UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

A Shift in Policy, A Shift in Peace: Colombian Civil Society Peace Initiatives (1997-2008)

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by

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The thesis of Julia Drey Schneider is approved and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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In the last fifteen years, Colombia's rapidly growing peace movement has produced activists who fervently work to create peace in a country that has been in conflict for more than forty years. These activists and the organizations that support them represent a heterogeneous group of people who use a diverse array of peace initiatives (or peace actions) to achieve their peace goals. Their work has attempted (and often succeeded) in influencing and impacting Colombian citizens, the government and foreign entities

This thesis focuses on how civil society peace initiatives have influenced and reacted to a changing political climate between 1997-2008 as the Colombian government shifted strategies from a negotiated settlement to a more militaristic approach. In this study I first examine the birth, decline, and rebirth of citizen participation in the Colombian peace movement. I demonstrate how the rise of citizen peace activism

strongly influenced the government to sit at the negotiating table with non-state armed actors and how citizen frustration and the decline in participation caused the government to end negotiations and begin a new policy of Democratic Security.

Next I analyze how peace organizations, especially at the national level have changed strategies in response to less citizen support and a governmental policy that has shifted away from a peaceful settlement. I suggest that these organizations have relied more heavily on public education, awareness, and networking than in previous years, and that these changes have made them more successful in fulfilling their missions.

Introduction

Colombia is a country whose reputation for violence, kidnappings, and drugs has overshadowed its beauty, culture, and diversity. This reputation is based on an internal conflict involving guerrilla groups, paramilitary forces, the military, narcotraffickers, the government and the Colombian people. Each group strives to accomplish specific goals, which are often in contradiction with the goals of the others. Although conflict seems to embody Colombia, the government, civil society organizations, Colombian citizens and the armed actors themselves have participated in a lengthy peace process that has had some successes and many failures. The process has included several citizen supported negotiation efforts between the state and the guerrilla and paramilitary groups; however when these efforts failed, the general public and the government shifted their support for a more militaristic strategy, while peace activists and organizations continued striving for peace

This thesis focuses on the complex and dynamic Colombian peace movement. It recognizes that the origins of the movement date back to the 1970s, but it was not until the mid 1990s that civil society activism really flourished. It was during this decade that activists began forming organizations that would influence the Colombian people to join them in initiatives promoting peace and conflict resolution, thereby pressuring the government to seek a negotiated settlement. Although these negotiations ultimately failed and a peaceful resolution is no longer the executive's strategy, the peace movement has continued to thrive. Today peace organizations reach all corners of the country and are composed of activists representing every race, gender, religion, ethnicity, class, and ideology.

A significant body of literature exists about the Colombian peace process and more specifically the civil society peace movement. Much of this literature was published in the late 1990s as citizen participation and organization increased, however more recent publications have come out in the past few years. When choosing my research topic in Spring 2008 and while conducting field research in the following months, the most recent research published on civil society peace initiatives was printed in 2006. Although the literature printed in the beginning of the decade gave a comprehensive analysis of the peace movement, it was not recent enough to closely examine the movement during President Uribe's administration. Last month however, a new anthology edited by Virginia Bouvier (2009) came into circulation. The fact that many of the central themes of her book address questions I ask in my thesis shows that Colombian civil society peace initiatives are a contemporary and important topic.

There are a number of key arguments that scholars have made regarding the civil society peace movement in Colombia. They can be synthesized as follows:

1. Colombian civil society participation in the peace movement has greatly increased since the early 1990s and remains strong despite the fact that the armed actors, the government and the general public are less interested in peace than they were ten years ago (Isacson 2009, Bouvier 2009, Garcia Durán 2004, Rettberg 2006).
2. Civil society actors are a diverse group who use an expansive repertoire of actions to achieve their goals. Although they do not agree on everything, they generally agree on the importance of citizen mobilization, peace and conflict resolution education, greater citizen participation in the peace process, political support for a peaceful settlement and

increased support for the conflict victims (Bouvier 2009, Garcia Durán 2004, Isacson 2009).

3. Civil society participation in negotiations and the official peace processes may have been limited, but they are important because they have the power to write proposals, urge citizen involvement in the peace process, support or reject a governmental policy, and pressure the state to make social reforms based on citizen demands (Bouvier 2009).

4. Over the last ten years, civil society participation has begun shifting from mostly national initiatives to more local and regional initiatives (Bouvier 2009, Rettberg 2006, Isacson 2009). These initiatives have shifted in focus from demanding national level negotiations to more local level concerns such as landmines, land seizures, kidnapping, and violence within a community (Bouvier 2009).

When initially planning my thesis, I hoped to make two contributions to literature on civil society peace initiatives in Colombia. First I wanted to further analyze the direction of the peace movement under the Uribe government. Because many publications were written during the Pastrana administration or during the first few years of Uribe's first term, they did not take into consideration how the democratic security policy has influenced the movement. Bouvier's (2009) recent publication fills some of these gaps.

The second contribution I hoped to make to the literature was the examination of national peace organizations in a changing political environment. Unlike the general public whose interest in the peace process has ebbed and flowed based on a variety of factors related to the government, armed actors, and personal motivations, peace organizations and their members have consistently strived for peace regardless of the

political environment. These groups are important to analyze because they are the ones who can narrow gaps between conflicting parties, mobilize civil society to promote peace and protest against human rights and social abuses, and produce positive outcomes from the bottom up. Some scholars include these organizations in their discussion about the Colombian peace movement, but they often only receive a couple of pages in a much larger text.

Central Questions and Conclusions

There are three central questions that I attempted to answer in this thesis. The first question asked whether or not the national government and the civil society peace movement influenced each other to shift policies and strategies from 1997-2008, and if so, what shifts occurred. In the past ten years, the level of citizen interest in peace has pressured the government to make modifications to its policy. The executive strategy has morphed from negotiation attempts during the Pastrana administration to a mixture of negotiation (with paramilitary and ELN organizations) and military defeat (against the FARC) during the Uribe administration. As the executive policy shifted, so did the peace movement.

The second and third questions that I attempted to answer considered the role of peace organizations (especially national level organizations) in the peace process. I asked whether or not changes in citizen and government interest in the peace process have impacted peace organizations, and if so, how have the organizations been impacted. Peace organizations have always been central in activating citizen participation and action, so it has been necessary for them to shift strategies as they endeavor to recapture the public and executive's attention.

Finally, in order to make conclusions about the effectiveness of the civil society peace movement, I asked whether or not peace organizations and the peace movement have been successful in fulfilling their missions and goals and how these successes or failures can be explained by organizational changes brought on by a shift in governmental policy.

Theoretical Framework

For each of the three central questions asked in this research paper there are key terms that must be defined and theories that need to be explained. These terms and theories are important for understanding references and arguments that come later in the thesis. The first question asked whether or not the national government and the civil society peace movement influenced each other to shift policies and strategies from 1997-2008, and if so, what transformations occurred. In order to further understand this question, it is important to understand what both civil society and the peace movement mean and how and why civil society participates in this movement.

Civil Society is a complex and difficult concept to define, which explains why several pre-modern and modern definitions have been given to the term. It was important to find an appropriate and applicable definition of the concept in the Colombian case because this research project is focused on peace initiatives set forth by Colombian civil society. Sociologist Larry Diamond's (1997) definition of civil society is clear and relevant to this study. He defines it as:

> The realm of organized social life that is open, voluntary, self-generating, at least partially self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules. It is distinct from society in general in that it involves citizens acting collectively in a public sphere to express their interests, passions, preferences, and ideals, to exchange information, to achieve collective goals, to make demands on the state, to improve the

> structure and functioning of the state, and to hold officials accountable (7).

Diamond's definition of civil society is useful for the Colombian case because it acknowledges that although civil society is distinct from the state, it still operates within a legal boundary. This distinction is important to make because it excludes violent, non-state associations such as the FARC and paramilitary groups from the category. It also informs us that civil society includes a variety of both formal and informal organizations that focus on economic, cultural, educational, developmental, issue-oriented, and civic concerns (8).

Civil society actors and in particular peace organizations use a variety of actions to promote peace. Many peace researchers (Rettberg 2006, Bejarano 1999, Isacson 2009, Bouvier 2006, 2009) as well as myself, label these actions as "peace initiatives." Jesus Antonio Bejarano's (1999) definition of peace initiatives is clear and complete. He defines them as:

> civil society actions in terms of initiatives, marches, workshops, forums, discussions, and proposals that seek a politically negotiated solution to the armed conflict, seek plans to overcome the difficulties that hinder the agreement of the parties in conflict, promote respect and the guarantee of human rights, generate a peace culture and promote and demand that the parties in conflict act according to norms of international humanitarian laws (295).

Each of these initiatives is important because they fall into the larger category of peace movement, which is defined as "made up of multiple initiatives without central coordination but with a common shared purpose" (Rettberg 2006, 12). In other words, a peace movement is made up of all the often disjointed peace initiatives working towards peace in Colombia. Additionally, it is a continuous effort made by more than one person.

This research project will look at the peace movement as a whole, but will include a number of peace initiatives in the evaluation.

There are a number of reasons that citizens become involved in a social movement. Sociologist Sidney Tarrow (1998) argues that it is changing political opportunities marked by openings or restraints that motivate actors to unite against elites, authorities, and opponents (2). During periods in which collective opposition is less risky, allies are more visible, weaknesses or rifts between elites or opponents are more evident, or the costs of not mobilizing become too great, actors are more likely to join forces. In contrast, when repression is high, risks are too great, and authorities exhibit strength and unity, social action is less likely.

Once certain groups form in response to greater political opportunities, they create opportunities for other related groups to emerge, thereby strengthening the movement and opening spaces for coalitions. When groups recognize that they have similar interests and goals, they may unite and make the movement even more solid. They translate these interests into action. In the Colombian case, although the violence caused by the rebel groups, narcotraffickers and paramilitary could have dissuaded collective action in the late 1990s, it instead caused large-scale mobilizations as citizens groups found allies in both the government and other citizens

Questions two and three focus specifically on civil society peace organizations. Question two asked whether or not changes in citizen and government interest in the peace process have impacted peace organizations, and if so, how have the organizations been impacted. Question three asked whether or not peace organizations and the peace movement have been successful in fulfilling their missions and goals and how these

successes or failures can be explained by changes due to a shift in governmental policy. In order to better understand these questions theory related to peace organizations and civil society organizations as conflict managers must be explored.

Peace organizations are one of the many types of collective groups that fall into the concept of civil society. These organizations are composed in a variety of ways and work on an assortment of issues related to peace (which will be further explained in Chapter 2); however they all have the goal of cultivating peace as their primary concern. In order to categorize an organization as a "peace organization," it must meet some of the following criteria:

1. Contain the word "peace" in its name
2. Contain peace in its mission/vision statements
3. Work on issues that are aimed at creating and promoting peace (democracy expansion, social development, negotiations, etc.).

All of the organizations that were interviewed for this research project fit the criteria.

Catherine Barnes (2005), Diana Chigas (2007), and Edward Azar (2004) all make arguments related to ways in which civil society organizations, including peace organizations, act as conflict managers. Catherine Barnes's (2005) proposes that civil society organizations (meaning non-government organizations, development and solidarity organizations, community based organizations, media organizations, church groups, and trade unions) are essential players in building peace. She argues that in a "global world, preventing war and building sustainable peace needs partnerships between civil society actors at local, national, regional and global levels with governments and intergovernmental organizations, and potentially businesses" (12). She contends that

civil society organizations are powerful peace builders because they have the ability to persuade and educate society, propose solutions, create local zones of peace, and influence by example. They can also be an important intermediary between the government and armed actors.

Barnes highlights a number of reasons why CSOs are essential in managing conflict situations. Many of these reasons differentiate CSOs from the state. According to Barnes, the important characteristics that CSOs have are the following:

1. Independence—CSOs can act quickly and independently without worrying about other institutions.
2. Innovation, Creativity, and Non-Coercive Strategies—CSOs can influence people to take part in peaceful processes in several ways that governments cannot
3. Flexibility--CSOs can act when official actors are powerless
4. Communication--CSOs can improve communication and relationships between conflict actors by arranging informal meetings
5. Monitoring—CSOs have time and resources to monitor events and call attention to violations
6. Pressure—CSOs put pressure on official decision makers and push for policies that would promote peace (15-16).

Diana Chigas (2007) also analyzes both the positive and negative impacts of civil society organizations (or NGOs) as conflict managers. She argues that NGOs are important in promoting public education, offering opportunities for dialogue, and creating benefits for cross-party cooperation. Through these strategies, Chigas lists what she considers to be the four most significant impacts of NGOs on civil society. First she

recognizes that NGOs help facilitate changes in attitudes and psychology of the various actors. They to do this by gradually breaking down negative stereotypes and generalizations that exist of the "other." Eventually people will learn that there are diverse views on both sides of the conflict. Second, NGOs improve communication and relationships across conflict lines. NGOs have contributed significantly to opening communication between the conflicting parties. This is especially true at the local level. Third, NGOs have developed new options to bridge competing solutions. They often come up with new ideas for conflict resolution. Fourth, NGOs work to strengthen pro-negotiation forces by influencing public opinion about the conflict and by building peace constituencies (563).

Chigas, similar to Barnes, argues that NGOs are useful as conflict managers because they use a broader set of ideas and approaches (than would official managers), they offer more flexibility and quicker responses, they have a great commitment to local environments, and they make connections to civil society and grassroots organizations.

An important part of Chigas's article is her argument in favor of multi-track diplomacy (see figure 0.1). She recognizes that NGOs cannot substitute for political action taken at the track-one level; however she argues that unofficial third parties are also important in mediation efforts. NGOs can play a role in both track two and track-three diplomacy. In track-two diplomacy "politically motivated and often politically influential members" of conflicting societies or sides work with unofficial intermediaries to improve relationships, understanding, and communication (Chigas 2007, 559). They also work together to develop new ideas for resolving the conflict. In track-three diplomacy, NGOs work with all types of people from all sectors of society in order to

advance peaceful resolutions. The main argument that Chigas is trying to get across in her description of multi-track diplomacy is that peace must be built from both the bottom up and the top down.

Track 1: Decision Makers

Track 2: Influential Elites

Track 3: Grassroots and local leaders

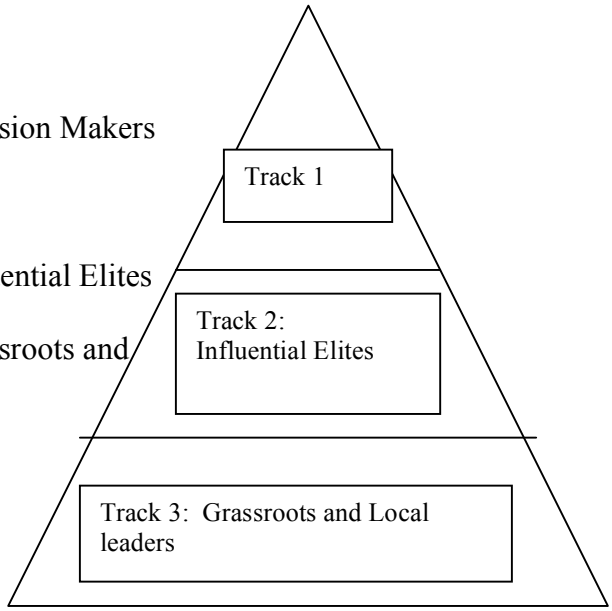


Figure 0.1: Multi-track Diplomacy
Source: Chigas, 2007

Edward Azar (2004) further explains the role of second track diplomacy in conflict resolution. Azar defines second track diplomacy (also known as Citizen's Diplomacy) as

> the bringing together of professionals, opinion leaders or other currently or potentially influential individuals from communities in conflict, without official representative status, to work together to better understand the dynamics underlying the conflict and how its transformation from violence (or potential violence) to a collaborative process of peace building and sustainable development might be promoted (2).

In terms of civil society members, second track diplomacy would involve middle level, civil society leaders. Azar argues that it is appropriate that civilians would

participate in the search for peace in their own capacities since they are the ones most affected by the conflict. The value of second track or citizens diplomacy is that these leaders, who have access and potential to influence decision makers, are "useful supplements to the work of professional diplomats and political leadership, while also facilitating discussion at the grassroots level" (23). In other words, they are useful for bridging the gap between the elites and most of civil society. Track two diplomacy should offer advice to the elite (track one) and help with conflict resolution at the local level. The idea of second track diplomacy is that it will eventually link up and influence the more influential members of track one diplomacy. Track two diplomacy is prevalent in Colombia, which is evidenced by the frequent seminars, meetings, and publications related to peace building; however there is little evidence that these influential leaders of civil society are having a direct impact on track one diplomacy.

Although Barnes and Chigas list a number of reasons why CSOs are important actors in peace building, they also recognize that they have a number of limitations. Barnes argues that CSOs are rarely able to achieve peace without government help, they are not able to deal with the political economy of war, they often start initiatives that are outside of their skills, they are often too small and isolated to take on big projects, and they fail to communicate with each other or create strong networks. Regardless of these limitations, she still finds that civil society organizations are critical for the peace process because peace cannot be sustainable without advocates for citizens and the support citizens. If the public does not feel like its needs are being met, it is impossible for the government to create a lasting peace (Barnes 2005, 17-18).

Chigas also gives many warnings about relying on NGOs as conflict managers. She contends that they have multiple agendas (and therefore often do not coordinate among each other), they demonstrate a lack of accountability, they lack many necessary skills and competences, they have gaps in strategic thinking and program design, and they often compete for funds, which further isolates them (Chigas 2007, 565).

Thesis Outline

This thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter analyzes how the peace movement changed from 1997-2008 by factoring in actions taken by civil society organizations, Colombian citizens, the government and the armed actors. Although the chapter is primarily focused on the last ten years, it begins by discussing the history of the conflict and negotiations prior to 1997. It will demonstrate the weakness of the executive powers and the relative absence of civil society during a thirty-year period in which armed non-state actors increased in size and strength.

Following the background section, I analyze the peace process in the period from 1997-2008 in terms of citizen actions and government response. I suggest that citizen peace efforts, often backed by peace organizations, greatly influenced executive decision-making. In response to the escalating violence in the late 1990s, citizen participation in the peace process climaxed to unprecedented levels and this pressure caused the government to reignite peace talks with the guerrillas. As the peace talks failed in 2001, citizen peace efforts greatly declined as frustration with the process increased. This disinterest accompanied with violent acts by the guerrilla groups led to the termination of the dialogues and the election of a president who focused on a military strategy to win the war. Recent years have sparked a new interest in the peace process, however despite the

wishes of peace organizations, citizen mobilizations have been more focused on ending the kidnapping and conflict using any means necessary as opposed to a negotiated settlement.

The second chapter will discuss how peace organizations, primarily at the national level, have transformed in the past five to ten years based on citizen and government interest in a military victory. I begin the chapter by explaining the diversity of peace organizations in Colombia, which allows me to analyze their contribution to the movement and their successes and failures in chapter 3. I argue that although the general public is not as involved in the peace movement as it was ten years ago, civil society peace organizations have maintained or even increased their efforts. I contend that the strategy shifts that national level organizations are making such as increasing education and awareness through media and publications as well as forming stronger partnerships with local and regional organizations, is causing the peace movement to directly impact more people.

Methodology

The arguments that I make in this thesis will be supported by primary and secondary sources that are both qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative research is based on field research that I conducted in Bogotá, Colombia from August 1-September 11, 2008. In Bogotá I participated in several civil society meetings as well as conducted formal and informal interviews. I conducted formal interviews with peace activists from six national level peace organizations: Fundación Escuelas de Paz, Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular, Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris, Planeta Paz, Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres, Colombia Soy Yo. In these meetings, I asked the interviewee a

series of questions about the organization such as its history, changes in strategies and goals in the last ten years, networks and relationships with other organizations, financial, human, and material resources, and perceptions of peace. Additionally I conducted informal interviews with leaders of several international, regional, and local organizations in order to find out what kind of initiatives they were involved in and what networks, if any, they belonged to. For the purpose of protecting the interviewee, all names have been changed.

Along with the interviews, I was able to make many observations during the numerous civil society meetings, talks, and conferences I attended. I attended the IV Congreso Nacional de Reconciliación, a three day conference whose participants consisted of members of the Colombian and international governments, as well as hundreds of representatives of civil society organizations from every department of Colombia. The conference is held every 2-3 years and is an opportunity for dialogue among a diverse group of participants. In addition to this massive conference, I also attended several smaller dialogues related to the FARC, current peace movements (local, regional, national), and public opinion survey results. These dialogues were hosted by civil society organizations, research centers, and universities.

In addition to qualitative information, I will also be using quantitative data from two Bogotá-based research centers: CINEP (Centro de Investigatión y Educación Popular) y CONPAZ (Programa de Investigación sobre Construccion de Paz). The data that these organizations have published give numbers of civil society organizations and initiatives in the past twenty years, and public opinion survey data conducted in the last ten years.

Chapter 1: Shifting Citizen Involvement in the Colombian Peace Process and the Response of the State and Armed Actors

Although Colombian citizens have experienced decades of internal conflict beginning with *La Violencia* in the 1940s, it was not until the 1990s that large numbers of citizen activists became involved in the peace movement. Frustration with escalating violence in conjunction with government peace processes caused citizens to believe that peace needed to be and could be achieved. As peace-oriented organizations emerged throughout the country, citizens began to look for ways in which they could play a role in ending the conflict.

This chapter explains and analyzes the role that citizens have played in the Colombian peace movement. It describes the shifting involvement of citizens in correspondence with the government peace process and conflict dynamics. It highlights the fact that the general public, often led by peace organizations, has a strong influence on governmental attitudes towards peace and the armed actors. Although peace organizations have a function in this chapter as the organizers of peace initiatives, the focus here is much broader. The focus is on citizen activity.

The chapter is comprised of two parts. The first part will explain the roots of the present-day conflict beginning with *La Violencia* in the 1940s, followed by the emergence and activities of armed non-state actors since the 1960s, the Colombian government's response to these non-state actors, and finally civil society's response to both of these actors in the form of peace activism prior to 1997. It is necessary to include this background information in order to understand how a number of historical factors have shaped peace activity in the past decade.

The second part of the chapter will closely examine citizen activity in relation to the political environment in the period of 1997-2008. The reason these starting and ending dates were chosen is because they mark the rapid acceleration, deceleration and reacceleration of civil society activity at the national level in correspondence with what the Colombian public wished to happen in the executive level peace process. I will argue that citizens have had a strong impact on executive level actions, despite the fact that the executive powers have rarely allowed civil society activists to have a direct role in the official peace negotiations. As will be shown later in the chapter, citizen mobilization and support of the peace process or lack of mobilization and frustration with the process greatly dictated government actions.

As briefly mentioned before, it is important to note that this chapter will focus on citizen mobilization as a whole, whereas chapter 2 will focus specifically on peace organizations and their efforts and evolution in the 1997-2008 time period. Peace organizations will still be mentioned many times throughout this chapter because they have been responsible for organizing the many mobilizations, public forums, and conferences that took place in the last decade; however, they will not be more closely examined until later in the thesis. While there have been periods of decreased participation by most of the Colombian public in the last decade, these periods did not also mark a decline in peace process participation by local, regional, and national peace CSOs.

1946-1996: The advent of armed groups, the failure of the State, negotiation attempts, and the emergence of the civil society peace movement

The roots of the current violence in Colombia date back to the 1940s during a period of great political polarity and social and economic instability. The Liberal Party (Partido Liberal-PL) leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán was developing a populist movement in Colombia that espoused land reforms, industrialization, and economic nationalism. The reforms angered the opposing Conservative Party (*Partido Conservador*, now known as *Partido Social Conservador* –PSC) and when the liberal government fell in 1946, a new Conservative government used violence as a means to reclaim land. The assassination of Liberal leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in 1948 served as a catalyst for the decade long war that followed, appropriately termed "*La Violencia*." The present-day conflict is not a continuation of *La Violencia*. However contentions over socio-economic reforms and political power are issues that were unresolved and consequently resurfaced.

In 1958, the Liberal and Conservative leaders tried to subdue the violence by making a pact known as the National Front, in which they would alternate the presidency and distribute cabinet positions between them. The National Front was beneficial for the two dominant parties, but did not accommodate other parties such as the Communists, and did not appease citizens that still favored socio-economic reforms. The political exclusionary tactics created by the country's elite, represented by the National Front, caused animosity that has had lasting effects. Historians Frank Safford and Mark Palacios argue that by denying political participation to outside parties "it provided some justification for those on the left who began to operate outside the electoral system" and "it invited another sort of violence with which the system is still trying to cope" (Safford

and Palacios 2002, 325). Although the National Front only officially existed from 1958-1974, and Colombia now has a multi-party system, the government was and still is primarily dominated by the two majority parties.

In the 1950s as a product of *La Violencia*, a small Communist guerrilla movement started to form in the jungles of Colombia. Led by military leader Manuel Marulanda Vélez (aka Tirofijo) and Marxist ideologue Jacobo Arenas, a self described "professional revolutionary," the group organized "Independent Republics" "based on economic self-management and military self-defense" (Molano 2005, 25). The army attack of the "Independent Republics" in 1964 gave birth to the organization that is now known as the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (more commonly referred to as the FARC) whose goal was to break down existing political and agrarian formations.

A second revolutionary group that emerged in the 1960s was the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN). In contrast to the FARC, which emerged out of La Violencia as an agrarian organization, the ELN was formed by urban intellectuals influenced by the ideologies of Che Guevara and Fidel Castro. The organization followed Che's doctrine by beginning with covert urban activity, but by 1965 it established a rural guerrilla *foco* or revolutionary camp (Safford and Palacios 2002, 359).

The 1970s

The 1970s was an important decade for the development of guerrilla groups because it was during this time period that their image and activities changed. The FARC was traditionally a small rural organization, but in the 1970s, some of the organization's leaders sought to establish an urban presence. Because of disagreements within the organization, these leaders eventually broke off and formed the April 19 Movement (M-

19), which focused more on the cities and wanted to reform not replace democracy. The M-19 became financially independent from the FARC and the Communist party because they, along with the ELN, began kidnapping bankers and wealthy landowners for ransom. The leaders of the FARC soon realized that they could also benefit from kidnapping. Although they initially limited themselves to kidnapping for political reasons, they were soon kidnapping indiscriminately (Dudley 2004, 51).

Illegal drugs provided another funding opportunity that the M-19 and ELN quickly tapped into. The drug boom began in the early 1970s with marijuana, and was later replaced by the higher earning coca. At first, the FARC stayed out of the illegal drug trade because they believed it was "against communist ideals" (Dudley 2004, 52) and that it "represented a kind of underground imperialist invasion" (Molano 2000, 27), but the FARC could not ignore the increase in coca cultivation and trade, especially as it was encroaching on their territory. The guerrilla groups made deals with the drug traffickers that they would lay off the business, but in turn they would charge a tax on each cocaine shipment, a tax for the protection of the shipment and a tax for the use of "FARC/ELN" land to establish labs (Dudley 2004, Molano 2000). The income that guerrilla and other armed non-state organizations receive from kidnapping, the drug trade, and forced displacement has been cited as a reason for the failure negotiation efforts. These organizations and the impoverished Colombians who have no choice but to join them, have become reliant on the "war economy" and would be forfeiting large sums of money if they reintegrated into Colombian society (Richani 1997).

The 1980s

Although the rebel groups were becoming a threat to municipal and regional security and governance beginning in the 1970s, peace negotiations were only a limited part of the national dialogue until the mid-1980s. In 1982, the Conservative candidate Belisario Betancur won the presidency and immediately began creating a model of amnesty, negotiations and national dialogue between the Colombian government and the multiple rebel groups that existed at that time. The negotiation terms varied by group, but often consisted of a cease-fire, amnesty, and political access for the insurgent group. By 1984, four out of five of the primary guerrilla organizations had signed a cease-fire, but despite all of the hopes of the 1980s negotiations and the effort put in by each party, not one of the rebel groups demobilized and reintegrated (Chernick 1988). The M-19 broke the cease-fire in its 1985 raid of the Palacio Nacional and the FARC returned to the jungle after paramilitary forces, arguably backed by the Colombian military, assassinated numerous leftist candidates of the UP.

The Betancur negotiations included the M-19, ELN and FARC, but it was the FARC who upheld the agreement the longest. Betancur was eager to negotiate with the FARC because the previous decade had marked the organization's growth from 300 members in 1970 to 3,000 members in 1982 (Molano 2000, 26-27). The two sides met in 1984 and signed the Uribe Agreement in which the FARC agreed to restrict activities such as "kidnapping, blackmail and terrorism" and in turn the Colombian government would "carry out constant efforts to improve all the educational, health, housing, and employment levels ….and to improve all the Colombian people's economic, political and social conditions" (Dudley 2004, 46). The negotiations never required the FARC to

surrender their weapons ("a major point of omission" according to scholars Laurence Boudon 2004, Daniel García-Peña 2007, and Matthew Shugart 1999) although the agreement supposed that they would eventually relinquish their arms with the creation of a political party.

Part of Betancur's strategy for reaching agreement with the guerrilla groups was reinstating the Peace Commission, which had been created by former president Julio César Turbay. Betancur attempted to make the Commission more relevant in the process by making small changes to it such as transforming it to an intermediary body (as opposed to an advisory body) and increasing the number of members from twelve to forty (Garcia-Peña Jaramillo 2007, 96). Increasing the membership allowed for a broader range of civil society actors to become involved in the negotiations. Despite this effort, scholars such as Adam Isacson and Jorge Rojas Rodríguez, argue that civil society participation in the Betancur agreements was largely symbolic since ultimately the dialogue was limited to the government and the insurgent groups (Isacson and Rodriguez, 2009).

One of the most important guarantees made in the Uribe Agreement was that the government would protect the FARC's political party, the Patriotic Union (*Unión Patriótica*-UP). The UP was the FARC's opportunity to enter the political arena and possibly achieve some of the reforms that it was unable to achieve as a guerrilla group. The government did not hold its end of the compromise as nearly 3,000 UP members were killed by the end of the decade. The failure of future negotiations between the FARC and the government can be partially attributed to these assassinations because the guerrilla group no longer trusted the government.

The group held responsible, but never charged for the UP members' deaths was the paramilitary. Many scholars such as Steven Dudley (2004) and Cynthia Watson (2000) argue that the weakness of the military is one of the prime reasons that subversive groups were able to grow as they did. During the 1970s and 1980s, the government allotted between 1.5-2% of the gross domestic product to the military. The military also had a limited number of combatants, which made it one of the smallest militaries in Latin America (Dudley 2004, 36-37). These numbers are in stark contrast with the considerable strength of the Colombian military today due to domestic and foreign investment.

The military's limited amount of power and the 1965 Colombian decree that stated "all Colombians, men and women…will be used by the government in activities and work that contribute to the reestablishment of order" (Dudley 2004, 41), gave legitimacy to civilian groups uniting against the FARC and other guerrilla groups. The paramilitary groups such as the *Muerte a Secuestradores* (MAS) and the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC) originally formed to respond to and defend against kidnappings in rural Colombia, but they eventually expanded to offer "protection" in areas where the government was not present. The paramilitary's focus was on guerrilla groups and it has been argued that they were in many ways messengers for the Colombian military, and therefore were helped and protected by them. Cynthia Watson (2000) acknowledges the relationship between the military and paramilitary in her argument that

> The paramilitary groups were accused of ties with active military units prohibited from taking extralegal steps in attacking the guerrillas. Paramilitaries could conduct quick, surgical actions against guerrillas to deter them from seizing Colombians for financial or ideological reasons;

> the military had to work through legal channels which limited their activities (534).

This relationship between the paramilitary and the Colombian government and military has made negotiations with rebel groups difficult and citizen support of the paramilitary disarmament, demobilization, reintegration (DDR) process in the early 2000s weak.

The emergence of the paramilitary groups in Colombia was an important occurrence because it drastically changed the dynamic of the conflict, negotiations, and civil society. The paramilitary groups can be blamed for many of the murders, land seizures, and forced displacements in Colombia. However the government and civil society have responded differently to this organization than they have to guerrilla groups such as the FARC.

The Early 1990s

The 1990s was an especially violent and turbulent decade even though the government was able to successfully negotiate with some of the guerrilla groups. In the early 1990s, several smaller guerrilla groups demobilized including the *Ejército Popular de Liberación* (EPL), the *Movimiento Armado Quintín Lame* (MAQL), the *Partido Revolucionario de losTrabajadores* (PRT) and the more prominent M-19. Although the M-19 was the second largest guerrilla organization in the 1980s, its numbers decreased following the violent attack on the *Palacio Nacional*. In a weakened state, the M-19 agreed to disarm in exchange for the opportunity to participate in congressional and local elections and help rewrite the Colombian constitution. Political Scientist Matthew Shugart argues that "the promise of a voice in restructuring the country's basic

institutions gave the guerrillas a stake at participating" (Shugart 1992, 136). The ex-rebel group was able to form a viable political party and compete in elections at the same time that the Colombian constitution was being rewritten to include institutional reforms that would allow among other things, greater access to parties other than the dominant two. In addition to creating a climate for greater political participation, the 1991 constitution also gave greater recognition to Colombia's multi-cultural nature and to peace. Article 22 of the new constitution explicitly responded to a desire for peace in Colombia. It states that "peace is a right and a duty whose compliance is necessary" (www.pdba.georgetown.edu/constitutions/colombia).

Unlike with the M-19, the Colombian government was not able to reach a peaceful settlement with the FARC or the ELN. The government was able to offer the FARC and ELN many of the same political incentives including the opportunity to have a role in the constituent assembly proportional to its support, but they opted not to participate. The inability of the Colombian government to reach a peaceful conclusion with the FARC and ELN at that time is unfortunate because the 1990s became a decade in which the organizations exponentially increased both in number of members and in violent acts, kidnapping, and extortion. In the mid-1980s the total number of guerrillas (from all groups) is estimated at 7,000-8,000, whereas in the mid-2000s, it was estimated at 20,000 (Isacson 2009, 4). This increase in number is even more significant considering that only two guerrilla organizations remain.

Prior to the mid 1990s, civil society peace initiatives were few and dispersed throughout the country. They were motivated primarily by social injustices and in support of a negotiated settlement to the conflict. In 1987, citizen groups announced the

first *"Semana por la Paz"* (Peaceweek) consisting of a variety of events whose purpose is to educate and raise awareness. This event still occurs every September, although participation has been lower in recent years (Interview with Semana por la Paz coordinator Ana Maria Carbonell, September 28, 2008). In the early 1990s, in conjunction with peace efforts made by Cesar Gaviria and inspired by Article 22 of the constitution, many peace organizations began to form throughout the nation. *Viva la Ciudadania* (Long Live Citizens) was the first major rights/peace group to form in 1991. Its goals were to apply pressure on the government to abide by laws established in the new constitution, in particular those insuring greater democratic participation and social spending (Isacson and Rojas Rodriguez 2009, 3).

As violence increased in the 1990s and became more visible to the national public, so did peace organization. Colombian citizens began to recognize that violence was no longer primarily a problem in the conflict zones as the increase in guerilla members made larger scale, more urban activities possible. Despite the risks involved in mobilizing, many people felt that the risks of not mobilizing and letting violence continue were greater. In 1993, two important peace organizations formed: the Committee for the Search for Peace (*Cómite de Busqueda de la Paz*), which connected a number of already existing social organizations and NGOs, and REDEPAZ (the Network of Initiatives for Peace and Against War), another network of mostly local and regional peace organizations. Following the advent of these large networks, several other civil society peace organizations were formed, including many of those interviewed for this project. The following sections will discuss the emergence of civil society participation and initiatives from the period of rapid growth in the late 1990s to the present.

The Surge in the Peace Process

As violence increased in many regions of Colombia throughout the 1990s and the executive office was too busy dealing with a presidential corruption scandal to successfully address the escalating conflict, civil society reacted by taking a number of important steps to create peace. Many of the initial steps were activated by organizing bodies such as REDEPAZ and were targeted at reforming the political system before the 1998 national elections. For this reason, the massive mobilizations of the late 1990s are a combination of reacting to violent acts and showing support for a future leader interested in peace.

The first national level mobilization occurred before the time period in which I am focusing; however I am including it in this section because it became a model for several of its successors. In October 1996, with the help of REDEPAZ and UNICEF, several Colombian youth organized the *Mandato de los Niños y Niñas* (Children's Mandate) in which 2.7 million children participated in a symbolic vote that addressed their interest in ending the conflict and in defending their rights as children. This "vote" was the first in a series of political actions that civil society took to express their desire for a peaceful end to the conflict.

Following the children's example, on October 26, 1997, business, church, and civil society peace organizations united to organize the *Mandato Ciudadano por la Paz, la Vida, y la Libertad* (The Citizen's Mandate for Peace, Life, and Liberty). The *Mandato* was a non-binding ballot that accompanied the municipal elections. An affirmative vote meant that the voter was in support of a peaceful end to the conflict. The positive result of the *Mandato* made the citizen desire for peace evident as 10 million

Colombians-the majority of voters-voted in favor of it. The outcome of the *Mandato* was extremely important because it demonstrated that not only peace organizations, but also the general public, was in favor of negotiations, and that together they could make a big impact. In response to the outcome of the *Mandato*, Camilo Gonzales, the Technical Secretary of the Citizen Mandate committee argued that

> The peace mandate indicates that there are enormous potentials for a continuous mobilization against all forms of violence, against the war and for a political solution to the armed conflict… The more participatory and democratic the process, the more diversity of initiatives will be on the peace scene (Sandoval 2004, 45).

Gonzalez's argument was legitimized as the *Mandato* was just the beginning of a series of large-scale mobilizations that would take place over the next year.

In addition to the unifying element of the *Mandato*, the affirmation was also important politically as current and future politicians sought to earn public support. There were two significant political responses to civil society peace efforts. The first was an effort taken by the then President Ernesto Samper. In order to create a greater emphasis on peace, President Samper created the *Consejo Nacional de Paz* (National Peace Council) in 1998. The council was comprised of a 31 member advisory board comprised of an equal number of government officials and civil society peace leaders. The council was supposed to meet once a month to set up government peace policies and listen to civil society demands. This step was the first effort made by a presidential administration to incorporate civil society into the peace process. It was an important executive response to the heightened interest and pressure that civil society peace activists were putting on the administration. Unfortunately, these important steps were overshadowed by corruption allegations related to Samper's campaign finances. It was

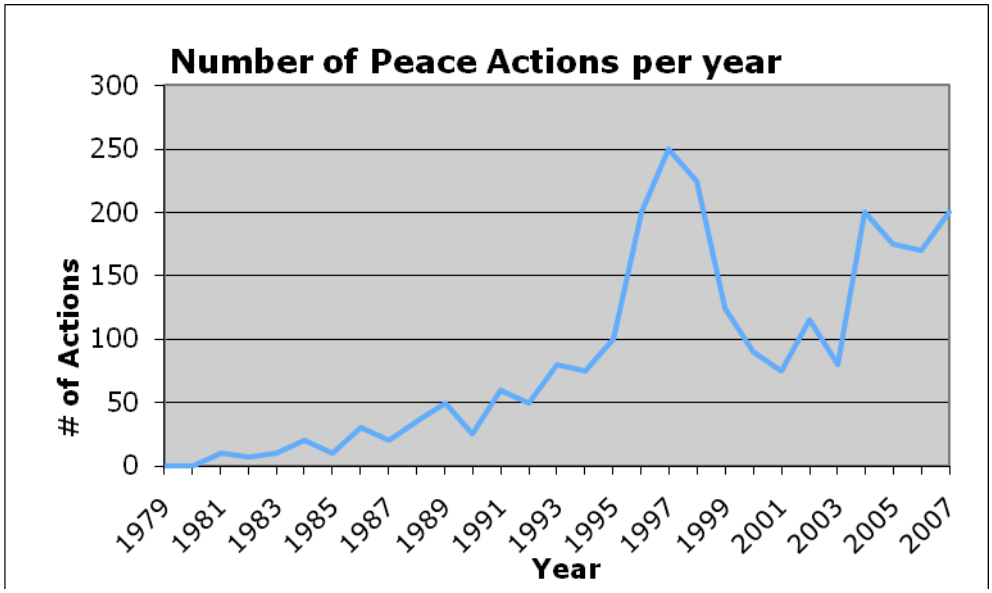
discovered that Samper had received large sums of money from the Cali cartel; a scandal which stripped Samper of both national and international legitimacy. Additionally, any negotiation efforts begun by the Samper administration were suspended as the guerrilla groups considered the administration too dishonest and weak to uphold its promises.

The second political response, which was more influential and farther reaching than the first, was the process and outcome of the 1998 presidential election. Prior to the July 1998 national election, constituents based their support of presidential candidates on the probability that they could initiate lasting negotiations with the guerrillas. In response to citizen desires, Conservative candidate Andres Pastrana made it clear that his first priority was to end the conflict by means of peaceful negotiation with the guerrillas. He acted on this platform by sending his future High Commissioner for Peace, Victor G. Ricardo, to meet with FARC commander Manuel Marulanda just a few weeks before the election. This move was a risky but necessary step to winning the vote.

The Pastrana Years (1998-2002): The rise and fall of the peace process

The peak years of the citizen peace movement occurred between 1997 and 2000 (see graph 2.1). During this four-year period, more than 43 million people participated in peaceful mobilizations-most commonly in the form of marches, demonstrations, and ballot measures (Garcia Durán 2007, 3). I suggest that these large scale citizen peace initiatives and the public's interest in a peaceful negotiation to the conflict pressured the executive to resume peace talks with the armed groups and increased citizen *attempts* to be part of the official peace process.

Graph 1.1: Number of Peace Actions per Year (1979-2008)



Source: CINEP 2007

Pastrana's victory and its significance to the peace process spurred a wave of civil society activity. Many civil society actors and organizations began meeting to discuss strategies for negotiating peace with the guerrilla groups and increasing the role of non-governmental groups in the process. The Permanent Assembly of Civil Society for Peace, the National Conciliation Commission, and the Oil Worker's Union (USO) organized the first of these *convergencias* (convergences) shortly before Pastrana's inauguration. This first meeting, which took place on July 30-31, drew in nearly 4,000 people, more than three times the expected number (www.ciponline.org/colombia). These frequently held *convergencias* often took place over a series of days and included sectors of peace activists from throughout Colombia.

Although there were many positive outcomes of the *convergencias* such as uniting activists from throughout the country in a large-scale discussion about peace, they

were ineffective because of the inability of the participants to construct a unified and detailed action plan. The lack of specific recommendations could be attributed to not only the sheer number of people involved in the *convergencias*, but also to the differences in interests and goals of many of the participants. The failures of the Permanent Assembly are not surprising considering Diana Chigas's arguments about NGOs as conflict managers. She argues that one of the greatest weaknesses of Track 3 diplomacy is the multiple agendas of the activists (Chigas 2007). These differences make coordination extremely difficult. Additionally, the Permanent Assembly's purpose of establishing a role in the negotiation process was ignored as the Pastrana administration did little to include civil society at the negotiating tables.

Once in office, as promised in his campaign, the Pastrana administration immediately began discussing a negotiation plan with the FARC. The two parties agreed to commence talks in early January 1999, but first the Colombian government had to make a few concessions to the FARC. The guerrilla group requested that the discussions take place in Colombia as opposed to a foreign location and more specifically, they wanted them to occur in a newly created demilitarized zone (DMZ). In November 1998, Pastrana ordered the demilitarization of the Vistahermosa, La Macarena, Uribe, Mesetas, and San Vicente del Cagúan municipalities—a large chunk of land roughly equal in size to El Salvador. The creation of the demilitarized zone would later prove detrimental to the peace process as it essentially became an area in which the FARC could gain power and authority without the intrusion of the armed forces (Garcia-Peña Jaramillo, 2008).

The Pastrana peace negotiations were a failure from the start. On January 7, 1999, President Pastrana traveled to the DMZ to meet Manuel Marulanda for the opening

ceremony of the formal peace talks; however he found himself alone as Marulanda failed to appear because of "security concerns." The concern could have been well founded because in the days following the planned meeting, the paramilitary groups committed a series of violent massacres. These massacres caused the FARC to withdraw from negotiations until the government responded to the violence and the proposed parapolitics. The FARC did not want to relive the violence they experienced during the UP assassinations in the late 1980s.

The start and stop nature of the beginning of the peace talks is representative of how they would continue until their demise in 2002. One side would frequently lose confidence and trust in the other because of the failure to uphold a promise, and then the other side would lose trust. Often it was the Colombian government that was making many of the compromises such as giving the FARC the DMZ or not requiring the FARC to give up their arms. The discontinuity of the talks and the disinterest by both parties in including non-state actors in the negotiations caused many civil society peace actors to criticize the government and the process.

Although civil society participation in the formal peace process was practically non-existent, 1999 marked the climax in citizen mobilization. This "climax" does not signify that there were more peace organizations and peace activists involved in the peace process in 1999 than there are today, rather there were more people in general participating in individual peace initiatives. These peace initiatives were primarily an unprecedented series of large-scale mobilizations. Between April and September 1999, more than 2.5 million people participated in 40 marches across the nation as part of the "No Más" campaign. The campaign against kidnapping and forced displacement and in

favor of a peaceful negotiation, culminated with the largest mobilization in Colombian history on October 24, 1999. Redepaz, Viva la Ciudadania, and Fundación País Libre organized this "Gran Marcha". On October 24, more than 8 million people mobilized in marches and events in over 180 municipalities across the country (Fernández, García-Durán, Sarmiento 2004, 3). In a January 2000 publication about the No Más marches by the peace organization INDEPAZ, future vice president Francisco Santos writes

> Yes, it must be said clearly, we want the assassinations to end, the massacres to end, the disappearances to end, the kidnappings to end, the forced displacement to end, and the land seizures to end. We will not be happy with anything less. But we are also marching so that this negotiation is not only about this insurgent group but rather with those that today carry arms. We say yes to negotiation, but with everyone, without standing up from the table and with concrete results (Sandoval 2004, 52).

Unfortunately, instead of portraying the march as a means to pressure both the government and the guerrilla in the peace talks, the Colombian media depicted the October 24 march as a protest against kidnapping and as a demonstration in disfavor of the slow-moving peace talks. The media's misrepresentation of peace mobilizations is a problem that continues to plague the peace movement today.

Despite the fact that civil society support of the peace process was at an all time high in 1999 and peace leaders made frequent trips to the demilitarized zone to offer recommendations and analysis of the process, neither the FARC nor the government paid much attention to their efforts. Instead, both groups limited the dialogue to a small group of advisors from both parties. President Pastrana's peace advisors represented such a small circle, that not only were civil society leaders excluded and not consulted, but so were many key governmental and military leaders (Isacson and Rojas Rodriguez, 2009). This exclusionary method does not incorporate the type of multi-track diplomacy that is

favored by many conflict resolution researchers. They would argue that although track one (governmental) diplomacy is the most important/effective in ending a civil conflict, it is impossible to create a sustainable peace without including track two and track three in the process (Chigas 2007, Azar 2004).

As the negotiations progressed, civil society became increasingly frustrated with the process and with each other. Not only did the government and FARC ignore their recommendations, but they also began to have internal disagreements. Divisions were exacerbated between elite and non-elite actors as most of the business sector withdrew participation from the Permanent Assembly and from other unions with non-elite groups. This schism was a large factor in limiting the success of the peace movement because the elite actors were more likely to be heard and respected than the non-elite.

The last two years of Pastrana's presidency began the shift from a negotiated solution to a militaristic solution due to the signing of Plan Colombia in 2000, the failure of the peace process, and the frustration of Colombian citizens with guerrilla and paramilitary violence. Plan Colombia would become an extremely important determinant in the direction of the peace process because it gave the Colombian government and military the financial and material support that it needed to give them more power. Plan Colombia was initiated by policy advisors in the United States who were concerned with the facts that 80 to 90 percent of cocaine distributed in the United States was coming from Colombia and that coca cultivation had been increasing not decreasing in recent years (Arnson 2008, 149). Based on the belief that U.S. drug consumption would decrease if supply decreased, the Clinton administration decided to focus more on supply reduction in Colombia.

The U.S. presented its interest in aiding Colombia in counternarcotic efforts to President Samper in 1997; however the multi-billion dollar Plan Colombia was not signed until three years later in June 2000. Plan Colombia was designed as an aid package that would address a variety of issues that would help end the conflict in Colombia such as peace promotion, human rights protection, economic recovery programs, improving democratic institutions, alternate and human development plans, and national defense and counternarcotics strategies. Although all of these proposed strategies were essential in strengthening the failing Colombian state and creating peace and prosperity, ultimately most of the money was directed towards the military and police for counternarcotic and counterinsurgency efforts. In the beginning, between 75-80% of the allotted money went to pay for police and military training and new war technologies (Hoskin and Murillo-Castaño 2001, 4). This money contributed to the increase in number of soldiers from 79,000 to 140,000 during the Pastrana administration. Additionally, the number of soldiers considered to be "professional" tripled (BBC news).

Civil society had a mixed reaction to Plan Colombia. Many of the elite business sectors who had already begun separating from more leftist peace activists felt that a greater military presence could be the measure necessary for coercing the FARC to a peaceful negotiation. This view was not shared by the majority of peace advocates. In October 2000, a number of peace organizations formed an alliance called *Paz Colombia,* whose primary goal was to increase civil society participation in the dialogues and to promote peaceful solutions as an alternative to Plan Colombia. *Paz Colombia* organized a meeting in San José, Costa Rica that united over three hundred people representing civil

society, the Colombian government, foreign governments, and several UN agencies. In the October 2000 convergence, *Paz Colombia* expressed that

> Peace construction is not only the responsibility of the armed actors but rather all of society, so much that PAZ COLOMBIA expresses the desire that civil society will continue strengthening spaces for participation, consultation, deliberation and compromise en the decisions. We ratify our rejection of a military strategy as an exit to the conflict, like Plan Colombia, that only represents an aggravation to the dramatic situation of human rights and international humanitarian law. We reaffirm that Plan Colombia represents not only the escalation of the conflict with repercussions in the Andean region, but also the destruction of high mountain and Amazon ecosystems, as a product of the fumigation, and an increase in displacement and the poverty of thousands of farmers (Sandoval 2004, 56).

Regrettably, this meeting, like many of its predecessors was unable to produce a unified response to the conflict and civil society requests were largely ignored.

Although Plan Colombia had been signed and U.S. dollars had already begun pouring into government coffers, Pastrana proceeded with the negotiations as promised. On February 9, 2001, Pastrana and Marulanda met in Los Pozos, Caquetá where they signed an agreement aimed at speeding up the discussion, developing a strategy for dealing with the paramilitary groups, and including more international actors in the peace process. The Los Pozos agreement did not fare better than previous agreements as violence by both the guerrillas and the paramilitary groups escalated. Daniel Garcia-Peña Jaramillo makes a very strong argument about civil society participation in the Pastrana negotiations based on the Los Pozos accords. He writes that the Los Pozos Accord

> exemplifies how the participation of 'civil society' was more rhetorical than real…The agreement they signed (Marulanda and Pastrana) did not mention or even pay lip service to civil society, completely ignoring the numerous expressions and letters of support that civil society had

> produced in those tense days preceding the encounter (Garcia-Peña Jaramillo 2008, 118).

While I agree with this statement, I would argue that President Pastrana would not be in Los Pozos, shaking Marulanda's hand if it were not for a determined, dedicated, and (mostly) united civil society working for peace.

Despite the numerous starts and stops of the Pastrana/FARC peace process, there were a number of actions that the FARC took in 2001 and early 2002 that prompted Pastrana to indefinitely end the peace talks in 2002. The final straw occurred on February 20, 2002 when FARC rebels hijacked a civilian plane and took hostage Senator Jorge Eduardo Gechem Turbay. Pastrana immediately ended the peace talks and within hours the military had reoccupied the demilitarized zone.

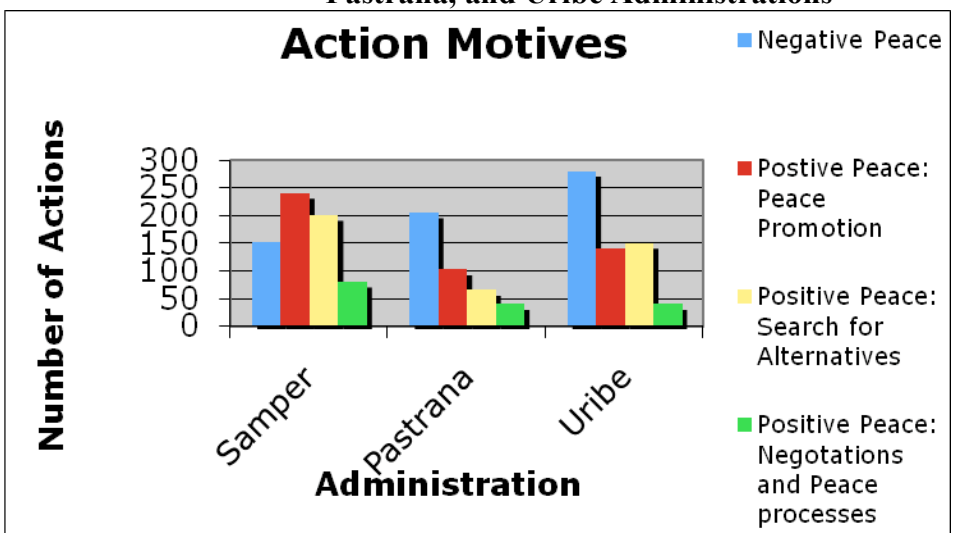
Long before Pastrana officially terminated the peace talks, many citizens no longer had confidence in the way in which Pastrana was handling the peace process. Those who had originally supported the negotiations felt frustration with the surging violence and the inability of the two parties to maintain the talks and uphold their end of the agreement. According to Gallup polls taken in Colombia during the Pastrana administration, approval of how he was handling the guerrilla was at an all time high (53% approval) in October 1998, but quickly decreased in 1999 as talks were inconsistent and failing. The approval rating was at its lowest point (9%) in December 2001, shortly before the plane hijack caused Pastrana to cease negotiation efforts (Gallup Colombia Poll 55). Although Colombian citizens were largely disinterested in furthering peace negotiations, the same cannot be said for peace organizations that have continued

promoting a peaceful settlement. The continuous efforts of these organizations will be further explored in chapter 2.

The Uribe Years (2002-2008+): Democratic Security and a New Wave of Citizen Mobilization

In the eleven-year period studied (1997-2008), citizen peace mobilization was at an all time low in 2001 as frustration and dissatisfaction with the peace talks grew. This frustration contributed to the presidential victory of Álvaro Uribe Vélez whose views about ending the conflict were in sharp contrast with those of President Pastrana. During the first few years of Uribe's presidency, citizen mobilization remained low, but it began increasing again in 2005 and has continued to increase ever since. These more recent mobilizations request an end to the conflict, but unlike earlier mobilizations, they are focused more on creating "negative peace" (militaristic or punitive measures for creating peace) rather than "positive peace" (not only demobilization of armed actors but also social and political reforms). In other words, they are looking for an end to the conflict using whatever means necessary (See graph 1.2).

Graph 1.2: Comparison of Number of Peace Actions by Motive during the Samper, Pastrana, and Uribe Administrations



Source: CINEP 2008

Much like in 1998, in 2002 the public's opinion about how to end the conflict largely determined the outcome of the presidential election. The Colombian public's change in opinion from a negotiated settlement to a more militaristic strategy was evident as candidate Álvaro Uribe won the May 2002 presidential elections. As a former governor of the notoriously violent province Antioquia and as the son of a FARC victim, he was intimately connected to the conflict. Throughout the Pastrana administration, Uribe had been highly critical of Pastrana's strategy and as president he immediately began working on his National Security policy. Uribe promised to better arm and educate the military forces as well as bring necessary social reforms.

Part of Uribe's plan was to make changes to the specifics of Plan Colombia negotiated during the Clinton/Pastrana years. He realized that a counternarcotics war was not sufficient to end violence in Colombia, therefore he introduced the Democratic

Security and Defense Policy which had three basic tenets: a lack of security is at the roots of Colombia's problems, the lack of personal security comes from the absence of the state in many sectors of the nation, and all elements of national power must be directed at ending the violent situation and integrating the nation (Marks 2006, 203). Uribe has been able to increase funding for security and plans such as urban special forces, special transportation network units, high mountain battalions, and local forces.

Uribe's counter-insurgency efforts have been paradoxical depending on the target group. His strategy with the guerrilla groups, in particular the FARC, has been highly militaristic, whereas with the paramilitary groups, he immediately began negotiations after taking power. The paramilitary leaders and the government began talks in 2002, but it was not until July 15, 2003 that the Santa Fe de Ralito demobilization accord was signed. Beginning in November of that year, thousands of paramilitary members participated in demobilization ceremonies in which they surrendered their weapons and promised to end their involvement in violence and crime. In return, the government would aid them in the reintegration process by providing them with skill training and financial assistance. Between November 2003 and the official end of the process in August 2006, 31,000 people had participated in demobilization ceremonies (HRW 2008, 22).

The paramilitary demobilization was an important step in gaining peace for Colombia, however almost all of the 31,000 were pardoned and therefore were never punished nor recognized for the thousands of people they killed and the property they stole. The government granted the paramilitary groups too many concessions and has not fully dealt with the thousands of human rights violations they have committed and

continue to commit. This leniency is not surprising considering that many members of the government, including President Uribe himself have ties to the violent group.

The civil-society peace movement was scarcely involved in the paramilitary negotiations however the process was not without civil society reaction. While some peace activists were supportive of the process, many were critical of the fact that the demobilization offered impunity to the ex-paramilitary combatants. Some organizations such as Redepaz and Nuevo Arco Iris took an active interest in examining and analyzing the process as well as making recommendations. Still today, Nuevo Arco Iris spends a great amount of time investigating the supposedly non-existent paramilitary organizations and publishes important articles about their abuses. These educational efforts will be further explored in chapter 2.

In contrast with the relatively low civil society involvement in the paramilitary demobilization process, many public leaders took an active role in negotiation attempts with the ELN. In 2005, civil society organizers formed the *Casa de Paz* (House of Peace) in Medellín, a place where civil society and ELN leaders would discuss peace proposals for three months prior to meetings with the Colombian government (Bouvier 2006). Unlike the FARC, the ELN wanted to hear input from civil society and them to be part of the peace process. Following discussions at the Casa de Paz, the ELN and the Colombian government participated in a series of formal talks in Havana, Cuba, facilitated by foreign governments. To date there have been eight rounds of peace talks with the ELN, yet the two parties still have not come to agreement on the terms. Civil society has continued to have a role in the informal discussions.

In comparison with the ELN, the Uribe government has done very little to initiate talks with the FARC and instead has focused on weakening the organization through military defeat and public dishonor. During Uribe's presidency, he has made great international efforts to recognize the FARC as a terrorist group in order to delegitimize their claim to be a leftist, ideological group. This strategy is highly effective in a post-9/11 world where terrorism is at the height of many people's senses. Additionally, several FARC leaders have been killed or have died in the past year creating potential uncertainty and insecurity within the organization. Many scholars argue that now would be an opportune time for the FARC to lay down their arms and reach an agreement with the Colombian government.

2008: A whirlwind of activity

"This country has a capacity to return to normalcy, to indifference, and we don't want this to occur without expressing ourselves in a massive way against all of these crimes."
--Iván Cepeda, representative of MOVICE

2008 was an active year for both the Colombian government and Colombian citizens. Several key events of 2008 put the FARC, the government, and civil society in the international spotlight. As the government won many victories over the FARC, citizen mobilization reached levels unseen since 1999. These massive mobilizations were in direct response to the political situation and to the actions of the rebel group.

Most of the major news stories about Colombia in 2008 corresponded to real events that made the Colombian government appear strong and successful in contrast to the weak and crumbling FARC. After much pressure from civil society and a few politicians, President Uribe agreed to allow Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez talk with

the FARC to discuss hostage releases because he was unwilling and unable to bring about the negotiation himself. Chavez was successful and in January 2008, six important political hostages were released from the FARC.

As hostages were slowly being released in January and the beginning of February, citizens' participation in the peace process began to re-emerge in the form of massive mobilizations that had been largely (but not entirely) dormant since 1999. The first and largest mobilization of 2008 occurred on February 4. It was unique because not only did it mobilize the largest number of people in nearly a decade, but also it was also transnational, uniting nearly 6 million people in over 165 cities around the world (semana.com). The story behind the 4F mobilization is indicative of political, social, and technological factors of the time.

4F was unintentionally initiated in January 2008, when Oscar Morales, a 33-year old engineer from Barranquilla, Colombia started a FACEBOOK group called "Un Millón de Voces Contra las FARC." When Morales checked the FACEBOOK page later that day, there were already 900 members in the group. As the group grew, they determined that a mobilization would be an effective way to promote the message that the Colombian people do not support the FARC or its actions. From the FACEBOOK group, *Colombia Soy Yo,* a student-run, peace organization, was created. The group continued to use FACEBOOK to enlist Colombians all over the world to organize marches in their communities and to recruit more participants. By the time of the march, over 200,000 people were members of the online group. Although the mobilization began with the internet, which arguably limits access to people who have the financial means to use the

technology, the word about the mobilization rapidly spread to Colombians regardless of class, race, gender, age, and physical location.

Although the 4F marches were widely supported, many people criticized the mobilizations because of the government's involvement and the narrowness of the focus. From the beginning, *Colombia Soy Yo* stated that the mobilization was non-political; however their intentions were overshadowed by the strong government presence at the event. The government took many measures to increase participation and show their support. President Uribe permitted ministers and congress members to close their offices during the mobilizations so that they could participate (el tiempo.com). He actively participated in the march in Valledupar, Colombia, where he also gave a speech. As well as allowing government officials to participate, many schools in Bogotá were closed for safety reasons, but it could also be argued, to allow more people to participate. Many Colombians, especially those that felt Uribe was trying to gain international attention for his Democratic Security policies, were unhappy with the government's support in the mobilizations, and therefore did not participate. Others did not participate because they thought the scope was too narrow. The FARC is just one of the many violent actors in the Colombian conflict and they did not agree that it should be singled out.

Because of the narrow focus of the February 4 mobilizations, another mobilization scheduled for March 6, 2008 was organized by an NGO called *Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas de Crímenes del Estado* (MOVICE). This mobilization was an attempt to recognize the victims of crimes by the paramilitary and the state. These victims include people killed or disappeared by military and paramilitary forces and people displaced from their homes. MOVICE recognized the impact that the anti-FARC

mobilization had, especially at the international level, so they also enlisted organizers around the globe, however they did not use FACEBOOK as a means to gather support.

The March 6 mobilizations had a strong turnout throughout Colombia and the world but the number of participants, the locations of mobilization, and the media attention was far less than the anti-FARC mobilization a month earlier. An investigation conducted by CINEP concluded that the ratio of the number of articles written about the 4F mobilizations versus M6 was 10:2 (Interview Fernando Obregón, September 2, 2008). The low participation number could be attributed to less effective communication about the marches, but more than likely it is the result of the government's lack of support and the general public's sentiments. Whereas the most recent Gallup Poll shows that the FARC has a 96% disapproval rating, the paramilitary and the military support is much greater (Gallup Poll Colombia 2008).

Another reason why participation in the March 6 mobilizations could have been low is due to the fact that it was overshadowed by the military's "successful" blow to the FARC just five days earlier. The assault was just the first of a number of events that weakened the rebel group. On March 1, 2008 the Colombian military attacked a FARC camp on the Ecuadorian border. In the attack, sixteen FARC members were killed, including, Raul Reyes, one of the key members of the organization's Central High Command. The strike was widely supported by the Colombian public, but was criticized by many leftist leaders in the nation who saw the attack as a threat to Ecuador's sovereignty.

Reyes's death was soon followed by the natural death of Manuel Marulanda. Many people were hopeful that the FARC would be more willing to negotiate following

Marulanda's death, especially because his successor Alfonzo Cano was considered to be more of an ideologue than a militant. As the FARC continued to refrain from negotiations under Cano's leadership, the organization was hit with a second major blow on July 2.

On July 2, the Colombian military successfully freed fifteen FARC hostages in a mission titled *Operación Jaque*. Included in the released hostages were former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt, three American contractors Marc Gonsalves, Thomas Howes, and Keith Stansell, and eleven Colombian police and military. The operation showed both the military's strengths and the FARC's weaknesses. Through intelligence and perhaps undercover operations, the military was able to pinpoint the exact location of the hostages and trick the FARC into releasing them. The military's success was devastating to the FARC because it showed a breakdown of communication within the organization and it decreased their bargaining power by rescuing their biggest bargaining chips—Ingrid Betancourt and the three American contractors. This mission reinforced the idea that the government could militarily defeat the guerrilla group if they so chose. Although President Uribe has always enjoyed high approval ratings, the success of Operación Jaque increased his rating to a record 91% (Wood, 2009).

Following the success of the Colombian military, the public responded by participating in another massive mobilization on July 20, 2008. Similar to the February 4 mobilizations, participants requested liberty for the hundreds of people the FARC still holds hostage. The Independence Day mobilizations also paralleled the 4F mobilizations because they were targeted at one specific group and were highly supportive of the government and its actions. How citizens and civil society organizations will respond to

future military victories is to be foreseen, but it can be inferred that there will not be a major shift in support anytime in the near future, or at least until Uribe is out of power.

This chapter demonstrated that in the last decade the Colombian peace movement has gained energy and power that was unseen in previous decades. The movement has proved that Colombian citizens have the capacity to mobilize a great number of people whose voices in numbers have been successful in pressuring the government to engage in peace talks or to terminate them when they felt necessary.

The large number of civil society peace initiatives that have occurred in the last fifteen years exemplify citizen interest in a peaceful negotiation and a desire to be part of the peace process. These initiatives have taken a variety of forms in order to reach the greatest number of people possible. They include actions such as seminars, marches, votes, public forums, peaceful protests, policy proposals and recommendations. What most of these actions have in common is that they were organized by civil society organizations that were trying to involve as many people as possible in the peace movement. These organizations and their mobilizing and educating strategies are analyzed in the following chapter.

Chapter 2: Civil Society Peace Organizations in the Peace Movement

"In Colombia, wherever you go, in whichever corner of the country, you will find people working to promote peace" –Ana Maria Carbonell (Fundación Escuelas de Paz).

Civil society peace organizations have played an important role in the peace movement since the early 1990s. Leaders of these organizations were some of the first people to make policy recommendations, activate citizen mobilization, and put pressure on the governmental peace process. In the 1990s, peace CSOs were successful in motivating citizen participation in the peace movement; however in recent years as fewer citizens are likely to mobilize for a peaceful negotiation, they have focused on other strategies to create peace in Colombia. Their recent efforts demonstrate that they can continue to make an impact on society, the government, and the conflict by focusing on educational efforts and local and regional peace initiatives.

In the previous chapter I discussed the relationship between the conflict, the government's actions, and civil society participation in the Colombian peace process. I suggested that Colombian citizens had an important role in the peace process by influencing governmental decisions through different types of peace actions. As citizens grew increasingly frustrated with the soaring violence in the 1990s, civil society used marches, votes, and seminars to pressure the executive branch to negotiate a peaceful settlement to the conflict. Many of these actions were organized by civil society peace organizations, which were springing up all over the country.

Although citizen interest in the peace process waned as the Pastrana peace talks failed, peace organizations continued to do peace work and attempt to re-convince the Colombian people and government that negotiations were the best solution. Under a

citizenry supportive of the Democratic Security policy and a government not interested in a negotiated settlement, peace organizations have had to change their strategies in order to achieve their goals. They realize that it is difficult to sustain people's interest in a movement because of "shifting involvements" (Hirschman 1982). Hirschman (1982) argues that a person will focus on either the public or private sphere depending on what they personally gain from participating. A person may participate in a movement if they feel that they will achieve some level of satisfaction or personal gain, but frustration and disappointment can lead them to revert to their private life. These organizations have attempted to educate the public and make them feel that they have something to gain by supporting the peace movement.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section will use criteria formulated by CINEP to explore different types of peace organizations based on location, how they define peace and the thematic issue/s they focus on. It is important to explain these categories in order to convey that although many organizations fit until the title of peace organizations, they are not a single united entity but rather a group of organizations that represent a variety of sectors, interests, and goals. These differences are considered to be a major factor in why the peace movement has failed (Garcia Durán 2004, Rettberg 2006, Bouvier 2006, 2009, Isacson 2009).

The second section will give brief descriptions of the five national level organizations whose members I was able to interview. In the description, I will explain aspects of each organization such as its history, mission and vision, membership, and alliances. These interviews will be used in the third section of the chapter where I explain how peace organizations have answered to the political shift from 1997-2008.

The third section will explain how peace organizations have changed in the past ten years in response to a change in both political and societal environments. In the last decade, the peace movement has seen an increase in local level organizations, many of which have formed relationships with larger regional or national level organizations. Many of these national organizations have come to realize that the local organizations have a real capacity to create peace in their communities by making local agreements with armed actors and educating and protecting their youth from joining the rebel groups. As a result, they have formed relationships with local organizations in order to supply them with human and financial support as well as protection. Additionally, national level actors can help make local efforts more visible because they generally have greater influence over political leaders. This influence is often attributed to the fact that leaders of national level CSOs tend to come from a more elite sector of society.

Using five national level peace organizations as case studies, I will analyze how peace organizations have responded to a militaristic government and how this response has required a shift in their strategies and goals. I will propose that because national level organizations currently do not have much influence on government decision-making, they have shifted their focus more to educating both the domestic and international public and in providing support to the local and regional-level organizations that have been seeing more concrete results. I hypothesize that these new strategies are more effective than the marches and seminars that were so common in the previous decade.

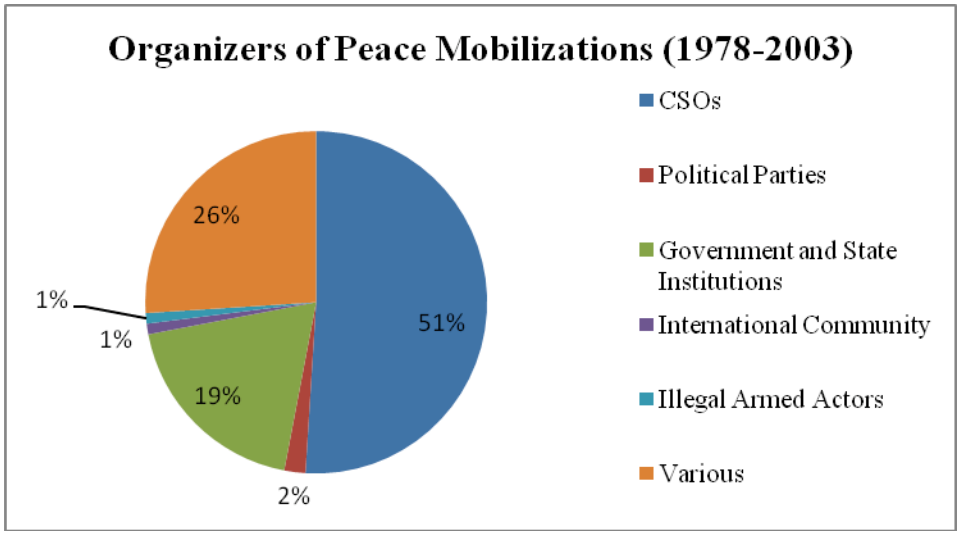
Characteristics of civil society peace organizations

As evidenced in the previous chapter, most, if not all, Colombian peace initiatives have been organized by a civil society organization. Civil society organizations compose a broad category that includes many subsectors. Mauricio Garcia has divided CSOs into four main groups: a) organizations focused on the construction of peace and confronting the negative effects of the armed conflict; b) groups and institutions related to cultural or religious dimensions; c) groups formulated around social class, ethnicity, gender or profession; d) elite business groups (Garcia Durán 2004, 208). Although all of these sectors work for peace in different capacities and are included in the analysis of civil society participation in the peace process, I will focus on peace organizations because they are responsible for leading and organizing a large percentage of peace initiatives (see graphs 2.1 and 2.2). As stated in Chapter 1, they can be defined as organizations and NGOs whose explicit purpose is peace work, the majority of which contain "peace" somewhere in their name (Delgado, Garcia Durán, Sarmiento, 2008).

Colombian peace organizations are classified in a variety of ways depending on their geographic scope, their definition of peace, and their choice of thematic issues on which to focus. By recognizing that these organizations represent diverse geographic locations, interests, and peace goals, it elucidates how they are responding to a complex conflict affecting a variety of territories, sectors of the population, and aspects of citizen life. The diversity is beneficial because it increases representation but it is also detrimental because it creates schisms in the peace movement. As stated in the introduction, many scholars have cited these differences as causes for a lack of unity among organizations, therefore making the peace process less likely to succeed (Rettberg

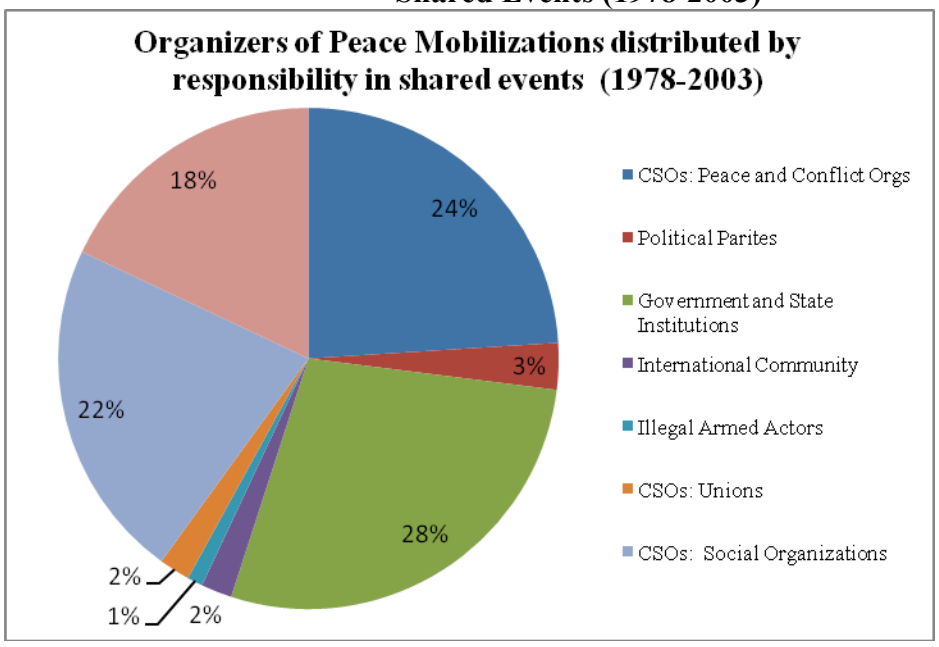
2006, Bouvier 2009, Garcia Durán 2004, Isacson 2009). In recent years however, many peace organizations have learned from mistakes of the past and have become less narrowly defined. Organizations today speak about their relationships with a variety of other organizations in different geographic levels and about their conversion from focusing on just a few issues to many.

Graph 2.1: Organizers of Peace Mobilizations Based on Type of Actor



Source: Garcia Durán 2004, 207

Graph 2.2: Organizers of Peace Mobilizations Distributed by Responsibility in Shared Events (1978-2003)



Source: Garcia Durán 2004, 207

Peace initiatives and organizations are classified geographically as local, regional, or national based on their location and geographic influence. Peace researchers Carlos Fernández, Mauricio García Durán, and Fernando Sarmiento (2004) classify local level peace initiatives as those developed by local level groups and actors at the village, district, or municipal level. These local level organizations often focus on creating peace within their conflict-ridden communities through civil resistance and direct negotiation with local armed groups. Regional peace initiatives are described as initiatives that seek to have a social, economic, or political effect at the regional level by covering several municipalities. Finally, national level initiatives hope to link peace mobilization and organization efforts with executive decision makers. Organizations working at the national level are generally located in Bogotá, but often have a number of satellite

member groups dispersed throughout the country. While the local level organizations and initiatives have more contact with the armed actors and have a greater effect on creating peace in the small areas that Bogotá often ignores, national level organizations and initiatives have more contact with international and national leaders and organizations (Fernández, García Durán, Sarmiento 2004, 3). The majority of the organizations interviewed for this research project were national level organizations that had strong partnerships with international, local and regional level organizations.

Another way in which peace organizations can be classified is through their definition of peace. Although peace may seem easy to define, it in fact has several different meanings that are categorized as either positive or negative peace. David Barash and Charles Webel (2002) define positive peace as "more than the mere absence of war or even the absence of interstate violence" but rather "a social condition in which exploitation is minimized or eliminated, and in which there is neither overt violence nor the more subtle phenomenon of underlying structural violence" (6). In contrast, negative peace "simply denotes the absence of war. It is a condition in which no active, organized military violence is taking place" (6).

According to criteria created by CINEP, in the Colombian context positive peace includes three major concepts: demobilization of armed actors, reconciliation, and the deepening of democracy. Demobilization is understood as the termination of the armed conflict by means of a peace process that demobilizes armed actors and reincorporates them into a democratic society. In addition to demobilization, some believe that ending the war is not sufficient and that a process of reconciliation must occur in which victims are guaranteed peace, justice, and reparation. Some believe that reconciliation is crucial

in creating a sustained peace. The third concept refers to an opening and deepening of the democratic political system so that previously excluded actors have a greater chance of participating in the democratic process (Delgado, Garcia Durán, Sarmiento 2008, 13). As argued in Chapter 2, many people blame the historical (and arguably current) political exclusion of many groups as a reason for the continuation of the conflict (Frank and Palacios 2002).

In contrast with positive peace, negative peace is focused more on militaristic and punitive measures for creating peace. CINEP has also broken down negative peace into three concepts: military victory, life defense, and truth, justice and reparation. Military victory refers to the idea that it is possible to militarily defeat the opponent and that this defeat will bring peace. This attitude has been adopted in recent years by both the FARC and the Uribe administration as negotiations have been pushed aside. Life defense refers to making life the first priority and making other social and political changes secondary. This concept puts emphasis on constructing civil ethics programs in which respecting life is at the forefront. Finally, truth, justice and reparation are understood as the state ensuring that the violent actors do not receive impunity but are instead held responsible for their actions. The victims and the Colombian citizens will learn the truth about the crimes, the perpetrators will be charged for those crimes, and the victims will receive reparations/restitution (Delgado, Garcia Durán, Sarmiento 2008, ppt 13).

While most Colombian citizens ultimately desire peace, it is this definitional distinction that makes one specific peace process difficult to agree upon. For this reason, in 2008 many Colombian citizens felt that a combination of both negotiation and military

force was the best solution for ending the armed conflict (Indepaz 2008).[1] Most peace organizations work to convince society that negotiations are the answer; however there are a number of peace organizations that agree with the blended strategy. If peace organizations cannot come to a consensus about what strategy is best, it is difficult to influence the government or the public.

There are a variety of thematic issues that peace initiatives work towards, and these issues are another way in which organizations can be categorized. Some organizations work specifically towards one theme, but many tend to value more than one and often have subgroups within the organization that are dedicated to working on a specific theme. CINEP's Peace Program has nicely broken down peace initiatives into the following six thematic categories:

a) Protection, Defense and Conflict Resistance;

b) Peace Education and Conflict Resolution;

c) Democracy Expansion;

d) Dialogue and Negotiation;

e) Peace and Development;

f) Organization and Articulation (Garcia Durán 2004, 225).

Organizations that work specifically on Protection, Defense and Conflict Resistance are generally local level actors that have organized from the bottom up in order to protect themselves against the aggression in their conflict communities. The only organization that I interviewed which would fit into this category is the Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres,

[1] In a 2008 survey conducted by the Universidad de los Andes INDEPAZ program, researchers found that of the 2000 people questioned, 813 people favored negotiations with the guerrilla, 331 favored military force, and 840 favored a combination of the two.

however many of the other interviewed organizations have formed partnerships with resistance groups and therefore offer them material and human support.

Peace Education is a common issue that many organizations emphasize regardless of whether or not it is their main goal. Organizations such as Fundación Escuelas de Paz focus all of their energy on educating Colombian youth about peace and conflict resolution as a means of creating a more peaceful future, but many other organizations are involved in initiatives such as workshops, talks, publications, and Peace Week as strategies used to educate the general public. Many of the organizations that I interviewed such as Nuevo Arco Iris and the Ruta Pacífica have greatly increased their focus on peace education in recent years.

Deepening and expanding democracy is a third strategy that many peace organizations focus on because they believe that it is a necessary condition for creating a sustained peace. The organization Planeta Paz is an example of a national level organization that has been involved in several initiatives that unite political and civil society leaders in order to strengthen Colombia's democracy.

Organizations that focus on peace and development issues believe that it is not possible to create a lasting peace without working on social and economic development programs in many regions of the country, especially the regions which are home to marginalized populations. Planeta Paz, the Ruta Pacífica and Nuevo Arco Iris all work on social and economic development projects, often as part of a local or regional alliance.

The final category of initiatives are those that try to coordinate initiatives and experiences throughout the country in order to make a greater and more unified impact. These organizations would include any type of network-based organization such as

Redepaz, the Asamblea Permanente por la Paz, Planeta Paz and the Ruta Pacífica de Mujeres.

Based on the various ways that peace organizations can be classified, it is evident that these organizations cover diverse geographic and thematic areas. This diversity is part of what makes the Colombian peace movement so rich and adds to its successes, but unfortunately many organizations put their individual interests before working towards the collective interest. These successes and failures will be analyzed more thoroughly in chapter 3.

Brief Description of Interviewed Organizations

I conducted five formal interviews with national level civil society peace organizations as well as many short informal interviews with peace scholars, former members of peace organizations, and local level peace leaders. The five organizations that I formally interviewed were Fundación Escuelas de Paz, Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris, Planeta Paz, Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres, and Colombia Soy Yo.

Fundación Escuelas de Paz (FEP)

Fundación Escuelas de Paz is a non-governmental organization that was formed by eight Bogotá teachers in 1997. It started as a classroom project created in order to discuss peace and conflict resolution during a period of escalating violence, in which peace is defined not just as an end to the war, but rather as "social justice without violence"* (Interview Ana Maria Carbonell, August 28, 2008). The initial project was so successful that the teachers expanded the program into many other schools and eventually

earned NGO status in 2001. The program is now offered in over 100 schools in Bogotá alone and many more in the surrounding area.

According to their mission and vision the general objective of Fundación Escuelas de Paz is to promote organization, investigation, publication, projects, consultation, and supplements in order to encourage a peace culture and to make peace an obligation and right for the new generations of Colombians (escuelasdepaz.org). The leaders of FEP believe that in order to reach people, a person must be exposed to peace education and peace culture in their formative years.

Today Fundación Escuelas de Paz is comprised of seven members who are all part of the directive board. Although their membership numbers are relatively small, they are able to accomplish big projects because of their relationships with other national and local organizations such as Indepaz, Redepaz, Viva la Ciudadania, and COINDES. In addition to their partnerships with peace organizations, they also have a working relationship with both the Bogotá mayor's office and the Department of Education.

Fundación Escuelas de Paz is apolitical, but they have formulated these governmental relationships in order to promote the Department of Education's program related to human rights and reconciliation. In an interview with FEP founder Ana Maria Carbonell, she explained to me that the human rights and reconciliation program was made a requirement for all Bogotá schools in 2005. She was proud to say that the idea originated and was developed by civil society leaders and it was those same leaders that pushed policy makers to enact the law (Interview Ana Maria Carbonell, August 28, 2008).

The program developed by the Fundación is successful because it recognizes that each school has its own goals and needs and it gives the participants the power to develop the program according to those needs. It begins with a diagnostic test in which the organization works with the students, parents, and teachers to identify problems that need to be addressed. Following the diagnostic, they formulate these problems into concrete statements such as "This school needs help with conflict resolution or communication." Next the school outlines an operational plan and begins forming solutions. Fundación Escuelas de Paz helps the school organize and reinforce the plan.

The programs in the schools as well as other activities that FEP is involved in are not financially backed by the organization. FEP does not have a steady source of economic support, but rather it receives money from international or national organizations that need aid in their projects, therefore each individual project has financial resources dedicated only to it. These resources most commonly come from the Spanish Department of Education, the Bogotá Department of Education, and UNICEF.

Planeta Paz

Planeta Paz began in 2000 as a project with the purpose of promoting the inclusion of civil society peace leaders in the dialogues between the Colombian government and the guerrilla groups. Many leaders felt that civil society was at the mercy of the FARC and the government, so the intention of Planeta Paz was to stimulate the participation of social organizations in the negotiating process, devise collective and detailed negotiation proposals, and encourage the participation of third track actors (civil society actors) in the negotiating process. In an interview with Carlos Vásquez, general

director of Planeta Paz, he argued that the project was successful because it showed that a "political culture for peace" was possible. In his opinion, the almost 900 organizations that participated in the project proved that the "Colombian people have a vision and proposals to resolve the conflict. They perceive that it is a complex conflict and that economic, social and political reforms must be made" *(interview Carlos Vasquez, September 5, 2008).

Today Planeta Paz is an organization that not only wants to contribute to a negotiated settlement to the conflict, but also acts to promote democratic expansion and social development programs. Their mission is to

> Contribute to the materialization of proposals by the Colombian Popular Social sectors as autonomous subjects in order to insist on the construction of alternative forms of power, formulation and implementation of public politics and social projects and the strengthening of their negotiating capacity with eyes toward the political resolution of the social and armed conflict and the achievement of a sustainable peace* (www.planetapaz.org).

They believe this mission can be achieved by ending the armed conflict, constructing economic and social programs to fight discrimination and exclusion, creating an ethics program that guarantees that the conflict and human rights abuses will not be repeated, and transforming the political power system in Colombia. The organization feels that much of the violence and conflict in Colombia is a direct result of greedy elites in powerful positions. Vasquez argued that it is the "powerful elites as well as regional governments that have used forceful mechanisms to appropriate resources from the poor and powerless populations, whereby creating more violence, discrimination, poverty, and exploitation"* (interview Carlos Vasquez, September 25, 2008).

In order to carry out their mission, the organization has a permanent membership of fifteen people, which are divided into three organizing bodies: the directive board, the advisory board, and the administration. The three bodies together make the general assembly, which work on the organization and implementation of the project. Although the initial 2000 project has been completed, the organization has continued to assemble civil society leaders for the purpose of making citizen recommendations and proposals. In addition to the domestic networks that Planeta Paz has developed, the organization also has relationships with international organizations and governments in particular those in Norway, Canada, Spain, and Sweden.

Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris (NAI)

The organization Nuevo Arco Iris has an interesting history because of its ties to demobilized ELN combatants. In 1991 during the rewriting of the Colombian constitution and the peace accords between President Gaviria and various armed groups, a branch of the ELN that no longer believed that weapons had a place in politics, broke off and formed a political party called the Socialist Renovation Movement (Corriente de la Renovación Socialista-CRS). The organization Nuevo Arco Iris emerged in 1994 during the agreements between the government and the CRS. It began as a civil society organization that expressed ways to peacefully reconcile the conflict and searched for alternative development plans (www.nuevoarcoiris.org.co). NAI believes that social and economic development are fundamental conditions for creating a lasting peace and likewise peaceful co-existence is necessary for development. These beliefs are highlighted in the organization's mission to "contribute to the construction of a new

social order in which peace, respect for differences, and equality and social justice through human, social, political, economic and environmental intervention strategies prevail"* (nuevoarcoiris.org).

Since its creation in 1994, Nuevo Arco Iris has had organizational branches in twelve departments with the largest number of members in Bogotá. Currently the organization has 55 members that make up either staff or volunteers. Although the present membership number is vastly lower than the 600 NAI members in 1996, Nuevo Arco Iris is able to accomplish many projects because of its relationship with local, regional, national, and international organizations.

My introduction to Nuevo Arco Iris assistant director Juan Pablo Dangond was extremely important to my research in Colombia. Not only was my interview with Juan Pablo highly informative, but he also introduced me to a number of active civil society peace leaders and invited me to attend various meetings and seminars that Nuevo Arco Iris was part of. These meetings, such as the weekly reunion of the "Post London" Alliance demonstrated how strong peace activism remains and revealed the valuable relationships that organizations such as NAI have with other peace and development organizations.

Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres

The Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres was formed in Antioquia in 1996 when a group of women united in reaction to a news report that emphasized the high numbers of rape, slavery and displacement of women throughout the nation. The founding members inspired other feminist, pacifist and anti-military women's organizations to join a peace

network concerned with the abuse of women as an effect of the conflict. The organizations also had the common goal of supporting a political negotiation to the conflict. In an interview with Gabriela Santos, an active member of the Ruta since 1996, she repeated the Ruta's often repeated argument "Women are not war booty. We do not birth children for the war. We do not feed the war with words, action, or even thought" (Interview Gabriela Santos, September 2, 2008). She wanted to make the Ruta's position clear that women do not need or want to play a role in the conflict.

The Ruta Pacífica recognizes that women are deeply impacted by the conflict; however they are often not included in any type of governmental decision making. The organization believes that because women compose at least 50% of the Colombian population, they should play a bigger part in resolving the conflict and problems surrounding it. In their mission, they identify themselves as a "feminist and pacifist movement with a political, cultural and social mission directed at strengthening the feminist vision of pacifism, non-violence, and civil resistance and promoting the inclusion of political and social proposals of Colombian women in government proposals"* (www.rutapacifica.org).

The specific number of women who are members of the Ruta Pacífica is unknown, however approximations reach the thousands. These members are from many regions of the country and include women of all races, social classes, professions, and marital status. Many of them are victims or have been victims in the past, but being a victim is not a requirement for membership. Their status as a woman's network has created important bonds at both the domestic and international levels. Their relationship

with European and North American women's organizations has given them further human and economic support.

Colombia Soy Yo

As briefly explained in chapter 2, Colombia Soy Yo was founded in 2008 as a result of the facebook page "Mil Voces Contra las FARC." A number of young activists united in order to not only promote the February 4 mobilization, but also to create an organization that would continue working on projects, programs and other initiatives that would ultimately make Colombia a more responsible, democratic and dynamic country These goals are stated in the organization's mission statement. It reads: "Our mission is to construct a Colombia without illegal armed groups, by promoting responsible collective action and human development" (colombiasoyyo.org).

Colombia Soy Yo is a unique organization because it is comprised of young professionals and students from all over the world. This transnational network is possible because of the way in which the organization has capitalized on the internet and social networking websites. CSY has not only created a highly developed website with news stories, information about the organization, and tabs for becoming a volunteer or donating money to the group, but it also has an extremely active facebook page. The facebook page is a place for the 41,181 "fans" to post letters, stories, calls for mobilizations and messages to other people interested in promoting peace in Colombia.

I interviewed two members of Colombia Soy Yo. One interview was with Felipe Abello from the Los Angeles branch of the organization. I spoke with him shortly after the February 4 mobilization that he organized in Los Angeles. He became active in the

organization when his brother called him from Colombia to tell him that no one in Los Angeles had signed up to plan the march there. He immediately contacted Colombia Soy Yo in Bogotá and only three short weeks after, he had organized a mobilization that attracted over 2,000 people (Interview Felipe Abello, February 10, 2008).

The second member of Colombia Soy Yo who I interviewed was Adriana López. Adriana is a student at the Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá and has been a member of the organization since it began in January 2008. We talked about the goals of the organization and what direction it has taken since the February 4 mobilizations. She explained to me that although the 4F mobilizations were directed specifically at the FARC, CSY is an apolitical and unbiased organization that works to raise national and international awareness of violent actions perpetrated by all the illegal armed groups (Interview Adriana López, August 25, 2008).

Table 2.1: Interviewed Organizations' Definition of Peace and Thematic Focus (* signifies primary focus(es)

Organization	Definition of Peace	Issue
Fundación Escuelas de Paz	*Positive Peace* End to conflict Social reforms	Peace Education and Conflict Resolution* Dialogue and Negotiation
Planeta Paz	*Positive Peace* End to conflict Deepening democracy	Democratic Expansion* Peace and Development Dialogue and Negotiation Organization and Articulation*
Nuevo Arco Iris	*Positive Peace* End to conflict Social reforms A combination of military action and political negotiation will lead to peace.	Peace and Development* Dialogue and Negotiation
Ruta Pacífica	*Positive Peace* End to conflict Social changes Truth and reconciliation	Protection, Defense and Conflict Resistance* Peace and Development Dialogue and Negotiation Organization and Articulation*
Colombia Soy Yo	*Positive Peace* End to conflict Social reforms	Organization and Articulation*

Peace organizations in relation to a shifting government focus (1997-2008)

As seen in the previous chapter, civil society organizations have been responsible for many of the peace actions in the previous decade. It is frequently these organizations that have mobilized people in marches or votes, sent proposals and recommendations to the government and the armed groups, and worked to protect victims or potential victims of the conflict. Despite the fact that overall citizen participation in the peace movement has waned in the last decade, peace organizations have maintained strong in number,

interest and outreach. They work daily to educate and protect Colombian citizens as well as influence the government and armed actors.

Because the political and social environments changed from the end of the Samper administration to the second term of the Uribe administration, peace organizations had to transform as well. In order to better reach the government, the armed actors, and the Colombian public, the organizations shifted their strategies to incorporate greater educational and outreach opportunities as well as form stronger bonds at each geographic level.

One of the important changes that many national level organizations have made in the last ten years is that they have become investigative centers. They spend a great deal of time examining the conflict, the various armed actors, governmental policies, and conflict resolution theories. This research is important because it is used as a means to educate other organizations, government entities and citizens through public presentations and written publications. Although these education efforts cannot create peace on their own, they do make people more aware of what is going on.

The Ruta Pacífica, Nuevo Arco Iris, and Planeta Paz have all published a number of books and articles in the past few years about the conflict. For a 2006 conference tour in the United States and Europe, the Ruta Pacífica published texts in both Spanish and English about the effects of the paramilitary demobilization process on women and the links between the paramilitary groups and politicians ("parapolitics"). In these publications, they share emotional stories about women who have become victims of the conflict in order to convey their argument that women are often targeted and they deserve a truth and reparations process. Gabriela Santos argued that by publicizing stories about

the victims, they become an important social actor for cultural transformation (interview Gabriela Santos, September 3, 2008).

Nuevo Arco Iris now has a branch of the organization that solely works on investigations. Juan Pablo explained to me that "today we (NAI) are a center for critical thinking, research and social action. Before we were only a center for social action" (interview Juan Pablo Dangond September 1, 2008). They realize this aspect of their mission by frequently publishing articles in El Tiempo and Semana, hosting or co-hosting public talks and publishing books and pamphlets. They research all aspects of the conflict including the FARC, the paramilitary DDR process and the ELN talks. Because NAI was affiliated to the CRS, they have a strong interest in the rebel group.

Planeta Paz's publications take on a variety of topics related to peace from a summary of their project proposals to an evaluation of how the *Tratado de Libre Comercio*-TLC (Free Trade Agreement) will affect peace in the country. They choose to write about a variety of topics because they want it to be clear that the conflict is complex and complicated and cannot be narrowed down to one problem. Their publications are given to organizations involved in the project as well as public institutions in order to create more "discussion spaces" (Interview Carlos Vásquez, September 5, 2008). Carlos was happy with the number of publications that the organizations had printed; however in the future he hoped to increase the amount of time the organization devoted to researching and educating.

In addition to an increase in investigation and publications, another way that the peace movement has evolved in the last decade is the increasing number and influence of municipal level peace organizations and initiatives all over the country. Local level

initiatives are highly effective because they often work with people who are directly affected or part of the conflict. They take the place of an absent federal government by making local negotiations or providing educational and protection programs for people in the community. Angelika Rettberg argues that there is "an increasing amount of civil resistance by indigenous groups, farmers, and municipal organizations that maintain their position and have created autonomous spaces in which armed actors do not interfere"* (Rettberg 2006, 50).

I was able to witness the extensiveness of local level initiatives at the IV National Reconciliation Conference on August 25-27 in Bogotá. More than 500 people attended the conference, many of them were members of peace or human rights organizations throughout the country. I was interested to see that more than 2/3 of the organizations represented were local-level. On the third day of the conference, these local organizations set on panels and were part of a display that highlighted the types of initiatives that they carry out. The display room was filled with over 100 tables that exhibited not only the diverse efforts of the organizations, but also the excitement and successes of their programs. The fact that almost all of the tables belonged to local level organizations supports arguments such as Adam Isacson's that state "the most innovative and energetic peace and conflict resolution efforts are currently most visible at the local, not the national level" (Isacson 2009, 24).

In recent years, national level organizations have noticed the successes of the local organizations and have partnered with them to create important networks. The national organization is able to supply the local level organization with human and sometimes financial support while the local organization is doing much of the hands on

peace and aid work. All of the organizations that I interviewed had either begun forming these partnerships in the past few years or they greatly increased the number of these relationships as more local organizations formed.

I was fortunate to be able to speak with members of both ends of a national-local organizational partnership. The Fundación Escuelas de Paz in Bogotá and the local organization COINDES (Comunicación e Investigación para el Desarrollo Sociocultural) in Soacha have been working together in recent years to help Soacha adolescents achieve a brighter future than has traditionally been available to many of them. Escuelas de Paz president Ana Maria Carbonell informed me about the importance of any type of educational program for Soacha children because of the highly conflictive nature of the city. Soacha is a city 45 minutes west of Bogotá known for its high number of displaced citizens and the presence of various armed groups in the mountains surrounding the city center. It also received a lot of negative media attention in Fall 2008 because of the false positives that the military was committing there. The military was killing civilians and masquerading them as guerrillas in order to "prove" the effectiveness of their military strategy.

Displacement and violence in the community has deeply impacted the futures of many of its children. Ana Maria reported to me that of every 100 male adolescents in Soacha, a maximum of two will go to a college or university. The majority will enter the military or the armed forces because they have no other options (Interview Ana Maria Carbonell, August 28, 2008). Fundación Escuelas de Paz has begun their peace and co-existence program in over 26 schools in Soacha, but they have also formed valuable relationships with business and grassroots organizations such as COINDES. Escuelas de

Paz works with these organizations by helping them secure financial resources from domestic and international aid institutions, as well as plan and implement large-scale activities and projects. The two organizations also promote each other in their respective communities.

Members of the grassroots organization COINDES invited me to a gathering that they host every Saturday. In these get-togethers, several recent university graduates will organize activities and a discussion forum for several teenage students living in the mountains outside of Soacha. The students walk up to an hour in order to take part in these activities. The Saturday that I attended was representative of most Saturdays for the group. The ten teenagers discussed what had happened at school or in their community the previous week. They spoke about weapons in school, about military recruiters coming to school in order to enlist young men, and about financial problems they were having at home. The students seemed wise beyond their age, but also young and immature. It was difficult to imagine them holding weapons as part of the guerrilla or military in less than a year.

Following the discussion, the teenagers worked on templates for the stencil graffiti that they were going to spray paint around their community. Their stencils represented ideas of peace and love, which once completed, would cover up the present graffiti that represented violence and anger. Their drawings included doves, flowers coming out of guns, hands outstretched to others, peace signs, and peaceful phrases and words. The stencil designs were based on conversations about peace they had in previous sessions. The teenagers were excited to talk to me about their drawings and about how they were going to impact the community. These Saturday workshops allow the students

to meet in a comfortable, safe environment where they can build faith in a concept that they do not see in their everyday lives: peace.

One of the ways in which networks are important is that they facilitate the flow of information. National level organizations have been helpful to local level peace organizations by giving them information that they have found through their investigations of the Colombian conflict, the Colombian peace movement, and peace initiatives around the world. Likewise, the local organizations can supply national organizations with information about the conflict and peace movement at the local level in order for it to be analyzed. In an interview with Fernando Obregón from CINEP, he explained the importance of the networks and dispersing information throughout the network. CINEP has spent the past fourteen years investigating the Colombian conflict, the Colombian peace movement, and peace initiatives around the world. In the last few years, the investigative center has traveled to communities around the country to teach local organizations what they have learned. They believe that these organizations can perfect their own strategies by learning lessons from peace actions from the past (Interview Fernando Obregón, September 4, 2008).

Networks are not restricted to educational efforts. Many organizations focused on peace and development and social issues also form networks across geographic sectors. Nuevo Arco Iris is one of the organizations that has focused on forming local and regional alliances in the past few years. These alliances are not only with grassroots organizations, but also with local level governments who realize that their territory is deeply impacted by the conflict and who believe it necessary to search for alternatives. NAI currently has relationships with local governments in the departments of Nariño and

Cesar. They work with the local government and organizations on projects related to displaced populations, peace promotion, and community building. Juan Pablo Dangond explained to me that local level politicians are often directly affected by the conflict and therefore see a greater need to react. They realize that "in their territory there is war and they need to look for alternatives" (Interview with Juan Pablo Dangond, September 1, 2008). They look to grassroots organizations as well as more powerful national organizations for the support they need to find these alternatives.

Network organizations such as the Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres have always had strong alliances, but the number of organizations and regions represented by the mother organization has grown. The Ruta now consists of 350 organizations from 9 regions of the country (Putumayo, Chocó, Bogotá, Bolivar, Antioquia, Valle de Cauca, Cauca, Santander, Risaralda) (Interview with Gabriela Santos, September 3, 2008).

Despite the fact that peace organizations are becoming more unified and have achieved many successes in the past few years, numerous organizations have found it more difficult to work under the current government since some of their goals directly contradict government policies. A primary concern for many of these organizations is safety. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, several organizations publicize disputable government policies and human rights abuses nationally and internationally while simultaneously proposing new peace measures and providing programs and assistance to the conflict's victims. Because CSOs often highlight crimes committed by paramilitary groups and the Colombian military, they are frequent targets for violent acts. Many participants in the March 6 mobilizations against the paramilitary, state and other armed actors received a number of threats. Gabriela Santos said that although the Ruta marched

in both the February 4 and the March 6 mobilizations, they only received threats due to their participation in the latter. In April 2008, a number of members of the Ruta were sent threatening letters accompanied by pictures of themselves marching by the Águilas Negras[2]. These and other threats have caused some women to take refuge in other countries (Interview Gabriela Santos, September 3, 2008).

Although the government should protect and support these groups both verbally and financially because they can be an important resource for reintegration and reconciliation, it often criticizes and stigmatizes them by calling them terrorist supporters and accusing them of unsubstantiated crimes. Furthermore, the government does not fully investigate the threats, attacks, assaults, and intimidation that human rights and peace workers receive daily from armed groups (Human Rights Watch 2008).

Gabriela Santos says that it is important not to radically distance yourself from the State and realize that you as an organization are an entity within the state. In response the government must treat these organizations with respect and dignity. She says that the primary role of social movements is to "inform the government of the interests of those who ask for social reforms"* (Interview Gabriela Santos September 3, 2008) and that the government must be willing to listen. When the government is not willing to listen as is the case of the current administration, grassroots organizations look for ways in which they can make reforms within the boundary of the laws.

In this chapter I examined national level civil society peace organizations under the Uribe administration. Since the early 1990s when Colombian peace organizations

[2] The Aguilas Negras are a violent "gang" that has emerged since the paramilitary DDR process. Many people believe that the group is comprised of formed paramilitary members.

began to emerge, they have experimented with different ways to make their voices heard by Colombian citizens, governing parties, and even international actors. These organizations have maintained many of their traditional strategies such as writing proposals, hosting conferences and seminars, and creating awareness campaigns, but as violence continues and the government is no longer interested in a peaceful dialogue, they have had to add new activities or amend previously existing ones.

National level peace organizations have witnessed a shift in the peace movement from a focus on national to local level initiatives. Instead of fighting to keep their original role, they have accepted their new position as educator to domestic and international groups, intermediary between local, regional organizations and the government, and ally to local grassroots organizations. While these new strategies have in many cases been beneficial to both parties, not all actions taken by peace organizations have been constructive.

There is no mistaking that Colombian peace organizations have had a large role in the peace process and have continued to look for ways to further their goals. Working towards these goals in one thing, but actually achieving them is another. The following chapter will examine how effective peace organizations have been in fulfilling their missions and reaching their goals.

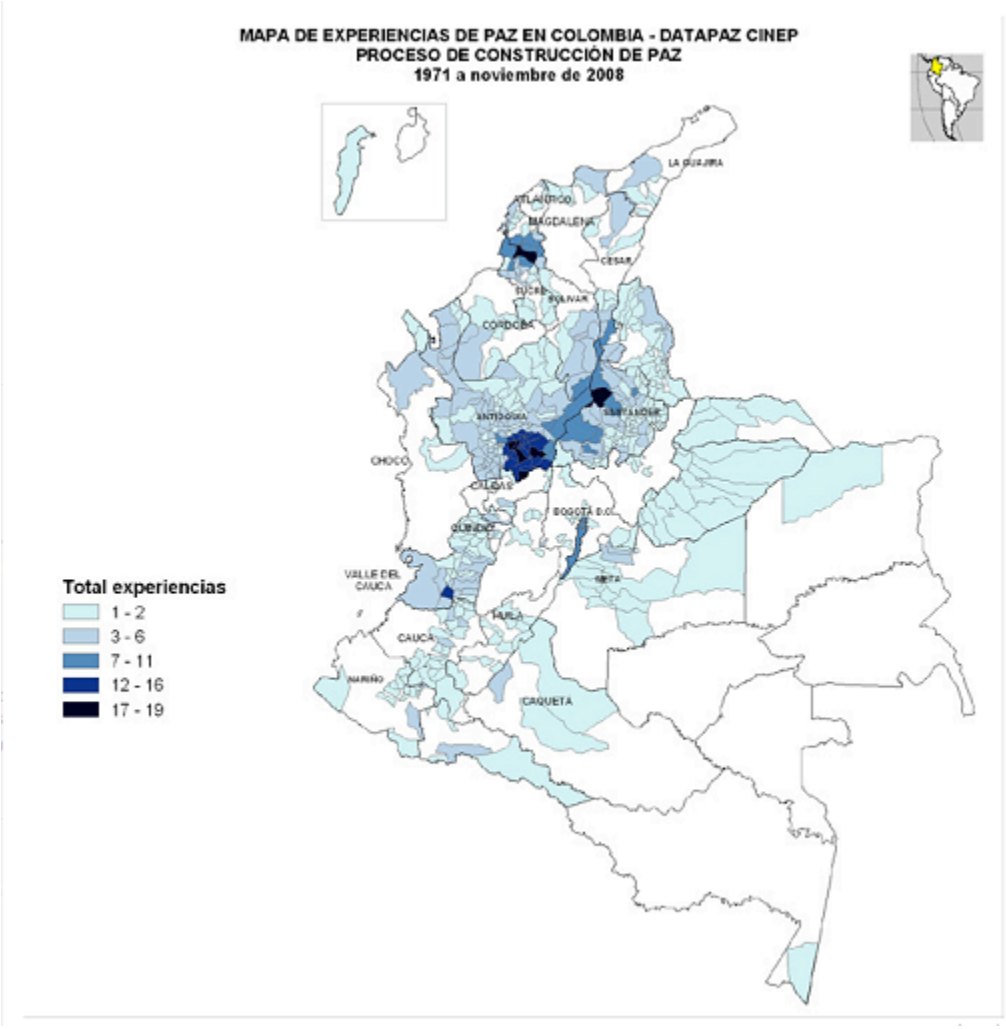


Figure 2.1: Map of Colombian Peace Experiences (1971-2008)
Source: CINEP 2009

Chapter 3: Successes and Failures of Peace Organizations and Conclusions

As evidenced by the previous two chapters, citizen participation and peace organizations have had an important impact on both the governmental and non-governmental peace processes in Colombia. The question to be asked however is what the quality of this impact is. Have the organizations been successful or unsuccessful in accomplishing their goals? The following chapter will evaluate the work of the peace organizations in terms of successes and failures. In the evaluation I suggest that peace CSOs have been successful in mobilizing people, finding ways to increase publicity, and increasing partnerships with like-minded organizations; however they have been unsuccessful because they have not been able to end the conflict, they have had little to no direct participation in the official negotiations, and despite the increase in networks, the coordination among organizations is still quite weak.

Evaluating the successes and failures of the peace organizations can be somewhat of a subjective task. I have determined that the best way to assess the peace organizations is based on how well they are achieving their goals and objectives. Each peace organization has its own objectives according to the mission statement, but they also have a number of goals in common. The ultimate goal of most organizations is ending the conflict, usually through a negotiated political settlement. In addition, many organizations believe that strengthening democracy and improving social programs are an important and necessary component of ending the conflict. These lofty goals are accompanied by many smaller objectives that the organizations feel lead to their ultimate goal. The smaller objectives include educational and awareness efforts, citizen

mobilization, government response to peace work, and conflict reduction and victim protection.

Since peace organizations began working for peace in Colombia they have had numerous successes but also many failures. It is these successes that keep them motivated and inspired and it is the failures that they are trying to learn from and adjust their strategies accordingly. The greatest successes of the peace movement in the past ten years are the increase in media recognition, the educational/awareness impact through publications, conferences, and internet websites, an increase in networks among all geographic levels, increasing "success" at the local level, and the ability to organize and mobilize a large number of people,

National peace organizations have made their cause much more visible in recent years through increased media recognition, an emphasis on publishing their investigations for both domestic and foreign readers, and the use of web pages and social networking sites to reach more people. This visibility is crucial for organizations that want more people to understand the dynamics of the conflict and what can and "should" be done to end it.

Because most major news publications in Colombia are controlled by elite sectors of society with strong governmental ties, the media has traditionally given very little attention to peace initiatives. The organizations that I spoke with told me that this lack of publicity is changing as more organizations are getting coverage. In an interview with Gabriela Santos from the Ruta Pacífica, she said that after their 2007 mobilization, both RCN and Caracol (the two largest national news stations) covered their story. Despite the fact that they had mobilized many times since their emergence in 1996, the 2007

mobilization was the first time they received this type of media coverage. The story lasted 1 minute and 30 seconds (Interview Gabriela Santos September 3, 2008). Gabriela said that news coverage is an extremely important means for getting out their information regarding human rights, victims and the peace process. Currently they are receiving more media coverage at the local and regional level rather than national, but any coverage is better than none.

Many national organizations have also been successful in getting articles and books published. Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris has actively tried to strengthen its ties to the media in recent years. They currently have regular publications in the national newspaper El Tiempo and Semana magazine regarding issues related to the conflict. Juan Pablo Dangond from NAI says these publications are possible now because the media is less partial and more professional and open than it was ten or fifteen years ago. He says this change is especially true of written forms of communication (Interview Juan Pablo Dangond, September 1, 2008).

As argued earlier in the chapter, networks are an important requisite for peace movements to succeed. I am somewhat hesitant to say that Colombia has succeeded in creating networks since it is often argued that it is the lack of networks that is creating weakness in the citizen peace movement; however I will suggest that the increasing number of networks and the realization that these associations are a crucial part of the process is a success. No longer are networks a characteristic unique to network-based organizations such as the Ruta Pacífica and Redepaz, rather they are a common trait among organizations regardless of location, conception of peace or objectives.

Another way in which peace organizations have been both successful and unsuccessful is in mobilizing people for peace. As seen in chapter 2, all of the large scale marches and mandates that occurred in the late 1990s were organized and promoted by civil society organizations. These organizations were not always peace organizations, but they often were. The peace CSOs were also able to rally large groups of citizens in public forums, seminars, and events such as Semana por la Paz. It was arguably not difficult to organize large number of citizens during that time because the public was frustrated with the conflict and ready to support and demand a peaceful negotiation, however had these CSOs not organized the people, the public's about the conflict may never have been heard.

After the negotiations failed and Colombian citizens were less interested in a non-violent resolution, these organizations found it more difficult to mobilize citizens than they had in the past. The public was more interested in testing out the Democratic Security Policy to see if it could produce the outcomes that the negotiations failed to generate. This attitude is beginning to change as more citizens are starting to mobilize again. Although CSO led mobilizations in 2008 were often directed at a certain group (such as the FARC or the paramilitary and armed forces) as opposed to a peaceful solution, these mobilizations can be seen as a success for the most part because they reignited public interest.

The biggest and most obvious failure of peace organizations and the peace movement is that the conflict is still very much alive despite years of peace actions. Although some of the armed actors have demobilized and reintegrated into society, recent government and civil society efforts have been largely unsuccessful. The paramilitary

DDR process was a farce because not only did it grant impunity to many ex-paras, it also did not rid the country of these vigilante groups. The guerrillas too are still a threat as the ELN peace process has not yet reached a mutual agreement and the FARC has become a military target.

Ultimately it is the government's responsibility to reach a negotiated settlement with the armed groups, but civil society wants and should have a role in that process. The fact that civil society leaders have not been able to coordinate with the state is another important failure of the peace movement. In both the Pastrana and Uribe administrations peace leaders and organizations were largely ignored. Pastrana was willing to negotiate with the FARC based on civil society wishes, but peace organizations failed to become active participants in the process. During the Uribe administration, although peace organizations have had some successes with the ELN talks, they have had even less sway over the government than in previous administrations because both the government and a majority of Colombian citizens see the Democratic Security policy as more successful. It is essential that these organizations have a more coordinated and influential relationship with the government and the public in order to have their demands heard.

Some scholars such as Jorge Rojas believe that in order for the civil society peace movement to have more power, it must not only build stronger relationships with the government but it also must become more political. He says that

> A citizen's mandate for peace in the ballot box is not enough. (We) need to create local, regional and national power in order to make societal political participation real. Citizen peace leadership should win power in the mayor, governor, and congressional offices and other popularly elected positions (Rojas, 2005, p. 39).

Although several recent local level elections have voted in candidates that are highly supportive of the peace movement and act on its behalf, for the most part peace CSOs do not have political aspirations and often feel that political links are to their disadvantage. Instead they make it clear that they are apolitical and do not support one candidate or party over another. They feel that this neutral position will make their goals and proposals stronger. I agree that their goals and message can be misinterpreted when they become politicized. As evidenced by the February 4 mobilization, although Colombia Soy Yo explicitly stated that neither the organization nor the march were political, both the government and the media portrayed it as a pro-Uribe mobilization.

In their evaluation of NGOs as conflict managers, both Catherine Barnes and Diana Chigas cite that many organizations fail because they lack coordination with each other and strong networks. Although there are an increasing number of peace networks today that connect local, regional, national, and even international organizations, there is still a large amount of separation among organizations based on the diversity of goals, definition of peace, and thematic interests of each group and network. This lack of coordination can be blamed for the failure of many civil society initiatives such as the Asamblea Permanente and the Costa Rican meeting.

While researching and interviewing a number of organizations in Colombia, I began to believe that coordination was becoming less of a problem because almost all peace organizations are now part of a larger network. The interviewees told me about a number of projects they were working on with other organizations and about how many of these relationships are new. These relationships are promising but they still have a

long way to go in order to create a larger, coordinated effort. Ana Maria Carbonell of Fundación Escuelas de Paz recognized this problem. She argued that although her organization works with a variety of other education oriented organizations, the peace movement as a whole is not connected. She said that "Even though there are many peace movements, we work very disconnectedly and we do not have a constructive, group project, a common project" (interview Ana Maria Carbonell, 09/05/08). In order for the peace movement to be more successful, these organizations must work together towards a common goal.

Table 3.1: Successes and Failures of Peace CSOs

Successes	**Failures**
Increase in media recognition	Unsuccessful in ending conflict
Increasing education and awareness through an increase in publications, conferences, and internet websites	Limited access to governmental peace efforts
Increase in networks at all geographic levels	Little governmental support and recognition
Ability to mobilize large numbers of people (in late 1990s and again in late 2000s)	Difficulty in swaying the general public towards support of a negotiated settlement (post Pastrana negotiations)
Increasing "success" at the local level	Lack of coordination among organizations

Despite the numerous weaknesses or failures of Colombian civil society peace organizations, I argue that they have had many important successes, which makes them valuable players in the peace movement and important additions to society.

Conclusions

My research can be used to add to and support many of the claims that are being made in recent literature about Colombian peace movements. My interviews and

investigations give further evidence that the peace movement has grown exponentially since the early 1990s and has had an important impact on policymakers and citizens alike. The heterogeneity of the peace actors and organizations has contributed to the diversity of actions and goals of the movement and has allowed more people to become involved.

After researching peace activism in Colombia and seeing many activists in action, my fears about the movement have been quelled. My previous concern that civil society activism had been muted under the Uribe government is no longer a concern. I witnessed the fortitude of these actors and organizations as they have searched for new and improved ways to not only end the conflict peacefully, but also bring about a more lasting peace through truth and reconciliation, social and political reforms, development programs, and peace and human rights education. They search for creative and innovative ways to impact citizens and the government in order to create a "culture of peace."

The future of the Colombian peace movement is unknown. It is doubtful that the conflict will end anytime soon, and as most things run in cycles, it is very likely that Colombian citizens will one day feel the same fervor for peace that they did in the late 1990s. Again they will join together and mobilize in mass numbers for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. They will convince their friends, families, neighbors and governments that a military victory is not the solution. But until that day comes, the peace movement must rely on peace organizations to promote its goals, protect its citizens, and propose its reforms and ideas to those in power.

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