Chapter 3
The Peace Process Mediation Network Between the Colombian Government and the April 19th Movement

Tania Galaviz

Abstract This chapter explores the role of mediation networks in the peace process. It considers the case of negotiations between the Colombian government and the April 19th Movement (also referred to as M-19), and the effectiveness of mediation networks in creating a successful environment to demobilize the movement. Systems Theory is used to study the peace processes, along with conceptual models for analysing mediated conflict management by John Paul Lederach and Thania Paffenholz. Mediations are considered as dynamic elements that help and support efforts to consolidate peace in societies incurring conflict. This perspective allows the chapter to transform the traditional concept of mediators to one of mediations, which is more dynamic and inclusive. This concept provides a basis for exploring the presence of citizen movements during M-19, and the absence of traditional high-level mediation during this particular peace process.

Keywords Mediation network · Systems theory · Peace process · April 19th movement

3.1 Introduction

This study focuses on the involvement of civil society in the peace process between the Columbian government and the "19 de abril" movement (M-19). Based on Luhmann's (1998) systemic approach, the related components appearing throughout its development were considered as influential to a larger and more complex structure. This allowed to considerer the peace processes as non-linear, erratic and

Dr. Tania Galaviz, professor, Humanities Faculty, Autonomous University of Morelos (UAEM); Edif.19 Av. Universidad 1001, Col. Chamilpa, Cuernavaca, Morelos, México, C.P. 62209; Email: tgalaviz@gmail.com.

41

multidirectional that responds to its environment and needs. Traditionally conflicts develop through four phases: pre-conflict, conflict, mitigation and post-conflict; is an idea that can be contested (Paffenholz/Spurk 2006: 15). For example, post-conflict is difficult to understand without mitigation. This would make peace processes more similar to a system that responds to its own variability, pressures and *autopoiesis*, which rarely follow a linear trajectory (Galaviz Armenta 2014: 14).

Autopoeises is the capability that systems have to maintain stability, especially useful when confronting external pressure (Galaviz Armenta 2014: 30). In the specific peace process in question between the M-19 and the Columbian government, this implied generating and reproducing the necessary conditions for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of M-19's members. Civilian participation through network mediation—as its *autopoietic* expression—allowed a favourable environment for the peace process. It also aimed at creating a strong social foundation for sustainable peace characterized by smart flexibility[1] to contextual variations and ability to build cooperative links at different levels.

To further the analysis of these developments this chapter is structured in four sections. The first will discuss social system theory applied to social conflict. Following are John Paul Lederach's and Thania Paffenholz' models for mediation methodology. The third section studies the Colombian armed conflict and the peace process in the light of social system theory. Finally, the network mediation model applied to the case study is presented.

3.1.1 Social Systems Theory

In the theory of social systems by Luhmann (1998), the system is defined with binding to its environment, that is, the system sets its scrutiny and boundaries of interaction regarding this precept: "systems are established and maintained through the creation and preservation of difference to the environment, and use their boundaries to regulate such difference" (Luhmann 1998: 40). Thus, the system will exist due to the environment and the environment—as environment—will require the system for its own distinction. Therefore, according to Luhmann, "the systems … are established and maintained through the production and maintenance of a difference to the environment and use their boundaries to regulate this difference" (Luhmann 1990: 50).

One of the key features of the systems is their consistency and independence from other systems. In other words, a system behaves not only as a simple compound of independent elements, but as an inseparable whole and coherent. This is because even though a system is part of another system, the component parts

---

[1]Smart flexibility is how network mediation attends to communication requirement and to resolve conflicts produced by inter-systemic pressures. It includes a growing complexity based on the collectives and the individuals involved, as the nature of the necessities (Poggiese et al. 1999: 11).

interact in a complex way that to make a change in one of these, a modification occurs in the other.

This capacity is referred to as 'recursivity', and is what allows a system to hold and contain, in turn, to other subsystems. The latter can be defined as the elements whose properties are reflected throughout the entire system. This total system can also influence the properties of subsystems, to the degree of their interrelationship.

Subsystems are created by the differentiation between the system and its environment: "Thus the overall system acquires the function of 'internal environment' for the subsystems, which, however, is specific to each" (Luhmann 1990: 42). This distinction is based on the different yet complementary functions of each system regarding its environment.

Identifying the internal processes of a system needs a second-order of observation it is considered of second-order because the observation is performed externally. It requires two types of references: hetero-reference and self-reference. That is, the properties that the observer attributes to the system and to itself—for instance the concepts by which the facts are analysed. The objective of the second-order observation is to identify causal relationships between the inside and outside to ascribe their purposes (Corsi 1996: 119).

3.1.2 Analysis of Social Conflicts

The second-order observation involves an analysis that differentiates between the events[2] and processes[3] they present and that transform the present into the past; that modify the entire system. Luhmann proposes three types of system analysis: baseline, procedural and systemic. Baseline analysis breaks-down the system elements according to their relationships. Procedural analysis relates to the temporal evolution of the element's internal relations and their association with the environment. Both of these approaches could be considered as part of the theory of systemic complexity. Systemic analysis studies the effects that the interactions and the elements have on the system with respect to its environment distinction (Luhmann 1998). In this case study the author is applying a systemic form of analysis.

This chapter examines the peace process involved in the M-19 movement in Colombia between 1981 and 1990. Here the M-19 movement is treated as complex system with capacity to generate its own structures and components. The analysis focuses on participation mechanisms for mediations as well as the grade of incidence that was involved in creating a favourable environment.

---

[2]Events are phenomena promptly fixed in time and only occur once.

[3]Processes are constituted by a sequence of events based on a double selection of possibilities. The first limits the succession of events that may arise. The second selection occurs when determining which event can be updated consecutively.

3.2   Approaches to Mediation

Traditionally, the mediator has been defined as a third person unconnected to the conflict who seeks to approach both parties with objective neutrality—with the capacity to generate empathy and look for solutions without pronouncing in favour of any involved parties.

However, in conflicts with multiple actors and a high level of complex inter-actions, the mediator is limited during negotiations and eventually isolated from the peacebuilding process. Accordingly, Lederach/Wehr (1991) proposed that media-tors to become a part of society affected by conflict. This will allow them to understand its causes, the underlying variables, the needs and attitudes of the population, which can facilitate building links or networks for reconciliation and transformation of societies (Lederach/Wehr 1991).

3.2.1   Transform Approach

The proposal of John Paul Lederach was nurtured by his experience in mediation and training in peacebuilding as well as his academic work at the universities of Notre Dame and Eastern Mennonite. From this reasoning Lederach makes his conflict transformation proposal that considers peace as "centered and rooted in the quality of relationships. These relationships have two dimensions: our face-to-face interactions and the ways we structure our social, political, economic, and cultural relationships" (Lederach 2003b: 20). So, peace becomes a dynamic, adaptive, changing process, which holds simultaneously a form, a purpose and a direction.

To address the conflict, Lederach proposes to analyse the immediate problem, the underlying patterns and context. With this a web of actions can be created that allows building changes in the processes involved in a conflict. Thus the temporal and spatial dimensions acquire centrality in the conflict transformation approach. As mentioned earlier, Lederach proposes that the mediation is performed by actors of society that come from the conflict and having some connection with any of the parties to the conflict. This model of mediation is called a trust-based model.

In this model, trust becomes the principal criteria to select and legitimate the mediator. It is the result of a good knowledgeable relationship between the parts. Key words for understanding the trust-based model are: legitimacy, tradition and positive connection (Lederach/Wehr 1991: 88).

Lederach stresses the importance of relationships between the different actors. Hence the trust-based model of conflict transformation establishes three levels in which the organizations and actors are grouped with different characteristics and leaderships.

The first level of the trust-based model is denominated top-level leadership. At this level the actors' profiles are public and their activities are concentrated on retaining position and influence (Lederach 2001: 146–147). The second level

locates mid-level leadership characterized that allows communication with other levels serving as a liaison. The actors participating in this level are not subject to political and electoral calculation, which allows them greater diversity and dynamism. Generally, they are members of academia circles, intellectuals and civil society organizations. This level involves training in resolving conflicts, which lays the basis for sustainable peacebuilding (Lederach 2001: 152–153). The third and the last level is base leadership. It consists of organizations and individuals that aim to meet the immediate needs of the population such as food, shelter, clothing, safety and education (Lederach 1997: 51–52).

The mid-level leaderships are capable of vertical mobility by linking base leaderships with high-level negotiations. It also has horizontal mobility, through its capacity to reunite organizations with ethnic, religious or linguistic differences, for instance (Lederach 2005: 79–80). According to Lederach, this mobility and interaction of middle level leaderships allows them to perform networking. The advantage of this type of relationships is their smart flexibility. In the face of environmental changes they are able to generate processes that address these flows (Lederach 2005: 85), and maintain the entire system as a dynamic totality characterized by self-organization, favouring the establishment of a new order in both time and space (Oswald Spring 2005).

3.2.2   Aid for Peace Approach

Returning to the Conflict Transformation model, Thania Paffenholz develops a model of peacebuilding based on the involvement of civil society, where 'civil society' is defined as an:

> (…) arena of un-coerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. As a public sphere where citizens and voluntary organizations freely engage, it is distinct from the state, the family and the market, although since civil society is closely linked with these spheres, strict boundaries may be difficult to establish (Foster/Mattner 2007: 3).[4]

The approach Aid for Peace aims to ensure the relevance of the intervention in a society in conflict; enable the improvement of its effects and avoid risks and unwanted results. The interventions considered comprise a wide range of activities taking place in areas affected by violent conflict or aftermath of a war. For Paffenholz and Spurk, the importance that civil society organizations have in building peace lies in their ability to reveal changes that armed conflict has on society both at the individual—attitudes, behaviour, confidence and security—and at the community level with respect to the change in power relations, as well as the political, legal and economic impacts from armed conflict (Paffenholz/Spurk 2006: 11).

Thus, civil society can be recognized as a mediator with features and activities that allow them to contribute to building a sustainable peace that enables

---

[4]This is the definition for civil society used from here on in this study.

reconciliation in society. The proposals by Lederach and Paffenholz are relevant to the transition from the traditional concept of mediator to the figure of mediations, which are much more dynamic, inclusive and with capacities to influence the creation of an environment conducive to the peace process.

3.3 Colombian Armed Conflict

In this section the Colombian armed conflict will be considered with reference to Lederach's theory, using temporal and spatial dimensions as reference parameters. It also carries out a baseline and procedural methodology of the conflict considering it as a system. In other words, it will analyse the elements comprising the system, the relationships between them and their environment.

The armed conflict in Colombia has origins in the deep economic marginalization derived from the unfair distribution of land, the isolated location of the population, and the unequal distributions of wealth. The Colombian territory is fragmented by three ridges that create six bio-cultural regions: Andean, Northern coast, Orinoco, Amazon, Pacific coast and Insular. Most of population and political power is concentrated in the Andean region, which also generates most of the country's wealth. Property value is determined by rich agricultural soil, hydraulic resources, as well as communication infrastructure. Gradually, the best lands were occupied by big owners, who constantly expanded their properties through forced purchase or dispossession. Faced with such impunity, Colombia's rural population transited from relative economic stability to misery.

According to World Bank figures, between 1950 and 1980 the annual *gross domestic product* (GDP) growth stood at 5 % annually (see Arboleda/Garfield 2003: 46). The industry growth rate remained 9.2 % per annum, which was linked to the diversification of the penetration of the United States (Medina 1989: 22). However, this economic development was not experienced by the majority of the population. According to the World Bank, in 1980 the Gini index was 59.9, indicating that social development was not homogeneous nor equitable (see Table 1. Poverty and Inequality Indicators, Colombia 1978–99, Vélez et al. 2003: 91).

From the second half of the 1980s, land use and the distribution of the population abruptly changed not only due to the entry of illegal practices such as drug traffickers and paramilitaries, but also by the rise of oil exploitation and open pit mining.

These elements helped to define the Colombian system as exclusionary with a high level of social marginalization. The exclusion which the political system operated contributed to increase instability of the system. The process to assimilate —or reject—the entry of a new flow or element implied an increase in the complexity of its operation, characterized by entropic trends to respond to these pressures.

According to Mauricio García Villegas, "Political parties monopolize most of the state, so that everything is subject to the ally/enemy conflicts, typical of partisan debate" (García Villegas/Rebolledo 2009: 32). Belonging to one of the political

parties, for the Colombian population, meant participating in traditions of mutual exclusion. Paradoxically, elite party leadership was narrow due to family ties through marriage and cronyism that ensured inclusion and permanence in the political system.

For the rest of Colombians belonging or identifying with one of the political parties did not mean a real chance to participate in the governing bodies. Therefore, the design of policies did not reflect the demands of the population, especially those of marginal urban settlements.

An example of this situation of political exclusion—deriving in economic marginalization—was the National Front, a political pact between the Liberal and Conservative parties that sought to guarantee parity in the exercise of power. From 1957 to 1974 party alternation was agreed; to equally share in the legislature and in the presidential cabinet.

During the National Front a formal exclusion of emerging political parties was established (Bushnell 1994: 306), however, the presidential elections of 1970—the last presidency of the National Front—included a coalition between members of the Liberal and Conservative parties to nominate General Rojas Pinilla as candidate (López de la Roche 1994: 68).[5] Official results showed that Rojas Pinilla captured 39.0 % of the vote, against 40.6 % of the official candidate Misael Pastrana Borrero (Bushnell 1994: 313). In the absence of a second round, these figures were enough for the Electoral Court to proclaim Pastrana winner.

The legality of the triumph of Pastrana was not linked to the legitimacy of it, as there is a very high possibility that a fraud was committed. This possibility caused discontent among the population; therefore, various political groups were integrated into an armed political movement called M-19 (Lara Salive 1987: 34–35).

The M-19 was founded by two organizations, 'comuneros' that included Jaime Bateman, Iván Marino Ospina, Álvaro Fayad, Carlos Pizarro, Augusto Lara, Rosemberg Pavón, María Eugenia Vázquez and Vera Grabe Loewenherz (Díaz 2008: 26); (Lelièvre et al. 2004: 75–76).[6] Most of them were active in the *Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia* (FARC) but left or were expelled due to ideological and strategy differences.

The second group that founded the M-19 was the Golconda movement. It was initially a group of priests that lobbied for socioeconomic change (Ramírez Orozco 2007: 268). Gradually the group expanded to incorporate university and professional sectors highly connected with grassroots organizations (Fajardo/Roldán 1980: 69).

---

[5]Colombian general, who after a coup, occupied the presidency between 1953 and 1957. His government ended the period of *La Violencia* in negotiating the demobilization of the Liberal guerrillas. He was deposed by a military coup that was ushered in by the National Front.

[6]Part of the M-19 was assassinated. Several survivors later joined leftist organizations such as *Polo Democrático Alternativo* or formed the opposition party *Opción Centro* (now *Alianza Verde*.) Other members like Camilo González Posso and Vera Grabe Loewenherz have since dedicated themselves to research and peacebuilding. Another survivor, Maria Eugenia Vázquez, now works in social work.

The M-19 was founded on the idea of uniting the Colombian people, so they did not use external references to legitimize their struggle; instead, it appealed to the national symbols like the flag and national anthem. Also, the M-19 defined itself as a 'democracy in arms,' considering it a tool to express the people's interests. Therefore, one of its main objectives was the creation of a National Democratic Convention that allowed for the discussion of new economic and social policies for Colombia.

With this proposal as a parameter of action, the M-19 proposed that the government begin a peace process that would allow the participation of civil society organizations in the construction of a new national pact. This involvement implies that the M-19 is not a conventional guerrilla force, besides the fact that it was capable to manipulate public images and representations to legitimate its actions and to "achieve important levels of public communication and sympathy" (García Durán et al. 2009: 52). Simultaneously, the Colombian government issued a peace proposal that would start a peace process that ended with the demobilization of the M-19 in 1990.

3.3.1 Peace Process Between Colombian Government and April 19th Movement

By analytically linking systems theory and the proposed of conflict analysis by Lederach, the peace process was conceptualized as a system with nonlinear trajectories that are erratic and multi-directional and that respond to their environment and its own needs.

To frame the analysis of the peace process between the Colombian government and M-19, a series of time periods were identified based on the presidential terms of Julio César Turbay Ayala (1978–1982), Belisario Betancur Cuartas (1982–1986) and Virgilio Barco Vargas (1986–1990); the various actions which together form the peace process with the M-19 were subsequently analysed according to this periodization.

A baseline and procedural analysis of these time periods was conducted by examining the component elements and the relationships that are maintained between them and their environment, as well as the temporal and spatial dimensions of their operation.

3.3.1.1 The Beginning of the Peace Process, Presidency of Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala (1978–1982)

On 27 February 1980, the M-19 took the headquarters of the Embassy of Dominican Republic to denounce human rights violations in the country and the release of its imprisoned members. After 61 days of negotiations to free the

hostages, the seizing of the embassy concluded with positive results for both the Colombian government and the M-19. In particular, the intention of both parties to begin the search for a peaceful solution to the armed conflict was announced.

However, neither the operation of the integrated Peace Commission to mediate between the parties, nor the Amnesty Law sent to the Colombian Congress for approval, was made concrete. This was largely due to the confusing messages from the Colombian government and the declaring of M-19 as a non-political criminal group. As such, negotiations between with the Colombian government and M-19 had to focus on the delivery of weapons and not on the discussion of a political agenda.

In contrast, the public discussion of a political agenda was the central point of the M-19 peace proposal. The movement considered democratic openness as one of the principles that would allow for the building of processes to eliminate economic differences in the population (Jiménez Ricardez 1986: 6). During this period, the participation of civil society was restricted to denouncing the violation of human rights. So it could not affect or accompany the scant initial stage of the peace process.

3.3.1.2 Peace Process as a War Strategy, Presidency of Belisario Betancur Cuartas (1982–1986)

From the start of the administration of Belisario Betancur Cuartas, the pressure exerted by both the public and the economic and political groups made the option to revive the proposal of the peace process with the M-19 an unavoidable task for the government. The Peace Initiative from Betancur answered to his analysis of the causes of the emergence—and prolongation—of armed conflict. For him, violence was the product of two factors that were both objective and subjective; the former were gaps in service provision and access to goods; the latter were the consequences of the actions of individuals, who analysed reality from a particular ideological perspective and made efforts to change it (Betancur 1990: 48).

The government proposal consisted of two phases. The first focused on promoting economic and social development that could eliminate the objective causes; the second phase was the negotiation with the armed movements.[7] To do this, the government designed a strategy of four elements: the reactivation of the Peace Commission, the appointment of High Commissioners of Peace, performing a Multiparty Policy Summit and the adoption of a wide amnesty law.

The Commission was composed of 40 members, who represented various aspects of political, social and cultural life of Colombia. President Betancur conducted the integration personally, so participation and even consultation, was impossible with the legislature, the judiciary, the armed forces or political parties. The Commission had no power of decision (Arias 2008: 13), and their interaction

---

[7]President Belisario Betancur's peace policy was aimed mainly at M-19. Nonetheless, it was the *Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia* (FARC) who responded with most interest, and the *Popular Liberation Army* (EPL) also later involving itself in Betancur's peace process.

was directly with the President, who kept it isolated from the rest of the cabinet and the other powers.

During the four years of government, the Commission gradually lost its capacity to influence the peace process besides his constant flirtation with informality, for instance they operated on the basis of the willingness of its members, without access to a specific budget.

The High Commissioners for Peace—a second element of the negotiation strategy—were responsible for the operation of building development plans, as well as the budgetary exercise of the Peace Commission. These figures generated confusion among the public because they were unclear as to the limits of its operation or aims of its creation (Morales Benitez 1991).

As for the realization of a Multiparty Policy Summit, it was intended to discuss the scope and limitations of the peace process and the political reforms needed to achieve it (Jaramillo 2003: 46). Despite the diversity of the participants in this, their work could not be successful because they did not explicitly commit themselves to get results. Thus, in the first quarter of 1983 the meetings of the summit concluded with only two bills submitted to Congress, both of which were rejected.

Finally, the Amnesty Law was approved on 18 November 1982, benefiting 339 political prisoners—among them members of the High Command of the M-19. The release of these prisoners generated discontent in various sectors of the population, especially in the Armed Forces, who operated as spoilers of this stage of the peace process (Ramírez/Restrepo 1989: 115).

During this stage, mediations driven by intellectuals and artists, such as Gabriel García Márquez, and social organizations, ecclesial base communities,[8] and others formed a favorable environment for the peace process. However, there was little they could do when both the Colombian government and the M-19 operated as spoilers of the peace process. For example, President Betancur on several occasions blocked the work of the Negotiating Committee to delay hearings to review the progress of the process, which hampered the continuity itself. He also made misleading statements to influence the international public opinion, which was received by the M-19 as an attempt to sabotage the process. As for the M-19, its internal division was reflected in the divergent actions and statements regarding the peace process.

The failure of the second stage of the peace process was framed by the takeover of the Palace of Justice by the M-19 and the bloody military recovery operation. This event, and the resulting increase in drug violence, determined the electoral commitments in presidential campaigns, which agreed to reject the continuation of the peace process.

---

[8]In 1985 the Jesuits sold a gold and jeweled religious relic to the Colombian Bank of the Republic and used the sale to startup its Peace Programme. From 1987 to 1997 the program financed close to one thousand projects focused on strengthening civil society in conflict and marginal areas (Romero 2001: 411). Also important to mention is that the Mennonites advanced their relationship with civil society through their Christian Center For Justice, Peace and Non-Violence Action (García Durán 2006: 234).

3.3.1.3 Peace Process as a School of Organized Civil Society, and the Presidency of Virgilio Barco Vargas (1986–1990)

During the first two years of the administration of Virgilio Barco there was a refusal to resume the peace process with the M-19. However, on 29 May 1988, the M-19 abducted Alvaro Gomez Hurtado, the leader of the Conservative Party. The objective of this action was to announce his new peace proposal, which consisted of a National Dialogue to build the foundations for a democratic transition.

Due to pressure from politicians and the public, the government considered the proposal of the M-19 and resumed the peace process. Because the environment of the process was characterized in a peak moment of narco-terrorism, the same stability was based on the commitment of the M-19 to demobilize, regardless of the conditions and terms of the process.

This generated great expectations among different sectors of Colombian society, and unlike the previous phase of the peace process, in this, the participation of civil society was to create a favourable environment for the process. In particular, peace movements and the Catholic Church began to perform activities such as marches, rallies, meetings and seminars in favour of peace; these were all broadcast for national public opinion.

In addition, the implementation of the Working Tables—and the Analysis Tables and agreements derived from it—allowed various sectors of society to discuss the proposals, focusing on three points: the drafting of a new constitution, the design of an economic and social development plan, and the redefinition of the social democratic framework (Bejarano 1990: 108–109). This favoured the integration of civil society organizations into the peace process and allowed for the strengthening of both the network of mediations that they had begun to build and the enabling environment for the development of the peace process.

The development of the peace process coincided with the mobilization for the convening of a *National Constituent Assembly* (NCA). Both events generated a synergy that would create an enabling environment for the realization of its objectives.

Thus, in the context of armed violence produced by narco-terrorism, as well as guerrilla and paramilitary activities, social mobilization generated environments favourable to the articulation of consensus for building mechanisms to reduce gun violence. In 1990, following the signing of peace agreements between the M-19 and the Colombian government, and the installation of the NCA, mobilization for peace decreased. This did not see the disappearance of such movements, which remained stable, however, and grew steadily in the following decades.

3.4 Mediation Network for Sustainable Peace

Lederach's proposal for mediation focuses on the involvement of mediators in peacebuilding activities. It builds interactions that synergistically moderate the intensity of the conflict and create a favourable environment for negotiation and

processes for building peace. Thus, mediations acquire the ability to become a dissipative structure. That is, mediations must allow for the stability of a system by absorbing instabilities, by creating multiple channels of feedback flows. In this way mediations can respond to the complexity of interactions between the system and its environment, and increasing its complexity. Also, mediations meet the needs generated at the levels where armed conflict is present, for instance, local, regional, national and international.

This type of mobility, allows the mediations to create a mediation network that is characterized by its ability to maintain smart flexibility. For instance, it is able to face changes in the environment, to generate processes that address these flows (Lederach 2005: 85) and to articulate mediation processes into a network; it is a peace-building dynamic that is responsive to its cycles of conflict (Lederach 2003a: 37). It is precisely this flexibility that allows mediation networks to establish effective cooperative links with peace processes since these are characterized by erratic and multidirectional trajectories. The network flexibility gives it the ability to meet communication needs and resolve conflicts arising from intersystem pressures, making it an emerging dynamic element that generates favorable environments for peace processes.

Mediation networks are dynamic social processes with the ability to create activities and actions that address the changing needs of building sustainable peace. Mediation networks are characterized by the actors' ability to transform, translate and modify the information they receive. For example, in the case of Colombian negotiations, a mediation network modified the initial objective of M-19 to convene a constituent opening of the political system for the integration of that movement, allowing the integration of unarmed, social organizations. Thus, interactions with the social movements could be woven into mediations with the NCA to provide feedback and strengthen the peace process.

Furthermore, mediation networks tend to lead to co-managed projects as a mechanism to reduce opportunistic behaviour. These projects see each of the network actors involved in the management of resources at meso and macro levels by partnering with another—or other—actors, either by sharing methodologies for planning or by implementing shared management mechanisms which are based on solidarity, trust and reciprocity.

Mediation networks work within a spatial approach to peacebuilding. That is, they transform the concept of peacebuilding as an international effort to address the structural causes of conflict into a more collaborative approach between international actors and the territories and regions affected by violence. At the individual level, mediation networks promote a process of transition, where the victims become actors in the development of peace. This reflects notions of peace from a gender perspective, allowing for the development of more comprehensive proposals in order to foster more equitable and fair relations (Serrano Oswald 2009: 1156).

Those activities are accompanied by social processes of empowerment and forgiveness, which allow for the development of processes of social healing through community resilience. That is an intermediary element between individual health and the development of collective reconciliation, which requires

communities to develop resilience, either by themselves or with the accompaniment of exogenous organizations. It involves strengthening the capacity of a community to foster solidarity based on hope and purpose so as to handle conflicts creatively and nonviolently.

In this manner, mediation networks promote the four pillars of human rights: truth, justice, damage repair, and non-repetition, which, in turn, permit the building of an infrastructure for sustainable peace.

3.4.1 The Colombian Mediation Network for Sustainable Peace

As a final note, the mediation network for sustainable peace in Colombia is based on the work of the Christian-based communities, and the Catholic Church itself. These have laid the foundation for the creation of social movements and peace. Although these social movements have not been directly involved in the negotiation process itself, they have helped to create a network fabric that has kept the peace process from being seriously affected by environmental pressures. Moreover, the pressure exerted on the Colombian government began to attract small-but-constant changes in the political system so that the military option began to be questioned as the only way for social change.

This process has over passed M-19 developments by achieving greater potential for social impact. The activities of social movements and ecclesial bases aimed at solving social and environmental problems helped decrease the pressure that these elements may have on the peace process. Simultaneously, these projects became social impulses that strengthened citizen activism.

3.5 Conclusions

Lederach's and Paffenholz' perspectives allowed identifying civil society as a dynamic element assisting the peace process between the Colombian government and the M-19. They allowed us to transit from the traditional concept of mediator to one of mediations, which are more dynamic and inclusive. They also facilitated an analytical juncture with systems theory that beyond considering dynamism distant from stability, propose it as a descriptive element of the studied case *autopoietic* qualities.

The peace process was affected by meso and macro interactions around it. Yet, despite the lack of civil society participation in negotiations, it was able to create a favorable environment that blocked outside interference. The activities carried out by social movements and ecclesial base communities to address social and environmental problems allowed for a reduction in the pressure that these elements could have had on the peace process. Their activities also created information

channels that operated together with the media to counteract the manipulation of the political class.

The peace process between the Colombian government and the M-19 had several results. The first was the demobilization of the movement. This later on influenced peace processes with other six armed groups[9] in the country. However, it must be said that one of the greatest contributions was the networked participation of civil society as mediators.

Considering these achievements, it was suggested here the most important result of the mediation network during the peace process was the experience. It allowed citizens to be peace-builders in the following decades and, while creating peace from conflict.

References

Arboleda, Jairo; Garfield, Elsie, 2003: "Violence, Sustainable Peace and Development", in: Giugale, Marcelo; Lafourcade, Oliver; Luff, Connie. (Eds.): *Colombia, The Economic Fundation of Peace* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank): 35–58.

Arias O., Gerson Iván, 2008: *Una mirada atrás: procesos de paz y dispositivos de negociación del gobierno colombiano.* (Bogotá: Fundación Ideas para la Paz).

Bejarano, Ana María, 1990: "Estrategias de paz y apertura democrática: un balance de las administraciones Betancur y Barco", in Leal Buitrago, Francisco. (Ed.), *Al filo de caos. Crisis política en la Colombia de los años 80*. (Bogotá: Instituto de Estudios Políticos y Relaciones Internacionales-IEPRI): 52–124.

Betancur, Belisario, 1990: *El homo sapiens se extravió en América Latina. Teoría de la subversión y de la paz.* (Bogotá: El Navegante Editores, Tercer Mundo Editores).

Bushnell, David, 1994: *Colombia, Una Nación a pesar de sí misma. De los tiempos precolombinos hasta nuestros días*, (Bogotá: Planeta)

Corsi, Giancarlo, 1996: *GLU: Glosario de la teoría social de Niklas Luhmann*, (México: Universidad Iberoamericana, Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente (ITESO), Anthropos).

Díaz, Lina Paola, 2008: *La Paz y la Guerra en Femenino: Historias de Mujeres ex combatientes del M-19 y las AUC*. (Bogotá, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana).

Fajardo, José, Roldán, Miguel Ángel, 1980: *Soy el Comandante 1*. (Bogotá: La Oveja Negra).

Foster, Reiner, Mattner, Mark, 2007: *Report No. 36445-GLB Civil Society and Peacebuilding Potential, Limitations and Critical Factors;* at: http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2008/03/27/000333038_20080327071355/Rendered/PDF/364450SR0REPLA1nd1Peacebuilding1web.pdf (11 April 2011).

---

[9]EPL (founded 1967 as the armed branch for the Colombian Marxist-Leninist Communist Party); Quintín Lame armed movement (MAQL; mainly indigenous from the South West of the Cauca Department); the Workers Revolutionary Party (PRT; a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist armed movement); the Popular Militias of the People and for the People along with the Metropolitan Militias (urban armed groups based in marginal areas of Medellín) and the Independent Militias from Aburrá Valley (another urban armed group, but based in marginal areas in Central Antioquía Department).

Galaviz Armenta, Tania, 2014: *Las mediaciones en el proceso de paz entre el Gobierno colombiano y el Movimiento-19 de abril, 1980–1990*. (Tesis de Grado, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México).

García Durán, Mauricio, 2006: *Movimiento por la paz en Colombia 1978–2003*. (Bogotá: Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular, Colciencias, Programa para el Desarrollo Humano de las Naciones Unidas).

García Durán, Mauricio; Grabe Loewenherz, Vera; Patiño Hormanza, Otty, 2009: "El camino del M-19 de la lucha armada a la Democracia: una búsqueda de cómo hacer política en sintonía con el país", in García Durán, Mauricio. (Ed.), *De la Insurgencia a la Democracia*, Vol. 1 (Bogotá: Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular, CINEP, Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management): 43–106.

García Villegas, Mauricio; Rebolledo, Javier, 2009: *Mayorías sin democracia. Desequilibrio de poderes y Estado de Derecho en Colombia, 2002-2009.* (Bogotá: Centro de Estudios de Derecho, Justicia y Sociedad).

Jaramillo, Daniel, 2003: "El viejo congreso y la paz. Una breve historia del papel de la rama legislativa en los procesos de paz de Betancur y Barco", in *Historia Crítica*, 7, (Enero- Junio): 45–49, at: http://historiacritica.uniandes.edu.co/view.php/119/index.php?id=119, (23 May 2011.)

Jiménez Ricardez, Rubén, 1986: "M-19: Paz y Guerra en Colombia", in Cuadernos Políticos, 45, (enero-marzo): 82–104.

Lara Salive, Patricia, 1987: *Siembra Vientos y recogerás tempestades* (Bogotá: Planeta).

Lederach, John Paul; Wehr, Paul, 1991: "Mediating Conflict in Central America", *Journal of Peace Research*, 28:1, 85–98. at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/424196 (26 September 2011.)

Lederach, John Paul, 1997: *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace).

Lederach, John Paul, 2001: "Levels of Leadership", in Paffenholz, Thania. (Ed.), *Peacebuilding A Field Guide* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc): 145–156.

Lederach, John Paul, 2003a: "Cultivating Peace: a Practitioner's View of Deadly Conflict and Negotiation", in Darby, John; Mac Ginty, Roger (Ed.), *Contemporary Peacemaking. Conflict, Violence and Peace Processes* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan): 30–37.

Lederach, John Paul, 2003b: *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation* (Intercourse Pennsylvania: Good Books).

Lederach, John Paul, 2005: *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (New York: Oxford University Press).

Lelièvre, Christiane, Moreno Echavarría, Graciliana; Ortiz Pérez, Isabel, 2004: *Haciendo memoria y dejando rastros. Encuentros con mujeres ex combatientes del Nororiente de Colombia* (Bogotá: Fundación Mujer y Futuro, Fondo de Desarrollo de las Naciones Unidas para la Mujer UNIFEM).

López de la Roche, Fabio, 1994: *Izquierdas y cultura política, ¿oposición alternativa?* (Bogotá: Cinep).

Luhmann, Niklas, 1990: *Sociedad y Sistema: La ambición de la teoría* (Barcelona: Paidós).

Luhmann, Niklas, 1998: *Sistemas Sociales. Lineamientos para una Teoría General* (Barcelona: Anthropos, Universidad Iberoamericana, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana).

Medina, Medófilo, 1989: "Bases urbanas de la violencia en Colombia", in: *Historia Crítica*, (Enero-Junio): 20–32. at: http://historiacritica.uniandes.edu.co/view.php/11/index.php?id=11 (08 November 2011)

Morales Benitez, Otto, 1991: *Papeles para la paz*.

Oswald Spring, Úrsula, 2005: *El valor del agua: una visión socioeconómica de un conflicto ambiental*. (Tlaxcala, México: El Colegio de Tlaxacala, A.C. FOMIX, Gobierno del Estado de Tlaxcala, SEFOA, Coordinación General de Ecología).

Paffenholz, Thania; Spurk, Chris, 2006: "Civil Society, Civic Engagement, and Peacebuilding", in: *Conflict prevention & reconstruction*, Paper 36, (October), at: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTCPR/Resources/WP36_web.pdf (09 April 2011).

Poggiese, Héctor.; Redín, María. Elena; Alí, Patricia, 1999: *El papel de las redes en el desarrollo local como prácticas asociadas entre Estado y Sociedad.* (Buenos Aires, Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales).

Ramírez Orozco, Mario, 2007: *Estrategias para una Paz Estructural. Caso Colombia*. (México, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México).

Ramírez, Socorro y Restrepo, Luis A. (1989). *Actores en Conflicto por la paz. El proceso de paz durante el gobierno de Belisario Betancur (1982–1986)*. (Bogotá: CINEP siglo XXI).

Romero, Mauricio, 2001 "Movilizaciones por la paz, cooperación y sociedad civil en Colombia", in Archila Mauricio; Pardo, Mauricio. (Eds.), *Movimientos sociales, Estado y democracia* (Bogotá: Centro de Estudios Sociales, Facultad de Ciencias Humanas, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia): 405–440.

Serrano Oswald, Serena Eréndira, 2009: "The imposibility of Securitizing Gender vis á vis Engendering Security", in Brauch Hans Günter, Oswald Spring, Úrsula; Grin, John; Czeslaw, Mesjasz (Eds.), *Facing Global Environmental Change, Environmental, Human, Energy, Food, Health and Water Security Concepts*. (Berlin-Heidelberg: Springer): 1143–1156.

Vélez, Carlos Eduardo; Rawlings, Laura; Paqueo, Vic; Riaño, Juanita, 2003: "Shared Growth, Poverty, and Inequality", in Giugale, Marcelo; Lafourcade, Olivier; Luff, Connie (Eds.), *Colombia. The Economic Fundation of Peace* (Washington, USA: The World Bank): 89–129.