

DOES FOREIGN AID FOSTER RECONCILIATION? EVIDENCE FROM
COLOMBIA

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IMPACT OF COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted my research progress in several ways. First, I am an ex-pat single mother. My daughter is in primary school, so I had to home-school her for ten months. This very demanding task delayed my progress because I had no family support for home-schooling or childcare.

Second, I did not have access to any office space during that period.

Third, my research was significantly affected by COVID-related travel restrictions because I planned to conduct face-to-face semi-structured interviews in Colombia. Colombia was on the UK's red travel list until November 2021, which meant that I was prevented from gathering that information in person. This is significant because many of my interviewees live in remote areas where they could not easily switch to online interviews. Consequently, my PhD supervisors and I decided to conduct the interviews remotely using phone calls. We decided to adjust the schedule to the exceptional circumstances and continue working once the situation started normalising.

Fourth, my data collection process was delayed because the governmental institutions I was asking for data were closed, and remote work created significant delays in answering my requests.

Fifth, the pandemic affected my financial income since job opportunities as a graduate teaching assistant were very significantly reduced during the pandemic. Therefore, I had to spend extra time on job applications, interviews, and administrative processes.

Sixth, I had a covid infection myself, whose symptoms were not mild. I could not carry out any work for two weeks and subsequently experienced the 'brain fog' phenomenon over the course of four weeks. The former situation made it hard for me to concentrate on my work. I also spent several days caring for my daughter while she had a COVID infection.

Finally, the circumstances of the pandemic made it the case that I communicated much less with my supervisors than I had done face-to-face. This decrease in the communication frequency also set back the speed at which I planned to develop my dissertation.

Consequently, I asked for a completion period and have since been able to catch up on the work that got delayed during the pandemic.

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Declaration

I declare that the present dissertation is my own work as the possible mistakes here.

ABSTRACT

Reconciliation is a phenomenon explored in the recent literature on conflict and post-conflict and in public policies in several ways. However, there is no agreement about the factors that create better conditions for reconciliation. Therefore, this research seeks to explore how different state and non-state actors affect the subnational dynamics that allow the creation of conditions for reconciliation, providing evidence from Colombia. In this post-conflict country, the analysis of those conditions is very relevant. The dissertation contains three chapters analysing the factors and conditions that shape reconciliation, providing quantitative and qualitative evidence.

The first chapter analyses the relations between foreign aid and the creation of conditions for reconciliation by exploring the European Union interventions and their effect on the local conditions for reconciliation at the subnational level in Colombia, observing differences in the victimisation levels behaviour between the municipalities intervened and not intervened by the European Union. This chapter concludes by finding that municipalities intervened by the European Union show lower levels of victimisation than municipalities that did not intervene, creating better conditions for reconciliation when fostering community capacity building.

The second chapter analyses the relations between armed actors' repertoires and the likelihood of victim mobilisation for reconciliation, finding that victims are more likely to mobilise for reconciliation when armed actors attack civilians rather than official targets. This is because the first repertoire has a positive effect on social cohesion.

The third and final chapter assesses beneficiaries' satisfaction with foreign aid interventions for peacebuilding and reconciliation, finding that top-down approaches perform

better long-term results and the highest level of satisfaction because it promotes recognition and community integration.

The research concludes by stating the main findings, the discussion of the research and its methodological implications, the respective policy implications, as well as the limitations and suggestions for future research derived from the research findings and limitations.

1. INTRODUCTION

There are different perspectives in the literature about how reconciliation occurs; however, there is a minimum agreement about the study of the creation of conditions for reconciliation in deeply divided societies. A consensus definition of foreign aid is an instrument of national policy (Bueno De Mesquita & Smith, 2007); part of the foreign aid policy which contributes with “money, goods, or services to other governments or the people or communities in foreign countries; the contributions are given for free, as heavily subsidised loans, or for a price well below the market price” (Bueno De Mesquita, 2013, p. 386). These interventions aim to promote economic development or to provide humanitarian assistance from donors (governments, NGOs or private organisations) to recipient countries or organisations (Crawford, 2001).

On the other hand, an empirical definition of reconciliation is the process of (r) establishing relations between former antagonists (Casas et al., 2020; Ugarriza et al., 2022). Reconciliation is a process, not just an outcome, of the transitional justice processes in conflict and post-conflict periods. Although the normative perspective of the concept includes additional conditions for understanding the concept as an outcome that leads to the construction of a shared notion of the future (Lederach, 2005), the dissertation follows a minimalist definition of reconciliation to understand how conditions for reconciliation are set amidst the dynamics of violence in conflict and post-conflict scenarios.

Several efforts foster conditions for reconciliation in conflict, and post-conflict countries implement transitional justice (TJ) schemes worldwide. TJ and reconciliation are linked inextricably since the period after the conflict requires (r) establishing relations between former victims and perpetrators to implement TJ tools successfully. As Mobekk et al. (2005) said, “national reconciliation is achieved when societal and political processes function and

develop without reverting to previous patterns or the framework of the conflict” (p. 262). Some examples of these efforts took place in several countries with deeply divided societies in the aftermath of the conflict, like Northern Ireland, which was divided by a religious conflict. South Africa and Rwanda were affected by ethnic conflict. Colombia, Peru, and El Salvador suffered armed conflicts between the governments, paramilitary, and rebel far-left guerrilla groups motivated by political and ideological reasons. Although the causes of these conflicts differ in the nature of the societal division, all of them have a common factor, the presence of highly polarised armed conflicts where there is an antagonism between perpetrators and victims.

Beyond these cases of national reconciliation, there are different examples of reconciliation at the sub-national or local level within these countries, where communities establish or re-establish relations with their former perpetrators on their own without governmental intervention. This literature has been relevant to understanding the benefits of decentralisation for peace on the autonomy of the local communities (Autesserre, 2014; Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015). This way, peace communities have been studied recently in the literature as organisations that have chosen neutrality amidst the armed conflict resisting violence in a collective setting (Ana Arjona, 2016; Kaplan, 2013; Mouly et al., 2016). As this branch of the literature highlights, it is truly relevant to analyse and understand how these local and communitarian experiences of peacebuilding and reconciliation are shaped and how interventions from international actors such as foreign aid agencies can foster their performance and results.

One expression of those social organisations within the peacebuilding process is peace communities. Mouly says that the concept of peace community “stresses the agency of the local inhabitants of these geographic spaces in opting out of the military confrontation and consciously seeking to develop a community underpinned by norms of peacefulness (...) Research literature identifies three key attributes of peace communities: (i) impartiality, (ii)

participation and cohesion, and (iii) the use of nonviolent action (also termed ‘civil resistance’)” (Mouly, 2022, p. 1171). There are different examples of these peace communities in Colombia, with around 30 civilian organisations declaring neutrality toward the armed conflict’s violence. Some of the most known and studied communities are San Jose de Apartado, Samaniego, Las Mercedes (Masullo, 2015; Mouly et al., 2016) and the Association of Peasant Workers of the Carare (ATCC) (Amaya-Panche & Idrobo, 2018; Kaplan, 2013). The former groups have been engaged with international actors such as foreign aid agencies since around 1980, with some differences over time.

Although most of these countries and communities have had foreign aid interventions, the relations between foreign aid and reconciliation have not yet been explored enough. There are several studies on the effect of foreign aid on a comprehensive set of variables, such as development (Andrews, 2009; Tarp, 2002) and economic growth (Durberry et al., 1998; Ekanayake & Chatrna, 2017; Feeny & Ouattara, 2009), democracy and governance (Asongu & Nwachukwu, 2016; Brautigam & Knack, 2004; Busse & Gröning, 2009), political stability (Steinwand, 2015b; Yuichi Kono & Montinola, 2009), electoral dynamics (Anaxagorou et al., 2020; Jablonski, 2014), public expenditure (Njeru, 2003; Odusanya et al., 2011) or corruption (Charron, 2011; Mohamed et al., 2015; Okada & Samreth, 2012) Previous research argues that foreign aid tends to increase corruption at the local and national levels.

Another branch of literature explores the relations between foreign aid, peace and conflict dynamics. Some scholars analyse the impact of foreign aid in conflict areas (Weezel, 2015) and the impact of these flows on civil wars, violence, and conflicts (Findley, 2018; Grady, 2017; Savun & Tirone, 2011) and the effect on the intensity of the armed conflict (Strandow et al., 2016). Also, over the probability of armed conflict (Sollenberg, 2012) or the risk of civil conflict recurrence (de Ree & Nillesen, 2009). Besides, other scholars analyse the

relations between aid, conflict, and human development (McGillivray & Noorbakhsh, 2004) or foreign direct investment and conflict (Garriga & Phillips, 2014).

Although previous research has explored the effects of foreign aid on conflict, war and peacebuilding, the effect of aid interventions on reconciliation at the subnational level in conflict and post-conflict countries has not yet been explored. The existing literature frequently emphasises the impact of aid on violence or the intensity of the armed conflict, even the risk of conflict, without paying attention to the local dynamics of peacebuilding and reconciliation.

Even though a considerable number of resources and technical support are channelled to intervene in some specific conflicts and post-conflict countries with ongoing reconciliation processes, the intended effect of these interventions on reconciliation is not yet apparent. The conditions for building reconciliation between former antagonists have not been entirely clarified yet, nor how this may be influenced through international support as foreign aid. Currently, the flows for peace and reconciliation in post-conflict societies are often among the most substantial components of foreign aid. According to European Union aid figures by sector, between 2007 and 2020, the European Union allocated 651.6 million euros for civilian peacebuilding and conflict prevention, the second concept in this type of expenditure regarding the overall budget.

Therefore, regarding the above arguments, the research aims to analyse a relevant topic that has crucial implications in terms of public policy as it contributes to understanding how this significant amount of technical and financial resources for peacebuilding and reconciliation are successful or not at delivering their intended outcomes. This way, some recommendations are suggested to improve the quality of the interventions performed and their legitimacy toward local beneficiaries.

1.1 Case selection

Colombia has had the most prolonged internal armed conflict in the western hemisphere. Recently, the parties involved signed a peace agreement; the government and the guerrilla group called FARC-EP (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia- Peoples' Army) in 2016 after more than five decades of conflict (Segura, 2017; Tellez, 2019). The former was not the first peace process in this country. Just after developing several attempts to dialogue and negotiate with armed actors since 1982, when the first negotiation took place between the guerrilla FARC and the government of Belisario Betancur (1982-1986) (Chernick, 1996), the government of former president Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2018) finally found an agreement with the oldest guerrilla group.

The conflict resulted in 1,081,410 million registered lethal victims¹ (Unidad Administrativa para la Atención y Reparación a las Víctimas [UARIV], 2019), by far the highest figure in comparison to other intra-state conflicts in the region. The Peruvian Truth Commission reported 70.000 murdered victims. The Truth Commission of El Salvador reported an estimated number of 75.000 lethal victims, and The Truth Commission of Guatemala registered over 200.000 killed victims. The dictatorship of Pinochet in Chile left 2.279 victims, according to the Rettig Report. For Argentina, the number of victims is estimated at 9,000 disappeared victims, according to The National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons (CONADEP) (Archivo Nacional de la Memoria, 2021). The evidence shows that the Colombian figures exceed the regional average of total victims by far.

¹ Including other types of victimisations, the Unit for Victims Reparation and Attention of Colombia (UARIV) reported a total of 12,019, 838 total registered victims in 2022 including lethal and non-lethal victims. This classification derived by the Law of Victims, Law 1448 of 2011, includes: forced displacement, homicides, confinement, crimes against children, kidnapping, land mines, personal physical injuries, personal-psychological injuries, property loss, sexual violence, spoil of land, terrorist attacks, threat and torture. Following the legal mandate, the UARIV counts victims since 1985.

However, as I mentioned before, several civilian peacebuilding experiences and pacific resistance groups confronted the dynamics of violence in this country to build reconciliation as well as a large number of individuals.

As well as being one the most violent intra-state conflicts with the presence of peace communities, Colombia had interventions from international actors, such as foreign aid agencies for development, who had supported peacebuilding and reconciliation by providing financial and technical support since the decade of 1970 when the Government of The United States supported the country with aid programs. Also, the Colombian government established the Special Division for International Technical Cooperation inside the National Planning Department (DNP). During the following decades, several aid agencies intervened in the country to support peacebuilding and the subsequent reconciliation process. Colombia is not an exception to the general tendency of foreign aid allocation described above since 43% of the total foreign budget (including all donors) is assigned to peacebuilding and reconciliation-related activities (Agencia Presidencial de Cooperación Internacional de Colombia [APC-Colombia], 2016).

The previous evidence shows that the case is relevant since it presents appropriate features to analyse the convergence of reconciliation during the conflict and post-conflict dynamics and a long tradition of international interventions from foreign aid agencies. Colombia is not an exception to the general global tendency for aid allocation since 43% of the total foreign budget (including all donors) is assigned to peacebuilding and reconciliation interventions. That concept is followed by environmental conservation at 20 % and rural development at 13% between 2015 and 2018 (APC-Colombia, 2016; 2018). Likewise, according to European Union aid figures by sector, between 2007 and 2020, the European Union allocated 651.6 million euros for civilian peacebuilding and conflict prevention, being the second largest concept in this type of expenditure.

The former figures show that despite becoming a middle-income country in recent years, Colombia still receives significant financial and technical aid flows from foreign aid agencies, whose primary purpose was supporting peacebuilding and reconciliation during the conflict. Nowadays, the purpose is to support the implementation of the peace agreement signed in 2016 and its respective main points. The long tradition of interventions from the different aid donors in Colombia for peace has been explored previously (Barreto de Sousa Henriques, 2012; Castañeda, 2014; Tassara et al., 2019). They have been focusing mainly on the EU as the former studies or in the USAID interventions (Findley et al., 2019; Samir & Vanegas, 2003). Consequently, it is relevant to explore the effects of both agencies on the local dynamics of conflict, peacebuilding, and reconciliation.

Previous research has not paid enough attention to the analysis of the effect of the interventions on violence levels or the beneficiaries' satisfaction. Therefore, it is relevant to understand how in a country with a long tradition of foreign aid interventions and one of the oldest armed conflicts in the western hemisphere, foreign aid affects the dynamics of violence, reconciliation, victims' mobilisation and last but not least, beneficiaries' satisfaction. All these aspects will be explored in more detail in the following chapters.

1.2 An Institutionalist Approach to Foreign Aid for Reconciliation

The problem of collective action has been analysed from several perspectives regarding the dynamics of conflict, violence, peacebuilding, and reconciliation. In general, regarding the concept of collective action, Ostrom highlights the relevance of the self-understanding of the actor's roles and their conceptions about acceptable behaviour in a particular context to build cooperative solutions. If the former assumption is true, the role of governmental authority can underpin or devastate collective action dynamics (Grant, 2004; Ostrom, 1990). Therefore, in

the context of armed conflict, the collective action problem requires a specific analysis of the role of civilians, their priorities and protection.

On the other hand, the responses from civilians in armed conflicts as a reaction to the violence from armed actors can vary in several ways depending on the conflict and their specific local features and subnational dynamics. Along the different alternatives, civilians can choose to cooperate with the armed actors or resist them violently or peacefully to the violence from them. A tendency to resist using non-violent repertoires has been extended worldwide since the Second World War and has been documented in the literature. The studies about non-violent resistance from civilians started more than a century ago and have been focused on examining how civilians resist in a pacific way to violent and repressive powers from different sources: colonial powers, dictatorships, tyrannies, and human rights violations by state actors in foreign countries, among others (Roberts & Garton, 2009). The literature about the resistance of civilians in wars and armed conflicts is a type of contemporary research on this discussion that analyses how civilians resist violent orders established by rebel or non-state actors (Arjona et al., 2015; Masullo, 2015; Mouly et al., 2016).

Concerning the relations between collective action and the responses of civilians in armed conflicts, many scholars have approached the matter of collective action in the context of conflict or war. They have shown how war can foster cooperation and how people exposed to war violence tend to behave more cooperatively after the war. Their social participation tends to increase by joining more local social and civic groups or taking on more leadership roles in their community that allow the development of altruism and collective identity, even many years after the war (Bauer et al., 2016, p. 250). The capacity to react collectively is crucial to facing armed actors' violence and determines how civilians react to their armed interventions.

Other studies explore how households directly experienced more violence are more likely to attend community meetings, join local political and community groups, and vote in Sierra Leone (Bellows & Miguel, 2009, p.1). Likewise, Blattman found that violence in Uganda may lead to personal growth and political activation, a possibility supported by psychological research on the positive effects of traumatic events (Blattman, 2009). Following Bauer's research, cooperation seems to predict an evolutionary reaction to external threats like war and violence, an assumption that is well supported in evolutionary theories. Specifically, this author found that "greater exposure to war created a lasting increase in people's egalitarian motivations toward their in-group, but not their out-groups" (Bauer et al., 2014, p. 47).

Therefore, the responses from civilians towards armed actors in armed conflicts vary depending on the type of conflict and armed actors' features and strategies. Previously, some scholars have demonstrated that civilians can develop collective action by building formal and informal institutions to protect themselves from armed actors to resist the effects of the violence through collective action, building partial or total resistance against armed actors that results (Arjona et al., 2015; Arjona, 2016) or even build and re-built relations with former perpetrators to reconcile with them (Oidor et al., 2019; Ugarriza & Nussio, 2017).

The dissertation aims to understand how the interventions of international actors, such as foreign aid agencies affect the collective dynamics of the actor's national state and non-state actors regarding the levels of violence and the subsequent repertoires that civilians create to respond to the violence. Foreign aid intends to alleviate the violence's negative effects on civilians, especially when the government cannot protect them during the conflict. The research attempts to understand if those intended effects are accomplished to suggest recommendations for future interventions from foreign aid agencies in conflict and post-conflict societies to foster peacebuilding and reconciliation dynamics and support collective non-violent action from civilians within violent periods.

1.3 Overview of the Dissertation

The dissertation has three sections. The first one is about how aid interventions by the European Union affect the local dynamics of reconciliation at the subnational level in Colombia, comparing municipalities with and without interventions by the European Union. The second section analyses how armed actors' repertoire affects how victims of the armed conflict mobilise for reconciliation. The third and final chapter assesses beneficiaries' satisfaction with foreign aid interventions for peacebuilding and reconciliation.

There have been several efforts to use international aid to support peacebuilding and reconciliation in deeply divided societies after an armed conflict. But there has been less attention to detailing exactly how such efforts could be successful or not and examining the evidence for whether they have their intended effects. In the first section, I propose that aid focused on reconciliation can reduce conflict intensity via strengthening community capacity building and empowerment within civil society organisations that protect them from armed actors and consequently reduces victimisation. The reduction in victimisation levels creates proper conditions for building reconciliation. The chapter evaluates qualitative and quantitative evidence on aid and reconciliation from Colombia, which has had interventions by several international aid agencies to promote reconciliation, strengthen civil society, and protect human rights. Since the European Union is a prominent and long-established donor pursuing a reconciliation agenda, this article examines how foreign aid interventions from the European Union are associated with changes in victimisation levels in Colombian municipalities between 2002 and 2018 as a proxy for observed reconciliation. Municipalities with interventions see less subsequent conflict intensity or victimisation levels than municipalities without EU

programs finding better conditions to foster reconciliation. I also provide qualitative evidence from the beneficiaries supporting the postulated causal mechanism.

The second chapter focuses on how variation in the repertoires of armed actors affects the civil population and the local civilian capacity to mobilise toward reconciliation. Civilians' mobilisation in armed conflicts and post-conflict is often examined nationally. But armed conflicts often display considerable variation at the subnational level, with different kinds of armed actors over time, in ways that are likely to pose various challenges for victims' mobilisation that may require different solutions and have different prospects for success. Prior research has suggested that targeting civilians in armed conflicts increases victims' political participation and mobilisation. This chapter argues that targeting repertoires influence victims' mobilisation potential and that we are more likely to see more victim organisations when armed actors focus on civilian targets. When armed actors target civilians, victims tend to have a higher capacity relative to perpetrators after the conflict and fewer prospects for successfully organising. I evaluate these claims using geographically disaggregated data on the armed conflict in Colombia and the emergence of victim organisations. Victims' mobilisation is more likely when armed non-state actors attack soft targets rather than hard ones.

A wide range of literature explores the impact of foreign aid on diverse phenomena such as economic growth, development, democracy, governance, electoral dynamics, public expenditure, corruption, migrations, and peace and conflict dynamics. However, the impact of different approaches to foreign aid implementation for peacebuilding and reconciliation on beneficiary satisfaction remains unexplored. Therefore, the last chapter aims to analyse the impact of foreign aid for peacebuilding and reconciliation regarding its implementation approach on beneficiary satisfaction levels. I provide qualitative evidence from the Colombian case, where foreign aid flows from USAID and the European Union are channelled through the National Cooperation Agency, APC. The chapter's central question is how foreign aid for

peacebuilding and reconciliation, and its implementation approach, impact the satisfaction of individual beneficiaries of programs led by aid agencies in post-conflict Colombia. Previous research has discussed how implementation approaches could lead to higher levels of aid effectiveness. However, it is unclear how these different types of aid approaches might affect beneficiary satisfaction. This paper provides evidence from semi-structured interviews, using content analysis to unveil several mechanisms that link bottom-up approaches to superior satisfaction levels among beneficiaries; beyond that, it conceptualises satisfaction as a complex concept in the context of foreign aid in post-conflict societies.

Finally, the last section contains the conclusions for the overall dissertation, recognising the study's limitations and providing possible questions for future research and policy recommendations. The research entails relevant policy implications related to the intervention effect from external actors, especially foreign aid agencies, on the local dynamics of peacebuilding and reconciliation in conflict and post-conflict societies. First, on the role of international actors such as the European Union with foreign aid flows and technical assistance to support and foster peacebuilding and reconciliation. Second, on the dynamics of armed actors' repertoires during the conflict on victims' mobilisation capacity and its implications for supporting victims' organisations to channel their demands for reconciliation. Third, the satisfaction that foreign aid agencies' interventions result in when intervening promotes peacebuilding and reconciliation and the criteria they should fulfil to guarantee the long-term results of their interventions. The former implications will be detailed in the conclusions section as suggestions for future interventions and research from foreign aid agencies in the local dynamics of conflict and non-violent resistance.

2. CHAPTER 2: CAN FOREIGN AID FOSTER CONDITIONS FOR RECONCILIATION? EVIDENCE FROM EUROPEAN UNION AID IN COLOMBIA

1. Introduction

Can foreign aid for reconciliation reduce conflict-related violence? This paper examines foreign aid for reconciliation. In particular, it explores how such aid from the European Union to Colombia might have affected conditions for reconciliation at the local level – therefore reducing victimisation. The research contributes to understanding how the decrease in violence could help to build better conditions for reconciliation as foreign aid interventions support this process.

Therefore, the paper explores how the interventions from the European Union affected the conditions of reconciliation at the local level, using evidence across municipalities in Colombia. The research contributes to unpacking the mechanisms whereby foreign aid can affect conditions for reconciliation, focusing on the role of community capacity building.

The main question that orientates this paper is: how does foreign aid related to reconciliation affect conflict intensity during and after armed conflicts? And the second question is, how is conflict intensity linked with conditions for reconciliation? I explore the European Union's efforts on reconciliation and their relation to victimisation in the municipalities that have had interventions in Colombia from 2001 to 2018. The results show that municipalities with interventions from European Union see less subsequent conflict intensity than municipalities without programs. The question is relevant as a significant number of interventions of foreign aid agencies take place in conflict and post-conflict countries without knowing how they affect local dynamics of violence and the creation of conditions for reconciliation.

Furthermore, apart from the former practical matter, the question has not been explored enough to understand the effects of foreign aid beyond reconstruction or developmental issues and tackle the question of the effects on the creation conditions for reconciliation. This research shows how reinforcing community capacity building and institutional capacity of civil society results in reducing conflict intensity and creating conditions for reconciliation. These effects can be seen in post-conflict scenarios such as El Salvador, Guatemala, Perú, Rwanda, Liberia (Ruggeri et al., 2013) and Afghanistan, where interventions from foreign aid agencies were significant (Ndkumana, 2016).

2 Theory: Foreign Aid and Conditions for Reconciliation

As Kumar (1997) notes, in post-conflict societies, the political system is weakened and cannot perform essential governance functions, then rehabilitating post-war societies requires promoting conditions reconciliation. It means redefining and reorienting relationships between political authorities, citizenry, and former perpetrators and victims. Rebuilding this relationship demands strengthening community capacity building and empowerment to improve social actors' capacity to re-establish everyday social life and economic activities.

Resuming an everyday social life needs a transitional period between the cessation of hostilities and building political stability. It takes around two or five years, and the outcome can be successful or can be returned to the crisis. However, a successful transition requires restoration, structural reforms, institutional building, and rebuilding (Kumar, 1997). At this point, the international community's role means multilateral and bilateral agencies, inter-governmental organisations, NGO philanthropic organisations, relief agencies, private sector involved in relief, reconstruction and supporting structural reforms and institutional building and transformation.

Usually, the role of international donors in supporting those processes is crucial. It consists in developing specific actions such as supporting the salary of public employees, developing technical assistance projects, supporting reparation of victims, demobilisation and reintegration processes, promoting psychological healing and protection of human rights, building capacities at the local level, creating proximity to people in this level and contributing to strength governmental and institutional capacities (Kumar, 1997), all of them oriented to foster institutional capacity building and empowerment of the communities to create appropriate conditions for building conditions reconciliation between former antagonists in the past of conflict.

Previous research has shown how foreign aid can alter conditions reconciliation in different ways. The effect can be positive, for instance, by developing and strengthening social cohesion and social cooperation (Fearon et al., 2009) when this aid develops strategies for protecting civilians. The former positive effects have been supported through qualitative evidence gathered by implementing semi-structured interviews supporting previous evidence, as the beneficiaries of foreign aid for reconciliation perceive that foreign aid supported them differently.

First, it guarantees and protects human rights, monitors human rights violations against communities and makes these violations more visible in the international scenario: In the Colombian armed conflict, guerrilla groups such as the Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC), The National Liberation Army (ELN), and The Popular Liberation Army (EPL) have confronted paramilitary forces, and the army resulted in severe polarisation when civilians were the target. Civilians were seen as potential support of one of those armed groups. The alliances between paramilitary forces and the army with political groups or politicians increased this polarisation because they supported actions against civilians when armed actors

suspected that civilians were involved with the enemy. They were targeted as part of the armed group.

Consequently, the political participation of civilians and organisations of civil society was undermined and the legitimacy of the state, too, because civilians perceived the army and the political forces that supported them as perpetrators. In this scenario, when aid agencies came to the local territories, they acted as guarantors of rights and protectors of civilians from armed state and non-state actors through different strategies performed, such as local presence, monitoring in the territories with direct contact with the community members, making visible the violations to the international community, promoting the strengthening and creation of social organisations of the civil society and implementing programs or projects for promoting development, political participation and human rights protection. In the beginning, aid agencies such as the European Union were neutral parties between the main actors in the conflict. Civil society organisations perceived them as mediators and guarantors of their rights. In this sense, the international support was autonomous of local political dynamics, gave back their rights to civilians and victims and created economic conditions for development. In their words: “they gave us back the right to dream again with our community life plans” (Interview 1, 2019).

Second, it Strengthens civil society. The participation of civil society is critical for the reconciliation processes, understood as a dynamic that implies a practice where the former perpetrators and victims find new forms of interaction when they can change ideas and perspectives about each other and where, after an intense conflict, aid finds diverse challenges in this sense, “reconciliation requires the support and active input of civil society” (Colvin, 2007, p. 335), articulated with the support and policies from the government to promote conditions for national reconciliation (Colvin, 2007).

Moreover, regarding the evidence, international aid facilitated communication between local organisations and international governments. The armed actors respected their

interventions because they were afraid of the international consequences of making visible the violations they made. In this sense, international agencies protected them with their presence, actions, and strategies for making the situation at the international level visible. As a result, communities perceived that in this first step, “civil society could repair itself because it is strengthened and is autonomous” (Interview 1, 2019).

The former set of conditions of foreign emerged from the semi-structured interviews. The former set of conditions can be grouped together in the causal mechanisms of *community capacity building and empowerment* as the primary mechanisms that articulate the relationship between foreign aid and conditions for reconciliation. As foreign aid tends to increase community capacity building and empowerment, civilians and their organisations are more likely to find conditions to build reconciliation.

Kaplan (2013) demonstrated that civilians that created local organisations built their own protection mechanisms from armed actors related to strengthening civil society. The external support of foreign aid agencies was crucial in this process. If civilians and local communities received support from foreign aid agencies, they protected them with human rights defence actions and promotion, increasing perceived security. Also, they trained members of communities in human rights and leadership, gave financial resources and developed several projects related to communitarian capacity building. They also made visible the situation of violence in the national and international spheres. Finally, it compelled leaders to strengthen their skills and communities and empower their actions and roles. As a result of strengthening local organisations, communities were protected from armed actors and were more able to build conditions for reconciliation.

Sieff and Vinjamuri (1999) note that “in the past two decades, there has been a proliferation of new institutional solutions designed to reconcile the goal of justice and peace (...) political

leaders have designed domestic tribunals, international tribunals, national truth commissions, amnesties and lustrations” (p. 758). In other words, in transitional contexts, political leaders install institutions that try to face the effort to reconcile the tension between justice and peace. Post-conflict societies face the challenge of building and rebuilding a new design of institutions to create proper conditions for the reconciliation processes, understanding the challenge of new collective learning processes and how those processes produce new mental models of conflict resolution (Mantzavinos, 2004) with the ability to give answers to the demands of justice and peace of a whole society (Sieff & Vinjamuri, 1999).

International aid agencies are an essential kind of organisation in this new institutional order. They articulate the domestic new institutional order with international actors and institutions and channel the flow of resources and support. These organisations in post-conflict contexts articulate external demands with domestic demands. Furthermore, they work as vehicles between civil society and states. Sanahuja notes that the configuration of the foreign aid system is supported by the distribution of power that organises and makes hierarchies of the actors of the aid system and conditions their patterns of interaction (Gómez Galán & Sanahuja, 2001; Sanahuja, 2007).

As Garriga and Phillips mentioned, the lack of information on post-conflict scenarios because of the violence shows that “the decision to send aid to a country signals the donors’ trust of local authorities ... presence of aid, whether the aid has achieved its intended purpose” (Garriga & Phillips, 2014, p. 4). It means that governmental institutions and civil society organisations have the institutional capacity to support the flow of aid. Despite the lack of information, they can channel these flows into actions related to peacebuilding and reconciliation because donors trust them.

At the same time as this focus on strengthening state institutions, international aid agencies have been intervening in local communities for decades to contribute to local community efforts in grassroots peacebuilding and the creation of conditions for reconciliation. Initially, conditioned aid was channelled when agencies and aid workers decided on the projects over the communities. After that, according to the organisation processes of local communities and the establishment of their own principles of autonomy, the dynamics of international aid were transformed and made suitable by the communities in their territories, following the "ownership" principle of the Paris Declaration for Aid Effectiveness. It means that the beneficiaries set their own strategies to improve their institutions, as the OECD stated.

Regarding the relation between foreign aid and conditions for reconciliation, some literature approaches face the relation between foreign aid and reconciliation through the role of mediation. As Clayton and Gleditsch (2014) said, "third-party efforts can increase or decrease the risk of escalation to violence and help foster alternative outcomes" (p. 266). Mediation literature suggests that a third party's role has been relevant in international crises since the early twentieth century. The most relevant mechanisms in this scenario are negotiation, adjudication, arbitration and nonviolent military actions. In a theoretical mediation context, those mechanisms prevent crisis escalation if they help bring crises to an end more rapidly, if crisis actors are satisfied with the outcome, and if a legacy of tension results following the crisis (Wilkenfeld et al., 2003).

Some studies have suggested that foreign aid has effects on development in post-conflict countries (Baptista et al., 2013; Collier et al., 2008; Ndkumana, 2016). This effect can be optimistic in terms of economic growth (Collier et al., 2008) and can foster social cohesion (Colvin, 2007; Fearon et al., 2009) or even promote fragmentation (Steinwand, 2015b, 2015a). However, the effect of aid on the creation of conditions for reconciliation at the local level has not been explored enough yet.

Foreign aid entails the reconciliation of a new relationship between citizens and governments, supported by building and rebuilding trust towards political institutions at the local and national political institutions based on the rule of law and respect for human rights (Van der Merwe et al., 2009; Yamagishi, 2005). In this sense, regarding relations between foreign aid and conditions for reconciliation, it is possible to say that the literature has found different types of impacts of foreign aid on post-conflict societies. They have explored the effects on development mainly. However, foreign aid affects other peacebuilding processes, such as creating conditions for reconciliation. It is possible to demonstrate that the effect of foreign aid focused on reconciliation over conflict intensity because it reduces levels of victimisation. The next section discusses the dissertation's main concepts: reconciliation, the dependent variable; community capacity building, the causal mechanism; and foreign aid from the EU, the independent variable.

2.1 What is reconciliation?

In terms of the concept of reconciliation, empirical studies define it as the process of building and rebuilding relations among former antagonists in post-war contexts (Govier & Verwoerd, 2002) and the establishment and re-establishment of trust relations between them and governmental institutions (Van der Merwe et al., 2009; Meierhenrich, 2008; Oettler & Rettberg, 2019; Rettberg & Ugarriza, 2016). Reconciliation is defined in the sense of restarting interactions with the aggressor. In order to reconcile them, it is required dialogue, the commitment to non-repetition of the offence and the requirement that offenders experience a consequence for their grievances to improve relations between parts (Cortés et al., 2016). In post-conflict societies, reconciliation is related to rebuilding trust between former actors in conflict and producing coexistence and democratic relations between them (Crocker, 1999;

López-López, Pineda & Mullet, 2018). The concept of reconciliation has been tackled in several ways (Rettberg & Ugarriza, 2016). However, the most common and pragmatic definition in the literature is “the ‘(re)establishment of relations between former antagonists’” (Ugarriza et al., 2022, p. 3).

Armed conflicts have been characterised by severe violations of human rights in deeply divided societies after massive collective violence or civil wars, which are followed by a transitional justice process that is powerfully articulated with reconciliation and their elements (Bloomfield, et al., 2003; De Greiff & Ciaran, 2002; Uprimny, 2009; Uprimny & Saffon, 2005). The relation between reconciliation and transitional justice processes has been discussed from the prescriptive or normative point of view. From this point of view, reconciliation is observed as a result of other transitional justice processes such as truth, justice, DDR and reparations (Galtung, 2003; Lederach, 1998, 2005). On the other hand, reconciliation can be seen as a complementary and transversal process with other transitional justice elements (Meierhenrich, 2008; Oettler & Rettberg, 2019).

2.2 Community capacity building and empowerment

Community capacity building and empowerment are core concepts to understand how the conditions for reconciliation can be built. The ability to build a community’s capacity and empowerment is central to creating conditions for reconciliation. As Chaskin (2001) highlights, community capacity is commonly linked to the existence of certain conditions, such as the interaction between the community’s commitment, resources and skills mobilised to build on community strengths and tackle community problems and opportunities (Chaskin, 2000; The Aspen Institute Rural Economic Policy Program, n.d.). Other scholars link those conditions to

individual participation in community planning, decision-making, and actions (Chaskin, 2000; Gittell et al., 1998). Whereas other definitions focus on empowerment as a critical aspect of understanding community capacity building, it has been generally defined as “the community’s ability to pursue its chosen purposes and course of action” (Fawcett et al., 1995, p. 682).

As Chaskin (2000) stated, the consensus in the literature shows at least four conditions for building a community’s capacity:

Taken together, these attempts to define community capacity suggest some agreement on at least a few factors, including (1) the existence of resources (ranging from the skills of individuals to the strength of organisations to access to financial capital), (2) networks of relationships (sometimes stressed in affective, sometimes in instrumental terms), (3) leadership (often only vaguely defined), and (4) support for some mechanisms for or processes of participation by community members in collective action and problem-solving. (pp. 292-293)

This paper follows the definition of capacity building as the skill to strengthen the community’s ability to become self-reliant by increasing social cohesion and social capital (Mcginty, 2002, p. 1) toward reconciliation efforts and creating appropriate conditions for building reconciliation. I will also follow the former conditions proposed by Chaskin (2000), linking them with the emergent qualitative evidence from the interviews. According to Simmons (2011), finding a common definition of community capacity building is difficult. However, the literature identifies that the practice of that concept aims to strengthen a community’s ability to increase social cohesion to improve their social capital to solve problems and make decisions collectively and effectively toward common goals (Simmons et al., 2011). For the purpose of this section, the former conditions are understood in the context of creating conditions for reconciliation in post-conflict societies.

The concept of empowerment will follow the definition in the context of reconciliation; it means “the sense of being an autonomous and influential social actor, who is treated justly and whose rights are respected” (Ugarriza et al., 2022, p. 13) in a context where former antagonists are rebuilding their relations. It is relevant to highlight that the literature has paid less attention to applying community capacity building and empowerment in creating conditions for reconciliation in post-conflict societies. This paper aims to contribute to this debate.

2.3 Foreign Aid from the European Union in Colombia

The European Union (EU) is Colombia’s second most prominent donor of financial support. One of the donors has focused more on peacebuilding, reconciliation, human rights protection, and strengthening civil society through interventions across the country, especially in municipalities and regions affected by the armed conflict. The EU opened a delegation for Colombia and Ecuador in 1993, and they supported the forced displacement population through the Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO). The EU tried to mediate conflicts in the Andean region and support civilians from the dynamics of violence. However, during the peace process with former President Pastrana (1998-2002) and FARC, between 1999 and 2002, the EU took distance from the implementation of Plan Colombia, a program prioritised by Pastrana and supported by the United States, against illicit crops because they considered it had a robust military component instead of a humanitarian one (Lillo González & Santamaría García, 2009).

As an alternative to Plan Colombia, the EU started 2001 the Peace Laboratories in six regions of the country with an initial donation of 92 million euros. They defined it as the primary technical and financial aid tool to promote dialogue, coexistence, pacific resistance mechanisms, and protection of the civil population from armed conflict. They understood that

inequality, lack of participation and social cohesion were the leading causes of conflict. For this reason, they promoted sustainable socio-economic development, human rights protection, strengthening participation and reconstruction of the social fabric. This program supported previous civil peace initiatives (Castañeda, 2014)

The success of Peace Laboratories opened the door for the consolidation of Regional Development Peace and Stabilization at the regional level in two phases, between 2009 and 2016. This program included a new strategy called Strategic Territorial Projects focused on alternatives for regional development oriented to building alliances between local organisations, foreign aid agencies, and the public and private sectors for building public policies for peacebuilding and reconciliation. After this program, from 2011 to 2018, former President Santos led New Territories of Peace, which looked to learn from past programs to keep strengthening civil society by reinforcing the state of law and local governance and protecting vulnerable populations affected by armed violence of state and non-state actors. This program promoted pacific coexistence, socio-economic development, strengthening public institutions and democracy-building (DPS, 2018).

2.4 Case Selection

Colombia has seen an armed conflict process since 1965, and foreign aid agencies have intervened with several programs and projects related to peacebuilding and reconciliation since the cold war (Stokes, 2003; Taffet, 2007). The most prominent donor is the United States, which first focused on the anti-Communist fight as, after the Cold War, the war on drugs. The second-largest donor is the European Union, which has had a presence in Colombia since 1998, developing several programs to promote human rights promotion, civil society strengthening, environmental protection, peacebuilding and reconciliation (Barreto de Sousa Henriques,

2012; Castañeda, 2014; Tassara et al., 2019). As the agenda of the European Union in Colombia is closer to creating conditions for reconciliation outcomes, I am analysing how the EU programs on peace and reconciliation have affected conflict intensity as a proxy for the creation of conditions for reconciliation.

Colombian national agency for foreign aid (APC-Colombia, 2020) and the European Union have implemented civil society-oriented programs promoting and strengthening community capacity building. They protected leaders from armed state and non-state actors and trained communities and leaders in the culture of civil rights and victims' rights. Foreign aid allowed local communities to develop autonomy and was a guarantor of their rights and communitarian projects. International agencies advised and supported communities and leaders and were a third party between the state, governments, and victims' organisations, promoting local and communitarian capacity building and empowerment. The creation of social organisations such as associations and nonprofit organisations (corporations and foundations) for economic production that support these organizations' autonomy was direct at the beginning (Interview 1, 2019).

The civil population of Colombia has lived amid high levels of violence for over 55 years due to the violence of the armed conflict. In this context, many problematic situations and harm persist, such as systematic and massive human rights violations, forced recruitment of minors, territorial disputes among illegal armed groups, threats against civilians, and selective murders.

According to the National Centre for Historical Memory (CNMH), the war has claimed at least: the lives of 218.094 people, 11.721 victims of massacres, 1.754 victims of sexual violence, 27.023 kidnappings, 5.126 victims of forced recruitment, and more than 8 million forced displacements, in the oldest conflict of Latin America (CNMH, 2019). The civil society

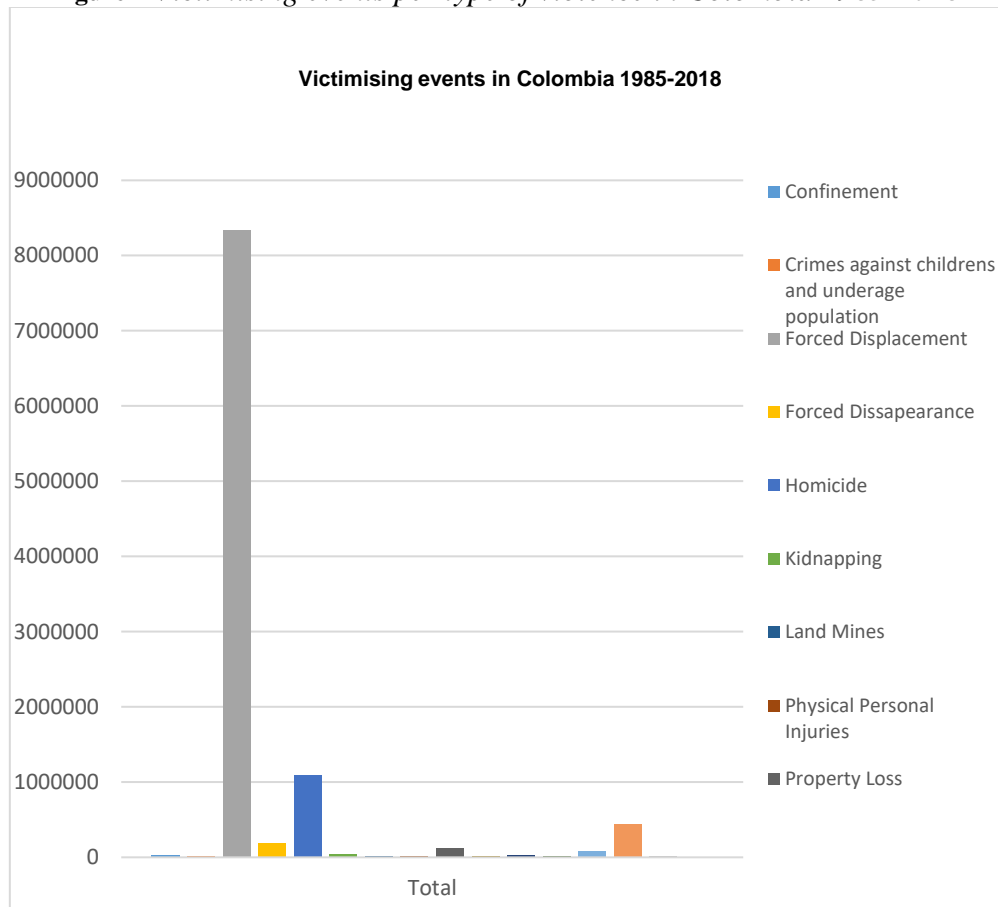
(Bejarano, 1992) amidst this conflict has been a central actor, and as a part of it, local peace communities. Those organisations have peacefully resisted the war (García-Durán, 2003; Kaplan, 2013; Valenzuela, 2009). Simultaneously, they built their development alternatives from their own development conception, sometimes with foreign aid support despite the threats of the armed conflict.

Considering this complexity, Colombia is an excellent case study for the initial research question because foreign aid has supported peacebuilding and creating conditions for reconciliation within the country during the conflict and post-conflict, affecting the dynamics of conflict intensity with their intervention.

2.5 Conflict intensity and victimisation in Colombia

The study's dependent variable is the existence of conditions for reconciliation measured by the decrease in victimisation levels. The Unit for Reparations and Attention of Victims of Colombia (UARIV) and their register system, following the Law of Victims and Land Restitution (Law 1448 of 2012), has developed a categorisation of victimisation events from 1985 to today that includes: confinement, crimes against children and underage population, forced displacement, forced disappearance, homicide, kidnapping, landmines, property loss, physical and personal injuries, sexual violence, spoils of land, terrorist attacks, threat and torture.

Figure 1 *Victimising events per type of violence in Colombia 1985-2018*

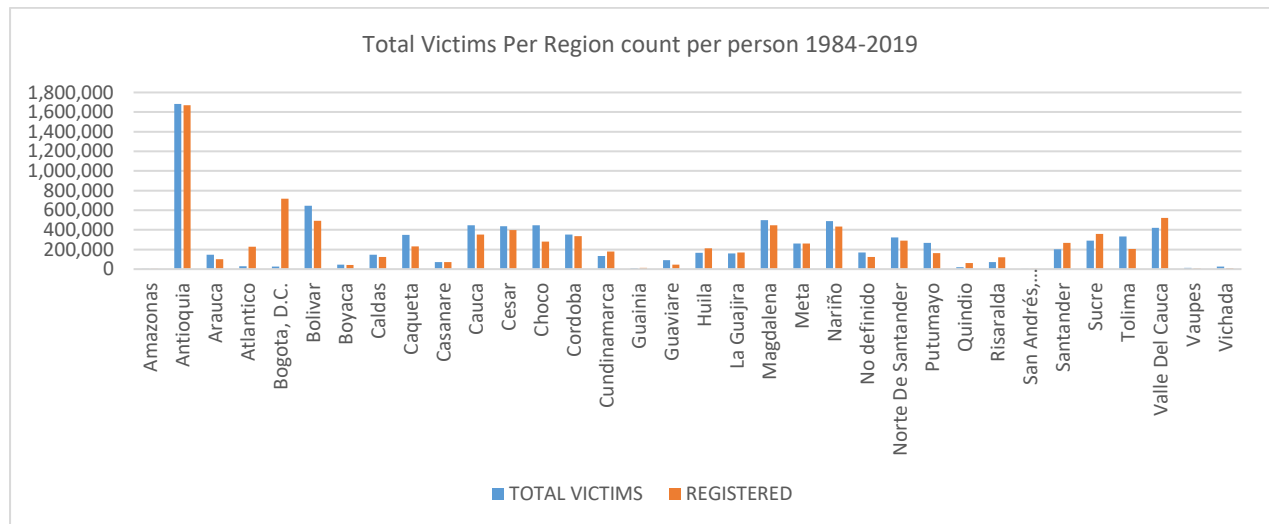


Note. Own Elaboration based on UARIV.

RUV data shows that the main victimising event in Colombia has been forced displacement, with a frequency of 49% and 80% of total victims of the conflict (Unidad Administrativa para la Atención y Reparación a las Víctimas [UARIV], 2019), followed by homicide, threat and forced disappearance as per in the figure above. The behaviour of forced displacement shows that this event is concentrated in the departmental administrative regions of Antioquia, Bogotá, Bolívar and Valle del Cauca, mainly areas where the country's main cities are primarily recipients of forced displaced people (Figure 3). It means that analysing the intensity of conflict in Colombia requires understanding forced displacement behaviour (Figure 4), not just combats or homicides like the classic measures suggest (Acevedo & Bornacelly, 2014). Here victimisation follows the broader definition of any type of harm or rights violations suffered individually or collectively because of the armed conflict violence, such as

confinement, crimes against children and underage population, forced displacement, forced disappearance, homicide, kidnapping, landmines, property loss, physical and personal injuries, sexual violence, spoils of land, terrorist attacks, threat, and torture.

Figure 2 *Victimising events per Administrative Unit in Colombia 1985-2018*



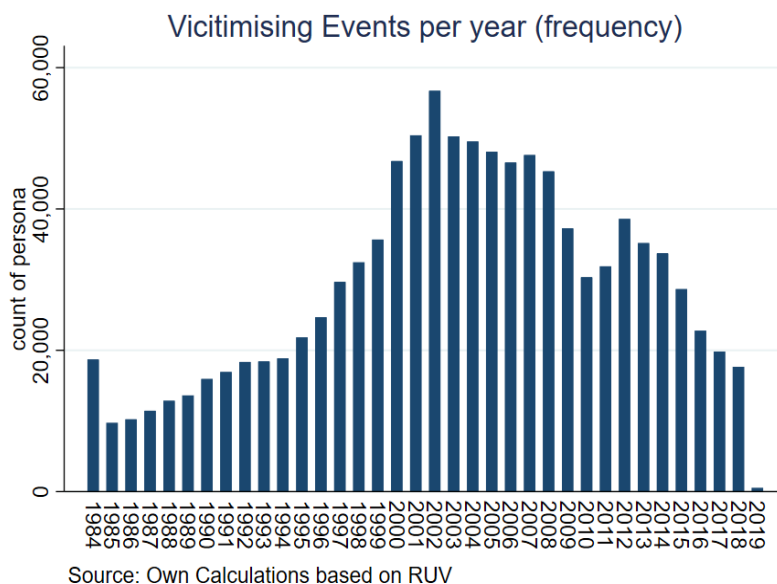
Note. Own Elaboration based on UARIV-RUV.

Figure 2 shows the recurrence of victimising events from the '80s to today shows that victimisation dynamics increased significantly in the period 1996 to 2000 when there was a territorial dispute for the territories between armed actors, specifically FARC, ELN, army and paramilitary forces and the failed peace negotiations between the government of Pastrana and the guerrilla of FARC, that allowed the advance of the rebel group over the control of most of the territory (González et al., 2002), particularly in Antioquia and Bolívar, where are registered the highest levels for victimisation, following the RUV data.

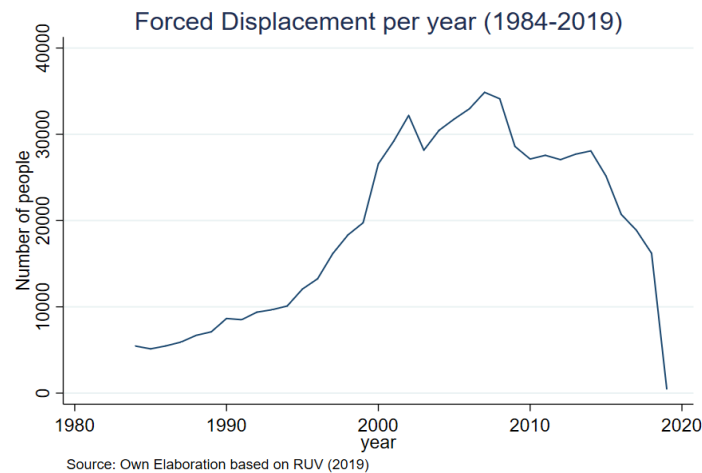
After this event, Colombians voted for a President who could militarily face and control the guerrilla expansion. However, this strategy resulted in a peak of victimisation. It forced displacement between 2002 and 2008 when the government from the far right of Álvaro Uribe Vélez (2002-2010) implemented the policy of Democratic Security and intensified the war

against rebel groups. Consequently, there was a vast incrementation in the forced displacement of civilians, the largest in the recent history of the conflict (Figure 3).

Figure 3 *Victimising events in Colombia per year 1984-2019*



The behaviour of forced displacement is similar to the pattern of victimisation over the analysed period. The main victimising event rocketed from 2002 to 2008 and decreased from 2012 to today. In this way, it is possible to say that the peace process between FARC and the National Government of Colombian, which started in 2012, had a positive effect on victimisation and forced displacement patterns as long as both dropped dramatically since the beginning of the peace process to today (Figures 3 and 4).

Figure 4 *Forced Displacement in Colombia 1984-2019*

Compared with other armed conflicts, Colombia registers the second highest level of internal forced displacement, with 1.8 million victims, after Turkey, where 3.8 million people have been displaced forcibly (Lasrado et al., 2021). Therefore, it is relevant to seek the dynamics of victimisation and how interventions from international non-state actors, such as foreign aid agencies, affect these dynamics and, consequently, how it affects or does not affect creating conditions for reconciliation as a set of processes.

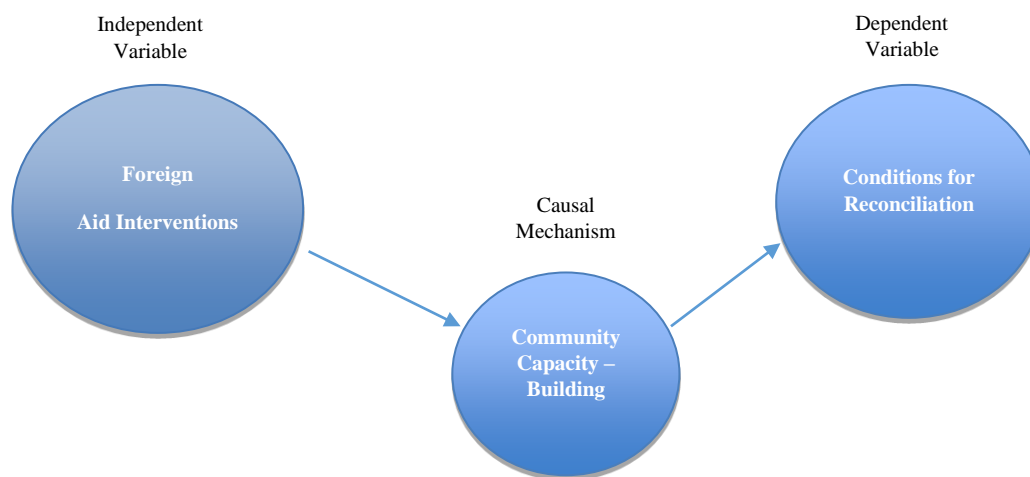
3. Research Design

3.1 Variables and causal Mechanism

The theoretical causal mechanism identified is community capacity building regarding the relationship between the effects of foreign aid for reconciliation on conflict intensity as a proxy of reconciliation. Foreign aid for reconciliation increases community capacity building within communities for several reasons. First, it protects civilians from the violence of the armed state and non-state actors, improving the perceived security. Second, it strengthens civil society's capacities to make them visible at national and international levels and encourages state

capacity and productivity. Consequently, levels of conflict intensity decrease because capacity-building skills allow the communities to develop protection mechanisms supported by foreign aid agencies. Therefore, victimisation decreases, fostering conditions for addressing reconciliation, which means re-establishing the relationship between victims and their former perpetrators. As communities are more empowered, more cohesive, and safer, reconciliation is more likely (Figure 5).

Figure 5 *Variables and causal mechanism*



As per Figure 5, foreign aid, the independent variable, fosters conditions for reconciliation, and the dependent variable through community capacity building as a causal mechanism. Community capacity building has been defined as a skill to strengthen the community’s ability to become self-reliant by increasing social cohesion and social capital (Mac Ginty, 2002, p.1). Empowerment is “the sense of being an autonomous and influential social actor who is treated justly and whose rights are respected” (Ugarriza et al., 2022, p. 13). In terms of creating conditions for reconciliation, community capacity building and empowerment are linked with the ability to coexist and (re)build trust to (r)establish the

relations between former antagonists. As Ugarriza (2002) demonstrated, empowerment leads to conditions that make reconciliation more likely.

In this way, foreign aid fosters conditions for reconciliation by strengthening community capacity building and empowerment via several strategies such as: providing technical and financial support to strengthen their organisation and participation skills, fostering social cohesion, protecting the community from armed state and non-state actors by making international human rights violations visible, and increasing the perceived security in their territories as the qualitative evidence supports and how some scholars have shown (Alther, 2006; Arjona, 2016; Naucke, 2017).

Therefore, the violence decreases when the violations are more visible because of the international actors and the subsequent press's monitoring and control, creating conditions for reconciliation. Also, community capacity building and empowerment make the community less vulnerable to the influence of stated and non-state armed actors. They develop tools to report violations and violence against them and increase their capacity to dialogue and negotiate with those armed actors to ask for autonomy and reduce violence. For example, the peace communities that emerged in Colombia declared neutral toward the violence of state and non-state actors. They were 30 civilian organisations that negotiated peacefully with armed actors and built their peace communities through nonviolent action or civil resistance to the war². As Mouly (2022) highlighted, one of these peace communities' most relevant roles is mitigating armed violence. However, it is crucial to point out that communities have had external support in this process; foreign aid has been crucial as they have strengthened community capacity building to mitigate armed violence. These conditions create an appropriate space for building

² Mouly (2022) identified key attributes for the definition of peace communities: "(i) impartiality, (ii) participation and cohesion, and (iii) the use of nonviolent action (also termed 'civil resistance')" (p.1171).

conditions for reconciliation. Civilians and victims feel more protected, safe, visible and empowered to establish or re-establish their relations with former perpetrators and trust them to explore ways to build a pacific coexistence.

In order to examine the effect of foreign aid (IV) on conditions for reconciliation (DV), I use a proxy on victimisation levels to measure how the reduction in the violence leads to better conditions for reconciliation. I assess the effect of the interventions from the EU before and after the midpoint of the interventions. I compare victimisation levels in municipalities that had interventions from the EU with municipalities where the EU did not intervene between 1993 and 2018. Secondly, I analyse selected departmental administrative regions with the highest victimisation levels and where the EU had more interventions.

Based on their reports, I built the dataset of the EU interventions at the municipal level to provide data on the IV. For conditions for reconciliation, I used victimisation as a proxy based on governmental data from the Administrative Unit for Integral Reparation of Victims (UARIV). Following National Agency for Cooperation from Colombia (APC) figures, the European Union is the second most prominent donor in peace and reconciliation in Colombia. For that reason, initially, I will analyse the intervention of this agency in terms of creating conditions for reconciliation because their plan is focused on human rights, peacebuilding, reconciliation and strengthening civil society. Their results are closer to conditions for reconciliation than other donors like USAID (USAID, 2019), the most prominent one, which intervene mainly in areas with illicit crops (APC-Colombia, 2018).

3.2 Conflict intensity and victimisation as a proxy for conditions for reconciliation

The number of victims a country has after violent armed conflicts is very relevant to understanding the intensity of conflict, not just inside but out of combat (Restrepo et al., 2006), keeping in mind the specific contextual characteristics of each conflict and its main victimising events.

Conflict intensity has often been measured in terms of the number of deaths, either in total for an event or over a standard time interval such as a year (Conflict Analysis Resource Center, 2019; Gleditsch, et al., 2002; Restrepo et al., 2006). Intensity reflects a conflict's violence, with more deaths implying higher intensity. "Wars come in different sizes, ranging from brief conflagrations that kill relatively few, to geographically isolated but prolonged insurgencies, to enormous military contests sweeping across entire states" (Lacina, 2006, p. 276).

In some conflicts, the main victimising pattern is not limited to deaths or homicides and other events like forced migrations (CNMH, 2015; Kothari, 1995; Lozano, 2018; Melander et al., 2009) or forced disappearances (CNMH, 2010) are essential to perceived conflict intensity. For this reason, I use a broader measure of victimisations in Colombia from RUV as a proxy for conflict intensity, defined based on the features of each conflict and the main victimising events that are measured per person registered at the UARIV Colombia, following the following events: forced displacement, homicides, confinement, crimes against children, kidnapping, land mines, personal physical injuries, personal-psychological injuries, property loss, sexual violence, spoil of land, terrorist attacks, threat and torture.

In Colombia, forced displacement represents the main victimising event, with more than 80% of the total victims, followed by homicides and forced disappearance (UARIV, 2021). Following this argument, understanding conflict intensity requires understanding victimisation levels beyond direct violence, combats and homicides.

Conflict intensity is measured by victimisation, assuming that first, victimisation is the better indicator of conflict intensity available for analysing the case of Colombia and second, it is used as a proxy for conditions for reconciliation as long as the mitigation of violence against civilians creates favourable conditions for the (re)establishment of relations between former antagonists, such as community capacity building, empowerment and perceived security. Civilians feel more capable, empowered, and safer (re) establishing contact with their former perpetrators as the conflict intensity decreases.

3.3 Exploring variation

I identified the municipalities intervened by the European Union in Colombia from 2002 to 2018. I built a database with 490 municipalities that were intervened with six programs, based on the EU's report of each program and a general report of the intervention. The analysis shows that the interventions have been developed in the following programs:

Table 1 *European Union Programs in Colombia 2002-2018*

Program	Period	Municipalities	EU	National Counterparty	Total	Beneficiaries	Number Of Projects
Peace Laboratory I	2002-2010	30	33.321.246 Euros	23.045.124 Euros	56.366.370 Euros	30.175 people	82
Peace Laboratory II	2003-2009	64	33.000.000 Euros	8.400.000 Euros	41.400.000 Euros	85.064 people	119
Peace Laboratory III	2006-2011	109	24.200.000 Euros	6.050.000 Euros	30.250.000 Euros	30.643 people	96
Regional Development, Peace and Stability-DPREI	2009-2015	156	26.000.000 Euros	5.300.000 Euros	31.300.000 Euros	16.768 people	36

Regional Development, Peace and Stability - DPRE II	2010-2016	34	8.400.000 Euros	2.100.000 Euros	10.500.000 Euros	8.254	8
New Territories of Peace	2011-2018	53	30.400.000 Euros	7.600.000 Euros	38.000.000 Euros	22.336 people	16

Note. Source: Own Elaboration based on DPS Reports

The European Union intervened in 490 municipalities between 2002 and 2018 and contributed 156.800.000 Euros.

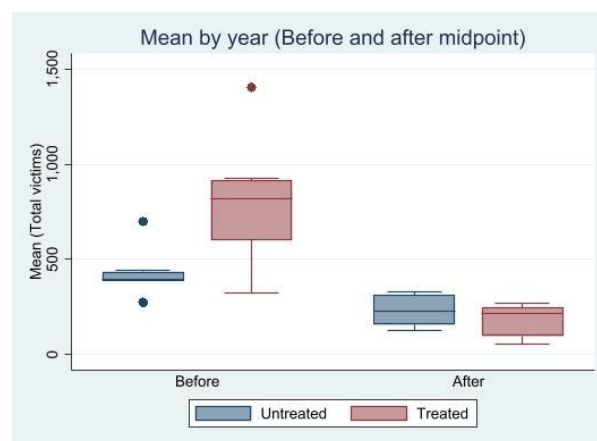
As Colombia has 1222 municipalities, I coded municipalities intervened and not intervened municipalities. Parallely, I took the victimisation database and homogenised it at a country level. Subsequently, I crossed the database of the interventions of the European Union with the database of victimisation to identify variation, taking as a breakpoint the middle point of the interventions (2010). This date coincides with the start of the government of Juan Manuel Santos, who led the peace process between the Colombian government and the guerrilla FARC and signed its final peace agreement in 2016. The interventions after the middle point show the effect of the interventions on the dynamics of victimisation as the programs take time to deal with administrative issues and implement their interventions. I coded the municipalities intervened by the EU with the administrative and political division code from the Statistical National Department of Colombia (DANE) (and included municipalities in which the EU has not intervened).

4. Discussion and results

As a result of the analysis, it is possible to observe in graph six that interventions in municipalities where the EU has intervened had more reduction in the victimisation pattern than municipalities that have not intervened after the midpoint of the interventions in 2010. It means that the initial hypothesis is verified.

There is a mean difference of 234 victims between the control and treated groups, meaning that the treated municipalities had a greater number of victims on average before treatment. According to the mean test, this difference is statistically significant at 5%. If the analysis takes into account the rate of victims concerning the population of the municipality, there is a difference in means between the control group and the treated group of approximately three victims per 100 inhabitants, statistically significant at 5%, according to the value of the test of means (Appendix. Table 1).

Figure 6 Mean victims before and after the midpoint of the aid interventions



After treatment, there was a mean difference of 55 victims between the total number of victims between treatment and control, a statistically significant difference with a p-value of less than 5%. If analysed through the rate of victims per 100 inhabitants, there was a mean difference of 0.2 victims per 100 inhabitants between the control group and the treated group, statistically significant with a p-value of less than 5% (Appendix. Table 2). For the treatment group, the reduction in the mean between the two periods was 604 victims, going from 783 victims on average to 174. The reduction in the mean for the control group was 225 victims, going from 429 to 214.

The distribution of the average annual number of victims for the treated municipalities decreased to a greater extent than the average in the untreated municipalities after the EU

interventions. The result confirms the claim that the average in the intervened municipalities decreased. It is evident that the treated municipalities, in general, have had a higher number of victims over the years; however, from 2010 onwards, the number of victims in the treatment group remained below the victimisations of the control group.

Figure 7 Mean of victims before and after the midpoint of the aid interventions

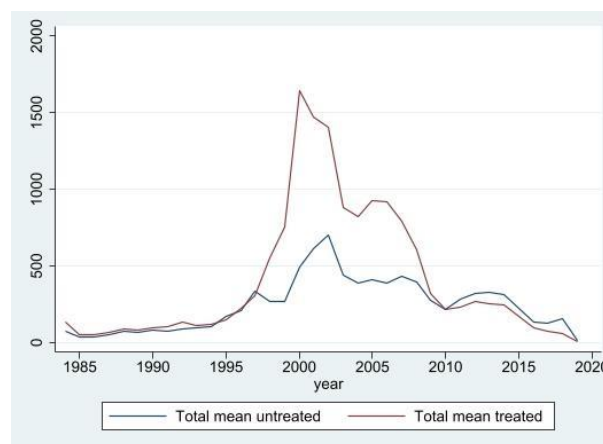


Figure 7 shows that there is a mean difference of approximately three victims in the rate of victims per 100 inhabitants between the control group and the treated group, i.e., the treated municipalities had a higher number of victims on average before treatment. This difference is statistically significant at 5%, according to the p-value of the means test (See Table 3, Annexe 1). Post-treatment, a mean difference of 0.2 of the victim's rate per 100 population is evident between the control and treated groups, a statistically significant difference with a p-value of less than 5%.

4.1 Regional Analysis

Regarding the diverse dynamics at the subnational level, I explore the administrative regions and their variation in the victimisation relative rate at the municipal level before and after the midpoint of the interventions of the EU as follows:

Table 2 Average departmental totals of victimisation before and after EU interventions

Administrative Unit	<i>Means of (sum) total</i>					
	Pretreatment			Posttreatment		
	Untreated	Treated	Total	Untreated	Treated	Total
<i>Amazonas</i>	15		15	24		24
<i>Antioquia</i>	513	651	542	311	59	230
<i>Arauca</i>	768		768	555		555
<i>ArchipiélagodeSanAndrés</i>	3		3	1		1
<i>Atlántico</i>	55	80	70	22	19	20
<i>Bogotá,D.C.</i>	941		941	749		749
<i>Bolívar</i>	338	769	618	142	135	136
<i>Boyacá</i>	25		25	5		5
<i>Caldas</i>	262	178	259	38	20	37
<i>Caquetá</i>	890	626	742	922	619	751
<i>Casanare</i>	167		167	50		50
<i>Cauca</i>	269	334	292	754	503	642
<i>Cesar</i>	835	444	750	126	83	112
<i>Chocó</i>	549		549	601		601
<i>Cundinamarca</i>	69		69	9		9
<i>Córdoba</i>	433		433	289		289
<i>Guainía</i>	56		56	34		34
<i>Guaviare</i>	1928	483	844	1061	264	475
<i>Huila</i>	146		146	207		207
<i>LaGuajira</i>	445		445	230		230
<i>Magdalena</i>	718	866	743	138	63	122
<i>Meta</i>	301	403	369	179	168	170
<i>Nariño</i>	247	245	246	542	275	454
<i>NortedeSantander</i>	313		313	311		311
<i>Putumayo</i>	757		757	626		626
<i>Quindio</i>	66		66	52		52
<i>Risaralda</i>	220	32	207	122	12	110
<i>Santander</i>	55	441	125	9	97	30
<i>Sucre</i>	257	785	470	62	78	71
<i>Tolima</i>	270		270	245		245
<i>ValledelCauca</i>	307		307	797		797
<i>Vaupés</i>	131		131	42		42
<i>Vichada</i>	222		222	164		164
Mean (Total)	293	527	332	233	174	219

In the table above, the number of victims decreased in the municipalities treated. The departments of Antioquia, Sucre, Bolívar, Magdalena, Guaviare and Santander are the municipalities where the number of victims decreased the most.

The findings are also supported by qualitative evidence. Specifically, interviews conducted with members of grassroots communities intervened by the European Union, where they said that

the European Union silences the voice of the rifle and gives voice to the human back, to reason, to the dialogue and the community for mediation, it is a guarantee of secure visibility, based on direct actions that transformed the living conditions of the peasants. At first, they were transparent, brought the truth and de-complexed the administrative system to return to the essentials. The rifle spoke for the unfulfilled promise of governments; guerrillas and self-defence groups are armed to breach those promises and corruption. They faced the rifle and the word. The European Union returns the word to the peasants. (Interview 2, 12 September 2019).

Consequently, the reductions in victimisation due to the EU interventions created favourable conditions for reconciliation as the victims felt safer and empowered to establish their relations with their former antagonists.

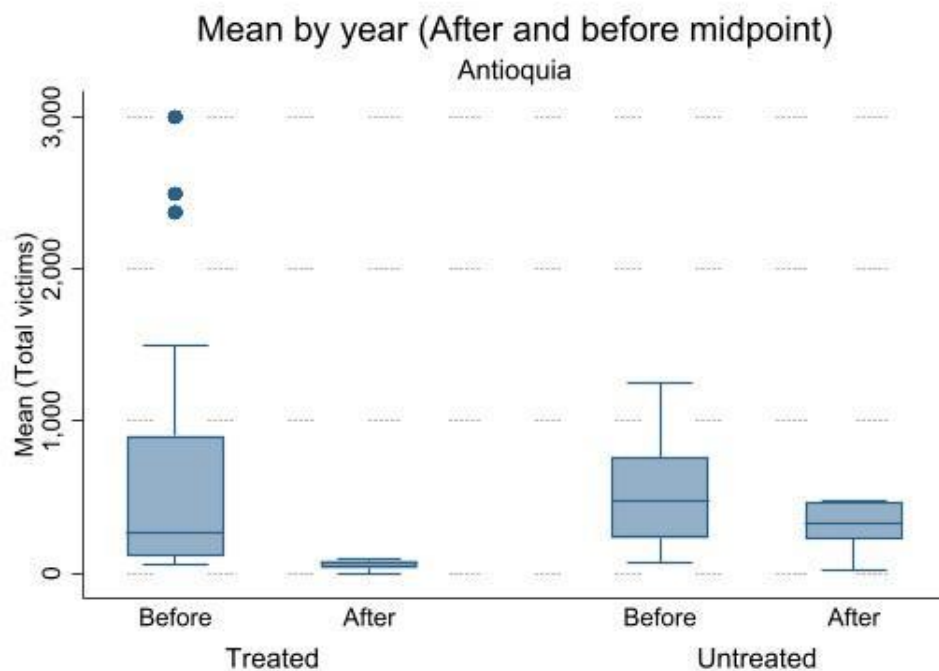
After the regional overview, I will explore the dynamics of six administrative regions out of 32, with 1223 total municipalities. I focus on administrative regions where the armed conflict was intense and where there was an appropriate number of interventions from the European Union. The regional analysis shows that regions with high victimisation levels and intervened by the EU had lower victimisation levels after the aid interventions' mid-point. I analyse the administrative units of Antioquia, Sucre, Bolivar, Magdalena, Guaviare and

Santander.

4.1.1 Antioquia

Antioquia has 125 municipalities registered, reporting the highest victimisation and forced displacement levels between 2001 and 2018 and victimisation. This region shares a border with Bolívar and is close to Sucre. Antioquia also had interventions in different municipalities from the European Union between 2001 and 2018. Antioquia was a strategic corridor during the conflict. Like other strategic regions (Montañez, et al., 2010), the armed conflict dynamics were transformed in terms of resource provision to armed actors (Muñetón Santa & Maya Taborda, 2018) and civilian support. The presence of several armed actors such as FARC, EPL, ELN, different paramilitary forces that were created in this region and cartels made Antioquia one of the most violent regions in the country. Around 50 of their municipalities were intervened by the European Union with Peace Laboratories I and II and the first phase of the Regional Development of Peace and Stability programs. In cases like Antioquia, it is evident that the country's highest level of victimisation decreased after the interventions' mid-point during the period analysed (Figure 8)

Figure 8 *Victims before and after aid intervention in Antioquia*



Own Elaboration based on UARIV-RUV and EU Reports

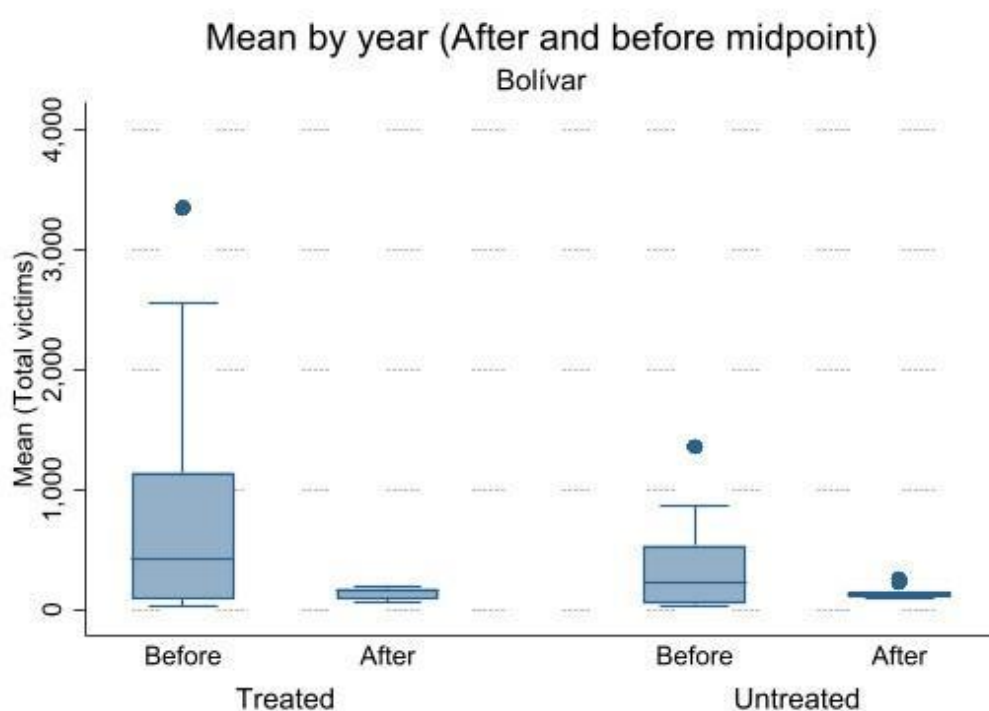
In the department of Antioquia, it is evident that the municipalities that were part of the treatment group presented a reduction in the average number of victims after treatment, corresponding to 592 victims, while in the control group, it decreased by 202 on average.

4.1.2 Bolívar

Bolívar has 46 municipalities and is the second department with the country's highest victimisation and forced displacement level. It was a zone of territorial disputes between guerrillas, moreover ELN (National Liberation Army) and paramilitary forces in the decade of '90s and the expansion of territorial control of paramilitary forces during the 2000s after their consolidation in Santander and Sucre (González et al., 2002; Misión de Observación Electoral-

Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris, 2007). It has significant interventions from the European Union in different municipalities, with various programs including Afropaz, Development, peace, and stability I and II and the Thematic component program (European Commission for Colombia, 2019). The following graphs show a reduction in victimisation after the midpoint of the interventions in this administrative region compared with interventions before the midpoint (Figure 9).

Figure 9 *Victims before and after aid intervention in Bolívar*



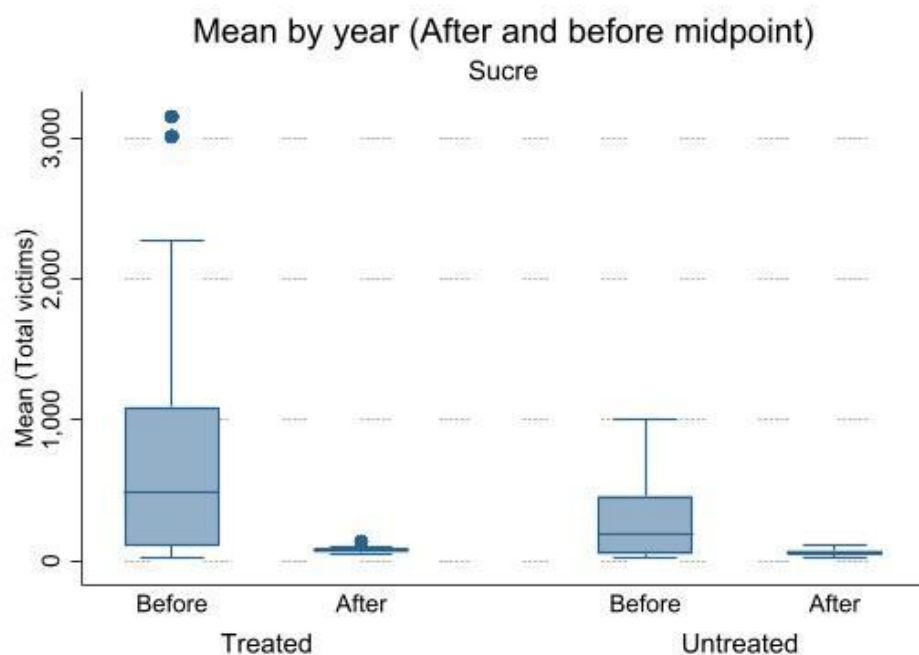
Own Elaboration based on UARIV-RUV and EU Reports

In the department of Bolívar, it is evident that, in general terms, the total number of victims was reduced. The municipalities that were part of the treatment group showed a reduction of 634 victims on the annual average after treatment, in contrast to the control group, which showed a decrease of 196 victims.

4.1.3 Sucre

Sucre is an administrative region located in the coastal zone, close to Bolívar. They share several European Union programs interventions such as Afropaz, Development, peace and stability I and II and the Thematic component program. Sucre had high levels of victimisation, with 276.100 persons displaced and 358.972 declared victims (UARIV, 2019). It was a territory of disputes between guerrillas and paramilitary forces, like Bolívar, where the pic of victimisation is registered during this decade when paramilitary forces took control of the region through massacres and forced displacement. The graph below shows that the effect of the interventions from the European Union in this region positively impacted victimisation as long as it was significantly reduced after the midpoint of the interventions.

Figure 10 *Victims before and after aid intervention in Sucre*

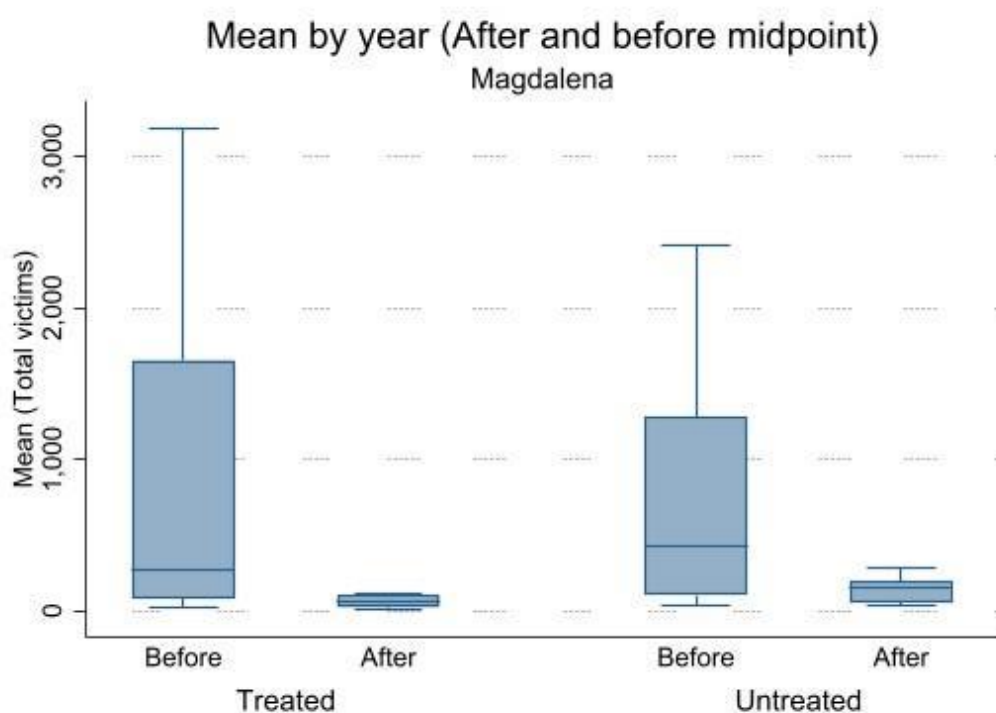


Note. Own Elaboration based on RUV-UARIV and EU Reports

In the intervened municipalities of the department of Sucre, the annual average of victims was reduced by 706, while in the municipalities of the control group, the average number of victims was reduced by 196.

4.1.4 Magdalena

Figure 11 *Victims before and after aid intervention in Magdalena*



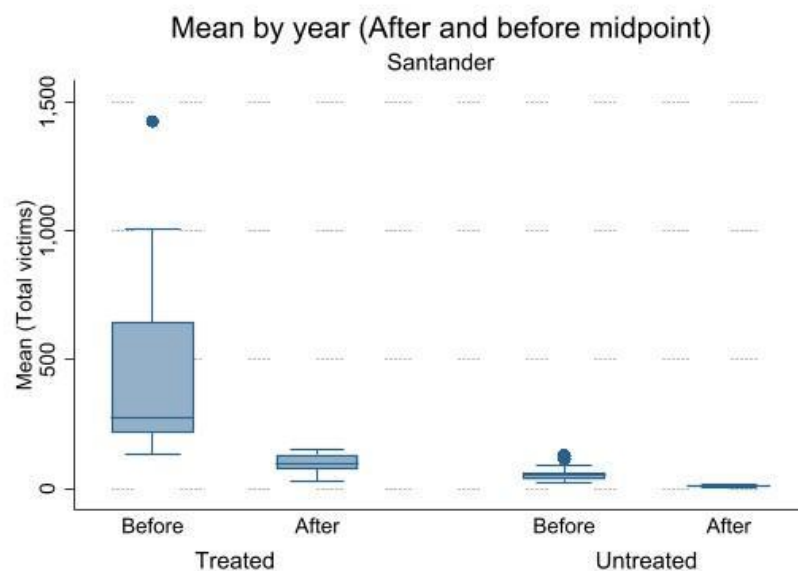
Note. Own Elaboration based on RUV-UARIV and EU Reports

In general terms, in the municipalities of Magdalena, there is evidence of a decrease in the average number of victims in the treatment and control groups, corresponding to 802 and 580 victims, respectively.

4.1.5 Santander

Interventions from the European Union started in this administrative region. The first Peace Laboratory took place in this region. It is the most intervened region overtime during the period analysed. Santander has 87 municipalities. It was a geostrategic zone during the armed conflict where the presence of several armed groups such as FARC, ELN, EPL and paramilitary forces fought for the control of the territory and resources. Santander is a relevant region as long as the presence of several civil society peace grassroots organisations are present and the European Union supports them³. It is evident that the European Union interventions positively impacted conflict intensity in this region, where the victimisation level was reduced significantly, and organisations from civil society were empowered to defend their neutral position towards armed actors, resulting in a protection mechanism (Kaplan, 2013).

Figure 12 *Victims before and after aid intervention in Santander*



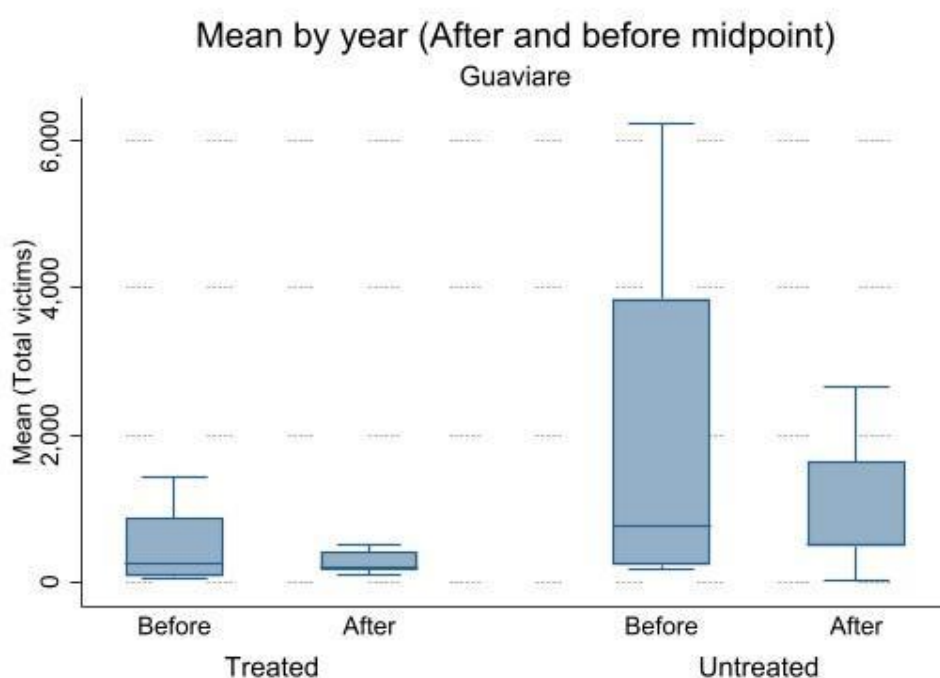
³ There are several organisations such as: *Asociación de Trabajadores Campesinos del Carare ATCC* (Amaya-Panche, 2012; Bernardelli Velásquez, 2014; Kaplan, 2013; Sanz de Santamaria, 1998; Valenzuela, 2001, 2009), *Diócesis de Barrancabermeja-Pastoral Social*, *Asociación de Campesinos del Valle del Río Cimitarra* and other local organisations that complete 15 and was intervened in the first Peace Laboratory by the European Union (Agencia Presidencial para la Prosperidad Social, 2019).

Note. Own Elaboration based on UARIV-RUV and EU Reports

In the department of Santander, Figure 12, the annual average of victims was reduced by 344, while in the municipalities of the control group, the average number of victims was reduced by 46.

4.1.6 Guaviare

Figure 13 *Interventions before and after the midpoint in Guaviare*

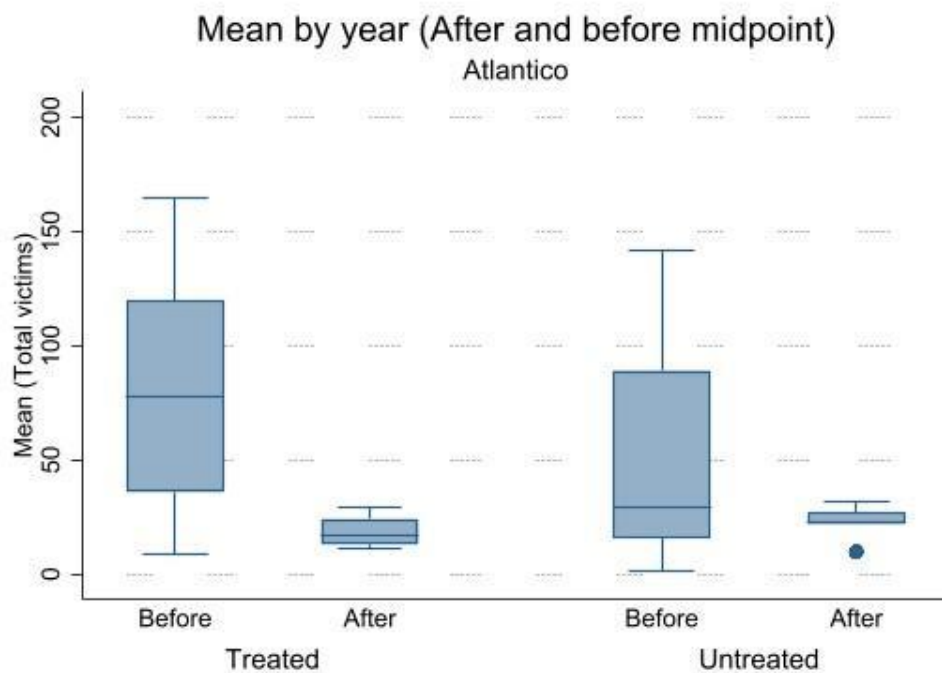


Note. Own Elaboration based on UARIV-RUV and EU Reports

For the department of Guaviare, there was a decrease in the average number of victims in both groups (treatment and control), corresponding to 220 victims for the untreated municipalities and 867 for the treated ones.

4.1.7 Atlantico

Figure 14 *Interventions before and after the midpoint in Atlantico*



Note. Own Elaboration based on UARIV-RUV and EU Reports

In the administrative unit of Atlantico, it is evident that the total number of victims in the municipalities that make up the treatment group decreased by an average of 61 victims, while the control group presented an increase of 32 victims.

The overall regional analysis shows that municipalities in the administrative units that had interventions from the EU around the country showed lower levels of victimisation, whereas the control group or the municipalities where the EU did not intervene within those administrative units had higher levels of victimisation. Regarding the previous evidence, it is possible to say that a reduction in victimisation levels increased the likelihood of victims' mobilisation since safer conditions are perceived in their territories. When victims feel safer and protected by the presence and interventions from the EU, they are more capable and

empowered to mobilise and channel their demands for reconciliation as well as to (r) establish a relationship with their former antagonist.

5. Conclusions

This paper showed that although some literature related to the effect of foreign aid in post-conflict societies tends to be negative in terms of development, this study demonstrated that the impact of aid from the European Union related to reconciliation and peacebuilding in Colombia created appropriate conditions for reconciliation. More specifically, victimisation, used as a proxy for lack of conditions for reconciliation, decreased significantly in municipalities where those interventions took place. Also, it is visible that regions with the highest levels of violence had an essential reduction in victimisation after the midpoint of the interventions after aid arrived. Therefore, it led to the creation of conditions for reconciliation because victims felt safer for (r) establishing contact with their former perpetrators since the violence decreased after the aid agency arrived.

The study has some limitations since it is focused on one country at the subnational level. Therefore, the model could be applied to other countries. Similarly, future research could disaggregate victimisation to observe how homicides are affected or even how the dynamics of forced displacement are affected. Regarding the methodology, future work could use multivariate regressions or experiments to explore the hypothesis further. Finally, future research can contribute to answering research questions on the effects of victimisation on conditions for reconciliation.

It would be interesting to observe the distribution of the victimisation pattern across other variables like gender, ethnic group, and disability. Also, the effects of operators' counterparts mean civil society organisations over conflict intensity. This analysis shows different features and dynamics of conflicts across several regions, so it is relevant to

understand how different types of conflicts require different types of conditions for reconciliation. Consequently, for the following and second chapters of this dissertation, I will analyse this relation to clarify that foreign aid agencies should keep in mind those differences to improve the effectiveness of their interventions over the creation of conditions for reconciliation.

CHAPTER 3. VIOLENT REPERTOIRES, LEGACIES OF VICTIM'S MOBILISATION FOR RECONCILIATION: EVIDENCE FROM COLOMBIA

1. Introduction

A large body of academic studies documents the variation in armed conflicts and suggests typologies of conflicts. However, there has been much less attention to how different types of conflicts can result in different challenges and prospects for creating conditions for reconciliation at the subnational level and, even more relevant, how this relationship can help to understand solutions to address the challenges for creating conditions for reconciliation at the local level in post-conflict countries. The main question that motivates this article is: how local variation in violent repertoires in armed conflicts affects the dynamics of victims' mobilisation and shapes demands and challenges for creating conditions for reconciliation.

I approach this question by identifying the general relationships, specifying the precise nature of the relevant causal mechanisms, and conceptualising the independent and dependent variables. Second, I consider the current debate about the type of armed conflicts and their relationship with different repertoires, followed by an analysis of the concept of collective action in places where an armed conflict has been placed. The aim is to understand the effect of the ability to mobilise to channel demands for creating conditions for reconciliation in conflict and post-conflict societies. Here it is necessary to remember that several local reconciliation experiences and organisations were created before the final peace agreement in

post-conflict countries like Colombia (Amaya-Panche & Idrobo, 2018; Arjona et al., 2015; Kaplan, 2013; Valenzuela, 2009).

I will analyse the data about armed actors' repertoires and whether they targeted civilians or official targets (Polo & Gleditsch, 2016) in Colombia to understand the effect of these strategies on different local dynamics of victim mobilisation at the municipal level. I use official data from the Colombian Government National Centre of Historical Memory (CNMH) about the presence of victim organisations and victim's defenders' organisations created or reinforced during the period analysed from 1993-2017. This paper suggests that attacks against soft targets are robustly associated with an increased likelihood of the foundation of victims' mobilisation.

2. Theory: violent repertoires and victims' mobilisation

Different types of conflicts affect different levels of victims' mobilisation in conflict areas in several ways (Fearon et al., 2009). On the one hand, in armed conflicts, armed actors sometimes allowed or promoted previous collective mobilisation; they encouraged new expressions of local or victim organisations. On the other hand, other types of actors and repertoires prohibited and even eliminated previous or existing forms of victim mobilisation at the local level or even the presence of civil society organizations (González et al., 2002; Gutiérrez-Sanín, 2008; Montañez, et al., 2010).

This research hypothesis is that social cohesion among civilians increases when specific armed groups develop more harmful repertoires, namely when they target civilians. As a result, their capacity to mobilise and build organisations increases, while victims are less likely to mobilise when armed actors target more official objectives. Consequently, despite the targeted victims, they develop pacific strategies to mobilise, channel their voices and better communicate their grievances and reconciliation demands toward governmental institutions at

the local level (Mac Ginty & Firchow, 2016). Social cohesion increases when armed actors target civilians since they develop collective strategies to protect themselves from violence by creating civil, peaceful organisations that declare neutrality toward the state and non-state armed actors (Arjona, 2016; Kaplan, 2013; Mouly et al., 2016). Consequently, they are also more robust to (r) establishing relations with their former antagonists, meaning there are better conditions for building conditions for reconciliation when civilians feel more cohesive in interacting with their former antagonists.

Armed actors could choose civilian or official targets based on ideological and strategical reasons. Firstly, those ideological reasons are related to armed groups' principles. In this way, rebels tend to choose official or hard targets that support their ideological principles related to the fight against capitalism, bourgeoisie or elites. They expect that the following coherence with their principles, they can gain civilian support. In contrast, paramilitary forces mainly focus on fighting against rebels and their support, working together with regular state armed forces. They tend to target more civilians than official targets expecting that they can gain control over territories and populations, inspiring fear through admonitory punishments. However, there are also strategic reasons that can modify military tactics as well and modify these initial ideological assumptions; they are related to strategies and resistance that the enemy performs during the armed confrontations (Moreno Leon, 2012), following the pattern and its respective learnings, if it is successful for the enemy, the counterpart tries to copy their strategy to take control of the territory and population, especially in disputed areas over specific periods (González et al., 2002; Sanín, 2008).

It means armed actors' repertoires affect the victim's mobilisation for creating conditions for reconciliation in conflict areas and could adapt beyond ideological reasons, following strategic and military repertoires. This dynamic is reflected in the ability to build victims' organisations through and beyond the conflict period. I suggest that repertoires change from

guerrillas to paramilitary forces, affecting how victims respond to violence from armed actors. The ability to build organisations indicates that the victims' institutional capacity can be a reaction from civilians against violent repertoires. Then the mobilisation configuration is a response from civilians when they are affected by violence from armed actors in different ways to perform and maintain a non-violent repertoire.

2.1 Violent repertoires classification

There are different approaches to classifying types of armed conflicts and understanding how state and non-state actors perform during armed conflicts. These strategies change over time regarding several factors, such as the conflict's duration, the presence, and the amount of other armed actors in the same territory, the military strategies of the counterpart and the type of relations that armed actors develop with civilians to get support from them or to control them. These factors are some domestic elements that configure/shape the strategy of armed actors, among others. Kalyvas highlights the logic and rationality behind the violent dynamics against civilians in civil wars (Kalyvas, 2006; Kalyvas & Balcells, 2010).

Polo and Gleditsch (2016) examine the strategic rationale for terrorist tactics in civil war identifying how the frequency of attacks and the type of target the rebels select is valid or not to coerce governments into asymmetric conflicts and civil wars. They develop a typology that classifies targets into soft and hard targets. Soft targets are "organisations and individuals with no official role in the state apparatus", and hard targets are associated with "government and underpinning state control, including police and core infrastructure" (Polo & Gleditsch, 2016, p. 824). They conclude that terrorism is a tactic that follows a political logic in civil wars, that is chosen by rebels when they want to improve "their effectiveness relative to conventional

war-fare, lower the costs of fighting for the rebels, and increase the costs imposed on the government” (Polo & Gleditsch, 2016, p. 827).

Both approximations follow as a criterion the strategy that armed actors developed to establish their typologies, which means that the type of conflict can be defined concerning the strategy that armed actors use, as well as the outcomes from the combined strategies used by the state and non-state actors. These strategies can be linked with *violent repertoires* as an expression of collective violent action that armed actors perform in armed conflicts (Sanín, 2008). The violent repertoire is defined as “coercive demonstrations of the armed actors; those actions have the purpose of gaining sovereignty” (Moreno Leon, 2012, p. 81) and where those actors use these repertoires strategically evaluating “the frequency and diversity they have to use in each territory to defeat the enemy’s resistance. On the other, the armed actors take into account the place where they are: if the territory has a high confluence of the military agent (centre) or not (periphery)” (Moreno Leon, 2012, p. 86). Then violent repertoires are expressions of collective armed action from actors that quest for sovereignty in certain territories in dispute, in this case, rebels and paramilitary forces.

On the other hand, the civilians’ mobilisation during and after the war has been approached from different perspectives. Schedler (2015) shows that organised violence makes it structurally tricky for passive bystanders to become supportive actors. It paralyses solidarity (Schedler, 2015). Some research on criminal victimisation and the relation between victims and criminal actors suggests that victims exercise an agency to resist the power of criminal actors (Moncada, 2020). Also, as Bateson highlights, criminal victimisation and exposure to violence in civil wars can result in political increased political participation, and victimisation extends this effect to peacetime (Bateson, 2012). On the other hand, the literature on work on civilian targeting in civil wars.

Other literature examines the benefits and disadvantages of targeting civilians for armed groups. For instance, Fortna evaluates how using terrorism as a tactic in civil wars decreases the achievement of larger political objectives from terrorist groups (Fortna, 2015), while other authors like Tomas demonstrated that “rebel groups are both more likely to be granted the opportunity to participate in negotiations and offered more concessions when they execute a greater number of terror attacks during civil wars” (Thomas, 2014, p. 804) finding that armed groups have incentives to spread violence against civilians. Similarly, Stanton finds that rebel groups tend to use violence to gain concessions from democratic governments in response to violence.

Groups with more civilian constituencies tend to choose fewer civilian targets to reduce public backlash (Stanton, 2013). Likewise, Wood and Kathman showed that rebel groups were more likely to engage in a settlement when they used a moderate level of civilian killing (Wood & Kathman, 2014). Following this line, Balcells explores the relationship between armed groups and civilians, explaining the dynamics of direct and indirect violence. The armed actors found support from civilians when performing direct violence associated with pre-support war (Balcells, 2011). Wood demonstrates that when rebels rely on local support, violence decreases as groups’ capabilities increase. At the same time, it is more likely to find more significant levels of violence when rebels rely on another type of support (Wood, 2014).

The existing literature shows that not enough work looks at what explains the mobilisation of victims during and after the conflict and its relationship with armed actors’ repertoires. I will contribute to providing evidence to this discussion by analysing the relation between violent repertoires and victim mobilisation. I will follow the typology developed by Polo and Gleditsch, approaching the type of repertoire that armed actors used between 1993 and 2017 in Colombia, including guerrillas and paramilitary forces in Colombia, to examine

the effect of those repertoires on victims' mobilisation capacity for creating conditions for reconciliation. The former is understood as a non-violent repertoire that civilians build in response to violent repertoires from armed actors to channel their demands for creating conditions for reconciliation between governmental institutions and former perpetrators. The following section explores the violent repertoires classification.

I classified the armed actors' repertoire into two categories creating two categories: hard targets and soft targets regarding the repertoires used by armed actors and applied the typology established by Polo & Gleditsch, using the events reported in the panel on violence and conflict from the Centre for the Studies of Economic Development of the University of the Andes - CEDE:

Table 3 *Hard targets and soft targets classification*

Soft targets	Hard targets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attacks against the civilian population • Incursions • Incursions into towns • Kidnap of civilians • Illegal seals: temporarily allocated to control the transit of people • False seals: non-state actors pretended to be a legal seal to control people's transit • Assaults on private property by • Collective homicides • Land piracy • Roadblocks: Intentionally stopping a land route's flow for an extended period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incendiary terrorist acts • Explosive terrorist acts • Explosive terrorist acts • Political kidnap • Kidnap of armed forces members • Armed harassment • Ambushes • Attacks on police stations • Political attacks • Air strikes • Political homicides • Armed forces' casualties • Members of the armed forces injured • Attacks on police stations by FARC, ELN and AUC • Attacks on facilities or entities by FARC and ELN

Note. Own Elaboration based on CEDE's Panel on Violence and Conflict

2.2 Victim's mobilisation in armed conflicts and non-violent repertoires

The problem of collective action has been faced from several perspectives in the literature on this topic. After examining Harding and Olson's models, Ostrom highlights the relevance of the self-understanding of the actor's roles and their conceptions about acceptable behaviour in a particular context to build cooperative solutions. Likewise, the role of governmental authority can underpin or devastate collective action (Grant, 2004; Ostrom, 1990). In the context of armed conflict, the problem of collective action requires a specific analysis regarding the role of civilians in this context.

On the other hand, the responses from civilians in armed conflicts as a reaction to the violence from armed actors can vary in several ways depending on the conflict and specific local features. However, in general terms, civilians can cooperate or resist violence from armed actors. From a historical point of view, the studies about non-violent resistance from civilians started more than a century ago and have been focused on examining how civilians resist a pacific way to violent, repressive powers from different sources: colonial powers, dictatorships, tyrannies, human rights violations by state actors in foreign countries among others (Roberts & Garton, 2009). The literature about the resistance of non-state actors in civil wars and armed conflicts is a type of contemporary research on this discussion that analyses how civilians resist violent orders established by rebel or non-state actors.

Concerning the relations between collective action and the responses of civilians in armed conflicts, many scholars have approached the matter of collective action in the context of conflict or war. They have shown how war can foster cooperation and how people exposed to war violence tend to behave more cooperatively after the war. Their social participation tends to increase by joining more local social and civic groups or taking on more leadership roles in their community that allow the development of altruism and collective identity, even

many years after the war (Bauer et al., 2016, p. 250). The capacity to react collectively is crucial to facing armed actors' violence and determines how civilians react to their armed interventions.

On this line, other studies explore how households directly experienced more intense war violence are more likely to attend community meetings, join local political and community groups, and vote in Sierra Leone (Bellows & Miguel, 2009, p.1). Blattman conducted a study in Uganda where he demonstrated, using qualitative evidence, that violence may lead to personal growth and political activation, a possibility supported by psychological research on the positive effects of traumatic events (Blattman, 2009). Following Bauer's research, cooperation seems to predict an evolutionary reaction to external threats like war and violence, an assumption that is well supported in evolutionary theories. Specifically, this author found that "greater exposure to war created a lasting increase in people's egalitarian motivations toward their in-group, but not their out-groups (Bauer et al., 2014).

In this way, the responses from civilians towards armed actors in armed conflicts are different and vary depending on the type of conflict and armed actors' repertoires and strategies. Some scholars have demonstrated that civilians can develop formal and informal institutions to protect themselves from armed actors (Kaplan, 2013) and to resist the effects of conflict through collective action, building partial or total resistance against armed actors that results in an "allocracy" (Arjona et al., 2015; Arjona, 2016), or even build and re-built relations with former perpetrators to reconcile with them (Casas et al., 2020; Oidor et al., 2019).

Both quantitative and qualitative evidence supports this causal relation showing that mobilisation is more likely when armed actors attack soft targets rather than hard targets. I analysed data on repertoires of non-state violent actors, specifically guerrillas: National Liberation Army - ELN and Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia- FARC, and

paramilitary forces, and I conducted interviews with researchers from the National Center of Historical Memory, ex-combatants, and victims. The consolidation of victim mobilisation occurred after the demobilisation process of paramilitary forces groups in 2006, mainly during that year and 2007, which means that victims mobilised more during the demobilisation period.

In contrast, the qualitative evidence shows that guerrillas attacked official objectives (challenging targets), and their victims created organisations mainly after peace talks and the final peace agreement in 2016 (Interview 1). Victims' mobilisation is an expression of collective action that attempts to claim their rights to integral reparation (Uprimny & Saffon, 2005) and channel their demands after peace talks, peace agreements and the post-conflict period for creating conditions for reconciliation. Therefore, victims' mobilisation capacity creates better conditions for reconciliation as they feel more empowered and safer talking with their former opponents.

In this section, I argued that the ability to develop a victim's organisational capacity is crucial in how civilians face violence from armed actors. Therefore, the hypothesis is:

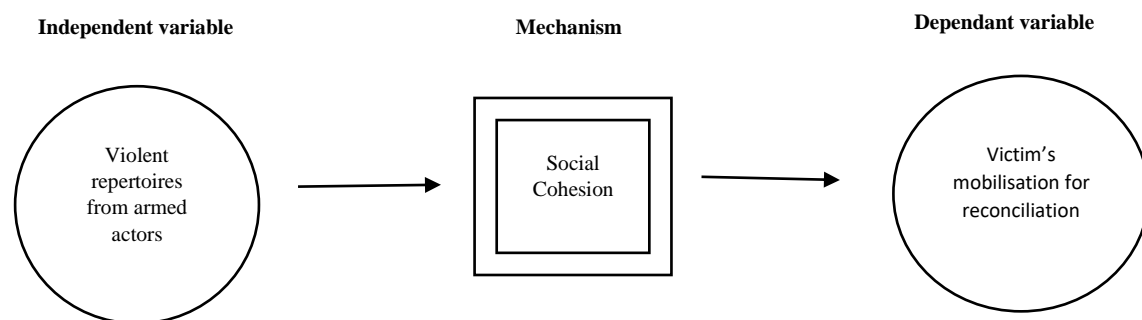
H1: Attacks from armed actors on soft targets increase the likelihood of victims' mobilisation more than attacks on hard targets.

3. Research Design

Figure 15 shows the relationship between the independent variable, the violent repertoire, with the causal mechanism, social cohesion, and the independent variable, the victim's capacity to mobilise to create reconciliation conditions. The violent repertoires of armed actors against civilian victims increase social cohesion more than when armed actors target official objectives or hard targets. As a result, the capacity of victims to mobilise to create conditions for

reconciliation tends to be higher when armed actors target soft targets rather than official targets.

Figure 15 *Variables and Mechanism*



As an example of this dynamic, qualitative evidence collected through semi-structured interviews with the indigenous community Nasa in Toribio Cauca verified that police stations and army installations are usually located in the town centres. They declared themselves neutral towards the violence of armed actors. They asked them to fight outside the town, strengthening their collective strategies to negotiate with armed actors to reinforce their organisation. In one interview, a leader woman said: “We here, the indigenous community, never accept or have never wanted, for example, to the Police, the Army, the guerrillas, no armed group it is welcome” (Interview 1, woman, 30 years old, pedagogical coordinator of the Life Plan). This example shows that when armed actors targeted soft targets, civilians were more likely to suffer the consequences of the clashes and mobilised to protect themselves and demand armed actors abandon their territories.

Although victims also mobilised when armed actors targeted hard targets, the likelihood of mobilisation is higher when armed actors choose soft targets. Some examples showed that

when armed actors attacked civilians directly as targets, they tended to protect themselves by creating organisations. Initially, massive, forced displacement occurred, as in the community Wayuu in Riohacha, known as the massacre of Bahia Portete, a milestone of the indigenous forced displacement in Colombia. After a massacre conducted by paramilitary forces, the community was frightened; therefore, their members abandoned their community's territory (CNMH, 2010). However, in the aftermath of forced displacement, they continue reinforcing their communitarian traditions and organise to demand recognition and reparation from the government. Despite the intentions of paramilitary groups and threats, they upheld their collective action from the cities, reinforcing their social cohesion.

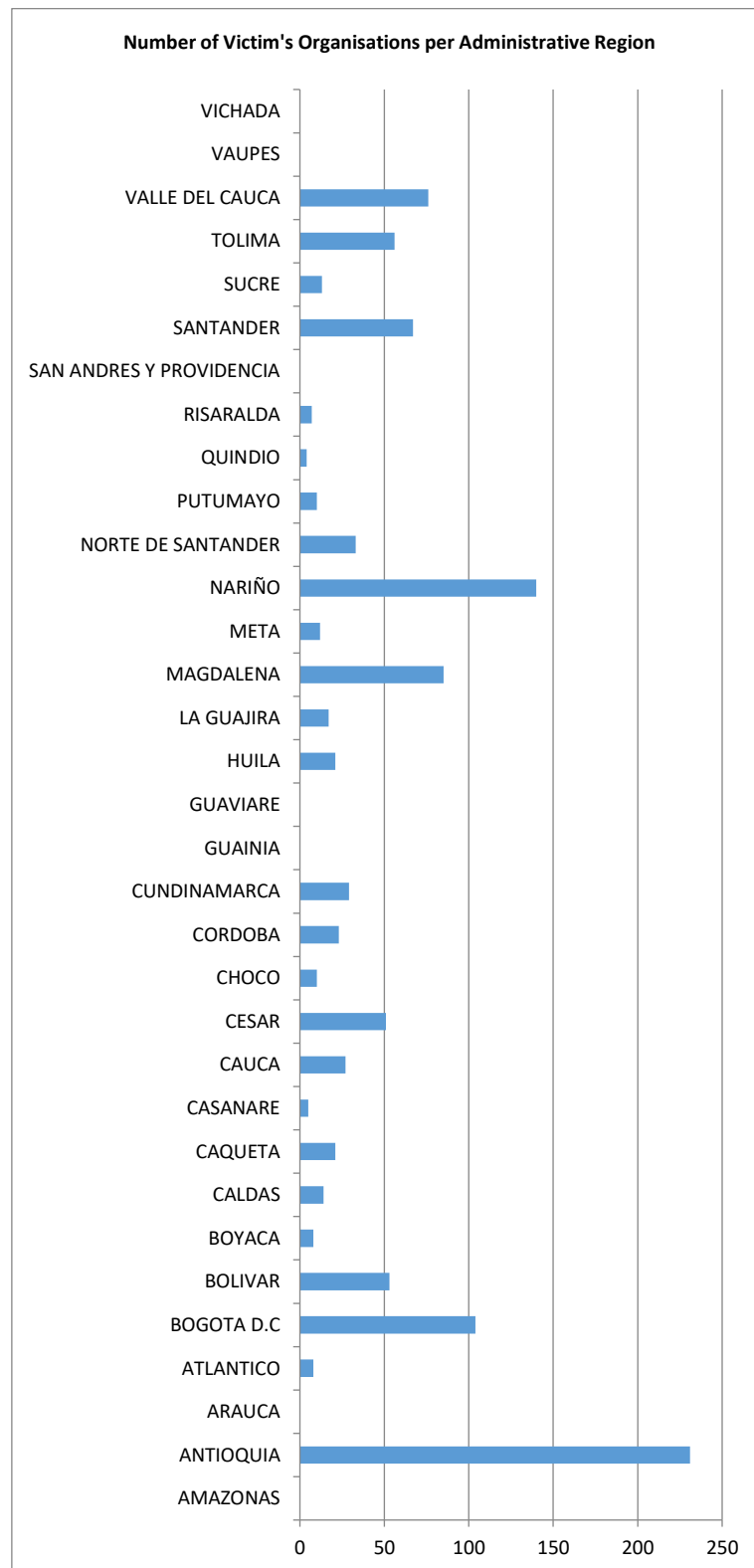
A similar situation occurred in Chinul and Chinulito, where the whole town where the whole population was displaced after massive violence conducted by paramilitary forces and the army. At least 42 towns were abandoned due to the violence of the armed actors against civilians, including guerrillas, paramilitary forces and the army (El Tiempo, 2001, September 30). However, despite many forced displacements in Colombia, many victims of forced displacement organisations were created to raise their voices and channel their demands to the government and international organisations. In some cases, civilians remained or returned to their territories, creating civil society organisations and peace communities to protect themselves from the violence of armed actors. Consequently, the likelihood of mobilisation increased when the armed actors targeted civilians. In contrast, the likelihood of mobilisation was lower when armed actors targeted official targets.

3.1 Data Selection

To develop the analysis of the former dynamics, I used data on armed repertoires from non-state actors, such as guerrilla groups and paramilitary forces, victims' organisations, and human rights defenders, because they support and protect victims from violence from the panel on

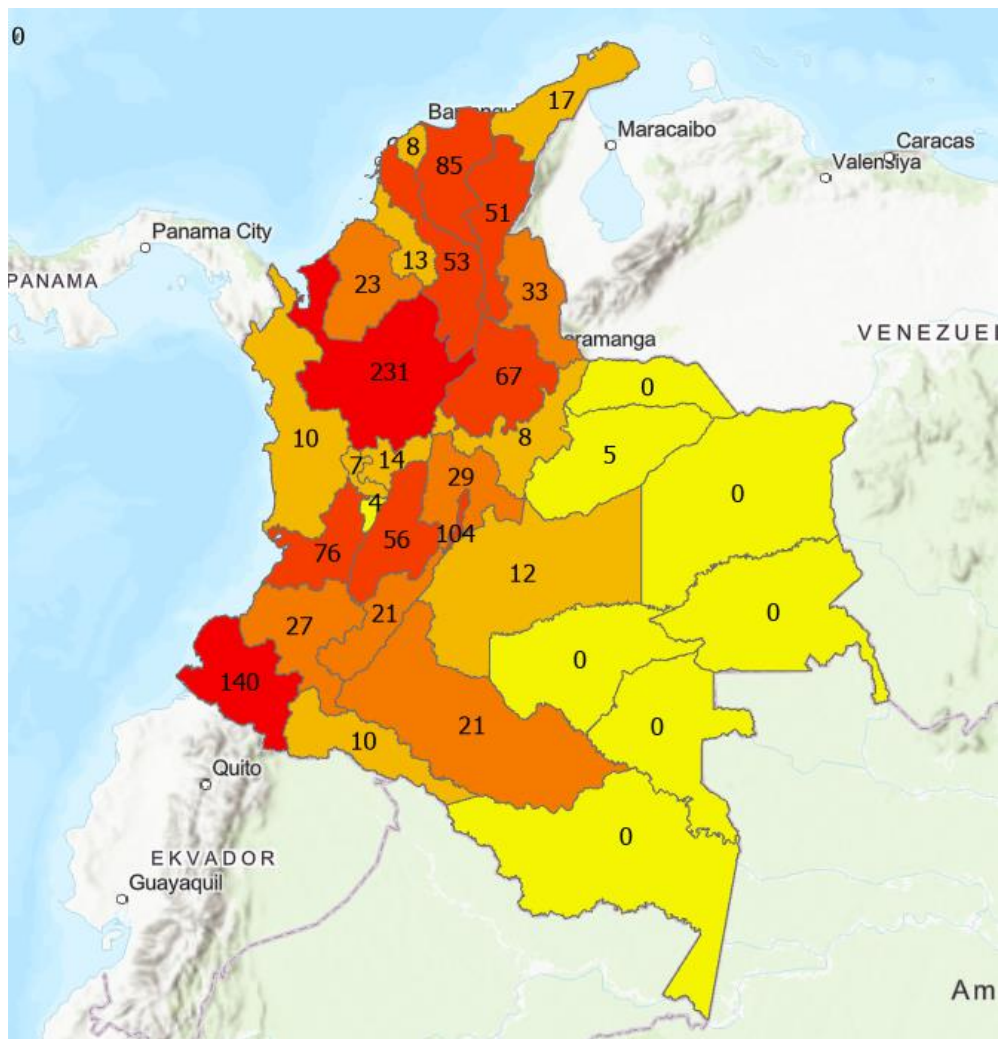
violence and conflict from CEDE-Andes University. I classify the data on conflict dynamics of armed actors in Colombia regarding the general category established in the previous research distinguishing between soft and hard targets (Polo & Gleditsch, 2016). I also classify the type of violent repertoires from armed groups: guerrillas, and paramilitary forces based on the violence and conflict panel dataset from 1993 to 2017. Parallely, I use the information on victim's organisations as a proxy for victims' mobilisation for creating conditions for reconciliation; that data includes the number of victim's organisations and human rights organisations, following governmental figures collected through the CNMH. I collected data from that governmental organisation that registered about 1.224 victims and human rights organisations in Colombia from 1959 to 2017 as per the following figures:

Figure 16 *Number of Victim's Organisations per Administrative Region in Colombia*



Note. Source: Own Elaboration based on CNMH da

Figure 17 *Map of Victims Organisations per Administrative Unit in Colombia*



Note. Source: Own Elaboration based on CNMH data

Figure 17 shows that victims' organisations are concentrated in urban areas, mainly in the administrative units for Antioquia, Nariño, Bogotá, Magdalena y Valle del Cauca, and their principal cities: Medellín, Pasto, Cali, and Santa Marta. For this reason, I control by population per municipality to understand if population dynamics affected the presence of victims' organisations or not.

After creating soft and hard targets as independent variables, I created the dependent dummy variable: victim's organisations, which shows the presence of victims' organisations per municipality using data from the National Centre of Historical Memory (CNMH) I

collected. I included both the dummy and the count of the dependent variable using a logit regression and OLS, respectively, to compare the results. Since there is a significant number of missing data on the number of organisations per municipality, the count does not provide meaningful information on the dynamics of victims' organisation's creation. I built a fine-grained data set, adding population per municipality as a control variable. I controlled by the population data, following National Department of Statistics (DANE) figures, because I wanted to know that the number of people per municipality did not affect the emergency of victim organisations.

4. Discussion and Results

I used strategies to approach the data and analyse the relations between armed actors' repertoires and the likelihood of victims' mobilisation, using victims' organisations as a proxy for this variable. The first strategy, the logistic model regression, shows the following results in 5 models:

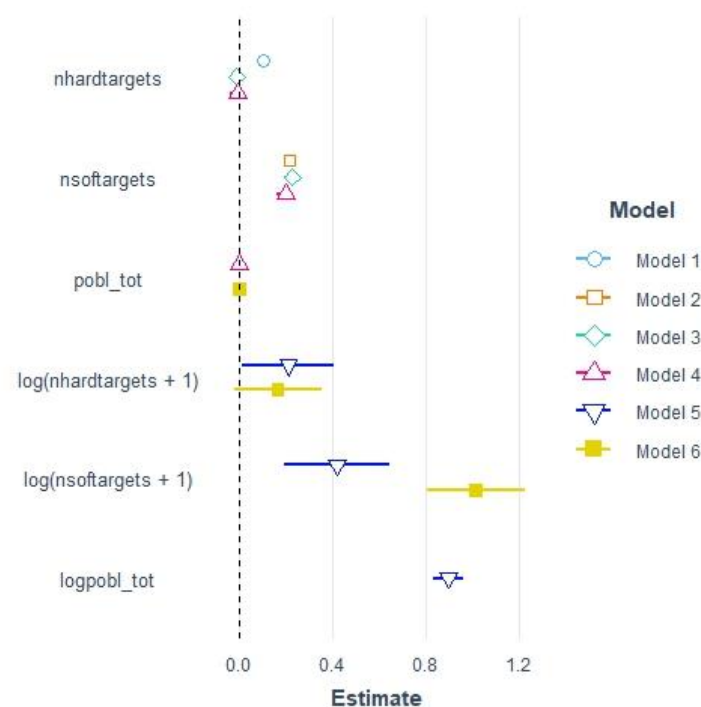
Table 4 *Model estimation results- Logistic Regression*

	Victims' Organisations					
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
(Intercept)	-4.12 *** (0.05)	-4.27 *** (0.05)	-4.26 *** (0.05)	-4.38 *** (0.05)	-13.59 *** (0.35)	-4.90 *** (0.07)
Hard targets	0.10 *** (0.01)		-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)		
Soft targets		0.21 *** (0.01)	0.23 *** (0.02)	0.20 *** (0.02)		
Total population				0.00 *** (0.00)		0.00 *** (0.00)
Hard targets log (+1)					0.21 * (0.10)	0.17 (0.09)
Soft targets log (+1)					0.42 *** (0.12)	1.01 *** (0.11)
Total population (log)					0.90 *** (0.03)	
N	29172	29172	29172	28050	27715	28050
AIC	5389.88	5208.90	5210.13	4771.18	4129.09	4636.63
BIC	5406.45	5225.46	5234.98	4804.14	4162.01	4669.60
Pseudo R2	0.03	0.06	0.06	0.13	0.25	0.15

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.

I use model 5 to explain my hypothesis because it fits better than the other models. When armed actors, including different guerrillas and paramilitary forces, target harder targets than soft ones, the ability to create victim organisations increases in both cases. However, it is lower when official targets are attacked than when civilians are targeted. The following Figure corroborates the model selection:

Figure 18 Estimators of models 1-6 - Logistic Regression



As per Figure 18, the best model is model 5 because this model has the lowest values for the AIC and BIC criteria and has the best goodness of fit, with an R-squared of 25%. This model allows us to conclude the following: (1) As the number of soft targets increases, there is a higher probability of creating victim organisations, statistically significant with a p-value of less than 1% (2) The more significant the population, the more likely it is that victim organisations will be created, statistically significant with a p-value of less than 1% and (3) As the number of hard targets increases, the higher the probability of creating victims, statistically significant with a p-value of less than 5%.

The following box plots, Figures 19 and 20, show the correlations between the repertoire, soft or hard target attacks, and the creation of victim organisations.

Figure 19 *Soft targets by victim organizations created*

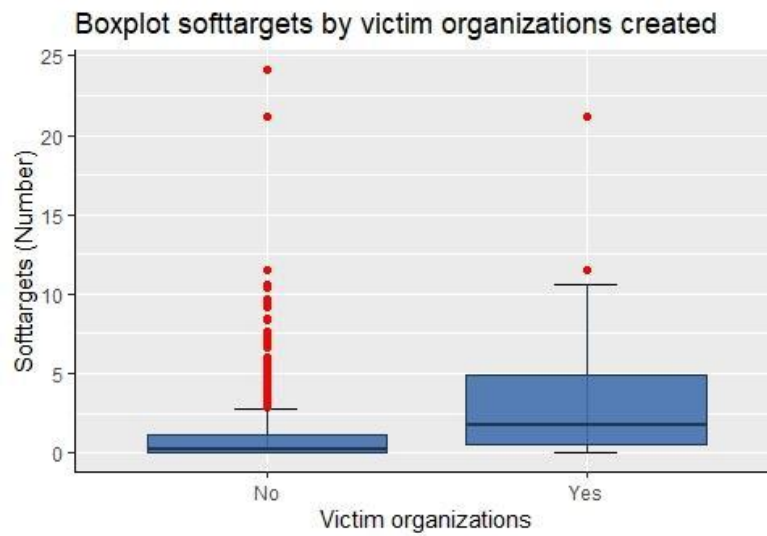
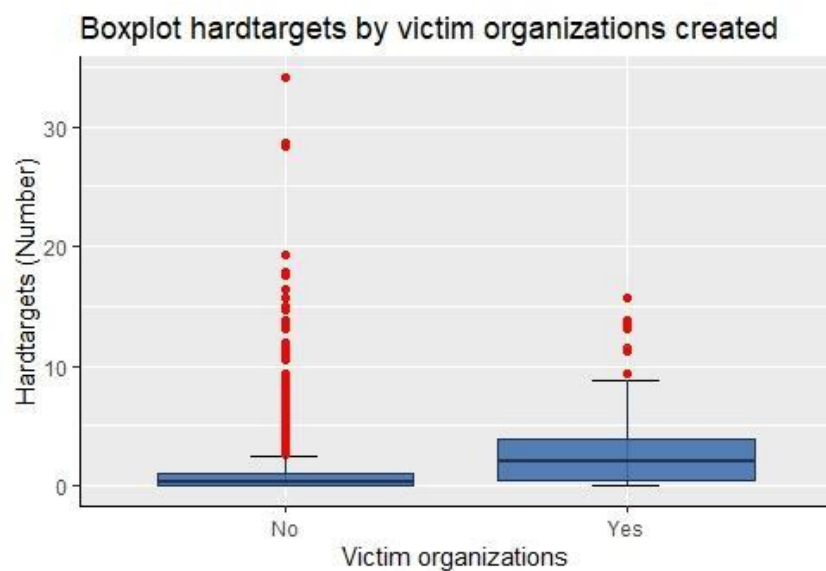


Figure 20 *Hard targets by victim organizations created*



The second regression model was OLS. It shows similar results and supports the initial claim of this study as follows:

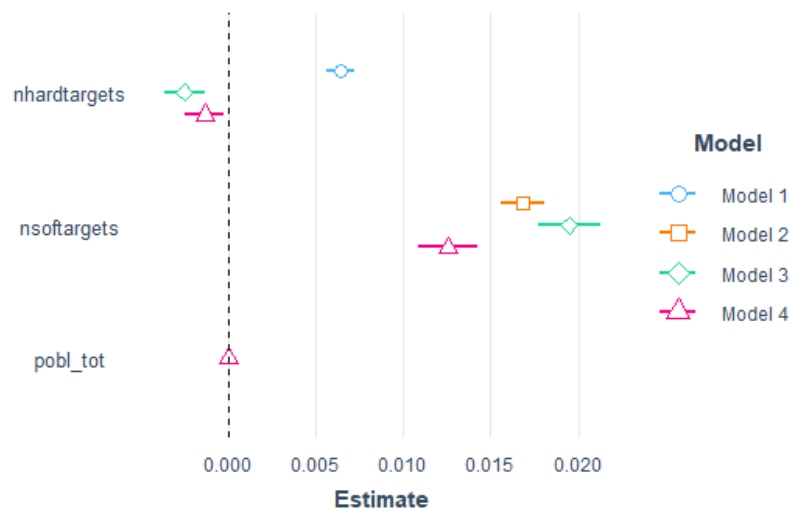
Table 5 *Model estimation results- OLS Regression*

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
(Intercept)	0.02 *** (0.00)	0.01 *** (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)	0.004 *** (0.001)
Hard targets	0.01 *** (0.00)		-0.002 *** (0.00)	-0.001 ** (0.001)
Soft targets		0.02 *** (0.00)	0.02 *** (0.00)	0.01 *** (0.00)
Population				0.0000 *** (0.00)
N	29172	29172	29172	28050
R2	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.12
Adjusted R2	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.12
ResidualStd. Error	0.20 (df = 29170)	0.20 (df = 29170)	0.20 (df = 29169)	0.19 (df = 28046)
F Statistic	232.29*** (df = 29170)	1;694.65*** (df = 29170)	1;356.61*** (df = 29169)	2;1,270.41*** (df = 28046)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01			

The estimated models' results suggest that victims' capacity to create organisations increases as a function of the number of armed actors in the territory, especially the soft targets (civilians). The OLS regression shows that the model with the best goodness of fit is model No. 4, with an R-squared of 12%, which is also the best specification according to the AIC and BIC selection criteria.

The results of model 4 suggest that when the number of soft targets increases by one person, the number of organisations created by victims increases by 2% (*ceteris paribus*), a statistically significant effect (p-value less than 0.1%). About the variables hard targets and population, it is evident that the effect is relatively close to 0%, with a statistical significance with a p-value of less than 5% and 1%, respectively.

Figure 21 *Estimators of models 1-4. OLS Regression*



The soft targets variable has a positive relationship with the number of victim organisations (Figure 21), which is corroborated by the coefficients of this variable for the three models that include it and which support the hypothesis of this research.

Figure 22 *Plot - soft targets by victim organizations*

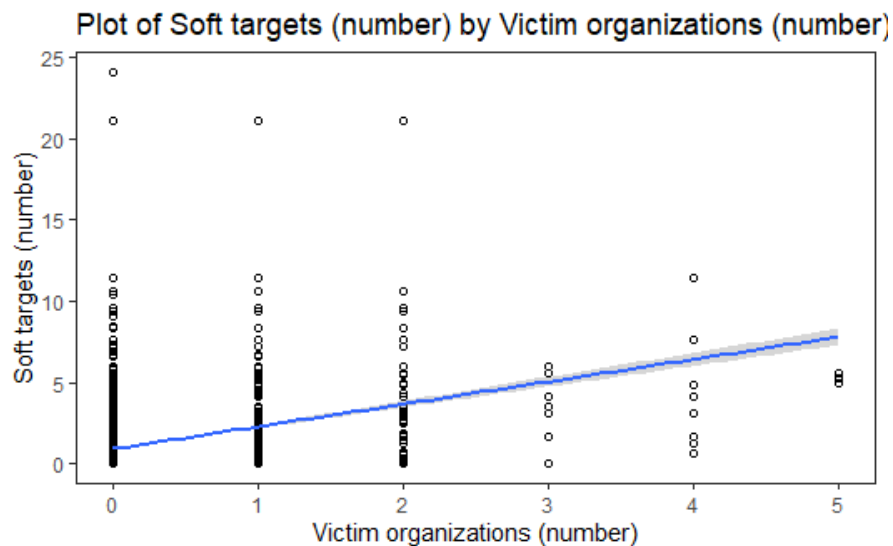


Figure 23 *Plot hard targets by victim organisations*

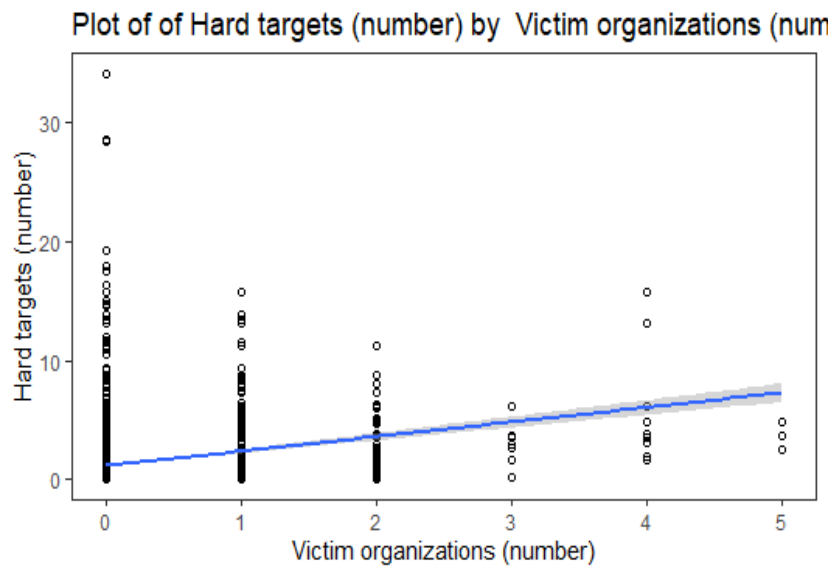
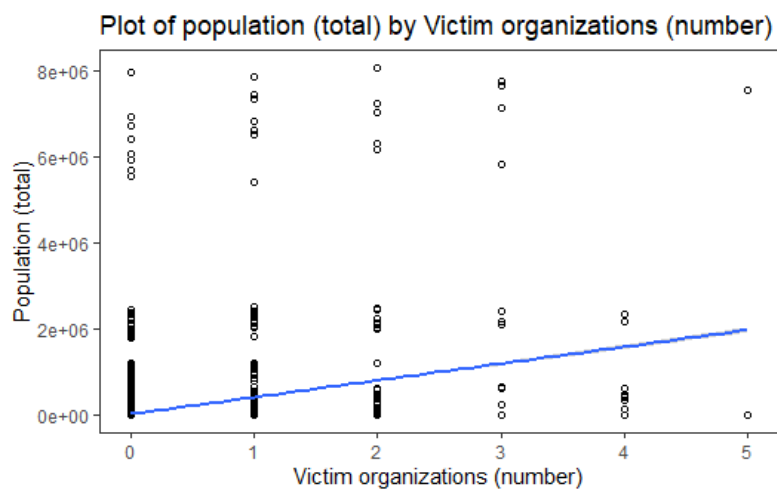


Figure 24 *Population by victim organisations*



Both regressions show that the main finding is that attacks on soft targets are the most robustly associated with the formation of victims' organizations. There is also one model where hard targets have a relationship with the dependent variable, models one (logit) and four (OLS), but the relation is weaker and not robust. The logistic regression shows more coherent and strong results on the correlation analysed.

5. Conclusions

To conclude, it is possible to say that attacks on soft targets are the most robustly associated with forming victims' organisations. There is also a correlation with hard targets, but it is weaker and not robust. The correlation between the type of repertoires and victim organisations is significant, verifying the initial claim of this section. When armed actors attacked softer targets, victims created more organisations than when armed actors attacked hard targets. The presence of victim organisations increased victims' capacity to mobilise and channel their reconciliation demands to governmental and international institutions by strengthening them to (re)establish their relations with their former perpetrators.

The fact that some armed state and non-state actors prefer to target soft targets intensively instead of hard targets is based on the rationale that those groups find more benefits when targeting civilians, as they intend to intimidate the population to control them. However, civilians developed collective action strategies to face the violence of the armed state and non-state actors that increased their social cohesion and resulted in the creation of organisations or the maintenance of those organisations to mobilise their demands for creating conditions for reconciliation. As victims feel stronger, they are more likely to resume contact with the former perpetrators to agree on strategies to coexist peacefully in the foreseeable future and proper conditions for integral reparation.

Therefore, the response from civilians is a collective non-violent repertoire that civilians build to protect from armed violence in the long run, despite the risks it implies. Although the risk can be costly, the benefits of creating and maintaining organisations represent more benefits since non-violent strategies to negotiate and approach the armed actors keep them safe and make them visible. Ultimately the collective action non-violent repertoire tends to be efficient when confronting armed violence against civilians. Although armed actors gain obedience or submission at the beginning, the exhaustion of civilians leads them to reinforce

their social fabric and increase their social cohesion to organise or strengthen their organisations. As they are organised, the likelihood of collective mobilisation to channel their demands for reconciliation increases.

Consequently, the analysis of armed actors' repertoires and civilian responses should be analysed following a tactic choice during the armed conflict rather than the actor-centred perspective, as Polo & Gleditsch (2016) suggested. The interaction between both repertoires and their rationalities can be explored better when focusing on the tactics since the armed actors adjust it following the strategic dynamics of the confrontation. Therefore, this study opens the door for future research questions and topics, such as the influence of different armed actors on the mobilisation process and the subsequent reconciliation process and questions about the participation and effectiveness of victims' mobilisation in creating conditions for reconciliation.

CHAPTER 4. BUILDING BRIDGES: FOREIGN AID BENEFICIARIES' SATISFACTION WITH BOTTOM-UP AND TOP-DOWN APPROACHES IN PEACEBUILDING

1. Introduction

There are two approaches to implementing foreign aid projects – bottom-up and top-down. To illustrate the difference, consider the example of building a bridge. A top-down-oriented aid agency might determine where the bridge is to be built using a technical criterion without consulting the opinions of affected communities. Such a criterion might be the speed at which goods and people can be transported from one place to another. To illustrate, a top-down-oriented aid agency might choose to build a bridge at a place where its existence maximises the speed of transportation of goods and persons between two places. Building a bridge in this way is helpful to the affected communities in a meaningful way, as an immediate need for improved transport of goods and persons.

A bottom-up approach proceeds differently. It takes as a point of departure the idea that effective and sustainable interventions are guided by the preferences and the participation of potential beneficiaries. Local communities are being consulted to consider various factors to determine a suitable place to construct a bridge. For example, it might be asked how the construction of a bridge can advance the objectives of the pre-existing community life plans. Further, local communities might prioritise the question of *who* is being connected by the bridge. For example, connecting communities divided by conflict can be essential to facilitate creating conditions for reconciliation. Building a bridge in this way is helpful because it considers facts considered to grasp from the 'outside'. As a result, the preferences of local communities are satisfied to a greater extent.

This example is not fictitious. It describes the experiences of the Association of Peasants and Workers of Carare (ATCC) in Colombia. Prior research illustrates a debate on whether top-down and bottom-up approaches result in higher levels of aid effectiveness. Interestingly, no attention has thus far been paid to the question of which approaches satisfy the preferences of affected communities and individual beneficiaries. This paper explores the advantages and disadvantages of both approaches. It provides qualitative evidence through semi-structured interviews to define which approach has a more significant impact on beneficiaries' satisfaction levels and provides a novel concept of satisfaction among foreign aid recipients.

This section is based on the following research question: what is the impact of foreign aid in creating conditions for reconciliation and peacebuilding on beneficiaries' satisfaction levels? The question is relevant to understanding how the intervention approach affects beneficiaries' perceptions of aid focused on peacebuilding and reconciliation. It helps to fulfil a gap in the literature about this relationship between foreign aid for peacebuilding and reconciliation implementation approach and beneficiaries' satisfaction. The former relationship is interesting as it can help improve how foreign aid agencies implement their approaches to increase beneficiaries' long-term satisfaction with their interventions.

The use of qualitative methodologies in this paper helps to understand the concept of satisfaction and the conditions for beneficiaries' satisfaction beyond the traditional definition. The paper uses content analysis to code semi-structured interviews gathered in two victim organisations in Colombia. The qualitative analysis includes a word frequency analysis and qualitative coding of the interviews using NVivo following the book of codes to understand the relations between the variables on the causal mechanism.

The research analyses the difference between two approaches, top-down and bottom-up, using the European Union and USAID case as an example to understand how their respective implementation approaches as foreign aid agencies affected perceived beneficiaries' satisfaction. The individuals interviewed were beneficiaries from both agencies organised in two peace communities in Colombia. The evidence shows that the bottom-up approach leads to higher levels of beneficiaries' satisfaction under specific conditions met in the identified causal mechanism, integration, and recognition.

2. Theory: Foreign aid and beneficiaries' satisfaction

There are several studies on the impact of foreign aid over diverse factors. The literature review explores the main branches of that discussion to identify the gap in the impact of foreign aid for peace and building conditions for reconciliation on beneficiaries' satisfaction.

Many studies examine the effects of foreign aid effectiveness (Bearce & Tirone, 2010; Boone, 1994; Riddell, 2008) on factors such as economic growth (Durberry, 2004; Ekanayake & Chatrna, 2017; Feeny & Ouattara, 2009). The effect on development is one aspect that scholars have studied more (Andrews, 2009; Honig, 2018; Tarp, 2002). Another type of research explored aid's effects on democracy and governance (Asongu & Nwachukwu, 2016; Brautigam & Knack, 2004; Busse & Gröning, 2009), whereas other studies focused on political stability (Steinwand, 2015). Some scholars have explored the foreign aid effect on electoral dynamics (Anaxagorou et al., 2020; Jablonski, 2014; Yuichi Kono & Montinola, 2009) or the relations with public expenditure (Njeru, 2003; Odusanya et al., 2011) among other variables. Another relationship analysed is the incidence of foreign aid over corruption (Charron, 2011; Mohamed et al., 2015; Okada & Samreth, 2012); some scholars argue that foreign aid tends to

increase corruption at the local and national levels. Some of the former literature highlights the role of foreign aid on the national and local dynamics of the recipient countries. Still, it does not explore the effect on the individual beneficiaries.

On the other hand, another group of literature explores the relations between foreign aid, peace, and conflict dynamics. Following this line of the literature, some scholars analyse the impact of foreign aid in conflict areas (Weezel, 2015) and the impact of these flows on civil wars, violence and conflicts (Findley, 2018; Grady, 2017; Savun & Tirone, 2011) and the effect over the intensity of the armed conflict (Strandow et al., 2016), also over the probability of armed conflict (Sollenberg, 2012) or the risk of civil conflict recurrence (de Ree & Nillesen, 2009). Besides, other scholars analysed the relations between aid, conflict, and human development (McGillivray & Noorbakhsh, 2004; McGillivray & NoorBaksh, 2007) or the relations between foreign aid, foreign direct investment, and conflict (Garriga & Phillips, 2014). However, few studies focus on the impact of foreign aid on peacebuilding and creating conditions for reconciliation, specifically on beneficiaries' satisfaction with this type of aid.

Previous studies also have focused on policies and foreign aid regarding foreign aid perception from different perspectives. Some researchers have focused on the public opinion effects of policies in donor countries (Bodenstein & Faust, 2017; Diven & Constantelos, 2009; Kobayashi et al., 2021) and recipient countries (Goldsmith et al., 2013), where Milner highlights that there is a scarcity of research on foreign aid perceptions and attitudes in recipient countries (Milner & Tingley, 2013). Beyond that, another branch of the literature explores how foreign aid shapes attitudes (sympathy or rejection) toward the donor within the beneficiary's countries (Tokdemir, 2017). Additionally, another type of literature is oriented toward assessing the impact of foreign aid on improving foreign aid programs and interventions (Burall & Roodman., 2007; Hofmann et al., 2004; Jakupec & Kelly, 2016). Other critical perspectives claim that neither the bottom-up nor the top-down approach shows long-lasting results in

delivering durable peace to local populations (Randazzo & Torrent, 2021). Nonetheless, the qualitative evidence provided in this article shows a different perspective on this view.

On the methodology, previous research on this topic had focused on causal inference by conducting quantitative analysis of foreign aid effects and policy impact in general, specifically on impact evaluation. Some studies have explored policy interventions' impacts following a process tracing methodology (Punton, 2015; te Lintelo et al., 2019) or assessing it qualitatively (Scullion et al., 2011). Along these lines, other studies analyse how mixed methods can contribute to policy evaluation (Greene et al., 1989; Palinkas et al., 2019). Likewise, other authors integrate qualitative and quantitative methods to assess policy interventions with these mixed methods (White, 2002).

The former discussion shows that there are different perspectives to tackle the implementation approach when delivering policies and foreign aid as a type of policy. This paper will provide evidence to support which approach works better. It also contributes to the analysis of the relationship between foreign aid for peacebuilding and reconciliation, its implementation approach, and beneficiaries' satisfaction which has not been addressed sufficiently. This paper aims to contribute to filling this gap.

2.1 Approaches to Foreign Aid Implementation

Foreign aid policy can follow different paths of institutional performance to deliver programs and channel their resources. Two paths or traditions can be defined when discussing institutional change dynamics: top-down and bottom-up. The former understand that institutional change results from laws and political leaders' decisions. In contrast, the latter

conceptualises this change as the spontaneous emergence of social norms, customs, beliefs, and values shared by individuals who belong to a community (Easterly, 2008).

In terms of the foreign aid implementation approach, these two contrasting views affect beneficiaries' satisfaction as institutional change is gradual in most cases. The literature has explored the features of both approaches without explaining how they affect beneficiaries' satisfaction. The *top-down* approach, as Easterly (2018) highlights,

tends to go together with the view that there is one globally unique best set of institutions toward which all societies are hopefully thought to be 'developing' (...) acts as a cross-country communicator of the institutions of the 'advanced' society to the less informed in the 'backward' society. (p. 1)

Along with these lines, some scholars have highlighted the advantages of a top-down approach that seems to be more efficient in targeting results, as the decision is based on technical criteria that require less time and resources, then appears to be more efficient. As Matland (1995) suggested, "the starting point is the authoritative decision (...) centrally located actors are seen as most relevant to producing the desired effect" (p. 146). Following this point of view, Honig's study (2018) demonstrates that Development Agencies use a top-down approach when they are insecure about the local agents and want to accomplish goals aligned with political objectives, including more control over local agents because they do not trust their criterion or capacity (Honig, 2018).

Conversely, the *bottom-up* approach rejects drastic changes as it respects the natural evolution of al dynamics (Easterly, 2008). As Easterly suggests, "attempts at rapid, top-down change can even have negative consequences (...) then an agenda of gradual reform that recognizes the constraints of bottom-up evolution will lead to more hopeful results than a delusory top-down attempt to leap to institutional perfection" (p. 99). As Goetschel &

Hagmann (2009) stated, “the gap between donors’ benevolent peacebuilding rhetoric and the reality of their interventionist and top-down character gives donor peace a bad name” (p. 66).

Whereas other studies focus on a top-down approach to virtues, this branch of the literature criticises the bottom-up approach (Sabatier, 1986). In this line, other scholars highlight the advantages of the top-down approach since it allows “tracing the steps occurring after policy enactment. Such studies emphasized the importance of policy design that provided explicit policy directives, clear statements of administrative responsibilities, and more direct actions with fewer veto points” (Koontz & Newig, 2014, p. 419). This approach is implementor centred. It attempts to control the implementation from the central agents since it trusts their judgment rather than the criterion of local agents or the local population (Honig, 2018). From this point of view, there is a risk of imposing technical epistemic points of view from aid technocrats on the local illiterate population, developing unequal power dynamics (Goetschel & Hagmann, 2009).

A third approach proposes hybridity, meaning “the interaction between these top-down and bottom-up forces and takes into account the levels and dynamics between top and bottom” (Mac Ginty & Sanghera, 2012, p. 4) in peace and conflict. Various studies follow the argument that developing a mixed or hybrid approach between top-down and bottom-up approaches can improve policy interventions in development contexts (Honig, 2018; Kaiser, 2020; Mac Ginty, 2010). Both approaches come together, articulating “international elites (for example, United Nations peacebuilding personnel) to national elites, local communities, and individuals. It is found in everyday life and the structures and institutions that shape how society is organised.” (Mac Ginty & Sanghera, 2012, p. 4) (Mac Ginty & Firchow, 2016). Recognising that this dynamic is not easy to replicate in the laboratory, the authors highlight how power relations and inequality affect the articulation between both dynamics. In other words, as Bargues (2020) said, “the policy and critical literature criticise current practices and call for improved methods

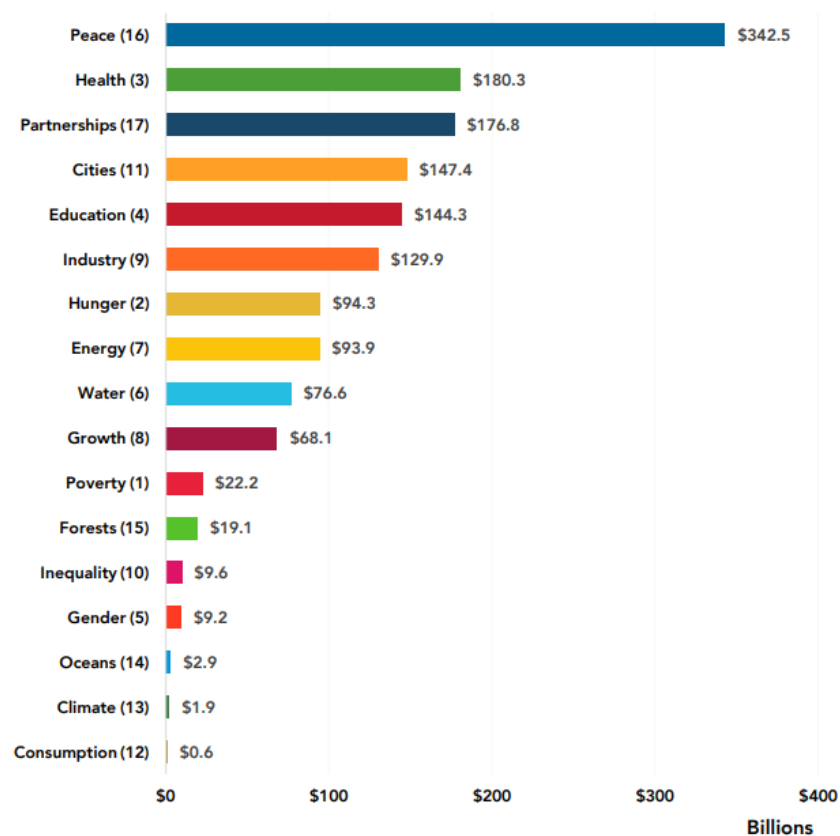
and approaches to try to close the gap between what is professed in theory and its implementation, thus overlooking that practice will always betray the limits of theory” (p. 20).

Some literature on foreign aid has shown how aid agencies transform resources into results and how the management practices (whether navigating by judgment or including more central controls) matter to increase effectiveness measured in quantitative results (Honig, 2018). Firstly, beyond effectiveness, understood as success in producing results linked to the intervention goals, the question of beneficiaries’ satisfaction as a measure of effectiveness has not yet been explored. Therefore, the effectiveness has been defined more from the aid agency’s perspective rather than the beneficiaries’ point of view. Secondly, the effect on beneficiaries’ satisfaction has not been explored enough. This paper faces both gaps by assessing beneficiaries of foreign aid for peacebuilding and reconciliation implementation approach on beneficiaries’ satisfaction.

2.2 Foreign Aid for Peace and Reconciliation

Flows of foreign aid have been channelled to support peacebuilding and reconciliation dynamics worldwide. Following Aid Data figures, \$342.5 billion dollars was invested in Sustainable Development Goal 16, which is into Peace, Justice, and inclusive institutions (Figure 25). Peace captures an appropriate amount of foreign aid flows, specifically regarding the ODA. Technical and financial aid has been provided to promote this goal, and the flows of resources are evident. However, these interventions’ impacts and effectiveness have not yet been explored enough and deserve more attention.

Figure 25 *Baseline ODA Commitments to SDGs, all donors 2000-2013*



Note. Source: AidData Research Release 3.1, 2021 (Figures in billion 2011 USD)

Globally, aid-for-peace has increased and gained attention in the international development plan. Since this concept represents a significant aspect of foreign aid, it is highly relevant to assess the implications of these flows and interventions in the recipient countries. Foreign aid implementation changes from one country to another as a foreign policy tool. Within this process, the implementation approach's role is essential to understanding their impact and effectiveness on the final beneficiaries' satisfaction.

However, the implementation approach can affect foreign aid effectiveness by distorting the interventions' outputs and results (Easterly, 2010). This top-down approach tends to privilege international donors' goals and sometimes fails to integrate beneficiaries' voices by not implementing participatory approaches and building accountability. Community

integration has been identified as a critical mechanism of accountability in foreign aid implementation, and evidence shows that foreign aid accountability is more effective when more government is involved. Inclusion is engaged in the process at the micro (individual aid projects) and macro (aid flows) levels. (Winters, 2010). The relations between the variables and the causal mechanism will be explored more profoundly in the analysis section.

This research suggests that foreign aid flows for peace and reconciliation are more able to satisfy the final beneficiaries' demands when the aid agencies and the government bureaucracies involved in the channel of resources formulate and implement inclusive approaches when formulating their programs and allow accountability after the implementation of these programs. In other words, a bottom-up approach is more likely to be effective.

Table 6 *Foreign Aid for peacebuilding and reconciliation implementation approaches*

Foreign aid implementation for peacebuilding and reconciliation approach	Implications	Beneficiary's satisfaction
Bottom-up	Promotes Community Integration-and Recognition <i>through</i> : -Alignment with communitarian priorities -Territorial local presence -Dialogue and participation Allows better aid target that leads to long-term interventions' impact. Strengthens community cohesion for peacebuilding and reconciliation. Increases the sense of security and protection perceived by the beneficiaries Fosters community empowerment and makes them visible to the international community	High levels of satisfaction in the beneficiaries
Top-down	It creates a sense of exclusion and imposition of criteria from the central agents Solve immediate needs that are observed as a duty, targeting short-term outcomes The sporadic presence in the territory leads to decontextualised interventions	Low or null levels of satisfaction in the beneficiaries

Note. Source: Own elaboration

Foreign aid is an instrument of national policy (Bueno De Mesquita & Smith, 2007) which contributes with “money, goods, or services to other governments or people or communities in foreign countries; the contributions are given for free, as heavily subsidized loans, or for a price well below the market price” (Bueno De Mesquita, 2013). These

interventions aim to promote economic development or to provide humanitarian assistance from donors (governments, NGOs or private organisations) to recipient countries (Crawford, 2001). ODA is one of the most common types of aid and is articulated with SDG 2030 (Table 7). This aid promotes developmental world policies that attempt to alleviate poverty and promote development (Thérien, 2002), although the allocation is not effectively designed to accomplish its intended effects on poverty (Briggs, 2021). ODA is usually channelled through international non-state organisations, governmental agencies, and NGOs. This type of aid can be directed to support transitional issues in post-conflict societies regarding goal 16 and its principles related to promoting peace.

This framework considers peacebuilding and reconciliation part of these transitional matters in post-conflict societies. In this section, reconciliation is understood as the process of building and re-building trust relations between former antagonists in the violent past and between governmental institutions (Van der Merwe et al., 2009; Cortés et al., 2016; Crocker, 1999; López-López et al., 2018; Meierhenrich, 2008; Oettler & Rettberg, 2019; Rettberg & Ugarriza, 2016). Then, foreign aid for peacebuilding and reconciliation is the type of foreign flow aimed to support trust relations between former antagonists and between them and governmental institutions and their outcomes and outputs. ODA for peacebuilding is defined in suitable goal number 16, aiming to “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels” (UN, 2022). To accomplish this goal, it establishes twelve targets:

Table 7 Table 3.2 ODA Goals

ODA Goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere 2. End abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence against and torture of children 3. Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all 4. By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime 5. Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms 6. Develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels 7. Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels 8. Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance 9. By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration 10. Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms following national legislation and international agreements 11. Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime 12. Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development
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Source: OECD, n.d.

Regarding inclusiveness as the causal mechanism, the research understands inclusiveness as a strategy where foreign aid agencies that channel, formulate, implement, and evaluate programs and projects can recognise local needs, demands and communitarian priorities. Some studies show that donors have good intentions when dispensing foreign aid. However, they often fail to produce adequate outputs and returns (Easterly, 2003).

Finally, the beneficiary's satisfaction is a process where the usual parties involved in delivering foreign aid - aid agencies, policymakers, and organisations from the governmental bureaucracy- proactively solicit feedback from the recipients of aid to promote and guarantee accountability and understand if the intervention fulfilled their expectations and improve future intervention (Carttar et al., 2015). Assessing interventions of international actors in domestic conflicts is very relevant because it helps to improve future interventions and contributes to the analysis of the role of international actors in internal armed conflicts and post-conflict scenarios (Wilkenfeld et al., 2003). This study aims to support this type of contribution.

This research explores beneficiaries' satisfaction with the foreign aid implementation approach in post-conflict settings by exploring the involvement and inclusion of beneficiaries by assessing the recipients' inclusion in the following policy cycle steps:

1. Recipient's selection:	Fairness	} Beneficiary's satisfaction
2. Formulation:	Design Quality	
3. Implementation:	Process quality	
4. Results:	Outcomes	
5. Evaluation:	Accountability	

Second, this research explores the beneficiary's expectations in these previous aspects and to what degree they were fulfilled by gathering feedback on the results, outcomes, and output satisfaction to suggest possible improvements in this type of intervention. The beneficiary's perception of the degree their expectations were fulfilled is a good indicator of their satisfaction. Also, the level of enrollment and inclusiveness affect beneficiaries' satisfaction. When their individual and collective inclusion is significant, beneficiaries tend to be satisfied with the intervention process and outcomes (Ananga et al., 2020).

After defining the theoretical framework and the main argument of this paper, we can state the initial hypotheses of this paper:

H1: When foreign aid for peacebuilding and reconciliation follows an inclusive, bottom-up approach in the implementation, it leads to higher levels of beneficiaries' satisfaction.

To some extent, the hypothesis is debatable and, therefore, worth testing. A possible criticism against the hypothesis might be that it is evident that when people are involved in something, they approve of it. However, this attitude is not necessarily intuitive since top-down approaches could be efficient, less costly, faster, expert-led, and even more efficient, leading to overall better outcomes, including satisfaction. Consequently, understanding why a top-down approach in the implementation leads to better results in terms of satisfaction.

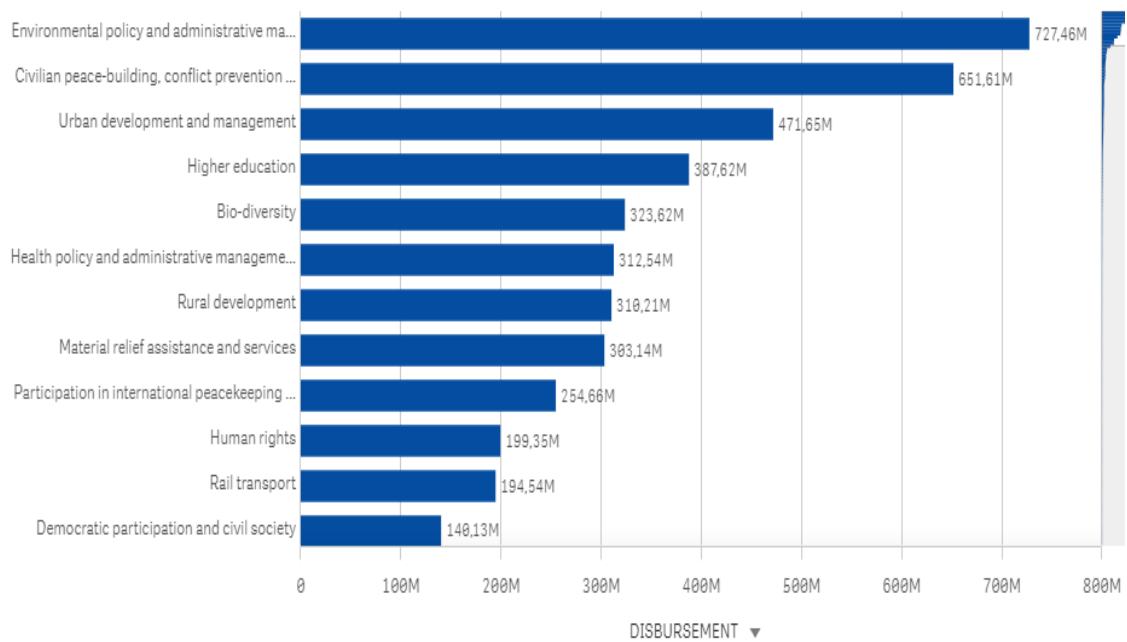
2.3 Case selection. Why Colombia?

Colombia signed a peace agreement between the government and the guerrilla groups called FARC in 2016 after more than five decades of conflict (Segura, 2017; Tellez, 2019). After developing several attempts to dialogue and negotiate with armed actors during the XX century (Chernick, 1996), the government of former president Santos finished with the oldest conflict in the Western hemisphere. With high levels of armed and political violence, according to the Unit of Victims of Colombia, there are 9,134,347 victims in the country, of which 7,368,335 are subject to reparation (UARIV, 2021).

International actors, such as foreign aid agencies for development, have supported peacebuilding and reconciliation in Colombia by providing financial and technical support since 1982, when former President Belisario Betancur (1982-1986) created the National Plan for Rehabilitation to attend to victims of the violence, as a result of the negotiations with guerrilla groups. During the following decades, several aid agencies intervened in the country to support the peacebuilding process. In this way, it is relevant to analyse the effect of these flows and technical support in the peace-building process and the subsequent satisfaction of the recipients.

Nowadays, the flows for peace and reconciliation in post-conflict societies are often among the most substantial components of foreign aid (Figure 26). Colombia is not an exception to this general tendency: 43% of the total foreign budget (including all donors) is assigned to peacebuilding and reconciliation-related activities, followed by environmental conservation with 20 % and rural development with 13% between 2015 and 2018 (APC-Colombia, 2018). Likewise, according to European Union aid figures by sector, between 2007 and 2020, the European Union allocated 651.6 million euros for civilian peacebuilding and conflict prevention, being the second concept in this type of expenditure.

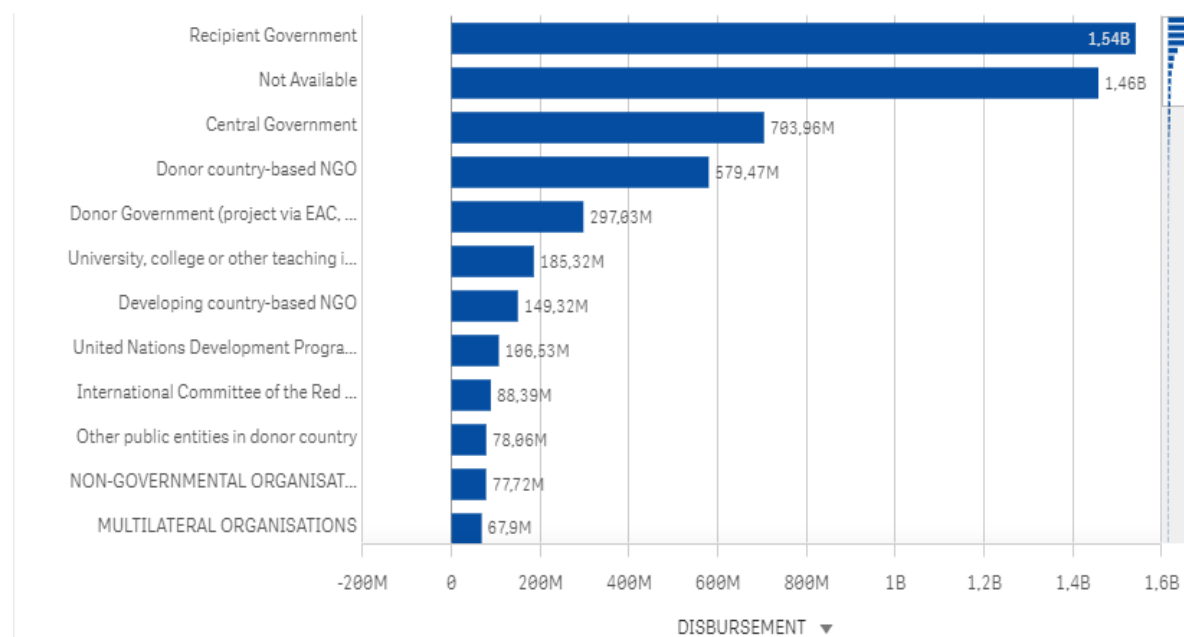
Figure 26 *Foreign Aid from EU in Colombia by Sector 2007-2020*



Note. Source: European Union. 2020

These flows are channelled through governmental institutions (typically, the central government), NGOs, and other civil society actors. These figures show that aid flows in Colombia are mainly channelled through various topics that formulate, implement, and sometimes evaluate programs developed with foreign aid funds.

Figure 27 Foreign Aid from EU in Colombia by Sector. 2007-2020



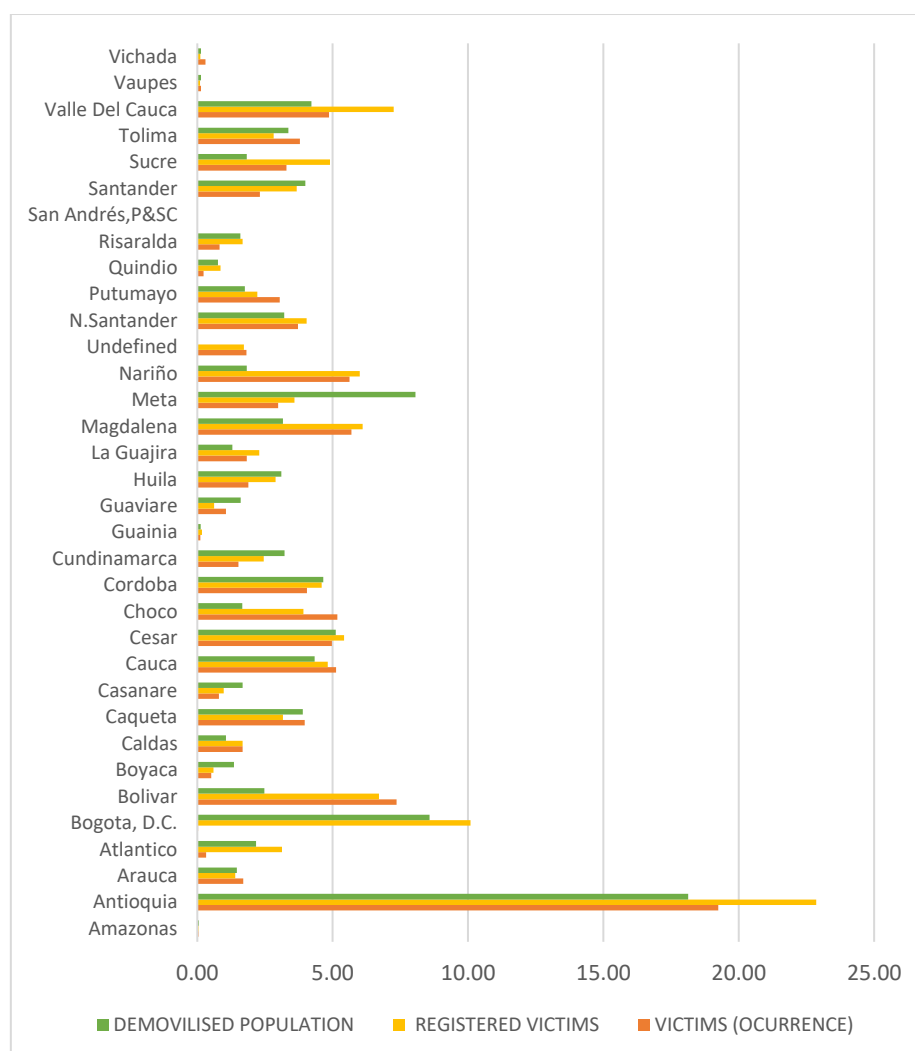
Note. Source: European Union. 2020

These figures show that significant resources are allocated to peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and reconciliation programs, and the Colombian government mainly channels these flows. Following the theoretical argument, the performance of governmental bureaucracies and their approach to channelling aid flows is significant in this country and will affect the beneficiary's satisfaction.

On the other hand, peacebuilding and reconciliation confront local dynamics of polarisation and post-agreement violence, specifically the presence of victims and former perpetrators. As per the graph below, the presence of victims from the armed conflict and the demobilised population shared spaces in different territories around the country with varying percentages of each (Figure 28). Nowadays, the debate on the role of the local arena in peacebuilding, from different perspectives, is relevant. Therefore, examining the dynamics of foreign aid for peace and reconciliation among local members of peace communities and their satisfaction as beneficiaries contributes to the debate on the role of the local level in peacebuilding, in contrast to the liberal view of this matter (Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015). The

perceived satisfaction is assessed by capturing how the interventions affected everyday peasants' experiences in peacebuilding and reconciliation.

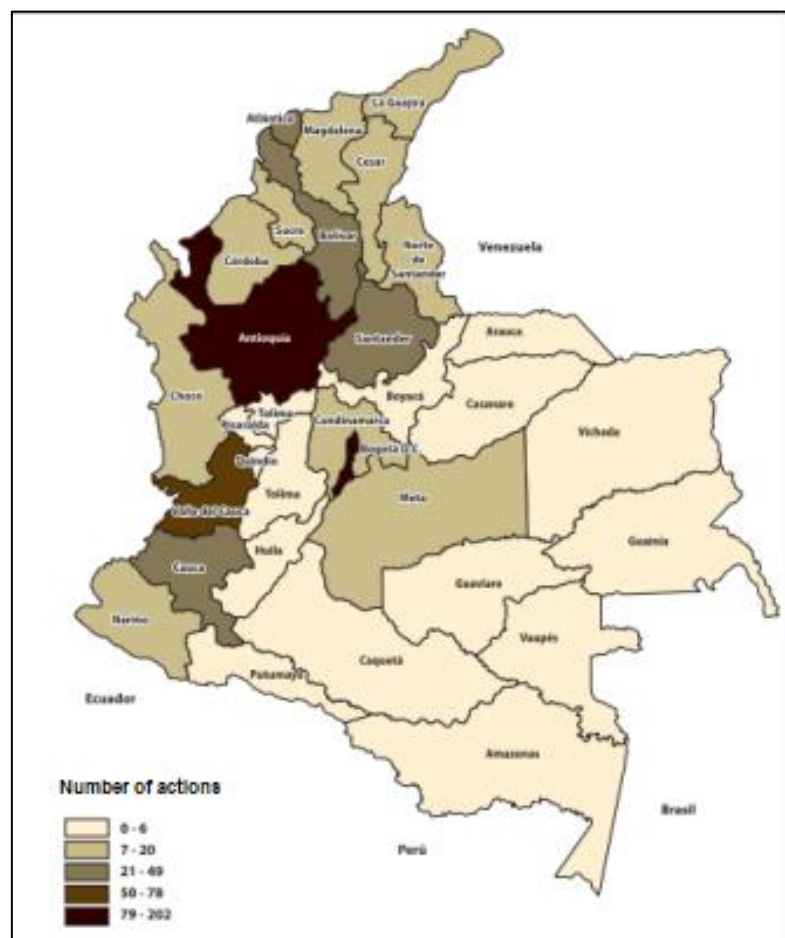
Figure 28 *Percentage of Victims and Demobilised Population per Administrative Unit in Colombia*



Note. Source: Own elaboration based on UARIV (2021) and ARN (2019) Data

Additionally, peace organisations have emerged in response to the violence and influence of various armed non-state and state actors in these contested territories affected by the armed conflict (CINEP, 2019). The expansion of collective action for peace is a good indicator of civil society mobilisation towards peace and the creation of conditions for reconciliation in a highly polarised environment (Figure 29).

Figure 29 *Collective actions for peace in Colombia 2012-2015*



Note. Source: DATAPAZ-CINEP (2016)

At least 37 peace communities are registered in Colombia. These civilian organisations emerged both during and after the conflict, and they declared themselves neutral amid the armed conflict and negotiated, forbade, or avoided contact with the combatants. Thus, they follow critical principles of civilian peacebuilding and neutrality: strengthening communitarian solidarity and social bonds, autonomy in the making decision process, transparent dialogue and collaboration with armed actors and defence of the territory (Amaya-Panche, 2012; Oidor et al., 2019; Valenzuela, 2001; 2009), among other principles that vary from one organisation to another.

3. Research Design

The research uses a qualitative approach to test the former hypothesis. It aims to gather individual perceptions from foreign aid recipients to analyse the beneficiary's perception of satisfaction. There are many debates on how these impacts must be evaluated. An essential group of studies suggest that micro-level studies and evaluations better understand the inclusiveness of peace and reconciliation interventions avoiding the risk of generalisations (Autesserre, 2014; Findley, 2018; Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013). As Autesserre (2014) highlighted, this tendency emerged for three reasons. First, attention to bottom-up peacebuilding by local populations and interveners. Second, observing the local effects of the interventions and their particular outcomes. Third, in consideration of the locals' diverse culture and everyday practices. On this last aspect, there is a series of studies that provided robust evidence of the relevance of studying the role of everyday practices in peacebuilding (Mac Ginty & Firchow, 2016).

Before, prior studies showed that moving to the micro-levels allows for building more accurate claims (Firchow, 2017; Mac Ginty, 2021). For this reason, this research focuses on a specific local case, analysing how intervention from two foreign aid agencies, USAID, and the European Union-EU, affected the satisfaction of beneficiaries by modifying their everyday practices. Data for this study were attained through individually administered in-depth, five semi-structured interviews. The interviews include a categorical analysis and the relations between these categories, a causal mechanism. The units of analysis are individuals, beneficiaries from foreign aid for reconciliation, and members of peace communities in the countryside of Colombia. This study aims to gather their satisfaction with foreign aid for reconciliation programs, following a deductive logic from the general categories identified in the literature to establish their respective coding.

This study follows a qualitative approach to gather precise data about individuals' perceptions of satisfaction with the foreign aid implementation approach. The individuals are selected following demographic criteria: women, men and youth, following the rolling snowball strategy. The individuals have been beneficiaries of the European Union and USAID interventions for peacebuilding and reconciliation. As Rao highlights, "qualitative methods can also help in circumstances where a quantitative survey may be difficult to administer" (Rao & Woolcock, 2003, p. 8) in marginalised communities without internet access, as the rural areas in Colombia are, with increased restrictions during the pandemic. Also, qualitative methods help broadly understand the context of the interventions (White, 2002).

The paper follows a case study analysis and uses content analysis to assess (Druckman, 2005) semi-structured qualitative deep interviews conducted with five individuals within two peace communities in Colombia. These organisations declared neutral amid the armed conflict between state and non-state actors and built autonomous peace communities. The case study can be defined as "an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2003, p. 14). This analysis follows a nomothetic perspective where the study's claims can be generalised under the scope conditions. This study is embedded with multiple units of analysis, meaning different individuals who are beneficiaries of foreign aid for peacebuilding and reconciliation in post-conflict societies. The content analysis methodology is "any technic for marking inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages" (Holsti, 1969, as quoted in Druckman, 2005, p. 257). The approach is flexible and can be applied to a variety of qualitative pieces of information (Druckman, 2005).

The case study analysis is supported using semi-structured qualitative interviews conducted with multiple individuals within two peace communities. To ascertain the dynamics

within these peace communities, I interviewed five individuals organised in peace communities that were recipients of peacebuilding and reconciliation programs of the European Union and USAID. I selected “Campesino”, a peasant community where interventions from the European Union have been implemented since 2002 and USAID interventions have taken place since the 80s. The number of interviews was determined upon finding the saturation point. I also implemented the rolling snowball to gather information from these individuals.

The interview asked about the points established in the theoretical framework focusing on the following topics:

1. Description of the foreign aid project for peace and reconciliation: EU Vs USAID- IV
2. Perception towards the foreign aid projects for peace and reconciliation implementation approach regarding the EU and USAID- IV
3. Exploring the causes of satisfaction: the causal mechanisms
4. Recipient’s satisfaction level regarding the EU and USAID implementation approach – DV

The questionnaire included specific questions on these topics, and following the interview dynamic, other topics were explored deeper (See questionnaire attached: Annexe 1).

3.1 Scope and limitations

This paper analyses individual perceptions of organised peasants that have been involved in the peace community of ATCC and ASODECAR in Santander, Colombia. They have been beneficiaries of the European Union's foreign aid.

4. Discussion and Results

The semi-structured interviews were transcribed (See transcriptions attached. Annexe 2) and analysed using NVivo to build the word frequency analysis filtering by words longer than five characters, the most frequent 100 words, eliminating stop words without a relevant meaning within the analysis.

4.1 Word Frequency Analysis

The information was transcribed (See transcriptions attached. Annexe 2) and analysed using NVivo to build the word frequency analysis filtering by words longer than five characters, the most frequent 100 words, eliminating stop words without a relevant meaning within the analysis.

As a result of the analysis, we can see the word cloud and the table of frequencies with synonyms and a tree map with relationships between the most recurrent words (Annexe 3).

interventions are aligned with the community's agenda. The analysis of these results will be explained in detail below.

4.2 Semi-Structured Interviews Analysis

The section follows the structure of the books of codes (Appendix – Chapter 3) to build the analysis to interpret the information from the coding report exported from NVivo after coding the individual semi-structured interviews.

4.2.1 USAID and EU: Top-down and Bottom-up approaches

The interviews show that the EU implements a bottom-up approach while USAID performs a top-down approach. This section establishes a parallel between these two aid agencies providing evidence of their differences when delivering aid for peacebuilding and reconciliation.

The beneficiaries interviewed reported being satisfied with the interventions from foreign aid agencies such as the EU and USAID. However, they mentioned they feel more satisfied with EU interventions for peace and reconciliation rather than USAID interventions because, for them, “satisfaction is measured in the impact of the project on the community” (Interview 1) and “the satisfaction level is much higher with the European Union” (Interview 3). They perceive that EU programs have a long-term impact on the community, whereas USAID focuses on solving short-term issues related to immediate needs. The interviewed beneficiaries attribute this satisfaction to the engagement and integration of the community in

the formulation and implementation of the interventions of the foreign aid agencies (programs and projects).

Therefore, they think that integration allows their participation. As one peasant said, participation allows the community's engagement and recognition, which results in a long-term impact of the intervention (Interviews 1 and 3) as beneficiaries feel more identified and recognised with the outcomes of the interventions as they are aligned with the community life's plan. Conversely, the beneficiaries perceive that USAID faces more immediate needs that are aligned with governmental rather than community agenda. For that reason, they feel disconnected from the outcomes of the interventions. Therefore, it results in the short-term impact of these interventions. As one beneficiary stated, "The EU involves the community life's plan whereas USAID follows the government agenda, then EU led to more prolonged lasting impact and higher satisfaction with its interventions" (Interview 1).

Consequently, the beneficiaries perceive USAID interventions as if they were part of the government, that their projects are conditioned to the government priorities and are linked to their demands (Interviews 1, 2, 3 and 5). Even though beneficiaries perceived all foreign aid interventions as a tool that helped to fulfil the government and state absence, they noted that the EU supported and recognised them as political subjects with a voice and empowered them by supporting their pre-existing community's goals. In contrast, USAID followed their priorities pre-determined by the central offices, in other words, from the top. This evidence supports previous findings where the interventions from USAID were perceived as vertical as they tended to control more of the agents on the field rather than relying on them, as happened with agricultural projects in East Timor, where USAID workers were found trapped in the bureaucracy to modify their interventions to be more effective as policies were designed from the central office. As a result, the intervention had few impacts on the farmers as they were

disconnected from the local reality (Honig, 2018), reinforcing a tendency where donor interest tends to dominate the recipient's needs and demands (Bueno De Mesquita & Smith, 2007).

When the foreign aid agency promotes the community's integration and recognition through participation, it strengthens the community by empowering them. As one interviewee mentioned: "the EU gave us voices and recognised our work for peace whereas the Colombian State abandoned us" (Interview 1). Then USAID implemented some type of participation strategies by consulting a few local leaders. From the beneficiary's perspective, their criterion is biased, as they do not represent the community's interest and do not capture the community's perception based on dialogue and consultation methodologies (Interview 1). As a result, from the beneficiary's perspective, the USAID strategy cannot be called participatory.

On the implementation, the hiring process also varies among USAID and the EU. While the first one relies on local governments' criteria to hire professionals that are usually linked with local corruption dynamics, the former involves community members implementing and evaluating their interventions to increase their skills to implement the projects by training the community members to increase their capacities and skills in order to strengthen their autonomy and freedom to choose. The EU workers intervene close to community members to accompany the interventions, protect them, and improve their results. As a peasant stated,

The community can decide how it will execute its project, how it will execute its resources, and what line it will strengthen, and it is autonomous to manage the personnel and hire people it trusts. It defines the times and the execution strategy. It has freedom, which strengthens the community, making it more autonomous, and free to express its opinion and to be able to decide what it wants. (Interview 1)

Regarding the supervision and monitoring strategy, if the individuals think that USAID aid is aligned with the local government priorities, then the aid agency relies on the local governments to supervise and monitor the interventions. In the peasants' view, the aid is conditioned and "tied" to the government's priorities, not the community's needs. Conversely, the EU he's pressing on the territory of supervising and monitoring their interventions with the community, engaging the community directly. USAID tends to administrate their interventions from the head squares in the capital city; their workers appear sporadically in the local territories. As a result, the beneficiaries perceived EU interventions as more legitimate and closer to their needs because they felt more involved, observed and integrated into their interventions. The presence of the foreign aid agency also increases the perceived safety as aid workers protect the communities from the influence of armed actors (Interview 1).

As an example of the type of this type of intervention, USAID developed the interview-reported programmes as forest warden families for the eradication of illicit crops. The agency made monthly payments to incentivise the farmers' families to grow legal crops. They also promote a "vital minimums" programme to provide a health care centre and some provisions. These projects address immediate needs such as health care but also prioritise the USAID predefined agenda fighting against illicit crops. As one interviewee said, "the project is defined from the top, then it reduces our room for manoeuvre in adjusting them to our needs" (Interview 2) As the peasant mentioned because the projects are administrated through local governments the room to change certain aspects of the implementation that could be improved in order to correspond to local realities is reduced causing dissatisfaction in the beneficiaries. A young woman peasant talked about a USAID project providing support for the forcibly displaced population. She said, "if you say it says douche resources are for trousers, they must be used for buying trousers despite the fact they don't fit our local population size." (Interview 5). Consequently, they perceived that "when they arrive in the territory, deliver a specific issue,

since already know who is going to manage resources, what their guidelines are, and they are not sensitive to the dynamics of what is happening in the territory” (Interview 5).

On the other hand, the EU has implemented programmes related to peacebuilding and reconciliation and strengthening local capacities to develop their autonomy in their capacity to promote reconciliation by themselves. One example of this type of intervention is the laboratories of peace where the peasants, Afro-Colombians, women, youth population, leaders, and elderly are consulted. The EU recognise the beneficiaries as political subjects. They know that their voice was silenced during the armed conflict, and they listen to their voices providing financial and technical support to strengthen their communitarian processes to raise their voices. The EU developed similar programs related to organic agriculture for peace where the peasants could even build and change knowledge with other communities (Interview 2).

Therefore, the integration of the community members creates different conditions to increase their satisfaction with EU interventions and increases their capacity to build peace and create better conditions for reconciliation by themselves by following their communitarian priorities. One interviewee stated, “The EU understands that local communities could have similar needs. However, the specific demands change from community to community as they have different dynamics. Communities could need eggs; one would prefer them boiled, while the other would prefer them fried” (Interview 5). Back to the trousers example, the beneficiaries mentioned that the EU would recognise the presence of peasants, indigenous, and Afro-Colombians. They would understand that all of them need different types of trousers.

In terms of the results, beneficiaries perceive that USAID helped to improve immediate needs mainly related to economic needs. At the same time, the EU also supported economic needs and supported them by increasing their administrative skills and most importantly, they supported and strengthened pacific strategies for conflict resolution (Interview 4).

The logical consequence of these approaches is that bottom-up approach interventions are accepted by the beneficiaries leading to satisfaction. In contrast, top-down implementations are perceived as imposed, leading to dissatisfaction.

4.2.2 Why are integration and recognition relevant to satisfaction?

“The master’s eye nourishes the horse.”

Peasant Interview

The causal mechanism responds to the question of what causes beneficiaries’ satisfaction with foreign aid interventions for peace and reconciliation. As per before, the standard answer was because it integrates and recognises the community and its members. More clearly, it is possible to observe that “The EU integrates the community; they discuss how the bridge can strengthen the social fabric and the community. They support and strengthen the community priorities beyond the bridge.” (Interview 1). Then integration and recognition foster social cohesion. When recognised, the beneficiaries feel more satisfied with the interventions because “there is much more space for freedom, for weaving dialogue around this project, and it is much more binding and participatory for the community than the other projects” (Interview 1).

Instead of imposing, they support communities to build peace and create conditions for reconciliation respectfully. One peasant mentioned, “The EU is respectful and empathetic with the communities. They formulate their interventions based on actual needs. They simply accompany the implementation to reassure that things are doing well” (Interview 1). Accordingly, their decisions were autonomous “EU projects generally allow communities to make their own decisions. How they want to do it and how they want to execute it. There are also evaluations that allow measuring the degree of impact” (Interview 2). They recognised

their needs embedded in the local context: “The project was born out of the same need that the community. Therefore, it generated a lot of social impact in the community” (Interview 2). The likelihood of appropriating the outcome increases when the interventions are based on the community’s needs and identified in a participatory way.

Also, the beneficiaries recognised that local knowledge leads to better-targeted interventions: “The EU is more flexible to the needs and dynamics of the territory. It is concerned about community protection” (Interview 5). The presence in the local territories leads to higher levels of local knowledge. When the aid agency is present in the local territories, the beneficiaries feel they care for them and are recognised and protected by the aid workers and their interventions. One interviewee used a metaphor to explain the effect of looking after and supervising the interventions face to face by using an idiomatic expression; “the master’s eye nourishes the horse” (Interview 4). He also thinks that recognising the beneficiaries as rights subjects helped promote rights redress, including the right to live in peace. In a peasant’s words,

you know that the one who is going to do the things is not the same as the one who orders the things to be done. The presence in the territory generates more satisfaction because it creates a sense of safety and protection from someone (government or organisations) who endorses you. Otherwise, you feel excluded and neglected. (Interview 4)

The peasant highlighted that they appreciate that aid worker from the EU get “dirty” going to the countryside and working with humble people as peasants.

The recognition from the EU towards community needs created a hinge to align the priorities from both sides: peacebuilding and reconciliation promotion and maintenance. A peasant said, “The European Union has been the one that has financed us; it has been a great

ally in strengthening our peace proposal” (Interview 1). The EU also encouraged the peasants to continue dialogues and negotiations with armed actors to protect them from violence. Also, those dialogues encouraged combatants to leave their weapons and start a new life as civilians. This way, the EU supported the process of building and rebuilding relations with former antagonists, the former perpetrators. “Curiously, the former antagonist were not strangers sometimes, they were part of our families, and we started a reconciliation process with them” (Interview 1). The peasants highlighted that “reconciliation is starting humanitarian dialogues between armed combatants and civilians to build a shared space to live peacefully, to live *the good life. Together*”⁴. (Interview 1).

The EU also supported the demobilisation of former combatants’ process. The ATCC already started this process on its own before the government did it in 2006. The UE supported the peasants in the reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life. The EU promoted building peace in The European Union, which has financed us. It has been a great ally in strengthening our peace proposal. In this sense, the above arguments show that the EU approach is closer to peace and the creation of conditions for reconciliation promotion results. The peasants said they started dialogues with the combatants from FARC before the government did. They started a reconciliation process recognising the combatants as humans and peasants who deserved a second opportunity to return to civilian life (Interview 2).

Integration and recognition also *align with a community’s plans*

The bridge then comes to build, let’s say, an infrastructure that benefits the community. This is good for USAID. But for the EU, this resource is allocated not just to build infrastructure but also to strengthen the community process in

⁴ The “Good Life” or “Buen Vivir” is a concept from indigenous and afro-descendant communities in Latin America, meaning the guarantee of their individual and collective rights to live in peace with dignity in their territories (Escobar, 2015).

other areas. So, it strengthens the lines of action that the organisation has contemplated within the life plan. (Interview 1)

To sum up, a quotation from an interview shows why recognition and integration are key for understanding beneficiaries' satisfaction:

The reason why it generates more satisfaction is that the EU involve us more and fosters community integration and participation, generating a long-term impact because it is not having immediate actions like USAID, which tries to solve problems by following the government's plan. EU involves priorities of the community's agenda of our life plan. So, the impact is more lasting and more satisfactory. (Interview 1)

Likewise, the EU fostered the rebuilding of the community's social fabric by implementing a project to support psychological rehabilitation. From the beneficiaries' perspective, these actions improved family relations and, consequently, the social fabric "recognising what happened in the past of conflict helped the families and the community to move on as a group to tackle the struggles of the violence" (Interview 5)

The EU interventions fostered social cohesion and community capacity to build peace and reconciliation by supporting conflict resolution strategies by acting as a mediator with armed non-state actors; they fostered dialogue and conciliation with armed actors that the community previously started. One interview highlighted that this support was strategic to maintain their neutrality as a community of peace (Interview 1).

4.2.3 Building a new concept of satisfaction of foreign aid beneficiaries

Satisfaction is not just a subjective perception of the beneficiaries; it is not even close to customer satisfaction. In this context, where foreign aid affects the dynamics of conflict and post-conflict countries and their communities, satisfaction means that the foreign aid agency fulfils specific requirements linked with integration and recognition of the community and its members, such as:

- The permanent presence of aid workers in the local territories and interaction with the communities through dialogue and participation. Especially in the abandoned countryside regions. The interlocution creates a sense of closeness and trusts toward the aid agency.
- The interventions align with pre-existing community plans, strengthening the social fabric and promoting social cohesion.
- This dynamic fosters peacebuilding and the creation of conditions for reconciliation as the community health the wound of the past and feels more empowered to interact with former antagonists.
- Long-term impact as beneficiaries feel integrated during the intervention's formulation and implementation.

Consequently, the community appropriate the outcomes as their own as they develop a community sense of belonging with the results. As one interviewee stated, “the interventions of the EU can be understood more as a duty fulfilled than as a real satisfaction” (Interview 1). They create just a partial sense of satisfaction but fulfil an immediate need. Still, they do not strengthen the communitarian process for peacebuilding and creating conditions for reconciliation. To summarise this dynamic in a peasant's words, “USAID acts as an agency

that hires local contractors whereas they eat you play a role of communities integration” (Interview 1).

Therefore, satisfaction implies a transformation in the way we observe aid “recipients” since recognising them as subjects with voice, knowledge and worth of participation makes a shift from being a recipient to being a beneficiary. The beneficiary is not just a customer of foreign aid or an empty container who received pre-designed interventions. The beneficiary is an active political subject who, in a post-conflict context, is empowered to raise their voice after being silenced by the weapons in the past war.

5. Conclusions

Although a wide range of literature explores the impacts of foreign aid effectiveness over diverse phenomena, the relationship between the foreign aid implementation approach for reconciliation and the beneficiary’s satisfaction levels has not been explored yet. This paper contributes to understanding how the foreign aid for peacebuilding and reconciliation implementation approach affects and shapes the beneficiary’s satisfaction. The qualitative evidence from the Colombian case suggests that USAID tends to align their interventions with the governmental agenda. They implement a technocratic, top-down approach without knowing the specific local dynamics. In that effort, beneficiaries perceive USAID as more vertical – a top-down approach. In contrast, the European Union is perceived as an inclusive agency that performs a bottom-up approach to integrating communities, recognising them as participatory subjects involved in the local community dynamics and working with them in their territories.

Consequently, integration and recognition, as causal mechanisms, lead to the long-term impact of the interventions as they are more legitimate for the beneficiaries. This way, beneficiaries tend to be more satisfied with the European Union approaches than the USAID strategy. Finally, the paper provides a new conceptualisation of satisfaction based on the criteria identified in the qualitative evidence gathered, saying that foreign aid interventions for peacebuilding and reconciliation should fulfil these aspects to increase satisfaction and promote long-term impact interventions in post-conflict societies.

The research opens new avenues for future research to conduct a comparative study between beneficiaries of foreign aid in other communities, urban areas and other regions beyond Colombia. There is also an opportunity to contrast the results using quantitative evidence such as surveys or experiments. My research provides meaningful insights into the understanding of beneficiaries of foreign aid satisfaction, finding that it goes beyond the traditional definition of “customer satisfaction” with a particular product. Satisfaction in this context requires the following conditions: the permanent presence of the agencies in the territories and participatory interaction with communities, alignment with the communitarian agenda, fostering peacebuilding and the creation of conditions for reconciliation with the interventions, leading to long-term effects of the interventions and long-term satisfaction. The former conditions can be explored further in future research with various methodologies and widening the scope conditions of the study.

Finally, this paper entails relevant policy implications since foreign aid for peacebuilding and reconciliation interventions should be monitored by national and local governments and, foremost, the local communities to guarantee long-term satisfaction of the interventions fostering better conditions for peacebuilding and the creation of conditions for reconciliation in the aftermath of the armed conflict. Following a bottom-up approach that recognises the local beneficiaries as participatory subjects and works with them to fulfil their needs according

to the local communitarian dynamics seems to lead to higher satisfaction levels than a top-down approach based on technical criteria pre-defined by the aid agency with the government priorities rather than community's ones.

4. CONCLUSION

The three preceding chapters explored how international and national non-state and state actors affected the dynamics of peacebuilding and the creation of conditions for reconciliation and the sub-national level by providing theoretical support and empirical evidence to test the study's claims. Thus, Chapters one and three examined the effect of foreign aid interventions on the local dynamics of peacebuilding and creating conditions for reconciliation. Chapter two analysed the effect of armed state and non-state actors' repertoires on victims' mobilisation for the creation of conditions for reconciliation. The overall dissertation examines different aspects that can affect the creation of conditions for reconciliation at the local level, including the role of international state actors such as foreign aid agencies and violent national non-state and state actors, i.e., rebel groups, paramilitary forces, and the army.

The dissertation's main findings are relevant to the research agenda on the role of international state and non-state actors in the local dynamics of peacebuilding and creating conditions for reconciliation in conflict and post-conflict countries, societies, and communities. First, I found that foreign aid interventions from the European Union in Colombia from 1993 to 2018 created appropriate conditions for building reconciliation since they reduced the violence. In other words, the observed violence in the municipalities often decreased after the EU aid arrived. Since civilian victims feel safer due to an observed reduction in victimisation levels, they seem more likely to mobilise to create conditions for reconciliation, channel their demands, and (r) establish relations with their former perpetrators in more equilibrated conditions.

Second, regarding the dynamics of violent non-state and state actors and their effect on creating conditions for reconciliation, I found that the actors' repertoire affects how victims mobilise to create conditions for reconciliation. It means that attacks on soft targets are the most robustly associated with forming victims' organisations. The correlation between the type of repertoires and victim organisations is significant; victims are more likely to mobilise to create conditions for reconciliation when armed actors attack softer targets than when armed actors attack hard targets. The presence of victim organisations increased victims' capacity to mobilise and channel their reconciliation demands toward governmental and international organisations by strengthening their social cohesion to mobilise and (r)establish their relations with their former perpetrators.

Thirdly, the research found that, following the qualitative evidence from the Colombian case, the foreign aid implementation approach shapes beneficiaries' satisfaction depending on how it includes the community's integration and recognition. Comparing two types of intervention, USAID and the EU, I found that the bottom-up approach leads to better levels of beneficiary satisfaction. Therefore, while USAID tends to link and negotiate their interventions with the governmental agenda by implementing a technocratic, top-down approach, the EU is perceived as an inclusive agency that performs a bottom-up approach to integrate the communities and recognise them as participatory subjects. The result, on top, is a consequence of practising communitarian integration and recognition, a mechanism which leads to interventions' long-term impact, more legitimate and satisfactory for the beneficiaries.

With the former findings in mind, in the remainder of this conclusion, I first discuss the dissertation's contributions to the academic debate, highlighting theoretical and methodological aspects and implications. Here I also recognise the possible limitations of my findings since they represent an opportunity for future research to grow and explore new research paths. As Gleditsch stated, citing Newton when asking if he had seen further than

others in his work, it was by “standing on the shoulders of giants” (Gleditsch, 2019, p. 1). Therefore, this dissertation is built on the valuable contributions of former researchers and is also subject to improvement for future research since it follows just one possible theoretical and methodological way of many. Second, I draw the relevance of the findings to policymaking and suggest how the interventions from external actors can improve the creation of conditions for reconciliation in conflict and post-conflict scenarios. Finally, I glimpse some recommendations for future research.

4.1 Contribution and Limitations

This dissertation entails different and relevant academic contributions. First, the previous literature on the effect of foreign aid on post-conflict countries tends to recognise missed impacts on the dynamics of peacebuilding. Some studies found negative effects, while others recognise positive results in promoting peace (de Ree & Nillesen, 2009; Strandow et al., 2016). The present research also finds mixed results of the foreign aid interventions showing that the effects of The European Union’s aid interventions tend to create positive conditions for building peace and creating conditions for reconciliation by decreasing victimisation levels in Colombia at the municipal level. Nevertheless, I found that the effect of those interventions on beneficiaries’ satisfaction levels is mediated by the type of implementation approach that aid agencies perform, meaning that bottom-up approaches lead to better satisfaction levels.

Secondly, regarding the observation unit, some previous research mainly focuses on the country level or uses cross-national analysis to support their claims. This research provides qualitative and quantitative data from the sub-national level by providing information about the local dynamics of peacebuilding and creating conditions for reconciliation in the aftermath

of conflict by observing municipalities, communities, and individuals. The former methodological strategy follows the emerging academic tradition whose privileges the micro and local level of conflict, peacebuilding and reconciliation analysis (Autesserre, 2014; Findley, 2018; Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013) that recognises more accurate claims on the understanding of everyday peace practices (Firchow, 2017; Mac Ginty, 2021). My dissertation contributes to nurturing this *meso analysis* and *micro analysis* tradition.

Third, the research contributes to the debate about the effect of foreign aid on peacebuilding, focusing on a matter that previous research did not pay enough attention to; the local dynamics and conditions for reconciliation. Hence, it helps to understand how reducing violence enhances conditions for (r)establishing relations between victims and their former perpetrators. Even recognising that it is difficult to operationalise the concept of reconciliation, it bears emphasising that efforts to approximate measures that can make conditions for reconciliation better are needed and are worth exploring. Thus, Chapter one contributes to the former discussion by including a measure of the reduction of victimisation as a proxy that explains how better conditions emerge for reconciliation. This claim is supported by both qualitative and quantitative evidence. Chapter two uses the same type of evidence to understand how the creation of victims' organisations fosters victims' mobilisation for creating conditions for reconciliation, channels their demands better, and makes them stronger to communicate with their counterparts.

Fourth, the rationality of collective action during armed conflicts and the subsequent post-conflict has been explored in the previous literature. The present work contributes to expanding the understanding of how the rationale of civilians' collective actions and mobilisation during wars help to foster reconciliation. Beyond the capacity to mobilise, my findings show that civilians can build and maintain repertoires to face the violent repertoires peacefully and collectively when their social cohesion is strengthened. Social cohesion can be

enhanced by the interventions of foreign aid agencies or the result of a collective strategy to protect from violence or armed actors. Under those conditions, civilians are more likely to resume contact with their perpetrators to agree on strategies to coexist peacefully in the foreseeable future and proper conditions for integral reparation.

Finally, the last chapter provides a novel conceptualisation of beneficiaries' satisfaction that seeks to understand the conditions under which that satisfaction is met beyond governmental obligations. Satisfaction goes beyond a simple definition of customer satisfaction; it is relevant in conflict and post-conflict settings since it contributes to one of the principles of integral reparations: victims' satisfaction. From the victims' perspective, the permanent territorial presence of aid agencies, alignment with the community's priorities and agenda, promoting peacebuilding and reconciliation and guaranteeing long-term effects of the interventions fulfil the satisfaction criteria. Otherwise, the results just fulfil a pre-existing obligation. The approach performed in the foreign aid implementation definitely shapes individual satisfaction perceptions that increase when individuals and their communities are recognised and included from a bottom-up perspective.

4.2 Discussion of Research

Since there are many theoretical and methodological approaches to researching the influence of international and national state and non-state actors on the local dynamics of conflict and the creation of conditions for reconciliation, I must clarify that the approaches and methodologies used and applied to the dissertation along with the chapters are just one possible way of different available options to explore the topics. Although there are different possibilities, the alternative to the rationale followed here, collective action, can be provided

by other theories, such as critical theories of foreign aid and conflict as well as deeper mixed-method studies.

Having said that, it is clear that the rationale of the dissertation relies on the underlying assumptions of the collective action theory, applied to the dynamics of conflict, mobilisation, pacific resistance and reconciliation and how international and national state and non-state actors affect the behaviour of that civilian collective action for building conditions for peacebuilding and the creation of conditions for reconciliation.

First, Chapter one takes into account the difference in means between the EU interventions before and after the middle point of the interventions and their subsequent effects on victimisation levels. The paper also considers qualitative evidence from victims who the EU has intervened in since the beginning of its interventions. The selection of the middle point of the interventions is justified in implementation planning logic, where the administrative task for planning and their logistical and juridical aspects take time before the program's implementation starts and show their respective effects. Although the data would allow the implementation of a *difference in difference* design, the fact that the EU did not choose the municipalities that intervened randomly but prioritised the regions with the highest conflict levels and human rights violations did not allow me to apply that model. A dataset supports the independent variable data I build based on the EU reports and official documents describing their interventions.

Second, Chapter two performs regression analysis using two ways. First, an ordinary least squares regression to observe the variation in the dependent variable using a count of the victims. Since there are many missing observations in the dataset of victims' organisations at the municipal level, a logistic regression to observe how the armed actors' tactic resulted in the presence or absence of victim's organisations, the last model shows the most robust results to

support the main claim. Here the analysis of armed repertoires, the independent variable, relies on a complete data set that specifies targeting strategies based on governmental information and compiled by the panel dataset on conflict from The CEDE violence and conflict data set (Acevedo & Bornacelly Olivella, 2014; Restrepo et al., 2006). I collected the data on victims' organisations with the help of The National Centre for Historical Memory of Colombia. Since the former dataset contained just one-year observation was not possible to apply time series analysis or fixed effects. Despite the former objective limitations, the paper also relies on qualitative evidence based on interviews conducted with one scholar, one expert from the CNHM and conflict victims.

Lastly, the third section employs a qualitative content analysis that follows the assumptions of the empiric analysis by identifying the recurrence, patterns, and most common topics along with the information gathered. Since the dependent variable seeks to capture the satisfaction perceived by beneficiaries from foreign aid following an inductive perspective, qualitative evidence, through semi-structured interviews, provides more and deeper information on satisfaction perception rather than other methodological tools such as surveys. I would expect to conduct more semi-structured interviews and even focus groups. However, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the limited resources to conduct fieldwork stopped me from expanding the evidence gathered. Nevertheless, the interviews collected included a variety of beneficiaries of different features belonging to diverse ages and gender groups and living in distinctive locations. Likewise, the interviews were gathered until finding the repetition of the information since the interviews started to follow the initial pattern by the fifth interview.

4.3 Policy Implications

Respecting the implications of my research for policy, I suggest a set of recommendations for the foreign aid agencies and the national and local governments. Since victimisation levels in Colombia have recorded one of the highest levels in an internal armed conflict, protecting civilians is crucial to guarantee the right of non-repetition to the victims. Beyond the strategical or tactical matters, it is crucial to support civilians by protecting their rights to integral reparation and their victims' organisations and rights to encourage a more effective reconciliation process without reproducing the asymmetries of the armed conflict in the post-conflict. Still, victims' voices and demands need to be listened to and channelled to address, not just the ex-combatant demands as a priority. Guarantee that equilibrium between victims' reparations and participation and the ex-combatants participation is crucial to guarantee a balanced reconciliation process.

Consequently, it is fundamental to maintain and reinforce alliances with international actors such as the EU to maintain safety and security policies that further decrease victimisation levels. Since safer conditions increase victims' mobilisation, the support of aid agencies to strengthen victims' collective action is vital to create better conditions for reconciliation. Maintaining the presence of those agencies, during the post-conflict period, in the territory also protects the civilians from the dynamics of violence.

Monitoring foreign aid for peacebuilding and reconciliation interventions by national and local governments and, foremost, the local communities is crucial to guarantee the long-term satisfaction of the beneficiaries. Similarly, promoting integrative participatory approaches when delivering foreign aid for peacebuilding and reconciliation targets better the intended purposes and help to sustain the results beyond the intervention.

Specifically for the Colombian case concerning the incoming government, there are several challenges to face in its reconciliation policy and its relations with international and national state and non-state actors. First, strengthening and promoting victims' mobilisation for creating conditions for reconciliation also guarantee their security to interact with the ex-combatants along with the reparation individual and collective process. Second, develop a strategy to stop and prevent attacks on civilian (soft) targets.

Second, strengthen and rebuild relations with aid agencies beyond USAID and the EU to create an alliance that supports and extends the reconciliation policy in the long run. Those agencies can play a vital role by overseeing the interventions from the national and local governments to verify if the intended purposes of the reconciliation policy are accomplished and satisfy the beneficiaries. Those efforts can also help to resume peace talks and contact with the remaining rebel groups, such as the ELN (National Liberation Army) and the FARC dissidents. In this way, creating a comprehensive security strategy is vital to address the emergency of new violent non-state actors that challenge the security conditions for implementing a reconciliation policy since they increase violence against civilians.

Finally, following one of the main findings of my research, the top-down approach leads to less satisfaction. Therefore, bottom-up or grassroots approaches should be encouraged when formulating, implementing and evaluating interventions from international and national state and non-state actors on peacebuilding and reconciliation. Likewise, it is crucial to formulate a diverse and plural national reconciliation policy that is implemented and evaluated following a participatory strategy, including voices from victims and ex-combatants and aligning the policy with pre-existing local and communitarian agendas on reconciliation to bolster its legitimacy. The government must be present in the territories, especially the rural areas, through their servants to gather the voices of victims and ex-combatants in order to build a coherent reconciliation policy.

4.5 Limitations and Paths for Future Research

Concerning the study's limitations, first, the research follows one approach to many existing possibilities. Since resources and time to develop this study were limited, the data collected could be expanded to robust the evidence. Also, the study focuses on one country at the subnational level. It follows a tendency in conflict studies to find stronger results when observing small units of analysis while conducting an in deep analysis. Therefore, the argument can be explored beyond that unit of analysis by applying the arguments to other countries with an armed conflict or post-conflict.

Consequently, concerning the findings from Chapters one and two, future research could disaggregate victimisation to observe how homicides are affected or even how the dynamics of forced displacement are affected by the dynamics of victimisation. Similarly, regarding the methodology, future work could use multivariate regressions or experiments to explore the hypothesis further. Future research can also contribute to answering research questions on the effects of victimisation and conflict intensity on creating conditions for reconciliation.

For my future research plans, as a development of this dissertation, I plan to explore the effect of foreign aid interventions for peacebuilding and reconciliation on the behaviour of armed actors' repertoires, observing how those interventions affected the tactic along with the time in order to understand the effects on rebels and paramilitary groups demobilisation and reintegration to the civilian society.

In chapter three, there is also an opportunity to support the results using quantitative evidence such as surveys or experiments. My research provides qualitative evidence to enrich

the comprehension of beneficiaries of the foreign aid satisfaction concept. The definition can be used to operationalise the variable using the criteria suggested and collect survey and experimental data that can support that claim.

Additionally, in the first and second Chapters, there is an opportunity to develop the analysis further by observing the distribution of the victimisation about other variables like gender, ethnic group and disability. Also, there is room for improvement in the results, including the operators' counterparts' effects on civil society organisations over conflict intensity. The research provides several features of conflict dynamics across several regions and municipalities. It is relevant to further explore the claim by analysing how different types of subnational conflicts demand different reconciliation conditions, processes and policies.

Furthermore, the limits of this research can be expanded by analysing the influence of different armed actors on the victims' mobilisation process and the subsequent reconciliation process, i.e., a variety of violent non-state actors such as rebels, paramilitary forces and the emerging post-conflict warlords and gangs, as their respective alliances with dissidents from rebel and paramilitary organisations. Another relevant factor to explore is the role of migrations and the coalitions between different violent non-state actors from different nationalities and how those transnational dynamics affect the behaviour of violence and the subsequent victimisation of civilians.

Similarly, it must be relevant to explore the relations between the intervention from the foreign aid agencies that affected the recent expansion of social leaders' assassination as well as ex-combatant murders. It is also a pending question to explore how the civilians' mechanism of protection that those agencies have helped to create or encourage by promoting collective peace strategies, such as the local peace communities, have helped to protect both civilians and ex-combatants from the violence of emerging non-state actors in the post-conflict period, which means how those agencies continue fostering conditions for reconciliation.

Finally, future research can help answer questions that the present study opened but did not answer. For instance, to address questions about the participation and effectiveness of victims' mobilisation in the reconciliation process and the ex-combatants participation in building conditions for reconciliation. The findings and contributions stated in this section open the door for future research to conduct a comparative study between beneficiaries of foreign aid in other communities, urban areas, and other regions beyond the case explored.

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⁵ The Informed Consent Format is included in the Appendix.

Interview 5: Beneficiary from foreign aid USAID and The EU-Colombia. July 2022

APPENDIX

Chapter 1

Table 1 Regression tables before and after the midpoint of the interventions

Table 1. T-test – Pre-treatment

Two-sample t-test with equal variances

Two-sample t-test with equal variances

	obs1	obs2	Mean1	Mean2	dif	St Err	t value	p-value
total by pretratam~1	21559	4146	278.6985	512.0865	- 233.388	18.3485	- 12.7	0

Table 2. Number of Victims T-test - post-treatment

Two-sample t-test with equal variances

Two-sample t-test with equal variances

	obs1	obs2	Mean1	Mean2	dif	St Err	t value	p-value
total by postrata~ 1	9473	2764	224.4495	169.333 5	55.11 6	19.4485	2.85	.0045

Chapter 3

1: Interview Questionnaire

1. Perfil demográfico

- a. Sexo: a.1. M 1.2. F
- b. Departamento:
- c. Municipio:
- d. Vereda:
- e. Proyecto/s de cooperación internacional de la USAID y la Unión Europea para la reconciliación de _____ los _____ que _____ ha _____ sido beneficiario: _____

- f. Cual fue la agencia financiadora del proyecto?
- g. Ejecutor:
- h. ¿Pertenece a alguna organización?
- i. ¿Cuál organización?
- j. ¿Cuál es su rol en la organización?

2. Preguntas sobre Cooperación internacional para la reconciliación

- a. ¿En qué consistió el proyecto de cooperación internacional para el desarrollo del que usted fue beneficiario/ participante?
- b. ¿Ha participado de algún otro proyecto?
- c. ¿Cuál es su percepción/ qué piensa sobre el desempeño del donante o agencia financiadora del proyecto?

3. Preguntas sobre enfoque de implementación entre UE y USAID

- a. ¿Qué diferencias puede identificar en la forma de formular los proyectos de cooperación internacional entre la UE y USAID?
- b. ¿Qué diferencias puede identificar en la forma de implementar los proyectos de cooperación internacional entre la UE y USAID?
- c. Cual de las dos formas de formular e implementar los proyectos de cooperación internacional genera mayor satisfacción, por que?

4. Preguntas sobre satisfacción

- a. ¿Cuáles eran sus expectativas sobre el/los proyecto/s antes de que se implementara/n
- b. ¿Estuvo satisfecho con la formulación del/ los proyecto/s?
- c. ¿Está satisfecho con la implementación del/ los proyecto/s?
- d. ¿Está satisfecho con la evaluación del/ los proyecto/s?
- e. ¿Considera que este proyecto contribuyo a la reconciliación en el área donde fue implementado (¿vereda, corregimiento, municipio o departamento? En el corto/ mediano o largo plazo?
- f. ¿Qué resultados concretos observa usted como producto del proyecto en materia de reconciliación?
- g. ¿Considera que el proyecto tiene resultados que pueden sostenerse en el tiempo?

2. Word frequency analysis – 100 words

TABLE 1. Word frequency analysis

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)	Similar Words
comunidad	9	111	0.58	comunidad, comunidades
internacional	13	76	0.39	internacional
recursos	8	68	0.35	recurso, recursos
gobierno	8	67	0.35	gobierno, gobiernos
cooperación	11	65	0.34	cooperación
Europe	7	53	0.27	europea
territorio	10	47	0.24	territorio, territorios
proceso	7	44	0.23	proceso, procesos
unión	5	42	0.22	unión
apoyo	5	41	0.21	apoyo, apoyos
diferencia	10	36	0.19	diferencia, diferencias
decir	5	34	0.18	decir
estado	6	34	0.18	estado, estados
fortalecer	10	33	0.17	fortalece, fortalecer
tiempo	6	32	0.17	tiempo, tiempos
espacio	7	32	0.17	espacio, espacios
necesidad	9	31	0.16	necesidad, necesidades
derecho	7	30	0.16	derecho, derechos
desarrollo	10	29	0.15	desarrollo
tierra	6	27	0.14	tierra, tierras
campesinos	10	27	0.14	campesino, campesinos
municipio	9	24	0.12	municipio, municipios
organizaciones	14	24	0.12	organizaciones
conflicto	9	23	0.12	conflicto, conflictos
estrategia	10	23	0.12	estrategia, estrategias
organización	12	23	0.12	organización
programa	8	23	0.12	programa, programas
satisfacción	12	23	0.12	satisfacción

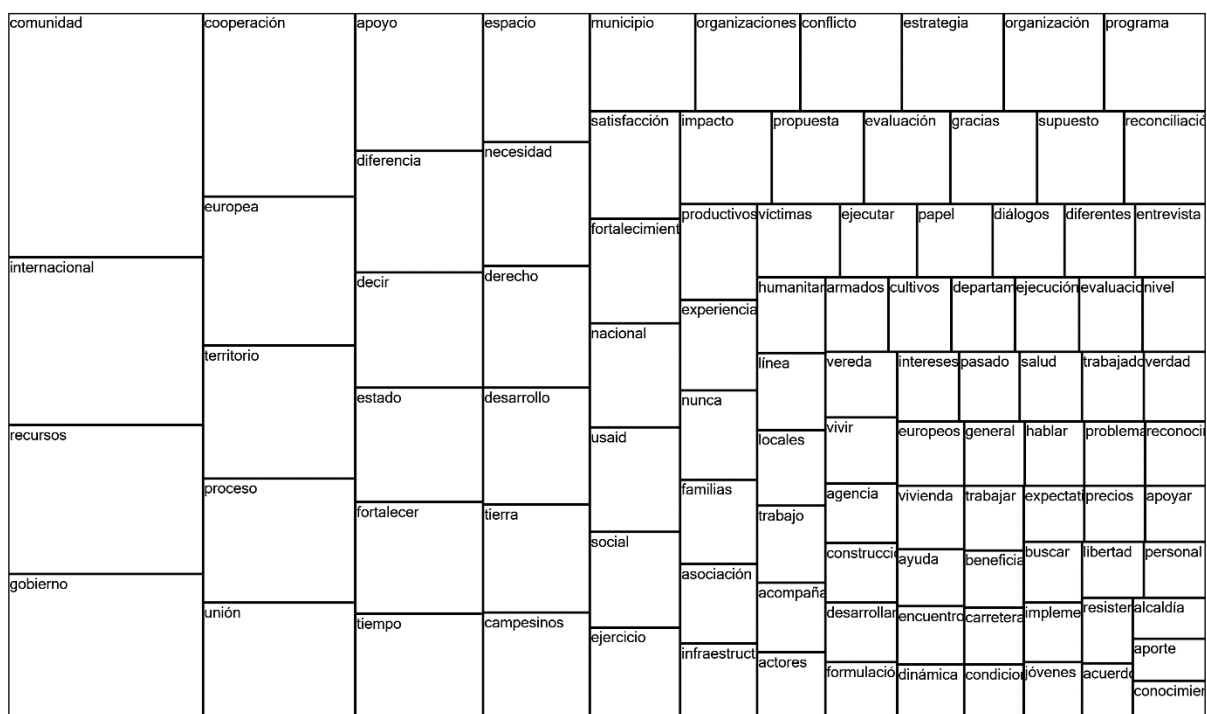
fortalecimiento	15	22	0.11	fortalecimiento
nacional	8	22	0.11	nacional, naciones
usaid	5	22	0.11	usaid
social	6	20	0.10	social, sociales
ejercicio	9	20	0.10	ejercicio, ejercicios
impacto	7	20	0.10	impacto, impactos
propuesta	9	20	0.10	propuesta, propuestas
evaluación	10	19	0.10	evaluación
gracias	7	19	0.10	gracias
supuesto	8	19	0.10	supuesto
reconciliación	14	18	0.09	reconciliación
productivos	11	17	0.09	productivo, productivos
experiencia	11	16	0.08	experiencia, experiencias
nunca	5	16	0.08	nunca
familias	8	15	0.08	familia, familias
asociación	10	14	0.07	asociación
infraestructura	15	14	0.07	infraestructura
víctimas	8	14	0.07	víctima, víctimas
ejecutar	8	13	0.07	ejecutar
papel	5	13	0.07	papel, papeles
diferentes	10	12	0.06	diferente, diferentes
diálogos	8	12	0.06	diálogo, diálogos
entrevista	10	12	0.06	entrevista
humanitario	11	12	0.06	humanitario, humanitarios
locales	7	12	0.06	local, locales
línea	5	12	0.06	línea, líneas
trabajo	7	12	0.06	trabajo
acompañamiento	14	11	0.06	acompañamiento
actores	7	11	0.06	actor, actores
armados	7	11	0.06	armado, armados
cultivos	8	11	0.06	cultivo, cultivos
departamento	12	11	0.06	departamento
ejecución	9	11	0.06	ejecución

evaluaciones	12	11	0.06	evaluaciones
nivel	5	11	0.06	nivel, niveles
vereda	6	11	0.06	vereda, veredas
vivir	5	11	0.06	vivir
agencia	7	10	0.05	agencia, agencias
construcción	12	10	0.05	construcción
desarrollar	11	10	0.05	desarrollar
formulación	11	10	0.05	formulación
intereses	9	10	0.05	intereses
pasado	6	10	0.05	pasado
salud	5	10	0.05	salud
trabajadores	12	10	0.05	trabajadores
verdad	6	10	0.05	verdad
europeos	8	10	0.05	europeo, europeos
vivienda	8	10	0.05	vivienda, viviendas
ayuda	5	9	0.05	ayuda, ayudas
encuentros	10	9	0.05	encuentro, encuentros
dinámica	8	9	0.05	dinámica, dinámicas
general	7	9	0.05	general
hablar	6	9	0.05	hablar
problema	8	9	0.05	problema, problemas
reconocimiento	14	9	0.05	reconocimiento
trabajar	8	9	0.05	trabajar
beneficiario	12	8	0.04	beneficiario, beneficiarios
carretera	9	8	0.04	carretera, carreteras
condicionado	12	8	0.04	condicionado, condicionados
expectativa	11	8	0.04	expectativa, expectativas
precios	7	8	0.04	precio, precios
apoyar	6	8	0.04	apoyar
buscar	6	8	0.04	buscar
implementación	14	8	0.04	implementación
jóvenes	7	8	0.04	jóvenes
libertad	8	8	0.04	libertad

personal	8	8	0.04	individual, personal
resistencia	11	8	0.04	resistencia
acuerdo	7	7	0.04	acuerdo, acuerdos
alcaldía	8	7	0.04	alcaldía
aporte	6	7	0.04	aporte, aportes
conocimiento	12	7	0.04	conocimiento, conocimientos

Own Elaboration based on the interviews gathered with NVivo

Treemap



Own Elaboration based on the interviews gathered with NVivo

Word Frequency Table- Translation from Spanish

Word	Weighted-Percentage-(%)	Similar-Words
community	0.58	community, communities
international	0.39	international
resources	0.35	resource, resources
government	0.35	government, governments
cooperation	0.34	cooperation
European	0.27	European
territory	0.24	territory, territories
process	0.23	process, processes
union	0.22	union
support	0.21	support, support
difference	0.19	difference, differences
say	0.18	say
state	0.18	state, states
strengthen	0.17	strengthens, fortifies
time	0.17	time, times
space	0.17	space, spaces
need	0.16	need, needs
right	0.16	law, rights
development	0.15	development
land	0.14	land, land
peasants	0.14	peasant, peasants
municipality	0.12	municipality, municipalities
organisations	0.12	organisations
conflict	0.12	conflict, conflicts
strategy	0.12	strategy, strategies
organisation	0.12	organisation
programme	0.12	programme, programmes
satisfaction	0.12	satisfaction
strengthening	0.11	strengthening
national	0.11	national, nations
usaid	0.11	usaid
social	0.10	social, social
exercise	0.10	exercise, exercises
impact	0.10	impact, impacts
proposal	0.10	proposal, proposals
evaluation	0.10	evaluation
thank-you	0.10	thank-you
alleged	0.10	alleged
reconciliation	0.09	reconciliation
productive	0.09	productive, productive
experience	0.08	experience, experiences
never	0.08	never
families	0.08	family, families

associationα	0.07α	associationα
infrastructureα	0.07α	infrastructureα
victimα	0.07α	victim,·victimα
runα	0.07α	runα
paperα	0.07α	paper,·papersα
differentα	0.06α	different,·differentα
Dialoguesα	0.06α	dialogue,·dialoguesα
interviewα	0.06α	interviewα
humanitarianα	0.06α	humanitarian,·humanitarianα
premisesα	0.06α	local,·premisesα
lineα	0.06α	line,·linesα
workα	0.06α	workα
accompanimentα	0.06α	accompanimentα
actorsα	0.06α	actor,·actorsα
armedα	0.06α	armed,·armedα
cropsα	0.06α	cultivation,·cropsα
departmentα	0.06α	departmentα
executionα	0.06α	executionα
evaluationsα	0.06α	evaluationsα
levelα	0.06α	level,·levelsα
pavementα	0.06α	pavement,·pavementsα
liveα	0.06α	liveα
agencyα	0.05α	agency,·agenciesα
constructionα	0.05α	constructionα
developα	0.05α	developα
formulationα	0.05α	formulationα
interestα	0.05α	interestα
pastα	0.05α	pastα
healthα	0.05α	healthα
workersα	0.05α	workersα
truthα	0.05α	truthα
Europeanα	0.05α	European,·Europeanα
housingα	0.05α	housing,·housingα
helpα	0.05α	aid,·aidα
meetingsα	0.05α	meeting,·meetingsα
dynamicsα	0.05α	dynamics,·dynamicsα
generalα	0.05α	generalα
speakα	0.05α	speakα
problemα	0.05α	problem,·problemsα
acknowledgementα	0.05α	acknowledgementα
workα	0.05α	workα
beneficiaryα	0.04α	beneficiary,·beneficiariesα
roadα	0.04α	road,·roadsα
conditionedα	0.04α	conditioned,·conditionedα
expectationα	0.04α	expectation,·expectationsα
pricesα	0.04α	price,·pricesα
supportα	0.04α	supportα

search	0.04	search	0
implementation	0.04	implementation	0
young-people	0.04	young-people	0
freedom	0.04	freedom	0
staff	0.04	individual,-personal	0
resistance	0.04	resistance	0
agreement	0.04	agreement,-agreements	0
city-hall	0.04	city-hall	0
contribution	0.04	contribution,-contributions	0
knowledge	0.04	knowledge,-knowledge	0

4. Book of Codes

Name	Files	References
1. Beneficiaries' Satisfaction-DV	1	1
2. Foreign Aid interventions-IV	0	0
2.1 European Union-Bottom-up	2	6
2.2 USAID-Top-down	5	17
2.3 Antecedents	1	1
2.4 Other donors	0	0
3. Mechanisms	0	0
3.1 Inclusiveness-Recognition	1	1
3.1 Dialogue and participation	6	11
3.2 Alignment with the communitarian agenda	3	3
3.3 Sense of security and protection	2	2
3.4 Strengthening of cohesion of local communities	5	16
3.5 The long-term impact of the intervention.	1	1
3.6 Territorial presence-fulfil State's gap	1	3
3.7 Make the community visible	1	1

5. Informed Consent Format in Spanish and English

Consentimiento Informado

Participación en Entrevista Semiestructurada

Universidad de Essex

Fecha:

Querido Entrevistado,

Esta entrevista busca investigar sobre las dinámicas y repertorios de los actores armados en Colombia en relación la respuesta de las víctimas frente a sus dinámicas violentas. Su objetivo principal es indagar por su criterio experto en el tema e indagar sobre las diferentes consecuencias que dichos repertorios tuvieron sobre los civiles. Como investigadora doctoral de la Universidad de Essex analizaré las respuestas para propósitos netamente investigativos dirigidos a alimentar mi disertación doctoral. También evaluaré el posible uso de estas preguntas en futuras encuestas.

Esta investigación está siendo realizada por la investigadora Johanna Amaya Panche, del departamento de Gobierno.

Su nombre se citará en caso de que usted así lo autorice. Los datos recopilados a través de este cuestionario se agregarán y no será identificable individualmente en ningún informe o publicación. Toda la información recopilada se mantendrá de forma segura y solo los investigadores a cargo de la supervisión doctoral y la examinación de la tesis podrán acceder a ella identificando a los entrevistados.

Estaría muy agradecida por su participación. Por favor registre tu firma si está de acuerdo con la información anterior.

Firma

Nombre

Cedula

Informed Consent (Translation)
Participation in Semi-Structured Interview
University of Essex

Date:

Dear Interviewee,

This interview seeks to investigate the dynamics and repertoires of armed actors in Colombia in relation to the response of victims to their violent dynamics. Its main objective is to ask for your expert opinion on the subject and to inquire about the different consequences these repertoires have had on civilians. As a doctoral researcher at the University of Essex, I will analyse the responses for purely research purposes to feed into my doctoral dissertation. I will also evaluate the possible use of these questions in future surveys.

This research is being conducted by Johanna Amaya Panche from the Department of Government.

Her name will be cited with your permission. Data collected through this questionnaire will be aggregated and will not be individually identifiable in any report or publication. All information collected will be kept securely, and only researchers in charge of doctoral supervision and examination of the thesis will be able to access it by identifying the interviewees.

I would be very grateful for your participation. Please register your signature if you agree with the above information.

Signature

Name

ID