Colombia's Peace On its Edges

Borderland peacebuilding approaches and their impacts at the Colombo-Venezuelan border

Photo of young woman from the Wayúu de Manaure, during a manifestation for peace in the Colombian borderland department of La Guajira. (Photo credit: Juan David Tena, *SIG*)

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ABSTRACT

This thesis outlines borderland peacebuilding approaches by major actors in Colombia's road to peace: the Colombian government and armed forces, and international humanitarian actors, in the Colombo-Venezuelan border region. Different approaches towards peacebuilding have their own set of trade-offs and contributions to peace and stability, and therefore each will be analyzed thoroughly using qualitative analysis consisting of primary policy and document analysis. This research is significant given the ongoing spill-over effects of the Venezuelan crisis on Colombia's peace process, and the current uncertainty revolving around the major Peace Agreement between the FARC-EP and the Colombian government. The local communities of the Colombo-Venezuelan border have experienced some of the heaviest burden of the Colombian internal violent conflict, yet have experienced the literal marginalization of the margins due to failed attempts to integrate these isolated regions with the rest of the country. Through the analytical frame of borderland peacebuilding, this thesis engages with the conceptualization of borderland peacebuilding and how this has been addressed by different actors in the Colombian situation. This research found that borderland peacebuilding by the Colombian State and its armed forces consists primarily of a counter-insurgency and counter-narcotics approach, carried out by a state centric security first approach. The impact of these was short term victories and unsustainable positive results in the long run. On the other hand, international humanitarian actors have approached borderland peacebuilding through a coordinated emergency response to the migration crisis, and the provision of humanitarian assistance for the region's most vulnerable victims of the internal conflict. The impact has resulted in the alleviation of the effects of the migration crisis, and the empowerment of local communities. Borderland peacebuilding means that the borderland region is not merely viewed as an unmanageable zone of violence from the center, but as an area capable of being a driving force for Colombia's peacebuilding process if the approach is comprehensive and inclusive.

ACKOWLEDGEMENTS

Ya es hora de entender que este desastre cultural no se remedia ni con plomo ni con plata sino con una educación para la paz, una educación inconforme y reflexiva que nos incite a descubrir quiénes somos en una sociedad que se parezca más a la que merecemos, que nos oriente desde la cuna en la identificación temprana de las vocaciones y las aptitudes congénitas para poder hacer toda la vida sólo lo que nos guste, que es la receta mágica de la felicidad y la longevidad. En síntesis, una legítima revolución de paz que canalice hacia la vida la inmensa energía creadora que durante casi dos siglos hemos usado para destruirnos y que reivindique y enaltezca el predominio de la imaginación.

Gabriel García Márquez, Mensaje sobre la paz en Colombia (1998)

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INTRODUCTION

Many mark the signing of a peace agreement as the beginning of peace, however this is far from the truth. Peacebuilding in Colombia has been a non-linear process which takes constant steps forwards as it does backwards. The Colombian conflict has been ongoing for decades, and a lack of comprehensive policies has led armed violence to continue reign in Colombia, especially within its borderlands. A peace deal was finally signed by the largest rebel group in the country, the FARC-EP, and the Colombian government in 2016, but instilling these peacebuilding measures has been an uphill battle.

The Colombo-Venezuelan borderland has felt much of burden of the Colombian conflict as it has historically been a region where armed groups controlled territory, escaped Colombian armed forces, and gained strength. Recently, the Colombo-Venezuelan border region was brought under the international spotlight due to the massive Venezuelan crisis affecting the entire Latin American continent. Today, the Venezuelan crisis amounts to nearly 4 million migrants having fled Venezuela, and about 1.3 million of these migrants have fled to their neighboring country of Colombia.[1] Already at a critical and vulnerable point in their history, following the peace settlement, Colombia is now faced with the second largest migration crisis of the world after Syria. The borderland region between both countries, a region which has suffered some of the heaviest consequences of armed guerrilla warfare over the years, is now suffering the weight of thousands of migrants crossing into Colombia in search for access to employment, education and social services.

This thesis will take the 2.219 km long Colombo-Venezuelan borderland region in this critical point of its history, in a post-agreement phase and currently facing a massive refugee crisis. In order to understand how different peacebuilding approaches contribute to peace and stability in Colombia, this thesis unpacks the approach of the Colombian State, and military forces, and the approach of international humanitarian actors towards borderland peacebuilding.

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[1] United Nations. (2019). Refugees and migrants from Venezuela top 4 million: UNHCR and IOM. Retrieved April 2019 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2019/6/5cfa2a4a4/refugees-migrants-venezuela-top-4-million-unhcr-iom.html.>

This thesis takes an analytical look at what has been done, and is currently being done by the governmental and non-governmental sector to build peace with what Annette Idler calls a borderland lens. A borderland lens signifies that the specific needs and dynamics of borderland communities are included into the creation and implementation of peacebuilding policies.[2] The nature of borderlands differs than the rest of the state; the presence of a frontier line creates particular dynamics and activities to arise between and within borderland communities. Borderlands give space for particular sources of conflict, since borders function to, "divide and unite, bind the interior and link with the exterior, [as] barriers and junctions, walls and doors, organs of defense and attack."[3] The "border effect" is the specific dynamics within borderlands that "intensifies people-centered insecurities, thus contributing to a complex security landscape and an environment that drives the illicit economy."[4] Idler's "border effect" has four dimensions: the border acts as a *facilitator* since violent non-state actors can move freely across borders and use this to their advantage while armed forces of a state are limited to the borderline, it acts as a *magnet* for illegal actors because of the high profits made my illicit cross border businesses, it acts as a *deterrent* to trustful relationships between local communities who depend on the illicit economic opportunities provided by illegal groups, and lastly it acts as a *disguise* for particular forms of violence and insecurities that create grievances.[5]

The government approach to the borderlands consists of state-centric peacebuilding policies, a confrontational security approach to borderland specific issues, and a historically weak presence in Colombia's borderlands. Their objective has essentially been to instill what Galtung calls negative peace, "the absence of violence or war."[6] On the other hand, the current international humanitarian approach consists of short-term emergency assistance to the migration crisis as well as long-term approaches which aim to end violence, build trust and co-existence within borderland communities. The humanitarian approach consists of instilling

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[2] Idler, Dr Annette, et al. (2019) "A Borderland Lens on Hubs of Protracted Conflict." *In Depth*, p. 3.
[3] Strassoldo, R. in Anthony I. A. & Peter O. A. (Eds.), *Borderlands in Africa: A Multidisciplinary and Comparative Focus on Nigeria and West Africa*. Lagos: University of Lagos Press, p. 389.
[4] Idler (n2, p.4)
[5] Ibid
[6] Galtung, J. (1964). 'An Editorial', *Journal of Peace Research*, 1 (1): p. 2.

positive peace; the integration of human society.[7] Positive peace "takes into consideration the capacity of a society to meet the needs of citizens, reduce the number of grievances that arise and resolve remaining disagreements and root causes of conflict without the use of violence."[8] The central question this thesis seeks to answer is how does the Colombian State and international humanitarian actors' approach to borderland peacebuilding contribute and impact towards peace and stability in the Colombo-Venezuelan border region? It is key to look at both the State and humanitarian approaches as these usually differ greatly in their approach and expectations in how they seek to contribute to peacebuilding. Different sets of policies have different trade-offs; "A borderland perspective calls into question several mainstream assumptions, including that: statebuilding and peacebuilding are synonymous with each other; extending the state footprint into borderlands will bring peace and stability; economic integration will reduce insecurity and poverty in border regions; and promoting good governance will help stabilise borderlands. There is therefore a need for more conscious deliberation on the trade-offs between different goals, and who bears the costs of various interventions."[9]

Borderlands have a distinct nature and dynamics due to their proximity to an international frontier line. The unique character of borderland regions leads these areas and their communities to experience transition processes, such as peacebuilding, differently than the rest of the state. Traditional peacebuilding analysis has often ignored borderland dynamics, so this analysis hopes to bring these particular dynamics to light within greater peacebuilding theory. This analysis considers the significance of the Venezuelan migration crisis since the current refugee flow has had a massive local impact, and is currently one of the most defining dynamics of the Colombian border with Venezuela. It is important to note that having a borderland lens does not mean that national focus on peacebuilding should be undermined or replaced, but instead that non-national histories, and local and trans-border relations lead to very different experiences and needs in borderlands which should be included within the goals of peacebuilding. Essentially, it means

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[7] Galtung, J. (n 6, p.4)
[8] Sida (2017) "Defining Key Concepts, Tools and Operational Responses." Retrieved May 2019 from: <www.sida.se/globalassets/sida/eng/partners/peace-and-conflict-tool-box/s209461_tool_defining_key_concepts_c2-3.pdf.> p. 1.
[9] Plonski, S., et al. (2018) "Borderlands and Peacebuilding: A View from the Margins." *Accord Insight*, no. 4, p. 19.

that the particular "vulnerabilities of borderland communities and other stakeholders can be turned into opportunities" [10] by adopting border sensitive peacebuilding policies.

This research is significant since the Colombian border with Venezuela is an under-explored region which holds great potential to contribute to peace and stability in Colombia. A lack of understanding of borderland regions often times leads to peacebuilding policies which are misaligned with the reality of these regions, therefore a careful look at how they have been dealt with and what is being done today in Colombia's post-agreement phase, could grant insight into what assumptions are held by the state and international humanitarian actors working towards peace in the region, and how these regions can be better developed and integrated in order to work towards their stability.

This thesis begins by looking at the relevant theory and literature that has led to the development borderland peacebuilding, and what it means today to leading academics and researchers in the field. Then, the methodology of the research is explained followed by the key context of the Colombo-Venezuelan borderland region, in order to understand the dynamic forces at play and the unique character within the peripheries of the Colombian State. The current Venezuelan migration crisis is looked at in the context of the borderlands and the effects it is having in the region. Next, state peacebuilding policies and programs by the Colombian government, and the Colombian Armed Forces, towards the borderland regions are mapped out, followed by an outline of borderland peacebuilding approaches by international humanitarian actors. Next, the differing programs and approaches are assessed based on how they have impacted peace and stability in the region through a borderland lens. Ideally, an analysis of national humanitarian actors would be included however, due to the massive scope of national humanitarian actors at the Colombo-Venezuelan border, and a lack of information monitoring their impact on the ground, these could not be included into this research. Finally, the thesis is concluded through a summary of how the impacts of these differing actors have contributed to peace and stability in the Colombo-Venezuelan borderland region, the significance of the research in the current context is explained, and further research and final thoughts are given.

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[10] Idler (n 2, p. 4)

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter outlines existing literature in order to better understand where the research can position itself within the field. The conceptualization of peacebuilding, and the nature of borderlands will be explored, and a definition of borderland peacebuilding will be formulated based on these.

The Conceptual Beginning of Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding has changed its shape and form throughout the years. It was first introduced in 1992, by former UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali as "action to identify and support structured, which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict."[11] Since its conceptual beginning, peacebuilding became a central component of the UN agenda; it has faced few successes and many obstacles, and its definition has developed and changed over time as a result. Most recently, peacebuilding was defined as: "a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development. Peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to the specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequences, and relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives."[12] As important peacebuilding partners, post-conflict countries, and organizations have engaged in policy discussions, five peacebuilding and state-building goals have become clear: legitimate (inclusive) politics, people's security, access to justice, employment generation and livelihoods support, accountable revenue management and service delivery.[13] These targets focus on the what and the why of peacebuilding, but the how has always been a fundamental

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[11] UN. Secretary-General. (1992). *An agenda for peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping,* Rep. No. A/47/277 - S/24111. New York: UN. p. 5.

[12] Decision of Secretary-General's Policy Committee May 2007 in United Nations (2010). *UN Peacebuilding: An Orientation.* Peacebuilding Support Office (Technical paper.), p. 5.

[13] International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (2009) *A New Deal for Engagement in fragile states.* Retrieved March 2019 from: <https://www.pbsbdialogue.org/media/filer_public/07/69/07692de0-3557-494e-918e-18df00e9ef73/the_new_deal.pdf>

challenge on the ground. Peacebuilding theory today accentuates the importance of implementing a national plan of peacebuilding, however traditional national approaches to peacebuilding tend to be state-centric and assume that peace begins at the center and spreads to the peripheries. As states develop and grow, the peripheries of a state are often ignored and viewed as obstacles to stability, and Colombia is a prime example of this.

Dr. Annette Idler defines the borderlands as, "regions situated on the edges of states which straddle an international border"[14], "whose economic and social life is directly and significantly affected by proximity to an international border."[15] The borderlands are directly affected by their distance from the political and economic centers of the country,[16] and their vicinity to an international frontier.[17]

The Colombo-Venezuelan borderland region has faced significant changes since the historic peace deal between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP, and the massive migration crisis caused by the socio-economic and political crisis of Venezuela. The changes experienced in this region highlight the growing importance for a peacebuilding approach which is inclusive of borderlands and their communities. The framework which will serve as the backbone of my analysis will be borderland peacebuilding. Borderland peacebuilding is defined as: Peacebuilding which views borderlands as opportunities for peaceful change where the complex dynamics and history of marginalization of borderlands and their communities is significantly considered. It is an inclusive form of peacebuilding which seeks to understand the local politics and economic factors which are particular to the nature of borderland regions, in order to form sustainable every day peacebuilding mechanisms which facilitate peace and stability from the margins of the state.[18] The following literature review will look at the arguments surrounding borderland peacebuilding through a political economy perspective as the political and economic spaces that have been contested in the Colombian conflict best define the borderland regional dynamics.

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[14] Idler, A. in Idler, A. et al. (2015). Zones of Peace in Colombia's Borderland. *International Journal of Peace Studies, 20*(1), p. 51.
[15] Goodhand, J. & Hansen, N. in Idler, et al. (n 13, p. 51)
[16] Martínez, O. in Idler, et al. (n 13, p. 51)
[17] Goodhand, J. & Hansen, N. in Idler, et al. (n 13, p. 51)
[18] Author generated own definition based on the work and theory developed by Annette Idler

What should peacebuilding look like?

According to John Karslrud, traditional peacebuilding has too often emphasized stabilization and counterterrorism at the expense of development and integration.[19] Traditional peacebuilding goals have failed to address root causes such as weak governance and marginalization. Evidence suggests that this turn towards stabilization and counter-terrorism, which has been the primary approach of the Colombian State when dealing with its borderlands, may be counter-productive, and feeding a cycle of violence.[20] A key trend that has been identified, by organizations such as the UN, is that liberal peacebuilding has been more difficult than anticipated; it is fraught with a "continuing difficulty in understanding local politics and dynamics,"[21] beyond the local realities of borderlands. This brings to light the academic debate surrounding the idea of peacebuilding as a way of *stabilization* or *transformation*.

As a result of critiques towards peacebuilding in the field, there is a growing interest in developing more inclusive peacebuilding measures. Inclusive peacebuilding is a holistic approach to peacebuilding which focuses on integrating local needs and desires through bottom-up approaches; although it is not specific or exclusive to borderland peacebuilding it is an important component of adopting a borderland lens in peacebuilding. This idea is forwarded by pioneers such as John Paul Lederach who argue that "the greatest resource for sustaining peace in the long term is always rooted in the local people and their culture."[22] Lederach introduced the notion of *conflict transformation,* a more holistic way of understanding peacebuilding which closely reflects the goals of borderland peacebuilding: peacebuilding not simply as the end of violent conflict, but as the building of positive relationships which include new social and political structures from the grassroots to the national level.[23] It empowers local communities to "become

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[19] Karlsrud, J. (2018): *From Liberal Peacebuilding to Stabilization and Counterterrorism*, International Peacekeeping, 26(1)., p. 2.
[20] Ibid (p. 11.)
[21] Autessere in Karlsrud, J. (n 18, p. 2)
[22] Lederach, J. P. (1997) *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press, p. 94
[23] Lederach in Alther, G. (2006). Colombian peace communities: The role of NGOs in supporting resistance to violence and oppression. *Development in Practice, 16*(3-4), p. 281

involved in nonviolent change processes themselves, to help build sustainable conditions for peace and justice."[24]

Key Assumptions of Peacebuilding

A key assumption of peacebuilding is that it begins in the center and spreads to the periphery of a state, but past peacebuilding operations have shown that the peripheries are often not integrated into these policies. This is the key point related to the lack of attention of the specificity of borderlands in peacebuilding as state-building. They are viewed as regions which are obstacles to peace and stability due to their underdevelopment, lack of governance and insecurity, which in turn only creates a vicious cycle of exclusion of borderland regions by the State. Traditional liberal peacebuilding has often overlooked local needs and lacked a sensitivity to local politics and desires; "peacebuilding tends to rely on top-down mediation amongst power brokers and on building state institutions, rather than bottom-up community-driven peacebuilding or the resolution of the underlying sources of conflict."[25] The Liberal Institutionalist Approach to Peacebuilding assumes that the principal problem in a fragile state is the lack of state institutions, leading to state-building based on generic Western typologies to become a priority and an end in itself.[26] A lack of attention to the specificities of borderlands, and a general blindness to local dynamics leads policy makers, and peace workers to "miss the reality on the ground and fail to create conditions conducive to durable stability."[27] Often times post-conflict societies, or in this case post-agreement societies, are viewed as political and social vacuums, but it is critical to understand that war does not destroy all notions of political and social structure, it simply transforms them. This idea is presented and supported by Annette Idler's findings of her fieldwork in the borderland of Colombia on how years of violence have created new forms of authority and transformed the foundations of society in borderland

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[24] ICCO and Kerk in Actie in *Conflict transformation: Three lenses in one frame* (2009). Peacemaker UN, (No. 14), p. 11.

[25] Futamura, M., Newman, E., & Tadjbakh, S. (2010). *Towards a Human Security Approach to Peacebuilding* (Issue brief No. 2), p. 2.

[26] Ibid

[27] Ibid

communities. [28] It is key to understand how these dynamics are being transformed in Colombia, in order to create more comprehensive and borderland sensitive peacebuilding policies.

Borderland Peacebuilding's Propositions and the Colombian concept of *Paz Territorial*

Borderland theory counters the traditional forms of peacebuilding policies by understanding local dynamics, and changing the way the peripheries are viewed by the center, and from there integrating these marginalized communities into more inclusive peacebuilding policies. According to Jonathan Goodhand, a proponent of borderland peacebuilding theory, three main propositions are associated with borderland peacebuilding. Firstly, that borderlands are frequently central to the dynamics of conflict. Second, that policy makers tend to view borderland areas as marginal, "partly because their state-centric analytical frameworks and ways of working, and partly because of the failure of border studies scholars to translate a borderland perspective into operationalizable policies."[29] And lastly, considering borderlands as serious vantage points to peacebuilding would challenge mainstream approaches and necessitate significant changes to development and peacebuilding practice.[30] This last idea has been partially introduced during peace deal discussions in Colombia as territorial peacebuilding.

The notion of *paz territorial* or "territorial peace," could provide the necessary sensitivity to understand and include the dynamics of border spaces into peacebuilding policies in Colombia. Territorial peacebuilding was first introduced in Colombia by Sergio Jaramillo, who served as the High Commissioner for Peace from 2012-2016. Jaramillo outspokenly recognized Colombia's limits in implementing peace throughout the country due to it being a strong central state and its historically weak state presence in its peripheral rural areas. Therefore, he emphasized the importance of adopting a territorial perspective within the state's peacebuilding approach. Jaramillo first introduced territorial peace in a 2014 when he stated: "What I want to emphasize is that we have to take advantage of the arrival of peace to align the incentives and to develop

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[28] Idler, A. (2019). *Borderland battles: Violence, crime, and governance at the edges of Colombia's war*. New York (N.Y.): Oxford University press, p. 80.
[29] Goodhand, J. (2018). *'Borderlands, Brokers and Peacebuilding: War to Peace Transitions Viewed from the Margins,'* Borderland Asia Org. (Working paper No. 2)., p. 3.
[30] Ibid

the institutions on the ground which over time will guarantee everyone's rights in a fair and equal manner. To that end, we must be complement a rights-based approach to peace with a territorial approach. There are two reasons why we must do this: first, because the conflict has affected some regions more than others; and second, because change will not come if we do not coordinate efforts and mobilize the population in these regions around peace. That is what I refer to as 'territorial peace.'"[31] He believed that there should be as much of a focus on human rights in the peace process as on territorial aspects. Jaramillo criticizes the assumption that peace can be achieved by "bringing" the State to borderland regions, he argues that this centralist approach has been done numerous times before in Colombia and has been fruitless.[32] Territorial peace is a form of decentralization which brings sustainable peace to the territories; it's based on a new alliance between the State and rural communities in order to institutionalize these regions. Jaramillo clarifies that institutionalization does not refer only to increased State presence but more so the establishment of norms and regulations to public life which promote the wellbeing of these communities.[33] Essentially it is a form of peacebuilding, which is inclusive of the particular needs of isolated territories to build long-term peace within them. Territorial peace not only brings to light the critical territorial component of the peace agreement, and how central the "territories" are in the Colombian conflict, but it allows Colombians to re-think the definition of the State and "re-imagine the nation"[34] openly for the first time. It addresses the significant dimensions of the Colombian conflict: "space, politics and society."[35]

Colombian academics have debated what territorial peace should like in Colombia; they have both agreed and criticized Jaramillo's notion of territorial peace since it was first conceptualized. Maldonado highlights the importance of the participation of rural communities in the construction of peace in these regions, she argues for a deeper understanding of the configuration of values, beliefs, ways of behavior in these communities by their participation in

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[31] Jaramillo, S (2017) *La Paz Territorial.* An edition from a speech presented at Harvard University on March 13, 2017. Retrieved May 2019 from: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0FPlZOTnip8NnZUbXJaZ3F6Q0k/view>, p. 1.
[32] Ibid (p. 4)
[33] Ibid (p. 1)
[34] Cario, et al., (2018) *"Territorial Peace": The Emergence of a Concept in Colombia's Peace Negotiations*, Geopolitics, 23(2), p. 465.
[35] Ibid (p. 485)

the creation of social agreements which promote the prevention of violence and the peaceful management of conflict. [36] Alongside this notion, Aunta and Barrera argue that territorial peace must be based on real practices that are based on promoting the capacity of rural communities, and their roles of authority at the local level in order to resist conflict and refrain from being passive in the face of violence.[37]

On the other hand, Daniels and Adell argue that the notion of territorial peace fails to offer anything new.[38] They argue that Jaramillo's territorial peace does not recognize that in Colombia social organizations have already been able to construct peace in the middle of conflict and therefore territorial peace "is nothing more than for peace to be built and define from the demands and agendas of the territories; with, from and for the territories themselves and with the direct and transforming participation of their inhabitants."[39] Daniels goes even further and argues that territorial peacebuilding is based on already existing tools in the current legal system, and simply proposes to build peace from community co-existence.[40]

The debate above conveys two progressive positions which differ on how new the concept of territorial peacebuilding actually is, and what is should look like. Colombian academics have highlighted how this notion is still in early development. Nonetheless this contention shows that it has the capability to be constructed further and implemented in peacebuilding approaches across Colombia, different from the traditional counter-terrorism and stabilization policies which borderland communities have experienced thus far.

This literature review gives a look into the roots of the notion of peacebuilding and how its limits and challenges have led to the emergence of borderland peacebuilding. The way in which borderland peacebuilding is being developed and contested by academics today, and to what extent this concept resonates with the Colombian concept of territorial peace is explained. Essentially, Jaramillo's notion of territorial peace combined with a borderland lens developed by

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[36] Maldonado, D. in Bautista, S. (2017). "Contribuciones a la fundamentación conceptual de paz territorial." Revista Ciudad Paz-ando, 10(1), p. 106.

[37] Aunta, A., & Barrera, V. in Bautista, S. (n 25, p. 106)

[38] Daniels, A. & Paladini, B. in Bautista, S. (n 25, p. 106).

[39] Adell, B. P. (2016). "Paz territorial: reconocimiento y diálogo." Presented at the international conference "Restitución de tierras y derechos territoriales en contextos de transición hacia la paz", Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá D.C., p. 3.

[40] Daniels, A. in Bautista, S. (n 25, p. 106)

Idler's fieldwork in Colombia, counter traditional peacebuilding efforts in Colombia today. Borderland peacebuilding has the capability to push new and inclusive forms of peacebuilding forward. This literature review shows that the way in which borderland peacebuilding approaches actually contribute to peace and stability must be further analyzed in order understand what borderland peacebuilding actually looks like in practice to different actors, and to determine if it can be further developed as a successful form of peacebuilding in Colombia. This will be done through an analytical mapping of borderland peacebuilding approaches in Colombia today. It is important to adopt a comparative approach, the State's approach and the approach of international humanitarian actors, due to the fact that throughout history state and humanitarian peacebuilding approaches in Colombia have greatly differed in their objectives and approaches towards the borderlands and their communities, and therefore have had very different effects.

METHODOLOGY

Positioning my Research

This research uses the analytical frame of borderland peacebuilding through a political economy perspective, adopted from the field of peacebuilding and border studies. This relatively new notion of peacebuilding is being conceptualized in Colombia under the notion of territorial peace, proposed by Jaramillo. Colombian academics are challenging this form of peacebuilding as to what extent it is more of what has already been done in the past; state-building policies which fail to include the experiences of borderlands, or if it actually is pushing forward a new way of peacebuilding which bridges the distance between the peripheries and the State.

The thesis is ontological orientation is primarily structural as it looks at the how structures and policies in place put forth by the State and humanitarian actors contribute to borderland peacebuilding. It also considers how the borderline itself exists as a structure and has particular effects and creates certain dynamics with borderlands and their activities. This thesis is epistemologically interpretive as it seeks to "understand" rather than "explain[41]" the complications and particular dynamics within the Colombo-Venezuelan borderlands, following the peace agreement, and during the massive Venezuelan migration crisis, and to what extent these are considered into concrete policies and approaches to peacebuilding.

Research Method

Due to my ontological and epistemological approach, and since the research is conducted from afar, this research will be primarily composed of qualitative research methods. The qualitative research includes primary document and policy analysis, alongside a few semi-structured interviews in order to gain further insight. The policy and document analysis is composed of policy papers, government reports, newspaper articles, and NGO reports. The secondary sources consist of studies by think tanks and independent institutes to analyze to what extent these policies and efforts have actually contributed to borderland peacebuilding in Colombia. Together with my own analysis based on my literature review, and the analysis of

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[41] Demmers, Jolle (2017). *Theories of Violent Conflict: An Introduction* (2nd ed.). Routledge., p. 17

secondary sources, the impact these different approaches have to borderland peacebuilding have had, and expect to have in the future, will be analyzed.

The sample of State policies that are analyzed are the ones that have had the greatest impact (positive and negative) on the borderlands and their road to peace. Some of the policies predate the 2016 agreement as they were key actions that were taken to reach an eventual Peace Accord and therefore are considered vital to analyze. The sample of international humanitarian actors that were chosen to be analyzed are based my research and exploration of the topic during my internship at PAX, based on the international actors that appeared most often as significant players during my research of borderland peacebuilding at the Colombo-Venezuelan border, and that the peacebuilding specialists I conversed with considered to be most beneficial to my analysis. Due to the magnitude of international humanitarian actors contributing to peace and stability through borderland peacebuilding approaches, a carefully and sound sample choice had to made based on my personal expertise, the expertise of those specialists I worked with, and on my exploration of the most impactful borderland peacebuilding work being done, had to me made.

Limitations and Challenges

Ideally my research would have included fieldwork research in Colombia's borderland regions. However, due to economic constraints I had to conduct my research from afar alongside my internship at PAX in Utrecht. Being on the ground would have granted me greater access to informants for interviews, which could have given me deeper insight into the reality of the contributions and impacts different approaches to borderland peacebuilding have actually had, and what local communities expect from these approaches in the future. Due to this limitation, I was dependent on policy and document analysis. I was able to conduct a few semi-structured interviews with informants working in Colombia on borderland peacebuilding, although they are few, it is critical to include them in my research as added insight for my analysis. Overall, it was very difficult to access informants in a society which is still experiencing high levels of conflict, as many people fear speaking out about the armed conflict in Colombia, especially to an outsider living abroad. Lastly, it would have been significant to include national humanitarian actors in this

research, but the immense scope of national actors working with borderland peacebuilding in Colombia, and a lack of information on the impacts of their approach due to a lack of monitoring mechanisms, required me to exclude them from my analysis. Essentially, more time and on the ground would have limited my challenges and contributed greatly to my research.

CONTEXT OF COLOMBO-VENEZUELAN BORDERLAND

This chapter explores the current Venezuelan situation in order to better understand the effects of the Venezuelan crisis on Colombia's road to peace. The migration crisis has had a deep impact on the borderland region's present dynamics, and these are critical to consider in borderland peacebuilding of the region. The security dynamics at the Colombo-Venezuelan border are particular to the nature of the border and their proximity to a frontier, and distance from the center. This chapter looks at the borderlands in the context the current security and migrations crisis it is facing.

The Venezuelan and Colombian Situation

Historically, the borderlands regions have experiences a weak state presence, poverty and high insecurity. The porous geography and presence of natural resources have attracted non-state armed groups, especially as they found a ready and impoverished workforce in the communities. The Colombian State has historically viewed these regions as violent obstacles to peace rather than comprehending their local realities, which have defined the security landscape to be as such over time, which has led to "literally, the marginalization of the margins."[42] A view lacking the historical reality of the region is problematic as it creates a violent image of the peripheries, which ignores the trans-border landscape of insecurity.

In 2016 the Colombian government finally signed a monumental peace deal with the largest rebel group, the FARC-EP, marking the formal end of the longest conflict in Latin America.[43] Growing violent attacks in the past year from armed groups especially towards social leaders however, has raised the question whether the situation in Colombia is better characterized as post-settlement rather than post-conflict. The situation is most delicate in the borderland between Colombia and Venezuela considering Venezuela is falling into deeper chaos, causing the dynamics of violence and political economic tensions to change within the borderland

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[42] Idler (n. 28, p. 71

[43] Brodzinsky, S. (2016) "Colombia signs historicalpeace deal with Farc," *The Guardian.* Retrieved March 2019 from: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/24/colombia-signs-historic-peace-deal-with-farc-rebels>

regions. The political and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela has had detrimental spill-over effects in the borderland regions of Colombia. It is critical to understand the Venezuelan crisis in order to fully grasp the situation at the Colombo-Venezuelan border today.

There is an array of reasons as to how Venezuela reached the devastating point it is at today. In summary, the oil-dependent economy of Venezuela had long enjoyed prosperity relative to its Latin American neighbors, but when global oil prices dropped in 2014,[44] hyper-inflation took control of the country. Living conditions began to worsen as a result of the oil-crisis and the poor political management of the situation. The crisis continued to worsen over the years, and in 2018 when Nicolas Maduro won a controversial re-election, the international world deemed him an illegitimate leader.[45] Protests have spread across the country due to corruption and deteriorating human rights conditions, but a lack of data coming from Venezuela leaves exact severity of humanitarian needs unclear. As the opposition grows, so does Maduro's strong hand for power. The government continues to deny humanitarian assistance for its people, and oppression of the opposition is becoming severely violent. A massive exodus of people fleeing the situation in Venezuela has created the second largest migration crisis after Syria today. It is the largest exodus of people in Latin American history.[46] This is a stark contrast to the thousands of refugees Venezuela has hosted in the region throughout its own history.

The political, socio-economic and human rights situation in Venezuela has put tremendous pressure on the border region of Colombia which is receiving thousands of migrants seeking food, medicine, employment and security. According to the UNHCR, "hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans remain without any documentation or permission to stay regularly in nearby countries, and therefore lack guaranteed access to basic rights. This makes them particularly vulnerable to labour and sexual exploitation, trafficking, violence, discrimination and

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[44] Background knowledge of author

[45] Long, G. (2018, May 21). "Venezuela's President Maduro wins controversial election." *Financial Times*. Retrieved May 2019 from: <https://www.ft.com/content/23bdde0a-5ca4-11e8-9334-2218e7146b04>

[46] Van Trotsenburg, A. (2019, March 29). "Facing an Unprecedented Migration Crisis in Latin America and the Caribbean." *World Bank.* Retrieved June 2019 from: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/opinion/2019/03/29/america-latina-y-el-caribe-frente-a-una-crisis-migratoria-sin-precedentes>

xenophobia."[47] The situation has only worsened with the temporary closing of the official border, and tightening immigration regulations on the Colombian side; it has led families with women and children to take irregular routes called *trochas,*[48] which exposes them to the dangers of human traffickers and illegal armed groups controlling the borderlands. This phenomenon has also bred new conflicts between armed groups. The *trocha* war has increased violence in these areas drastically. Armed groups are fighting for control of these irregular crossings to exploit and recruit migrants who use these paths to go to work, attend school, or buy food and medicine in Colombia to bring back to Venezuela where they have become very scarce.[49] The *trocha* war is a prime example of how the Venezuelan crisis, and political mismanagement of the border, has had detrimental security and humanitarian effects in the borderland region.

Colombia has received the largest number of migrants from Venezuela, about 1,3 million.[50] Not only are Colombia's borderlands reaching their saturation point but they are also struggling to implement their own stability and peacebuilding measures, as the Venezuelan crisis breeds more conflict in the country. According to the head of the International Red Cross delegation in Colombia, Chris Harnisch, "The situation Is now more complex than when the Peace Agreement with the FARC-EP was signed. The humanitarian situation in several departments of the country has significantly deteriorated, and this is exacerbated by conflicts at the borders and the extreme vulnerability of migrants arriving in Colombia."[51]

The upheaval in Venezuela is creating new violent dynamics. The lack of state presence among the borderlands has created spaces for illegal armed groups to grow by recruiting vulnerable Venezuelan refugees. They offer desperate refugees food, water, housing and income in return for their work in illegal activities. Many armed groups in the borderlands are highly dependent on natural resources of the region, for their illicit activities and Venezuelan refugees

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[47] UNHCR (2019*). Venezuela situation*. Retrieved April 2019 from: <https://www.unhcr.org/venezuela-emergency.html>

[48] *"*Trails Along Colombia-Venezuela Border Are Criminal Enclaves." (2019). *Insight Crime.* Retrieved June 2019 from: <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/brief/trochas-colombia-venezuela-criminal-enclave/>

[49] Ibid

[50] United Nations (n 1)

[51] "Humanitarian Situation in Colombia worsened during 2018." (2019) *International Committee of the Red Cross.* Retrieved May 2019 from: <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/humanitarian-situation-colombia-worsened-during-2018>

provide cheap and easy labor for these. According to the GS/OAS report, there is significant risk in border communities on the impact on, "children, adolescents, young adults, women, and ethnic communities. There is a growing risk of forced recruitment by the ELN and other groups, especially for Venezuelans in Arauca and Norte de Santander,"[52] making the humanitarian situation on the ground in many borderland communities worse than they were before the peace agreement with the FARC. The lack of basic goods and services for Venezuelan refugees in poverty driven border communities has pushed vulnerable Venezuelans to turn to armed groups.

Even more worrying, the vast presence of ELN in Venezuela has shown the identity of the Colombian armed group slowly shifting towards a Venezuelan paramilitary role. There are growing reports which indicate a strong alliance between the Maduro regime and the ELN. According to *Red Más*, Venezuelan armed forces have delivered ammunition, and highly explosive materials to the ELN,[53] and Maduro has reminded the Venezuelan army that the ELN and other armed groups related to the Bolivarian revolution are allies of the government and there shall be no military operations against them.[54] As ELN grows deeper in Venezuelan territory under the safe harbor of Maduro, there are growing risks to Colombia's peace and stability.

Security Dynamics Along the Border

The differences in the socio-economic dynamics that have risen from North to South along the Colombian border with Venezuela as a result of different levels of governance has created perfect conditions for violent armed groups to consolidate their authority. Weak state authority in Colombian border departments have caused armed groups to substitute their roles, "taking advantage of local grievances toward the absent inefficient state." [55] Not only this, but the lack of coordination among neighboring states towards their border policies when dealing with

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[52] MAPP/OAS (2019) *Twenty-Sixth Report of the Secretary General to the Permanent Council on the Organization of American States Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia.* Retrieved June 2019 from: <http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2019/CP40839EXXVIREPORTMAPP.pdf>, p. 7

[53] "Exclusivo: Los Documentos Confidenciales confirmarían apoyo military de Maduro al ELN" (2019) *Red Más.* Retrieved May 2019 from: < http://www.redmas.com.co/colombia/exclusivo-los-documentos-confidenciales-confirmarian-apoyo-militar-maduro-al-eln/>

[54] Ibid

[55] Idler (n 28, p. 80)

security, economics and development have made these sites breeding grounds for armed groups to organize themselves, re-group, and operate their illicit markets free from the state of law. Much of the money generated from the global network of drugs and crimes comes from these Colombian border regions.

The porous border area attracts a huge illicit economy of contraband flow across the border of mostly gasoline and drugs. Weak state control and lack of infrastructure connecting the borderland region to the rest of the country has left them isolated, making it the perfect ground for armed groups to consolidate their power. The level of neglect of the borderlands highly contrasts to the high level of natural resources in region such as oil and mining. The state's failure to integrate the borderlands left armed groups to reap the economic benefits of the different regions along the border. Despite the economic capacity of the region, the local populations are forced live in poverty.

There are a couple of factors which induce violent non-state interactions in the region: weak state governance, the geographic conditions which are favorable for natural resources, its geo-strategic position for drug trafficking routes, and strategic border crossings which allow for short-term arrangement among groups.[56] According to Idler, "the ease with which multiple violent non-state groups were able to establish roots in these zones relates to how the power centers have dealt – and are still dealing – with the region."[57]

In all, one cannot understand these regions without analyzing them through a borderland lens, where the political and economic factors largely contribute to the consolidation of power of illegal armed groups across the borderlands, and how these affect the lives of local communities which inhabit these areas. The global context is extremely relevant to the borderland regions as the global illicit economy shapes many of the illicit drug flows coming from these regions. A borderland lens therefore puts the local non-state order into the context of the great global economy which shape the security dynamics of the Colombian-Venezuelans borderlands.

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[56] Idler (n 28, p. 110)
[57] Ibid

APPROACH OF THE COLOMBIAN STATE

The State borderland peacebuilding approaches will be divided into two parts: the national government's policies and programs, and an overview of the national armed forces role and mission during the implementation of these policies. It is important analyze the critical policies the Colombian government has passed which are either directly intended for the borderlands or seek to contribute to peace and stability in the borderlands' in some way. The government plans and policies are analyzed in chronological order. First, *Plan Colombia,* then its successor the *National Consolidation Plan and Peace Colombia*, and then the major components of the *Peace Agreement of 2016* which are relevant to building peace and stability in the borderlands is mapped out, followed by a short overview into what the current Colombian administration's approach has been towards the *Peace Agreement*. After that, the approach of the Colombian armed forces since *Plan Colombia* is looked at, as the Colombian armed forces have played a very significant role in the borderland territories and often times have had their own impacts on borderland peacebuilding.

Plan Colombia

As a result of an increment in cocaine production and deteriorating security conditions in Colombia with the FARC entering the drug trafficking business in 1990s, a Colombian-US strategy was created to solve the problems that engulfed the country. One of the most critical programs to analyze is *Plan Colombia*. This was a US supported, and funded, initiative implemented in Colombia in 2000 by President Clinton and President Uribe to fight the war on drugs and left-wing insurgent groups in the country. *Plan Colombia* primarily consisted of: 1) reducing the production and trafficking of illegal drugs by 50% in a span of six years (primarily cocaine), 2) improve the security landscape of the Colombia by re-gaining back large territories that were controlled by violent armed groups.[58] According to Rojas, "In its evolution, Plan Colombia has

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[58]Mejía, D. (2006) *Plan Colombia: An Analysis of Effectiveness and Costs,* Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence Latin America Initiative, p. 3.

come to represent not only a military strategy to confront the war and an extension of the counter-narcotics policy of previous years, but also the attempt to implement a vast program of institutional construction, recovery of the social fabric and establishment of conditions for the exercise of democracy."[59] It is important to see how *Plan Colombia* approached its borderland peacebuilding goals although it predates the agreement of 2016, as it set up many of the pre-conditions for the peace agreement with the FARC, and has had long-term effects on the security dynamics and activity within the borderland region until today.

Plan Colombia consisted first and foremost of a counter-narcotics strategy by the Colombian government. This was done mainly through crop eradication of coca[60] and poppy cultivations, and the destruction of processing facilities and transportation networks. There is a clear connection between the State's counter-narcotics strategy and its counter-guerrilla strategy. The State assumed that by tackling the drug trade through a hard security approach, it would be dismantling the armed group's main source of economy, and therefore their ability to carry out the violent internal conflict.[61]

According to an official document by the U.S Government Accountability Office, the military funding on behalf of solely the US was around US$540 million every year from 2000 until 2008. The Colombian government invested about US$812 million every year into *Plan Colombia*. This represents 1.2% of Colombia's average annual GDP in that time span. *Plan Colombia* had a very high expenditure, yet the results of this bi-national strategy are mixed. The governmental sector and a few think tanks deem much of the plan a great success and a model for peacebuilding.[62] President Santos in an interview on national radio called the plan a "very useful and effective instrument."[63] Even US Secretary of State, John Kerry, stated that the plan "helped to transform a nation on the verge of collapse into a strong institutional democracy with

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[59] Rojas, D. M. (2012). *Much More than a War on Drugs: Elementos para un Balance de Plan Colombia*(Vol. 26, Rep. No. 77). p. 114. [Quote translated by author.]

[60] The government strategy to counter drug production was the aerial fumigation of over 1.6 million hectares of land using a possible carcinogenic herbicide.

[61]Rabasa, A. & Chalk, P. (2001) *Colombian Labrynth: The synergy of Drugs and Insurgency and Its Implications for Regional Stability.* Santa Monica, CA: Rand., p. 65

[62] DeShazo, et al., in Rojas, D. M. (n 56, p. 115)

[63] Casey, N. (2016) "Has Plan Colombia Really Worked?" *BBC News Colombia.* Retrieved June 2019 from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-35491504>

historically low levels of violence,"[64] in an opinion piece from the Miami Herald. On the other hand, the non-governmental sector mostly agrees that there were advancements on the security front, but the structural problems which prolong armed violence throughout the country were not addressed through this plan.[65] For example, according to the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), "Looked at more closely, […] Colombia's security gains are partial, possibly reversible, and weighed down by 'collateral damage.'"[66] Although it is not possible to see what Colombia would look like today if *Plan Colombia* had never been implemented, drug production and armed violence statistics today show that these issues did not improve across the country as President Santos and John Kerry boldly believed.

What *Plan Colombia* meant for the borderlands was a short term improved security situation and a short-term weakening of the FARC in urban areas; a lack of a borderland lens failed to give a long-term solution for local borderland communities, and any sort of long term stability in the region. The security approach towards the borderlands, due to a state-centric view towards these regions as violent uncontrollable areas, only caused violent non-state armed groups to move deeper into the porous borderland region and into Venezuela.

National Consolidation Plan and Peace Colombia

From 2004-2010 the *National Consolidation Plan and Peace Colombia* was created and implemented under Defense Minister at the time Juan Manuel Santos and Vice Minister of Defense Sergio Jaramillo (later renamed the *National Plan for Consolidation and Territorial Reconstruction*). This plan was known as the successor to *Plan Colombia.* Its aim was to coordinate government efforts in marginalized areas where violence and drug trafficking reigned supreme. Overall, it was supposed to increase state presence in marginalized areas by integrating a security, development and counternarcotic approach to these regions. The approach was as follows: Colombian armed forces would fight armed groups until they were able to consolidate

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[64] Kerry, J. (2016) "Getting the endgame right in Colombia" Opinion-ed. *Miami Herald,* Retrieved June 2019 from: <https://www.miamiherald.com/opinion/op-ed/article57352418.html>
[65] Leal, et al. In Rojas, D. M., (n 57, p. 115)
[66] Isacson, A. (2010) "Colombia: Don't Call it a Model," *WOLA.* Retrieved May 2019 from:
<https://www.wola.org/2010/07/colombia-dont-call-it-a-model/>

the territory, then government institutions and agencies would move in and "regularize the presence of the state and reintegrate the municipalities of these marginalized zones into Colombia."[67] The territories were chosen depending on: frequency of armed groups, need for basic social services, and presence of coca cultivation or use as a drug trafficking/arms corridor.[68] A pilot project was carried out in the *Serranía de La Macarena* region, a zone which has been under FARC control almost since the beginning of the guerrilla's formation. The pilot program was known as *Plan Consolidación Integral de la Macarena* (La Macarena Integral Consolidation Program); the first phase was entirely military due to the extremely critical security situation in the region, then once the guerrilla was cleared out or reduced significantly state authorities moved in. Quick impact projects which focused on infrastructure at first and then government services which attended developmental needs were carried out. "The end result would be a 'consolidated' zone in which a functioning, mostly civilian state was providing services in a secure environment to a population fully able to participate in the nation's politics and economy. Soldiers would then be freed up to start the first phases of similar operations in new regions."[69] However, the program suffered budgetary limits and had difficulty implementing its measures.

Security became a priority of the plan and development fell short. Between 2006 and 2010, the Ministry of Defense under the leadership of Juan Manuel Santos, shifted its policy approach towards a FARC-centric strategy aimed at reducing FARC members and leadership.[70] By 2010 the FARC guerrilla had been decreased from about 20,000 to 9,000 active insurgents by Colombian armed forces[71] Santos was eventually elected president and during the first half of his administration, and he implemented another FARC-centric military strategy named "Sword of Honor."[72] However, the plan failed as the FARC were able to retreat into rural areas where the state had no control. Barack Obama eventually announced a shift from a hardline security approach in the U.S involvement in *Plan Colombia,* to support to an increase in economic and

[67] Congressional Research Service (2019) *Colombia: background and U.S Relations.* FAS, (Report 43813), p. 30.

[68] Isaacson, A. (2012) *Consolidating "Consolidation": Colombia's "security and development" zones await a civilian handoff, while Washington backs away from the concept,* WOLA., p. 5.

[69] Ibid

[70] Dominguez, A. E (2015) *After the Negotiations: How Reconstruction Teams Can Build a Stronger Peace in Colombia.* PRISM,*5*(4)., p. 91.

[71] Ibid

[72] Ibid

social aid.[73] When US aid shifted, it became a great source of funding for the consolidation of marginalized zones. New police stations opened, infrastructure improved, water projects were implemented in La Macarena; it became a showcase of development.[74]

The shift in the US plan was called *Paz Colombia.* A more civilian centric approach was adopted and the campaign changed towards gaining the trust of rural areas. This proved to be difficult as there was a reasonable fear among rural communities regarding peace negotiations; they believed that the exit of the FARC from these territories would create a power vacuum leading to a resurgence of new armed groups. Currently, this people-centric approach is being questioned by the Trump and fellow US republicans, as the current Trump administration supports a military approach on the war against drugs in Colombia, and peace under conditions of the Colombian far-right.[75]

Overall, *Plan Consolidation* had a much more territorial approach than *Plan Colombia*, as it aimed to focus on the consolidation of the most isolated territories. Of the nine territories it aimed to consolidate, four included border municipalities (Arauca, Catatumbo of Norte de Santander, Putumayo, and Tumaco in Nariño.)[76] Nonetheless, much of the governments promises went unfulfilled. The government's counter-narcotic approach using aerial fumigations for coca eradication brought negative health effects and caused farms to move deeper into ungoverned borderland territory. Local borderland communities did not experience improvement in governance, health, infrastructure or education. Instead, the presence of new armed forces increased in the borderlands as the communities had feared they would.

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[73] Isaacson, A. (n 66, p. 10)
[74] Ibid (p. 6)
[75] Congressional Research Service (n 65, p. 32)
[76] Milana P., et al., (2011) *La Guajira en su laberinto: Transformaciones y desfaíos de la violencia*. FIP, nr 12., p. 6.

Peace Agreement

On November 24, 2016, the Colombian government signed a monumental peace deal with the FARC-EP (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo).* The accords were the culmination of a four-year long process mediated by the Cuban government. The result was a 132-page long peace agreement which encompassed: a comprehensive rural reform, political participation, the end of the conflict, a solution to the illicit drug problem, an agreement with the victims of the conflict, and a series of implementation and verification mechanisms.

The rural reform aims to transform rural Colombia by addressing the well-being of the populations in marginalized zones and in turn strive for non-repetition of the conflict and sustainable peace, by increasing state presence in various regions. First and foremost, land access and its use was addressed by creating the *Fondo de Tierras* (Land Fund)[77] for the distribution of land of rural communities without land or insufficient land. The fund contains 3 million hectares of land at its disposal for the first 10 years. Next, the *National Plan's* goal is to address the well-being of rural populations by targeting rural poverty deduction by 50% and reducing inequality in the next 10 years, taking into consideration the dynamics of each region and their specific features. The measures focus on infrastructure to reconstruct rural areas, social development to improve healthcare, education, housing and opportunities for rural people, enticing primary production economies, innovation, and boost the labor market. Lastly, in the areas most heavily affected by conflict, poverty, weak state governance, and illegal markets, development programs with a territorial based approach will be implemented in order to support national plans.[78]

Next, political participation was addressed in the agreement by first guaranteeing the rights for political opposition as a way of strengthening Colombian democracy. Security guarantees were addressed with a plan to put in place a *Comprehensive Security System for the Exercise of Politics* which includes protection measures for social leaders and human rights advocates, many of whom work implementing peace in the borderlands.[79]

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[77] Alto Comisionado para la Paz Colombia (2016) *Colombia's Agreement to End Conflict and Build Peace*. Retrieved March 2019 from: <http://www.altocomisionadoparalapaz.gov.co/herramientas/Documents/summary-of-colombias-peace-agreement.pdf>, p. 6.
[78] Ibid (p. 8)
[79] Ibid

In regard to ending the conflict, the agreement aims to tackle a few factors. First, it plans to reincorporate the FARC-EP into civil society. This will be done by political reincorporation, through their disarmament and transition into legal political life.[80] Next, their economic and social reincorporation will be implemented through socio-economic programs and access to healthcare, education, psycho-social care, family reunification, culture, etc.[81] The agreement also ensures security guarantees for the entire Colombian population, and especially for social organizations and collectives, and the opposition that emerges from the FARC's transition into a political party.[82] The fight against criminal activity will be addressed by a national commission on security guarantees, the Special Judicial Unit, and the national police.[83]

In order to address the problem of illicit drugs, a characteristic problem within the borderlands, the plan aims to find a solution in a few different ways. First, by reducing illegal crop production by creating a *National Comprehensive Program for the Substitution of Crops used for Illicit Purposes*.[84] Special legal measures and alternatives for small illicit crop growers will be arranged, as well as de-mining and cleaning up the country side which has been affected by anti-personal mines. The problem of illicit drug use will also be addressed through a human rights approach, viewing it as an issue of public health, but the phenomenon and commercialization of narcotics will be addressed by strengthening state control.[85]

Regarding the victims of the conflict, a comprehensive system for truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition made up on judicial mechanisms which hope to realize victims' rights, ensure accountability for the conflict, give legal certainty to those involved. This will be carried out by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), it will hold certain crimes accountable, such as torture, sexual violence and recruitment of minors, while lesser crimes will be given amnesty or pardon.[86] This portion of the agreement hopes to ensure social coexistence, reconciliation and guarantees for non-repetition of the conflict. The agreement intends to guarantee that the truth

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[80] Alto Comisionado para la Paz Colombia (n 77, p. 16)
[81] Ibid (p. 18)
[82] Ibid (p. 20)
[83] Ibid (p. 20)
[84] Ibid (p. 24)
[85] Ibid (p. 26)
[86] Ibid (p. 29)

is established, and that the Colombian government, and the FARC-EP, will respect human rights and guarantee the right to a peaceful life.[87]

The way in which the *Peace Deal* is implemented in the borderlands will greatly determine the success of the deal, as much of Colombia's peace is dependent on the stability and development of these regions in order to end the growth of non-state armed groups and their illicit economies. Today, there is not much optimism around the peace deal as the current right-wing Duque administration has tried to push back many critical components of the *Peace Agreement*. He partly won the presidential election on a campaign promise to leave the deal, and since being in office his administration has been in a legislative dispute against the JEP. Opposition towards the JEP has affected its credibility and, the administration's opposing rhetoric towards the JEP has mobilized large parts of the public against the its role.[88] This uncertainty has already had major effects. It has been a major cause for hundreds of ex-FARC soldiers to re-arm into dissident groups, [89] as they fear extradition and imprisonment,[90] and has affirmed the distrust many local borderland communities already felt towards the deal.

Plan Impacto

More recently, the Colombia government's approach has evolved to a more integrated strategy towards the borderlands. The massive pressure borderland communities were experiencing at the border due to the Venezuelan migration crisis led President Duque's administration to create a plan which aims to address the critical situation at the border. The plan includes the commitment of 32 state officials, led by Vice President Marta Lucía Ramirez, consisting of a road map for more than 50 measures which were created for the comprehensive and integrated care

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[87] Alto Comisionado para la Paz Colombia (n 77, p. 30)
[88] Background knowledge gained by author during internship at PAX (NGO)
[89] Casey, N. & Escobar, F. R. (2018) "Colombia Struck a Peace Deal with Guerrillas, but Many Return to Arms." *New York Times.* Retrieved June 2019 from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/18/world/americas/colombia-farc-peace.html>
[90] Isaacson, A. (2019) "Duque Has Left Colombia's Peace Process Rudderless." *World Politics Review.* Retrieved June 2019 from: <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/27824/duque-has-left-colombia-s-peace-process-rudderless>

of the Colombo—Venezuelan border crisis.[91] The plan consists of an US$228 million investment for the next two years, to meet needs and issues of each border department, "they are measures that allow us to face the crisis, but also to leave these areas prepared for a return to democracy in Venezuela, which can also be a cornerstone of the economic recovery of these regions,"[92] said Duque. The plan intends to contribute to peace and stability in the region through investments in health, institution building, education and economic growth. Economically there is a primary focus on generating employment, as for the health sector there will be investments in hospital resources for emergency attention in border hospitals, resources to cover the economic costs of the Venezuelan population's health care coverage, construction of new health centers, as well as humanitarian needs such as provision of water, sanitation and hygiene resources. To improve institution building, it promises the presence of more border security forces and more police stations across the border region, and as for education tit promises an investment in entrepreneurship programs, provision of food at schools, new teachers and new schools.

Plan Impacto adopts a set of promises reflective of borderland peacebuilding in that it takes a department specific approach to tackle the specific needs of each area. It views the migration crisis and the structural issues of the borderland region as intertwined causes for grievances, and of critical attention. The Plan does look promising, but past government promises for development in isolated regions have always come short in the past, making it difficult to be optimistic.

Colombian Armed Forces

When *Plan Colombia* began*,* the security and drug problems of the country, especially within marginalized borderland areas, were approached by the restructuring of the Armed Forces to a complete anti-narcotics strategy, through a security first approach. One of the main focuses was a military approach towards regaining state control over Colombia. *Plan Colombia* funded the

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[91] Duque, I. (2019). *Declaración del Presidente Iván Duque al presentar el Plan de Impacto para mitigar los efectos generados por la crisis migratoria y el cierre de la frontera colombo-venezolana*. Speech presented in Cúcuta, Colombia. Retrieved April 2019 from: <https://id.presidencia.gov.co/Paginas/prensa/2019/190414-Declaracion-Presidente-Ivan-Duque-Plan-Impacto-mitigar-efectos-generados-crisis-migratoria-cierre-frontera-Venezuela.aspx>
[92] Ibid [Quote translated by author]

creation and training of a new Counter Drug Brigade (*Brigada Contra el Narcotráfico)* in the armed forces whose mission was to regain control of territories in order to eradicate coca cultivations.[93] Primarily *Plan Colombia* supported a complete build-up of the national armed forces. This only increased once President Alvaro Uribe was elected whose Democratic Security *(Segurdidad Democrática)* [94] policy accelerated and strengthened the anti-FARC offensive. The armed forces practically doubled, and their budget almost tripled from 1998 until 2010. Thanks to their increased training and support, the military gained greater mobility and "air superiority."[95]

   Plan Colombia moved away from a primarily counter-narcotics strategy to a counter-insurgency strategy which began with a military campaign known as *Plan Patriota.*[96] *Plan Patriota* was a heavily US supported military offensive whose sole objective was to counter non-state armed groups and their strongholds within these isolated territories; it "brought tens of thousands of ground troops to a large swath of rural Colombia."[97] However, *Plan Patriota* failed to adopt a long-term borderland lens and therefore it came with no plan to actually consolidate and govern these areas after the initial military attack cleared the area of armed groups. The military was able to establish themselves in a few rural towns, but essentially failed to drive the FARC out of the region.[98] This failure eventually led to the implementation of a more territorial approach known as *Plan Consolidation.* During the implementation of *Plan Consolidation*, the approach was supposed to first be a military counter-insurgency approach and then a civilian focused consolidation phase, however in most of the regions it remained in the military phase. The military once again was unable to permanently drive out non-state armed groups from the borderland region,[99] as these areas remained ungoverned in the long run.

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[93] Isaacson, A. (n 66, p. 3)
[94] Ibid
[95] Ibid
[96] Ibid (p. 4)
[97] Ibid
[98] Ibid
[99] Martínez, A. F. Á. (2010). *La guerra contra las FARC y la guerra de las FARC*. Corporación Nuevo Arco Isis (CNAI)., p. 8.

Under the current *Peace Agreement,* the military's approach consists of *Plan Victoria,*[100] to consolidate isolated territories and bring stability to these regions. Essentially the objectives of this plan are to re-gain control of isolated territories especially in the borderlands, stabilize them, provide critical government services and carry out humanitarian programs.[101] The current military's goals reflect historical approaches like that of *Plan Consolidation*, but hopefully if the approach is accompanied by *Plan Impacto* it will be able to make significant gains in borderland peacebuilding. However, thus far there seems to be continued build-up of a hard security approach towards the borderlands, which has only pushed major groups like the ELN deeper into Venezuelan territory where they are protected.

Over all, the Colombian State approach since *Plan Colombia* towards borderland peacebuilding has been defined by a security approach to counter non-state armed groups and drug trafficking over decades. Despite the fact that the borderlands are regions which have felt the consequences of the Colombian internal conflict the hardest, the State has failed to bring any concrete peace to these regions. The approach towards borderland peacebuilding has been a strengthening of the national armed forces and police forces, a centralized approach which has not contributed to long-term peace and stability in the region.

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[100] Dussán, Y. (2017) "Colombian Armed Forces Activate Plan Victoria" *Digital Military Magazine: Forum of the Americas.* Retrieved May 2019 from: <https://dialogo-americas.com/en/articles/colombian-armed-forces-activate-plan-victoria>
[101] Ibid

APPROACHES BY INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ACTORS

The approaches by humanitarian actors will be looked at by analyzing international humanitarian actors contributing to borderland peace and stability by either responding to the migration crisis and/or addressing the roots of grievances within Colombia's borderlands. The approach of these actors will be analyzed by exploring their objectives, expectations and major thematic projects.

The international humanitarian actors were chosen based on the major actors partaking in the regional response plan of the Venezuelan migration crisis in Colombia, led by the International Office of Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Then, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), a major player in meeting the needs of vulnerable population affected by the internal conflict is assessed, and finally, the Organization of American State's Mission (MAPP/OAS) in Colombia, a major player in the monitoring the implementation of peacebuilding policies in Colombia's territories is also mapped out.

International Humanitarian Actors

The two major actors in mitigating the effects of the Venezuelan migration crisis within the Colombo-Venezuelan borderland region is the IOM and the UNHCR, by instruction of the UN Secretary General. In April 2018, the UNHCR and IOM launched a regional response plan to address the migration crisis within the Colombian borderland which is focused on: data collection and dissemination, capacity building and coordination, direct support, and socio-economic integration.[102] The response aims to build a comprehensive regional policy towards the Venezuelan migration crisis. The Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan in Colombia includes 34 partners in the GIFMM which respond to urgent needs of refugees and migrants from with a short term and long-term lens. Their short-term goals include direct emergency assistance

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[102] UNHCR (2019) *Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan.* Retrieved March 2019 from: <http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2019%20RMRP%20Venezuela%20%28December%202018%29.pdf> , p. 68.

and protection, while their long-term goals include socio-economic and cultural integration and strengthening the capacity of the Colombian government in managing migratory flows.[103]

At the forefront of their emergency response to the migration crisis is the assistance and protection of vulnerable migrants. Their preferred strategies are "institutional and community based protection and support to regularization initiatives."[104] One of the key values in their emergency response is the IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)[105] which helps monitor, process and disseminate information on migration flows and the evolving needs of migrants. The information is shared with other humanitarian organizations in order to "jointly identify priority interviews and emerging needs and risks."[106] The emergency assistance plan also helps provide temporary accommodation in transit and host territories for Venezuelans, distribution of non-food item kits to migrants on the *Ruta de los Caminantes,*[107] and emergency health care assistance. In order to meet their goal in offering protection to migrants in Colombia, their key activity includes facilitating the documentation and regularization process for Venezuelans. They provide migrants information on their rights, as well as offer technical support to government institutions to better manage their immigration policies. Migrants in Colombia are especially vulnerable to trafficking, smuggling and exploitation from criminal and armed groups in the border regions and therefore the regional response has prioritized creating awareness on the risks set out for migrants in Colombia and how to prevent risky situations.[108]

Their long-term approach to the migration crisis includes the socio-economic and cultural integration, and the building of resilience among Venezuelan migrants and refugees. Their preferred strategies for their long-term goals are "bringing development oriented and private sector, faith-based organizations, and international financial institutions into the fold."[109] One of their main goals includes providing long term consistent access to education and healthcare. The GIFMM is working with the Colombian government to help promote social conditions which lead

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[103] UNHCR (n 102, p 19)
[104] IOM (2018) *Migrant and refugee Venezuelan Crisis: IOM Regional Response Overview.* Retrieved March 2019 from: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/venezuela_sr_201804-201902.pdf>, p. 1.
[105] Ibid (p. 5)
[106] Ibid
[107] Term used for the major routes refugees take on foot from Venezuela to Colombia
[108] Ibid (p. 7)
[109] Ibid (p. 5)

to a more positive image of migration in Colombia, and how there are positive economic and social effects of migration at the local level.[110] They do this by aiding in the recognition of skills and degrees of Venezuelans so they can integrate promptly into the labor market, and by creating campaigns with other UN agencies in order to target growing xenophobia and discrimination towards migrants. Lastly, they offer support to improve the Colombian government's capacity by providing technical support to government agencies, advisory services in order to identify best practices and management tools, as well as training government officials through workshops as one of their key activities.[111]

Although the leading partners of the regional response in Colombia to the border crisis is the IOM and UNHCR, there is an array of partner international humanitarian actors who are providing short-term assistance to the crisis. Appendix 1 gives an overview of which partners reported activities in the most recent regional response report from April 2019.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), compared to the regional response to the migration crisis discussed above, deals with the humanitarian response for the most vulnerable populations of the Colombian internal conflict since 2009. It has mobilized over US$ 15 million to assist communities most affected by the conflict as well as natural disasters, reaching over 300,000 people in need.[112] The OCHA has a national office which directly reports to the main division of coordination and response of the OCHA, and local offices in border regions such as Arauca, La Guajira, and Norte de Santander. Their projects are mostly carried out by partner NGOs, national and international, who have access and presence in the territories, and their financial support is provided by external country donors through their *Humanitarian Fund*. The majority of their funding goes to national NGOs, as they hope to empower national and local humanitarian action above all. Their coordination with NGOs working in the region on the field and national level, as well as the Colombian government, strengthens their greatest assets: inclusiveness, flexibility, timeliness, efficiency, and

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[110] IOM (n 104, p. 7)
[111] Ibid (p. 8)
[112] OCHA (n.d.) *Colombia.* Retrieved June 2019 from: <https://www.unocha.org/latin-america-and-caribbean-rolac/colombia>

accountability in providing humanitarian assistance for vulnerable populations of the internal conflict. [113]

The OCHA works in the Colombo-Venezuelan borderland departments of La Guajira, Norte de Santander and Arauca.[114] They provide protection, water and sanitation, health, food security, education, early recovery, and shelter to meet the humanitarian needs of victims of the internal conflict, that are also suffering the consequences of the migration crisis. In Appendix 2, the objectives under each of their main approaches to humanitarian assistance by the OCHA is outlined in detail.

Another key international actor is the Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia of the Organization of American States (MAPP/OAS). The MAPP/OAS is an international organization that has been monitoring and accompanying Colombia's peacebuilding policies since 2004, and recently the Colombian government expanded their mandate to 2021.[115] The Mission is permanently deployed in the regions that were most affected by the conflict. They have 18 field offices, including field offices in strategic borderland areas such as in Cúcuta and Arauca.[116] The MAPP accounts for one of the largest humanitarian peace organizations in Colombia today. Their work mostly consists of: bridging the gap between communities and institutions, delivering analyses and specific recommendations to the Colombian government for policy and decision making across the local and national level, and lastly, being a permanent presence in the territories affected by the conflict.[117]

One of the key characteristics of the Mission's work is that they respect and integrate the varying dynamics of different territories. The Mission claims to understand and highlight the special needs of communities within borderland regions, and stresses that the consequences of the internal conflict are even more pressing in Colombia's borderlands. Their latest report states, "these problems are even more urgent in the border areas of the country, where the presence

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[113] OCHA (2018) *Colombia Humanitarian Fund 2009-2018: Closing Document.* Retrieved June 2019 from: https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/Colombia%20HF%20Closure%20report%202018.pdf, pp. 6-7
[114] Ibid (p. 4)
[115] OAS (2016) *The Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia (MAPP/OAS).* Retrieved May 2019 from: <http://www.oas.org/en/media_center/press_release.asp?sCodigo=S-017/16>
[116] Semi-structured interview with ex-MAPP/OAS employee to gain further insight
[117] MAPP/OAS (n 52, p.3)

and activities of illegal armed groups create risks that are further complicated by border conditions, in that they affect not only Columbian but also neighboring communities, which are in constant contact with the territory. In this context, it is necessary to remember the positive contribution of cross-border dynamics and migration flows to sustainable regional development, which should guide the focus of joint actions to effectively safeguard the rights and protect the interests of all of the members of these communities."[118]

In an interview with an ex-employee of the Mission, further insight was gained regarding to what extent the objectives of the Mission are met and to what extent they are inclusive of rural communities. Although the Mission's current role is monitoring the peace process in Colombia, field offices still conduct peacebuilding activities in cities where they gather data, "you can't just come to a city and leave, so we do stuff for the people while we are there, such as activities and support processes. In some areas, it goes really well and in others less so."[119] One of the greatest assets of the Mission is the trust they have built between the fieldworkers and local communities. The teams consist of half national and half international members, where the international members do a lot of the public and technical support, but the national members are "walking around among the people, they are the ones who know how things are really going. They have knowledge of very local dynamics."[120] Essentially the Mission has a grand scope, and although their work today primarily consists of monitoring the peacebuilding process, their local offices offer insights into the changing dynamics and security situations on the ground of isolated and rural territories, providing a borderland lens to their peacebuilding activities.

Over all, the largest international humanitarian efforts in Colombia are carried out by the UN agencies such as the IOM, UNHCR and OCHA as well as the Mission from the OAS. A combination of humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding projects all contribute to borderland peace and stability in one way or another. The IOM and UNHCR provide the operational response for refugees and migrants coming from Venezuela, and the OCHA coordinates humanitarian assistance for vulnerable populations inside of Colombia. While the Mission from the OAS monitors the implementation of peacebuilding efforts since the Peace Agreement and collects

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[118] MAPP/OAS (n 52, p.3)
[119] Ibid (n 114)
[120] Ibid

critical information of human rights developments, including in key border regions. Colombia's internal violent conflict and migration crisis are deeply intertwined, and heavily affect the peace and stability of the borderland regions, and therefore a multi-approach humanitarian effort addressing both are critical to borderland peacebuilding. The international humanitarian actors' coordination with fieldworkers and national NGO's allow them to adopt a borderland lens to their approaches showing a stray away from traditional top-down approaches in the development sector.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF DIFFERENT APPROACHES

In order to understand the approach of the Colombian State and armed forces, and international humanitarian actors towards borderland peacebuilding, the impact of their programs, and policies must be assessed. First, the impact of the Colombian State's approach to borderland peacebuilding is analyzed by major government programs since *Plan Colombia*, and then the impact of the armed forces approach is assessed alongside this. Finally, the impact and expected contributions by key international humanitarian actors to borderland peacebuilding is assessed. The analysis of each approach is based on a borderland lens, and the output of this section determines how the Colombian State and international humanitarian actors' approach to borderland peacebuilding have impacted and contributed, or expect to contribute, towards peace and stability in the Colombo-Venezuelan region.

## Impact Assessment of the State and Military Approach to Borderland Peacebuilding

Overall, the impact of the State approaches through *Plan Colombia, Plan Consolidation,* have constituted of a state-centric military approach which has failed to contribute to long term borderland peace and stability. The *Peace Agreement* was composed as a comprehensive approach towards the borderlands as it offered a territory-sensitive approach, however the current administration has been reluctant to implement much of the peace deal leading to tremendous uncertainty around it. The current government program, *Plan Impacto,* hopes to offer an approach which addresses the structural causes for grievances in the borderlands that are being exacerbated by the migration crisis in the borderlands. However, past efforts to integrate the border regions have been fruitless, and the current administration has shown to prefer a historically traditional military approach to the borderlands, so there is not much optimism around the promises the plan lays out.

    Plan Colombia expected to contribute to peace and stability by reducing dug production and trafficking, and improving the security landscape by re-gaining large territories controlled by violent groups. Major drug corridors exist through the borderlands into Venezuela, as they are then easily connected to the Caribbean and taken to the United States and Europe. Although

deemed a success by US and Colombian politicians who originally supported the plan, it did little to address the structural issues that burden the borderlands. Firstly, in regard to countering drug production levels, it was not a long-term success. According to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which monitors the illicit crop production in Colombia, production reached an all-time high of 171,000 hectares in 2017.[121] Graphic 1 below demonstrates how average coca cultivation fluctuated since the beginning of *Plan Colombia* until 2017.

[121] UNODC (2018) *Colombia – Survey of territories affected by illicit crops 2017 – Summary and fact sheet.* Retrieved June 2019 from: <https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Colombia/Colombia_Survey_territories_affected_illicit_crops_2017_Summary.pdf>

Coca Cultivation in Colombia (UNODC 2000-2017)
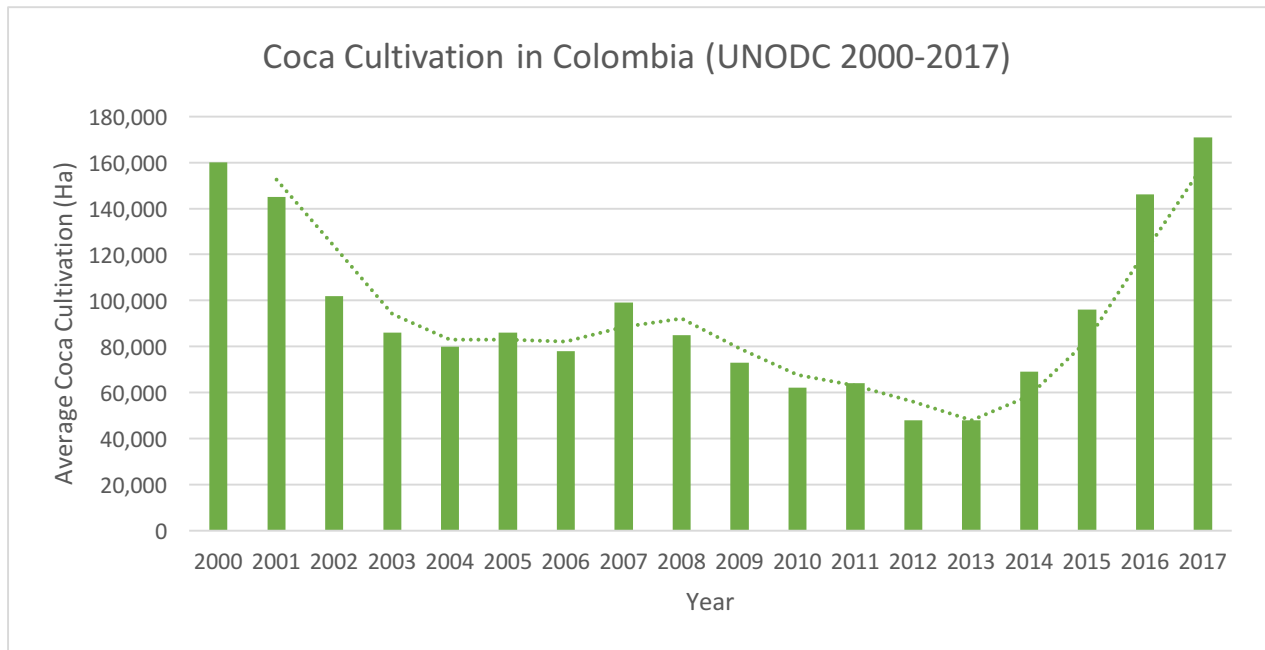
As seen in Graphic 1, drug production levels, concentrated in the Colombo-Venezuelan and Colombo-Ecuadorian border[123], are currently higher than when *Plan Colombia* was first implemented.

Due to the characteristic nature of a border, the smuggling and trafficking of drugs is a characteristic problem of the frontier region between Colombia and Venezuela, which also feeds into the insecure landscape of the region. Much like the State's impact on drug production, the State's impact on drug trafficking were also unsustainable. The State's eradication strategy during *Plan Colombia* and *Plan Consolidation* simply destroyed local farmers of their livelihood with no substitution, and produced a 'balloon effect' which only fragmented coca crops deeper into the borderland's jungle and forced frequent changes in trafficking routes. The State's inability to build on farmer's capabilities and to substitute coca crops, failed to target drug production in the

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[122] Graphic was produced by author using data from UNODC crop monitoring reports from 2000-2017. These reports and data can be retrieved from: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/crop-monitoring/index.html?tag=Colombia>

[123] UNODC (n 121)

long run and even increased violence as farmed moved into more remote border areas controlled by armed groups which led to increased support for armed groups.[124]

As for the *National Consolidation Plan and Peace Colombia* (2004-2010), which aimed to improve the security situation by gaining back territories controlled by armed groups, there were positive results for about a decade. From 2002-2010 the homicide rate experiences almost 50% decrease, acts of terrorism a 78% decrease, and extortion about 50% decrease.[125] From 2009 onwards, the security situation began to worsen once again due to non-state armed groups high adaptability to the military's strategy.[126] The plan's promise to focus on development after a strong military phase failed and hard security approach remained in the borderlands. According to locals, the majority of the 15,000 troops stationed there as part of the government's *Consolidation Plan* are there to protect the infrastructure rather than the people,[127] leading to high levels of distrust.

The State's approach during this time led to an increase in new businesses from criminal groups to sprout, and new alliances to form. The armed conflict simply fragmented and armed groups retreated to the peripheries of the state. According to CNAI, from 2009 onwards the conflict moved to three areas: the Pacific region of Chocó, Valle del Cauca, Cauca and Nariño. The second region consisting of Arauca, Casanare, Vichada, Meta y Guaviare, and the last region where the conflict moved to is made up of northern Chocó, Antioquia, el Bajo Cauca, southern Bolívar and parts of Norte de Santander.[128] A majority of these regions composing of the Colombo-Venezuelan borderlands, or its close proximity.

If the State had been more inclusive of borderland communities' needs, and there had been a smaller gap between the reality on the ground and the official policies of *Plan Colombia* and *Plan Consolidation*, it could have been more successful in contributing to sustainable peace in the region. A borderland lens would have meant concrete development and employment generation opportunities within the government's approach, in order to substitute illicit work

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[124] Mansfiled, D. (2011). *Assessing Supply-Side Policy and Practice: Eradication and alternative development* (Working paper)., p. 8.
[125] MDN in Rojas, D.M. (n 57, p. 123)
[126] Ibid
[127] Idler (n 28, p. 106)
[128] Martínez, A. F. Á. (n 99, p. 8)

and cut non-state armed groups income from the core. In all, it could be argued that *Plan Colombia* failed in its proposed objectives but aided the path towards a more peaceful Colombia by laying the stepping stones for the 2016 peace agreement.

As for the results of the peace agreement thus far, a little more than two years in, it has contributed little to peace and stability in the regions most affected by the conflict. The results are contradictory as thousands of FARC-EP demobilized and disarmed by August 2017,[129] but the marginalized territories that were abandoned by the FARC left a power vacuum which the state failed to fill in time. Violence has recently increased within the borderland territories due to power reconfiguration dynamics in the borderland regions that were once controlled by the FARC and are now being fought over by armed groups such as the ELN, EPL, FARC dissidents and other Organized Armed Groups (GAO).[130] Coca cultivation is at its highest, and social leaders are being targeting and murdered across the country.[131] The post-settlement period for Colombia has been difficult and there have been many steps backwards as President Duque's compliance to the agreement looks meek. However, there is still much to be seen as the initial post-agreement challenges come to light and are hopefully addressed.

The Kroc Institute has been monitoring the implementation of *Peace Agreement* thus far, and the current administration's reluctance to meet many of the Agreement's promises have led to low optimism[132] on its capability to address many of the problems which are suffered within the borderlands. According to their latest monitoring report as of February 2019, 35% of the commitments have reach an advanced level of implementation, 34% have reach minimal implementation level and 31% of the commitments have not begun to be implemental at all.[133] Some of the greatest consequences of the peace agreement not being fully implemented, has

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[129] Sida (2018) *Colombia and Regional Venezuela Humanitarian Crisis Analysis 2019.* Retrieved June 2019 from: <https://www.sida.se/globalassets/sida/eng/how-we-work/humanitarian-aid/hca-2019/hca-colombia-venezuela-2019.pdf>, p. 1.

[130] The Colombian Ministry of Defense refers to non-state armed groups that re-emerged after the paramilitary demobilization as Organized Armed Groups, also known as GAO.

[131] Veitch, Adam (2019) "59 of Colombia's social leaders assassinated in first four months of 2019: report," *Colombia Reports.* Retrieved May 2019 from: <https://colombiareports.com/59-of-colombias-social-leaders-assassinated-in-first-four-months-of-2019-report/>

[132] Based on discussions with NGO workers during internship at PAX

[133] Kroc Institute (2019) *Peace Accord Implementation in Colombia Continues to Progress Two Years In,* Report 3. Retrieved May 2019 from: <https://kroc.nd.edu/assets/316152/190409_pam_media_advisory_final.pdf>, p. 1.

been a complete lack of security guarantees for social leaders, human rights defenders and ex FARC-EP combatants.[134] The *Peace Accord* includes methods to implement security guarantees for these members of society, but they have failed to be implemented in rural territories leading to increased violence especially felt in the borderlands. According to the Kroc Institute's representative in Colombia, "Peace is materialized when citizens experience concrete improvements to their quality of life through the State's provision of goods and services in the territories,"[135] but a failure to implement structural reforms in the State's rural areas, has led to no concrete peace in the borderlands.

Positively, Colombia has been able to implement national laws which entitle victims of the internal conflict to assistance and their right to truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition. However, poor coordination among agencies, reluctance from the Duque administration, low institutional capacity at the local municipal level has undermined efforts to peace and stability in the Colombo-Venezuelan border. It is clear from local peace workers in the borderlands, things are not better than they were. In an interview with ex-MAPP employee, the Duque administration's unwillingness to implement much of the *Peace Agreement* has led to difficult realities in rural territories, "We have to talk to increasingly desperate people on the ground; there's no government money being allocated to these areas, people who have signed up to substitute coca crops are not being paid, and those who thought they were going to live in peace are living in territories controlled by over 5 armed groups today. The whole context is not very optimistic."[136]

As for *Plan Impacto,* which seems more promising since it adopts a territorial approach with measures built for each border department. However, when looked at more closely the plan intends to contribute to peace and stability through borderland peacebuilding policies which consist of bringing the State to the peripheries and injecting money into their municipalities to boost their economies. The State's blindness to borderlands in its peacebuilding policies to deal with the specific experiences felt within borderland communities as a result of the migration crisis from Venezuela, have led to the assumption that state-building and economic growth in the

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[134] Kroc Institute (n 133, p. 1)
[135] Ibid (p. 2)
[136] Semi-structured interview with ex-MAPP/OAS employee to gain further insight

peripheries will contribute to sustainable peace. Although peacebuilding and state-building are not mutually exclusive, and both aim to improve the social fabric and political order, the assumption that bringing the State to the peripheries will bring peace can be problematic. The problem lies in viewing state-building within the borderlands as an end goal, when it should be an instrumental tool which helps peacebuilding, "In short, while peacebuilding is a multi-faceted single-purpose task, state building can be characterised as a multi-purpose, instrumental task."[137] The GIFMM intends to work closely with local authorities to provide necessary technical support to the Colombian government so that the plan can be implemented in a way that is inclusive of borderland needs.[138] However, experts who are familiar with the situation on the ground are skeptical. In a discussion with Bram Ebus, he stated, "'Plan Impacto' most definitely looks interesting, but to be honest I'm not that optimistic."[139] Peacebuilding in the borderlands has shown that bringing the State to the peripheries alone does not work in Colombia.

The approach by the national armed forces has had several impacts on the borderland region. First a foremost, a buildup of the military since *Plan Colombia* has failed to contribute to long-term sustainable peace and stability in the borderlands, and has only experienced short-term victories in consolidating borderland territories. The state-centric approach of the national armed forces hard security approach to the borderlands has cleared out territories in the short run, and left a power vacuum for new non-state actors to appear in the long run. Since there was no long-term approach to maintain a permanent state presence in the regions, there were no concrete contributions to sustainable peace in the borderlands through the Military's approach.

Due to the pressure to maintain and increase a hard-military offensive against the guerrillas, extreme human rights abuses from the armed forces occurred in the early 2000s. The Colombian armed forces executed thousands of civilians, mostly peasants, to boost their body count and meet their numerical objectives. The Colombian Attorney General's office has

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[137] German Development Institute (2009) *The Convergence of Peacebuilding and State Building: Addressing a Common Purpose from Different Perspectives* (Briefing paper No. 4)., p. 2.
[138] GIFMM (2019) *Colombia Situation Report April 2019.* Retrieved March 2019 from: <https://reliefweb.int/report/colombia/gifmm-colombia-situational-report-april-2019>
[139] Email correspondence between author and Bram Ebus of *Crisis Group*

investigated over 3,600 unlawful killings by Colombian armed forces from 2002-2008.[140] Most recently, Nicolas Casey showed that the army's approach may not be that different today. According to interviews with senior officials and written documents, "Colombian generals and colonels were assembled and told to sign a written pledge to step up attacks. Daily internal presentations now show the number of days that brigades have gone without combat, and commanders are berated when they don't carry out assaults frequently enough, the officers said. One order causing particular worry instructs soldiers not to 'demand perfection' in carrying out deadly attacks, even if significant questions remain about the targets they are striking."[141] Although the Colombian army denies the truth of these allegations, this raises questions once again of the dangers of a hard security approach which prioritizes anti-narcotics and anti-guerrilla offensive over social and economic development. The "false positives" phenomenon in Colombia has had impacts such as creating a high level of distrust among local communities and the national armed forces and police. This is a deep and complex negative effect the approach of the armed forces has had on borderland peacebuilding, as it now takes a much more comprehensive and long-term solution to rebuild trust between the State and civil society. The distrust created by the approach of the armed forces will continue to present major obstacles for borderland peacebuilding in the future.

Impact Assessment of Approaches by International Humanitarian Actors to Borderland Peacebuilding

Overall, the impacts of international humanitarian actors' borderland peacebuilding efforts have contributed to peace and stability in the region by meeting the grave needs of migrants at the border which local communities don't have the resources to meet, and by providing the necessary assistance for vulnerable victims of the internal conflict where the State has failed to do so. Although there is a theoretical separation between humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding, in the Colombian case the internal conflict and the migration crisis are very

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[140] Human Rights Watch (2018) *Colombia: Events of 2018.* Retrieved May 2019 from: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/colombia>

[141] Casey, N. (2019) "Colombia Army's New Kill Orders Send Chills Down Ranks." *New York Times.* Retrieved June 2019 from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/18/world/americas/colombian-army-killings.html>

closely intertwined; an increasing burden on the borderlands poses augmented risks to peace and stability for the entire country's peacebuilding process. There lies tension in the humanitarian response to both, because as the Venezuelan migration crisis grows in Colombia, humanitarian donors aimed at responding to the internal humanitarian conflict of the country are phasing out;[142] new funding and new actors are joining the emergency response to Venezuelan migrant's humanitarian assistance. There is a risk associated with the high level of focus on response to Venezuela at the expense of a lack of focus on the structural grievances of host communities in the borderlands.

Nonetheless, humanitarian assistance for victims of the migration crisis is directly intertwined to guarantee Colombia's road to peace and stability. The regional response led by the IOM and UNHCR, has launched their work under four thematic approaches: direct emergency assistance, protection, socio-economic and cultural integration, and strengthening the capacity of the host government. According to their latest May 2019 situational report they have reached thousands of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia, but there is still a magnitude of humanitarian assistance needed. As of May 2019, there are 515.286 Venezuelans in an irregular situation, meaning without a visa or permit to be in Colombia, this is about 40% of all Venezuelan migrants in the country.[143]

It is critical to meet the dire needs of Venezuelans entering the country in order to prevent their recruitment into illicit activities and armed groups out of desperation, and thus feed the vicious cycle of violence the Colombia. The economic and political needs of Venezuelans must be met; it is of critical importance that Venezuelans are granted easy access for their political regularization in Colombia allowing them to access basic goods and the labor market, in order to guarantee their long-term integration. During the month of May, the inter-agency response assisted over 6.100 persons in over 29 municipalities and 13 departments.[144] Several capacity orientation workshops were carried out about facilitating employment for Venezuelan refugees. These workshops help foment employment opportunities through orientation and information

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[142] Sida (n 129, p. 3.)
[143] GIFMM (2019) *Reporte Situacional –Mayo de 2019.* Retrieved March 2019 from:
<https://reliefweb.int/report/colombia/gifmm-colombia-situational-report-april-2019>, p. 1.
[144] Ibid (p. 7)

dissemination. It is critical that borderland departments are developed and integrated into the state in conjunction with humanitarian assistance for Venezuelan refugees, so that refugees are viewed as opportunities for peace and stability by local populations, rather than obstacles to it.

The humanitarian assistance for the migration crisis must be accompanied with long term peacebuilding measures, such as their political and socio-economic integration as stated before, in order to contribute to peace and stability in the borderlands. It is critical that humanitarian actors continue to work towards the specific issues of the internal conflict, alongside the migration crisis. Since 2009, the OCHA has been working to meet the needs of those directly affected by the internal armed conflict in Colombia. In the borderlands, they have carried out projects in Norte de Santander, La Guajira and Arauca.[145] According to their implementing partners, the greatest contribution of the OCHA was their ability to respond to "crises that were emerging in the country, in a timely and efficient way, before it became relevant for other humanitarian actors." Another added value of the OCHA, according to their implementing partners, is their coordination with local authorities "who actively participated during the implementation of different projects, nurturing the process and guaranteeing a better implementation."[146]

A major project carried out by the OCHA which exemplifies their work in the borderlands is an innovative project which aimed at delivering bonuses and cash transfers to internal displaced people and Venezuelan migrants by the Luther World Fund (LWF) in Arauca. According to the OCHA, "this strategy is based on a global humanitarian trend, where it was identified that cash transfer and bond deliveries have a positive impact on human dignity, since it allows people to obtain directly what they need, making this activity something more personal."[147] Prior to the implementation of the project the community is reviewed based on sufficient supplies, the quality of products and their local market, "Likewise, the organizational capacities of the community and their willingness to participate in these activities are taken into consideration, but the main principle for the creation of this type of projects is based on trust."[148] Due to past

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[145] OCHA (n 113, p.4)
[146] Ibid (p. 9)
[147] Ibid
[148] Ibid (p. 19)

empty promises from external organizations, and government programs, there is a general distrust between local communities and external humanitarian efforts. International organizations which have implemented top-down approaches to peacebuilding in the past, and failed to understand local borderland dynamics, were unable to provide long-term contributions to peace and stability in the region. This is something current development actors must now work through and overcome. The way in which this project took into consideration the dignity of the local community in Arauquita (Arauca), reviewed the specific conditions of the community prior to its implementation, and prioritized trust-building, demonstrates that there was an inclusive borderland lens built into the creation and implementation of their projects. The project even had long term positive results as it helped bridge an alliance the banking system in Arauca "which set a positive precedent within the framework of cash transfers in the region."[149]

There is a high level of coordination with local authorities, emphasis on trust building, promotion of self-dignity, and mechanisms in place allowed for their sustainable implementation, contributing greatly to peace and stability in the borderlands. It is important to note that although all of the OHCHA's projects have a time limit of 6 months to maximum 1 year, there is an obligation to leave the local community and local institutions with the capacity to continue their work[150]. This compares to other peacebuilding projects in the borderlands which leave no mechanism instilled to guarantee sustainable peacebuilding once they are gone. The OCHA's mandate was meant to end in 2017, however due to the debilitating human rights developments in the country their mandate was extended to the end of 2019; it is not clear what the effect will be once it ends, but hopefully the organization's ability to transfer their processes to other actors will make for an easy transition on the ground.

Next, the impact of the MAPP/OAS will be assessed. The MAPP/OAS is the largest mission in Colombia granting them a broad reach across the country. Although their impact today is based on monitoring the implementation of peacebuilding measures, they carry out local projects on the ground in the communities they work in. Their greatest asset is their national field offices, with strong presence in the borderland territories which were most affected by the internal

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[149] OCHA (n 113, p. 20)
[150] Ibid (p. 2)

armed conflict. Their national team members, and long presence in the field have contributed to high levels of trust in the communities they work, allowing for greater efficiency in their work. Not only this, but their presence itself serves to deter violence. Ex-MAPP/OAS employee explained, "No one (illegal armed actors) comes into the communities when they see our cars and vests, it stops them from coming and doing whatever they want. Some of the local teams have people who have been working in the territories for 30-40 years, there is a lot of trust between the locals and the Mission."[151]

Although the OAS gives the Mission its strength, there is also a limit of working under such a large organization. What this means is that although every field office conducts their own fieldwork and projects, the information that is reported into the final reports given to the Colombian government and other key peacebuilding actors is only a fragment of the knowledge the local offices have gained on the dynamics and human rights situations of each community.[152] The exact reason for this is not clear, however it can be assumed that this is due to logistics of working under the umbrella of a large organization, and/or the sensitivity of the information gathered. Another limitation is that politically, the OEA does not have the best track record in Colombia; historically, the OEA has a difficult relationship with left groups and organizations, which limits their coordination with certain actors. Today, OAS Washington has been outspoken of their support for Guaidó and has been very harsh in regard to the Venezuelan crisis.[153] This puts the mission in a complicated place politically, which can limit coordination efforts with certain organizations which are not politically inclined to align themselves with the Mission, limiting their efficiency. Overall, the Mission's strength lies in their local teams, but working for a large organization limiting the ability of local offices to disseminate all their information, can limit the borderland lens at the national level.

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[151] Semi-structured interview with ex-MAPP/OAS employee to gain further insight
[152] Ibid
[153] Ibid

Conclusion: Borderlands as Opportunities for Peace?

Summary and Key Findings

This thesis aimed to answer the follow research puzzle: *how does the Colombian State and international humanitarian actors' approach to borderland peacebuilding contribute and impact towards peace and stability in the Colombo-Venezuelan border region*? This research began by conceptualizing borderland peacebuilding within the greater peacebuilding theory. Traditional peacebuilding failed to include the particularity of borderlands into their peacebuilding goals; the distinct nature of borderlands, due to their proximity to an international borderline, causes these regions and their communities to experience peacebuilding processes different to the center of the state. For this reason, peacebuilding should be approached with a borderland lens in order to contribute to sustainable peace and stability. In the case of the Colombo-Venezuelan border, a borderland lens means viewing the ongoing migrations crisis, and the structural poverty and lack of state presence in these regions, as opportunities for peace and development, rather than as unmanageable violent regions which must be securitized.

This research found that the Colombian State and armed forces' approach towards borderland peacebuilding stemmed from their power center. This means that the way in which they have dealt with the Colombian internal conflict in the borderlands was by bringing the State to these areas through various top-down interventions. The goals of the State and military in the borderlands consisted mainly of addressing insecurity and drug trafficking/production through several interventions. The impact this had on peace and stability was analyzed through a borderland lens; the research found that the hard security approach merely had a 'balloon effect' which caused non-state armed groups to move deeper into the borderlands and seek refuge in Venezuelan territory, where the State could not reach them. In the short run, various territories were cleared through these interventions but in the long run, this only led to new non-state violent actors to appear in the region. Not only this, but the hard security approach from the Colombian armed forced led to an array of human rights abuses creating high levels of mistrust between locals and the State. As for drug production the results are similar, the coca eradication approach by the State failed to understand the economic dynamics of the region, and today coca

crop production is at its peak. The current approach by the State seems more comprehensive but once again fails to integrate a borderland lens as it assumes peace will be achieved in the regions through economic growth and bringing the State to the peripheries.

As for the international humanitarian actors' approach towards borderland peacebuilding, it firstly consists of a UN agency (IOM and UNCHR) led emergency humanitarian response towards the migration crisis, with short term emergency assistance and long-term goals for the integration and peaceful coexistence of migrants. Their work with numerous international and national actors allows them to have a massive reach in the borderlands, but the increasing rate of the exodus of migrants from Venezuela to Colombia is presenting a substantial crisis which is difficult to manage. Nonetheless, the popularity of the Venezuelan crisis has attracted donors and actors into increasing humanitarian assistance in the region, but this has also had a negative effect as it has skewed key donors and development actors away from borderland peacebuilding which focuses on tackling the structural issues borderland communities face. The OCHA, through an emphasis on trust-building and increasing local ownership, has increased resilience in the territories and contributed to concrete borderland peacebuilding as such. The MAPP/OAS has also played a major role in borderland peacebuilding over the years; their strong field presence in the Colombo-Venezuelan borderland and long-time presence in the field has allowed them to gather critical information on human rights developments. Their presence and concrete contributions over time has earned them the trust of local communities, helped deter violence in the region, and given them deep insight into borderlands and their needs. It is critical to maintain a multi-faceted comprehensive approach by international humanitarian actors, and not lose sight of the historical structural issues communities continue to suffer, which the migration crisis only worsens.

Significance and Future Research

During a critical time in Colombia's history, following the major *Peace Agreement* between the FARC-EP and the Colombian government, it is critical to take a look at how one of the regions that has suffered some of the greatest consequences of the internal conflict, and is now bearing the second greatest migration crisis in the world, has been approached by the Colombian State

and military, as well as major international humanitarian actors. It is critical to analyze the State and Military's approach to bring peace to the margins since the major government plan, *Plan Colombia*, since it laid out the critical stepping stones to the *2016 Peace Agreement.* Their hard security approach however has had detrimental effects in the region, and the research found that a failure to adopt a borderland lens is what breeds this sort of state-centric approach. Understanding the impact of these approaches presents lessons for policy-makers in the significance of adopting a territorial approach during Colombia's precious road to peace.

It is just as critical to understand the impact and approach international humanitarian actors have had on the region as the literature review showed a critical shift from top-down approaches to peacebuilding towards a more inclusive, bottom-up approach. This research showed this shift is occurring among international actors on the field in Colombia, yet more can be done in viewing the migration crisis and the structural grievances of local borderland communities as interconnected issues which require a comprehensive approach from peacebuilding actors.

Further research through interviews with local borderland communities, as well as Venezuelan migrants inhabiting these regions, could grant significant insight into what the impact of borderland peacebuilding looks like on the ground from a bottom-up perspective, which is a critical component of adopting a borderland lens in this analysis. Also, increased monitoring of the impact of national actors and increased dissemination of their work would allow for future significant analysis for this research, and a more well-rounded understanding of borderland peacebuilding as approached by international actors compared to that of national actors contributing to peacebuilding at the Colombo-Venezuelan border.

Final Thoughts

Finally, a borderland lens means viewing the issues in the borderlands as opportunities for peace and development in the region, rather than as destabilizing forces which only feed into the problems of these isolated regions. What this means, is that the migration crisis, could provide a boost in the economy with new jobs and small businesses which are needed for developing living standards of local communities in the borderlands. It also means that the poverty and lack of

state presence in the borderlands present real opportunities for bringing peace into the whole country; there is a ready population willing to work and improve their situations, which would in turn cut the source of income for non-state armed groups. The borderlands are rich in natural resources and have the capacity to provide a boost in the Colombian economy and significant improvement in the living standards of Colombians across the country, if the State is not merely brought to the peripheries but the borderlands are approached in a sensitive and inclusive way which prioritizes development and human rights. Local communities are desperate for peace, if empowered, sustainable peacebuilding capabilities can be unleashed. The potential power of the borderlands has been limited and harmed by non-state armed groups, but if development actors and the Colombian government begin to view their capacity for change, and the will of local communities to instill peace, it could lead to the creation of high impact projects and policies, and the successful implementation of sustainable borderland peace and stability. Appendix 3 offers insights and recommendations for the Colombian State and Humanitarian actors to engage more comprehensively the borderland needs and their path to peace. The way in which the Colombian State and key development actors deal with, and view, the borderlands could be a turning point for Colombia's desperate peacebuilding process.

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Appendix 1: International GIFMM partners[154]

Border Department	GIFMM PARTNERS	GIFMM PARTNERS
	Direct Emergency Assistance	*Protection*
La Guajira	ACH, UNHCR, CRC, FAO, FUPAD, DRC, Malteser International, Mercy Corps, IOM, OXFAM, PMA, UN Women, Save the Children, UNICEF	UNHCR, CRC, DRC, FUPAD, IOM, UN Women, Save the Children, UNICEF, CRC
Cesar	UNHCR, Mercy Corps, PMA	UNHCR
Norte de Santander	ACH, UNHCR, Ayuda en Acción, CRC, IRC, IOM, PMA, Plan Internacional, UNICEF, World Vision	UNHCR, CRC, IRC, Plan Internacional, TdH, UNICEF, World Vision
Arauca	UNHCR, CRC, FUPAD, IOM, OMS, Save the Children, UNICEF	UNHCR, Save the Children, UNICEF
Vichada	CRC, IOM, OMS	UNHCR
Guanía	CRC, NRC	

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[154] GIFMM (n 125, p. 4)

Appendix 2: OCHA's objectives[155]

Active cluster	Objectives	Lead Organization
Protection	**Objective 1:** "Promote prevention and response actions against recruitment of girls, boys, adolescents and teenagers, GVB MAP/MUSE ensuring he centrality of protection in humanitarian response" **Objective 2**: "Implement protection actions ensuring the protection approach in humanitarian action"	UNHCR
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	**Objective 1**: "Ensure access for human consumption, sanitation facilities and promotion of key hygiene practices" **Objective 2:** "Ensure joint actions in WASH, Food Security and Nutrition and Health Cluster that contribute to risk reduction on more vulnerable populations´ health in context of humanitarian crises"	UNICEF
Health	**Objective 1**: "Increase access of health services in vulnerable populations and affected by humanitarian crises" **Objective 2**: "Strengthen the institutional capacities to respond to crises and emergencies in health" **Objective 3**: "Ensure joint actions in WASH, Food Security and Nutrition and Health Cluster that contribute to risk reduction on more vulnerable populations´ health in context of humanitarian crises "	PAHO

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[155] Colombian Humanitarian Fund (2017) *Annual Report*. Retrieved June 2019 from: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/colombia_2017-_v3a.pdf>, pp. 25-31.

Food Security	**Objective 1:** "Improve household immediate access to food through provision of unconditional transfer depending on the severity of food insecurity and seasonality of the livelihoods" **Objective 2:** "Ensure joint actions in WASH, Food Security and Nutrition and Health Cluster that contribute to risk reduction on more vulnerable populations´ health in context of humanitarian crises " **Objective 3**: "Increased timely, permanent and diverse access to varied food basket"	FAO
Education	**Objective 1**: "Facilitate access of girls, boys and adolescents affected by emergencies caused by armed violence and natural disasters in protective educational environments"	UNICEF
Early Recovery	**Objective 1:** "Recovering and protecting the livelihoods of affected populations and host communities with an emphasis on income generation with a focus on gender, ethnicity and life cycle"	UNDP
Shelter	**Objective 1:** "Promote solutions in shelter for IDPs populations affected by natural disasters of armed violence with different response approach including gender and protection"	IOM

Appendix 3: Recommendations

Recommendations for the Colombian State

- o It is imperative to advocate and openly support a peaceful transition in Venezuela to prevent further human rights abuses under the Maduro regime and the exodus of more refugees into Colombia

- o Create and support a shift in the public rhetoric towards the Venezuelan migration crisis away from a humanitarian problem to a process of development, whereby Venezuelans can contribute to development and peace in Colombia

- o Support the entry of humanitarian aid into Venezuela, through technical support and dialogue with Venezuelan officials, to decrease the exponential growth of migrants crossing over the border for emergency assistance

- o Ensure the easy access of Venezuelan migrants into the country, and into the labor market, to allow for their successful integration into Colombian society

- o Urge border officials to disperse information, and implement cross-border alerts on the dangers of utilizing irregular crossings to reach Colombia, to decrease the recruitment of refugees and migrants into armed groups

- o Urge local municipal authorities to work closely with local development actors for technical support, and more bottom-up approaches in the implementation of *Plan Impacto*

- o Underline the importance of a development approach within the Colombian armed forces which focuses on trust-building, and minimize pressure to meet the anti-narcotics and anti-insurgency objectives through a hardline security approach

- o Work closely with neighboring Latin American countries to grant Venezuelans refugee status at the regional level

- o It is critical to prioritize a territorial approach in the implementation of the *Peace Agreement,* and to ensure the implementation of its promises in concrete contributions to peace and stability in rural communities

Recommendations for Humanitarian Actors

- o Focus campaigning on the structural issues borderland communities continue to face as a result of the internal conflict, and how these are exacerbated by the migration crisis, in order to promote more balanced funding and attention from donors and key actors

- o Create and support workshops and programs in border areas which prioritize the socio-economic and cultural integration of Venezuelan migrants into Colombian society

- o Work closely with border officials in order to bridge the gap between local communities' needs and the implementation of peacebuilding measures from the State

- o Identify, map and analyze dynamics of non-state armed actors to better understand and protect local communities

- o Acknowledge the authority of non-state armed groups in borderland regions and learn from the structures they have created

- o Identify actors who can act as brokers between non-state armed groups to reach areas which are controlled by them, and provide the necessary humanitarian assistance to these communities

- o Assess and identify the real-life priorities and needs of local borderland communities to live a more peaceful life

- o Make trust-building a priority peacebuilding goal

- o Strengthen early-warning and early response systems in the borderland regions to prevent the outbreak of violence, and protect migrants and civilians

- o Ensure the implementation of community members as staff to increase representation, trust, and empowerment

- o Create and support a positive image of migration in the borderlands by recognizing the concrete contributions migrants could bring to impoverished borderland regions