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Civil Initiatives for Peace-building in Southern Tolima: Social Mobilization Processes as Scenarios for Resistance and Cooperation[1]

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Abstract

In the present article, two civil initiatives, based in the municipalities of Planadas and Chaparral, are characterized. These were generated to counteract difficulties caused by the Colombian armed conflict, and were necessary for the generation of a culture of peace in southern Tolima (Colombia). With a qualitative methodology, different approaches were applied to groups and social organizations, implementing case studies via interviews, participant observation, and participatory communication diagnoses. It was concluded that the disregard of the State and pressure from the armed conflict were decisive for the civilian movement in communities affected thereby. This set a position of resistance that generated bonds of union and modifications of the social fabric.

Key words: Peace; Social management; Civil resistance; Communication; civil initiatives.

1. Introduction

The investigative procedure that has focused its attention on the description and comprehension of the Colombian armed conflict has gone on for some time, and has included various players and scenarios, in which victims, as farmers, indigenous peoples, and vulnerable citi-

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zens, have been those most affected. With the dismantling of one of the most representative and vast illegal armed groups in the Colombian conflict, the *Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC),* a context was created, in which to consider a post-conflict scenario in which the key world is peace.

The intent of the present investigation was to show that peace is a process that was not only concluded with the Havana peace dialogues, but that also lives on in each of the communities which had been immerse in conflict scenarios, and which learned to survive and resist these, with or without state backing.

"Let us begin by verifying a basic fact: the 'war' has been a failure. Failure for the insurgency, which in forty years has not taken power, and failure for the state, which has been unable to stop the bleeding" (Gómez-Buendía, 2003, p. 16). These were the words with which the National Human Development Report for Colombia - 2003, entitled *El conflicto, callejón con salida,* and which sowed a hopeful view of the termination thereof described the conflict.

The idea of the failure of the war is where civil alternatives emerge, to counter conflict in the most geographically far-flung regions. These, owing to their rural conditions and large physical and real distances from the state's presence, were epicenters and corridors for armed struggles. In these places, affected populations were immerse in the armed conflict, and their options were to form part of it, or to resist.

Said resistance is marked within the recognition itself of communities and the territories in which they live. Specifically, southern Tolima (the Chaparral and Planadas municipalities), in addition to being named, for some time, the "red zone", given the presence of armed groups, is also a territory rich in biodiversity. Its mountain system and water resources characterize these municipalities as having soil apt for agriculture, owing to its fertility. This enabled agricultural production to be one of the area's strongest economic points, as far as the armed conflict permitted. The quality of coffee, cacao, and other exportation-type products produced in these municipalities became known both nationally and internationally.

The farming vocation of these municipalities diminished and were inconsistent, owing to the events of the armed conflict. However, with decreased armed confrontation beginning in the year 2000, these communities had the opportunity to fortify this aspect with a special characteristic. The difficult economic situation in the area made agricultural production quite complex, as farmers, without the support of the state, did not have the inputs necessary to expand the production of their farms to anything more than daily bread. For one of the leaders interviewed, *What farmers most identify with is general state abandonment. Farmers have no guarantees when they plant, because we see the overrun in inputs. Production is very difficult. Farmers work just to survive. Truly, the government and the state have not attempted to understand that the countryside and farmers are the greatest producers, those who feed the large cities. You can see that farmers are agglomerating in the cities, because they see no guarantees in the countryside. We live here because we love the land, not because it is really profitable or because there is any guarantee* (Personal communication, 2016).

Tatiana Alexandra Ávila Barbosa - Beatriz Helena Alba Sanabria

Despite these conditions, communities decided to autonomously initiate processes and combine forces to improve their quality of life, by way of the creation of productive organizations characterized by their origins and farming legacy.

2. Civil initiatives in response to the conflict and social inequality scenarios

The role played by social movements, in the defense of human rights, and in the search for justice and peace, has caused those affected by the armed conflict to find ways out of their vulnerable conditions, through the creation of social organizations. These initiatives arise "...as a result of civil society's organization, given the need to respond to and materialize their inconformity with that established and imposed by players who govern the dominant social system" (Juárez, Restrepo, and Botero, 2017, p. 2). Doubtless, this continues to be the opportunity of civil society to find a way to meet their needs, with the consolidation of collectives or associations, which have permitted their lives to be steered toward a more promising future.

The appearance and posterior consolidation of these civil initiatives were evidence of the absence of state support, as well as that of other essential players who economically, politically, and socially support these activities in Colombia, and who, for years, have left populations in the most remote parts of the country to their own devices. Social movements, from the above, are understood to be "...collective political players with mobilizing character (and as such, a participative space) which seek objectives of change through action (generally non-conventional). They are also agents of influence and persuasion that defy dominant interpretations regarding diverse aspects of reality" (Martí, 2014, p. 1).

From this perspective, social movements are symbolic integration initiatives for those with roles and functions with little-established characteristics, with variable organizations that lack linear, or defined, structures. Social organization, in response to the violent scenario of the armed conflict is understood to be "...collective actions, community organizations, or Colombian institutions that have sought, by their own means, solutions to the most severe consequences of the armed or social conflict that surrounds them" (González, 2010, p. 36).

The framework of civil initiative is fed by different definitions that prioritize its social quality, born of the community itself, as expressed also by Hernández (2009):

> Socially-based civil peace initiatives may be understood as scenarios for the construction of peace from the ground up, generators of :imperfect or unfinished peace:, built with the :pacifistic empowerment: of towns, communities, and populational sectors that assume and transform reality based on the values of their cultures and abilities, their non-violent responses to the defiance of compelling needs imposed by violence, and the dynamizing power of their dreams, in specific geographical contexts (p. 137).

Thus emerges the categorization of said initiatives, as national or community-based. The former consist of programs or proposals of governmental institutions, while the latter emerge as the ideas of a community or group of people. González (2009) typifies different community initiatives as, "Initiatives for development and peace, initiatives in favor of democracy and local development, initiatives based on resisting violence and conflict, and national initiatives such as: initiatives of education for peace and conflict resolution, State dialogue and negotiation initiatives, and recent mass-mobilization initiatives for peace".

In the present investigation, civil initiatives that fell within the community organizations described as *peace and development*, that "...promote the construction of peace in areas of conflict, through productive projects that ensure 'life with dignity' for their inhabitants" were identified (Hernández, 2009, p. 46). This is initiative with which the *Aprovocal productive association,* from the Calarma township of the Chaparral municipality, is affiliated, and lends bases in favor of democracy and local development. This "...emerges to promote citizen participation in democratic processes related to public matters and those of general interest" (Hernández, 2009, p. 46). Therein, the community radio network, *Musicalia Estéreo*, based in the Planadas, Tolima municipality, is present. Both processes are based in the southern part of the department, which are described in greater detail below.

The field of communication has a direct relationship with the construction of peace, which is based on the dialogue, participation, and interaction of all those involved in the horizontal and assertive communication process. By way of dialogue, all human beings share and exchange their ideas, thoughts, and positions freely and voluntarily. This enables the active and inclusive participation of all individuals, so as to generate change and repercussions in their ways of relating to others, in places and contexts that have been silenced and perturbed for years by violence and armed conflict.

In order to overcome the invisible structures of power and political oppression that remained for long decades in these municipalities, union and community work was necessary to construct peace. As a result of this, communicative strategies that equipped them with meaning, significance, and recognition for productive and social associations were implemented. The above is so, considering that communication is a determinant process for any movement or social initiative, as it represents the group of activities and procedures that permit interaction and idea and objective exchange for those that they hope to achieve.

Particularly in social organizations, solid ties of trust, teamwork, and communication are created, as axes of sustainability for those processes of articulation that permit cooperation and social fabric to be woven. "It is by way of the generation of communicative networks, where communication constructs meaning and significations produced by the public, by way of the reinforcement of collective actions" (Rocha, Moreno y Molina, 2011, p. 210).

Thus, communication is proposed as the basis for change processes, in the conformation and execution, through time, of civil initiatives, that, by way of a violent reality, decide to transform those contexts with proposals that contribute to the construction of peace. This peace is understood as actions that distance individuals from those episodes of conflict and violence present in their territories.

Tatiana Alexandra Ávila Barbosa - Beatriz Helena Alba Sanabria

A civil initiative inevitably passes through the creation of an interaction scenario which advocates for transformation of the social conditions of a community or group of people. This has been traced by communication for social change, from a practical exercise, beyond theoretical, from the end of the 1940s (Beltrán, 2006, p. 56) with community social proposals that, based on their inconformity with the economic and political reality of their regions, saw communication or culture as tools to transform these. *La Radio Sutatenza*, in Colombia, or *Radios Mineras*, in Bolivia, are examples of the infinity of social articulation process that are very much their own, in Latin American realities, which provide historical support to specific social convergences, as founders of micro-level societal change processes.

Specifically, project implementation was oriented toward the identification of communication processes for social change within civil initiatives that could not strictly correspond to means of communication or activities derived from social communication or community journalism processes, but also from different types of initiatives, for whose axis of interaction and articulation with their members corresponded to communicative ties and fabrics, although in a basic sense of interaction. For this reason, the idea of communication for social change, understood as "...an ethical communication, or from identity and the affirmation of values, amplifies hidden or silenced voices, and seeks to strengthen their presence in the public sphere. Recuperate dialogue and participation as central axes"(Gumucio, 2004, p. 6), is used as a starting point from which to transcend from a media outlook to a social communication outlook.

3. Methodology

The present investigation, from a qualitative point of view, was interested, in the terms of Lukas and Santiago (2004), in the comprehension of the "...meanings of human actions for the different individuals involved in social action" (p. 28), human actions being within civil initiatives. With this methodology, and in-depth analysis was performed of the interpretations of those subjects involved in the highlighted social initiatives, by way of an exploratory study, which identified perceptions and values shared by the communities studied.

The qualitative approach contributed to the analysis of communication processes for peace in southern Tolima, "...by way of dialogue, interaction, and experience, which are determined via consensuses that emerge from the sustained exercise of processes of observation, reflection, dialogue, creation of shared meaning, and systematization" (Sandoval, 1996, p. 30).

The investigation was implemented in two phases, which permitted the fulfillment of those specific objectives proposed. The first phase corresponded to the identification of citizen communication for peace processes in two municipalities in southern Tolima, by way of searching and tracking throughout the regional territory, the different peace initiatives generated by citizens in order to overcome the armed conflict were identified. In the second phase, the position that communication occupied in citizen peace processes was explored, based on the characterization of two civil initiatives, by way of the case study method, which

Robert Yin defines as: "...an exploration that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real context of existence" (Sandoval, 1996, p. 91).

In order to carry out the characterization of initiatives, a participative communication diagnostic was performed, which permitted an interactive process, via direct contact with the community. In the encounter spaces, idea, information, point of view, and experience exchange occurred between individuals and groups.

> With this methodology, communication is a two-way street, in which individuals are valuable sources of information and ideas, and are very important to hear. Passivity does not exist in this process, as it requires the active mental cooperation of all those involved, until common understanding and awareness is achieved [...]. In the context of development, this communication approach presupposes that all players are equal (Anyaegbunam, Mefalopulos, and Moetsabi, 2008, p. 19).

The methodological development implies closeness to the selected initiatives, via gatherings and meetings in which the different participative research techniques, such as surveys (in the first phase) for collective classification, interviews of leaders, initiative members, and community members, to learn and understand their opinions and perceptions regarding the topic under study, were applied. Simultaneously, these permitted participant observation of the different dynamics and routines of social organization members. Further, a documentary review was performed for information regarding collectives, both with print and digital documents. Lastly, a participative communication diagnostic was carried out with each initiative, in which instruments such as sociograms, social cartography, and problem trees, among other things, were utilized.

By way of the participative diagnostic, the involvement of communities, not only in information gathering, but also in the prioritization and analysis of their problems and needs was revealed. As such, and in accordance with that proposed, two of the identified civil initiatives that were conformed to combat the conditions of vulnerability caused by the armed conflict are presented.

4. Communication for social change in civil initiatives

4.1 *Aprovocal* (Calarma Association of Producers from Organized Townships)

In the municipality of Chaparral, over 25 km from the municipal seat, it is located between the mountains that surround the Cañón de las Hermosas, Calarma township, and four hamlets: Brazuelos, El Torredón, Vistahermosa, and Risalda. In the last of these, the *Aprovocal* (Calarma association of producers from organized townships) organization was created. This consists of female farmers who decided to unite, in order to improve their quality of life, by way of the cultivation and production of exportation-type coffee, of the castillo, colombia, and caturra

Tatiana Alexandra Ávila Barbosa - Beatriz Helena Alba Sanabria

varieties. The area is identified by its agricultural geography and landscape, in which coffee, cacao, and plantain plantations predominate, given the fertility of the land.

The association was created in 1986, with the support of the Tolima Coffee Farmer Committee, and was legally constituted in March of 1990, so as to improve the quality of life of township families, and support the women interested in leading township projects based from the association, and thus step out of their daily routines as homemakers. "*Before, one spoke of men. There were very few women who sought to lead".* One Aprovocal leader says*, "We sought a way to improve our quality of life ourselves, instead of always waiting for the man to work and provide our daily bread"* (personal communication, 2016). *Aprovocal* consists of 54 families, approximately, including single mothers and owners of farms apt for coffee cultivation, with annual production of nearly 50,000 kg.

This female role transformation occurred as a consequence of the permanent changes in economic, political, and social conditions in Colombia, which motivated them to leave their traditional conditions to the side, so as to participate and actively manage processes in contexts other than their homes. "As a consequence of the struggles of feminist movements, women began to participate more in the public sphere, and achieved incursion into the work environment, as active subjects in different organizations of various kinds" (Garbiras, in Hernández, Barreto, and Gutiérrez, 2017, p. 76).

Aprovocal is a community organization that has persisted, from its creation to the present day, owing to the continual work of its leaders and members, who, in addition to, little by little, consolidating their productive processes, have also obtained local, regional, and national achievements, given their good practices. These have been recognized by governmental entities and those specialized in coffee production. It should be noted that the main action axes of this organization are the participation of women from the coffee region, as single mothers, and the contribution of the association to the community on economic, social, and cultural levels.

This association is differentiated from other productive organizations in the area and characterized by its female empowerment and leadership, which has generated spaces and opportunities for their access to both individual and Collective activities that have legitimized their role and perception in the community. For this reason, "empowerment is among the fundamental strategies of community transformation" (Erazo, Jiménez y López, 2014, p. 151), as it permits self-management processes to be carried out to strengthen the entire community's ideas and projects.

Since its founding, *Aprovocal* has supported the consolidation of peace in its territories, as it has generated economic development by way of the creation of the special coffee production project. This work contributes to the economic growth and consolidation of families that work to overcome inequality and reduce rates of poverty and forced displacement, with the objective of achieving greater equality and positivism among inhabitants of townships and hamlets of the Chaparral municipality. This participation has permitted that both women and their families be focused on the improvement of their special coffee brand, leaving the discrimination and stigmatization that has categorized them for years, as victims of the armed

Figure 1. *Creation of the mural of a woman from the Coffee Axis in the APROVOCAL collection center. Photo taken in May of 2016 in the Calarma township, in which the participative workshop took place with members of this civil initiative.*

Source: Photo taken by Paola Vargas (2016).

conflict, especially owing to the notion and perception of this area of the Tolima department and its indirect relationship with aggressors (subversive groups), to the side.

On an internal level, *Aprovocal* has been an organization, consisting of family groups, in which customs and the generational succession prevail, as the founders delegate the roles of leading new social processes to their daughters and family members. This situation demonstrates the importance of the power of belonging to and continuing with this association, via the trajectory constructed in the townships and Chaparral municipality.

Aprovocal has implemented transcendental projects for the regional economy, for which reason these women, from the coffee region, have become references in the community, with their perseverance and dedication to actions and strategies that benefit not only association affiliates, but also the community in general. In these territories, the notions of war and violence do not exist because agricultural crops and exportation-type coffee production became the protagonists that have legitimated civil movements as essential actors and the future of the population.

4.2. *Musicalia Estéreo* community radio: the south speaks

In the mountains of the Planadas municipality float the sound waves of the modulated frequency of the community radio station Musicalia Estéreo. For twenty years, this initiative has existed as a communication process characteristic of southern Tolima, with the intent to create a radio space that would be nearer to the realities that characterize the municipality.

On December 19, 2007, after broadcasting for ten years, the Ministry of Communication approved its project, as a community radio program, which today reaches 80% of the Planadas municipality. This is, majoritarily, a rural area, with beautiful mountainous geography, plentiful water and a warm climate. Said frequency also reaches the northern part of Huila (Baraya, Santa María, Limón), the Cañón de las Hermosas, San Antonio, Santiago Pérez, and other parts of Ataco and Chaparral townships. According to the community radio broadcaster, "*Community*

Tatiana Alexandra Ávila Barbosa - Beatriz Helena Alba Sanabria

radio stations reached where nobody else could, geographical corners, that's where community radio stations are. This is the reporting work that we have done in the construction of peace" (personal communication, 2016).

"The radio station that belongs to all and is for all" identifies the station's undertaking, based on social community service, which is the axis of Musicalia's work. Many approach the station to request community solidarity when faced with a problem, for example, poor health or that of their family. The radio station serves as an intermediary for this type of work. The different programs emitted are created by the community itself. Thus, the municipality hospital, coffee committee, municipality, various churches, other institutions, and municipality players all have radio space.

The peculiarity of *Musicalia* is in its implementation of community campaigns in different areas of the municipality, extending social work beyond the microphones and radio cabin to propose meeting scenarios, such as the provision of school *kits* to municipality children, during the month of January, the Musicalia Christmas soccer cup, which provides uniforms and prizes to children between 10-15 years of age, rewards for the best Icfes results in the municipality, and celebration of special days, such as Mother's Day, among other things. All of these activities are performed jointly with Planadas institutions that support them.

Figure 2. *Mural, Una pincelada por la paz, in the township Sur de Atá (Planadas), created by the Musicalia Estéreo radio community.*   **Source:** photograph taken by Durley Vásquez (2016)

In the environment of scenarios that support the construction of peace, initiatives such as the mural, *Una pincelada por la paz,* stands out. Said mural is located in the township Sur de Atá, and was created by children from 10-13 years of age. With their drawings, they represented what, to them, meant peace, and were rewarded with bicycles, with the support of the armed forces and local government.

Further, the radio programming includes programs with emphases on peace. Together with the Pijao Network, they broadcast programs such as *Pasa la Paz, Tierra al Derecho,* by USAID, and *En línea con el presidente*, in which special transmissions, such as those made from the *FARC* concentration area in San Miguel, with delegates from the High Commissioner for Peace and this armed group, or *Píldoras para la paz*, with messages from important individuals such as the Pope, who invite reflection on the role of peace constructions in nuclear families. In addition to special broadcasts, such as *Voces de paz*, eight historic recollection programs are emitted in the municipalities most affected by the war. In the words of the community broadcaster, *we open spaces for all, so that they can count on peace, which is what we are working toward* (personal communication, 2016).

Thus, they form part of the network of community radio stations that work in outreach, and support the *SIPAZ* network, 488 radio stations throughout the country, which make Marquetalia, the epicenter of the armed conflict, visible in stories such as the negotiation of peace of the *Nasa,* indigenous town hall with the *FARC, events that lend importance to this initiative.* On the topic, the community radio broadcaster affirms, *We have reconstructed historical memory, dialogued with those who have been immerse in the armed conflict about how it began, what it was like, referring to Planadas 20 years ago, and the way it is today. We have drawn these parallels so that the community sees that the municipality has advanced* (personal communication, 2016).

The audience that interests them most are is youth. As such, recently, they began online diffusion, and to emit their programming via internet, daily, and hope that *planadunos* in other regions, will listen in. The hope is that the radio station and its campaigns and programming will positively affect the young, who they consider those called to transform the municipality, considering that, *here, we have always wished to be involved with all entities that propose community participation and aid programs* (personal communication, 2016), says the community radio station broadcaster.

Financing, as with the majority of national community initiatives, is one of the processes' weaknesses, for which reason they use publicity, institutional messages, and municipality commerce to pay their group of employees and perform team maintenance. The community radio broadcaster indicates that, *Sustaining a radio station is not easy, and many times one thinks that, because we are a community station, managers or broadcasters, everything has to be free, and it is difficult to pay broadcasters from outside the municipality, maintain studies, pay for electricity, utilities, clearing, the secretary...it is difficult* (personal communication, 2016).

In accordance with the testimony of the leader of the community radio station (personal communication, 2016), it may be confirmed that the armed conflict, for the radio station,

located in one of the municipalities at the epicenter of the armed confrontation between *FARC* guerrillas and state armed forces, has directly and indirectly influenced its development. They recall, specifically, one violent episode that they experienced, approximately ten years ago, as they had recently obtained their license as a community radio station. They were notified of a summons to meet with the guerrilla, after they had set fire to the place in which the radio towers were located. In the decision to remain on the margins of the confrontation, they failed to heed the summons, and instead emitted the radionovela *Río de Pasiones,* recorded in Putumayo, which discussed matters such as narcotrafficking, paramilitarism, and guerrilla. This provoked the guerrilla to take their equipment, forcing them to remain off-air for over fifteen days, and obligating them to negotiate for the return of the equipment, which, in the end, was delivered damaged. They highlight that the community was supportive during this episode, and supported the radio station the entire time, so that they could return to the airwaves.

Along the same lines, different episodes of content censure occurred, such as when official sources from the armed forces or police could not be interviewed for information diffusion, and no type of campaign or program could be emitted, in which these players had any kind of impact. This included demobilization campaigns, and information about captured individuals from their armed group, as according to the leader of the community radio station, *here, there was a time in which it seemed that they were in power* (personal communication, 2016). It was after the definitive arrival of the armed forces to the area that the situation changed, and they could dedicate themselves to programs that promoted peace.

The radio competition of Musicalia is the national army station, which works with 1,800 watts, while they have a range of just 220, regulated by the Ministry of Communication. As explained by the community radio station leader, *People always prefer the radio station for community work and spaces provided to the community itself in its programming. People say that, although it is a community station, there is nothing to envy about a commercial. In terms of community work, people always prefer it* (personal communication, 2016). This affirmation is confirmed by other community members, with respect to *Musicalia*'s recognition in the municipality, as is the case of an official of the *Department for Social Prosperity (DSP)*, who indicates that, *the impact has been significant, because by way of this, communication arrives more quickly to communities. The message is quick in its coverage, the communities heed the invitations, meetings, and events that the radio station reports* (personal communication, 2016).

Currently, the station creates strategic alliances with municipal and departmental institutions, whether for specific campaigns or radio slots. On a local level, they coordinate with the mayoral office, army, hospital, police, religious communities, and firemen, among others. On the departmental level, they coordinate with the governorship of Tolima, *Cortolima*, and internationally, with *USAID*.

6. Conclusions

The civil initiatives identified for this study were framed within the proposition of scenarios for the direct construction of peace. They do not confront the conflict scenario, but rather, through the absence of well-being indirectly derived from the violent scenario, the best strategy to articulate their expectations for change were found within the social organization: one from the standpoint of productivity, and another from communication. Both provide paths, within social organizations, to peaceful environments.

The emergence of initiatives occurred with the recognition of state abandonment by its inhabitants, who did not find, on one hand, a solid, robust economy that would permit dignified living conditions, specifically including support for agricultural production, which is the area's strength, as it is populated by farmers and indigenous people. They opted instead to construct, via productive organizations, solutions that contributed to making their agricultural economy profitable. On the other hand, given the absence of social meeting spaces, they proposed a means of communication which would meet their communicative needs, as a specific region besieged by the armed conflict, but which is incredibly complex in terms of geography and diversity, as they had no meeting point to interact as a region.

The civil initiative corresponding to the *Musicalia Stereo* radio station, from the Planadas municipality, responds to a direct communication exercise to resist the armed conflict, from which one may underscore the participative intent of the territory's community initiative, in favor of democracy and local development, promoting information and the discussion of public topics and those of general interest to the inhabitants of the region (González, 2010). It is also a plural environment, open to the community, its ideas, and expectations, which transcend the mere exercise of production of participative radio content, to generate collective action in the territory, in order to support the solution of municipal problems.

In the case of *Aprovocal*, peace has been constructed with management practices, led by women, to transform their lives and traditions, because they have focused their attention and efforts on improving exportation-type coffee cultivation and production processes. For this reason, peace, beyond being an ideal state, with the end of war and violence, is a condition related to the improvement of community quality of life. For the members of this association, violence and the existence of armed groups has ceased to exist in their territories. Meanwhile, other problems, such as the absence of the state, lack of education and employment opportunities, and the latent presence of difficulties to continue cultivating in the countryside have become more evident.

Civil resistance for peace in southern Tolima reflects determinant stances for the construction of peace, from the standpoint of non-violence[4], by way of pacific mechanisms, processes, and

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4 Non-violence: a group of procedures and techniques that permit management, transformation, and even resolution and transcendence of certain conflicts. Its main peculiarity is renouncing the use of violence to obtain justice, equality, freedom, human rights, etc., rejecting passivity or acquiescence, but leaving the door open to negotiation, commitment, and constructive work with the adversary. Proposal of Mario López- Martínez (2004, p. 308).

Tatiana Alexandra Ávila Barbosa - Beatriz Helena Alba Sanabria

actions of those collectives that united to seek the end to and solution of their inequalities and vulnerable conditions. These social movements have permitted the transformation of the notion and social stigmatization that affected them, in decades past, for living in areas affected by the armed conflict, thanks to efforts that lend meaning to their actions, and support for the construction and mobilization of peace from the community networks in which they find support, union, and community.

Specifically, the initiatives studied perceive a social mobilization process, in which members, using their own means and tools, act to change the problematic scenarios that surround them, and initiate processes that, indistinctly from their nature, create scenarios of peace and support the improvement of their living conditions.

In terms of communication, *Aprovocal* and *Emisora Musicalia Estéreo* are able to create social recognition and repercussion in the region to which they belong. The absence of professionalization and communicative expertise has not been an impediment for them to showcase their actions or achievements. In the case of *Aprovocal*, its leaders have implemented and participated in events by which they position and ensure visibility of the coffee product. Further, they have used radio stations in Chaparral and nearby municipalities to inform the community of association advances. Recently, they created a website that is under construction at present, on which they hope to publish news and information related to their activities. Musicalia Estéreo, as a community radio station, has been able to include population participation in radio slots, as well as social activities, in addition to leading processes of reconstruction of historical memory, with events and stories narrated by those in the municipality. As such, the affective link of the community with this radio station is the motor by which these processes are made visible and are recognized over time.

Consequently, the role of communication, for these movements, has enabled nearness to the population and its context, including success and recognition of the actions and projects implemented. Thus, communication is, historically, in this population, one of the pillars of the resistance, mobilization, and social vindication.

The exploration of the different initiatives which have emerged in these populations that have suffered from the armed conflict permits the demystification of these places and their populations, as exclusive areas of armed conflict, which have been stigmatized for this reason, and enabled visibility of the infinity of processes that occur there, such that natural, agricultural, and human wealth may also define and characterize them. It is also shown that not only the peace dialogues established by the national government construct peace, but so too do the communities. These can support said efforts with small proposals for the transformation of environments and scenarios that, before, had been exclusively for.

Continual visibility of civil initiatives for peace permits us a glimpse of community contributions to the post-conflict stage, foreseen nationally, with the objective of transcending institutional peace, to experiences constructed by the community, as symbols of resistance to violence and strategies by which the social fabric may be enhanced.

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