GRASSROOTS PEACEBUILDING IN COLOMBIA: LAYERS OF PEACEBUILDING
AND THEIR INTERSECTIONS

by

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Dedication Page

This thesis is dedicated to community peacebuilders. May you continue to find strength and support for your work.

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Abstract

This thesis discusses the role of grassroots organizations in peacebuilding at multiple levels of society. It also examines the challenges and potential of elite-level peacebuilding, looking specifically at the case of Colombia since the 2016 accord. The thesis uses theories of Conflict Transformation and Multi-Level Peacebuilding to argue that local-level peacebuilding is essential for the sustainability of a peace accord, and that a culture of peace can only be built through the work of organizations that are rooted in community life. Through interviews with peacebuilding organizations in Colombia and the analysis of websites and publications of community peacebuilding organizations, this thesis analyzes discourses of peace. Community-based discourses are then compared to those of the state. The comparison offers insights into a way forward for sustainable peacebuilding by highlighting the unique contributions that community-based organizations offer, such as a focus on the individual psycho-social level.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

    This research project analyzes the roles that grassroots peacebuilding initiatives play in Colombia. In 2016, a peace accord called "The General Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace" was reached between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - FARC), a guerilla group. This accord brought more than half a century of armed conflict to an end. While this formal peace accord marks an historic accomplishment, Colombia still faces the challenges of peacebuilding and shifting cultural norms. Violence and coercion are components of political and social operations in Colombia, with persisting values and norms in collective consciousness (Pecaut, 2001; Odendall, 2012).

    Now that a political peace accord has been reached between the FARC and the government, more attention needs to be given to building a society and culture of peace. Examining the functions, goals and discourses of peacebuilding organizations is a key method for this research. This research examines small-scale, holistic approaches to peacebuilding, and will explore the unique discourses of peacebuilding of grassroots, community-based organizations in Colombia.

    While political and economic elements of peacebuilding are essential considerations, research suggests that peacebuilding work must occur at the local, community level in order for a cultural shift towards sustainable peace to occur (Jeong, 2005; McDonald, 1997). Debates around local ownership of peacebuilding policies are recent (Gauthier and Moita, 2011), so bringing more attention to the roles of local peacebuilders is an important aspect in holistic post-accord peacebuilding. Local peacebuilders can engage communities in building a peaceful post-conflict reality (Gruner, 2017). The research will also examine the ways that grassroots organizing intersects with other levels of peacebuilding. In order to understand the unique role of

grassroots peacebuilding initiatives, the discourse of government institutions will also be examined.

The main methods for this research include a literature review, semi-structured interviews, and discourse analysis. The fieldwork research for this project was undertaken from June to August 2018 in the Colombian city of Bogota, with locally-based peacebuilding organizations and state institutions. Because of practical safety concerns, I was not able to examine the day-to-day practices of rural organizations. This thesis therefore analyzes discourses of peacebuilding organizations based on interviews and analysis of publications and websites. To put this discourse analysis into context, I also analyzed discourses of government organizations. To provide a longer-term perspective and relevancy, I selected institutions like the National Museum and the Centre for Memory, Peace, and Reconciliation that are not limited to a particular governmental administration. These state organizations have lasted through multiple administrations and presidents with different priorities.

1.2 Research Objectives and Questions

This thesis is based on the understanding that a protracted conflict inevitably leaves lingering societal problems from the entrenchment and normalization of violence. This research project outlines problems with elite level peace processes which threaten the sustainability of a peace accord. The goal of this research is to bring attention to underexplored elements of the peace process, with a focus on understanding how grassroots approaches contribute to sustainable peacebuilding in Colombia. Grassroots organizations are leading many projects and important discussions at the community level in Colombia, and this work should not be underestimated in creating a strong social fabric of peaceful relations. This research contributes an important perspective to the peacebuilding literature by examining the roles of grassroots organizations in

the peacebuilding process in Colombia with the broader goal of understanding how grassroots organizations can contribute to peacebuilding processes in other contexts as well. By comparing the discourses of grassroots peacebuilding organizations to those of the state, the intricacies and possibilities that exist within multi-level peacebuilding become apparent. This is an important approach to peacebuilding that has great potential in making future efforts more inclusive and sustainable.

The central questions for this thesis are:

1) How do grassroots initiatives contribute to sustainable peacebuilding in Colombia?
2) What is the relationship between grassroots initiatives and structural/national peacebuilding projects?
3) How does the peacebuilding discourse of grassroots organizations compare to that of the state of Colombia, and why does discourse matter?

The theoretical perspective used in the development of these questions is Conflict Transformation Theory, as put forward by John Paul Ledarach (1995) and Johan Galtung (1996). Regarding scope, this research focuses on community-based approaches, but will conceptualize these approaches in the context of other layers of peacebuilding, particularly the government institutional level. While the focus is on post-accord peacebuilding, this research will also consider peacebuilding and peacemaking before and during the accord process (Galtung, 2010).

1.3 Significance of the Research

This research is important because inclusive peacebuilding is essential for sustainable peace. Considerable research over the past few decades indicates that elite-level peacemaking initiatives have been inadequate and unsustainable, suggesting that community-level participation is

necessary (Pearce, 1997; Jeong, 2007; Funk & Said, 2010; Paffenholz, 2010, Hellmuler & Santschi, 2014). Post-accord grassroots peacebuilding is under-researched, especially in Colombia (McDonald, 1997; Gruner, 2017). Understanding examples of successful and failed peace initiatives is important in informing future approaches to peacebuilding.

Colombia is an appropriate example because of both its high levels of violence and the high number of grassroots peacebuilding projects. Colombia was entrenched in a civil war for more than half a century. There were over 300, 000 violent deaths in Colombia between 1985 and 2000, with homicide as the leading cause of death for men ages 18 to 45 (LeGrand, 2003). Colombia has experienced some of the highest homicide rates in the world in spite of significant economic growth and a democratic system (Angrist and Kugler, 2008). Although Colombia's peace process has been heralded as inclusive and progressive because it has given victims a voice at the negotiating table (Carasik, 2016), the level of inclusivity is highly disputed, especially by minority groups (Gruner, 2017).

My interest in this project partially stems from my upbringing. My family lived in Northern Ireland before, during, and after the signing of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. My parents worked for community-based reconciliation and were involved in grassroots peacebuilding. I also visited Colombia in 2015 and was struck by the commitment of community-based organizations to create peaceful realities for their communities.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into nine chapters. Following the introduction of Chapter 1, Chapter 2 will explore the context of the conflict in Colombia and Chapter 3 will provide a literature review on peacebuilding. These first three chapters will highlight the importance of sustainable

community-based peacebuilding in Colombia, based on the literature. I will then introduce the Theoretical Framework with a focus on Conflict Transformation Theory in Chapter 4. Conflict Transformation Theory is a useful lens through which to view peacebuilding and peacebuilding discourses. In Chapter 5, I will outline the Methodology for my research and ethical considerations, explaining why I chose to do a discourse analysis alongside semi-structured interviews with organizations in Bogota. Moving into my primary research in Colombia, Chapter 6 will present discourses and projects of four Community-based Peacebuilding organizations, followed by discourses and campaigns of governmental peace projects in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 will provide an analysis and comparison arguing the importance of community-based peacebuilding activities. My conclusions in Chapter 9 will include directions for further research. References and Appendices will follow.

Chapter 2: History and Context of the Conflict in Colombia

An examination of some of the key moments of Colombian history, the political economy of conflict, and the entrenchment of violence in the lives of Colombians highlights the need for a critical investigation of the root causes of the conflict. The complex nature of the injustices and the normalization of violence in Colombia suggest that a national peace process between the main parties will not bring about effective, sustainable peace without grassroots participation.

2.1 A Long History of Violence

Political violence has been a major feature throughout Colombian history, beginning with Spanish colonization of the 16th century. Many of these historical roots of violence can be understood through a territorial perspective. This can be traced back to the Spanish conquistadores and their establishment of a semi-feudal system based on land possession (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2008), including dispossession of indigenous territory and feudal agricultural production involving forced peasant labour. During the Spanish conquest, high levels of displacement occurred based on where mineral resources and agriculturally productive land were found (Gruner, 2007). In addition to land as motivation for violence, Colombia has a history of violence as a tool to structure society, as seen through the initial Spanish conquest, the Spanish colonial social structure, and the subjugation of Indigenous and Afro-Colombian groups to violence as a form of domination (Osquist, 1980).

Following the colonial era, physical violence remained prevalent in the independence movement, and in the many civil wars and political conflict following independence (Oquist, 1980). In the late 1840s, the Liberal and Conservative parties were formed, and they continue to control state structures, along with social life, even with the introduction of other political parties

in recent years (IDMC, 2008). These two main parties and their supporters have a history of conflict; the most violent example being that of the civil "War of a Thousand Days" beginning in 1899, which had an estimated death toll of a hundred thousand people (IDMC, 2008). Additionally, external politics played a role in increasing violence, like the Cold War which exacerbated the divide between the Liberals and Conservatives at the highest level of society (Safford and Palacios, 2002).

2.2 La Violencia

La Violencia (a twenty-year period in the mid-twentieth century) is typically seen as the starting point to the contemporary conflict (IDMC, 2008). However, it should be acknowledged that there was electoral violence around the 1922 presidential campaign, and widespread socioeconomic violence from the 1920s through to the 1940s (Osquist, 1980). La Violencia was directly sparked by the 1948 assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, a liberal party leader who challenged both Liberal and Conservative power structures (Zackrison, 1989). Due to the intense rivalry of the two political parties, there was a partial collapse of the state. This led to violent sociopolitical processes that caused rivalry between groups with contradictory interests (IDMC, 2008). Hundreds of thousands were killed or displaced in the following years (IDMC, 2008). During La Violencia, huge numbers of rural Colombians were displaced into urban settings. This process favoured a few elite individuals by further concentrating the ownership of land (Gruner, 2007).

The concentration of land ownership in turn led to monocultures, surplus labour, the expansion of illegal trade, and the creation and support of paramilitary groups by national elites. Thus, military, political and economic power became highly concentrated, and conflict escalated (Gruner, 2007). There was a minimum of 193, 603 deaths in the 20-year period of La Violencia,

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which means that at least 1.56% of Colombia's population was killed in only two decades (Osquist, 1980). Even in the early 1960s, when the level of violence had significantly decreased, Colombia had the highest death rate in the world (Osquist, 1980). According to Safford and Palacios, La Violencia was caused by "an aggressive confrontation of elites of opposing parties seeking to impose through the national state a model of modernization, conforming to conservative or, contrarily, liberal norms; and, second, from a local partisanship that affected people of all groups, classes, and large regions of the country" (2002, p. 345).

In 1957, a power-sharing agreement, called the 'Frente Nacional' ('National Front'), was reached between the two political parties that officially ended the period of La Violencia, but did not stop the violence in Colombia society. This suggests that the causes of the conflict are deeper than political affiliation (IDMC, 2008). The continuation of armed conflict even during the power-sharing agreement is attributed to political, economic, and social factors: agrarian conflict, local power struggles, local partisan conflict, and revolutionary guerilla activities (Osquist, 1980). The power-sharing Frente Nacional lasted until 1974 and continued to increase the concentration of land ownership (Osquist, 1980). Given these land issues, combined with problems of increasing poverty, exclusions, state (il)legitimacy, political participation, and political negotiation methods (Gruner, 2007), it is understandable that a political solution like the Frente Nacional was inadequate to stop the conflict, as it did not address the multiple root causes.

2.3 The Guerillas

The two main guerilla groups, formed in the 1960s, are the FARC (the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and the ELN (National Liberation Army) (Safford and Palacios, 2002). The FARC has its roots in peasant organizations and has been mostly agrarian-communist throughout its history. In its inception the FARC supported the peasant reclamation of land, land reform, and

better working conditions for rural peasants (Safford and Palacios, 2002). While it started out as more of a defensive organization, government attacks transformed it into a revolutionary guerilla group (Safford and Palacios, 2002). Over time, the FARC also became heavily involved in the drug trade (LeGrand, 2003).

The ELN was inspired by the Cuban Revolution (Safford and Palacios, 2002), in response to the tendency of the Frente Nacional to exclude other voices from participating in politics or economics (IDMC, 2008, p. 19). Guerilla groups have diverse motivations, but are largely ideologically concerned with state repression, rural violence, extreme inequality, and land ownership issues (IDMC, 2008, p. 8). Of course, these ideological principles are less than evident in many of the violent, and sometimes contradictory, tactics used by guerillas to increase their power. Government responses to guerilla violence had an extremely detrimental impact on rural populations, like the loss of livelihoods and family members, and had the effect of increasing forced displacement (IDMC, 2008, p. 9).

2.4 The Political Economy of Conflict

With this understanding of some of the main elements in the history of the Colombian conflict, the reasons behind the duration and forms of violence in Colombia can be examined. To do so, the political economy of conflict is an important starting point. The political economy of conflict approach focuses primary attention on the ways in which the conflict is financed, and how particular sources of finance shape the conflict. In Colombia, the political economy of conflict can be explored by looking at unequal land distribution, the drug industry, the arms trade, the oil industry, foreign interest, and neo-liberal economic policies. Unequal land distribution has been identified as a root cause of the conflict (IDMC, 2008) – at the heart of the Colombian conflict is the struggle to strip peasants of their land and resources to favour the elite

and the drug barons, who are responsible for the concentration of land ownership (Dugas, 2012). In 2004, over sixty percent of rural land was owned by only 0.4 percent of landowners (IDMC, 2008).

Dugas frames the Colombian conflict as caused and sustained by the powerful elite doing whatever is necessary to maintain and increase their power (Dugas, 2012). They do this by dispossessing the working class and destroying any resistance. This dispossession and destruction are accomplished primarily with paramilitary forces, whose tactics are tailored to the maintenance and strengthening of the established sociopolitical order (Dugas, 2012). Paramilitaries are used deliberately to serve the interests of the elites both inside and outside of Colombia's borders. In the 1980s, the paramilitaries linked to the Colombian landowning elite gained power and made strong ties with drug trafficking groups (IDMC, 2008). In the 1990s the paramilitaries were supported by many powerful players including large landowners, businesspeople, politicians, multinational corporations, and drug traffickers. They were able to carry out projects with the acquiescence and cooperation of state security forces (Dugas, 2012).

The growth of the of coca and cocaine trade in the 1980s and 1990s played a key role in sustaining guerilla warfare (IDMC, 2008), as both paramilitary groups and the guerillas took advantage of the revenue-generating opportunities from the drug industry, seeking control over the production, trafficking, and forced taxation of narcotics (Ballentine and Nitzschke, 2003). Safford and Palacios contend that the booming drug economy was a trigger for the exponential increase of criminality and violence in Colombia (2002). Ross (2004) argues that the drug economy is not to blame for initiating the conflict, but rather that the conflict in Colombia led to the drug economy by creating areas of the country that were outside government control. There are certainly many groups in Colombia involved in the drug business, but the role of those who

are creating the demand for these illicit drugs in North America and Europe is often overlooked (Gruner, 2007). This foreign demand, along with the roles of the paramilitary, officials and elites in the Colombian drug business is underexplored, putting more of the blame on the shoulders of those growing the crops, and the guerillas (Gruner, 2007).

Beyond the drug industry, there were other economic motivations for conflict which were clearly linked to the increase in transnational commerce and to the political economy of violence in Colombia (Dunning and Wirpsa, 2004). In particular, the conflict has been shaped by the promotion and restriction of oil and other similar commodities by subnational, national, and transnational actors (Dunning and Wirpsa, 2004). All major parties of the Colombian conflict, from the paramilitaries, to the guerillas, to the government, took money from oil extraction and distribution and used it to fund their efforts (Ballentine and Nitzschke, 2003; Dunning and Wirpsa, 2004). The economic opportunities that arose from the oil industry both perpetuate and reshape the conflict: the territorial dimension to the conflict is heightened as groups competed for the control of oil-rent producing territory (Dunning and Wirpsa, 2004).

Beyond funding parties to the conflict, the oil industry highlights the influence of foreign governments, particularly the United States. Oil is a strategic, highly valued resource and military intervention on the part of the United States is increasingly used to ensure that oil flows internationally (Dunning and Wirpsa, 2004). The United States structures policy around strategic resources and energy sources, and the military protection of them (Dunning and Wirpsa, 2004). As the United States sought to defend the oil-related investments and interest in Colombia, they used military power that contributed to the conflict (Klare, 2001). For example, in 2002, the Bush administration directed military aid, military advisors, and equipment to train a Colombian armed group to defend the Caño Limon-Covenas oil pipeline. A US multinational company,

Occidental Petroleum, is a part owner and operator of this pipeline and owns 44% of the crude oil pumped (Dunning and Wirpsa, 2004).

Oil is not the only example that highlights the considerable role that the United States played in the conflict in Colombia: "From 2000 to 2007, Colombia received unprecedented levels of U.S. aid totaling more than US$5 billion, more than three-quarters of which went to the Colombian military and police for counterinsurgency and antinarcotics operations and oil pipeline protection" (Bouvier, 2009, p. 5). The FARC have claimed that the United States used Colombia's narcotrafficking problem merely as an excuse to exert further influence over the internal practices and policies of Colombia (Lee, 2012). Even when the United State's 'War on Drugs' efforts seemed pointless or without effect, the U.S. government continued to use antinarcotics as justification to maintain a domestic defense presence and to push its political agenda onto the Colombian government (Lee, 2015).

One way that the United States exerted its power and influence in Colombia was through the use of paramilitaries. Paramilitaries created attractive conditions for foreign investors: low wages, poor working conditions, and high profit margins for Multi-National Corporations. Further, paramilitaries displaced high numbers of people to allow companies to access economically strategic territory (Maher and Thomspon, 2011). This connection between the Colombian paramilitaries and United States interests (both private sector and geostrategic) highlights a key dimension of the political economy of conflict: the violent tactics used by the paramilitaries were an important part of how foreign investors, mostly American ones, shaped the conflict (Maher and Thompson, 2011).

These connections between the oil industry, foreign investment, military action, the drug industry, and the political economy of Colombia provide essential insight into understanding

Colombia's conflict. However, they do not fully explain why Colombia continues to experience endemic violence that appears disconnected to any particular motivations for political or economic gain. The social and cultural dimensions of conflict must be considered for a clearer explanation of Colombia's levels of violence.

2.5 Social Dimensions of Conflict

By exploring the factors behind the startling homicide statistics of Colombia (see Appendix A), it is evident that the conflict must also be examined through a social lens as well as from a political economy perspective. In the 1970s, Colombia's homicide rates were the highest in Latin America (30 per 100,000) and in the 1990s the rates climbed to 90 per 100,000 (Safford and Palacios, 2002, p. 346). Unlike other Latin American countries, the causes of these high homicide rates in Colombia have been attributed to psychosocial factors, like social intolerance and vengeance (Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, 2013). In 2011, homicides resulting from interpersonal violence were more common than those attributed to sociopolitical actions (Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, 2013). Solimano suggests that we must go beyond the political economic approach to understanding conflict and violence, and offers the following conceptual framework to understand the complex nature of conflict in Colombia:

1. Political: history of violence, unequal access to economic resources, unequal political power and representation, role of drug-related, guerilla and paramilitary violence.
2. Economic: poverty, inequality, rapid growth, lack of employment.
3. Social: lack of effective conflict-resolution mechanisms in the justice system, corruption, lack of educational opportunities, role of family in violence reproduction (Solimano, 2000, p. 23).

This framework suggests the logical conclusion that just as the conflict in Colombia affects all levels of society, so too must any approach to solving the conflict and building peace.

2.6 Displacement and the Entrenchment of Violence

By examining the intersections between the political, economic and social dimensions of the conflict, the question of why Colombians live with such high levels of violence can be addressed (Safford and Palacios, 2002). Compared to some of Colombia's neighbouring countries, Colombia is significantly more violent, as measured by homicide rates (See Appendix B and C). The pursuit of power for economic advantage is not a sufficient explanation for political violence; when violence becomes a long-term or permanent feature of a society, violence can become engrained in everyday culture (Waldmann, 2007). There are three types of indicators that suggest Colombia has a culture of violence: structural indicators stemming from the frequency and intensity of the Colombian conflict, mental indicators suggesting an endemic inclination for violence, and the absence of taboos and tools discouraging violence (Waldmann, 2007).

One reason that Colombia experiences a culture of violence is because multiple generations have seen all sides of the conflict use violence as a means of pursuing their goals. This continued observed use of violence has affected the culture of everyday Colombians: almost half of Colombians surveyed in 2014 approved of "taking justice into one's own hands" and over 35% supported 'social cleansing' to eliminate delinquents (Guerrero and Fandiño-Losada, 2017, p. 10). There is a widespread cultural disposition towards violence: thinking in terms of "friend and foe", while originally linked to the traditional political party rivalry, pervades social discourse and relations (Waldmann, 2007).

This culture of violence, combined with the political and economic motivations to perpetuate conflict, means that the conflict has lasting and multi-generational impacts on the daily lives of Colombians. This is made especially clear by looking at the situation of displacement. Displacement of peoples is a tactic used by every major player in the conflict. Regions of economic development interest, conflict, and high levels of displacement overlap: those regions that are richest in resources or strategic value are the most attractive to capitalist developers and thus experience the most conflict (Gruner, 2007). Hector Mondragón states: "There are not only displaced people because there is war, but rather there is war in order that there be displaced people" (Gruner, 2007, p. 165). In the early 2000s, paramilitary groups were responsible for up to 63% of displacements, guerillas for around 12%, and the rest by either the state or other armed groups like gangs (Escobar, 2003). Between 1985 and 2010, over 5 million people were displaced **(**Jimeno, 2001). After communities are forcibly displaced from their land, either guerilla or paramilitary forces repopulate land with any military or economic value (Muggah, 2000). Terror strategies of violence and intimidation are used by these groups to displace communities and gain control of their land (Escobar, 2003).

Indigenous people (indigenous women in particular) (Tovar-Restrepo and Irazabal, 2013) are negatively impacted by conflict and displacement, not just because of the high numbers affected, but because of their territorially-based way of life (IDMC, 2008). Large scale development projects have undermined their traditional livelihoods, and they are both directly and indirectly affected by the conflict (IDMC, 2008). In Colombia, there are approximately one million indigenous peoples belonging to eighty different groups with over sixty languages. The majority of these peoples have become victims of forced displacement or have been threatened due to the conflict (IDMC, 2008).

Effects of displacement include the loss of traditional lands, the destruction of biodiversity, environmental degradation, food insecurity, and the destruction of alternative economic structures. Many individuals continue to suffer physically, emotionally and psychologically because of traumas associated with displacement (Gruner, 2007). This situation is exacerbated by the weakening of local and environmental practices and the killing of organizational and community leaders (Gruner, 2007). Effects of displacements are not limited to the physical realm: there is long-lasting, sometimes invisible, erosion of community and individual well-being.

Due to the extremely high level of conflict over such a long period of time, violence has become harmfully embedded and normalized in the daily lives of Colombians. "Arguably, the most worrisome feature of this conflict is the way in which violence has become entrenched in every aspect of social life, normalized in daily existence. The weight of this burden and its negative impact on people's well-being and quality of life cannot be overestimated" (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2006, p. 5). A tendency towards violence is a feature of many Colombian households, often manifesting in the mistreatment of children in the family home (Guerrero and Fandiño-Losada, 2017). It is clear that abused or neglected children experience lasting mental and physical effects (Guerrero and Fandiño-Losada, 2017).

It is also important to note that violence does not affect everyone equally, and the entrenchment of violence in daily life is more of a reality for some than others. Women, rural communities (especially the rural poor), Afro-Colombians, youth, and the indigenous have consistently been politically, socially and economically excluded (Bouvier, 2009). These groups are most impacted by the armed conflict. Many years of high levels of interpersonal, familial

violence suggests that Colombia bears a heavy burden of social violence. The tendency towards social violence is attributed to the numerous and long-lasting conflicts (Guerrero and Fandiño, 2017). Widespread and long-lasting violence deeply and dramatically affects individuals and communities in Colombia in terms of livelihood, family life, and feelings of safety (MSF, 2006). This entrenchment of violence is what grassroots groups in Colombia are working to address. Without forgiveness and reconciliation at an interpersonal level, a stable base for peacebuilding is impossible.

2.7 Contextual Changes

The 2016 peace accord, currently being implemented, contains elements that show promise of addressing this deep-rooted and normalized violence. The accord acknowledges that the many years of conflict in Colombia have resulted in a lack of trust, that victims must be acknowledged, accountability must be established, and that the whole of Colombian society must acknowledge the past in order to embrace this opportunity for peace ("Final Agreement", 2016). There are several clauses in the Peace Accord that work to address the legacy of conflict. One is "Political Participation: A democratic opportunity to build peace," which emphasizes including more diverse voices, inclusion, and participation ("Final Agreement, 2016, p. 7-8). Another clause working to build peace and prevent the recurrence of conflict is the "Reincorporation of the FARC-EP into civilian life – in economic, social and political matters- in accordance with their interests." Additionally, the Victims Agreement outlines compensation, the investigation and address of violations of human rights and humanitarian law, searching for missing people, and guarantees of non-recurrence ("Final Agreement", 2016, p. 9).

There is some question, due to the entrenchment of violence and long-lasting presence of the FARC, as to what has changed in the context of conflict to make the 2016 peace accord the most feasible to date. Preceding 2002, the economic and military strength of the guerillas and paramilitaries seemed to be only increasing, which meant that it was in their best interest not to participate in peace negotiations, since their means of supporting themselves seemed to be secure. Peace negotiations were frequently attempted in earlier phases in the conflict, with no lasting success (Ballentine and Nitzschke, 2003). In 2002, after three years of failed negotiations, the Colombian state began to seriously weaken the FARC through an increased sustained military confrontation. With the goal of the Santos government to achieve a political agreement with the FARC, the Santos administration of 2010 continued to use military pressure while also encouraging the guerilla group to reattempt negotiations (Posado-Carbo, 2017)

Lee provides a compelling explanation for the decline of the FARC power and the feasibility of the current peace accord. He argues that the FARC were receiving little support in urban settings, that the Uribe administration of 2002 – 2010 significantly damaged the organization and that there have been major military setbacks since 2002, including a decline in recruits and the loss of FARC leaders (Lee, 2012). In 2012, Lee argued that the FARC were at an important crossroads. They needed to either overthrow the state, which was becoming less likely as the FARC's power waned, or negotiate a political solution to ensure their survival (Lee, 2012). This has proven to be an accurate prediction, as the FARC signed a peace agreement in 2016 with the Colombian government under the Santos administration.

The FARC claims an ideological commitment to social justice, but their involvement with the "world's most infamous criminal industry" (Lee, 2012, p. 35) – the drug business –

highlights the contradictions within the organizations, which undermine public support for its legitimate concerns. This hypocrisy, along with the FARC's violence, urban terrorism, and kidnapping, has played a role in eroding the support for the FARC and may have pushed them towards favouring a political peace accord (Lee, 2012).

2.8 Conclusion

While the political economy of Colombia is a major aspect in a historical and contemporary understanding of the conflict, psycho-social factors must also be considered. It is only through a comprehensive understanding of the varied root causes of the conflict in Colombia that a sustainable way forward can be determined. Just as the conflict has been manifested at every level of society, the approach to peace must also address these diverse parts of society, politics, and economics. This calls for grassroots, community-based initiatives for change in conjunction with national efforts.

<u>**Chapter 3: Peacebuilding**</u>

3.1 Challenges of Peacebuilding

       Peacebuilding can greatly vary in theory and practice and can involve a variety of actors

and concepts. In this thesis I use Cravo's (2017: 45) definition of peacebuilding because it

includes nuances relevant to the work of organizations in Colombia:

> With the objective of creating the conditions for a self-sustaining peace in order to
>
> prevent a return to armed conflict, peacebuilding is directed towards the eradication of
>
> the root causes of violence and is necessarily a multifaceted project that involves
>
> political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions and security practices, which are
>
> understood as complementary and mutually reinforcing.

       Peacebuilding can take many different forms. In order for post-conflict peacebuilding to

be successful and sustainable, the underlying causes of conflict must be addressed (Lambourne,

2004). This is the difficulty in the Colombian case: many of the root causes of conflict have not

been adequately addressed by the peace accord and its implementation. Post-conflict

peacebuilding is a complex process. It must address many issues like lack of resources and

political will, lack of the capacity to implement a peace accord, and political constraints

(Lambourne, 2004).

       There is pressure on peacebuilders for rapid achievement of measurable indicators of

"success" in order to receive funding or support from external organizations and networks.

Success is often measured by the number of returned refugees or rebuilt infrastructure without

taking into account larger questions of sustainability or the current government's interests

(Donais, 2009). This pressure for measurable outcomes makes it difficult to assess the efficacy of

local ownership in peacebuilding, as there are rarely immediate measurable results. Local initiatives, "like any democratic process – tend to by messy, time-consuming, and inherently unpredictable" (Donais, 2009, p. 9).

Another challenge is that peace agreements do not end wars or achieve sustainable peace on their own: in many instances, the issues that contributed to conflict and war continue and undermine the prospects for reconciliation and long-term peace (Francis, 2000, p. 357). Examples from Nepal, Sudan, Northern Ireland, and Guatemala demonstrate that the implementation of a peace accord can be more of a challenge than the peace negotiations themselves (Herbolzheimer, 2014). These country cases all highlight different challenges to post accord peacebuilding including the lack of endorsement by the citizenry, the continued segregation of communities, lack of trust, continuation of criminal activity, resistance to accord implementation, and even a relapse into conflict (Hancock and Mitchell, 2012; Herbolzheimer, 2014). Peacebuilding requires the mobilization of a variety of resources in order to be sustainable. Depending on the peacebuilding project and priorities, these resources may come from the international community, local organizations, civil society, the government, non-profit organizations, and businesses (Hellmüller and Santschi, 2014).

In December 2016, after four years of negotiations, the Colombian congress approved a peace agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia). This peace agreement followed a national referendum held in October 2016 which saw an earlier version of the accord narrowly defeated (Gill, 2017). 50.2% voted against the peace accord, while 49.8% supported it. The difference between those against and in support measured less than 60, 000 votes in a country of 48.65 million people (Kan,

2017). The defeat of the peace accord in the plebiscite brings to light some interesting dynamics of Colombian society, with important implications for the future of peace in Colombia. First, 63% of Colombians abstained from voting (Gruner, 2017). Most of those who voted against the accord were urban dwellers, often quite removed from direct conflict and arguably more influenced by disturbing right-wing political tactics (Gruner, 2017). [1] Voting in favour were most rural, Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities living in conflict zones. The defeat of the accord in October put the cease-fire at risk and meant further delays in implementing peace: Colombian president Santos did meet with those who voted 'no', which impacted the revisions of the accord, and included protection for landowners and compensation for victims through the FARC's surrender of all assets (WOLA, 2016). The revised accord approved by Congress in December (with no votes in opposition) brought more than half a century of armed conflict between the FARC and the government to an official end (Gruner, 2017).

This monumental peace deal seeks to facilitate a cease-fire, demobilisation, reintegration of insurgents, victims' rights, political participation, rural reform, illicit drugs, and transitional justice (Carasik, 2016). The model used to end the Colombian conflict is heralded as innovative in comparison with recent peace deals in other countries primarily because it promotes dialogue and gives victims a voice at the negotiating table (Carasik, 2016).

While the formal peace accord marks an historic accomplishment, and it appears that the peace negotiations were more inclusive than in other countries, there are still criticisms of the Colombian peace negotiations, which remained elitist and male-dominated (Herzbolheimer,

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[1] Tactics used by right wing political groups are often linked to the previous president of 2002 to 2010, Álvaro Uribe, who took a much more militaristic approach in attempting to deal with drugs and violence in Colombia during his presidency. Uribe vocally advocated for harsher treatment of the FARC and against the transitional justice approach proposed in the peace accord. The tactics include campaigns to undermine the accords by saying they were a threat to private property and a threat to the family unit (Gruner, 2017).

2014). Also, looking at cases of past peace negotiations and demobilizations suggest that an agreement made with one armed group does not end all conflict in violent regions, as with the 1992 demobilisation of the guerilla EPL, or the paramilitary AUC in 2006 (Naucke, 2017, p. 458). Already in 2017, the ELN and some paramilitary successor groups have occupied some of the territory that the FARC have vacated (Naucke, 2017). In order for peacebuilding to be effective, these power vacuums must be addressed along with unequal power relations, continued exclusions, and the post-conflict political economy with its social implications (Pearce, 1997, p. 448). In the case of Colombia, one hopes that the more inclusive approach, and the revision of the accord following the referendum, will set up a favorable environment for post-accord peacebuilding.

Beyond the formal peace negotiations, Colombia still faces the additional challenges of overcoming a culture of violence that has developed through decades of conflict. This culture of violence can be understood by observing a widespread tendency to commit violent acts, the degree and frequency of conflict in Colombia, and the lack of taboos and discouragement that would make violence less acceptable (Waldmann, 2007). A political peace agreement does not equate to immediate peace in daily life: "Colombians ask when an "after" to the decades-long war in Colombia will arrive" (Gill, 2017, p. 159). While the overall decrease in deaths and displacements since the ceasefire are indicators for the potential success of peacebuilding, the viability of peace in Colombia is certainly in question due to ongoing violence (Gruner, 2017). The homicide rate in 2017 was the lowest in 42 years – at 23.9/100,000 ("Homicidios en Colombia", 2018). However, serious concerns for this post-accord period remain– like the continued systematic targeting of Indigenous, Afro-Colombian, campesino, and leftist leaders by FARC dissidents (Gruner, 2017). Ongoing post-accord violence is in part a continuation of the

national conflict: at the personal and community level people incite social violence in response to unresolved structural issues (Odendaal, 2012). Violence and coercion are components of political and social operations in Colombia, with persisting values and norms becoming embedded in collective consciousness as a result (Pecaut, 2001). Violent actors may also take advantage of the unstable nature of political transition to pursue self-interested activities (Odendall, 2012).

Now that the government of Colombia has reached an accord with the FARC, the pros and cons of the accord must be examined to move into implementation and peacebuilding. There are also other armed groups who have not disarmed or signed a peace accord with the government, like the ELN. While peace negotiations are necessary for a peace process, peacebuilding must involve actors and inspire discussions beyond negotiations: there are numerous paths to peace, and all of them are important (Ledarach, 1995, Herbolzherimer, 2014).

3.2 Layers of Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding involves the attempt to establish peaceful alternatives to the violence that underlies conflict (Mouly et al., 2015). The concept of peacebuilding promotes the idea that cultural and structural violence must be simultaneously confronted (Galtung, 1990) and has three main characteristics:

1. It is a process that works to address the root causes as well as the symptoms of conflict, and it is well-suited to countries with internal conflict.

2. Peacebuilding can take place at multiple levels of society, from the community level to the national level.

3. It is a long-term process without a clear start or end-point. Peace can be built before a conflict, during a conflict, during peace negotiations (Gruner, 2017), and as part of a long-term process after an accord has been signed (Odendaal, 2012; Mouly et al., 2015).

Rather than focusing on the contrasts between "top-down" and "bottom-up" peacebuilding, a more useful approach emphasizes the interaction between the multiple levels of action required to make peacebuilding effective (Odendaal, 2012). Broader forces, such as elite international interests, must be explored to understand how they may encourage or hinder the capacity of local communities to undertake post-conflict societal reconstruction (Pearce, 1997). Beyond these elite and grassroots levels, it is also important to recognize the peacebuilding contributions from other levels of society, like religious organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, and regional bodies (Alther, 2006). Broad sectors, or layers of society, must be invested in the ownership and implementation of the peace accord in order for peace to be participatory and effective (Jeong, 2005). "…A peace process that is not merely top-down, but also contains elements of peacebuilding from below, is expected to produce more stable outcomes" (Nilsson, 2012, p. 248). Efforts targeting political and interpersonal violence need to be implemented at the same time at multiple levels of society: strategies addressing only one level of the conflict will not be successful (McDonald, 1997; Alther, 2006). Consultations to get local perspectives on issues discussed between the parties in conflict, representative decision making at the negotiating table, and grassroots level intercommunity meeting are all ways in which peacebuilding from below can strengthen a political peace process (Nilsson, 2012, p. 247-248).

Peacebuilding, beyond being multilayered, also occurs in both the short and long term in different ways. In the short-term, elite-led negotiations among the major parties in a conflict act as one important element of a peace process. However, the long-term commitment to peace education, development, and human rights is arguably even more important to the sustainability of peace (McDonald, 1997).

The peacebuilding work of local communities is one of the most important conditions for the sustainability of a peace process because they can bring about social transformation by working on reintegration, reconciliation, and dialogue (Jeong, 2005). It is important to note that it is local people who have been involved in the conflict in various roles as victims, survivors, peacebuilders, armed actors, or relief workers. This means that the responsibility, or burden, for long-term peacebuilding lies largely with local people (Pearce, 1997). "While the discourse of local ownership has increasingly become part of the vocabulary of post-conflict peacebuilding, the discussion to date on both the meanings and practices of local ownership in peacebuilding contexts remains underdeveloped" (Donais, 2009, p. 3).

Grassroots organizations are in a unique position to tackle peacebuilding in a way that other levels of society are simply not as well-placed to bring about (McDonald, 1997). In order for peacebuilding to be sustainable, it must be rooted in the realities of particular local contexts. Thus, further research is needed to better understand how grassroots organizations may contribute to peacebuilding: processes of 'peacebuilding from below' should be understood to determine what is most effective (Pearce, 1997, p. 441):

> Peacebuilding from below is both a practice and attitude. As a practice, it means
> peacebuilding engaged in at the local level by the people who live in the midst of
> violence. As an attitude, it rests on the assumption that those most affected by violence,

who understand and have to live with its consequences, are likely to be best places to find

the most appropriate solutions to it.

(McDonald, 1997, p. 1-2).

The concept of 'peacebuilding from below' is a key feature of a crucial alternative to the

theoretical and practical implications of liberal peace. Liberal peace, its shortcomings, and

alternatives will be further explored in the Theoretical Framework chapter. Grassroots

approaches are based on the premise that local people are best placed to know what their most

pressing issues are, and what the most appropriate solutions could be (Alther, 2006; Hellmüller

and Santschi, 2014). Local resources and wisdom are essential for sustainable peacebuilding.

Insiders have the resources, skills, and knowledge to understand the root causes of conflict and to

come up with realistic and sustainable solutions (Donais, 2009). All too often, elite-level

processes exclude local leaders and communities and relegate them to passive spectators so that

there is no interference in the 'real business' of peacemaking (Hancock and Mitchell, 2012).

Peace must be both defined and constructed at the local level (Hellmüller and Santschi, 2014),

and peacebuilding is sustainable only if local resources are used and methods are appropriate for

particular cultural and religious contexts (Funk and Said, 2010). "In much the same way that

genuine reconciliation cannot be imposed by outsiders, no amount of externally generated policy

prescriptions can shift post-conflict societies from a culture of violence to a culture of peace"

(Donais, 2009, p. 11). It is therefore clear that grassroots organizations rooted in particular

communities are well-suited for sustainable peacebuilding.

3.3 Peacebuilding in Colombia

While there has been significant research regarding the causes, unique features, and outcomes of the Colombian conflict, there has been less attention to examining the reduction of violence (McDonald, 1997), especially grassroots driven efforts for non-violent political and social change (Bouvier, 2009). The research on the contemporary activities and impacts of grassroots peacebuilding organizations in Colombia since the signing of the accord in December 2016 has been particularly limited.

A few studies do address the roles and activities of grassroots organizations during the conflict and during the peace negotiations in Colombia (Mouly et al., 2015, Gruner 2017, Naucke, 2017), and are touched upon below. The CRIC (an indigenous movement from the department of Cauca) represents one of the first experiences of resistance in the 1970s. People from peasant, Afrodescendant, and indigenous communities have contributed to the construction of local peace, unarmed and quietly. By refusing to bear weapons and cooperate with armed groups, they demonstrate active resistance to the logic and influence of armed actors (Sacipa-Rodriguez, 2014). This organization worked to counter structural violence and contributed to other experiences of civil resistance like the Nasa Project in 1980, Jambalo in 1988, the experience of the community of La Maria in 1989, and Antioquia in 1994. Through these experiences, the "active neutrality of the indigenous organization was created" (Sacipa-Rodriguez, 2014, p. 9).

During the conflict, one example of a peacebuilding initiative is the Peace Territory of Samaniego (Mouly et al., 2016). Samaniego is located in the Southern department of Nariño bordering Ecuador. This community lies on a strategic drug trafficking route and has been a site

of conflict between guerilla groups and the military (Mouly et al., 2015). A Peace Territory is a delineated area where community members declare themselves neutral to the conflict and require armed actors to follow rules to limit the impacts of the armed conflict (Mouly et al., 2016). They are guided by principles of impartiality and nonviolence. Weapons are prohibited, and no collaboration with armed actors is allowed (Mouly et al., 2015). Some peace communities focus only on protection, especially where armed conflict is intense. In other areas, peace communities work for greater social inclusion and participatory politics, as occurred in Samaniego (Mouly et al., 2015).

Both structural factors and the strategies employed by the civil resistance movement contributed to the success of this declaration and the reduction of violence (Mouly et al., 2016). At the time of the declaration of this peace territory in 1998, peace negotiations were underway between the government and the National Liberation Army (ELN) guerilla rebels which changed the national and structural context (Mouly et al., 2016), and motivated the peace movement in Colombia (Mitchell and Hancock, 2012). Also, peace initiatives were being undertaken in other Colombian communities that provided examples and inspiration, like the community of Cacaria in Choco (Sanford, 2003) and San José de Apartadó in Antioquia (Naucke, 2017). The combination of these factors created an environment that was conducive to the establishment of Samaniego as a peace territory (Mouly et al., 2016).

During the peace negotiations, the Afro-Colombian National Peace Council was an especially prominent grassroots group (Gruner, 2017). This Council is made up of nine regional and national organizations that represent Afro-Colombian, Indigenous, Palanquero and other communities and territories in Colombia. The peace accord signed in 2016 includes an Ethnic Chapter, due to the efforts of Afro-Colombian and Indigenous territorial and political

organizations that worked throughout the four years of peace negotiations (Gruner, 2017). This Ethnic Chapter includes written safeguards to protect the territorial and cultural rights of Afro-Colombian and Indigenous communities, along with guiding principles and practical methods for implementing and monitoring peacebuilding in their territories (Gruner, 2017).

3.4 The Psychology of Peacebuilding

A return to conflict is an unfortunately common occurrence in the case of Colombia's past peace deals, as well as in other countries. Therefore, education and reconciliation are necessary to foster micro-level behavioural changes *alongside* structural reform (Jeong, 2005). Education and reconciliation activities are undertaken by various grassroots organizations in Colombia, including the Foundation for Reconciliation and REDEPAZ. To advance peacebuilding, relationships between individuals and communities on 'opposing' sides must be improved, and such changes are dependant on psychological transformation. According to my research findings, this transformation can only come about by working to address the impacts of the violence experienced by victims (Jeong, 2005, p. 4).

It is also important to acknowledge the varied ways people are impacted by conflict including loss of family members and violence. "Violent actions from Colombia's armed groups, repeated almost daily, have negative effects on individuals and produce social inhibition. Public executions, selected kidnapping, and nocturnal killings at people's homes, all violate the intimacy of families and create fear and distrust, making violence (seen or experienced but always feared) an element of daily life" (Novoa, 2014, p. 42.)

However, conflict can also create conditions in which people become more resilient and are able to develop new skills and ways to cope (Jeong, 2005). This can be seen particularly in youth and women's groups, described in Chapter 6. Therefore, sensitive and systematic support

of the rebuilding efforts of local people, learning from their unique experiences, and building on their strengths and capacities are all efforts that the state and international actors can make in support of sustainable peace (Pearce, 1997). The promotion of self-sustaining grassroots initiatives is an essential part of bringing about long-term socioeconomic transformation (Jeong, 2005). This must take place, of course, alongside structural change (Pearce, 1997).

When are grassroots initiatives most effective? In the post-accord period, more than during the conflict or during peacemaking, grassroots organizations have managed to negotiate for a better balance between national and local control over resources and programs (Mitchell and Hancock, 2012; Donais, 2009). An important consideration, particularly at the outset of peace accord implementation, is the common delay between when a country officially signs a peace accord and enters a post-conflict period and when peace is a reality in the daily lives of citizens. This is a gap that grassroots peacebuilding organizations can help to address. Grassroots organizations are often the only ones protecting the well-being of community members in areas outside state control (Mitchell and Hancock, 2012).

The roles of grassroots organizations cannot be discussed in isolation from other levels of peacebuilding. In South Africa, for example, some local peacebuilders were largely successful because of the way they encouraged collaboration between different parts of society including political parties, civil society, local government and police (Odendaal, 2012). While the South African context is different from that of Colombia, lessons can be learned from the way South Africans approached societal collaboration. In terms of the way the grassroots initiatives and elite-led processes may influence and be influenced by one another, it is clear that grassroots efforts respond positively to elite processes much more than national elites or insurgents respond to grassroots projects (Hancock and Mitchell, 2012).

3.5 Conclusion

Since the accord was signed so recently, there is a lack of literature regarding post-accord peacebuilding in Colombia. Within peacebuilding literature, there is a further gap in understanding how grassroots actors can bring about changes in social values (Paffenholz, 2010). These are the main gaps this thesis aims to address, through evidence from interviews and publications of community-based peacebuilding organizations.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework

4.1 Alternatives to Liberal Peace

As a theoretical starting position, this research project is critical of the concept of Liberal Peace, which has been widely criticized for reproducing the power and interests of Western Capitalism, universal norms and policies of good governance (Hellmuler & Santschi, 2014), while disrespecting difference and diversity (Neufeldt, 2014). Liberal peacebuilding theory assumes the primary role is that of international actors, not communities themselves (Bargues-Pedreny, 2017). In the liberal peace narrative, locals are placed firmly in the role of 'grateful recipient' (Donais, 2009, p. 9). Liberal peace sees peacebuilding as an attempt to apply the international system's standards of governance to a conflicted country. The core ideas underlying liberal peace include democratization, human rights, the rule of law, and economic liberalization (Paris, 2002). These values increasingly influence the conceptualization and practice of contemporary peacebuilding (Richmond, 2007). While the values of liberal peace are not undesirable in principal, the practical process to achieve these values has often involved external imposition. According to the perspective of liberal peace, the liberal democratic framework is viewed as both the ideal form of governance and the most stable base for sustainable peace (Donais, 2009).

However, the track record of peacebuilding since the Cold War suggests that outsiders have not generally been effective in building peace, and also that the standard liberal internationalist approach to transition after a war possesses critical failings. More than half of all peace processes since 1991 collapsed within a five-year period (Donais, 2009). This means that a better peacebuilding model is needed.

An alternative view of peacebuilding, quite different from that of the liberal brand, is communitarian in nature, also called "peacebuilding from below." Communitarians argue that a viable solution to conflict must come from and serve the lives of people living in a specific time and place. Peace communitarians support the right of communities to make decisions for themselves, whether or not these decisions support international (Western) norms. Local ownership is the essential issue here: peacebuilding processes "must be designed, managed, and implemented by local actors rather than external actors" (Donais, 2009, p. 7). Communitarianism is an important element of Conflict Transformation Theory.

4.2 Conflict Transformation Theory

Conflict Transformation Theory, developed by Johan Galtung and John Paul Ledarach, is a suitable framework for understanding grassroots peacebuilding concepts. Conflict Transformation Theory highlights the role of individuals and groups in creating peaceful realities. This framework includes multiple actors and multi-level action (Thiessen, 2011) with short, medium, and long-term perspectives (Paffenholz, 2012). This theory was developed in part from Ledarach's work in Colombia, and it aims to support the diversity in people's everyday lives (Bargues-Pedreny, 2017). Conflict Transformation Theory also focuses on sustainable reconciliation and peacebuilding within societies by challenging violence in institutions and reimagining the role of education in peace (Paffenholz, 2010). Ledarach encourages a broad understanding of peacebuilding that includes restorative justice, socio-economic development, and cultural change (Lambourne, 2004).

There are recent changes in the nature of conflict that call for a concept like Conflict Transformation Theory. Most contemporary conflicts are asymmetric in power and are protracted. Also, they alter the fabric of society, creating long-lasting violence that is fuelled by

both local power struggles and global interests (Miall, 2004). Other theorists in conflict intervention think that *conflict management* or *conflict resolution* are more appropriate than *conflict transformation.* Conflict management theorists argue that resolving conflict is unrealistic, and effort would be better spent in containing violence and seeking practical cooperation (Miall, 2004). Conflict resolution theorists aim to identify roots of conflict and help affected parties identify creative solutions. Conflict Transformation theory involves transforming interests, relationships and discourses that support conflict (Miall, 2004). In practical terms, conflict transformation can happen in different ways at different times. The different types of transformation include context, structural, actor, issue, and personal/elite. Because Conflict Transformation theory focuses on developing capacity and structural change, it can be difficult to see major outcomes, as compared to focusing on settlements and specific outcomes (Miall, 2004). It also engages with conflict in the post-violence phase (Miall, 2004).

Conflict Transformation Theory respects peace traditions that are outside Western rational frameworks and affirms the relevance of the knowledge and practices possessed by people in diverse settings, encouraging empowerment as well as capacity development through the sustainable use and adaption of local resources (Ledarach, 1995). Programs that help farmers reclaim their land for traditional crops from forced drug cultivation is one example of a practical activity that falls in line with this Theory. Other programs like the Reconciliation Centres (see Chapter 6.2) encourage people to use their own experiences and knowledge to plan peacebuilding that is appropriate for their communities. Conflict Transformation Theory also emphasizes coordinating structures that engage all levels of society, and that relationship building is the basis for peace as a process of change (Lambourne, 2004).

This theoretical basis informs my methods and approach. Conflict Transformation Theory leads to me to ask about the role of relationships in peacebuilding in Colombia, and how grassroots peacebuilding in Colombia relates to other levels of peacebuilding, particularly at the governmental level. Conflict Transformation Theory asks and answers questions like: what role do individuals have in transforming their realities? How do different levels of peacebuilding interact? Why should peacebuilding take place at the local level?

This framework is suitable for the following reasons:

1. The theory is culturally relevant, as it emerged partially out of work in Colombia.
2. It helps to frame the role of post-conflict local peacebuilding organizations in the context of other levels of peacebuilding.
3. It is compatible with theories of transitional justice, positive and negative peace, hybrid peace, peace psychology, and sustainable peacebuilding.

These additional theories are being explored in addition to Conflict Transformation Theory to help answer the research questions and guide the research. The theories also inform the use of terms and the selection of interview questions. While the major findings from my interviews focus on peace at a micro and interpersonal level, Conflict Transformation Theory helps to put these findings into context.

4.3 Supplementary Theories

Theories of negative and positive peace will be explored (Cravo, 2017)– with positive peace identified as the focus of this research. "A peace agreement should deliver the silencing of guns… described as *negative* peace. The *positive* peace – the structural change that addresses the root causes of armed conflict – will need to be addressed by society at large, and will take

longer" (Herbolzheimer, 2014, p.154). These structural changes include addressing inequalities, distribution of goods and services, and land redistribution..

How do norms, values, and attitudes change? How can cultural norms of violence be shifted and changed to a culture of peace? Theories of Peace Psychology can help answer these psycho-social questions (Sacipa-Rodriguez and Montero, 2014). Psychology offers insight into the way that loss and trauma directly and indirectly affect victims of violence and their caregivers (Sacipa-Rodriguez and Montero, 2014). In order for reconciliation and peace to be reached in Colombia, psychological damage must be repaired (Novoa-Gomez, 2014). This psychological damage references the suffering caused by the strategic use of violence as a tool to dominate. This suffering must be addressed on both an individual and a cultural level (Novoa-Gomez, 2014). Theories of peace psychology align with Galtung's theory of positive peace: the opposite of peace is violence, not war. Therefore, constructing peace means that direct, structural, and cultural violence decreases or is absent (Sacipa-Rodriguez, 2014). In its ideal form, peace includes individual, family, and global levels and means wellbeing while at peace within a country, among generations, among different races and religions, among economic classes, and with nature (Sacipa-Rodriguez, 2014). The central arguments of Peace Psychology affirm that peace research and peacebuilding must be "historically, culturally, socially, economically, and geographically contextualized" (Sacipa-Rodriguez, 2014, p. 8) in order to be sustainable.

Sacipa-Rodriguez and Montero show that theories of psychology are important to the case of Colombia in their book "Psychological Approaches to Peace-Building in Colombia." Peace Psychology focuses on the individual level of analysis and asks questions like: what tools are needed for healing to take place at a psychological level? How do loss and trauma have an

impact on the way peace can be built? A framework of Peace Psychology helps with an understanding of the role of relationships and social connections in peacebuilding. As will be evident in Chapters 6 and 8, the organizations interviewed in the fieldwork clearly employ strategies of Peace Psychology to affect change.

The combination of these theories helps to frame and contextualize grassroots peacebuilding, to organize the peacebuilding literature, and to determine appropriate questions. Through the lenses of these theoretical approaches, grassroots organizations are understood to occupy a unique place in the peacebuilding discussion – particularly well suited to address relationship-building and the links between peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation. The organizations interviewed, especially the Foundation for Reconciliation and SOYPAZ, are especially strong in this regard.

Chapter 5: Methodology

To address the gaps in the literature and answer the research questions, this research uses qualitative methods, relying primarily on semi-structured interviews with representatives of peacebuilding organizations and a discourse analysis. An extensive literature review was also undertaken, using some statistical data to emphasize unique elements of the conflict in Colombia. The fieldwork portion of this research took place in Bogota, Colombia between June and August of 2018.

The original research plan was to start in Bogota with interviews and observation with several urban grassroots peacebuilding groups, and then conduct research in rural areas to study projects in zones that were more directly affected by violence. I had planned to participate in and observe a few peacebuilding projects over the course of several weeks. This research would have allowed me to reflect on any psychological and social changes that may have occurred with project participants. The literature seemed to be saying that community-based organizations are essential for peacebuilding in part because they are able to impact people's interpersonal relations and the culture of a community and a society in a way that broader level projects cannot. I intended to investigate grassroots initiative's opportunities, limitations and challenges.

However, it quickly became clear that 'post-accord' does not mean 'post-conflict' or 'post-violence.' Many places where peacebuilding work was taking place were still active conflict zones, and it became clear that it would be unsafe for me as a foreign researcher to conduct research in these locations. Thus, I did not have as much direct contact with rural grassroots projects as I had initially planned. Some of the realities of international research, and of peacebuilding, were brought into focus by this situation. It is impossible to anticipate all the intricacies of a situation before arriving. This highlights the idea that while Colombia is referred

to as being as 'post-accord' or even 'post-conflict', an accord has only been signed between the government and the FARC – one guerilla group. There are numerous other guerilla groups and parties involved in the conflict that are not a part of this peace agreement. During my research period in 2018, Colombia still felt very much in the negotiation phase. Implementation may have been occurring, but not for all communities.

However, the urban organizations that I was able to observe and interview in Bogota also undertake projects in rural Colombia, so I was still able to learn about projects taking place. SOYPAZ, for example, while based in Bogota, does research and projects in the South of Bolivar – a rural area directly impacted by paramilitary and guerilla conflict. It should be acknowledged that this project information is not based on my own evaluation and assessment of projects, but is rather filtered through the organization's own explanations. I shifted from a plan to investigate the opportunities and challenges of grassroots initiatives to a focus on discourse and organizations' self-interpretation of projects and impacts. Rather than do an in-depth assessment of projects, since I was unable to participate and experience them, I shifted to a focus on discourse. This shift came about through valuable discussions with individuals and organizations in Colombia and is well-rooted in the realities and potential applicability of this peacebuilding research.

Even within Bogota, the security concerns escalated as the summer of 2018 progressed: a new president was elected, and many civil society leaders were assassinated (Sánchez-Garzoli, 2018). These horrific deaths prompted protests and vigils in many locations around the city. Navigating these situations as a foreigner, and one who is not completely familiar with Colombian politics and protocol, made it unsafe to travel to some research locations.

I had hoped to observe and participate in grassroots peacebuilding activities as much as possible – taking notes and learning about day-to-day activities and potential changes in interactions, focusing on psycho-social changes. I was still able to discuss psycho-social and cultural changes in interviews, with the data generated coming largely from the organizations' own interpretation of their projects. This opportunity to alter research plans to reflect the contextual reality provided me with an opportunity to listen to the stories and voices of grassroots peacebuilding groups and to reflect on the most effective way of conveying their perspectives. The shift to discourse analysis also allowed me to contextualize the work of grassroots groups in a way that an in-depth analysis of rural peacebuilding projects would not have. The experience has provided me with valuable insights into peacebuilding work, and international research more generally.

In order to understand the role of civil society in peacebuilding in Colombia, I examined four organizations that carry out peacebuilding activities, SOYPAZ, OBSERPAZ, REDEPAZ, and the Foundation for Reconciliation. These organizations are based in Bogota, and they also do projects and research in other parts of Colombia. Examining the functions, goals, and impacts of these organizations is a key method for this research. The evidence for the arguments in this thesis is based on interviews and additional discourse analysis of the publications and websites of these four organizations. To put these arguments into context, the governmental discourse was analyzed through an exploration of the National Centre for Memory, Peace and Reconciliation, the National Museum, and various government published web campaigns. Using a theoretical framework of Conflict Transformation Theory, the thesis examines discourses and projects of both grassroots and government organizations.

The semi-structured interview research method allowed for some flexibility with the stories that community organizations want to share. This makes it a suitable approach within the framework of Conflict Transformation Theory because it allows for difference and diversity to be expressed. The interviews took place mostly with people in leadership positions, and with a few other organization members. Starting with the question: why does this organization exist? gave a good indication of the organizational ideology, the issues the organization is working to address, and its various successes and challenges.

Interview questions were directed towards understanding how organizations are working towards positive peace and conflict transformation. Questions were used to learn about the discourses and goals of peacebuilding organizations in Colombia, what peace means to people involved in peacebuilding, challenges and successes, and any lessons they wished to share with other organizations that may be undertaking similar work. These questions were informed by Conflict Transformation Theory, tackling the community level in the context of interactions between different levels of peacebuilding. By shifting to my focus on discourse, I was better able to investigate the overlapping and distinct layers of peacebuilding.

Research took place in Bogota, the capital city of Colombia between June and August of 2018. The original plan of semi-structured interviews changed into a combination of 18 semi-structured interviews, observation, and discourse analysis of both grassroots organizations and state institutions. Some interview highlights included the director of a university-affiliated organization, the coordinator of a foundation for reconciliation, and the manager of an entrepreneurship and peace organization. I also interviewed members of these organizations. The semi-structured interviews were between 30 and 60 minutes in length and were conducted in Spanish. I was given permission to audio record the interviews, and I also took extensive notes

throughout the interviews. I selected my interviewees in part through contacts provided to me by a researcher I had met when in Colombia with my undergraduate university in 2015. This researcher is a member of Uniminuto University, where I did a short course on community development in 2015. He was able to provide me with contact information to start selecting people for interviews. I was also able to get some responses to contacting other organizations without my pre-existing contacts. This helped to diversify my interview pool. My position as a masters student from Canada led to some interesting conversations and leads for interviews.

Given that the primary methodology of this thesis involves in-depth interviews with a fairly limited number of community-based peacebuilding organization in Bogota, and that the timeline and scope of a master's thesis by its nature limits the possible breadth of research, the conclusions reached in this thesis does not represent the full diversity of discourses found in community organizations in Colombia. Rather, this project aims to highlight a few of the gaps in the literature and present some potential directions for further research, particularly in the areas of layers of peacebuilding and the individual psycho-social changes necessary for a cultural shift towards peace. Given the limitations, this thesis cannot prove or fully test the conclusions reached, but it can suggest patterns emerging that have not been fully explored in the literature.

5.1 Ethical Considerations

As I am not a completely fluent Spanish speaker, I was concerned about the accuracy of my interpretation of interviews. By taking notes and audio recording, I was able to go over the interviews many times and confirm that my comprehension was accurate. I also needed to consider whether conducting my interviews put my interviewees in any danger. Since I focused on urban-based community peacebuilding organizations in Bogota, I was not drawing attention to more vulnerable rural peace projects in active conflict zones.

One ethical challenge I faced was balancing my personal safety concerns with the goal of conducting rigorous research. It would have been high-risk to follow through with the original plan of working directly with rural peacebuilding organizations, as violence had resurged in many of the places I had hoped to do my research. By adjusting my research goals, to an examination of discourses versus rural activities, I was able to ensure my safety while still undertaking in-depth research.

Chapter 6: Discourse and Projects of Community-Based Peacebuilding Organizations

6.1 Introduction

The focus of this thesis is the specific contributions of grassroots organizations' discourses to peacebuilding in Colombia. The main contributions of community-based organizations are examined through an analysis of Conflict Transformation Theory, as described in Chapter 4. It is also important to understand the discourse of state institutions as a point of comparison for community-based organizations. By comparing the discourses and projects of grassroots groups to those of the state, it becomes clear that process and priorities differ greatly. Regarding peacebuilding, while grassroots groups focus on changes in relationships and community resilience, state organizations focus on influence and power. This comparison, followed by an analysis of the importance of community-based discourses, can offer insight on the value of peacebuilding taking place at the community level. This smallest level is the interpersonal level where peace is built through relationships and communication. Grassroots organizations aim to foster context-specific peacebuilding in ways that state organizations do not.

The four community organizations examined in this thesis are the Fundación Para la Reconciliación (Foundation for Reconciliation), SOYPAZ (I am Peace), REDEPAZ (National Network of Citizen's Initiatives for Peace and Against War), and OBSERPAZ (The Observatory for Peace). These organizations were selected because they all had an active web presence and a significant volume of published materials. Some of the organizations also had connections to Uniminuto University in Bogota (where I also had research contacts) and responded to initial requests for an interview. I interviewed between three and five people at the organizations in Bogota, between June and August 2018. I asked questions like: Why does your organization

exist? What are some of your successes and challenges? How would you describe your peacebuilding work? What are your plans for the future? How do governmental activities impact your work?

6.2 The Foundation for Reconciliation (Fundación Para la Reconciliación - FPR)

The Foundation for Reconciliation was established in 2003, with a specific mandate to promote forgiveness and reconciliation in Colombian society (Interview with FPR member, Hunt field notes, June 2018). One member of the FPR emphasized the concept of forgiveness both as a crucial aspect of peacebuilding, and the main aspect that sets this organization apart from others. The FPR has established Reconciliation Centres and projects for adults, youth, and children in schools. The foundation works on practical projects as well as through publishing documents.

The FPR looks at peacebuilding as something that starts with the individual: forgiveness must happen within a victim to initiate any movement towards reconciliation and peace. The FPR understands that forgiveness is more complicated than reconciliation. Forgiveness must start with the victim, not as something that is between the victim and perpetrator. By being a victim, many things are broken: a sense of security, of life, of future dreams and plans, and a social life. According to the research of a member of the FPR, violence can become internalized, and the human memory does not lend itself towards forgiveness: two-thirds of what we remember are bad memories and negative emotions, while only one third is good memories. This means that negative experiences are more easily remembered and make a more lasting impact (Interview with FPR member, Hunt field notes, June 2018).

Based on this understanding, one of the things that the FPR works on is the transformation of negative memories into positive ones. It acknowledges that victims may have

feelings of anger, resentment, and retaliation. The FPR works with victims to create new narratives to change the way they think and speak about the past. An FPR member gave an example of this by telling a story of a woman whose son and father were both killed by an armed group. She initially sought to kill the person responsible for their deaths. She was firmly rooted in negative experiences and was dwelling in feelings of hatred and plans of vengeance. Through work with the FPR, she was able to shift her perspective, focus on forgiveness, and learn how to use her experience to work for peace. Now she works with demobilized armed actors on their reintegration into civil life (Interview with FPR member, Hunt field notes, July 2018). Forgiveness, according to the FPR, is always a necessary step in peacebuilding. When a victim does not forgive, there is an unhealthy connection between the victim and perpetrator. Forgiveness is required to break this negative connection, to free the victim from the vicious cycle of anger and blame (Interview with FPR member, Hunt field notes, June 2018). Forgiveness is the central feature of the FPR's peacebuilding discourse.

Reconciliation, on the other hand, is not always possible and is not always the goal. According to the FPR, there are different types of reconciliation, and different circumstances call for different forms of reconciliation. True complete reconciliation requires a pact of non-repetition, a communal construction of truth, and acts of reparation to rebuild trust. This is not always possible or necessary. People can coexist and work together without a formal pact (Interview with FPR member, Hunt field notes, June 2018).

According to the FPR, both forgiveness and reconciliation are living and experiential processes. Forgiveness must be practiced as a daily activity. Forgiveness is a process with self, and reconciliation is between two or more people. One interesting project the FPR undertakes is what they call "Encuentros de improbables", or "Improbable Meetings." These meetings are set

up between victims and perpetrators, to allow for discussions to happen in an environment where everyone is seeking to acknowledge the conflict and move forward (Interview with FPR member, Hunt field notes, June 2018). These meetings always start with saying their names and not their role in the conflict. This suggests that people are more than their actions. This also allows for everyone involved to think of each person as an individual with a complex history, rather than as merely a face for one side of the conflict or another (Interview with FPR member, Hunt field notes, June 2018).

The FPR is part of an international network called ESPERE, which stands for Escuelas de Perdón y Reconciliación (Schools of Forgiveness and Reconciliation). ESPERE formed in 2006 and holds a meeting every two years with member organization from seventeen different countries to specifically discuss peace and pedagogy. ESPERE curricula and programming are constantly being updated and are specifically applied to individuals and victims. Being part of this international network, the FPR is able to draw on and contribute to an international pool of knowledge and resources (Interview with FPR member, Hunt field notes, June 2018).

Future projects of the FPR include more work with victims, youth, children and schools – with a focus on an intergenerational approach to sustainable peacebuilding. Based on their work with victims and in peacebuilding, the FPR believes that peace must be constructed at the individual level starting with self and forgiveness, and then at the community level. The work of the Foundation intersects with politics and the peace process and the FPR believes that it both affects and is affected by governmental activities. The Foundation works with concepts like memory, truth, and restorative justice to address forgiveness and reconciliation ("Cómo construímos reconciliación?", 2018) They support the notion that justice cannot only be punitive, and it benefits no one to put all perpetrators in jail. Rather, restorative action needs to be

undertaken by the perpetrator. (Interview with FPR member, Hunt field notes, June 2018). This value of restoration and reconciliation that benefits all of society is a key feature of the FPR's discourse on peacebuilding and justice.

The Facebook page of the FPR highlights some of their online community engagement strategies. On May 29, 2018 they posted: "Write in the comments what values you can relate to forgiveness". Responses included: humility, sensitivity, peace, social and personal responsibility, and self-love. The FPR frequently reaches out to their community on social media to draw a wider group into their activities.

One of the projects of the FPR is Podemos Ser ("We can Be"), a youth project located in Medellin, Cali, and Bogota. It tackles issues related to histories of violence and experiences of conflict in specific neighbourhoods. It seeks to explore creative and peaceful solutions, to transform the imaginary, and to change the perception of words like "reconciliation" and "peace". These concepts are not only political, but they are practical and relevant in many situations. These words are parts of daily life and are necessary for confidence in social relationships and to improve methods of resolving conflicts (Torres, 2018). Podemos Ser involves a training component with the youth involved: they learn about methodologies of reconciliation while applying types of storytelling. Throughout this training, they undertake individual reflection on conflict, ways to approach group conversation, and joint planning of scenarios in which forgiveness and reconciliation can take place ("Podemos Ser", 2018). Within this training period, there is also over 130 hours of training in art, organized into three units: emotion and the human body, techniques of artistic application, and social/political improvisation. To make this project more visible to a wider external audience beyond that of the

youth involved, Podemos Ser develops communication strategies designed to share what they have learned through their involvement in the project ("Podemos Ser", 2018).

Another activity of the FPR is their Reconciliation Centres: peaceful community living in houses located in sectors that are vulnerable to violence. These four centres were developed in 2006 in four different areas of Colombia. These centres promote a citizen culture of care, forgiveness and reconciliation. Participants live in the Centres for two years, where they go through three formative cycles. First, members of the reconciliation centres will undertake community training by reflecting on problematic aspects of their communities and the daily life of individuals. Secondly, members create local projects for peace as an opportunity to apply knowledge gained in the first cycle. Finally, members will develop a plan of action with partners and networks to achieve sustainable and realistic community peace projects ("Centro de Reconciliation", 2018).

Practices at the Centres include active listening, community training, and the development of new skills for the resolution of conflicts in diverse scenarios. One participant, who was formerly an armed actor in the conflict, explained: "The Centre for Reconciliation is my best opportunity to recruit people for peace, before I used to recruit for the war and now for peace. The Centre became my second home… I now dedicate all my time to be here, already I do not want to go anywhere else, it is my best option of reintegration into civil life. Here I am happy" ("Inicio, 2018). The Centres for Reconciliation offer opportunities for people interested in peacebuilding in their communities to learn about peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation and apply this knowledge to community-based projects.

Specifically, in the post-accord period, the FPR has worked to put the voices and experiences of victims of internal armed conflict at the centre of dialogue. For this purpose, FPR used a conceptual and methodological design that adapted the pedological project ESPERE for the realties of victims in Colombia, working with ten victim organizations. Based on this work, the Foundation for Reconciliation believes that fostering a culture of forgiveness and reconciliation is an immediate strategy to generate reconstructive conditions to restore the community's social fabric. To do this, the FPR works with victims of the armed conflict to address the emotions and effects arising from experiencing violence. They work to help victims redefine experiences of violence, giving a new perspective about life, about self-identity, and about who hurt them. From this position the organization is able to facilitate a communication exercise that allows for options of reconciliation between the victim and whoever caused the damage. ("Post-conflict", 2018).

The FPR combines both theory and practice of forgiveness as a necessary step of peacebuilding. This is the main unique feature of the discourse and practice of this foundation: the focus on forgiveness before everything else. The FPR believes that the capacity to learn and to be healthy and social- is all based on forgiveness. People are all "seres integrales", or "integrated beings". This means that people are multidimensional and complex, and that forgiveness must take place in order for peace to be possible. In spending some time with this organization, it is clear that they have a unique emphasis: that peace is only possible with forgiveness (Hunt, Field Notes, June 2018).

6.3 SOYPAZ

Another organization that includes a strong discursive promotion of cultural change at the individual and community level is SOYPAZ ("I am Peace"). SOYPAZ is a program of Uniminuto University in Bogota, Colombia and has a unique model that lends itself to community and cultural change. Uniminuto University offers extensive scholarship and financial support programs that set it apart as a socially minded institution. The primary campus of Uniminuto University is located in the neighbourhood "Minuto de Dios" in Bogota, which is categorized as a lower income neighborhood.

Uniminuto University created the program SOYPAZ as a collection of actions to promote peace from below. SOYPAZ offers a diploma program in Peace and Nonviolence offered at Uniminuto University. The organization SOYPAZ offers an academic space for research on peace and the postaccord period, opportunities for innovation in peace and education, and encourages cooperation on peace projects with the national and international academic community ("Objectivos", 2016). SOYPAZ has extensive publications and emphasizes the need for peace from below and peace from within (Interview with SOYPAZ member, Hunt field notes, June 2018). It aims to build peace through peace research, training in peace, and social projects. SOYPAZ's discourse revolves around the belief that peace depends on every Colombian becoming builders of everyday peace (Interview with SOYPAZ member, Hunt interview notes, June 2014). Ordinary citizens are directly responsible for transforming relations with others to recreate peaceful and respectful relations, and to overcome the inclination to act within a logic of war as enemies. This is the way to reconciliation: it is not that enemies reconcile at the table of peace negotiations, but that everyone reconciles among themselves and

stops thinking about other people as enemies. In this way a new society can be created together (Useche, 2014).

SOYPAZ is a program of studies and the promotion of peace and citizenship from the perspective of nonviolence. It contributes to the coordination of many projects that Uniminuto University has undertaken in Colombia. This includes accompanying communities in their activities in local territories, like the massive social mobilization occurring in the negotiations and implementation of the agreement between armed groups, preceding and following the signing of the 2016 accord (Interview with SOYPAZ member, Hunt Field notes, July 2018). The main purpose of the focus on peace and citizenship is to support peacebuilding at different scales and in different forms, further explained below. This support is based on pacifist tradition and discourse, along with the work of academic and research groups making important contributions to peacebuilding (Useche, 2014).

Uniminuto University created the SOYPAZ program based on the belief that the responsibility to build peace lies with everyone. SOYPAZ offers training for peacebuilders and academic spaces oriented towards peacebuilding (Interview with SOYPAZ member, Hunt interview notes, July 2018). Uniminuto University also offers the diploma program for Peace and Nonviolence, focusing on creative and nonviolent strategies of citizen resistance. Alongside academic programs, SOYPAZ undertakes research for peace and focuses on research on territories of peace and post accord work for new social and territorial organizations (Interview with SOYPAZ member, Hunt interview notes, July 2018).

In 2018, SOYPAZ undertook two main projects with communities in territories of peace. The first is associated with the peace accord and the territorial development plan for peace, using State resources. The second involves research with communities facing resettlement, reclaiming

natural resources, dealing with mining companies, and overcoming the illicit drug problems of heroin and cocaine by helping farmers return to the cultivation of traditional crops.

SOYPAZ also works with urban community and youth groups. According to SOYPAZ, urban groups experience different types of violence: it is typically more intrafamilial, against women, and associated with narcotrafficking. In the next several years, SOYPAZ is undertaking a study comparing peaceful rural resistance to violence in rural communities in the Department of Bolivar, and urban projects in neighborhoods in Bogota (Interview with SOYPAZ member, Hunt field notes, July 2018). This study is still in the planning stage, and the methods and expected outcomes are still in development.

The discourses of SOYPAZ leaders emphasize the importance of the voices of victims. Peace will not come from the struggle between powerful groups who are trying to gain influence and control. The voices of victims who have begun the path of resistance must be heard; otherwise, the most that can be expected is to seek to balance the power of armed groups (Useche, 2014). A balance of power does not automatically generate a culture of peace.

To follow the route of peacebuilding groups, SOYPAZ believes that conflict will only end through cultural changes in the fabric of society. This can only happen through the deep power of the communities and their capacity to initiate change and events that shift norms at the local level. To put an end to the violent and protracted conflict, the dignity of victims and resistant groups, the diversity of experiences, and the primary role of women and children must be acknowledged (Useche, 2014). These are major elements of the discourse of SOYPAZ, along with the role of individuals to work for peace in their everyday realities.

6.4 National Network for Citizen's Initiatives for Peace and Against War (Red Nacional de Iniciativas Ciudadanas por la Paz y Contra la Guerra – REDEPAZ)

REDEPAZ is the National Network for Citizen's Initiatives for Peace and Against War. They provide opportunities for meeting and cooperation between individuals, groups, sectors, and organizations that build peace. REDEPAZ works for reconciliation, a double mandate of reflection and action, and the democratic transformation of society (Quienes Somos, 2014). These terms and associated activities are prevalent in their discourse of peacebuilding.

REDEPAZ was formed by more than 400 delegates and participants of the National Meeting Against War and for Peace, in November 1993. Respect for life and the peaceful resolution of conflicts are two fundamental values of REDEPAZ, by being involved in the construction of a peaceful and just social reality (Quienes Somos, 2014). There are many individuals and groups involved: churches, NGOs, youth groups, women's groups, human rights groups, victims of violence groups, artists, academics, volunteers, and other peace workers.

Their mission is to amplify and consolidate the social movement for peace as an initiative of the power of citizens, with a political, cultural, and ethical sense, for the refoundation of Colombia. They visualize a Colombia at peace, with social justice, cultural democracy, human rights, life, and diversity all respected (Quienes Somos, 2014). These values are central to the discourse of REDEPAZ.

REDEPAZ works in several project areas at all levels of Colombian society. They work on projects involving community members in peace projects that tackle issues like contested territories and gender issues ("Inicio", 2014). Their practical activities include starting and supporting youth councils and victim's organizations, hosting events for the peaceful

transformation of conflict, symbolic acts of reconciliation, running a communication school for development, planning communication campaigns for promoting peace, and promoting community reconciliation through the transformation of educational institutions (Emil et al., 2014). This last activity, involving the transformation of educational institutions, involves curriculum development for peace, integrating activities for peace in the classroom, and teacher and administrator training. These practical activities allow REDEPAZ to appeal to many different people and communities, making their work more widespread. The discourse and priorities of REDEPAZ emphasize their belief that individuals have a crucial role to play in building a culture of peace in Colombia.

6.5 Observatory for Peace (Observatorio para la Paz, OBSERPAZ)

OBSERPAZ is a social organization that works towards a cultural and political transformation for peace through research, organizing demonstrations for peace, and disseminating information ("Inicio", 2019). They emphasize the need for cultural change in beliefs, relationships, ethics, and practices to build peace and citizenship in the everyday life of individuals, organizations, and communities. OBSERPAZ was created by organizations of ex-combatants, institutions responsible for the development of the peace agreements of the 1990s, and peace and conflict academics. These groups decided to build a space for reflection, using their own experiences and recognizing the need to generate useful knowledge for a better understanding and action for peace in Colombia ("Quienes Somos", 2019).

Individuals from various civil society, state, and academic organizations have worked to address issues related to peace, conflict, violence, democracy, security, disarmament and how to make peace a reality for social, political, and cultural transformation. According to OBSERPAZ, tools are needed to dismantle violence, strengthen practices of coexistence and transform

conflicts in a non-violent way. OBSERPAZ argues that people, organizations, and communities must become actors and protagonists in their own histories, to make peace an exercise in daily life, and work to overcome political practices that support violence by exclusion. The Observatory for Peace supports learning about issues regarding the identification and transformation of conflicts that affect social organizations of women, youth, disabled people, and other groups ("Quienes Somos", 2019).

To accomplish their goals, OBSERPAZ offers courses and peacebuilding training. In 2005, they started a project in three rural communities: Cucuta, Nieva, and Bucaramanga. They offered training to community mothers, educators, university students and community leaders who worked directly with vulnerable or displaced families. In some cities, OBSERPAZ also created travelling schools for cultivators of peace, teaching practical conflict mediation and peacebuilding skills. These travelling schools have reached more than ten thousand people in Colombia ("Meterse al Rancho", 2019). While these schools have been well-received, OBSERPAZ acknowledges that there is still much to be done to address the problem of conflict.

They also offer a flexible secondary program for victims of the conflict. This program is designed for vulnerable populations, to generate a cultural transformation away from violence. The program is located in the communities where the students live, and teachers and tutors go to the student's neighborhoods. They want school to be viewed as a flexible space that is open to learning in and with the community. According to OBSERPAZ's program assessment, the flexible secondary program has been shown to lead to the greater success of displaced and vulnerable populations, while also helping the host population overcome prejudice ("Bachillerato Pacicultor", 2019).

A third project of the Observatory for Peace is literacy for peace, where community literacy for adults is taught with a focus on peace as culture. These adults, some of whom are illiterate, and some of whom are functionally literate, live in situations of exclusion, abandonment, marginalization, and loneliness. According to OBSERPAZ leadership, they are seeking dignity and respect and to rejoin their communities ("Paciliteracia", 2019). Literacy is more of a societal issue than an issue of individual community members. In learning how to read and write, these members are able to access more employment, education, and social opportunities. This contributes to a culture of acceptance and peace ("Paciliteracia", 2019). These projects demonstrate the major features of the discourse of OBSERPAZ: community peacebuilding and cultural transformation through education, integration, and skill-building in order to foster a culture of peace in Colombia's communities.

6.6 Community-Based Organizations: Conclusion

Themes of forgiveness, reconciliation, memory, nonviolence, education, and resistance are commonly found in the discourses of community-based peacebuilding organizations. These organizations, through many years of work and a variety of projects, have identified the need for forgiveness and reconciliation at a micro level. In their understanding, peacebuilding and cultural change must take place at a base level, with individual community members.

In order for multi level peacebuilding action to be effective, peacebuilding must include forgiveness and reconciliation at an individual and community level. Often, peacebuilding work also includes tangible support for meeting the physical needs of community members. Some of this support comes from organizations like the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission. This organization is a partner of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace. This partnership demonstrates the networks that exist that cross borders and nations. Solidarity and

advocacy can make major differences for community projects and organizations: they do not operate in isolation with no contact to the outside world.

Based on these four organizations, it is clear that their discourse emphasizes multi-level action and the idea that peace and cultural change start at the individual and community level. These organizations are all located in Bogota and are therefore based in urban realities. However, they do have partner organizations and projects taking place in rural and urban communities all over Colombia, making these organizations more representative of grassroots discourses in Colombia more generally. Main features of the community-based peacebuilding discourse in Colombia, based on my fieldwork include:

1. Peace and cultural change start at the individual and community level
2. Multi-level action for peace that is grounded in local realities is needed
3. Education for peace, from elementary to university students, formally and informally

These themes will be further investigated in the Chapter 8, along with the theoretical framework provided by Conflict Transformation Theory.

There are tensions between community and state peacebuilding discourses. While community discourses emphasize that sustainable change begins at the individual and interpersonal level, state discourses emphasize profitable change at a national and structural level. The next section on governmental discourses outline several prominent government institutions and projects that give a good indication of state priorities and attention.

Chapter 7: Discourse of Governmental Peace Projects

Discourses of the State of Colombia are important to examine when embarking on a project of understanding the role of Grassroots Peacebuilding Organizations. In order to understand where grassroots organizations fit in the broader context, discourses of the state must be examined. The purpose of this chapter is to present four different examples of the peacebuilding discourse of the state of Colombia, and examine how these discourses relate to and impact grassroots initiatives. Conflict Transformation Theory suggests that an analysis of discourse is important. Rather than choose a particular president's speeches or rhetoric, I chose to undertake a discourse analysis of institutions that transcend a particular party in power. This approach allows a long-term view to be used and does not call into question the successes or failures of grassroots organizations that were operating in the time of a particular president. The examples selected for the state discourse analysis are: The Centre for Memory, Peace and Reconciliation, The National Museum, and publications of the Government of Colombia. The main findings of this chapter are that state institutions have an important role to play in encouraging sustainable peacebuilding and that they have great potential to both support and suppress grassroots groups.

7.1 The Centre for Memory, Peace and Reconciliation

The Centre for Memory, Peace, and Reconciliation is located in Bogota, Colombia. It is a museum dedicated to themes of conflict and peace. According to the Centre website, it was established in 2008 by the government of Colombia to support a culture of peace and give voice to the memory of victims of the armed conflict ("Informacion General", 2019). The Centre contributes to the construction of peace with the participation of different sectors of Bogota by

promoting and strengthening processes of remembering. The Centre aims to make visible experiences related to armed conflict ("Informacion General", 2019).

The Centre for Memory, Peace and Reconciliation has a number of exhibits designed to promote peacebuilding. One exhibit at the museum was entitled "manos por la paz" (Hands for Peace) in which people could write their promise for peace. This is an example of interaction between a government institution and individual citizens. The various statements from individuals included: a cessation of war, harmony with the earth, listening to other's opinions, forgiving people, engaging in dialogue, studying to become educated for peace, and learning from past mistakes so as not to repeat them. There are also casts of twenty hands of activists, working towards building a culture of peace in Colombia despite much resistance (Hunt field notes, July 2018).

Another exhibit at the museum featured photographs of women mostly buried in dirt: illustrating the connection between women and the earth, and the importance of both in peacebuilding. As one of the Centre's goals is to represent voices of victims of the armed conflict, it is clear that many women have been greatly impacted by the conflict in many ways. This exhibit told stories of women, their experiences of conflict, and their relationship to the earth. Women have faced forced displacement from ancestral territories, forced cultivation of coca, and resettlement in new places (Hunt field notes, July 2018).

Outside the museum, there are trees planted along a walkway. There are plaques in front of each tree, drawing attention to groups that have been most affected by the conflict, and groups that have worked hardest despite many obstacles to build peace in their communities. The plaques say that they are "planting memory and dignity." Different trees are dedicated to the families of victims of forced disappearance and displacement, to organizations of women

peacebuilders, and to Afrodescendant defenders of rights, territory and life (Hunt field notes, July 2018).

The Centre has exhibits of various groups that are working for peace, and certainly encourages visitors to think critically about the various actors and victims in the conflict. However, since it is still a governmental project, it is questionable as to whether these groups are being selected or edited to help achieve some governmental goal. The Centre does not critically examine who those responsible for conflict may be. While it is a museum partially dedicated to Memory, it focuses on the memory of victims. This is of course an essential aspect of Memory but is incomplete without an examination of the context of conflict. The Centre for Memory, Peace and Reconciliation uses a discourse of storytelling, and the voices of victims. The overall tone is one of sadness and history, and less of critical engagement with determining a peaceful way forward.

7.2 The National Museum (El Museo Nacional de Colombia)

The National Museum is located in Bogota and has been in existence since 1823. It aims to preserve, research, and diffuse information on historical periods related to national culture ("Direccion", 2018). Governmental discourse is expressed by the tone and wording of the exhibits in the National Museum, as well as the exhibits themselves. For many who visit, the museum's depiction of conflict and peace is understood as truth. One exhibit in the museum is called "Memory and Nation" and presents an interesting example of governmental discourse.

[The Memory and Nation Gallery] encourages new forms of understanding history through transversal perspectives and joint interpretations. The work in this gallery explores the relationships between past and present, evoking ideas about what is sacred,

evidence of linguistic and cultural territories, the manners in which our relationship with the natural world are named and constructed, the value of the spoken and written word, the nation's ongoing conflict, and mourning and hope.

The writeup in the Memory and Nation Gallery goes on to discuss history, identity, and listening to "Others" experiences. It encourages museum visitors to think critically about Colombia's history and how best to move forward (Museum visit – Write-up on "Memory and Nation Gallery wall).

This write-up is interesting for multiple discursive reasons. By using terms like "joint interpretations," "listening to the Others," "and deeper reflection and questioning", the museum implies a commitment to encouraging critical thought and presenting unbiased stories from multiple points of view. This is relevant to the discussion of peacebuilding because the government museum seems to say that they want Colombian and international visitors to reflect on "building a future Colombia," but without saying how that would be possible for so many diverse voices to be included.

There is another exhibit at the National Museum called "Memory and War." To introduce the exhibit, the museum states that ideologies, land, power, and wealth have led to conflict in Colombia's history. This exhibit aims to evoke a variety of feelings associated with war like displacement, desolation, suffering, and death. It speaks "about the memories of the fighter, the victim and the everyday life of Colombians" (Museum Visit, Write-up on "Memory and War" Gallery wall). To explicitly mention the inclusion of victim's experiences, and the everyday life of Colombians are important things to note in the discourse of the government through the National Museum. To add to this inclusive discourse, there are stories from people affected by the conflict. The following museum write-up comes from the Women's Assocation "Weaving

Dreams and Flavours of Peace (Asociación Mujeres Tejiendo Sueños y Sabores de Paz), from Mampujan Bolivar:

> On March 10th, 2000, paramilitaries returned to our community in the village of Mampujan, in the region Montes de Maria, in the department of Bolivar, and forced us to leave the village. The next day, March 11th, they killed twelve campesinos in Las Brisas, deeply damaging our community. As a form of building our families and overcoming the pain, we, women of Mampujan organized in the association "Weaving Dreams and Flavours of Peace", of the group Asvidas Maria la Baja, sewed tapestries in fabric. Between each stich we transformed the pain of the war into a movement of strength and hope, making visible the consequences of the conflict and promoting, through an exercise of memory, forgiveness and reconciliation so that these things do not happen again" (Asvidas, 2014).

This story, as it is presented in the National Museum, is a story of a grassroots organization. While it is in some way supported by the Museum because it is presented as an exhibit; simply retelling someone's story is not necessarily representative of a commitment to that vision. If a story is simply retold without a true commitment to uphold and further the cause of the organization, it can be merely token support. However, including the story of a victim's organization does indicate some measure of support for the initiative and encourages people to think critically about affected parties of the conflict. Overall, the Museum does an admirable job in several of their exhibits in presenting a variety of voices that were impacted by the conflict and that are working for peace. The displays and information at the National Museum show that the state's public discourse on peace is complex and varied.

7.3 The Government of Colombia

In examining governmental discourse, it is important to consider the response of the government to the results of the plebiscite on October 2nd, 2016 – when the referendum for peace was defeated by a narrow margin. While this response was connected to a specific administration (Santos), it has a significant impact on the way peace is developing today and the ongoing activities of the state related to peace. After the plebiscite, the government met with those who voted "no" to discuss their concerns with the peace agreement. They also met with many groups who had voted "yes": Afro Colombians, victims of the conflict, indigenous communities, faith-based organizations and other groups ("Notes on the changes", 2016). These meetings, along with those that the FARC had with various groups, led to the updated peace agreement.

The Office of the High Commission for Peace has a website page entitled "All you need to know about the Peace Accord". This page contains the final peace accord, information on the implementation of the accord, and some multimedia tools to understand the peace accord. It appears to make significant efforts to make the Peace Accord accessible and understandable to the general public (OACP, 2018). This website and the information it contains is also important to understand the long-term interaction between grassroots organizations and the state, and the potential for multi-level peacebuilding in the future.

7.4 Community and Governmental Projects and Discourses: Conclusion

While it is oftentimes not clear whether these public documents, displays, and campaigns can be strictly attributed to one government or another, they can all still be attributed to the state. The state has ongoing interest and power, despite changes to particular elected officials. The state discourse appears to be changing. The 2018-2019 period is one of transition in Colombia,

from the Santos to the Duque administration. Santos is known to be a staunch supported of peace, winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 2016. Duque, however, has expressed more resistance to the peace accord, and clearly expressed his displeasure with terms of the accord both preceding and following his election. It is not entirely clear how the state discourse is changing, and how this will impact peacebuilding in Colombia

According to a member of the Foundation for Peace and Reconciliation, very little has happened to advance the peace process in practice since the signing of the accord (Interview with FPR member, June 2018). In Bogota, uncertainty about the implementation of the accord is felt, but in regions more directly impacted by violence this uncertainty is felt as a paralysis, or as a stagnation (Avila, "Gobierno Duque y Postconflicto"). According to Avila, many communities who have been most impacted by violence and displacement feel as though peace is not advancing (Avila, "Gobierno Duque y Postconflicto").

Of course, people experiencing conflict, or the long-lasting impacts of conflict cannot simply wait for the government to develop a project appropriate for them. This is one reason community-based peacebuilding projects are so essential: they are not bound by phases or governments and can work to meet the needs of particular communities regardless of government initiatives. One example of this successful context-specific peaceful change is the Peace Territory of Samaniego. This Peace Territory has removed landmines, limited the number of community members involved in the conflict, and has reduced the impacts of armed conflict on the population (Idler et al., 2015).

The Centre for Memory, Peace and Reconciliation and the National Museum in particular do an admirable job of telling stories of communities impacted by the conflict, as well as

organizations building peace. It is unclear how museum exhibits actually promote the construction of a culture of peace.

The discourse in museum exhibits is not backed up with practical, on-the-ground efforts to build peace in Colombia. To date, at least, the storytelling in the museum exhibits appears largely tokenistic. Community-based organizations, on the other hand, appear to use the stories they themselves possess to influence their practice. The next section of Analysis and Comparison will explore this claim.

Chapter 8: Analysis: The Importance of Community-Based Peacebuilding Discourse

8.1 Introduction

Grassroots organizations offer something that government institutions do not: context-specific small-scale change. In this section I will analyze the discourses of community-based peacebuilding organizations and explore their distinctive contribution to sustainable peace. I will also compare community-based discourses to those of the Colombian state. Conflict Transformation Theory is useful in this comparison to help understand the role and context of community-based organizations.

"Peace is a cultural transition", says Oscar Aldana of SOYPAZ. This statement emphasizes the priority and the role of the community-based peacebuilding organizations featured in this thesis. Community organizations, much more so than governmental organizations, are dedicated to cultural change in Colombia. This is one element of Conflict Transformation Theory: that changes in relationships and culture are essential for sustainable peacebuilding.

In speaking with community organizations, it is evident there are some interesting projects taking place at the national, governmental level – that are relevant to the community-based projects taking place. This can be understood through theories of Multi-Level Action and Conflict Transformation. Various projects taking place at different levels of society will influence one another and this is an important consideration in examining discourses. A discourse analysis provides important insights into what the government says it is doing and comparing it to what community organizations say that they are doing, and what kind of

vocabulary both sets of actors are using. A comparative discourse analysis sheds light on the intersecting layers of peacebuilding in Colombia.

This analysis is based on interviews, publications, and projects of peacebuilding organizations (The Foundation for Reconciliation, SOYPAZ, REDEPAZ, and OBSERPAZ) along with publications and projects of the government (The Centre for Memory, Peace, and Reconciliation, The National Museum, the governmental response to the plebiscite, and the Office of the High Commission for Peace). This allows the examination of the role of grassroots organizations to be rooted in the current Colombian context - with the recent elections and the implementation of the peace accord. The central questions addressed here are: How do different actors in Colombia understand the challenges of peacebuilding and what are they doing and saying they are doing to address those challenges? How can we actually determine the difference that community-based peacebuilding organizations make in sustainable peacebuilding? These questions are central to Conflict Transformation Theory, in the sense that peacebuilding is contextually rooted and must be supported from many angles to be sustainable.

Part of what community-based peacebuilding organizations supply is continuity and a long-term view. While state peace discourses are tied to power and national interest, community-based organizations are rooted in particular places and people. This is made especially evident in the recent change in presidents – from peace promoting Santos to peace threatening Duque ("People's Dispatch", 2019; "International Crisis Group," 2018). Community grassroots organizations are faced with the realities of conflict and peace on a daily basis, and this shapes their work and their plans for the short and long term. While the organizations may still change with leadership or funding, many have become well-established and are able to provide stability and programs to the people they represent and serve.

The main findings from my research with community-based peacebuilding organizations will be explored throughout this Analysis section:

1. Peace and cultural change must happen at the individual and community level

2. Multi-level action for peace that is grounded in local realities is needed

3. Education for peace is a priority, from elementary to university students, formally and informally

8.2 Conflict Transformation Theory

Where governmental discourse focuses more on problem-solving and achieving territorial and national levels of "peace" (as determined through the Peace Accord), community-based organizations concentrate on individual and community-level healing and transformation. They believe that cultural change starts at this level of healing. The theoretical framework of Conflict Transformation (as put forward by Galtung and Ledarach) offers a structural understanding of the roles of both the governmental and community levels of peacebuilding. The theory supports coordinating activities that engage all levels of society. Multi-level action and multiple actors are essential for building sustainable peace, and it is evident through the community organizations and governmental projects presented that different activities are best suited to certain levels of society. An important point to note, coming from my field research, is that action must be firmly rooted in the realities of local communities. It is easy to generalize problems and solutions at macro levels of action, but these solutions must be dynamic and flexible enough to apply to very different experiences. Just as the effects of conflict have varied according to regional and local characteristics, so too must the strategies for peace be context-specific (Mora and Aldana, 2013).

Grassroots organizations, as explained in Chapter 6, coordinate activities to address

conflict, like running centres for reconciliation, facilitating dialogue between victims and perpetrators of violence, and skill-building to empower community members to become peacebuilders. These activities are practical examples of Conflict Transformation Theory.

Conflict Transformation Theory focuses on peacebuilding within societies and communities. Organizations like The Foundation for Reconciliation and SOYPAZ aim to build peace through education, relationship building, and facilitating reconciliation. For these organizations, relationship building is understood as the basis for building sustainable peace, and the community organizations described in this thesis tackle this aspect of Conflict Transformation Theory.

8.3 The Impact of Violence

The Foundation for Reconciliation states that the damage to the victims, caused by the internal armed conflict, is represented in different ways at emotional, sociocultural, political and moral levels, generating fragmentations that are sometimes difficult or even impossible to repair. The type of impact that violence generates is incurred at the individual, family, and community level ("Post-Conflict," 2018). If the impact of violence is felt at the community level, it makes sense that organizations based in those same communities can be well-suited to address the fragmentations and encourage forgiveness and reconciliation, provided they have developed knowledge and have the adequate resources.

At the emotional level, victims have been affected by the brutal practices that are used in war. These experiences affect emotions and therefore memories as well, which are permeated by

memories of atrocities committed against them and their families. Often victims of violence are left without a way to deal with those traumatic experiences ("Post-Conflict," 2018).

Along the same lines, the latest report by the National Centre for Historical Memory states that,

> the climate of terror that armed actors instilled in many regions of the country with actions such as massacres, torture, enforced disappearances, targeted killings, sexual violence, or illicit cultivations, led to people experiencing permanent sensations of threat and vulnerability. The world became unsafe, and people were forced to use protective mechanisms like silence, mistrust and isolation. This substantially altered community and family relations ("Basta Ya!", 2013, p. 263).

These protective mechanisms have a long-lasting impact on people's thoughts and actions. Organizations like the Foundation for Reconciliation state that emotional fractures are one of the most negative impacts on victims, because they directly limit the possibilities for people to rework and rebuild their lives (Interview with FPR member, Hunt field notes, June 2018). When a person is continually exposed to violence they may be paralyzed by fear, feel uncertain, and feel guilt and shame about not being able to do anything about the loss of family members. They may also experience the social stigma of having the marks of war on their bodies, feel hatred or anger as a result of injustices and impunity for the invisibilization of the crimes, or the lack of consequences for the perpetrators ("Postconflict," 2018). This makes any implementation of a peace process difficult, as different individuals and communities have experienced and coped with ongoing violence in different ways.

8.4 Reconciliation and Relationship-Building

Different people have different priorities for reconciliation. An apology is a necessary first step for some people. For others, forgiveness and reconciliation can be possible without an apology (Lambourne, 2004). Criminal tribunals, truth commissions and political and legal parts of peace agreements are important aspects of peacebuilding, but more attention must be given to relationship-building and how to foster it (Lambourne, 2004). The role of justice must also be acknowledged. Justice can be understood as a pillar of peace through the establishment of processes that promote equality, the acknowledgement of wrongdoing, and reparations. It is clear that there is a major psychological aspect of protracted conflict, and it is thus equally clear that there needs to be a psychological and emotional aspect of a conflict's resolution (Lambourne, 2004).

However, the emphasis on psychological needs does not mean that other approaches to peacebuilding are not important. Security concerns, power dynamics, resource distribution, and structural issues also need to be addressed (Lambourne, 2004, p. 21). Action at the governmental level is needed for peacebuilding in these thematic areas. The argument Lambourne makes is that relationship-building and psychological aspects of peacebuilding have not been adequately considered in post-conflict peacebuilding implementation (Lambourne, 2004). Community organizations are well-suited to investigating appropriate relationship and psychological needs of their particular communities.

8.5 Communities of Resistance: Community-Based Change

In Colombia, "men and women from peasant, black and indigenous communities, frequently accompanied by the Church and international community representatives have, silently and unarmed, contributed to the construction of 'local peace'" (Sacipa-Rodriguez, 2014, p. 9). They have initiated ways to increase the participation of community members and worked against violence and conflict. Many people have even lost their lives because of their refusal to cooperate with armed actors. These communities provide examples of peacebuilding without resorting to violent means, even when caught up in the midst of conflict (Sacipa-Rodriguez, 2014).

One example of a community of resistance is the Peace Community of San Apartadó. The community is made up of non-combatants who agree not to participate in hostilities, not to possess weapons, to refrain from providing any support to combatants, and to refrain from asking anyone involved in the conflict to assist in resolving any disputes (Naucke, 2017). Additionally, the practical strategies of the community are focused on improving the daily lives and living conditions of the community members along with creating locally-based solutions to the root causes of the conflict (Naucke, 2017). These strategies are only effective through a democratic organizational structure that favours participation, dialogue, and diverse opinions (Naucke, 2017).

One of the things made clear is that this community, self-designated as a Peace Community, is not solely focused on peace as a cessation of conflict. They have also prioritized food autonomy and a community-oriented economy. There is interfamily economic interdependence working in food production, which reinforces social cohesion in practical terms (Naucke, 2017)

Communities of resistance, researched by organizations like SOYPAZ, have had a long and difficult experience in their resistance to the war. The violence of paramilitaries and guerillas, the incompetency of the state, and the violation of human rights on the part of the state has constituted a network of violence. This network is not easy to escape from to build alternatives ways of living. Despite this, many ways of resisting have stemmed from the life experiences in the struggles of hundreds of indigenous, Afrocolombian, campesinos and urban people who have challenged the logic of violence and confrontation. These groups have recognized the power of diversity and plurality in confronting the crisis of a society of violence (Useche, 2014).

Colombia and the international community can take advantage of the extensive lessons learned by communities of resistance. These lessons will give support to the set of multidimensional actions required for sustainable peace. It is necessary to take steps toward the localized power in the periphery of society. In this way, a major transformation can take place to bring nonviolent revolution to Colombia (Useche, 2014).

8.6 Political Negotiations vs. The Construction of Peace

It is important to note that Colombia did not suddenly become peaceful upon the signing of the peace accord. The Centre for Human and Social Thought of Uniminuto University calls this period more accurately "post-negotiation" rather than "post-conflict" (Mora and Aldana, 2013). Negotiations at the national level do not equal the construction of peace. The negotiation is about strategic objectives which are developed in macropolitical spaces. Therefore, the main focus is solving problems about the control of physical territory and guaranteeing areas of resettlement, protecting the physical security of those who disarm, and defining possibilities to negotiate local representative power (Mora and Aldana, 2013). These strategic political

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discussions are undoubtedly necessary for peace negotiations at a political level, but do not necessarily promote cultural change that facilitates long-term peacebuilding.

Many communities that have been victims of the conflict have been successful in resisting violence and building peace. The local communities impacted by the conflict have not been impassive or immobilized by terror (Mora and Aldana, 2013). There is an alternative society in motion that has been very little recognized, and on many occasions, it has had to become invisible in the face of threats to life. There are numerous expressions and forms of peaceful organization that have been able to subsist and expand thanks to their immense creativity, their strong traditions and ways of life, and their rethinking of the political relations within the community (Mora and Aldana, 2013).

Chapter 9: Conclusion: Hope for Peace in Colombia

Part of the difficulty of an inclusive peace lies in the representation of victims: each case contains a multitude of differences in content and in the magnitude of the offense. Victims are more than victims – they are also members of society. A new form of coexistence is needed, in which political participation solves a situation of polarization and a weak social fabric (Mora and Aldana, 2013). The need for social repair is one key aspect of theories of Transitional Justice. In recognizing that a society has particular histories, strengths, challenges, and opportunities, a path forward can be discovered as the voices of those impacted by the conflict are heard. While political participation is one method of repairing the social fabric, there are other strategies needed for inclusive, sustainable change to construct a culture of peace. These strategies, used by organizations like SOYPAZ and the Foundation for Reconciliation include living in communities of peace, art for peace, and youth groups for peacebuilding.

Ongoing news from Colombia is making people question the efficacy of the peace process, as there is continued violence and inequality (Forero. 2018; Alsema, 2018; Charles, 2018). The experience of the negotiation and subsequent application of transitional justice with the paramilitary groups has not been positive (Useche, 2014). However, organizations like the Foundation for Reconciliation and SOYPAZ have seen changes in the way people are interacting with each other through the work they are doing in various communities in Colombia. Some individuals have gone from pursuing vengeance to being active peacebuilders (Interview with FPR member, Hunt field notes, June 2018). They believe that these shifts must happen at the individual and interpersonal level in order to achieve a sustainable culture of peace in Colombia.

The results from my fieldwork in Colombia both supports and is supported by the literature and theory around conflict transformation, peacebuilding, and the role of grassroots

groups. While it is unclear how this post-accord period will play out, especially given the new president and his threats to the peace process, grassroots organizations have an essential role to play in fostering a culture of peace in Colombia. There is a gap in the peacebuilding process that only community organizations can fill, as understood through a discourse analysis. Whether they can fill this gap will require further research. If there is hope for peace in Colombia, it will not come from the struggle between groups in conflict that are seeking to gain power and control. A real cessation of violence depends on the capacity of being one society, producing viable alternatives to conflict. The voices of victims who have begun the path of peace must be heard; otherwise, the most that can be expected is to seek to balance the power of parties in conflict (Useche, 2014). Balancing the power of parties in conflict is an important step in peacemaking, but much more is possible.

Hybrid peace can help inform this idea: that local agency has an important role in offering feasible alternatives to violence in both the everyday and in the broader political sphere. New macroeconomic models are needed that include these voices of social resistance at the local level (Useche, 2014). This is where grassroots groups can have such power. In challenging norms of violence and demonstrating alternatives to confrontation, peacebuilding groups can and do alter modes of interaction and nurture peace from the bottom up. Also, it is not as if these grassroots groups are working in isolation. Rather, they are often part of wider network that can offer knowledge-sharing and consistent support.

Through research with four community-based peacebuilding organizations, alongside a literature review and an exploration of Conflict Transformation Theory, it has become clear that community-based grassroots organizations operate with a discourse that emphasizes individual, family and community level reconciliation and healing taking place to foster a culture of peace.

They also emphasize that reconciliation must take place at the individual and community level, through the work of organizations like the ones outlined in this thesis.

By comparing the discourses of community organizations to those of the governmental projects presented, the concept of Multi-Level Action can be better understood. While there is certainly a need for political negotiations and structural change, peacebuilding should be rooted in the realities of localities impacted by conflict and the prospect of peace. Listening to the voices of victim's organizations, acknowledging the emotional and psychological healing needed for reconciliation, and striving to build on the strengths of longstanding communities of peace should help inform the implementation decisions made at a national level.

Due to time, language, safety issues, and contact constraints, fieldwork and interviews with rural peacebuilding organizations was not possible. It was nevertheless interesting to see how urban community-based peacebuilding organizations served as a bridge between rural peacebuilding initiatives and macro-political projects in the urban centre of Bogota. A logical continuation of this research would be to observe and analyze the work that urban organizations actually do, and how this compares to their discourse. It would then be interesting to see how the findings from this project, that urban-based community peacebuilding organizations provide essential contributions to sustainable peacebuilding in Colombia, compare to the contributions of rural peacebuilding organizations and projects. Since the urban groups represented in this thesis support and draw information from rural groups, it is clear that these rural groups have an important role to play. Further research could aid in providing more details on these roles.

Overall, this research project provides an important contribution to the peacebuilding literature and discussion by highlighting the importance of local peacebuilding discourses and comparing them to state discourses. In placing a high value on the voices of those who are

closest to the issues, a shift in thinking about peace is possible. Through this research, it is clear that grassroots peacebuilding organizations have the ability to foster an everyday peace based on relationship-building, with the ability to impact peace initiatives at all levels of society. By rooting peacebuilding in local realities, multi-level action and larger scale initiatives have the potential to build a more inclusive and sustainable peace in Colombia.

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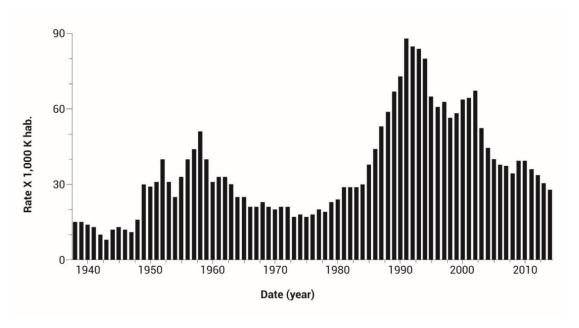Useche, O. (2014). "Soypaz", *Polisemia.* 18, 10-12.

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Appendix A: Homicide Rates in Colombia

(Guerrero and Fandiño-Losada, 2017, p. 10).

Appendix B: Homicide Rates in the Americas in 2013

Table 1. Homicide Rates in the Americas in 2013

Country	Cases	Rate*
Honduras	6,431	75.2
Jamaica	1,200	44.2
Guatemala	5,253	34.0
Colombia	15,234	32.3
Belize	99	28.3
Dominican Republic	1,978	19.3
Brazil	57,045	17.5
Panama	666	17.3
Ecuador	1,723	10.9
Nicaragua	594	9.8
Paraguay	666	9.8
Uruguay	260	7.7
Peru	2,013	6.6
Chile	481	2.7
El Salvador	2,499	n.d.
Bolivia	938	n.d.

n.d. = no data.
*Rates per 100,000 inhabitants.
Created by the CISALVA Institute of the Universidad del Valle, Colombia.
Sources: Proyecto SES/Sub Unidades Técnicas Nacionales in participating countries (2014).7 No consolidated data are available for Argentina, Costa Rica, Guyana and Mexico for 2013.

(Guerrero and Fandiño-Losada, 2017, p. 10).

Appendix C: Rates of Homicide in the Americas between 1988 and 1997

Crude rates of homicide in the Americas (per 100,000)

Country	Last available year between 1988 and 1995	Last available year between 1994 and 1997
Argentina	4.2	4.1
Brazil*	**17.8**	**23.5**
Canada	2.1	1.6
Colombia*†	**76.3**	**73.3**
Chile	3.0	3.1
Costa Rica	3.7	5.3
Cuba	7.3	6.6
Ecuador*	**12.6**	**12.3**
El Salvador*	**39.9**	**40.9**
United States*	**10.1**	8.2
Honduras	not available	not available
Guatemala*	**25.3**	2.2
Guyana	not available	**11.0**
Jamaica	1.8	1.3
Mexico*	**17.6**	**15.1**
Nicaragua	6.1	6.4
Panama	9.7	**12.7**
Paraguay	9.3	**11.6**
Peru	2.9	not available
Puerto Rico*	**23.2**	**22.4**
Dominican Republic	not available	**12.2**
Uruguay	4.3	4.4
Trinidad and Tobago*	8.0	**11.1**
Venezuela*	**11.2**	**13.5**
Average*	**14.7**	**14.7**

*Rates higher than 10 per 100,000 people are considered high and are printed in bold.
†Country with the highest rates in the Americas.
Source: Charles Bergquist, Gonzalo Sánchez, and Ricardo Penaranda, eds., *Violence in Colombia 1990–2000: Waging War and Negotiating Peace* (Wilmington: SR Books, 2001), 276.

(Waldmann, 2007, p. 609)