

**PEACE, CONFLICT,
AND IDENTITY****Social Anthropological
Explorations on the
Continuities and Ruptures
between Conflict,
Post-Conflict, and Peace**

SAFRAN 07

**Schlaininger Arbeitspapiere für Friedensforschung,
Abrüstung und nachhaltige Entwicklung**

**Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution
Michael Lidauer and Thomas Roithner (eds.)**

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Introduction

by Michael Lidauer

Peace and conflict have long been among the research foci of Social Anthropologists. During the last decade, this topical area has come to influence the discussions, research arenas, and fields of engagement of Social Anthropologists even more explicitly. Not the end of history, but changes in the world order since the break down of the Soviet Union, (re)emerging frozen conflicts and identity politics, new markets of violence, changing means of warfare and cooperation have led anthropologists to return to well-known sites under unknown conditions, to link viable theories to new social realities, and to explore other research dimensions than before. Among the challenges anthropologists face is how to make sense of these dimensions and how to best communicate them. A huge amount of writings on this topic has already been produced.

Social Anthropologists' reflections on peace and conflict also become visible in curricula, conferences, and networks. The Swedish anthropologist Ronald Stade has founded PACSA – “Peace and Conflict Studies in Anthropology” – at the EASA¹ Conference in Bristol 2006. PACSA is a European network of social anthropologists who are interested in studying peace and conflict by putting people in the forefront of their analysis. Anthropologists organized in EASA felt that peace studies in Europe are by and large dominated by political sciences and international relations, favouring an institutional approach. Anthropologists are keen to emphasize the agency of people who are confronted by conflict and war with their theoretical approach, fieldwork, and qualitative methodology. PACSA thus aims to contribute to make this critical and reflexive approach to peace and conflict more visible through meetings and publications.

After Bristol, PACSA first met at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle (Saale) in Germany 2007. Several PACSA workshops took place at the EASA Conference in Ljubljana 2008 and are organized at the EASA Conference in Maynooth 2010. The 2nd Bi-Annual PACSA Meeting took place at the Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR) at Schlaining Castle. The 3rd Bi-Annual PACSA Meeting is scheduled for autumn 2011.

Continuities and Ruptures between Conflict, Post-Conflict and Peace ...

The 2nd Bi-Annual PACSA Meeting (9 – 11 October 2009) was organised by Erella Grassiani (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam), Alexander Horstmann (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen), Michael Lidauer (ASPR), and Nerina Weiss (University of Oslo). The organisers invited scholars to address one or several of the following questions: ‘Conflict’ and ‘peace’ are recurrent concepts, constantly used within and outside academia. Peace is mostly defined in its negative terms, and might as well be replaced by the rather ambiguous categories of post- or pre-conflict. These terms have become more central within anthropological studies, especially in connection with studies on trauma and reconciliation. The last PACSA meeting had shown that even within the anthropology of peace and conflict, these categories are not sufficiently defined and no common understanding of these terms exists. The organizers therefore encouraged participants to (re)think and clarify

¹ European Association of Social Anthropologists / www.easaonline.org

the categories of conflict, post-conflict and peace, as well as making the continuities and ruptures between them visible.

The papers presented during the meeting have all reflected PACSA's innovative approach to peace and conflict studies. The organizers were proud to welcome Carolyn Nordstrom (University of Notre Dame, USA) as prime key-note speaker. The second key-note of the meeting was kindly delivered by Maria Six-Hohenbalken (Institute for Social Anthropology, Austrian Academy of Sciences) who provided the participants with the unique opportunity to receive an insight into the contested multi-cultural space of Burgenland, the very region where the conference took place, its conflict history and marginalised present.

... in this SAFRAN

This SAFRAN edition brings together three selected papers that were held and discussed at the 2nd Bi-Annual PACSA Meeting. All contributors are PhD candidates or have recently finished their dissertation (see profiles in the end of the edition). Their research results represent work in progress built on intensive and most recent fieldwork in three culturally and geographically distinct conflict zones. These results inspire anthropological thinking about the categories of peace, conflict, and identity. All contributions relate to the main theme of the meeting at Schlaining Castle, that is, continuities and ruptures between conflict, post-conflict, and peace. However, they take different paths to explore these notions.

Ainhoa Montoya explores the continuities and ruptures between conflict, post-conflict and peace in the context of civil war and everyday violence in El Salvador. She shows that while most people agree to specific dates that serve as markers to describe the beginning and the end of civil war in El Salvador, everyday violence had not only preceded these dates, but has years later reached homicide numbers and an atmosphere of fear and mistrust that exceed those of war times by far. Based on her own most recent field work, Montoya criticises the description of the peace process as a success and promotes a more gradual approach to the shaping of history in this conflict-ridden country.

In chapter two, Regine Penitsch explores a "classic" social anthropological field in the context of peace and conflict, which is the construction of identities and its use by political agents and international stakeholders. By taking this approach Penitsch does not only add another detailed and up-to-date analysis of the crisis in Sudan, but invites to a more subtle and historically contextualised reading of conflict parties and their identities in Darfur and beyond. Building upon the case of Jabal Marra, a Darfurian highland, Penitsch shows that the simplifying and polarizing use of the identity categories "Arabs" versus "Africans" does not constitute a root cause, but rather an outcome of the conflict.

Last, but not least, Barbara Karatsioli dedicates her chapter to explorations of "the political" and "the local" against the background of *rapprochement* and long-term UN Peacekeeping presence in Cyprus. She bases her theoretical approach on the comparative analysis of two villages, Potamia and Pyla, where Greek and Turkish Cypriots lived together also after the partition of the island. Karatsioli shows how the village communities took different ways to oppress or express violence – and to build peace – in their respective regions, uses this comparison for a reflection on peacebuilding, and derives at a proposal how to let "peace escalate".

Acknowledgments

The 2nd Bi-Annual PACSA Meeting at the ASPR in Stadtschlaining would not have been possible without the invaluable support of the Institute for Social Anthropology (ISA) at the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research. Apart from the organisers and the contributors to this edition, the following scholars have participated in the Meeting and contributed to the discussions: Jens Adam, Jeroen Adam, Eyal Ben-Ari, Lidewyde Berckmoes, Gebhard Fartacek, Erella Grassiani, Paul Grohman, Kathryn Hohman, Stefan Khittel, Irene Kucera, Sonja Lenk, Sabine Mannitz, Veronique Schutz, Martin Slama, Elizabeth Stones, Katharine Thurnheer, Christian Warta, and Patricia Zuckerhut. Elizabeth Stones also deserves the editors' gratitude for proof-reading parts of this compilation.

When Does War Begin and the Transition to Peace End? The Problems with Delineating War and Peace in El Salvador¹

Ainhoa Montoya

Abstract

In 1992 the Salvadoran government and FMLN guerrilla leaders signed the Chapultepec Peace Accords, which put an end to El Salvador's twelve-year civil war. International observers and members of the United Nations who monitored the enactment of the Peace Accords deemed the country's democratisation process a success. However, ongoing and increasing political division and violence call into question these positive assessments. Likewise, an examination of the events that occurred prior to the official beginning of the war in 1980 challenges conventional war history, evincing that pre-war violence and conflicts in regions such as the La Paz Department have been ignored. In this paper I call into question the markers that were established as the beginning and end of the war and suggest that the grayness of the concepts of 'war' and 'peace' could be better apprehended by examining the linkages and overlaps between them as well as the nature of change as it manifests in everyday life. I argue that the emphasis on rupture between the war and the post-war era in El Salvador partly results from a hegemonic depiction of history and a reliance on conventional imageries of war. The problems inherent in a concept like transition and the consequent difficulty of defining it are also discussed. The war account that dominates public discourse, I argue, has contributed to the obscuring of various manifestations of both war and post-war violence. Only by acknowledging the blurriness of temporal boundaries and the political motivations behind the drawing of these

¹ I would like to thank the participants of the Second bi-annual PACSA meeting held at the Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution in October 2009, as well as John Gledhill, David Pretel and Aliaa Remtilla, for their valuable comments on an earlier version of this article. Any omissions and inconsistencies are the sole responsibility of the author. I am especially grateful to the members of the Father Cosme Spessotto Committee for their friendship and generosity in sharing their work with me.

boundaries can a more nuanced understanding of El Salvador's violence, past and present, be achieved.

Introduction

It is unarguable that a war took place in El Salvador in the 1980s. However, when one turns to the richness and complexity of everyday life, the precise timespan over which the war and the transition to peace occurred is not as clear. Nor is it clear what constitutes 'war' and 'peace' in El Salvador. These problematic aspects of the task of shaping history were voiced by Salvadorans during my fieldwork in Santiago Nonualco, a *municipio* of the central La Paz Department², in 2008 and 2009. In narrating their war experiences, people from Santiago claimed that the history of El Salvador as publicly disseminated conceals their actual experiences of war violence. The war account most familiar to ordinary Salvadorans is the report by the Commission on the Truth, which very clearly states 1980 to be the beginning of war and 1992, when the Chapultepec Peace Accords were signed, as its cessation; interestingly, however, the report begins its narration of the war with the events following the failure of the 15 October 1979 coup d'état and stresses the assassination of Archbishop Romero on 24 March 1980 as the herald of the war (United Nations 1993: 3, 24-30). It is also generally agreed that the signing of the Peace Accords signalled the beginning of the political transition from war to peace, a transition praised by scholars and members of the international community alike (see Boutros-Ghali, cited in Moodie 2004: 237; López Pintor 1999; Montgomery 1995; Sriram 2004). However, the high rates of violence in post-war El Salvador and the often aggressive manifestations of political division indicate that reconciliation has not been fully achieved and thus the transition not yet completed.

The narration of history on the Salvadoran war is scant and predominantly shaped by triumphalist views of the war negotiations (*ibid.*) and by the bulk of post-war testimonial literature (see for instance Galeas and Ayala 2008; Panamá 2005; Peña 2009; Sánchez Cerén 2008). Indeed, it is the history as written by historians and other scholars that includes more nuanced accounts of the Salvadoran war (cf. Americas Watch 1991; Baloyra 1982;

² A department is the main administrative unit in El Salvador, with La Paz being one of the fourteen departments into which El Salvador is divided.

Byrne 1996; Dunkerley 1982; Montgomery 1982). Interestingly enough, attempts by Salvadorans to question the results of the post-war history-building process reveal that public discourse is dominated by a war narrative and war-related rhetoric that rigidly define the war as a twelve-year conflict. In this paper I show the artificiality of the account of the Salvadoran conflict that embraces the triumphalism of the negotiations and the political transition as monitored by the United Nations. I also highlight the contradictions that the war/peace rhetoric and imageries put forward by both the Salvadoran governments and members of the international community engender on the ground. Underlying such depictions, I argue, there is a particular approach to history-building and a rigid imagery of war, both of which have implications for defining violence and for understanding how change occurs in a case like El Salvador's.

As a result of depictions that define El Salvador's political condition as one of either war or peace, it has become commonplace to refer to El Salvador as a 'post-war' or 'post-conflict' society, the 'post' prefix vigorously implying the surmounting of a conjuncture of conflict and violence. Yet, as my ethnographic research has shown, history-building efforts fail to explain the past and present of a given society if approached as a simple and logical succession of discrete stages with clearly defined boundaries. The difficulty in delineating a historical stage in El Salvador is evidenced, for instance, by the fact that, although the end of the war is said to be 16 January 1992, violence has continued ever since, with increasing homicide statistics that surpass the number of violent deaths in the latter stages of the war (Ramos 2000). It follows from this perspective that Salvadoran post-war violence is approached as an inherently pathological problem, an invitation in the eyes of some to focus on the country's 'culture of violence' (Alvarenga 2006; Moser and Winton 2002; Santacruz Giralt and Concha-Eastman 2001); a focus that could serve as a dangerous deterrent to exploring the country's historical roots of violence and the political and economic underpinnings of this violence. In this respect, I follow in the footsteps of Richards (2005) and Bourgois (2004), who have theorised the war-peace continuum and have accordingly explored violence as a manifestation of ongoing political conflicts, rather than restricting this endeavour exclusively to war or, alternatively, assuming that violence within peacetime is symptomatic of a 'culture of violence'. Depictions of the blurriness of the temporal boundaries

commonly held to delineate the beginning and end of the war in El Salvador will serve to support my argument.

Before the 1980s

The history of the Las Ánimas Canton is one that defies the hitherto accepted chronology of the history of 20th century El Salvador. Las Ánimas is a remote highland, covered by tropical forest, in the Santiago Nonualco *municipio* of the central La Paz Department. It extends over the foothills of the dormant Chichontepec Volcano, which defines the border between the La Paz and San Vicente departments. Studies on this area are scant and limited to historical narratives, some with a legend-like quality, based on the deed of Pipil Indian Anastasio Aquino, who led a rebellion against El Salvador's rulers in 1832 (Barraza Ibarra 2001; Domínguez Sosa 2007; López Bernal 2008). Apart from a classic anthropological monograph on the neighbouring *municipio* of San Pedro Nonualco (Marroquín 1964), there have been no thorough ethnographic studies on the *municipios* of La Paz. Nor have there been any war testimonies or studies of the war as it transpired in this particular department. This is partly because La Paz was commonly considered to be outside the war zones; unlike the Chalatenango or Morazán departments, La Paz was not one of the main war battlegrounds. This has led to the assumption, even among Salvadorans, that the war barely reached La Paz. It is assumed to have reached only the departmental capital, Zacatecoluca, which extends partly over the slopes of the Chichontepec Volcano, where a large number of civilians fled from the mountainous sectors of the La Paz *municipios* and armed combat between the guerrillas and the army was frequent. My research in Santiago Nonualco suggests, however, that war had been experienced in the La Paz Department, albeit in different ways and on a different timescale than in other departments.

A mourning event organised on 25 July 2009 by residents of various *municipios* of the La Paz Department who comprise the Father Cosme Spessotto Committee provided an opportunity for many inhabitants of Las Ánimas to break their silence on how the war had affected them and to speak out about their experiences. The Committee consists of La Paz residents who define themselves as victims of the war in the 1980s, either because they themselves suffered violence or because they lost relatives in violent acts. Their main goal is to write the hitherto unwritten history of

the war in the La Paz Department, so that acknowledgement of human rights violations in that area during the war can bring about the attainment of “truth, justice, and compensation” and, ultimately, a veritable reconciliation. The event was organised with the aim of remembering and honouring the war victims of Santiago Nonualco and was the first of this kind in this *municipio*. The commemoration ceremony was held in the Las Ánimas Canton, generally accepted to have been the sector of Santiago where the local population suffered the most army and police harassment, persecution and violence during the 1970s and early 1980s. This was a significant and emotional event for Las Ánimas residents, given that their experience of war violence had hitherto been pervaded by silence and denial. The members of the Father Cosme Spessotto Committee chose to conduct the ceremony on the site where a church bombed during the war used to stand and where four graves, containing the remains of five local residents assassinated during the war by the local police forces, are located. It is an abandoned plot of land covered with bushes and fairly tall weeds. The plot lies beside the dusty main path crossing Las Ánimas, from which the green Chichontepec Volcano, located on the border of the San Vicente Department, can be seen. The four graves lie on the side of the plot bordering the path. Their neglected state, exacerbated by the cattle that regularly tread on them despite complaints by relatives of the deceased, is evocative of the oblivion to which the subject of war has been consigned. The commemoration ceremony marked the first post-war opportunity for many inhabitants of the Las Ánimas Canton to share their war experiences publicly, both in the organisational meetings that preceded the commemoration and on the day of the commemoration itself.

One of the stories that members of the Father Cosme Spessotto Committee sought to reconstruct – a story that would initiate the narration of many others by various residents of Las Ánimas – concerned the four people buried in the plot where the event was to be celebrated. Every inhabitant of the Las Ánimas Canton can tell ‘the story of the four graves’ but only the elders, some of whom helped to bury the bodies, and the relatives of those buried there can relate the details. On 28 May 1980, as I was told by relatives and neighbours, Gaudencio Galán Hueso left his house and rode his horse along the path that leads to Santiago to meet with the person who would sell him the fertiliser he used for the crop of corn he cultivated in a small plot he had recently acquired. When Gaudencio was riding

past the entrance of the Las Ánimas school, he encountered a military vehicle. He and his horse were shot and left dead on the path. This was not an isolated incident or a result of the war that had just officially begun; Gaudencio had suffered persecution and a two-year imprisonment during the 1970s. His wife Rosa suspects that he had been participating in a local agricultural cooperative and had thus supported political activity in the area, although she cannot confirm this given that the men of the area who participated in politics during this time did not talk to their relatives about it. His body was found by a local resident who buried it in the plot where it now lies. In the same year, in 1980, a daughter of his was abducted, as were his two sons in 1981 and 1983. In 1980 Rosa and her five remaining daughters had to flee the area. Throughout the 1980s they continually resettled in different parts of the country due to ongoing persecution. One of the daughters had to go into exile and now lives in the United States. In 2004 Rosa resettled in Las Ánimas on her own.

According to various Las Ánimas residents, the bodies buried alongside Gaudencio were those of his relatives: Juan de la Cruz Galán, killed in October 1980; Rosario Galán Hueso and Efraín Grande, killed on the same day and buried together in the same grave, also in October 1980; and, Andrés Galán, killed in January 1981. As close relatives of these other victims have not yet been found, the details of their death are unknown and the dates unconfirmed. The members of Gaudencio Galán’s family who survived did so because they fled the area. The graves of other residents killed before the war are spread throughout the Las Ánimas Canton, typically with no visible markers so that their location is known only by the elders. Between the late 1970s and the early 1980s, more than one hundred people were killed in Las Ánimas alone. Committee members along with residents of Las Ánimas have been able to document the assassination of 124 people and the abduction of 8 people in the early 1980s. More Las Ánimas inhabitants were killed in other sectors of Santiago after fleeing their homes. As violence escalated, most of the population abandoned their property and belongings in Las Ánimas just as Gaudencio’s family did. They either took refuge in the houses of relatives who lived in the neighbouring cantons such as San Sebastián Abajo and San Sebastián Arriba or in the centre of Santiago, or they left the area and looked for a place to live in the peripheral *municipios* of San Salvador. By 1982 the Las Ánimas Canton was empty, its inhabitants’

belongings having been looted and its houses and plots burnt by the local paramilitary groups who had been very active in Northern Santiago. Only in 1983, after guerrillas had attacked the local paramilitary groups of the neighbouring rural Santa Cruz Loma Canton, did the violence diminish and the former residents of Las Ánimas begin to return to their land. Fear prevented most of them from returning until after the signing of the Peace Accords in 1992, and some never returned. As many dwellings had been burnt, many former residents could not afford to return and rebuild. Indeed, most of the people who repopulated Las Ánimas belonged to a younger generation, the sons and daughters of those who had suffered violence since the late 1970s and fled the area in the early 1980s.

The population of the Las Ánimas Canton was regarded as “communists” by Santiago residents since the late 1960s³ and relabelled as “guerrillas” or “collaborators” in the 1970s when the first armed groups were founded in El Salvador. As there are no records of what the war was like in that area, and in fact the whole department was considered to have been outside the war zone, meaningful information can only be obtained from the generation that fled Las Ánimas during the 1970s and early 1980s. Only a few of these elderly people have returned to Las Ánimas, while the majority are now dispersed throughout the suburbs and neighbouring *municipios* of San Salvador. They have lost touch to the extent that they do not know whether their friends and neighbours are dead or alive. One member of a family famous for its political involvement, who now lives in Apopa, a *municipio* in the periphery of San Salvador, was the source of substantial information on the history of the war in Las Ánimas. He first met members of the Father Cosme Spessotto Committee members while seeking information on the plot that had belonged to the cooperative he had founded along with other Las Ánimas residents in the late 1970s. Most members of *El Progreso* Cooperative had been assassinated, and he was interested in recovering the plot to turn it into ‘a site of

³ The rhetoric of the communist threat in El Salvador dates back to the 1932 peasant rebellion led by members of the then recently founded Salvadoran Communist Party (PCS); it served General Maximiliano Martínez Hernández in legitimising the excess of repression during his regime (Alvarenga 2006: 281-283; Anderson 1971; Gould and Lauria-Santiago 2008; López Bernal 2007; Parkman 1988: 26).

memory’, on which a monument in honour of Las Ánimas war victims would be erected. His deafness notwithstanding, Andrés Crespín – a 70-year-old who lived in the Las Ánimas before the war – enjoyed narrating how the political activity and ensuing repression had begun in Las Ánimas. In the mid-1960s, he spent a year in San Salvador living in the same house as Salvador Cayetano Carpio, then leader of the Salvadoran Communist Party and founder, in 1970, of the Popular Liberation Forces (FPL), an armed group that would subsequently become part of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) (Baloyra 1982: 160-166; Byrne 1996: 35-36). Conversations with Cayetano led Andrés to read classical Marxist texts and engage in further discussions. A year later, when Andrés returned to Las Ánimas after finishing his job in San Salvador, he disseminated Marxist ideas amongst his brothers and friends. Soon after, they formed the first communist cell in Santiago, with the support of the Salvadoran Communist Party (PCS) delegate in the La Paz Department, thus consolidating political discussion and organised activity in Las Ánimas, including the dissemination of propaganda by the PCS at night in the centre of Santiago.

In the 1970s cooperatives were founded in Las Ánimas to collectivise agricultural work as well as provide a façade for locals’ political meetings and actions. Had they assembled in a single house without a legitimate aim, their actions would have been judged “seditious” and they would have been vulnerable to arrest. The cooperative meetings provided a perfect disguise for their political aims, or so they thought. As it turned out, peasants of the Las Ánimas Canton did suffer frequent persecution, arrest and assassination at the hands of the National Police, the National Guard and the local Civil Defenses⁴, to the extent that simply residing in that area became associated with “subversiveness” and “outlaw”. Although the outbreak of the war has generally been established as 1980 (see for instance Baloyra 1982: 102, 105; Byrne 1996: 73-74; Dunkerley 1982: 132, 162; Montgomery 1982: xi, 159; United Nations 1993), with the offensive launched by the FMLN guerrillas on 10 January 1981, narrations by locals from Las Ánimas of violence in the 1970s problematise that commonly held view and evidence the

⁴ ‘Civil Defences’ were paramilitary groups that originated before the 1980s and patrolled urban sectors in order to report to the National Police and the National Guard anyone suspected of taking part in “subversive” organisations and meetings.

need for nuances. Although historians generally coincide on citing 1980 as the turning point that indicates the beginning of the war, they do not agree on a specific date. Dunkerley locates the war's outbreak in April 1980, yet affirms the difficulty of determining a precise date, while Baloyra suggests that the 15 October 1979 coup d'état that served to overthrow the General Romero government marked the beginning of a transition from reactionary despotism to democracy, the civil war being part of that political transition. Montgomery has also indicated the significance of the failure of the government junta that ruled the country after the 15 October 1979 coup and the blatant human rights violations that occurred in fuelling a revolution. Others (Americas Watch 1991: 9; United Nations 1993), including left-wing sectors of the Salvadoran population, point to the assassination of Archbishop Romero as the event that triggered the outbreak of the war. Byrne, however, argues that 1980 provided the conditions for the outbreak of war in 1981, with the "final offensive" launched by the FMLN. The lack of agreement on a precise date shows the arbitrariness of determining "critical events", that is, events after which new modalities of action and new or redefined categories are instituted (Das 1995: 5-6).

The Commemoration organised by the Father Cosme Spessotto Committee stirred Las Ánimas residents' memories of unrest and fear and brought to mind relatives abducted or killed during the late 1970s and early 1980s. This in turn underscored the oblivion to which those memories have been relegated in a history of the war that neglects events that occurred in the central regions in favour of more sensational instances of violence, such as guerrilla exploits or massacres by the army. Political activity and confrontations with local police forces commenced in the late 1960s in Las Ánimas, with an upsurge in violence and unrest occurring in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Las Ánimas residents recall that FAL⁵ guerrillas used to hide in this canton, but there is little detailed information about this, apart from the recollections of certain elders. By 1983, the war had ended in Las Ánimas because the whole canton had been

⁵ The Liberation Armed Forces (FAL) was a guerrilla organisation which originated as the armed group of the Salvadoran Communist Party (PCS). The presence of the FAL guerrillas in Las Ánimas is consistent with testimonies revealing the prior existence of a communist cell in Santiago Nonualco in the late 1960s.

abandoned. This was not only the case in Las Ánimas; repression enforced by terror was practised in the 1970s in other rural areas of the La Paz Department, such as the Zacatecoluca Cantons, where military operations and massacres emptied entire cantons⁶. These events indicate that the violence Salvadorans experienced before 1980 was something more than just an uneasy peace, even though war had not yet been officially declared and an uprising at the national level had not yet occurred.

Scripts of Everyday Violence in Post-War El Salvador

Negotiations between the Salvadoran government and the FMLN guerrillas, instigated and closely supervised by members of the United Nations, began in 1989 (United Nations 1992; United Nations 1993: 13). A rupture in the negotiations appeared inevitable when discussion turned to polemic issues such as the purge of the military and the dismantling of police forces. Yet, after a round of meetings, both sides finally came to an agreement (United Nations 1992). A transition from war to peace was certainly initiated with the signing of the Peace Accords in 1992, which can be considered a turning point in history due to the pivotal changes that were introduced: the abandonment of a sanctioned confrontation between the guerrillas and the army, which relied on the support of the country's police forces and the acquiescence of the government; the dismantling of the police forces that had existed during the war; and the purge of high-ranking military officials. These measures had a great impact and symbolic meaning for the Salvadoran nation as a whole. However, the Peace Accords and their enactment have had a somewhat less dramatic effect on Salvadorans' everyday lives. For instance, the residents of Santiago Nonualco experienced the worst of the war from the late 1970s to 1983, by which point violence and repression in Santiago had drastically diminished. Indeed, according to anecdotal accounts, Santiago residents believe their daily lives have been more affected by *the dollarisation* of the Salvadoran economy set in motion in 2001 by the Francisco Flores government than by the Peace Accords. In light of this, I argue that the transformation

⁶ These military operations and massacres have been documented by members of the Father Cosme Spessotto Committee in a hitherto unpublished manuscript that compiles information and testimonies on them.

brought about by the Peace Accords has been overstated.

Not only have homicide rates persisted at high levels in post-war El Salvador, but they have also surpassed wartime rates (Ramos 2000). There is no single day on which newspapers do not report several homicides, although it was only after the 2009 FMLN victory that violence became a burning social issue considered worthy of front-page news in the most widely-read Salvadoran newspapers, namely *La Prensa Gráfica* and *El Diario de Hoy*. Even before the 2009 presidential election, homicides were never missing from the departmental section of the newspapers. However, usually brief and lacking in detailed information, the daily homicides tended to go unnoticed unless accompanied by a sensational headline stressing the number of homicides in the past month or a massacre that had occurred the previous day. With or without confirmation or evidence, the news reports often attribute the homicides to youth gang violence. A stereotypical news article about post-war violence speaks of several youngsters, presumably gang members, shot to death, presumably by members of the opposing gang. Such violence has become an everyday issue in post-war El Salvador, one that covers the pages of newspapers, fills conversations, is subject to all kinds of rumours, and instils fears in Salvadorans to the extent that it permeates many aspects of the mundane.

The ubiquity and multiplicity of post-war violence is graphically illustrated by a variety of violent incidents that occurred in Santiago Nonualco both before and during my fieldwork in 2008 and 2009. This *municipio* does not stand out as one of the most violent; nor does the La Paz Department within which Santiago is located. Yet all the different types of violence that exist in El Salvador exist in this particular *municipio*. Although 18 years have passed since the end of the war, I observed during my fieldwork that political violence is still present in El Salvador, and that electoral processes tend to exacerbate it⁷. Violence has become an integral part of politics, to the extent that when elections approach, relationships among neighbours who support opposing political parties turn tense and hostile. The greatest division continues to be between members of

the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) and those of the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA), these representing the two opposing sides of the war. The FMLN political party began as a Marxist-Leninist guerrilla organisation in 1980 and became a political party after the signing of the Peace Accords in 1992. ARENA, a nationalist and conservative party that serves the interests of the economic elite, was founded in 1981 by Major Roberto D'Aubuisson, the intellectual author of Archbishop Romero's death and the founder of the death squads, according to a report by the post-war Commission on the Truth for El Salvador (United Nations 1993: 180, 185). In Santiago, the tension between these two parties is so intense that certain conservative rural sectors in the north of the *municipio* cannot be visited by FMLN members identifiable by their red and white flag or red t-shirts, whether during or outside electoral campaigns. In September 2007, the local FMLN leadership of Santiago contacted a neighbour from the Northern San Antonio Arriba Canton who was interested in founding an FMLN Base Committee in this area. A few months after taking steps in pursuit of this goal, he was beaten up by two unidentified hooded men. He spent a month recovering in hospital.

There is a third political party in El Salvador that further contributes to the tense and aggressive situation of Santiago's municipal elections. The conservative National Conciliation Party (PCN), founded in 1961 and the country's official party until the coup d'état in 1979, has governed the Santiago council since 2000. Today it is a minor political party relative to ARENA and FMLN, but it continues to govern in some municipalities, and its support of ARENA in the National Assembly is crucial in passing or blocking legislation. When it comes to municipal elections, however, alliances between ARENA and PCN do not exist in Santiago, so tension, threats, and violence characterise the relationships amongst members of all three major parties. Other national political parties, such as the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) and Democratic Change (CD), are not as visible in Santiago. The confrontations between party loyalists or people working for political parties range from verbal aggression and death threats to gunshots and physical violence. During the 2006 municipal and legislative elections two ARENA members were run over by a car and killed, allegedly by a PCN member, while painting logos and plastering posters in the central streets of Santiago at night. The driver claimed not to have seen

⁷ This is not only the case for the municipal, legislative and presidential 2009 elections that I directly observed during my fieldwork, but also for the 2004 presidential elections (see García Dueñas 2006).

anyone because of the darkness and, with the support of the PCN council, was freed of all charges. However, as a police officer stationed in Santiago informed me, this incident led police to deem Santiago a “high-risk *municipio*” during electoral periods. During the 2009 elections, death threats and hostilities were far from absent.

The number of homicides in El Salvador, while consistently high, varies from period to period, and is concentrated in certain *municipios* and towns, notably the capital and its periphery. During the electoral campaigns at the end of 2008 and the beginning of 2009, the number of homicides in the *municipio* of Santiago was low. As soon as the 2009 elections ended, however, homicides increased dramatically in Santiago. This pattern mirrors the trends of the country as a whole⁸. Some victims are recognised by Santiago residents, such as the 15- and 16-year-old boys gunned down on 13 August 2009 in the centre of Santiago⁹. Others remain anonymous, and may have been from another *municipio*, their bodies having been disposed of in Santiago. Most frequently the motive of the crime is unknown, and so is the person who has committed the crime. The scant knowledge as to the source of the violence renders it all the more terrifying and results in an immediate rash of rumours trying to make sense of it. Impunity is another common feature of most homicides. It is rare to hear that a case has been solved; indeed, newspapers report on homicides but very rarely on the judicial response or solutions. People in Santiago often voice their fears that relatives who leave home for the day may not return, given the arbitrary and indiscriminate violence that seems to predominate.

Youth gang violence, present throughout El Salvador, is not absent in Santiago. MS 13 and MS 18 are the names of the country’s main transnational youth gangs. Named after streets

⁸ With more than 4,296 homicides, 2009 has patently overcome the homicide statistics of the preceding 10 years, consolidating El Salvador’s position as the Latin American country with the highest homicide rate (71 per 100,000 inhabitants). See *El Diario de Hoy*, January 1, 2010, ‘El Salvador cerró 2009 como el más letal: 4,365 asesinatos’; *La Página*, January 4, 2010, ‘En El Salvador ocurrieron 71 homicidios por cada 100 mil habitantes en 2009’; *La Prensa Gráfica*, January 1, 2010, ‘El 2009 cerró con 4,296 homicidios en todo el país’.

⁹ See *La Prensa Gráfica*, August 14, 2009, ‘Desconocidos asesinan a dos primos’.

in Los Angeles, where the gangs were initially formed, they were joined in the 1980s by young Salvadorans whose families were exiled during the war (Cruz 2007: 14). Deportation of those arrested due to gang criminal activity spread their organisational model and violence throughout Central America¹⁰ (Winton 2004). Estimates indicate that there are between 75,000 and 250,000 active gang members in Central America, 10,000 to 30,000 of them in El Salvador (Hume 2007b). The large band of error is due to the scant knowledge that exists on them. Although studies on gang violence have proliferated since the late 1990s, there is a lack of detailed information about what they actually do, why they do it, and where, as well as about possible connections with more complex crime networks such as drug-trafficking and social cleansing groups. Nor are there clear-cut explanations for their existence and their actual contribution to violence. Indeed, various myth-like assumptions about youth gang violence (see Moser and Winton 2002) have contributed to conflating all sorts of youth gangs and criminalising youth. In 2003, the ARENA central government implemented a *Plan Mano Dura* (Iron Fist Policy), created to repressively fight youth gang violence. This policy only exacerbated the country’s violence and increased homicide rates that had been on a steady decline since the mid-1990s (Hume 2007a).

Santiago residents told me that members of the transnational youth gangs used to assemble in the Colonia Alvarado, a central neighbourhood, in the early 2000s. They later moved on to rural areas of Santiago, namely the Santa Inés Colony in Southern Santiago, where their activity is subject to less police control. Since then, this colony has become a “no-go zone”, identified by Santiago residents as a meeting place for gang members and hence an area to be avoided at all costs. The majority of the gang members who assemble there do not even live in Santiago, but rather in the neighbouring *municipios* of Zacatecoluca, San Rafael Obrajuelo, and El Rosario. As in other areas of the country, they have clearly marked their control over the territory of the Santa Inés Colony, often by imposing curfews on residents. Gang members have let it be

¹⁰ As Santacruz Giralte and Concha-Eastman have pointed out, youth gangs are not a recent phenomenon in El Salvador; they already existed before the war (2001: 24-25). What is most likely new is their transnational character, as well as the links of some (such as those originated in the United States) with crime and drug-trafficking networks.

known that neighbours should not be out of their houses between 6pm and 6am, regardless of whether this interferes with their work schedule. Only during periods in which gang leaders were arrested did the neighbourhood become calmer. For instance, until the beginning of 2009, the leaders were absent and violence in the Santa Inés Colony was reduced to a minimum. In 2009, however, youth gang members returned to the area, at which point homicides suddenly increased.

A large number of residents of Santiago's central neighbourhoods are or have been subject to death threats and extortion. Via a landline phone call or an anonymous letter slid under the front door, they have received threats against themselves, their children, or their whole family: if they do not "cooperate", they will be killed. Death threats often precede extortion, sometimes for a single high sum of money and most often on a regular basis – monthly, weekly, or even on every return trip made by bus drivers. Most people decide not to report these cases to the police, fearing that those who have threatened them will somehow learn of the report. In addition, rumours suggest that a Santiago police officer is himself involved in extortion, thus discouraging people from filing reports. Paying the sum requested by the extortionists is generally preferred, even if it means economic hardship for the whole family. Indeed, since 2009 there has been little correlation between incidents of extortion and the wealth of the targeted families. The majority of victims turn to God rather than to the police, praying for divine intervention. The minority that reports death threats and extortion to the police usually receives the response that there is not much that can be done. Once I accompanied a Santiago resident to report that his parents had been called and told that two of their sons would be killed if they did not cooperate. The police in Zacatecoluca simply suggested that he buy a mobile phone and ask the extortionist to call the new number so that future calls could be monitored. As this did not sound like a satisfactory solution, he and his family did not follow the advice. Death threats often arrive at home, but they can also come at the work place. Indeed, extortionists tend to target most micro-businesses, both formal and informal, especially owners of transport vehicles, canteens and market stalls or informal stores in the front of private houses.

When extortionists' demands are not met, the consequences may very well be the assassination of the person who did not pay, or the kidnapping or assassination of a relative. For instance, in 2006 the son of a garage

owner whose business is located in the centre of Santiago was kidnapped and killed after his family refused to pay *la renta* (the rent), as the extortion payment is popularly known due to its often monthly character. The country's scourge of daily homicides, along with the constant threat of death as a result of unpaid extortions, reported or not, has led Santiago residents who have faced death threats and extortion to change their lifestyles. Telephone numbers are immediately changed and children prohibited from picking up the phone when it rings. Outdoor activities are reduced to a minimum, often restricted to work and the procurement of essential goods. People tend to spend most of their time at home, avoiding going out after sunset at all costs. Metal doors and windows, although barred, are closed two hours earlier than before, that is, between 6 and 7 pm. Residents who can afford it have built walls around their houses and protected them with barbed wire and security guards. Relationships among neighbours, even relatives, have also changed as a result of death threats and extortion: people have become more distrustful of each other and ceased political activity and participation in local associations. In some cases people have moved, either to another neighbourhood, another town, or to the United States.

Robberies committed with high calibre weapons, along with ordinary crimes, are also commonplace in Santiago businesses, ranging from small market stalls in the main square to stores, garages and canteens. As a result, security guards for offices, businesses, or the town council are likewise commonplace, in Santiago as well as the rest of the country. No delivery in this *municipio* takes place without the presence of at least one armed security guard. Yet the increasing securitisation has not discouraged crime. What follows is the case of one of the largest local grocery stores in central Santiago. Because its owners are widely known to be well-off, they have been subject to robbery and extortion. A member of the family was kidnapped in 2006 and released only after a \$50,000 ransom was paid by the family. Since then, a plain-clothed but armed security guard has watched the entrance of the store, and the front counter is protected by a barred fence. In 2009, the same store was robbed; with one of the perpetrators dead and another wounded in hospital, family members and the security guard feared retaliation. At the end of 2009 an underage member of the family was kidnapped and released within a few days, most likely after the family paid a ransom initially set at \$200,000. Small-scale robberies also take place at Santiago's bus stops and in

the back of buses, as well as on isolated paths in the cantons. The widespread feelings of insecurity and the ubiquity of private security have led to a landscape of guns, rifles, high walls and barbed wire that isolate houses and other buildings from the outside world.

What I have described hitherto cannot be defined as wartime. Nor can it be defined as peace. Narrow imageries of both war and peace have turned post-war violence in El Salvador into a largely depoliticised phenomenon, a pathology no longer rooted in political motives. This view, asserted by the ARENA governments (see Moodie forthcoming) among others, portrays El Salvador as epitomising a transition to democracy. Yet the rigid categories of 'war' and 'peace', and their corresponding 'political violence' and 'social violence', belie the country's war and post-war violence. Whilst 'political violence' is employed to designate violence against the state or illegitimate violence by the state, 'social violence' describes interpersonal violence during peacetime (see Bourgois 2004; Cruz 2003; Cruz et al. 1998; Hume 2007a; Moser and Winton 2002; Santacruz Giralt and Concha-Eastman 2001). As both Moodie's research in the immediate aftermath of the war and mine in 2008 and 2009 demonstrate, the rigid categories of 'political violence' and 'social violence' contribute to the obscuring and neglecting of specific kinds of violence that conform to neither 'war' nor 'peace' stereotypes. This is the case with the acts of rapacity underlying the apparent political violence in Las Ánimas; often the population was killed or forced to leave the area, in order for the local police forces to loot their houses. Likewise, in the aftermath of war – during the 2009 elections, for instance – confrontations between Salvadorans of opposing political views became commonplace, sometimes leading to assassinations and political repression aimed at discouraging political activity. In light of this, a problematisation of the term 'transition', so widespread in public discourse on El Salvador, shows up as highly pertinent.

The Building of the History of the Salvadoran War

The historical narrative of war and peace that prevails in El Salvador has been largely shaped by the Salvadoran governments' public discourse (see Moodie forthcoming) and by representatives of the international community rather than by historians. In a country where the discipline of history is barely present in

school curricula and only recently at university¹¹, it is not striking that a document such as the report by the Commission on the Truth (United Nations 1993) has, among Salvadorans, become one of the most widely read written accounts of the civil war. As shaped and disseminated, the history of El Salvador conceals much of the violence and conflict of the 1970s¹² as experienced by Salvadorans in certain regions such as La Paz. As shown by Moodie (forthcoming), assertions that a state of peace has been achieved – in the aftermath of war and following the successful completion of transition – have contributed to a downplaying of the high levels of violence that persist in present-day "peacetime". When recognised, violence in the post-war era is labelled 'social' – thus potentially denuding it of political and official links – and attributed to dehumanised youth. I suggest that Santiago's examples of pre-war and post-war violence effectively challenge the prevailing account of Salvadoran history as well as the stereotypical imageries of war. Indeed, I argue, the available historical narratives of the war and the resort to stereotypical imageries of war and peace have masked much of the violence that affected certain regions of El Salvador in the 1970s as well as the persistence of violence in peacetime.

When approaching the building of history, one of the ways of dividing up the past in order to make its narration and dissemination more manageable, is to resort to grand or "critical events" that serve as a turning point between two historical stages (Das 1996; Jordanova 2006: 107-121). This is what historians have referred to as 'periodisation' (Bentley 1996; Davis 2008; Frank and Gills 1993; Jordanova 2006). Lauria-Santiago (1999), in referring to the written history of nineteenth and early twentieth century El Salvador, is critical of its preponderant focus on coffee production. He observes that historians have emphasised coffee to the point of making it the epitome of

¹¹ Historians Ricardo Antonio Argueta Hernández and Carlos Gregorio López Bernal work for the *Universidad de El Salvador* (UES), the only public university in the country. They informed me that it is this university that, in 2001, founded the only existing department of history at the university level.

¹² According to the Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO), the homicide rate during the 1960s and 1970s hovered at 30 per 100,000 inhabitants, even higher than that of countries such as Colombia and Nicaragua (Cruz and Beltrán 2000: 9).

the country's transition from traditional agriculture to modern export-led agriculture (Lauria-Santiago 1999: 4). In the case of the Salvadoran war in the 1980s, its beginning and end have been defined by two grand and conspicuous events: the initiation of systematic nationwide repression by the army and its open contestation by revolutionary groups in 1980, and the signing of the Peace Accords on 16 January 1992, respectively. Even though everyday violence by the army and the police forces had commenced long before 1980 in many parts of the country, as occurred in the Las Ánimas Canton, it was military and rebellious operations, that is, visible confrontations between two clearly demarcated groups (the army and police forces, on the one hand, and the left-wing revolutionary organisations, on the other) that were considered sufficiently anomalous and dramatic as to inaugurate a new historical era in El Salvador. Much of the historical literature on the Salvadoran war refers to this period as "a decade of terror" (Americas Watch 1991) or "a decade of war" (Sundaram and Gelber 1991). Yet if the history of the country had been documented ethnographically and its local idiosyncrasies thus apprehended, the narration of the war would most likely cover a timespan of more than just one decade. The study of war violence in El Salvador within the confines of a single decade derives not just from a particular way of dividing up the past, but also from an approach to violence that focuses on spectacular violent events and neglects subtler manifestations of everyday violence. My fieldwork in Santiago – a *municipio* not known for violence either during or after the war – along with work by members of the Father Cosme Spessotto Committee identifying a war historical chronology similar to those of the surrounding *municipios*, reveals that much of the country's violence has been ignored by the prevailing historical accounts.

16 January 1992 is an undeniably important date for Salvadorans. Yet, despite its being a unique political event with immense symbolic meaning, the signing of the Peace Accords did not have as much repercussion in the everyday life of Salvadorans of some regions as did other events that occurred before and after 1992. This was undeniably the case for the residents of Santiago, where violence and repression diminished dramatically after 1983 but have steadily increased after the signing of the Peace Accords. Additionally, the predominant historical approach relies on nation- and state-based narratives that neglect any details that might challenge their

credibility¹³. This is also the case of the history of the war in the Las Ánimas Canton, which in various respects does not coincide with the history commonly narrated about El Salvador as a whole. For instance, the dramatic events referred to as markers of the beginning and end of the war in El Salvador are not as useful to explain war violence in Las Ánimas. We could also question the adequacy of the terms 'post-war' and 'post-conflict' in present-day El Salvador and contemplate what actually would mark the end of the post-war era (cf. Troebst 2009). While selecting temporal markers and delineating units of study may make the task of history-shaping more manageable, these practices oversimplify the analysis of how change actually occurs and how violence originates, persists and evolves in everyday life.

The second reason why I argue that El Salvador's ongoing conflict is overlooked is the predominance of stereotypical imageries of war and peace that conceal a great deal of people's actual experiences. War violence is often identified with armed combat between two large opposing formations representing either distinct nations or opposed parties within a single nation. This war stereotype, I suggest, may underlie the selection of combat between two formations in 1980 as the time marker for the beginning of the war in El Salvador, a marker that effectively excludes the systematic, yet less spectacular, violence that preceded it in sectors like Las Ánimas. An equally narrow depiction of El Salvador's peacetime has contributed to a downgrading of post-war forms of violence. The official view is that the war is over in present-day El Salvador; given that war and peace are considered mutually exclusive conditions, it follows that the absence of war is peace. The result of this logic is that violence in peacetime is considered an anomalous phenomenon; yet not one that, like war violence, fundamentally threatens the status quo. In light of this, one may ask what violence in peacetime means and whether there is a 'tolerable violence', that is, a degree of violence in peacetime that we have to consider normal. The assumption that the absence of war is peace masks the political roots of the violence that occurs in peacetime, including violence with political motives or the so-called 'social violence' violence for which the state may be indirectly responsible. Accordingly, there is a tendency to characterise post-war violence in El Salvador

¹³ Micro-studies in history and other disciplines have proliferated as a corrective to this tendency, but they do not predominate.

as 'social violence'. When present-day levels of violence in post-war El Salvador are recognised as unbearable, there is also a tendency to consider it a social pathology ('a pandemia', according to the definition provided by the World Health Organisation for such high levels of daily deaths) – one whose manifestations differ from traditional war imagery – rather than the result of political and economic problems that, while transformed, have transcended the war and persist in peacetime.

Yet for many Salvadorans "it [peace] is worse than the war" (Moodie 2002) or, as I was told during my fieldwork by Santiago Nonualco's inhabitants, in present-day El Salvador "there is neither war nor peace". Their memories and experiences of violence reveal the inadequacy of the war/peace binary. The widespread presence of the term 'transition' in public discourse to describe the aftermath of war would seem legitimised by the existence of a liminal interval which is "neither war nor peace". Yet, the conception of transition carries within it a very specific notion of change that does not apply to the case of El Salvador. The teleological and unilateral character of transition entails a direction and progression that the persistence of violence in post-war El Salvador defies. I do not deny that there have been changes since the official end of the war, but these – negotiated by political elites – have come to fruition in more gradual, blurred and uncertain ways than those implied by 'transition'. Another possible misconception to be gleaned from Santiago residents' description of the aftermath of the war as "neither war nor peace" is an assumption that El Salvador has simply not completed its transition from war to peace. If this were the case, we would have to imagine Salvadorans' lives as suspended on a trajectory toward peace – a contradiction in terms. The encroachment of violence on peacetime reveals that change is more accurately thought as a continuum than as the progression implied by a term like 'transition'. In this respect, parallels can be drawn to the exploration of change in post-socialist countries (see Berdahl et al 2000; Bridger and Pine 1998; Burawoy and Verdery 1999; Creed 1998; Hann 2002; Verdery 1991).

With regard to the labelling of historical stages as 'pre-', 'neo-', or 'post-', I argue, following Humphrey (2002), that the discussion should be historicised and localised in order to determine the usefulness of these prefixes. To refer to present-day El Salvador as a 'post-conflict' or 'post-war' society does certainly

raise temporal boundaries, in this case the cessation of the war with the signing of the Peace Accords. It is, however, necessary to assess what the term forces us to think as well as what it invites us to omit. Although both 'peace' and 'post-war' indicate that the war is over, the 'post-war' qualifier admits the continuing relevance of the war in explaining the current situation. While the term 'post-war' certainly raises boundaries, they are diffuse enough to enable the term to explain a present characterised by unresolved economic and political inequalities, ongoing violence and rampant impunity – all of which were themselves at the root of the war. I do not intend to suggest that we can talk about post-war El Salvador as a homogenous period, since there are certainly differences between today and the 1990s, even with regard to violence. Yet, since violence is still a burning issue, I suggest that the term 'post-war' acknowledges the need to explore connections and overlaps between present-day El Salvador and the war of the 1980s.

Conclusion: Implications for Understanding the Aftermath of War

This article does not aim to criticise or discard the existing written history on El Salvador, whether by scholars or others, but rather to show the need to increase our awareness of how history is shaped and who participates in its shaping, so that we can identify who and what may have been excluded in that practice, and why, especially in the case of contemporary El Salvador, whose history has yet to be written and analysed. Additionally, there is a need to build history less on grand events and more on gradual changes and processes, that is, on ethnographic research that yields a nuanced comprehension of the everyday experiences absent from large scale historical narratives. I am thus suggesting the blurring of historical markers, such that history does not appear as a simple and logical succession of discrete stages whose boundaries are defined by certain "critical events". This is not to say that a different history of contemporary El Salvador should be written, but rather that an awareness of how the most recent history has been shaped is fundamental to exploring how change takes place. What I hope to have made clear in this article is that periods of peace and war do not follow each other but rather overlap and intermingle – most visibly at the local and everyday level – to the extent that sometimes the definition of their boundaries is difficult to determine and the decision to label them either 'war' or 'peace' may be more political than

intellectual. During some stages of the Salvadoran war there was actually less combat and violence than there is today, which leads to the conclusion that present-day El Salvador is, in certain key respects – its high homicide rates and the widespread fear of its people – closer to a state of war than to a state of peace, even if it does not totally fall into either category. To appreciate the ambiguous nature of Salvadoran history requires recognition of both the disruptive quality of violence in peacetime and the ordinariness of wartime violence.

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Politics of Identity and Local Conflict in Darfur

Regine Penitsch

Abstract

The international media have generally presented the conflict in Darfur as one between the Sudanese government backed by Arab militias on one side, and African insurgents on the other. Even though the shortcomings of the “Arabs versus Africans” explanation have been explored in many publications on Darfur, this dualistic simplification remains central to many analyses. Drawing upon fieldwork conducted in Khartoum, I argue that the polarization of identities is not a root cause but an outcome of the conflict in Darfur, and show the historical emergence and development of this dichotomy. Further, I demonstrate that this polarization can be upheld only by concealing crucial facts that do not fit the dichotomy. Political elites involved in the civil war use identity categories as instruments in complex power struggles. The disentanglement of the Arab-African-dichotomy may support a better understanding of the needs, motivations and aims of the different actors involved in the conflict and its ongoing dynamics. The example of Jabal Marra is used to analyse groups’ motivation to join specific parties in this conflict

Introduction¹

Darfur comprises the north-western corner of Sudan, borders Libya, Chad and the Central African Republic and covers a territory of around the size of France; comprising one fifth of the total area of Sudan. Ecologically Darfur ranges from desert in the north to rich marshland savannah in the south. The northern desert is dominated by nomadic pastoralism with camel and sheep, the semi-desert south with little more rainfall allows a limited cultivation of millet. The Jabal Marra plateau in the centre of Darfur reaches about 10,000 feet above sea level. Here, due to stable rainfall and good soil quality, intensive agriculture is possible. Sandy plains to the east and clay soils to the west of the Jabal Marra with adequate rainfall provide the conditions for

¹ This chapter is based on 15 months of fieldwork in Khartoum between August 2007 and March 2009 as part of a PhD research project at the Max-Planck-Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle (Saale), Germany.

some stable agriculture and sheep rearing and hosting camel nomads from the north during the dry season. The southern belt of Darfur has rich savannah pastures and is known for extensive cattle herding.

Darfur was an independent sultanate under the virtually uninterrupted rule of the Keira-Fur dynasty² until 1916 when the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium incorporated it into Sudan. Darfur has always been a meeting place between North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa as well as between West Africa and the Nile Basin; thus, its population is ethnically diverse. The oldest inhabitants are sedentary farmers with the Fur as the biggest group. They were the founders of the Keira-Fur sultanate and the traditional rulers of the region. Nomads herding cattle and camels came later to Darfur. The biggest pastoralist group is the Rizayqat. The major contribution of Darfur to the national economy is livestock.

In 2003 two rebel movements, the Sudan Liberation Movement/ Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), began attacking government targets in Darfur. The most intense period of fighting occurred during 2003 and 2004, between the rebels and government forces. Political efforts towards the settlement of the conflict resulted in the Darfur Peace Agreement in May 2006. This agreement produced further complications such as the splintering of the rebel groups and the multiplication of confrontations between all the conflict parties. In May 2008 JEM reached Omdurman, the twin city of Sudan’s capital Khartoum. This was the first strike on the capital in thirty years and constituted a significant milestone in the Darfur civil war. However, the battle field is Darfur, resulting in around 2 million internally displaced people and 200,000 refugees in Chad. Violence increased again in 2008 and access for humanitarian agencies became more difficult. In March 2009 the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court requested an arrest warrant against President Al-Bashir for crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in Darfur.

It might seem late to add an article to the pile of existing publications exploring explanations of the conflict in Darfur, especially

² One can find the names Keira sultanate, Fur sultanate, Keira-Fur sultanate or Darfur sultanate but all refer to the same entity. The Keira dynasty started the rule over a region inhabited by the Fur in the Jabal Marra area with Sulayman Solong around 1650. The Keira gradually merged with the Fur.

at a time when dialogue is centered on solutions, peace and compensation.³ However, the current analyses of this conflict; especially concerning the relevance of identity, have been rather unsatisfactory. In general, the international media presents the conflict in Darfur as one between the Sudanese government backed by Arab militias on one side, and African insurgents on the other. One extreme position holds that genocide is being committed in Darfur. It is clear to any observer who looks more deeply at the situation that the view “Arabs attack Africans” is a simplification, but there are reasons why this dichotomy exists and why it has prevailed until now.

I challenge this polarization by demonstrating that it can be upheld only by concealing crucial facts that do not fit the dichotomy. The political elites involved in the civil war have no interest in clarifying this blurred picture; on the contrary, it serves their interests. It is my aim to illuminate some of the omissions in the narrative about the Darfur conflict. My argument follows two central themes. First, I look at the semantics of the terms Arab and African and their Arabic translations in the context of the Darfur conflict, *arab* and *zurqa*. I argue that several misunderstandings and misuses have occurred over time, and their current usage is also influenced by national, regional, and global discourses. On the national level, the struggle for a national identity after independence plays a role; particularly the focus on an Arab-Islamic identity by the hegemonic discourses of the governments of Khartoum. This vision has been countered by the idea of a “New Sudan” employing a multicultural definition of the nation, promoted by the late John Garang, the former leader of the rebel group Southern Peoples Liberation Movement/ Army (SPLM/A). The SPLM/A was involved in civil war in the southern parts of Sudan for several decades until a peace agreement was reached in 2005. I will show that the transfer of the terms “Arab” and “African” (which have emerged in the context of the southern civil war) to the Darfur context is flawed, as there are fundamental differences between these regions. Darfur is part of northern Sudan, with a long history as an independent sultanate until 1916. In addition, its location on the western periphery of Sudan distinguishes Darfur in comparison to other regions of Sudan – Chad, Libya and parts of West Africa influence Darfur even more than Khartoum. These specificities

³ Examples for publications about the Darfur conflict are Flint/ de Waal 2005 and 2008; Ghaffar/ Manger 2006; Hassan/Ray 2009; Marchal 2008; Prunier 2005; Young 2005.

include the Darfurian perception of Arab and non-Arab as well as the second aspect of my argument: Who sides with whom in the current conflict. Revealing the weakness of the Arab-African dichotomy by examining the matter on the level of semantics forms the basis for criticizing the perception that the two sides in the conflict can be identified by their ethnic identity. By stressing the fact that there is a local perception of Arab and non-Arab, I want to outline that the alliance between the central government and the militias in Darfur is not based on Arab brotherhood, but rather on complementary interests. The exceptions where Arabs side with insurgents and non-Arabs with the government forces reveal a deeper pattern; where local actors ally with the forces that can support them in the pursuit of their own aims.

In this article, the Jabal Marra area in the heart of Darfur serves as an example of the dynamics of the relationship between the Fur, a non-Arab group, and several Arab groups with whom they have contact. The analysis of Jabal Marra addresses root causes of the violent conflict on the local level, and shows how the current local conflicts in Darfur and the civil war between insurgents and the Sudanese government influence each other. The Arab-African dichotomy has served to trigger fears against the other - and this other has been produced by consolidating the various ethnic groups under the two blocs *arab* and *zurqa*. At this point the issue of identity enters the conflict. Hence one outcome - and not cause - of the current conflict in Darfur is the construction of the identities of *arab* and *zurqa* with new meanings. Currently these terms are highly emotionally loaded with mistrust and fear, and embody the opposition of perpetrator and victim. The future will show how these meanings are transformed.

Identity Politics of the Sudanese Government

The successive governments of Sudan have influenced the polarization between Arabs and Africans since the country gained independence in 1956, when Arabic was declared the only official language and Islam the state religion. Since this time, the concept of an Arab-Islamic nation has been propagated as the basis for the national identity. Under President Al-Numairi (1969-1985) Pan-Arabism gained momentum and Shari'a Laws were established as the law of the country. Islamism and Arabism became part of the state's self-definition, and this found symbolic expression in the transformation of the national

flag in 1970 into the current one, which resembles the flags of other Arab national flags.⁴ During the government of Sadiq al-Mahdi (1986-1989) the two biggest parties managed to gain the support of the biggest ethnic groups in Darfur; it was perceived that the Umma Party under Sadiq al-Mahid backed the Arab groups, while the Democratic Union Party (DUP) supported the Fur. For Al-Mahdi and his Umma Party, it seemed necessary to win Darfur in order to gain political success (Prunier 2005: 52, Salih 2005: 153-154). Al-Mahdi began to recruit and arm Arab groups (mainly cattle herders) and to deploy them as militia against the SPLM/A in south Darfur from 1986 onwards. In 1987, the "Arab Gathering" emerged. In an open letter to president Al-Mahdi, 23 prominent Darfurian Arabs claimed that Arab tribes represented more than 70% of Darfur's total population. Despite being socially, and economically predominant, they claimed that they were marginalised in political representation in Darfur. This letter was followed by pamphlets entitled "Quraysh 1, 2, and 3".⁵ In particular Quraysh 2, probably dating from 1987, promotes Arab superiority in Darfur and aims at pushing non-Arabs out of the region (Flint/ de Waal 2008: 50).

In addition to the governments' clear Islamist direction, Arabism became stronger as a racial ideology during the 1980s. President Al-Bashir, who came into power in 1989, used the nexus between Arabism and Islamism to mobilize support for a war against the south under the label of *jihad* (Lesch 1998: 22). His regime continued to support Arab military groups and mobilised them in the fight against the SPLM/A. Simultaneously, winning them over to his side served to undermine the foundation of the Umma party (Prunier 2005: 75).

The specific facts about the Arab Gathering as an organization remain unclear, and the authorship of the pamphlets is unknown, but it is likely that this propaganda was more influenced by Libya's Muammar Ghadafi and his Sahelian Pan-Arab struggle than by Darfurian or Khartoum-based actors (Prunier 2005: 174, footnote 51; Flint/ de Waal 2008: 52). It is debatable to what extent the propaganda reflected or resulted in a conviction of Arab superiority among Arab groups in Darfur. However, it fitted well into the polarization process. During the 1981

provincial elections ethnicity had already become a key political factor. When the Fur politician Ahmed Diraige became governor of Darfur in 1980 the Fur became more self-confident, and the concerns of the disadvantages faced by Arab groups were substantiated (Flint/ de Waal 2008: 49). The reaction to the foundation of the Darfur Liberation Front led by Abd al-Wahid Muhammad al-Nur in 2002 was similar; opponents started to ask from whom the Fur aimed to liberate Darfur, and the direct answer – "from the Arabs" – provoked fears amongst Arab groups.⁶

Al-Bashir's government increased its influence in Darfur by re-shaping the administrative system; the single state of Darfur was divided into three states in 1994. For the first time, the Fur became a minority group in each of the new states. The government tried to co-opt the personnel of the new administration with material means, and the newly created political, juridical and administrative posts were given preferably to candidates who stood close to the government (cf. Khalid 2009 (63) and Abdul-Jalil 2009 (327)). Al-Bashir's government withdrew from extreme political Arabism and Islamism in the late 1990s, in the context of the negotiations between the ruling National Congress Party and the insurgent SPLM/A to end the civil war in the South. Despite this, his regime continues to be Arab-centric and Islamist, although in a less radical form than previously.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of January 2005 plays an important role in the war in Darfur, although it mainly concerns the Khartoum government and the southern rebel movement SPLM/A. The CPA introduced a quota for sharing political power and wealth between the SPLM and the National Congress Party (NCP). Despite its name the agreement was not comprehensive, but rather concerned the southern regions whilst neglecting other parts of the country. However, the "lesson learnt" for everyone was that armed struggle is rewarded by negotiations, and may lead to enhanced political power. The outcome of the civil war in the south influenced the establishment of two insurgent movements in Darfur, the Sudan Liberation Movement/ Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). Rumors suggest that groups of Darfur insurgents tried to build an alliance ranging from Darfur to Kordofan (eastern Sudan) and maybe even to parts of the northern Nile and the Blue Nile

⁴ Concerning the contest of national identity see e.g. Lesch 1998 (38-46) and Sharkey 2007 (34-36).

⁵ Banu Quraysh was a prominent tribe of ancient Mecca and Prophet Mohammad its descendant.

⁶ Interview with a member of the Darfur Development Front, Khartoum, 03/2009. Cf. e.g. Khalid 2009 (62).

states. Such an alliance would pose a considerable challenge to the governing National Congress Party (NCP). It is controversial in Khartoum whether these movements could threaten the government militarily. Attacks on Omdurman on 10 May 2008 by the JEM were interpreted by many as a dangerous sign.⁷

Identity Politics of the Insurgents

The insurgents of Darfur refer to themselves as “movements” or “armed opposition”. They express their right to take up arms as citizens of Sudan against the current Sudanese government, which they often call a “dictatorship”, implying that it is not the legitimate leadership of the country.⁸

Darfur has long tried to keep its autonomy against rulers from outside. Darfur and Sinnar were the only independent territories before the Turco-Egyptian occupation of the territory of what is today known as the country Sudan. The Keira-Fur sultanate in the Jabal Marra region serves as a reference for a regional identity comprising both non-Arabs and Arabs, demarcating it as a separate unit to central Sudan (de Waal 2009: 126). This is reflected by the category of identification *ahl dar Fur*, people from the homeland of the Fur. Darfur revolted against the Turco-Egyptian colonial power several times⁹ and lost its sovereignty only in 1917. Darfurians showed the will to reassert their independence even during the short interplay of independence under Al-Mahdi (1881-1898) (Braukämper 1992: 138f; O’Fahey 1980: 148). Both Arabs and non-Arabs perceived the rule of Al-Mahdi like the Turco-Egyptian occupation as ‘foreign’, i.e. emanating from the Nile Valley.¹⁰ Several political organizations opposing the centralization of power in Khartoum and the lack of regional participation in decision making

– some of them ready to use violent means¹¹ – emerged in Darfur in the late 1950s and mid-1960s. The previously mentioned SLM/A and JEM both came into existence in 2003.

There is nothing like a natural loyalty between Arab groups from the centre and the Darfurian Arabs. Although Darfurians are Muslims, there is a hierarchy between the ethnic groups who embody the top positions of the national political power structure, and other groups including the Arabs and non-Arabs of Darfur. This is reflected in the emic term *awlad al-bahr*, “sons of the river” (Nile), self-appointed by the riverine Arabs in order to express their distinction as “true Sudanese” from others, e.g. the *awlad al-gharb* or *gharaba*, literally “sons of the West” or “Westerners”. The latter term includes Kordofan and Darfur, Arabs and non-Arabs. *Gharaba*, people from the West, are also suspected of not being “real Sudanese”. The perception among the population of the peripheries is that members of the political and economic hegemonic centre in Khartoum do not accept someone from the periphery in a powerful position or as part of the ruling elite. This point was strongly made by the Fur politician Daoud Bolad who became a chairman of the Muslim Brotherhood-dominated Khartoum University Students’ Union in the end of the 1970s. The Muslim Brotherhood was renamed National Islamic Front in 1985. Later, however, he was disappointed by the discrimination he faced as a Darfurian by the national political elite (the Muslim Brotherhood) during the 1980s.¹²

Paradoxically, some Darfur Arabs look down on the Arabs of the Nile Valley (such as the Danagla, Ja’aliyyin, and the Shaygiyya groups). The authors of Quraysh 2, Arab Darfurians, see a clear difference between the Arabs in Darfur and the riverine Arabs. The Darfurian Arabs deny the authenticity of the riverine Arabs because of the Nubian influences in their genealogies. Thus the Khartoum government, composed of these riverine Arabs, would be an obstacle for proper Arab rule (“Quraysh 2” in Hassan/Ray 2009: 452).

This is only one example of the ambivalences inherent in the Arab-African polarization. Another example concerns the synonymous portrayal of Darfur Arabs with the

⁷ JEM members arrived with 80 to 300 vehicles and took over the police station in Omdurman by force, killing six local police officers (United Nations Security Council 2008: 1).

⁸ Interviews with several members of the opposition, including members and ex-fighters of the Darfur insurgent movements.

⁹ For example the revolt of Abdullah al-Sihayni-revolt in Nyala 1921 (Woodward 1990: 28).

¹⁰ This contradicts the popular Sudanese perception that the Mahdiyya was a largely ‘Western’ movement, particularly after the death of the riverine-born Mahdi and Abdullahi’s ascent to power (Prunier 2005: 18-20).

¹¹ For more details see e.g. “On the failure of Darfur peace talks in Abuja” by Abaker Mohamed Abuelbasha, www.sudantribune.com, 7 Jan 2010.

¹² Interview with a writer and journalist and member of the Darfur Development Front, 02/2009, Khartoum.

government and the government militias. Most of the people who ally with the government stem from Darfur Arab groups (however not because of an Arab heritage but rather due to other factors, as I demonstrate throughout this paper). Amongst the international public, the image prevails that the majority of the Darfurians side with the government against the non-Arab groups. Examples of Arab groups who are not allied with the government have been presented as exceptions. There are no statistics about this division, but rough estimates from early 2006 by "an Arab intellectual sympathetic to the Darfur rebels" (Flint 2008) suggest that ninety percent of the Arabs of Darfur were neutral. This view is supported by international assessments of the conflict dynamics after the Darfur Peace Agreement (May 2006), which claim that several Arab groups have left the government or given up their neutral position in order to ally with the insurgents (Flint 2008; International Crisis Group 2007: 2-4).

The question arises why the presentation of the conflict as one between "Arabs and non-Arabs" and even as "Arabs exploit and/or kill (Black) Africans" has also been consolidated among the insurgents, taking into consideration that the whole population of Darfur (and not only the non-Arab groups) has suffered. Statements using this terminology can be associated with national politics, but are also connected to global discourses which in turn provide a basis for access to symbolic and material resources.

On the national level, the stress of an African identity establishes ties to the discourse of a "New Sudan" in order to counter the Islamist governments claim for an Arab-Islamic state; this discourse envisages a secular and democratic Sudan promoted by the late John Garang. Garang has reached out to the Nuba and peoples of southern Blue Nile under the label of an African identity (cf. Flint/de Waal 2008: 21). Some of the Darfurians educated elite chose "African" as one of the identity markers in order to build political alliances. The SPLM/A has assisted in the building of a group with a political program of national and not only Darfur-related scope, symbolized by the renaming of the "Darfur Liberation Front" (DLF) to "Sudan Liberation Movement" (SLM) (de Waal 2009: 139-140). The agenda's up scaling to the whole Sudan was accompanied by the emergence of the African and anti-Arab factor.¹³

¹³ Interviews with a journalist, Khartoum 02/2009.

On the global level, it is assumed that international actors are more likely to intervene if they can associate a conflict to elements of cultural oppression of an indigenous population. This assumption weighs heavy in light of the international community's reaction to media images of Darfur. The image of Africans being suppressed, or even being victims of genocide, facilitates dialogue with other oppressed groups and their advocates. The legitimacy of awareness- and fund-raising in terms of 'Arabs kill Africans' fits a popular stereotype of the violent, intolerant, racist Arab. I argue that a description of complex interrelations between Darfurians beyond this simple dichotomy of Africans and Arabs would not meet such an attention by the international public. The most prominent Darfur-related campaigns promote either a Pan-African or an anti-genocide discourse that creates solidarity and mobilises support. The most active leaders of this discourse are not Sudanese but are found among human rights activists in Western countries and are often influenced by an anti-Arab discourse in the context of the world past 9/11 (Hassan 2009: 154-158). The benefits of this connection are manifold for the insurgents, including logistic and material support including weapons and a general sympathy for their ambitions. Being a non-Arab Darfurians opens the access to symbolic and material resources on many occasions, one example being that non-Arab Darfurians are study grants by South African university in South Africa on the basis of African brotherhood. Coming from a non-Arabic group in Darfur thus the basis for solidarity from outside.

An Analysis of Identities in Darfur before the War

In the Western media, the war between the southern insurgency and the government has been described as one between "African Christians" against "Muslim Arabs". The reporting on the Darfur conflict looses the reference to religion but sticks to the terminology of "Arab" vs. "(Black) African".¹⁴ However, it does not make sense to use these terms for both the citizens of the southern states of Sudan and for the "non-Arabs" of Darfur. The differences are rooted in the

¹⁴ See for example www.sudantribune.com. The "SudanTribune" is a non-profit internet website based in France. It provides news, analysis and commentary, official reports, press releases and maps from SudanTribune or other agencies on Sudan and neighbouring countries. It should not be confused with the Sudanese newspaper "Sudan Tribune".

unequal relations between regional areas; the south and the north on one side, and the west and the centre on the other. These relations influence the definition of marginalization itself, and the content of identification categories. One remarkable difference between the north-south-axis and the centre-west-axis stems from the history of the slave trade during the 18th and 19th centuries, which inculcated a residual prejudice of northerners towards southerners and resentment of the southerners towards northerners. This does not apply to western Sudan, however. On the contrary, Darfur under the Keira-Fur sultanate (approx. 1650-1916) was heavily involved in slave trading and ownership, but not as victims of slavery themselves (O'Fahey 1973: 43). The slave raids reinforced the difference between the Darfur Muslim traders and raiders and southern non-Muslims among whom people were enslaved (Beswick 2006: 14 and 158; O'Fahey 2008: 244). Another difference between the regions is the result of the divide-and-rule policy of the British Colonial administration, manifested in the Closed District Ordinance Act of 1920 which isolated the south. Entry by northerners was highly restricted, and Arabization or Islamization did not occur in these regions due to this enforced isolation. In contrast, Darfur has been part of northern Sudan since the British colonial period, and Islam and the Arabic language and culture were never seen as elements imposed on the Darfurians by the rulers of the centre. Islam was brought from West Africa in the 16th century by Muslim Fulbe scholars, but it was only in the 18th century that Muslim holy men from the Nile Valley expanded their influence in Darfur.¹⁵ Some of my interview respondents pointed out the relaxed religious interaction between Fur and Arabs of that time by the name for the region itself: *dar* is an Arabic word (literally "house", in Darfur: "homeland"), and *Fur* is the name of the ethnic group building the Keira-Fur sultanate (O'Fahey 2008: 22, 40, 42 and 224).

These historical differences between north-south and centre-west relations inevitably influence the analysis of marginalization of the Sudanese south and Darfur. Elements of a cultural colonialism in terms of forced

¹⁵ Islamization has been a slow process related to state formation. It was strengthened by the first sultan of Darfur, Sulayman Solong (c. 1650-1680), who decreed Islam as the sultanate's official religion. Religious conversions occurred on large scale under the reign of Ahmad Bukr (c. 1700-1720) when teachers were invited, mosques built, and his subjects compelled to become Muslims.

Arabization and Islamization are missing in the latter (cf. e.g. Beshir 1984 (24)). In an early political declaration the SLM/A even declared that "the Arab tribes and groups are an integral and indivisible component of Darfur's social fabric who have been equally marginalized and deprived of their rights to development and genuine political participation."¹⁶ The key factor which prompts many citizens of western Sudan to turn against their government is the unequal distribution of economic resources between the center and the peripheries.¹⁷

A variety of social and cultural identifications was used by the people in Darfur before the war. The broadest category was the previously mentioned *ahl Darfur*. The category *qabila* was socially the most important one, translated as tribe or ethnic group. Until recently, Darfur has been home to a society in which cultivators and pastoralists live mutually complementary lifestyles. Cultivators were the earlier inhabitants of the region; the pastoralist livelihood came to Darfur through later immigration. Arab camel pastoralists had not reached an important scale before the 15th century and their partial transformation to cattle herders developed only since the 18th century (Braukämper 1992: 72; 114-116).

The English term "Arab" is a direct translation of the Arabic term *arab*, but the content is not as obvious as it seems. In Darfur in particular, the term *arab* has a different meaning than in other contexts. Religion does not contribute to ethnic categorizations in this context because all groups in Darfur are Muslim, except those who have immigrated from southern Sudan. In general, authors writing on Darfur classify a group as *arab* when its members speak only Arabic and no other language, which applies to people originating from Arab speaking countries. However, there are groups who have been linguistically

¹⁶ "The Sudan Liberation Movement and Sudan Liberation Army (SLM/ SLA): Political Declaration", 14 March 2003. In: Hassan/Ray 2009 (374-377); "Justice and Equality Movement (JEM): Proposal for Peace in Sudan in General and Darfur in Particular". In: Hassan/Ray 2009 (378-380).

¹⁷ See for example El-Tom 2007 (227); Flint/de Waal 2008 (14); Johnson 2003; Prunier 2005 (42). Descriptions of Darfur's marginalization are found for e.g. in Prunier 2005 (25-33). However, it should be mentioned that some voices claim that cultural oppression occurred against non-Arabs in Darfur citing the school curriculum and its presentation of Darfur without history as proof (El-Tom 2009: 86).

Arabized, but who are still perceived as non-Arabs by most people in Darfur.¹⁸ In addition to being the first language of many people in Darfur, Arabic has also developed into a lingua franca.

In Darfur, speaking the Arabic language does not automatically translate into being Arab. Language does not constitute the only criterion for ethnic identification, and in many cases may not even be an influential factor for ethnic identity.¹⁹ Examples suggest that occupation is a key criterion, and thus crossing ethnic boundaries can be relatively simple. Håland (1969) describes the situation of a group of Fur cultivators who invested in cattle, like their Bani Halba cattle-herding neighbors. When this was more profitable than farming they were obliged to cross the ethnic categories. They became Bani Halba by turning away from their earlier way of life and language and by adopting the skills and culture of the cattle herders, including the Arabic language.²⁰ Ethnic identity was transformed by a shift in the social context; adapting to a new livelihood, culture, language and ethnonym.

An examination of the emic terms applied to pastoralists demonstrates that the combination of language exclusivity and livelihood constitutes key factors for the legitimacy of an Arab identity in Darfur. The most common term is *ruhhal*, “people who move”, without differentiation between nomads, herders, pastoralists, or agro-pastoralists. In addition to *ruhhal*, simply *arab* is used as the epitome of the authentic Arab nomad.²¹ Nowadays, being a cultivator or a pastoralist is more an ideal than a reality. A continuous shift from pure pastoralism towards agro-pastoralism is occurring, and cultivators also practice herding.

¹⁸ Examples include the Bargu-Silaihah, the Qimr, and the Zaghawa-Um Kimmelte.

¹⁹ Interviews with people from Darfur, Khartoum, 11/2007-04/2008; cf. Braukämper 1992 (241). Some groups try to claim an Arab identity exactly by arguing that they only speak Arabic, for example the Qimr and parts of the Fallata. These groups usually try to support their claims by factual or invented genealogies that link them to Arab groups like the Ja’aliyn (e.g. in the case of the Bargu-Silaihah and the Qimr).

²⁰ Abdul-Jalil (1979) shows another example for changing ethnic identities of Fur and Zaghawa.

²¹ In diverse interviews people just said *arab* and meant for example Zaghawa or Rizaygat. This equation is related to the vision of the *arab hurr*, the free or noble horseman (cf. Braukämper 1992 (163)).

In addition, other livelihood strategies like trade, labor migration and remittances supplement these livestock-rearing and farming activities (Young et al 2005: viii; Young et al 2009: 67-73). However, in Darfur the connotation with camel or cattle herders is always *arab*, and the connotation with *arab* is nomad or herder. At least in the collective memory of the Darfurians, it is the combination of speaking the Arabic language exclusively, following a nomadic lifestyle, and the associated cultural elements that defines who is an Arab in Darfur.

As far as the term “African” is concerned, the Arabic translation *ifriqi* is not used in Darfur. There is no emic term representing the non-Arabs as a unit. The term that is used currently in the dichotomy of Arabs and non-Arabs is *zurqa*. It has existed in Darfur and literally means “blue” (“black” in the Darfur context), but there is nothing like a united body of *zurqa* with a common phenotype, language, history or culture. People keep stressing that *zurqa* is not used widely, and is applied only in a descriptive and neutral way. The current application of the word is a recent development; one theory of how it has come to its current usage leads to Libya, where it is used by Arab pastoralists to describe the non-Arab Anakaza (camel pastoralists in Libya, Chad and Sudan) in a pejorative way. The derogative content of the term entered Darfur with Ghadafi’s Pan-Arabist discourse from Libya and Chad in the 1970s and has racist connotations (Prunier 1992: 44, with reference to Burr/Collins 1999: 84).

Local Conflict in Jabal Marra and Civil War Dynamics

Generally the coexistence of around one hundred ethnic groups and sub-groups prior to the current conflict has been described as harmonious, and in some parts of Darfur intermarriage was commonplace. Although the relationship between nomadic and sedentary people was complementary, tensions frequently arose over the use of natural resources; especially between cultivators and pastoralists over water and grazing rights.²² Conflicts occurred and were resolved between the different ethnic groups whereby no reference was made to the category “Arab” or “non-Arab”. A special customary system of land tenure serves as an instrument for regulating the coexistence of the groups in Darfur. This system regulates the granting of

²² Concerning traditional conflict and their management see for example Mohamed/Badri 2005 (41-45 and 52-56).

land titles, i.e. estates, called *hakura* (plural *hawakir*) by the pre-colonial rulers of Darfur. The so-called administrative *hakura* grants limited rights of taxation over people occupying a certain territory, and is usually given to tribal leaders. It is also known as *dar* (plural *dur*, literally "homeland"), thus *dar* Fur means that the Fur have a communal leadership over a defined territory (Abdul-Jalil 2006.) One positive aspect of this system for the coexistence of pastoralists and cultivators is that the leaders of different ethnic groups and sub-groups are encouraged to establish and maintain alliances. Hence social relations between leaders and residents of different *dur* are encouraged, thus promoting peace and security. However, the *dar*-system was simultaneously the origin of the vulnerability of the pastoralists without *dar* due to their dependence on the land-owners for access to natural resources (Abdul-Jalil 2006: 24-25; Braukämper 1992: 219-220; Young et al 2005: 29; 45-46). It is important to note that while the majority of the cattle-herding groups occupying southern Darfur have their own *dar*, the camel-herding groups in the northern parts of Darfur do not (Young et al 2009: 40).²³

The current civil war has deeply disturbed the largely peaceful social interaction in Darfur. For large parts of the population in Darfur the social reality of the time before the war has gone forever. The people I have interviewed talk about that time like a lost paradise. I interpret this nostalgic memory shaped by the current experience of destruction and loss. The past is described as "normal"; people say: "we had everything", "we had no problems", and "if problems occurred, we solved them." Normality implies order and stability; where one knows how the world functions. People don't refer to the present situation as "the war" or "the conflict". They simply say *al-mushkila* or *al-mashakil* (problem or problems). This appears to be a humble word for the realities in Darfur, but in contrast with "the normality" of the pre-war era it describes the deep disturbance they have experienced; now everything is vague, and reality cannot be taken for granted.

The example of Jabal Marra demonstrates some of the dynamics between the involved groups. Jabal Marra is a mountainous area of volcanic origin, with a cooler micro-climate than the surrounding plains and the highest

²³ Dar-holders in southern Darfur are for example the southern Rizayqat, Habbaniya, Ta'isha and Bani Halba. See Young et al (2005: 119-120) for examples of groups having a *dar*.

point at around 3,000 metres. It lies in the middle belt of the Darfur region where semi-fertile sands are characteristic. This area of settled peasants is the geographical and historical centre of Darfur. Here, markets were the meeting-place for wide-ranging transactions between cultivators, nomads, and travelling traders (O'Fahey 2008: 2, 33-36 and 241-242).

The Jabal Marra area is part of the *dar* of the Fur, thus the leadership of the Fur regulates the access to land and resources in this region. The Fur had intermarried with different ethnic groups, including Arabs. Some of the previously Arab groups have given up the Arabic language, adapted themselves to the social and cultural surrounding, and are now considered to be Fur.²⁴ There are also historical relations between the Fur and Arab agro-pastoralist groups living in the marginal areas of the Jabal Marra plateau.²⁵ Furthermore, seasonal migrations of Arab cattle and camel herders lead through the Jabal Marra area, mainly those of the northern Rizayqat.²⁶

In Jabal Marra historical events have influenced the establishment of the two blocs currently known as Arab pastoralists and non-Arab cultivators. These historical developments do not only explain the rigid tightening of social boundaries, but also why the two blocks eventually clashed and experienced a formerly unknown violence. Nowadays, the Darfurians perceive a major difference between the Arab groups traditionally living in their social surrounding, and groups who have migrated to Darfur more recently, particularly since the 1980s. In 1984 recurrent droughts resulted in a severe and widespread famine, pushing both cultivators

²⁴ An example for this category are the Jawama; Arab cultivators from Kordofan. A famous member of this group is the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) leader Abdelwahid Mohamad al-Nur.

²⁵ Examples are the 'Utriya, the Hutiya, the Ta'alba, Bani Mansur, the Tarjam, and the Mahadi.

²⁶ Interviews with people from Darfur, Khartoum, 11/2007-04/2008.

The northern Rizayqat are traditionally camel herders, the southern Rizayqat cattle herders. They have three branches in common: the Mahriyya, Nuwayba and Mahamid. The Irayqat and Itayfat are camel herders. The southern Rizayqat are united under one native administration. The northern Rizayqat are found separately under their individual native administrations (Young et al 2009: 29-30).

and camel and cattle herders from northern and western Darfur and from north-eastern Chad further south, into the fertile Jabal Marra, stimulating violent conflicts over water and grazing lands between the Fur cultivators and several pastoralist groups. Most of the herders stemmed from Arab groups, although some were members of the non-Arab Zaghawa. Between 1986 and 1989 violent conflicts intensified as the Fur were confronted by a broad coalition of twenty seven different Arab groups composed of cattle and camel herders from the margins of the Jabal Marra plateau and northern Rizayqat camel herders respectively. The intensification of violence and the collective organisation of these Arab groups correlated with a change in their strategies and aims. One result was an intensification of attacks by Arab herders on Fur cultivators.

Recurrent droughts and scarce resources were common problems leading to conflicts in Darfur, and methods of conflict management had been developed to mitigate violent escalations. Neither the droughts nor the attacks were therefore surprisingly new in this context. However, between the mid-1980s and the early 1990s, several governmental authorities were involved in attempts at conflict management in Darfur, but instead of solving problems their biased attitude in favour of the Arab groups brought the conflicts to another level. The former conflict units were the *qabail* (plural of *qabila*), the ethnic groups or tribes, but now the categories "Arab" and "non-Arabs" were introduced. The government became a stakeholder in the tribal conflicts and contributed significantly to the shift from smaller-scale violent conflicts to a fully-fledge civil war with unprecedented levels of violence.

The Arab groups in Jabal Marra and at its margins sought the support of the government, or answered calls from the government to mobilise and fight against the Fur. Newcomers to the region usually do not possess any land. Furthermore, their chances of becoming integrated in the native administration of the *dar* of the Fur - at least to a certain extent - are diminished due to the pre-existing tensions. Another issue concerns the ongoing rejection of the demands of the Arab groups to share power in their local native administration system by the Fur in Jabal Marra.²⁷ Since the 1980s Arab herders noticed a worsened reception when they entered the land of the Fur. The herders complained that the Fur refused them access to land and water

resources in an exaggerated way, and that new settlements had been built on their traditional migration routes. The expression *zaraib al-hawa* (lit. enclosures of air) is used by pastoralists to accuse the Fur and other cultivators of blocking off unused land in order to hinder the free access of the pastoralists' cattle (Young et al 2009: 59-60; Prunier 2005: xix). They claimed that the Fur would deliberately cause them problems. According to the argument of the herders, the Fur could have been much more generous in their hospitality without losing too much. A counterargument by the cultivators was that the demographic pressure of people and animals was too intense for the available resources. However, the capacity of the farming land could have been maximized through better management and development projects. In addition, the pressure for new pastures could have been limited by convincing the herders to keep smaller numbers of animals rather than very big herds. Then these problems could perhaps have been resolved at an earlier stage. However, none of these interventions occurred and the area was left to solve the problems on their own. Thus, a root cause of the conflict was the neglect of sustainable development in the area.²⁸ Another issue concerns the Arab groups who have lived for generations among the Fur. In this atmosphere of competition and fear, their Arab roots may potentially become significant markers of identity and exclusion. They live in fear, and some actually experience maltreatment, robbery, murder, and expulsion.²⁹

In the Arabs' search for allies to support their interests, the government was an obvious choice. The government promised Arab herders land and own native administrations, and thus potential political power. From the perspective of the government, this was not a method for the unification of "the Arabs" of the centre with "the Arabs" of Darfur. The stress on the common Arab identity was merely a superficial instrument for the creation of stronger loyalties.

²⁸ Interview with a Darfurian ex-politician, 03/2009, Khartoum. The conflict aggravated the situation of the pastoralists drastically. The access to grazing reserves was restricted because traditional livestock migration routes were not usable. In addition, the internal and external livestock collapsed (Young et al 2005: xi and 70-82).

²⁹ Interview with a Bani Halba member living since generations in Jabal Marra, 03/2008, Khartoum.

²⁷ Several interviews with Darfurians, 11/2007-03/2009, Khartoum.

The non-Arab groups, the Fur in the case of Jabal Marra, complained that their interests were being ignored and that the government was biased in favour of the Arab groups.³⁰ Among the complaints of the Fur were that Arab herders ignored the established animal migration routes. In addition, the Fur protested that newcomers were not yet integrated in the administrative system and thus could not be punished for these infringements. Furthermore, when Arab groups lived within the Fur estates and were included in their native administration, they refused to respect the Fur customs. Another point of criticism was the arrival of transnational migrants, mainly from Chad, whose settlement in Darfur was protected by some other Arab tribes which led to a perceived imbalance of power.³¹

The frequent attacks by the herders, their support from consecutive Sudanese governments, and the ideology of Arab – non-Arab differences spread into Darfur and raised fears among the Fur that their interests are being ignored for the benefit of the Arab groups. Many Fur feared that their land and power would be transferred to Arab groups, especially because the political regime promised Arabs land as a reward for their support.³² Simultaneously an awareness-raising campaign was promoted amongst the forerunners of the current rebels, spreading messages that the Fur were not just one ethnic group, but resembled a nation and, as the authentic and original inhabitants, were the real rulers of Darfur. The Fur now started to mobilize and to build up an armed movement in Jabal Marra. By 1997, the entire region was mobilized.³³

After 2003, more factors influenced the Fur in the Jabal Marra area siding with the armed rebellion. First, the majority of the older generation, who were initially against an armed rebellion, started to support it in opposition to the government, who collectively labelled Fur as bandits in an attempt to devalue the insurgency as criminality. In the long run,

³⁰ Young et al (2005: 26) mention 16 drought years since 1972. See for example Abdul-Jalil 2006 (29-30); Abdul-Jalil 2009 (334); Khalid 2009 (41).

³¹ See for example "The people committee for peace and development. Kas [a town in Darfur; R.P.] conference for peace and co-existence, 20-23 January 2003" (unpublished document).

³² See for example International Crisis Group 2007 (11) for cases where land and new localities were given to Arab groups.

³³ Concerning the beginning of the Fur resistance see for example Flint/ de Waal 2008 (75-77).

however, the government could not continue to deny the existence of an insurgency.³⁴

Second, the Fur were influenced by the broader context of the insurgency in the region of Darfur. Other non-Arab groups, e.g. the Zaghawa, as well as the SPLM, members of the elite, and the diaspora mobilized them to support an insurgency against the centre. Hence there was a shift from local interests to a national framework.

The Emergence of New Identities and their Role in the Darfur Conflict

The terms Arab and (Black) African or *arab* and *zurqa* are the product of recent social and political constructions. Nowadays, they are political identities which are valid in the context of the violent actions of these warring groups. The current meaning of *zurqa* has emerged in contrast to *arab* as a term for all non-Arab groups in Darfur, in the context of the polarization of identities and most sharply in the context of the current civil war. It is a new, politically loaded term, used derogatively to describe the other in opposition to the pro-government forces. It is thus an ascription by others and not used as self-description in terms of cultural identity. Meanwhile, "Arab" has been equated with "perpetrator" and with *janjawid* in Darfur. This becomes visible for example through the fact that the Tama, a non-Arab group, are sometimes called „new Arabs“, because some of them are recruited by the government militia. Here the term "Arab" has no connection to a descent group. Both terms, *arab* and *zurqa*, are highly emotionally loaded and embody hatred and fear for the respective opposition.

Another example of how the dichotomy between Arabs and Africans is becoming more powerful in the contemporary social reality is the way in which some young, urban, non-Arab Darfurians use the term *zurqa* to connect themselves with a pan-African discourse; in the sense of "being proud to be black". This self-image is an outcome of the conflict, and correlates with a sense of purity. On one occasion, a Darfurian Arab political scientist and politician hinted at the Arab background of the Keira-Fur sultanate. A young Fur accused him of denying the strength and purity of the Fur identity.³⁵ A dual identity with Fur and Arab

³⁴ See for example Assal 2009 (288-289) for a description of the government's presentation of the conflict.

³⁵ I witnessed this for example in a discussion after a presentation of Dr. Walid Madibbo at Al-Khatim Adlan Center for Enlightenment and Human Development, 03/03/2009, Khartoum.

elements seems no longer possible. In the current climate, Fur are inevitably distinguished from their new Arab opponents. Perhaps we are witnessing the construction of a group identification that will survive the current context of violent conflict.

To my knowledge, not much research has been conducted into the ways in which identity categories have shaped the perception of the reality of conflict in Darfur. One exception is Hastrup's text "Violating Darfur" (2008). His main thesis is that the technology of violence employed to control Darfur was a technology of language. The perception of what is going on – "the truth about Darfur" – is an echo of the Khartoum government's insertion of a racist rhetoric, that is the introduction of the label *zurqa*, for mobilizing the militia fighters on the ground. *Zurqa* and other labels, including *janjawid*, were also adopted by the international community and are now powerful categories in the definition of truth and justice. These categories are also influential in the context of the International Criminal Court concerning Sudan.³⁶ I propose to use the polarizing terms *zurqa* and *janjawid* in a slightly different way. Historically, the terms *zurqa* and *janjawid* were not introduced by the central government, but rather influenced by discourses in Darfur itself, as well as in Chad and Libya. Nevertheless, this polarization is not contested by the Sudanese government, the insurgents, civil society activists or the international community.

The current contents of the terms and the perceptions as two opposed blocs of Arabs and non-Arabs/ *arab* (or *janjawid* in the context of Darfur) and *zurqa* are an outcome rather than a cause of the conflict.³⁷ Identity constitutes one ideological aspect of this complex conflict whereby identity markers are used for mobilization of violence by political elites at the centre as well as by the insurgents. I identify the root causes that underlie the conflict dynamics as follows: First, the marginalization and underdevelopment of Darfur as a whole and of the pastoralist groups in particular. Having no *dar* and being ignored by development efforts brought the camel pastoralist northern Rizayqat in particular into a

vulnerable situation. The use of violence can be seen as a coping strategy (Young et al 2005: 45; Young et al 2009) where access to land is a core promise from the government in exchange for military support. In Darfur, land is not only valuable for farming or herding, but also provides access to political power in local administrations. Thus, a second root cause lies in the specific land laws of Darfur which do not provide every citizen with the same rights of access. Third, there is a severe lack of good governance in Darfur, which is used as a playground for power games of the centre. Playing the "identity card" as a divide-and-rule strategy weakens the whole region by making the parties turn against each other. Some groups are strengthened and used as supporters while their opposition is weakened. All this serves the hegemonic potentates in order to consolidate their monopoly of power.³⁸

Conclusion

Two levels of the conflict have been addressed – the local level of the conflicts between communities in Darfur and the national level of the conflict between the insurgents of Darfur and the central government.³⁹ The local conflicts and the civil war get connected through the practice that local groups side either with the government or with the insurgents. The reason for siding with one or the other is, as I have outlined in this article, not because people share a joint identity as either Arabs or Africans, but because the respective national and local interests merge in a complementary way. Exceptions to this pattern can be explained by the fact that some groups are not satisfied with their position in their local social arena. The current civil war gives them the chance to get protection or, with governmental support, to secure a better position in the native administration. Both the sedentary and the pastoralist populations suffer from the far-reaching effects of underdevelopment and marginalization. However, local imbalances do exist. Thus a small or weak group looks for support and chooses a strong partner (or accepts or refuses to be recruited). The choice between

³⁶ Abdul-Jalil (2009) shows another example for the way how categories used by the international community work and are remoulded at local level shows concerning the model of power sharing within the DPA and its translation to the local level of northern Darfur (Abdul-Jalil 2009).

³⁷ For more on identity in conflict situations see Schlee 2004 and 2008.

³⁸ For the calculations of the National Congress Party see for example International Crisis Group 2007 (8). An elaborate account of different hypotheses to understand the outbreak and continuation of wars in Sudan is found in de Waal 2007.

³⁹ In addition there is the regional level that is not considered in this chapter. For the regional dynamics, see for example International Crisis Group 2007 (16-20) and Tubiana 2008.

the government and the insurgents is not made arbitrarily, but is influenced by historical and socio-political factors in the local context as the example of Jabal Marra shows. In other areas of Darfur, groups do not actively take part on either side. This attitude can be explained by understanding the fact that involvement in this violence is not worth the benefits of being in alliance with the government or the rebels.⁴⁰

The situation in Sudan and Darfur is complicated. The simplification of the conflict into one between Arabs and Africans creates confusion and ambivalence. Arabs from the centre do not consider themselves to be the same as the Arabs in Darfur, and vice versa.⁴¹ The same applies accordingly for the terms "African" and *zurqa*, which do not carry the same meaning in the north-south relation and the centre-west relation. This confusion has served as an instrument for manipulation, for the benefit of the elites of both groups at the centre, and the insurgents. Revealing some of these confusions might support a better understanding of the needs, motivations and aims of the different actors involved in the conflict, and its ongoing dynamics.

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⁴⁰ The conditions are diverse and thus the problems and interests accordingly so. Other examples are found in Takana 2008 for south Darfur, Young et al 2005 for west and north Darfur, and Young et al 2009 for north Darfur.

⁴¹ Prunier uses „native Arabs“ or „tribal Arabs“ for Arabs from the east and west Sudan, and "real Arabs" for the Arabs of the centre of Sudan, while he puts all in quotation marks. Although Prunier seems to be aware of this, I argue that he does not go far enough as he says for example: "The 'Arabs' of Sudan are not 'Arabs' by blood but semito-cushitic culturally arabized Creoles" (Prunier 2005: 179, footnote 78) See also Mukhtar (2004), Lesch (1998) and Sharkey (2008) for the complexities of Arabization as a postcolonial policy of national integration with the northern riverine Arab identity as template.

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Escalating for Peace in Cyprus: Roads to Peace through Scales of Conflict

Barbara Karatsioli

Abstract

Based on the comparative analysis of the dynamics of conflict and peace in Potamia and Pyla, two sites of Greek and Turkish Cypriot coexistence, this article advances the necessity of a new reading of conflict resolution for the case of Cyprus. Hereby, an anthropologist's contribution based on fieldwork can be fundamental. I propose a different vision of the political and its scales that can help to implement durable peacebuilding on the local level. This understanding of the political shows that the achievement of sustainable peace does not only depend on institutional transformation. Successful peacebuilding needs to be embedded in local forms of the political to ensure that the escalation for peace can be built on the same scales as the escalation of conflict.

Introduction

During my fieldwork in Pyla, a buffer zone village in Cyprus composed of Greek and Turkish Cypriots, it became a habit to play with the children in my neighbourhood. A little Turkish Cypriot boy often came to my open door, stand on the doorstep and wait for me to notice him. "Savash," I would say, "what are you doing there, why don't you come in?" He always responded by approaching me on the run. This banal scene repeated itself for months until one day another boy asked me why I kept calling my young neighbour Savash when his name was, in fact, Barish.

Why indeed did I insist on calling the young boy "War" (Savash) when his name was "Peace" (Barish)? What made me confuse peace with war? Was it because of Barish's particular situation in the village? That is, was it because of the boy's mainland-Turkey origin, which clearly distinguished him – in terms of language, clothes, playing habits, way of life – and rendered his integration amongst Turkish Cypriot boys in the village difficult? Barish was, in many ways, the embodiment of the undesired effects of the war for both Greek and Turkish Cypriots¹ (Hatay 2005 and 2007).

¹ Turkish Cypriots – mainly left wing – have developed since the 1980s a political discourse

What might have also contributed to my error is the fact that after the 1974 war, many Turkish Cypriots named their newborn children Savash, while many others chose Barish. Both names referred directly to the *Turkish* military operation in Cyprus – seen as a peace operation and the salvation of Turkish Cypriots. Last but not least, my mistake could be linked to the opposing visions of the two conflicting parties: What Greek Cypriots call war, Turkish Cypriots call peace. For Greek Cypriots, peace is yet to come, whilst for Turkish Cypriots it has been accomplished with war. Not surprisingly, their antithetical perceptions, Greek Cypriots aiming for justice and Turkish Cypriot for recognition, are mirrored in their views on conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

This article takes the anthropologist's confusion about the continuities and ruptures between conflict, post-conflict, and peace as a point of departure to show that this particular confusion frequently appears in current approaches to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The absence of violence or latent conflicts can easily be confused with peace, whereas mechanisms of regulating violence can be confused with conflict. Arguably, a better distinction between, and understanding of, conflict and peace could lead the way towards a lasting peace. More specifically, a clearer distinction between local forms of violence and forms of regulating and confining violence can benefit peace escalation which I define as the process of enlargement and intensification of peace relations through switching scale levels.

Based on the results of a five-year comparative study I conducted between 2001 and 2006 in Potamia and in Pyla, two places where Greek and Turkish Cypriots still live together after the partition of the island in 1974, I argue that the anthropologist's approach to peace and conflict grounded on fieldwork can provide new perspectives on conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Understanding conflict and violence escalation in Cyprus in the past can help construct the scale of peace escalation today and in the future. This comparative study

against the Turkish presence in Cyprus, be it the Turk settlers, the presence of the Turkish army, or the control of politics by the Turkish government. The Turkish presence points to the failed sovereignty that the Turkish Cypriots had hoped to achieve with the Turkish military intervention in Cyprus. Greek Cypriots denounce this Turkish presence as an act of colonisation that extends the Turkish military occupation in the northern part of the island and creates an additional problem to the resolution of the conflict.

is not an effort to generalise the two cases as models. Rather, it invites a more thorough examination of the scale of mobilisation for either conflict or peace. It aims to show that changes in patterns of conflictual and peaceful relations as well as patterns of regulation on a small scale can contribute to the conception of peace plans.

The aim of the article remains modest. It does not intend to provide new propositions for international interventions on national conflicts, but simply to discuss the problems that the misconceptions of peace and conflict engender for peace resolutions. It sustains that a new understanding of the political and its scales, starting at the local, can reveal the actual problems in peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

The term “peacebuilding”, introduced in peace politics by UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali with the “Agenda for Peace” (1992), refers to the processual character of establishing peace. It is used here mainly to address the efforts of local and international political actors (states, political groups, international organisations) for an institutional transformation to help build sustainable peace. The term also refers to the capacity building of non-governmental organisations to obtain peace. “Peacekeeping” is the particular operation that aims to keep conflict parties at arm’s-length and to make sure that ceasefires and treaties are respected. Progressively, as I redefine the political, I show that peacebuilding should extend to encompass more local forms of the political.

The article is organised in three parts. The first discusses the cognitive displacements fundamental to this perspective: The “political” and its “scales”. The second presents general information on the conflict and conflict resolution in Cyprus and delves into the two case studies. The third discusses the significance of the political as it appears in these case studies for peacebuilding in Cyprus.

Cognitive Displacements: The Political and its Scales

Following Chandler (2005), I maintain that peacebuilding should rely on the “political”. Like Lederach (1998), I argue that peacebuilding retains a narrow technical focus on political transformation. Peacebuilders argue that they penetrate society. I sustain they penetrate only the political and public sphere. Whereas Lederach emphasises the necessity of a larger web of relations for reconciliation, I sustain – based on my personal fieldwork in Cyprus – that the notion

of the political needs to be redefined to go beyond the political sphere of the state.

In current conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts, this notion is generally linked to state-building: The state, the currently imagined shelter for peace, needs to be built upon the classical modernist model of democratic representation to apply to and to integrate the liberal world (Liden/ MacGinty/ Richmond 2009). In general, peace solutions tend to recreate the state in the image of the state that has failed. Problems of state breakdown are thus paradoxically addressed by state reconstruction (Robinson 2007). The construction of peace is synonymous to reinforcing the political sphere, the modernist form of representation. In these terms, peace plans recreate and reinforce previous power positions – frequently the same actors – that introduced and helped escalate the conflict. They do so whether they focus on politics from the “top” (reinforcing the political sphere) or from “below” (reinforcing grassroots politics or the traditional or administrative “leaderships”) on local or national forms of representation. But is this the best solution? Can conflict – and its escalation – be contained this way? Or can one escape the liberal and modernist frame of the politics to implement peace through other forms of the political?

I maintain that the practices of the political are plural and not always state-referential. I avoid associating political action with the state, as doing so would avoid its essentialisation. For the state is only one form of political organisation of the society, dominant but not eternal. The dissociation of the political and the state can reveal forms of action and organisation that extend beyond the temporal and spatial limits of the state. In these terms, the political encompasses both the state and its political forms, not the contrary. Following Clausewitz (1976), I argue that violence is present in the political, subordinated to it, or in other terms, its continuation by other means. I sustain, arguing against Clausewitz, that violence is not intrinsically related to the state nor is political power measured through the control of legitimate violence by the state. I argue against Max Weber’s definition of the political as the domination of one group over others for the purpose of organising society, that the political does not necessarily show relations of domination of one group over the others. The political defines the relations between groups and their organisation, whether it be in terms of representation or of mobilisation, durable or only apparent at times of conflict or peace, expressed in violent or peaceful means, for the purpose of organising society. The political can be traced from both

the top and below, and it is always multi-referential. The political is not expressed or controlled by one group: It is expressed in different locations that I call "locations of the political" (*lieux du politique*, Abèles 1996)² and builds upon different networks (Tilly 1978). Understanding the plurality of the specific and unique "locations of the political" is, I helpful for an understanding of the escalation of conflict and the quest for new ways of implementing lasting peace as these locations reveal particular forms of politics and political organisation that can contribute to both peace and conflict.

The cognitive displacement of the political also demands a new definition of the notion of the "local". I propose that the local should not only be seen as the smallest scale of representation and always in relation to the political sphere of the state. Rather, it should be disconnected from the idea of place as an administrative unit or as the lowest scale of group representation. The local represents above all the smallest scale for structural organisation and for mobilisation. Thus it refers to the fundamental mobilising and de-mobilising units, that is to the process of organisation, containment and regulation of collective action and forms of violence. Following Grossetti (2006), a scale is defined by three dimensions - mass (the aspect of social phenomena that is the number of the unities of action they implicate), generality (context, defined by the different levels of the mass) and time (duration, a composite of action). The change in these three dimensions indicates the change of scale, hence the escalation of peace and conflict. For the purposes of this article, I only consider the local in terms of the organisation of mobilisation and will discuss the escalation of conflict on the local scale.

Since it is dissociated from the administrative, the local can extend to bigger or smaller territorial or collective units. The local is the smaller scale of the organisation of collective action, whether this refers to a region, a village, or a transnational group. It is also the first scale of the containment of violence and should thus be taken into account in the resolution of conflict and peacebuilding. Thus, my analysis should contribute to the understanding of collective action. More specifically, the changes in conflict and peace relations at local levels and the subsequent forms of regulation illustrate alternative scales

² My use of the notion "lieu du politique" differs from that proposed by Abèles in that I consider that these "political localities" are not necessarily in the "places of the state".

– and mechanisms to reinforce or weaken – to implement peace.

Patterns of Peace and Conflict in Cyprus

In 1990 the Republic of Cyprus, representing the Greek Cypriot population, applied for integration into the European Community. One reason for this application was a new perspective on the resolution of the Cyprus conflict, a failed subject of negotiations since 1963 (Diez 2002, Ker-Lindsay 2005, Tocci 2004), in the framework of a larger Europe. The conflict, which set Greek and Turkish Cypriots against each other, has been violent since 1958 when Cyprus was still a British colony (Holland 1993-1994). Although the constitution of the Republic of Cyprus was highly praised in 1960 as the best example of a "bi-communal" state (Crawshaw 1960, Weston-Markides 2001) it took only three years for the republic to break down. In 1963, a constitutional crisis led to the emergence of violence across the island and the retreat of the Turkish Cypriot community from the republic (Kyriakides 1968; Markides 1977)³. Violence spread throughout Cyprus, leading to the displacement of the Turkish Cypriots from mixed areas and the reinforcement of enclaves in the capital, Nicosia (Drousotis: 2005). These enclaves were divided from the rest of the city by the so-called Green Line. UNFICYP (United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus), a peacekeeping force was created and dispatched and has been present in Cyprus ever since (Mirbagheri 1998). It was not until 1968, after being urged to do so by their authorities, that Turkish Cypriots started to return to their villages. This return was linked to the start of negotiations between the two sides (1968-1973), but not to a return of the Turkish Cypriot community to political coexistence in the Republic of Cyprus.

In 1974 after a coup organized by the Greek military government and Greek Cypriots, the Turkish army invaded Cyprus to protect the Turkish Cypriot community (Crawford 2006)⁴.

³ The constitutional crisis was provoked by the proposal for the "13 amendments" of the constitution proposed by President of Cyprus Archbishop Makarios in 1963. The administrative and constitutional reforms proposed were in favour of the Greek Cypriot community. The Turkish Cypriots responded by retiring from the government.

⁴ The Republic of Cyprus is what James Crawford has called an internationalised state: The Treaty of Guaranty of the Constitution signed in 1960 acknowledges the right of Turkey, Greece and England to intervene in

The war ended with the partition of Cyprus and the displacement and separation of the two communities. The Green Line, stretching from the east to the west coast of the island, has separated the Greek Cypriots in the south from Turkish Cypriots in the north ever since. The partition created by the Turkish invasion was reinforced by the constant presence of the Turkish army in the north of Cyprus. The Republic of Cyprus continues to function and is recognized internationally as a republic representing the Greek Cypriot community. The self-declared "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" in 1984 in the northern part of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus has no such international recognition.

Following the partition, the only interaction between the two communities took place at the UN negotiating table. There was no other contact between the two parts of Cyprus. Pyla and Potamia are among the few places where coexistence was not disrupted. Potamia now lies in the territory under the control of the Republic of Cyprus; Pyla is situated in the buffer zone supervised by the United Nations.

The Cyprus conflict has seen a number of peace plans since 1963, including the four resolutions of the Makarios-Denktaş negotiations of 1977. At this time, the two parties agreed amongst other things on an independent, nonaligned, bi-communal federal republic, the freedom of movement and settlement, and a central government. The failures since then are usually linked to the two parties' politics: The Greek Cypriots' demand for justice set against the Turkish Cypriots' demand for recognition (Bahçeli 2004, Bryant 2001).

After numerous failed opportunities, peace plans proposed for Cyprus after 1977 revolve around the same guidelines. They become technocratic, "consociational," overly detailed, and leave little room for failure in the political sphere. Since the 1990s, along with propositions for conflict resolution, the plans have integrated propositions for peacebuilding. Peace plans have sought complex methods of conflict resolution and peacebuilding and tight control of the political by reinforced consociationalism, that is, power-sharing or power-division between the two communities in the state. In this form of government, the rule belongs to the elites, but I argue that this complexity of the political scale aids the

the internal affairs of Cyprus. This is possible only after agreement between the three countries and not by one country alone, as was the case of the Turkish military intervention in 1974.

breakdown of the constitution and the mobilisation of the population.

Since the 1990s, the international community has encouraged civil society initiatives for peace and the construction of bridges between the two communities (Cockburn 2004). Efforts at *rapprochement*, the political movement which aimed to help establish peace from below through contact and communication between the two communities, are praised by international organisations, but find little real support in Cyprus. The Turkish Cypriot leaders' unilateral decision to allow the free circulation of Cypriots in both parts of Cyprus was a first step towards re-establishing contact, but it did not serve as a catalyst for peace. Although inter-communal business has begun to grow, the same is not true for the *rapprochement* movement. In fact, little has been done by local authorities to build peace.

What mechanisms can prevent this conflict mobilisation and establish peacebuilding? Can a focus on other political scales help establish peace? I point here to a smaller scale, to politics from below, as a solution.

Pyla: Where Peace is delocalised Conflict

Many studies on violent conflict focus on territorial forms of violence and group violence (Bax 2000) but seldom try to understand the "territorial absence" of violence. This contributes to the creation and perpetuation of a double misconception concerning the "peacefulness" of the territories in question. First, the absence of violence is interpreted as the absence of conflict. Second, the "peacefulness" of its inhabitants is understood as if they would not engage in violence outside the village. I demonstrate that the absence of violence at a particular locality can entail the "delocalisation" of violence. Further, the conflict, while delocalised in a violent form, can be present in other forms in that particular locality. The study of this phenomenon is a first step to apprehending other forms of the political and how they contribute to the failure of peacebuilding in particular sites.

The study of the scales of conflict and its regulation amongst the inhabitants of Pyla can contribute significantly to this discussion⁵. Its Greek and Turkish Cypriot inhabitants both promote a peaceful image of their village. They apply this image not only to the period beginning after the war when the village, caught up between two armies and composed of a mixed population, was turned into a buffer zone. They claim that Pyla has always been

⁵ On Pyla see also the anthropological work of Yiannis Papadakis (1997, 2000).

peaceful, with no sign of inter-communal violence inside the community. The peacefulness of the village, they say, is not a result of the UN peacekeepers' presence or the village's character as a buffer zone. It is, rather, a structural characteristic of the relations in the village. Studies depicting violence territorially during the period of inter-communal troubles confirm the villagers' contention (Patrick 1976). It appears indeed that the village is peaceful. This does not imply that precautions against violence were never taken. As in other parts of Cyprus, houses were prepared to serve as fortresses, and there were tensions, especially during the periods of inter-communal fighting and war, but they simply did not give way to a violent outbreak.

Interactions inside the village have always had a bi-communal flavour, reinforced by a mechanism of strict reciprocity between the two communities. Villagers keep and have always kept separate coffee-shops, churches or minarets, mayors and councils, and since 1974, their own flags, Greek and Turkish. The dynamics of conflict are certainly present. Tensions arise regarding the celebration of festivities in the village square, the flags, and the uses of public spaces. But when tensions rise locally, the inhabitants tend to resolve problems through negotiations. Reciprocity is always used as a means to resolve issues and preserve peaceful relations. From the beginning of the conflict, to the division of Cyprus, and up to today, the communities cooperate in money-making enterprises.

The village has always been a "peace sanctum." The inhabitants have never allowed violence inside the village and have always prevented attacks. Interestingly, the inhabitants of Pyla practise violence – but only outside the village. In 1963-1964, when intense inter-communal fighting took place in Cyprus, the inhabitants of Pyla were very active in the violence. Turkish Cypriots from Pyla organised in groups and headed to the north where they joined to protect Turkish Cypriots or to fight Greek Cypriots in mixed villages. For their part, some Greek Cypriots headed south to fight in the neighbouring villages or in the city of Larnaca.

During that period, both Greek and Turkish Cypriots participated in and even initiated violence in other villages. Their actions are no secret. On the contrary, they speak openly to fellow villagers about the murders, rapes, and other violent acts they committed. Appalled by each other's participation in violence, villagers always spoke to me of the growing hatred that they always tried to suppress against the other.

They feel the need for revenge. Nevertheless, they confine violence to the exterior of the village, fearing acts of revenge inside the community. This delocalisation of violence helps to preserve a apparently peaceful site, while at the same time it contributes to the escalation of conflict in other locations.

Also in 1974, at the time of the Greek coup and the Turkish military invasion, the inhabitants fought outside the village. At that time, the situation in Pyla was tense with guns shown and threats made. First, the Greek Cypriots tried to control the village during the five days of the coup, July 15–July 20. The Turkish military invasion reversed the situation, with the Turkish Cypriots trying to control the village. It was not until the Turkish army approached Pyla that the inhabitants decided to cooperate to keep all "strangers", the Turkish army and Greek Cypriot refugees alike, outside the village's boundaries. They united in force to preserve the village as a peace sanctum and to maintain power relations between the two communities.

In 1996, 22 years after the partition of the island and the separation of the two communities, villagers found themselves facing each other in violent opposition on the Green Line of Dekelia. Greek Cypriots from Pyla joined a biker rally on the southern side of the Green Line. This rally aimed, like many others after the partition, to prove by crossing the Green Line that Cyprus could not be divided and that the Republic of Cyprus was sovereign over the entire island. Meanwhile, the Turkish army, extreme right-wing organisations, Turks, and Turkish Cypriots were in place to stop the crossing and to remind Greek Cypriots that the northern part of Cyprus was an independent republic. This was one of the few events where Greek and Turkish Cypriots from Pyla came face to face with violence. Greek Cypriots who tried to cross the lines were killed by Turks. The injury of a Greek Cypriot woman from Pyla could not be seen in the same way as past practices of violence towards strangers outside the village – it was a matter that had to be resolved inside the village. The Turkish Cypriots responded by "encouraging" a Turkish resident who participated in the violent events to leave the village.

Returning to my main argument, the study of the absence of violence reveals interesting local political practices. The apparent peacefulness in the village depends on two forms of regulation: On the one hand, the practice of negotiations and reciprocity inside the village and on the other hand, the delocalisation of violence. The peacefulness is, in fact, conflict in disguise – latent protracted

conflict on the scale of the village and violent conflict outside the village.

How can peace interventions be successful in this community? The study of the practices of conflict inside and outside the village shows that conflict is managed locally by delocalisation of violence. Egalitarian reciprocal relations between the two communities tend to confine tensions inside the village. UNFICYP supervision of the village and its integration in the buffer zone after 1974 does not contribute to peacekeeping between the two communities locally, nor does it prevent the inhabitants from confrontations outside the village as the events of 1996 have shown. Their presence in the village is rather focussed on larger peacekeeping efforts between the two parts of the divided island and the two armies of Cyprus.

Can peacebuilding prove locally more effective than peacekeeping? Through UNDP-funded projects, the UN assists, mainly the development of cooperation between the two communities. At the same time, there appear to be no local initiatives to promote peace inside the community or to use the bi-communal character of the village to advocate peace, even though bi-communal groups promoting *rapprochement* chose the village as a meeting point for their activities. Pyla is also the only location in the buffer zone, (and of entire Cyprus) that is accessible for both Greeks and Turkish Cypriots. The choice of the village by the bi-communal groups is thus due to its particular geographical and political situation. The bi-communal character of the village comes in second, even though it is often used as a proof of the possibility of peaceful coexistence. Since the first meetings in the 1990s, *rapprochement* partisans have urged the inhabitants of Pyla to participate, share their experience of peace, and help to extend the peaceful relations on Pyla to the entire island, but they have not managed to mobilise the inhabitants. In fact, there is little to no participation of the village's Greek and Turkish Cypriots in the promotion of bi-communal activities.

To conclude, it appears that the mechanisms of conflict regulation developed locally in Pyla are too strong to allow peacekeeping or peacebuilding interventions from outside to transform local relations structured around deep-rooted conflict. They cannot be easily changed, neither through politics of peace nor through politics of conflict.

Potamia: From Conflict to Peace

Relations between Greek and Turkish Cypriots in Potamia are different from those in Pyla.

Before the conflict, one could hardly distinguish Greek from Turkish Cypriots in their everyday practises. They worked together, frequented the same coffee shops, intermarried, and participated together in political movements. The conflict brought a radical change within the local relations.

Violence started in 1958 with ambushes on members of TMT and EOKA.⁶ According to my informants, this was the first form of violence between members of the two communities. In the beginning, Greek or Turkish Cypriots from Potamia and surrounding villages met in group and waited for their victims, usually members of the EOKA or the TMT, at night. Murders or massacres, as they are called by the inhabitants, were always committed outside the villages. In the second phase, which started with the constitutional crisis of 1963, violence also burst out inside the communities. The fights did not only involve the inhabitants of Potamia; the site of violence was the region, a compound of five villages. When violence started in Potamia, inhabitants of neighbouring villages joined in immediately to reinforce their larger community. Villagers also initiated violence or performed acts of vengeance in other villages. The division into two communities, as well as the violent outbreaks, happened at the regional level. Violence implicated the inhabitants of all villages, but the site of violence shifted from one village to another quite rapidly. It is also significant that violence was not always based on national opposition – it became a means to settle interpersonal disputes.

In all the villages, the inhabitants controlled the entryways from their houses, observed each other's movements, and waited behind closed windows to start firing. The spread of violence was rapid in the region. Turkish Cypriots began to flee, some finding refuge with the Turkish army stationed in the nearby village of Lurujina, or in the city enclaves. When the UNFICYP was created, the peacekeepers helped to evacuate most of the remaining Turkish Cypriots to Lurujina. The region was one of the most important sites of inter-communal fighting during that period (Patrick 1976). The displaced Turkish Cypriots of the

⁶ EOKA, Greek for the National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters, was a Greek Cypriot national military resistance organisation created in 1955. It fought against the British rule in the island and for the union of Cyprus with Greece. TMT, Turkish Resistance Organisation, was a Turkish Cypriot military organisation, created in 1958. Its aim was to defend Turkish Cypriot rights against EOKA demands for Cyprus' union with Greece.

region did not return until 1968 upon the urging of their leaders.

Violence began again in 1974 with the Greek military coup and the Turkish invasion. The same networks were used as before, and violence expanded again at the regional level. At the end of the war, Potamia remained under the control of the Republic of Cyprus. Of the five villages in the region, only Pirroyi came under Turkish control. All its Greek Cypriot inhabitants fled to the territory controlled by the Republic of Cyprus. Some came to live in Potamia, others in Nicosia, while the majority united in Dali, the biggest village of the region. The Turkish Cypriots who found themselves in Potamia after the partition managed to reach the northern part of the island. Few Turkish Cypriots stayed after 1974. Some came back one or two years later along with others who had migrated to England in the 1960s; some started to leave northern Cyprus and to return to the village after the 1990s, but the Turkish Cypriots, the majority in the village before the war, constituted no more than five per cent of the population.

By the end of the 1990s, Potamia, which had so rapidly disintegrated into violence, joined Dali, the neighbouring village, to initiate *rapprochement*. The committees created to organise the meeting with their former co-villagers, of whom the majority was living in the village of Akchayi⁷ after 1974, turned to the UN for help. Communication by telephone or mail between the two parts of Cyprus was difficult, but the UN presence facilitated contact. Meetings were arranged in Pergamos, a park in the British Sovereign Base of Dekelia, a territory that both communities could access. Initially reluctant to engage in bi-communal activities, the other villages of the region followed suit when they saw the organisation's success. The change was radical: The network stretched throughout the villages and the old combatants felt remorse for their actions.

The changes in Potamia correspond to general political tendencies. The villages seem open to new political ideas, whether politics of conflict or peace. The village has a high political party participation. Many inhabitants have been active in left-wing politics since the 1930s; others have been involved in right-wing politics since the 1950s. It is the latter who engaged in conflict and violence from the late 1950s to 1974, even though both left-wing and right-wing villagers participate in the current *rapprochement*. Although party participation can explain the change of ideas and the

spread of new political ideas locally, it does not explain why this region participated in action so quickly and massively. Nor does it explain the scale of violence or the local politics, namely, why a "movement" is both deployed and contained at the level of the region.

Unlike Pyla, Potamia, along with the other villages in the region, engaged in violence locally. Neighbours suddenly turned into violent enemies. Whereas Pyla preserved the peacefulness of the village through the delocalisation of violence, Potamia rendered violence more intense and constant by expanding violence throughout the region. By constantly switching sites of violence, residents had to be constantly ready to welcome violence to their village or to participate in violence nearby. The expansion of violence at the level of the region accelerated and intensified the phenomenon. The networks deploying violence were confined to this particular region, but for the violence to cease, UN intervention was required. The violence only came to a halt with the displacement of Turkish Cypriots.

The case of Potamia is an excellent example of the escalation of peace through the same local networks, at the same scale, and sometimes by the same people who engaged in violence some 30 years earlier. The scale of political mobilisation did not change throughout the years, the region remaining the smallest scale for the mobilisation of both conflict and peace. When violence spread during the 1960s, the division into national communities and the defence of one's community on the regional level was practically immediate. When Dali decided to engage in *rapprochement*, it immediately invited the villages of the region to act in common, this time in the name of the region, not the national community.

This brings me last, but not least, to a major question which can help to understand the meaning of the political and its scales in Potamia more thoroughly. Why and how did the region become the relevant level for the organisation of political action? The answers given to me by my informants were sometimes quite confusing. Some commented that the organisation of violence on the regional level during the 1960s was a result of the "naturalness" of defending one's national community outside one's village. Others claimed it had always been like that, and that relations within the region were tight. Asked about the organisation of the *rapprochement* movement locally, my informants used the same arguments, considering it "natural" that the movement be extended to the level of the region, since the relations were so close. They referred to the past violent actions to argue

⁷ The village bore the name of Argaki before the war. The location is thoroughly analysed in the work of Peter Loizos (1975, 1981).

that if violence were deployed at this level so should peace. The *rapprochement* movement had to correct the mistakes of the past.

It was not until I started to analyse past mobilisations that I understood how the region had become the pertinent level of political action. Even in the early 1920 and 1930s, inhabitants engaged in the class struggle locally, at the level of the region. The study of this mobilisation has permitted me to see that the century-long existence of a *çiftlik*, a feudal private estate and a centre for work for the surrounding villages as late as the 1940s, was the main reason why the villages organised in collective action. The economic and social life of the inhabitants of this region revolved around the *çiftlik* for centuries. The collapse of the feudal economy (along with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire) the rise of a capitalist economy (along with British colonialism) gave way to the first mobilisations of the inhabitants on a regional level. The aims of political action may change from politics of conflict to politics of peace, but action is always deployed on a regional level. Interpersonal relations facilitate ever-changing group identifications (as enemies or as friends, as national or social enemies, etc).

Once conflict arises, it can escalate and divide the region very easily. Peacekeeping was necessary in 1963, as no mechanisms of regulation seemed to exist. But has it been successful? To stop violence, it was necessary to separate the two communities and displace the Turkish Cypriots. But now, 30 years later, local peacebuilding efforts have emerged to remedy or regulate the violence of the past on the local level.

Considering other Politics and Scales for Peacebuilding

The comparison of the cases of Pyla and Potamia is of particular interest as it allows a new understanding of the political and of the local. The two cases point to the existence of different local organisations of the political. The organisation of the political, the stretch and the rise of the common identity unifying the structure, is different during periods of mobilisation for peace and conflict and in peaceful periods. The political, though constructed on local practices, motivations and power relations, is not independent from the national political process. The political does not develop outside the political system nor does it represent the subaltern political power. On the contrary, it bears the marks of the different political systems (past and present), including those of the state as much as that of the local organisation of relations. It is the production of

the articulation between local and national forces of the political. Influenced by national politics, it is shaped by local politics. In other terms, the local is the smaller scale in which the action is pertinent. The local is also the limit-scale of a particular sense of the political and of violence and of its mechanisms for regulation.

The dichotomous cases of Potamia and Pyla shed light on the organisation of networks marking the specific scales of peace and conflict. Pyla is an excellent example for the continuities and ruptures between conflict, post-conflict, and peace. The existence of what is falsely regarded as "peace" in the village depends on two practices to regulate tensions: Negotiations to avoid escalation of conflict inside the village and violence outside the village. The first mechanism is practised constantly both through the periods of peace, of inter-communal violence (1963-1974), and of protracted non-violent conflict (1974-). The second mechanism, the delocalisation of violence, is activated and re-activated in periods of violence. These two mechanisms show not only the politics of the regulation of (non-)violence inside the village, but also the politics violence outside the village. At this level, the village is the scale of the conflict contained. The structural relations of the village's inhabitants can help to clarify these practices of the political and to clarify confusions about the continuities and ruptures between conflict, post-conflict, and peace. I sustain that identities are constructed in an oppositional mode, the enmity being the structural characteristic of a common local identity. The relations between the members of the two communities seem to have been, for at least the last century, always inter-communal and never inter-individual. It is enmity that defines the relations between the inhabitants. Negotiations and reciprocity are basic local political processes allowing for enmity to be expressed and regulated internally. They allow for this enmity to be expressed in violent terms only outside the village, and always at periods of general mobilisation in accordance to political changes in the relations between the two communities. These practices, in and outside the village, are difficult to change. Peace is difficult to implement and to practice following the steps to the escalation and of the containment of conflict locally. The regulatory mechanism that allows conflict to be contained and avoided does not allow for peace to install.

As for Potamia, judging the fact that relations have always been inter-individual and intermarriage and change of religion have always been possible, one would expect that the conflict could not affect local relations. But

it has – and to such a degree that the apparently only way to halt violence was to displace one of the communities. Violence became a means to defend the new identities as it became a means to settle local interpersonal differences. The desire for reconciliation since the 1990s mirrors the intensity of the conflict in the 1960s and 1970s (Boulding: 1962). Thirty years later, Potamia promotes peace. The political can be expressed through practices of violence and of reconciliation. The absence of mechanism of regulation in the villages of the region makes it easy for new identities to expand locally. High party participation amongst the inhabitants of the region helps to channel new identities and new political ideas, but the political is at the end structured through these local structural relations to become real local politics. The close relations between the inhabitants of all five villages make it even easier for networks to unfold in the region and cross-cut various groups. National and class identities can divide, unite, or re-unite the region's inhabitants. Here the political is an integral part of the everyday. Local relations and categories are revisited when political ideas change.

UN Peacekeeping interventions in Potamia proved to be efficient. The UN Peacekeepers halted violence in the region by transferring the Turkish Cypriot community to Turkish enclaves. The decision of the Turkish Cypriots to return to their village was triggered by their own authorities, as was the decision of Greek Cypriots to accept them without making trouble. Their decision to fight in 1974 depended on the political groups to which they belonged, and the Turkish Cypriots' decision to leave the village was encouraged by their authorities. However, it seems that the UN supervision of Pyla after 1974 did not have a particular role on the peacebuilding process inside the village other than to reinforce economic cooperation. If the violence has temporarily ceased, it is due to the division of the island and the new form of protracted conflict. As shown by the 1996 events, the inhabitants can quickly opt for violent interaction.

These cases challenge the actual efforts for peacebuilding as it is promoted through international organisations by bringing in a new dimension of the political that can reinforce the peace process. The understanding of these local definitions of the political can prove helpful and help prevent a potential breakdown of the state. The reinforcement of the institutions of the state and the consociational form of organisation of relations inside a new state for Cyprus can easily provoke the same problems as in 1963. The understanding of

other forms of the political is thus important in that it helps penetrate and transform the structural relations on the local level. This intervention can be embedded in the actual political forms of the local. Unless this effort is made, mobilisation can happen very quickly and is difficult to be contained on the local level.

At the same time, the understanding of these particular meanings of the political and its scales can benefit the state. They can help to develop and transform this political institution through the process of peacebuilding. The state, as it is the most representative institution, controls the means to the production of politics. This article does not suggest particular ways by which these perceptions of the political and of the local should be integrated into peace plans. It suggests that the situations observed by anthropologists, should be considered to implement peace successfully. The experience of conflict and peace mobilisation in particular areas can contribute to a better understanding of the problems and to a new peacebuilding.

Last but not least, this understanding does not eliminate the confusion about continuities and ruptures between conflict, post-conflict, and peace. Is the structural enmity observed amongst Greek and Turkish Cypriots in Pyla peace, or is it conflict? Is this a consociational form of organising relations from below or is it a form of institutionalised conflict? The continuities and ruptures observed at the two localities point to two different understandings of peace. They do not close the discussion on these continuities and ruptures, but open a new one on the feasibility of peacebuilding and the actual meaning of peace.

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Peace Center Schlaining

The Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR) was founded in September 1982 as an independent, non-profit and non-partisan organization. The ASPR aims to contribute to the promotion of peace and peaceful conflict resolution and to the dissemination of practical ideas for peace, including its developmental and environmental aspects. In order to carry out these tasks, the ASPR conducts and evaluates research in line with its objectives, engages in training and education, and conducts scientific courses.

It also publishes several periodicals (Dialog, Friedensforum, Working Papers, SAFRAN) dealing with peace issues. Several major conferences are organised each year, including the summer academy and an annual international meeting of peace researchers on "The State of Peace".

ASPR was the founder of the European University Center for Peace Studies. A European Peace Museum in Schlaining Castle has been established. In order to help to facilitate ASPR activities, ASPR set up a unique infrastructure including the Peace Library in a former synagogue, a Conference Center in Schlaining Castle, the Hotel Burg Schlaining, and Haus International, which is a student hostel. For these and other efforts, the ASPR was awarded the UN "Peace Messenger" status in 1987, and, together with the EPU, the UNESCO-Price for Peace Education 1995.

Peace and conflict have long been among the research foci of Social Anthropologists. Not the end of history, but changes in the world order since the break down of the Soviet Union, (re)emerging frozen conflicts and identity politics, new markets of violence, changing means of warfare and cooperation have led anthropologists to return to well-known sites under unknown conditions, to link viable theories to new social realities, and to explore other research dimensions than before. Among the challenges anthropologists face is how to make sense of these dimensions and how to best communicate them.

SAFRAN 07 brings together selected contributions to the 2nd Bi-Annual PACSA Meeting at the ASPR in 2009 that relate to continuities and ruptures between conflict, post-conflict, and peace in different ways. All based on intensive and most recent fieldwork in three culturally and geographically distinct conflict zones - El Salvador, Sudan, and Cyprus - this work in progress manages to inspire anthropologists and non-anthropologists in thinking about the categories of peace, conflict, and identity.

With contributions by Barbara Karatsioli, Ainhoa Montoya and Regine Penitsch.

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