Living And Resisting

In The Shadow Of The Colombian Conflict:

Forcibly Displaced People Seen Through A Family Therapy Lens[1]

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to develop a holistic analysis of conflict and social resistance to it, which accommodates reason/rationality with the emotional aspects to conflicts (sometimes neglected or disregarded). We will use a dialectical model of blaming from family systems theory that focuses on a number of themes (beliefs about the problem, nature of relationships, communication style, power dynamics, awareness of others, negotiating responsibility, orientation in time). To illustrate the methodology we will draw on the Colombian experience as a protracted violent conflict that is characterised by a degree of interdependence which covers the individual, family, community and social levels. The dialectical model helps to focus attention on some dimensions and dynamics which are decisive if there is to be an interest in empowering communities living and resisting in the midst of this conflict, and in helping collective groups to strengthen their emotional capacity to manage tensions and to find peaceful alternatives for the future.

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1.   Introduction

Positive opportunities can be enhanced through the awareness of mutual dependence on one another. Resolving the issues requires the replacement of violent tactics with nonviolent action in achieving desired outcomes[4]

The above quote captures the essence of the analysis to be offered. It is proposed that 'the awareness of mutual dependence' requires new approaches to understanding conflicts, particularly interdisciplinary ones. We are concerned with how a 'replacement of violent tactics' is achieved, but our central focus for this paper will be to apply a psychological model to a specific situation of violent conflict in order to enrich the type of psychosocial interventions possible: our interest is to empower communities living and resisting in the midst of a violent conflict[5].

Given this purpose, a number of definitions of some terms that become central to the ensuing argument may be helpful at the outset:

- 'Resistance' or 'civil resistance'[6] - consciously 'unarmed' actors trying to find collective means of disapproving and rejecting all forms of violence, either passive, active or confronting;

- 'Empowerment' – process by which a group or community affected by violence could regain power, understanding it as the possibility of acting collectively by consensus[7];

- 'Population' – the people directly affected by the conflict, comprising different sectors and cultural groups with different levels of interaction (not a uniform or homogeneous group) with the armed actors. Given the cultural and social traditions in Colombia, it is normal to find distinct 'communities' living in a specific geographical location;

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[4] Jeong, Ho-Won, *Peace and Conflict Studies – An Introduction* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000): p.37.

[5] García-Durán, Mauricio, "Challenges and dilemmas in the search for peace." In Mauricio García-Durán (Issue editor), *Alternatives to war: Colombia's peace processes – Accord* **14** (2004): p. 4-9.

[6] Randle, Michael, *Civil Resistance* (London: Fontana Press, 1994).

[7] This definition of power is based on the concept developed by Arendt, Hannah, *Crises of the Republic* (New York: Harvest, 1972).

- 'Interdependence' – individuals intimately connected due to living in the same locality, having mutual relationships and overlapping loyalties, and related to who has access to local power and resources.
- 'Dialectical' - this is the inherent polarization, which manifests itself in social situations, and in the arguments that develop around a conflict, when a blaming dynamic is dominant. Therapeutically this kind of dialogue is rich because one has privileged access to the deeper beliefs, which lie behind motivations, but the potential for defensive attachment to opinions is high, to the cost of change and moderation[8].

Our hypothesis concerns whether a dialectical model derived from family systems theory[9] can be a useful adjunct to the conflict analysis toolbox, to develop ideas to help psycho-social interveners engage with the blaming aspects of conflict dynamics. The application of systems theory follows on from Lederach's framework for finding sustainable reconciliation in divided societies[10], in which he conceptualises the process in terms of the interdependence of a number of widening systems and time-frames. In addition, issues of neutrality are central to family therapy approaches[11] and are at the heart of the degradation of the Colombian conflict[12]. It seems that all armed actors – including the government – are demanding the political allegiance of the population. Declaring 'neutrality' in such circumstances can be interpreted as 'opposition' or 'loyalty to another'.

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[8] This definition is developed in Bowen, Ceri, Madill, Anna, & Stratton, Peter, "Parental accounts of blaming within the family: a dialectical model for understanding blame in systemic therapy." *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy* **28**:2 (2002): p.129-144.

[9] Bowen, et al, "Parental accounts of blaming…

[10] Lederach, John P., *Building Peace – Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997).

[11] Family therapists have been aware of issues relevant to the abuse of power and implications for psychological problems since the founding of family therapy following Gregory Bateson - see also Curle, Adam, *To Tame the Hydra: Undermining the culture of violence* (Charlbury, UK: Jon Carpenter, 1999), p. 51-60. Concerns about neutrality then become a concern because of the systems focus, the concern is to engage all members of the group to maximise the group potential and to avoid people working against each other.

[12] Neutrality in the Colombian context is related with the effort of the civil population not being involucrated in the armed conflict, cf. Esperanza Hernández, 'Compelled to act: grassroots peace initiatives', in García-Durán (Editor), *Alternatives to war,* p.24-27.

There are a number of caveats we make in connection with the hypothesis: firstly, that we accept that there are healthy aspects to blaming (e.g. when it leads to collective action), and more unhealthy parts (e.g. when it increases divisions in the community or increases the level of overt violence); and secondly, that it can be problematic to introduce psychosocial interventions in isolation from humanitarian, political, security, economic and existing indigenous approaches to the conflict.

We will now introduce the dialectical model to be used as a framework, after which a summary of the Colombian context will be presented, which forms the basis of an analysis and leads into some conclusions.

2.   Conceptual framework: a dialectical model for understanding blaming[13]

When one applies models of conflict from different settings, a certain degree of conceptual confusion is risked. Below we propose to apply theory from family settings to wider conflicts, with the qualification that the identification of primary or primordial, and secondary relationships may not always be absolute. Of course, there are also differences when comparing conflicts at the interpersonal and societal levels. Galtung argues that the process of complexifying an analysis requires broadening and deepening[14]: in this instance, we can expect wider conflicts to involve more actors and more issues.

A detailed examination of the disabling effects of blaming and conflict within the family is provided by a previous study[15]. Developed from family systems theory and based on the perspective of parents attending for family therapy, this model focuses on a number of themes that are pertinent to understanding blame (beliefs about the problem, nature of relationships, communication style, power dynamics, awareness of others, negotiating responsibility,

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[13] An analysis of the need for conflict resolution to draw on systemic and family therapy perspectives is not the focus of this paper, however there is a long history of the psychological accounts of war and its adjuncts, such as post-traumatic stress. For a useful set of papers about displaced people, drawing on systemic family therapy ideas, see: Papadopoulos, Renos K. (Editor), *Therapeutic Care for Refugees: No place like home* (London: Karnac, 2002). For a psychological review of the conflict resolution field, see: Sanson, Ann & Bretherton, Di, "Conflict resolution: theoretical and practical issues." In *Peace, Conflict, and Violence - Peace psychology for the 21st century*, edited by Daniel J. Christie et al (New Jersey, USA: Prentice-Hall, 2001), p.193-209. For a deconstruction of the link between post-traumatic stress and violence, see De Zulueta, Felicity, *The Traumatic Roots of Destructiveness: From pain to violence* (London: Whurr, 1993).

[14] Galtung, Johan, Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and conflict, development and civilization (London: Sage, 1996).

[15] Again, Bowen, et al, "Parental accounts of blaming...

orientation in time). There are at least two dimensions to the themes of the model (see also Appendix 1): those elements related with perceptions (beliefs, awareness, time orientation) and those related with action or interaction (relationships, communication, responsibility and power). Clearly there is also a dialectical relationship between perception and action, and so the notion of dialectics moves from micro to macro, manifesting itself as blaming in conflict situations.

Bowen et.al. found that family members often brought to therapy their own ideas and beliefs about the problem, and that this influenced the way people talked to each other and the way individuals negotiated with each other. Whether people were consciously aware of the different positions held by the relevant parties varied, as did expressions of power and the degree to which people were rooted in the past or future. The model also highlighted a clear role for the emotions in interpreting conflict situations (expressing or concealing feelings, avoiding or confronting styles of interaction), which can inform possible psychosocial interventions (e.g. how can this be facilitated by outside interveners). The overarching themes of the model are hypothesised to form a dialectical framework in that it was observed that people often held quite extreme positions. Therefore one could say that, how different individuals process the same experience determines the way individuals position themselves in relation to the 'other'. It was not enough to merely analyse blaming statements and to look for issues of causality to be addressed in therapy using the standard techniques implied by the theory.

The Colombian context offers an opportunity to apply the model and to take an interdisciplinary approach: to connect psychology, political sciences, and peace studies. The pertinence of blaming to the social and political situation adheres itself to the application of a theoretical understanding of blaming and its consequences.

3.   Context

Colombia has been characterised by a protracted violent conflict over the last 40 years. Violence has spread throughout the whole geographical area of the country , involving all the levels of the society and a growing degradation of the war. In fact, there are overlapping conflicts and violence: the political one among guerrilla forces, paramilitary groups and the Army, and drug-related, criminal and domestic conflicts. This has had a great impact on the population, especially in the countryside, where the guerrillas and paramilitary groups have

control.

Political violence began to increase noticeably from 1980 onwards, but we see an exponential increase from 1985 up until 1988, at which time the victims of the armed conflict, both those who have died in combat as well as other victims of political violence, stabilizes at an average of more than 3,000 victims *per annum* (See Fig. 1). Such an increase is certainly the result of a notorious growth in the number of agents of violence, both legal and illegal, and of the gradual intensification of the confrontation between them. Above all, this is due to a notable rise in the number of political assassinations in the nineteen-eighties, the so-called "Dirty War", a war that sustained a very high and stable quota of violent deaths right through the nineteen-nineties. When one considers the victims that the violence in Colombia has left over the past fifteen years, we find that the statistic is slightly greater than 50,000 dead in total, of which 32 000 (64%) were civilians killed because of political violence. In other words, it has been not only a war between armed factions, but also a war against society. The existence of over two million people forced to internally migrate because of violence only confirms what we are saying.

The logic of terror has become central to the conflict: changes in the balance of military power create the necessity for armed groups to conquer and re-conquer territory, and among the civilian population this means a continual adaptation to new requirements of loyalty and, simultaneously, a fear of vengeance for alleged old loyalties to former occupiers. In short, people have learned to live amidst a blaming dynamic: "All armed combatants understand territoriality as a zero-sum game in which no neutral space exists, and no room for negotiated solutions is available. The civil population is caught in the paranoiac logic of 'si no estas conmigo estas contra mi' ('if you are not with me, you are against me')"[16].

Given this context, there have been many attempts by Colombians to resist in the face of pressure from the armed actors. In this sense, several grassroots initiatives have arisen, which try to consolidate a consensus of the people against the use of violence by declaring 'indigenous neutrality', by forming a number of 'peace territories' and 'peace communities' with displaced people, by promoting a constituent process for the areas of Mogotes and Tarso, by organising a local referendum for peace in Aguachica, and so on[17].

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[16] Meertens, Donny, "The nostalgic future – terror, displacement and gender in Colombia." In *Victims, Perepetrators or Actors – Gender, armed conflict and political violence*, edited by Caroline O. Moser & Fiona C. Clark (London: Zed Books, 2001), p.136.

[17] A large list of this civil initiative could be found in a table published in García- Durán (Editor), *Alternatives to war*, p.28.

Fig. 1

INTENSITY OF THE ARMED CONFLICT IN COLOMBIA, 1978 - 2003
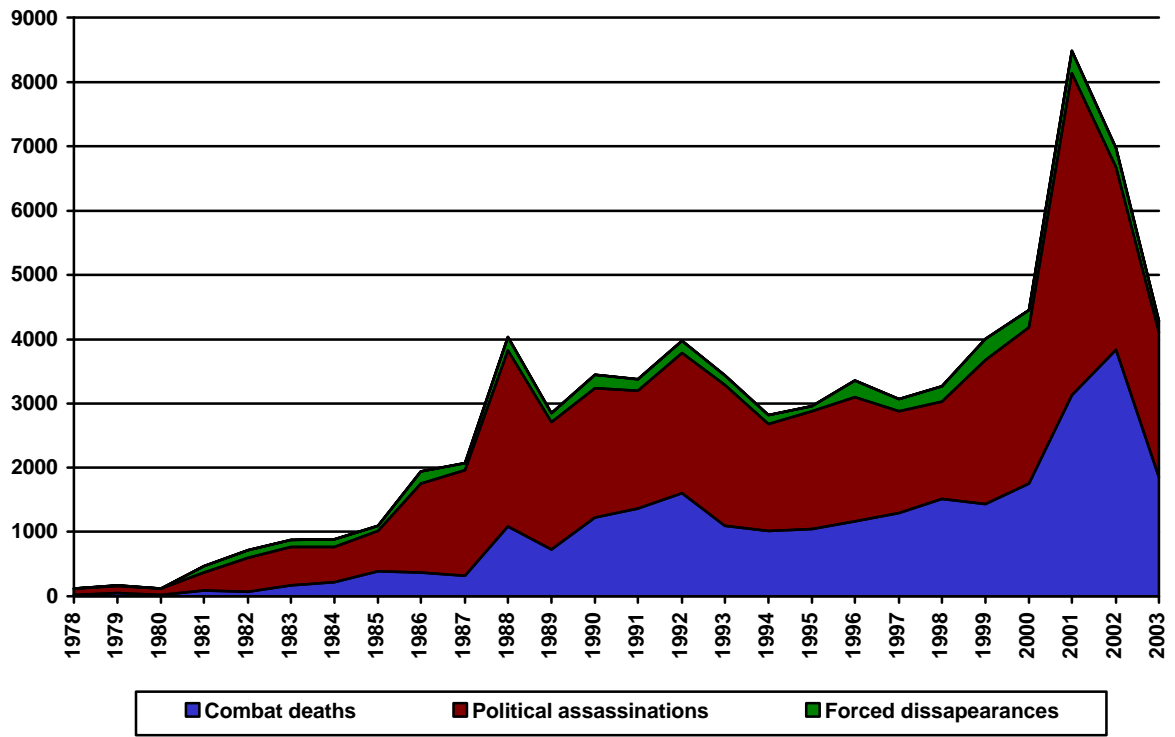
Source: Data Base on Human Rights, CINEP and *Justicia y Paz* (Justice and Peace)

However, the reality of extended violence has some important consequences in terms of social and psychological symptoms (below), one of which will be the focus of this paper.

a) The endemic violence has implied in the Colombian case two related social phenomena: *anomie* (an extreme case of dissolution of social norms and values, culture, for public space behaviour) and *atomie* (an extreme dissolution of social fabric, structure, with fragmentation/atomisation)[18]. Neither private nor public space remains for the construction of safe social bonds. In addition, there are other related consequences at the social level, such as increased homelessness, unemployment, incapacity and dependence on social systems of support[19].

b) There are also specific psychological and social consequences for the innocent victims of violence, particularly the displaced people[20]:

- Fear and anger
- Depression and inertia
- Splitting and dissociation
- Loss of dignity and self-esteem
- Difficulties in communication
- Loss of one's 'vital project' and hopelessness about the future
- Guilt and questioning the meaning of life
- Family break-up

c) At the psychosocial level there has been a blurring of the boundaries between peoples and consequent identity confusion, rooted in projections and other defence

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[18] Galtung, Johan, "40 conflicts, 40 perspectives." In *Searching for Peace: the road to TRANSCEND*, edited by Johan Galtung & Carl Jacobsen (London: Pluto Press, 2000), p.185.

[19] Castro, Jorge A. & García, Mauricio, Porque era Desplazado y me Acogiste – Una aproximación teológico-pastoral al trabajo con desplazados por la violencia (Bogotá: Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados, 2001), p.35-38.

[20] Villa, Juan David, Estamos en Camino: Talleres psicosociales para el desarrollo de las comunidades de paz (Bogotá: CINEP, 2000); Villa, Juan David & Equipo Psicosocial Cinep, En Camino… A Pesar de Todo: Talleres psicosociales para el acompañamiento a las comunidades de paz (Bogotá: CINEP, 2002).

mechanisms but manifesting as blaming dynamics. This has been articulated by researchers, for example, Meertens summarises this phenomenon in the following way, "under arbitrary power, however, nearly all bonds of solidarity, even those of the private domain, are eroded by mistrust. Primordial attachments such as kinship and family membership – normally a 'given' identification – become extremely confused as they are overruled by successive imposed group loyalties"[21].

In this context, the blaming dynamics of all social actors, but especially of the armed ones, has been prominent and become one way to avoid owning responsibility in the conflict and also becomes an expression of power within society. Ongoing violence in Colombia means there are a lot of victims and pain; in some way, everyone has suffered as a result of the conflict, generating many hurts, grievances and desire for revenge. This situation implies that emotions are running high and, consequently, the demands people make can often be irrational and excessive.

In the following analysis, we will focus on part (c) of the above, the blaming dynamics, by drawing on our knowledge of the Colombian context and of intractable problems at the level of a systemic analysis.

4. Analysis

The dialectical model helps to focus attention on some dimensions and dynamics which are decisive if there is to be an interest in empowering communities resisting in the midst of a violent conflict, and helping everyone to strengthen their emotional capacity to manage tensions and to find alternatives for the future. With reference to the Colombian situation and taking the different dialectics in turn, we will now analyse the impact of current behaviour patterns on the conflict and explore and strategise alternative modes of interaction (see also Appendix 1):

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[21] Meertens, "The nostalgic future, p.137.

A. Beliefs about the Problem

There is a tendency for all groups to define the conflict in single-cause terms, yet politicising the conflict has a tendency to increase the futility of politics and thereby also disempowers the population in relation to the conflict. The population observes clear parallels in the violent behaviour of the different armed groups, and this affects their beliefs about the problem. However, there are instances when they surpass their beliefs centred on fear and actively resist or confront the armed actors in a direct way (collective non-compliance). While this strategy reflects a belief in a single cause – that arms and conflict are intertwined – the confronting style of interaction also represents a certain level of sophistication, to make a stand against arms rather than people, and to identify armed actors, like the population, as pawns in the conflict game with consequent human frailties and weaknesses to be exploited.

B. Nature of Relationships

The reality of the situation implies that the population coexists with the armed actors in the communities, yet this is not an easy relationship. In a social sense they are equals but the armed actors use their arms to take control and influence the governing bodies, outlawing an increasing number of behaviours and expecting a 'special status', which they may not have 'earned'. While independent collective action against the armed actors is necessary, it is also risky and so not often possible, which contributes to a loss of dignity at a personal and community level. Of course, we all expect support from the groups to which we belong, but when that loyalty becomes a means of oppression, the risky stance of neutrality (perhaps in the form of multiple loyalties)[22] becomes the only option.

C. Communication Style

There is a pattern of distancing communicative styles in the Colombian conflict, with the paradox that people are living side-by-side, but often with no direct channel of communication. As Meertens comments, "Narratives of violence get lost in a labyrinth of

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[22] See Crisp, Richard J. "Social Categorization: Blurring the boundaries." *The Psychologist*, **15**, (2002), p.612-615.

rumour and accusation, where boundaries between what is real and what is imagined tend to dissolve and the speaker's own positioning in the power networks may be interpreted in various ways, both by him/herself and the listener"[23]. Given this, there is a need to consider alternative ways of communicating and lobbying to make sure one's views and interests are heard, perhaps incorporated within collective actions for peace. This may help to avoid an over-reliance on the use of external spokespersons (representatives from NGOs, church and international organizations) to communicate with the armed actors.

D. Awareness of Others

The armed actors use community support as a mechanism for legitimating their authority but also as a war tactic; therefore they tend to view individuals not as people with autonomy, but as only supporters of one side in the war. On the other hand, the population is all too aware of the existence of the armed actors, which appear quite often as if they are an invader force. After many years of conflict, the population tend to realize that all the armed actors are responsible for human right violations, but they also need to ask for support from peace and church organizations in order to make a protest against this. On the other hand, the population are personally acquainted with many of the armed actors, who may be relatives or friends, and in a close-knit community the population is exposed to, and may have sympathies with some of the arguments propagated by warring parties. There is always a balance to be negotiated between empathizing with others and misrepresenting oneself.

E. Negotiating Responsibility

The armed actors' denial of responsibility for atrocities can lead to a situation where 'if you deny someone a past then you deny them a future'. Therefore, it is crucial to pressure the armed groups to play a political role, which makes them assume their responsibility in the ongoing war. On the other hand, the population tend to avoid making a stand in the public arena, and keep a very low profile. Nevertheless, only by recognizing one's own contribution to a conflict does it then become possible to move on and negotiate possible collective forms

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[23] Meertens, "The nostalgic future, p.137.

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of action in order to resist the dynamic of violence. Given the collective logic of this, it is also necessary to assert the rights of the individual, but at the same time expressing aspirations for the future which include community and family.

F. Orientation in Time

The war situation compels individuals, communities and armed groups to act on a short-term basis with consequent difficulties having projects in the medium and long-term future. There are also continual reminders of blood ties and other relationships rooted in the past, which confuse loyalties and blur the distinction between the different groups and impose limitations on efforts to move on. There are multiple needs here, which must all be addressed: acknowledging the events of the past and grieving; finding meaning in the present; and thinking ahead to the future.

G. Power Issues

The armed groups dominate the population and disable their collective action through violent means, acting as an illegitimate force and thereby avoiding any direct confrontation or resistance while legitimising their authority. The population struggles to create boundaries and to find social spaces for the safe expression of feelings that would give some distance from involvement in the ongoing conflict. The possibilities for building alternative forms of power depend on organizing a consensus of opinion and action, yet the people are often limited to utterances of private disapproval, which tends to be futile and can build up resentment. Meanwhile, those outside the community often infer their co-involvement in group decisions and actions, which merely exacerbates the situation and often results in brutal retaliation.

H. Summary

There is a tendency for beliefs about the conflict to be simplified, perhaps by individuals on all sides of the dispute. Communication takes place indirectly and often in private, which increases peoples' resentment of being occupied and used almost as if pawns in a game, while giving the armed actors a false sense of security that they are indeed representative of a consensus. It is important to find the way in which people's aspirations and needs are articulated within the wider social narratives in order to hypothesise and look to the future. In this sense, it is a priority in any intervention to discover the tensions, paradoxes and dilemmas that people face in the different levels of interaction. This is the condition to finding alternatives for recreating the social fabric and encouraging people to be not only victims of violence and terror but also "shapers of their future"[24].

Neutrality has been mentioned as particularly salient to the Colombian conflict in the literature previously[25], and one can see that it is also crucial to understanding the blaming dynamic that operates in the mindset of the armed actors and the population. It would appear that adherence to one side or another is often inferred from the actions or inactions of the population, who unsurprisingly try to hide any connections they may have to the various groups. On the other hand, the armed actors do not appear to have any requirement to remain neutral; their position is always clear and determined by their opposition to the 'other'. In this sense, one can see that the identity processes that operate may in fact promote collusion with the conflict because the conflict rapidly becomes a defining characteristic of the group identity[26]. The chance to remain individually neutral or to be perceived as an individual seems to be a rare commodity.

In terms of a rationale for the above sequence of events, it would seem that war places conflicting demands on the emotional and rational systems of the individual resulting in the

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[24] Meertens, "The nostalgic future, p.133.

[25] Hernández, Esperanza & Salazar, Marcela, Con la Esperanza Intacta – Experiencias Comunitarias de Resistencia Civil No Violenta (Bogotá: Oxfam, 1999); Ramírez, Jesus (Ed.), Neutralidad y Vida – Un camino para hacer y vivir la paz (Medellín: Viva la Ciudadanía /Alcaldía de Mutatá / Gobernación de Antioquia, 1997).

[26] Northrup, Terrell A., "The dynamic of identity in personal and social conflict." In *Intractable Conflicts and their Transformation*, edited by Louis Kriesberg, Terrell A. Northrup, & S.J. Thorson (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1989), p.55-82.

human meaning-making mechanism being in a state of paradox. There is a real emotional need for security that encourages a degree of amnesty for actors, but also a concomitant requirement for atrocities to be acknowledged and accounted for, historically and intellectually. Ideas of conflict 'resolution' in Colombia need to take into consideration a people living with paradox. It would appear that some kind of empowerment is vital for individuals to feel they are again owners of their own lives, with the power to make decisions and look forward to a peaceful existence for themselves, their family and community. The dialectical model for understanding blame recognises the traps of blaming others for one's own predicament, as has perhaps been the case for all Colombians. More than anything it makes conditions of neutrality strained and hard to maintain, increases the constraining effects of circularity, and also makes imagining a positive future more difficult[27].

5.   Conclusions

In analysing the Colombian context, we have tried to bridge the gap between rational and emotive aspects of conflicts. In doing so, we follow Galtung & Tschudi's example, as given in their 'division of a field of psychology'[28], by connecting to the deep cognitions and emotions, often unarticulated and related to experiences of shame about past behaviour. Galtung & Tschudi make it clear that conflict workers have to engage in these 'deep' aspects of the problem if attempts to solve the problem are to be helpful.

In this paper, we have drawn on family therapy ideas and applied them to a wider socio-political context. We make a number of qualifications when doing this, particularly in terms of whether such an analysis is capable of articulating the social bonds in the field communities and in the social fabric in general, that allow for the informal ways of processing trauma. Another limitation of the above analysis is the fact that the dialectical model has been derived from family research and so needs to be considered in terms of the wider socio-

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[27] Palazzoli Selvini, Mara, Boscolo, Luigi, Cecchin, Gianfranco, & Prata, Guiliana, "Hypothesizing-cicularity-neutrality: three guidelines for the conductor of the session." *Family Process*, **19**:1 (1980), p.3-12.

[28] Galtung, Johan & Tschudi, Finn, "Crafting peace: on the psychology of the TRANSCEND approach." In *Peace, Conflict, and Violence – Peace psychology for the 21st century*, edited by Daniel J. Christie et al (New Jersey, USA: Prentice-Hall, 2001), p.210-222.

political framework of power also. In particular, there has also been limited opportunity to expand on the implications of the model for the holders of power and arms. To reiterate, that it can be problematic to introduce psychosocial interventions in isolation from humanitarian, political, security, economic and existing indigenous approaches to the conflict – cultural dynamics need to be maximised and the risks of resisting in a violent situation considered.

> In terms of future directions for research, we feel there is much to be done to translate the ideas expressed here into actual psychosocial interventions, to help build the peace communities and other forms of civil resistance and to consolidate their own resources and encourage them to express their beliefs verbally. However, we conclude that there is a urgent need for safe social and political spaces, for planning and implementing collective actions for peace, particularly against the backdrop of a paranoiac blaming dynamic.

Using the dialectical model gave us a clear framework but may have simplified matters in a way that others may wish to avoid. We also have to be mindful of theorists who may assert the view that, "aggression exists as innate potential, and is therefore ineradicably, unfortunately cuts the ground from beneath the feet of social theorists who argue that violent crime, cruelty and war can be abolished from human affairs simply by changing the social system in such a way as to minimize frustration (e.g. by increasing national wealth, eliminating social inequality, etc.)"[29]. It is more important than ever to listen to the voices at the grassroots level that may be yearning for some recognition of the deep paradox and tensions they are living in response to conflicts they have little power to change.

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[29] Stevens, Anthony, *Archetype Revisited: An updated natural history of the self,* 2nd Ed. (London: Brunner-Routledge, 2002), p.261.

Appendix 1: A dialectical model for understanding blaming dynamics between armed actors and population within the Colombian conflict

Themes and dialectics of interaction	*Between Armed actors*	*And the Population*
Beliefs about the problem (e.g. single cause vs. multiple cause)	*Both revolutionary & anti-subversive discourses simplify the arguments (there is an interaction with power here) and discount certain behaviours.*	*The political conflict between the armed actors is the problem; groups with arms cannot be confronted except by force.*
Nature of relationships (e.g. dependency vs. autonomy)	*Providing security for the population in return for their support; creating high expectations of protection; exploiting the reality of the coexistence of populations and groups; demanding unconditional loyalty to the group.*	*Feeling occupied by an invader force; trying to survive while managing a coexistence with armed actors; having an amicable relationship with them but without trust of available support in a crisis.*
Communication style (e.g. confrontation vs. hidden feelings)	*Impose views and make decisions in a non-democratic way; reluctance to listen at the grassroots level (selective depending on the issue and the situation).*	*Avoiding confrontation & silence; use of external spokespeople (e.g. NGO representative, priest or nun) to defend the community.*
Awareness of others (e.g. misunderstanding vs.	*Using community support as a tactic for exerting authority but also for security reasons;*	*Recognizing armed actors' presence & power & that by their actions they are defending*

empathising with different positions)	*invested interest and relationship to the community for ulterior motives; tendency to view individuals not as individuals but as only supporters of a group.*	*their autonomy; feelings of disempowerment from the actions of the armed actors; opportunities to pursue a better life are often blocked.*
Negotiating responsibility (e.g. projecting vs. accepting responsibility)	*Public denial of involvement in atrocities; legitimising and enforcing authority with ambiguous support of the population; acting as 'owners' of individual lives.*	*The political conflict is not our problem'; avoiding making a stand in the public arena, and keeping a very low profile.*
Orientation in time (e.g. orientation to the past vs. the future)	*A military logic, in some cases with long-term goals and historical links with the past (family relationships), but some short-term political pressures to resolve issues quickly.*	*The war implies a short-term perspective, adjusting to the situation with the armed actors on a moment-to-moment basis; some hopelessness about the future.*
Power dynamics (e.g. exerting authority vs. empowering people)	*Power is derived from arms and operating as a predator force; 'lip-service' to empowering communities; exerting authority to defend the gained power.*	*No authority of their own; passive resistance as the only way of protesting against occupiers; private disapproval of the situation and the behaviour of the armed actors.*