



NGOs and Conflict Management.

Peacebuilding activities in International Crisis.

Analysis, Experiences, Perspectives.

ABSTRACT

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NGOs and Conflict Transformation. Peacebuilding activities in International Crisis. Analysis, Experiences, Perspectives.

The general introduction to the research presents the first responsibility of confidence building; that being to reinforce the framework of collaboration between Italian institutions and the civilian workers of Non Government Organizations.

This is articulated in three parts, the aim of each being to contextualise the research, with respect to the elaboration, both in theory and in practice, of the institutions and civilian organisations involved in peace work, trying to create a fertile ground of common comparison between peace workers and civilians, between whom synergy appears to be urgently needed.

In the first part of the general introduction, Dr. Del Turco reviews the terms, concepts and some problematic aspects associated with missions in support of peace, with reference to the approach taken by diplomats and experts in the field of international politics. The second part of the introduction opens with an elaboration of the concept of subvention and a description of the processes of integration and co-operation between national and international institutions, broadening to cover the relationship between non government organisations and other institutions.

The third part of the introduction presents the concept of multi-track diplomacy. This values all the initiatives of civilian society and represents the most up to date system to bring these forces together, with respect for the identity of everyone involved, and to increase the effectiveness of their operations.

The first part of the research (chapters 1-3) presents a series of conceptual instruments, useful to the understanding of the current state, potential, and spheres of activity of the confidence building work undertaken by non government organisations.

In the first chapter a general distinction is presented by Giovanni Scotto between different types of third party intervention in conflict situations.

These are peace work, humanitarian action, the protection of human rights, and co-operation in development. The problematic relationship between these goals and their attainment and the construction of peace is also examined. The chapter concludes with a valuation of the temporal axis in which the instruments of intervention in conflict are situated: and as well as intervention in situations of crisis and peace building, the issue of the prevention of violence is also introduced.

Johan Galtung, the internationally renowned researcher and author of *The 3 R's After Violence* (reconstruction, reconciliation and resolution of the causes of conflict), deals in a detailed manner with the principle questions raised in peace processes in the second chapter. Every conflict, according to Galtung, can be read as a composite of three distinct dimensions: the actions of the parties (direct violence), the psychological cognitive dimension of their attitudes and perceptions, and the objective component of the structural contradictions at the base of the conflict (structural violence). The vicious circle of war and violence can be broken by resolving the three connected problems and the constituent components of conflict: the material reconstruction necessary after violence, reconciliation between the parties and the resolution of the underlying problems that provoke conflict.

In the third chapter Prof. Francesco Tullio deals in depth with the emotional and communicative dimension of conflicts and peace processes that make up part of the sphere referred to by J. Galtung as "cultural violence". The psychosocial dimension is underlined and the relationship between psychological, interpersonal and intergroup violence is investigated.

The relationship between political-economic and psychic crisis is explored at the example of the ex Yugoslavian experience, of the psychic position of Mr. Slobodan Milosevic and the attitude of a significant part of the Serbian population. This analysis is necessary in the confrontation of external conflict, and for a nation to develop its security and potential to intervene as a third party in international conflict. The contribution of psychical science to the comprehension of the dynamics of violence and aggression, between both individuals and groups, is notable, both in the formulation of strategies of intervention in conflict and the training of peace operators, and is increasingly recognised by both diplomats and international civilian society.

This chapter also considers one of the instruments of track two diplomacy, that of informal meetings to create dialogue, along with an appraisal of the role of the means of mass communication and the collective psychology of conflict processes.

The second part of the research collects concrete experience of constructive work towards peace and democracy.

The fourth chapter describes in depth post war experiences from Kosovo in 1999. Confidence building activities between the two communities are seen at the centre of a greater political picture: the European Union's offer of the prospect of regional integration to the states and peoples of south east Europe, with the launch of the stability agreement for the region. The plans presented regard the work of the campaign for a non violent solution in Kosovo, active since 1993, and a series of initiatives for reconciliation realised after the end of the war in 1999. This chapter is largely based on material collected by Alberto L'Abate of the University of Florence.

The fifth chapter, written by Mauro Cereghini, with the collaboration of Davide Sighele, offers a detailed description of five Italian NGO's engaged in confidence building activities: the Community of Sant'Egidio, the Operazione Colomba proposed by the Associazione Pope Giovanni XXIII, the Peace Brigades International, Beati i Costruttori di Pace ("Blessed are the Peacemakers"), and the Zavidovici Embassy of Local Democracy. The chapter ends with a summary of the five case studies, their principle characteristics, and their strengths and the difficulties encountered in the interventions described.

The sixth chapter presents the results of empirical research conducted by Francesco Tullio and Raffaele Vertucci which covers several Italian non government organisations. The results are presented in tables, regarding the individual organisations, according to their context and type, then according to the phases of the conflicts in which intervention took place, and then the type of diplomatic approach followed, according to the category of multitrack diplomacy. The results make it clear that the Italian NGO's demonstrate the necessary competence to contribute in a systematic manner to conflict management and the drawing up of strategic plans, work which makes an indispensable contribution to the extension of international democracy and puts in place the best conditions for the management of global conflict.

The two chapters that follow expand upon the perception of constructive civilian intervention, which until now has centred on the role of the Italian NGO's as a "third party".

The seventh chapter, by J.M. Mueller, presents a series of experiences in confidence building: UN missions conducted in cooperation with international civilian society; mediation, observation and non violent intervention; permanent embassies of local democracy, an example of which being the model of confidence building put into practice by Pat Patfoort through dialogue workshops in The Caucasus.

The integrationalist perspective is argued in the eighth chapter, where various authors present experiences of local initiatives for peace, demonstrating that the internal protagonists of the conflict should themselves be the ones to help create the resources essential to the overcoming of the causes of violence. The research covers South Africa, the Basque Country, Northern Ireland, Guatemala and Columbia. The use of pertinent examples helps reinforce the importance of grass roots involvement and the exploitation of local resources in the pursuit of peace.

The third part of the research consists of two chapters that cover three lines of development important to the future enhancement of the effectiveness of confidence building work carried out internationally in conflict situations.

The ninth chapter collects documents and analysis on the project of the civilian Peace Corps, based on the idea of constructing a new institution which would operate at the national level, yet still expressing a civilian identity, capable of constructive intervention in conflict. Statements made by pan-national organisations such as the OSCE, The Council of Europe, The European Council, The European Union, the European Parliament, and the UN are reported, giving account of the necessity for the participation of suitably trained civilian personnel in the management of conflict.

This research demonstrates that Non Government Organizations are the natural candidates for this task, already having the resources and fundamental skills required. It is also argued that collaboration between official institutions and civilian groups is essential to the smooth running of such an undertaking. The activity of the Civilian Peace Corps should be based on the wealth of experience accumulated by the NGO's in this field. Alongside the Civilian Contingent of Peace, it will also be important to create a National Institute for Research and Training in the field of Peace and Conflict. This should emerge through the collaboration between institutions, among them the various universities that are currently working towards this goal.

The project of the Centre for the Study on Civilian Defence (Centro Studi Difesa Civile) presents the proposals detailed, regarding the organisational and operative aspects of the Peace Corps, so as to allow a rapid synchronisation between institutions working in areas of conflict, including the military.

The tenth chapter concerns the training of peace workers, and presents, in the context of international and Italian experience, a proposal for a training course for those involved in peace missions which has been drawn up by the Centro Studi Difesa Civile (CSDC). This course accompanies traditional teaching with the

development of relational abilities indispensable in conflict, dealt with through models well proven in group work and in strategic and organisational problem solving.

The three lines of development proposed (the creation of an Italian contingent of civilian Peace Corps to be made available to international organisations, the creation of a national institute for the research of conflict management, and specialised training for civilian peace workers) aim to improve of the quality of confidence building and peace work, a goal that can be achieved by exploiting to the full the potential of Italian civilian society for the realisation of a democratic approach to international missions in support of peace.