New Horizons in European Studies

Aston University, 24-25 April 2014

www.uaces.org

Ignasi Torrent Oliva
Pompeu Fabra University
International Relations Area
PhD candidate
December 2012
Contact: ignasi.torrent@gmail.com

Dealing with Reconciliation: A Theoretical Framework and its Policy Fundaments

Abstract

This working paper aims to stress the need for coherence between theory and practice in regard of the process of reconciliation in a post-conflict context. The texts analyses first the fundaments of conflict and its causes from a critical perspective. From this analysis, the article moves forward with the exposition of a theoretical framework for reconciliation taking into account the pitfalls pointed in the previous analysis. Finally the author describes a couple of implemented policies aimed at reconciliation implemented in the Basque Country and Bosnia-Herzegovina, respectively. Through the description of these two practices implemented in real scenarios, the author reinforces the theoretical model for reconciliation and the link to its policy outcome.

Key words: peace, policy, reconciliation, relationship, social-psychology, transformation.

"Reconciliation is the most natural thing in the world", Desmond Tutu.

Introduction

This article is principally intended to reflect the necessity for theory and practice to complement each other in the field of peace and conflict studies. More specifically, the text describes a theoretical framework for reconciliation processes in post-conflict societies and two real practices supporting this model that have been implemented in real scenarios. Based on research questions such as "how can we operationalize the theory on reconciliation between previously confronted communities?", or "what are the feasible policies aimed at reconciliation like?" the author needs beforehand to clear up the methodological issue.

The two major methodologies to develop research in social sciences are the so called deductive and inductive methods. On one side, deductive methodology (based on a top down approach) works from the more general to the more specific. It starts by thinking up a theory and then narrows it down to a more specific hypothesis to be tested. Through observations the researcher may come to a conclusion. Many academics in the field of peace and conflict studies use deductive methodology. On the other side, inductive methodology (based on a bottom up approach) evolves from observations to broader generalizations and theories. By detecting common patterns, practices and particularities it formulates hypothesis and finally some general conclusions. A comparative study between different study cases is a good example of inductive methodology. This paper develops the analysis based on a deductive methodology. However, from an integrating perspective, the author emphasizes how combinable and interdependent both methods are. The text expresses how, particularly in the field of peace and conflict studies, theory and practice may influence and transform each other.

It should also be highlighted the general disagreement on finding common definitions for key concepts such as peace, conflict, reconciliation or security, often expressed in endless theoretical dilemmas, as well as few practical outputs this theory brings about. Often the complexity underlays on operationalizing the theory and the concepts. Researchers should not miss the ultimate goal consisting of coming up with policy-oriented conclusions. All theory lacks sense if it is not accompanied by practical, fruitful and tangible implementation. And conversely, successful practices should be grouped in general observations in order to transfer them to different contexts. That is the reason why this article pays careful attention to the description of both a theoretical framework and two real practices that fulfill the theoretical arguments presented.

The first chapter starts with references to masters of philosophy close to critical and post-modern thought. By doing this, the author aims to develop analysis in the field of peace and conflict studies avoiding any previous assumption about what conflict is. In other words, the text intends to start the analysis from the roots, from the structural causes of the conflict. The article briefly describes the conflict concept from a critical approach. By quoting masters of philosophy, the author establishes a starting point to develop the following analysis.

In the second chapter the article describes the structural conditions a context requires to develop a potentially successful process of reconciliation. It is pointed out how essential is to be a good connoisseur of the historical background of the affected society as well as of its cultural features.

Then a conceptual graphic is presented to frame the reconciliation process within what the author calls the cycle of peace and conflict. Reconciliation is described through the frame of conflict. On this section the article moves forward with the operationalization of the reconciliation concept in order to make the analysis over real experiences feasible. In particular, two different policies aimed at reconciliation are described: moral actions, that aim at the social-psychological process or change a society needs to experience before engaging in a successful process of reconciliation; and transformative actions, that attempt to transform the nature of the relationship among previously confronted communities. In this part, the concepts of "moral actions" and "transformative actions" are described. This part of the text is fundamental as it makes the theoretical concepts operational aiming to proceed with the analysis of the two following examples.

The final chapter is a detailed description of two implemented policies in real scenarios that support the previous model. Specifically, the first example presents a documentary that was broadcasted on the Catalan and Basque national TV where former members of ETA (*Euskadi Ta*

Askatasuna, in english Euskadi and Freedom) expressed their apologies to relatives of victims of terrorism. The second example describes an initiative developed in the post-war Bosnia where ethnically diverse educators were put together to carry out dialogue-based workshops.

Finally, the paper concludes with some final remarks that attempt to clear up some of the strong points highlighted along the text.

1-. The nature of conflict: a critical perspective

No one could disagree on the fact that western societies are still strongly influenced by the age of Enlightenment, the age of the blind faith in science and reason. Positivism has been hitherto the main stream in the field of knowledge, that is to say, we tend to think that things exist in an objective way, reality being external and alien to the individual who observes it (Pourtois and Demt, 1998). Nonetheless, masters of philosophy yet warned hundreds of years ago about the pitfalls of these "given" assumptions. Immanuel Kant, whom the author considers one of the fathers of reflectivism and therefore of constructivism and post-modernism, in the eighteenth century distinguished between our perceptions (*the phenomena*) and things *per se.* He states that reality is not directly accessible, but we perceive reality through what Kant calls a priori frames of our understanding. In his work, the philosopher asserts that conflict in itself can only exist through the subjective perception of their protagonists (direct and indirect parties, these including observers) (Kant, 1781).

To the author's understanding, this is the theoretical basis of the current theory of transformative peacebuilding: final resolution of conflict comes through the transformation of perceptions of protagonists towards the conflict. To be aware of the relativity of the nature of conflict, in the sense that we perceive the same situation differently according to our subjectivity, constitutes the first step to start dealing with the resolution of conflict and accordingly the establishment of lasting peace. This idea is at the core of the definition of the reconciliation process exposed in this paper.

Two centuries after Kant, the French sociologist Michael Foucault , retakes this idea of casting doubt on reality and criticizes the rooted custom of the West consisting of taking for granted all assumptions. Through his genealogical methodology of analysis, best known as the archaeology of knowledge, along with Jacques' Derrida de-construction concept, they present the idea of *de-constructing* all given assumptions ("realities") and study their roots and origin. In his findings, Foucault describes what he calls the discourse and regimes of truth. As he puts it, the narratives of the discourse (pre-designed by the power or the regimes of truth) tell us unambiguously what the varied and changing events of history must be taken to mean (Foucault, 1972: 21-31).

Approaching all this to the field of peace and conflict studies, Foucault states that nationalisms in conflict are regimes of truth whose interests crash. Therefore, to overcome these conflicts, it is required to cope with the narratives created by those regimes of truth (Foucault, 1984: 90). By mentioning these philosophers, the author aims to look at the root of conflict instead of taking for granted general assumptions in the field of peace studies. Thus, the starting point of this working paper and the approach used consist of de-constructing the concept of conflict, that is to say, to start the analysis from what actually causes conflict. In this sense, the author states that the root of conflict comprises a relational incompatibility due to a multifactorial causality (see next chapter) that brings about exclusive perspectives to the parties. Accordingly, the final resolution of conflict and the establishment of sustainable peace require the overcoming of the rooted causes that generated an incompatibility between parties and subsequently the transformation of their relationship so as to reconcile them.

2-. Needed structural conditions for reconciliation to happen

It is worth mentioning that this text does not intend to be a receipt for effective conflict resolution. Actually, there is not such receipt. Above all, one has to study in-depth the particularities of the context where the conflict takes place. In other words, anyone interested in understanding the conflict and being useful for its resolution should make an effort on getting to know the history of the place as well as the cultural specificities of its society.

Before reconciling the relationship among parties, certain structural conditions need to be met. In other words, we need to overcome those multifactorial causes that allowed and eased the stage of conflict. In his human needs theory (later known as the general theory of conflict), John W. Burton argues from an eclectic perspective that deep rooted conflict is caused by the denial of basic human needs: identity, security and distributive justice (Burton, 1979). In the same direction, the father of contemporary peace studies Johan Galtung describes what he calls structural violence. According to this author, structural violence is that form of indirect (non-visible) violence through which those in power institutionalize unjust social structures that will ultimately bring about the emergence of direct violence (Galtung, 1998: 13-28). A society with a high index of socioeconomic inequality and a protracted unfair distribution of wealth could be a good example of structural violence.

Integrating both theories, one could summarize that overcoming structural causes of conflict requires a multidimensional approach and its respective policies that should aim at: the provision of basic needs to people (food, health and education); a context of political freedom where, in Amartia's Sen words, one could fully develop its potential of being and making (Sen, 1979: 373-380); a fair socioeconomic context seeking a balance between equality of opportunities and rewarding for efforts made; and an impartial and independent judiciary system that enables and grants people to fully enjoy their rights as human beings. This idea is supported by the human security approach. This new paradigm in the field of security studies consists of transferring the approach from the military-based state security concept to the security of human being, whose protection demands multidimensional policies aimed to provide people with basic needs.

3-. Framing and operationalizing the concept of reconciliation

Aiming to contextualize the reconciliation process and easing thus the understanding of this concept, the author comes up with what he calls the cycle of peace and conflict.

Figure 1: Cycle of peace and conflict studies. Source: the author.
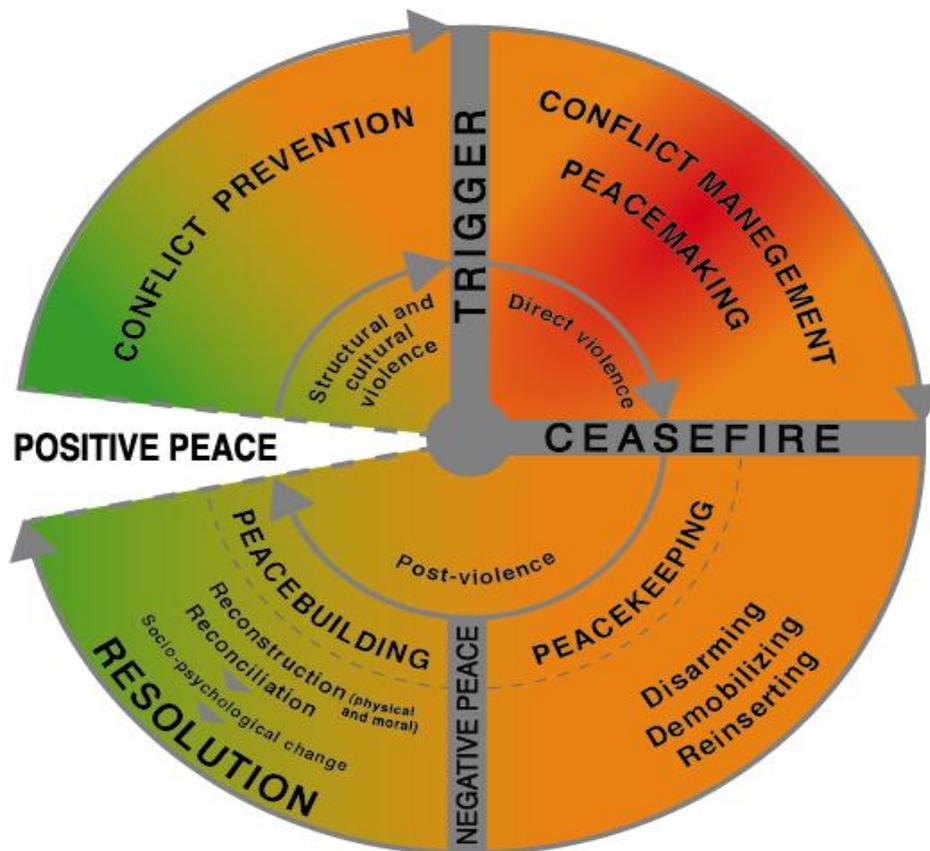
      The first phase of the cycle is known as conflict prevention phase, and it copes with structural and cultural violence and attempts not to allow these to turn into direct violence (Galtung, 1998:13-28). Usually, a trigger (be it political, social, economic or military) is the last and most tangible cause for violence to erupt. Once violence breaks out, academics face the stage of conflict management or peacemaking, field that basically seeks to end violence and minimize its consequences. A ceasefire and/or a peace agreement stops the direct violence. At this point, experts of peace studies start dealing with post-conflict situations, seeking first to consolidate a non-violent state by disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating soldiers in society. This is also known as peacekeeping or peace-enforcing process. This phase takes the society to a state of negative peace, which consists of a state where the re-emergence of violence will hardly occur but the previously confronted communities have not resolved yet the clash of interests that caused the conflict. Secondly, experts on post-conflict stages study how to build up a new context where people sort out their structural incompatibilities and thus can live together in peace and diminish at minimum levels the risk that violence erupts again. This final and perhaps the most complex stage is known as peacebuilding, and here is where reconstruction, reconciliation and, finally, resolution take place. When structural causes of conflict have been removed and society enjoys lasting peace, the context is labelled as positive peace.

Once structural causes have been faced, policies oriented to reconciliation have to be designed and implemented aiming at (a) the social-psychological change of the society involved into conflict and (b) the transformation of the relationship between the two previously confronted parties.

a) The social-psychological process and its policies: moral actions

In general, peace and conflict studies have paid little attention to social-psychology (Ogay, 2006: 269-277). Through using a social-psychological approach that deals with the relationship between individuals and society, we are able to situate the conflict in the perspective of the actors. To the author's understanding, that is a necessary step before negotiating a common solution for the conflict. Furthermore, war-torn societies need to experience a social-psychological change in order to see their previous enemies not as "the other", but as a group they will be soon living peacefully with. Any process of reconciliation requires first a social-psychological process, a transitional change.

In order to trigger the desired social-psychological change, the author describes what he calls moral actions. Specifically, there are four different policies that should be carefully considered by stakeholders aiming at:

- Truth: these actions are essential to write a common history which is the basis for the establishment of a peaceful common future. The need for a common history marks the beginning of shared beliefs that will unify the communities and thus enable living together. The truth is a transformative power for all stakeholders: public, victims and perpetrators (Daly, 2007: 140-179). However, the process of truth telling is not always easy or comfortable. Unless events present absolute evidence, parties and their protagonists display a biased attitude and position about the succeeded facts, hence the importance of structures such as truth and reconciliation commissions. Among many examples of practices aimed at truth, one may highlight the constitution of the mentioned truth and reconciliation commissions, trials, Ombudsman, investigations, documents or material provided by witnesses.

- Apology: acts aimed at apology represent the formal acceptance of responsibility and culpability. They call for forgiveness. The apology also labels the parties: the perpetrator and the victim. Usually these actions are expressed through official speeches (diplomatic acts). Out of the official sphere, speeches can also be given by leaders or relevant members of the parties. Concerning diplomatic acts seeking apology, one has to be aware that states are legal abstractions and not ethical persons. Accordingly, apologizes can never mean the same to states as to individuals (Cohen, 2004: 177-196).

- Forgiveness: actions expressing forgiveness constitute the only phase of the process that empowers both parties. It substitutes the culture of revenge and therefore the re-emergence of violence. Forgiveness is eventually an expression of love and mercy (Auerbach, 2004: 149-176) and the forswearing of resentment (Murphy and Hampton, 1998). As to the apology, forgiveness is usually displayed through official speeches or relevant members of the parties. The example of moral action that is described in the following section illustrates a good practice aimed at apology and forgiveness.

- Reparation: this is the material price the perpetrator has to pay to the victim. It is a restorative fine to cover the physical and/or psychological damage caused by the perpetrator to the victim. These actions usually consist of penalties imposed by the court or even voluntary donations.

b) The transformation of the nature of the relationship and its policies: transformative actions

Old paradigms in the field of systemic theory focused on the parties of the system individually without taking into account the nature of the system as a whole. And so was for the analysis developed in international relations, whose system was considered to be anarchic-based in the sense that states behave individually and according to their own interest (Waltz, 1959). Nonetheless, the field of International Relations has made important contributions to re-think its theoretical basis (Fetherson, 2000:190-218). New paradigms of analysis stress the key role of the relationship among parties of a system in order to understand in-depth the behaviour of these

parties as well as the system as a whole. In this sense, reconciliation processes constitute systems whose final success or failure depends fundamentally on the relationship amongst its parties.

In the field of peace and conflict studies, Burton describes what he calls "provention", referring to that process that provides a long-term and societal focus not merely on the conditions that create the environment of conflict, but more importantly the promotion of conditions to create a cooperative relationship (Burton, 1990: 3). In this same direction, John Paul Lederach describes his integrated model of peacebuilding. According to this author, the key phase in the whole process of conflict resolution and establishment of lasting peace is reconciliation, through which the relationship between previously confronted parties experiences a transformation. Specifically, as Lederach states, reconciliation is developed in an integrated frame that does not merely consist of the end of violence (negative peace), but of the construction of a new, positive and constructive relationship among previously confronted parties (positive peace). Accordingly, reconciliation becomes a structure-process concept: there is a transitional frame (structure) where the transformation of the nature of a relationship takes place (process) (Lederach, 1998: 51-65). It is relevant to note that a relationship is both the cause and the solution of the conflict.

In order to forge this transformation, experts design what the author calls transformative actions, aimed at the transformation of the nature of the relationship. While moral actions are aimed at the social-psychological change that will prepare people and its context for true reconciliation, transformative actions are directly intended to get previously confronted protagonists together and transform the nature of their relationship.

The aim of transformative actions is therefore to consolidate a positive and constructive interaction among previously confronted communities. Inter-group conflict usually arises out of mutual ignorance and if the groups get close, they would therefore get to know each other and not fear each other anymore. However simple contact can even make things worse. That is the reason why parties should be prepared to cooperate to achieve common goals (Cornellie, 1993: 40-60). Among many examples, one may mention inter-community initiatives or projects (such as rebuilding houses, preparing food or reconstructing infrastructures), organization of inter-group dialogues, inter-group artistic movements, intercultural exhibitions, tourist agencies organizing trips from one group's place to the other's or creation of inter-group mass-media.

4-. Implementing moral and transformative actions

This section presents two specifics examples of a moral action or practice and a transformative one. Firstly, the author describes the broadcast of a documentary on both Basque and Catalan national TV where former members of the terrorist group ETA (*Euskadi Ta Askatasuna*, Euskadi and Freedom) apologize to the victims of their violence. Secondly, the text gives details of an initiative carried out by the NGO the Karuna Center for Peacebuilding (KCP) consisting of organizing inter-group dialogues in two towns in the post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina.

5.1-. Example of moral action: *El perdó* (the forgiveness)

On 4 March 2012, *Televisió de Catalunya* (Catalan national TV) broadcasted a documentary about a couple of a few meetings that took place in the Basque Country where former members of the terrorist group ETA met relatives of victims of terrorism to apologize. Eduard Sanjuán and Mireia Pigrau, along with the collaboration of Txema Urkijo from the Office for Victims of Terrorism of the Basque Government, show through their documentary how former members of ETA meet and apologize to people who have suffered closely the violence of terrorism.

As described later, the broadcast of this documentary is considered to be a good example of moral action in view of (a) the echo the documentary had on the media and its subsequent effect on the general public, (b) the opinion of a few interview experts and personalities involved in the peace process and (c) the interview with the organizer of the meetings. It is directly aimed at apology and forgiveness.

Sanjuán's project started when he read an interview in a newspaper to Iñaki García Arrizabalaga, whose dad was assassinated by ETA in the eighties. In his declarations, García revealed how these meetings were taking place in Vitoria. The meetings were being organized by the Office for Victims of Terrorism of the Basque Government as a step further for the achievement of reconciliation and lasting peace in the Basque Country. At that time, eleven meetings had taken place, four of which got together the victim and the direct responsible for the crime committed to the victim's close relative.

The film consists mainly of three interviews. On the victims' side the witness is the same García whose dad, as just mentioned, was shot to death by ETA. The victim carefully relates his meeting with a former terrorist, who was not the direct responsible for García's dad death but for other assassinations (he wanted to remain anonymous in the documentary). García describes the feeling of revenge and hate he had during the first years after his dad's death. One day he realized that ETA had not only finished with his dad's life, but was also finishing with his one. "It was preventing me from living in peace with myself", he assures. After that, García changed his position radically and started engaging in many initiatives for the achievement of peace in the Basque Country. And that is the reason why he accepted to meet an ex-member of the terrorist group. He shows his conviction that, by forgiving him, Basque society is taking a step further on the way to reconciliation and lasting peace.

The second interview of the documentary was intended to be with a former member of ETA. This, as Sanjuan explains, was much more difficult to arrange. Eventually, Iñaki Rekarte, a former member of the terrorist group who participated in the meetings, accepted the proposal to tell his experience to the camera. Rekarte did not meet a direct victim of his crimes either, but a person who had suffered a close murder committed by ETA (this person also wanted to remain anonymous in the documentary). Rekarte exposes the contradictory feeling he had in prison consisting of the need for apologizing confronted with a feeling of fear and refusal. At some point, Rekarte confesses that, to him, apologizing was like acknowledging that part of his life had been a failure. At the end of the interview, he describes a feeling of defeat and pity he had once he had apologized and had been forgiven, but also a mysterious sensation of empowerment and a deep sense of working for peace in the Basque Country.

The last and shortest interview in the documentary is with Txema Urkijo, who is a consultant of the Office for Victims of Terrorism of the Basque Government and the responsible for the organization of these meetings. He gives details about the previous work that had to be done before the celebration of the meetings such as a three months session with psychologists and both parties,

separately. The victims as well as the ex-members of the group were being prepared for a strong psychological shock at the meeting. When concluding the interview, Urkijo reveals that a few interviews ended with both protagonists hugging.

To the author's analytical concern, the relevance of this case is not the celebration of these meetings in itself, but in the fact that the documentary about these meetings was broadcasted on the Catalan national TV and, later on, also on the Basque national TV. On 4 March 2012, around 750.000 people in Catalonia watched on TV former members of ETA apologizing and being forgiven by victims of terrorist violence in the Basque country. The protagonists express that what actually pushed them to attend the meeting was the desire for achieving reconciliation and establishing lasting peace.

Based on a qualitative evaluation, a few indicators give evidence that the broadcast of the documentary could be considered a successful moral action aimed at the social-psychological change. Firstly, the day after the broadcast, the documentary was on the front page of a few newspapers, which undoubtedly indicates a real impact on public opinion. Even though this may well have a negative effect on groups reluctant to give former terrorists a role in the peace process, "the meetings were a fundamental step in the path to a successful peace process", as Paul Ríos stated during an interview with the author. Furthermore, Txema Urkijo, also during an interview with the author, assured that "if the meetings between victims of terrorism and former members of ETA are not politicized and instrumentalized by public powers, they will be definitely fruitful for the peace process".

To sum up, and linking to the theoretical model presented in the previous chapter, this documentary is a good example of moral action aiming at social-psychological change within the society. Apology and forgiveness are key processes in this mentioned social-psychological transition. Thanks to the behaviour displayed on the documentary by both the victim and the perpetrator, Basque society is closer to a social-psychological scenario where people are better prepared to start a process of transformation of the relationship between parties and therefore to engage in the construction of positive and constructive peace.

5.2-. Example of transformative action: The Karuna Center for Peacebulding (Project DiaCom)

The Karuna Center for Peacebuilding (KCP) is a non-profit organization founded by Paula Green in 1994 based in the city of Amherst, Massachussetts, in the US. This organization addresses growing global challenges of ethnic, religious and political conflict. It basically provides education and training in conflict transformation, reconciliation and healing, and non-violent change. Karuna is the Sanskrit word for compassion. The KCP started its work aimed at post-conflict reconciliation as a reaction against the atrocities committed in the Bosnian War. Paula Green has extensive international experience in peacebuilding and conflict transformation, working as an international consultant, facilitator and lecturer in Europe (Bosnia among others), Asia, Africa and the Middle East as well as in the US.

Project DiaCom

It all started in 1997 when the KCP received the call of a Bosniak woman who invited the organization to work with women refugee from two northern towns in Bosnia, Prijedor and Sanski Most, whose inhabitants had lost extended family members, had been removed from cherished homes and land, and were dislocated and dispirited. Many of them had been raped. The context of these two towns was very complex. Before the war, both villages had about 100.000 inhabitants each, presenting an ethnically mixed population. During the war, Prijedor was ethnically cleansed of Muslims and many refugees went to Sanski Most that was 36 km away. Likewise, most Serbs from Sanski Most fled to Prijedor fearing repression. After the war, the division of the country in two political entities affected the core of the region, leaving Sanski Most in the Federation of B-H and Prijedor in the Republic of Serbska. It is known that, during the war, over 58.000 Muslims from Prijedor were expelled either to camps or as refugees in former Yugoslavia territory.

The city of Prijedor gained reputation during the war for developing concentration camps using

warehouses, factories, schools or hotels. It is documented that prisoners were tortured, murdered, raped and starved. In 1992 the reporter Roy Gutman discovered the first concentration camp of Bosnian War.. Many of the Bosnian participants who were involved in the Project Diacom were survivors of those camps: Omarska, Trnopoloje or Keraterm.

Therefore when Paula Green received that call from this Bosnian woman, being aware of the rough situation of the affected region, she decided to design a project to implement in situ in order to help these disconsolate women. The core of the program was the realization of inter-communal dialogues between Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Muslim women from Prijedor and Sanski Most. The initial goals of that first project designed in 1997 were to carry out workshops through which women could regain a sense of themselves and dignity, create a safe place to mourn their looses and bond with each other and share communal issues, educational initiatives, violence prevention methods and efforts for reconciliation.

Through the dialogues, women could serve their healing instead of creating further negativity towards the members of the other community, who often were former friends, neighbours, colleagues or schoolmates. First inter-ethnic dialogues were of great difficulty and the revealed stories often caused deep suffering to the attendees. For Serb women, the situation was even harder, and they had an internal dissonance either denying what Muslim women were telling or acknowledging the violence perpetrated by their people. All the time, mediators of the KCP attempted the speakers not to use accusative tone but at the same time were encouraging the victims to speak out their suffered horrors intending deep feelings to emerge. The key role of mediators was to strengthen and save the constructive relationship between the participants.

As the initiative grew and started being well perceived by the attendees, participants asked the KCP to initiate dialogues with educators. They considered that infusing in educators a culture of peace would be a helpful task for the consolidation of an interethnic peaceful future, as they would later teach children. Again, the organization responded positively, allowing themselves to be guided by the wishes of the community rather than assuming that as outsiders they would know what the victims needed. In this sense, it is worth noting how the KCP shapes its project according to the needs and desire of the society. This is a good example of how to pay attention to the particularities and needs of the context.

So that in 2000, only three years after the first inter-communal dialogues took place among Muslim and Serb women in Sanski Most and Prijedor, this program evolved into the Project for Dialogue and Community Building for Educators (Project DiaCom), that would be supported by the Foundation for Community Encouragement, a Seattle-based NGO whose member Ann Hoewing would become the partner and colleague of Paula Green during the entire project. The KCP had to ask for permission to both ministers of education, the one from the Federation and the one from the Republic of Srpska.

Since the very beginning, the Project DiaCom established clear long-term goals to achieve to (i) sensitize a significant number of educators in the two school districts in multi-cultural tolerance and active, pro-social, anti-discriminatory behaviours, so as to make repatriation possible for those Muslims and Serbs families who wish to return home; (ii) make the participants to practice and disseminate non-violent mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflict and to utilize their communication skills to more honestly address past injustices and perception of history; (iii) develop expanded or "cross-cutting identities", so that participants learn to identify by role and interests as well as by ethnicity; (iv) strengthen cross-border cooperation to actualize their shared visions of what they have named "welcoming schools"; (v) design "Training of Trainers" programs for the strongest participants to allow them to develop their own training and projects. Thus, the impact of the project increases significantly.

Attempting to pursue these goals successfully, the project requires a strict and well organized methodology:

a) There were three seminars a year for over twenty ethnically diverse educators each. The seminar consisted of two dialogue workshops, gathering of former participants, meetings with educational administrators, local officials and crisis management assistants over logistics, enrolments and other organizational problems.

b) Participants were taught new concepts during the seminars: listening and communication skills, causes of violence and the cycles of revenge, behaviour leading to recovery and

reconciliation, conflict mapping, personal responses to conflict, theories of prejudice, legacies of stereotyping and social change.

c) When crisis group happened and the safety of the dialogue felt threatened due to a sharp expression of an ethnic prejudice, a blame, an issue of member dominance, an inappropriate verbal attack or a challenge to the history and memory, it was time for the mediators to shift the focus of the conversation to the participants' role as educators, where they could feel safer.

Again based on a qualitative assessment, a few indicators reveal that this initiative has been proved to be a good practice of transformative action. As specified in detail in the following lines, the posterior evaluation of mid-term goals displayed an improvement and transformation of the relationship between people who enrolled in the project. The evaluation process used by the KCP consists of the employment of data collection instruments and methods to assess the immediate effectiveness and long-term impact of its trainings. Evaluation includes a participatory process whereby trainers, trainees and stakeholders can (a) reflect personal or societal changes occurred due to the project, (b) generate knowledge of lessons learned and possible improvements and (c) identify project strengths and opportunities for future action.

Throughout three years, from 2000 to 2003, hundreds of educators participated in the seminars. Quite often the task was hard and painful, and they witnessed tearful reunions between former educational colleagues separated since 1992. After the work done, a few signals express that the project actually had positive impacts for the reconciliation process and thus, for the resolution of the conflict.

Concerning the specific indicators about the success of this practice, first of all, the ownership of the Project DiaCom was transferred to those participants who had taken the "Training for Trainers" program, creating thus, the first post-war interethnic NGO in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Moreover, the experience of the project induced other citizens to found new NGOs to carry the work forward in local schools. For example, Vahidin Omanovic, who is an ex-participant of the Project DiaCom, set up the Center for Peacebuilding, a Bosnian NGO committed to rebuild trust and foster reconciliation among the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In regard to the expected impact by the KCP mentioned above, one may conclude that, indeed, the mediators' work enhanced the relationship among communities. Inter-group activities through which participants have to reach common goals are proved to play a key role in the process of transformation of the nature of the relationship between previously confronted communities. Concerning attitudinal change of participants, by observing the growth of local NGOs aimed to strengthen interethnic relationships, one may state that this change has actually occurred. Moreover, the case of Vahidin Omanovic also proves that the project also had positive results in terms of managing people to develop their own projects aiming at the same goals than the initiative of the KCP pointed.

Summarizing, through the in-depth study of the impact of the DiaCom project in view of the theoretical model exposed in the previous chapter, this project constitutes a good example of transformative action that actually transforms the nature of the relationship between the participants and, therefore, pursues the ultimate goal of establishing lasting peace.

Concluding remarks

There are three ideas in this article worth highlighting. First of all it should be remarked that there is a need for theory and practice to have a strong and dependent relationship in the feel of peace and conflict studies as well as in many areas of social sciences. As the basis of deductive methodology defends, any theory should be tested and accompanied by its practical implementation in particular cases. Or as the text has put it in other words, theory should always be policy-oriented to make sense. But this article goes beyond such statement. Indeed, theory assures its value by bringing about tangible changes being these constructive and resolutive for real scenarios. However, there is another step further to be taken: theory and practice may engender a mutual transformation thus enhancing their own nature and consequently the result of its relational process. Concerning the content of the article, the work done by the Karuna Center for Peacebuilding in Bosnia evolves from a dialogue-based activity for women who suffered the atrocities of war to a Project for Dialogue and Community Building for Educators (Project DiaCom). The change of the project's theoretical nature came from a request by the involved Bosnian community. This case is an example of how the implementation of a policy aimed at the reconciliation process transforms the theoretical basis behind it. It was a demand of the context itself that eventually turned out to have a positive impact on the overall project.

Secondly, it is a matter of fundamental importance to understand that conflict is caused by an incompatibility of perceptions that gives place to a clash of interests. Accordingly, in the overcoming of any conflict underlays a transformation of these perceptions. It is easier to figure out taking the reconciliation process: this can only be successfully achieved through the transformation of the nature of the relationship between the two previously confronted parties. That is why reconciliation and, more broadly, conflict resolution requires not only a deep knowledge on matters related to peace and conflict studies but also a good basis of social-psychology as well as a deep understanding of the historical context. In all, it could be summarized that sustainable peace should come from a multidimensional and multidisciplinary approach that designs and implements a feasible and effective policy-oriented theory. Finally, as it has also been noted in the article, it is essential that before NGO's members, peace-workers, experts or any person involved in the work on the ground implement a policy aimed at reconciliation, certain structural conditions need to be met. A war-torn society is not ready for a peacebuilding process oriented to establish lasting peace. Previously, efforts should be made to provide the population with basic needs and to grant aspects such as political freedom, a minimum socioeconomic standards and an impartial judiciary system. The provision of the mentioned structural necessities will strengthen and favour the reconciliation process and therefore, the establishment of sustainable peace.

Bibliography

Auerbach, Y. (2004): "The role of forgiveness in reconciliation". In Yakoov Bar-Simantov (Ed.): *From Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Burton, J. W. (1990): *Conflict: Resolution and Provention*. Vol 1, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Burton, J. W. (1979): *Deviance, Terrorism, and War: The Problem of Solving Unsolved Social and Political Conflicts*. Oxford, UK: Martin Roberston Press.

Cohen, R. (2004): "Apology and Reconciliation in International Relations". In Yakoov Bar-Simantov (Ed.): *From Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Corneille, O. (1994): *Le Contact comme Mode de Résolution du Conflict Intergroupes: Une Hypothèse toujours bien Vivante*. Cahiers Internationaux de Psychologie Sociale.

Daly, E. and Sarki, J. (2007): *Reconciliation in Divided Societies: Finding Common Ground.* Philadelphia, US: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Fetherson, A. B. (2000): "Peacekeeping, Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding: A Reconsideration of Theoretical Frameworks". International Peacekeeping, 7:1.

Galtung, J. (1998): *After violence, 3R: Reconstruction, Reconciliation, Resolution. Coping with Visible and Invisible Effects of War and Violence*. Princeton, US: Transcended.

Foucault, Michael (1972): *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. New York, US: Phanteon Books.

Foucault, Michael (1984): "What is Enlightment?" In P. Rabinow (ed.). *The Foucault reader*. London, UK: Penguin.

Kant, I. (1781): Critique of Pure Reason. Ed. Cambridge University Press. February 1999.

Lederach, J. P. (1998): *Building Peace. Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington, US: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Murphy, J. G. and Hampton, J. (1998): *Forgiveness and Mercy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Ogay, T. (2006): "Conflict Mediation and Resolution: the Contribution of Social Psychology". European Journal of Intercultural Studies, 9:3.

Pourtois, J. P. and Desmet, H. (1998): *Epistémologie et Instrumentation en Sciences Humaines*. Liège, Bruxelles: Pierre Mardaga.

Sen, A. (1979): *Economía del Crecimiento*. Fondo de Cultura Económica. México.

Waltz, K. (1959): *Man, the State and War*. New York, US: Columbia University Press.

Other sources

Documentary "El perdó", produced by Televisió de Catalunya. Director: Edurad Sanjuán and Maria Pigrau. Broadcasted on Televisió de Catalunya on 4 March 2012. Available at: http://www.tv3.cat/30minuts/reportatges/1835/El-perdo

Unpublished documents facilitated by Paula Green, the director of the KCP.