

Post-conflict policies in Colombia. A South-South Cooperation approach to the peace process

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Abstract

The agreement's signature between the Colombian government and the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia –FARC) has finalized one of the longest civil conflicts in history. However, there are several issues subsequent to the agreement that have not been completely addressed: disarmament mechanisms, social reinsertion of the conflict's parties –official and unofficial–, political participation and transitional justice. Taking into account a myriad of needs and a limited international cooperation –on its access and its economical sustainability– South-South Cooperation becomes relevant, especially as it targets technical assistance rather than just direct money transfers. In this context, this presentation has a multifold purpose: firstly, it analyzes the post-conflict policies regarding the signaled topics, implemented up-to-date. Secondly, it investigates specific policies coming from South-South Cooperation and finally, it extrapolates initiatives that could be implemented in Colombia from other Latin American countries that have endured similar civil conflicts. It is concluded that South-South Cooperation is inspiring certain post-conflict policies in Colombia; however, there are some other unexplored prospects that could be useful, especially those coming from countries with a similar conflict-experience.

Resumen

La firma del acuerdo entre el gobierno de Colombia y las FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) parece estar poniendo fin a uno de los conflictos más largos de la historia. Sin embargo, en este cierre existe una serie de problemáticas sobre las cuales, hasta el momento, no se han diseñado respuestas completas y definidas: los mecanismos de desarme, la reinserción de las fuerzas en conflicto –las oficiales y las extraoficiales–, la participación política y la justicia transicional. Considerando unas necesidades tan extensas y una cooperación internacional clásica limitada –en su acceso o en su sostenibilidad económica–, cobra importancia la Cooperación Sur-Sur, centrada en la ayuda técnica más que en la financiación económica. En tal contexto, la presente ponencia tiene una triple función: en primer lugar, analizar las políticas de posconflicto diseñadas e implementadas hasta el momento sobre los temas anteriormente mencionados; en segundo lugar, mostrar más concretamente las políticas basadas en la Cooperación Sur-Sur implementadas en tales

cuestiones; y por último exponer opciones de Cooperación Sur-Sur no desarrolladas en Colombia a través de la comparativa con otros escenarios de conflictos internos en América Latina. Se concluye mostrando cómo la Cooperación Sur-Sur, si bien está inspirando ciertas políticas del gobierno colombiano, ofrecen toda una serie de propuestas adicionales basadas en la experiencia de la resolución de otros conflictos internos.

1. Introduction

The Colombian society has endured a brutal conflict involving a myriad of actors –i.e. the Government, *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* Revolutionary (Armed Forces of Colombia-FARC), *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (United Self-defense Militias of Colombia-AUC), *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (National Liberation Army-ELN), among others– for more than fifty years. This conflict has broken the social, economic and political tissues in Colombia and has left the country in a constant wave of violence and crime.

To end the conflict, there have been several attempts at ceasing fire and building the so-longed-for peace. The most recent peace dialogues took place in Cuba, where the long-time warring parties agreed to hold negotiations. After several months of talks and an intense media coverage, a peace agreement was signed between the Colombian government and FARC. Despite the promising nature of the agreement, it has faced some controversies, especially the ones raised by the referendum called by President Santos in 2016 as a previous step to implement the peace treaty.

The international community has been very involved in this peace process. In fact, the peace talks in Havana were formally guaranteed by Cuba and Norway. The financing of the various initiatives and public policies derived from the agreement have an important participation of Northern countries and ‘classic’ international organizations. However, the mere figure of Cuba as a peace guarantor shows that the involvement of Southern countries is becoming more visible. In fact, during the last decades, the countries from the South have become more active and dynamic in their relations with their neighbours and have successfully implemented programs of cooperation with other Southern countries under a novel paradigm called South-South Cooperation (SSC). Southern countries themselves, namely El Salvador, Nicaragua or Guatemala, have endured harsh civil conflicts and, through their experiences, they could actively help to shape better solutions for the Colombian scenario.

Having in mind the latter, the purpose of this article is to explore the role that Southern countries may have in the peace building process in Colombia and how they can support the ongoing initiatives. Post-conflict policies, their financing and implementation are a very relevant topic of study, especially as a peace agreement is only the first step in the pacification of a country. Thus, the policies following the signature of the agreement are key to determine if the treaty will in fact guarantee justice and peace.

In this sense, the present article analyses the policies derived from the peace agreement, especially those coming from SSC sources, as they are designed through the experiences of other countries dealing with their own post-conflict issues. More concretely, the article is organized as follows: the first section offers a theoretical framework discussing a typology of peace, the ways in which SSC offers a valid alternative from the classic cooperation forums and how it could be helpful in the Colombian scenario. Then, some successful programs implemented by Southern countries (i.e. Nicaragua and El Salvador) are discussed, providing useful insights of how some specific initiatives could be adapted to Colombia.

The next section explores the state-of-the-art of international cooperation for the implementation of the peace treaty. In this section, the role played by SSC is emphasized. Finally, there is a section investigating initiatives from other countries –irrespective of their SSC cooperation nature– with the aim of extrapolating valuable lessons for the Colombian case. Finally, the article concludes stating the potential of SSC in Colombia and the avenues for success it may have taking into account past experiences in the region.

2. Theoretical framework

a. Civil conflicts and peace-building strategies

War is undoubtedly one of the most relevant issues on human nature. Since the beginning of mankind, violent conflict has been constant, no matter the type of society, political regime, culture or religion. Thus, war has always been an object of discussion and has been analyzed from a myriad of perspectives, focusing on the way a war is developed (Maquiavelo, 1520), its relationship with morality (Walzer, 2012) or even its effects on the population under conflict (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004).

While civilizations evolved towards less violent societies, war studies were increasingly complemented with alternative approaches focused on peace-building processes (Kriesberg, 1997; Miall et al, 1999). Once a war ends, the harm within the society needs a complex response (Baranyi, 2006), mainly because its social capital suffers from severe shocks that cannot be reduced to structural factors.

In fact, when a war takes place within the borders of a country, confronting the same population, the scars in the society are stronger. In such cases, some specific aspects deserve special attention: the disarmament of the war forces –both legal or illegal ones– (Berdal, 1996; Spencer, 1997); the reconstruction of the State, concretely in the materialization of legislative elections (Reilly, 2004; Ho-Won, 2005); the demobilization and reinsertion of ex-combatants, providing them a way of living in the post-conflict context (Özerdem, 2009; Barth, 2002); and the design of a transitional justice process, by judging the crimes committed by all the sides of the conflict (Lamborune 2009; Paige, 2009; Minow, 2011).

Several studies on this matter and focused in Colombia can be found, as it constitutes one of the longest and cruelest civil wars not only in Latin America but in the world. For example, there are approaches studying the agrarian question within the country (Restrepo, 2012), the

process of transformation of former fighters into crime gangs' members (Pérez, 2011) or even in a comparative view, observing the different efforts and initiatives in the post-conflict scenario (Cárdenas, 2003).

The main issue that every society suffering a civil conflict must address is related to the kind of peace it aims to construct. The tension between maintaining the peace agreement and the search for justice, forces all parties at stake to take into consideration pragmatic and normative aspects, knowing that an excess of justice could break the treaty and that –on the contrary– its lack would suppose impunity and social rejection of the whole post-conflict process.

In this sense, the academy has proposed a distinction in function of the kind of peace aimed at building: maximalist peace and minimalist peace (Valencia et al, 2012: 153-154).¹ In the first one, the absence of war is a necessary but not enough step to end the civil conflict. On the contrary, it is required a transitional justice process understood in a broad sense: not only preserving peace and judging the crimes committed during the conflict, but also implementing a general plan –in political, economic or social spheres– to face the structural causes which originated the conflict, and prevent the rise of a new one (Baranyi, 2006; Call and Cousens, 2008; Richmond, 2007).² The second kind of peace, the minimalist one, searches only to maintain a non-hostile scenario among the parts in the former conflict. In this sense, the lack of implementation of a transitional justice process is conceived as a necessary sacrifice in order to consolidate peace, understanding that this is a more relevant value than justice itself (Sarmiento, 2016; Minow, 2011).

As previously exposed, the maximalist concept has the potentiality to prevent the rise of new conflicts and provides justice against the crimes committed during the conflict (Page, 2010). But at the same time, these goals jeopardize the whole process of peace-building, as the parts in conflict can break the agreement, feeling that they are not being integrated in the new national scene. In turn, minimalist peace guarantees the consolidation of a non-violent society, but the lack of prosecution of war crimes, as well as the continuance of the former structural problematics, can lead to the discredit of the peace process and to the rise of new violent conflicts (Hoshino, 2007).

The latter differentiation is deeply related with the kind of end that the conflict had: when a civil war ends with a strong victory of the State –as it happened in Peru against Shining Path– the implementation of a peace process can be completely directed by the winning side (Elster, 2006). The government can choose between a minimalist or a maximalist peace, depending on its own interests and values, as the threat of the insurgent forces to return to the use of

¹ It is necessary to point out that this kind of peace does not limit itself to the mere choice between justice and peace, but this differentiation does constitute the structure of its discussion.

² That concept has been denominatd as the absence of structural violence (Maley, 1985). Or even with the distinction between negative peace, the absence of armed conflict, and positive peace, the presence of co-operative and harmonious relationships (Page, 2010).

violence is minimum. This is the case of the Sri Lanka civil war, where the Tamil guerrilla was completely defeated, its whole territory conquered by the government, and its leaders murdered (Wickeremesekera, 2016).

On the contrary, when the peace treaty is the result of negotiations among the parts in conflict, the acceptance of political, economic or social requirements can be a necessary step in the pacification of the internal national orb (Zartman, 1993). The more maximalist-peace-driven a peace agreement is, the more the opposition's rejection may be. Focused in Colombia again, the implementation of the agrarian reform, the reinsertion of the guerrilla fighters and the integration of the left wing politicians in the political arena are issues considered as 'red lines' in the governmental agreement with FARC. These 'red lines' generate rejection among the paramilitary forces, which were relevant actors in the Colombian conflict. Therefore, this kind of conflict—where the 'enemies' keep their military power—requires the implementation of a mixed system that allows some political concessions, while at the same time, it consolidates the pacification process.³

b. South-South Cooperation as an alternative form of international cooperation

After the end of the Second World War, the United Nations (UN) was established as the main channel of communication among the States: a space to dialogue and resolve controversies avoiding violent mechanisms. Besides, the implementation of International Courts—firstly special courts for Yugoslavia and Rwanda, and secondly, the International Criminal Court—supposed the international recognition of Human Rights' protection.

Through this system, the UN implemented numerous missions with the purpose of compelling the international society to stop civil conflicts as well as to promote reconciliation among the combating forces. In this sense, the peace building initiatives were developed in different ways: from economic assistance to political surveillance or even to military interventions.

Nonetheless, this system—mostly lead by the northern countries—has shown some limitations on the resolution of conflicts in non-western spheres. Its incapacity to understand collective or tribal feelings has been widely criticized (Rafter and Singer, 2004), or the secondary interests of intervening States following every humanitarian 'altruist' act. For example, the classic financial forums (the International Monetary Fund-IMF and the World Bank-WB) were perceived in Latin America as intruders that affected sovereignty, due to the neoliberal requests that these institutions demanded in order to concede loans (Jima et al., 2017).

³ Nonetheless, the military result of the conflict is not the exclusive determinant of the peace-building result, i.e. the popular support of the forces in conflicts is also relevant (Barnett, 2006). In fact, in Colombia, where the rejection to FARC and to the paramilitary forces is strongly spread among the population, it constitutes a relevant factor to take in consideration in the post-conflict context.

Trying to avoid these pitfalls, South-South Cooperation (SSC) focuses on the creation of alternative forums of cooperation among the Southern hemisphere, searching for the achievement of a double objective: the progressive abandonment of the classic North-South cooperation system –replacing it with a more equal structure–, the implementation of alternative mechanisms focused in the experiences of the Southern States, and technical assistance instead of monetary financing (Lechini, 2009).

More concretely, SSC has provided interesting tools towards conflict resolution, using the experiences of countries that have endured civil wars to elaborate more effective programs in order to prevent and resolve the problematics associated with a post-conflict scene. In this sense, some efforts have been made by organizations such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) –especially with the internal conflict lead by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka (Basu, 2017)–, as well as by bilateral relations, i.e. the existing forums between Brazil and Guinea-Bissau created to consolidate the peace-building process in the African region (Erthal and Marcondes, 2013).

In addition, the South-South Cooperation system, if not directly linked with conflicts, could be understood as a relevant part of the achievement of a maximalist peace. For example, the economic relations developed among China, India and Ethiopia (Cheru, 2016) has supposed a turning point in the latter country: the efficient development of the Ethiopian economy has decreased poverty and starvation, affecting positively to the pacification of a country that had suffered a long and cruel civil war.

Therefore, South-South Cooperation must be understood not only as a tool to pacify the Colombian political life –to avoid new confrontations or to disarm the fighters– but it is also an extremely useful resource in the task of reconstructing the tissue of the Colombian civil society: the reinsertion of the former combatants, the demobilization of the paramilitary forces, the settlement of the displaced persons or the implementation of a post-conflict national justice.

3. The Colombian peace agreement: achievements and challenges

a. A brief historical background of the Colombian civil conflict

The Colombian civil conflict has been deeply studied by a myriad of academic fields, as it has spread for more than fifty years⁴. It has been tackled in the most various ways, including elite political competition, drug trafficking organizations, guerrilla revolutionary struggle, violent indigenous claims or paramilitary forces with ambivalent relations with the State.

The discussion of the causes leading to the long duration of the conflict has been polemic. However, most academics agree that the most relevant factors were the weakness of the

⁴ In fact, the beginning of the conflict could be found at the end of the XIX century with the violent conflict between liberal and conservative parties.

Colombian state, that avoided a strong response from the military forces; the underestimation of the threat of the emerging outlaw forces, allowing the strengthening of the emerging criminal and revolutionary forces; and the consolidation of a violent culture in the Colombian population, that provided the long-term structural basis of the present criminal organizations.

In addition, the duration of the conflict constitutes an important element to understand the depth of the Colombian civil conflict. If the first struggle was led by the liberal and conservative parties, generating in turn self-defense militias –to collaborate with these parties or to face them–, in the subsequent decades it evolved into a multiple-sides conflict: the very state, the revolutionary forces –both in rural zones (ELN, FARC) and urban zones (M19)–, the paramilitary forces and the drug trafficking organizations with strong links with the Colombian political power.

Though the actual process of pacification is not the first one attempted, it can be considered the most successful one. Unlike the former peace attempts, the Havana peace treaty was backed by a strong political commitment –national and international– to reach a tangible solution. After the formal dissolution of the paramilitary forces and the agreement’s signature between the Colombian government and FARC, the pacification of the country seems a real possibility.

Because of the elevated number of parties in conflict, and undoubtedly due to their terrorist and guerrilla strategies, the harm in the Colombian society is very high: hundreds of thousands of casualties, millions of displaced persons and countless of human rights violations. In this sense, the scar in the population requires a solution not only in terms of transitional justice, but a more comprehensive response, including guerrilla and paramilitary fighters’ reinsertion, economic and psychological help to the victims, civil reconstruction and support to the displaced population.

Though the end of the conflict between the guerrilla forces and the government has been shown as the flagship of the pacification of Colombia, the real achievement of this goal requires the implementation of a complete program focused on transitional justice, on victims’ reparation and in the reconstruction of Colombia’s social capital.

b. Content of the peace agreement

As already mentioned, the international community has played an essential role supporting the achievement of the final agreement. Countries like Norway and Cuba have acted as international witnesses and will be guarantors of the peace process. Similarly, Chile and Venezuela are backing up the initiatives derived from the dialogues in Havana. The UN will be part of the Special Political Mission that will be in charge of monitoring and checking the permanent ceasefire as well as the disarmament process. This Special Political Mission will be a tripartite mechanism, formed by one member of the Colombian government, one delegate of FARC and one international delegate –representing the UN. The delegates from

the UN will be civilians, and their principal work will be just to observe. The delegates will not include any military member like the Blue Helmets or Blue Berets (El Tiempo, 2016).

The commitment of the Colombian government towards an effective action over all the national territories is highlighted on the final peace agreement. In this line, and in the aim at consolidating peace in the post-agreement scenario, the main encompassing values are justice, truth, reconciliation and no repetition. The final peace agreement incorporates the following issues: Integral Rural Reform – IRR; Political participation; Permanent ceasefire and disarmament process; Solving the illicit drugs problem; Developing an integral system for victims including truth seeking, transitional justice, reparation and no repetition; The creation of two mechanisms to follow, impulse and verify the final peace agreement.⁵

Regarding the first point *Hacia un Nuevo Campo Colombiano: Reforma Integral Rural* (Towards a New Colombian Rural Area: Integral Rural Reform-IRR), the peace agreement establishes various mechanisms to guarantee the right to access the land in a fair way⁶. *i.e.*, it created a special land fund to give or formalize land properties to peasant communities. This land fund is also used to keep up-to-date the rural cadaster and assure that land is used efficiently. Overall, IRR creates adequate conditions for the rural population, including access to health institutions, education services and technical assistance.

Another polemic point in the peace agreement is FARC's future political participation. The acceptance of an armed group as a political actor will be a challenge for the Colombian society.⁷ Nonetheless, in order to consolidate the Colombian democratic system, the agreement document stated that it is necessary to open the political spectrum giving the chance to all actors –without any exceptions– to participate in the country's political life. The Opposition Statute will guarantee the political practice and has been already approved by the Parliament.

Currently, FARC has formed a new political movement called *Voces de Paz* (Peace Voices). *Voces de Paz* has two spokeswomen and four spokesmen assisting to parliamentary sessions, three of them will be part of the Parliament and the remaining three will be members of the Senate. The final peace document establishes that during the next two electoral periods the FARC's political movement will have five Senators and five Camera Representatives, as well as special financing and media promotions of their political proposals. It is also specified that

⁵ The mechanisms named in the last point will be a commission formed by the Colombian government and FARC and another commission formed by the international community.

⁶ Rural census made by Colombian State on 2014 determined that 0.4% of owners concentrate 46% of the land.

⁷ Nevertheless, it has been done in the past; between 1990-1994 various guerilla groups including M-19 participated on demobilization processes⁷. This disarmament process led to the reform of the Colombian Conservative Constitution of 1886 and the birth of a more liberal constitutional order embodied on the 1991 Constitution.

the new political movement would not be able to participate in politics until the UN –as a part of the special political mission of disarmament process– has received all the weapons.

Reconciliation has been identified as a key ingredient of successful post-conflict societies (Lambourne, 2000) and it must focus on reestablishing interactions between antagonist actors. In fact, it is undeniable that there is a direct relationship between justice, reconciliation, conflict resolution and peace (Lambourne et al., 2000). The Truth Commission, aimed at building peaceful coexistence and no repetition, was recently formed by the Legislative Act 588, which encompasses the development of the postulates of the Colombian peace agreement regarding victims and justice. This commission will be an important part of the *Justicia Especial para la Paz* (Special Justice for Peace-SJP), the transitional justice body recently created. Similarly, the Colombian Law of Victims has opened a new way to address the conflict, based on land, truth and reparation (CNMH, 2015).

4. International cooperation in the Colombia's post-conflict context

a. Main mechanisms in Colombia's North-South Cooperation

In order to accomplish this peace agreement, Colombia is expecting to receive international aid coming, among other donors, from United States, the European Union (EU), Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), and the UN. This assistance obeys to the belief that restoring confidence in societies struggling to recover from an armed conflict, like the Colombian one, needs strong leadership as well as international support (WDR, 2011).

The Colombian Agency for International Cooperation - APC will have the challenge to coordinate all the international aid, as well as to increase the number of donors and to efficiently articulate the resources received, redirecting them to prioritized areas of social investment. With the aim to support and build a stable and durable peace, Colombia is expecting to increase its Official Development Assistance (ODA) and other resources coming from international aid, including technical cooperation. According to figures of the APC, between 2010 and 2011 the ODA received was 367 USD million and between 2014 and 2015 it increased to 560 USD million, which means that ODA received by Colombia to invest on peace-building projects increased on more than 34 percent (CONPES, 2015).

As a strategy to manage non-refundable resources coming from multilateral shareholdings, the APC has decided to create four international funds: the Inter-American Development Bank - IADB Colombia Sustainable Fund; the European Union Peace Trust Fund, the Peace and Post-Conflict World Bank Fund and the UN Colombian Post-Conflict Multi-Donor Fund.

Colombia Sustainable Fund is coordinated by the IADB and will be supported by countries like Canada, Sweden, Switzerland and Norway. This fund has a life expectancy of 15 years and will be in charge of mobilizing, in the first stage, 600 USD million. The resources will be invested on sustainable development projects on the territories whipped by the armed conflict. The European Union Peace Trust Fund will especially support the first postulate of

the peace agreement. It will help to improve the social conditions of the rural areas by supporting productivity, employment and income generation. The fund is expected to raise 90 € millions that will be supported, among others, by Portugal, Germany, UK, Spain and Ireland. The World Bank Fund was formed in 2014 with the aim of supporting the disarmament and reconciliation processes during three years. Sweden will contribute with resources and will raise 7 USD millions. The UN Colombian Post-Conflict Multi-donor Fund is the most robust of the international funds described, and will support all the initiatives signed on the peace agreement. It has 12 thematic areas including justice, peace and reconciliation culture, Human Rights, disarmament process and political engagement (APC, 2017).

b. Main mechanisms in Colombia's South-South Cooperation

The preceding section analyzed the current NSC mechanisms used by Colombia in the pacification process. It was shown that this kind of cooperation consisted mainly on direct financial support. This section, in turn, presents the state-of-the-art of SSC in Colombia showing alternative cooperation mechanisms focused on technical assistance and in the socialization of past experiences of countries enduring similar situations.

As stated by the World Bank, increasing the engagement of middle-income countries with the dynamics of international cooperation has changed the way in which policies are designed. Nowadays, middle and new higher income countries have turned into important donors, investors, diplomatic and trading partners (WDR, 2011). In this change, countries like Cuba, Chile, Venezuela, and Mexico have played an active role.

The Ibero-American General Secretariat – SEGIB, an international organization formed by 19 Spanish speaking countries –i.e. Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Chile– has shown an explicit willingness to support the Colombian peace agreement during the XXV Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government in Cartagena Colombia, on October 2016. Similarly, the *Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños* (Summit of Latin- American and Caribbean States-CELAC) –an inter-governmental organization formed by thirty-three Latin-American and Caribbean countries– has agreed to actively support the final peace accord. This organization will figure as an observer and will be in charge of monitoring the disarmament process.

The direct intervention of the aforementioned organizations, will give the opportunity to present Colombia's peace-building policies in an international discussion forum, helping the government to formulate and develop projects in accordance with the international aid framework. In other words, regional scenarios framed within the 'new' paradigm of partnership known as SSC will contribute to reach the aims of Colombia's peace agreement and a horizontal space of sharing "know-how" (ACR, 2016).

The Justice and Peace Law of 2005, resultant from the peace agreement between the government and the right-wing group AUC, has been a good learning experience of designing and implementing peace-building strategies between ex-combatants, victims and civil society. i.e. an Agency for Reintegration (ACR), the National Commission of Reparation and Reconciliation, the Social and Economic Reintegration policy and great experience on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration process DDR⁸. Due to the expertise acquired through this processes, the Colombia's DDR model is considered as an international reference for countries enduring reintegration and demobilization programs.

The flag international event to share knowledge was the Fifth Tour of Technical South-South Cooperation: Reintegration, Reconciliation and Development from Territories, hosted by Colombia's ACR in 2015. Colombia has the experience of supporting 57.000 ex-combatants from different armed groups to reintegrate them into the society. These figures position the country in a leadership role compared with other participating countries. This international cooperation scenario gathered forty-six delegates from different countries, which had the opportunity to exchange experience, among other topics, on disarmament process, peace and reconciliation culture, political engagement, reintegration and reconciliation process.

5. SSC policies in post-conflict contexts: Lessons from Nicaragua and El Salvador

Nicaragua and El Salvador experienced harsh periods of civil war during the 1980s, which led to the dismemberment of their political, economic and social structures. These conflicts occurred on the dynamics of the Cold War. In Nicaragua, the positioning of the Sandinist Revolution as the post-Somoza political force caused a conflict –with a hard interventionism from the United States– which lasted eleven years (1979–1990). The situation lived in Nicaragua was somehow replicated in El Salvador, where the *Fuerza Armada de El Salvador* (El Salvador Armed Force) fought against the *Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional* (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front) from 1981 to 1992. The aforementioned civil conflicts were simultaneously derived and exacerbated by the severe inequality and poverty endured by Central America since the early 1960s (Peceny and Stanley, 2003).

After the conflicts came to an end, the efforts to construct accords in order to foster peaceful societies were reflected on the agreements signed: *Protocolo de Managua* (Nicaragua) and the *Protocolo de Chapultepec* (El Salvador). These peace protocols were envisioned to implement long-term peaceful solutions for all the parties in conflict, including ex-combatants, governmental institutions and the civil society in general. Economic sources for the implementation of the programs established through the agreements were financed by

⁸ According to Colombian Commission of Jurist CCJ, many aspects into this process has led to inconsistencies. Non-compliance of weapon surrendering process, lack of transparency in the process, fake demobilization, manipulation of the number of AUC members at convenience, impunity of crimes against humanity, increasing on Human Right violations in some territories and recruitment process are aspects that CCJ has identified as a relevant and in-admissible characteristic of the process.

several sources, including traditional lending bodies, international organizations and specific countries' agencies. This section analyzes those coming from SSC sources and whose stories of success can be replicated in the Colombian post-conflict context.

Previous to the introduction of specific examples of SSC from the two referred countries it is relevant to highlight the active role that Colombia had in the peace process of Central America. Together with Mexico, Panama and Venezuela, Colombia formed the *Acta de Contadora para la Paz y la Cooperación en Centroamérica* (Contadora Act for Peace and Cooperation in Central America – Contadora Group). The Contadora Group had the support of international organizations such as the United Nations together with its Security Council and General Assembly. This group was key to develop the peace agreements not only in Nicaragua and El Salvador but in the entire Central American region and was proposed outside the United States' interests in the region.

Needless to say, both the *Protocolo de Managua* and the *Protocolo de Chapultepec* incorporated in their programs several plans for consolidating long-term peaceful societies. The following lines bring into consideration a variety of projects that were developed and implemented –regarding disarming, elections, displacements, and ex-combatants' work reintegration– and that proved to be accurate in peace building initiatives.

Even though the major donor for post-conflict projects in El Salvador was the United States (47% from the total aid received between 1993-2000), there are some SSC initiatives that deserve special attention. In the field of electoral projects, the *Instituto Iberoamericano de Derechos Humanos* (Ibero-american Institute for Human Rights) through its *Centro de Asistencia y Protección Electoral* (Center for Electoral Assistance and Protection) envisioned a national program to enroll citizens for the elections, train delegates, and set up offices from the National Electoral Registry. These contributions were essential, especially in remote areas where larger plans organized by bigger organizations –the Electoral Division from the United Nations– couldn't reach (Rubio Fabián et. al, 2004)

Regarding Human Rights' respect and justice, at the beginning of the conflict, the Catholic Church, local universities and some initiatives from the civil society were the flag organizations in charge of safeguarding them. However, when the struggle escalated, the violence almost annihilated these organizations. When the conflict ended, the United Nations Special Mission for El Salvador played a major role in this Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela participated both respect. Nevertheless, some SSC initiatives can be signaled: with financial resources and with technical assistance for the establishment of the Truth Commission, an initiative that aimed at reaching the victims of the conflict and give them the opportunity to offer their own accounts of the war. The help provided –specially the personnel specialized on human rights, security and crimes investigation– was highly valued by the international community, although several recommendations are still pending for implementation. The *Defensorías del Pueblo* (Ombudsman Offices) from Mexico, Argentina, Guatemala, Colombia were key actors for the creation of *Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos*

Humanos (Counsel for the Defense of Human Rights), providing political and financial support as well as training its personnel. Despite its initial ‘success’, nowadays this institution has been criticized for its deficient administration, showing that post-conflict policies and initiatives should be sustained in the long-term.

Regarding security consolidation, nowadays El Salvador could be considered not only a recipient of SSC but also an offeror. El Salvador has maintained successful campaigns for contributing towards the control of gangs and crime organizations. It has been able to translate its successful strategies but also its capacity to recognize its flaws and help other governments to prevent them. The *Asistencia Estratégica para el control de organizaciones delictivas y pandillas* (Strategic Assistance for the control of criminal organizations and gangs) project carried out in Ecuador is an example of the latter (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de El Salvador, 2012). Through this program members of Ecuador’s National Police and from El Salvador National Police could socialize their experiences and consolidate public policies for Ecuador based on the experiences of the Central-American country. More specifically, Ecuador’s National Police could replicate the models of identification and prevention recommended by specialized agencies from El Salvador. Similar programs could be replicated in Colombia, a country with more similarities with El Salvador, in terms of social conflict.

On 2016, El Salvador announced that its government will share its pacification experience with Colombia, especially on topics of ex-combatants’ social reinsertion, which is often referred as the most difficult issue on the post-conflict scenario. There is a cooperation group already established, the *Grupo Salvadoreño de Amistad con la Paz para Colombia* (El Salvador’s group for Peace in Colombia). The group includes several authorities that participated on the negotiations that led to El Salvador peace agreement. In fact, the new Bilateral Program 2016-2018 was recently established and will be focused on areas –in addition to post-conflict initiatives– such as public security, education, science and technology, cultural policies, social inclusion and housing (Programa Iberoamericano para el Fortalecimiento de la Cooperación Sur-Sur, 2016).

In the case of Nicaragua, the role played by *Promotores de Paz* (Peace Promoters) is quite remarkable and provides a successful program that could be replicated in the Colombian context. The *Promotores de Paz* was an initiative focalized at specialized trainings for ex-combatants thought community actions based on reconciliation. This program was supported by private institutions such as the *Centro de Estudios Internacionales*, which means that the private sector can also contribute to the post-conflict initiatives. In fact, since 1990s Colombian ex-combatants started to form their own organizations with these objectives under the platform *Programa para la Reinserción* (Reinsertion Program) which has 9000 members under the following organizations: *Compaz*, *Progresar*, *Copadec*, *Corriente de Renovación Socialista* y *Corporación Colombia Viva*. The *Promotores de Paz* are envisioned

as ‘literacy teachers’ in peace matters and focus on different areas depending on their personal abilities.

The effort made by Nicaragua to clean up its territory from anti-personnel mines is outstanding and since 2010 it is considered free from this problem. Since its creation in 1998, the Comprehensive Action against Anti-Personnel Mines (AICMA) has been devoted to the eradication of mines. In fact, the AICMA has established a ‘Colombia chapter’ which is coordinated by the Organization of American States (OAS) with the technical assistance of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB). In September 2001 Guatemala became the first beneficiary country to provide the Chief of the International Supervisory Team, known as the Mission of Assistance for the Removal of Mines in Central America (MARMINCA). This change in leadership followed the training and integration of new military supervisors from Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Venezuela. The latter is an indication that the organization is changing its dynamics and including other actors more actively. In this sense, Colombia could get benefitted from this process that has the direct participation from countries that faced the same issues and have surpassed them.

In short, there are several programs that countries that have endured conflicts, such as Nicaragua and El Salvador, employed in order to promote the consolidation of peaceful societies. In the search of those initiatives supported by SSC, this section has highlighted a variety of ways in which this type of cooperation works –ranging from technical assistance and trainings to direct money transfers– and possible ways it could be integrated or replicated in the Colombian post-conflict context.

6. Experiences dealing with post-conflict issues: a possible source of future SSC among Latin American countries

This section, unlike the previous one, highlights some initiatives not necessarily considered as SSC-based but that could help to lay out similar lines of action in Colombia due to their efficacy at consolidating peace in the countries where they were implemented. More concretely, examples from Mexico and El Salvador are brought to the table. These experiences tackle some of the most sensible issues in a post-conflict scenario: displaced people and security.

As previously explained, displaced people’s situation is one of the most important issues in the Colombian Peace Agreement: during the fifty years of the conflict millions of citizens were evicted from their shelters, directly –forcing them due to economic or political interests– or indirectly –turning those places in battle fields. Unfortunately, this tragedy has not been unusual in the southern countries, especially in the Latin American ones, i.e. Honduras, Mexico and Colombia have shown high rates of forced displacement. Though

Colombia shows the highest rates of the continent⁹, the experiences of other countries dealing with displaced persons could be the source of the design of its own politics.

In this sense, the Mexican experience in this issue –facing the displacement of population due to the guerrilla struggle led by the *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (EZLN) in Chiapas– is interesting in a multifold sense: pointing out the relevant aspects in the management of displaced persons, providing answers to the problematics derived of the displacement and including politics on the displaced indigenous population. In this sense, the Mexican government has implemented a victims’ support system –directed by the *Procuraduría Social de Atención a Víctimas del Delito* (PROVICTIMA) and the *Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas* (CDI)– to provide material assistance as well as to reproduce the cultural identity of the indigenous peoples displaced due to the conflict (Pérez, 2014: 9).

Regarding security, an often cited successful case of ex-combatants’ protection and social reinsertion is the creation of the *Policía Nacional Civil* (National Civil Police) in El Salvador. The National Civil Police was shaped as a fundamental part of the Chapultepec Peace Accords and 30 percent of its members were former combatants in the *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional*. Although this article doesn’t suggest to follow the El Salvador model in Colombia, some useful lessons can be obtained from this case: first, the experience and discipline acquired from ex-combatants can be put to good use, in this case towards the protection of figures that are key for the successful implementation of La Havana Peace Accords. And second, if there is a proper training of these ‘new police forces’, the result could be the decrease in the criminalization of the ex-guerrilla forces. Again, El Salvador shows that, in comparison with other post-conflict scenarios lived in Guatemala and Nicaragua, the level of criminalization of the former guerrilla forces was less when ex-combatants were part of the new police bodies.

Regarding political engagement, Colombia has important differences with other post-conflict countries. One of the most particular cases is that FARC’s political movement will have a minor representation on the parliament. For instance, Bicesse Accord, Angola’s peace agreements granted 70 of a total of 220 members of Parliament, 4 Ministries and 7 Vice-ministries, to UNITA –the insurgent guerrilla party. In the case of Nepal’s peace process between the government and the Communist Party, 5 Ministries and 83 out of 330 seats were granted. Similarly, Sudan’s peace accord established to grant 126 from a total of 450 parliamentarians as well as 8 Ministries to the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM).

⁹ In fact, according to the *Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre* (IDMC) reports Colombia has the second highest rate of displacement in the world, after Siria –which is suffering a genuine civil war. <http://www.internal-displacement.org/database/country?iso3=COL>

Anyway, all these internal policies must be understood within the internal state dynamics. Undoubtedly, in this kind of negotiations, factors like the strength of the guerrilla forces at the moment of the negotiation or the support of the guerrilla among the population, are relevant when crafting political engagement policies. However, referring to past-experiences of post-conflict countries –especially when they are geographically and cultural approximated– is an adequate source for Colombia to design its own policies.

7. Conclusions

Colombia is currently facing one of the most relevant moments of its history: the opportunity of consolidating a process of pacification after more than fifty years of civil conflict. The demobilization of the FARC combatants will probably lead to the surrender of the rest of the remaining guerrilla forces. Thus, the success of the peace agreement can be considered the first step in the national cease fire among paramilitary forces, guerrilla movements and even drug trafficking organizations.

However, as it was exposed, there are some challenges that the Colombian government must resolve to consolidate the agreement: the reinsertion and integration in the political life of the former combatants, the implementation of a transitional justice process and the support to the displaced people. In the same sense, it was shown how the efforts in this sense -through the national legislation and the traditional international cooperation- cannot be considered enough to ensure the success of the peace treaty.

In an effort to propose alternative solutions, this article developed the potentiality of the SSC policies, showing the Colombian policies in which numerous countries are cooperating with different purposes: the surveillance of the agreement, the FARC demobilization or the reinsertion of the former guerrilla members. This study was complemented showing the way in which other Southern countries -paying special attention to the Nicaragua and El Salvador cases- dealt with their own internal conflicts backed by this type of cooperation. In addition, the experiences of Mexico and El Salvador were exposed, analyzing the ways these countries faced, respectively, the support of displaced populations and the protection of the former guerrilla fighters.

As a conclusion, this article evidenced how the current Colombian situation is relevant in the consolidation of the peace agreement with the FARC and in the future pacification of the remaining struggling forces. It was also exposed how SSC has an extremely relevant potentiality, allowing the socialization of experiences among the Southern countries which have dealt with the very same issues that Colombia is nowadays facing. Therefore, it is concluded that SSC policies could -and should- play a relevant role, applying the currently existing programs to the Colombian situation, as well as promoting new ones with countries with successful experiences dealing with their own conflict issues.

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