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Donor Aid in Supporting Local Governance in the Context of Conflict in Colombia: Plan Colombia and Peace Laboratories

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Cristina González Pérez

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Members of the examining committee:

Dr. Joop de Wit
Dr. Karim Knio

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Inquiries:

Postal address: Institute of Social Studies
P.O. Box 29776
2502 LT The Hague
The Netherlands

Location: Kortenaerkade 12
2518 AX The Hague
The Netherlands

Telephone: +31 70 426 0460

Fax: +31 70 426 0799

Dedication

...To my Mother, the person to whom I owe all I am

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List of Acronyms

ACCI	Colombian Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation
ASOPATIA	Association of Mayors of Nariño
AUC	United Colombian Self-defence Group
CCAI	Centre for Coordination and Integrated Action
CRIC	Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca
ELN	National Liberation Army
EOM	Election Observation Mission
EU	European Union
FARC	Armed Revolutionary Forces
GAO	The United States Accountability Office
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations
ODA	Official Development Aid
PDPMM	Peace and Development Program of Magdalena Medio
PDSD	Democratic Defence and Security Policy
PRODEPAZ	Network of Regional Peace and Development Programs
US	United States
USAID	US Agency for International Development

Abstract

This paper examines the process of design and implementation of aid programs supported by the US and the EU for governance improvement in Colombia. The paper focuses on the understanding of the logic behind their divergent perspectives and the way such perspectives have been reflected at the national and local level through the implementation of Plan Colombia and Peace Laboratories, the main assistance programs supported by the US and the EU respectively. The hypothesis is that given the tensions and contradictions within and between the US and EU approaches, both have experienced limitations to contribute in addressing governance issues at the local level. By analysing the Department of Nariño case, this paper suggests that the failures of articulation of objectives and instruments supported by these donors, as well as the lack of coherence between the stated goals for governance improvement and the processes of program implementation, have limited the scope of the contributions of Plan Colombia and Peace Laboratories in terms of legitimacy, accountability and effectiveness.

Relevance to Development Studies

Since the 1990s, the notions of good governance and aid effectiveness have been of increasing importance in the development agenda. These issues have shaped the policy design and implementation of international aid programs. 'Legitimacy, accountability, effectiveness and ownership', among others, have constituted a common place in the rhetoric of development assistance. However, as the present research shows, the way in which such discourses are materialized through policies and programs and their translation into the local realities, depend on divergent understandings and interpretations of the notion of governance in itself. Moreover, the contradictions between discourse and the process of program implementation limit the scope of international aid for local governance improvement. Context also matters: the success of policies and instruments supported by donors are challenged by local socio-political specificities as the case of the Colombian conflict shows.

Keywords

Local governance, conflict, Peace Laboratories, Plan Colombia, international aid, Nariño.

Note to the Reader

All the translations of the texts from Spanish to English were made by the author.

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Background

Colombia has been subject to an internal armed conflict for more than fifty years. Its impact has been mainly experienced in the rural and marginalized zones of the country where the presence of state institutions has been historically weak or null. In this context, guerrilla and paramilitary groups have pretended to replace the state's functions, especially those related to the monopoly of the use of force, the establishment of the rules for social interaction, justice management, and taxation. As Salamanca (2009:6) points out, these groups "severely harm civilian populations in order to build control zones of para-state nature, where obedience, fear and forms of de facto justice are imposed through the use of armed force and threats".

Therefore, the violent actions of the illegal armed groups fighting for achieving the territorial control, particularly in areas where illegal activities related to coca crops and drug traffic take place, have been reflected in increasing homicides rates, kidnapping, forced displacement, and restriction in the political rights of the population.

This situation has been faced by people for many years without a decisive response of the state in terms of protecting their rights, providing justice and delivering social services. All of this has resulted in lack of confidence and legitimacy of the state, a situation that has been seen both as cause and consequence of the internal armed conflict. Consequently, in looking for a way to overcome the conflict and achieve a sustainable peace building process, local governance issues, strengthening of government institutions and building legitimacy, have occupied an important place in the conflict management agenda in recent years.

It is in this context that multiple stakeholders at the international, national and local level, claiming to build institutional capacity and improving governance practices are now influencing the design and implementation of public policy in conflict zones in Colombia.

From the international level, different aid agencies have intervened through development projects, institutional strengthening programs and military aid. However, they have divergent approaches and understandings of governance, conflict management and institutional mechanisms required for the peace building process.

On the one side, the United States' Government (US) from a *hard power* view supports the fight against narco-traffic and illegal armed groups based on the

idea that building legitimacy requires firstly to guarantee security conditions by strengthening the capacities of the military forces and the police. But at the same time the US supports projects aimed at institutional strengthening, alternative development and human rights, which are seen as a complement of the security strategy.

On the other side, the European Union (EU), instead of supporting the use of force, has contributed to the creation of "Peace Laboratories" focusing the efforts on strengthening local participation, grass root organizations, civil society, and local institutional improvement for good governance practices and conflict prevention. From a *soft side* perspective, the EU conceives sustainable development and mitigation of root causes of violence as necessary conditions for a peace developing process in Colombia.

From the national level, the central government defines the main objectives in terms of development and security and allocates public investment resources for achieving the proposed goals in those areas. Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that the state constitutes one of the actors of the armed conflict.

However it is at the local level where the effects of different policies and interventions are felt by the population. All these actors and organizations converge at the local level where local authorities, NGOs, civil society organizations, local elites, rent seekers fighting to attract the donor's attention, illegal armed groups, and people who suffer the harshest effects of the violent conflict, are present.

1.2. Problem Statement

In this paper, it is argued that despite the increasing amounts of national and international resources, and a multiplicity of actors and organizations claiming to be addressing issues of local governance, a real improvement in terms of legitimacy, efficiency and accountability has not been achieved in some conflict regions in Colombia. Particularly, while different initiatives supported by the US and the EU offer the promise of improving citizen participation, institutional strengthening and legitimacy building, they also exhibit a series of tensions and contradictions which at some point reduce their possibilities of meeting their goals.

Firstly, divergent and contradictory versions of the meaning of good governance from the US and the EU are manifested in the design and implementation of policies and programs that they support. Such views frame the discourses, the identity, the actions and the actors they want to promote. They come from dissimilar objectives, interests and instruments but after all, they converge in the same terrain in a disarticulated and contradictory process.

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Secondly, for people who directly face the consequences of the armed confrontation, the notion of the state and its responsibilities is diluted by the presence of numerous NGOs and international agencies working in projects that range from building of aqueducts, schools, hospitals, micro business, to capacity building and strengthening of military and police capacities. These interventions are in generally transitory and unaccountable, and consequently, instead of helping to bridge the relationship between the citizens and the state, they might result in the assumption that people can deal with the consequences of violence and marginalization without any permanent public support.

Finally, the overlapping and disarticulation of financial and non-financial efforts put in the same territory generates loss of efficiency in the allocation of scarce resources in these poor areas. Additionally, the interventions supported by different donors are increasingly seen with skepticism by the population for whom, after experiencing the arrival and departure of multiplicity of international aid agencies in its territory, non clear guarantees for the protection of their rights, addressing their needs, and sustainable possibilities for overcoming the conflict and its consequences are provided.

1.3. Objectives and Research Questions

The main objectives of this paper are to analyse the process design and implementation of aid programs supported by the US and the EU for governance improvement, to understand the logic behind their divergent perspectives and to identify the factors that have limited their success at the local level in some conflict regions in Colombia. It is important to stress that this research does not constitute an impact study aimed to evaluate the results of the international cooperation programs.

The focus will be on the divergent nature of the process under which these interventions take place, the way they are translated at the local level, and in particular, on the lack of coherence between their stated objectives of governance improvement on the one hand and the process of implementation of the programs on the other. The hypothesis is that given the contradictions within and between the US and EU approaches both have experienced limitations to contribute in addressing governance issues at the local level.

Therefore the main research question this paper seeks to address is, to what extent the divergent ideas behind the interventions supported by the EU and US and the contradictions in the process of implementation, have limited the achievement of their goals in terms of local governance improvement in conflict regions in Colombia.

The sub-questions that will guide the analysis are:

- To what extent has the internal armed conflict influenced local governance issues?

- What are the ideas of governance behind the intervention programs supported by the EU and the US in Colombia?

- How do the divergent positions from the EU and the US towards governance and peace building translate into the design and implementation of policies and programs in Colombia?

- Who are the stakeholders in the implementation process of international aid programs and how do they interact?

- How are these different approaches reflected in the local realities where the armed conflict is present?

- Which factors have limited the achievement of the stated goals in terms of local governance?

1.4. Relevance and Justification

Even though Colombia has increasingly received the international support to address governance and conflict issues, little attention has been paid to the understanding of the logic that has guided the design and implementation of programs for local governance improvement supported by the EU and the US in conflict regions of the country. Further research is required to analyse their implications at the local level as well as possible constraints they face in order to meet their goals. With this study I hope to contribute with new insights for understanding the process, limitations, and opportunities for improvement of international aid programs oriented to address issues of local governance in conflict regions in Colombia.

1.5. Research Methods and Limitations

The research is based on the analysis of data obtained from secondary sources, documents produced by international aid agencies from the EU and the US, policy papers from international donors and the Colombian government, national and international NGOs reports, as well as newspapers and academic documents related to the topic.

Additionally, in order to address the research questions and support the main arguments, the paper includes an analysis of the process of implementation of

the US and the EU assistance programs in the Colombian Department of Nariño. Even though the generation of primary data would have been desirable, developing field work was not feasible given the time restrictions for this research. This resulted in limitations to access to more detailed information about local governance processes that could have enriched the analysis of the case study.

1.6. Organization of the Paper

The paper is structured in six chapters, where the present introduction is the first one. The second chapter provides the analytical framework and the conceptual background that will guide the analysis. In particular it will provide a discussion of the emergence of the notion of governance and its conceptualization, as well as the concept of legitimacy and its three dimensions (participation, effectiveness and transparency) Moreover, this chapter examines the divergences between the US and EU's aid modalities and presents the Paris principles on aid effectiveness.

The third chapter turns to describe the Colombian conflict context as well as some characteristics of the conflict-local governance nexus in this country.

The fourth chapter provides a description of the origin, evolution and characteristics of the aid programs supported by the EU and the US in Colombia. It also discusses the process of interaction between these donors and the Colombian government.

Chapter five will bring a description of the process of design and implementation of Plan Colombia and the second Peace Laboratory in the Department of Nariño, which constitutes an illustrative study case to enable the analysis of the guiding research questions. Then, before moving to the conclusions chapter six analyses the Nariño case in the light of the core concepts of governance and the Paris Declaration principles of aid effectiveness.

Chapter 2
Conceptual Framework

2.1 Governance from Political and Theoretical Perspectives

2.1.1. The Emergence of the 'Good Governance' Agenda

Before discussing different approaches and concepts around governance, for the purposes of the present analysis it is useful to understand why this topic has played an increasingly important role in the international agenda and how it has shaped the design and implementation of international aid programs.

After years of structural adjustment policies guided by the Washington Consensus, the failures of the market fundamentalism doctrine became evident. Poor performance in terms of economic development, macroeconomic stabilization and poverty alleviation were common characteristics in countries where such policies were implemented[1].

As a consequence, a set of transformations in the neoliberal discourse took place. In contrast to the view of a minimalist state proclaimed by the Washington Consensus, it was recognized that "the state has an important role to play in appropriate regulation, social protection and welfare. [Therefore], the choice should not be whether the state should be involved but how it gets involved" (Stiglitz, 1998:24).

Hence the market fundamentalism doctrine left space to a new agenda which considers broader objectives to address not only economic but also social and political issues. This constitutes a renewed version of neoliberal policies which has been known as "Post Washington Consensus".

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[1] Gill (2000:54) points out that in general the results of the neoliberal policies developed during the 1980s in Eastern and Central Europe "have so far proven to be disastrous, with output plunging, physical capital being liquidated, infrastructure collapsing, and the pauperization of large sections of the population". Similarly, Duménil and Lévy (2005:17) explain that the countries of the periphery (Latin American and African countries) "have been injured by the imposition of neoliberalism due to the rejection of autonomous development strategies. [...] The combination of a high cost of financing, exchange rate stability, and free international mobility of capitals defines the basic neoliberal cocktail, a recipe for stagnation and crisis".

From this view, the failure of the neoliberal prescriptions was attributed not only to the market imperfections but also to the incapacity of the states to implement the structural adjustment policies in a correct way. It is argued that corruption, weak institutions and lack of accountability limit the possibilities for the state to complement the markets appropriately. Thus, the question is not only how to make the government smaller but also more effective to support economic efficiency and growth.

It is at this point that the discourse of 'Good Governance' became increasingly relevant. On the one hand, it was conceived as a useful concept to deal with the failures of the pure free market perspective by giving the state a more important role to play in the market sphere. On the other, good governance practices were seen as a mechanism to overcome state failures because they are expected to give more space to non state actors and processes in the public realm.

Therefore, good governance emerges as one of the most fashionable terms that guide multilateral financing and aid programs for development. This concept is "extremely useful […] because it allowed the international financial institutions (and the donor community in general) to retreat from economicism and to reconsider crucial social and political questions" (Hewitt, 1998:106).

As a result, international efforts have increasingly supported programs that range from institutional strengthening, capacity building and reform of the state, to efforts aimed at enhancing human rights, civil society participation, accountability, access to justice and basic freedoms among others.

2.1.2. Conceptualizing Governance

The concept of governance has played an important role not only in policy design and implementation issues but also in the scholarly debate. Its usage has been shaped by different academic fields and approaches. Nevertheless, there is a common characteristic in the notions of governance recently developed. It shifted from its traditional association with government, to a broader notion that involves non state actors in the public sphere.

According to (Kjaer, 2004:2), in the field of political science, different definitions of governance can be categorized within three subfields: Public administration, international relations and comparative politics. Although their similarities, each perspective refers to different debates.

The first one is more related to processes of public sector reform. Kjaer argues that from a public administration and public policy view, governance refers to "self-organizing, inter-organizational networks characterized by interdependence, resource-exchange, rules of game, and significant autonomy from the state" (Rhodes, 1997:15; quoted in Kjaer, 2004:3).

Conversely, from a global political perspective, governance is conceived "to include systems of rule at all levels of human activity – from the family to the international organization – in which the pursuit of goals through the exercise of control has transnational repercussions", (Rosenau, 1995:13; quoted in Kjaer, 2004:3). Thus, this notion is placed in the sub discipline of international relations.

Finally, according to Hyden governance constitutes "the stewardship of formal and informal political rules of game. [It] refers to those measures that involve setting the rules for the exercise of power and settling conflicts over such rules", (Hyden 1999:185, quoted in Kjaer, 2004:3). This definition is placed in the subfield of comparative politics. He argues that from this perspective the concept of governance focuses on state-society interaction and it refers to the literature on democratization process.

Given the purposes of this paper, governance will be understood following Hyden's notion because it leaves room to consider the role of formal and informal rules of social interaction. This notion of governance also allows considering that the public realm constitutes an arena where a multiplicity of stakeholders (state and non state actors) with weaker and stronger basis of power interact to solve collective (local) problems. Furthermore, this concept is helpful to emphasize that such stewardship of the rules of the game is a conflictual process mediated by power relationships. All of these factors being of particular importance at the local level in conflict contexts as it will be shown in the Colombian case.

2.1.3. Legitimacy: A Core Concept of Governance

It has been said that governance is understood as the stewardship, setting and enforcement of formal and informal rules. Moreover, it implies processes of empowerment, participation, and more horizontal institutional arrangements that cannot be detached from issues of redistribution of power. This is a problematic facet of the ideas promoted by the discourse of governance. All of these social processes lead to further questions as why and how such rules are accepted or contested, in other words how they are legitimazed. After all, "governance is about managing rules of the game in order to enhance legitimacy in the public realm" Kjaer (2004:15).

Haus and Heinelt (2005:14) define legitimacy as "the acceptance, trust and support as well as political justifiability and enforceability, both with respect to the decision and implementation processes and to the policies objectives as such". They argue that in a democratic political system, there are three interrelated forms of legitimation:

a. *Input-Oriented Legitimation Through Participation:*

From this perspective, people consent to be governed; they accept the rules because it is considered that it is appropriate and right. This is the type of legitimacy coming from people and rests on some kind of authentic participation for collective problem solving and decision making. It requires meaningful mechanisms that enable "the possibility of expressing consent or dissent with proposed policies and of influencing the decision of these policy proposals" (Haus and Heinelt, 2005:15).

    b.   Output-Oriented Legitimation Through Effectiveness:

From this perspective, the acceptance comes from the ability of the system to solve problems affecting the community it claims to represent and to produce tangible results that serve the common good. Here legitimacy depends on "whether political decisions and their implementation achieve the effects or objectives that are intended". (Haus and Heinelt, 2005:14).

    c.   *Throughout-Legitimation Through Transparency*:

Under this notion, the legitimacy of the system rests on clearly defined mechanisms to "understand how the measures are taken and who is responsible for them, in order to make actors accountable for their actions". (Haus and Heinelt, 2005:15).

2.2   The Discourse of Governance and Aid Effectiveness

As was mentioned before, governance improvement has increasingly constituted a goal of international cooperation, but at the same time, the lack of governance is seen as one of the most important limiting factors of aid effectiveness. It is argued that weak institutions, corruption and patronage relationships limit the results of the international assistance.

Therefore, governance-related issues have been linked to the donors concerns with aid effectiveness. In this sense, Horner and Power (2009:7) point out that the notion of good governance "is generally considered the most appropriate lens for dealing with aid effectiveness issues".

Furthermore, the lack of coordination, duplication and dispersion of efforts, as well as the divergent approaches and mechanisms implemented by multiplicity of donors in developing countries, have been recognized as limiting factors to support successful development processes.

The debate about aid effectiveness resulted in the adoption of the Paris Declaration in 2005. It recognizes that "while the volumes of aid and other development resources must increase to achieve [the Millennium Development Goals], aid effectiveness must increase significantly as well to support partner

country efforts to strengthen governance and improve development performance" (OECD, 2005: 1). Therefore, the Paris Declaration set five principles for aid effectiveness:

1. Ownership: Partner countries exercise effective leadership over their development policies and strategies, and coordinate development actions.
2. Alignment: Donors base their overall support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures.
3. Harmonisation: donor's actions are more harmonized, transparent and collectively effective.
4. Managing for results: Managing resources and improving decision-making for results.
5. Mutual accountability: Donors and partners are accountable for development results.

It is important to stress that under these principles, ownership constitutes a central pillar of aid effectiveness. It is recognized that "development priorities cannot be imposed externally by donors; the recipients of aid are in a much better position to define priorities accurately, and building state capacity to deliver on these priorities makes development process more sustainable in the long term" (Horner and Power, 2009: 4).

In this perspective, issues related to participation of the relevant stakeholders at the national and regional level (governments, civil society and the private sector), as well as capacity building for the design and implementation of policies and programs are of special relevance. To summarize: increased country ownership needs to be accompanied by good governance in order for aid programs to be effective.

2.2.   Two Aid Modalities: The EU And The US

From the above, it follows that the adoption of the Paris principles constitutes an attempt of progress towards aid coordination and harmonization. Moreover, the rhetoric of good governance agenda is a common place in the design and implementation of international cooperation programs. However, different understandings, approaches and tools adopted by donors have resulted in a large variety of aid modalities being used in developing countries.

Such is the case of the international cooperation programs supported by the US and the EU. Although both of these actors have adopted the Paris Declaration principles and claim to be working for governance improvement, each of them exhibit marked differences in their actuations in these fields. The interests, the identity, and the mechanisms each of them projects at the international level, shape the aid modalities on governance that they support.

On the one hand, according to Nau (2000:127), the US foreign policy is a reflection of the "dualism of the idealist and realist traditions. Both traditions pose a sharp dichotomy between a democratic society at home, which eschews force, and balance of power system abroad, which uses force". Therefore, the US position is more preoccupied with protecting its national interests and projecting its military power to support security goals, even if it implies giving up democracy, civil liberties and human rights protection[2].

This background of the US international policy is reflected in the type of foreign assistance it supports. As Hout (2007:71) points out, "a US agency for international development (USAID) […] argued that fostering development abroad serves US security interests, because such development would pre-empt threats and disasters, open new markets for US goods and services, [and] lead to secure environments for US investment".

The author continues by saying that "the United States has traditionally used its foreign aid as a tool to support its allies in parts of the world considered strategically important […] the position of USAID mirrors the political use of foreign aid in the United States. The agency, set up in the 1960s to disengage development assistance from aid given for political and security reasons, has gradually become involved in programs- for instance, in Egypt and Colombia- that are no part of its original mandate" (Hout, 2007:73).

Additionally, from the USAID perspective, good governance is seen as a prerequisite for effective development assistance. According to this agency, "poorly performing states [...] will not achieve sustainable development unless they dramatically improve governance" (USAID, 2002:42, quoted in Hout, 2007:73).

Finally it is important to note that the US government has been increasingly preoccupied by projecting the image that "while waging a world-war on terror, [the US] was 'not focused solely on military action and that it want[ed] to play a positive non-military role in low-income countries" (Hout, 2007:70). This rhetoric has shaped the logic under which different US institutions (particularly the Department of the State - through USAID- and the Department of Defence) develop their international cooperation programs.

On the other hand, according to Manners (2001:10) Europe has a normative basis and its actuations in international affairs are motivated by its core norms: peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights and

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[2] In this sense, Nau (2000:141) argues that "weaker nations see democracy promotion as a thin disguise for US economic and military interests. When the latter are not at stake, the United States pushes democracy and human rights. […] But when economic or security interests prevail, the United States quickly soft-pedals democracy".

fundamental freedoms. In this sense Europe tries to assert its identity as an international peace actor which promotes democracy and human rights.

Therefore, in contrast to notions of military power, the EU approach exhibits greater emphasis on the construction of norms, treaties, declarations and policies. This guides its understanding of democratic governance, peace and conflict. Instead of using physical force, the EU focuses its attention on addressing the structural causes of violence and promotes a discourse of conflict prevention, and sustainable peace building (Manners, 2004:4-5, 19).

In relation to issues of governance, the European Commission asserts that the approach must vary depending on the specific country situation. Hout (2010b:6) explains that the *Country Strategy Papers* are the main tool used by the European Community to define the relationships with developing countries. These documents constitute a country diagnosis according to the political, social, economic and environmental situation. The analysis is based on a set of governance indicators related to human rights, democratic principles, organization of the government, decision making process and capacity to perform basic government functions, Hout (2010b:6).

Following the above, the EU has paid particular attention to governance related issues in the so called *fragile states*[3] given that governance deficit is seen as one of its main causes. For instance, from the EU perspective "in post-conflict situations where state institutions are either non-functioning or non-existent [...] the aim of the approach would be to bring the authorities to address governance issues, which were at the root of the conflict in many cases" (European Commission, 2003:21).

Based on this, the Commission indicates that governance "is a central issue in relations with Colombia and most of the Central American Countries, which are structurally fragile, [and] have highly unequal societies […]. In these conditions, strengthening the rule of law, internal structures for dialogue and reconciliation and promoting participatory democracy are crucial areas of cooperation" (European Commission, 2006:18).

In conclusion, following Castañeda (2009a:8) "in general, the US exposes an international actor profile focused on maintaining security and reacting in its area of influence, using foreign aid directly to support security goals. In

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[3] From the EU's perspective, state fragility is understood as "weak or failing structures and to situations where social contract is broken due to the State's incapacity or unwillingness to deal with its basic functions, meet its obligations and responsibilities regarding the rule of law, protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, security and safety of its population, poverty reduction, service delivery, the transparent and equitable management of resources and access to power" (Hout, 2010:146).

contrast, the EU presents itself as a development [...] actor, approaching security matters and conflict prevention through humanitarian and developmental instruments".

Chapter 3
Conflict and Local Governance in Colombia

3.1.   The Colombian Conflict

Colombia is located in the north-western region of South America and inhabited by 46 million people. This country has a privileged geographical location bordered by both, the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans constituting the main port of entry to South America. It is a middle-income country with a per capita GDP of $8.900 and is rich in natural resources as petroleum, emeralds, coal, coffee and high biodiversity. However, Colombia has a visibly unequal income distribution with a GINI coefficient of 0.86 and a high unemployment rate (11%).

Concerning the political organization, Colombia is a unitary state, democratic, decentralized, and with autonomy of its territorial entities. Nevertheless, this country has experienced a violent internal conflict for more than four decades. Most scholars have identified its origins in the mid-20th century. The assassination of the liberal populist leader Jorge Eliecer Gaitán in 1948 unleashed a violent dispute between liberal and conservative partisans during an 18-year period known as *the violence*. Such confrontation claimed the lives of thousands of people mainly in the rural areas of the country.

It was in that period when the emergence of the two main guerrilla groups, the Armed Revolutionary Forces (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN), took place. The FARC were born in peripheral regions from farmer colonization where they consolidated their position taking advantage of the little or no presence of the state, this group "was initially interested, first and foremost in land reform issues […]. The movement originally was political in nature" (Dipaolo, 2005:169).

Since the mid-1980s Colombia has faced a process of intensification and degradation of the conflict reflected in increasing violence indicators as homicide rates, extortion and kidnappings. Several factors have contributed to this situation. On the one hand, in that decade the FARC guerrillas experienced a strong increment in its number of members and got increasingly involved with illicit activities related to the narco-traffic. On the other, being in the service of drug-barons and powerful landlords, the extreme right-wing paramilitary group, United Colombian Self-defense Group (AUC), emerged as a new actor of the conflict.

Therefore, since that time guerrillas and paramilitary groups have been increasingly involved in a violent dispute for the territorial control in order to achieve the generation of illegal rents derived from the drug production and trafficking.

However, González (2006:16) indicates that mainly, the Colombian conflict is characterized by interposed third party, where the adversaries do not face directly to each other, but rather strikes the real or supposed social basis of the enemy, which leaves the population subject to the decisions and arbitrary actions of the conflict actors.

When analyzing the patterns of territorial control, González finds that on the one side, the paramilitary groups seek to control territories near urban capitals, zones that are relatively more prosperous and integrated to the national or world wide economy, and where regional and local powers of a semiautonomous character exist. On the other side, guerrillas seek to control the territory in marginalized areas of the country breaking the bonds between the people and the government, and weakening the legitimacy and people's confidence in the state institutions.

However, as it was stated before, nowadays both actors have been increasingly involved in a violent struggle for achieving territorial control, especially where illegal activities related to drug production and trafficking take place. Drug trade has become one of the most important sources to fund the operations of guerrillas and paramilitary groups.

In the search for a solution to the armed conflict, since 1982 the Colombian government has engaged in a number of peace negotiations with the FARC and ELN guerrilla groups. However, they have repeatedly failed. On the other hand, in 2003 after a controversial process, demobilization agreements were signed between the national government and with the AUC. Nevertheless, "the reality is that the essence of para-militarism is not being dismantled. Their leaders still have more than ten thousand men in arms and their structures remain place."[4]

In this context, Salamanca (2009:6) points out that "no country with such a history of failed attempts to achieve peace and human security can claim to have stability and sovereign governance".

3.2. Conflict -Local Governance Nexus.

Although Colombia is considered the oldest and one of the most stable democracies in Latin America, generally speaking conflict regions have been characterized by historical state's weaknesses in the monopoly of force and justice as well as failures to guarantee the socioeconomic well-being of the citizens. Therefore, talking about notions of governance and legitimacy in Colombia requires to mention that some conflict regions of the country

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[4] The Centre for International Policy's Colombian Program. Available at http://www.cipcol.org/?p=48. Visited August 22, 2010.

constitute a good example of what Hewitt (1998:110) has considered "governance in extreme cases", a situation in which neither civil society, nor the state exists at all.

The notion of *state fragility* mentioned above constitutes an accurate description of the situation lived in these regions where the doors have left open for illegal armed groups to achieve and increase their local control constituting a parallel state in the zones they dominate.

For instance, Wickham-Crowley (1987:10) shows that "the more extensive is the fall or absence of legitimate authority in a region, the more the population becomes a "virgin territory" for those that could be a "counter power" or alternative government. […] The new authority is constructed and maintained by offering the classic contributions of the governments: the maintenance of order and internal peace (police and administrative functions), and the contributions to the material security (the function of social welfare)."[5]

In the fight for achieving territorial control, it is clear that what it is territorialized is not only the physical space, but also the networks of economic exchange and information, the culture, power relationships and life styles of the people. In the territories controlled by illegal armed groups, they have established the rules of social interaction, the mechanisms of application of justice, they define what is accepted and what is not, and their influence goes to the point to even influence the education, family life and the resolution of conflicts in the communities under their control.

In sum, following Hyden's definition of governance, these groups have a strong influence in the process of steering, setting, application and enforcement of the rules of social interaction in conflict zones. The armed confrontation determines a complex system of violent relations and informal rules of the game. In such context, meaningful spaces for civil society participation, legitimacy strengthening, and accountability are barely found.

Additionally, given that the dispute for the local power is crucial, the armed groups not only fight each other to domain the territory, but also seek ways to consolidate their local control by deteriorating and co-opting the local institutions and mechanisms of civil participation. According to Sanchez and Palau (2006:3) this phenomenon has intensified from the mid 1980s when important institutional economic and politic changes at the municipal level took place. Since that time the mayors are elected and local governments have access to bigger resources transferred from Bogota.

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[5] The 'governing law' established by the FARC in 2002 constitutes a clear example of how this armed group have become a parallel state in the zones they control. In such law "individuals with assets of more than $1 million are required to pay a fee for the protection of (or, really, from) FARC or 'risk detention'" (DiPaolo, 2005:169).

The process of fiscal, political and administrative decentralization was carried out in a context of weak local governments characterized. Therefore, this authors explain that "as political power and budgetary resources became more local, the irregular groups had more of an incentive to exercise greater control especially due to the state's weaknesses in the monopoly of force and the administration of justice" Sanchez and Palau (2006:4).

Moreover, as the administrative decentralization "gave local authorities the right to draw up and execute budgets, plan activities, authorise spending and sign contracts" this process turned into a sort of system of 'armed clientelism' in conflict regions (ibid:17).

In such landscape of weak institutions and armed conflict, local governance faces serious threats. On the one hand, in most cases, the illegal armed groups directly influence the decision of the government and local authorities in conflict regions. They intimidate, plunder and form strategic alliances with local and regional leaders to gain political power and to have access to local budget, which constitutes an attractive source of financing for their activities. Guerrillas and paramilitary "threaten, exile or kill leaders not willing to concede" (Sanchez and Palau, 2006:27).

For instance these authors show that "in recent past more than 500 hundred mayors – around 50% of the total number of mayors- were threatened, forced to leave and had to run the municipality from the department's capital. Between 1998 and 2004, 322 mayors, 617 councilpersons, 347 local political leaders, 214 grass root leaders, 185 union leaders and close 600 government officials were killed by all armed groups including government forces" (Sanchez and Palau, 2006:27).

Furthermore, the democratic mechanisms of participation are severely restricted by the local power of the illegal armed groups, "in order to control resources or influence local governments decisions the guerrilla and paramilitary groups curtail local electoral competition letting to compete in elections those parties or candidates likely to concede to their interests" (Sanchez and Palau, 2006:30).

On the other hand, in the zones controlled by illegal armed groups, citizens can barely exert their right to vote, or if they do, they are constrained to vote for the candidates according to the armed group's preferences. To this respect, statistics presented by the Electoral Observation Mission (EOM) show that in 420 municipalities (out of 1.101), the last parliamentary elections were on risk given the presence of illegal armed groups, press freedom violations, violent actions against candidates, forced displacement with electoral effects, and number of combats between conflict's actors, (map No.1).

Map No.1
Electoral Risk Generated by Violence: Congress Elections 2010
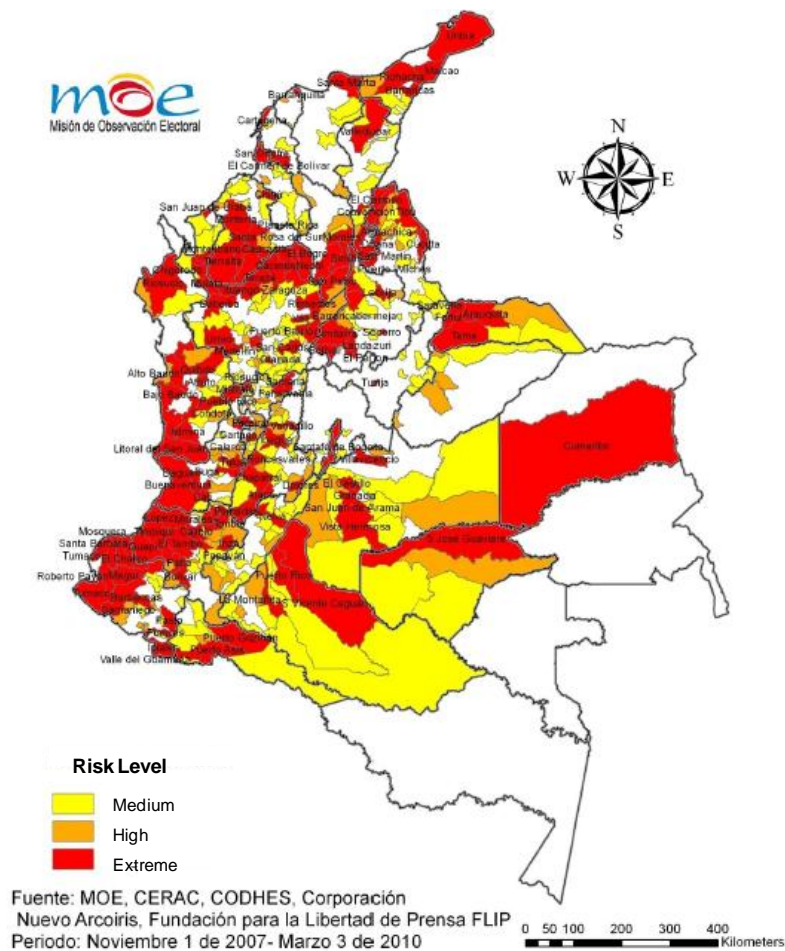
Source: Electoral Observation Mission (EOM), 2010.

To sum up, given the importance of the local power for the armed groups, the internal conflict has had severe impacts on local governance issues. In this panorama of territorial domain by illegal armed groups, legitimacy, transparency and capacity of the state institutions as well as citizen participation are not meaningful. The local authorities' autonomy is highly restricted, the institutions are either co-opted or threatened and face serious obstacles to comply with their mandates of delivering social services.

This generates a vicious circle in which governance improvement is constrained by the existence of the conflict, and at the same time, the lack of governance creates appropriate spaces for its existence.

Chapter 4
The EU and US Cooperation Programs: Two Different Approaches

The Colombian armed confrontation has experienced a process of internationalization since 1990s. Two main factors contributed to such process. "First, the severe consequences of internal conflict started to clearly affect other countries. Second the world became aware of the Colombian crisis and the international community became involved in the search for a solution" (Castañeda, 2009a:2).

As a result, Colombia has been recipient of increasing aid programs from the US government and the EU under the label of peace building, democracy promotion and governance improvement. However, their divergent and conflictual ideas and understandings towards these objectives, have shaped the process of policy design and implementation of programs, as well as the instruments they support to achieve their stated objectives.

As the next two sections will show, such divergences constitute a clear manifestation of the US and the EU's aid modalities discussed in chapter two. In the Colombian case they are reflected in the two main programs supported by these donors: Plan Colombia and Peace Laboratories respectively.

4.1. Plan Colombia and Peace Laboratories

By the late 1990's, the Colombian government was in a peace process negotiation with the FARC guerrillas but at the same time, the country was experiencing an intensification and degradation of the conflict given the increasing destabilization power of the guerrillas as well as the rising negative socio political influence of narco-traffic.

To respond to these challenges, the national government launched an ambitious strategy known as *Plan Colombia*: "a commitment to recover the central responsibilities of the state, which are the promotion of democracy, the monopoly of the application of justice, territorial integrity, the generation of favourable conditions for employment, respect for human rights and human dignity, and the conservation of public order" (Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, 1999).

Thus, Plan Colombia was conceived as an integrated strategy based on four components: peace process, socioeconomic stabilization, anti-drug strategy, and institutional strengthening and social development (DNP, 2003:9). The plan was submitted by the Colombian government and a search was begun for economic support from the national and international community.

Under the strategy of "Diplomacy for Peace", the Colombian government "asked the support from the EU and its member states, and the US in two ways: first, diplomatic support for peace talks through a group of "friends for the peace process" – a kind of international participation which differs from mediation; [and] second, economic support for [...] the Post- Conflict period", (Castañeda, 2009a:3).

The results of the negotiation process to gain support for Plan Colombia constituted a juncture point that has shaped the EU and US cooperation programs in Colombia since that moment.

4.1.1. US and Plan Colombia: 'The War on Drugs'

After several rounds of negotiations, the US government (led by President Clinton), decided to participate as a donor for Plan Colombia and an emergency support package for the fight against drug trafficking was authorized by the US Congress. The discourse in favour of supporting Plan Colombia was based on concerns about significant growth in illicit crops and increasing destabilizing power of the Colombian conflict in the region, which was considered as important threats to the US' national interests.

Furthermore, this support was also justified on the basis of good governance objectives. In this sense, US responded to the request of the Colombian government "to expand and consolidate government presence, and to improve the livelihoods of the most vulnerable Colombians by […] protecting human rights, strengthening rule of law, and making governance more transparent, participatory and accountable"[6].

Therefore, based on the principle of shared responsibility, the US government decided to contribute for the execution of Plan Colombia with a total amount of initial resources of up to $1,190.3 million for the fight against drug trafficking. The line items of the allocation of resources were: military aid (49,5%), aid to the Colombian Police (30,5%), and alternative development (6,6%). The remaining 13,4%, went to areas such as aid to internal displaced people, human rights, judicial reform, state strengthening, and peace process[7]. Shifter (1999:19) shows that "this new package makes Colombia by far the leading recipient of U.S. security aid in the western hemisphere and the third in the world, behind Israel and Egypt".

[6] Embassy of the United States in Colombia. "US Assistance to Colombia". US Embassy for Colombia website, http://bogota.usembassy.gov/plancolombia.html, visited June 28, 2010.
[7] Statistics provided by the Ministry of National Defence of Colombia.

Under the anti-narcotics strategy, the most important goals set were a 50% reduction in the area dedicated to growing illicit crops to be accomplished over a six year period, and an assault on the production and commercialization of narcotic drugs. To achieve these goals the US supported the creation of a "new Army Counter -Narcotics Brigade, supplied generously with helicopters [that] would assure security conditions on the ground for an aggressive fumigation campaign spraying herbicides over tens of thousands of acres of coca growing zones" (Isacson and Poe, 2009:4).

In short, the support provided by the US for Plan Colombia was mainly oriented to the military and police components of the anti-drug strategy and less concerned about peace process, institutional reforms or socioeconomic stabilization. These objectives have had a far smaller share in the resources provided (figure No.1).

Figure No. 1
US Assistance to Colombia (2000-2008)
Dollars in Millions
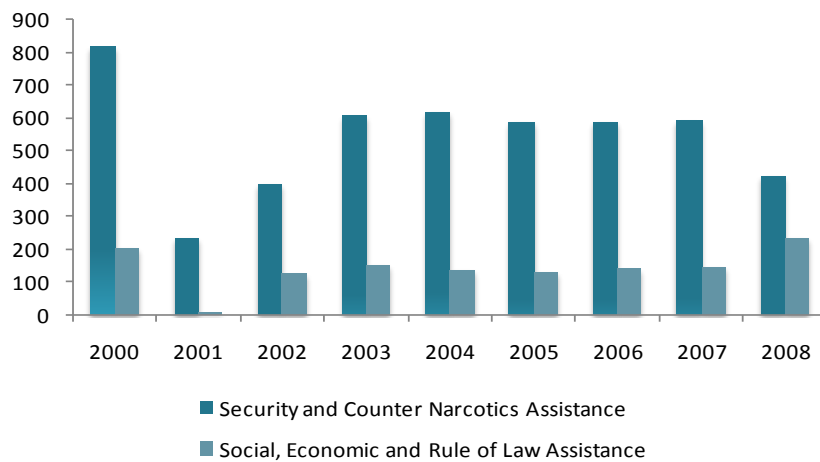
Source: U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO, 2008:15)

After ten years of implementation, the military emphasis for the destination of resources and type of programs supported by the US remain. In fact, after September 11/01, the doors were opened to the direct use of such resources to strength the state forces in order to combat "narco-terrorist" guerrillas. To this respect, the US government pointed out that "recognizing that terrorism and the illicit narcotics trade in Colombia are inextricably linked, the U.S. Congress granted new expanded statutory authorities in 2002 making U.S. assistance to

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Colombia more flexible in order to better support [the] unified campaign against narcotics and terrorism"[8].

Since 1999, when the US government responded to the invitation made by the Colombian government, that country has provided $6,1 billion. 79% percent has gone to security and counter narcotics strategy. The remaining 21% has been oriented to support socioeconomic and rule of law programs.

4.1.2. A New Phase of US Assistance: Integrated Action

The implementation of Plan Colombia has showed very limited progress in eradicating Colombian coca and this country continues being one of the largest cocaine producers of the world. Therefore, it was recognized that relying only on military methods without greater efforts in social and institutional components, the issue of drug production and commercialization could not be successfully addressed.

In accordance with the US government attempt to project the image of not being focused solely on military action, the principles guiding the US antinarcotics assistance in Colombia has shifted towards the concept of *integrated action*, a doctrine that closely integrates civil and military efforts.

A new strategy was proposed to overcome the critics against Plan Colombia: "that the effort should not be entirely military; that social services are important; that forced eradication without aid will do harm; and that populations should be consulted" (Isacson and Poe (2009:6).

The new scheme of intervention, known as *National Consolidation Plan*, is aimed to establish state presence in traditionally ungoverned spaces in order to improve governance, legitimacy and to recover citizen's confidence in the institutions of the state.

The logic of intervention consists of a phased sequence consisting of three stages: the starting point is to develop military and police operations in order to control the territory. Then, the execution of quick impact actions as medical assistance, infrastructure building, humanitarian assistance for internal displaced people and support for small business aimed to stabilize the zone and recover citizens' confidence in the state institutions. The sequence finishes with the establishment of the presence of civilian government institutions to deliver social services and justice administration (Ministry of National Defence of Colombia, 2007:31).

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[8] Embassy of the United States in Colombia. "US Assistance to Colombia". US Embassy for Colombia website, http://bogota.usembassy.gov/plancolombia.html, visited June 28, 2010.

To implement this strategy, in 2004 the national government created the Centre for Coordination and Integrated Action (CCAI), a national coordination body composed by representatives from different state institutions[9] and supported by the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Such inter-agency body would be in charge of leading a socioeconomic development and security plan to re-establish long term governance in southern Colombia (Isacson and Poe, 2009:6). The prioritized zones where these interventions take place are characterized by presence of illegal armed groups, extreme poverty, illicit crops, as well as critical security and socioeconomic conditions.

To operationalize the National Consolidation Plan, CCAI has two coordination instances. The first one has a decision making character composed by the heads of Ministries and directors of government institutions that are part of CCAI. The second one, with an operative character, is in charge of channelling the requirements for the development of regional action plans previously defined in the first instance. It also has the mandate to gain support from private, public and international institutions for the implementation of such action plans (Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, 2009:9, 14).

Since its creation in 2004, CCAI has increased its presence from 39 municipalities in 7 prioritized zones, to 69 municipalities in 14 zones. Between 2004 and 2008, it has been spending approximately $500.000 million including national and international resources on projects for governance strengthening, economic and social development, justice and security, and establishment of property rights (Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, 2009:9,18).

Additionally, in order to support this strategy, USAID launched the 'Initial Governance Support Program' in March 2007. Its goal is "to reinforce stability in high-priority, conflict-affected areas of Colombia. [The program's] objectives are to strengthen the credibility and legitimacy of the government of Colombia (GOC) in post-conflict areas through small, community-driven activities; to increase the willingness and capacity of communities to cooperate and interact with the GOC; and to expand the GOC's capacity to exercise timely, credible, and responsive civil functions" (USAID, 2010:1).

Under this program USAID has provided some $5.6 million in assistance for quick impact projects in areas as education, health, institutional development, media/communications, productive activities, small municipal infrastructure, socio-cultural activities, transportation and water/sanitation, (USAID, 2010:1).

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[9] Including Presidency Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation, General Command of the Military Forces, Family Welfare Institute, National Police, General Attorney, Ministries of Education, Social Protection, Interior and Justice, Agriculture, Mines and Transportation, among others.

It should be pointed out that even though socioeconomic aspects of the peace building processes and participation at the local level have gained importance in the US cooperation strategy, it does not imply a structural shift in the balance between military aid and other socioeconomic objectives. In fact, as was shown in the figure No. 1, the share of resources provided for these areas continue being a far smaller effort compared to those supporting counternarcotics and security objectives.

4.1.3. EU and Peace Laboratories: 'Alternative Paths of Peace'

In the year 2000, political efforts were begun to gain the support of the European countries for the social component of Plan Colombia. However, this support did not materialize. The central argument of the European donors was the strong military emphasis that this plan had adopted.

The EU justified its reluctance to support Plan Colombia by arguing firstly, that the Colombian conflict had structural socioeconomic and political causes that cannot be addressed just through military aid; secondly, that the design of the peace process did not involve social movements and civil society organizations; and finally, that the EU should support a peace building process that boosted institutional strengthening, alternative development, humanitarian aid and social development (Universidad Militar Nueva Granada, 2001:3).

Consequently, instead of supporting Plan Colombia, the European donors focused their attention on a peace building program independent from the government strategy: the Peace and Development Program of Magdalena Medio Region (PDPMM).

This initiative had been born in 1995 as a local community driven response to overcome the causes of violence, poverty and social exclusion in the Magdalena region which has been strongly affected by the armed conflict. According to Barreto (2007:11), PDPMM "represented an attempt to create the social, economic and cultural conditions to peace at a grass roots level […]. It constitutes an attempt to find and build alternative paths to peace and development in the middle of the conflict".

The principles of democracy, rule of law, and peace building that shape the EU's cooperation strategies seemed to fit well in the philosophy of PDPMM. Consequently this process attracted the interest of the European donors and it was supported through the creation of a "peace laboratory" in Magdalena Medio in 2002.

Several reasons explain the European participation in this process: 1) as an attempt to support a political negotiated solution to the conflict; 2) after the European refusal to take part in the Plan Colombia, it was politically imperative for Europe to give a response to it and develop its own peace

policies and approach to Colombia; and 3) as recognised by the European Security Strategy, "in an era of global interdependence, the world's insecurity constitutes Europe's insecurity consequently, Europe has been developing peace-oriented policies, development and good governance for the rest of the world (Barreto, 2007:5).

Three objectives for the Peace Laboratories were outlined in the *Colombia Country Strategy paper* in 2001: "first, to support, in the field, the implementation of the specific agreements entered into by the conflicting parties; second, to build up zones of peaceful coexistence for the inhabitants by reinforcing local institutions, and supporting civilian actors engaged in promoting peace; and third, to foster economic and social development, including when possible, support to alternative development" (European Commission, 2001:26).

Sanín (2004:34) points out that the guiding principle of the peace laboratories is participation. "The objectives should be achieved through projects presented by community associations or local governments [...]. A high attention is given to improve the capacity building of community's organizations, specially in formulation, mediation and management of programs that improve social services and socioeconomic strategies with impact on the more vulnerable population".

Since 2004, besides the Magdalena Medio peace laboratory, two more laboratories have been implemented in the south-west and north-east regions in Colombia. The EU has allocated $116 million to finance projects oriented to institutional strengthening, good governance, sustainable development projects, public infrastructure building, human rights, and local participation, among others (Castañeda, 2009b:166).

4.2. The EU and the US: Divergent Understandings and Instruments

Given the fact that in the Colombian case the interventions of the US and the EU have to deal with the armed conflict context, analyzing their understandings on this issue constitutes a good starting point for identifying key divergent points and its reflection in policy design and implementation.

From the US perspective Colombia is facing a narco-terrorist threat, rather than an internal armed conflict. In consequence, given that the armed groups are seen as terrorists, the main instrument to neutralize their actions is the use of force. The states do not negotiate with terrorists as their actions are not grounded in political basis. Therefore, from this viewpoint there is little space for dialogue.

This interpretation of the armed struggle in Colombia, added to the US's tradition of projecting its military power in order to protect its national

interests and security objectives, explain the military focus of the programs that this country supports in Colombia.

Moreover, the fact that US focuses on the consequences of the conflict rather than its causes, and security objectives are placed at the first level of priority, other goals as socioeconomic development have a subsidiary role. As it was mentioned before, from the US perspective, security is seen as a prerequisite of any form of sustainable development. In this sense military intervention is justified in both, developmental grounds and security considerations.

Consequently, although the new strategy of cooperation under the "National Consolidation Plan" claims to be a more civilian and socioeconomic oriented approach to aid in Colombia, "the US profile as an ODA [Official Development Aid] donor is rather weak, as the Southern Command presence and military focus lead the policy while weakening USAID profile" (Castañeda, 2009a:14)

By contrast, from the EU point of view, Colombia experiences a long lasting conflict which nature is not only armed but also socio-political. This has two important implications. Firstly, as the conflict has a socio-political dimension, its solution requires more than the use and deployment of military force. Indeed, it would be require addressing the structural causes of the conflict. In this sense, the EU promotes a discourse of conflict prevention, and sustainable peace building.

Secondly, given the political aspects of the conflict, its solution requires a negotiation process between the state and non state conflict actors. In contrast to notions of military power, the EU approach exhibits greater emphasis on dialogues and treaties as key instruments for conflict resolution.

Another important divergent point is related to the type of capacity building that each of these donors promote. This determines the type of institutional strengthening that the EU and the US support in Colombia.

As the US considers the use of force as primary tool for establishment of the rule of law, its cooperation is more oriented to support coercive policies through the strengthening of military forces and police capacities. The US supports the objective of improving the institutional presence in the territory which has meant increasing presence of armed forces.

Moreover, under this view, institutional strengthening has a top-down character and the US cooperation programs for governance improvement is based on military objectives. It is reflected in the fact that the National Consolidation Plan has as a main goal to gain the confidence of the population in favour of the state forces in order to recover territories under the domain of illegal armed groups. This logic constitutes a reflection of the "hearts and minds" counter insurgency principle applied for the US army in order to gain people's support in favour of the state forces.

In contrast, as the discourse of the EU's support is based in the promotion of peace building processes at the local level, the capacity building it supports is more oriented to strengthening local participation, civil society and grass root organizations. From this viewpoint, local participation constitutes a core issue of governance. That explains the fact that the EU focuses its attention in local institutions and civil society organizations in a rather bottom-up approach.

4.3. The Interaction Donors – National Government

It is important to bear in mind that the design and implementation of the international cooperation programs cannot be possible without the cooperation and interest of national actors. The role of the donors in Colombia, the programs they support and the instruments they use, are also the result of the process of interaction between them and the national government. The Colombian government has been influenced but at the same time has influenced the way that international donors have supported governance improvement initiatives in the country.

Since 1999, different factors have determined the donors-national government relationships. In a first stage, between 1999 and 2002, "the Colombian government was caught between two rationales: peace trough development and negotiation versus peace through military support to the Colombian state" Castañeda (2009a:8).

In this context, the engagement between the national government and the US and the EU took very different connotations. The EU had and active involvement in the peace dialogue process, while the US was rather reluctant to support a negotiated solution with the FARC guerrillas.

Moreover, the position of the US government towards Plan Colombia and the way Clinton's administration supported it, constituted a determinant factor in the subsequent evolution of the engagement between the Colombian government, and the international donors. The plan initially conceived by the Colombian government as an integral strategy combining the four components mentioned above, resulted more or less on the concentration on just one of them: the counter narcotics strategy.

Therefore, what is known as Plan Colombia clearly diverges in the majority of aspects from what was initially proposed by the Colombian government. This is a good example of what Fukuda-Parr *et al* (2002:12) argue regarding the relationships donors-governments. According to them, governments "may or not agree with donors about priorities, but they will have a strong incentive to conform to what donors propose". This is true for the case of Plan Colombia, even more given the fact that in this case the donor is by far the most dominant power in the region. The unbalanced power relationships are clearly manifested in this situation.

Consequently, due to the results of Plan Colombia negotiations, the relationships between Colombia and the US got closer than with the EU. While the EU oriented its work to civil society and local institutions, the Colombian government was considered a US' ally for its security objectives.

Later, in 2002, after the breakdown of the peace negotiations and the beginning of President Uribe's administration, the relationships between the Colombian Government and the US became even closer. President Uribe set a strong position against guerrilla groups and the military action was seen as the primary resource to solve the armed conflict.

Since his first mandate such vision has been materialized through the design and implementation of the *Democratic Defence and Security Policy* (PDSD) which main goal is to restore the state control on the territory, especially in those areas with presence of illegal armed groups. For doing so, the national government has developed a strategy of gradual restoration of the presence of armed forces and national police in all the municipalities (Ministry of Defence of Colombia, 2003: 31).

In this view, the FARC guerrillas have been considered a narco-terrorist group rather than a guerrilla movement. All of these in clear alignment with the US interpretation and discourse on the Colombian conflict. Then, Colombia became the first US ally in the region.

On the contrary, the EU was not expected to play an important role in Uribe's administration. For instance, Castañeda (2009a; 11) argues that when the PDSD started, the EU manifested its concerns about the respect for human rights and stressed the importance of peace building. As a result, instead of contributing to the national security policies, the EU decided to support peace building processes at the local level through the Peace Laboratories, sometimes bypassing the Colombian government.

However, nowadays the relationships between the EU and the national government have gotten closer. Several factors have influenced such process. Firstly, according to Castañeda (2209a;13) the "Colombian consulate in Belgium has carried out an insistent information campaign for EU representatives [about] the Democratic Security policy achievements".

Secondly, since 2005, the national government decided to centralize the international cooperation programs under the Presidency Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation (ACCI) "with the obvious intention of using ODA mainly for government priorities" (Castañeda, 2009a; 12).

Such attempt to align international aid with the national policies was also manifested in the fact that for the second Uribe's administration, the national development plan included the peace laboratory programs under the strategy for consolidation of democratic security.

Thirdly, on the one hand, the Colombian government has been increasingly involved in the design and financing of peace laboratories, on the other, "the EU and member states participate actively in government-civil society-donors dialogue called the Londres-Cartagena process" (Castañeda, 2009a:14).

In sum, the process of interaction between national government and the US and the EU, has been related to their different positions towards the conflict. At the beginning, during President Pastrana's administration, there was a dual process where peace talks and military strengthening took place at the same time. Later on, under President Uribe's government, there has been a strong position in favour of the use of state forces as the main mechanism for conflict resolution.

Consequently, the US has continuously contributed to the military forces' strengthening and has strongly supported the government position. Conversely, the EU has supported the peace laboratories, at the beginning in a clear dissension with the government policies, but then in a process of closeness with them. In this context, Castañeda (2009a: 15) shows that the US establishes a direct dialogue with national government institutions as the Presidency, Ministry of Defence, and ACCI. By contrast, in a first stage the EU was much closer to civil society and local institutions but nowadays it has more links to ACCI and the national government.

After all, since 1999 there has been an overlapping of divergent views and initiatives from the national and international level towards conflict management, institutional strengthening and legitimacy building in Colombia (figure No.2).

Figure No. 2
Timing of National and International Initiatives
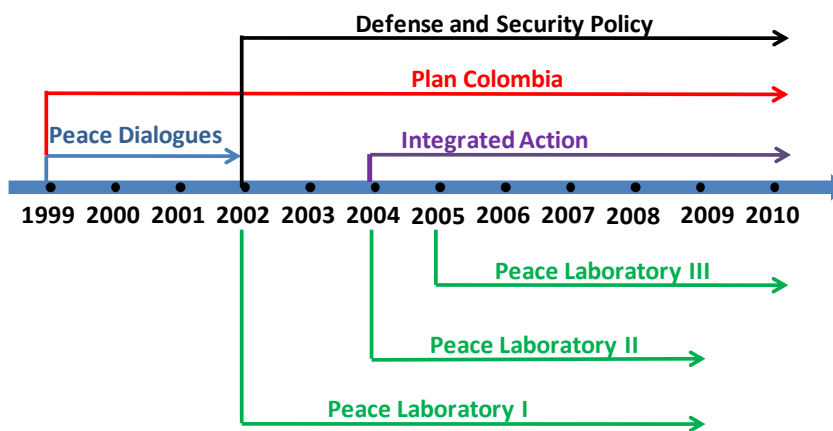
However, the social change that donors claim to promote in terms of governance, is determined not only by their interaction with the national level, but also and more important, by the social processes and the effects of their programs at the local sphere.

It is at the local level where the effects of the international aid programs are ultimately felt by the population, where the government meet the citizens, where key elements of the discourse of governance as "legitimacy" "participation", "capacity building", and "civil society" are materialized in concrete actors, institutions, and social relations.

The questions are then who are donor's local allies for change, how the EU and the US engage local actors, what is their role in the implementation of the programs they support. However, such relationships are even more complex in the Colombian context where the violent dispute for the local power is crucial. To illustrate how these processes under different approaches and instruments converge at the local level, the next chapter presents the case of the Department of Nariño.

Chapter 5
Conflict, Local Governance and International Cooperation: The Department of Nariño Case

5.1. The Context of Nariño

Nariño is a department of 1.5 million people in south-east corner of Colombia. It is inhabited by a diversity of ethnic groups. 10.8% of its population are indigenous, 18.8% are African- American and 70.4% metizo[10]. Most of its population (53% of total) live in rural areas and the indigenous communities live in 67 reservations occupying 467.000 hectares in 24 municipalities. The region is rich in natural resources and has a privileged geostrategic position on the Pacific Coast bordering the Republic of Ecuador.

However this department is one of the poorest areas of Colombia and is characterized by almost nil state presence and unequal distribution of land.

The precarious socioeconomic conditions are manifested in high unemployment rates (14.1% in the capital city), low share of total GDP (1.76%), and lots of people with very low standard of living (only 46% of the households have access to electricity, water supply and sewerage systems). This situation is even worse in rural areas where 86.5% of households do not have access to these services. Besides, 59% of households living in rural zones and 26% in urban areas are not able to meet their basic needs[11].

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[10] Mestizo is the term used to denote people of mixed Spanish and Amerindian ancestry.

[11] Statistics provided by the Colombian National Administrative Department of Statistics.

In addition to all of the mentioned above, Nariño, as many marginalized regions in Colombia, has suffered from the consequences of the internal armed conflict. In that context of poverty and marginalization, ELN and FARC have constituted *de facto* authority in this region since the 1980s. However in recent years their territorial domain has been increasingly challenged by paramilitary groups that fight for controlling the production and drug trafficking corridors in the pacific coast. As it will be shown in the next section, this situation, in part exacerbated by the Plan Colombia's anti narcotics strategy, have resulted in one of the worse humanitarian crisis in Colombia.

Therefore, Nariño constitutes a very difficult territory to govern and the democratic mechanisms of participation are constrained by the presence and actions of armed groups. On the one hand, people are deprived from their right to vote. On the other, this department constitutes one of many cases where such groups look for achieving local power by co-opting or influencing local institutions.

For example, the Election Observation Mission (EOM) (2010:9) shows that in this department, 28 municipalities (41% out of total) faced electoral risks for the last parliamentary elections. Armed strikes imposed by the rebels, mined fields and threats against local authorities interfered in the development of electoral process (EOM, 2010:17). In around 25 small villages people were confined by surrounded mined fields impeding mobility of voters.

Additionally, in the same report, the EOM (2010:39) expresses that unlike guerrilla groups, the neo-paramilitaries do not use the logic of blocking citizens' mobilization to participate in the electoral process. On the contrary their main interest constitutes the cooptation of local institutions. The Mission found that in Nariño paramilitary groups influenced the elections by giving financial support to the campaigns of some candidates with familiar nexus with some politicians related to them (EOM, 2010:39).

These are the conditions under which, a variety of aid programs supported by the US and the EU have taken place. On the one side, since 2000, the US-backed Plan Colombia's drug-eradication efforts have influenced the socioeconomic dynamics in this department. The effects of such plan are derived not only from the anti narcotic operations carried out on this territory, but also because of the indirect impacts resulting from the pressures generated by eradication operations in surrounding departments as Putumayo. In addition to this, currently Nariño constitutes one of the prioritized zones of the National Consolidation Plan supported by USAID. On the other side, since 2004 this department was included in the second peace laboratory supported by the EU.

## 5.2. The US and EU Cooperation Programs in Nariño

5.2.1. Plan Colombia and Integrated Action: The US Cooperation

Since 2000, the Plan Colombia's anti narcotic strategy has led an aggressive fumigation campaign accompanied by increasing military and police operations aimed to eradicate coca crops in Southern Colombian area. Such operations were initially concentrated in the departments of Putumayo (which borders Nariño), Caquetá, Guaviare and Meta, the main coca growing-zones in the country.

The pressures derived from this strategy resulted in displacements of cultivations toward other regions where this problem was previously minor. That is the case of Nariño, which has experienced a strong increase in the area cultivated with coca since the implementation of Plan Colombia took place. The number of hectares with coca crops in this department increased by 395% between 1999 and 2008 (figure No.3).

Additionally, although between 2002 and 2007 Nariño was the most sprayed department in the country (with 239.948 hectares fumigated in that period) and 27.329 hectares were subject of forced manual eradication[12], currently this department is the main producer of coca leaf in Colombia (figure No.3).

Figure No.3
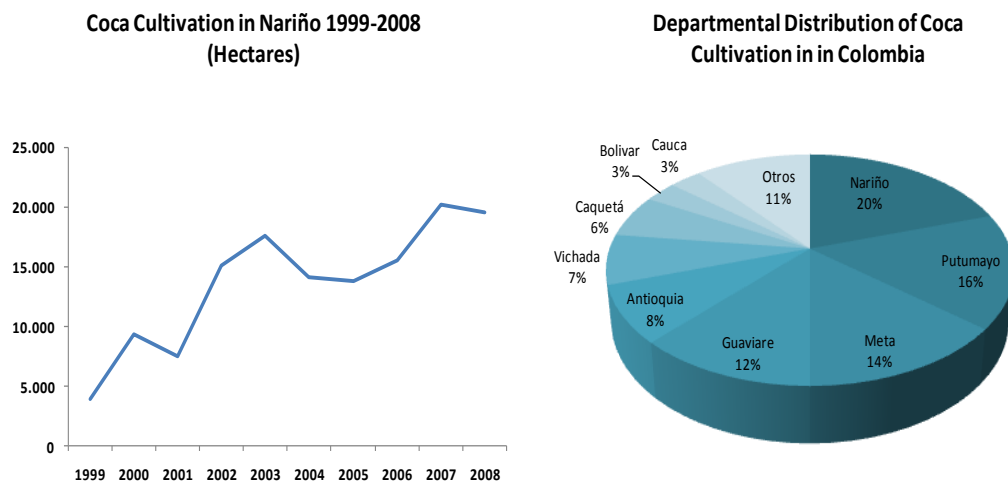
Source: UNDOC. SIMCI, Integral Monitory System for Illicit Crops.

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[12] Statistics provided by the Departmental Development Plan of Nariño, (2008:34).

This geographical shift of drug production and trafficking has been accompanied by all kinds of social problems. Although Nariño had previously suffered from the effects of the armed struggle, after the implementation of Plan Colombia this department has experienced a sharp increase in the intensity of the conflict. "The rise in violence is attributed [...] to the arrival of so many drug traffickers driven out of neighbouring areas by government forces under the US-backed anti-drugs initiative Plan Colombia" (Salazar, 2009).

The territorial control by ELN and FARC guerrillas in the zone has been challenged by the entrance of new emerging paramilitary groups such as the *Aguilas Negras, Los Rastrojos,* and *Organización Nueva Generación (ONG)*[13]. All of these armed groups are involved in a bloody dispute to achieve control over drug trafficking and coca crops. They not only fight each other frequently but also have adopted a strategy of striking the real or supposed social bases of the enemy. In this context, the population constitutes the principal victim of the decisions and arbitrary actions of these armed groups. According to Ceballos (2003:22), in Nariño, community leaders, humanitarian actors, and indigenous communities are the population mostly affected by the violence.

The response of the state under the PDSD has been an intensification of counter-insurgency and counter-narcotic operations through more presence of military and police forces in Nariño. New military brigades, battalions, and police stations have been created to operate in this zone. Therefore, most of Nariño's territory is currently subject of a violent dispute for territorial control by state and non state armed actors (map No.2).

Such intensification of the conflict has resulted in increasing violence indicators. Between 2002 and 2006, homicides increased by 54% (from 518 to 797). In 2006 the homicides related to the armed confrontation occurred mainly in municipalities as Policarpa, Ricaurte, Tumaco, Barbacoas and Ipiales, which together concentrate 48% of hectares cultivated with coca crops in the department. In the same period the number of victims of massacres increased by 167% (from 12 to 32 cases), (Vice-Presidential Observatory for Human Rights, 2007:3).

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[13] A name that parodies the Non Governmental Organizations (in Spanish Organizaciones no Gubernamentales, ONGs).

Map No. 2
Presence of Armed Actors and Coca Crops in Nariño

ELN
FARC
Paramilitary
Coca Crops
Army and Police
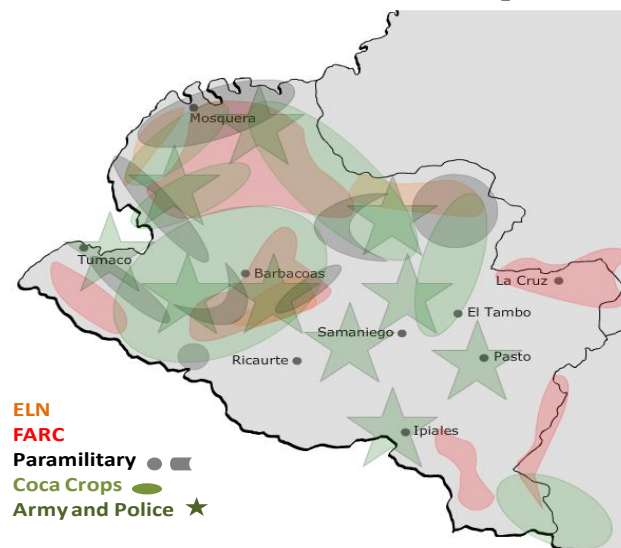
Source: Semana, May 5, 2009

Moreover, internally displaced people have become a huge problem in Nariño. The national government estimates that between 2003 and 2006, the number of cases of expulsion increased from 5.869 to 11.543. On the other hand, in the same period, Nariño received 32.333 internally displaced people mostly coming from Putumayo, after the fumigations and armed confrontations increased (Vice-Presidential Observatory for Human Rights, 2007:3).

Finally, there is an increasing tendency in the number of victims from antipersonnel mines. Between 2003 and 2006, 130 people were injured or killed by this type of weapons. Such phenomenon is explained by the usage of mines by the illegal armed groups in order to guarantee their territorial domain in strategic zones for coca cultivation (Vice-Presidential Observatory for Human Rights, 2007:10).

To sum up, the effects derived from the armed conflict in Nariño have further worsened after the implementation of Plan Colombia's counter-narcotics strategy supported by the US. Not only the amount of hectares planted with coca has increased but also, nowadays Nariño faces one of the worse humanitarian crises in Colombia.

On the other hand, as it was mentioned before, under the new *integrated action* strategy supported by the US, Nariño became one of the targeted zones defined by CCAI. The interventions include projects in 7 municipalities (Olaya Herrera, Ricaurte, Tumaco, Samaniego, Policarpa, el Rosario, Leiva y Barbacoas) where the main objective is to consolidate a licit economic activities model and new culture for peaceful coexistence (Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, 2009:24).

According to CCAI, the interventions begin with the identification of the strengths of the current departmental development plan and continue with a commitment to develop a sustainable, realist and widely participative process that enables Nariño's citizens to abandon illicit economic activities and propose their own ways for development and welfare in their municipalities. (Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, 2009:24).

In this context, by mobilizing national and international resources (mainly from USAID), CCAI have led the development of humanitarian missions, productive projects, voluntary eradication programs, elaboration of contingency plans, cultural and sports events, and assistance for household victims of forced displacement. Under the governance strategic line, CCAI has led the development of technical training sessions in projects formulation methodology for public servants in municipal offices (Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, 2009:25).

5.2.2. The European Union and Peace Laboratory II

In 2004 the European Union supported the creation of the second peace laboratory. The objective of this program is the establishment and consolidation of socioeconomic processes to reduce conflict, violence and people's vulnerability in the regions of Norte de Satander, Oriente Antioqueño and Macizo Colombiano and Alto Patía -Nariño and Cauca- (Laboratorio de Paz, 2010).

In the case of Nariño and Cauca (a Nariño's neighbouring department), several factors influenced the decision of the EU to support the creation of a new laboratory. Firstly, this is a marginalized zone with high levels of armed violence, but at the same time has experienced processes of civil resistance to armed conflict and social mobilization led by dynamic civil society organizations as the Movimiento de Integración del Macizo Colombiano (Integration Movement of Macizo Colombiano), Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca (Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca - CRIC), and the Asamblea Constituyente de Nariño (Constituent Assembly of Nariño) (Barreto, 2009:548).

Secondly, by that time the elected governors in Nariño and Cauca represented alternative political forces. They participated with other governors of the southern region of Colombia in the creation of an alternative proposal against Plan Colombia in order to address its harmful consequences. Such proposal focused on supporting voluntary manual coca eradication of illicit crops and guaranteeing food security for communities involved in this activity (Barreto, 2009:548).

This processes called the attention of the EU and the idea of including the Departments of Cauca and Nariño in the second peace laboratory was materialized. The strategic lines defined for this initiative were: 1) the

establishment of a culture of peace based on dialogue and respect for dignity and human rights, 2) democratic governance, institutional strengthening and citizen participation, and 3) sustainable economic development (Laboratorio de paz, 2010).

Barreto (2009:562) shows that the Nariño and Cauca Peace Laboratory constitutes a complex structure aimed to work as a kind of non hierarchical pyramid with a variety of participants at the local, regional, national and international level. At the local level, this initiative works with the most vulnerable communities and people, indigenous groups, women organizations, local NGOs, and grassroots organizations. At the regional level, it develops projects with dioceses, universities, regional institutions and departmental authorities.

In order to implement this strategy a structure was created based on two institutions: the Association of Mayors of Nariño (ASOPATIA) and CRIC. At the national level, it works with the National Department of Planning, ACCI, and the PRODEPAZ network[14]. From the international level, the European Commission, the state members of the European Union, UNDP and the World Bank are involved in this program (Barreto, 2009:562).

The list of projects financed by the European Union in the zone includes social organizations and social movements strengthening, peaceful coexistence and conflict resolution, human rights protection, sustainable development, establishment of a peace observatory, democratic governance strengthening, and environmental protection, among others.

The project of democratic governance is built on three fundamental pillars: a society able to build public interest, to solve their own conflicts, and to manage their own resources. The objective is to strength democratic and participative governance through the improvement of political, ethical and technical capacities of community and public institutions (Laboratorio de Paz, 2010)[15].

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[14] PRODEPAZ is a network created in 2001 as a civil society coordination system, which articulate regional programs to promote local and regional participation in development planning. It is composed of peace and development programs, private organizations, Church, universities and social movements as CRIC.

[15] Laboratorio de paz II "Proyectos Articuladores". Peace Laboratory website. http://www.laboratoriodepaz.org/publicaciones.php?id=27798. Visited June 30, 2010.

Chapter 6
Analysing Local Governance and International Cooperation in Nariño

To analyse the interaction between local governance and the process of implementation of aid programs from the US and the EU in Nariño, the three dimensions of legitimacy (participation, effectiveness and accountability) stated by Haus and Heinelt will be used. Moreover, this chapter briefly discusses some issues of the international assistance in Colombia in the light of the Paris principles on aid effectiveness. But before doing so, in order to develop the analysis it is useful to discuss the role of different stakeholders of the process, their interests, and the way they are involved in the Nariño's context.

6.1.   The Stakeholders

On the basis of all what have been said before, the layers of the intervention process and the convergence of different actors who influence such process in the territory can be schematized by the following figure.

Figure No.4
Layers and Stakeholders of the Process

From the international level the US and the EU have increasingly supported different programs under different understandings and tools. On the one hand, the US cooperation in Colombia (and its consequent reflection at the regional level) is justified in the protection of American national interests. At this point

it is important to remember that Nariño is located in the southern area of the country where the main concentration of coca cultivation and historical presence and dominance of rebel groups take place. Moreover, this department is a border zone with Ecuador, one of the currently leftist South-American countries and closest ally of Chavez's Venezuela.

On the other hand, the European Union has more emphasis in strengthening local participation and civil society from a rather bottom-up approach. Its interest as Colombian donor (and specifically in Nariño) could be more related to the objective of projecting itself as a development and peace building actor at the international level, even more, given that Nariño is a region with high ethnic diversity and indigenous population.

From the national level, the central government designs national security and development policies, defines the main objectives and allocates national public investment resources to those areas. Moreover, it is at the national level were aid packages are negotiated with international donors, and the national government, through institutions as ACCI and the Ministry of Defense, is in charge of channeling the resources provided by donors. Thus, the national government constitutes the bridge between international assistance and recipient regions.

In addition, the state constitutes one of the actors of the armed conflict. During the last decade, the state forces have been increasingly fighting the illegal armed groups through counter insurgency and counter narcotics strategic objectives defined by the PDSD. Nariño has constituted one of the priority zones for carrying out military operations aimed to reach such objectives.

But after all, it is at the local level where all of these programs and initiatives meet a multiplicity of stakeholders with different roles and interests.

Firstly, the local authorities (sometimes influenced or pressured by illegal armed groups) are in charge of delivering social services in the municipalities. They benefit from the international aid as it constitutes and additional source of resources that complement the scarce local budget.

However, they have to cope with pressures from different fronts. On one side they have to deal with the illegal groups looking for influencing or co-opting local administrations. On the other side they try to meet the requirements of international donors, attend numerous training sessions under governance improvement projects supported by them, and are influenced to focus municipal resources according to national and international agendas. They are accountable to the national government, which expect them to implement the national policy objectives; And they also have to comply with the mandate of meeting the serious social needs of the local population.

Secondly, guerrilla and paramilitaries fight to achieve territorial control especially in strategic areas for drug production and commercialization, as it is the Nariño case. In this region, they fight each other or make strategic alliances according to their convenience in order to domain the territory.

Thirdly, there are numerous NOGs and civil society organizations, which act on behalf of other people claiming to represent their interests and having a particular understanding of the issues concerned. They face the dilemma of how to translate the problems of the people into de strategic plans supported by international cooperation. Some of them become rent seekers fighting to attract the donor's attention.

And finally, at the lowest level are the people who suffer the harshest effects of the conflict. In a recent visit to Nariño, European Union's diplomats found that in the situation of Nariño, it is worrying that the ones that suffer [the consequences of the conflict] are the civilians. There is a huge demand for support and humanitarian assistance and there is no one who can fulfill those needs. People want peace. What most of them expressed is that when combats for achieving territorial control start, all evils come (Semana, February 10, 2010).

For instance, people from the region say that the intensification of the dispute for territorial control between illegal groups and between these groups and the state forces, has affected their life in social, economic and even education aspects. An inhabitant of the region explains that "suddenly people have become signaled of being collaborators of one or another armed group […]. Given the fear, nobody wants to visit the zone, there is no communication, there are no teachers or nurses […]. There are not places where to sell our products […]. Children cannot go to the school because the roads are plagued of antipersonnel mines" (Semana, February 15, 2010).

6.2. The Core Concepts of Governance and International Aid

This section aims to analyze the process of intervention supported by the EU and the US in Nariño in the light of the three dimensions of legitimacy presented in chapter two. The issue of legitimacy is considered of vital importance for the present analysis not only because it constitutes a core concept of governance but also because in the Colombian conflict context, and particularly in the Nariño case, legitimacy building is considered one of the most important issues for governance improvement and conflict resolution.

6.2.1. Input-Oriented Legitimation Through Participation

Plan Colombia and Integrated Action

As was mentioned before, Plan Colombia's aid package resulted from a process of negotiation between the Colombian and US governments. However, the role of local actors in the policy design and implementation has been completely undermined. This is not surprising given the top-down approach of this counter-narcotics strategy. But what is contradictory is the US government's claimed objective of making governance more participatory by providing assistance to Plan Colombia.

If participation (understood as the process by which stakeholders influence and share control over policy design and implementation) constitutes a key issue of legitimacy strengthening, this objective was put at risk since the beginning as local stakeholders (local authorities, civil society organizations, community based organizations) were not taken into consideration in key aspects of the process of design and implementation of drug eradication policy and programs.

Firstly, from the beginning the anti narcotics strategy supported by the US government faced strong resistance at the local level. 325 delegates of regional and municipal governments and councils, civil society organizations, human rights activists and local leaders from the southern departments of Nariño, Caquetá, Valle, Putumayo and Cauca met in September of 2000 in order to discuss the eradication strategies proposed by Plan Colombia and to propose alternative solutions to address the issue of narco-traffick in their regions. After meeting for two days, the results were presented in the 'Puerto Asís Declaration'[16].

In that document it was argued that the design of eradication strategies contained in Plan Colombia ignored the local realities and the initiatives proposed from regional and local authorities and the communities affected. That Plan Colombia was a reflection of US' "zero tolerance" policies that emphasize on the use of repressive instruments. That forced eradication was a strategy against the weakest link in the coca production chain (small cultivators and coca leaf pickers), but did not substantially affect other different stages of coca production and trafficking where the biggest profits are generated. And finally, that due to the strong military emphasis it would constitute an additional deepening factor of the humanitarian crisis and human rights violations (Declaración de Puerto Asís, 2000:2).

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[16] Puerto Asís is a municipality located in the Department of Putumayo.

Such opposition did not have echo either at the national or international level and the eradication programs were implemented as initially defined by the US and the national government of Colombia.

Secondly, paradoxically the strategy claiming to address legitimacy strengthening and state building issues, resulted to be an obstacle for building citizen's confidence in the state. The mentioned declaration says that the fumigations harmed people's health, environment and licit crops and induced forced displacement. For those reasons, the participants demanded the immediate suspension of fumigations as a required condition to generate an environment of confidence between state and communities (Declaración de Puerto Asís, 2000:3).

In fact, after years of implementation, Isacson and Poe (2009:5) show that "drug eradication programs sprayed tens of thousands of *campesino's crops* [peasant's crops], increasing anger at the government in ungoverned guerrilla controlled zones".

The fumigations have affected the Nariño population in many different ways, just to mention an example Rojas (2004:78) shows that the municipality of Samaniego (one of the municipalities of Nariño where currently CCAI is carrying out its programs) "has reported negative consequences of aerial fumigations product of Plan Colombia's war against drugs. In an article from El Espectador […] Samaniego reported that a high school […], a national forest protected area, and a fish tank are being constantly fumigated by air".

Moreover the intensification of the conflict reflected in increasing violence indicators, and the absence of sustainable licit economic alternatives for subsistence, are the consequences mostly felt by the population of Nariño's municipalities affected by the fumigation campaign.

Regarding the National Consolidation Plan , even though it claims to have a more participatory approach where the priorities are defined by the local governments and the population, in fact not much space is given for them to participate in key decision making processes.

As it has been mentioned before, there is no participation of local authorities and local organizations in the decision making instance of CCAI. The definition of the strategy, instruments of implementation and allocation of resources are defined by the heads of national institutions and US officials. For instance, Lopez (2009) points out that as the local institutional structure defined by the political administrative decentralization system was not considered useful by the national government to carry out the National Consolidation Plan, it is not designed or executed through mayoralties and governorates.

In this context, local authorities and local organizations are taken into account just to align them with the national strategy previously defined and to gain the

local support required for its implementation. For doing so, CCAI organizes regional meetings with local authorities to achieve "local ownership" of the strategy (Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, 2009:17).

Moreover, Alexandra Hall (a member of the British Embassy, who recently visited Nariño) shows that, "it is clear that there are differences between the perspective from an official in Bogota trying to solve problems of the whole country and the individual experience of the people in the region. Locals say that people in Bogota have no idea about what is happening in Nariño […]. The national government has a vision of the realities, but the people in the region have other perspectives and think that the priorities are different." (Semana, February 10, 2010).

Peace Laboratory

As it is known, the logic of intervention of peace laboratories claims to be shaped by the principles of civil society participation, grassroots organizations strengthening and peace building process at the local level. It was mentioned that the implementation of the second peace laboratory in this region involves a complex structure with diversity of actors organized in a sort of "non hierarchical pyramid". However such "horizontal" network is in fact composed by actors with different interests, priorities, perspectives and basis of power.

Regarding the association between the regional organizations in charge of implement peace laboratories' programs, these have very divergent origins, missions and political objectives.

CRIC emerged as a community organization to become an intermediary in the negotiation processes between the state and the indigenous groups to address issues of land distribution and preservation of indigenous culture (Espinosa, 2005:146). The mission of this organization is aimed to the defence, promotion and enforcement of fundamental and historical rights of the indigenous populations in the country (Laboratorio de Paz, 2010)[17].

On the other side, ASOPATIA constitutes an association of mayors, councillors and social organizations of municipalities in Nariño and Cauca oriented to promote regional sustainable development and strengthening of associated municipalities with the collaboration of governmental and non-governmental organizations (Laboratorio de Paz, 2010)[18].

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[17] CRIC, Peace Laboratory website.
http://www.laboratoriodepaz.org/publicaciones.php?id=28903. Visited June 30, 2010.
[18] ASOPATIA, Peace Laboratory website.
http://www.laboratoriodepaz.org/publicaciones.php?id=28903. Visited June 30, 2010.

Due to their divergent origins and objectives, Barreto (2009:565) argues that the "temporal union" of CRIC and ASOPATIA constitutes, to a large degree, an artificial creation. It represents a convenience marriage forced by the EU. In fact, deep tensions and conflicts have arisen since the beginning in the relation between the two organizations"[…] "the problem of this temporal union is not only institutional, is more about worldviews. The indigenous have their purposes and ways of working. ASOPATIA has a more technical and institutional view" (Mendoza, 2008; quoted in Barreto, 2009:565).

Even more, the same author shows that in its early negotiation process, not only CRIC but a platform of social organizations called "Minga Fondo" was considered to participate in the peace laboratory. However, as the later did not have either legal status or political experience, the process resulted in charge of CRIC as representative and delegate of Minga Fondo. That was not a consensual decision and some organizations have questioned the role attributed to CRIC (Barreto, 2009:565).

In addition to the above, the paradoxes of the process of implementation of this peace laboratory are also reflected in the citizens–state relationships. Barreto (2009:569, 570) explains that under governmental decisions and criteria, the municipalities chosen to be part of the peace laboratory do not match with CRIC's influence area. The territorial delimitation of the peace laboratory left out important peace initiatives led by indigenous groups. As a consequence the political compromise of CRIC with the peace laboratory is far from being total because it does not represent the vital interests of the indigenous. Even more, the participation of the state in the peace laboratory process is seen with distrust and scepticism by indigenous authorities for whom the state has constituted the historical political opponent of the indigenous movement.

All these examples constitute a sample of how the ideas of governance, civil society strengthening and participation are mediated by issues of power which determine who and how are allowed to participate. Civil society and local organizations are not homogeneous groups pursuing harmonized and common interests. The process of inclusive participation and empowerment is conflictual because it involves different social forces and stakeholders with different sources and basis of power, competing for different needs and interests.

Therefore, one could question the way that the peace laboratory is empowering some specific groups and disempowering others, what can be the implications of this process, and to what extent this initiative is failing to represent the interests of the socially excluded and most vulnerable people they claim to support. As Lusthaus, Adrien and Perstinger (1999:11, 12) point out, "the issue of power is inextricably linked with the idea of focus (including choice a partner). When donors invest in strengthening civil society organizations […], they are affecting power relationships in the country. […] Power is in the

hands of those who control decision-making process around capacity development investments".

In addition, (Barreto, 2009:573) argues that even though the initial idea of the peace laboratory were grounded in a bottom-up approach based on civil society initiatives, this peace laboratory has been more centralized and designed from Bogota with an active involvement of the EU and ACCI, reducing the role and autonomy of local actors. In fact this author shows that the local institutions have played just the role of supervising and approving projects rather than leading and defining the project's objectives.

Finally, complex technical procedures required by the European Commission constitute one more contradictory aspect between the bottom-up, participative and inclusive philosophy of the peace laboratory, and its practical process of implementation. To obtain financing for their projects, the aspirants have to participate in public calls and fulfil specific requirements. The organizations are required to have legal status and to prove through written documents that they have at least three years experience in working in the related field. Moreover, they are expected to have experience in designing and executing projects (European Union, 2008).

Such process generates obstacles for excluded and vulnerable people to get financing for their initiatives. Instead of fostering inclusive participation, this process constitutes and additional factor of social exclusion. The result is that this peace laboratory allows to participate mainly big organizations with some experience in project management. In fact, after the first call big NGOs as Fundación Social, ASOCAFE, and Fondo Mixto de Cultura de Nariño did indeed benefit from EU's funds and are now in charge of the execution of some of the projects.

This constitutes a good example of what Crespin (2006:436) argue regarding the difficulties for donor agencies to engage with local actors. According to him "many procedures exclude the local organizations that have the potential to bring significant improvement at the local level, but lack the influence, the Western language skills or the familiarity with accepted procedures to be selected as "beneficiary representatives" and participate in the decision making or implementation of donor-funded activities".

With respect to this, Barreto (2009:577) points out that somehow the peace laboratory is based on an "elite" of mobilization and social work. Similarly, he shows that the public call had as an effect, the attraction of organizations without any link with the region putting in risk the possibility of leaving any capacity installed at the local level.

6.2.2. Output-Oriented Legitimation Through Effectiveness

Plan Colombia and Integrated Action

Regarding the effects of Plan Colombia in Nariño, this dimension of legitimacy is particularly problematic. It was mentioned that output oriented legitimacy results from the ability to the system for solving problems that affect the community. In this case it could be argued that not only plan Colombia's counter narcotic strategy has not really contributed to solve people's needs, but has rather resulted in deepening poor socioeconomic conditions and violence in the region. The intensification of the conflict and the limitations that people face to find licit alternative means of subsistence clash with the stated goal of legitimacy building in this region.

Moreover, concerning the main objective related to reduction of coca crops and drug production, in Nariño not only the area cultivated with coca did not decrease, but multiply by 5 since the implementation of Plan Colombia took place. The eradication programs have not been effective in achieving their objectives and the lack of governance remains in the zone. As Isacson and Poe (2009:5) show "in a vaccum of governance [...] coca replanting easily kept up with the increased eradication". Additionally, currently the Pacific Coast of Nariño constitutes one of the most important routes for drug trafficking.

On the other hand, the implementation of the National Consolidation Plan requires the development of socioeconomic projects supporting security objectives. For doing so, CCAI not only channels national and international resources in order to develop projects in the "consolidation zones" (as the Nariño case) but also looks for the commitment of local authorities in prioritizing their resources according to such objectives. However, the perspective of people's needs and their priorities varies depending on whether the person is in Bogota or in the conflict region where the armed groups dispute the territory control.

Furthermore, the non military effort of the new U.S assistance strategy has the objective of showing immediate visible results in order to gain people's confidence in the institutions of the state. This is done irrespective of whether or not such results are addressing the real needs of the people. In fact under this principle, U.S. agencies have supported projects as renovations and repainting of existence infrastructure, soccer fields, and playgrounds, which do more to show an incipient presence of the state than meet resident's basic socioeconomic needs (Isacson and Poe, 2009:9).

However, even if CCAI's short term strategy is successful in achieving quick impact results by providing some services to the communities in need and showing an apparent presence of the state in the territory, other structural and long term harmful consequences for the population, as the intensification of violence, could result from this strategy. The conflict, its structural causes and

negative consequences for the civilians are still present and are not being addressed by the short term objectives stated by the National Consolidation Plan.

Peace Laboratory

Here the critical aspect is related to the mentioned limitations of the peace laboratory programs to meet the poorest and most vulnerable people.Regarding the process of implementation, the organizations that have had access to the European funds do not necessarily represent the needs of the people that the program targeted in its objectives.

In addition to this, the philosophy of the peace laboratory is based on the idea of strengthening civil society and community organizations in order to deal with the consequences of conflict and poverty. Instead of helping to bridge the relationship between the citizens and the state, this initiative could result in the assumption that people can deal with the consequences of violence and marginalization and solve their own conflicts and needs without any permanent public support, and at the end the conflict and its deep structural causes are not being addressed as the EU's policy documents claim to do. From this perspective, the state "devolves" to the people the responsibilities that it has historically failed to assume in Nariño, in a sort of governance without the government.

6.2.3. Throughout-Legitimation Through Transparency

Plan Colombia and Integrated Action

In this point the questions are, who is accountable for the effects of spraying peasant's crops, for the effects of fumigations on natural diversity, for the intensification of the conflict in Nariño?. How the eradication programs of Plan Colombia are accountable to the people that face its consequences?. Who is going to assume the responsibility for thousands million dollar invested in this Plan without producing a substantial reduction in the production and commercialization of drugs?. These questions have no clear answers.

The US agencies are accountable to their home constituencies. In fact, The United States Accountability Office (GAO) (2008:17) points out that "Plan Colombia's goal of reducing the cultivation, processing, and distribution of illegal narcotics by 50 percent in 6 years was not fully achieved […]coca cultivation and cocaine production increased, though data from 2007 indicate that cocaine production slightly declined."

As a response to the failures of Plan Colombia, GAO recommends to carry out a 'nationalization process', which means that the Colombian Government would have to take responsibility, using national resources, for the operation

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and maintenance of the goods and services received from the bilateral cooperation programs.

For instance, such nationalization process has gradually started, in spite of the fact that after 10 years of implementation, the Colombian government does not have an impact evaluation of Plan Colombia and no clear control mechanisms for its process of implementation and results have been defined. Completely missing from this scenario is accountability to people that in the territory experience the effects of this program.

On the other hand, it is well known that donors often need to report short term results. That is particularly relevant under the National Consolidation Plan's 'quick impact strategy' supported by the U.S. a situation that results in a lack of long term vision and sustainability of the programs.

Peace Laboratory

Due to the emphasis in the role of non state actors (civil society and community organizations) in addressing people's needs, the peace laboratory program faces limitations to establish clear mechanisms of accountability. In this context, NGOs are accountable to the donor, but not to the people.

Here the problematic notion of accountability under a system of "governance beyond the state" can be applied. "Accountability is assumed to be internalized within participating groups through their insertion into (particular segments) of civil society (through which their holder status is defined and legitimized). However given the diffuse and opaque systems of representation, accountability is generally very poorly, if at all developed" (Swyngedouw, 2005:2000).

6.3. Plan Colombia, Peace Laboratories and the Paris Declaration Principles

The analysis presented above gives place to discuss the process of design and implementation of cooperation programs in Colombia in the light of some of the Paris principles on aid effectiveness. As it has been mentioned before, such principles are quite related to the core concepts on governance therefore, most of the issues previously discussed can be also understood under the Paris principles framework.

Related to the notion of *ownership*, it is important to remember that the implementation of Plan Colombia was not consulted with the national congress, local authorities or civil society organizations. As the Nariño case shows, there has been a lack of participatory mechanisms to allow relevant stakeholders to influence the policymaking process of this plan.

This constitutes a good example of what is pointed out by Horner and Power, (2009:12) regarding the Paris principles, and in particular, the issue of ownership as the pinnacle of aid effectiveness. They argue that "the interpretation and implementation of *ownership* thus far has tended to focus on ownership of the [cooperation] agenda by the executive branch of the government. […] It limits the extent to which citizens can shape […] and monitor the processes. […] It can also undermine democratic institutions for example through limiting the opportunity for parliamentarians to represent their constituencies".

The principle of ownership emerged as an important issue in the Plan Colombia's agenda only once the failures of the anti drug strategy became evident. On the one hand, claiming this principle, the US government is pushing the mentioned 'nationalization process' in order for the Colombian government to be gradually in charge of the sustainability costs of such anti drug strategy.

On the other, the National Consolidation Plan led by CCAI and USAID is guided (in the discourse) by a more participatory and locally owned approach. However as stated before, key aspects of the decision making process for the design and implementation of the program remain in charge of the national government and US agencies. In addition, the short term nature of the National Consolidation Plan and its mechanisms of implementation do not leave much space for long term capacity building at the local level.

In relation to the second Peace Laboratory being carried out in Nariño, it was discussed how the complex technical requirements have limited the participation of communities and organizations that do not have the required skills and ability to access to international funds. In this context, the notion of capacity building a critical element of the rhetoric of ownership results understood as the capacity of NGOs to access the resources and to implement donor's agenda.

Additionally, even though Peace Laboratory programs are much more concerned about encouraging civil society participation and engaging local and regional processes and social dynamics, the agenda, the priorities and the plans are still being determined from Brussels and Bogota.

Finally, it can be argued that both, Plan Colombia and Peace Laboratories have failed to understand and engage with local politics, actors and institutions. The discourse of institutional building and civil society participation is specially challenged in conflict contexts characterized by informal rules of social interaction, violent dispute for the local power and weak or non existing state institutions and/or civil society.

In relation to the principle of *harmonization*, in the Nariño case, the supported processes by the US and EU have overlapped each other without clear mechanisms of coordination. Although both donors share the discourse of

governance improvement, local participation and institutional strengthening, their very different approaches and instruments converged in the same terrain in a disarticulated process and fragmented donor activity.

One member of the delegation from the European Union that visited Nariño in order to know the situation in this department argues that "there are two very different visions of how to overcome the problems. One vision is to intervene by using the legitimate force and violence from the state to eliminate illegal armed groups. And the other, is the bottom-up peace building process led by the communities and the regions. What I see is that there is a lack of dialogue between these two different perspectives and how they can be combined to fulfil population's needs" (Semana, February 10, 2010).

At this point the role of ACCI become crucial as it is the national institution in charge of channelling the programs and resources from the international cooperation. However, it faces serious limitations to reconcile the two very divergent discourses and perspectives from the EU and the US. Therefore the discourse is shaped according to the donor's agenda. While in the negotiation process with the US the rhetoric of *war* against drugs and terrorism is of paramount importance, the negotiation of aid packages with the EU is framed by the discourse of *peace-building*, policy dialogue, human rights and civil society participation.

This aspect is pointed out by Reis (2007:9) who argues that "the divergent objectives stated by the international cooperation programs have crucial implications. They imply opposing existential experiences as living in peace or in the midst of the war, or being involved in war strategies or in peace building processes."

Finally, in both cases, Peace Laboratory and Plan Colombia, *accountability* mechanisms, if existent, are more related to government-donor accountability or aid agencies-donors rather than domestic accountability. This issue is also pointed out by Horner and Power (2009:13) in their analysis of the Paris principles. According to them, "strengthening accountability between donors and partner governments tends to receive more attention than strengthening accountability between governments and citizens".

Chapter 7
Conclusions

Since 1990s, the discourses on governance and aid effectiveness have occupied an important place in the international assistance agenda. However, the way in which donors put in practice such discourses is shaped not only by their different interpretations of the notion of governance in itself but also by the interests and the identity that they want to project in the international field.

The main cooperation programs supported by the US and the EU in Colombia constitute a clear manifestation of how different understandings and views are translated into divergent modalities of aid on governance. Divergent and contradictory versions of the notion and mechanisms for governance improvement, conflict management and peace building are manifested in the discourse, as well as the identity and the orientation of programs and policies that these donors want to promote.

On the one hand, from a top-down approach, the US support has been mainly oriented to military aid and the development of socioeconomic programs are aimed to achieve security objectives. Its discourse on governance and legitimacy is shaped by the rhetoric of the war on terrorism and drug trafficking. By contrast, the EU has promoted a discourse of peace building, civil society participation and respect for human rights. It claims to be a more bottom-up approach where local initiatives and organizations constitute the core elements for development and conflict resolution.

However, regarding the process of design and implementation of Plan Colombia and Peace Laboratories, a series of tensions and contradictions between and within of these approaches can be identified.

Firstly, these initiatives converge at the local level without clear mechanisms of coordination. As it can be concluded from the study case, on the one hand the pressure generated by Plan Colombia's military operations and non participatory mechanisms has resulted in forced displacement, intensification of the conflict and increasing human rights violations, fostering the lack of legitimacy and citizens mistrust in state institutions.

On the other, the Peace Laboratory claiming to work for civil society strengthening and participation gives a more important role to the NGOs and civil society organizations in delivering services and solving people's needs. Therefore, this initiative seems to be following the logic that the citizens can solve their own needs without any permanent public support. Consequently, it fails to contribute to bridge better linkages between grassroots organizations and local and national policy making instances. Moreover its technocratic view

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and imposition of complex requirements to access to funds have resulted in the exclusion of key local actors, organizations and the most vulnerable people that it claims to support.

In conclusion, one could barely argue that these initiatives have resulted in structural improvements in linking the citizens-state relationship. Moreover, in spite of their claimed objectives neither the military approach supported by the US nor the peace development perspective promoted by the EU seem to be resulting in tangible contributions to overcome the ongoing conflict or addressing its root causes. The armed conflict is still present and in the case of Nariño it has intensified affecting every aspect of the lives of the most vulnerable people and isolated communities.

Secondly, the adopted notion of governance by the EU and the US fails to recognize the political character of local governance issues. They seem to undermine the role of issues related to political patronage, state capture, violent resistance of groups against the state, human rights violations, and complex power relationships that characterize the Colombian conflict context, where the fight for the local power is of paramount importance.

The design and implementation of their aid programs have undermined the limiting factors for governance improvement in terms of legitimacy, effectiveness and accountability imposed by the local social dynamics and the way in which power and local authority is exercised. As the Nariño case shows, while the design and implementation of international cooperation programs are guided by formal rules, the social interaction at the local level is mostly guided by informal rules and *de facto* illegitimate authority of the armed groups and drug lords who have a strong influence in steering the setting, application and enforcement of the rules of the game. In this scenery, Plan Colombia and Peace Laboratories do not challenge or transform such power relationships. These aspects not even seem to be considered.

Moreover, it is important to recognize that implementation of international aid for governance improvement is embedded in power relationships manifested in the interaction donors-national government, national-local governments and the way in which all of them engage local stakeholders. The programs have focused on technical and procedural aspects of institutional strengthening and capacity building but do not address issues of redistribution of power between the local and national authorities, between the armed groups and state institutions, between illegal groups and the civilians, and between other local stakeholders as bureaucrats, NGOs, local communities, etc.

Thirdly, there are also contradictions between the stated goals of good governance and the results in terms of legitimacy, efficiency and accountability. For people who directly face the consequences of the armed confrontation, the notion of the state and its responsibilities is diluted by the presence of numerous international agencies working in projects that range from building

of aqueducts, schools, hospitals, radio stations, micro business, to capacity building and strengthening of military and police capacities. These interventions are implemented without a clear system of checks and balances, are aimed to achieve quick impact results and normally lack of long term sustainability.

In spite of the increasing financial and non financial resources provided by donors in conflict regions in Colombia, the limitations faced in order for them to achieve their stated goals for governance improvement, lead to the question of how to address the tensions and foster possible complementarities between the two perspectives promoted by the US and the EU. Coordination, harmonization and coherence between their goals, as well as between their objectives and process of implementation, are fields where further progress is needed. This also requires a comprehensive understanding of the underlying power relationships and interests in which the implementation of these different aid modalities are embedded.

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