Research papers on:
international experiences in Non-violence:

Project:
The Palestinian Consortium for Non-Violence: towards a Regional Movement on Non-Violence

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Research papers on international experiences in Non-violence

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Building Culture of Nonviolence in Croatia:

Lessons learnt from Volunteers Project Pakrac & Peace Teams Osijek

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1. Summary

Two consecutive 4-5 years long volunteer peacebuilding projects in post war areas in Croatia, in 1990s, contributed significantly to building 'nonviolent social fabric'[1] in Croatia. They gathered respectively   a) over 400 international volunteers, from over 30 countries in mostly three weeks shifts and b) around 30 nationals and 10 internationals in at least two years shifts. Both were big in an organizational and financial size in a different way - one by personal contributions of every volunteer, another by daring to apply and receive in that time huge grants. Bringing normalization by living in traumatized communities, building culture of nonviolent conflict transformation by example and learning by experimenting are their three most important common features. Both projects were designed and implemented on basis of equal power cooperation. Main legacy of both projects is <u>increased peace building capacity on national level</u> and fact that twenty years ago involved communities are <u>incident-free areas</u> in contemporary times.

2. Introduction

In Balkan region nonviolence is not a popular thing. Nonviolence is not really part of our tradition - would be an answer of majority of Croats, a wrong one[2]. Nonviolence in time of war or cease fire, immediately after war is suspicious, not welcome, seen often as an expression of weakness. There are two questions to be posed here: a) What do we mean by nonviolence? b) Is nonviolence an expression of weakness or strength?

Nonviolence is a constant struggle against potential for violence in ourselves and around us. It is deep and profound respect of life and someone's needs, particularly of mine/ our needs but also of others needs including opponents'.

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[1] John Paul Lederach speaks about nonviolent social fabric as prerequisitte for stable peace.(1997)

[2] Our Dalmatian coast cities have been always finding a way to negotiate, protect their lives and interests, aim at acceptable agreements. Dubrovnik[2], our tourist pearl, for half millennium free Republic is most prominent example. Some of our fathers[2] of nation were dedicated to nonviolence, albeit that part of their engagement is not promoted nowadays.

Nonviolence is not a magic formula, it is understanding that violence harms everyone including people who use it.

Communication and cooperation with our opponents is something which needs to be incorporated in our activities. Not an easy task definitely, let us at least admit it can be very difficult.

Concrete physical and social work and living on same terms as local people in war affected areas provided good base for Croatian peace movement to understand needs of people living there and how nonviolence can be of use for them.

3. Example One: Volunteers Project Pakrac 1993 – 1997[3]

This was pioneering[4] cooperation between UN and local human rights/ peace organization. UN provided legal entrance of national peace organization into sensitive area bordering 'rebel' territory and kind of protection which was more useful as 'officially existing' rather than functioning in practice. Linking with big agencies/ organizations always has side effects, their actions/ reputations can easily influence/harm local/national associates. Nonviolence as base of VPP was our real protection. Not being a threat to anyone, showing respect to everyone but knowing what our values are: human rights and respect of dignity of everyone's life.

UNPROFOR[5] mission started in 1992, soon after intense war fighting in Croatia[6]. There were 4 UN protected areas with only one of them where Croatian government in Zagreb had access too – Sector West and destroyed and divided town Pakrac, with some 8000 people before the war, then only 2000 on 'Croatian side' and bit less on 'Serb side'. Up to 75% houses were damaged or destroyed.

Volunteer Social Reconstruction project started on 'Croatian side' and attempts to cross ceasefire line were not seen nicely by locals. They felt betrayed again, this time by their new friends. It was all about opening minds for opportunities, constant struggle to think and act 'normally' in wounded community.

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[3] Both projects described here could be found in more details and depth analysed at the link
https://www.cms.hr/system/publication/pdf/16/Preporuke_EU_KNJIZNI_BLOK.pdf
[4] There were only earlier experiences in PRODERE programme in Central America
https://www.ecmi.de/fileadmin/downloads/publications/JEMIE/2014/Komnenovic.pdf
[5] https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/unprofor
[6] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Croatian_War_of_Independence

Risk? It was high but is there peace action without risk? It wasn't higher than in many normal situations, but most of our project managing efforts were about risk management. It was process of practicing nonviolence, hours and hours of reflections, discussions, learning from daily experience. Paying attention to everyone's comments, questions, suggestion, dilemma.

How successful was project? A lot in terms of bringing normality and de-traumatization to town. Probably not as much as aimed in terms of reconciliation on official level. Let us explore some key lessons learnt:

a) Preparation is important, commitment to nonviolence is base for every thinking, attitude and action. Getting out of political, geostrategic logic and reasoning, observing humans out of their social roles, respecting ourselves and others equally and deeply.

b) Doing unpopular things is a process. There are no 'obstacles', there are reasons for work and reminder of aim. Peacebuilding is relationship building. Solidarity is most helpful, constant caring that human relations are cooperative, 'power with' rather than 'power over'.[7]

c) Preserving space for difference is important. Even if it is different music, clothing, preparation of meals, cultural habits. War and extreme violence call for homogenization of people, uniformity, peace is based on allowing differences in everyone. Here comes gender issue, among vital ones. Role of women in our region was vital in all peace processes coming from the ground. In short, it is power of listening, communicating, doing things together, caring for others.

d) Leadership of the project was horizontal and mutually supportive, sometimes collective, always protective to volunteers. As one of three founders and key project leaders, my role was to look after volunteers, enable opportunities for their work in community, ensure they are treated with respect in project and treating others same way. Volunteer project Pakrac was between anarchist community and well managed project, always fluid and open to locals, to response to their needs.

e) In one sentence project could be summarized as "Daily testimony to everyone's right to dignity, particularly of marginalized ones, victims, weak ones, youth and women."

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[7] https://www.powercube.net/other-forms-of-power/expressions-of-power/

4. Example Two: "Building a democratic society based on the culture of non-violence : Post war peace building in eastern Croatia" aka Peace Teams, 1998 - 2003

"Peace Teams"[8] are perhaps most ambitious and demanding peace project in Croatia since its independence. After ten weeks of intense preparation training, they started in 1999 in five post war communities at the east of country. Another five communities were added at second phase in 2001, three of them in neighboring Bosnia-Hercegovina. In total there were 36 team members involved living in those communities at least two years. They came after ending of UNTAES[9] mission from January 1996 to January 1998 later described as one of the most successful UN mission ever. Center for Peace, Nonviolence and Human Rights from Osijek was largest peace NGO in Croatia at that time. It seemed everything was at its place: a) war was over, country was reunited with its 'separatist' areas b) UN finished successfully peaceful integration of last 'occupied' areas c) peace organizations were having experience, resources and developed foreign partnerships (Life and Peace Institute, Sweden) d) internally displaced people were returning to their homes where some new settlers already arrived and some former enemies remained, so need for peace work was obvious.

Very intriguing is that Peace Teams are still unknown to Croatian public but also rarely topic to mention and celebrate even among peace movement, so why is that? There may be two reasons, interlinked, internal and external. It was very demanding, complicated project to manage, coordinating and managing 5 – 10 teams in period of several years. Remember, it was based on culture of non-violence where every person is important and deserves attention. That approach requires lots of human resources, patience, expertise in psychology and conflict transformation, commitment. They were, simply to state, too big to handle at that time. Externally, they were facing aims not reached even two decades after, economical development, functioning local governance, de traumatization, reconciliation. Those aims require involvement of governmental structure and 'political will' which was diminishing after end of UN mission in 1998.

However, it would be wrong to conclude there was no results and legacy. Most of the former peace teams members continued doing peace and/or community building work in years coming, some of them are among most competent and active peace workers in country and wider . Communities involved are ones

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[8] http://www.centar-za-mir.hr/uploads/dokumenti/knjige/I_choose_life.pdf
[9] United Nations Transition Authorities in Eastern Slavonia

without scandals, incidents or violence, that could be noticed easily but to make direct links new researches has to be done.[10]

Let us explore lessons learnt:

a) <u>Selection is important but is not a guarantee.</u> Education too. Complexity of living and doing grassroots peace work in post war area requires people dedicated to nonviolence. That can't be always seen through selection process, setting properly personal boundaries, respecting others, dealing with unpredictable, dealing with one's own weaknesses and 'failures', handling secondary trauma, accepting things beyond our control, accepting not being liked by all/most community members are among some of the challenges. Communities tend to be united and homogenous, presence of peace activists who have respect to humans on side of current enemy could be not easy thing to deal with for anyone.

b) <u>Team members are ones who profit most</u>, they are future leaders. In peace projects one is usually looking at the aims, impact on community, concrete activities, that is fine but real benefit is in growth and development of team members, as humans, as peace activists. Often projects fail to achieve aims, but people involved learn a lot.

c) Living with people in need is essence of peace work. <u>Human solidarity.</u> Presence on daily level, interactions, communications, sharing stories, emotions, understanding that humankind is linked and needs to be linked, that is core. There is a journey to understanding that real enemy is fear inside me, fear of my potential, fear of failure, not enemy on other side who actually has same fears.

d<u>) Peace work requires authorities to get involved</u>, state system to take over duties, it is difficult to accomplish but is essential. Lot has to be invested in presenting achievements, explaining its importance, incorporating it in state structures. Best field project if it is not linked with state structures/ and or societal fiber is missing its achievements.

5. How Croatian experience in nonviolence can be of use in Palestine
a) Understanding that we all are part of global peace movement

Millions of people worldwide work for peace, against any kind of violence, for more just world. They/we are not in media and are often invisible. Peace movement started after WW1, strengthened a lot after WW2 and in Cold War.

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[10] http://www.centar-za-mir.hr/uploads/dokumenti/izvjesca/Towards_Rec_1_part__English__Web.pdf

Entering new millennium provided new boost[11].   Peacebuilding as term entered UN vocabular relatively recently, in 1992[12] "Agenda for Peace" by Secretary General.

One may call it differently than 'global peace movement' but label is not relevant. If in 20th century became popular phrase "Think globally, act locally.", for nonviolent social change in 21st century is more appropriate to say: "Feel and know that you are part of global movement even if you act only locally." Being part of global movement assumes equal power relationship. It means that in1990s we have been supported by friends from abroad, but soon we started to support friends/ people in need abroad. We all are connected, we all have something useful to share, to contribute, to assist other in need. It helped us to feel connected when in 1998 Croatia was host of War Resisters International[13] Triennial in town Poreč in Istria, Croatia. That very year, Center for Peace Studies[14], newly founded Croatian NGO was asked to provide preparation training for Balkan Peace Team, international cooperation project in our region. That was big recognition for us, we have been acknowledged by our 'senior', more experienced foreign partners, to be capable to train their field staff. That was one of key moments of our (peace activists) self understanding that we are not any more recipients of aid, our role turned into givers/ teachers too. Powerful shift and witness of importance of work – getting people out of 'role of victim'[15]. Being part of global peace movement assumes horizontal cooperation & support relationship with others.

b) Building our own peace infrastructure

Above mentioned Center for Peace Studies, Zagreb grew out of Volunteer Project Pakrac and is its most visible and developed legacy. We have realized that we need to build organization based on our grassroots peace building experiences. There was a need for reflection, learning, teaching, nurturing nonviolence, advocacy. Center for Peace Studies (CPS) is now 22 years old organization, probably largest peace organization on whole Balkan peninsula[16]. Its quality is horizontal leadership, commitment to work both grassroots and at advocacy level, openness, ability to generate new initiatives. In over two decades CPS has grown to over 25 employed peace experts and budget around 1 million Euro. Twenty second generation of (unofficial) Peace Studies annual program is about to start

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[11] https://gppac.net/
[12] https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1478328/files/DPI_1247-EN.pdf
[13] https://www.wri-irg.org/en
[14] https://www.cms.hr/en
[15] https://medium.com/@gulshan4206/trapped-in-a-tricky-triangle-4c8a36d4294f
[16] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balkans

with over 20 new participants. There are difficulties, political environment is not friendly toward CPS but big achievement is becoming acknowledged, present in media on daily level, regularly consulted on burning issues (immigrants, prevention of violence, peace education, ...). We need more similar organizations but to be honest in 1990s none dared to think CPS will ever become such big, active and relevant. Our experience is that peace organization, particularly in post war area, can't have vertical structure/ hierarchy , must be horizontally organized with opportunity and attention given to everyone. It is not by coincidence that women makes majority of employed staff. There is long tradition of recognizing crucial role of women in building alternative, horizontal, nonviolent organizational structures in peace movement in Croatia. Even if it is not a case in Palestine, that could be aim, vision, to have gender balanced based and built peace organizations.

Having our own peace organizations/ infrastructure have enabled us to reflect on our own struggle and experiences. We have found very important to learn from our failures and mistakes, to see what could be done different, to articulate our knowledge. We succeeded to bridge, at the beginning huge gap between practitioners and academia, both sides disliked other one a lot. It took us almost two decades to reconcile 'learning by working' and 'learning and then working', to accept that theory and practice has to be intertwined. This is good place to mention that last year our guest speaker was Dr Bashir Bashir[17], person I learnt a lot in our two days gathering. Palestine and its people have already a lot to offer to peace movement. Peace infrastructure, like Pal-Think but also other groups and organizations, indigenous ones supported by others are needed to offer platform for already existing knowledge, experience, people.

c) Gradually growing up to level of more difficult tasks

We have learnt that growing in/ through nonviolence is a long term process. We started by concrete physical work on demolished houses, helping displaced people, humanitarian work – but learning all the time. Soon we came (1993) to establishment of first peace education/ nonviolent conflict transformation organization "Small step", discovering the power of communicating nonviolently. We have learnt that understanding needs 'of others' is crucial for peace work, not agreeing with them necessarily but being able to hear/ understand their viewpoints/ needs. It took us a long journey to be able to start communicating with war veterans (2003) and others seen as our political/ life values opponents.

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[17] https://www.openu.ac.il/personal_sites/bashir-bashir/

Work with war veterans, active in their associations was/is very demanding but extremely rewarding for all involved. It helped us not to look at people through labels and to learn that one who carried arms could share similar/ same interest for peace. For five years that work was going carefully, with workshops and meetings, often just meeting each other, all the time followed by war veterans loud statement: "We don't want to change." And peace/ human rights activists quite statement of same kind. In a way is true to say that people involved from both sides wanted to change others. At the documentary made in 2009, all of us involved have finally admitted: "We've changed a lot." That is a point of all nonviolent social change activities, admitting and accepting that all are involved in process of change, not a quick one but gradual and invisible on daily/ monthly level. Importance of involving war veterans (or any now or previously armed people) in peace work is that they have access to (big) part of public, not accessible to recognized peace makers. Their voice can reach many people. One retired colonel of Croatian Army returning from first peace conference open to war veterans in our region (2005) was asked for impression 'after meeting an enemy'. His statement surprised his fellow ex-combatants: "Guys, we need to learn a lot."

d) What is concrete peace work (successful one)

Our[18] experiences taught us that 'successful peace work' means (to us) several things. It includes   a) creating opportunities, b) identifying individuals (agents of change) c) constant reflection and learning d) opening ourselves to people we disagree with or dislike e) constant linking individuals and groups f) practicing cooperation however difficult it is, particularly with 'like minded' people and organizations.

Creating opportunities is best illustrated with 5 days MIRamiDA[19] Trainings, organized since 1995 in over 30 post war communities in Croatia, Bosnia-Hercegovina, Serbia and Macedonia. It is gathering of local interested people, exploring issues relevant for their community and peace and offering them space and methodology to communicate and cooperate on demanding issues. It is about empowering individuals and groups on micro level and linking them with other

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[18] By 'we' in this paper author refers to Croatian peace movement linked to network and legacy of Antiwar Campaign Croatia 1991 - 2000

[19] Started as part of Volunteer Project Pakrac in 1995. MIR means peace, ami is friend, DA is yes. Also, amid means 'between two sides'. Word is similar to Pyramid (piramida) and people see it is 'pyramid of peace' . It carries important connection with John Paul Lederach pyramid from his book „Building Peace – Reconciliation in divided societies" (USIP, 1997) https://www.beyondintractability.org/moos/lederach-pyramid. There were over hundred of Miramida trainings since 1995, in all post-YU countries, last ones in Ukraine.

similar groups nationally and wider. Team of trainers are facilitators of process, not lecturers, creating space where participants interact and learn experientially.

Identifying individuals is particular skill of recognizing potential for inner and outer change in a person. Those individuals are often seen in their communities as ones not easily fitting in, 'black sheep', 'rebels' but also respected teachers, doctors, elders. There is no rule for recognizing beside capacity to learn, act and not looking for orders but rather being ready to take responsibility and risks. Sometimes, part of peace work is to teach these peacemakers how to fit in, how to be more cooperative in community and not angry on others being fearful or obedient.

Peacebuilding is cooperation and learning, practicing cooperation with as many people and actors is real peace building. Cooperation includes common and thorough preparation, getting to know each other, trust building, building equal power relationship, sharing information, admitting mistakes, warning on delays or problems, basically building mutual respect and trust.

Some of best examples of peace work includes public meetings in postwar communities where people could express publicly their different experiences of war. It is about talking to armed soldiers about nonviolence and getting positive feedback from them. Big lesson is of 'not being a threat' to anyone, particularly to opponents/ enemies. Showing respect to people one disagrees with, proved to be very powerful. I was personally present in many situations when 'rigid' right wing war veterans, radical nationalists or influential politicians, changed their starting attitude after realizing that I/we treat him/them/her as person and with respect because he/she/ they are humans, not because of their social role or position of power. Enabling people to get out of their social roles and behave as human individuals is one of key points of our peace work.

e) Visions of future, expectations and illusions

Our working definition of reconciliation is[20] one of Brandon Hamber which talks about three (time) levels past, present and future. It is about dealing with a past (dark side of what my/our side has done), having relationship now (with opponents, former enemy), developing common vision together. All parts are demanding but developing common vision is particularly missing in our region. It is very rare case that people/ organizations discuss their own visions of future.

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[20]

http://www.brandonhamber.com/publications/Paper%20A%20Working%20Definition%20of%20Reconciliation.doc

Usually it is part of project writing (e.g. "society where conflicts are resolved nonviolently") but rarely 'down to earth' thinking, feeling, sharing, exploring. One of 'illnesses' of peace/ civil movement in our region is 'donor driven' projectization. We are suddenly all involved in our projects but losing wider picture, losing each other from sight.

Common visioning is powerful tool for getting to know ourselves and each others. CPS[21] and other big peace organizations practice regular visioning and planning sessions with people outside their membership to enrich a process. Croatia never did it as country and allowed itself to get trapped into practical goals: becoming member of NATO and EU. That is not visioning. Where is content? Who is involved in discussion? Do Croatian citizens feel any ownership over this process? (No, we don't , that is problem.). After achieving these goals and becoming member of EU in 2013, we got lost and confused about our future. So we escaped back into 1990s, time of (suddenly 'glory' Homeland war), and got trapped into past. Consequence is big disillusion among people and more and more war veterans claims " I didn't fight for this, corruption, lack of rule of law, state capture." Croatia is among EU countries with largest decrease of population. Lack of common vision about our future is one of key reasons. Lack of hope is that.

f) Acknowledgment of cultural differences

This text is written by someone who has never been in Palestine or Middle East. It means that misconceptions and inappropriate interpretations are included. Author is not expert for Middle East, but is willing to offer his 26 years long experience in peace building in Balkan and Ukraine. Experience mostly means 'doing mistakes' and learning out of them. Mistakes are Ok, they are part of any social change work. Disrespect of others is not Ok, as is not lack of ability to listen and learn from others. This paper is attempt to make life a tiny bit easier to friends in Pal-Think, Gaza, Palestine and whole Middle East. Author is deeply convinced that nonviolence is only proper road for common living on this planet.

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[21] Center for Peace Studies, Zagreb

How to build peace in fragile contexts?: Strategies of defense and return to the territory

Laura Henao-Izquierdo

Juan Pablo Guerrero-Home

From where to when our war: Some key dates of the armed conflict in Colombia

Colombia is the second most populated Spanish-speaking nation and the fourth country with the largest nominal GDP in Latin America. It has 49 million inhabitants, most of which are mestizos (58%). Although 75% of the population lives in urban areas, there is a notable heterogeneity in rural areas with indigenous, peasant, Afro, mestizo and colonist populations. This heterogeneity combined with the geographical complexity, land concentration and the expansion of the agrarian frontier has reproduced social inequalities that have in turn deepened the armed conflict in Colombia (Departamento Nacional de Planeación 2015).

The armed conflict in Colombia allegedly began in the sixties, with severe expressions of violence in territories such as Chocó, a department located in northwestern Colombia. The causes of the conflict were diverse. There is little consensus over the exact origin and causes of the armed conflict: while some authors claim it began in the second decade of the 20th century (Comisión Histórica del Conflicto y sus Víctimas 2015), others affirm that it arose in 1948, the year in which the violence between liberals and conservatives intensified, and massacres, sexual crimes, dispossessions of property, the exhibition of severed heads and other acts of brutality, became frequent, imprinting the seal of the period known as *La Violencia*[22].

The events during *La Violencia* unfolded in a military dictatorship between 1953 and 1957 as an intervention strategy to contain the high rates of violence (Pizarro Leóngómez 2015). The attempt, nonetheless, proved insufficient which derived in a political pact known as *El Frente Nacional*, an explicit power-sharing agreement between the traditional parties (Liberal and Conservative Party) for 16 years, a duopoly of political representation (Pécaut 2015). This pact, which

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22 Although social tensions have been increasing since 1920, particularly around agrarian issues, which also fueled protest movements between 1920 and 1936, (Pécaut 2015), 1948 is a year of outbreaks of violence. Although both the liberal and the conservative parties promoted this violence, the latter was characterized by overt sectarianism between 1950 and 1953, translating the conflict into an open armed confrontation (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013, p-112).

excluded the political diversity of the moment, served as a breeding ground for the emergence of political groups, many of them armed[23]. Unsurprisingly, during this period guerrillas such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP), the National Liberation Army (ELN), or the People's Liberation Army (EPL), appeared and started to thrive[24].

In the 1970s, particularly between 1971 and 1973, unarmed popular strikes, mainly driven by peasant reification for land[25], were restrained through "blood and fire" by landowners and local elites, due to the incapacity of the State regulations to resolve agrarian and territorial conflict. Throughout this decade, many urban civic strikes, in articulation with rural movements, expressed their dissatisfaction with the government negligence and the institutional repression – inherited from the National Front - against the unions and the protesting movements (García, Martha Cecilia 2017).

In the midst of economic destabilization and social discontent, another important guerrilla emerged in Colombia: The M-19. Meanwhile, many settlers who expanded the agrarian frontier through "waves of occupation" with little to none State accompaniment[26], were then expelled to the cities in the next decade by local landowners who used violence or cheap legal tactics against them (Legrand, 1988; in Gutiérrez Sanín, 2015, p.505). Precisely after these years there was a notorious expansion of the guerrillas, that lasted until 1996, when it was slowed-down by a dramatically violent response of paramilitary forces in different regions of Colombia[27].

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[23] This is one of the reasons for the emergence of violence in Colombia. Signed in Spain on July 24, 1956, between the president of the liberal party and the former conservative president leader of that party, to fight against the military dictatorship between 1953 and 1957. The period was framed by the Cold War and a strongly anti-communist ideology, emphasizing repressions against the political dissidents of the moment.

[24] The Farc-Ep was a guerrilla created in the sixties, with a strong rural base, particularly peasant. They arose in the department of Tolima, as an armed response to attacks by the State, in 1964 (Farc-EP 2019). The history of the ELN guerrilla refers to the meeting between young people from cities - formed according to the guidelines of the Cuban and Chinese revolutions - and those who inherited the principles of the old liberal guerrillas. (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013). The ELN was born in the department of Santander and contains some elements of Theology of Liberation (Semana, 2016) (Medina Gallego, 2019). The emergence of the EPL is linked to the Sino-Soviet rupture and its rejection of the reformist tendencies of the Communist Party that evaluated the National Front as a period of "peaceful transition to socialism" (National Center for Historical Memory, 2013, p.125).

[25] A large part of these were collected in the ANUC (National Association of Peasant Users), a political movement that promoted land grabs and made visible the rural problems of Colombia.

26 This catalyzed an unequal economic integration of the territories and favored the emergence of illegal economies such as drug trafficking: the marijuana business in the seventies, and the fruitful coca market in the eighties.

[27] This year is the turning point of paramilitarism, composed of groups created by a variety of reasons, among which stands out an anti-communist policy against leftist guerrillas that emerged in the context of the Cold War, and with a strong relationship with some commanders of the Military Forces and regional businessmen.

The spread of violence and the territorial control of paramilitary groups reached its peak from 1996 until 2006, when members of the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC)- a nation-wide counter-insurgency project - were demobilized[28]. Unfortunately, this process of demobilization, together with the most recent peace-agreement reached between the National Government and the FARC-EP in December 2016, did not mean the end of a history of violence in the country. Profiting from the absence of the AUC and the FARC-EP, remaining armed groups such as the ELN and the EPL augmented their territorial control, and new paramilitaries are now on the rise: Post-demobilization Armed Groups (GAPD, in Spanish[29]). This context has led to political-violence, forced displacement, and a serious humanitarian crisis in several departments of the country, among them, Chocó.

The negotiation process between the FARC and the Colombian government, which lasted four years and culminated in the signing of the agreement in December 2016, represents a great challenge for the current period of transition towards peace. The agreement implies a commitment during the implementation process that will last between ten and fifteen years. It must include the 6,804 ex-combatants who left 7,132 weapons (Fundación Ideas para la Paz-FIP 2015) and the colombian civil society. In spite of this commitment, 137 former guerrillas and 627 social leaders and human rights activists have been killed since the agreement was signed. Approximately 95% of these deaths correspond to peasants, communal, indigenous, Afro and union leaders from 155 municipalities, in the departments of Cauca, Antioquia, Nariño, Valle del Cauca and Chocó. It is evident that major challenges still remain: illegal military structures persist,

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Their bet is violent, with massacres, murders, displacements, disappearances, tortures, many of them towards the civilian population.

[28] Demobilization signed in 2003, and completed in August 2006, where 30,944 members were demobilized. This number must be seen in detail, since many of those who took part in the process were drug trafficking structures that took advantage of the legal benefits offered by the State (Verdad Abierta, 2017). In addition to that, years later it was proved that many demobilizations were false, such as those of the Tolima Block of the AUC, in which 207 members were presented and turned out to be young people and farmers from the area recruited months before the arms delivery ceremony. 39 more structures incurred in this practise to show greater capacity ('Quantitative analysis on paramilitarism in Colombia', of the Directorate of Truth Agreements (DAV), an agency attached to the National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH). (Reinoso 2019) .

[29] Post-demobilized Armed Groups are the groups that emerged from the demobilization of the AUC. This denomination tries to overcome the discussion about its political pretensions or its criminal action. This implies overcoming the official interpretation of paramilitarism, which reduces its manifestation to the strictly criminal level, forgetting "i) the local orders that the different paramilitary organizations had previously configured; ii) the organizational legacies that shaped GAPD and iii) the inevitable political impacts of their actions. In addition, internationally they are known by this name (GADP). (Vásquez, Teófilo 2016)

GAPDs such as the Gulf Clan with 1500 men in arms, 2,300 FARC dissidents and almost 2,000 in the ELN (Red + 2019).

## The Bajo Atrato: A portrait of the Colombian history

The *Bajo Atrato* extends from the *Uraba Chocoano* region and the *Uraba Antioqueño* region to the mouth of the *León* River. In this territory, a multiplicity of identities and ethnic groups coexist, due to historical migrations: the liberation of slaves and maroons at the beginning of the 19th century; the arrival of miners and workers from nearby *haciendas*; and the arrival of settlers from neighbouring departments. Along with the cultural diversity, the arrival of these settlers also produced an increase of disputes over land-use, mainly associated with the growth of livestock farming, and the large banana plantations both of which became the axis of the region's economy (El Despojo a las comunidades negras. Viaje al corazón del Atrato 2016). The rise of illegal armed groups in the region, is partly explained by these growing disputes but also by the strategic location of the municipalities in the *Bajo Atrato*, ideal for drug trafficking routes.

Illegal armed groups in the Bajo Atrato

This region is characterized by high rates of violent acts perpetrated by different armed groups, including forced displacements, extorsions, kidnappings, disappearances, murders and threats to social leaders, to name a few. The first illegal armed actors to arrive in this territory were the FARC-EP and the EPL, in the 1960s. The ELN, arrived later on in the seventies. Some of these groups established with the sympathy of settlers and peasants linked to the banana industry and the trade union movement, while others broke into organizational structures and tore social fabric apart (Guerrero Home, 2018). In the mid-1990s, paramilitary groups entered the region to allegedly fight the guerrillas that were already present. The abrupt entrance of the paramilitaries - some of them with the endorsement of the State and the private sector - resulted in serious violations of human rights and the International Humanitarian Law against the civilian population. In the peak years of the paramilitary presence, palm monoculture increased and with it, displacement, and land dispossession. Specifically, there was an upsurge of violence in the territory between 1996 and 1997, mainly due to the militarization of the territory and the arrival of paramilitaries with the renowned *Operación Génesis* (Operation Genesis), where the civilian population was the most affected in terms of violations to Human Rights and Territorial

Rights (Líder Organización Afro 2019). With the resurgence of violence, between the mid-1990s and 2006, when the paramilitary demobilization process ended, and between 2016 and 2019, with the power vacuum left by the Farc-EP (Front 57), social leaders have had to reorganize to continue peace-building processes in their territories.

Currently, the relationship between criminals, businessmen and paramilitaries in the region is close and evident which poses many risks to peace-building processes. Together, these actors are responsible for the forced displacement of black communities, for illegally appropriated ancestral lands, for the sow of large areas of oil palm (Pacifista 2016) and, most importantly, the murder of social leaders, as shown in the following map of the region.
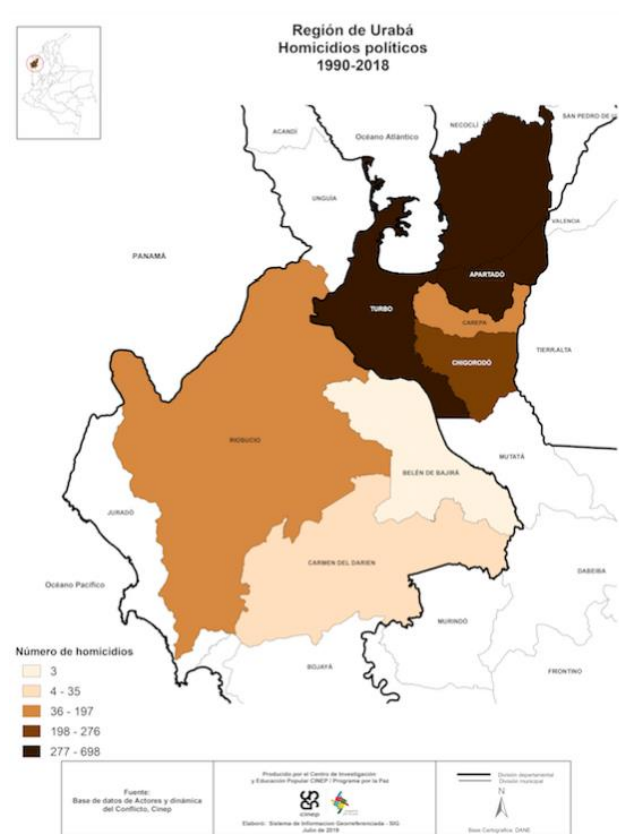
Source: (CINEP 2019)

Resistance and persistence: Who builds local peace?

During the armed conflict, several civil society organizations formed by marginal groups, such as ethnic groups, resisted the conflict through various peace strategies that are often expressed through social mobilization, but also include blockades, protests, forums, debates, artistic and sports events, peaceful marches,

self-management, initiatives to return to their lands after displacement, the lead of demining actions, educational campaigns, etc. This kind of actions have spread in several regions, especially after 1990, following the demobilization of armed groups and the pressure of social organizations for a negotiated solution to the conflict (Henao, et al., 2016). Within this variety of organizational expressions, we will emphasize on the work carried out by the Community Councils and the organized ethnic communities.

Consejos Comunitarios (Community Councils) and organized ethnic communities: What are they facing?

Since 1991, covered by the Law 70 of 1993 that protects Afro-Colombian communities and recognizes the black communities that historically occupied uncultivated lands in rural areas of the rivers of the Pacific Basin, autonomous collectives have been created for the protection of the cultural identity of these groups. In an exercise of autonomy and self-determination these organizational expressions have managed to articulate a diversity of organizations in the region; obtain collective land titles for ancestral use; achieve returns to the territory; develop productive projects and fundraising; negotiate with armed groups; and influence public policy and land-use planning. Thanks to the Law 70 of 1993 community councils have also exercised a form of local government based on a collective vision of the territory. However, building peace in the midst of conflict implies major challenges in terms of security, access to information, geographical adversities, Organizational frailties and scarcity of resources; all of them are interconnected.

Security

The first major historical challenge for leaders in the region has been the violence that has occurred in a systematic way. Between 1990 and 2018 more than 2718 infractions against International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and Human Rights have been committed (see graph 1)[30].

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[30] Some Human Rights and IHL violetions are: Extrajudicial executions, forced disappearance, torture, physical injuries, arbitrary detentions, threats, attacks, sexual violence, forced displacement, collective confinement, abductions, threatened groups, displaced groups, injured groups, rapes, forced pregnancies, murders, attacks, combats, bombing, deaths and injuries due to attacks on civilian property, intentional homicide or injury to a protected person, civilians killed or injured in military actions, arbitrary prosecution, to name a few (CINEP / PPP 2019).

The conflict has worsened and the permanence of illegal armed groups in the region has been a challenge in terms of security for the construction of peace: "*Here in the Bajo Atrato we do not know post-conflict, we know aggravation and transformation of the conflict, because at this moment the FARC left, but (...) the actors who arrived are worse (...)* (Leader of an Afro-Colombian community in the Bajo Atrato Region 2017).

Graph 1. Evolution of Infractions of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights: Bajo Atrato Region
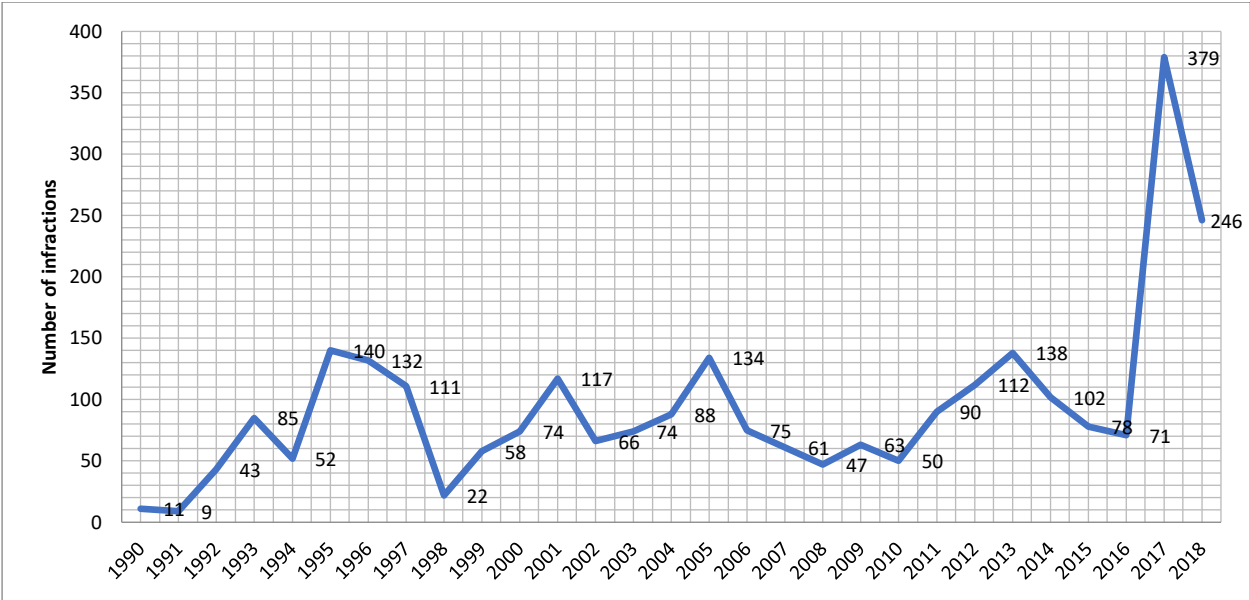
Source: CINEP/PPP, 2019

Leaderships and fragile internal ties

The weak leaderships and fragile internal ties within civil organizations respond to many factors. First, the history of violence, fear and persecution of leaders has had repercussions in the low participation of leaders in community meetings. Second, the Co-optation of leaderships also hinders collective action, since many leaders are bribed to accept the *status quo* and the local political elites. These leaders end-up losing their independence and their interest in collective political actions. One last factor are the complex geographical conditions and lack of road infrastructure since many of the organizations lie on extensive territories that are difficult to access and to connect, which make it more difficult for articulated spaces to be found among the leaders of the region: "*We have a legal representative who is very close to the businessmen. Sometimes people want to give themselves a great life without working, without living the daily life of the*

territory, these people can walk from armored cars from here to there, from here to Bogotá, on behalf of the territory without taking into account the community" (Afro-Colombian leader of Bajo Atrato 2017).

How to overcome challenges: Strategies for peace

In territories with high levels of conflict, such as Chocó, far from the capital cities, and with high poverty rates[31], organizations and social leaders use strategies in order to survive and build peace in their territories. These strategies include the creation of different forms of protection; the denunciation of human rights violations and the demand for rights to the State; the generation of alliances and social organization; mobilization and social protest; the self-management of the territory; ethno-education; and negotiation and mediation with armed actors. We will highlight two: i) the reporting of human rights violations and the demand for rights; ii) and the creation of alliances and organization.

Reports of violation and demands to the State

With the support of human rights organizations and NGOs at the national level, the community councils have made visible the violations of their rights and have demanded from the State the titling of collective lands and the restitution of territorial rights usurped during the armed conflict. Some of these actions consist of punctual demands to the Colombian State, such as education, productive projects, protection especially to land claimants, and the dismantling of illegal armed groups. This requirements were also raised within the Dialogue Committees, as happened in 1997, during the presidency of Andrés Pastrana: "*We organized ourselves by demanding from the Government 5 points that were titling, settlement, community development, protection and reparation, that is not it was easy*" (Afro-Colombian leader of Bajo Atrato 2017).

Partnership and internal organization

Again, with the support of different NGOS at the national level, these organizational processes achieved the return to their territories when many Community Councils united under the ASCOBA (Asociación de Consejos

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[31] 61.5% of the population lives in monetary poverty conditions and 34.5% in extreme monetary poverty (Chocó 7 días 2019)

Comunitarios del Bajo Atrato, Association of Community Councils of Bajo Atrato), negotiated with armed groups to protect the families that were part of the communities they represented: "*We created a small group inside ASCOBA of people who had good experience (…) and were the only ones allowed to speak of that, of that situation with the armed actors* "(Afro-Colombian leader of Bajo Atrato 2017).

ASCOBA was created after the return of the communities without the proper accompaniment of the State, on October 3, 2003. The construction process was complex and demanded the logistical, social and political support of several organizations: "*ASCOBA emerges as a strategy to return, because we knew that on the part of the government there was not going to be a return, that was not going to be*" (Afro-Colombian leader of Bajo Atrato 2017).

Similarly, the training and the awareness raised at the national and international level were key for protecting people and for increasing participation. The national or international organizations that supported this process were CINEP, Amnesty International, USAID, *Forjando Futuros*, *Fundación Arcoiris*, CODHES, the European Union, among others: *"We were dedicated to the protection of the people, to the protection of the territory (…) also to training and consultancies (…) in addition to that, to make visible what was ASCOBA outward through the web page, email, and newsletters*" (Testimony of a Leader from ASCOBA 2017).

The organization and generation of alliances resulted in another strategy for the protection of the territory in a context where the local government had no land-use plan: the so-called Humanitarian and Biodiversity Zones: "*The strategy of the biodiversity zone was for subsistence and for the conservation of the environment. As a matter of fact, it was created to order the territory"* (Afro-Colombian leader of Bajo Atrato 2017).

These zones, self-declared by the communities, are now spaces for the protection and recovery of ecosystems, and they are also a means to guarantee the food safety of families facing the risks posed by the increasing monoculture plantations in the region (Rueda and Bouley 2009). Although this model of Zones has no legal basis, it is backed by the International Humanitarian Law, since the zones where built to protect the civilians in a context of internal armed conflict. Fences delimit the zones, there are signboards alluding to the protection of life; and the entry of armed actors, including the Public Force, is explicitly forbidden.

Lessons learned: The strengthening and empowerment of ethnic organizations: self-management, organization and national and international alliances

The ethnic organizations have managed to have a close relationship with the public power, whether it is through cooperation projects or through the demand of their territorial and human rights. In a context of State abandonment but with a strong military presence that, alongside local elites, hinders the inclusion and participation of social organizations (González 2004), the mechanisms of pressure and incidence articulated by sub-regional organizations, help to influence public policies and in the land-use plans. Thanks to the generation of alliances, to the denunciation of violations, and to the demand of their rights, the organizations have managed to defend and protect the population from the armed actors, and have been able to mitigate environmental exploitation and the abandonment of the State. This has made possible their permanence in the territory.

The organizations have achieved the recovery of their territories formerly occupied by companies and third parties, collective titling, and the visibility of dispossession in the lower *Atrato*. However, legal captures and proceedings against businessmen who illegally appropriated the territories are still lacking. Furthermore, the peace process with the FARC is not yet closed, and there is still need for the restitution of other territorial rights in the region as well as a greater autonomy of the communities.

Recommendations

The strategy to remain or to return and build peace agendas in a territory has involved the efforts of different actors and social organizations. A joint effort is needed especially to guarantee the human rights of civilians, to guarantee the basic needs of the communities and to guarantee the inclusion of regions to national and international markets in a context of rapid economic change. (González 2004). Therefore, it becomes necessary to:

1. **Recognize existing social organizations, and social leaders, who have articulated actors and contributed to the construction of territorial peace agendas**

The construction of peace is based on the recognition of those actors who have sacrificed their lives in the midst of the conflict and who, despite the war, have continued to bet on the protection of their communities and territories.

Considering this, public policy should be aimed to help the territorial organizations that know the history of successes and failures in their regions and that have a strong commitment to protect their communities. This requires on the one hand, the strengthening of leaders through training and advice, and on the other hand, the sustained support of national and international organizations that help to raise awareness of the problems of the region, and offer a joint response to leverage the self-management of the ethnic communities.

2. Generate opportunities for participation that encourage the establishment of new forms of relationship between civil society and the State and the articulation between local, regional and national processes to strengthen peacebuilding based on local demands

The State has been absent in many territories of Colombia. Its absence is evident in the lack of guarantees of protection for the communities, or the coverage of public services. Part of its presence has been done through the Military Forces, which has established a relationship of violence with some communities that are in the middle of the conflict. On the contrary, the State presence should be aimed to allow the articulation of successful processes of civil society, with those institutions at the national level –such as CINEP- that have the duty to ensure the rights of communities. In the same way, the State should ensure the construction of shared spaces for civil society organizations at different levels: national, regional and local, to reduce their lack of articulation and prevent the duplicities of their work and efforts.

3. Promote the proposals for self-determination and self-management of the Community Councils.

It is necessary to break with the centralized development structures and imaginaries imposed from Bogotá and foster the community's own development models and self-management. The self-determination strategy promoted by the communities, draw on a popular base, has contributed to recover and preserve the traditions of the ethnic groups, and has become a principle of resistance and the base upon which the region can build a sustainable peace.

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DO OR DIE: THE SOUTH AFRICAN TRANSITION PROCESS

Fazela Mahomed and Anis Daraghma

Keywords: transition, negotiations, public engagement, talks about talks.

The South African transition process is arguably one of the most significant developments of the 20th Century. At the time the conflict was deemed intractable, and seemingly had no prospect for any peaceful resolution.

Much of the documentation of transition process in South Africa, focusses on the period prior to the release of Nelson Mandela and the first few years of the democratic Parliament. This paper considers the impact of the years preceding the negotiation process. Further, this paper posits that the unique factor in the South African peace process was the high level of public mobilisation and engagement during the negotiation processes.

This paper describes and assesses the four phases of the negotiation process:

The pre-negotiation phase, the demand for a negotiated settlement was carefully timed. It was clear by late 1980's that a political stalemate arose, the apartheid government found it increasingly difficult to rule and the anti-apartheid forces were unable to defeat the apartheid regime.

In this pre-negotiation phase, the engagement was to create a climate conducive to negotiations. In this phase demands for conditions for talks was identified, and addressed.

The second phase was direct engagement with the apartheid regime and the African National Congress (ANC). It commenced with the signing of the Groote Schuur Minute, which made recommendations to resolve those issues which impeded a full blown negotiation process.

The third phase was the negotiation process, in which both sides engaged on processes to manage the transitional arrangements towards the establishment of a democratic State. In this phase a transitional executive authority was formed to develop an interim constitution to enable a transition guided by the rule of law.

The final phase was the transition to democracy, the first democratic elections, the democratically elected constitutional assembly tasked with crafting of the South African constitution, the establishment of peace and reconciliation process and the creation of a government of National Unity.

To conclude these processes will be assessed and recommendations on issues which could have been better dealt with.

Glossary of terms

ANC: African National Congress – South African Liberation movement, majority Party in the South African Parliament.

Apartheid: A policy or system of segregation or discrimination on grounds of race.

CODESA: Conference for a Democratic South Africa, held at Kempton Park, Gauteng

COSATU   Congress of South African Trade Unions – largest trade union movement in South Africa

Group Areas Act: The acts assigned racial groups to different residential and business sections in urban areas in a system of urban apartheid.

IFP   Inkatha Freedom Party a traditionalist Zulu Party

NP: National Party the party of the white minority in South Africa.

PAC: Pan African Congress, liberation nationalist African party

Pass laws: a body of laws in operation in South Africa under apartheid, controlling the rights of black people to residence and travel and implemented by means of identity documents compulsorily carried.

Robben Island: Island near Cape Town where the political and other prisoners were held.

SACP: South African Communist Party who are alliance partners of the African National Congress

UDF   United Democratic Front, mass based organisations with affiliates from all sectors.

Apartheid did not begin in 1948, from the onset of colonial rule by the Dutch in 1652, the indigenous people of South Africa were subjected to discrimination and racism, and the dispossession of their land through annexation and division of

territory. Laws were enacted to dislodge African people from their land while consolidating areas of White settlement. South Africa was already moving in the direction of spatial segregation through land dispossession.

The Natives Land Act (No. 27 of 1913) was passed to allocate only about 7% of arable land to Africans and leave the more fertile land for whites. This law incorporated territorial segregation into legislation for the first time since Union of South Africa in 1910. The law created reserves for Blacks and prohibited the sale of territory in white areas to Blacks and vice versa… In effect, over 80% of the land went to White people, who made up less than 20% of the population. The Act stipulated that Black people could live outside the reserves only if they could prove that they were in employment. These actions impoverished the majority of Africans. https://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/natives-land-act-1913

The National Party (NP) under the leadership of DF Malan rose to power in South Africa in 1948. Its vision was one of racial segregation and white supremacy, with the objective to build a country run by white people for the benefit of white people. This was the beginning of a formalised system of apartheid. Apartheid was designed to systematically deny the majority of non-white citizens their political rights.

Two years after its ascent to power, the NP passed a series of apartheid laws that assigned a racial identity to each citizen under the Population Registration Act. Legislation was enacted to restrict the movement of black people under 'Pass Laws'.

The division of races was further entrenched under the Group Areas Act, which restricted the right of African, Coloured (people of mixed race) and Indian people from living in certain areas. Non-white people who lived in areas designated for white people were forcibly removed. Africans, Coloureds and Indians were afforded different rights and restrictions, thus creating a hierarchy of oppression, and created the basis for a divide and rule policy.

The ANC and its allies, the South African Indian Congress, the Coloured People's Congress, the South African Congress of Trade Unions, and the Congress of Democrats in 1955, through a public campaign developed the Freedom Charter, a response to apartheid, and its vision for a post-apartheid society. The Freedom Charter remained the rallying call of the ANC led alliance throughout the ANC's struggle for freedom.

The ANC's preferred course of action for opposing apartheid was non-violent resistance in the period between 1948 and 1960. The ANC and its allies called for

a Defiance Campaign in 1956 to peacefully protest the apartheid laws. These non-violent protests were met with force by the authorities.

The Defiance Campaign brought together different political organisations, people from all races, classes and different ideological persuasions into an alliance against the apartheid government. It was founded on the principle of the unity of the oppressed, and on the basis of the common vision the Freedom Charter. The influence of different views of the alliance partners changed the ANC, in particular its relationship with the Communist Party brought in ideas of internationalism and multiracialism to the ANC.

The Defiance Campaign culminated in the now infamous massacre of 69 people in the Gauteng township of Sharpeville on March 21, 1960, when police opened fire on residents who were conducting a peaceful protest against the Pass Laws. A further 180 people were wounded in the incident. (Spitz, 2000, pp. 6,7)

After the Sharpeville massacre, the government used draconian measures to stifle all opposition to apartheid, it outlawed political organisations, including the ANC, the Pan African Congress (PAC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) forcing many leaders into exile. These actions of the apartheid government resulted in the call for armed resistance. The ANC formed its armed wing called Umkhonto we Sizwe, and the armed wing of the PAC, POQO.

The apartheid state successfully stifled dissent between 1961 and 1975. In the early 1970's this changed. The introduction of Afrikaans as the main language of teaching in township schools in 1976, this resulted in country wide protests by students, called the Soweto Uprising. The first protest erupted in the Gauteng township of Soweto. Mass demonstrations and protests soon spread all over the country, as a result many young people were killed by the police.

This uprising coincided with the revival of the trade union movement in South Africa. At the time business pushed for labour reform, they recognised that continued repression of workers would harm the maturing industrial sector.

In response to the uprisings, the apartheid government in the 1980's commenced with a process of piecemeal reform, this fell short of the growing demand by the majority for one person one white. The reform process allowed for local community councils' for Africans in urban areas, and the so called homelands for African people in rural areas. The authorities also established a Tri-cameral Parliament for Indian and Coloured people, the voting balance was passed on the following ratio, for every 5 representatives for whites, there were 2 for coloured (mixed race) people and 1 representative for Indians. These reform measures

ensured that whites retained control of all power. The Black local authorities and homeland leaders had no real power.

Whilst the reform process was not genuine, it created limited legal space for the mobilisation against the apartheid measures. Resistance become more organised. The United Democratic Front (UDF), an organisation aligned to the ANC, was established to resist apartheid reforms, and created a broad coalition against apartheid. The 1980s, was a turbulent time in the history of South Africa.

 The UDF brought together diverse sectors and groups in the fight against apartheid. This included faith based organisations, women's organisations, sport bodies, civic, youth groups, political formations, and the trade union movement. Internal political resistance was complimented with a co-ordinated international campaign that called for the boycott and sanctions against the apartheid regime. The armed struggle was used to support internal struggles. These actions united the political, labour and armed structures of the struggle

The government, under the leadership of former President Pieter Willem (PW) Botha, responded to the resistance by declaring a state of emergency in 1986, and increased repression; detention without trial of activists, the banning of individuals and restrictions placed on organisations.

The apartheid army - once one of the strongest in Africa - was used to bomb neighbouring countries if they gave any support to the ANC. By the late 1980's the military was deployed in the townships to quell the protests.

The UDF began a campaign to call on military conscripts (white) to refuse to serve in the army. The end conscription campaign gained momentum among white South Africans.

The call by the ANC to make South Africa ungovernable had gained traction. In the face of massive repression, the protests continued unabated. The funerals of those killed, was used to foster further resistance.

There was a growing realisation that the apartheid regime could not continue to rule as it had in the past. The ANC was not able to wrest power from the government. South Africa was in a situation of a political stalemate. The apartheid regime was not able to continue ruling without change. Due to the military strength of the apartheid government, the ANC was not able to wrest power from the apartheid government.

Talks about talks …

Against this backdrop, the realisation dawned amongst some white South Africans that the apartheid model was no longer sustainable - the process of 'talks about talks' began. The South African Foundation, which represented big business, started talking about reforms and agreed to meet the ANC.

Despite the opposition by former President Botha, the meeting proceeded. The key issues that were tabled were the ANC's relationship with the SACP and future economic policy. "For the first time, the captains of industry were exposed to the full spectrum of ANC policy decisions, which led to the demystifying and 'de-demonising' of the ANC in the eyes of the delegation…. " (Pahad, 2014)

At the end of the meeting all the participants advocated the abolishment of all discriminatory laws, and called for negotiating power sharing, to grant citizenship rights to all South Africans. As a result of the increased protests in January 1985, Botha made an offer to release Nelson Mandela, on the condition that Mandela abandoned the use of violence. Mandela refused the offer of conditional release.

In September 1985, the Minister of Justice under apartheid, Kobie Coetsee, began discussions with Mandela. Coetsee met with Mandela on several occasions in 1987. Mandela, through his lawyer, informed the president of the ANC, Oliver Tambo, about the contents of the talks. The talks with Mandela continued with senior government officials.

"The ANC could not, however, ignore the reality that the apartheid regime had launched an offensive to project an image of itself as a government that understood the realities of South Africa and was committed to reform. By trading on the notion that it was willing to find a negotiated solution, the regime hoped to diffuse the growing struggle in South Africa and thereby divide our people and isolate us from the burgeoning support emanating from broad sections of society and many governments internationally." (Pahad, 2014, p. 120)

Tambo began preparations for negotiations, he appointed a constitutional committee to answer the question "we know what we are against, but what are we for and what kind of country do we want." (Pahad, 2014, p. p122).

The Constitutional Committee was of the view that it was not politically correct to draft a constitution, as this should come from the people through an elected constituent assembly. The committee opted to draft constitutional principles; which consisted of four principles; political pluralism, mixed economy, participatory democracy and a Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights offered an

alternative to the group right solutions proposed by Nationalist Party think tanks. Tambo committed the ANC to negotiations. This was not easy, as many in the leadership in the ANC and its armed wing Umkontho We Sizwe did not trust the regime.

In 1989 Mandela sent a memorandum to Botha in which he restated the call for majority rule, he called for the government to negotiate with the ANC. Botha remained intransigent. Later that year in August 1989, through internal change within the National Party, Frederick Willem (FW) De Klerk, became President of South Africa. Whilst many considered De Klerk as part of the more conservative faction of the NP, he proceeded with the agenda for change.   In 1989, as a precursor to the larger reforms, De Klerk released 5 senior political prisoners who were in Robben Island with Nelson Mandela.

"We enter negotiations because they may offer the shortest and most peaceful route for the transfer of power to the people. Our participation in negotiations does not rule out the use of any forms of struggle, in principle or in the long term, if the negotiations do not offer a path to the transfer of power to the people. Negotiations are a terrain of struggle. Power in negotiations is derived from outside the negotiating forums, in particular through the creation of centres of real power on the ground. For the regime this means the maintenance of control by the repressive apparatus and the system of local authorities. For the liberation movement this means the strengthening of the power of mass organizations as alternative sources of power in townships, the rural areas and the factories. Central to our understanding of negotiations is the concept of strategic initiative. This is the ability by one side in the negotiations to determine and control the pace and direction of the negotiating process." SACP Manifesto 1989 https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/harare-declaration

Then in October 1987 the ANC reiterated its commitment to negotiations, through the Harare Declaration. It went further to identify the steps which Pretoria would have to take to create a climate conducive to negotiations. Those conditions included:-

The release of all political prisoners; The unbanning of banned organizations; Unconditional return of exiles; The withdrawal of troops from the townships; and an end to the state of emergency and creation of an atmosphere conducive to political freedom.

By 1990 both sides recognised that talks were necessary and inevitable. On 2 February 1990 De Klerk announced the unconditional release of Mandela, and legalised all the liberation movements, including the ANC, SACP and PAC.

Both the ANC and National Party signed the Groote Schuur Minute, which outlined the process for the release of political prisoners, the return of exiles and the amendment of security laws. In August 1990 in the Pretoria Minute the ANC agreed to suspend the arm struggle. This did not mean that the ANC agreed to cease all armed action permanently.

CODESA (Conference for a democratic South Africa)

The CODESA process was an inclusive process, all parties and groups were allowed to participate, on the basis of a signed a declaration of intent. Most parties signed a declaration of intent, which committed them to substantive negotiations. The IFP and PAC refused to attend.

The NP was seeking a solution based on power sharing, group rights, protection of white minorities and self- determination of ethnic groups. In contrast the ANC put forward the demand for an undivided South Africa, one person one vote, a Bill of Rights, and multiparty democracy.

After 1990 there was little movement in the negotiation process, Mandela broke the deadlock, he called for an all party conference to negotiate a constituent assembly.

 A covert war against the ANC commenced. In 1990 Chief Gatsha Buthelezi launched the Inkatha Freedom Party as a national political party, it was previously a cultural organisation based mainly in the KwaZulu Natal province. Within a week of its launch, busloads of Zulus arrived from KwaZulu Natal and invaded the hostels in Johannesburg, in that same week 30 people are killed in Sebokeng, a township in the Vaal region.

Many in the ANC were becoming frustrated at violence, and the slow progress in negotiations. Calls for public protests culminating in a general strike was proposed. The ANC alliance were keen to show the NP its strength at grass roots level. COSATU in particular had the capacity to mobilise public action in response to the stalling.

The negotiations end as a result of the violence and allegations of state complicity. In the mean while The Inkatha Freedom Party and the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) white right wing join forces. The AWB, and with

the support of former military general, form military like structures to show opposition to negotiations with the ANC, and in particular did not support elections for all South Africans. The IFP, AWB were joined by homeland leaders (black leaders who were co-opted by the apartheid government) who understood that their interests are threatened by a united South Africa.

During this time the violence grew "Using the hostels as a springboard, attacks are launched into nearby communities; massacres of train commuters by gangs of men in balaclavas, drive by shootings, bombs in bars, attacks on clubs and commuters at taxi ranks, assassinations and random murder, women and children included. 3693 people die." in the period of negotiations. (Harris, 2010, p. 12)

It is in this context that trade unions, business and churches discussed the deteriorating situation. This resulted in a call for a peace accord. A National Peace Accord was signed on 14 September 1992 by all major parties, except white right wing organisations and the Pan Africanist Congress. The purpose of the accord was to get people to patrol, monitor and control areas hardest hit by the violence.

In order to diffuse the right wing in the National Party, De Klerk called a whites only referendum to end <u>apartheid</u>, this was held in <u>South Africa</u> on 17 March 1992.

Mandela himself faced much criticism for the decision to end the armed struggle without consulting the National Conference of the ANC, in response his went on a country wide campaign to explain his decision to the public, and provided reasons for his decision. The rationale presented by Mandela was that had he obtained prior approval from the National Conference, it may have undermined their negotiating position regarding the release of political prisoners, and the return of exiles.

The ANC saw what it called rolling mass action, as a way of reconnecting with its grass roots base, and to engage its constituency on the negotiation process. On June 16 1992 a mass stay away brought the country to its knees. On the 17 1992 June a group of armed Zulus killed 38 people in Boipatong a township south of Johannesburg, it was alleged that the police were involved in supporting the IFP in the massacre, and that this was an attempt to weaken the ANC. CODESA collapsed.

On 3 August 1992 a COSATU led stay away inflicted damage to the South African economy. A protest in Ciskei (an apartheid homeland) led to the killing of 28 people by the Ciskei Defence Force. These crisis created an impetus for

renewed talks. A channel of communication was developed between Roelf Meyer and Cyril Ramaphosa to open discussions on renewed talks.

CODESA 2

A Record of Understanding committed both sides to a transitional period with a government of national unity, which had a two stage constitution making process. There was much disagreement on the detail. These talks were not as inclusive as CODESA one, although the PAC joined the talks, the Inkatha Freedom Party IFP and Conservative Party (CP) a party to the right of the NP formed an alliance in response to the record of understanding.

Joe Slovo from the SACP proposed the "sunset clause" in which the ANC agreed to a power sharing deal for a limited period, through a coalition government which would continue to operate with the old government's bureaucracy. The sunset clauses also proposed amnesty for perpetrators of politically motivated crimes with full disclosure. This meant that the key sectors in NP were placated; that is the NP politicians, the security forces and public servants. Both sides were making compromises which could create a workable settlement.

Just nine days after the new negotiations commenced, a popular militant ANC leader was murdered by a Polish immigrant with links to the Conservative Party. The talks teetered, but continued. Hani's assassination and the ANC's skilful response pushed forward the negotiation process. The need to identify an election date became urgent.

The uncertainty increased, former military leaders Constand Viljoen and Tienie Groenewald formed a party, the Afrikaner Volksfront (AVF) on a platform to stop negotiations until violence stopped.

On the 15 June 1993 sufficient consensus was reached and the date for the first democratic elections was set. On the 17 November 1993 the Interim Constitution was adopted. Kempton Park talks were adjourned. Following this much effort was taken to include the IFP into the process. A provision for Afrikaner self-determination allowed the AVF to enter the process for elections. THE IFP wavered, at the last moment, in February 1994 they agreed to join the elections.

In the run up to the elections, the AWB begin a bombing campaign and threaten further violence. In February 1994, two months before the elections, the AWB threatens more bombs. Constand Viljoen former Commander of the South African Defence Force from the Afrikaner Volksfront continues to seek ways to reach an

agreement with the NP and ANC. Lucas Mangope homeland leader of Bophuthatswana, refuses to accept the incorporation of homelands into South Africa. On 9 March 1994, public servants go on strike in Bophuthatswana, the police joint the strike, which descends into chaos, Mmabatho the capital of Bophuthatswana is looted. Without the police, Mangope requests assistance from Viljoen Head of The AV. Meanwhile the other right wing group, the AWB also enter Bophuthatswana, and randomly shoots civilians. Meanwhile the black conscripts of the Bophuthatswana army are unaware that the white right wing organisations were there at the request of Mangope. The AWB enter Mmabatho hurling racist insults and shooting randomly. The Bophuthatswana army revolts. The AVF now have no access to arms. They withdraw. Meanwhile to de-escalate the military threats in KwaZulu Natal, its main training camps are raided and weapons are seized. On the 19 April 1994 the IFP agrees to participate in the elections.

A week before the elections the AWB embark on a bombing spree. On the 26 April 1994, one day before the first democratic elections, the police arrest the Members of the AWB who were responsible for the bombing.

Despite the threats the vast majority of South voted in the 1994 election. The peace was won.

Conclusion

The inauguration of President Nelson Mandela in May 1994, marked the end of 350 years of white domination in South Africa. Most observers of South African politics in the 1980s would have thought it implausible that the apartheid government would voluntarily surrender power, and that the black majority would not seek retribution against the former oppressive white minority. To most observers a long drawn violent conflict was the predicted outcome for South Africa's future.

As the rhetoric of the miracle of South Africa's transition gained prominence, very few people appreciated, the real the threat of a civil war was in the years of the transition. Frederick Willem (FW) De Klerk, President of apartheid South Africa, signalled amidst much fanfare to the world in 1990, that he was serious about real change in South Africa. In February 1990 he released Nelson Mandela and unbanned all resistance movements including the African National Congress.

It must be borne in mind, that negotiations process was a process between adversaries or even enemies, who fought a bitter battle. To reach a settlement would require that both sides made concessions, and that the outcome of the process by its nature would not be perfect.

When the South African leaders embarked on a journey to peace, they did so with the realisation that an unsuccessful negotiation process had the potential to create a war of attrition which would ultimately lay the country to waste. In other words failure was not an option.**Negotiations are dependent on the ability of all sides in a conflict to realise that a settlement is inevitable.**

In South Africa the National Party understood that change was inevitable and that delays would give them less space to negotiate; the ANC realised that change was within its grasp. The conditions in South Africa in the late 1980s was one of a political stalemate, neither side, the apartheid regime nor the ANC were able to hold or take power. The apartheid government could not rule through force alone, and the ANC could not defeat the apartheid government through force.

The conditions for change in South Africa was ripe, the geopolitical situation at the time afforded a window of opportunity for change; the negotiations commenced as the Soviet Union began its decline, as a result the South African Government was unable to use the threat of communism as an excuse for the oppression of black South Africans. At the same time the international mobilisation against apartheid was taking effect. Its international allies the Thatcher and Reagan governments facing public pressure started pushing their apartheid allies to change.

The Cuban's military engagement against the South African Defence Force at Cuito Cuanavale in Angola in 1988, was a turning point for the South African military. The once powerful military were not able to act unchallenged in Africa.

Leaders from all sides must rise above their own narrow interests and understand that they have to transcend their party interests for the broader good of the country. At the most crucial times the constituencies of both sides of the conflict pushed for an end to the process. Leaders must keep the process on tract. However, accountability and responsiveness are key to maintaining the trust of the constituency.

Pivotal to the transition, is trust of the political leadership in the negotiation process. Mandela had the political maturity and the personal ability to engage in a manner that put his opponents at ease and to accept that they were able to change their views. He was also principled in his approach to his opponents, he expected the same of them. It is not only important to display good faith but the parties must have the ability to communicate this to the other side. Mandela spent a lot of time addressing the fears of his opponents.

Likewise at the 1986 Dakar conference held between exiled members of the ANC and a high level South African delegation; Max Du Preez one of the journalist in attendance said of ANC National Executive Committee Member and later South Africa's second President, Thabo Mbeki's speech "is probably the most honest, direct and comprehensive explanation ever given to people outside the organisation" (Pahad, 2014, p. 128).

The pragmatism of the National Party leaders was also key factor in negotiating a settlement. The apartheid government was well aware, that based on the numbers alone, minority rule had a limited shelf life. General Constand Viljoen former head of the South African Defence Force said "I can remember at least four occasions when we had formal briefings for Cabinet between 1975 and 1985, in which we warned them that that militarily we can carry on for a long time but politically, year after year, the strategic options keep narrowing. (Waldmeir, 1997, p. 35)'' . Compromise is a necessary evil in a negotiation process.

Approaching negotiation from the perspective of a **win-win situation** allows both sides to claim victory. It was said that a negotiation process must not extract from one party more the party can give. This means when a concession has the potential to undermine the peace from holding, it should not be pressed.

Avoid unrealistic expectations and manage the fears of their constituencies. The ANC had throughout the process engaged its membership on the negotiation process.

Respond to the spoilers. All negotiations will have its detractors, especially within in their own ranks, who have the capacity to derail the negotiation processes; it is thus crucial to ensure that the parties create sufficient consensus for a critical mass of the population to support the negotiation. The National Party did so through the 1992 referendum, whilst the ANC managed it support through mass action to push the agenda of negotiations.

Participation in negotiations must be backed by **detailed preparation**, often hard facts, maps, statistics and thorough research, can settle a matter and reduce unnecessary arguments.

A hope grown solutions to a South Africa problem. Both side in the dispute agreed early on that they would forge their own future as South Africans. To ensure that all South Africans had a place in the new South Africa.

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