FARC 2016:8) (which has resulted in the group switching the meaning of its acronym to the "Revolutionary Alternative Force of Colombia"*)*, the collection of more than 1.3 million pieces of ammunition from the former guerrilla group (Al Jazeera 2017) as well as improvements in the rights of indigenous populations (ibid).

While the security level has highly improved, and the level of violence has been sinking since the peace deal was signed, the peace deal in itself is in many ways frail. The Kroc Institute, which has been tasked with analyzing the implementation of the peace accord, concluded in a report in November 2017 that many immediate activities had been implemented or were on the way of being fully implemented. However, there are still several areas where significant change has to occur soon according to the report, such as security and protection measures for ex-combatants of FARC and the processing of legislative and administrative implementation priorities (Kroc Institute 2017:3pp). This situation, combined with the pause of the governmental peace talks with ELN due to the group killing five police officers in the city of Barranquilla (NPR 2018) are reminders that while Colombia has made important strides since the conflict ended, there are still many hurdles to overcome. A factor which also influences the debate on the peace accord is the current situation in Venezuela, where the growing economic and social turmoil has resulted in more than 470 000 Venezuelans fleeing to Colombia, which has spurred a debate from the Colombian opposition regarding the possible dangers with having a more left-leaning government after the election (Deutsche Welle 2018).

2.2 Post-conflict processes

Despite being a highly discussed topic for decades within the academia, the concept of post-conflict processes has many different definitions surrounding it. This is much due to the fact that post-conflict resolution and its content differs immensely from case to case, with different challenges to peace being the main priorities depending on which conflict it is. The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) (2004:12) defines post-conflict transition as:

> The period in a crisis when partnerships with the international
> community are most crucial in supporting or underpinning still

> fragile cease-fires or peace processes by helping to create
> conditions for political stability, security, justice and social equity.

While the UNDG's definition captures the fragility of the country facing post-conflict and the need for support from international actors, it fails to capture the "how" of ensuring that the process is not only successful but also incorporates different societal perspectives in order to be wholesome. It however resonates well with goal 16 from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) regarding the promotion of just, peaceful and strong institutions where several points lift the necessity to build capacity at all levels of society, ensure participatory decision-making and governance as well as transparency and accountability (UN 2018).

Panić (2008:5p) characterizes a country within a post-conflict process as a nation that usually has a low Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as well as a lower economic growth. This connects to what is usually a high unemployment rate due to insecurities both when it comes to the working sector in general, but also due to damaged structures within society concerning labor. Furthermore, Panić (2008:6p) argues that the conflicts that have taken place have created a worse reality for the countries in comparison to how they would have fared otherwise, listing Rwanda's drop in Human Development Index (HDI) being significantly higher than what would have happened had the genocide of 1994 not occurred.

Another challenge when it comes to post-conflict processes is corruption. Scholars such as Huntington (1968) and Harvey (2012) highlight that post-conflict countries are some of the more corrupt countries in the world at which point they reach post-conflict, which not only complicates the path to reaching long lasting peace, but also has a tendency to ignore the voices of persons which have suffered the most from the conflict. Specifically, Huntington (1968:60pp) argues that corruption seems to be at its peak when attempting to remodel the country after a violent conflict, due to for example new forces rising to power during the transitional period and that behavior once viewed as common practice becomes perceived as corruptive processes and action. Harvey (2012) further notes that the weakness of societal structures coupled with political liberalization concepts and policies, often introduced in a rushed manner, have a negative effect on actually getting to the core of the matter in the country. This specific discussion was actualized in the Colombian post-conflict process in April 2018, when Sweden, Norway and Switzerland, all donors to Colombian peace fund, wrote a letter to the Colombian government. In this letter, they greatly worried about possible corruption due to the lack of transparency and postponed payouts for the money in the fund, eventually resulting in the removal of the head of the fund (Reuters 2018).

2.3 Colombia and humanitarian action

Due to the internal conflict of Colombia, the country has for many years been a large recipient of developmental and humanitarian funds from multistate bodies, states and international non-governmental organizations. According to the UNOCHA database regarding humanitarian support for the Colombian crisis, 590 million United States (US) Dollars have been allocated by state and multi-state bodies between 2008 and 2017 (see figure 1), with a peak in 2014 of 88,9 million US Dollars and a downward trend in financing the latest years, with a bottom sum of 39,3 million US Dollars in 2017.

Figure 1: Humanitarian funds allocated to the Colombian crisis 2008-2017

Trends in reported funding

Source: FTS UNOCHA 2018
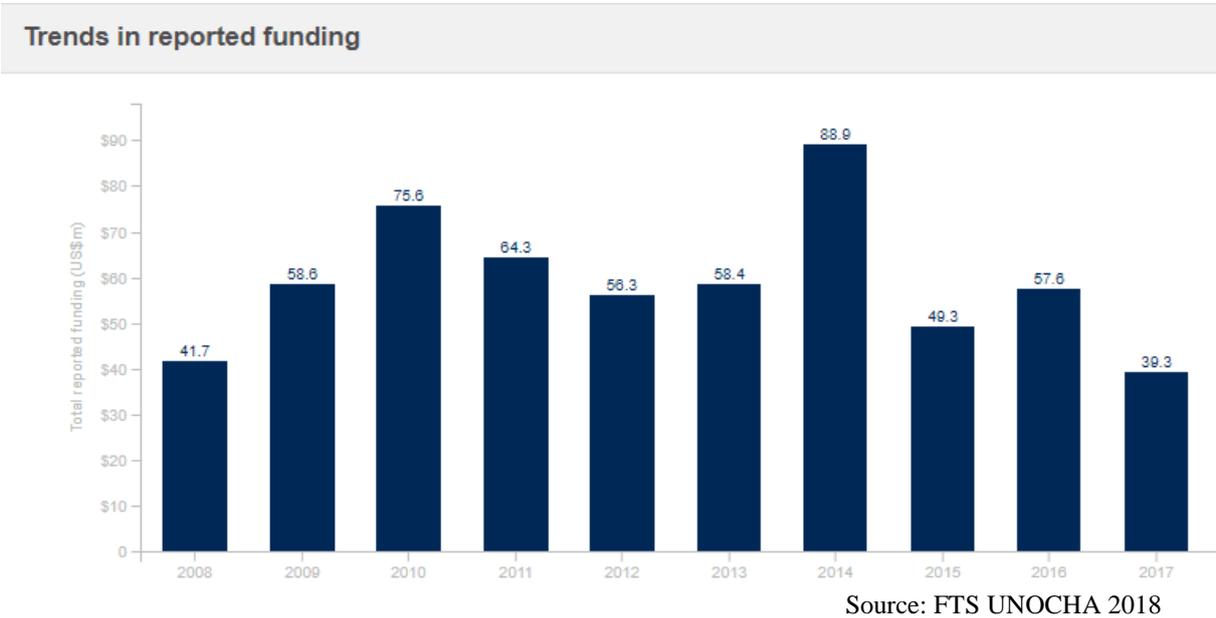
The main reasons for the year 2014 receiving the most funding during this time period seem to, according to an annual review, be because of displacement due to combats between FARC and military forces, confinements impacting the humanitarian needs of indigenous people in northern regions as well as water and food shortage affecting almost 200 000 people (UNOCHA Colombia Humanitarian Bulletin 2015). Otherwise, the level of humanitarian funds seems to have declined in accordance with the announcement of the peace negotiations between the Colombian government and FARC in 2012 (BBC 2012).

While the humanitarian funds have declined as the peace accord has been signed, the Humanitarian Response Plan 2018 for Colombia still pinpoints humanitarian challenges for the country. In the plan, UNOCHA lifts three main pillars that are prioritized for the humanitarian needs of Colombia: save and protect lives, prevent and mitigate protection risks as well as ensure early recovery and durable solutions (UNOCHA 2017a:9). UNOCHA (ibid)

thereby makes a connection between humanitarian assistance and peace building efforts, as they will "promote multisectoral actions to ensure stabilization and the effective guarantee of rights in the context of peace building". Thus, there seems to be a priority from UNOCHA to address the post-conflict process in Colombia via humanitarian efforts.

2.4 Conflict, post-conflict and humanitarian assistance

While connected through the suffering of the population, as well as the vulnerability and low level of resilience to cope with disasters, there is limited research that looks at humanitarian assistance in a country where both its conflict and post-conflict era is taken into account.

Looking at the spectrum on humanitarian action in conflict, the goal in most cases for is to support beneficiaries with food, shelter or other measures vital for the survival of the population. While this support is pivotal in order to sustain a vulnerable group with what they need, humanitarian aid in conflict can actually keep the conflict going on longer than it otherwise would. Neil Narang (2014:2p) finds that there are mechanisms within humanitarian assistance that could be factors in prolonging a conflict. This can be done by supplying warring parties with more resources than they would otherwise have had, sustaining the population with aid which enables the local authorities to put more money into the war. Kenyon Lischer (2003:80pp) similarly argues that impartial humanitarian action risks being a cause of decreased security for refugees and local residents as such funds can be used to strengthen and legitimize rebel movements or guerrillas.

In their article about health sector reparations in post-conflict settings, Kruk et al. (2010:89pp) sees one of the main missions for humanitarian organizations in post-conflict transitions to not only provide with acute support to vulnerable inhabitants, but also to support resilience and capacity building for the local government. Kruk et al. (ibid) for example lifts the important role that humanitarian organizations can play in post-conflict settings by helping to increase transparency and the accountability of the societal structures. They argue that humanitarian actors should strive to address pre-conflict inequities within the structures that need reparation in society, in order to support the country to combat the new challenges facing it.

The subject of creating resilience seems to be one of the most prominent ways in which humanitarian organizations are seen to play a role in post-conflict settings. UNOCHA Policy Development and Studies Branch (2011:5) for example mentions the concept of resilience in peacebuilding as humanitarians trying to build capacity to increase the population's ability to cope with future crises. However, there are several obstacles that humanitarian actors need to

address in order to do this effectively. For starters, there is usually a need for humanitarian actors to act quickly, even in settings where the acute situation has calmed down such as in a post-conflict setting, in order to address the main needs of the local population. Also, post-conflict settings are typically plagued by a tough economic situation, low amount of qualified human resources as well as political turmoil, creating a fractured state apparatus. Seeing that, there is a need for humanitarian actors to cooperate with authorities on analyzing prioritized needs, but also to see which competencies are needed to long-termly build a working societal structure where needs are addressed in the most efficient way. This goes in line with Panić's (2008:9) view on post-conflict handling, as he argues that external assistance to post-conflict countries can be effective only if it is based on a pragmatic assessment of what needs to be done and how, in order to ensure timeliness, effectiveness and appropriateness.

2.5 Post-conflict and reconciliation

Addressing reconciliatory points in a post-conflict process is important in order to heal the antagonistic relationships that have plagued the country during the conflict. Building on this, Brounéus (2008:12) defines reconciliation according to the following:

> Reconciliation is a societal process involving mutual acknowledgment of
> past suffering and the changing of destructive attitudes and behavior into
> constructive relationships toward sustainable peace.

Brounéus (ibid) further elaborates changes in emotion, attitude and behavior are necessary components for reconciliation to be successful. The IDEA (2003) handbook on post-conflict processes also singles out parts of a post-conflict process that is of significance for successful reconciliation. These processes are letting things take its time, balancing justice and impunity, and finally to facilitate reconciliation between different parties (IDEA 2003:97pp).

For many years, the main concept of post-conflict processes was focusing on punishing the perpetrators of the conflict, thereby reaching justice for the actions that have been committed and condemning the past of the country in order to start anew. The process of doing this is today known as transitional justice. This concept is according to Uprimny et al. (2003:2pp) a relatively new definition within the realm of post-conflict, as the importance of achieving justice after a conflict has been developing during the latter half of the 20th century.

Villa-Vicencio (2003:246pp) notes that there are three parameters that must be included when working in post-conflict contexts. He first mentions collective liability, arguing that the responsibility for reconciliation not only lies with the government but the entire population in

itself. Secondly, he mentions communal responsibility, which means looking critically at one's own actions during the conflict to locate behavior that could be seen as reinforcing injustices during the conflict, and acknowledge responsibility. Lastly, Villa-Vicencio (2003:248) mentions national reconciliation, which he interprets as a way to deal with the "many-layered spiral of interrelatedness" that is necessary to create a country lead by a new agenda. Firchow (2017:317) also argues that reparations to the affected Colombian population in terms of compensation and assistance could have a positive effect on the country, though these need to be performed in connection to reconciliatory efforts and not as an isolated tool.

In order to emphasize on the reconciliatory parts of the post-conflict process, it has become increasingly normal to initiate a truth commission. This is done to address former atrocities or acts against human rights and also to identify what has actually happened during the conflict. Truth commissions were first introduced in 1982 in Bolivia, as an attempt to bring peace and tranquility after a military rule. The concept spread to many other post-conflict countries in the 1980's, each process and each mandate of the commissions being different to tackle the challenges facing the nation (Brahm 2004).

The Colombian government has created a truth commission with the assignment of creating recommendations for the process going forward (Colombia Reports 2017). This commission, according to Ortiz (2017:43) will be challenged by the need to fill information gaps and unearth which violations have been committed by which party in the conflict, which are deemed crucial for legitimizing the process forward. Westendorf (2015:5) further argues that the peace process and the plans for it also needs to be context specific and shaped according to the societies capabilities, creating another challenge for the Colombian truth commission.

3 Theoretical framework

This chapter presents the theory used for this thesis, how it came about as a counterpart to the liberal peace theory as well as the components within the thesis that will be used to analyze the findings of the thesis. It also responds to criticism towards the theory, and includes reasons why the theory is relevant to use in the setting of the Colombian post-conflict process.

3.1 The liberal peace theory

As the world came out of the Cold War, international actors such as the UN and humanitarian organizations were optimistic about the trends of democratization that were on the rise in how to work in post-conflict settings. As explained by Richmond and Franks (2009:4), this led to:

> The liberal peace being conceptualised as being predicated upon the
> cornerstones of democratization, the rule of law, human rights, free
> and globalised markets, and neoliberal development.

Liberal peace theory, or liberalization, therefore states that the better you can integrate the key factors mentioned above, the more successful the peace transition will become (ibid). The concept of liberalization stems in large part from what Paris (2004:185) calls "Wilsonianism". The term was coined from the opinions of the 28th US president Woodrow Wilson, where he argued that the most important component for lasting peace was democratization and marketization within state legislature. This approach became highly influential within UN Practices especially within peace building missions, and was a key factor in liberalization becoming a popular concept after the end of the Cold War (ibid).

Despite the broad support and acceptance that the liberal peace theory received from the international community, much criticism to its efficiency has been raised. As Richmond and Franks (2009:9p) conveys, different parts of the liberal peace theory goes against itself, as for example the very expensive democratization process goes against the potential of economic reform, leading to inconsistencies. Thus, they question how the liberal peace theory have been able to reach the acceptance level as it has, referencing the broad academic research base that goes against the efficiency of the theory (ibid).

Seeing this, Richmond and Franks (2009:13) argue that peacebuilding through following the liberal peace theory is not suitable for the frame of statebuilding, and that it instead enforces the already existing state apparatus despite being deemed as a tool for emancipation and change (2009:173). They therefore conclude that statebuilding is a slow process which

requires focus on civil society, social welfare and institutions that engage with the populace at a local level to strengthen the applicability of how to work in the post-conflict process.

3.2 The IBL theory

The theoretical framework for this thesis will be grounded within Roland Paris's theory Institutionalization Before Liberalization (abbreviated IBL), which is presented in detail in Paris' book At war's end (2004). This theory was constructed by Paris (2004:7p) as a response to what he deemed to be the failure of the liberalization format of post-conflict settings, and focuses on ensuring that a country builds up sustainable institutions (such as departments, the judicial system and a welfare state) before democratic elections and changes within state law is made.

In order to determine the actual effects of liberalization, Paris (2004) conducted a study where he identified fourteen peace building missions from 1989 to 1999 that the UN had been involved with, and thereafter analyzing how liberalization had impacted the respective contexts. Within his study, he realized that though liberalization as a concept contains factors that are important to create a stable country (such as strengthened human rights laws and good governance), he also realized that these measures did little to help the countries to grow out of the problems that they had been facing within their conflicts (Paris 2004:151pp). Instead, he came to the conclusion that the liberalization discourse put a Westernized perspective, view and value on the conflicts, disregarding the perhaps long and arduous road that the liberal changes would have to face, and also ignoring the attitudes of both the populace of the country but also those ruling it (2004:4pp).

3.3 The six key elements of the IBL theory

Based on these findings, Paris (2004) instead theorized that focusing on institutionalization within the post-conflict settings would be of better use to the countries in question. Within this model, he lists six separate elements as key components to ensure an institutionalization of society, which will be briefly presented below. These are meant to work as counters for what Paris (2004:160) deems are the "five pathologies of liberalization" which he argues undermine the post-conflict process.

Within the first element of IBL, Paris (2004:188) argues that while elections historically have been promoted by peacebuilders in order to create stability, they rarely result in peaceful competition. This is especially true according to Paris (ibid) if a party opposing the government is against the way the peace transition has taken place, as such forces are prone to

undermine the process and instead appeal to fear and hatred towards the societal changes brought on by the peace agreement. Paris (ibid) therefore argues withholding elections until there is a guarantee for a successful vote, as well as ensuring that the political institutions can resolve conflicts that emerge from an election concerning the peace implementation. Within this thesis, this perspective will be used to analyze the political dimensions connected to the post-conflict process of Colombia, and how they affect the peace transition and the potential for humanitarian action to strengthen the post-conflict process. Special emphasis will be put on the fact that Colombia will have its first elections after the peace agreement in 2018, which actualizes this point.

For the second element, Paris (2004:191pp) argues the need to construct electoral systems that promote reconciliation among the electorate in order to decrease extremist behavior and conflict between societal groups (such as different ethnic groups or classes). Citing failures in the Bosnian post-conflict contexts, where its models of dividing the electorate ethnically reinforced societal division, Paris (2004) instead argues (ibid) that it is necessary to create political systems that make it necessary for candidates to gain support from a broad spectrum of the population. This will then, according to Paris (2004:194), lead to an increased credibility of those elected, as the new government will not only represent the interests of specific societal groups. In this thesis, this parameter will specifically identify possible differences in prioritization between different societal groups in Colombia, how the interviewees perceive these differences and what could be done to ensure the inclusion and prioritization of all societal groups.

The third element, the promotion of good civil society organization, is according to Paris (2004:194pp) necessary to promote organizations actively working with reconciliatory efforts and breaking down negative structures in society, while at the same time restraining the organizations whose work increases tensions between societal groups. This is seen as crucial by Paris (ibid), as the development of a civil society running activities in alignment with peace efforts could bring about positive changes that could be hard to achieve only from the government's efforts. Within this thesis, this point will be specifically used to identify if and how support to humanitarian organizations and their efforts are made by the Colombian government. This point will also include the perception of how the government deals with the remaining rebel groups of Colombia and how both of these parameters affect organizations' ability to carry out humanitarian assistance in the context.

The fourth element in the framework is about the country's press, and to suppress publications that are motivated by sensational journalism aimed at creating rifts between societal groups. This is a complicated point as Paris (2004:196pp) encourages censorship of hate while at the same time encouraging media to create standards of how to report news in the post-conflict setting. As the scope of this thesis does not specifically involve the role of media, this point will only be briefly touched upon in the analysis of this thesis, mostly limited to how media is used and can be used in order to report about the post-conflict processes.

For his fifth element, Paris (2004:199pp) argues that there are several factors that needs to be addressed in order to handle economic reforms in a post-conflict setting as sustainably as possible. These include delaying economic reforms until political stability has been achieved, increasing institutional capacity to reform markets and providing vulnerable groups of the population with dividends to create a feeling of the situation improving (ibid). This is done to both keep the support for the post-conflict process from the population's point of view, as they will have tangible proof that their situation is improving, while also providing the government with time to strategize how economic reforms can be carried out in the long run. For this thesis, these parameters will be linked with the humanitarian organizations' experience from the field, by identifying and analyzing the current economic and social context of their beneficiaries and what the organizations deem necessary to do in order for the situation to improve during the post-conflict process.

These five elements are connected to the sixth and final element, which according to Paris (2004:205p) is the need to reform state institutions, instead of prioritizing democratization and marketization. By stating this, he argues that these processes are not able to be effective without institutions carrying them out in a neutral and non-corruptive fashion, putting forward examples of court systems and developing a welfare state as key factors to cement before focusing on liberalization processes (ibid). As Paris (2004:207) sees this type of work as a lengthy and complicated matter, he believes this requires actors involved in the post-conflict process to plan five years ahead for the process' different steps and implementation, and which role each actor involved will fill in order to "create the necessary conditions for self-sustaining peace". This last point will be used in this thesis to explore how humanitarian organizations perceive the current Colombian governmental institutions, if and how prioritization on institutions are of significance for the post-conflict process and how the organizations could support the implementation process.

3.4 Other voices regarding institutionalization and post-conflict processes

Paris's (2004) IBL theory is one but several theories within the area of post-conflict processes and peace, and can be argued to be especially applicable to a context recently being out of an internal armed conflict as it focuses on how institutions not only must be strengthened in order to be able to implement the peace agreement, but also in order to create legitimization of the process in itself. This specific issue regarding legitimacy is seen as a pivotal point by Roberts (2008:546pp), who discusses two different approaches of instilling legitimacy for peace implementation: by creating a democratic legitimacy for the peace implementation and ensuring the performance quality of the institutions responsible for the implementation. Within this argument, he sees the positive perspectives with the democratic legitimacy approach, as this would provide both internal and external actors with the impression that the country has been able to vote for its future, thereby being able to "validate democracy" for the post-conflict context (ibid). Seeing this, Roberts (ibid) seems to favor a model where emphasis instead is put on enhancing the performance quality of the institutions, by stating that legitimacy for both the post-conflict process as well as the institutions responsible for it can only be achieved by actively supporting the improvement of the welfare state in a fashion where the citizens can distinguish that they are affected by the actions made by the institutions. He also notes the difficulty that external actors (such as humanitarian actors) face when it comes to successfully supporting the strengthening of institutions, as the main work within this field has to come from national actors in order to gain full legitimacy (2008:547).

Similarly to Roberts (2008), in their article about external actors and state-building, Krasner and Risse (2014:546pp) argue that there are three factors that are the most important regarding this area: legitimacy, task complexity and institutionalization. They further argue that the involvement and how well external actors can support the institutions is dependent on the relationship that the external actors have with the state. This is most likely to be successful, according to Krasner and Risse (2014:552), if the external actors are contracted in some way by the government, as this will cement a mutual cooperation and understanding about the actions necessary for creating institutional stability. This connects to Paris's (2004:6) argument that institutionalization and the stabilization that comes with it creates the foundation for liberalizing efforts to be carried out at a later stage, expressing the theory's relevance for analyzing how external actors such as those within the humanitarian sphere can work to strengthen a country's post-conflict process.

3.5 Criticism of the IBL theory

The IBL theory, though grounded in thorough analysis regarding where liberalization has failed, is not without its criticism. McGinty and Richmond (2013:101) for example argues that while IBL goes well with the concept of transitional justice, as this process focuses on a collection of activities meant to perform a transition to peace, the IBL perspective does not take into account competition over ownership and participation within the process. Hence, by going the institutionalizing route to sustainable peace, the authors mean that it can be difficult to take into account interests that may prolong or complicate how to build up the societal structures within the country.

Another criticism of the IBL theory comes from Williams (2005:170), where he criticizes the economic perspectives (or lack thereof) within the IBL model. He does this by acknowledging that the IBL model does not take into account academic facts from the realm of political economy, such as the different ways that a state's economic system can be liberalized. Williams (2005) also argues that the IBL model does not address how to resolve territorial disputes, as the model does not provide information on how to govern territories that might be subject to division or independence.

Both arguments are however countered by Paris (2004:210) due to what he argues is the theory's emphasis on longevity and strategy, as he means that his theory allows a state to put aside time to figure out the most feasible plan for the peace implementation. Therefore, the state will be able to include different parameters such as territory and different ways of building an economic system, as well as ensuring that they neither create a process that could prolong interests nor create culture of dependency from outside actors (Paris 2004:209).

3.6 Applicability and usage of the theory within this study

The theory of IBL is deemed relevant for this research for several reasons. For starters, the Colombian civil war had been going on for more than 50 years before the peace agreement was signed, resulting in much devastation. The notion of therefore focusing on building up societal structures and addressing inequalities within society could therefore be an interesting way of approaching the post-conflict process of Colombia. Secondly, as pointed out by Paris (2004:6), post-conflict processes that took place in the 90's show that while priorities from a liberalization point of view have allowed strides forward, there are still structural issues within the countries that have yet to be resolved. By therefore applying this theory, necessary priorities for the Colombian context could be discerned, pinpointing in the possible impact

that humanitarian actors can have in this setting and how their contextual experience and expertise could improve the odds of a sustainable peace taking place in Colombia.

The IBL theory will be an important tool for several reasons within this thesis. First of all, it will provide a framework for creating interview guides for the different types of interviews conducted within the study (see Annex 2-3 for the interview guides) in order to identify questions that will provide opportunities to identify the existing Colombian institutional structures and their ability to implement the Colombian peace process. By doing this, the interviews will unearth which institutions that are present within the implementation and if and how the humanitarian actors interviewed perceive that these institutions need to be prioritized, or if liberalization components in the country need to be focused on primarily.

Secondly, the theory will be of importance during the coding of the material gathered by primary interviews, as the elements within the theory will help to discern answers that can be grouped together within thematic areas. Through that process, it will be possible to identify trends and patterns within the answers that could provide answers to the research questions of the thesis. This will therefore provide the chapter containing the results of the thesis with headlines that embody the main findings of the thesis.

Finally, the theory will be used in order to produce the analysis of this thesis. This will be done by comparing the headlines from the findings with the six key elements lifted within Paris's theory to interpret the findings from these perspectives, in order to do constructive and critical analysis of the theory and its alignment with the results of this study.

4 Methodology

In this chapter, the research methods of this thesis will be explained, including data gathering, respondent sampling and the scope of the interviewed group. Additionally, reasonings regarding the validity and reliability of the study, as well as ethical concerns and limitations, will be presented.

4.1 Research method

This thesis's analysis is based on primary data gathered from interviews of humanitarian actors operating in Colombia, which have been conducted by the researcher. For the data gathering, seven interviews were conducted with six international humanitarian organizations and one embassy in Colombia, in order to collect perceptions regarding how humanitarian action can strengthen the post-conflict process of Colombia. Seeing this, the study approach is of an emic nature, as it attempts to collect information based on what those involved within the context, insiders, think about the situation (Bailey et al. 2010:18p). By the end of the interviewing, a level of saturation was reached due to the last respondents lifting roughly the same issues as previous respondents had before. As Kvale and Brinkmann (2009:113) state that interviews can reach saturation after five interviews, it was deemed that the responses from these seven interviews were enough to properly analyze the thesis's research questions.

The interviews were conducted through two different standardized interview guides (See Annexes 2-3) that had been created for each type of respondent through the means of qualitative research methods. While several of the questions were unique for each interview group, most of the questions were identical in order to make the process of analyzing the material easier and clearer. Originally, three interview guides were created to also include Colombian humanitarian organizations. However, as no Colombian organization ended up taking part within the study, the third interview guide was discarded.

4.2 Choosing the participating organizations

The process of choosing which organizations to contact for the study was carried out in several steps. First, the researcher created a list of international humanitarian actors active in Colombia, as well as a smaller sample of Colombian organizations involved in humanitarian assistance. The organizations on the list were thereafter validated to be relevant by the University of Javeriana in Bogotá as well as the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation (SweFOR), both highly involved and knowledgeable within the sector in Colombia, which also added a few organizations to the list. This process helped in increasing the reflexivity of

the study, which Bailey et al. (2010:20) describes as the researcher's ability to reflect on how his or her background and assumptions affect the study.

Afterwards, the organizations were contacted by means of email, where a signed letter from the University of Javeriana was attached (see Annex 4 for a template of the letter). Sending an official letter is argued by Goldstein (2002:671) as a very important part to receive a positive response on the interview request, though for it to be successful it needs to clearly state the aim of the study, the time estimation for the interview and clear contact information to the student and the thesis supervisor.

Six out of eleven international organizations, one out of six embassies and zero out of three Colombian organizations were willing to proceed with being interviewed, which meant that interview sessions were separately booked and carried out by the interviewer. Each interview was anonymized during the process of transcription by each organization receiving a number as the only point of reference. This process is according to Dumay and Qu (2011:254) a key issue, especially when interviewing persons representing an organization, in order to protect the persons taking part. Each organization was before the interview informed about this process, as well as how their statements and responses would be used within the thesis.

4.3 The scope of the interviewed group

When gathering data from respondents, there are positives and negatives regarding how the respondent group looks like. If the group is relatively homogenous, which in this case for example could mean working within the same humanitarian cluster or in the same geographical region, the chances of the variety of responses being narrowed down would increase. This is further emphasized by Duan et al. (2015:3), who claim that responses from homogenous groups tend to result in a simpler process of analysis which focuses on similarities instead of understanding a broader picture. For this thesis however, it was decided that it would be most beneficial for the thesis if the organizations represented different fields. The reasons for this are several. By gathering opinions and perceptions from a broad group of respondents, the received perspectives regarding the post-conflict process can show a more diverse picture of how involved actors and certain groups within societies are affected by or perceive the post-conflict situations. This line of method is argued by Kaufman (1986:187p) to be viable in qualitative research, as this allows the researcher to view a phenomenon through a wide range of perspectives in order to understand their joint reality. This therefore allows for a more complete picture of the needs present within the Colombian context, and

therefore also how humanitarian assistance can play a role in meeting those needs. As the original plan was for Colombian NGOs to be included in the thesis as well, the fact that no such organization wanted to be interviewed limits the thesis to include only the perceptions of international humanitarian actors. While this limits the scope of the study somewhat, nearly all respondents taking part explained their close collaboration with Colombian organizations and the challenges they face, resulting in an inclusion of this perspective as well, albeit from a secondary party.

4.4 The choice between a qualitative or quantitative approach

For this thesis, a qualitative approach to gathering data was chosen, by carrying out the interviews with the different organizations and thereafter analyze them. The reason for choosing the qualitative approach was however not obvious. A quantitative approach could also have been a viable option for this research, as focus instead could have been on creating a statistical analysis on what the organizations think of specific actions and priorities that humanitarian action could do to strengthen the Colombian post-conflict process. This would be a measure which Bailey et al. (2010:16p) point out would be highly relevant to use quantitative methods for. While this is a handy characteristic of quantitative approaches, it also carries with it some downsides. While surveys produce a lot of data that is easily measured, it lacks the possibility of deeper interpretation on a subject, which Bailey (2010:17) argues instead is a characteristic of qualitative research. Bailey (ibid) also notes that quantitative research requires a large group of participants within the study in order to produce statistical data, which was deemed unsuitable for this study as the number of organizations participating would be insufficient to produce quantitative results.

As this thesis is mostly directed towards the perceptions that the interviewed organizations have regarding the impact of humanitarian action in post-conflict Colombia, it requires a method that allows extended explanations in order to pinpoint the clear opinion of the interviewee. Bailey et al. (2010:9) argue that qualitative research methods meet this requirement, as "the approach allows you to identify issues from the perspective of your study participants, and understand the meanings and interpretations that they give to behavior, events or objects". A tool that significantly helps in this regard is the ability to ask follow up questions or probes. Bailey et al. (2010:113) sees using probes as a way for the interviewer to receive further elaboration on a subject to get the complete perception of the interviewee, thereby increasingly understanding the perspective of the person interviewed. This happened several times during the interviews, which allowed for clearer explanations from the

respondents perspective and a clearer understanding of the subject for the researcher. Seeing this, the approach of using qualitative methods to collect the data is deemed appropriate in order to fulfill the aim and purpose of this thesis.

Qualitative methods such as the one used within this study are, according to Bailey et al. (2010:19p) prone to be subjective to the persons being interviewed, as perceptions of a phenomenon are mainly grounded in personal experiences. In order to diminish the level of subjectivity to the largest extent possible, the questionnaire for the interviews purposely phrased the questions to focus on the perception of the organization that the person represented, rather than the perceptions of the specific person. This allowed for the interviewee to elaborate on the question based on the organization's specific experiences. Though this method most likely did not eliminate subjectivity completely, there is reason to believe that this helped the interviewees become representations of the view of their organization rather than from their own personal perspective.

4.5 Method of analyzing primary data through interviews

For this thesis, the method of thematic analysis is used in order to understand and put together patterns within the primary data that has been obtained through the conducted interviews. Thematic analysis, as argued by Braun and Clarke (2006:6), is "a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" which enables the researcher to distinguish where the different respondents' perceptions coincide with each other. It is a common method used within qualitative research in order to for the researcher to actively identify the most commonly mentioned and emphasized topics related to the analysis.

In this particular case, the different subjects brought up by the respondents were singled out in order to determine the different subjects. These findings were thereafter grouped together based on their similarities to each other. For example, where one respondent spoke about capacity building towards civil society organizations and another one talked about training social movements, these were grouped together due to the meaning of the statements being the same or close to the same. After this process was finished, the different groups received names reflecting the content of each group, such as "Building capacity for civil society organization". In some instances, these groups were divided into subgroups in instances where the respondents shared more specific statements about a group, such as "Capacity building to civil society organizations about the peace accords". These groups are what partly

constitute the "Results" chapter of this thesis, and are thereafter analyzed by help of the six different elements of the IBL theory.

4.6 Reliability and validity of the study

The concepts of reliability and validity are originally constructed from the quantitative school of data gathering. Seeing that, Lewis and Ritchie (2003:270p) argue that for these concepts to be properly translated into a context where qualitative methods are used, they need to be reshaped into what they call confirmability, i.e. the possibility to confirm the correctness of the results of the study based on the surveyed context. As the results of the data gathering goes in line both with the challenges presented by the Colombian peace accords, as well as with the theory of institutionalization before liberalization, there seems to be a level of confirmability within this thesis.

Judging on the reliability of the respondents that have taken part in is difficult, especially since the researcher had no former connection to some of the interviewed respondents. Leung (2015) argues that the essence of reliability lies in its consistency in how it was retrieved and how it was verified to be relevant within the context. In this thesis, the researcher used pre-existing organizational contacts which were used to gain the confidence of the respondents, which are deemed to strengthen the reliability of the respondents' answers. This proved to be a good way of providing a confidence from the respondents to provide the interviewer with their honest opinions and perceptions of the questions asked. A factor further enabling this was the official document attached from the University of Javeriana during the first contact, cementing credibility for the research. Goldstein (2002:671) argues that while pre-existing contacts should be used in order to increase the chance of being successful in carrying out the interview, though the researcher needs to ensure that the sample of interviewees does not limit the study based on its scope.

Berry (2002:680) argues that in order for a research to minimize that information is interpreted in an erroneous way, there is a necessity to have multiple interviewees confirming the situation, moving the interviewee away from his or her own perspective and focus on interview questions with a higher level of payoff. This approach has been highly influential within the gathering of information during the thesis, to ensure that the information meets the aim of the thesis. Preparing for the interviews, the researcher read up on the organizations' activities and the goal of the organizations work in Colombia in order to avoid being confused or misled in interpreting the interviewee. This is a pivotal part in data gathering, as this will

make it easier to identify what parts within the interview that are subjective and what parts in which the interviewee is objective towards the information provided (Berry 2002:681).

Putting all these different factors together, as well as comparing the answers from the interviews with the previous research that have been conducted on the subject, the study shows several arguments that attest to the reliability of the data that has been produced (Lewis and Ritchie 2003:270pp).

In order for a thesis or a study to be considered valid, there are several parameters to take into account. Lewis and Ritchie (2003:273pp) argue that in order for a study to excel in validity, there needs to be a clear understanding of what is studied and a comprehensive interpretation on how to analyze the gathered data. As the subject of the study focuses on if and how humanitarian assistance can strengthen the Colombian peace process, and the interviewed respondents are humanitarian actors involved within the Colombian post-conflict process, it is clear that the subject has been understood and that the gathered data is applicable. This is apparent as the interviewed organizations were pinpointed by the researcher in collaboration with several persons that were knowledgeable within the field of humanitarian action and peace in Colombia.

The transcription of interviews and how it is performed are elements that can impact the validity of the research. In order for transcription to successfully validate the data, Nikander (2008:225) argues that the data must be written down in a way which allows "a highly detailed and accessible representation of the phenomenon". Measures were therefore taken in order to decrease the risk of losing material from the interviews. All interviews were recorded through a mobile device, which was afterwards used to go through the entire recording and write word for word what was said during the interview. During the interviews, the researcher also took notes on what was said in order to remember the different dynamics and responses of the interview. The interview was thereafter transcribed fully within the next 24 hours in order to complete the transcription and to be able to have full focus on the next interview that were to be conducted. Seeing this, there are several points which collectively build a case for the validity of this thesis.

4.7 Limitations and ethical concerns

There were several elements of the data gathering which posed limitations on the study. The first was the language of the interviews conducted. As the language of this thesis is set to English, those participating in interviews were asked to relay their responses in English,

which five respondents did. For several interviewed persons, this did not constitute a limitation in their answer due to their advanced ability to convey their perceptions in the English language. This was however not the case for all participants, as they sometimes struggled with responding to the questions during the interview. Before the interview, they were therefore provided with the opportunity to partly respond in Spanish if they could not express themselves to their own content, which some of them used. This allowed for potential information that would possibly not have been relayed to manifest itself through the Spanish language, which was possible due to the interviewers advanced apprehension of Spanish. This is however still deemed as a limitation of the study, as it impacted the ability for all answers to be given from the same mastery of the language the interview was conducted in.

In interviews where the interviewees did not have enough knowledge of the English language, the interviews were conducted in Spanish. This also poses somewhat of a limitation on the study, as the ability of the interviewer, while well versed in the Spanish language, to convey the response in an exact translation could have affected the quality of the response in its translated format. This was however mitigated partly due to the fact that the interviews were recorded and therefore possible to go through once more to discern if any details were missing in the transcript of the interview.

Another ethical concern regarding the contact with the organizations was the issue of establishing the researcher role and the limitations that the role entails. This meant ensuring that the respondent understood the reason why they were interviewed and the position of the interviewer, which are factors lifted by Woliver (2002:677p) as essential to avoid unnecessary ethical dilemmas. Also, before the actual interview took place, this information was once again relayed to the organization to remind it of the preconditions of the interview and the opportunity to elect not to participate. No organization however chose to do so, and all the interviews were then carried out.

5 Results

This section will present the results of the qualitative interviews conducted within this thesis, showing their main thematic findings. As previously described in the Methodology chapter, seven interviews were conducted international actors involved within humanitarian work, the post-conflict process or both. Based on these interviews, seven different thematic areas were identified connecting humanitarian action and the Colombian post-conflict process.

5.1 The need to combat corruption

One of the common subjects that the interviewees brought up was the corruption within different parts of the Colombian society, and how it impacted beneficiaries of humanitarian operations. Respondent 2 reasoned according to the following: "The country has perfect laws I think, it's one of the best laws in place that can exist. [It's] just not implemented". This statement provides a picture that while Colombia theoretically has created a good foundation when it comes to laws concerning democracy and human rights, it seems to lack the transparency and the willpower to shape its institutions in order for these laws to be adhered to. This is further emphasized by Respondent 1 claiming the following:

> You could debate the quality of Colombian democracy, but the fact that
> it is a democratic country (…) is not being questioned, it is one of Colombia's
> prouds. When all the South American was having military regimes and
> dictatorships, Colombia had a democratic government. What you could
> question is the quality of that democracy that lead 250 [thousand] people
> dead and 60 000 disappeared.

Another difficulty related to corruption is according to some respondents the handling of public funds. As Colombia is regarded as a middle-high income country as well as running a candidacy for joining the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the financial means of the Colombian government are substantial and has the potential to cover the basic needs of its population. However, this does not seem to be the case according to the respondents. Respondent 1 claims the following:

> So there are resources, at least at the national level. The problem is
> they don't get to the regions. In Chocó it is the completely different. (…)
> If you go to the rural areas you will find that there are deficiencies like
> there is no access to sanitation, there are no hospitals. These are zones
> where a lot of afro communities and indigenous communities live.

Respondent 6 paints a similar picture when it comes to funds that are supposed to be allocated to the implementation of the peace agreement.

> The fund for peace that is precisely from Norway, well from several
> countries that gave resources for the post-conflict. The issue is that they
> have disappeared (…). There is an investigation of the funds where it is,
> [because] they have disappeared. So if you understand me, you can use
> the government to make the laws so that there is a fund, but the truth is
> that in the territory you do not pay attention, that money never comes.

Here, it seems that the mechanisms assuring that the money meant for implementation of the accords are not directed where they should be, or in fact completely disappearing as they are handled within the institutional apparatus of the government. This is also highlighted by the governmental authorities having marginal presence in many of the regions, which limits the capacity of ensuring that the funds actually reach intended goals. Respondent 7 also feels that these issues regarding corruption heavily threaten the implementation of the peace agreement.

> The process is already there, but after the agreement it will not continue
> to succeed. Because the percentage of implementation is minimum.
> Already (…) the peace agreement goes to half capacity at a low speed.
> More (…) money are lost by corruption, if the high mantles of the
> FARC continue to do jobs, continue in drug trafficking, then I think the
> peace process will not succeed. The post-conflict will not do very well.

This sentiment is shared by Respondent 6, who worries that the support from the international community to the peace implementation will decrease due to both the corruption of funds meant for the post-conflict process.

> They planned the funding for post-conflict and it's really ambitious
> because it says the 80% must come from state budget, but we all know
> that there is no money for that and they can't do any tax reform because
> they done one two years ago that was very criticized (…). There is
> no money now and there is no possibility to gain new money so the
> government is working only with 11% that corresponds to international
> cooperation and this is the only money that has been seen.

This image therefore contrasts the picture that the Colombian government wants to communicate regarding the Colombian economy's development and its ability to sustainably carry out the implementation plan for the peace accord. This is turn also supports the

organizations' claim that the Colombian government is not capable of handling the humanitarian needs held within the post-conflict process due to the lacking state funds.

Respondent 6 therefore believes that humanitarian organizations should be connected to the money allocated for the post-conflict process. This to guarantee that the funds do not disappear without any activities being carried out, but also because of the difference in trust and contextual knowledge that humanitarian organizations have compared to the government.

> We really think that humanitarian action is absolutely necessary in this
> period of transition. (…) We have an experience on those territories that
> have been forgotten for years, and the government has no presence and no
> experience in that zone. (…) We have a knowledge, a know-how and we
> have the trust of the communities, and I think those three issues (…) are
> the main issues why the government must support the NGOs.

Connecting to the quote, Respondent 6 therefore argues that a way to combat corruption in the implementation of the peace agreement is to involve humanitarian organizations to a larger degree. This also goes in line with a comment Respondent 2, explaining that humanitarian organizations have an innate accountability mechanism within their work.

> Development organizations doesn't have the same kind of
> accountability mechanisms like we do in the humanitarian summit.
> We do have coordination mechanism, the humanitarian coordinator
> is held accountable for the coordination of the humanitarian action
> and we can always go back and say that these things are not working.

Seeing this, humanitarian actors could therefore be not only a tool in order to more efficiently support the government's duty to implement the peace agreement, but they could also be a guarantee to decrease corruption. This could in turn be a factor in increasing the resources to remote and rural settings, paving the way for a greater opportunity for developing structures and services that are missing throughout parts of the country.

Respondent 3 also lifts that humanitarian organizations and other civil society organizations can perform another function when it comes to tackling the corruption.

> The process has an official monitoring tool in hands of the United
> Nations. This is okay, we have said we recognize this work, it's
> wonderful. But, it's very important that the civil society organizations
> in the regions organize own instruments to follow the peace
> agreement's implementation because when the state's instruments

> realized the work, from time to time, they avoid critics. (…) The
> government is not very happy with critics, (…) but it is necessary.

This kind of function could therefore, according to Respondent 3, serve as a complimentary tool to support the established monitoring function from the UN (UN 2016:1p), and perhaps have more of a regional focus that could identify gaps within the peace implementation.

Finally, another worry connected to corruption is "that people are really afraid, especially those governing the country, of the truth, what happened during the conflict", as expressed by Respondent 2. The process of the Colombian truth commission is therefore not only seen as important by the respondents, but also pivotal when it comes to keeping the motivation within the population, or as Respondent 2 phrases it, "the spirit of peace".

5.2 Strengthening the legitimacy of the peace process

Several of the questions concerned the organizations' relation to the peace process and what they deem humanitarian organizations should do in order to strengthen the peace process. While the organizations were positive about the peace process, there were several points that were raised concerning the work to legitimize the peace process in the country.

First of all, while the Colombian conflict had been ongoing for many decades, a great difficulty arose for humanitarian actors and peace actors during the mid-2000's, as then president Álvaro Uribe declared that there was no internal armed conflict in Colombia, instead branding the guerrilla groups as narco terrorists. Respondent 3 describes the situation during this time as the following:

> This was very difficult for our work. I think during this part of our
> work, it was very important to say all time that we need to recognize
> the internal armed conflict and for this reason, legitimize the vigencia
> [validity] of the IHL, the international humanitarian law, because if
> your government doesn't recognize the internal armed conflict, it's
> very probable that you forget international humanitarian law.

Seeing this statement, the humanitarian as well as the development organizations in many instances had to work in disadvantageous conditions, where peacebuilding activities were difficult to carry out and get finances for. This reality however seems to have changed after electing Juan Manuel Santos as the Colombian president, as explained by Respondent 3:

> After this, during the years of Santos president, there was a very
> important change. Santos recognized the internal armed conflict. This

> was, I remember more or less four or five months after he took the
> position of the chair, we recognized that here exists an internal armed
> conflict and the guerrilla is an organization that rebels, no narco
> terrorism. (…) We were very happy with this attitude.

This statement from Santos led according to Respondent 3 to immediate accolades from the civil society. However, as the official attitude regarding the internal armed conflict had been actively communicated as terrorism for several years, this statement has been met with much criticism, not only from the opposition, but also from a large portion of the population. This has been very relevant for the humanitarian organizations active in Colombia, and some respondents argue that one of the most important activities for the context is to strengthen the legitimacy of the peace process. The main issue is explained by Respondent 3:

> The (…) problem for us is a problem about the legitimacy of the peace.
> [The parties of the right] are [a] coalition in this moment that puts a
> very important focus on the peace agreements like a problem for the
> country. In their opinion, the peace agreement obtained by Santos
> president and the FARC guerrilla are synonymous for
> Castro-Chavismo model for Colombia.

This rhetoric is perceived by the respondents as a danger to the peace accords being carried out. According to Respondent 3, the opposition has fuelled this discussions with statements saying that the peace agreement "implies a gender ideology putting in risk the masculinity of the people in Colombia", as it has wordings on how women and LGBTQ persons that have been affected by the conflict need to be taken into consideration specifically.

Seeing this, the fact that Colombia in 2018 faces a presidential election worries several of the respondents regarding what will happen to the implementation of the peace agreement. Respondent 7 expresses the following concern about the peace agreement and the risks it might face due to the election:

> A very big challenge I think is the presidential elections. (…) Because
> there are ultra-right candidates and there are ultra-left candidates, it
> makes it difficult. (…) The theme of the presidency in Colombia I
> think is carrying a strong transition here.

While the respondents claim that there is no party that wants to go back on the peace agreement completely, the resistance towards several parts of the agreement during the latest

years may prove to be trying for the legitimacy of the agreement. This worries some of the respondents, as their own operations might be affected.

The humanitarian actors have therefore in many instances taken upon themselves to carry out activities informing the general public and specific target groups about the content of the peace accord, and the rights guaranteed by it to groups affected by the conflict. Respondent 7 lifts children as such a group, feeling that their needs are underrepresented in the peace agreement.

> The peace agreement is one of the most complete in the world. But I
> think there is a little more missing from the theme of children, to
> strengthen the issue of children's rights, preparing victims but also tell
> an account to the children. (…) All projects that are said in the
> agreement are focused as persons but there are no projects for the children.

This view is shared by Respondent 4, who has started initiatives specifically directed towards education of the peace deal to children.

> Education is the most, the area from which we can contribute to create
> more durable solutions in children and youth affected by conflict. (…)
> Doing these interventions, peace education promoting inclusive
> education, promoting, inclusion and peace culture in general is like a
> great challenge here in Colombia regarding going forward towards peace.

Respondent 4 therefore argues that "durable solutions" are what the country needs in order to transition in a sustainable manner to peace.

> Durable solutions has to be the framework and that might include
> income generating activities, access to education, access to vocational
> training (…) and also changing the culture of violence that is all around
> here in Colombia. (…) When I talk about durable solutions, I talk about
> generating opportunities for communities that have been affected by
> conflict over decades. (…) Like supporting development interventions
> to generate income, to create capacities, because (…) the peace process
> has been linked to poverty in Colombia, so communities that have been
> affected by conflict have also been affected by poverty and they have had
> no opportunity to grow and that is something that continues.

By supporting educational activities about the peace deal, which has become a prerequisite for the Colombian ministry of education due to the peace accords, and creating activities to increase the opportunities of the affected population, humanitarian organization therefore

have a void to fill which the government has not been able to. This sentiment is echoed by several respondents as they mean it is pivotal for humanitarian actors and governmental actors to work together. Respondent 3 argues:

> I think one thing that is very important in this moment are continued
> work about pedagogical spread about the peace agreement, because
> remember I mentioned the problem of the legitimacy. It is necessary
> that partners, the Colombian government, the parties involved in the
> peace agreement work jointly in the region to promote that the society
> knows very well the peace agreement to avoid the false visions about
> the peace agreement.

By arguing the above, the respondent sees a clear cut path for humanitarian organizations to be resources in informing about the peace agreement, but also educating victims of the internal armed conflict about the rights guaranteed to them in the peace agreement. As such, these are activities more inclined to be operated from a longer term perspective, instead of short term humanitarian efforts that have traditionally been humanitarian actors' main focus.

5.3 Addressing the root causes of the conflict

> I don't think that from the state here in Colombia there is a understanding of
> going to the roots of the problem. No, because in the speech of the
> government, [they say] there's peace, there's peace and Santos (…) was
> more interested in winning the Noble Prize. But then in the end, all the
> roots of the conflict, nobody's doing nothing about the roots.

As seen by the statement from Respondent 4, humanitarian organizations operating in Colombia still see several actions of the current government as undermining the possibilities of humanitarian assistance to be able to have the effect that it preferably should have. A key reason for this seems that there is a lack of understanding of the current situation and the mechanisms causing guerrilla groups to continue spreading violence within rural regions, as the government has chosen to focus on communicating the successful Colombian peace process instead of prioritizing those still living within a conflict setting. Several of the lifts the lack of priority of the government as not only a continuous reason for them to be on the ground in affected regions of Colombia, but also how the successful peace rhetoric is affecting the view donors and states have of the humanitarian situation in Colombia. Respondent 1 lifts one of the instances in which this results in problems for the humanitarian sector to get funds and work in the long-term in Colombia:

> For the last years the problem was that the international community sees Colombia as a successful case of peacebuilding, neglecting the humanitarian situations that require attention. For example, the Colombian government is not very keen on asking for help and also Colombia is on the way of entering the OECD. It is expected that before President Santos leaves office in August the process will be finalized. So it is not acceptable that a country that is in the OECD is receiving humanitarian funds.

This analysis is also emphasized by Respondent 2, who criticizes the Colombian government's lack of priority within the domestic humanitarian issues and how this is affecting the possibility of addressing the root causes on the ground:

> [Colombia] is an upper-middle income country, the government should have the money but it's not, it goes to corruption to different levels, and it is not implementing on the areas that are affected by the internal conflict and now will be affected by the Venezuelan crisis. We are supposed to be on a post-conflict reconstruction era, with new types of conflictivities [sic!] but with new actors. I think that people are realizing that the same landgrabbing and environmental crisis for the root causes for the whole conflict, it's just different actors and a bit more visible again with human rights defenders being killed.

While the conflict between the Colombian government and FARC has reached its end through the peace accords, the violence is still prevalent within several areas around Colombia, especially in the regions of Chocó and Arauca. Here, there have not been many changes for the local population since the formal conflict ended. Respondent 2 expresses that "[t]he conflict hasn't ended exactly. When the situation with FARC ended, then there were immediately new actors, so the situation for the communities actually didn't reduce".

This is further emphasized by Respondent 7, who not only sees it as problematic that new armed groups have arisen after the peace agreement, but also what kind of ramifications this has meant for the humanitarian sector in terms of access to beneficiaries and establishing a relationship with the new armed group to carry out the humanitarian work.

> The issue is that although the government made a peace agreement with FARC, the problem is that Colombia has other armed actors present, such as ELN that there is a special negotiation but we also have the paramilitaries, they have occupied the land that the FARC was in. It is true that there are territories where armed conflict is still very active. So the first challenge will be how to work now with these new illegal

armed groups because the FARC respected the work of the international
organizations. These new groups do not.

Thus, there is an apparent need for humanitarians to take the responsibility that the Colombian government has not yet done, by supplying necessary items and services to the affected populations. However, being able to actually work with addressing the root causes in order to create a long-term stability within the regions the humanitarian actors are operating in is seems to be increasingly difficult. The main reason for this is due to the changed financial environment for humanitarian assistance within Colombia, which according to some interviewees has been an ongoing trend since 2012. This has resulted in UNOCHA deciding to close the Humanitarian Fund for Colombia and leave the country. Respondent 7 phrases it like this:

> Well, a big challenge we are facing I think (…) is that the humanitarian
> architecture of the country is changing. I do not know if you know, but
> OCHA who does all the humanitarian coordination is leaving the country.
> It is coming out precisely because we are in a post-conflict issue. (…)
> I think that if it leaves, many organizations will begin to duplicate efforts
> or do not know the context.

With this situation, having the opportunity and financial means to work with addressing root causes for the humanitarian actors have been severely limited after the peace negotiations. Respondent 6 describes the situation accordingly:

> One of the main worries is that the money that we are getting from
> donors are only for two or three years and this process of transition
> needs money, big money, for 15 years at least. Because people in those
> communities that has been affected by conflict, that have suffered a lot
> and have a lot of needs, they need tangible things that can alleviate the
> main needs, infrastructure, health, education, access to opportunities, a
> lot of things for courts, food security and access to markets.

When asked what possible methods the respondents see which could have an impact on the current situation, the common denominator which they all touched upon was a close contact between humanitarian organizations and governmental bodies to both inform the government of the challenges, but also find means which would allow the organizations to pass on context specific knowledge. Respondent 1 expresses this need in the following fashion:

> I think it should be focused on a hand over of capacities between the
> humanitarian actors and the government and the development

> cooperation actors. (…) They are now realizing that it is not this linear
> but it is a cycle, and you can fall back backwards at any point. What we
> are trying to do here is we are conscious that the first two years after the
> signing of a peace agreement are the most fragile ones.

By doing this, Respondent 1 argues, there could be a greater understanding from the actors that will be present within the context when the time comes for humanitarian actors to leave after the fulfillment of their role.

As a final note on this subject, Respondent 2 cites the development in Guatemala after its peace process as a reminder of the risks of returning to the situation before the peace agreement if the root causes are not properly addressed. Colombia therefore has to be on the alert for such trends and ensure that the factors highlighted as major points to address in the post-conflict process are not forgotten or pushed to the side.

> In Guatemala, you have conflict, you have peace agreement, you have
> peace process and now you are back in a conflict context again, affected
> maybe from the regional challenges that are not necessarily directly from
> the same causes, but the new dynamics that are again affecting the
> vulnerable communities. (…) People are afraid that the same things is
> happening again and people are normally more afraid of what will happen,
> (…) we lived through it all and now it is coming back again.

5.4 Advocating for preventive activities and long-term support

Relating to the previous point regarding donors mostly wanting humanitarian actors to conduct lifesaving activities, there are inclinations that suggest that prevention and early warning initiatives are not being supported to the extent necessary. Since the humanitarian situation within several regions of Colombia has barely changed after the peace agreement was signed, the necessity to build resilience and strengthen the capability of the communities are actions most respondents claim they would rather be working with, as those actions are deemed more appropriate to deal with the long-term perspective.

Similarly, the humanitarian community of Colombia had warned donors and governments of the imminent risk of a refugee crisis from Venezuela that would affect Colombia and its humanitarian landscape. However, financial means to prevent or decrease the impact of a future refugee crisis were according to Respondent 2 limited, which resulted in the humanitarian community being much less prepared when the refugee crisis actually happened.

> Prevention is the ideal, that is actually something that humanitarian work
> has been talking about for two years about Venezuela. [The donors say]
> "But no, there is no money moving around, is it really that bad, how is it
> gonna be?". And now when the situation gets worse, then people are like
> "Huh, it got worse, where do we get the money, people aren't trained for
> doing, it is new type of work and a new setting". Then the chaos starts.

This situation might not have been able to avoid altogether, but could have been mitigated to an extent had the donors been providing the organizations with early warning funding instead of mainly funding meant for lifesaving activities. Instead, much focus for the humanitarian community has transcended into putting out fires due to the Venezuelan refugee crisis. This has led to a more costly and actually less lifesaving situation according to Respondent 2:

> We could be saving many more lives and go into the very extreme
> poverty situations if we were able to work on this confinement before
> they get displaced. But then donors say "You have to be lifesaving only".
> When the people are already displaced then you have to go there and
> deliver food, but the situation won't change anyhow. If we were able to
> actually work with them to maintain and reduce the risks we would
> actually be doing a lot more.

This statement implies that the dialogue between donors and organizations has trouble pinpointing where the greatest needs are and where money would be most efficiently spent. This current situation seems to not benefit the goal of humanitarianism of being able to withdraw from a context when the needs are not there anymore, as this order of business does not seem to take into account what humanitarian actors could do not only to supply what the population needs, but also ensure that the population and society have the tools and knowledge to handle humanitarian crises on their own in the future.

Seeing this, the respondents almost unanimously express that long-term activities are essential in order to succeed with building capacity for Colombian actors to handle present and future humanitarian needs. This is important in the current situation, Respondent 3 argues:

> A very important thing is a discussion about the vision of Colombia like a
> country at the same time in war and in peace. (…) We are at the same time
> in the middle of war and peace, post-peace agreement stage. It's not the best
> but it's our situation. And according with this, it's necessary that the
> international community understand (…) the support to humanitarian
> activities is a crucial matter in Colombia.

This situation not only makes it difficult for humanitarian actors to conduct their activities, but the peace agreement has also led to a consensus from the Colombian government and the international community that the Colombian case is a very successful one. The notion that Colombia would therefore be in need of long-term humanitarian project therefore does not fit with this image. This is especially worrying according to Respondent 4 as the humanitarian organizations operating in Colombia have increasingly started to adapt their operation to a more long-term perspective, as that has been deemed to create better result.

> [Donors should be] supporting more development interventions rather than
> responding to the emergencies. (…) And also, that's also a challenge that to
> move funds for long-term interventions, because until now we have been
> used to specific interventions to go and put down the fire of an emergency,
> provide short term assistance and get out of the field or the place affected
> with the emergency. But I think that the organizations are going in that direction.

This sentiment is shared by Respondent 6, who not only argues for more funds for long-term activities, but also argues that the adaptability of humanitarian organizations coupled with their contextual knowledge makes such funds likely to be successful. The respondent lifts the organization's recent strategy as an example of this:

> We took the point of one of the peace accords, that is the rural
> development and we found these main issues, and those are our projects
> that we usually do and we adapted to follow up this strategic lines of the
> peace accord. So what we want to show is that we have the possibility
> to adapt our strategic mission in order to support peacebuilding.

Naturally, a long-term approach is more associated with development organizations than humanitarian organizations. However, several of the respondents mean that while development actors are able to do great work within the setting, it is necessary for humanitarian organizations to be an involved part in collaborating with development actors to make a great of an impact as possible within the context. Respondent 1 phrases this argument in the following manner:

> The humanitarians have dealt indirectly with the root causes of the
> conflict because they have had to give answers to the consequences. So
> they know a lot about the context, and this is very useful information
> that peacebuilding and development agencies can use, because
> development agencies are the ones that are being called to solve or to
> help to solve these root causes. So it is not like two separate things.

The respondent continues this thought by arguing that this can only be done by jointly focusing on long-term operations in order to make the change as sustainable as possible, denouncing the current trend of short term life-saving operations which the respondent does not think is as effective. Instead, the nexus between humanitarian and development organizations should focus on taking into account in an early stage the context and needs, the current political situation and the expertise of the different actors to put together solutions that are concrete and quick to initiate.

> In Colombia, (…) you need the people that are doing the humanitarian-
> development work in a conflict setting, so you actually need a lot of (…)
> making sure that the local implementing partners that you work with are
> able to follow and read the context and follow the humanitarian principles
> while they try to do a lot more early recovery type of activities (…) and
> really reading carefully what are the real needs and just coming with a
> package and saying this is what is needed.

Though this current situation seems to be a challenge according to some interviewees concerning how to adapt and how to shape operations in the future, Respondent 4 argues that the key word is flexibility, as the current situation calls for both humanitarian and development actors to have the ability to quickly adapt jointly to the beneficiaries' needs.

> Many organizations that have been working mostly on humanitarian aid,
> their mandate is not as flexible to work on development. But in this
> context, like the challenge would be to be more flexible and look forward
> on further actions, because we have to go where the needs are, so we have
> to work on development and more needs, but it's challenging.

5.5 Emphasizing the continued humanitarian context

Within the interview guides for the study, several questions concerned the activities of the interviewees during the current post-conflict process. To the surprise of the researcher, few organizations claimed that there was much difference within their operations in comparison between the time before the peace accords were signed and after. The same reason for this was provided by those interviewed: The conflict between the Colombian government and FARC may be over, but the beneficiaries of their operations are still living in a conflict context. Respondent 2 explains:

> When the situation with FARC ended, then there were immediately
> new actors, so the situation for the communities actually didn't reduce.
> We've actually been continuing our work and increasing that over the years.

This sentiment is shared by Respondent 1, who also notes that a peace agreement is not a panacea to solve the humanitarian needs, neither in Colombia not in another post-conflict setting.

> Knowing that the fact that you are in a peace processes does not mean that humanitarian means end. In fact, during the first year of an implementation of a peace process, the humanitarian needs raise a lot. So basically they should focus first on advocacy, this message needs to be told, and also to understand that although their actions are driven to save lives and those are humanitarian, the consequence of their actions affect the capacity of peacebuilding being sustainable.

When mentioning the continuing conflict and humanitarian context within the regions that the organization's work within, most of the respondents claim that many territories previously controlled by FARC has now been taken over by ELN or other major guerrilla groups, which has created new challenges for the humanitarian actors. As FARC has been replaced with other armed groups, the strategic work of getting access to the beneficiaries has been changed. Respondent 4 relays the following comment regarding this:

> There are problems because there are others guerrillas, other armed groups that already existed before the peace accords. And other new groups that are emerging to fight the control over the territories that were occupied by FARC. So maybe humanitarian organizations have to do a twofold intervention because on the one side, from the humanitarian organizations assistance has continued to respond to ongoing crisis, emergencies, displacement, violations of human rights, murders of human rights defenders.

Seeing this, the interviewed organizations argue that their humanitarian work is perhaps needed more now than during the conflict because of the shifting actors, the prevailing needs as well as the situation because of the influx of refugees from Venezuela. However, being able to handle these different challenges has become increasingly harder as the humanitarian funding has been decreasing quickly after the peace agreement was announced. Respondent 3 conveys the following picture:

> [A] challenge is the NGOs and social movement work in difficult contexts related with the finances because the international cooperation is among the most important support for the work, and in Colombia the last years, many organizations similar like [our organization] abandoned the country or diminished their resources.

This situation seems to heavily impact the humanitarian community, despite how the context could be argued to have become more in need of humanitarian support the latest years. Several respondents further portray Colombia as a country that is highly unequal and where the understanding of the differences between rural areas and urban areas are limited. However, this reality seems to be difficult to communicate to donors and the international committee ever since the peace negotiations ended. This has made it difficult for humanitarian actors to answer to the urgent needs in the poorer parts of the country. Several of them have therefore started to make visibility campaigns to highlight the humanitarian needs. Respondent 2 paints the following picture:

> Now you have the peace deal and we should be given signals that "You are
> doing well Colombia" but Colombia can be doing well, but people on the
> ground are doing worse. So it is complicated and needs a lot of lobbying and
> visibility work with the donors (…) [because] some of the indicators in
> Chocó are below the ones you have in sub-Saharan Africa.

This statement is further reinforced by Respondent 5, who states that visibility is necessary in order to show the complicated reality of post-conflict Colombia.

> The situation is very complex yet it is facing communities. (…) If
> you do not recognize that humanitarian action is needed, as well as the
> support you need to guarantee security conditions in complex areas, it is
> a huge challenge. (…) Also the low visibility of work of humanitarian
> organizations and under-recognition of the importance of their work.

There therefore seems to be a clear need for donors not only to be involved in making sure the peace implementation is progressing, but also to take into account the analyses made on the ground regarding the humanitarian situation Colombia is facing despite the peace agreement.

5.6 Reconciliation

One of the main areas almost all the respondents touched upon in their statements is reconciliation through different dimensions. Getting on the right track after over 50 years of conflict is a difficult task, and the respondents are adamant that reconciliatory efforts need to be at the forefront of the post-conflict process if Colombia is to hope for a successful peace transition. It was however clear during the interviews that reconciliation is a large umbrella for different kinds of actions pertaining to different parts of the Colombian society coming together, making reconciliation very complicated.

The most common way of speaking about reconciliation from the respondents' perspectives was the concept of reintegration of former combatants of FARC. This issue is described as a pivotal one within the context, and is deemed important to shape societies which can forgive former actions. Respondent 4 looks at the situation according to the following:

> I think that as civil society, it's our responsibility also to reintegrate
> persons who have been part of the conflict, not only as victims but also
> as armed groups, because if there is a peace process, there has to be
> integration necessarily. This is difficult, because if (…) you have seen
> all the terrible things that FARC were doing, and then opening the doors
> and your hearts to welcome them into society, it's challenging, but I think
> that is what the country has to do.

This respondent, and the other respondents, argue that reintegration is necessary for different reasons. Much relates to the relational perspective between former perpetrators and victims and its need for resolution, but much is also about the role that reintegration have for the conflict to be able to end. As Respondent 4 explains, "the government was not able to militarily win the war, so we have to negotiate with them and bring them in to society and move forward, because otherwise, we will be in a conflict forever". Setting aside the reintegration of former combatants in the peace process would then ensure that ex-combatants would continue to be outcasts in Colombia. Thus, what Respondent 4 explains in the previous quote would most likely be true, as this would not change much for the persons on the ground in comparison to the conflict. Respondent 2 explains this notion like this:

> You need to support the peace process on seeing how the
> recorporation [sic!] of FARC with the communities is working and
> supporting them. Otherwise, it will just, if they don't receive any help
> they will find their way to be again the same peasant core that they
> started just part of the guerrilla, so nothing changed for them actually.

The process of reintegration has however so far been difficult. According to the respondents, the number of reintegrated and demobilized combatants as well as children formerly involved with FARC has been lower than expected, and the process of reintegration has been met with much protest by involved communities. This has resulted in several security issues and the results have in many cases been fatal, as Respondent 3 expresses:

> It's necessary that the state guarantee the rights for the ex-combatants
> related with the safe life. In this moment, more or less 50 persons of

> FARC guerrilla ex-combatants were killed since the peace agreement
> signing. This is a very serious problem.

However, the concept of reconciliation within the post-conflict process is much more than just about reintegration. Respondent 4 paints a picture of a divided Colombia not only in terms of reality between urban and rural settings, but also when it comes to class and quality of life.

> Have you noticed that Colombia is a very, you have very rich and very
> poor, and there is a huge gap in the middle? (…) From the state there is
> no concern on creating opportunities for all those people who are in
> poverty, it's very difficult for them to grow, to have a middle class that
> can live in minimum conditions.

The specific point of the lack of opportunities for many Colombians was a subject which surfaced several times during the interviews. This divide in opportunities seems to not only have created challenges for society as a whole, but has also worked to divide the population itself, as seen for example by the result of the referendum regarding the peace agreement. Respondent 4 sees this as a sign of the lack of understanding between the different parts and classes of Colombia, and expresses the following:

> I believe that working on that understanding and also understanding that
> we all have been victims of the conflict from both sides should be the base
> of forgiveness, and also accepting that many people, more than half of
> Colombia who voted in the plebiscite believe that they don't deserve to be
> forgiven. (…) If you have grown with all the opportunities and everything,
> (…) there is no understanding many times of what is really happening.

This approach of seeing the conflict and its context through this reconciliatory lens seems to be a clear mission for the actors involved in humanitarian assistance within Colombia. However, the societal walls and the unwillingness to understand the other side seem to not be the only structures that complicate this work. According to Respondent 3, while civil society has been a pivotal part of the peace negotiations, they are still viewed as an actor which can't be completely trusted from the government's perspective.

> Like the government and the authorities, especially the army and the police,
> have the mentality of [civil society as] the internal enemy. And we need
> that the freedom to express the ideas for the mobilization, for the civil
> society organizations work in better circumstances, not like internal enemies.

Seeing this, the humanitarian actors have hurdles to overcome concerning the interaction with authorities, the general public as well as local communities when it comes to advocating for a successful reconciliation process. This could be seen as extra important seeing as the Colombian government has assigned a truth commission to both identify events that have happened during the conflict, but also put forward recommendations meant to increase the chance for a successful post-conflict process.

5.7 Institutionalization and liberalization

As this thesis is influenced by the IBL theory, there were questions in the interview guides specifically meant to highlight the perceptions of the respondents on what they deemed most important out of institutionalization or liberalization, and why. Respondent 1 felt that it was most important to strengthen the institutions for several reasons, the most important being to prepare the government and involved actors to eventually be the ones in charge of strengthening different parts of society:

> We have been focusing a lot on generating capacities both in civil society and institutions and also preparing. We thought that okay, we have signed a peace process and all goes wonderfully, (…) we have to prepare people that we are leaving. We are now evaluating that this is not the case. Things have been going good, we cannot be so pessimistic, but there have been some setbacks and maybe cooperation is still needed. There is a focus on strengthening capacities.

The respondents however argues that there is another necessity when it comes to strengthening the institutions, and that is to have strong and transparent institutional bodies that can ensure that laws are implemented. This statement is further backed by Respondent 5 that there is no need to introduce new laws within the Colombian legal system as they in theory are good.

> We already have all the laws. The laws are recognized, they are very well really, but they are not implemented. So I think it is if it is to strengthen the institutions and this has to be seen also with the presence of the institutions in the territories that (…) has not yet been established and a presence that guarantees the participation of the civil society in decisions.

As the organization argues that the legislation itself is very good, the institutions need to improve in order to actually be able to create a justice system in which no one is being mistreated or which favors others through impunity. This comment is concurred by

Respondent 3 which states that "we have an impunity enormous in the Colombian context related with all kind of criminal activities", effectively creating a conflict of interest between those included within the impunity and those affected by it.

However, other respondents instead point toward the necessity of building capacity within individuals and those organized within movements, in order to increase their ability to call for both improved legislation and for increased transparency within authorities. As much priority from authorities' point of view is allocated towards Bogotá and other urban areas within Colombia, civil society and its activities are usually in the rural and less developed regions like Chocó and Arauca. Therefore, the contact between the authorities and organizations tend to be sparse. Respondent 4 expresses the following regarding this situation:

> I think that the problem in Colombia over the years has been that we have the state here [lifts hand high], far away from civil society, so if you continue strengthening institutions here [sinks hand low], there is like something broken in between. So, I believe that efforts should be put towards strengthening local organizations, yes strengthening communities and empowering communities to progress and to fight towards poverty.

With this statement, Respondent 4 conveys a belief that humanitarian actors, while important when helping to strengthen the institutions of Colombia, are more suitable to remain focused on strengthening and building capacity. Respondent 2 shares this sentiment, by expressing the need for more localized authorities that could be nearer the context, see the needs on the ground and act faster when need be.

> They were just saying that many of the local institutions, they have to decentralize a lot of things, that's what's needed so that the implementation, decision making and planning to be decentralized to departmental and municipal level. Now it's really centralized and we are saying that this will not work and that it's not relevant to the region.

The regionalization of institutions therefore seems to be a necessity not only to address the humanitarian and development needs on the ground, but to integrate the more remote regions in Colombia with the more urban ones. This would also go well with previous statements from respondents saying that an important part of the humanitarian organizations' work is handing over contextual knowledge, which would be much easier with regional authorities present within the areas of operation.

As seen from the statements of the respondents, the question of prioritizing institutionalization or liberalization seems to be a complicated one when it comes to Colombia due to many different factors such as already existing legislation, corruption and the distance between authority and citizen. Seeing this, it might be a necessity for humanitarian organizations and the beneficiaries that they support to work on several fronts. Respondent 3 feels this kind of work is necessary through the following perception:

> I think it is necessary both [institutionalization and liberalization]. It's
> necessary that the institutions doing the work better. (…) Okay, we need
> the justice works very well, we need that all institutions created in the
> (…) peace agreements realize the work with high standards. But, we
> need in terms of the people, not in the institutions, we need that the
> people can live in a freedom context.

Respondent 6 is instead proclaiming that there has been an ongoing process with strengthening the Colombian institutions for years without results that have been satisfactory and with a substantial part of the funds gone missing in the process.

> We have a lot of years [been] strengthening our institution, (…) but
> Colombia has not that problem. I think Colombia is the most
> institutional country worldwide, we have a lot of institutions, entities,
> agencies. (…) But there are a lot of issues and a lot of entities and a lot
> of institutions and then you don't know who has the responsibility
> of what and that's a problem.

As a final note, the main takeaway from the respondents seems to be the key word of implementation, and to enable the institutions to be able to carry out both the peace agreement and the Colombian justice system in an effective manner, or in Respondent 1's words, contributing in "fostering guarantees of non-recurrence". Respondent 6 also concisely sums it up in the following way: "We have a lot of methodologies, we have a lot of everything, but we don't do".

6 Analysis

Based on the findings in the previous chapter, it is clear that the interviewed organizations are convinced that humanitarian organizations and their activities are important in order to strengthen the Colombian post-conflict process. In this chapter, the six elements of the IBL framework will be used as a point of analysis on the implementation of the Colombian peace agreement, and how the theory can explain the situation and how to move forward. In the end, a seventh element is proposed in order to include components which based on the results have been deemed important and relevant within the framework.

6.1 Element 1: Postponing elections until conditions are in place

As Colombia was a democracy already before the peace process begun, this element could be deemed as not important to the Colombian society for the sake of the sustainability of the post-conflict process. However, the findings from the interviews disprove this, as the humanitarian actors lift two major points that heavily impact this specific element. First, while the democratic structure and legislation is to a large degree already present within Colombia, the implementation of said laws is underwhelming and the corruption is visible in most governmental levels. This therefore connects widely to the dimension regarding institutional mechanisms to ensure compliance within element 1 of Paris's theory (2004:191), which not only questions the capacity of the institutions to be able to handle a governmental transition, but especially on how the peace implementation will be affected.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, it is clear from the interviews that the conditions for the 2018 elections are far from optimal. The debates regarding the peace agreement seem to be conducted in a polarizing way by several political parties, by talking about the dangers of the peace agreement instead of the possibilities, thereby creating insecurity about the credibility of the peace agreement but also creating division within the electorate. This goes directly against Paris's (2004) element, as he argues that for an election to be held in a setting similar to the one in Colombia, there must be guarantees of both having parties involved that wants to resolve disputes and move the peace implementation forward, but also that are both interested in reconciliation and to gain support from the broader masses of society.

Seeing this situation, the efforts of humanitarian actors cannot be understated for several reasons. First, the educational efforts of these actors when it comes to raising awareness about the peace agreement are pivotal in order to cement facts about the agreement. This is factor necessary to promote moderation within the political sphere, as political rhetoric will then be

questioned to a higher degree. Second, the reconciliatory dimension lifted by the interviewees is also important within this realm, as a more united population that understand each other's perspectives could be argued to be a necessary part to ensure conditions fit for an election.

With this in mind, this element from Paris's (2004) theory seems to be highly applicable to the Colombian context, especially concerning the worry several respondents expressed concerning the insecurities regarding the election and what that would mean for the post-conflict process. It could therefore be of use for the humanitarian sector to collaborate with political parties and civil society organizations to produce a list of factors that need to be implemented in the post-conflict setting before initiating heavy processes such as elections.

6.2 Element 2: Creating an electoral system promoting reconciliation

When it comes to this element, there have been strides made by actors involved in the peace process to create common ground and reconciliation among themselves, such as between the government and FARC. However, these two seem to be only major actors that have had somewhat success within this parameter, as both other armed groups as well as the political opposition according to the interviewees does not seem to share the same interest for reconciliation. While having succeeded with the effort of making FARC into a political party from a guerrilla group, it is clear based on the interviews that the process of cementing an acceptance of this action both in the political sphere and in the electorate has not transpired. The discussion in and outside of politics have therefore remained polarizing, going directly against the essence of Element 2 in the IBL theory, as Paris (2004:191) argues for moderation and creating centrist systems within the political setting.

One of the main challenges regarding this seems to be the lack of trust within the political system from those most affected by the conflict, according to the respondents. One factor that especially embodies this is the lack of governmental presence on the local and regional level presented in the interviews, which cements that there is a lack of prioritization for the status and opportunities of the population that is poor, indigenous or living in humanitarian need. Hence, there is an apparent need to not only infuse a higher prioritization within these regions, but also to create an electoral system where these groups are motivated to vote, where they feel that they are listened to by the political parties and where their needs are taken seriously.

With this in mind, the IBL theory's second element is despite Colombia's proud democracy highly relevant for the Colombian context, as the democracy is in need of credibility and moderation. It could therefore be in the humanitarian actors' interest to collaborate with

peacebuilding actors to moderate talks and debates on local, regional and national levels between politicians and the population in order to unearth possible amendments to the electoral system that would lessen the risk of weakening the post-conflict process and to build bridges between current adversaries. Based on the interviews, it is not sustainable that humanitarian actors are the ones mainly providing vulnerable groups with necessities, as there will always be a limit to what they can do, especially in a context where funding for humanitarian operations is decreasing.

6.3 Element 3: Developing a good civil society

This specific element is both successful and not successful so far within the post-conflict process in Colombia. Civil society organizations have not only been important partners in creating discussions and finished texts for the peace agreement, but they have also been vocal supporters of the peace agreement and the way forward for the society at large. The willingness to be part of the implementation of the process is also apparent based on the interviews conducted with the humanitarian actors, as they pinpoint both their own and other projects that are involved in creating capacity for the society to grow. It is therefore clear that an involvement from civil society actors such as humanitarian ones is pivotal for the success of the post-conflict process, and that there is an abundance of "good" civil society organizations promoting the peace implementation in Colombia.

However, it is clear based on the interviews that there are several hurdles within this realm. First, the view of civil society as an enemy as previously exclaimed by Respondent 3 by parts of the authorities, making it more difficult for civil society and those that they represent to be able to voice their opinion and spread their contextual knowledge. In addition, it is clear that the government has not been able to restrain organizations not pursuing the implementation of the peace agreement, such as armed groups that have taken over territories previously controlled by FARC. Instead, this has created a situation where the humanitarian organizations argue that the humanitarian needs of those living in these territories are worse today than during the actual conflict. Seeing this, Paris's (2004:195) notion of creating a culture of peace has not come into fruition in the Colombian case, and this risks becoming worse as the communication of Colombia as a successful case of peace transition limits the funds directed to humanitarian organizations as well as their opportunity to carry out long-term operations.

However, Paris's (ibid) notion that civil society actors that openly act with violence within the post-conflict setting should be shut down can be determined to be detrimental to the other elements that are focusing on reconciliation and moderation. As it is clear from the interviews that a large part of the population feel ignored by the Colombian political sphere, restricting organizations representing their interests, regardless if the organizations turn to violence or not, would most likely further increase their isolation within society, and perhaps create a disdain for a peace agreement that does not care about them. Thus, this type of model could actively hinder the will for reconciliation and further the risk of local disturbances. Instead, it could be argued that humanitarian actors, known for being guided by a code of neutrality, could act as mediators in such circumstances, in order to limit the level of violence and try to find common ground between the organizations or guerilla groups in order to not worsen the situation for the population on the ground.

Paris's (2004) third element in the IBL model is therefore both relevant for the Colombian context, while it also carries with it potential dangers for the armed conflict to blossom once again. The regulation of violent acts proposed by Paris (2004:196) could therefore be a double-edged sword for Colombia. Humanitarian actors therefore need to monitor the effects of local organizations and armed groups within their operational area and possibly facilitate meetings or forums between these actors and political actors to create mutual understandings and ensure the non-proliferation of violence spreading.

6.4 Element 4: Regulating hate speech
While the role of media was not a main focus area within the interviews, it was still brought up frequently by the interviewees for several reasons, with the main ones being how media was used to communicate the Colombian success with the peace agreement, while also how reports on ongoing troubles and humanitarian needs has become increasingly rare. This constitutes a problem, as donors and the international community will not be updated on the current needs in Colombia, thereby deeming the situation under control and lowering the funds available for organizations to use. Seeing this, Paris's (2004:196) argument about the need of a free media as a goal within a post-conflict setting is important, as such type of media would be able to report about the humanitarian situation within the country and thereby help putting pressure on the government to allocate funds and deliver according to the needs of the affected population.

While the component of regulating hate speech through the media is important to not give room to a hateful rhetoric with the aim of creating division concerning the peace implementation, a component lifted to a larger degree by the respondents is the lack of visibility that humanitarian issues still face. This fact results both in decreased pressure against the government to help and to seek help to handle the humanitarian issues, but also that the government's communication of Colombia as a success story is not rivaled, resulting in less resources directed towards the Colombian context and more organizations having to close down operations.

This element, while relevant for the Colombian context, therefore seems to be incomplete due to the fact that the framework does not take into media's power in more ways than preventing or igniting hate speech. As such, by including this concept within the element, humanitarian actors could improve their opportunity to communicate to the government and donors on the situation on the ground, which could improve the opportunities for the beneficiary group and thereby make them more positive to the post-conflict process, as they would see concrete positive changes in their lives in comparison to the conflict.

6.5 Element 5: Promoting conflict-reducing economic reforms

As previously mentioned, the fifth element of IBL involves delaying economic reforms until political stability has been reached and providing vulnerable groups of the population with dividends to create a feeling of the situation improving (Paris 2004:199p). Based on the interviews, the dividend point seem to be very applicable to the Colombian case, as several respondents claim that many vulnerable groups have not had their situation change or opportunities increased since the peace agreement was erected. Because of this, the effects of the peace agreement have not been felt for many citizens from a resources standpoint. Paris (2004:201) argues that this could have much to do with how war-torn countries are lacking in governmental institutions, which is backed up by the interviewees concern regarding the lack of governmental presence in the rural Colombian regions where the basic and humanitarian needs are the greatest.

This particular element therefore proves to be a common denominator for several of the interviewed organizations, as many pointed out the unequal share of wealth, health and opportunities between rural and urban areas in Colombia. Thus, here lies a great challenge for the Colombian government and other actors involved in the post-conflict process. Paris's (2004:204) theory here proposes to put in motion a process of marketization, where different

steps of economic liberalization are introduced sporadically in order for the context to not be shocked by many new economic policies at once. This process will however only work if the context is well understood by those constructing the strategy, which makes humanitarian actors important in order to provide a perspective on the population's current capacities, economic situation and needs in order for them to contribute and benefit from the economic changes as much as possible.

Seeing the above, this element seem to fit the Colombian context well, as material and economic dividends combined with long-term economic strategies would create action plans for taking people out of poverty and humanitarian needs while also ensuring a short term increase in resources before the liberalization process takes place. This would also benefit the humanitarian actors in Colombia, as they could to a larger degree focus on carrying out long-term projects benefitting the post-conflict process. This is true especially due to the last part of the element, as Paris (2004:205) proposes that donors should allocate finances to support investments in welfare areas such as health systems and job creation programs. This fits well together with the humanitarian actors' opinions on how such investments do greater good for the humanitarian situation of Colombia than lifesaving activities, ensuring that the type of activities that the humanitarian organizations currently have troubles carrying out due to low funds would find increased support.

6.6 Element 6: Developing effective institutions

For the final element of the IBL theory, there seems to be a broad consensus within the interviewed organizations that effective, developed and reliable institutions are necessary in order to improve the humanitarian situation of Colombia and the implementation of the peace agreement. This is especially true with regards to changing the reality within the poorer areas suffering from humanitarian needs in the country, both in terms of those related to the Venezuelan refugee crisis but especially to Colombians that are displaced or living in poverty, as their needs according to the interviews have not been prioritized since the peace agreement was decided upon. Here, there are several matters in which humanitarian organizations can support the Colombian government in order to improve its capacity to address the needs of the population better on its own, and erect welfare systems that rely less on the activities of humanitarian actors.

A major part of the arguments made by the interviewed organizations include the necessity for further decentralization of the government as the current presence is mostly limited to

military forces. As those types of institutions are the ones most likely for both regional organizations and citizens to be in contact with, they play an important role in communicating and acting on political decisions, but also to provide support to the local population. With this in mind, the IBL theory's core message regarding the strengthening of institutions having to come before liberalization seems to be well fitting for the Colombian context.

However, the decentralization of institutions is still a point where the IBL framework differs slightly, as Paris (2004:206) only speaks of the need to support the improvement of central government functions, but does not delve into the importance of improving the capacities of local ones. This is however based on the interviews crucial, as the feeling of alienation within the population creates a situation where the distance between the political powers and the citizens is long. This can in turn lead to decisions being made by the government or other political bodies not being felt relevant by this population, or the information about the decisions not even reaching the citizens. Seeing this, humanitarian and development organizations can play a vital role in connecting the citizens with local politicians with the goal of improving the transparency and accountability for the government. They could also build capacity in local organizations and unions to monitor and create reports on the impact these local institutions would make, which could then be a tool for advocacy.

6.7 A seventh element: Institutionalizing peace education

As can be seen by weighing in the Colombian post-conflict context in comparison to the suggestions made by the IBL framework, there are very few parts and actions in the post-conflict context that have so far followed the proposed actions of Paris's theory, while at the same time it is clear that most parts of the IBL theory is applicable to the Colombian context. However, looking at the interviews, there seems to be one component lifted by the interviewed group which is not present within the IBL theory, the need to standardize peace education. While the IBL framework does a good job in terms of providing ways to mitigate violence within the post-conflict society to create enough stability before liberalization measures are carried out, it fails to recognize the importance of educating the population in what the peace agreement guarantees and how it is supposed to be implemented.

Several respondents lifted as one of their main points that they have started educational activities, primarily in schools where humanitarian needs are still prevalent, as a way of cementing the rights guaranteed in the peace agreement with the population while at the same time slowly creating pressure for the implementing bodies to keep the promises from the

agreement. However, this alone is not enough, as that would not fit within the rest of the IBL model which aims to affect the entire society in which the post-conflict process is taking place. As such, this seventh component would therefore be targeted towards the entire population of the post-conflict society, involving schools, universities, unions, sports clubs, work places and other relevant forums which gather larger groups of citizens. Naturally, such action would constitute a significant amount of resources and finances to carry out for the ruling government, which could possibly limit its ability to be implemented. However, by involving the good civil society from the third element, as well as humanitarian and development actors supported by international donors, strategies and models of financing could be created to create a feasible plan for implementation.

Including the education component in the model would fit well with the aim of the IBL theory, as Paris (2004:187) argues that the model's main goal is to create political stability. Therefore, ensuring that the population, including both school children and adults, would have a joint knowledge base about the peace agreement, its limits and its promises would serve to not make the post-conflict process clearer, but it would also hinder the possibilities of forces working against the peace implementation to spread false information about what the agreement entails. This would thereby result in a decrease in political violence and therefore contribute to the other elements of creating moderation within the political sphere, as well as preventing hate speech among the electorate.

7 Conclusion and final remarks

This study has focused on if humanitarian actors can be a useful force in helping to strengthen the Colombian post-conflict process, and how. According to the findings of the interviews conducted, humanitarian actors are highly relevant when it comes to strengthening the post-conflict process and the implementation of the peace agreement. This is done for example by providing support and education for the Colombian government, civil society and regular citizens, based on their contextual knowledge, their professional caliber (through for example making strategies on how to support the peace agreement) and the trust that they have accumulated from the beneficiaries and other actors involved in the process. Thus, it is evident that humanitarian actors perceive their work to be an important component in not only providing beneficiaries that live in poverty or are displaced with basic necessities and education but also provide in depth knowledge to both development actors, the government and the international community with the challenges (such as continued violence, low amount of funding and legitimizing the peace agreement) that have remained within the context.

Based on the IBL framework of this study, it is also clear that the humanitarian actors can play an instrumental role in supporting the strengthening of institutions. The respondents see the need to make the Colombian institutions both more effective, but most of all closer in proximity to the population, both in terms of making it clearer who to contact in different circumstances but also through the decentralization of authorities. This measure, together with extended resources on educational activities to cement knowledge about the peace agreement, are key measures where humanitarian actors could be important to strengthen civil society efforts to improve the effectiveness of both the Colombian institutions, but also promote a greater reconciliation between societal groups in Colombia.

7.1 Recommendations for the Colombian post-conflict process

Based on the results provided by the findings of the study as well as the analysis of the findings, a list of recommendations has been put together for three different actors that are directly or indirectly involved within the post-conflict process in Colombia.

7.1.1 Recommendations for humanitarian actors in Colombia

- Create a joint campaign directed towards donors, highlighting the perks of the peace agreement, but also that despite the progress, the humanitarian needs have barely changed in several parts of the country.

- Continue spreading information and testimonies regarding humanitarian needs and the necessary actions from the government and donors to remedy the situation.
- Build capacity within Colombian civil society to increase their ability to advocate for greater governmental presence in regions with humanitarian needs.
- Continue to carry out educational activities regarding the peace agreement, and in collaboration with the government, monitor and evaluate how educational activities could be shaped to reach all groups within society with correct information.

7.1.2 Recommendations for the Colombian government

- Increase governmental presence (not counting military forces) within the Colombian regions, especially those affected by humanitarian needs such as Chocó and Arauca.
- Hold meetings with humanitarian actors, civil society organizations and community leaders within these departments in order to get a better understanding of the contexts, the gaps within basic commodities and opportunities, the gravity of the humanitarian needs and the existing activities/projects that are carried out from a humanitarian point of view, in order to pinpoint actions that are necessary to improve the situation.
- Survey the current structure of the governmental institutions with the purpose of making it clearer where in the hierarchy different matters belong, and where the population should turn when having issues where institutions are necessary to contact.
- Create a list on what factors were the key components in creating the ceasefire between the government and FARC, and use these as starting points for creating negotiations with other armed groups active within the Colombian departments.

7.1.3 Recommendations for donors of humanitarian funds

- Gather information about the humanitarian needs from different regions of Colombia to a larger degree from organizations working on site, as the governmental presence has not yet materialized for a complete picture to be communicated.
- Continue to support the implementation of the Colombian peace accords. However, ensure that there are mechanisms in place which can all but guarantee that benchmarks regarding the level of implementation are met at the required speed.
- Ensure the prevention of corruption of the funds for peace implementation by demanding budgets and allocations on how the funds will be spent, with regular reports on how the funds have been used and what these activities have resulted in.

- Budget for increased grants in the areas of preventive humanitarian activities in Colombia, with specific focus on humanitarian crises that are not connected to the Venezuelan refugee crisis.

7.2 Recommendations for further research

This study focused on gathering the perception of international actors involved in humanitarian action in Colombia, and their specific perception on how humanitarian action could be used in order to strengthen the Colombian post-conflict process. This scope does however not provide with a complete picture of those involved in humanitarian action in the country. Thus, it would be beneficial to increase the academic knowledge of this particular field by gathering the perceptions of Colombian organizations involved within the setting of humanitarian action on a more local level. As respondents have lifted specific regions within Colombia, where the humanitarian needs are dire and where the benefits of Colombia having reached a peace agreement has not been felt, it would be interesting conduct a similar study, but from a local perspective. Such a study would allow for specific recommendations to be created with the means of addressing the issues of violence and lack of resources, thereby making the studies more applicable from a hands-on perspective.

Another interesting perspective is to focus on how humanitarian action can be of significance in Colombia from a reconciliation point of view. As the Colombian truth commission is going to conduct its work in the upcoming years, it would be relevant to follow the work of the truth commission and identify humanitarian factors able to enhance the recommendations of the commission. This could be further enhanced by analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of former truth commissions to identify pitfalls that should be avoided in Colombia, thereby ensuring that the commission's work will have an impact within the Colombian society.

Finally, the premise of this study could also be applied on future post-conflict processes, to identify the possibilities of humanitarian action having a strengthening capacity to the challenging transition from war to peace in other countries. While every post-conflict process is different due to the unique history, conflict dynamics and societal structures of the contexts in question, it could be interesting to see if the results from this study would be similar to ones made in other contexts. Depending on the result, the different studies could then be used to put together an anthology chronicling the results of their studies and what this could mean in terms of how humanitarian organizations can operate in general in post-conflict contexts.

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ANNEX 1 – List of interviewees

Interview number	Name of respondent	Position and type of organization
1	Maria	Humanitarian advisor for an embassy in Colombia
2	Saara	Country representative for a humanitarian INGO in Colombia
3	Cesar	Country representative for a development INGO in Colombia
4	Maria	Advisor for a humanitarian INGO focusing on children in Colombia
5	Laura	Programme manager for a humanitarian INGO in Colombia
6	Maria	Programme manager for a humanitarian INGO focusing on food in Colombia
7	Camilo	Advisor for a humanitarian INGO focusing on children in Colombia

ANNEX 2

Interview guide for embassies

How long has your embassy been operating in Colombia?

How does your embassy work with humanitarian issues? Which organizations and operations do you support?

What does your embassy feel is the main challenges working with humanitarian issues in Colombia?

Has your embassy been involved with the Colombian peace process? If yes, how?

Is your embassy in any way supporting the post-conflict process (by supporting the state, NGOs or other actors)? If yes, how?

Has your country been supplying Colombia with humanitarian assistance before the peace deal was signed? If yes, how?

Has your country been supplying Colombia with humanitarian aid after the peace deal was signed? If yes, how? If no, why not?

Does your embassy feel there is a difference in how you or other actors carry out humanitarian work from before and after the peace deal was signed?

What kind of activities/issues does your embassy think would be the most important to address or prioritize in the current post-conflict process in Colombia?

Do you think humanitarian actors could play a role in this? How?

Does your embassy think it is more important for Colombia to focus on strengthening institutions or to liberalize the country (through for example focus on democratization)? Why?

Do you know if your country has been involved in any other post-conflict processes in the past? Which ones?

If yes: What were, in your opinion, the most prominent/important actions taken during that/those post-conflict processes (both by states and humanitarian actors)? What were the biggest mistakes?

What does your embassy think is the most important actions that humanitarian assistance can do to support in post-conflict processes, in Colombia and otherwise?

Is there anything you would like to tell me about or any perspectives you would like to share which I haven't thought to ask about?

Thank you for your time and your answers!

ANNEX 3

Interview questions for international organizations working in Colombia

What is your organization's name?

What is your organization's main purpose of operating in Colombia?

What kind of humanitarian operations is your organization part of?

How do you conduct your work in humanitarian operations? Do you have implementing partners or your own local staff on the ground?

What does your organization feel is the main challenges working with humanitarian issues in Colombia?

Was your operations compromised in any way during the time that Colombia was in a conflict?

Was your organization in any way involved in the Colombian peace process? If so, how?

How has your organization been involved in Colombia from a humanitarian standpoint after the conflict ended?

Do you see changes in operations (humanitarian or otherwise) for your organization in Colombia after the peace deal was signed? If yes, in what way?

What kind of activities/issues does your organization think would be the most important to address in the current post-conflict process in Colombia?

How does your organization think humanitarian organizations can support these activities/issues? What will you do?

Does your organization think it is more important for Colombia to focus on strengthening institutions or to liberalize the country (via for example focus on democratization)? Why?

Have your organization been involved in any other post-conflict processes in the past? Which ones?

If yes: What does your organization think were the most important experience you got during that/those post-conflict processes?

What does your organization think is the most important actions that humanitarian organizations can take in post-conflict processes, in Colombia and otherwise?

Is there anything you would like to tell me about or any perspectives you would like to share which I haven't thought to ask about?

Thank you for your time and your answers!

ANNEX 4

Bogotá, 15 de febrero de 2018

Señores

XXXXXX

Attn: XXXX

Estimados Señores:

El Señor Julle Bergenholtz, alumno regular del Programa de Master en Acción Humanitaria NOHA (Network of Humanitarian Action) se encuentra desarrollando en Colombia su trabajo de tesis con una beca de la Agencia Sueca de Cooperación Internacional. Su estancia investigadora tiene lugar en acuerdo con nuestra unidad académica.

El Señor Bergenholtz está llevando a cabo una serie de entrevistas con actores relevantes de la cooperación y de la acción humanitaria, y su organización resulta para nosotros de referencia en el proceso que adelantamos.

Como director de su trabajo de grado, quiero extender mi recomendación para que, en la medida de sus posibilidades, se pueda conceder un tiempo a convenir con su organización para una entrevista de una hora sobre generalidades de la acción humanitaria en tiempos de posconflicto. Sería deseable que dicha entrevista pudiese sostenerse en idioma inglés.

Agradezco su atención a la presente, seguro de su amable colaboración y con la expresión de mi consideración.

De Ustedes,

Manuel E. Salamanca, Ph.D.

Director

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