The people's peace processes: Local resistance processes and the development of 'zones of peace' in Colombia

Sumario

Zones and Peace Communities in Colombia: resisting pain, building nests and weaving life.   NGO's assistance in helping to crate zones of peace: the case of REDEPAZ "One hundred municipalities of peace".   Mogotes: Peace in spite of all adversities: five-year anniversary.   Samaniego: the effectiveness of the power localities in the quest for peace. San Pablo: practicing peace in the center of war.   Comparative Analysis Chart.

Resumen

 El objetivo de este artículo es el de exponer el caso de tres municipios Colombianos Mogotes (Santander); Samaniego y San Pablo (Nariño) quienes declararon sus comunidades como zonas de paz. Al ilustrar el proceso, desarrollo, obstáculos y problemas al establecer una zona de paz, el artículo espera desarrollar los siguientes temas:
1) Resistencia local a la violencia: el desarrollo de la noción de "neutralidad activa";
2) El proceso de desarme de la "maquinaria de guerra": procesos de recuperación de espacios de paz.
    La tesis principal de este artículo es que las Zonas de Paz contribuyen al cambio en procesos de identidad, específicamente aquellos cambios relacionados con la noción del saberse "víctima del conflicto". Por ende, las Zonas de Paz aportan al tránsito de una perspectiva centrada en la victimización a una noción de empoderamiento en el cual las comunidades locales más afectadas por la violencia en Colombia pueden ellas mismas contribuir a forjar las condiciones para la resolución y la reconciliación de los conflictos en sus propios términos.

Abstract: The objective of this article is to expose the case of three Colombian municipios –Mogotes (Santander), Samaniego and San Pablo (Nariño) which declared their communities as zones of peace. Through the illustration of the process, development, obstacles and problems when establishing a peace zone, the article hopes to develop the following themes:
1) Local Resistance to violence: the development of the notion of "neutral activity."
2) The process of disarmament of the "machinery of war": processes of recovery of spaces of peace.
The main thesis of this article is that Peace Zones contribute to change in the process of identity, specifically such changes related to the notion of knowing oneself as "victim of the conflict." Therefore, peace Zones contribute to the transition of a perspective centred in the victimization to a notion of empowerment in which the local communities most affected by violence in Colombia can themselves contribute to forge the conditions for the resolution and the reconciliation of the conflict in its own terms.

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Derechos humanos y conflicto

The people's peace processes:
Local resistance processes and the
development of 'zones of peace'
in Colombia

Catalina Rojas

Colombia's conflict is the oldest armed conflict in the Americas. Nearly four-decades of armed confrontations between several armed organizations, FARC (Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces), ELN[1] (National Liberation Army), AUC[2] (United Authorities of Colombia) and the Colombian Army. Currently, all peace efforts from civil society organizations are being done in the midst of the confrontation between the major-armed actors. Colombia's state is a fragile one, currently disputing the political and territorial sovereignty with a number of violent actors including guerrillas, drugs traffickers, self-defense units, paramilitaries, and common delinquency.[3] Because of this complex association of violent actors, civilians are the most vulnerable populations for the following reasons:

- Government authorities do not protect the life and integrity of its citizens.
- The Colombian territory is partially controlled by armed actors, endangering the life of civilians who currently occupy those areas.
- Violent factions forcibly recruit civilians, exposing them as 'targets' for massacres, disappearances, tortures, or murderers.

The effects of the conflict on civilians are immense. In Colombia, since 1985, nearly 2.9 million of civilians have been forcibly displaced creating the biggest humanitarian crisis in the Western Hemisphere[4]. Hence, civilians are both the primary victims and are often "trapped" in the armed confrontations. In sum, it is important to arrange empowering processes and interventions by which civilians can declare themselves "actively neutral" -restraining the access of violent actors within their community, if an endurable, sustainable peace is desired for Colombia.

Additional time and resources should be invested in creating interventions to alleviate the condition of the most vulnerable sector in contemporary armed conflicts: <u>civilians</u>. Trapped in the middle of such con-

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[1] Left-wing guerillas.
[2] Right-wing guerrillas.
[3] Notice that each actor can "strategically" combine with each other if needed. For example, drug lords and self-defense units in the northern part of the country; militaries and paramilitaries against guerrillas; different guerrilla groups against paramilitaries.
[4] CODHES "Desplazamiento," "El Embrujo Autoritario". (Bogotá: Colombian Human Rights Platform P, 2003)124.

flicts, civilians are often displaced, tortured, massacred, and dispossessed of their land. Moreover, international law does not provide mechanisms for their protection, nor are they included as active parties in formal negotiations. One of the most challenging tasks facing the Conflict Analysis and Resolution field is how to design effective interventions in situations of internal armed conflicts.

Colombia's civil society is quite complex and rich in its variety of actors including peasants, students, union workers, women, associations of relatives of kidnap and disappeared people. Likewise, the peace initiatives vary from pressuring the national government to start a negotiation process; to organizing thousands of women marching the streets of Bogotá and Putumayo in 2002 and 2003; to supporting local resistance processes of peace. One of the many local resistance processes conducted in Colombia in the last few years is the '*One hundred Municipalities of Peace*' conducted by REDEPAZ, the oldest peace network in Colombia. The peace umbrella organization REDEPAZ is a network of more than 400 organizations different peace efforts that has active presence in all the regions of the country, fostering local peace processes within the communities. In the year 2002, REDEPAZ carried out the project 'One hundred Municipalities of Peace'. One of the important aspects of this project was the special focus on the most vulnerable sector that is currently suffering the consequences of the armed confrontation in remote regions of Colombia, often under the control of armed actors and historically abandoned and unattended by the Colombia State.

"Mogotes" declared their town a peace territory in 1998. REDEPAZ used the case of "Mogotes" as an example of local citizen peace initiative that could be reproduced in other locations such as municipalities, schools and neighborhoods. This is the origin of the project "One Hundred Municipalities for Peace" funded by the European Union.

The objective of this paper is to illustrate the case of three municipalities that are part of the above-mentioned project. Mogotes (Santander), Samaniego and San Pablo (Nariño) declared their communities a zone of peace. By illustrating the process, development, obstacles and current challenges of es-

tablishing a zone of peace, I attempt to address the following themes:
1) Violence resistance: the process of developing the notion of 'active neutrality'[5];
2) The process of disarming the 'war machinery[6]' by reacquiring spaces for peace.

The leading proposition of this essay is that Zones of Peace are capable of producing identity-transformation changes with regards to the notion of being 'victims of the conflict'. Thus, the ZOP contributes to the modification of a victim-centered perspective towards one of resilience in which the local communities foster conditions for reconciliation and resolution of the conflicts in their own terms. As some of the written material about the "One hundred Municipalities of Peace" states:

> *The project is thus based on the notion that unarmed civilians are not only victims of armed confrontations but actors of peace within their own communities. Much has been said about the need to complement the formal negotiation process between the elites of the parties with democratizing, bottom-up processes. Zones of Peace such as Mogotes, Samaniego and San Pablo are concrete examples of citizen, governmental and non-profit cooperation to protect the life, the land and the dignity of unarmed civilians.*

The field of Conflict Resolution is in need of systematizing the local initiatives for peace that are taking place in war-torn societies such as Philippines, Guatemala, and Colombia. This article is a very small contribution to learn from field experiences and hopefully to start delineating a deeper understanding of what makes a Zone of Peace (hereafter known as a ZOP) more durable and successful in conditions of extreme violence. The study recognizes the bravery of those that live under the fear of violence yet believe in the power of non-violent resistance, even after being threatened and having their houses destroyed in several occasions.

This paper is divided into four sections. First, a general depiction of the notions of zones (which obeys to geographical boundaries) and communities (corresponding to the community as such regardless of their loca-

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tion) of peace.   Second, an overview of the project "One hundred municipalities of peace". Third, an account of the processes of Mogotes, San Pablo and Samaniego. Fourth, a comparative analysis based on the above description and lastly, general conclusions and guidelines for future research. [7]

1. Zones and Peace Communities in Colombia: resisting pain, building nests and weaving life

Colombian International Humanitarian Rights expert, Alvaro Villarraga argues that since 2002, the peace movement manifests in three instances:

1) the women's movement; 2) the indigenous resistance as a cultural and territorial movement and, 3) the community resistance processes as humanitarian flags. Those are the three bastions, I believe it is the only and most important that could let us affirm as a fact that there is still a peace movement in Colombia, as a real, material fact (Personal Interview, October 17th, 2003)[8].

The process of building local resistance initiatives by itself is an interesting one as it exemplifies how communities can restore their social fabric by working on humanitarian goals in conditions of high levels of violence. Moreover, it is happening not only in Colombia, but in other conflict-ridden societies such as the Philippines, El Salvador and Guatemala. [9] Even more importantly, some of these local resistance processes are being led by women. As Magdala Velazquez explains:

> The civil resistance done by women is very strong here, [...], but Colombia doesn't have the eyes to see it or to value it. After Uribe won last year, the humanitarian struggle has been led by women, I mean the only humanitarian agreements that have been accomplished in this country are done by women [...] the vanguard of the humanitarian movement is in the hands of women (M. Velazquez, Personal Interview, October 29th, 2003)[10].

Local resistance processes have been large-ly ignored by the Colombian society in general and by social sciences in particular. However, there is an increasing interest in the topic as shows the efforts by several research institutes and institutes. A very relevant example is the most recent United Nations "Human Development Report" for Colombia. The Colombia UNDP report entitled "Colombia: Alley with an Exit" was published in October of 2003[11]. The team of researchers spent a year and a half talking to more than 4000 people all over the country. One of the chapters is called the "Data bank on good practices of the 'Other Colombia'" in which the researchers explore the community-oriented processes of restraining violence. It is precisely in the regions that are most affected by the incursion of guerrilla or paramilitary violence, that resistance and co-existence practices are becoming the 'keys' to confront violence and resolve conflicts. Some examples of these local resistance practices in Colombia include:

> [In order] to protect ethnic reservations in El Cauca, communities are conducting indigenous 'guards'; processes of civil resistance from armed actors in Micoahumado (Bolívar) achieved that paramilitaries and ELN guerillas respected their village; Constitutional assemblies in Mogotes (Santander) and Tarso (Antioquia) and in some parts of Tolima. [...] In the Valle region, land has been given to 10,000 Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs), thanks to the humanitarian accords achieved between armed groups and communities.[12]

The local resistance processes have an intrinsic value in itself, as citizens are able to organize themselves in "Peace Communities"[13]. Alvarro Villaraga defines peace communities as:

> spaces in which armed actors are not allowed to enter, the only protection is symbolic, with signs and everything, but obviously this is symbolic, and reduces the risk of the community as well as distance them from the violent actors" (Personal Interview, October 17, 2003).

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[7] The article was originally written in the year 2000. However, the author has up-dated the information of the last three years for the three zones.

[8] Interview done of the Woman Waging Peace research.

[9] For more information on "Local Zones of Peace" see the research conducted by the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, at George Mason University. Forthcoming publication. www.gmu.edu/icar

[10] For more information on the role of women in the creation of local zones and communities of peace please consult the Women Waging Peace forthcoming publication at wwww.womanwagingpeace.net

[11] For a full-length copy of the report go to: United Nations Development Program, Colombia: alley with an exit, www.pnud.oeg.co/indh2003

[12] "El banco de buenas prácticas de la 'Otra Colombia', El Tiempo. (Bogotá: Dossier, Sunday, October 12th, 2003) p. 17

Without the use of arms, entire communities have prevented the incursion of violent actors or partially negotiated with insurgents, with some degree of success. Those local resistance practices are not exempt from failure as some of their leaders have been assassinated by guerrilla organizations, as happened with an indigenous leader in El Cauca. However, in some cases, the peace communities, as in Mogotes, Santander, the process has endured for some years and has gained national recognition.

Moreover, these processes help answer the question of how civilians who are clearly victimized in a civil war, can transition for victim hood to leaders in the reconstruction of their communities social fabric. In other words, local resistance efforts, either in the form of zones or peace communities, are examples of how to effectively transition from pain to resilience as a form of resistance.

These local resistance processes support the concept that an eventual peace process in Colombia has to take into account the regional differences for the conflict that manifests itself differently depending on the region. For example, in areas where forced displacement has occurred, several returnees have established peace communities. Such was the case of the San Francisco de Asís Community, located in the northeastern part of Colombia :

in 1999 [the community] ratified a document with a framework for defining individual membership to the peace community. [In the document, the community] stipulated what it meant to not provide the armed actors with any logistical, strategic or tactical assistance to any of the warring factions. [the document also stipulated] the types of penalties that can occurred within the peace community to prevent them from happening or to enforce any disciplinary modality and security measures that will prevent misleading the nature of the peace community. [14]

The perspective of the conflict in Colombia varies if the person is in the capital, Bogotá, or happens to live in an area that is in dispute or controlled by armed actors. The regional resistance processes are being organized in places like Tolima, Antioquia, Cauca, Barranca, Urabá, Nariño, Caldas, Atrato among others. In sum, these regional practices are de facto questioning the following two assumptions. First, that 'dialogues' should only be held at the national level and second, that negotiations should be exclusively between armed actors and the government.

Following a detailed account of the NGO's REDEPAZ project of "One hundred municipalities of peace" as background information of how external actors such as NGO's assist in the process of helping communities such as Mogotes, San Pablo and Samaniego becoming zones of peace.

2. NGO's assistance in helping to create zones of peace: the case of REDEPAZ "One hundred municipalities of peace"

As was mentioned before, REDEPAZ developed a project called "One Hundred Municipalities of Peace in Colombia"[15]. The intervention was an attempt to "promote, create, and/or consolidate one-hundred experiences of citizen participation in local decision making processes that foster gender equity, peaceful relationships and democracy at the local level".[16]

The project can be briefly summarized as a way of conducting civilian resistance by enclosing communities from the presence and influence of violent actors without the recourse of violence. However, it consists of a series of different approaches that altogether give shape to the process of consolidating a peace territory. To start with, there is variety as to how the process might take place, either as:
a) an autonomous decision of the *inhabitants of a municipality*;
b) a decision of the *local authorities* or,
c) a process guided by *REDEPAZ*, or
d) any possible combination amongst the three actors above mentioned.

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[13] For more information on "Local Zones of Peace" see the research conducted by the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, at George Mason University. Forthcoming publication. www.gmu.edu/icar

[14]. Fundación Cultura Democrática, Interior Ministry and UNDP. Peace Communities and humanitarian zones in Urabá and Atrato (Bogotá: Fundación Cultura Democrática, 2003) p. 76

[15] The information taken is based on official documents that were given to me by Antonio Sanguino , director of the project in Bogota, Colombia. Given that is only for official use between the funding agency and the NGO carrying out the project, thus I am not able to properly cite the documents.

[16] European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights. Grant Application.

The project is characterized by a number of different strategies including: citizen participation, pedagogical interventions, public actions, information and communication processes and organization of local civil society leaderships in one hundred municipalities. Consequently, the project is result of the interaction between the following strategies[17]:

STRATEGIES OF THE PROJECT "100 MUNICIPALITIES FOR PEACE"

1) Pedagogical Strategy:
i) Impact on the educational system;
ii) Development of a culture of peace and;
iii) Educative alliances
2) Organizational Strategy:
i) Political basis
ii) Peace territories network;
iii) Peace territories;
iv) Peace tables;
v) Educative communities;
vi) Network of peace builders, and
vii) Possible allies
3) Communicative Strategy:
i) Defining a communicative strategy,
ii) Plan of activities and;
iii) The symbolism of peace
4) Strategy for Social and Political Actions:
i) Elaboration of a local agenda for peace;
ii) Process of declaring peace territories and municipalities;
iii) Municipal development plans,
iv) Social control action and participatory mechanisms;
v) Early warning systems;
vi) Peace activism against war crimes and atrocities
5) Civilian protection strategies:
i) Humanitarian accords;
ii) Humanitarian Symbols

According to the newsletter published by REDEPAZ in relation to the project, the general objective[18] is to:

"foster local participatory efforts of peaceful coexistence within local communities in order to contribute to violence reduction and to strengthen citizen participation in public affairs, as a way of implementing the "Citizen Peace Mandate for Peace, Life and Freedom"[19] .

The project is based on the need to build and strengthen the 'civil subjects' that any peace requires. The intention is to provide peace a territorial dimension and implement the citizen mandate in the different territories and communities, which reaffirm that peace is the most important public asset for all Colombians[20].

One of the shortcomings that I see in this project, encompassing so many different levels of actions and actors, is the difficulty of evaluating success if there is not an explicit description of which level will activities be implemented first. For instance, the project is not clear in delineating the level of importance between the pedagogical process and the establishment of the peace municipalities, or the creation of networks of different sectors of civilians working for peace. Therefore, more clarity is needed in the project as to which strategy should be considered the most relevant for the success of the project, or a systematic explanation of how these different strategies work.

The European Union was the main donor of the project. It is an 18-month long initiative. However, the process of consolidating peace territories is much longer. The goal is to be able to foster the initial stages of the one hundred peace municipalities in a year and a half. It is relevant to know that REDEPAZ supports communities that ask for advice, accompaniment, or any form of assistance under the parameters of peaceful coexistence. *Hence, REDEPAZ does not arrive at the communities if the organization has not been previously invited.*

The three zones of peace that will be described shortly are part of the "One hundred municipalities for peace" project. The criterion for selecting the cases for the research was based on the fact that each of them represents an exemplar of three possible procedures to undertake the process of becoming a ZOP. First, Mogotes is an initiative originally created by a cooperation amongst the inhabit-

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[17] Project "100 Municipalities for Peace" Methodological guide for the construction of the peace territories. See Appendix 1 for a complete review.
[18] Newsletter of the "One Hundred Municipalities for Peace" project. Year 1. Number 2 Bogota, Colombia, March 2001, p. 5
[19] The "Citizen Peace Mandate for Peace, Life and Freedom" was another project directed by REDEPAZ in which almost 10 million Colombian citizens voted for a negotiated settlement of the armed conflict and the immediate cessation of hostilities amongst the violent actors in October 1997.
[20] This particular project works with the definition of zone of peace defined as a territory together with a community committed to peace.

ants of the municipality (bottom-up process) that requested the creation of a Constitutional Assembly to deal with the ongoing conflicts of political corruption and guerrilla participation in the internal decisions of the locality. Second, Samaniego obeys to a different dynamic. The major (local authority) of Samaniego was the one who initially developed the peace declaration. Lastly, San Pablo is a peace declaration coming entirely from the population. Because of its geographical location (Southern Colombia, neighboring Putumayo), San Pablo is a case of remarkable importance given that the locality is close to the target zone of Plan Colombia's a drug interdiction program. The three municipalities are zones in which the guerrilla organizations operate. FARC in the case of San Pablo; and ELN in the case of Mogotes and Samaniego. In addition, the paramilitaries also have an active presence in those territories. The zones are characterized as being deprived areas in which little or no presence of the state represented by public force, education facilities, health services or basic infrastructure.

There are a significant number of zones of peace in Colombia that are not part of the REDEPAZ project[21], but this paper is limited to the description to the three territories above mentioned. Since the scholarly sources on the topic in Colombia are scant, some of the data for this paper is based on a series of interviews and analysis of different primary sources such as newspapers, and archival documents, a video and a CD-ROM.

3. MOGOTES: Peace in spite of all adversities: five-year anniversary

Geographic and demographic information

- Department of Santander (Please see Map of Colombia)

- Province of Guanentá
- 12,488 inhabitants according to the Colombian Municipalities Federation
- According to the 1985 Census Mogotes had 11'831 inhabitants, in the census of 1993 Mogotes had 11,803 inhabitants.
- 2001 Population Estimate: 11,175[22]
- 33 kms from San Gil which is two hours by car from Santander's capital city Bucaramanga
- Other main features:
Presence of FARC/ELN/AUC
The 13 of September 2003 was the fifth-year anniversary since the formation of Mogotes Constitutional assembly that lead to the zone of peace process in the municipality.

History of the process in Mogotes: reassuring a public commitment to peace[23]

The event that triggered the decision of the inhabitants of Mogotes to declare their village a peace territory was after 150 armed men and women of ELN took control of the municipality the 11th of December, 1997. With the intention of judging the major charged with corruption. In that action, three policemen and one civilian were killed. As a response to the assassinations and subsequent crisis, the communal leaders called for a *'Municipal Constitutional Assembly*[24] ' in which two hundred people, some from Mogotes and some from the adjunct rural villages formed the assembly. Unanimously, the participants requested the guerrilla organization to free the major, Dorían Rodríguez, and for him to be democratically 'judged' by the citizens. After a popular vote, the town decided to discharge the major from his duties and called for new elections. José Angel Guadrón was subsequently elected the new major intending to implement the governance program suggested at the Municipal Assembly together with the process of municipal reform also suggested at the forum. The ex-

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[21] For more information on Zones of Peace please consult the ICAR-USIP research project and the UN "Human Development Report" both mentioned above.

[22] The 2001 Population estimate was obtained by the following way:
Po=Pi * (1 = R) > (Tf – Ti) where:
Po= Final Population
Pi= Initial Population
R= Growing Factor
Tf = Final Time
Ti= Initial Time
The value for Mogotes population for 2001 is negative due to the decline in the value of R. Between the periods from 1985 to 19 ⬜ the population has constantly decreased.

[23] Newsletter of the "One Hundred Municipalities for Peace" project. Year 1. Number 0 Bogota, Colombia, December 2000, p. 8

[24] There exists a historical pattern in Colombia, that all attempts of social change are mediated through a constitutional reform. ⬜ ⬜ political history of XIX until date for more references on this.

perience of Mogotes is one of citizen participation for social change and non-violent conflict resolution. In 1999, Mogotes received national and worldwide recognition through the National Peace Prize. Diplomats, union leaders, non-profit leaders, Catholic Church priests, the media, all visited Mogotes. After a year of receiving the award, an event was organized by the Municipal Assembly, REDEPAZ and the Catholic Offices in Santader to subscribe together a "Commitment Letter" with the objective to strengthen Mogotes' engagement in peace.

The challenges[25]

As was mentioned before, Mogotes' experience was so powerful that it led REDEPAZ to replicate this process in one hundred municipalities all over the Colombian territory as has been described above. However, as in any process that is not based on force or coercion, the intent to isolate the community from the territorial, political, social and, economic influence of the violent actors with the use of non-violence, is subject to the action of external violent actors. Hence, ELN executed the major originally charged of corruption. In retaliation, the major's relatives publicly accused one of the leaders of the Municipal Assembly and the process of political renovation and citizen power started to show 'signs of fracture'. After a while, the process regained force and the community began gaining cohesiveness after a Catholic father entered a 4-day hunger strike offering his life to the process. The community requested the violent actors to show respect for the process. The hunger strike was stopped when insurgents, paramilitaries and REDEPAZ went to the town Mogotes reiterated its commitment to peace.

The people of Mogotes are indeed remarkable. For example, they modified the title of major to one of <u>manager</u>, thus transforming the whole concept of public service, moving away from clientele-based politics to more efficiency and merits- based way of handling public affairs. Periodically he/she has to present a public report in the inhabitants in the public plaza. Long question and answers sessions are the ruling dynamics of social change, in a town characterized by unemployment and minimal presence of the state. Quoting the

words of Diana Angel who visited the village: "Mogotes is the living example of a small Athens, in the middle of nowhere in Colombia".

Current events in Mogotes : 2002-2003

According to Sara Ramirez, field researcher of the ICAR-USIP project,

Up to this moment [July 2003] 44 assembly meetings have happened in the last five years of the existence of the process. Of all these assemblies, records have been kept, and in addition, in order to guarantee the good behavior of the constituents, a manual was created entitled: "The Profile of the Pubic Servant". (Ramirez, Sara, Mogotes, Report, No. 8, July, 2003)

Today Mogotes is still under the threat of ELN forces. In addition, a much more deadly threat is attempting to enter the zone: the paramilitaries. Currently ELN and the paramilitaries are in dispute for controlling the surrounding province of García Rovira.

Despite the pressure from the paramilitaries, and the previous crisis, Mogotes still defines itself as an autonomous peace community. As long as the civilians continue their support to excluding the use of force and to accept that any violent actor are dicing over their town, a zone of peace survives, because it is their way of resisting their condition as victims of this conflict.

4. Samaniego: the effectiveness of the power localities in the quest for peace

Geographic and Demographic Information
- Samaniego is part of the Nariño Department (See Map for location of Nariño Department)
- Southwest region of Colombia
- According to the Colombian Municipalities Federation the total number of inhabitants is 65'380
- According to the 1985 census the total number of inhabitants was 43'653
- According to the 1993 the population was 51'491
- The population estimate (same method

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[25] Interview with Francisco Angulo. See Appendix 3

as above) shows that R has augmented (the opposite as with Mogotes), the total is 60'709. This phenomenon might obey to the number of displaced people coming from Putumayo.

- Samaniego is 4 hours way from Pasto, Nariño's capital city.
- The major's name is Pedro Dorado Galindo and he will be in office until 2003.
- Other important features:
  Samaniego has reported the negative consequences of aerial fumigations product of Plan's Colombia War Against Drugs. In an article from El Espectador (07/25/01) Samaniego reported a high school (Colegio Agropecuario San Martín de Porres), a national forest protected area and a fish tank as being constantly fumigated by air.

How Samaniego was created a Zone of Peace

According to one of the interviewees Francisco Angulo[26] Samaniego is "a very special case". In his words: "Samaniego is an example that local authorities can be committed to peace and it breaks the myth that it is only in civil society where change lies. In addition, the most important lesson is that it is possible to work jointly with local representatives for peace and reconciliation".

In Samaniego, two processes overlapped in 1998: the popular major elections and the Citizen Mandate for Peace[27]. The elected major was captured by the ELN. As a reaction, the entire town protested, requesting for his immediate release. After his liberation the major committed himself to work for the transparency of his actions and the implementation of the Citizen's Mandate. He then invited the citizens of Samaniego to participate in the process of declaring the village a zone of peace. Consequently the initiative was entirely welcomed by the people and the process of building a peace municipality started. The major contacted REDEPAZ for advice on the process of declaring Samaniego a peace territory. In January 1st

1998, the process was completed. However, this town is under the direct influence of ELN, which monitored the process of elections. [28]

The major assumed one of the programs of the Presidents Office for De-mobilization and graduated 200 adults in with high-school degrees with a minor on "peace coexistence". Moreover, the major authorized the 200 adults to have a multiplier effect and trained additional members of the community. This gesture was taken as the major's commitment to direct participation process and the community showed empathy.

Samaniego has been a ZOP for the past three years. The main problem is the situation of displaced people coming from Putumayo, as a result of the humanitarian crisis, a bi- product of Plan Colombia. Therefore the Nariño Peace Table[29] sought organizations such as REDEPAZ, and the Catholic Church for advice and support. The people have already contacted the governor of Nariño to assure the continuity of the process and provide solutions to the incoming Internally Displaced People's (IDP) crisis. In general, one of the big obstacles is the total absence of a humanitarian accord with the violent actors present in the region. Moreover, the people were losing faith in the past peace process, between FARC and former President Andres Pastrana, given that the continuation of violent actions kept targeting the civilians.

The process of establishing the town as a ZOP has been paralleled by the efforts of the Peace Table of Samaniego that gathers 25 representatives of private and public institutions, youth groups, children and all the members of the community that want Samaniego to be a peace territory. This process, as was stated above, is totally supported by the current major, which is convinced of the need of transforming the culture of confrontation and fear. Among the different activities contemplated by the Samaniego Peace Table are[30]:

1) The establishment of an information system to the vulnerable population of the municipality

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[26] See Appendix 2.

[27] The Citizen mandate for peace was a national process in which citizens voted their willingness to start a negotiated settlement solve the conflict by negotiations rather than by military operations, more than 10 million people requested the beginning of peace negotiations.

[28] In the early 90s the new constitution installed the 'decentralization process' which, according to some analysts, is one of the big causes of why the guerrilla organization gained so much territorial and political power in the regions.

[29] REDEPAZ has regional chapters in different zones of the country. The Nariño peace table gathers the efforts of REDEPAZ in that specific region.

[30] This information was extracted from an official document Nariño's Peace Table (South of Colombia).

2) Creation of municipal social policies to improvement the situation children, women, homeless, seniors, disabled, etc.
3) Design, creation and implementation of TV, radio and publicity intended to shift the perception of the communities towards the affected population of Samaniego.
4) Networking with institutions that target at-risk populations in order to jointly implement and evaluate programs and projects envisioned in a coherent social policy for the municipality.

Samaniego was, as many municipalities in Colombia, a territory in which the insurgents use to control the area and the local politicians were corrupted. The people of Samaniego, under the leadership of its major are committed to changing the public and private institutions so that they can contribute to the peace process of the village.

Current events in Samaniego: 2002-2003

Despite the steady increment of paramilitary attacks against the population, as well as guerrilla retaliations, Samaniego continues to be a peace territory. However, the lack of institutional support from the current municipal administration and the lack of financial assistance from external NGOs like REDEPAZ or the local government, have contributed to slow or impede the development of the programs that were part of the "Samaniego: peace territory" program. According to Sara Ramirez in her report about Samaniego, "the greatest obstacle that "Samaniego Territory of Peace" faced has been the lack of continuity of the programs by subsequently administrations which let to stagnation and the ending of the majority of the programs". (Ramirez, Sara. Samaniego. Report No.6, May 2003).

The other main problems that in turn escalate the conflict situation are the drug problem, the indiscriminate fumigations and the steady number of displaced people arriving from Putumayo. However, an interesting sector has gained social and political recognition as they become active members in their community. In the year 2003, the Movement for Children for Peace in Samaniego started a non-profit organization called "Foundation for Children and Youth for Peace"[31]. The foundation is engaged in a wide range of activities,

from implementing campaigns of exchange of war-like toys to recreational toys, to conducting peace workshops in the various villages, participating in radio talk shows. In addition, they are involved in assisting the displaced populations with housing, food and health.

Overall, Samaniego's peace community survives amid the following challenges
- The Security Challenge by the incursion from AUC and guerrilla; together with drug production and trafficking, Financial (hardship in acquisition of funds) and;
- Humanitarian challenge with the influx of displaced people in need that are mainly subjected to public assistance and, environmental/health (U.S. lead fumigations damage the food-crops while poison natural resources, also increasing health problems to the rural communities) and;

Social actors such as Children, Youth and Women start gaining recognition as agents of social change, which can influence –in the long-term- the current culture of war and violence as the preferred strategy to deal with crisis, uncertainty and disagreement. This can be accounted as a positive feature.

4. San Pablo: practicing peace in the center of war

Demographic and Geographic Information
- San Pablo is also in the Nariño Department (Southern Colombia).
- According to the Colombian Municipality Federation, San Pablo has 25, 089 inhabitants.
- The mayor's name is Luis Eduardo Lasso, until 2003.
- Other interesting features: San Pablo is a coca-cultivated area. There is presence of FARC, ELN and more recently Paramilitaries.

San Pablo's story

San Pablo represents the complexity of the war dynamics in southern Colombia. Being an illegal crop cultivation area, San Pablo is currently disputed by all the violent actors seeking to benefit from the profits of coca and heroine. There have been hostilities between FARC and

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[31] Information send by Ingrid Cadena on July 10, 2003. For a detailed account on Samaniego's Children and Youth Foundation please go to "Samaniego, Territorio de Paz?"(2001) REDEPAZ. EU. ESAP.

ELN and more recently the paramilitaries are starting to appear in the scene. In addition, the consequences of Plan Colombia are clearly seen in this municipality: displaced people coming from Putumayo (as in Samaniego) and a general escalation of the armed interventions, products of the Plan Colombia's strategy in the southwestern part of the country. Plan Colombia started in 1999. It is a US aid package to Colombia (Plan Colombia)[32] mostly focused on military assistance.

The recent history of San Pablo[33] reveals six recent attacks from the insurgent fronts of FARC and ELN. The population decided to declare themselves a peace territory as a means of protecting the community from future attacks of any of the violent actors in the conflict. In November 2000 the population publicly declared San Pablo a peace municipality. Unfortunately on March 9th 2001, FARC again attacked the town. San Pablo's citizens, together with the Nariño Peace Table and REDEPAZ expressed[34] to FARC, the government, the paramilitaries and everyone else, that they are not going to stop the process of being a peace territory. The most important process right now is for the community and supporting institutions to make it clear to the violent actors that they should respect the voluntary and popular decision of letting San Pablo become a territory for peace. This process is far from easy and San Pablo's community is not very homogeneous for there are civilian sectors that adhere to some of the violent actors. There are conflicts between the civilians supporting FARC with those civilians supporting ELN. The intra-community divisions increase the complexity of the process. Francisco Angulo[35] affirmed during the interview that the San Pablo's political context is indeed very complex. The population is divided and has been influenced by different armed sectors, making it difficult to fully develop the notion of 'neutrality'. What has kept the process from been totally abandoned is the determination of the people to create conditions from protecting themselves from the violent actions. This is not an easy step, given the problems of division and intra-communal conflicts amongst the in-

habitants. FARC sees the process of San Pablo as a real obstacle towards the power struggle for advancing economic, social and political power in the municipality. This is a real threat to the community, and, as was stated before, San Pablo has been attacked after the peace declaration, which means that FARC is really not respecting the popular will.

Francisco Angulo made a very important statement at the end of the interview, which is that

ZOPs are posing a real obstacle to the violent actors. Because war is about controlling territories, and the Zones of Peace takes those territories from the war confrontation. Hence, the violent actors 'frame' ZOP as territories that they have 'lost'. This is why they are a clear military target and this explains why FARC and ELN insist on hurting civilians.

One of the few strategies of undermining this potential threat for all ZOP in Colombia is to create enough pressure from different sectors inside and outside the country. Hence, any decision to undertake an attack or massacre on a ZOP will signify a high political cost for the perpetuators, hence reducing the chances for attack. In this process, the International Community plays a relevant role.

Current events in San Pablo: 2002-2003

San Pablo's levels of violence have steadily increased, even after been declared a Peace territory. As a way of reacting towards the high levels of violence REDEPAZ (Nariño) attempted to denounce the violent actors at the National and International levels. It was also necessary to produce 'protect' the leaders working inside the communities, given the imminent risk to their lives. Unfortunately, given the high levels of violence the local organizations engaged in the process were unable to continue their work. Their leaders were obliged to leave the territory in order to survive, practically stopping the activities of the peace territory[36].

In addition, the local leader of the peace territory shifted the project of San Pablo being a peace territory to small economic and

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[32] For a detailed analysis look : Rojas, Catalina. "What is the war on (T) ERRORISM ? US foreign policy towards Colombia in the post-September 11 world: the end of the peace talks, the beginning of the new-old war" and Reflexion Política". Journal of the Political Studies Institute of UNAB University (2002) 76-94.

[33] Taken from the interview made to Francisco Angulo. See Appendix 2 for more information.

[34] See Appendix 4, which is a compilation of support letters from different institutions after San Pablo was attacked by FARC.

[35] See interview in Appendix 3

[36] Information sent to me from Ingrid Cadena from REDEPAZ –Nariño on June 25, 2003

productive projects. Such changes were done on behalf of the local leader without consultation with REDEPAZ, which isolated San Pablo from the national peace territories. By now, the remaining community leaders are all gone in addition to the local leader of the peace territory that also left after being accused of mismanagement. This is a case in which both internal and external circumstances contributed to the weakening of the process. San Pablo is still plagued with high levels of violence, drug production/trafficking problems and the humanitarian crisis of displaced people coming from further south. With the current policies of both President Uribe and President Bush that tend to escalate a military solution to the political violence and the drug problems, San Pablo's situation can get even worse.

5. Comparative Analysis Chart[37]

The following chart is based on the information gathered in the various interviews (done in May of 2001). Given that the description of the development of peace municipalities is completed in the above sections, what is needed at this point is the identification of a series of patterns or commonalities that can help us understand the conditions under which a ZOP tends to last and develop in a more flourishing way. It is also required to discern the main obstacles in declaring a peace territory and the primary areas that need to be addressed for a community to make such a decision. This is the purpose of displaying the following charts.

MINIMAL CONDITIONS TO ESTABLISH A ZOP	IMPORTANCE OF THIRD ACTORS
❖ To demonstrate to Colombia and the International Community that ZOP are not only the creation of the government-guerrilla negotiations. Civil Society has also struggled to create peace zones. ❖ The process of understanding that the war is not the only way to go about life and deal with differences. ❖ The procedures vary, what remain constant in all cases is that the community starts dialoguing with the violent actors and set 'boundaries' through the use of dialogue. ❖ As far as the communities expressed their willingness to stop being victims and take non-violent action to restrain violence way of dealing with the community problems, a ZOP can start.	**There is not a single-actor.** **The consolidation of ZOP is the result of the cooperation amongst various sectors. The most salient ones in Colombia are:** ❖ **Catholic Church** ❖ **Indigenous Communities** ❖ **Peace NGOs such as REDEPAZ, CINEP** ❖ **Organized Communities** ❖ **Various Human Rights and Women's NGO's** ❖ **Community leaderships** ❖ **Local Authorities** ❖ **Educational Communities** ❖ **Peasant Organizations**

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[37] The information used to fill the chart is based entirely on the interviews. See Appendixes 2 and 3.

WHAT MAKES A ZOP SUSTAINBLE	MAIN CHALLENGES	MAIN NEEDS
❖ **The possibility of the communities to decide their own future, the feeling of empowerment. They have seen for years/centuries that war is not conducing them to better lives. Communities see that It is time to shift the dynamics of life.** ❖ **The need for protection their lives and land.**	**EXTERNAL CHALLENGES** ❖ **To gain respect from the violent actors.** ❖ **Both insurgent, but more recently the paramilitaries have shown very little intention of leaving the communities away from their confrontation.** **INTERNAL CHALLENGE** ❖ **The main challenge is to have a unified voice, or at least to be able to install mechanisms of dealing with differences, other than physical destruction of the opponent.** ❖ **Communities have to build more trust in their process and within themselves.**	**RM NEEDS** ❖ *Need for training: **Even in the most remote areas people are asking for pedagogical***

CONCLUSIONS

The guerrilla announced the attack of the small town called Pensilvania. Suddenly all the inhabitants of the village appeared in the central plaza, all dressed in white carrying peace flags. They told the insurgents that it was their decision if they attacked the town, but the community did not approve the action. They made an *unarmed human frontline* and their town was protected after the insurgents left.

This is one of the thousands of examples that have been developed under the peace municipalities. After centuries of being attacked by the state authorities, the insurgency, the paramilitaries, the communities started revisiting the power of weapons and are shifting towards the use of dialogical processes to produce social changes in their surroundings. Perhaps they are not totally ready for peace, but they are certainly tired of war.

Many local communities and municipalities are aware that conflict is a natural part of everyday life, thus practicing dialogue as a preferred mechanism to resolve their differences. Even in some cases, local authorities are cooperating with the communal initiatives. This article is just a small sample of the invisible processes of people building peace in the midst of a civil war. Colombia is at the verge of escalating the armed conflict due to the continuation of Plan Colombia especially at the southwestern areas.

Endurable peace processes need to start at the local level, and what is happening in Colombia with the development of zones of peace and other local resistance processes, is -despite the war escalation process- a small but significant sign of peace building practices at the grass-roots level, which will hopefully contribute to help sustain an eventual peace process in the country.

APPENDIX I

GEOGRAPHIC   AND   DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
Colombian Chapter of World Health Organization
www.col.ops-oms.org/desplazados

Colombian Municipality Federation
www.fcm-colombia.org.co
Calle 14# 8-79

Statistical Colombian Department
www.dane.gov.co

Other map sites
www.red.gov.co
www.geocitties.com/tricolorcolombiano/
mapas
www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/
colombia

General Information on Colombia

www.lalupa.com/gobierno
www.locombia.org
www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/cds/countries

Research and Advocacy Links

Colombia Support Network
Center   for   International   Policy
www.ciponline.org
Incore

Main Colombia Newspapers

El Tiempo www.eltiempo.com
El Espectador www.elespectador.com
Semana www.semana.com

Movie about Zones of Peace recently presented in Colombia
Movie title: "San Mateo's decision"
Contact: Dario Villamizar
E-mail: darioampc@colnodo.apc.org
www.colnodo.apc.org/villamizar
Phone: 2854347/ Mobile 2932691

Peace NGOs in Colombia currently involved in ZOP processes
REDEPAZ
Contact: Ana Teresa Bernal
Email: redepaz@colnodo.apc.org

Luis Emil Sanabria
E-mail: luis_emil@hotmail.com
Phone number 3406061 (The movie was inspired on him)

Peace Observatory
Contacts
Dario Villamizar listed above
Otty Patiño Phone numbers: 2487716, 2496674

Academic Contacts

Pedro Valenzuela
Colombian professor currently working on ZoP. Based in Uppsala, Sweden.
Contact: www.uu.se/department of peace and conflict research

The Zones of Peace

Mogotes
Major's Office Phone Number 977-279-239
Samaniego
Major's Office Phone Number 927-289-068
Fax 927-289-068
San Pablo
Major's Office Phone Number 927-276-009
Fax 927-276-009

APPENDIX II

The Interviews
The following interviews were conducted to various members of the "100 Municipalities for Peace" project. Following, the reader will find the original interview in Spanish and a translated version of the questions. This was a semi-structured interview conducted by phone from Virginia to Colombia. I was unable to record the data , hence it is based entirely on my notes. The duration of the phone interview was 1 ½ approximately. Prior to this phone interview, Diana Angel in Colombia conducted some preliminary questions that I arranged for her. The criterion for selecting San Pablo, Samaniego and Mogotes was based on the interviewers responses.

The questions

1. With your experience in developing ZOP in
   Colombia, could you please describe
to me a case in which a ZoP has developed ?

Are you aware of any ZoP dissolution process in Colombia?

2. Which are the minimum conditions for a ZoP to emerge and be sustained for a considerable amount of time?

3. How relevant is the participation of third parties in the process of establishing successful ZoP? (e.g. Catholic Church, Peace NGO's such as REDEPAZ) .

3. Mitchell and Allen Nan defined a ZoP as "an attempt to establishing norms to regulate the effects of destructive protracted conflict". Based on your experience, do you agree with this definition? Which would be the basic norms that different actors have generated in order to declare themselves a territory of peace?

4. Let's talk about Samaniego, how long since the major declared it a ZoP? What are the factors that have contributed to the maintenance of Samaniego as a ZoP? Which processes can be improved based on the Samaniego case? Apart from the major and other local authorities, which other actors have participated in the process?

San Pablo seems to be a remarkable case. Despite its recent creation (4 months) and the recent guerilla attack soon after being declared the municipality a ZoP, it continues defining itself as a ZoP. In your opinion, what are the main reasons that have permitted the continuation of San Pablo as a ZoP? Which are the main obstacles that San Pablo is currently facing?

**ENTREVISTA MUNICIPIOS DE PAZ
FECHA : 03/22/01**

DIRIGIDA A: Francisco Angulo Email redsur@col2.telecom.com.co

CARGO: Coordinador Regional del Proyecto "100 Municipios de Paz" de REDEPAZ

ENTREVISTA EFECTUADA POR: Catalina Rojas

1. Con la experiencia que usted ha acumulado trabajando en las zonas de paz en el país, me podría decir de un caso en que se haya establecido una zona de paz y esta haya tenido que disolverse y por qué?

Una comunidad es una población que se declara territorio de paz; mientras que un territorio en un concepto que integra la idea de unidad entre el cuerpo, el ser y la tierra. No conozco de ningún territorio de paz que haya tenido que disolverse. Todas las acciones por la paz, se ven afectadas por un sinnúmero de actores de manera casi inevitable.

El caso de Mogotes

Fue galardonado con el 1er Puesto Nacional de Paz, a raíz de la declaratoria de la comunidad como territorio de paz en un acto de soberanía popular. El asesinato por la insurgencia, del ex - alcalde que la comunidad revocó por corrupción, hizo que el proceso sufriera un poco. Esto debido a que la familia del individuo acusó a la gente de Mogotes, desestabilizando el proceso. Como reacción un líder religioso se declaró en huelga de hambre. Esto evidencia la fragilidad de los procesos que no involucran el uso de las armas. Adicionalmente, Mogotes hoy está amenazado por los paramilitares, el tercer actor. No se conocen los efectos sobre la presión ejercida por los paramilitares para que Mogotes no continúe su constitución como comunidad autónoma de paz. No se ha desmoronado ninguna comunidad de paz sólo porque la gente persiste en la construcción de la paz, porque es su manera de resistir su condición de víctima en este conflicto.

San Pablo

Es un caso que evidencia la fragilidad de la participación de sectores sociales. Adicionalmente, la sociedad civil en ocasiones participa activamente con un actor del conflicto u otro. Por ejemplo en San Pablo, el candidato de la alcaldía que perdió era simpatizante del ELN, y por ello estos están culpando a las FARC. Esta es la división política de a sociedad civil. El problema tiende a agravarse porque el grupo que simpatiza con el ELN y que por consiguiente culpa a las FARC, consigue fortalecer a los Paramilitares quienes ya ahuyentaron a la policía del municipio y amenazan con irse definitivamente. Todo esto debido a los intereses sobre el control de los cultivos ilícitos. Sin embargo, la población civil expresa los deseos de continuar con el proceso de consolidarse territorio de paz. A pesar de que el pueblo ha sido destruido en varias ocasiones, los habitantes han manifestado interés en trabajar temas de pedagogía para la paz, especialmente con jóvenes y niños.

En general, no es posible hablar de un proyecto fracasado, debido al irrestricto desea de la gente por construir.

2.   ¿Cuáles son las condiciones mínimas para que una comunidad de paz surja y se mantenga por un tiempo considerablemente prolongado?

Deseo de la población de los habitantes de la localidad por cambiar su entorno. El gran problema reside en la falta de capacitación a las comunidades, por ejemplo el concepto de la Neutralidad. REDEPAZ no declara las comunidades, estos devienen en el deseo de la comunidad. El rol de REDEPAZ es pedagógico, se manejan los conceptos de DIH, Neutralidad Activa. La falta de capacitación de las comunidades puede llevar a éstas cometan faltas. Respecto a los factores que generan la organización de la sociedad civil, por ejemplo en Samaniego (Nariño) el proceso de declaratoria de territorios de paz se dio bajo la iniciativa de las autoridades locales. El caso de Mogotes (Santader) es distinto puesto que el proceso fue generado por las comunidades. Los principales actores de este proceso son: las autoridades locales, la sociedad civil organizada y la iglesia participativa. La comunidad tiene que entender que esto es un proceso largo, y por ende, la seguridad y a la protección de sus habitantes se da en la medida que se avance.

3.   ¿ Que tan importante es la participación de terceros para el éxito de las zonas de paz? (Iglesia, REDEPAZ)

*E*l acompañamiento internacional es necesario para romper el miedo de la gente, este ha sido negado, y el no gobierno no colabora. El rol de terceros se puede dividir en:
• Impulso al dialogo
• Presión para lograr una salida política al conflicto
• Incidencia no sólo en la resolución al conflicto armado sino también en que los terceros sean constructores de paz

El acompañamiento de la comunidad de paz no posee un patrón especifico. Por ejemplo, mientras que Mogotes fue una iniciativa ciudadana que después tuvo incidencias políticas; Samaniego fue una iniciativa de un alcalde que fue luego acogida por la comunidad en su conjunto. Sin embargo, lo más importante es el apoyo a la sociedad civil local. Ellos solos no pueden. Poseen muchas carencias como la capacitación. Ellos mismos han solicitado invertir en procesos pedagógicos como el manejo de conceptos tales como Derechos Humanos, Derecho Internacional

Humanitario, Equidad de Género. Este es el rol de una entidad como REDEPAZ.

El acompañamiento internacional tiene como rol principal el del servir del garante del derecho a la vida. Nosotros queremos que se nos acompañe para que tanto los actores como el estado colombiano nos escuche. Es necesario también que el Estado no nos vea solos para una más efectiva redistribución de los recursos.

4. Hay quienes han definido las zonas de paz "un intento de establecer normas para regular los efectos destructivos del conflicto violento" (Mitchell, Allen Nan) . Basado en su experiencia, esta usted de acuerdo con esta definición? Cuáles serían las NORMAS BASICAS que han generado los distintos actores para declararse como Zonas de Paz en el sur del país?

Hablar de normas en Colombia es hablar de impunidad e incumplimiento. En realidad las zonas de paz en Colombia no so una respuesta para intentar institucionalizar o normativizar el conflicto. La motivación de los civiles, o el "primer deseo" es la defensa de su vida y las de sus familias. Luego aparecen ciertas normas de convivencia entre las mismas comunidades, posteriormente para los actores armados. Dichas normas se enmarcan dentro del respecto por el Derecho Internacional Humanitario. Mas que buscar nuevas normas lo que los motiva es su PROTECCION.   La norma más importante en Colombia es el Derecho Internacional Humanitario, ya que a partir de esta se genera resistencia y se desarrollan maneras de desarticular la guerra a través de la acción de jóvenes, de niños y de las mujeres.

4. Hablemos de Samaniego, cuanto tiempo hace que el alcalde declaró dicho municipio como zona de paz?
 Cuales han sido los factores que han contribuido a que Samaniego permanezca
como una zona de paz con el apoyo irrestricto de la población?
 ¿Que procesos o factores usted cree pueden hacerse mejor, basado en el caso de Samaniego?
Aparte del alcalde y las autoridades locales, que otros actores o movimientos han
*   participado en el proceso de Samaniego?*

En Samaniego el tanto el Mandato Ciudadano por la Paz como la elección municipal

de alcaldes coincidió. El alcalde elegido fue retenido por el ELN. El pueblo entero protestó en su defensa. El alcalde a su regreso prometió hacer efectivo el Mandato Ciudadano por la Paz. Contactó el alcalde a REDEPAZ para asesoría en el proceso de declaratoria del territorio de paz. Es así como el 1ero de Enero de 1998 , Samaniego es declarado territorio de paz. Este pueblo es de influencia del ELN, quien estuvo al tanto de la gestión del alcalde. Este, en aras de darle continuidad al proceso de declaratoria de paz, asumió el programa presidencial para la reinserción en donde 200 adultos se graduarían del bachillerato con énfasis en Convivencia Pacífica. El alcalde dio la aprobación para que estos 200 adultos sean reproductores de convivencia pacífica. El pueblo asume esto como un gesto directo de participación ciudadana y ha recibido esto de manera positiva.

El proceso de Samaniego lleva ya tres años de desarrollo. El máximo problema que les aqueja en estos momentos es la situación con los desplazados del Putumayo. La Mesa de Trabajo por la Paz en Nariño busca a otras organizaciones como REDEPAZ, la Conferencia episcopal, y, en solicitud la sociedad le exigió que al gobernador de Nariño para que el proceso la participación siguiera.

Uno de los mayores obstáculos es la ausencia de un acuerdo humanitario con los principales actores del conflicto, entre estos las FARC. La gente ha perdido credibilidad en el actual proceso de paz. L agente necesita recuperar la credibilidad a través del cese de violaciones a la población civil

6. San Pablo me parece un caso fascinante. A pesar de su corto tiempo de haberse establecido (4 meses) y de haber sufrido una escalada guerrillera posterior a su declaración, sigue definiéndose como un municipio de paz.

¿Cuál cree usted que es la razón principal por la que San Pablo siga siendo un municipio de paz? ¿ Cuales son los mayores obstáculos para que San Pablo siga siendo un *municipio de paz?*

El contexto político de San Pablo es muy complejo. La población está dividida y es influenciada por distintos actores del conflicto armado, haciendo muy difícil desarrollar la noción de neutralidad. Lo que ha mantenido el proceso de San Pablo es la tenacidad de la gente para no dejarse matar, para protegerse de las acciones de los violentos. Sin embargo, dentro de la comunidad no hay consenso y esto genera problemas intra- comunales.

En el caso de San Pablo, la insurgencia mira a la zona e paz como un obstáculo. Las FARC es consciente que la guerra se gana avanzando en el poder económico, político y social. Y las zonas de paz obstaculizan dicho procesos al ganar escenarios y territorios para la paz. Por ende los actores del conflicto ven a las Zonas de Paz como un territorio perdido, de ahí que sean blancos de objetivos militares así posean su condición de civiles.

APPENDIX 2

Second interview conducted in Colombia by Diana Angel with some preliminary questions that I arranged with her. This short interview gave me more elements to select the cases. This interview was conducted by Diana Angel to Antonio Sanguino.

ENTREVISTA A ANTONIO SANGUINO

1. Cuales a su juicio son las principales zonas de paz en Colombia?

R/ hay varias experiencias, experiencias, entre esas las experiencias con municipios que han incorporado el tema de soberanía popular que involucra a los ciudadanos en el desarrollo municipal, los municipios de paz involucran la gestión pública y las autoridades locales en el proceso de constitución de los municipios de paz.

Entre los más importantes se encuentran: Mogotes (Santander), Tarso (Antioquia), Samaniego (Nariño).

También existen otras experiencias de paz como la Comunidades y Territorios de Paz, las cuales generan una autonomía de las comunidades frente al conflicto, algunas zonas principales son las del Urabá Chocoano, El Urabá Antioqueño, la diferencia entre estas comunidades y los municipios, es que éstas muchas veces no involucran a las autoridades locales ni la gestión pública. Otras comunidades de paz son las de los indígenas en Antioquia apoyadas por la OIA y en el cauca apoyadas por el CRIC.

2. Como cree que sería la mejor forma de describir la historia, el desarrollo y funcionamiento de dichas zonas de paz?

R/ 1. sistematizar las experiencias.

2.Acudir a las memorias de los encuentros de estas experiencias y de las secretaria técnicas para sistematizar las operaciones, reunir lo elementos de valor positivo, lo que puede ayudar a visivilizar las experiencias.

3.   ¿Quienes fueron los actores claves?

4.   R/ hubo una gran diversidad de actores, en algunos municipios ha jugado un papel muy importante la iglesia en particular la católica con el trabajo de pastoral social que realizan o muchas veces como reacción a actos violentos cometidos por algún actor del conflicto. Otros actores han sido: las comunidades indígenas, movimientos de paz en particular REDEPAZ, Acciones sociales comunitarias y ONGS de Derechos Humanos y de mujeres que se han unido para declarar comunidades o municipios de paz según el caso.La creación de municipios o de comunidades de paz es para demostrarles a la comunidad internacional que no solo existen territorios de paz creados por la guerrilla y el gobierno sino también la sociedad civil también ha luchado y participado para la creación de estos territorios.

5.   ¿Donde se consigue mas información sobre las zonas de paz?

La información se puede conseguir en REDEPAZ y se tiene como meta crear una pagina WEB y un directorio electrónico internacional.

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