Chapter 27
Marketing for Conflict Transformation:
The Case of Peace Laboratories in Colombia

Fred R. van Sluijs
Independent Researcher, Costa Rica

Marinus C. Gisolf
Tourism Theories Asesores, Costa Rica

Arno Ambrosius
Independent Researcher, Costa Rica

ABSTRACT

When in 2016 the Colombian peace agreement was signed between the FARC-EP and the Colombian government, the hope was created to finish a chapter of cruel internal violence leaving close to 300,000 deaths in 50 years of conflict. The peace process, which is still continuing, incorporated a wide range of visions, approaches, political stands, gender issues on poverty in all its destructive dynamics. The European Union's decision at the beginning of the 21st century to help stimulate a peace process from the bottom upwards through so-called peace laboratories is analyzed, and their development, their success, and their limitations are followed in an attempt to shed light on the triangular relationship between people in conflict, peace, and the mechanisms that can connect the two.

INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this chapter is to show, that conflict and peace can be paralleled to each other, leading to an increased understanding of their dimensions, conditions and nature. The change of a situation of armed conflict towards more peaceful environments employs a series of mechanisms, that incorporates stakeholders on all levels and exercises a binding function towards a common goal: to achieve the type

of change that leads to a growing understanding of the required readjustments of political, institutional and socio-economic structures of a society in a just and inclusive manner. The existing contradiction is that peace can become an instrument, that for some may mean a political or socio-economic menace and in practice may mean changes in social and political power relationships. Peace may be regarded as a situation or state of (political) being, but peace as an ever changing condition in social and political life can not only be a tool to reach sustainability, but also a much needed condition to combat corruption, drugs trafficking and outside influences that may threaten the basic fabric of a given society.

First a theoretical framework will be presented, starting out from International Relations theories and then narrowing down the scope to the theory of conflict studies, clearing the grounds for the focal point of this chapter: marketing peace as an essential mechanism of a conflict transformation process and highlighted by a specific case study of the Laboratories of Peace developed in Colombia during the last two decades. When peace negotiations take place, what is negotiated are the conditions for peace and although peace is still considered to mean an absence of violence and conflict, a wider social interpretation of the term shows a more versatile face of peace as being a generator of socio-economic conditions leading to social, economic and environmental sustainability. The question that this chapter intends to answer is that negotiating peace in this wider sense challenges a whole range of (historically) established power relations, converting peace into an instrument. Can peace itself be used as a means for non-violent conflict resolution? To use peace as an instrument for non-violent conflict resolution formed an innovative initiative, undertaken by the European Union in Colombia as will be explained further on.

Two Schools of International Relations

Within the context of this book it is not considered necessary to indulge in extensive descriptions of the phenomenon of peace. For this particular book chapter what is of direct interest is, that peace is not so much a static concept referring to an unchangeable condition, but rather it is flexible, imperfect and ever changing to the extent that there are as many types and definitions of peace as there are cultures (Salazar, 2006). In this sense it can be argued that peace is best defined in terms of its presence rather than absence (Haessly (2010), and that peace as presence needs to be manifested in all the daily activities of an individual's personal, professional and political life. Another distinction that has been proposed is between positive peace relating directly to its presence on all levels of social life and on the other hand a negative peace that only describes a situation of absence of violence and conflict, whereby Moufakkir and Kelly (2010) add, that negative peace may involve the presence of peacelessness: a situation in which, while there is no violence, there is discord between and within communities and conflict is likely to emerge. When people live under conditions of continuing violence, conflict or the pressure of peacelessness it seems natural that at first people seek conditions of absence of violence or a negative peace as stepping stone to social conditions that guarantee a life not only without any threats, but more than anything else that creates social and economic justice and balances of gender, ownership and power.

For long the striving for peace has been an intensive research object for International Relations scholars, who generally accept the two major divisions that persists between realists and the idealists of different sorts (Holsti, 1985). The realist perspective views conflict as a natural part of the human experience and feels that humans will never outgrow this behaviour (Webster & Stanislav, 2014). At best, realists expect humans to use diplomacy and statecraft in ways to limit conflict. Balance of power is a typical approach associated with realist thinking, whereby states either use or should use their war

Related Content

4-Helix Entrepreneurial Ecosystems: Poverty and Violence
Jose Manuel Saiz-Alvarez (2023). *Research Anthology on Modern Violence and Its Impact on Society (pp. 600-617).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/4-helix-entrepreneurial-ecosystems/311289

Teen Dating Violence Prevention Based on an Education for Intercultural and Critical Citizenship
Encarnación Soriano Ayala, Verónica C. Calaand Rachida Dalouh (2023). *Research Anthology on Modern Violence and Its Impact on Society (pp. 238-253).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/teen-dating-violence-prevention-based-on-an-education-for-intercultural-and-critical-citizenship/311267

Evaluating Emotional Stability as a Predictor of Chinese MTI Students' Interpreter Aptitude
Jiang Fengxia (2016). *Psychology and Mental Health: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (pp. 862-876).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/evaluating-emotional-stability-predictor-chinese/153428

Hacking Well-Being: Can Serious Games Fit Positive Technology Framework?
Luca Argenton, Federica Pallavicini, Gabriele Barone, Andrea Zini, Giacomo Garcea, Andrea Zanacchiand Fabrizia Mantovani (2016). *Integrating Technology in Positive Psychology Practice (pp. 230-246).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/hacking-well-being/146909

Collaborative Peace Education in Contexts of Sociopolitical Violence
Irene Giovanniand Daniel Fernando Jaramillo (2023). *Research Anthology on Modern Violence and Its Impact on Society (pp. 427-445).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/collaborative-peace-education-in-contexts-of-sociopolitical-violence/311279