Sustainable peace building in the South: experiences from Latin America

Jenny Pearce

Introduction: contextualising conflict

The 'peace industry' has grown enormously in the wake of the Cold War. The UN system, government and non-government aid programmes, and new academic research have focused their attentions on the complex and very violent internal wars which seem to have characterised the immediate post-Cold War era. The only area of overseas aid which has grown in recent years is that directed at disaster relief and peacekeeping. According to the World Debt Tables 1996, aid levels in 1995 were 13 per cent lower than those recorded in 1991. Aid for disaster relief and peacekeeping, however, had more than doubled from US$2.5bn in 1990 to US$6bn 1994–5 (Ridell 1996).

A new terminology has emerged. The UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) has focused its attentions on 'war-torn societies'; the United Nations has created a distinct group of conflicts, which it calls 'complex political emergencies'.[1] A new range of issues has come to preoccupy official and non-government donor agencies, such as the relationship of relief to development; peace making and peace building; the role of the military in humanitarian work; post-war reconstruction; and conflict prevention.

Attempts to generate universally applicable formulas collapse, however, when confronted by the huge range and complexity of the actual situations involved. 'Conflict' is not a very useful analytical category at all. Nor is it unequivocally negative: one of the conflicts examined in this paper was considered positive by a wide spectrum of international opinion and humanitarian agencies.

Much of the present concern with complex internal conflicts is in fact limited to certain recent and exceptionally violent conflicts that have attracted considerable media attention, notably former Yugoslavia,

First published in *Development in Practice* 7(4): 438–55 in 1997

Central Africa, West Africa, and the Horn of Africa. Political imperatives and resource constraints place these major 'fires' at the top of the conflict-intervention agenda. The media tend to focus on these, making them real to millions of households, and in turn forcing politicians to respond somehow.[2] One could almost say that, whether media-determined or not, there is a threshold of what is not politically acceptable at the international or national level, and crossing it will provoke a response. Public and élite opinion tolerates 25,000 violent deaths in Colombia in 1995, but not the 800,000 that took place in Rwanda in 1994. Long-term conflicts with high accumulative death tolls (such as Guatemala, where between 1961 and 1997 an estimated 150,000, mostly poor indigenous peasants, were killed and some 45,000 'disappeared') attract much less attention than the massacre of thousands in a short period of time. An analogy might be the identification of the AIDS virus. The high loss of life resulting from the virus is appalling, but many more millions in the South have died and continue to die through avoidable illnesses such as diarrhoea, TB, and measles.

There is both a terrible reality to, and understandable preoccupation with, complex contemporary conflicts. At the same time, the focus on these distorts the real world, its many forms of violence, and the historic and developmental crises from which these emerge.

Non-government organisations (NGOs) concerned with longer-term development, for instance, find that it is the emergencies which raise the funds. The media-encouraged (or media-driven) public need for a 'quick fix', a 'result' commensurate with their donations, channels attention into certain kinds of operation and short-term vision. No cynicism is implied here. The desire to save lives is palpable. However, the logic of contemporary discourses on conflict is to extract the immediate and urgent from the long-term social realities in which they are embedded. The 'complex political emergency' becomes a phenomenon in its own right, requiring its own explanations, responses, and expertise.

It is not dissimilar to the debate on 'famine'. The image of mass starvation that shook the world in the mid-1980s similarly led policy makers and much of the academic community to put aside the many studies of rural livelihoods and their macro-level environment. The words of my colleague, Donna Pankhurst, in her review of the literature on famine, could be used with respect to the 'complex political emergency':

Famine came to be seen as something separate and detached from the rest of history, requiring new explanations, which was reflected in the number of texts and commentaries on the subject ... Where famine is seen as the outcome and end result of many factors which make people poor and make them vulnerable to changes in their systems of production and reproduction (such as drought and war), then we can avoid seeking solutions to famine, or plans to ensure its prevention separately from all other analysis of how people become so vulnerable.

(Pankhurst 1989:513)

The separation between the emergency and developmental wings of Northern agencies intervening in the South further encourages the decontextualising of conflict. The divide often reflects institutional separations (and sometimes rivalries): for instance, at the international level between United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); at the interagency level between agencies concerned with refugees and those concerned with development; and at the intra-agency level between the development and emergency departments within NGOs such as Oxfam GB. Increasingly, 'emergencies' become the headline-grabbing, fundraising core of international assistance, as opposed to 'development', which is a more complicated process to explain, and beset with failures rather than clear successes. While individuals move between these various agencies and gain relevant and important experience of the connections between their activities, institutional dynamics often prevent the learning from these experiences at the institutional level. Time for reflection, analysis, discussion, and systematising of experiences can be seen as an indulgence in the hectic and emotive world of relief and development.

But while the idea of a continuum between emergency relief and development, with clear cut-off points between the end of one phase and the beginning of the next, may be institutionally useful, in my experience it is a very poor way to conceptualise reality.[3] Most of the regions beset by conflict in the South never had 'development'; indeed, such conflicts often have their epicentre in the most peripheral regions of countries where development has been uneven, if at all. Failure to understand the socio-economic context of conflict seriously weakens the emergency effort, as well as the prospects for post-conflict peace building.[4] There is a huge difference between peacebuilding in former Yugoslavia, for example, where there was a relatively highly skilled and educated population and level of economic development before the war, and much of Africa.

The reality of the world today, and notably in its southern hemisphere, is that there is a spectrum of violent situations. There are the exceptionally violent conflagrations already mentioned, but there is a range of others. For instance, besides many protracted conflicts (such as Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Colombia, or Angola), there are conflicts in a fragile transitionary phase from long-term conflict to peace (as in Guatemala, where the Peace Agreement was signed on 29 December 1996), conflicts which have formally ended but where social problems continue to threaten long-term peace (as in El Salvador or Mozambique), and situations that simmer on the edge of major conflict (as in Burundi).

The number of potential conflicts is great. Today's developmental crisis may be tomorrow's violent conflict; contemporary 'emergencies' all express deep developmental, social, and political crises. As Adams and Bradbury point out,

> In 1993, when the UN designated 26 conflict-generated emergencies as 'complex', there were over 80 other violent conflicts recorded. In many countries not at war, violence and insecurity are daily realities in the private and public lives of many women, children and ethnic and religious minorities, with profound consequences for their physical, psychological, and material well-being. Insecurity and violence are development issues that have received little serious attention from the UN, governmental agencies, and NGOs working for poverty alleviation and justice.
> (Adams and Bradbury 1994:36)

There is an urgent need to build up a body of authoritative knowledge about this range of conflicts and the social, economic, and political processes from which they erupt. We need to improve our conceptual tools for understanding them and their outcomes. In particular, we need to root conflict analysis, emergency intervention, and peace building within specific socio-historical contexts. Conflicts have a social history: they are not abstract categories. Peace building has a political economy. It also depends critically on human resources: most people will have been negatively affected by personal experience of violence, loss, and destruction, but also positively shaped by courage, new skills, and coping strategies. Peace building should not become a set of abstract principles, unless they derive from careful study of a number of cases, take into account the range of contingent factors which affect post-war environment, and are then continuously revised in the light of experience.

Building a body of knowledge: the contribution of Latin America and Southern Africa

The recent internal wars of Latin America and those of Southern Africa are examples of conflicts that are not considered to be 'complex political emergencies'. These conflicts have disappeared from the headlines, but they have nevertheless had a devastating impact on their respective countries. Peace building is taking place in a problematic macro-level environment in both regions.

The international dimension to these conflicts contrasts them with more recent ones. They were all in a sense 'Cold War' conflicts; the Peruvian conflict reflected Cold War ideologies, but did not involve the superpowers in the way that Central America did. But in fact the international influences only exacerbated and prolonged what were essentially internal conflicts. Apart from the notable exceptions of Angola and Colombia, these largely came to an end in the last phase of the Cold War or in its immediate wake. Guatemala has been the most prolonged of the conflicts and of the peace processes, with an agreement signed only at the end of 1996. As the first examples of peace settlements with international supervision, they have been used as models of post-war reconstruction.

Long-term peace building is the responsibility of local people, many of whom have been involved in the war in different ways: some as victims/survivors, some as protagonists, and some as relief workers and peace builders. We need to understand these processes of local 'peace building from below' and to learn what is and what is not effective.[5] But we also need to understand the factors operating at a broader level, including the external interventions, which facilitate or hinder local capacity to reconstruct societies from the devastation of war.

This article arises from my contribution to the Oxfam/CSVR Symposium, in which I described recent Latin American experiences of conflict and peace building. It looks comparatively (and very schematically in such a short article) at two regions of conflict in Latin America: Central America (Nicaragua and El Salvador) and the Andes (Peru). The comparative method is used to draw out differences as well as similarities. It focuses on these countries because they are all in the post-war reconstruction phase. It is based on four years of research and fieldwork in most of the areas of conflict in Latin America except Chiapas in Mexico, with a particular focus on the problem of internal displacement.

The article begins with an analysis of each conflict, using a socio-historical approach. It subsequently tries to identify the critical social changes which took place as a result of conflict and how the humanitarian intervention responded to them. How did people cope with and survive the war, and what skills and capacities might they bring to the peace? Finally, it asks to what extent these local capacities have been able to influence the post-war situation and prospects for long-term and sustainable peace building.

Conflict analysis

Violent conflicts appear to be cataclysmic events, but they are in fact the result of processes that have developed over time. They are rooted in some way in the interactions between identities of class, ethnicity, and sometimes religion (gender inequalities have not yet led to open warfare on gender lines!), and structural socio-economic factors. These identities are channelled, articulated, and politicised through the presence of some catalyst, and conflict is triggered by political acts or action of some kind.

The identities of any individual or subject are, as the post-modernists have taught us, multiple; they are neither fixed nor essential. In the conflicts examined below, for instance, most women have tended to suppress or play down their gender-related identity and concerns in favour of a sense of belonging based on class, ethnicity, or nationality, which cuts across gender; although gender-awareness has at the same time often grown stronger in the course of the war itself.[6] A vital question is why at any given moment one identity appears to predominate over others and even provides a reason for taking up arms. There is no automatic reason why any of these identities should result in conflict. Conflict analysis needs to understand how historically rooted injustices, exclusions, inequalities, and rivalries that exist in all societies turn into violent internal war in some.

Central America: Nicaragua and El Salvador

Long before the civil wars that tore this region apart in the 1980s, its socio-economic and political structures had developed along particularly exclusionary and socially divisive lines.

Common to both countries was the concentration of economic and political power in the hands of a mostly white or *mestizo* (mixed white and Indian) élite. Only a small, politically weak, professional middle class lay between the mass of the peasant population and the urban

poor people. The structural inequalities resulted in clear class cleavages in El Salvador (in the case of neighbouring Guatemala they were class and ethnic cleavages). In Nicaragua, however, class divisions were complicated by the fact that the élite itself was divided, with one dynasty concentrating power and wealth at the level of the State and alienating other sectors of the élite.

There were also significant spatial or geographical patterns to the deep social divisions in the two countries. In El Salvador, departments such as Chalatenango, Cabañas, and Morazán were the poorest, most ecologically damaged, and agriculturally unsustainable regions. Poor, land-hungry peasants struggled to sustain a fragile, vulnerable livelihood in these departments, which later constituted core regions of the conflict. In Nicaragua, there was also a geographic and ethnic divide between the Pacific and Atlantic regions of the country. The social structures of the former did not reproduce themselves in the latter, where indigenous Miskito and Sumo peoples had come under the influence of Britain and the Moravian Church, and had little communication or relationship with the Spanish-speaking Catholic population of the Pacific region.

More than any other structural inequality, the role of land distribution and use in the unfolding conflicts was probably the most significant. Inability to sustain the peasant economy on the amount and quality of land available to the poor majority was a core issue. Economic growth was nevertheless facilitated by the relationship between the agro-export and peasant economies: unable to live on the available land all the year round, peasants had to migrate and sell their labour cheaply at harvest time on the agro-export estates, in order to earn some cash to support themselves for the full year. The problem became ever more acute with population growth and the expansion of agro-export crops and concomitant expulsion of peasants from their land. The gravest situation was found in the smallest, most densely populated country, El Salvador.

Many dispossessed people headed for urban areas, where they would once again end up on the margins of society, with relatively few gaining jobs in the small manufacturing sector. In Nicaragua, where there were still unsettled agricultural areas, colonisation schemes banished some of the land-hungry to remote areas in the 1960s and 1970s, where poor infrastructure and State neglect resulted in a difficult struggle for survival. Nueva Guinea in Nicaragua would later become one of the conflict-ridden regions of that country, for instance

(the Ixcán in Guatemala would be another example of a zone of colonisation in Central America which subsequently became a centre of conflict). In Nueva Guinea, many peasants remained politically tied to *Somocismo* in gratitude for the former dictator's land grants, and this made them a fertile recruiting ground for the anti-Sandinista forces in the 1980s. Chalatenango in El Salvador was an area of unplanned colonisation. When thousands were expelled from the coastal regions to make way for cotton-growing in the 1950s, and thousands more were driven from their small subsistence plots on the coffee estates, they headed for the regions of little interest to the agro-exporters. In Chalatenango it was cattle ranching, not agro-exports, which predominated, and some land was available for rent.

The Andes: Peru

In Peru, class and ethnic identity overlapped in the highland departments of Ayacucho, Huancavelica, and Apurimac. These represented the poorest regions of the country and the epicentres of the conflict that erupted in the early 1980s.

Populations of alpaca herders and subsistence farmers and sharecroppers, some of whom paid labour dues up until the late 1970s to local landowners, lived in remote and desolate altitudes. The State showed little interest in the contribution that the region might make to the national economy, except insofar as the land reform which finally gave the peasants title to land in the late 1970s was aimed also at forcing expropriated landowners to invest their capital elsewhere. Ethnic identity among the peasants was culturally strong, with most still speaking primarily Quechua. Many women spoke no Spanish at all, and many men did so with difficulty. The problem of communicating with the wider Peru was an isolating factor, exacerbated by widespread racism towards the 'Indian'. Ethnicity was not an identity which the peasants and herders themselves valued or affirmed. Any action in the wider world taken by these people reflected their socio-economic position and not their ethnic identity; examples are the peasant movements which did emerge in the wake of the Velasco government's efforts to mobilise them 'from above' in the early 1970s.

In the valleys, such as that around Huanta in Ayacucho, where larger landowners and better-off peasants lived, the population was mostly *mestizo*, and strongly rejected the 'Indian' influence within it, although most spoke Quechua as well as Spanish. Nevertheless, they would never be accepted into the same social élite as the Lima-based

bourgeoisie. The frustrations of a generation of sons and daughters of peasants on medium-sized farms, with educational opportunities but few professional or social ones, would play a major role in the subsequent conflict.[7]

Catalysts of war

None of the conditions described leads invariably to war and/or violent conflict. Many parts of the world are characterised by deep class and ethnic divisions and a highly exclusionary distribution of political and economic power corresponding to them. Often these divisions, like the ones we are exploring, rest on a great deal of threatened or actual violence. The status quo is defended through a variety of coercive mechanisms from national to private armed force. Some writers have even identified 'structural violence' to describe situations of violence embedded in social relations but which do not manifest themselves in armed conflict between the parties (Galtung 1990).

Affirming identity does not necessarily lead to conflict.[8] But there are situations where identity is mobilised in such a way as to challenge another social group or the State. It is the character of these catalysing factors which is critical to the analysis of conflict; they introduce new elements into an ongoing situation, and transform perceptions about the legitimacy of that situation and what can be done to change it.

Central America: El Salvador and Nicaragua

In **El Salvador** the catalysts consisted firstly of the radical Church and secondly of left-wing political movements. The fact that the Central American civil wars originated in the 1960s and 1970s meant that they were heavily influenced by the ideological currents that on the left made class an over-arching identity which could bring others, such as gender and ethnicity, under its umbrella. This produced a powerful mobilising tool to pitch against a State which also organised itself essentially around the interests of one class. A peasant movement began to emerge in the poorest zones of the country in the 1970s, linking up with other popular organisations in the urban areas, and articulated politically by the guerrilla movements that formed the Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional (FMLN) in 1980. The class-based nature of this movement was a source of its initial strength, but it provoked a stronger class solidarity among the Salvadorean oligarchy who controlled the State and could call upon the armed forces, and ultimately the US government, for support.

In **Nicaragua** the success of the Sandinistas in overthrowing the Somocista dictatorship triggered the relentless hostility of the US Administration to what it perceived to be a revolutionary pro-Soviet government. While the revolution against Somoza had attracted a multi-class alliance, this did not survive the assumption of power by the Sandinistas, although the new government attempted to preserve it. Those who opposed the focus on social distribution and popular participation of the Sandinista government were the catalysts – with US backing – of an armed movement to overthrow it.

This armed movement was able to exploit the social discontent among sectors of the peasantry alienated by the Sandinistas' approach to the agrarian question. It also managed to mobilise the ethnic particularities of the Atlantic Coast communities, which were deeply disaffected by the Sandinistas' ill-conceived initial approach to a region used to virtual autonomy from Managua.

The counter-revolutionary movement grew with external support, but nevertheless exploited many internal social tensions and class and ethnic identities to bring down the first State in Nicaragua's history that proposed to base itself on the 'logic of the majority'. The historic weakness of a State which had developed around a dynastic dictatorship could not be overcome very rapidly, however, and certainly not with sufficient speed to deal adequately with the social contradictions exposed by the overthrow of the old order.

The Andes: Peru

In **Peru**, the catalyst was a movement which emerged with a messianic Maoist vision, which it attempted to apply to the most impoverished regions of the Andes. *Sendero Luminoso* ('Shining Path') set out to mobilise the peasants in a struggle against feudalism and capitalism. It exploited the abandonment of these regions by the State, an abandonment reaffirmed by the application of the agrarian reform to the Ayacucho region in the late 1970s. This gave peasant communities their land and freed them from servitude. But almost no other support was given to peasants struggling with an inhospitable terrain and lack of infrastructure to connect them either physically or socially to the rest of the country.

Indigenous communities responded initially to *Sendero* because the movement filled a virtual power vacuum in the area and sought to give them a wider vision of their role, although it made violence a means for them to achieve recognition, status, and survival. *Sendero*

had little interest in their ethnicity, much more in their class identity. Indeed, it was *Sendero*'s disrespect for their traditions and community structure which, among other factors, led the indigenous people to turn against the guerrilla movement. The imposition of a revolutionary committee structure, for instance, on the time-honoured community structure, and the killing of community elders and Presidents, were two such. But repudiation of *Sendero* was not enough to save the peasants from the vengeance of the Peruvian army. Peasants were killed in their thousands, either by *Sendero* for betraying them, or by the army for having given support to the guerrillas.

Similarities and differences

In analysing these three conflicts, some common threads are apparent amid many differences. A significant similarity is the way in which social marginalisation and exclusion could be mobilised by political forces in very divergent ways. In **El Salvador**, the popular movement of the 1970s was strong enough to create a social dynamic of its own. While it was closely linked to the political force that would lead it into conflict, there is sufficient evidence that a conscious movement of poor people had emerged and chosen a revolutionary option. This would be a very important factor in determining the way in which the conflict took shape, and the humanitarian responses to it. Much support was channelled to the popular organisations and people's initiatives in this conflict. Only the USA and its agencies chose to put all their efforts into shoring up the Salvadorean State, both militarily and politically.

In **Nicaragua**, although the Sandinistas emerged from a multi-class alliance with strong backing from the urban poor, intellectuals, and significant sectors of the peasantry, they were not able to generate a national following behind their modernising and transforming governmental project. There was little history of popular organising before the revolution, and the lack of consciousness was apparent in the ability of external forces to mobilise social and political discontent around an anti-government initiative. However, the fact that the Sandinista State was committed to a socially radical and nationalist agenda would also influence the international humanitarian response to the conflict. A great deal of international support was channelled through the Sandinista State.

In **Peru**, social sectors isolated and neglected by a State with very little interest in the subsistence agriculture of the Andean highlands

were mobilised by an ideologically rigid armed group. Although many abandoned this allegiance, they were already exposed to army revenge. It was only when subsequently the army began to arm them, and peasant militia were created, that the peasants gained a real protagonism of their own in this conflict. That protagonism has provided the basis for a humanitarian response now that the war has come to a kind of ending.

The impact of conflict

The particular character of each of these conflicts had a profound impact on their societies. Men and women changed their roles as they do in all wars; they may be victims of terrible things, but they also have to cope with the situation. Men tend to carry the guns and lead movements, while family survival comes to depend on women alone. Social and political change and economic destruction, unevenly spread and experienced, all characterise conflict. Only a careful analysis of this can provide the tools for understanding the challenges of peace, and in particular enable peace-building strategies to harness the positive energies and capacities developed to cope with and survive the conflict.

Central America: El Salvador and Nicaragua

In **El Salvador**, observers close to the popular sectors identified an impressive level of organisation among the most illiterate and marginalised social groups. An estimated 500,000 people were displaced inside the country by the war (10 per cent of the population), over 70,000 people were killed, and an estimated 68 per cent of the population was living below the poverty line in 1990 (CEPAL 1990). But there is no doubt that the population most affected by army bombardment, State terror, and counter-insurgency showed an extraordinary protagonism at key moments.

In the zones of guerrilla control, they established their own local governments and developed creative and courageous responses to the destruction and danger around them. In the refugee camps, they organised workshops and training; and, when the moment was appropriate for them (and in opposition to the wishes of international agencies such as UNHCR), they asserted their right to return in the manner they wished – openly. In the returned communities which were set up within the zones of conflict, they challenged the army through peaceful resistance to efforts to dislodge them from the civilian space they had won.

These activities opened up a political and civil space in the country, and enabled the popular movement to start re-grouping from 1986 onwards. Local NGOs were able to establish themselves and channel funds to the war-affected populations. While the guerrilla movements maintained political and military leadership, it was this grassroots organising that held people together in the face of relentless government repression, largely financed by the USA.

These capacities of the population had a big impact on international humanitarian NGOs. There was an understanding that an historic struggle was at stake for social and economic change in favour of the poorest people. The humanitarian support from these NGOs was not neutral, but value-driven, and very much based on respect for the political options of the 'victims/protagonists' of the war. These international NGOs accompanied the popular organisations, lobbied their own governments to challenge the US role in the country, and provided an international umbrella of protection (Thompson 1996).

In El Salvador, therefore, the history of the conflict is the history also of a social *and* political process, in which mostly illiterate or semi-literate men and women participated in a prolonged struggle to bring about a fundamental transformation of their society. This they ultimately failed to do, however. But that population had gained an experience of protagonism that should have enabled them at least to influence the peace.

In **Nicaragua**, the conflict unfolded in a context where the State under the Sandinistas was itself the protagonist for a project of social change. The lack of tradition of independent popular organising, the weakness of political parties, and the culture of exclusion had to be addressed in order to mobilise support. At the same time, however, the Sandinistas had to channel that support into their national project, which included an alliance with the private sector. The Sandinistas did generate an enthusiastic following among a significant sector of the population. Many international NGOs, and Western as well as East European governments, gave the State strong support for what was seen as an historic opportunity for people-centred development. Humanitarian assistance during the war in Nicaragua encompassed a great deal of solidarity and political support for the project of the Sandinista State.

The military response organised by the USA and its local allies both undermined the social dimensions of the Sandinista project and exacerbated its contradictions. The Sandinistas were attempting to

persuade the private sector to accept a loss of political power in exchange for retaining considerable economic power. Popular mobilising became increasingly organised around the defence of the revolution and support for the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN), weakening its capacity to generate autonomous and sustainable social action. In the conflict zones, the logic of war replaced the logic of the social processes.

The conflict in Nicaragua divided the majority population of poor peasants and indigenous peoples. It had high human, social, and economic costs for an already impoverished country; but it also contributed to the premature collapse of an attempt, however flawed, to harness popular energies into modernising the country and State.

The Andes: Peru

In **Peru**, the impact of the war was felt primarily in the three Andean departments referred to above.[9] An estimated 600,000 people were displaced within Peru during the conflict, 80 per cent of them from these departments, which also accounted for many of the 25,000 dead. However, the responses to the conflict among the population also demonstrated how 'victims' can also be 'actors', developing capacities to cope with the most barbaric and traumatic circumstances.

The conflict forced people to choose between fleeing the zone of conflict, dying at the hands of *Sendero* or the army, or staying and offering armed resistance. Many fled, either following historic migratory patterns and heading for Lima, or settling in the nearest urban centre. But, unlike historic migrations, these were not planned population movements, but forced expulsions.

Unprepared and often traumatised, the displaced ended up on the periphery of towns and cities where they did not even speak the language. Many were widows or women left to cope with the children (including many orphans) alone, because their husbands had stayed to fight. Many displaced men were even less able to adapt from peasant life to urban environments, and found it more difficult to find work than the women, who could at least do domestic work. Nevertheless, the experience of urban life had a profound effect on these displaced people. Despite often appalling living conditions, the possibility of some schooling for their children and the experience of modern communications and urban social life have changed the expectations and aspirations of significant groups of Andean peasants.

Others stayed to resist, in some regions managing to preserve the community structure, but in others forced to move from isolated rural dwellings into virtual camps, from where they would venture out to farm their distant plots or to fight *Sendero*. It is the ill-armed peasant militia or *rondas*, rather than the army, which many believe to be responsible for the defeat of *Sendero* in the Andes.[10] This has given *ronderos* a sense of self-worth that was historically denied them.

The humanitarian assistance to the population affected by this war was very limited. Peru did not attract the international attention paid to the Central American wars, and *Sendero*'s hostility to international aid made it very dangerous to work in the war zones, although some agencies such as Oxfam GB managed to maintain a flow of aid. Only with the capture of *Sendero*'s leader in 1992 and the virtual – though not complete – defeat of *Sendero* have the dimensions of the crisis affecting the displaced population become apparent.

The problem of sustainable peace building

The impact of war was devastating for all three countries examined above. But social changes did take place, with some positive implications in terms of new capacities, skills, and expectations among the populations. These capacities are easily eroded in peace-time, as is well known in the case of women who take new public roles during wartime and return to private domestic ones subsequently. Indeed, the 'gendered' nature of peace agreements reflects this (Pankhurst and Pearce 1997). Fundamentally, however, the problem is that most peace agreements do not even purport to encompass or reflect social changes. They are political deals.

The discussion of peace building is frequently confused by the different ways in which the term 'peace' is used. Some define it negatively as the 'absence of war'; others invest it with a positive content too: ultimately the 'peaceful' society is one in which there are no causes for violence and conflict. The mechanisms for achieving this and its precise content are much debated, and the debate centres around the concepts of justice, equality, liberty, and democracy. The debate about positive peace draws our attention to the apparently obvious: that the absence of war does not necessarily mean the absence of violence in a society, and it certainly does not mean an end to conflict. Socio-economic inequality, unequal gender relations, political exclusion, and racism are just some of the factors that fuel social and political violence in any society. For some, therefore, a

sustainable peace is only meaningful and possible if steps are made to deal with these fundamental problems. Others prefer to focus on the immediately achievable, the by-no-means-simple task of bringing parties to armed conflict into a negotiation which will at least allow for the 'management' of the conflict, or a decision by the parties not to pursue their differences through violence.

How can these two approaches be married? In practice, of course, a peace agreement may not deal with all the underlying causes of the conflict, but it might open up a political space to deal with them in another way. The problem arises if the peace agreement is treated as an 'ending' to something, rather than a 'beginning' in which the parties to conflict have formally agreed to address their differences in non-violent ways.

The process of peace building – and it is by nature a protracted and complex one – will depend on the prospects for reconciling fundamental, often structurally embedded, differences through peaceful means. Given that conflicts are about attempts to change power relations in some way, their outcome will create an environment which negatively or positively affects this. The historical outcome of the conflict and the political economy in which the peace-building process takes place are critical factors for societies emerging from internal war. The conflict will have changed something in the society. But *to what extent* will these changes allow for the emergence of new social practices, the construction of accountable and representative government institutions, and inclusive economic processes? To what extent will the rule of law be legitimised, so allowing alternative means to violence for the redress of grievances, and the protection of the basic rights of all the population? Will the cessation of armed conflict enable the victims of violence to write their history freely, and to deal with the trauma of bereavement? If the changes do not facilitate these things sufficiently, the ending of the conflict will simply bequeath a legacy of frustration and resentment to another generation.

'Peace building' cannot be seriously discussed in the abstract, because armed conflicts end in so many different ways and offer such different possibilities. The social history of the pre-conflict period must be related to the political economy of the post-conflict context. If the reasons why people took up arms have not been addressed and there are no means of articulating them politically, how will they manifest themselves in the peace? Demoralisation and exhaustion may depoliticise aspirations and atomise individuals into seeking

private solutions, giving the illusion of a 'stable peace'. But this will not be a society that has dealt with its past. In the short term, people are relieved that war is over, but the legacy of violence will imprint itself on the society and express itself somehow, in inter-personal relations, in levels of domestic violence, on children and, quite probably, eventually in the political arena once again.

The issue of 'impunity', truth, justice, and reconciliation remains one of the most problematic issues in the aftermath of conflict. In reality, most peace agreements are compromises or defeats/ victories, rather than a joint attempt to redress the grievances of the past in order to build something new. The question of what is done to bring to justice perpetrators of extreme violence goes to the heart of the nature of the peace agreement and the power relationships it expresses as the conflict ends. Guatemala, for instance, is now beginning its transition to peace, following the signing of an accord. However that accord was made possible by an agreement to an amnesty that protected the guerrillas from prosecution for political violence but also, far more significantly in terms of the scale of the violence they used, exonerated the army of responsibility for the mass and cruel violence it perpetrated against indigenous people and opposition groups. What kind of peace will emerge in Guatemala, where the rule of law has been practised so partially?

Realistic peace building

Realistic peace building must confront the flawed foundations of the peace agreement. It must take into account the power relations, persistent exclusions, and the social implications of the post-war political economy. The case studies below suggest that the most important steps towards a sustainable peace are those which foster and strengthen local capacity to deal with the past, to engage with the present, and to shape the future in ways which do not exclude, oppress, or divide.

Central America: El Salvador and Nicaragua

El Salvador has been acclaimed as achieving one of the most 'successful' peace agreements. There are undoubtedly many significant features of the Salvadorean peace negotiations. But, in 1995, there were more killings each day through criminal violence than during the war.[11] Questions of land, poverty, and marginalisation are as much a concern as before the war. The difference is that the

ability of previous leaders to articulate excluded groups politically is much diminished.

The protracted conflict wore people down; while the guerrilla movement remained militarily powerful, it was clear that they could not take power through arms. Sectors of the oligarchy meanwhile had also understood that they could not defeat the movement militarily. The price of peace would be to broaden the basis for political participation in the country, and this became acceptable to a sufficient sector. Meanwhile, the Cold War was ending and the USA was seeking to extricate itself from its military commitments.

Many other factors influenced the peace, but it is important to note that, in the end, and despite the mobilisation of civilian groups in favour of peace (through initiatives such as the *Debate Nacional*), it was negotiated between the élites of both sides of the war.[12] While the 'victims/ protagonists' had high expectations of the outcome, the war did not transform the socio-economic basis of power in the society. It opened a political space for civilian government and free, contested elections, and most notably allowed for the political participation of the former guerrilla leaders. The international presence played a major role in guaranteeing the transition from war to peace.

International pressure ensured that local NGOs were given the space to participate in discussions about the post-conflict resettlement and reconstruction programmes, through what was called the CIREFCA (International Conference for Central American Refugees) process. But most of these NGOs had emerged during the war, closely tied to the FMLN and ill-prepared for the tasks of post-war reconstruction or working with people in a non-instrumentalist way. The popular sectors, despite their protagonism in the war, found it hard to adapt to the new discourse of electoral politics which relegated them to the role of voters, with little space to retain their political engagement. The demoralisation that resulted brought with it the dissipation of that creativity, courage, and energy with which people had responded to the revolutionary war.

The failure to transform the Salvadorean State would also have profound implications for the peace. A State that had historically served only one sector of society, and was very much weakened by the war, was in a poor condition to lead the post-war reconstruction; but above all it still fundamentally reflected the pre-war class structure. Issues such as the rule of law, accountability, and effective administration remain unsolved in El Salvador, although there has

been a concerted international effort to address them and to support the modernising social and political forces. While these dominated the governing right-wing ARENA party (as they did under President Cristiani, 1989–94), there were some prospects for progress. But his successor, Calderón Sol, proved ill-equipped to take the country forward. It is telling that the most searching analysis of the post-war reconstruction effort in El Salvador has drawn attention to the limitations of external post-war assistance where the national government lacks the political will to collaborate:

> *External assistance has played a critical role in El Salvador's peace process. Grants and loans from bilateral and multilateral agencies have been the main source of finance for many programs mandated by the Peace Accords, including the land transfer program, the reintegration of ex-combatants, poverty alleviation programs and infrastructure projects. External assistance actors have also influenced the political momentum of the peace process. Aid has affected not only the balance of payments, but also the balance of power. Aid can be an important complement to limited domestic resources. It can, however, also become a substitute for them ... This dilemma has been clearly apparent in El Salvador. External assistance unquestionably has contributed greatly to post-war reconstruction and to the consolidation of peace. But external assistance actors have been less successful in prompting the government to mobilize greater domestic resources to finance peace programs. Indeed, virtually no internal fiscal reforms were undertaken specifically with a view to financing the peace.*[13]
> (Boyce 1995:1201)

The inability of former guerrilla leaders to provide political leadership to their supporters for the new agendas of the peace has had a very negative impact on the popular movement and its ability to influence that peace. There are some examples of successful interactions between NGOs and international agencies in the reconstruction, and some efforts to build accountable municipal governments, but they are relatively few and still not part of a systematic *government* project.[14] And while international agencies have stressed 'participation' in their interventions, time and attention must be invested in helping traumatised, impoverished, semi-literate populations to recover from war and respond to the often technocratic visions of professional external actors.

There is no plan to incorporate the former war zones into a national development plan. They are left to the projects of international

financial agencies and international NGOs. Many of the urban and rural poor people of El Salvador subsist on dollar remittances from relatives in the USA, rather than on their own productive capacity. The survival mentality today contrasts strongly with the creative mobilisations of the war period. Outstanding tensions over land and the future of demobilised ex-combatants continue to threaten the prospects for peace: the disaffection of the latter has already led to more than one violent incident.

In **Nicaragua**, the counter-revolutionary army was ultimately defeated militarily, but not politically – the reverse of the situation in El Salvador. The electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in 1990, just after the formal signing of the peace agreement, meant that the process of peace building would take place without the commitment of a 'progressive' State. At the popular level, the legacy of Sandinista organising had left its mark, and there was much greater capacity to defend popular interests than otherwise. But much of this was still led and organised by the Sandinistas, now fighting to regain political power through electoral means.

The most vigorous and independent voices, many observers noted, were from the women's organisations that throughout the Sandinista period had defended both the revolution and also, increasingly, their gender interests. The other group that would emerge in the early years of the peace were the demobilised soldiers, peasants from both sides of the war who now identified common interests and who felt betrayed by their leaderships. The Foundation of Ex-combatants included former members of both the Sandinista and the counter-revolutionary or *contra* armies.

The Sandinistas had not had the time or resources, particularly after the economy was put on a war footing, to modernise the State apparatus. The State they bequeathed was still prone to corruption and bureaucratism, tendencies enhanced by the weakness of the new Chamorro government. The government's main concern was to transform the macro-level policy environment from a State-led to a market-driven one. It was not concerned with systematic post-war peace building. While the international financial community did contribute funds for this purpose, the lack of local capacity to administer them proved a major obstacle. Local NGO capacity was much weaker than in El Salvador. The Sandinista State had tended to dominate the associational sphere. While new NGOs emerged with the electoral defeat of the FSLN, they still mostly lacked the capacity

and experience to make proposals relevant to the new conditions. A study of the search for peace and consensus in Nicaragua in the five years after the 1990 peace agreement concluded:

> As a direct result of civil war fought within the context of the cold war, Nicaragua's peace process has been beset since 1990 by a sometimes violent array of conflicts over land, over economic policy and division of resources, over institutional power, and over quotas of power within and between a political class with many small parties and factions. For common citizens it has been a bewildering and dispiriting political scene they have viewed from an unsteady economic terrain which has deteriorated an already poor living standard.
>
> (Dye *et al.* 1995)

Again, the picture is not entirely negative. There have been some interesting local experiences. One of these is Nueva Guinea, where the Protestant Church had been very influential during the war in brokering peace between the *contra*s and the Sandinista army. While it continued these efforts in the wake of the peace agreements, supported by international NGOs, these were continuously undermined by the economic marginalisation of the region. With little State investment in infrastructure and development, it is left to international and local NGOs and, in the case of Nueva Guinea, the peasant union, UNAG, to develop and implement projects. But often they do so with conflicting rather than common agendas. This tendency is sometimes fuelled by the increasing scarcity of funds and, therefore, competition among various organisations as Nicaragua moves from being a country of concern to the international community to one where 'peace' has been restored.

The situation is worsened by the neo-liberal national policy environment. A key ingredient of the peace building in the zone, to encourage what have been mostly *contra*-supporting communities to accept Sandinistas into their midst, is economic reconstruction and improvement in the living standards of the people. The peasants in the zone, however, are moving desperately from crop to crop, as trade liberalisation brings in cheaper staples from neighbouring Costa Rica. As a new crop is tested for its market potential, so communities all turn to it, and the price collapses. The resolution of these problems is critical to the sustainability of long-term peace in a region where poor people in very recent memory took up arms against each other.

The Andes: Peru

In **Peru**, the war has never been formally brought to an end, and the State has felt no compulsion to invest in the reconstruction of the war-torn regions. Political parties have been much weakened in Peru over the last decade, in particular on the left. This has adversely affected Peru's historically strong non-government and popular organisations, which were mostly linked to the parties. President Fujimori has claimed the credit for the victory over *Sendero* and has used this to launch his programme of economic modernisation. This does not include the Andean highlands, which according to the Peruvian anthropologist, Carlos Monge, are still seen by the government as *un gran comedor popular* (a big soup kitchen).[15] In other words, while efficiency, competition, and the free market are the agenda for the productive coastal export zone, the Andean highlands are still viewed as an unproductive region where State paternalism is the only economic hope.

As international and local NGOs struggle to develop an agenda for post-war reconstruction in the face of government indifference, so also their conceptions of what this should mean differ widely and often conflict with each other.[16] Technically competent NGOs lack sensitivity to the social dimensions of rebuilding communities devastated by violence and bereavement. The men who head the NGOs, for instance, do not know how to build on the capacities demonstrated by the women during the war years.

In El Salvador a highly politicised popular movement and NGO community found it hard to make the transition to a new role in the peace. In Nicaragua, the Sandinista State had not encouraged independent organising, and therefore the NGO and popular sectors were too weak to take full advantage of the post-war situation. In Peru, however, one of the most interesting developments is that of the organisational capacity of the displaced communities seeking support for a return programme or for permanent settlement in their places of refuge. With a new sense of protagonism inherited from their role in the war, these communities, particularly in the Ayacucho area, are embarking on an important attempt to influence the reconstruction programmes in the region. Their capacity to do so will greatly depend on the dynamics of their evolving relationships with the State and with the local and international non-government agencies that are currently supporting them.

Conclusion

This article has emphasised that 'conflict' should not be treated as an asocial, ahistorical category; nor should peace building be understood without reference to the way in which power relationships have been reconfigured at the end of the conflict, and the nature of their impact on the political economy of post-war reconstruction.

At one level, these may seem very obvious points. However, a great deal of the debate on 'conflict', 'conflict prevention', and 'peace building' appears to treat them as if they have a reality of their own, divorced from their social context. The external agencies concerned with peace seem increasingly to focus the debate on *their* interventions (for instance, what *they* can do to articulate relief and development, what *they* can do to prevent conflict and build peace), and much less on the dynamic of *local* capacities and how they can shape the future prospects for peace building. And where the discourse does focus on them, the practice of supporting the efforts of traumatised, poor, and ill-educated populations to rebuild their lives is often insensitive and reflects unrealistic expectations of rapid results and achievements. For example, a real appreciation of how gender relations affect the ability of poor and powerless women to play their full role in the post-conflict situation (as opposed to a knowledge of the correct *discourse*) is essential. In my experience, few of the professional men involved in external assistance programmes have that real appreciation, and repeated gender-training workshops help only partly.

Latin America offers some useful case studies of conflicts that have tended to be forgotten as international concern looks to the newly defined category of conflicts: the 'complex political emergency'. The Latin American examples, which are now in their post-war reconstruction phase, do nevertheless suggest some important topics that are worth exploring for their relevance to other conflicts and peace-building processes in the South.

The relationship between identity and structure is one such topic, which is critical to the analysis of conflict and for assessing the prospects for a sustainable peace. The case studies reveal the importance of understanding the process of identity mobilisation in conflict, whether there is an 'empowering mobilisation', a 'manipulated mobilisation' (that is, one which seeks to manipulate exclusions for a political project which expresses the power rivalries of élites and leaders), or an 'affirmative mobilisation'.

In El Salvador, conscious movements emerged, linked by class interests, initially with the help of the radical Church, creating strong and combative popular organisations. This empowering mobilisation enabled ordinary peasants and workers to play an extraordinary role during the war, which was widely recognised by humanitarian agencies. These movements, which were closely tied to political leaderships during the war, have mostly, however, been unable effectively to influence the peace. Their leaders saw them in peace-time as a source of electoral support, not as a human resource for long-term peace building. The rural and urban poor people of El Salvador had demonstrated in the zones under guerrilla control, in the refugee camps and returned communities, their capacity for organisation and their readiness to learn new skills. But these have mostly not been harnessed for the peace.

In Nicaragua, poor peasants and ethnic groups were mobilised behind a counter-revolutionary project which was essentially about élites regaining political power and the USA regaining influence in the country. But the Sandinistas also mobilised 'from above' around their own agenda for government in an historical context of weak associational life, a tendency exacerbated by the demands of war. The reconstruction effort was weakened by expectations among the population that the State or external agencies would provide solutions to their problems.

In Peru, there are signs that indigenous peasants have gained a sense of self-worth which could be the basis for an 'affirmative' identity for the peace. Indigenous women are potentially able to use their experiences during the war to play significant roles in the reconstruction of their communities. In this case, there is no 'mobilisation' around these identities, but a sense of self-value and a new sense of 'rights', which has emerged in the course of the conflict and which could be supported by humanitarian efforts in the post-war situation.

A second topic to highlight is the role of the State. In all three countries, the incapacity or unwillingness of the post-conflict State actively to promote the conditions for peace building has seriously weakened the process. The three countries share a history of socially exclusionary, coercive, corrupt, and unaccountable States. The historic outcome of the conflicts in El Salvador and Nicaragua has placed the issue of State modernisation and legitimacy on the agenda, but has not brought about the shift in social and economic power

which could force it through. Renewed polarisation into armed groups is unlikely, but the poverty and exclusion that led to war in the first place now fuel the non-political criminal violence of the desperate. In Peru, the historic outcome of the war has been to strengthen the modernising impetus of the State, albeit under the authoritarian leadership of President Fujimori. But here, too, the distribution of social and economic power remains unchanged, despite the modernisation process afoot. It is too soon to judge the capacity of the victims of the war to claim State recognition that they bore the brunt of army and *Sendero* violence, as well as their rights as citizens in a country that has barely accepted its indigenous population in this way.

A third topic is the role of NGOs. There is much concern among the international community to build up local NGO capacity in the wake of war. This is not so much a recognition of the need to strengthen long-term, sustainable local peace-building capacity, as has been argued here. It is more about the macro-economic agenda of the international financial community, where NGOs are now seen as service-providers preferable to bureaucratic and corrupt States.

However, NGOs are not *necessarily* preferable to an effective, competent, and accountable State. And in order to enhance the capacity of NGOs to take on these new roles, the comparative advantages of NGOs – their cost effectiveness, their closeness to beneficiaries, their lack of bureaucracy, etc. – often diminish. The NGOs in the three countries we have looked at are fragile institutions. To what extent will more sustainable peace processes be fostered by 'scaling-up' these organisations to carry out poverty-alleviation functions in the absence of State programmes? Experience from all three cases suggests that what is needed is indeed more effective NGOs, but ones that remain close to the marginal social groups caught up in the conflict, that can support, not substitute for, *their* efforts to articulate their needs better, to organise more effectively; NGOs which can assist them to make better use of the reconstruction funds available from international agencies, which can facilitate inter-community reconciliation, and so on.

Last, but by no means least, there is the topic of the post-war economy, and in particular the challenges of growth and equity which are both so critical to a sustainable peace. The main conflict areas of all three countries are characterised by their peripheral status in their national economies. The wars did not change that status. On the

contrary, they further devastated and decapitalised them. While international institutions have poured money into these regions in the wake of war, in particular into El Salvador, there is no substitute for a national plan of socio-economic development that includes these regions.

However, these very same international financial institutions also promote the economic model of greater integration into the world economy on the basis of comparative advantage and a market-led approach to development. The export sectors are owned by the country's élites, and the main challenge for the national economy is to encourage greater efficiency, diversification, and competitiveness in these sectors. There is real concern among the international financial institutions about the inequitable distribution of wealth in these war-torn countries, and much emphasis on how to build capacity to redress this imbalance and make the State more accountable and democratic. But in societies recovering from war, where the majority of the population lack basic services and minimal education, where bereavement and destruction have characterised their recent lives, their capacity to influence the State has to be nurtured and encouraged over time.

We return to the argument that if peace is not limited conceptually to 'the absence of war', then peace building is a prolonged process which must incorporate concerns for development, justice, and equality. Emergencies are dramatic moments which affect public and political opinion and are capable of raising considerable economic solidarity. However, a serious commitment to peace requires much more than the rapid response to such emergencies. It requires an understanding of the historic social dislocations and divisions which, in the South in particular, have been exacerbated by external powers, poverty, and repressive exclusionary States. It also requires an honest appraisal of the impact of wars and their endings in particular cases. From what reality does the peace-building process begin?

It is likely that historic divisions have been only partly reconfigured, if at all, by the conflict, while economic destruction has further diminished the limited material capital of the society. But even a massive injection of dollars offers no guarantee for long-term peace building. An interim approach is sensitively and systematically to support the efforts of local people attempting to rebuild lives and livelihoods. Learning from their experiences and building on their capacities, rather than introducing quick-fix solutions dreamt up by outsiders, may be a longer path to peace, but a more sustainable one.

Notes

1. ' ... the term "complex emergency" was coined in the United Nations to describe those major crises, which have indeed proliferated since 1989, that require a "system-wide response": a combination of military intervention, peace-keeping efforts, relief programmes, high-level diplomacy, and so on. In other words, the complexity refers to the "multi-mandate" nature of the international response as well as to the multi-causal nature of the emergency' (Deborah Eade: Preface to Martin and Alvarez 1996).

2. The relationship of the media to conflict has been explored in Minear *et al.* (1996).

3. Many fieldworkers recount anecdotes which reflect the artificial distinctions made by some donor agencies and governments. A former Oxfam fieldworker in Central America, for example, recalls how the Overseas Development Administration's distinction between relief and rehabilitation during the conflict of the 1980s meant that it was possible to secure emergency co-funding for housing materials for Salvadorean refugees returning from Honduras, but not to reconstruct their homes once there (unless they were bombed). The same nails and roofing sheets could be classified as 'relief' or 'development', involving distinct budget lines and grant processes.

4. Mary B. Anderson suggests that humanitarian intervention which is intended to provide relief to victims of war or to support the capacities of people to achieve economic and social development often ends up 'reinforcing or exacerbating conflict in the area where aid is given' (Anderson:2).

5. The Bradford University Department of Peace Studies is engaged in a collaborative research project on 'peace building from below', aiming to identify its contradictions as well as its potential for long-term peace-building.

6. The extent to which women have kept alive their concerns about gender has often been underestimated or simply ignored. A growing body of literature and testimony is now focusing on women's experiences of and perceptions of their role in conflict and war (e.g. Hooks 1991; Smith-Ayala 1991). That women experience war in ways that reflect gender-determined relations of power is beginning to be documented. The systematic rape of Bosnian women as part of a strategy of war caught the headlines, but rape is increasingly understood to be a strategy of war over the centuries. The extent to which women experience violence in their daily lives in contexts that the world has not yet recognised as a 'conflict' situation is also only recently being acknowledged. The 1995 UNDP Human Development Report (UNDP 1995:7), for instance, reported that two-thirds of married women in countries as varied as Mexico and Papua New Guinea experience domestic violence, one woman in six worldwide is raped at least once in her lifetime, and over half of all murders of women in countries ranging from Brazil to Bangladesh are committed by husbands or partners.

7. The history of this process is only now being seriously researched. An important example is Coronel (1996).

8. The concept of 'affirmative ethnicity' was raised at the Johannesburg Symposium, and emphasises the

positive dimensions of awareness of one's difference or specialness, such as a sense of self-worth. There is no implicit or inevitable translation of such affirmation into the denigration of others or into actual conflict with others. Why this happens and when has to be researched.

9 The war did of course have a national dimension, particularly after *Sendero* had partially shifted its theatre to Lima. The jungle areas were also badly affected by the war, though the extent is less known, given the isolation of the region and the fact that *Sendero* still operates there.

10 The controversial role of the *rondas* is explored in Degregori *et al.* (1996).

11 The Human Rights Office of the Central American University (UCA) in El Salvador estimates that crime figures for 1995 included 24 murders and 500 robberies or muggings a day.

12 Geraldine McDonald conducted a series of interviews in 1993 for her PhD research in the Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford (McDonald 1996). In assessing the impact of the popular sectors on the Salvadorean peace process, she records her interview with Salvador Samayoa of the FMLN: 'Salvador Samayoa explains that the FMLN argued for the establishment of a participatory mechanism for social sectors in the Geneva agreement as a means of improving the balance of forces in its favour. The "consultation" of so-called social sectors was in reality a means for both sides to gain legitimacy for their positions at the negotiating table. These organisations didn't exist autonomously. We knew that their entire social base was made up of FMLN supporters. They received political lines from us, we organised them, but we did it

clandestinely ... this was a game we had to play and the government played it too ... Who accepted that the *Instituto de Libertad y Democracia* (Institute for Freedom and Democracy) was autonomous? Nobody did, and yet we still had to pretend that it was. In fact it was an organism of the right, of the ARENA party and it was at the service of the government' (G. McDonald's translation, from the draft thesis chapter, 'Elite-led negotiations in El Salvador: perpetuating the legacy of exclusion', McDonald 1996).

13 The potential contradiction had been noticed for some time by international NGO workers with long experience in the country. Pauline Martin and Francisco Alvarez noted in 1992 that 'the National Reconstruction Plan of the Salvadorean government does not in our view inspire much hope that it has the will or the ability to go beyond party-political interests to build a broad-based consensus around rebuilding the country' (Martin and Alvarez 1996:58).

14 The reconstruction processes taking place at local, municipal level are beginning to be documented. Even where there are FMLN mayors, however, many difficulties remain. See for example Lungo (1995).

15 Interview with the author in Lima, May 1996.

16 For instance, there is a debate between the 'modernisers' and the so-called *Andinistas,* who aim to preserve something of the indigenous skills and way of life. These comments are based on the author's discussions with local NGOs, academics, government officials, and the displaced and returned communities of the Ayacucho and Huancavelica areas in 1993 and 1996.

References

Adams, M. and M. Bradbury (1994) *Conflict and Development: Organisational Adaptation in Conflict Situations,* Oxfam Discussion Paper 4, Oxford: Oxfam GB.

Anderson, Mary B. 'International Assistance and Conflict: An Exploration of Negative Impacts', unpublished mimeo.

Boyce, James K. (1995) 'External assistance and the peace process in El Salvador', *World Development* 23(12): 1201.

CEPAL (1990) *El Salvador: El Estado de la Pobreza y Lineamientos de Política para Afrontarla,* Santiago: CEPAL.

Coronel, José (1996) 'Violencia politica y respuestas campesinas en Huanta', in Degregori *et al.* (1996).

Degregori, Carlos Ivan *et al.* (1996) *Las Rondas Campesinas y la Derrota de Sendero Luminoso,* Lima: IEP Ediciones.

Dye, David *et al.* (1995) *Contesting Everything, Winning Nothing: The Search for Consensus in Nicaragua 1990–1995,* Cambridge, MA: Hemisphere Initiatives.

Galtung, J. (1990) 'Cultural violence', *Journal of Peace Research* 27(3): 291–305.

Hooks, Margaret (1991) *Guatemalan Women Speak,* London: CIIR.

Lungo, M. (1995) 'FMLN mayors in 15 towns', *NACLA: Introduction to Hope: The Left in Local Politics* XXIX(1): 33–7.

McDonald, G. (1996) 'A Comparative Analysis of Peace-building from "Below" in Colombia and El Salvador', mimeo.

Martin, Pauline and Francisco Alvarez (1996) *Development in States of War,* Oxford: Oxfam GB.

Minear, L., C. Scott, and T.G. Weiss (1996) *The News Media, Civil War and Humanitarian Action,* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Pankhurst, D. (1989) 'Review article: poverty and food – contemporary questions', *Journal of International Development* 1(4): 513.

Pankhurst, D. and J. Pearce (1997) 'Engendering conflict analysis', in H. Afshar (ed.) *Women and Empowerment,* London: Routledge.

Ridell, R. (1996) 'Trends in International Cooperation', London: ODI, mimeo.

Smith-Ayala, Emilie (1991) *The Granddaughters of Ixmucané: Guatemalan Women Speak,* Toronto: Women's Press.

Thompson, M. (1996) 'Empowerment and survival: humanitarian work in civil conflict' (part 1), *Development in Practice* 6(4): 324–33.

UNDP (1995) *Human Development Report.*