

Attachment inserted November 1, 2013:

The fieldwork for this dissertation was done between November 2007 and March 2009, and unless otherwise specified the conditions mentioned here refer to that time period. The situation in Colombia has changed considerably since then, as have the operating procedures of many of these organizations. The reader is asked not to assume that the specifics mentioned about these organizations are still in effect today.

Nevertheless, errors were made in the description of the work of some organizations and to ensure the safety of the work today, at their request blackouts were made to this online version to correct specifics about their work that they felt could affect their reputation in ways that would put their work in jeopardy.

The following blackouts were made:

Chapter 6: assessments as to the relative professionalism of each group were deleted throughout.

Page 164: details about the training, length of stay, and pay of Red accompaniers was deleted.

Page 170: details about the number of PASC accompaniers, their length of service, and their mode of operation have been deleted.

Page 173: mention of changes in IPO was deleted.

Page 173: reference to pay, length of stay, director, and national origins of IPO volunteers was deleted

Page 173: reference to a director, and to political affiliations of IPO volunteers was deleted.

Page 175: mention of groups that did not wear uniforms was deleted.

Page 176: reference to IPO volunteers paying their way was deleted.

Page 177 and 190: mention of the legal status of companions in Colombia was deleted.

Page 178 and 184-5: mention of disagreements between accompaniment organizations related to levels of professionalism and understandings of non-partisanship was deleted.

Page 187: mention of groups that did not have such an explicit policy was deleted.

Page 188: mention of a group doing work in the fields was deleted.

Page 199: mention and analysis of the logos of the Red and PASC was deleted.

Page 202: the word significant was deleted.

Page 204-5: mention of an incident where the protocol of an organization was analyzed as less professional was deleted.

Page 251: mention of companions being deported was deleted.

Page 269: the location of an incident was deleted.

Page 289: reference to the interactions with the army was deleted.

Page 291-2: mention of PASC discussions about their understandings of privilege was deleted.

Page 297: mention of the nature of the use of PASC uniforms was deleted.

The organization PASC asked that the following clarifications be made about their work: PASC companions receive a formal three-month training that involves four workbooks of reading and assignments, three intensive weekends, and personalized follow-up. That training process is described at <http://www.pasc.ca/en/content/accompaniment#2.3>. The Spanish skill level of all potential volunteers is assessed before training. PASC companions stay in Colombia for a minimum of three months. PASC wears uniforms or not depending on the requests of those they are accompanying. The English version of the current PASC logo, adopted in 2008, is shown in figure A below, and, like others, is also in the shape of an eye. PASC companions sometimes

participate in some of the events of those they accompany as a part of an exchange of ideas between movements, and when events are more internal and that is not appropriate they may observe, or not participate in any way. The list in table 7 of organizations that PASC directly accompanied in 2010 is missing the following: four field teams of the *Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz Ecumenical* (Commission for Justice and Peace) in the regions of Bajo Atrato, Cauca, Valle, and Putumayo, *Comité de solidaridad con los presos políticos, nacional* (the National Committee in Solidarity with Political Prisoners), FEDEAGROMISBOL, *Federacion Agrominera del Sur de Bolivar* (Federation of small miners/farmers in the Southern part of the Department of Bolivar), and CISCA, *Comité de Integración Social* (Committee for Social Integration) in Catatumbo, Norte de Santander. The mentioned communities should be listed as the communities of the ‘Consejo Mayor’ (high council) in the region of Bajo Atrato, Chocó. The larger list of organizations that they currently accompany is available on their site, www.pasc.ca. PASC regularly meets with various Colombian authorities and the Canadian embassy.

From 2009 through 2012 PASC established the project, “Our Solidarity: a territory to decolonize”, to deepen their discussions and understandings. They held workshops on this topic with more than 50 organizations. The project culminated in the publication of a book on the topic, discussing their experience in depth, as well as a workbook for facilitators with 12 activities for discussing these issues. These are available at decolo.pasc.ca. They are currently in French, but are in the process of being translated into Spanish and English.



figure A: current PASC logo

IPO asked that the following clarifications be made about their work: IPO provided stipends to volunteers who stayed for six months or longer, generally around \$250 USD a month after their third month. Volunteers for 3 months or longer were compensated for almost all of their expenses in the field but did not receive a stipend. Volunteers for less than 3 months covered all of their own expenses. All volunteers were asked to give a one-time contribution of about \$50 USD for housing. Catalonia and Denmark were the nodes that sent the most volunteers. Volunteers had to attend a weekend-long training in Europe to be considered. Once they arrived in Colombia they had 3-5 days of intensive training, in addition to being in a sort of "apprentice" mode in the field for at least their first 3 accompaniments. IPO always used photo identification cards in the field. They were printed in house, and had the name of the organization, a photo of the volunteer, a signature from the legal representative of the organization, the NIT of the organization (equivalent to 501c3 status in the US), and other information. They were generally proactive about presenting these to authorities in the field.

Witness for Peace notes that some of the details of their early history around the world in chapter two are inexact. For a more complete and accurate history see my forthcoming article in the

Annals of the Association of American Geographers, entitled *The place(s) of international protective accompaniment: the travels of a peace tactic*.

The organization Red de Hermandad asked that the following clarifications be made about their work: The Network of Brotherhood and Solidarity with Colombia - RedHer - is a space for organizing amongst independent Colombian and international organizations and collectives who share common principles of international political solidarity. The RedHer facilitates mutual aid and enrichment of resistance experiences for groups from Europe, North America, Argentina, and Colombia. RedHer is committed to a negotiated political solution to the social, armed conflict and operates on two thematic axes: Fighting against impunity and repression, and defending natural resources, with the goal of complete justice and the respect of sovereignty and culture. The Red Europea (the name stayed though organizations from the Americas joined later) is composed of committees, collectives and organizations of local activists, and Colombian migrants. They organize tours of Colombian social movement spokespersons in their country to raise awareness of the Colombian conflict as a way to denounce systemic and global injustice. Each group has their own campaigns and they coordinate for common actions or campaigns. Examples of the initiatives implemented by REDHER in the past include: an International Opinion Tribunal in Barrancabermeja, Montreal and Toronto (1999); Public Popular Hearing on Coca Cola in Atlanta, Brussels, and Bogota (2002); Campaign against Nestlé (since 2003); the Colombian chapter of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal process (2005-2008); and the international campaign against BP (since 2005).

MAKING SPACE FOR PEACE:
INTERNATIONAL ACCOMPANIMENT IN COLOMBIA (2007-2009)

by
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Abstract

International protective accompaniment is a strategy used in conflict zones which puts people who are less at risk literally next to people under threat because of their work for peace and justice. Thousands of human rights workers, grassroots organizations, and communities have been protected in this way. The term accompaniment was first used for this work by Peace Brigades International (PBI), which sent the first international team to Guatemala in 1983. There are now international accompaniers working with 24 organizations in ten countries. Colombia is the country with the largest number of international groups, with twelve. Accompaniment in Colombia is widely used to protect small farmers resisting or returning from being displaced by paramilitaries tied to large agribusiness. These campesinos are organized in what are often called ‘peace communities’.

I spent 15 months in Colombia (2007 – 2009) holding ongoing conversations with accompaniers about how accompaniment works, or to use Peace Brigades’ slogan, how it ‘makes space for peace.’ Paradoxically accompaniers use the fact that their lives ‘count’ more (because of passport/economic/racial privilege), to build a world where everyone’s lives ‘count’, where it matters when a small farmer is killed in the Colombian jungle. I was hoping that accompaniment was using privilege in such a way that it could ‘use it up’, that is, that it could dismantle the systems that make some lives count more. I did not find that, but I argue that accompaniment can wear down the structures that grant privilege unequally – but it can also reinforce those, depending on how it is done. It is easier for accompaniers to fall into colonial patterns that make some lives worth more than others when they understand themselves as nonpartisan civilian peacekeepers, rather than emphasizing building and activating chains of solidarity to make accompaniment work. It is also easier to fall into those traps when accompaniers see space as abstract and elide how race and other privileges shape their work. To change structures of domination, accompaniment needs not only to leverage difference, but also simultaneously engage in building connections across difference and distance, through chains of solidarity.

Preface

Ethics approval for this research was received from the University of British Columbia's Behavioural Research Ethics Board on September 12, 2007, Certificate number H07-01916.

A version of the discussion of geopolitics in Chapter 9, the conclusion, has been published as

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List of Abbreviations

AUC	<i>Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia</i> , United Self-defense Forces of Colombia
BACRIM	<i>bandas criminales</i> , criminal gangs
BTS	Maritimes Breaking the Silence
Carea	<i>Cadena para un Retorno Acompañado</i> , Chain for an Accompanied Return
CG	Collectif Guatemala
CJ	Cry for Justice Coalition
CPT	Christian Peacemaker Teams
EAPPI	Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel
ELN	<i>Ejercito de Liberación Nacional</i> – National Liberation Army
FARC	<i>Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia</i> - Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
FOR	Fellowship of Reconciliation
GSN	Guatemala Solidarity Network
IAP	International Action for Peace
ICW	International Checkpoint Watch
IPO	International Peace Observatory

IPT	Iraq Peace Teams
ISM	International Solidarity Movement
IWPS	International Women's Peace Service
MPT	Michigan Peace Teams
MW	Mideast Witness
NISGUA	Network in Solidarity with Guatemala
NP	Nonviolent Peaceforce
OD	Operation Dove
PAGQ	<i>Projet Accompagnement Guatemala - Quebec</i>
PASC	<i>Projet Accompagnement Solidarite Colombia</i>
PBI	Peace Brigades International
PPF	Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
PW	Peace Watch
Quixote	Quixote Center
Red	<i>Red de Hermandad y Solidaridad - Solidarity and Sistering Network</i>
SiPaz	International Service for Peace
SweFOR	Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation
Voices	Voices in the Wilderness
WFP	Witness for Peace

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dedicated to Lahe, Terry and Ingrid

Chapter 1: Introduction

'Interestingly, geography ... can actually make a serious claim to be the 'queen of the peace sciences' — not out of our innocence, but rather out of our guilt. It is the quintessential war science.'

– William Bunge¹

Geography has been internationally associated with war and violence since its inception. Geographers have long offered advice to 'the prince', and justification to the 'Great Powers' for their colonial exploits.² It is only recently that this connection between geography and war has received critical attention, both in historiography of the discipline and the way in which geographical knowledge is intimately involved in the conduct of war, from geopolitics through to tactics.³

Given that the discipline of geography has long been used for and tied to war, it might seem odd to turn to it to as a way to study peacebuilding. But the discipline of geography is not, as O Tuathail puts it, "beholden to battlefields" - even though it has been shaped

¹ William Bunge, *Nuclear War Atlas*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Blackwell Publishers, 1988).

² Anne Godlewska and Neil Smith, *Geography and Empire* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1994); see Felix Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2001).

³ D. R. Stoddart, "Geography and War:: The 'New Geography' and the 'New Army' in England, 1899-1914," *Political Geography* 11, no. 1 (1992): 87–99; M. Heffernan, "Geography, Cartography and Military Intelligence: The Royal Geographical Society and the First World War," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 21, no. 3 (1996): 504–533; Trevor Barnes and Matthew Farish, "Between Regions: Science, Militarism, and American Geography from World War to Cold War," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 96, no. 4 (December 2006): 807–826, doi:10.1111/j.1467-8306.2006.00516.x; Gearóid Ó Tuathail, "Battlefield," in *Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Human Geography*, ed. John Agnew and David Livingstone (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).

by them.⁴ I run the risks of using the ‘master’s tool’ of geography to think about peacemaking because peace is inherently spatial.⁵ Peace is shaped by the space in which it is made, as it too shapes that space. It makes a difference if peace is made through a network, a hierarchy, or in closed rooms. If we imagine peace as something delivered by men in suits in a negotiation room, we may not see a role for ourselves to play.

Over the years there have been various calls for geographers to do more work on peace.⁶ The argument has been taken up again recently, with a new twist. Megoran has argued that critical geopolitics has been indirectly supporting just war theory, and called for geographers to commit to nonviolence.⁷ He later called for geographers to study ways to promote peace, or what he calls ‘pacific geopolitics’.⁸ Most recently he has called for geographers not simply to study but to commit to building peace.⁹ Inwood and Tyner have also recently issued another aspirational call for geographers to commit to a ‘pro-peace agenda’ (which according to them is “not necessarily peaceful”). They call for

⁴ Ó Tuathail, “Battlefield,” 478.

⁵ “The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house” Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Darlinghurst, New South Wales, Australia: Crossing Press, 2007).

⁶ For an overview of works in geography on peace, see Virginie Mamadouh, “Geography and War, Geographers and Peace,” *The Geography of War and Peace: From Death Camps to Diplomats* (2005): 26–60.

⁷ Nick Megoran, “Militarism, Realism, Just War, or Nonviolence? Critical Geopolitics and the Problem of Normativity,” *Geopolitics* 13, no. 3 (2008): 473–497.

⁸ Nick Megoran, “Towards a Geography of Peace: Pacific Geopolitics and Evangelical Christian Crusade Apologies,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 35, no. 3 (2010): 382–398. These calls have generally been more aspirational than an analysis of peacebuilding, but in this article Megoran looked at the Reconciliation Walk of Christians apologizing for the crusades.

⁹ Nick Megoran, “War and Peace? An Agenda for Peace Research and Practice in Geography,” *Political Geography* 30, no. 4 (May 2011): 178–189, doi:10.1016/j.polgeo.2010.12.003; My commentary on that article was published as Sara Koopman, “Let’s Take Peace to Pieces,” *Political Geography* 30, no. 4 (May 2011): 193–194, doi:10.1016/j.polgeo.2011.04.013.

geographers to commit to a pro-peace pedagogy that challenges narratives that legitimate killing and inequality and discusses social injustices.¹⁰

There are many ways to work for peace, and these include critiques of the workings of war, as well as research, and pedagogy, on rights and justice. Geographers do not need to put peace front and center in their work, much less commit to pacificism - or even activism, to be building peace. Indeed studying peace does not necessarily build it. In the past 25 years there have been three edited collections of geographies of war and peace. These collections have generally not defined peace and have implied that peace is simply the absence of war.¹¹ This pattern was repeated by the recent special issue on Geographies of Peace and Armed Conflict of the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*.¹² This sort of vague definition of peace can lead to a misuse of 'peace' to promote deeply conservative views and an entrenchment of unequal global power relations.

'Peace' as an abstract is widely used to justify war. It is also often used to promote a neoliberal agenda that links peace to a certain form of capitalist development (i.e. a 'liberal peace'). Not defining peace makes it susceptible to this misuse. Goetschel and

¹⁰ Joshua Inwood and James Tyner, "Geography's Pro-Peace Agenda: An Unfinished Project," *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 10, no. 3 (January 2012): 446, 449, 451.

¹¹ David Pepper and Alan Jenkins, *The Geography of Peace and War* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1985); Nurit Kliot and Stanley Waterman, *The Political Geography of Conflict and Peace* (London: Belhaven Press, 1991); Colin Flint, *The Geography of War and Peace: From Death Camps to Diplomats / Edited by Colin Flint*. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

¹² 99: 5, December 2009, edited by Audrey Kobayashi

Hagman argue for re-politicizing the term by facing the “thorny question of what peace means for different social groups in a particular place and time.”¹³ To unsettle peace by exposing how it is both portrayed as well as practiced differently is not just an intellectual exercise but an integral part of creating peace itself. Peace is always situated – it is made in some *way* but also some *where* for some *people*. Peace is not the same everywhere anymore than war is. When peace is portrayed as a mythical singular it can become so abstract as to seem unobtainable. Or it can become so unspecified that it is open to manipulation by politicians and attached to violent situations of pacification. Peace is located and spatial, practical and material – and as such, necessarily plural. Peace is not a static thing, nor an endpoint, but a socio-spatial relation that is always made and made again.¹⁴

There are two ways forward as a critical geographer. One is rigorous engagement with the philosophical, political, and ethical critiques of the idea of a liberal peace. The second is a sustained engagement with substantive practices of peacebuilding and peacekeeping. The advantage of doing the latter is that unlike the first it is more sensitive to the different forms that peace takes in different places, and to that extent recognizes multiple geographies and spaces for peace(s) – even though much of this work to date has focused on formalized practices of peacekeeping through military operations and their

¹³ Laurent Goetschel and Tobias Hagmann, “Civilian Peacebuilding: Peace by Bureaucratic Means?,” *Conflict, Security & Development* 9, no. 1 (2009): 64, doi:10.1080/14678800802704911.

¹⁴ John Agnew, “Killing for Cause? Geographies of War and Peace,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 99, no. 5 (2009): 1054 – 1059.

intersection with critical discourses on security and development.¹⁵ There has been little critical engagement, in or out of geography, with the quotidian nonmilitarized practices of peacebuilding, at least framed as such.¹⁶

This dissertation takes the second path and looks at peacebuilding practices as enacted and understood by international companions in Colombia. My aim in doing this research was to understand how accompaniment ‘works’ (i.e., how it is that it provides protection for and strengthens local work for peace) and the role that privilege plays in that. My hope was to offer insights that might help companions to both do their work more effectively and use privilege with more clarity. Let me begin by clarifying what I mean by accompaniment.

Defining international protective accompaniment

The term *acompañamiento* (accompaniment) is commonly used by Colombians to refer to all sorts of ‘walking with.’ It is used to refer to walking to the store with a friend,

¹⁵ Paul Higate and Marsha Henry, *Insecure Spaces: Peacekeeping in Liberia, Kosovo and Haiti* (London: Zed Books, 2009); Paul Higate, “Peacekeepers, Masculinities, and Sexual Exploitation,” *Men and Masculinities* 10, no. 1 (July 1, 2007): 99–119, doi:10.1177/1097184X06291896; Mark Duffield, *Development, Security and Unending War* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2007); Mark R. Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security* (London: Zed Books, 2001); Michael Dillon and Julian Reid, *The Liberal Way of War: Killing to Make Life Live*, New edition (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009); Oliver P. Richmond, *The Transformation of Peace* (Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Sherene H. Razack, *Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping, and the New Imperialism* (Toronto, ON, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

¹⁶ Though see Jenna M Loyd, “‘Peace Is Our Only Shelter’: Questioning Domesticities of Militarization and White Privilege,” *Antipode* 43, no. 3 (June 1, 2011): 845–873, doi:10.1111/j.1467-8330.2010.00822.x; Jenna M Loyd, “‘War Is Not Healthy for Children and Other Living Things,’” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* (2009), doi:10.1068/d12107.

visiting a remote rural community in a hot conflict zone, and supporting that community from afar by making phone calls when they are under threat. Catholic missions visit remote communities, often on a week-long horse or canoe ride through an area, to offer mass, baptisms and weddings - and this too is called *acompañamiento*. Psychologists may go to offer workshops on healing from trauma, and this is also called *acompañamiento*.

What are called missions (or sometimes *commissions*) of human rights workers visit remote communities in groups to collect testimony about abuses for legal claims and this as well is called *acompañamiento*.¹⁷ This use of the term accompaniment is not limited to Colombia. In one of the only articles in geography to use the term accompaniment Pratt uses the term to describe this sort of short term one time trip in the Philippines, where local human rights workers were able to go and collect testimony because of the presence of internationals that had come on a short trip for that purpose.¹⁸ Similarly in Colombia human rights workers are often only able to make these trips with an international accompanier along. In this case it is often said that an accompanier (international) is accompanying the accompanier (the Colombian human rights worker).

The word accompany comes from the root ‘companion’, which can mean mate, friend, or intimate partner. Companion is translated into Spanish as *compañero*, but that word is broader, as it can mean comrade in struggle, work colleague, or intimate companion. In

¹⁷ When groups of internationals go to conflict zones for short term visits in Colombia these are generally in English called “delegations”.

¹⁸ G. Pratt, “International Accompaniment and Witnessing State Violence in the Philippines,” *Antipode* 40, no. 5 (2008): 751–779.

English we are less likely to say “I’ll accompany you” and more likely to say “I’ll keep you company.” Yet in the Anglo world we are also less likely to do this – not only for running errands but, for example, after someone has lost a loved one we are more likely to think they will want time alone than making sure they always have someone keeping them company. In this dissertation I am focusing on those who do unarmed accompaniment as civilians which aims to provide some protection to an unarmed civilian¹⁹ person, organization or community at risk because of their work for peace and justice - in a country that is not the accompaniers’ own, and for medium- to long-term periods, that is, from three months to several years. I examine organizations that do a broad range of activities that they call accompaniment, from living full time in a community to visiting an organization intermittently.

Other terms for protective accompaniment

Other terms that are also used for what I am calling here protective accompaniment are: civilian peacekeeping, third-party nonviolent intervention, humanitarian protection, peace team, peace force, and peace army. Those who use the term accompaniment may also call it nonviolent or unarmed accompaniment. Some groups distinguish between political, physical and technical accompaniment. Many accompaniment groups also call themselves ‘human rights observers.’

Most protective accompaniers seem to agree that one term which does *not* adequately describe their work, but which is perhaps the most widely used in the mainstream media,

¹⁹ I do not interrogate the category of ‘civilian’ in this dissertation, but hope to in future research (see discussion in chapter nine).

is ‘human shield.’ The media use of this term for accompaniers is a conflation and confusion, because the term is also and more commonly used to refer to those who have not chosen this role, i.e. civilians used by armed actors as a buffer. For example, in response to the NATO bombing of Libya in May 2011, Qaddafi decreed that telephone company workers would camp out with their families at key telecommunications network sites.²⁰ Aside from the question of choice, the term ‘shields’ also implies accompaniers are standing in front of the accompanied rather than walking beside them, in companionship.²¹

Weber and Moser-Puangsuwan use the term ‘nonviolent intervention across borders’, which includes a wide variety of actions, from material aid deliveries to Cuba by Pastors for Peace to the Cyprus Resettlement Project funding homebuilding. The typology used in their book divides these actions into:²²

- local nonviolent actions and campaigns (to support struggle in another country),
- mobilization actions (to draw attention to an international grievance such as nuclear disarmament),
- nonviolent humanitarian assistance (in contexts where others will not provide it),
- nonviolent reconciliation and development,

²⁰ “Libyan Officials Threaten to Use ‘Human Shields’ to Thwart NATO Bombings,” *New York Times*, May 17, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/17/world/africa/17libya.html?_r=3&hp.

²¹ I write more about the implications of this and other metaphors for accompaniment in chapter seven.

²² Robert Burrowes, “Cross-border Nonviolent Intervention: A Typology,” in *Nonviolent Intervention Across Borders: A Recurrent Vision*, ed. Thomas Weber and Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan (Honolulu, HI: Spark M. Matsunaga Institute for Peace, University of Hawaii, 2000), 45–69.

- nonviolent witness and accompaniment,
- nonviolent intercession (simply to be present in a violent zone, e.g. the Sahara Protest Team which tried to stop nuclear testing),
- nonviolent solidarity (to be present in a zone of violence to highlight the suffering it is causing local people and generate solidarity for them),
- nonviolent interposition (standing between conflicting parties), and
- nonviolent invasion (invading a violent space to lower the risk of violence, e.g. 3,000 Indian satyagrahis crossing into Goa in 1955 to support the nationalist movement there).

International accompaniment in Colombia has at times participated in all of the first seven of these actions, making it a broader activity than portrayed in this typology.

A similar term is ‘third-party nonviolent intervention,’ which is used by several writers from the US and in the literature of some accompaniment organizations.²³ I never heard an accompanier in Colombia use the term. Gene Sharp gestured to this term in his landmark book highlighting different forms of nonviolent action, where he refers to “the possibility of third-party action in the form of international nonviolent intervention”.²⁴

The term is most explicitly defined in the Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) training handbook developed by Hunter and Lakey, where they offer a typology of four techniques:

²³ Ivan Boothe and Lee Smithey, “Privilege, Empowerment, and Nonviolent Intervention,” *Peace & Change* 32, no. 1 (2007): 39–61; Daniel Hunter and George Lakey, *Opening Space for Democracy: Third-Party Nonviolent Intervention Training Curriculum* (Philadelphia: Training for Change, 2004); Victoria L. Henderson, “Citizenship in the Line of Fire: Protective Accompaniment, Proxy Citizenship, and Pathways for Transnational Solidarity in Guatemala,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 99, no. 5 (2009): 969–976, doi:10.1080/00045600903253403 The organizations include FOR, PBI, CPT, MPT and NP, though particularly in that of the later and only occasionally by the others (see acronyms listed on p. xiii).

²⁴ Gene Sharp, *Dynamics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston, MA: Porter Sargent Publishers, 1985), 664.

observation and monitoring, accompaniment, interposition and presence.²⁵ Again, accompaniers engage in most of these activities. Most accompaniers describe being witnesses, or observers if you will, as essential to their role as accompaniers.

Interposition is generally different than accompaniment and better describes how peacekeeping is traditionally imagined – as standing between two armed parties. The concept of presence is too vague (creating a ‘shift of energy’) to be useful, though it could certainly be argued that accompaniers are a ‘presence.’

There are problems with each of these other terms, but I elect to use the term accompaniment primarily because it is the term that was most widely used in Colombia. It is also the term that this technique was born with, as it grew out of the Latin American tradition of informal social accompaniment, as described above. I describe the history of the beginnings of international protective accompaniment in chapter two.

Where I write from

For more than 20 years I have been an activist in the US and Canada in what is often simply called the “solidarity movement,” which is to say the movement that works in solidarity with Latin American movements for peace and justice and to end US militarism in Latin America. I was involved in the sanctuary movement in the 1980s, set up a sister university relationship in the early 1990s between Swarthmore College and the Universidad de Centro America in San Salvador, served as a staff organizer in the mid 1990s for the Seattle Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES),

²⁵ Hunter and Lakey, *Opening Space for Democracy*.

have been involved in various Colombia solidarity groups, and have been a core organizer of the vigil to close the US Army's School of the Americas for the past 11 years.²⁶ Through that activism I had met and worked on campaigns and conferences with activists from several accompaniment groups, including Witness for Peace, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Peace Brigades and Christian Peacemaker Teams. I had collaborated with Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), one of the accompaniment groups, as both a volunteer Spanish translator (written) and interpreter (oral).

Coming to this research with this activist experience meant that I not only had many contacts in different accompaniment organizations, but also more importantly that it was easier for me to build trust with accompaniers. I see accompaniment as part of the larger solidarity movement - my movement, my people as it were. This work 'speaks to me' and I speak its 'language'. I also speak Spanish fluently, having lived in Colombia as a small child and worked as a professional Spanish interpreter since 1994. Yet even more useful to this research was my experience with the way solidarity movements talk and think things through. My activist history was crucial for my ability to have access, trust, and understanding with accompaniers.

I was also an 'insider' by being from the US – though this made me in some senses an 'outsider' in Colombia, it did help me to build connections with other 'expats.' It would have had very different conversations were I Colombian, or, say, Bolivian. Being a younger white woman also made a huge difference in who I spoke to and how. It made it

²⁶ The School was officially renamed the Western Hemispheric Institute for Security and Cooperation, but the movement continues to call it the School of the Americas, as do many in armies across the Americas.

much easier for me to build connection with the many other young white women who do accompaniment.²⁷ It inevitably also shaped what the Latina companions from the US said to me about race. I was an insider then in several ways, but I was *not* and have never been an companioner myself, and in that sense I write as a sympathetic outsider.

I come to this research as a Quaker, having been raised to believe in “the peace testimony.” The Quaker testimonies are not about literally speaking, as in telling a narrative, but rather letting one’s life speak.²⁸ I have spent my life working for peace and justice in various ways. I did come close to ‘putting my life on the line’ as an companioner for Peace Brigades in Colombia, but after completing the training in 2002 I was told that I was not a good fit because I was too emotional about the conflict, from having lived there as a child and having many close family friends who were affected. I also wondered if my Colombian accent in Spanish was part of the decision. It all left me asking who *is* a good fit, why, and then how it is that accompaniment works. And so, still wanting to support the project of accompaniment, I ended up writing a dissertation about it.

I came to this work more as an activist than an academic, though I am now both and this research has been part of my process of putting the hyphen between the two. There is no one clear way to be an activist-academic, or what some call an ‘engaged scholar’ or scholar-activist. I have been engaged in the debates in the discipline about what it means

²⁷ For more on why there are so many white women in the solidarity movement see Sara Koopman, “Imperialism Within: Can the Master’s Tools Bring Down Empire,” *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 7 (2008): 283–307.

²⁸ The five Quaker testimonies, which could also be considered lived values, are Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community and Equality.

to be an activist-academic. I was one of the founders of the Activist Geographers Grouping, which organized sessions and gatherings from 2005 – 2009 at the annual meeting of the American Association of Geographers, and in 2008 I organized both a panel and a workshop entitled “What’s Activist?” (in response to the ‘What’s Left?’ debate in geography).²⁹ What was clear from those discussions was that there is no one way to do activist scholarship, and that it is rarely, if ever, easy.³⁰ I have been inspired by the ways that Paul Routledge³¹ and Paul Chatterton³² have combined their own activist involvement in social movements with their academic work, and was influenced by Laura Pulido’s ‘letter to potential Scholar/Activists,’ which I read in 2006 as I was formulating this project.³³ My approach is perhaps most shaped by the seminar I took with Linda Tuhiwai Smith in 2005, which gave me the confidence to do collective thinking with fellow activists in much the same way I had done before entering graduate school.³⁴

Thinking with companions

²⁹ Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift, “What’s Left? Just the Future.,” *Antipode*. 37, no. 2 (2005): 220–238; Neil Smith, “Neo-Critical Geography, Or, The Flat Pluralist World of Business Class,” *Antipode* 37, no. 5 (November 1, 2005): 887–899,

³⁰ For a review of recent academic-activism by geographers see Nick Blomley, “The spaces of critical geography,” *Progress in Human Geography* 32, no. 2 (April 1, 2008): 285–293.

³¹ see, for example, Paul Routledge, “Toward a relational ethics of struggle: embodiment, affinity and affect,” in *Contemporary anarchist studies: an introductory anthology of anarchy in the academy*, ed. Randall Amster (London: Taylor & Francis, 2009).

³² Paul Chatterton, “Demand the Possible: Journeys in Changing our World as a Public Activist-Scholar,” *Antipode* 40, no. 3 (June 1, 2008): 421–427.

³³ It was later published as Pulido, “FAQS: Frequently (Un)Asked Questions on Being a Scholar/Activist,” in *Engaging contradictions: theory, politics, and methods of activist scholarship*, ed. Charles R. Hale (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008) This volume is an excellent resource for ways to be an activist-academic.

³⁴ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 1999).

In the solidarity movement much of that sort of thinking happens online in listserves. In CISPES in particular I was used to the tradition of regularly circulating short position papers about changes we might make as a group that were then discussed. That was the method I used for my M.A., which was based on an online discussion with other white women at the heart of the movement to close the School of the Americas. Yet many of the discussions about where we are going as a movement and as organizations and the way we do our work, particularly discussions about privilege and oppression, happen much more informally in offline social spaces. They happen among friends, in homes, at parties, on walks, and over the phone. Sometimes time gets more formally set aside to step back as a group and think about these things at conferences or retreats. Often we call these ‘workshops’ and one person presents some ideas and exercises to get us thinking together. These were the two main methods I used for this PhD research.

I was in Colombia from November 2007 to March 2009, mostly based in Bogotá though I also went on trips to several regions of the country where accompaniers work.³⁵ I was fortunate to have and develop good friends who were accompaniers who cared about issues of privilege and accompaniment and were interested in talking about them regularly. I also shared an apartment with a housemate who was a former Christian Peacemaker Teams accompanier and we were able to host many dinners and parties to

³⁵ In November 2007 I went on a Ruta Pacifica de Mujeres (Women’s Peaceful Way) several day cross-country caravan to the border with Ecuador, with many action stops along the way. Several accompaniers from Peace Brigades and Christian Peacemaker Teams were also along. In February 2008 I went to the peace community of San José with FOR, and went back there in August of 2008. In December 2008 I spent two weeks in Barrancabermeja with the Christian Peacemaker Teams, where I also led a workshop, and went on a trip to Micoahumado, one of the ‘humanitarian zone’ communities that they accompany. I went to the Chocó in January 2009, where I led the workshop with the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation.

which many accompaniers came. Many accompaniers coming through Bogotá also stayed at our place, and some of these conversations were had in pajamas at the breakfast table. I ended up having ongoing informal conversations with a regular circle of eight but a total of 20 accompaniers. I often made notes on a little pad while we talked and kept a daily journal with more detailed notes and thoughts on those conversations.

Eventually those conversations helped me shape the eight workshops that I held with six different accompaniment organizations, with a total of 35 participants. I also did twelve somewhat more formal audio-recorded one-on-one conversations with some accompaniers, based on a loose set of open-ended questions to get us started. These tended to be with accompaniers that I did not have the opportunity to talk to on a regular basis so I wanted to be sure to talk with them somewhat more systematically. I also read all of the reports and discussions in the websites, newsletters, public emails and blogs by accompaniment organizations and accompaniers in Colombia from mid 2007 through to the end of 2010.³⁶

I told accompaniers that I was not ‘studying’ them, but that I wanted to think *with* them how accompaniment works, and how space and privilege are part of that process. We did collective thinking about these questions, yet there was certainly no consensus. This dissertation is a product of collaborative reflection, but it is of necessity my own interpretation and development of those exchanges. I imagine that the conversations themselves are the research ‘product’ that accompaniers will find most useful, but I also

³⁶ Links to all sites and blogs are on my own blog www.decolonizingsolidarity.blogspot.com - which is the only site on the web to aggregate links to all accompaniment organizations.

intend to return this dissertation to both the companions who did this thinking with me and those now with those organizations, both in its complete form and in a short summary well laid out as a pamphlet with graphics. I have also written a short report of it for the Fellowship of Reconciliation magazine, and hope to do the same for other accompaniment organization newsletters. This dissertation will be embargoed from going online for a year while I check with every individual quoted and all organizations described that there is nothing they want removed for safety reasons. But I also hope to get more detailed feedback and have further discussions with them that will shape the final form this research takes. My involvement will not end there. I am committed to a lifetime of activism with the solidarity movement and will continue to think with others in the movement, particularly companions, about these issues for many years to come.³⁷ It is my hope that this dissertation is only a beginning, and that my future research on these issues can be more fully collaborative. I am inspired by the long-term collaborations of geographers Richa Nagar, Geraldine Pratt, and Caitlin Cahill.³⁸

This research does not engage with how accompanied Colombian activists understand accompaniment to work. When I initially asked some of them about accompaniment they were effusive about its importance and effectiveness. These responses seemed highly

³⁷ For example, in the future I hope to do a regular annual online survey of accompaniment organizations around the world as there is no clear documentation of who all is doing accompaniment where, and I will work with a group of companions to decide what information to collect and how.

³⁸ Richa Nagar and Frah Ali, "Collaboration Across Borders: Moving Beyond Positionality," *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 24, no. 3 (2003): 356–372; G. Pratt, "Collaborating across our differences," *Gender, Place & Culture* 9, no. 2 (2002): 195–200; Caitlin Cahill, "Defying gravity? raising consciousness through collective research," *Children's Geographies* 2, no. 2 (2004): 273–286.

shaped by my being from the US, and by being introduced to these activists by accompaniers themselves. Perhaps if I had been able to live in the peace community of San José for an extended period of time I would have been able to build a more independent connection with community members, which seemed necessary for more critical collaborative thinking. During my time in Colombia there was regularly combat very near the community, and given that I did not have the protections that accompaniers themselves relied on, I did not feel safe staying in the community for an extended period. In the future I hope to do joint research with Colombian academics with long standing relationships with different accompanied peace communities where they lead discussions with those communities about their understandings of accompaniment, and then I come in and do follow-up workshops with them. I believe we would have very different conversations.

Why I write

This research is both a personal and a political project. I lived in Colombia as a small child because my father was doing research there as an epidemiologist. When we moved back to Seattle I spent a good deal of time in the Latino community, but always had to explain how I was a white girl with a Colombian accent. Living across worlds made me aware of race and class and passport privileges from an early age. As I struggled to find my place I also made the connection to US policies early on, for when I was twelve Salvadoran refugees entered sanctuary in our Quaker Meeting. I have worked in various ways since to use my own position to change US policy and build more and different

North-South connections, including many years as a professional interpreter and translator.

I came back to academia in part because of my frustration that solidarity organizing often does not ‘walk the talk,’ and has trouble ‘being the change’ we want to see in the world. It is hard to work together across gulfs of distance and difference without falling into old colonial patterns. After many discussions with other activists about these issues I came back to the academy looking for tools - for ways to decolonize solidarity.

My MA research looked for answers in the heart of the movement to close the US Army’s School of the Americas (a training camp for Latin American military officers). Many of those involved in the movement are white middle class women like me, and I turned specifically to those who had ‘crossed the line’ onto the base in an act of civil disobedience. Based on an online discussion with these women I argued that the ‘good helper’ role, which has historically consolidated the power of Empire, is also being used by many solidarity activists *against* empire. Yet I argued that this is a toxic colonial tool that in fact reinforces the systems of domination that prop up empire, and argued for greater clarity about motivations and roles as a way to decolonize solidarity work.³⁹

My present research on accompaniment is a continuation of my search for ways to decolonize international solidarity work. This time I am not looking at motivations, though much of that thinking on the good helper role is relevant to accompaniers. I

³⁹ Koopman, “Imperialism Within.”

turned to accompaniment because it is the solidarity tactic that most explicitly *uses* inequalities based on colonial histories. Paradoxically, it uses the fact some lives ‘count more’ to try to build a world where everyone’s life ‘counts’. As such accompaniers have a privileged standpoint, or way in, to thinking about these issues that affect all North-South solidarity activism (and for that matter, also impact North-South humanitarian and development efforts). This is a reworking of Sandra Harding’s ‘standpoint theory.’⁴⁰ She argues that the oppressed have a clearer insight into the workings of oppression. I believe that those privileged people who use their privilege in ways that do not follow the norm also have a useful perspective.

I undertook this research as a way of strengthening solidarity and accompaniment by supporting, engaging with, and developing conversations that some in the movement were already having. But movements have a vested interest in presenting their work as coherent,⁴¹ so it is perhaps not surprising that accompaniers rarely talk publicly about the paradox of accompaniment using privilege to work for a world with equality - though some were certainly talking regularly amongst themselves, about issues of race in particular, before I started talking with them. Given that accompaniment so openly uses inequalities I began this research looking for ways that geopolitical/racial privileges can be used against the very systems that grant them. I had hopes of finding ways that accompaniers were dismantling systems of domination even as they used them. I am

⁴⁰ Sandra Harding, *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies* (New York; London: Routledge, 2003).

⁴¹ Winifred Tate, *Counting the Dead: The Culture and Politics of Human Rights Activism in Colombia* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 26.

afraid this undoing is incredibly hard to do and I did not find quite what I expected, yet I will end this dissertation arguing for a way that I have come to understand that some accompaniers are, if not dismantling, at least wearing down structures of inequality. These arguments are relevant not only to those interested in making accompaniment more effective, but for those interested in the increasing the impact of international solidarity organizing more generally.

Overview

There is a dramatic case from Colombia of a death squad coming in the night when Peace Brigades International (PBI) was there. Bodo Von Borries, from Belgium, was one of the accompaniers. He was there with another accompanier from Spain.⁴² It was in Barrancabermeja, on December 23, 1997 and the two were spending the night in the home of Colombian human rights worker Mario Calixto because he had received serious threats. Two armed men came to the door in the night, saying they were going to kill Mario. When the accompaniers stepped forward and said ‘we are internationals and we are here with him,’ the armed men left. Scenarios like this are extremely rare.⁴³ The aim of accompaniment is to ensure that armed actors will already know that the accompaniers are present, and so will not even knock on the door. But as Mahony puts it, we have no

⁴² Velcrow Ripper, *In the Company of Fear* (video), 1999.

⁴³ Though in another dramatic incident in Colombia Nico Udu-gama was serving as an accompanier with the International Peace Observatory in a small town when they heard that the army had gone in to a small farm, dressed up the farmer as a guerilla, and were going to kill him. This appears to be common practice in Colombia, to improve “kill counts”, and has recently been exposed and become a scandal. When Nico and his partner got to the farm the army had a knife to the farmer’s neck, but because of the internationals let him go free. “Revolution Live.”

way of knowing how many times they choose not to knock on the door – and I would add, we have no way of knowing why they chose not to knock.⁴⁴

So let me clarify that I do not examine *whether* accompaniment works, because there is no way to fully know if an accompanied Colombian was not attacked because of the accompanier's presence or because of a myriad of other factors, ranging from the weather to the love life of the local paramilitary leader. Given that those accompanied regularly state that they believe they are alive because of accompaniment, and that more and more Colombian groups request international accompaniment - far more than currently receive it - I assume that it generally does work, at least in Colombia. Instead the research question that has guided this dissertation is *how* does accompaniment work.

In **chapter two** I provide a global geography of international accompaniment. I review where and when it has been done to begin to offer a sense of how it works. I review the precedents for it, how it began, and where, when and how it developed around the world. After setting this broader context, I turn to the context of accompaniment in Colombia. I highlight three aspects of the conflict that make accompaniment work particularly well there. In **chapter three** I focus on land grabs and US involvement. Many of those accompanied are resisting displacement, as well as returning to their stolen lands – and both are particularly spatial forms of resistance that can be more easily supported through the physical presence of accompaniers than, say, a hunger strike. US involvement is important for understanding the workings of accompaniment because it offers

⁴⁴ "Peaceful Strategies for Protecting Human Rights Defenders," Peace Talks (radio program), June 25, 2010.

accompaniers the leverage that they use to pressure Colombian decision makers to protect those they are accompanying. The third aspect of the conflict that makes accompaniment work well in Colombia is that it is *campesinos* in racialized regions that are being displaced, and accompaniers generally stand out in these regions as being ‘out of place.’ In **chapter four** I describe these dynamics of racialization in Colombia and the idealization of whiteness that shapes how accompaniers are seen.

In **chapter five** I turn to the peace part of ‘making space for peace’ and ask what peace means in general, in the Colombian context, to the groups that are accompanied, and to accompaniers. I also argue against the characterization of accompaniment as ‘civilian peacekeeping.’ **Chapter six** both continues to outline the context of accompaniment in Colombia, and begins the discussion of how it works. I present the different groups doing accompaniment, their levels of professionalism, and the debates about doing accompaniment as nonpartisan or as openly in solidarity. I argue here that accompaniment is most effective when it is both professional, and openly engaged in solidarity.

Having presented the context of accompaniment in Colombia, I then turn to how accompaniment works. The slogan of PBI is “making space for peace”, yet there is little clarity amongst accompaniers as to what space is and how it is ‘made’. **Chapter seven** is largely based on workshops I held with accompaniment organizations to bring theories of space as a relation into conversation with accompaniers’ experiences and understandings of how they ‘make space for peace’. This chapter describes accompaniers’ practices, productions and performances of space. In **chapter eight** I look

at how accompaniment works racially. One of the ways the accompanied who are resisting displacement are able to ‘stay in place’ is through the solidarity of companions who, when they walk with them in these places, are ‘out of place’. Depending on how this is done it can either reinforce or wear down systems of privilege.

I end, in **chapter nine**, by looking at how accompaniment can be understood as doing an alternative sort of geopolitics. This is where I found the most hope for accompaniment wearing down structures of domination that make some lives count more than others. But I also review the various ways, discussed in the last four chapters, that accompaniment can fall into colonial patterns and reinforce those structures. I also offer a more in depth summary of my arguments in each chapter than in this brief overview, and point to directions for future research.

Chapter 2: The place(s) of accompaniment

This chapter is an attempt to sketch both the roots of accompaniment and then where and when actual international accompaniment has been done around the world, along with the limited information available about how it has been done.⁴⁵ Again, I am defining international protective accompaniment as actions taken by unarmed civilians to protect other unarmed civilian individuals, organizations or communities under threat for their work for peace and justice, in a country that is not the accompaniers own, by physically (as well as in other ways) being *with* them (either full time or off and on) for three months or more.⁴⁶ I offer this look at accompaniment across time and place not simply as a survey but as a way in to the puzzle of how it works – since this is so intimately tied to both where and when it is used. I end by looking at trends that stand out across different accompaniment projects and I point to which of these I see continuing in future projects. In this chapter I do not assume that accompaniment generally *does* work, that is that it effectively provides protection and strengthens local peace work, as I do for

⁴⁵ The most recent such review is now ten years old. See Thomas Weber, “A History of Nonviolent Interposition and Accompaniment,” in *Nonviolent intervention across borders: a recurrent vision*, ed. Y. Moser-Puangsuwan and Thomas Weber (Honolulu, HI: Spark M. Matsunaga Institute for Peace, University of Hawaii, 2000), 16–41.

⁴⁶ I will briefly mention here domestic accompaniment attempts by US groups in the US, because they are relevant to the growth of two of the international accompaniment groups (CPT and MPT), but this chapter is primarily a review of international accompaniment and does not look at other domestic accompaniment done around the world, such as that by Colombians of Colombians. Here I will consider accompaniment by settlers of aboriginal communities in North America to be international.

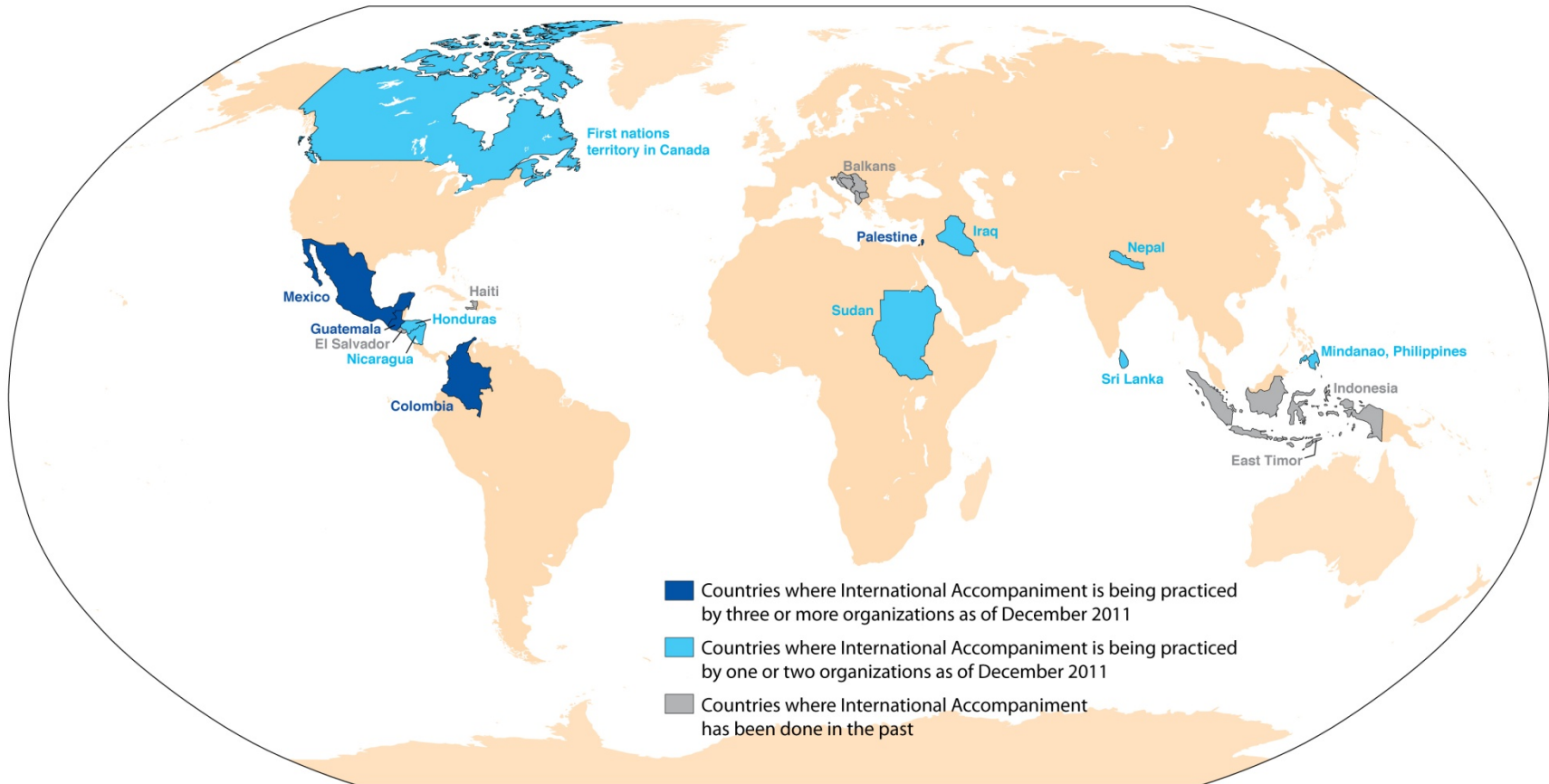


Figure 1: Where international accompaniment is and has been practiced
 map by Eric Leinberger, © UBC Geography, by permission

accompaniment in Colombia. As will become clear in the story I tell in this chapter, this has certainly not always been the case around the world.

As can be seen in the map above (figure one) and tables one through four (see appendix A), accompaniment has primarily been used in Latin America. This would be much clearer on the map without the distortion of large countries with few companions (e.g. Indonesia and Sudan). It would also be clearer in a cartogram that reflected the number of companions in each country over however many years, but those numbers have not been made public by accompaniment groups.⁴⁷ The other data lacking from this map is what countries companions come *from*, something I hope to trace in future research. But perhaps the most important limitation to any cartographic representation is the implicit assumption that accompaniment has been done in the same way across these countries. As I hope to make clear in this chapter, it has not been.

Christian roots

Though there were other precedents, which I review below, accompaniment began in Central America and came out of the broader US movement in solidarity with Central America. In the 1980s there were internal wars in Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador - and the US government was involved in funding and providing military training in all three. The solidarity movement aimed to stop US involvement and support Central American peace and justice movements. It was by no means limited to church groups,

⁴⁷ In future research I hope to establish relationships and a collaborative research team that would be able to regularly survey groups for these numbers. I did make initial email inquiries but most groups seemed either not to have this information or to be uncomfortable sharing it.

but the Christian left played a leading role, as it continues to in the now broadened Latin America solidarity movement.⁴⁸

Much of this Christian solidarity organizing began with and was rooted in the longstanding Christian practice of sanctuary. Thousands of Salvadorans and Guatemalans were fleeing the conflict in their countries and coming to the US. When they applied for asylum they were repeatedly denied, for to grant asylum would imply recognizing that the US was funding their persecutors. To avoid deportation many turned to churches for help.⁴⁹ There is a longstanding US tradition, based on the division between church and state but also a much older English tradition, of the government not entering churches. Refugees avoided deportation by moving into church basements. Many churchgoers then heard their stories and were moved to take other action to end US support for the persecutors of the refugees and became a key base for the broader solidarity movement. My own involvement in solidarity work began this way when Sandra, Sergio and their daughter Natalia arrived from El Salvador as refugees to our Quaker Meeting in Seattle the mid 1980s.

Salvadorans and Guatemalans working against repression and for justice inside their countries also turned to the church. Though the church was generally conservative, there were individual priests, nuns and eventually even an Archbishop who were moved by both the suffering and the calls of the liberation theology movement, which was

⁴⁸ The broader movement now includes solidarity with Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Cuba and Bolivia – though Colombia is the only South American country with international accompaniers.

⁴⁹ For a study of the sanctuary movement in the US see Hilary Cunningham, *God and Caesar at the Rio Grande: Sanctuary and the Politics of Religion* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

burgeoning in the 1970s and early 1980s.⁵⁰ Many of these church leaders were murdered for their work against state repression, most famously Archbishop Oscar Romero in 1980 and seven Jesuit priest professors in 1989, both in El Salvador. This made a deep impact on many Catholics in the US who were interested in justice, as did the 1980 murder of three US nuns and a lay worker doing mission work with the poor in El Salvador.⁵¹ It is worth noting that in the late 1950s every Catholic diocese in the US was asked to send at least 10 percent of its clergy to Latin America.⁵² Thousands went and many worked there with those struggling against dictatorships. One such priest was Father Roy Bourgeois, who did mission work in Peru and was tortured there for his work with the poor. Back in the US he was moved by the attack on Romero and then the Jesuits to protest the School of the Americas, a US army training camp for Latin American military officers, including those involved in those murders.⁵³ Father Roy's protest grew into a large vigil held annually since 1990 in front of the School on the anniversary of the murder of the Jesuits. This three-day event has become the key gathering of a broad range of solidarity groups

⁵⁰ For a discussion of the more theological roots of Christian solidarity activism see John Sobrino and Juan Hernandez-Pico, *Theology of Christian Solidarity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985); Mark Stelzer, *The Kingdom of God, Communion, and Solidarity: An Introduction to the Ecclesiology of Jon Sobrino* (Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Verlag, 2009); Stephen J. Pope, *Hope & Solidarity: Jon Sobrino's Challenge to Christian Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008); Kathryn Anderson, *Weaving Relationships: Canada-Guatemala Solidarity* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2003).

⁵¹ For a description written at the time of attacks on priests in Latin America that was widely read by activists in the US see Penny Lernoux, *Cry of the People* (New York, NY: Penguin (Non-Classics), 1991).

⁵² Margaret Swedish and Marie Dennis, *Like Grains Of Wheat: A Spirituality Of Solidarity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), xv.

⁵³ James Hodge and Linda Cooper, *Disturbing the peace: the story of Roy Bourgeois and the movement to close the School of the Americas* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004).

and continues to be heavily attended and led by Christian activists, with many Catholic universities busing in students.⁵⁴

Christian activists have and continue to play an important role in shaping accompaniment.⁵⁵ The first group to do accompaniment in its current form was the Christian group Witness for Peace. Today the organization with the most accompaniers seems to be Peace Brigades, which is not religious (though many of the early PBI accompaniers were Quakers),⁵⁶ but Christian Peacemaker Teams seems to be the next largest group.⁵⁷ I am unsure about the relative size of other accompaniment teams around the world because this information is not made available by most accompaniment

⁵⁴ Sara Koopman, "Cutting Through Topologies: Crossing Lines at the School of the Americas," *Antipode* 40, no. 5 (2008): 825–847; I have long been involved in organizing this vigil, for my analysis of the movement see Koopman, "Imperialism Within."

⁵⁵ For more on the relationship between Christianity and the solidarity movement more broadly see Sharon Erickson Nepstad, *Convictions of the soul: religion, culture, and agency in the Central America solidarity movement* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004); Sharon Erickson Nepstad, "Oppositional Consciousness Among the Privileged: Remaking Religion in the Central America Solidarity Movement," *Critical Sociology*, (July 1, 2007): 661–688 vol. 33; Sharon Erickson Nepstad, "The Role of the Church in International Peacebuilding: Lessons from the US-Central America Solidarity Movement," *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 1, no. 3 (December 15, 2009): 20–34.

⁵⁶ Liam Mahony and Enrique Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards: International Accompaniment for the Protection of Human Rights* (West Hartford, CN: Kumarian Press, 1997).

⁵⁷ Though Catholics are heavily involved in the solidarity movement in general, accompaniers are more likely to be Mennonite, Brethren or Quakers, the historic peace churches which, notably, do not have a history of mission work in Latin America. (Evangelical Quakers did mission work in Bolivia, but accompaniers have been unprogrammed (silent) Quakers). There was however one member of the Catholic Worker movement serving with CPT while I was in Colombia.

organizations.⁵⁸ The role of Christian activists has also shaped *where* accompaniment has been done given their ties to the Latin American church.

Beginnings

Mahony and Eguren argue that the modern idea of what they call a “nongovernmental international protective presence” goes back to the formation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in **1863**. As they put it, the ICRC was “the first NGO to convince warring nations to honor the moral and symbolic force of an outside neutral party.”⁵⁹ Various early proposals and attempts by Europeans are more often mentioned as precedents by accompaniers, though none of these came to fruition. The first and most cited was the **1931** proposal by British pastor Maude Roydon to the League of Nations to send a “nonviolent army” of volunteers to stop the war between Japan and China in Manchuria. A thousand volunteers were recruited, and some of these eventually went to Palestine for a couple of years, though their effort ended with WWII.⁶⁰

When they offer a history of accompaniment many writers mention the Shanti Sena (peace army), an idea conceived by Mahatma Gandhi and realized in **1950**, shortly after his death. By 1959 there were some 1,000 Sainiks (peace soldiers) throughout India, the

⁵⁸ I have included throughout the chapter the information that I was able to access through web sites and email inquiries. In future research I hope to do an annual survey of accompaniment groups to collect more quantitative data.

⁵⁹ Mahony and Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards*, 3.

⁶⁰ *Civilian Peacekeeping: A Barely Tapped Resource* (Belm-Vehrte, Germany: Sozio Publishing, 2009), 10; Hunter and Lakey, *Opening Space for Democracy*, 274; Thomas Weber, “From Maude Roydon’s Peace Army to the Gulf Peace Team: An Assessment of Unarmed Interpositional Peace Forces,” *Journal of Peace Research* 30, no. 1 (February 1993): 17 Weber gives no more information about the volunteers who went to Palestine and I have found no further details on this initial effort.

largest such force deployed to date. They primarily responded to riot situations in India. Martin Luther King Jr. attended the Shanti Sena's official inauguration that year. The Shanti Sena was strongest in the late 1960s and early 1970s but internal conflicts led to its demise in 1974.⁶¹ It engaged in a small effort in Cyprus, but its work was primarily domestic. Interestingly Vinoba, one of the leaders of the movement, said that "the citizens of a country which maintains an army have no right to conduct satyagraha⁶² in another country", arguing that their passport power ultimately relied on military power.⁶³ Another leader, Narayan Desai, would later become one of the founders of Peace Brigades.

In the 1950s there was a growth of international nonviolent interposition actions on bombing ranges which, though different in style, could be seen as precedents to accompaniment. In **1957** the first protest was held at the US nuclear bombing range in the Nevada desert, which would grow into a large peace camp that lasted through 1994 and involved 37,488 protesters and 15,740 arrests.⁶⁴ In **1958** Quaker Albert Bigelow sailed his ship *The Golden Rule* into US hydrogen bomb testing areas in the Pacific.⁶⁵ In **1959** the international Sahara Protest Team attempted to stand in the nuclear French test

⁶¹ Hunter and Lakey, *Opening Space for Democracy*, 273; Thomas Weber, *Gandhi's Peace Army: The Shanti Sena and Unarmed Peacekeeping* (Syracuse University Press, 1996); Weber, "From Maude Royden's Peace Army to the Gulf Peace Team."

⁶² Satyagraha is widely understood to mean nonviolent action. It is a Sanskrit term that Gandhi used to mean "clinging to truth" (Sanskrit). For a fuller history and definition of the term see <http://www.mettacenter.org/definitions/satyagraha>

⁶³ Tandon, cited by Weber, "A History of Nonviolent Interposition and Accompaniment," 35.

⁶⁴ "Peace Camp 25/Nevada Nuclear Test Site: April 2011", n.d., http://peacecampnts.blogspot.com/2011_04_01_archive.html (accessed January 13, 2012).

⁶⁵ Weber, "A History of Nonviolent Interposition and Accompaniment," 22.

site.⁶⁶ Greenpeace got its start when Quakers from Vancouver attempted to do this sort of action in Amchitka in **1971**.

In **1960** at the meeting of War Resisters International⁶⁷ in Gandhigram, India, plans were made to establish a World Peace Brigade, and the founding conference was held in **1961** in Beirut, Lebanon with 55 delegates representing 13 countries. They attempted to carry out three projects, a march in Northern Rhodesia, the Everyman II voyage to Leningrad, and the Delhi to Peking Friendship March. None of these was fully realized, leading to the demise of the organization in 1963.⁶⁸ Several of those involved in the World Peace Brigade would later participate in the founding conference of Peace Brigades International in 1981. In **1968** an English group called Non-Violent Action in Vietnam attempted to stand in target areas in North Vietnam but the team of 26 were not able to cross from Cambodia into Vietnam.⁶⁹

Most reviews of the historical precedents to protective accompaniment overlook the **1964** Freedom Summer campaign in the US.⁷⁰ Although Freedom Summer was domestic, and

⁶⁶ April Carter and Moser-Puangsuwan, "The Sahara Protest Team," in *Nonviolent Intervention Across Borders: A Recurrent Vision* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000).

⁶⁷ "About WRI | War Resisters' International", n.d., http://wri-irg.org/network/about_wri (accessed January 25, 2012) War Resisters' International is an international network of groups that "exists to promote nonviolent action against the causes of war, and to support and connect people around the world who refuse to take part in war or the preparation of war," also known as conscientious objectors.

⁶⁸ The details of these projects are described by Weber, "A History of Nonviolent Interposition and Accompaniment," 29–34.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 36 Weber also describes various other proposals made in the 1950s and 1960s that never came to any sort of fruition.

⁷⁰ Though Coy does briefly mention it Patrick Coy, "Cooperative Accompaniment and Peace Brigades International in Sri Lanka," in *Transnational social movements and global politics*, ed.

not called accompaniment, the idea was that the more than one thousand white volunteers (mostly Northern college students) would work alongside black volunteers and together they would be more able to register black voters in Mississippi in the summer of 1964.⁷¹ The effort was organized by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, which was led by black activists. Though not all involved would frame it this way, the idea was that the white Northerners would ‘accompany’ local black activists as they went around together signing up voters. However having whites along may have enraged racists rather than served as protection. Within ten days James Chaney (who was black), and Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner (who were white), were lynched (see figure two). By the end of the summer, another activist was killed, four were seriously wounded, and a great many were beaten and arrested.



Jackie Smith, Charles Chatfield, and Ron Pagnucco (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 79 –100; and Mahoney and Eguren briefly mention Freedom Riders, white activists in the U.S. in the 1960s who rode next to black activists on segregated buses, see Mahony and Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards*, 3.

⁷¹ This was not the first case of white Northern activists supporting black organizing in the South, for example New York Jewish communists were supporting black workers’ strikes in the 1930s, but it was certainly the largest and best-known effort.

Figure 2: Andrew Goodman, James Cheney, and Michael Schwerner
photos from FBI missing poster, in the public domain

Perhaps Freedom Summer is not cited as a precedent by accompaniers because it did not seem to ‘work’, in the sense that it did not seem to offer much protection to the black civil rights workers who were still attacked. Yet it certainly ‘worked’, much as accompaniment can, in that it strengthened the organizing campaign by generating far more publicity and attention from those in power. In a recent documentary about the ongoing search for justice in the case,⁷² black activists talked about their resentment that the deaths of Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner attracted so much attention when James Cheney, and the several black civil rights workers who had been murdered in previous years, received so little. Even today their deaths seem to carry more weight in the popular imagination, and the mainstream Hollywood movie *Mississippi Burning* was made about the incident.⁷³ Even in death, their lives continue to ‘count’ more, much as do the lives of accompaniers.⁷⁴

Mahony and Eguren argue that the concept established by the ICRC of the “detering effect of international moral pressure” was further developed in the 1960s and 1970s by Amnesty International as it involved “everyday citizens in direct pressure campaigns” and that accompaniment takes that one step further, making the pressure more immediate

⁷² Micki Dickoff and Tony Pagano, *Neshoba: The Price of Freedom.*, documentary, 2010, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1337155/> (accessed September 27, 2010).

⁷³ Alan Parker, *Mississippi Burning* (MGM (Video & DVD), 1989).

⁷⁴ As I described in the introduction and will come back to throughout this dissertation, the paradox of accompaniment is that it uses the fact that some lives ‘count’ more to try to build a world where everyone’s life ‘counts.’

by being physically present with the threatened person.⁷⁵ They argue that the growing human rights movement in the 1970s and 1980s fed into early accompaniment groups. I would add that the tactic of urgent alerts and a flood of letters popularized by Amnesty International is a key part of how accompaniment works. This has been made easier by email and now web based ‘quick click’ action alert software such as Salsa.⁷⁶

“Invading” Nicaragua with Witness (1983 -)

It was twenty years after Freedom Summer that international accompaniment was first attempted in a form something like that being done today. Mahony and Eguren are correct to argue that accompaniment, though influenced by the precedents above, was born out of the Central America solidarity movement in the US - but accompaniment began when and where and how it did not only because of the strength of that solidarity movement, but also because of the geopolitical moment (conjuncture).

In the early 1980s President Reagan argued that the ‘communist’ Sandinistas in Nicaragua threatened national security, and, ludicrously, that they were only a two-day march from Texas.⁷⁷ Many were skeptical and one of the first campaigns of the Central America solidarity movement was to persuade Congress to pass a bill in 1982 that

⁷⁵ Mahony and Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards*, 3.

⁷⁶ The other technological advance that has made accompaniment easier has been increasing cell phone coverage and smaller and cheaper satellite phones. Cheaper airplane flights over the last twenty years have also made travel more accessible.

⁷⁷ Speech on July 23, 1986, available in full at “Remarks at a Campaign Fundraiser for William Clements in Dallas, Texas”, n.d., <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1986/072386a.htm> (accessed January 13, 2012).

stopped US funding of the Contra rebels who were fighting the Sandinistas. But the Reagan administration was not stopped. Under Reagan's direct authorization, the CIA mined Nicaragua's main harbor, and then, in what came to be known as the 'Iran-Contra scandal', sold arms to Iran, which was then under an arms embargo, so as to fund the Contras. Although this was not exposed until 1986, it was clear that the war in Nicaragua continued with US support. And so solidarity organizing continued, and also turned to new tactics.

In April 1983 a delegation from the Carolina Interfaith Taskforce on Central America went on a 'fact finding tour' to Nicaragua. When they heard that a village near the border was under attack by Contras based in Honduras they boarded their bus at 4 am and drove for six hours to see for themselves. When they got there the town was still burning, but the shelling had stopped. When they asked why the bombing had stopped the answer was 'because you're here,' and the townspeople asked them to stay.⁷⁸ They did not stay, but the request made such an impact on them that on the bus ride back they devised a plan to return with an 'invasion' of 1,000 US Christians (note that this is the same number of volunteers that Freedom Summer had). A large group went back to Jalapa in July 1983 (see figure three below).

⁷⁸ Mahony and Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards*, 4; Ed Griffin-Nolan, "Witness for Peace," in *Nonviolent intervention across borders: a recurrent vision*, ed. Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan and Thomas Olesen (Honolulu, HI: Spark M. Matsunaga Institute for Peace, University of Hawaii, 2000), 279–304; Ed Griffin-Nolan, *Witness for Peace: A Story of Resistance*, 1st ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991).



Figure 3: More than 150 US Christians hold a peace vigil with residents of Jalapa at the edge of their town, July 1983.⁷⁹
© Ed Griffin Nolan, by permission

By October of 1983 that dream materialized as the organization **Witness for Peace**. It began with a structure, maintained today, of a few people based in the country long term who host and guide many more who come for two-week trips. At first these were called ‘rotating vigilers,’ and the four long termers held a candlelight vigil every night in the Jalapa town square and protests at the US embassy weekly. That same October the US invaded Granada, and many in Witness for Peace feel that their presence in Nicaragua helped deter a similar invasion there. Their organizing certainly helped to end US aid to the Contras. Although there were never 1,000 there at once, over the next seven years nearly four thousand people went to Nicaragua with Witness.⁸⁰ Griffin-Nolan argues that

⁷⁹ Griffin-Nolan, “Witness for Peace” unnumbered photo pages, used by kind permission.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 295.

the presence of so many US citizens in Nicaragua may have done more to deter a US invasion than to stop Contra attacks.⁸¹

Witness continues to have a team in Nicaragua today. They went on to establish a permanent presence in Guatemala in 1990, which lasted through 1993, and in Cuba in 1999, which lasted until 2005 when the US revoked their travel license.⁸² Though they no longer have a permanent presence in Cuba they continue to organize short-term delegations there. Witness established a team in Mexico in 1998 and a team in Colombia in 2000. They continue to work in both countries. In the past they have also led delegations to Haiti and Chiapas, and are now going to Honduras, Venezuela and Bolivia. Over their 27-year history the permanent teams have hosted and led trips for tens of thousands of short-term delegates. As of November 2010 they have 12 permanent team members, serving in Nicaragua, Mexico and Colombia.⁸³

Brigading in Guatemala (1983 -)

Peace Brigades International (PBI) started at around the same time as Witness for Peace. The idea for PBI was established at a conference held at a Quaker retreat centre on Grindstone Island in Ontario, Canada in 1981 that was attended by ten men involved in various other peace groups.⁸⁴ At a second meeting in the Netherlands in 1982 they

⁸¹ Griffin-Nolan, "Witness for Peace."

⁸² Sara Joseph (2010) personal communication

⁸³ Sara Joseph (2010) personal communication

⁸⁴ I have not found any histories of the group that mention it, but the name seems to make reference to the international brigades that fought in the Spanish civil war in the 1930s, and may

decided to investigate possibilities of work in Central America, Sri Lanka, Namibia, Pakistan and the Middle East.⁸⁵ Their first work on the ground was done in coordination with Witness and involved a short-term presence in Nicaragua in September 1983, until Witness got their team there in October. Peace Brigades then moved on to establish a permanent team in Guatemala later that year, where the US was also involved in military funding and training, in this case the Guatemalan military.⁸⁶

When they first arrived in Guatemala it was unclear what PBI would do. It seems that it was a few Guatemalan mothers of the disappeared themselves, who were just beginning to meet each other and work together, who first suggested that PBI ‘accompany’ them on a visit to Archbishop Peñados to ask for his support. This first instance of accompaniment by PBI points to the various roles accompaniment plays, because clearly the women did not need to be protected from the Archbishop, but PBI’s presence served as a symbol of international support and legitimacy. The Archbishop refused to help the mothers (Archbishop Romero had recently been killed in El Salvador after publicly supporting the Mothers of the Disappeared there), so PBI offered their house instead as a safe space where they could meet. They accepted the invitation and while meeting at the PBI house founded the *Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo* (GAM, Mutual Support Group), and soon hundreds were coming to the meetings. In March 1985 two of the leaders of GAM were brutally tortured and murdered, one along with her brother and two year old son. It was

also have been inspired by the Venceremos work brigades of US citizens going to Cuba to break the blockade, which were strong in the 1970s (and continue today).

⁸⁵ Kathleen Kern, *In Harm’s Way: A History of Christian Peacemaker Teams* (Cambridge, U.K.: Lutterworth Press, 2009), 4.

⁸⁶ US military support was cut by Carter in 1977 but millions continued to flow in covert aid.

clear that the other leaders were next. It was in this context that PBI started ‘escorting’ – accompanying the surviving leaders around the clock. The drama of those early days of accompaniment are described in detail by Mahony and Eguren.⁸⁷ In 2001 Peace Brigades was nominated for the Nobel peace prize for this work.

The term and concept of accompaniment then, as I understand it, grew organically out of Latin American experience. When the first activists from Peace Brigades went to Guatemala to see what they could do they had a much wider set of activities in mind, but the mothers of the disappeared said that the most useful thing PBI could do was to accompany them as they made the rounds to offices searching for their missing children.⁸⁸ It is quite common in Latin America to go along with a friend or family member who has to do a long bureaucratic errand (which are common and as mundane as paying the electricity bill, which generally has to be done in person and may require going to two offices), and to take the time waiting in line as a chance to chat. Of course, in a human rights context having someone with privilege along also helps to give you the courage to go to the military base and ask for your son in the first place and is likely to keep you safer and get you more attention when you arrive.

Returning with refugees across Central America (1989 – 1999)

In the 1980s the US government was also heavily involved in funding a war in nearby El Salvador, and in 1987 PBI established a second team there, which operated until 1992. Salvadorans who had fled into exile in Honduras began organized group returns in 1989,

⁸⁷ Mahony and Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards*.

⁸⁸ “Peaceful Strategies for Protecting Human Rights Defenders.”

which continued through 1992 and helped to create pressure for an accord. A wide variety of solidarity groups in the US provided informal accompaniment to this process. The umbrella group that coordinated much of this work was called **Going Home**.⁸⁹ PBI expanded from Guatemala and established a team in El Salvador which operated from 1987 to 1992.

Guatemalan refugees, inspired by Salvadorans, began organized returns from refugee camps in Mexico in 1992, after signing of an accord between refugees and the Guatemalan government on October 8, 1992, which outlined the conditions of return. These included the right to have international accompaniment.⁹⁰ This led to a burgeoning of accompaniment groups in Guatemala in the early and mid 1990s, many focused on accompanying Guatemalan refugees returning to the country from camps in Mexico.⁹¹

Witness for Peace was one of the first organizations to do this work. Starting in 1990 they had a permanent presence in both the refugee camps and then also in returned communities in Guatemala.⁹² There were close to twenty different accompaniment

⁸⁹ Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan, "A short history of grassroots initiatives in unarmed peacekeeping," *Peace News*, no. 2391 (June 1995): unnumbered.

⁹⁰ Erin K. Baines, "International Accompaniment: The Role of 'Project A of Canada' in the Return of Guatemalan Refugees," in *Building Peace and Democracy in post-Conflict Societies*, ed. A.L. Griffiths (Halifax, NS: Center for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, 1998), 141.

⁹¹ For a review of accompaniment organizations serving in Guatemala in 1995 see Barry Levitt, "Theorizing Accompaniment," in *Journeys of Fear: Refugee Return and National Transformation in Guatemala*, ed. Lisa North and Alan Simmons (McGill-Queens University Press, 2000), <http://www.questia.com/googleScholar.qst;jsessionid=LjnYNTwGvQn2YrCT3s3YnMJysC6g2L30qJ16JrDQG9mvDJhZLk0K!-1679437133!1680139891?docId=89005454> (accessed January 29, 2010).

⁹² "Witness for Peace : Mission and History", n.d., <http://www.witnessforpeace.org/section.php?id=89> (accessed November 12, 2010).

groups in Guatemala by 1998.⁹³ Many of these seem to have been quite small and short lived, and there were also for a time a great number of ‘sueltos’, or unaffiliated accompaniers. The group **Foro Internacional** (Denmark) was unique in that accompaniers qualified for government unemployment benefits, and as such was the largest group, but had very little coordination.⁹⁴ **Projet Accompagnement**, based in Canada, also received government funds through the Canadian International Development Agency, though most of its funding came from churches. It functioned from 1992 to 1999.⁹⁵ They had had 140 Canadian accompaniers whose average stay was three months, though some stayed up to eight.⁹⁶ Most of the various accompaniment projects operating in Guatemala in the mid 1990s seem to have had short to medium-term accompaniers.

Peace accords were signed in Guatemala at the end of 1996, but violence continues, particularly against those who are pressing legal cases against the perpetrators of the violence, as well as increasingly against those disputing natural resource extraction. International accompaniment also continues in Guatemala, and the various groups there formed a coordinating body, Acoguate, in 2000. As of 2010 their website lists eight

⁹³ Baines, “International Accompaniment: The Role of ‘Project A of Canada’ in the Return of Guatemalan Refugees,” 152.

⁹⁴ For a detailed history of “Project A” see Anderson, *Weaving Relationships* see also discussion in ; Barry Levitt, “Theorizing Accompaniment,” in *Journeys of Fear: Refugee Return and National Transformation in Guatemala*, ed. Lisa North and Alan Simmons (Montreal, QC: McGill-Queens University Press, 2000), 237–254; Baines, “International Accompaniment: The Role of ‘Project A of Canada’ in the Return of Guatemalan Refugees.”

⁹⁵ Though the work really began with an exploratory trip in 1988 organized by the Atlantic Regional Solidarity Network that Project Accompaniment came out of. Personal email from Kathryn Anderson, March 12, 2011

⁹⁶ For a history of Project Accompaniment see Anderson, *Weaving Relationships*, 98.

different groups: **Swefor** (Sweden), **NISGUA** (US), **Carea** (Germany), **Collectif Guatemala** (France), **Maritimes Breaking the Silence** (Canada), **Peace Watch** (Switzerland), and **Project Accompagnement** (Quebec, Canada).⁹⁷ The UK based **Guatemala Solidarity Network** also participates.⁹⁸ Some 12 to 20 accompaniers serve at a time across those groups. PBI closed down their Guatemala team in 1999, after the peace accords were signed, but reopened it in April of 2003 because of ongoing violence.⁹⁹ They currently have ten volunteers there protecting 14 organizations,¹⁰⁰ but do not belong to the coordinating committee.

Christian Peacemakers search for a place

Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) also got started in the mid 1980s, around the same time as Witness and PBI. In 1984 Ron Snider gave the keynote address at the Mennonite World Conference and made a passionate argument for establishing a peacemaking ‘army’ that would be prepared to ‘die by the thousands’, for “unless we are prepared to pay the cost of peacemaking, we have no right to claim the label or preach the

⁹⁷ “La Coordinación de Acompañamiento Internacional en Guatemala”, n.d., <http://acoguate.blogspot.com/> (accessed November 4, 2010).

⁹⁸ “International Accompaniment Project | Guatemala Solidarity Network”, n.d., <http://www.guatemalasondarity.org.uk/?q=content/international-accompaniment-project> (accessed November 4, 2010).

⁹⁹ “Peace Brigades Canada: Our History”, n.d., http://www.pbicanada.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=169&Itemid=165&language=en (accessed November 8, 2010).

¹⁰⁰ “Field Projects: PBI”, n.d., <http://www.peacebrigades.org/field-projects/> (accessed November 8, 2010).

message.”¹⁰¹ He held up Witness for Peace as an example but grandiosely suggested that the historic peace churches¹⁰² together develop a force of 100,000 people.

This call mobilized a group of 100, largely Mennonites, to found CPT in 1986 at a meeting in Chicago.¹⁰³ They later brought in the Brethren and then the Quaker historic peace churches, and eventually also got the sponsorship of peace wings of other churches, that is, groups organizing inside other Christian churches for peace.¹⁰⁴ When CPT started it took them some time to get organized and figure out where to go and what to do. Gene Stoltzfus, who had been on the delegation to Nicaragua that led to the founding of Witness for Peace, was hired in 1988 as the first staff person, based in the US. He served as director from 1987 to 2004.¹⁰⁵ In 1990 CPT organized a vigil at a Minuteman nuclear missile silo in North Dakota, in the US.¹⁰⁶ In 1990 it also sent its first short term delegations to Iraq to try and prevent the first Gulf War, and shortly after to the Oka reserve in Quebec where the Mohawk nation was in a standoff with the

¹⁰¹ Kathleen Kern, “Christian Peacemaker Teams,” in *Nonviolent intervention across borders: A recurrent vision* (Honolulu, HI: Spark M. Matsunaga Institute for Peace, University of Hawaii, 2000), 175.

¹⁰² Quaker, Brethren and Mennonite (including the Amish): Christian churches founded on a belief in Christian pacifism and which advocate conscientious objection to military service. For more on the Mennonite peace tradition see Cynthia Sampson and John Paul Lederach, eds., *From the Ground up: Mennonite Contributions to International Peacebuilding* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁰³ For a history of CPT see Kern, *In Harm’s Way*; Tricia Gates Brown, *Getting In The Way: Stories From Christian Peacemaker Teams* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2005).

¹⁰⁴ Today these include the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, the Catholic Basilians, Every Church a Peace Church, On Earth Peace, and the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship. “History | Christian Peacemaker Teams”, n.d., <http://cpt.org/about/history> (accessed September 29, 2010).

¹⁰⁵ At first serving as a volunteer. Kern, *In Harm’s Way*.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

provincial police.¹⁰⁷ In 1991 they took a delegation to Israel, occupied Palestinian territory, and Jordan.¹⁰⁸ In 1992 they wanted to send a delegation to Los Angeles after the Rodney King riots, but were unable to respond quickly – which then moved them to organize trained ‘reservists’ who could be on call.¹⁰⁹

Haiti (1993 – 2000)

The first CPT accompaniers to stay for longer than a few weeks went to Haiti in 1993 through the coalition **Cry for Justice**,¹¹⁰ which PBI and Witness were also a part of along with over a dozen other organizations, including the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Cry for Justice sent 75 short-term (two week stints) volunteers to six different towns, but CPTers stayed for longer.¹¹¹

The geopolitical conjuncture in 1993, when accompaniment began in Haiti, was quite complicated - and again the US was involved militarily. Aristide took office as president of Haiti in February of 1991, as the first president to be elected democratically. He survived a coup attempt even before taking office, but was then deposed by US trained army officers in September of that year and forced into exile. His supporters in the country suffered severe persecution. Murders ran into the thousands and human rights

¹⁰⁷ Kern, “Christian Peacemaker Teams,” 177.

¹⁰⁸ Kern, *In Harm’s Way*, 13.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹¹⁰ for more on this effort see Ed Kinane, “Cry for Justice in Haiti, Fall 1993,” in *Nonviolent Intervention Across Borders: A Recurrent Vision*, ed. Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan and Thomas Weber (Honolulu, HI: Spark M. Matsunaga Institute for Peace, University of Hawaii, 2000), 207–234.

¹¹¹ “Peace Brigades Canada: Our History.”

abuses were rampant, led by CIA informant Emmanuel Constant who formed the FRAPH paramilitaries. Aristide was scheduled to return to Haiti in late October of 1993, and it was in this context, to help open space for his return, that accompaniment began. Yet on October 11 there was a FRAPH ‘demonstration’ on the docks, and the US ship with 200 Canadian and US military that was meant to pave the way for his return, turned around. Aristide did not return until October 1994, as a result of a US invasion.¹¹²

The Cry for Justice coalition lasted for only ten weeks at the end of 1993, but CPT continued on in Haiti through 1997.¹¹³ After the US invasion in 1994 their work turned to intervening with and monitoring the US military, which caused some dissent on the team.¹¹⁴ Witness for Peace had permanent staff there through from 1993 through 1996, and sent delegations from 1992 through 2000.¹¹⁵ In 1995 PBI also began protective accompaniment in Haiti, as well as offering training programs in nonviolent conflict resolution, and support to local mediators. The PBI team closed in 2000 when it was assessed that local groups could carry out their work without protection.¹¹⁶ It seems there was a lull around then, but violence continued in the following years – yet accompaniment has not returned as it did to Guatemala. Perhaps the nature of the violence and the changed geopolitical conjuncture made it less likely to be effective at

¹¹² Kinane, “Cry for Justice in Haiti, Fall 1993.”

¹¹³ Kern, *In Harm’s Way*.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹¹⁵ Sarah Joseph, personal communication, February 14, 2011

¹¹⁶ “Peace Brigades Canada: Our History.”

providing protection, but it may also be influenced by accompaniment organizations having very few Creole speakers to draw on.¹¹⁷

North America (1992 -)

Around the same time that CPT carried out their first accompaniment in Haiti, they were also experimenting with accompaniment in the United States. A short ‘project in urban peacemaking’ was attempted in Washington DC from 1994 – 1995. Kern’s history of this work strangely elides the dynamic of the Columbia Heights neighborhood they were in being largely black and CPTers being overwhelmingly white, as well as DC residents being disenfranchised of the vote.¹¹⁸ CPTers in DC did community organizing to shut down a crack house and set up safe Halloween trick-or-treating and a community safety patrol. The project ended because Wes Hare, the primary organizer, was no longer able to commute from his home in Richmond, VA. Others had mostly come for short-term stints. Hare later organized a similar smaller project in Richmond that officially lasted from 1997 to 1999.¹¹⁹ In Kern’s analysis of these projects she argues that they did not last because those who had signed up for CPT wanted to work as ‘unarmed soldiers’ rather than as community organizers. CPT was clearly still trying to sort out who they were and what they were doing, as well as where to do it.

¹¹⁷ This is repeatedly mentioned by Kinane and Kern. Kinane, “Cry for Justice in Haiti, Fall 1993”; Kern, *In Harm’s Way*.

¹¹⁸ Kern, *In Harm’s Way*.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 84.

PBI had actually already been doing work in North America, of a different sort, for several years. In 1992 PBI established a North American project after the confrontation between Mohawk warriors and the Canadian army in Quebec, Canada. It was not intended to be accompaniment, but rather supported local dialogue and reconciliation, trained local human rights monitors, and provided anti-racism education. That project was closed in 1999 because of a lack of a funding.¹²⁰

Around that time, in 1999, CPT shifted to a different sort of accompaniment in North America, this time on aboriginal territory explicitly as ‘internationals’ on what they recognized as sovereign aboriginal land. Though CPT had discussed doing this work throughout the 1990s, it moved forward after a member of the Dakota Nation visited the CPT team in Hebron and asked why they were going around the world to address issues of land confiscation when it was happening so much closer to their home – and then sent a request for accompaniment at a Dakota encampment on La Framboise island in South Dakota, which was at risk of confiscation. CPT accompanied that camp from April through October of 1999, when the federal government agreed not to transfer the lands.¹²¹

The next spring CPT responded to another invitation from the Esgenoopetitij Nation in New Brunswick, which was struggling to assert its fishing rights and facing considerable violence from settler fishers and from the Canadian Department of Fisheries, including boat ramming and line cutting. That accompaniment continued through 2002, when the Esgenoopetitij Nation signed an agreement with Fisheries. In 2002 the

¹²⁰ “Peace Brigades Canada: Our History.”

¹²¹ Kern, *In Harm's Way*, 300 – 306.

Asubpeeschoseewagong Nation in Ontario began a blockade to prevent clear cutting on their territory and asked CPT for support. CPT accompanied various blockades there in the summers of 2002 and 2003.¹²² The blockades continue through 2011 and CPT has visited on delegations and supported them by issuing action alerts, but because the initial fear of violence passed, has not done ongoing physical accompaniment. CPT has gone on to do short term physical accompaniments with several other First Nations in North America, and to organize delegations to educate settlers about aboriginal struggles for justice.¹²³ The **Michigan Peace Team** also does short-term physical accompaniments on aboriginal territory in North America and has since 1996 when they were requested to do so by the Keewenaw Bay Indian Community in Baraga, Michigan.¹²⁴

Mexico (1994 -)

The **International Service for Peace (SiPaz)** is a coalition of over 50 civil organizations and religious groups from across the Americas and Europe, but predominantly from the US, that formed after the Zapatista uprising of January 1994 in Chiapas, Mexico.¹²⁵ It aims to protect and promote those nonviolently working for social change in the midst of the ongoing armed conflict in Chiapas. As conflict has turned violent in the Mexican

¹²² Kern, *In Harm's Way*.

¹²³ "Aboriginal Justice | Christian Peacemaker Teams", n.d., http://cpt.org/work/aboriginal_justice (accessed November 24, 2010).

¹²⁴ They consider that to be international work, but they also do what they call "domestic accompaniment". They have been "invited to reduce violence" at events like LGBT parades, the protests during the 2008 Republican National Convention, and during violence following sporting events, and at hate group rallies. Until now most of their domestic work has been "event based."

¹²⁵ "SIPAZ - International Service for Peace / Servicio Internacional para la Paz", n.d., <http://www.sipaz.org/> (accessed November 9, 2010).

states of Oaxaca and Guerrero the team now also does periodic visits to those regions. As of 2010 the team has on average 6 or 7 accompaniers.¹²⁶ Two SiPaz members run their own separate accompaniment teams, **Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation**, which also has teams in Colombia and Guatemala, has four accompaniers in Mexico and **Carea** (Germany) has others.¹²⁷ PBI started working in Chiapas, Mexico as part of the SiPaz coalition in 1995, but established its own Mexico team in 2001,¹²⁸ with a team in Guerrero, and later a smaller team in Oaxaca.¹²⁹ As of 2010 they have thirteen volunteers on the Mexico team.¹³⁰ Witness for peace has four and has been there since 1998.

In December of 1997 45 members of the Mayan pacifist protestant Christian group *Las Abejas* (the bees) were massacred at the Acteal refugee camp in Chiapas by state supported paramilitaries. CPT had begun taking delegation to Chiapas in 1995, and one delegation had met with las Abejas that very December, shortly before the massacre, and found deep connections in their faith-based approaches to peace work. CPT established a team in mid 1998¹³¹ and were with the Abejas through the end of 2001, when it was decided that overt physical violence had diminished in Chiapas¹³² and they had received

¹²⁶ Marina Pages (2010) personal communication

¹²⁷ Their website does not specify how many and they have not responded to emails.

¹²⁸ Lisa Maracani, PBI Mexico project coordinator, Nov. 9, 2010, personal communication

¹²⁹ "Mexico Project history: PBI", n.d., <http://www.pbi-mexico.org/los-proyectos/pbi-mexico/sobre-pbi-meacutexico/historia-del-proyecto/?L=1%3FL%3D1> (accessed November 8, 2010).

¹³⁰ Rory (support@mypbi.net), November 29, 2010, personal communication

¹³¹ Witness for Peace started their team in Mexico around the same time, likewise moved by the Acteal massacre.

¹³² They recognized that economic violence continued, as it had in Haiti, but felt they were not set up to address this effectively. Kern, *In Harm's Way*, 271 This has been an ongoing question

an urgent invitation to work in Colombia. The Chiapas CPT team in particular did many public worship actions, such as public fasting in front of a military base. They did many of these on their own, not alongside the Abejas. As a result they had ongoing conflicts with SiPaz around their different understandings of how to do accompaniment.¹³³

Occupied Palestinian territory (1989 – 1992, 1995 -)

In 1989 PBI had a short lived project in occupied Palestinian territory.¹³⁴ Accompaniment was tried there again in 1990 by a US group called **Mideast Witness**, which received support from Witness for Peace. That group folded in 1992 for lack of funding and volunteers.¹³⁵ In 1995 CPT set up their first full long-term team in Hebron. They got there a year after a massacre of 29 people in a mosque by a settler, and just as Israeli troops were pulling out but not removing violent settlers.¹³⁶ The original proposal was to stay for five months – but the team remains there as of 2011.¹³⁷ They had other short lived satellite teams, one in Beit Jala in 2000, in Beit Ummar in 2002 and another in

amongst accompaniers, particularly as physical and economic violence become ever more intertwined.

¹³³ For more on this see Kern, *In Harm's Way*; Paul Neufeld Weaver, "Restoring the Balance: Peace Teams and Violence Reduction in Chiapas, Mexico" (dissertation, Minneapolis, MN: University of St. Thomas, 2002).

¹³⁴ Moser-Puangsuwan, "A short history of grassroots initiatives in unarmed peacekeeping" Israelis were doing solidarity work and presence in Palestine before this, but again, I am looking here at international accompaniers.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Kern, *In Harm's Way*, 99.

¹³⁷ For more on CPT in Palestine see Kathleen Kern, *As Resident Aliens: Christian Peacemaker Teams in the West Bank, 1995-2005* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2010); Jerry Levin, *West Bank diary: Middle East violence as reported by a former American hostage* (Pasadena, CA: Hope Publishing House, 2005).

Jerusalem in 2002. In 2004 CPT established a permanent second team in the village of At-Tuwani, in the southern Hebron hills.¹³⁸

Though CPT started accompaniment in Hebron in 1995, it was not until beginning of the 2000s that a number of other organizations joined them in doing accompaniment in occupied Palestinian territory. Again this seems to have been shaped by the geopolitical conjuncture. There was an increase in violence that began at the end of September 2000 after Sharon's visit to the Haram al Sharif/Temple Mount compound – the last in long list of affronts which sparked the 'second intifada.'¹³⁹

Starting in 2001 CPT hosted short-term delegations to Hebron from various other peace groups around the world, and after one such visit the World Council of Churches established the **Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)** in 2002, which was at first organized by a CPT reservist on the CPT model.¹⁴⁰

That same year the **International Solidarity Movement (ISM)** was founded by two Palestinians and a US activist as a Palestinian led organization that calls for civilians from around the world to stand with Palestinians non-violently resisting the Israeli military. Both EAPPI and ISM continue that work, primarily using what I would call short-term accompaniers (3 months for EAPPI, ISM does not seem to require a minimum

¹³⁸ Kern, *In Harm's Way*.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 141; For more context see Derek Gregory, *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004).

¹⁴⁰ Kern, *In Harm's Way*, 177. "EAPPI Overview", n.d., <http://www.eappi.org/en/about/overview.html> (accessed October 4, 2010).

stay and considers those who stay more than 2 months to be ‘long termers’).¹⁴¹ The number of ISM accompaniers serving at a time varies greatly. In November 2010 EAPPI had their 36th group serving, made up of 26 accompaniers from eleven countries (Australia, Germany, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, UK and the US). They also have sending organizations in Canada, France, Ireland, New Zealand and Poland.¹⁴² During their service they rotate between different sites, which makes relationship building harder, but exposes them to more situations. These rotations include work in Jerusalem with Israeli peace groups. They make a strong commitment to doing report backs and organizing events when they go home. They were nominated for the Nobel peace prize in 2004.

The **International Women’s Peace Service** began their work in the village of Haris, on the West Bank, in 2002. In 2010 they moved to the village of Deir Istiya, also on the West Bank.¹⁴³ They currently have 21 long term volunteers, who commit to a minimum of three years and take turns "on the ground" serving in the house in the West Bank. They aim to have four in the house at all times, staying three months each. This has been difficult to maintain, so they have had between one and six of these women staying in the house between a month and about a year at a time. They also have short-term volunteers, who stay between 3 weeks and six months. Many serve more than once. They also organize mixed gender delegations from the UK and the German speaking countries to

¹⁴¹ “Join Us in Palestine | International Solidarity Movement”, n.d., <http://palsolidarity.org/join> (accessed June 6, 2011).

¹⁴² “EAPPI: Sending organizations”, n.d., <http://www.eappi.org/en/about/sending.html> (accessed November 12, 2010).

¹⁴³ “IWPS Background”, n.d., http://iwps.info/?page_id=629 (accessed October 4, 2010).

accompany farmers during the olive harvest. These delegations stay for two weeks.

Including these delegates they have had more than 300 serve.

The **Michigan Peace Team** (MPT) has been sending members to the West Bank (Palestine) since 1991, and have had an almost year round presence there since 2001. They currently have between 2 and 12 companions at a time in the West Bank.¹⁴⁴ At around the same time that the MPT began a year round presence in occupied Palestinian territory the **International Checkpoint Watch** was formed and served in Palestine, though it was a short lived effort in 2001 and 2002.¹⁴⁵ Given the necessary brevity of this review of global accompaniment efforts I will not include here the various Israeli solidarity and accompaniment efforts in occupied Palestinian territory. The work of groups like B'Tselem and Israeli women's *Machsom* (checkpoint) Watch,¹⁴⁶ also founded in 2001, is certainly a form of accompaniment, but here I will not consider it to be 'international.'

It is in Palestine that companions have suffered the most, and harshest, direct attacks, including the deaths of Rachel Corrie (US, 2003), Tom Hurdall (UK, 2004), and major

¹⁴⁴ They have also, as they put it, "placed peacekeepers for violence reduction projects in Bosnia, Chiapas, Haiti, the West Bank, Iraq, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, Algonquin Reservation (Canada), Juarez (Mexico), and with the Western Shoshone people." Those all seem to have been more short-term projects. They have had over 150 volunteers serve, generally for between three weeks and three months at a time. "MPT Peace Team Reports: Palestine/Israel: About MPT & Teams", n.d., <http://mptinpalestine.blogspot.com/p/about-mpt-teams.html> (accessed November 5, 2010).

¹⁴⁵ "International Checkpoint Watch - ICW", n.d., <http://www.canadazone.com/icw/mission.htm> (accessed October 4, 2010).

¹⁴⁶ "MachsomWatch", n.d., <http://www.machsomwatch.org/en> (accessed October 4, 2010); "B'Tselem - The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories", n.d., <http://www.btselem.org/English/index.asp> (accessed October 4, 2010).

injuries, including serious brain damage (Tristan Anderson, US, 2009). Israel does not seem to respond much to international pressure. This surely has something to do with huge, and apparently almost entirely unconditional, US support of the Israeli military. This is shaped by the large pro-Israel lobby and constituency in the US that is unlike that for any other country.

Asia (1989 -)

Accompaniment in **Sri Lanka** was done by Peace Brigades from 1989 to 1998. This was their fourth location, after having worked briefly in Nicaragua, then Guatemala and El Salvador. As such it was the first place that accompaniment was practiced outside of Latin America and the Caribbean, though accompaniment was also getting off to a slow start in Palestine in 1989. It was also the first place to receive international companions that had no ongoing international solidarity movement support, and the first where the US did not play a significant role in the military conflict. Yet PBI felt they were still able to effectively offer protection and stayed in Sri Lanka through 1998, when the government insisted on censoring their human rights reports.¹⁴⁷ The **Nonviolent Peaceforce** (NPO) chose Sri Lanka as their first location and began doing accompaniment there in 2003, and have continued there past the official cessation of armed conflict in 2009.

The **Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP)** was founded in 2002 at an event in Surajkund, India with attendees from 49 countries. The organizing for it was begun by David Hartsough and Mel Duncan, who each brought similar proposals for such an organization to the

¹⁴⁷ "Peace Brigades Canada: Our History."

1999 Hague Appeal for Peace (a 10,000 strong peace conference).¹⁴⁸ They have always dreamed big for this organization, and aim for it to be much larger than existing organizations, with more official recognition and funding. They have always paid accompaniers a living wage and distinguish themselves as a professional and permanent force (as opposed to most accompaniers who serve as volunteers with a minimal stipend, generally for a set term). They aim to have a mix of what they call ‘peacekeepers’ from both the global North and South, though they do not speak or write much about how this changes the dynamics of their work, an issue I will come back to in chapter eight.

It was not until a decade later that accompaniment was practiced in another Asian country. Accompaniment in **East Timor** in 1999 was a short lived effort by the Italian group Operation Dove, presumably timed around the referendum held that year on independence from Indonesia, for which UN military peacekeepers were also deployed. That same year PBI began accompaniment in **West Timor** (the other half of the island of Timor, also controlled by Indonesia) at the request of the National Human Rights Commission. That office was closed in 2008 after a joint decision with the human rights workers who were being accompanied that their organizations were now stronger and safer.¹⁴⁹ They continued, however, to work in other parts of Indonesia (Papua, Aceh, and Jakarta) until that team was closed at the end of 2010.

¹⁴⁸ “How It All Began | Nonviolent Peaceforce”, n.d., <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/about/history> (accessed November 8, 2010).

¹⁴⁹ “Peace Brigades Canada: Our History.”

It was in 2005, six years after beginning that work in West Timor and then other parts of Indonesia, that PBI opened another new team (and they have launched no other team since). Their 2005 expansion was into **Nepal**, where they currently have 14 volunteers.¹⁵⁰ The conflict in Nepal heated up that year as the king dismissed the government and used executive power to increase conflict with the armed Maoist movement. PBI's presence there is ongoing and as of 2010 they have nine companions on the team. What is striking about these teams in Asia is that US and European complicity in the violence is much less direct, and there is no broader solidarity movement in North America or Europe focused on supporting groups working for justice and peace in these countries.

The same is not true of the next team in Asia, established in 2007 in **Mindanao**, a disputed region in the Philippines, a former US colony. US troops have been involved in the conflict since 2002.¹⁵¹ One of NP's companions in Mindanao, Umar Jaleel, (a person of color from India) was kidnapped by rebels and held from February to June of 2009.¹⁵² In late 2009 the Nonviolent Peaceforce joined the civilian protection component of the International Monitoring Team (with armed peacekeepers from Malaysia, Brunei, Japan, and Libya), which was established to monitor the peace agreement between the

¹⁵⁰ Rory (2010) personal communication

¹⁵¹ Ryan Rosauo, "Clarify US role in Mindanao war--MILF - INQUIRER.net, Philippine News for Filipinos," *Inquirer Global*, September 2, 2009, <http://globalnation.inquirer.net/news/breakingnews/view/20090902-223185/Clarify-US-role-in-Mindanao-war--MILF> (accessed October 25, 2011); Jojo Malig, "WikiLeaks cables: US forces directly involved in Mindanao terror hunt |," *ABS-CBN News*, September 14, 2011, <http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/-depth/09/14/11/wikileaks-cables-us-forces-directly-involved-mindanao-terror-hunt> (accessed October 25, 2011).

¹⁵² "Jaleel," *Nonviolent Peaceforce - Jaleel*, n.d., <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/en/Jaleel2009> (accessed December 1, 2009).

Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The other organizations working as part of the agreed on ‘civilian protection component’ are the International Committee of the Red Cross and Mindanao People’s Caucus. This is the first time that accompaniers have had their role *officially* recognized by both armed actors in a conflict.

Iraq (1990 - 1991, 2002 -)

Several attempts have been made in Iraq to have an **international peace presence** of some sort, none of which seem to quite qualify as protective accompaniment, but which I will review here because CPT has been heavily involved. Just before the first Gulf War, in November 1990, Christian Peacemaker Teams sent a delegation which met with the ‘hostages’ – foreigners that were not being allowed to leave the country - and convinced the government to release those with medical conditions. For the next two months (November 1990 to January 1991) an ad-hoc group of 73 people from 15 countries calling themselves the Gulf Peace Team established a ‘peace camp’ outside Baghdad to try and stop the bombing that began after the UN deadline of January 16. They did not have a deterrent effect and evacuated soon after the bombing began.¹⁵³ I do not consider this sort of interposition between armed parties to be protective accompaniment¹⁵⁴ – particularly since they were not working with or located near any civil society

¹⁵³ Robert Burrowes, “The Persian Gulf War and the Gulf Peace Team,” in *Nonviolent Intervention Across Borders*, ed. Thomas Weber and Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan (Honolulu, HI: Spark M. Matsunaga Institute for Peace, University of Hawaii, 2000), 305–318.

¹⁵⁴ For more on the difference between interposition and accompaniment see the discussion of terms in the introduction.

organization or social resource but simply camped out in the desert.¹⁵⁵ It is interesting that this high drama did pull together what seems to have been the most multi-national team to date.¹⁵⁶

Between the first and second Gulf War, Iraq was crippled by sanctions, and the US organization Voices in the Wilderness sent over 70 delegations carrying food and medicine, beginning in 1996.¹⁵⁷ CPT began sending delegations in 2002, as Bush's rhetoric against Iraq ramped up after the September 11, 2001 attacks.¹⁵⁸ As US bombing loomed, the two organizations formed the '**Iraq Peace Team**', which put US citizens in Iraq from September 2002 through the March bombing.¹⁵⁹ Within hours of the March

¹⁵⁵ (There was then a short lived, and failed, effort at a similar sort of interposition in Croatia in 1993 called Mir Sada. For an account of this see Christine Schweitzer, "Mir Sada: The Story of a Nonviolent Intervention that Failed," in *Nonviolent intervention across borders: a recurrent vision*, ed. Thomas Weber and Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), 269–278.)¹ This turned into the Balkan Peace Team, which was in Croatia from 1994 to 2001, but doing peacebuilding activities other than accompaniment. See Dave Bekkering, "Balkan peace Team Internation in Croatia: Otvorene Oci (Open Eyes)," in *Nonviolent Intervention Across Borders: A Recurrent Vision*, ed. Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan and Thomas Weber (Honolulu, HI: Spark M. Matsunaga Institute for Peace, University of Hawaii, 2000), 191–206; "Balkan Peace Team", n.d., <http://www.peacebrigades.org/archive/bpt.html> (accessed November 9, 2010) In 1994 PBI also opened the Balkans project, which did peace building work but not protective accompaniment. That project closed in 2001 for lack of resources. ; For other actions over the years which are related to but not themselves accompaniment see the edited collection Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan and Thomas Weber, eds., *Nonviolent Intervention Across Borders* (Honolulu, HI: Spark M. Matsunaga Institute for Peace, University of Hawaii, 2000).¹

¹⁵⁶ Moser-Puangsuwan, "A short history of grassroots initiatives in unarmed peacekeeping."

¹⁵⁷ "Voices in the Wilderness: Voices in the Wilderness: A Brief History (1996-2005)", n.d., <http://vitw.org/archives/317> (accessed November 25, 2010).

¹⁵⁸ On January 6, 2003 one of the CPT delegates, George Weaver, was killed in a car accident. Kern, *In Harm's Way*.

¹⁵⁹ As they put it on their website: "We will live among the Iraqi people during any aggression directed at them, including continued economic sanctions. We will use our presence and non-violent actions to witness, understand and expose the situation of both the civilian population of Iraq and highlight the importance of facilities such as water purification plants that are critical to

20th beginning of the bombing CPT members were reporting live from Baghdad on Canadian television, and continued to do media work for the few days that they had phone lines. Other team members served as voluntary human shields at a water plant where they camped out with a banner saying “to bomb this site is a war crime”. All team members left Baghdad for Amman by April 1st, but CPTers returned on April 16th.

CPT would go on to stay through 2005, focusing on documenting abuses by US forces. In November and December of 2003 they actually handed flyers out to US soldiers encouraging them not to obey orders to abuse Iraqis.¹⁶⁰ They went on to focus on detainee issues, with family members looking for loved ones at Abu-Ghraib and other prisons – which sounds much like the work that Peace Brigades initially did with family members of the disappeared in Guatemala, though the US army was not running the prisons in Guatemala. Indeed Iraq is the only place accompaniment has been attempted where the US was an outright occupying force. Like the early work in Guatemala, the family members were not yet organized – but unlike Guatemala, they were too fearful to begin to organize or gather, and CPT’s work continued to be with individual families, and often seemed to involve CPT going on their own to the prisons or to US forces to ask for information about missing family members, in a way that looked a bit more like social

daily life. We will report on our experiences in Iraq through this website, our support teams, and all who will listen. Iraq Peace Team is not affiliated with Human Shield projects. Though we hope to remain in Iraq in the event of an attack, we don’t consider ourselves “human shields.” IPT exists to stand in solidarity with the peoples of Iraq. Voices in the Wilderness refuses to incorporate military language or ideas to describe the peace witness of IPT members.” In 2003 Voices in the Wilderness was fined \$20,000 by the US government for breaking the embargo. They refused to pay it and closed the organization. Many of the activists then formed the organization Voices for Creative Nonviolence, which has focused on civil disobedience in the US rather than going to Iraq.

¹⁶⁰ Kern, *In Harm’s Way*, 430.

work than accompaniment. Indeed Kern reports that families began directing their anger toward the team when they could find no trace of their family members.¹⁶¹ In Guatemala the army hassled the accompaniers a good bit, even bombing the PBI house,¹⁶² but still cared about their international image enough to respond to the pressure that was then generated and not do more. The guerillas in Guatemala may not have attacked accompaniers because having more international witnesses may have served them, since the vast majority of human rights abuses were being committed by the army. In Iraq CPT was not trying to influence the (weak) Iraqi government and army's compliance with international humanitarian law as much as the actions of the occupying US army itself. The US does not seem to care particularly about international pressure (lonely UN votes on the Cuba embargo or the Israeli occupation being only one sign of this). US Congress does, in some measure, respond to pressure from constituents - but CPT was not generating enough of this to have much of an impact, though they established an 'adopt a detainee' program and had over a thousand people write the government about the situation of particular detainees in Iraq.¹⁶³ The weak movement in the US against the Iraq war was more focused on getting troops out than on improving their treatment of detainees during occupation – so the CPT team could not rely on a larger movement that to generate pressure, like the Central America solidarity movement that did so much work around Guatemala in the 1980s and early 1990s, or even the current movement in the US to end military aid and involvement in Colombia. CPT's documentation of

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 435.

¹⁶² Mahony and Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards*, 107–8.

¹⁶³ Kern, *In Harm's Way*.

detainee abuse did, however, get a good deal of attention after the Abu-Grahib prisoner abuse photos hit the press in the spring of 2004. This was certainly human rights work, though not protective accompaniment. Rather the opposite, Kern reports that Iraqi human rights workers actually asked CPT to leave in 2004, saying that their presence would endanger Iraqi's they worked with.¹⁶⁴ CPT did leave, but only briefly. In early 2005 they came back to help train an Iraqi group calling themselves the Muslim Peacemaker Team.¹⁶⁵

The Abu Grahیب photos, along with the US army's assault on Fallujah in 2004, increased anger against internationals, and many aid workers were kidnapped and some killed in 2004. The armed insurgencies in Iraq, one of whom ultimately kidnapped four CPTers in November of 2005, did not seem distinguish CPT's work as different, or as a positive force.¹⁶⁶ The only one to be executed was the US citizen. Surely this is no coincidence.¹⁶⁷ What is perhaps surprising is that the Canadians and the British citizen, whose countries are close allies of the US, were not. Perhaps all of the photos that were circulated of the kidnapped CPTers opposing the occupation of Palestine made a difference. That work certainly inspired the many statements by Muslim leaders asking

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 441.

¹⁶⁵ "Muslim Peacemaker Teams - Working for peace and human rights in Iraq", n.d., <http://www.mpt-iraq.org/> (accessed November 25, 2010).

¹⁶⁶ For a good review of the incident see Peter Nyers, "In solitary, in solidarity: Detainees, hostages and contesting the anti-policy of detention," *European journal of cultural studies* 11, no. 3 (2008): 333–349.

¹⁶⁷ For more on how race and citizenship played out in this incident see Gada Mahrouse, "The Compelling Story of the White/Western Activist in the War Zone: Examining Race, Neutrality, and Exceptionalism in Citizen Journalism," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 34, no. 4 (2009): 659–674.

for their release, including, astoundingly, one signed together by Hamas, Fatah, and the Popular Front. Ultimately this was not what led to their release. It seems that British military intelligence somehow got through to one of the kidnappers. Given that he led them to the site it appears that a ransom may have been paid, though that was never made public. Ironically the kidnappers' public demand was that the US release Iraqi detainees, precisely what the CPTers had also been pressuring for.¹⁶⁸ No Iraqi detainees were publicly released as a result of either the kidnapping or CPT organizing.¹⁶⁹

CPT, surprisingly, chose to send another team back to Iraq in late 2006, after the kidnapping – though since then they have been based in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. Their work there is now focused on “accompanying displaced persons home by living in conflicted border regions and documenting human rights violations against civilian populations.”¹⁷⁰ Soon after they went back to Iraq CPTers were *again* kidnapped. On January 27, 2007 Will Van Wagenen and Peggy Gish, along with an Iraqi partner and an interpreter were taken captive. Gish and the interpreter were released after two days. Van Wagenen and the Iraqi partner were held for a week, until Feb. 4th. This second kidnapping was kept low profile. There was only one print story, in the local Salt Lake

¹⁶⁸ Kern, *In Harm's Way*.

¹⁶⁹ Tricia Gates Brown, *118 Days: Christian Peacemaker Teams Held Hostage in Iraq* (Telford, PA: Cascadia Pub. House, 2009); James Loney, *Captivity: 118 Days in Iraq and the Struggle for a World Without War* (Toronto, ON, Canada: Knopf Canada, 2011); Peggy Gish, *Iraq: a journey of hope and peace* (Waterloo, ON: Herald Press, 2004); For more on CPT in Iraq see Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, *To Baghdad and Beyond: How I Got Born Again in Babylon* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2005).

¹⁷⁰ “Iraq Project | Christian Peacemaker Teams”, n.d., <http://cpt.org/work/iraq> (accessed November 13, 2010).

city paper (where Van Wagenen is from).¹⁷¹ Perhaps a condition of the release was that there would be no media coverage. Peggy did send an email to CPT supporters on March 9th, 2007 saying that she and Will had been “abducted briefly” and that “We know that the suffering and daily threat of violence Iraqis face have been so much greater than anything we have experienced. We don't want our struggles to detract attention from their story.” I was intrigued by this, since most accompaniment seems to try to do precisely the opposite, use the experiences of accompaniers to bring attention *to* their partners. CPT chose to stay on and continues working in Kurdistan as of 2011. PBI, in a spring 2006 newsletter, said they have chosen not to work in Iraq because the armed groups there are not unified, do not have a single strategy, and are undeterred by criticism when internationals are harmed.

Other places accompaniment was tried

CPT sent exploratory delegations to Chechnya in 1995-96 but decided not to pursue it because of a lack of US involvement and limited language skills. They explored work in Bosnia in 1996, but found that their goal of accompanying refugees home was not feasible at that time. CPT sent various delegations to Puerto Rico to participate in the campaign of civil disobedience against the US bombing range on Vieques island in 2000 and 2003, but chose not to make it a permanent team because they did not have enough people to staff it. In 2002 CPT sent an exploratory delegation to Afghanistan, but again Kern reports that it did not materialize because they were unable to find people willing to

¹⁷¹ Todd Hollingshead, “Former BYU student safely home after Iraq kidnappers release him,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, February 17, 2007.

staff it in what would have been extremely difficult conditions. CPT also did seasonal summer work on the US-Mexico border in the Arizona desert with the organization No More Deaths, staffing emergency assistance camps from 2004 to 2007. Other groups have not been as public with information about locations that they explored but did not pursue, though PBI does say they considered Namibia and Pakistan.¹⁷²

Operation Dove (Operazione Colomba)¹⁷³ is an Italian accompaniment group that grew out of the Pope John XXIII community, a Catholic international lay association. It is open to “believers and non-believers alike who wish to experience within their lives the power of non-violence as the sole means by which to obtain lasting peace founded upon justice and truth”. Over 1000 volunteers have served with Operation Dove since 1992. ‘White helmets’ (an Italian term for conscientious objectors to obligatory military service) can, under Italian law, do their alternative civil service with Operation Dove.¹⁷⁴ This is the only such government sanction of accompaniment as an alternative to military service that I know of. Most of their projects have been short lived. They first went to Yugoslavia in 1992, then Sierra Leone (1997), Kosovo and Albania (1998-1999), East Timor (1999), Chiapas in Mexico (1998-2002), Chechnya (2000-2001), the Democratic Republic of Congo (2001), Israel/Palestine (since 2002), and Uganda (2005-2006). They have been in Colombia since 2009.

¹⁷² Kern, *In Harm's Way*, 4.

¹⁷³ “Operazione Colomba - Home”, n.d., <http://www.operazionecolomba.com/> (accessed November 12, 2010).

¹⁷⁴ “Our projects: Operation Dove”, n.d., http://www.operationdove.org/?page_id=35 (accessed November 4, 2010).

Africa (2011 – 2013)

Though Africa has a good deal of military peacekeeping (there are currently far and away more UN peacekeeping forces in Africa than on any other continent, as well as regional peacekeeping forces),¹⁷⁵ it has only very recently had international protective accompaniment, though several exploratory short-term efforts have been made. The only ongoing effort to establish a team seems to be that of the Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP), who were invited by two Sudanese organizations to collaborate to build Sudanese-led violence prevention teams. They established a 50 person team for the South Sudan independence referendum in 2011.¹⁷⁶ They set up several months before the referendum and will stay on through the transition. They expect to staff a team there for a total of two years. It is unclear from their materials what their local to internationals ratio is, but as you can see in their photo (see figure four) they are a primarily black team (something their web site does not discuss). I will come back to issues of race and accompaniment in chapter eight.

¹⁷⁵ For a full table of all UN and non-UN military peacekeeping deployments see International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2010* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2010) updated annually.

¹⁷⁶ For more on the NP in Sudan, and their funding by the Belgian government, see <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/sudans-north-south-border-role-civilian-peacekeepers>



Figure 4: The Nonviolent Peaceforce team in Mundri, Sudan.
The white woman on the top left, Tiffany Easthom, is the country director.¹⁷⁷
© Nonviolent Peaceforce, by permission

Peace Brigades sent an exploratory team to Chad in 1994, but did not establish a permanent presence.¹⁷⁸ Again, Operation Dove had teams in Uganda 2005-2006 – it appears from their site that they were not permanently there but did ongoing visits. It is unclear why they did not continue. They also list having been in Sierra Leone (1997), and the Democratic Republic of Congo (2001). They do not give more information on their site, but it appears these were also short-term efforts. Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) did three exploratory delegations to the Great Lakes Region in Africa from 2005-2008, visiting Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. It seems that they chose

¹⁷⁷ <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/fieldwork/all-projects/sudan-project>

¹⁷⁸ Moser-Puangsuwan, "A short history of grassroots initiatives in unarmed peacekeeping."

not to establish a project both because of lack of funding and because it seemed that the armed actors in those regions did not appear to be responsive to international pressure. As CPTer Nils Dybvig put it in an online discussion about accompaniment hosted by New Tactics, “The fear of outside scrutiny leading to international sanction is one of the things that makes unarmed accompaniment effective in the areas that it’s used. In a sense, this is another way that the world community’s neglect of African issues is playing itself out; given the context of neglect armed actors don’t believe the international community will pay attention to their abuses even with the presence of international accompaniers, so accompaniment as a tactic can’t be as effective.”¹⁷⁹ Boothe points out in that same discussion that accompaniment would not have worked in Rwanda because perpetrators of the violence were purposely targeting westerners in order to scare off outside intervention.¹⁸⁰ Hutu soldiers rounded up ten Belgian peacekeepers and killed and mutilated them, which did indeed lead to Belgian withdrawal.¹⁸¹

Liam Mahony contributed to that same online discussion with a radically different interpretation, writing, “I found that the political dynamics that logically justify

¹⁷⁹ “New Tactics | Unarmed Accompaniment”, n.d., <http://www.newtactics.org/en/blog/new-tactics/unarmed-accompaniment#comment-598> (accessed November 8, 2010) Though in fact the UN did impose sanctions on Libya in 1992; Liberia in 1992 and 2001; Somalia in 1992; parts of Angola in 1993, 1997 and 1998; Rwanda in 1994; Sudan in 1996, Sierra Leone in 1997; Ethiopia and Eritrea in 2000; and parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo from July 2003. ; A. Vines, “Monitoring UN sanctions in Africa: the role of panels of experts,” in *Verification Yearbook* (London: VERTIC, 2003) That US citizen Dybvig did not know of these sanctions is perhaps telling. .

¹⁸⁰ This was of course also a problem in Iraq, and is why international accompaniers do not work in areas of Colombia under control of the guerillas, who have in the past targeted internationals for kidnapping.

¹⁸¹ Paul Neufeld Weaver, “Restoring the Balance: Peace Teams and Violence Reduction in Chiapas, Mexico” (dissertation, Minneapolis, MN: University of St. Thomas, 2002), 117.

accompaniment as an effective tool were as evident in the African countries I looked at as they were in Latin America or Asia.” He does not specify, either here or in the Proactive Presence booklet he references,¹⁸² what those dynamics are. It seems to me that a key dynamic is US involvement in a conflict that a solidarity movement in the US can then leverage to respond to crises. Mahony does not seem to have these ways that accompaniment works in mind when he describes the informal accompaniment that he sees as happening in Africa:

“indirect or un-deliberate forms of accompaniment are being carried out all the time by people and organizations who are not explicitly using this terminology, not based in organizations with a mission to protect or deal with human rights, or often doing accompaniment as a by-product of carrying out a different mission. ... humanitarian and development organizations, for instance, often have an international component of their presence and visits to communities facing threats, and through this, although they do not claim to be offering any protection, the implicit protective value of the presence may often have the same impact. Similarly, the presence of international missionaries, UN agencies, journalists, individual solidarity activists, etc. can all have this impact through presence. So if we tried to count up the number of organizations who are doing accompaniment unconsciously or non-publicly - in Africa and elsewhere - the number would be far greater than the few organizations that consciously and rigorously use the tactic.”¹⁸³

I am intrigued by this idea that a great many humanitarian and development workers are, in a sense, serving informally as accompaniers.¹⁸⁴ Yet their numbers would still be

¹⁸² Liam Mahony, *Proactive Presence: Field strategies for civilian protection* (Geneva, Switzerland: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 2006).

¹⁸³ “New Tactics | Unarmed Accompaniment.”

¹⁸⁴ He discusses how development and humanitarian organizations can more consciously do so in Mahony, *Proactive Presence: Field strategies for civilian protection*.

dwarfed by UN peacekeeping, both in Africa and worldwide¹⁸⁵ - which is likewise dwarfed by worldwide military expenditures.¹⁸⁶ To quote the UN's own site, "The budget for UN Peacekeeping operations for the fiscal year 1 July 2010-30 June 2011 is about \$7.83 billion. By way of comparison, this is less than half of one per cent of world military expenditures in 2009. The estimated cost of all UN Peacekeeping operations from 1948 to June 2010 amounts to about \$69 billion"¹⁸⁷ - which is equivalent to what the US spent in 96 days fighting in Iraq.¹⁸⁸

Trends

I have been unable to compile an overall number of protective companions or total budgets as little information is available, but the countries in which they are working, in order from greatest number of companions active in June 2011 to least (by my best guess according to online information) are:

- Colombia,
- Palestine,
- Guatemala,
- Sudan
- Sri Lanka,
- Philippines (Mindanao),
- Mexico,
- Nepal,

¹⁸⁵ Again, for annual UN peacekeeping statistics see International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2010*.

¹⁸⁶ Neufeld Weaver, "Restoring the Balance: Peace Teams and Violence Reduction in Chiapas, Mexico," 32.

¹⁸⁷ "Financing peacekeeping. United Nations Peacekeeping", n.d., <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/financing.shtml> (accessed January 13, 2012).

¹⁸⁸ "National Priorities Project", n.d., <http://nationalpriorities.org/> (accessed October 25, 2011).

- Iraq (Kurdistan),
- Nicaragua,
- Honduras, and
- Canada (First Nations territory).

A list of what organizations are accompanying in each country is provided in tables one and two (Appendix A). As detailed in table three (Appendix A), other countries where accompaniment has been done in the past but is not currently being done are El Salvador, Haiti, East Timor, Chechnya, and the Balkans (though again, what was done in the Balkans was not quite accompaniment).

A list of organizations that have done and are now doing international protective accompaniment is provided in table four (Appendix A). Countries that have had more than two different international organizations practicing accompaniment are Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico and Palestine. Those that have only had one or two are First Nations territory in North America, Honduras, Nicaragua, Iraq, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Philippines (Mindanao) and Sudan (see map, figure one). Though Colombia did not receive a team until 1991, it is now the country with the largest number of international groups with twelve, including several that are only in Colombia and thus not included here. I outline the history and work of those groups in chapter six.

It has been hard to find information on how many actual accompaniers were at each site and when, but it seems that the largest group of accompaniers were in Guatemala in the late 1980s and early 1990s, then Chiapas in the mid 1990s, then Colombia starting in the late 1990s, and in the last five years a growing number have been in Palestine (see tables one, two and three in Appendix A). In the last year two new small accompaniment

projects were begun in Honduras. These are all countries in conflict, at times when the conflict has been particularly “hot” – but they are also, notably, countries where, and generally when, the US was a major player in the conflict. Accompaniment groups rarely talk explicitly about this, though Neufeld, a CPT reservist, wrote in his dissertation that, “CPT chooses to intervene in conflicts where the US and/or Canadian governments are at least an indirect actor. This accentuates the power of the CPT intervention.” I believe that it is much more than simply a matter of accentuating but actually a key part of how accompaniment works. Accompaniers have again and again worked to protect the accompanied from state and parastate actors who receive support from the US, and sometimes from Europe and Canada. This means that accompaniers, who tend to be from those countries, have some leverage – they are able to pressure their own governments to pressure the client governments (and in some cases to pressure those governments to then pressure paramilitary actors). This is a more direct and effective pressure than the general international pressure to follow human rights norms that writers on accompaniment often refer to.¹⁸⁹ Again, there is no clear data but it seems that overall most accompaniers are from the US, followed by Western Europe, then Canada (see appendix A). PBI has ‘country groups’ that recruit and support accompaniers in Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK and the US.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ e.g. Coy, “Cooperative Accompaniment and Peace Brigades International in Sri Lanka,” 90.

¹⁹⁰ “Become a volunteer: PBI”, n.d., <http://www.pbi-colombia.org/los-proyectos/pbi-colombia/voluntarios/?L=1> (accessed February 24, 2011).

Accompaniment continues to be connected to solidarity movements working to end US militarism in Latin America. Yet it has also expanded beyond this. Accompaniment, in much smaller numbers, is now being done in countries like Nepal and Sudan, which have no solidarity movements in the US or Europe, and where the US does not play a key role in the conflict.¹⁹¹ There accompaniment is done on a civilian peacekeeper (rather than solidarity movement) model. Given patterns of displacement it is much less likely that someone from the US will have previously met, and been inspired, by a refugee from Nepal than one from Guatemala. These countries are also much further from the US and require a much more expensive plane ticket and lengthy trip, a barrier for many volunteers (this also makes it less likely they will have gone previously on a two week ‘delegation’ that inspires them to make the longer term commitment of accompaniment). Given that these are countries with what linguists call ‘languages of lesser diffusion’, it is also less likely that accompaniers from North America or Europe will speak, say, Timorese than Spanish, and have been drawn to make personal connections through language practice. This also generally requires the accompaniment organization to provide language training.

This move away from Latin America began in 1989, with Sri Lanka and Palestine, but really took off in 1999 and 2000, with East Timor and Indonesia. It could also be considered part of a rising trend at the time of NGO-ization or professionalization of

¹⁹¹ The latter cannot be said of Indonesia or East Timor, but the US there does not play as large a role in the conflict as they do in the Latin American countries.

activism.¹⁹² The premise of accompaniment is that there will be an international response not only if something happens to the *accompanier*, but if something happens to the *accompanied* and the *accompanier* sees it. In most accompaniment that response comes from solidarity movement supporters who receive urgent action emails and make calls and write letters. More and more however PBI and others, particularly it seems in countries outside of Latin America, rely instead on a response from embassy officials and supportive politicians, or as Coy puts it ‘policy elites’ that they meet with regularly and cultivate ‘insider status’ with.¹⁹³ I come back to this issue in more detail in chapter six.

Conclusion

More recently started accompaniment efforts have been moving away from accompaniment’s Christian, solidarity movement, and Latin American roots. They have also moved away from conflicts strongly shaped by US involvement and are not necessarily going in at particularly ‘hot’ geopolitical conjunctures. Yet my sense is that of *accompaniers* in the field today around the world, the majority are still in Latin America (see Appendix A). Again this is hard to verify without hard numbers for *accompaniers* with each organization, something I hope to address in future research. It is also hard to say whether most *accompaniers* today are part of the solidarity movement, as this seems to be understood to mean different things by different organizations (see my discussion of this debate in chapter six). Some of the largest accompaniment organizations operating today have Christian ties (CPT, WFP and EAPPI – smaller

¹⁹² INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2009).

¹⁹³ Coy, “Cooperative Accompaniment and Peace Brigades International in Sri Lanka,” 94.

Christian groups are FOR, SweFOR, OD and PPF), though not all accompaniers with those groups identify as Christian. FOR and SweFOR in particular often operate as secular organizations day to day in Colombia, but have a strong base of support amongst ecumenical religious activists in the US and Sweden.

More recently launched accompaniment projects, such as those in Asia and those of the Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) in general, rely on a nonpartisan model rather than on solidarity movement support, a difference I will look at more closely in chapter six. Though the NP presents itself as able to go anywhere, I foresee accompaniment continuing to be done primarily in those countries where the US in particular, and to some extent Europe, plays a key role in the conflict. Given that accompaniment relies on pressure from solidarity networks, it will be most effective in those countries where it has that sort of leverage. Accompaniment does not necessarily have to be in Latin America nor have Christian ties to work, but I do believe that it is most effective when it is done in countries where the US in particular is supporting one of the armed actors in the conflict, and when it is part of a broader solidarity movement. Of course there are other factors that shape accompaniments ability to ‘work’ (i.e., provide protection and support), such as being in a country with a language that is widely spoken in the US and Europe. The other factor that appears time and again in the brief sketches in this chapter is the geopolitical conjuncture in which accompaniers act (so not just where but when).

As I said at the start of this chapter, I do not assume that accompaniment was effective at providing protection and support in all of the countries described here. Accompaniment has been particularly under attack in Iraq and Palestine. I mentioned here only murder,

serious injury and kidnapping of accompaniers (all in those two places, with the exception of one kidnapping in Mindanao), but accompaniers have also faced a series of arrests and deportations around the world.¹⁹⁴ Yet the latter attacks do not necessarily mean that accompaniment was not ‘working’. To further explore the question of how accompaniment works requires a closer look at how it is being done. I do this for accompaniment in Colombia, the country that currently has the largest number of international accompaniment groups. But first I turn, in the next two chapters, to a review of the Colombian context, highlighting three aspects of it that make accompaniment particularly effective there – land grabs, US involvement, and racialization. Only one of these came to light in the stories in this chapter, but I suspect that all three might be found to be relevant to how accompaniment works in other countries if those cases were looked at more closely.

¹⁹⁴ Many of these are detailed in Mahony and Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards*.

Chapter 3: Why Colombia?

Colombia is the country with the largest number of international protective accompaniment organizations, and yet still there are many more communities and organizations requesting accompaniment. Accompaniment is widely perceived as effective protection by Colombians that are accompanied and those that request accompaniment. In the last chapter I looked at factors that have helped accompaniment ‘work’ across time and place. I now turn more specifically to factors of the Colombian conflict that shape how accompaniment ‘works’ well there: land grabs and US involvement. The third major factor of the Colombian context that shapes how accompaniment works is racialization, which intersects with issues of land, but which I will describe separately in the next chapter. I do not mean to imply that these three factors alone explain the conflict, which is much more complicated than that, or even that they are the three most important factors in the conflict.¹⁹⁵ Instead I focus on these three

¹⁹⁵ For a review of different analyses of the violence in Colombia see Fernán E. González, Ingrid Johanna Bolívar, and Teófilo Vázquez, *Violencia política en Colombia: de la nación fragmentada a la construcción del estado* (Bogotá, Colombia: CINEP, Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular, 2003); For other useful analyses of the conflict in Spanish see Daniel Pécaut, *Guerra contra la sociedad* (Bogotá, Colombia: Espasa, 2001); Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Instituto de Estudios Políticos y Relaciones IEPRI, Instituto de Estudios Políticos y Relaciones Internacionales, *Nuestra guerra sin nombre: transformaciones del conflicto en Colombia* (Bogotá, Colombia: Editorial Norma, 2006); Alejandro Reyes Posada and Universidad Nacional de Colombia, *Geografía de la guerra: un estudio de la Universidad Nacional; [investigación de Alejandro Reyes Posada]*. (Bogotá, Colombia: Multirevistas Editores, S.A., 1999); In English see Nazih Richani, *Systems of violence: the political economy of war and peace in Colombia* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002); Forrest Hylton, *Evil Hour in Colombia* (London; New York: Verso, 2006); Virginia Marie Bouvier, *Colombia: building peace in a time of war* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2009); Charles W. Bergquist, Ricardo

as the factors of the conflict that most shape how it is that accompaniment ‘works’ in Colombia.¹⁹⁶

I start this chapter by describing the basic parameters of the armed conflict in Colombia – that is, who is fighting who. To explain some of what they are fighting about, I then turn to the history of land grabs and violence in Colombia. I then describe the history of US involvement, looking first at the US’s role in the formation of the guerillas, and then in the formation of the paramilitaries. This leads me to a review of the current state of struggles over land and the armed actors, and then a look at US involvement in the conflict today. I conclude by pointing to how land grabs and US involvement shape how accompaniment works in Colombia. In essence, resistance to land grabs is particularly spatial and lends itself well to accompaniment, and US involvement gives accompaniers the leverage that they use to generate pressure on the Colombian state to protect those they are accompanying by pressuring the US state to pressure the Colombian state. I describe how this is done day to day and through chains of solidarity in more detail in chapter seven. Here I detail the US involvement that provides that leverage. Again, this chapter is a highly selective account of the Colombian conflict limited to those factors that account for international accompaniment. The context of the conflict is much wider and involves much more complicated internal political and economic dynamics.

Peñaranda, and Gonzalo Sánchez G, *Violence in Colombia, 1990-2000: waging war and negotiating peace* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001).

¹⁹⁶ Though this chapter will offer some sense of it indirectly, my aim here is not to discuss why those Colombians who are accompanied are under attack. That is a different and complicated story that has not only to do with land, but also with an ideology that painted anyone who worked for social justice as communist and a guerilla sympathizer. The guerillas’ discourse of ‘combining all forms of struggle’ also made such attacks worse.

Armed conflict and political violence

During my fieldwork in Colombia (2007 – 2009) there were a number of ‘armed actors’ involved in a conflict that reached back to the middle of the twentieth century. This conflict has changed over time and is variable across space. Establishing its parameters is difficult because it is so dynamic, and particularly because it is not one actor fighting another but involves multiple actors who have had different alliances across time and region, as well as varied relations to the state and its armed forces and national police. It is a classic case of ‘late modern war’ in which you have the advanced military of the state confronting and occasionally collaborating with non-state actors in a conflict with no clearly defined beginning or end in time or space.¹⁹⁷ The political roots of the conflict lie in struggles over land and resources. Those struggles have frequently taken the form of armed conflict as a result of limited democratic space and the repressive response of the Colombian state and its auxiliaries.

To characterize the war in Colombia as a conflict between right and left is an oversimplification, but in broad strokes the armed actors are the leftist FARC guerillas (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* – The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), the leftist ELN guerillas (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional* – National Liberation Army), the Colombian armed forces, the Colombian national police, and the right-wing paramilitaries. Many of the paramilitaries were previously grouped in the AUC (*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* – United Colombian Self-defense Forces) but

¹⁹⁷ By “late modern war” Gregory is referring to both what are called “new wars” (over there) and the Revolution in Military Affairs (over here). For an analysis of the relationship between these two and the changing dynamics of war see Derek Gregory, “War and peace,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 35, no. 2 (April 2010): 154–186.

officially demobilized in 2005. Yet many paramilitaries still exist and there is disagreement as to how new these are, and whether they are now simply criminal gangs or still have political aims. They are sometimes called BACRIM, short for *bandas criminales*, criminal gangs, and sometimes *neoparamilitaries*. In broad strokes the guerillas are fighting against both the state forces and the paramilitaries, who collaborate to different degrees. But the picture is actually much messier. The state has, to different degrees, worked to distance itself from the paramilitaries – and in some areas the guerillas and the paramilitaries have actually been found to be collaborating to traffic drugs.

As is the nature of late modern war, thousands of unarmed actors have been killed. It is hard to get reliable numbers for deaths, especially when many are disappeared and when it can be dangerous to report your loved ones as dead. Statistics like this are of course used as part of the contest over truth, and are anything but neutral abstractions.¹⁹⁸ The number seems to be hugely more than were killed in Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala, or any other war in the Americas – though very rarely is a number actually put on it. The Indigenous Association of Cauca, one of the strongest indigenous groups in the country, does give a number, saying that over a million people have been killed. They count 600,000 between 1947 and 1955, a period known as 'La Violencia', 100,000 between 1956 and 1988, and then some 200,000 deaths between 1989 and 2007.¹⁹⁹ Other groups

¹⁹⁸ Tate, *Counting the Dead*; Diane M. Nelson, "Reckoning the after/math of war in Guatemala," *Anthropological Theory* 10, no. 1–2 (March 1, 2010): 87–95.

¹⁹⁹ "Asociación de Cabildos de Indígenas Norte del Cauca - ACIN", n.d., <http://www.nasaacin.org/> (accessed February 8, 2011).

give higher numbers for the most recent period.²⁰⁰ The Colombian government does not, at least publicly, track overall deaths due to the conflict.

Land

The dynamics of the Colombian conflict vary across time and space, and I spoke to accompaniers working in various regions around the country. Yet there are some general characteristics that stand out. What is most fought over in the Colombian conflict is control over land. The numbers of people violently expelled from their lands (largely by paramilitaries) took off in the mid 1980s and has continued to grow. From the mid 1980s through to 2009 in Colombia around one in 10 people had to flee their homes, communities, and land - over 4 million in total.²⁰¹ More than 80% of those were displaced after 2000 (when Colombian army's Plan Colombia began), and 98% were displaced from rural areas - which is to say it is the rural poor whose land is being taken.²⁰² Entire regions have been turned into "landscapes of fear."²⁰³

²⁰⁰ "Banco de Datos de Derechos Humanos y Violencia Política - Cinep", n.d., <http://www.nocheyniebla.org/> (accessed February 8, 2011).

²⁰¹ "CODHES: Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento", n.d., <http://www.codhes.org/> (accessed February 8, 2011); CSPPDF: Comisión de Seguimiento a la Política Pública sobre Desplazamiento Forzado., *Magnitud del despalo y abandono forzado de bienes de la Población Desplazada en Colombia: III Encuesta Nacional de la Comisión de Seguimiento a la Política Pública sobre el Desplazamiento Forzado* (Bogotá, Colombia: Centro de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia, n.d.).

²⁰² ^sMost are internally displaced, which is to say that they flee to another part of Colombia, though some with more resources flee to other countries, primarily across the border to Ecuador, and next to formal asylum in Canada. Diana Arango and Annalise Romoser, *Closer to Home: A Critical Analysis of Colombia's Proposed Land Law* (Baltimore, MD and Bogotá, Colombia: U.S. Office on Colombia, Lutheran World Relief and IndePaz, February 25, 2011), <http://www.usofficeoncolombia.org/> (accessed February 26, 2011) For the experiences of these

By the 1980s land distribution in Colombia was already one of the most unequal in the world, and it has continued to get far worse. From the colonial period through to today political conflicts have turned around control over land for economic activities.²⁰⁴

Colombia started exporting coffee in 1870, United Fruit started exporting bananas in 1900, and barbed wire made its first appearance around that time, expanding and enclosing ranch lands. LeGrand argues that these activities pushed more people to the ‘frontiers’, starting a long running cycle where settlers (*colonos*) would clear and cultivate the land, but were followed a decade or so later by men with resources who used various methods to push them off their small plots (which they often had no legal title to) and consolidate them into larger private properties.²⁰⁵ This cycle of displacement has been repeated again and again over the years as ‘frontier’ land has taken on new value when ‘new’ commercial crops emerge, or other natural resources are found or become more valuable.

LeGrande’s argument has been widely cited and taken up by other analysts of violence in Colombia. González, Bolívar and Vásquez call it a phenomena of ‘permanent campesino colonization’ stretching back to colonial times, and emphasize that those

forced migrants see ; Pilar Riaño and Marta Villa, eds., *Poniendo Tierra de Por Medio* (Medellin: Corporacion Region, 2008).

²⁰³ Ulrich Oslender, “Another History of Violence: The Production of ‘Geographies of Terror’ in Colombia’s Pacific Coast Region,” *Latin American Perspectives* 35, no. 5 (September 1, 2008): 79; Ulrich Oslender, “Spaces of Terror and Fear on Colombia’s Pacific Coast,” in *Violent geographies: fear, terror, and political violence*, ed. Derek Gregory and Allan Pred (NY: Routledge, 2007), 111.

²⁰⁴ Ulrich Oslender, “Violence in development: the logic of forced displacement on Colombia’s Pacific coast,” *Development in Practice* 17, no. 6 (2007): 757.

²⁰⁵ Catherine LeGrand, “The Colombian crisis in historical perspective,” *Canadian journal of Latin American and Caribbean studies* 28, no. 55–56 (2003): 3.

peripheral colonization zones were racialized and had less socio-economic control by elites and the church. As the structures of power, control, and concentration of land ownership moved in to those zones, campesinos were repeatedly pushed out. Though this process started early, they argue that in the middle of the twentieth century more than half of Colombia was still a ‘frontier zone’, and that over time the areas most disputed between armed actors have been these zones.²⁰⁶

The trends have varied by region, but LeGrande argues that in general terms in the 1970s the new crop was marijuana, in the 1980s and 1990s it was coca leaf for cocaine, in 2000s it was oil palm for biodiesel.²⁰⁷ In the late 1980 there were significant new discoveries of oil and coal and new oil discoveries in particular have continued.²⁰⁸ In the last few years as the price of gold has taken off, so too have gold mines— such that many are said to be turning from drug trafficking to gold mining.²⁰⁹ Small plots and mines are being taken and consolidated into larger holdings.²¹⁰ There are regional and temporal

²⁰⁶ González, Bolívar, and Vázquez, *Violencia política en Colombia*, 260–265, 315–318 They also present a nuanced argument about which of these zones have been dominated by guerillas, which by paramilitaries, and how and why each has been moving towards the others’ zones.

²⁰⁷ Given the difficulty of getting crops to market across the mountains on the few roads, which frequently wash out under heavy rains, crops that are light and of high value have often been the only profitable option in remote areas.

²⁰⁸ Catherine LeGrand, “The Roots and Evolution of Conflict in Colombia” (presented at the Colombia, the Conflicts and Beyond, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada, April 19, 2009) US citizens are the major consumers of all of these commodities.

²⁰⁹ Heather Walsh, “Gold Eclipses Cocaine as Rebels Tap Colombian Mining Wealth,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 14, 2011, http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/g/a/2011/10/14/bloomberg_articlesLSYNAC6KLVS5.DTL (accessed October 18, 2011).

²¹⁰ This is facilitated by the new mining code passed in the mid 1990s, which also drastically reduced royalties to the state down to 0.4% on subsoil resources, and was designed with the help of CIDA, the Canadian Institute for Development Assistance. Michael O Tuathail, “The

variations,²¹¹ but in broad strokes this is an ongoing cycle of accumulation through dispossession.²¹² This development model is made possible by, and relies on, violence.²¹³

These land grabs have aggravated an already extremely unequal division of wealth in Colombia. In 2009 the UNDP ranked Colombia as the 6th most unequal country in the world after Angola, Haiti, Botswana, Comoros and Namibia.²¹⁴ Land concentration in Colombia is striking and, again, is one of the worst in the world. According to the UNDP in 2011, Colombia's GINI coefficient for land is 0.85.²¹⁵ The top 1% now own 52% of the land. Worse still, they do not use it well. A recent World Bank report talks about the '*ganaderización*' (cattleization) of the country. Some 41 million hectares that were before used to grow crops are now used to rear 21 million cows (at an average of

Converging Paths of Social movements" (presented at the Colombia: The Conflicts and Beyond, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada, April 19, 2009).

²¹¹ For a carefully documented examination of violence and land grabs in the coastal Caribbean region of Colombia over a period of 20 years see Donny Meertens and Absalón Machado, *La tierra en disputa: memorias del despojo y resistencias campesinas en la Costa Caribe 1960-2010* (Bogotá, Colombia: Grupo de Memoria Histórica de la Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación, 2010), <http://memoriahistorica-cnrr.org.co/s-informes/informe-12/> (accessed December 27, 2011); For an analysis of these dynamics on the Pacific coast see Arturo Escobar, *Territories of difference: place, movements, life, redes* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).

²¹² Harvey argues for using this term rather than Marx's "primitive" or "original" accumulation since it is ongoing. See his chapter explaining this concept in David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005). In that book however Harvey does not emphasize the role of violence in carrying out acts of dispossession. Instead he writes of how the dispossession will create resistance that will then be met with repression, p. 208.

²¹³ Oslender, "Violence in development"; Oslender, "Another History of Violence."

²¹⁴ Sebastian Castaneda, "Land, Colombia's natural resource curse," *Colombia Reports*, October 28, 2009, <http://colombiareports.com/opinion/117-cantonese-arepas/6609-land-colombias-natural-resource-curse.html> (accessed December 20, 2011).

²¹⁵ The GINI coefficient for land is a measure of land concentration that ranges between 0 and 1, where 0 is total equality *Informe Nacional de Desarrollo Humano 2011: Colombia rural, razones por la esperanza* (UNDP Colombia, 2011), <http://pnudcolombia.org/indh2011/> (accessed December 20, 2011).

about two hectares per cow).²¹⁶ But food crops are also being replaced by oil palm plantations, under a development model promoted by the US.²¹⁷

This is an ongoing massive counter-land reform. Displacement is not a side effect of the armed conflict - the conflict turns around the theft of land and resources. Oslender argues that “displacement must be understood as a development strategy” and that terror is its tool.²¹⁸ This dispossession has further concentrated land and wealth over the last twenty years, in what was already one of the most land and income unequal countries in the world.²¹⁹ An ongoing detailed survey estimates that 6.65 million hectares have been lost through force from 1980 through July 2010, without including collectively owned indigenous and Afro-Colombian territories.²²⁰ But those communities have been the worst hit, as this displacement has been heavily racialized.²²¹ Serje calls this “territorial pacification” and argues that they are hardest hit because the territories of these

²¹⁶ Nazih Richani, “The World Bank Development Report and the Colombian Conflict,” *NACLA Report on the Americas*, November 21, 2011, <https://nacla.org/blog/2011/11/21/world-bank-development-report-and-colombian-conflict> (accessed December 20, 2011) Oil palm for biodiesel was also aggressively promoted by President Uribe and the Colombian elite are heavily involved in the project. Again, I focus here on those factors of the conflict that shape the power of accompaniment, rather than other factors such as the role played by national elites.

²¹⁷ Teo Ballvé, “The Dark Side of Plan Colombia,” *The Nation*, June 15, 2009, <http://www.thenation.com/article/dark-side-plan-colombia> (accessed November 1, 2010).

²¹⁸ Oslender, “Violence in development,” 759.

²¹⁹ The annual World Bank Gini index of inequality can be found at <http://www.gapminder.org/data/>. The UN calculates the Gini slightly differently, and it is at <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/indicators/160.html>. Though it is difficult to collect reliable data in a war zone, these measures all point to a history of extreme inequality

²²⁰ “CODHES - Comisión de seguimiento a la política pública sobre desplazamiento forzado”, n.d., http://www.codhes.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=39&Itemid=52 (accessed November 1, 2010).

²²¹ Mario Murillo, *Colombia and the United States: War, Unrest, and Destabilization* (New York, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2003), 175.

communities are the last bastion of untapped natural resources.²²² This displacement continues, despite the supposed demobilization of paramilitaries.

It is largely those communities that are resisting this displacement, or were pushed off but went back to their lands, or the human rights groups that support them, that are protected by international companions. Companions' ability to deter such attacks has a good deal to do with the 'special role' of the US in Colombia. The paramilitaries of course do not say that they exist to violently steal land. They claim to be fighting the guerillas. So before describing the evolution of the paramilitaries, let me step back and tell the story of the guerillas, intertwined with the history of US involvement.

The history of the US role and the guerillas

In 1903 the US, angered by Colombian refusal to build a canal in what is now Panama, brought a war ship near the coast and urged elites in that region to claim independence from Colombia. The US then immediately recognized Panama as an independent country and signed the canal treaty with them instead.²²³ This generated anti-US sentiment in Colombia, which continued for years and mixed with other frustrations.

The first major strike in Colombia was in 1924 against the US Tropical Oil company.

The next was the 1928 strike against the US corporation United Fruit (now Chiquita),

²²² Margarita Rosa. Serje de la Ossa, "Iron Maiden Landscapes: The Geopolitics of Colombia's Territorial Conquest," trans. Ashley. Caja et al., *South Central Review* 24, no. 1 (2007): 37–55.

²²³ US involvement actually began earlier, the first of 20 US military invasions of the isthmus was in 1856. For more history of the US role and how Panama was separated from Colombia see the book by FOR Colombia program co-director John Lindsay-Poland, *Emperors in the jungle: the hidden history of the U.S. in Panama* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).

which resulted in the massacre that García Márquez's drew on for his novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.²²⁴ Organizing for workers' rights and land reform continued to rise in the 1930s and 1940s, coming to a head with the presidential campaign of Gaitán, who was murdered in 1948. After his murder insurrections broke out in cities and rural areas across the country, and were savagely suppressed for threatening not only government authority but also racial hierarchies and property rights. Years of repressive violence followed, in part as a reaction to the radical thrust of 'Gaitanismo',²²⁵ but also tied to the pushing of small scale coffee farmers off their land by large coffee producers.²²⁶ The fighting in the late 1940s and 1950s is called simply '*la violencia*', and scholars and commentators disagree as to whether the current conflict began then, or in the 1960s with the formal formation of the guerillas, or in the 1980s with the formation of the paramilitaries and the increase in levels of violence.

State repression in the 1950s was aided by the US. By the 1950s Colombia was one of the top recipients of US military aid and training in the Americas.²²⁷ It was also one of the first places to receive US Peace Corps volunteers in the mid 1950s. It was the only Latin American nation to send troops, including a frigate, to fight with the US in the

²²⁴ Michael Taussig, *Law in a Lawless Land: Diary of a Limpieza in Colombia* (Chicago, IL: University Of Chicago Press, 2005), 193.

²²⁵ The organizing in the 1930s and 1940s is described well in English by Hylton, *Evil Hour in Colombia*, 31–49; For a fuller analysis of the dynamics of the period known as "la violencia" see Mary Roldán, *Blood and fire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).

²²⁶ Tate, *Counting the Dead*, 38.

²²⁷ Russell Crandall, *Driven by drugs* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008), 20–21; By 1967 US military aid to Colombia had reached 160 million, the largest amount for any Latin American nation prior to the El Salvador aid in the 1980s. Doug Stokes, *America's Other War: Terrorizing Colombia* (London: Zed Books, 2005), 74.

Korean War in the 1950s. Colombian veterans of that war then directed state terror back home.²²⁸ Stokes argues that it was the first country in Latin America to adopt US counterinsurgency measures, before there really was an armed insurgency to counter.²²⁹ What there was were peasant *colonos*, settlers who had been pushed to the ‘frontier’ by violence, who had organized for self-defense against the ongoing state attacks into what came to be known as ‘independent peasant republics’.²³⁰ These *colonos* were influenced by the Colombian communist party, but were not organized together as any sort of insurgency.²³¹ In 1955 the Colombian state started using napalm against these areas.²³² Aerial bombing continued through the 1960s. It was another Korean war veteran, with US advisers supervising from a nearby base, who in 1966 led the assault on the largest such zone, Marquetalia in 1966. The FARC guerillas consider this attack to have led to their founding that year by those who escaped (fleeing to the next ‘frontier’ – distant rural areas with virtually no state presence).²³³ Since its founding, equitable access to land has

²²⁸ For example, a battalion that had recently returned from Korea massacred 1500 peasants outside of El Libano in 1952. Hylton, *Evil Hour in Colombia*, 40–42.

²²⁹ Stokes, *America’s Other War*, 5.

²³⁰ Today’s peace communities do not talk about the connection but could be seen as a similar move, though they are not armed.

²³¹ LeGrand, “The Colombian crisis in historical perspective,” 8.

²³² Greg Grandin, *Empire’s workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the rise of the new imperialism* (New York, NY: Holt Paperbacks, 2007), 98.

²³³ Hylton, *Evil Hour in Colombia*, 56; LeGrand, “The Colombian crisis in historical perspective,” 8; This makes them the oldest currently active guerilla group in the world. For an overview of the history of the FARC see Garry Leech, *The FARC: The Longest Insurgency* (London: Zed Books, 2011).

been one of the central demands of the FARC.²³⁴ It is also the central demand of the smaller guerilla group operating in Colombia today, the ELN.

The history of the US role and the paramilitaries

The origin of the paramilitaries is also entwined with US involvement. It is no secret that the US has trained and funded death squads across the Americas, or that US training manuals advocated their use.²³⁵ Publicly the US responded in the early 1960s to the growth of rebel movements across the Americas (and the Cuban revolution in 1959) with Kennedy's Alliance for Progress program, which ostensibly promoted democracy. But at the same time the US was involved in training death squads and supporting coups in Uruguay, Bolivia, Argentina and Chile from 1964 to 1976.²³⁶ As part of that same push in 1962 "General William Yarborough, for example, advised the Colombian government to set up irregular units trained to, "execute paramilitary, sabotage and/or terrorist activities against known communist proponents." As Grandin puts it, this is "as good a description of a death squad as any."²³⁷ The Colombian government did indeed at that

²³⁴ Castaneda, "Land, Colombia's natural resource curse."

²³⁵ Stokes, *America's Other War*, 60, 76. There is considerable evidence that the CIA, DEA, the Israeli Defense Force (close to the US), and US military contractors have armed and trained Colombian paramilitaries, particularly those around mining and energy mega-projects. See also the description of repeated exposure of this support in Francisco Ramirez Cuellar, *The Profits of Extermination: Big Mining in Colombia* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2005), 67–71; and details in Jasmin Hristov, *Blood and Capital: The Paramilitarization of Colombia*, Ohio University research in international studies, Latin America studies series no. 48 (Athens: Ohio University Press; Between the Lines, 2009), 60–63.

²³⁶ Grandin, *Empire's workshop*, 47–48.

²³⁷ Yarborough had just come back from Vietnam, and there was a good deal of traffic of personnel and tactics at the time back and forth from Latin America and Vietnam. Grandin argues that it was in Colombia that the US did its first pre-Vietnam experiment with scorched earth – that

time openly establish legal paramilitaries.²³⁸ In 1965 decree 2298 was passed, and converted into law 48 in 1968, which remained in effect until 1989, authorizing the executive branch to create ‘civil patrols’.²³⁹ Despite this legal beginning in the 1960s, the academic literature on paramilitaries in Colombia often places them as beginning in the 1980s and rarely mentions early links to the US.²⁴⁰

Paramilitary violence did take off in the 1980s. The first formal peace negotiations began between the FARC and the government in 1982. They signed a ceasefire in 1984 and many members of the FARC were inspired to lay down arms and enter electoral politics. They formed the Unión Patriótica in 1985 - and won 5% of the votes in the 1986 national election. In 1988, when local elections were held for the first time, they won 16 mayoral races, including several in the area around the San José peace

is razing villages and setting up “strategic hamlets” (a sort of opposite to “peace communities.”). Ibid., 96–98.

²³⁸ Of course there is far more to the changing phenomena of paramilitarism than US influence or links to the Colombia state, which is no monolith. Here I emphasize the US role as US involvement in the conflict is what accompanies leverage to generate pressure from the US on the Colombian state to then pressure the paramilitaries, a process I detail in chapter *. For a full history and analysis of the paramilitaries see Gustavo Duncan, *Los señores de la guerra: de paramilitares, mafiosos y autodefensas en Colombia* (Bogotá, Colombia: Planeta, 2006).

²³⁹ Hristov, *Blood and Capital*, 62 argues that General Landazabal, another veteran of the Korean war, was one of those primarily responsible for their creation and incorporation into the military system.

²⁴⁰ For a review of the literature and the various takes on paramilitarism see Edwin Cruz Rodríguez, “Los Estudios Sobre El Paramilitarismo En Colombia,” *Análisis Político* 20, no. 60 (May 2007): 117–134; Human rights groups are more likely to talk about this as the first phase of paramilitarism, see for example Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo, “CONSOLIDACIÓN PARAMILITAR E IMPUNIDAD EN COLOMBIA”, March 14, 2006, <http://www.colectivodeabogados.org/CONSOLIDACION-PARAMILITAR-E> (accessed December 27, 2011) which goes back to death squads of “la violencia” in the 1940s and 1950s and ties their systematization to influence from the US, and Yarborough in particular, in the 1960s.

community.²⁴¹ This modest success won them a landslide of repression. Nearly every candidate they ran was killed, along with many other party activists. Over 3000 in all were assassinated within 10 years – almost all killed by paramilitaries.²⁴²

In the mid 1980s the cocaine trade soared and drug traffickers had money they needed to ‘clean.’ Many invested in land, becoming owners of large cattle ranches.²⁴³ They and other landed elites also invested in ‘security’ for these ranches, ostensibly from the guerillas, and turned the previously existing paramilitaries into a much larger beast. The US continued to surreptitiously provide support and training, often through Israeli Defense Force trainers, most notoriously Yair Klein.²⁴⁴

In the mid 1990s the paramilitaries became more unified and coordinated, many of them through the loose confederation AUC (*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*, United Self-defense forces of Colombia).²⁴⁵ Paramilitary activity and power increased in the 1990s and López argues that they increased their presence in resistance to the democratic reforms of the new Constitution (passed in 1991) as a way to maintain the power of

²⁴¹ Stokes, *America's Other War*, 76; Hylton, *Evil Hour in Colombia*, 77; Lesley Gill, *The School of the Americas: military training and political violence in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); Grandin, *Empire's workshop*.

²⁴² For a full account, including the ongoing struggle for justice, see Ivan Cepeda Castro, “Colombia - Genocidio a Union Patriótica: GENOCIDIO POLÍTICO: EL CASO DE LA UNIÓN PATRIÓTICA”, n.d., <http://www.desaparecidos.org/colombia/fmcepeda/genocidio-up/cepeda.html#sdfootnote2sym> (accessed November 1, 2010).

²⁴³ LeGrand, “The Colombian crisis in historical perspective,” 12.

²⁴⁴ Geoff Simons, *Colombia: A Brutal History* (London, Beirut: Saqi Books, 2004), 213; Teresa Welsh, “Yair Klein claims he was paid by Colombian military,” *Colombia Reports*, November 24, 2010, <http://colombiareports.com/colombia-news/news/13080-yair-klein-claims-he-was-paid-by-colombian-army.html> (accessed October 18, 2011).

²⁴⁵ Hylton, *Evil Hour in Colombia*.

Colombian elites.²⁴⁶ Romero makes a similar argument but places the resistance as coming earlier, as many of those with economic and political power turned against the very spectre of such reforms that was raised by both the local elections of mayors established in 1986 and the peace negotiations with smaller guerilla groups (which then led to the Constitutional Assembly).²⁴⁷ He points out that cold war fear and rhetoric was high then, in the region and from the US, which was heavily involved in wars in Central America at the time (the major FMLN offensive in El Salvador was in 1989).²⁴⁸ Reyes Posada highlights regional differences amongst the paramilitaries and offers a detailed account of different paramilitary structures and land grab tactics by region.²⁴⁹

Land and the armed actors today

In the 1980s the FARC still had some popular support, primarily in rural areas, but they were increasingly delegitimized in the 1990s as they increased kidnappings (between 1997 and 2001 they kidnapped 3343 civilians, and the ELN 3412) and turned to other disreputable tactics, such as the use of gas cylinder bombs that are likely to kill civilians. Paradoxically their numbers grew even as their support dropped, for their finances

²⁴⁶ Leon, “‘Por fin entendí el iceberg de la parapolítica’: entrevista con Claudia López” Paramilitarism had another brief period of legality. In 1994 law 365 legalized “private security forces” known as the “CONVIVIR” (an acronym of a word meaning 'live together'), which were widely condemned for participating in human rights abuses and whose powers were legally restricted by the Constitution court in 1997. .

²⁴⁷ Mauricio Romero, “Democratización política y contra reforma paramilitar en Colombia,” in *Violencias y estrategias colectivas en la región andina: Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Perú y Venezuela*, ed. Eric Lair and Gonzalo Sánchez G (Bogotá, Colombia: Editorial Norma, 2004), 337–376.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 351.

²⁴⁹ Alejandro Reyes Posada, *Guerreros y campesinos: el despojo de la tierra en Colombia* (Bogotá, Colombia: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2009); Regional differences are also emphasized by Cruz Rodríguez, “Los Estudios Sobre El Paramilitarismo En Colombia.”

improved.²⁵⁰ It happened that the remote areas where they had fled to turned out to be where coca was best grown, and they were taxing the transactions.²⁵¹ Beginning in the early 1980s they also moved out of those ‘outback’ areas they had retreated to and where they functioned more in self-defense, and instead became active throughout the country, often in areas where they did not have a base of support.²⁵² By the mid 1990s they had some 20,000 fighters.²⁵³ The FARC withdrew from their last peace negotiations with the government in 2000, purportedly because of the government’s unwillingness or inability to rein in the military and paramilitary to a ceasefire.²⁵⁴ The FARC went on to hijack a plane and kidnap a Senator and the talks collapsed.

Colombian right-wing politicians repeatedly argue that the FARC guerillas are on the point of surrender, but the FARC is the longest running rebel group ever in the Americas and certainly the best funded, given their recent turn from taxing to trafficking drugs. Though their numbers have dropped from what the government said was 20,000 fighters in 2002 (though that number was likely inflated), there seems to be general agreement amongst analysts that they continue to have some 7,000 – 9,000 members scattered across at least half of the country’s provinces, and they clearly continue to be capable of

²⁵⁰ Thus they were more able to pay wages to fighters, and perhaps cared less about winning local support.

²⁵¹ Hylton, *Evil Hour in Colombia*, 86.

²⁵² LeGrand, “The Colombian crisis in historical perspective,” 9.

²⁵³ LeGrand, “The Roots and Evolution of Conflict in Colombia.”

²⁵⁴ Hylton, *Evil Hour in Colombia*, 99.

attacks.²⁵⁵ The ELN continues to have influence in some areas but it is much smaller. Military estimates are that they now have around 1,800 members, down from 8,000 in 2002.²⁵⁶ Both groups continue to have significant land reform as their central demand.

In 2004 then President Uribe signed a ‘peace agreement’ with paramilitaries. The demobilization law, law 975, was called ‘the justice and peace law’, though it offered little of either. The time to be served by those who confessed was three years on a farm instead of prison, for commanders only. Though the Constitutional Court later increased it, the maximum is now only eight years for serious crimes against humanity. Even so the few cases filed have been stymied in the courts and by mid-2011 only one sentence had been issued. Very little of the land they stole had been returned,²⁵⁷ and when campesinos have managed to reclaim their land they have frequently been killed shortly thereafter.²⁵⁸ Yet the accords served to distance the government from criminals who were

²⁵⁵ “The FARC without ‘Mono Jojoy,’” *Just the Facts*, n.d., <http://justf.org/blog/2010/09/23/farc-without-mono-jojoy> (accessed October 20, 2010).

²⁵⁶ Adam Isaacson, “Six months in, Colombia’s Santos faces a murky security situation,” *Just the Facts*, February 8, 2011, <http://justf.org/blog/2011/02/08/six-months-colombias-santos-faces-murky-security-situation> (accessed February 8, 2011).

²⁵⁷ John Jairo Rincón García, “¿Y la tierra dónde está? Versiones de los paramilitares sobre tierra-territorio y entrega de bienes para la reparación de las víctimas en el marco del proceso de Justicia y Paz en Colombia (2007-2009),” *Revista Colombiana de Sociología* 33, no. 1 (210AD): 125 – 174.

²⁵⁸ A victims and land restitution act (*la ley de víctimas y restitución de tierras*) was passed in May 2011 that establishes reparations for all sorts of victims of the conflict, including returning land. This will be difficult to implement given that many of these areas are still under paramilitary control and because of complications around titles, including pervasive corruption in the land titling agency, which is considered so untrustworthy that victims groups have established an alternative land registry.

becoming inconvenient, particularly after the US government put them on the terrorism list in 2001.²⁵⁹

That distance is relative, given that the Congress that approved this law was one third controlled by the paramilitaries, according to the bragging of Mancuso, one of their top leaders, and continues to be so today according to the careful analysis of Claudia López, of the paramilitary watchdog think tank Nuevo Arcoiris.²⁶⁰ She has documented the paramilitary ‘elections fix’ in various ways, but began by comparing election results with paramilitary violence and found highly atypical majorities in districts controlled by the paramilitaries.²⁶¹ López argues that the paramilitary leaders and politicians were colluding to legalize their illicit wealth and power.²⁶²

The Constitutional Court put over a third of the Congress under criminal investigation, and more than two dozen were convicted of having paramilitary ties.²⁶³ In Colombia this is all called the ‘parapolitics scandal.’²⁶⁴ But many of the investigations were cut short

²⁵⁹ Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo, “CONSOLIDACIÓN PARAMILITAR E IMPUNIDAD EN COLOMBIA”; Stokes, *America’s Other War*, 111; Murillo, *Colombia and the United States*, 102.

²⁶⁰ León, “‘Por fin entendí el iceberg de la parapolítica’: entrevista con Claudia López”; Hylton, *Evil Hour in Colombia*, 114.

²⁶¹ Claudia López, *Y refundaron la patria--: de cómo mafiosos y políticos reconfiguraron el estado colombiano* (Bogotá, Colombia: Debate, 2010).

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ “VerdadAbierta: paramilitares y conflicto armado en Colombia”, n.d., <http://www.verdadabierta.com/> (accessed June 14, 2011).

²⁶⁴ Understood to mean politicians colluding with paramilitaries, unlike the US where the term is often used in the media as a synonym for conspiracy theory. Political scientists in the US have defined the term in various ways, see for example Eric Wilson and Tim Lindsey, *Government of the Shadows: Parapolitics and Criminal Sovereignty* (London: Pluto Press, 2009), 8 who define it

when Uribe extradited 14 top paramilitary commanders to the US in 2008, ostensibly for drug charges.²⁶⁵ Victims groups in Colombia, no longer able to confront those commanders, argued that they were sent away because they were exposing too much about their regular coordination with politicians in Uribe's party and people close to Uribe himself.²⁶⁶ Dramatically they were extradited the day after one of them, 'Don Berna', began to testify about military involvement in the massacre in the peace community of San José that had received a great deal of attention from the US. Neither US courts nor the US administration have facilitated ongoing testimony by these leaders from the US. The Colombian Congress is far from 'clean' now. Aside from stymied investigations, in many cases of jailed members of Congress their seats are now held by friends and family.²⁶⁷

as the study of criminal sovereignty, meaning both the covert criminal behaviour of states and the state like behaviour of some criminal organizations - but not the intertwining of the two, as in Colombia.

²⁶⁵ Many of the paramilitary groups have long been deeply involved in drug trafficking. Unlike the guerrillas many paramilitary groups were first drug traffickers and then identified as paramilitaries. One of the conflicts among them when many came together as the AUC in 1997 was that they said that they would stop trafficking, but many never did. Castaño, the leader of the AUC, pushed for an end to trafficking by paramilitaries and this may have been what led to his assassination in 2004. By 2002 paramilitaries had become the biggest drug network in the country according to Danielle Wilkinson, "Death and Drugs in Colombia," *New York Times, The New York Review of Books*, June 23, 2011, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2011/jun/23/death-and-drugs-colombia/?pagination=false>.

²⁶⁶ see Sonia Acelas, "Iván Cepeda habla sobre la extradición múltiple", May 24, 2008, <http://colombia.indymedia.org/news/2008/05/87231.php> (accessed October 17, 2011); Many of Uribe's long standing ties to paramilitaries were recently exposed in the book Iván Cepeda Castro and Jorge Enrique Rojas, *A las puertas de El Ubérrimo* (Bogotá, Colombia: Debate, 2008) Cepeda, a leader of the victims movement and now an opposition Senator, has received multiple assassination attempts and has at times used international companions and at other times armed bodyguards.

²⁶⁷ "VerdadAbierta: paramilitares y conflicto armado en Colombia."

The paramilitary groups have also remained active, with new names and somewhat new structures but led largely by those who were previously mid level leaders and using the same tactics.²⁶⁸ López argues that there are now some 10,000 ‘neo-paramilitaries’ in arms, as compared to 35,000 before law 975. These are not all the same men, but the leaders are primarily from the previous ‘generation’, who they attack and how is very similar, and they continue to intertwine with the state at various levels (in some regions to the point of being indistinguishable).²⁶⁹ Paramilitary influence extends beyond the Colombian Congress and they continue to control many local political offices. They have infiltrated many government institutions, particularly notaries and the land registry office, INCODER, which they have used to title ill-gotten land.²⁷⁰ They have even tapped into USAID development funds.²⁷¹ The army and police continue to work with the ‘neo’ paramilitaries and López argues that in some regions they control various drug trafficking routes together.²⁷² Various high officials in the former Uribe administration have been exposed for collaboration, as have high officials in other state institutions, most notably

²⁶⁸ *Paramilitaries’ Heirs: The New Face of Violence in Colombia* (Human Rights Watch, February 3, 2010), <http://www.hrw.org/node/88060> (accessed February 8, 2011).

²⁶⁹ “¿Neoparamilitares?, Artículo Impreso”, June 4, 2011, <http://www.semana.com/nacion/neoparamilitares/157914-3.aspx> (accessed June 9, 2011).

²⁷⁰ Blog Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris, “Los líos del Incoder por la adjudicación de tierras y proyectos productivos,” *Semana.com*, March 16, 2011, http://www.semana.com/wf_InfoBlog.aspx?IdBlg=59&IdEnt=2913 (accessed December 27, 2011); For more on corruption in INCODER see “La filosofía carimagua,” *Semana.com*, September 13, 2008, <http://www.semana.com/por-clasificar/filosofia-carimagua/115489-3.aspx> (accessed December 27, 2011).

²⁷¹ Ballvé, “The Dark Side of Plan Colombia.”

²⁷² Claudia López, “Vuelve el cuento de la negociación,” *La Silla Vacía.com*, July 9, 2011, <http://www.lasillavacia.com/historia/vuelve-el-cuento-de-la-negociacion-25647> (accessed December 21, 2011).

the national intelligence agency DAS (*Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad*, Security Department).

In what is being called ‘DASgate’, the DAS has also been exposed for not only invasively tracking human rights activists, to the extent of following and photographing their children, but sending death threats (e.g., using those photos), and causing their ‘political death’ through delegitimizing them in the media, and often criminalizing them with false charges.²⁷³ This too may well have been influenced by US training, for McCoy argues that the US developed the technique of this sort of a ‘politics of scandal’ as a strategy of counterinsurgency in the Philippines.²⁷⁴ At any rate most of the surveillance equipment the DAS used was provided by the US.²⁷⁵ While I was in Colombia it came to light that the emails of FOR, one of the accompaniment groups I was regularly emailing, were being tapped by the DAS.²⁷⁶

The US in Colombia today

²⁷³ WOLA.ORG - The Washington Office on Latin America, *Far Worse than Watergate*, June 17, 2010, http://www.wola.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=viewp&id=1121&Itemid=33 (accessed October 26, 2010).

²⁷⁴ Alfred W. McCoy, *Policing America's Empire: The United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009).

²⁷⁵ It appears from wikileaks cables that most of the intelligence the Colombian army is using comes through not just US equipment but US advisers managing the information. “Uncovering the U.S. War in Colombia | North American Congress on Latin America”, n.d., <https://nacla.org/blog/2011/10/17/uncovering-us-war-colombia> (accessed December 20, 2011).

²⁷⁶ This came to light through a court case that cited one of these emails.

In the last eleven years Colombia has received far more US aid than any other country in the Americas, and most of it has been military.²⁷⁷ US military aid to Colombia was drastically increased in 2000 when Congress approved ‘Plan Colombia’, and came to more than six billion dollars between 2000 and 2010.²⁷⁸ Obama’s 2010 budget package for Colombia was \$625 million, which did decrease overall military aid by five percent, but increased counter-insurgency aid to the Colombian army.

There are several laws designed to ensure that US aid is not used to commit human rights abuses, most notably the Leahy Amendment, which prohibits assistance to any army unit if there is credible evidence they have committed gross human rights violations. Yet the Colombian army has continued receiving US aid, even after recently been exposed as regularly killing campesinos and some urban poor and dressing them up as guerillas to improve their ‘kill count’ – a phenomena described with the euphemism ‘false positives’. This strategy may have come out of Plan Colombia efforts to ‘modernize’ the Colombian army promoted by US trainers who wanted to track numbers.²⁷⁹ It seems to also have been fostered by the bounty and vacation time that were offered to soldiers who killed “guerillas”. Though that practice has been stopped, complaints of this sort of killings

²⁷⁷ In 2010 US aid to Colombia of all sorts was 660 million USD, of which 244 million was not directly military related. Ibid.

²⁷⁸ CIP, the Center for International Policy, LAWG - EF, the Latin America Working Group Education Fund, and WOLA, the Washington Office on Latin America, “Just the Facts: a civilian’s guide to U.S. defense and security assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean”, n.d., <http://justf.org/> (accessed October 11, 2010).

²⁷⁹ Gibson argues that this techno-managerialism infused the military during (and since) the Vietnam War, and “false positives” seem remarkably like the thinking that “If it’s dead and it’s Vietnamese, it’s VC.” James William Gibson, *The Perfect War: Technowar in Vietnam* (New York, NY: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2000).

continue. The Attorney General's office has received 300,000 complaints regarding 150,000 such deaths.²⁸⁰ Human rights activists believe that the actual number is higher. This so-called 'false positives' scandal broke in 2008, but by the end of 2010 only 5.7% of reported extrajudicial executions had resulted in conviction.²⁸¹

The Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) recently released a report based on an in-depth investigation of over 3,000 of these extrajudicial executions which found that many Colombian military units committed more of these killings during and after the highest level of US aid to those units.²⁸² The report also documents that after this became a scandal, in November 2008, the number of reported killings of civilians by the Colombian armed forces dropped, but has been followed by a steep climb in the number of reported killings by paramilitary successor groups in the same areas.²⁸³ FOR argues that as such the Leahy law requires the suspension of military aid to nearly all fixed brigades, and many mobile brigades.²⁸⁴ Accompaniers pressure US decision makers to

²⁸⁰ "Calculan en 150.000, casos de ejecuciones extrajudiciales," *El Espectador.com*, April 22, 2010, <http://www.elespectador.com/desaparecidos/articulo199544-calculan-150000-casos-de-ejecuciones-extrajudiciales> (accessed October 23, 2010).

²⁸¹ Isaacson, "Six months in, Colombia's Santos faces a murky security situation."

²⁸² Fellowship of Reconciliation, *Report: Military Assistance and Human Rights: Colombia, U.S. Accountability, and Global Implications*, July 2010, <http://forusa.org/content/report-military-assistance-human-rights-colombia-us-accountability-global-implications> (accessed October 26, 2010).

²⁸³ For more on the "successor" paramilitary groups see *Paramilitaries' Heirs: The New Face of Violence in Colombia*.

²⁸⁴ Another related report was released in 2010 by the Center for Global Development which likewise did a close read of the quantitative data, in their case by military base rather than unit, to argue that increases in US military aid are tied to an increase in paramilitary violence in areas around the bases, and lead to no decrease in guerilla violence in those areas. Oeindrila Dube and Suresh Naidu, *Bases, Bullets, and Ballots: The Effect of U.S. Military Aid on Political Conflict*

pressure Colombian decision makers not only around the safety of individual accompanied Colombians but for broader safety in ways like this. This broader pressure has had less success.

Despite the record of abuses by the Colombian military, the US has not only increased military aid, but has also been increasing its military presence in Colombia. The US had its primary military base in the Americas in Panama until 1999.²⁸⁵ When the US handed



Figure 5: Map of planned US bases.
Map by FOR at www.forcolombia.org
©FOR, used by permission.

the Canal Zone back to Panama that year, the base was moved to Ecuador. There were growing protests against that base in Manta and president Correa, part of the growing ‘pink tide’ in Latin America, refused to renew the ten year lease when it ended in September 2009 (unless, as he put it, the US in return gave Ecuador a base in Florida). In October 2009 the US moved their primary base for military operations to Colombia. This time,

in Colombia (Washington, DC: Center for Global Development, n.d.), <http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/1423498> (accessed December 23, 2011).

²⁸⁵ It is hard to say when that base began, since the first of 20 US military invasions of the isthmus was in 1856. For more history of the US role and how Panama was separated from Colombia see the book by FOR Colombia program co-director Lindsay-Poland, *Emperors in the jungle*.

perhaps so as to not provide such a clear target for protests, rather than establish one large base they split it into seven bases (see figure five).²⁸⁶ But on August 17, 2010 the Colombian Constitutional Court ruled that the bases agreement had to be approved by the Colombian Congress. Given the controversy the bases had generated, the president did not send it to Congress, and both the US and Colombian governments said that it did not ‘matter’ and would not affect cooperation. Indeed the month after the ruling US Southcom signed contracts for \$5 million in construction of ‘advanced operation bases’ for US Special Forces in Colombia.²⁸⁷ The US also continues to train dramatically more Colombians than members of any other army of the Americas, both at its most elite training institution, the School of the Americas,²⁸⁸ and across the US and Colombia.²⁸⁹

Part of the reason accompaniers are able to pressure for the safety of individual accompanied Colombians but have had less success pressuring to cut US military aid is that the US role in the conflict in Colombia is not only geopolitical but also geoeconomic. The neoliberal program pushed around the world by the US and US-led international financial institutions has aggravated the Colombian conflict. Neoliberal policies were

²⁸⁶ They established these on parts of what or sometimes alongside previously existing Colombian bases – so as to argue that they did not have their own bases.

²⁸⁷ John Lindsay-Poland, “Pentagon Building Bases in Central America and Colombia,” *Fellowship of Reconciliation*, January 27, 2011, <http://forusa.org/blogs/john-lindsay-poland/pentagon-building-bases-central-america-colombia/8445> (accessed February 9, 2011).

²⁸⁸ Now officially called the Western Hemispheric Institute for Security Cooperation in the Americas (WHINSEC), but still widely called the SOA by both activists and various militaries.

²⁸⁹ CIP, the Center for International Policy, LAWG - EF, the Latin America Working Group Education Fund, and WOLA, the Washington Office on Latin America, “Just the Facts: a civilian’s guide to U.S. defense and security assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean.”

first widely adopted in Colombia in the late 1980s.²⁹⁰ Tariff barriers went from 83% in 1985 to 6.7% by 1992, which had a huge impact on the agricultural sector and opened the way for drug barons to push their way on to land.²⁹¹ As unemployment skyrocketed in certain parts of the country²⁹² many turned to the drug trade, or the paramilitary or the guerillas - often the only employers in remote areas.

Neoliberalism creates havoc that can only be contained with repression, as exemplified in the first full implementation of neoliberal policies in Chile in the 1970s, under the Pinochet dictatorship. It is no coincidence that the US-Colombia Free Trade Agreement (FTA) was put forward along with the military Plan Colombia.²⁹³ The FTA offers special concessions and protections for US corporate investment and opens access to key resources. It will also benefit Colombian elites investing in large agribusiness and mining operations. But as cheap corn and other US products flood the market it will put many more Colombian small farmers out of work. The FTA was signed in late 2006, but was only approved by the US Congress in October 2011.

The relationship between natural resources and US military aid is no secret. Bill Richardson, then Secretary of Energy under President Clinton, said in Cartagena in 1999,

²⁹⁰ Murillo, *Colombia and the United States*, 132.

²⁹¹ Teo Ballvé, "Everyday State Formation: Territory, Decentralization, and the Narco Land-Grab in Colombia," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. (forthcoming).

²⁹² Not well captured in national statistics, but these did register a nearly 20% official unemployment rate in 2000. "DANE - Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística", n.d., http://www.dane.gov.co/daneweb_V09/#twoj_fragment1-4 (accessed July 3, 2011).

²⁹³ Plan Colombia was first proposed by the Colombian state as more of a Marshall plan but by the time the US approved the funds it was almost entirely military aid. Hylton, *Evil Hour in Colombia*.

shortly before Plan Colombia began, that, “The United States and its allies will invest millions of dollars in two areas of the Colombian economy, in the areas of mining and energy, and to secure these investments we are tripling military aid to Colombia”.²⁹⁴ Half of foreign direct investment in Colombia is in natural resources, most is from US, and both of those percentages are growing.²⁹⁵

Access to and control of resources is tied to control of land. Colombia has a wealth of reserves of untapped oil, natural gas, gold, and coal, as well as emeralds, uranium, hardwoods and ample fresh water, which is used to grow in particular bananas, sugarcane, oil palm,²⁹⁶ cattle, and roses²⁹⁷ - though these may not be the first exports you think of in relation to Colombia.²⁹⁸ Colombia is a major Latin American exporter of oil to the US,²⁹⁹ but perhaps more importantly it also has large untapped future oil reserves,

²⁹⁴ Cuellar, *The Profits of Extermination*, 32.

²⁹⁵ According to United Nations statistics. “OMAL Observatorio de las Multinacionales en América Latina”, n.d., http://www.omal.info/www/indicadores.php3?id_rubrique=13 (accessed October 24, 2010).

²⁹⁶ Palm oil is used for commercial cooking and soaps, but its recent surge in growth is due to its increasing use for biofuel. Colombia has become the largest producer of oil palm in the Americas and one of the largest in the world.

²⁹⁷ Colombia is the second largest exporter of fresh flowers in the world after Holland and almost all of the roses sold in the US are from Colombia.

²⁹⁸ “About Colombia,” *Justice for Colombia*, n.d., <http://www.justiceforcolombia.org/about-colombia/> (accessed October 21, 2010).^{and} Cuellar, *The Profits of Extermination*.

²⁹⁹ Behind Mexico and Venezuela, but exports from those two countries are dropping whereas Colombia’s have been rising. “Overview of Latin American oil exports to the USA,” *Alexander’s Gas and Oil Connections*, April 27, 2008, http://www.gasandoil.com/news/n_america/3cd816c5a3d1696189ffb00a4a4b10f7 (accessed October 17, 2011).

many of which are thought to be located in what has traditionally been FARC controlled territory.³⁰⁰

Colombian elites are as interested in maintaining US corporate investment as they are US military aid. The two are closely linked. US military aid has particularly benefited Los Angeles-based Occidental Petroleum (Oxy), which owns the Caño-Limón oil fields in Colombia, which have large untapped reserves. They are also part owner of the pipeline that runs from there out to the sea. That pipeline had been repeatedly attacked by guerillas, so Oxy spent nearly \$4 million lobbying the US Congress to expand military funding.³⁰¹ In return they got hundreds of millions of dollars worth of pipeline protection, since much of the US military aid and training was earmarked for the region around the pipeline, despite the 18th brigade in the region being notorious for attacking civilians.³⁰²

The World Bank recently ranked Colombia one of the easiest places to “do business.”³⁰³

It has also long been ranked as the most dangerous place to be a trade unionist.³⁰⁴ British

³⁰⁰ Hylton, *Evil Hour in Colombia*, 102; Michael Walker, “Oil and US Policy Toward Colombia,” *Colombia Journal*, January 7, 2008, <http://colombiajournal.org/oil-and-us-policy-toward-colombia.htm> (accessed October 17, 2011).

³⁰¹ Then US Vice-President Al Gore’s family is a major owner of Occidental. “Witness for Peace : Colombia”, n.d., <http://www.witnessforpeace.org/section.php?id=95> (accessed October 27, 2010).

³⁰² Walker, “Oil and US Policy Toward Colombia.”

³⁰³ Kevin Young, “Two, Three, Many Colombias by Kevin Young,” *znet.com*, January 13, 2011, <http://www.zcommunications.org/two-three-many-colombias-by-kevin-young> (accessed February 7, 2011).

³⁰⁴ According to the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) there were 2832 murders of trade unionists between 1 January 1986 and 30 April 2010. “Colombia - Annual Survey of

political scientist Doug Stokes argues that Colombia has long been one of largest recipients of US counterinsurgency funding and training not because of the cold war, the drug war, or now the war against terror, but rather, he argues so as to preserve a capitalist socio-economic order conducive to US interests by fighting against both insurgents and progressive sections of Colombian civil society. Stokes argues that this boils down to a war on the poor.³⁰⁵ Witness for Peace actually uses the slogan ‘stop the war on the poor’ on banners and buttons.³⁰⁶ That phrase is a simplification, since not all of the victims of terror in Colombia are poor, though certainly most are, and since they are not being attacked *because* they are poor. French historian and Colombia expert Daniel Pécaut argues that it is rather a ‘war against society,’ i.e., against all civilians.³⁰⁷ What the ‘war on the poor’ slogan does point to is how the violence has been used for land theft, or what Harvey calls ‘accumulation by dispossession.’³⁰⁸ The violence has been used not only to maintain inequality, but to increase it. Colombia is not a case of neoliberalism creating havoc that is then contained with repression, but rather one of violence creating havoc for neoliberal ‘development’ to take advantage of.

The peace community of San José de Apartadó

violations of trade union rights 2011 - ITUC”, n.d., (accessed December 28, 2011).

³⁰⁵ Stokes, *America’s Other War*, 11.

³⁰⁶ “Witness for Peace : Colombia.”

³⁰⁷ Pécaut, *Guerra contra la sociedad*.

³⁰⁸ Harvey, *The New Imperialism*.



Figure 6: Location of San José.
Map by Eric Leinberger © UBC Geography, used by permission

The peace community of San José de Apartadó was one of the first groups to receive accompaniment and for years has been one of the groups that has received the most. The community has become emblematic of both struggles over land and the impact of accompaniment. Human rights abuses in San José became a test case for US military aid and as such it is a dramatic example of how accompaniers use US involvement in the conflict to pressure the Colombian state to protect those they accompany.

In Colombia struggling to stay on your land, or go back to it, can be dangerous for small farmers in the midst of the conflict – but there is a movement that is doing just that, as families join together and form what they call peace communities, or sometimes humanitarian zones. International accompaniment has been crucial for making this possible. The Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) had two to three accompaniers, mostly from the US, living full time in the peace community of San José. San José is in a region called Urabá, at the North end of the Andes Mountains in lush countryside that looks out over the Caribbean (see figure six). The area was coveted by many of the armed groups as a route over the mountains for both fighting and drug trafficking, and because crops grow well there since the area is fed by three rivers and thus has irrigation for thirsty crops like oil palm. A mining company was also working to open a coal mine in the area.³⁰⁹

The area around San José, Urabá, was for many years controlled by the FARC guerrillas. In 1985 many members of the FARC left to join the new political party Unión Patriótica

³⁰⁹ For a historical geography of the conflict in Urabá see González, Bolívar, and Vázquez, *Violencia política en Colombia*, 121–153.

(UP).³¹⁰ Mayors in Colombia had long been nationally appointed but were popularly elected for the first time in 1986. Many of the towns in the region around San José elected UP mayors and then faced a massive backlash from the army and paramilitaries. Across the country thousands of UP activists and almost all of their candidates for all offices were assassinated.

In 1996 and 1997 the Colombian military carried out two massacres near the village of San José. Most survivors fled to the nearby city of Apartadó, but some just came down from their hamlets in the mountains and gathered in the village center, which at that point was a ghost town. Around 500 people who had come down from the mountains decided to stay in the village. They issued a public declaration that they would not collaborate in any way with any of the armed actors. The community declared themselves neutral and in active nonviolence, which meant that no one was allowed to carry arms or collaborate with any of the armed actors in any way.

Each of the armed actors claim that the community is supporting the other side, and continue to attack them. These attacks have included 186 assassinations in the past ten years, around 20 of these by the guerillas, the rest by the military and paramilitary, often working closely together.³¹¹ The community has grown to around 1,500 as others who had fled came back, but the proportion of community members killed is still over one in

³¹⁰ The UP was formed by members of the communist party and former FARC. For more in English on the political moment that made this possible and the history of the UP see Steven S. Dudley, *Walking ghosts: murder and guerrilla politics in Colombia* (Hove, East Sussex, UK: Psychology Press, 2004).

³¹¹ figure given by community member Jesús Emilio Tuberquia in a video interview with Adam Isaacson of the Washington Office on Latin America in October 2011. available at <http://vimeo.com/18663200>

ten. Attacks have also included rapes, burning homes and the school, armed robbery of scarce community resources, bombs left in fields, and road blockades that cut off supplies for months at a time - as well as constant death threats. The community says they could not be there at all without accompaniers, but clearly accompaniment is not enough. Usually the attacks happen at times and in places where accompaniers are not present. But in 1999, soon after Peace Brigades International (PBI) began accompanying the community, the army (working with paramilitaries) killed five people while accompaniers were nearby. As Andrew Miller, one of those accompaniers who was there put it, “We don’t have a special power to turn bullets into flowers as they mark their victims.”³¹² He did however then fly to Washington DC and met with members of Congress, 49 of whom wrote a public letter to the Colombian president and generated enough pressure for the attacks to diminish for a good while.

This community is brave and determined, and after a couple of years they decided that a group would try moving back to La Unión, one of the closest small hamlets – but still a several hour hike up the mountains. In response the army committed a massacre in La Unión in 2000, killing six people.³¹³ Amazingly this time the survivors did not all flee. Instead they sought a way to increase their safety and to be able to stay. At that point Peace Brigades was spending a few days a week in village centre, and the community had seen that attacks decreased when PBI was there. They decided that the riskier action of

³¹² Testimony by Andrew Miller in *15 años de PBI en Colombia: 15 años acompañando a defensoras y defensores de derechos humanos* (Bogotá, Colombia: Peace Brigades, 2009), 20, <http://www.pbi-colombia.org/los-proyectos/pbi-colombia/sobre-pbi-colombia/15-anos-de-pbi-en-colombia/> (accessed November 2, 2010).

³¹³ In Colombia over four people killed together is legally considered to be a massacre.

staying in the more remote hamlet of La Unión required more support, and asked another organization, FOR, to accompany them there full-time. FOR started doing so in January 2002 and has kept a team of two to three internationals there since.

Several years later the community decided that some would try to move back to Mulatos, another hamlet further still up the mountain trails. In February 2005 Luis Eduardo Guerra, a leader of the community, was in Mulatos with his family working his crops to get the area ready for a permanent return. The army, working with paramilitaries, came in to Mulatos and killed him, his family, and another nearby family (including 3 children in all) and cut their bodies into pieces. Luis Eduardo was killed with his eleven year old son Deiner and his partner Deyanira Areiza. Alfonso Bolivar, Sandra Milena Muñoz, and their children Natalia Andrea Tuberquia, 6 years old, and Santiago Tuberquia Muñoz, 18 months old, were also killed, along with another adult, Alejandro Pérez, who worked on their farm. Accompaniers were not with Luis Eduardo on February 22, but they joined the group of more than one hundred community members who, walking in a large group for safety, went up to Mulatos to look for him on February 24th.

As Erika Zarate, the Canadian PBI accompanier who was on that search party, tells it,

“The commission left at four in the morning, heading for the home of Alfonso Bolivar, one of the most active members of the Peace Community. The way was steep and muddy. After seven hours on foot we finally arrived at the farm. Soldiers and police surrounded us and Robert explained to them that we were international workers accompanying a civilian commission and that our team had personally informed the Vice President of Colombia, the General of the XVII Brigade and many embassies and UN bodies of our presence there. The military official in charge told his troops to lower their arms and to let the commission pass.”

When we arrived we found ourselves contemplating a horrendous scene: a humble family home with blood splashed all over the entrance to the house, empty cartridges on the ground, and the severed hand of a small girl sticking out from a pile of rotten cacao fruit shells. A painful silence overcame us.

I called the PBI team in Turbo and I gave them the exact location of the farm so that the forensic team of the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman could find us easily. Its helicopter landed hours later and the authorities and scientists began to work immediately. The forensic process was observed by the Colombian lawyer, several leaders from the community and three international companions. The investigators found three adults and two small children in a mass grave. The adults displayed torture marks made with a machete. The five had been beheaded. The victims of the massacre were: Alfonso Bolivar, his partner Sandra Munoz, their children Natalia (six) and Santiago (two) and a farm worker, Alejandro Perez.

When the helicopter arrived to collect the forensic team and the plastic bags that contained the human remains, the commission prepared to continue the search, heading towards the house of Luis Eduardo Guerra and his family. As we were about to leave, it was a painful shock to see the soldiers taking photos in front of the bags that contained the bodies, making signs of victory with their fingers.

After some five more hours walking, and without any sign of the disappeared persons, we decided to camp on an abandoned farm until the following morning. I was at the front of the commission that day. After following the river for a long time I stumbled across the skull of Deiner, a playful but timid boy of ten with who I had shared sweets and free time on previous occasions. We all continued up river in a state of numbness until we found the bodies of Luis Eduardo Guerra and his partner Beyanira Guzman and the remains of their son Deiner.

FOR reported that the army arrived on the scene (see figure seven) before the legal investigators, and in front of dozens of witnesses, a soldier picked up a bloody machete near the bodies of Luis Eduardo and his family, went to the river, wiped off the blood with sand and water, and said “This was the decapitating machete.”³¹⁴ According to a

Figure 7: Area where bodies were found, PBI accompanier in white t-shirt.
Photo taken by author in 2008.





Figure 8: Luis Eduardo Guerra speaking in front of the School of the Americas, November 2001, © Linda Panetta, by permission.

statement by the Peace Community, the soldier also wiped the handle of fingerprints and took the machete.³¹⁵

This massacre became a test case against impunity, which is rampant in Colombia – in part because the bodies were quickly found, which would likely not have been possible without accompaniment as it gave the community members the sense of safety to hike up the mountains and search, the ability to get past the army blockade, and the satellite phones

with which to report to national human rights authorities. One of the FOR companions who helped find the bodies then traveled to DC and met with members of Congress to tell the story. Again, thirty-two members of Congress signed a letter to President Uribe pressuring him to investigate the case, which Uribe at the time was publicly blaming on the FARC. Several congressional staffers went to the peace community soon after the massacre on a delegation organized by FOR and WOLA (Washington Office on Latin America) and heard testimony that contradicted that version.³¹⁶

This case was also taken up widely because Luis Eduardo had travelled the world telling the story of the community, even speaking outside the US Army's School of the

³¹⁵ "Comunidad de Paz de San José de Apartadó", n.d., <http://www.cdpsanjose.org/> (accessed November 1, 2011).

³¹⁶ Nancy Pelosi, former Speaker of the house and now minority leader, sent her aide Jonathan Stivers.

Americas (SOA) in Georgia at the annual vigil to close that training program for Latin American military officers (see figure eight). The General of the 17th Brigade who controlled the area around San José during the massacre, General Hector Jaime Fandino Rincon, had also been to the SOA beforehand – but as a student.³¹⁷ The movement to close the SOA and a wide variety of grassroots solidarity groups in the US organized and pressured the US Congress on this case and as a result US military aid to Colombia was frozen for months.³¹⁸

Despite this being made a test case of the Colombian government's ability to end impunity, both by activists and the US government, the Colombian army has not been held responsible. Seven paramilitaries testified, as part of their supposed demobilization process, to participating in these killings with the Colombian army – including dramatic testimony by HH, one of the top paramilitary leaders who was shortly thereafter extradited to the US and thus was unable to testify in further trials on the case. In 2008 one military officer (Captain Gordillo) pled guilty in a civilian court and implicated his superiors. He received a twenty-year jail sentence. In a separate legal process, full of delays and detours, another ten military officers were acquitted by a civilian court on August 6, 2010. No charges have been filed against higher officers responsible for ordering the operation (Generals Fandiño and Montoya), nor against Colonel Duque, who

³¹⁷ “Massacre in Colombian Peace Community | SOA Watch: Close the School of the Americas”, n.d., http://www.soaw.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1024 (accessed November 2, 2010).

³¹⁸ A wide coalition of groups united on this campaign. I represented the Seattle Colombia Committee in regular conference calls that included some 15 activists from across the country, from other small committees, church groups, and national organizations like the Latin America Working Group. Much of that work was led by two accompaniment groups, Fellowship of Reconciliation and Witness for Peace.

coordinated it. The case has become emblematic of the army going beyond tolerance of paramilitary activity to actually coordinating atrocities with them – and of their impunity for doing so.

Immediately after the massacre president Uribe both accused the FARC of committing the massacre and accused the peace community of working with the guerrillas.³¹⁹ The numbers of Colombian army and police in the area increased dramatically. The national, highly militarized, police - who have a long record of working with the paramilitaries in the area - insisted on setting up a command post in San José.³²⁰ Not only that, but as the FOR newsletter told it at the time:

“According to an April 1 statement by the community, the Colombian police entered the village on March 30 “with psychologists, sociologists, people filming us, and handing out flyers proposing that the community work together with the police and saying that we had agreed to this.” The flyers also announced that the police would carry out “educational work with the children, conflict resolution, and social work.” On March 31, “two people in civilian clothes carrying guns arrived at the entrance of the village; later the police priest came announcing with a megaphone the arrival of the police.” They sent in the clowns. Clowns and other performers entered “inviting the community to work with the police and filming the village and its residents. Various kids and the community rejected the

³¹⁹ These statements are carefully detailed by Father Javier Giraldo in Javier Giraldo, *Cronología de agresiones contra la Comunidad de Paz de San Jose de Apartado y poblacion de la zona, con posterioridad al 7 de agosto de 2002*, January 28, 2008, <http://www.javiergiraldo.org/IMG/pdf/CronologiaUribe.pdf>; see also his recent book on the history of the peace community Javier Giraldo, *Fusil o toga: toga o fusil* (Bogotá, Colombia: CINEP, Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular, 2010).

³²⁰ The police post has, predictably, been a target of attack for the guerillas. In 2008 two soldiers were injured by a landmine that guerillas had placed near the post and very near the foot path that villagers and accompaniers regularly take up to La Union. Colombia is said to have more active land mines now than any other country (though this is hard to measure). Bouvier, *Colombia*.

*gifts and sweets they were handing out. Upon hearing this, various police officers and the priest got angry telling us that we would pay a heavy price.*³²¹

They did pay a heavy price, but one they chose themselves. The community was so adamant that they would not have anyone with guns in their space that after all of this they moved, yet again, and built new homes a fifteen minute walk down the road, away from the police. This also meant they left behind the brick and cement buildings they had worked so hard to build, even a bakery and store, and had to start all over again with very simple wood structures, no water, and, at first, only one outhouse.³²²

They also continued work to move back up into the mountains. On February 21, 2008, the third anniversary of the massacre, five brave families went ahead and moved back to the hamlet of Mulatos where Luis Eduardo had been working his crops when he was killed. For safety, 150 members of the community and a group of some 30 internationals hiked with them up to the massacre site to hold a commemoration and house blessing ceremonies. It took us ‘internationals’ nine hours on the extremely muddy path that normally takes locals only five. On arrival a large camp was set up around the massacre site – most sleeping in hammocks, a few setting up ‘tents’ made of large banana leaves. There was one small building that had served as a medical clinic before the community fled. An open air chapel had been built to commemorate the victims, and was filled with the orange birds of paradise flowers that grow wild around there. Padre Javier Giraldo, a

³²¹ “Further Agressions Against the Peace Community (col-pp-update-0305),” *The Fellowship of Reconciliation*, n.d., <http://forusa.org/programs/colombia/col-pp-update-0305.html#f> (accessed November 2, 2010).

³²² It was because of international solidarity that they were able to move. The land they moved to was purchased for them by a Dutch supporter, and as such is sometimes called La Holandita (it is also distinguished from the old town as San Josesito). The police moved families from other regions in to many of the homes the community left behind in the old town, with no compensation.

Jesuit priest who has visited and served the community for years, held mass. Dinner was cooked in two huge pots over the fire, one with a wild pig that had been hunted that morning, another vegetarian for many of the internationals and the padre.

San José is growing, both in size and strength. The community of San José is one of many peace communities in Colombia, but it is the best known, both across Colombia and internationally. This is because they have long prioritized networking widely with other groups working for peace and justice. It was out of this impulse that they asked for a good deal of accompaniment early on, and as such have long been the community with more international accompaniment than any other. Their story has become emblematic of accompaniment in Colombia and what it can and cannot do.

Conclusion

I have focused here on two dynamics of the Colombian conflict that are key to accompaniment's effectiveness in Colombia: land grabs and US involvement. The large numbers of international accompaniers in Colombia are related to the nature of the armed conflict and the way in which it is violently bringing a certain form of neoliberal capitalism to rural areas. Small farmers, *campesinos*, are being pushed off their land in a massive violent land grab, primarily by paramilitaries and their affiliates who are 'developing' these lands with large agribusiness and mining projects. Many brave *campesinos* are resisting displacement, as well as returning to their stolen lands – and both are particularly spatial forms of resistance that can be more easily supported through

the physical presence of accompaniers than, say, a hunger strike. Again and again, around the country, international accompaniment has played a key role in making this resistance possible, and I describe the ways accompaniers ‘make space’ for this resistance in chapter seven. Not all groups that are accompanied are of displaced people, but those that are not are often of human rights organizations, who themselves are often working to end the abuses against the displaced and being attacked for it.

International accompaniment began in Colombia in 1994, but only one group was doing it until 1999 when another small group began. It was in 2000 that the US Congress approved Plan Colombia funding and that same year the US based group Witness for Peace, who had fought hard against the passage of Plan Colombia, began accompaniment. The next year, 2001, another largely US based group, Christian Peacemakers, followed. The next year, 2002, FOR, another US based group who had been involved in fighting Plan Colombia, also began accompanying. They were followed by other groups over the next few years (see Appendix A and full description of this history in chapter six). The wave of accompaniment came to Colombia after massive US military aid did, led by US groups - though other European groups then followed.³²³

It could be said the accompaniers came because of the military aid in several senses.

The increased militarization was leading to more violent land grabs, displacement, and

³²³ The influence that European groups have in Colombia is less obvious than US groups, though certainly Europe also gives significant aid to the Colombian government. The difference between the way these groups work is one of the topics I have proposed for post-doctoral research.

human rights abuses generally. Some accompaniment organizations were inspired by a sense of responsibility to work on the ground and support those struggling against the abuses that the military aid paid for by their tax dollars was facilitating. Some wanted to use their presence and eyewitness reports as a way to strengthen continued lobbying for an end to that aid. But I have highlighted here the depth of US involvement in the conflict because the aid also increased the leverage that they use to do accompaniment with the use of a US passport that was now even more powerful in Colombia. This is true from the soldier at the checkpoint to the high level Colombian officials who now paid even more attention to calls and visits from US citizens, particularly ones with a relationship with a US member of Congress that votes on military aid bills.

For US involvement to make a difference in how accompaniment ‘works’ it is also crucial that both the US and Colombia have democratic structures that allow for grassroots advocacy. In Colombia the armed actors, even the paramilitaries, are vested in a performance of respecting human rights and show some willingness to respond to pressure. Neither the US nor the Colombian state is a monolith. Even sections of the US embassy can have different takes on any given situation, and there are far greater differences between the US State Department, Congress, the US Agency for International Development (USAID), and US military trainers. One of the challenges for accompaniers is to find the best entry points into the US state that can be convinced to pressure, often through a chain, key points of the Colombian state.

Accompaniment works well in Colombia because both historic and recent high levels of US involvement offer leverage that accompaniers use to pressure US decision makers to

pressure Colombian decision makers to protect those they are accompanying. Chapter seven describes this process in more detail. Accompaniment also works well in Colombia because the Colombians being accompanied are resisting land grabs with spatial strategies that lend themselves well to accompaniment. Another factor that makes accompaniment effective in Colombia is that displacement is happening in racialized regions, where accompaniers generally stand out as being ‘out of place.’ In the next chapter I turn to the dynamics of racialization in Colombia that make this so.

Chapter 4: The impact of racialization

In the last chapter I focused on two of the factors that make accompaniment work well in Colombia: land grabs and US involvement. Here I will discuss the third key factor: racialization. An ongoing debate, amongst accompaniers and in the limited literature about it, is how much accompaniment is enabled by and relies on privileges of whiteness. I was surprised when accompaniers told me they had never discussed how whiteness was different in Colombia than in North America. How whiteness is imagined in Colombia, and particularly *where* it is imagined to belong, shapes how accompaniers are received and the impact that they have - that is to say, it is part of how accompaniment works.

Rather than reify 'race', or 'whiteness' it is my intention here to point to how it has and continues to be constructed – and how space is intimately part of that construction. I first discuss racial categories in Colombia, and then how these are regionalized. I then discuss historic attempts to 'whiten' the nation and the 'Colombian race'. I end by looking at how these racial imaginaries are today both changing and hardening through the armed conflict. Ultimately I argue that there continues to be an idealization of whiteness and a strong association between race and place that accompaniers, however unintentionally or reluctantly, use to make accompaniment 'work' in Colombia.

‘Racial’ categories in Colombia

“Mona, mona!” I am regularly called out as ‘white girl’ when I walk down the street in Colombia, by street vendors and random men. “Mona, mona!” As one blond light eyed former accompanier from the US put it, “it’s like I’m famous when I walk down the street”.³²⁴ Armed actors may not call out “mona!” to accompaniers, but ‘white’ accompaniers will also stand out to them. As a lighter skinned person I am hypervisible in Colombia, and regularly reminded of my color. It feels like the opposite of how invisible whiteness can be to me at times as a ‘white’ person in the United States and Canada. As in the North though, whiteness is what is desirable and attractive, and thus all the more important for women. The models in Colombian beauty ads are almost always light skinned, even blond, as are the news announcers. Hair straightening, by means of vigorous brushing while using a hair dryer (*un blower*), is common and many women go regularly to the salon to get this done. Blue and green coloured contact lenses are another popular form of whitening (*blanqueamiento*) and social body codes like these are widely understood and manipulated.³²⁵

Colombians with lighter skin and hair are called “mona” (women) or “mono” (men). In some families the lightest skinned child will be nicknamed “la mona” (the ‘white’ one).

³²⁴ S-----, field notes

³²⁵ Mara Viveros Vigoya and Gloria Garay Ariza, “El cuerpo y sus significados. A manera de introducción.” in *Cuerpo, diferencias y desigualdades*, ed. Mara Viveros Vigoya and Gloria Garay Ariza (Bogotá, Colombia: Facultad de Ciencias Humanas, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1999), 15 – 30 “Whiteness” refers not only to skin color but also other phenotype markers such as eye color, hair color and texture, nose shape, height, etc.

Families will also often nickname the darkest skinned child “el negro” (the ‘black’ one).³²⁶ Racialization is never, anywhere, about “real” or “scientific” categories. ‘Races’ (what physical differences are used as cues and which specific combinations of skin color, hair type, facial features count as a ‘race’) change over time and place, in ways that tie in to different colonial histories. These social categories were (and are) used to legitimate processes of domination but have come to be seen as ‘natural’.³²⁷

It is often argued that a key difference in the way ‘race’ functions in Latin America versus the US is that historically in the US “one drop of ‘black’ blood” meant a person was considered ‘black’, whereas in Latin America there was a legal continuum of categories depending on the various possible ‘races’ of the child’s parents.³²⁸ In the eighteenth century paintings of these *castas* were popular throughout Latin America (see figure nine).

³²⁶ Bettina Ng’weno, *Turf Wars: Territory and Citizenship in the Contemporary State* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 109.

³²⁷ Cunin in O. Almario et al., “Aproximaciones a los estudios de razas y racismos en Colombia,” *Revista de estudios sociales*, no. 27 (2007): 184–193.

³²⁸ Peter Wade, *Race And Ethnicity In Latin America* (London: Pluto Press, 1997), 14–15.



Figure 9: Anonymous Mexican 'castas' painting from the eighteenth century, now at the National Institute of Anthropology and History, Mexico City, Mexico, image in the public domain.

Those categories are no longer official. The Colombian national census, last taken in 2005, collects information on “ethnicity”, but only under the categories of ‘black’, indigenous or gypsy (Rom). In 2005 the census listed 10.6% as ‘black’, but this figure is highly disputed.³²⁹ The 1993 census was the first to ask for ethnic affiliation,³³⁰ but did so in confusing ways that led to undercounting.³³¹ It listed Afro-Colombians as only 1.5%, whereas the Afro-Colombian movement generally claims around 25%.³³² Oslender argues that reluctant black self-identification in a dominant context of whitening is behind the wide variance in statistics.³³³ As Tate puts it, “racial identity remains a slippery category in Colombia, and most Afro-Colombians do not identify themselves as such.”³³⁴ Many people with some African heritage deny it and identify as *mestizo*.³³⁵ However it gets counted, Colombia clearly has one of the largest Afro-descendant populations in the Americas. Yet what is striking in the 2005 census is that those who do

³²⁹ “DANE - Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística.”

³³⁰ Or rather, the first since 1918, when the government stopped including racial classifications in the census. Smith 1966 cited in J. Streicker, “Policing boundaries: race, class, and gender in Cartagena, Colombia,” *American Ethnologist* 22, no. 1 (1995): 70; Williams argues that racial categories were removed in 1918 in an attempt to whiten the nation. Fatimah Williams Castro, “The Politics and Everyday Experience of Race in Post-Constitutional Reform Colombia” (Rutgers University, 2011).

³³¹ Jaime Arocha and Adriana Maya, “Afro-Latin American Peoples,” in *A Companion to Latin American Anthropology*, ed. Deborah Poole (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2008), 414.

³³² Even the Colombian government’s human rights observatory says that nearly one in four Colombians is of African descent. Hylton, *Evil Hour in Colombia*, 138.

³³³ Oslender says that the most widely accepted estimate is 26%. Ulrich Oslender, “Fleshing out the geographies of social movements: Colombia’s Pacific coast black communities and the ‘aquatic space,’” *Political Geography* 23, no. 8 (2004): 966.

³³⁴ Tate, *Counting the Dead*, 34.

³³⁵ A term meaning a mix of Spanish and indigenous heritage, sometimes including African heritage. The term was first imposed by Spanish conquerors as one of the castas (see figure one) to mean a Spanish father and an indigenous mother, and is now used more widely to mean a racial mix.

not identify as 'black', indigenous or Rom, 86%, are left unclassified.³³⁶ They are officially named simply 'Colombian'.³³⁷ Yet whiteness is certainly not unnamed in daily life.

"Mona, mona!" I was less likely to get called out as 'mona' when I was in wealthier neighbourhoods in the North end of Bogotá. Most wealthy Colombians are light skinned.³³⁸ Wade says that the argument that class matters more than race has been widely made across Latin America.³³⁹ Streicker found the belief that class matters more than 'race' to be widely held in Cartagena, Colombia, but he argues that class discourse both hides and promotes racism.³⁴⁰ The relationship between 'race' and class is a classic debate amongst Latin American social scientists,³⁴¹ but I believe neither trumps, replaces nor reduces to the other. Rather 'race' and class reinforce each other, and one of the ways they do so is through space.

³³⁶ "DANE - Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística."

³³⁷ The CIA, however, lists Colombia as: mestizo 58%, white 20%, mulatto 14%, black 4%, mixed black-Amerindian 3%, Amerindian 1%, though it is unclear on what basis. "CIA - The World Factbook: Colombia", n.d., <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/co.html> (accessed July 12, 2011).

³³⁸ "las clases sociales tienen colores de piel" Urrea in Almario et al., "Aproximaciones a los estudios de razas y racismo en Colombia," 187.

³³⁹ Wade, *Race And Ethnicity In Latin America*.

³⁴⁰ The other way he puts this is that "race is embedded in class and gender discourse." Streicker, "Policing boundaries," 67.

³⁴¹ Cunin in Almario et al., "Aproximaciones a los estudios de razas y racismo en Colombia" Typically Marxists have reduced race to class; some postcolonial scholars argue that race is the primary organizing hierarchy in Latin America, see Ramón Grosfoguel, "The Epistemic Decolonial Turn," *Cultural Studies* 21 (March 2007): 211–223.

Regional ‘races’

In Colombia not only are certain neighbourhoods more likely to have people of lighter or darker skin, but entire

regions are racialized.

Racialization in Colombia

is shaped by the Andes

Mountains, which splits

into three huge chains

which divide the country,

and which are themselves

divided by two major

ivers, the Cauca and the

Magdalena (see figure

ten). Historically the

difficulty of crossing these

meant that Colombia

became a country of

distinct regions, and ‘race’ is

often conflated with region.

For example “Paisas”, or

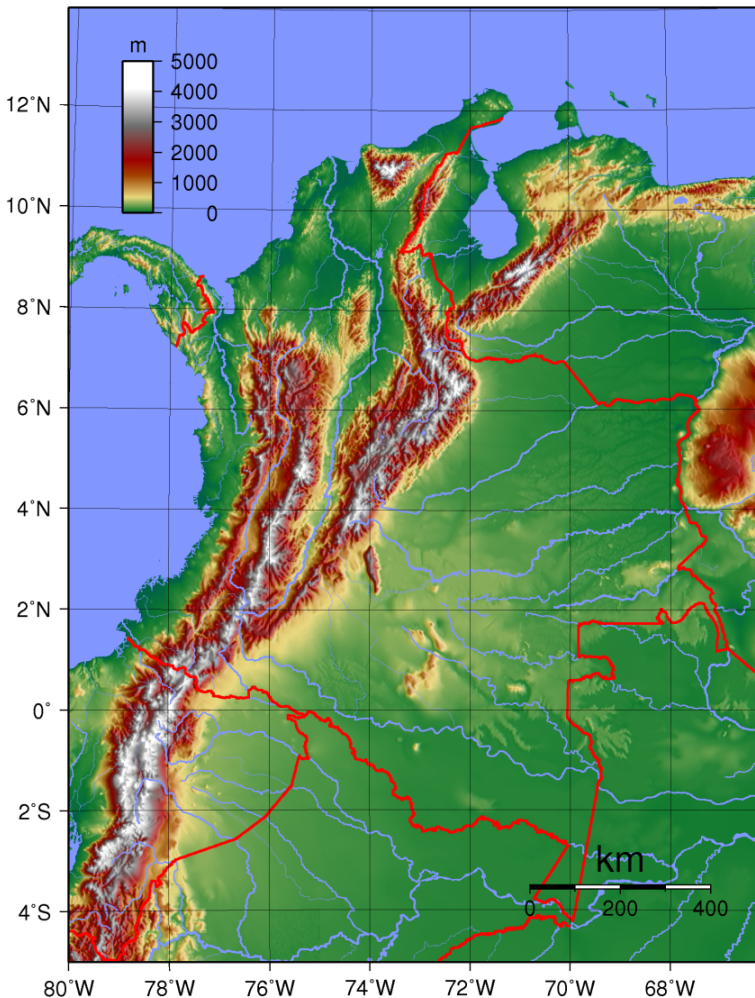


Figure 10: Topographic map of Colombia
by Sadalmelik, creative commons, available at
http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archivo:Colombia_Topography.png.

people from the region of Antioquia (with some extension of the identity into the Departments of Caldas, Quindío and Risaralda),³⁴² tend to have lighter skin and are stereotyped as shrewd and industrious entrepreneurs. They have a strong regional identity as 'la raza antioqueña', based on a myth of racial purity and a lack of African and indigenous heritage.³⁴³

Region is widely used today by Colombians as a language of racial differentiation. Wade argues that in Colombia in general 'race' is regionalized, that is to say, it is not only reflected in spatial categories but actually constituted by them.³⁴⁴ Regions are commonly defined in opposition, as either 'white' interior, indigenous Amazon lowland, or 'black' coasts (the Atlantic being less 'black' than the Pacific).³⁴⁵

Appelbaum extends Wade's argument to argue that the racialized discourse of regional differentiation began in the 19th century as Colombians colonized the country (an ongoing process, as discussed in the last chapter), and that greater morality and progress was assigned to those regions (and localities within regions) that were marked as "white",

³⁴² Mara Viveros Vigoya, "Imágenes de la masculinidad blanca en Colombia. Raza, Género y poder político." (presented at the III Coloquio Internacional sobre varones y masculinidades, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2008).

³⁴³ Peter Wade, *Blackness and Race Mixture: The Dynamics of Racial Identity in Colombia* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 66.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 52; Sandra Soler Castillo and Neyla Graciela Pardo Abril, "Discurso y racismo en Colombia. Cinco siglos de invisibilidad y exclusion," in *Racismo Y Discurso En América Latina*, ed. Teun Adrianus van Dijk, 1a ed. (Barcelona: Gedisa, 2007), 182.

³⁴⁵ Wade, *Blackness and Race Mixture*, 54,64; Ng'weno argues that the largest numbers of Afro-Colombians are actually not rural people on the coasts, as widely imagined, but urban dwellers in Valle, Antioquia and Bolivar – though it is on the coasts that there are majority "black" departments. Ng'weno, *Turf Wars*, 102.

while ‘frontier’ areas defined as “black” and “indian” were associated with backwardness and danger.³⁴⁶ Antioqueños constructed their regional identity as ‘white’ against a dark ‘other’ on their periphery. Urabá (where the peace community of San José is located) was particularly seen as a periphery to be transformed.³⁴⁷

In the 19th century around the world idealized visions of the nation-state by elites engaged in nation building imagined it as racially homogeneous.³⁴⁸ Appelbaum argues that elite Colombian nation builders defined Colombia as a “country of regions” as a way to make sense of a population that did not fit that vision.³⁴⁹ As she puts it, the division of the country into regions, “was a spatial manifestation of a view of modernity that associated national progress with racial whitening and homogeneity.”³⁵⁰ Hylton similarly argues that the idealized figure of conservative Antioquia, symbolized by the light skinned property owning frontier settler, became the measure of national progress, in contrast to the dark skinned tenant sharecropper, or communal landholder in the Cauca.³⁵¹ The Antioqueño fetishization of capitalist “progress” was intertwined with a devotion to ‘white’ supremacy and practices of internal colonialism.³⁵² Viveros also argues that throughout Colombia whiteness has been and continues to be considered a synonym for

³⁴⁶ Nancy Appelbaum, *Muddied Waters: Race, Region, and Local History in Colombia, 1846–1948* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 4.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

³⁴⁸ Aníbal Quijano, “Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America,” *International Sociology* 15, no. 2 (June 1, 2000): 215–232.

³⁴⁹ Appelbaum, *Muddied Waters*, 207.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 27.

³⁵¹ Hylton, *Evil Hour in Colombia*, 23.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 26–27.

modernity and progress.³⁵³ These are the associations that companions that are seen as ‘white’ are read through, and which become all the more powerful when they are in regions that are coded as the dark frontier.

The ‘Colombian race’

The hygiene movement, strong between 1910 and 1930, attempted to ‘whiten’ Colombia through greater physical and moral ‘hygiene’, in the belief that racial characteristics had both hereditary and environmental factors that could be manipulated.³⁵⁴ Yet it was considered that many traits were not alterable, and so eugenic thinking was also strong at the time. As such there was a push to foster European immigration - though only from the ‘right’ regions of Europe, that is, those with the right height and weight, facial features and ‘nervous blood temperament’ that could truly ‘move the country forward.’³⁵⁵ It seems that even Spaniards were not necessarily ‘white enough’.³⁵⁶ Calls to whiten the Colombian population through mixing in more European stock are as recent as books published in 1953 and 1962.³⁵⁷

Whiteness was seen as the path to modernity and national advancement. The Colombian elite’s inability to inspire much ‘white’ immigration was one of the major frustrations of

³⁵³ Viveros Vigoya, “Imágenes de la masculinidad blanca en Colombia. Raza, Género y poder político.”

³⁵⁴ Santiago Castro-Gómez, “La decadencia de las razas tristes (1910-1930)” (presented at the *Tres tristes trópicos: Imaginarios y construcción de nación*, Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá, Colombia, 2008).

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁶ B. Fra-Molinero, “The Suspect Whiteness of Spain,” ed. L. Jennings, *At home and abroad: historicizing twentieth-century whiteness in literature and performance* 44 (2009): 147–170.

³⁵⁷ Wade, *Blackness and Race Mixture*, 17.

their 'civilizing' project in the nineteenth century.³⁵⁸ Other countries in Latin America with similar worries in the nineteenth century were more successful in luring 'white' European immigrants, often through subsidies for travel.³⁵⁹ Argentina, Cuba and Sao Paulo were notably so, as was the Colombian region of Antioquia.³⁶⁰

Scholarship on *mestizaje* across Latin America has argued that the idealization of mixing that became strong in the beginning of the nineteenth century was generally based on the idea that 'whiter races' would mix in to 'improve' the darker ones.³⁶¹ Behind the discourse of 'we are all *mestizo*', which submerges and denies difference, lies the hierarchical discourse of *blanqueamiento* (whitening).³⁶² 'Indians' and even sometimes 'blacks' could be romanticized as part of a glorious past that with paternalistic guidance would be integrated and whitened.³⁶³ *Blanqueamiento* shapes discourse and policy, but also daily practices. Many Colombians today continue to engage in *blanqueamiento* as a social practice for upward mobility. This might entail the physical act of looking for a

³⁵⁸ A. Múnera, *Fronteras imaginadas: la construcción de las razas y de la geografía en el siglo XIX colombiano* (Bogotá, Colombia: Editorial Planeta, 2005), 147.

³⁵⁹ Nancy Appelbaum, *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Alastair Bonnett, "A White World? Whiteness and the Meaning of Modernity in Latin America and Japan," in *Working through whiteness: international perspectives*, ed. Cynthia Levine-Rasky (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2002), 69 – 105.

³⁶⁰ Appelbaum argues that the result was an ongoing rough correlation between racial definition and the economic condition of these countries and regions. Appelbaum, *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America*, 212.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 209; Wade, *Race And Ethnicity In Latin America*, 32.

³⁶² Wade, *Blackness and Race Mixture*, 18.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 11.

whiter spouse for lighter offspring, hair straightening, or simply denying having any blackness in one's heritage.³⁶⁴

Wealth can, to a degree, buy whiteness. It can pay for coloured contacts, but in more indirect ways, as Bonnett puts it, “money whitens.”³⁶⁵ Streicker reports that older people in Cartagena use ‘*claro*’ for a light skinned poor person but ‘*blanco*’ if that person is wealthy.³⁶⁶ Wade writes that the same individual dressed shabbily and smartly will be identified with different colour terms.³⁶⁷ Viveros and Garay say that a man may use a good suit and careful diction with a neutral accent to move from ‘indio’ to ‘doctor.’³⁶⁸ Viveros writes that for a *mestizo* to be considered an ‘honorary white’ it is essential that they have “good manners” and the habits, tastes and behaviours of the wealthy.³⁶⁹ Cunin

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 77.

³⁶⁵ Bonnett, “A White World? Whiteness and the Meaning of Modernity in Latin America and Japan,” 73.

³⁶⁶ Streicker, “Policing boundaries,” 60.

³⁶⁷ Wade, *Race And Ethnicity In Latin America*, 38; Werner writes that in the Dominican Republic what she calls “social whitening” is “achieved through a combination of living in urban spaces, taking on an urban look, and engaging in forms of labour socially constructed as “modern,” such as factory work. M. Werner, “Embodied negotiations: identity, space and livelihood after trade zones in the Dominican Republic,” *Gender, Place and Culture* 17, no. 6 (2010): 38.

³⁶⁸ “Doctor” being a term of respect generally not signifying an actual MD or PhD. Viveros Vigoya and Garay Ariza, “El cuerpo y sus significados. A manera de introducción.”

³⁶⁹ Viveros Vigoya, “Imágenes de la masculinidad blanca en Colombia. Raza, Género y poder político.” 10; In the other direction Streickler writes that older people in Cartagena in the 1990s would call most Afro-Colombians “moreno” unless they were considered to speak and act rudely, in which case they would be called “negro”. Streicker, “Policing boundaries,” 10.

separates these ‘cultural’ forms of whitening from the ‘biological’ ones, e.g. marrying lighter skinned partners.³⁷⁰

Whiteness opens access to both economic and social status.³⁷¹ Castro Gómez argues that all of this construction of whiteness had as its aim, either openly or not, the private concentration of capital: economic, social and cultural.³⁷² In Colombia class and ‘race’ not only intersect, they interlock.³⁷³ Each not only shapes but reinforces the other, and one of the primary ways they prop each other up is through spatiality. But there is some room for slippage. The way Chaves puts it is that one’s daily social inscription in categories such as ‘indian’, ‘black’, or ‘white’ is never absolute but always in relation to attributes of power, wealth, and status.³⁷⁴ As such white companions are often assumed by Colombians to have class privilege (on the basis of both ‘race’ and nationality), and

³⁷⁰ Cunin Elizabeth, “La competencia mestiza. Chicago bajo el trópico o las competencias heurísticas del mestizaje,” *Revista Colombiana de Antropología*, no. 38 (2002): 28.

³⁷¹ Bonnett, “A White World? Whiteness and the Meaning of Modernity in Latin America and Japan,” 71.

³⁷² Santiago Castro-Gómez, *La hybris del punto cero* (Bogotá, Colombia: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2005), 88.

³⁷³ Intersectionality is a framework first advanced by Crenshaw and Collins K. Crenshaw, “Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color,” *Stanford Law Review* (1991): 1241–1299; P.H. Collins, “It’s all in the family: Intersections of gender, race, and nation,” *Hypatia* 13, no. 3 (1998): 62–82; Though Collins also used the term interlocking, the idea that systems of oppressions do more than intersect but also interlock has become influential primarily through the work of Razack. Mary Louise Fellows and Sherene Razack, “Race to Innocence: Confronting Hierarchical Relations among Women,” *Journal of Gender, Race and Justice* 1, no. 2 (1998 1997): 335–352.

³⁷⁴ Chaves, M. in Almario et al., “Aproximaciones a los estudios de razas y racismos en Colombia,” 192; This is a more complex understanding than the argument widely made by US sociologists studying Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s that class determined “race”, such that, they argued, a wealthy “black” man was seen as “white” and a poor “white” man was seen as “black”. Elizabeth, “La competencia mestiza. Chicago bajo el trópico o las competencias heurísticas del mestizaje.”

those companions who are ‘not quite white’ but have nationality privilege and act and dress in ways that are read as signs of the assumed associated class privilege are also seen as ‘whiter’ as a result.³⁷⁵

Changing imaginaries

Indigenous Colombians have played an important role in challenging ‘the racialization of progress’ and disarticulating modernity from whiteness by asserting that Colombia is neither ‘white’ nor *mestizo*, but rather a racially plural nation.³⁷⁶ This has happened most spectacularly on paper. Wade argues that the ‘white’ republic enshrined in the 1886 constitution was replaced, in the 1991 constitution, with a vision of a ‘pluriethnic’ nation.³⁷⁷ Appelbaum also emphasizes that the new constitution both reflected and reinforced a changing imaginary. Soon after it was signed the state launched what appeared to be a ‘let us all be happily multicultural now’ campaign, with posters that said ‘unity in diversity’ and had pictures of smiling women and men of various phenotypes and dress, identified by region.³⁷⁸

³⁷⁵ I discuss these dynamics more in depth in chapter eight.

³⁷⁶ Appelbaum, *Muddied Waters*, 27.

³⁷⁷ Wade, *Blackness and Race Mixture*; Neither constitution uses those actual terms in the text, but the 1991 constitution does say “The Colombian Constitution recognizes and protects the ethnic and cultural diversity of the nation” (article 7) “All persons are born free and equal under the law and shall receive the same protection and treatment from authorities and shall enjoy the same rights, liberties and opportunities free from any discrimination on the basis of race” (article 13). For more on race and the new constitution see Daniel Bonilla Maldonado, *La Constitución multicultural* (Siglo del Hombre Editores, 2006).

³⁷⁸ Appelbaum, *Muddied Waters*, 214 These posters were on the walls of my home for many years.

Shortly after the passage of the new constitution the national identity cards (*cedulas*) were also changed. Before 1993 these had a category for “color”, which included entries such as rosy white (*blanca rosada*) and *trigueña* (“corn-coloured”).³⁷⁹ The new cards have other biometric data, but no entry for ‘race’ or ethnicity.³⁸⁰ Yet ‘race’, and racial discrimination, was not so easily erased. As García Márquez put it “*somos dos países a la vez: uno de papel y otro en la realidad*” (we are two countries at the same time: one on paper and another in reality).³⁸¹ The decade after the signing of the constitution was one of growing income inequality that also exacerbated racial inequalities.³⁸²

‘Race’ at war

Under processes set in motion by the new constitution, 31.3 million hectares of traditional territory, stunningly over a quarter of the country’s land, were legally granted and titled as *resguardos* (indigenous collective land property), and another 5 million

³⁷⁹ Mentioned as official cedula entries in a discussion of race on poor but happy “Difference between Trigueña and Morena (Poorbuthappy in Colombia!),” *poor but happy*, n.d., <http://poorbuthappy.com/colombia/post/difference-between-triguea-and-morena> (accessed October 5, 2011); “trigueño - Diccionario Inglés-Español WordReference.com”, n.d., <http://www.wordreference.com/es/en/translation.asp?spen=trigueno> (accessed October 5, 2011).

³⁸⁰ Jaime Torres Melo (via personal communication) suggests that the change was made not because of pressure to remove the color category but in search of a more effective mechanism for identifying bodies in a context of violence. Indeed the text of the law itself (law 38 of 1993) describes in great detail how the dental records now associated with the identification are to be used for this purpose.

³⁸¹ Garcia Marquez , 1995, cited in Soler Castillo and Pardo Abril, “Discurso y racismo en Colombia. Cinco siglos de invisibilidad y exclusion,” 195.

³⁸² M. Chaves and M. Zambrano, “From blanqueamiento to reindigenización: Paradoxes of mestizaje and multiculturalism in contemporary Colombia,” *Revista Europea de estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe* 80 (2006): 9.

hectares have been legally granted to historic black communities on the Pacific Coast.³⁸³

Though this was a major achievement, these regions continue to be marginalized economically, with dramatically higher poverty and illiteracy rates, far fewer homes with electricity and running water, and few roads and public services in general. As Oslender puts it, though the new constitution offered discursive inclusion and territorial rights, these groups faced continuing socioeconomic and political exclusion.³⁸⁴

Regions that are traditional black and indigenous territory, most of which were only recently titled, were long ignored by national development plans and roads into these areas were few and of poor quality. But these areas are now the new frontier - and are targeted for natural resource extraction. This is the continuation of the long pattern of frontier colonization and violence discussed in chapter three. Roldán in particular writes about how that process has been racialized. She argues that '*la violencia*', the period of violence in the 1940s and 1950s that is seen by many as the beginning of the current war, was a culmination of, as she puts it, the 'internal colonialism' of regions, which was then used to justify violence against 'others' as a pretext for seizing their land and natural resources.³⁸⁵ She argues that '*la violencia*' was the product of capitalist development.

There are many dynamics at work in the violence today, but this certainly continues to be one of them.

³⁸³ Ibid., 9; Ng'weno argues that granting these titles was a way to bring remote areas into the fold of the state. Ng'weno, *Turf Wars*, 188 Resguardos were first established by the Spanish crown. The 1991 constitution recognized many colonial resguardos that had not been recognized as such for many years. .

³⁸⁴ Ulrich Oslender, "The Logic of the River': A Spatial Approach to Ethnic-Territorial Mobilization in the Colombian Pacific Region," *Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 7, no. 2 (2002): 89.

³⁸⁵ Roldán, *Blood and fire*.

Violence has hit Afro-Colombians and indigenous people the hardest, and they form a greatly disproportionate number of the displaced,³⁸⁶ because their territories, for so long considered undesirable, are now widely seen by outside investors as an ‘untapped’ treasure trove of gold, hardwood lumber, and land and water for oil palm plantations. These areas have also become more important geopolitically and geoeconomically in the push to connect Colombia more to global commerce and make it a biodiesel power.³⁸⁷ There are pending massive development projects to connect rivers and roads across Northwest Colombia to compete with the Panama Canal and major road building to carry goods into Panama and further North, as well as pipeline construction. Drug traffickers are also using more routes through these regions.

These capitalist interests are threatened by Afro-Colombian communities gaining collective title to their traditional territory. Though this right was established by law 70 of 1993, it was not until many years later that most communities were able to fulfill the requirements to get their title. But in the late 1990s there was a repeated phenomena where communities, after struggling for years for legal ownership of their land, would sign the documents giving them collective ownership - and soon thereafter paramilitaries

³⁸⁶ In one 2008 survey 17% identified as Afro-Colombians. Ordoñez, “Los afrocolombianos: La población más vulnerable como consecuencia del desplazamiento forzado”; Oslender says one-third of the displaced are thought to be Afro-Colombian, but as he notes, these are very difficult statistics to track. Many of the displaced do not register officially as such out of fear, and the official registries do not track “race” or ethnicity. Oslender, “Another History of Violence”; Even with these limited statistics, “the probability that an Afro-descendent citizen has been displaced is 84% higher than that of white-mestizos.” Rodríguez-Garavito, Alfonso Sierra, and Cavalier Adarve, *Racial Discrimination and Human Rights in Colombia: A Report on the Situation of the Rights of Afro-Colombians*.

³⁸⁷ Colombia is already the fourth largest palm-oil producer in the world. Uribe repeatedly emphasized it as a development goal and funded its expansion. For an analysis of these policies and their impact see Oslender, “Violence in development.”

would move in to their area, committing violence aimed at scaring people off their newly legal land.³⁸⁸ Ironically it was precisely when communities received their land titles that they were pushed off their lands and the entire Pacific coast region, which had been known as a peaceful refuge from the rest of the war, saw intense combat between the FARC and the paramilitaries.³⁸⁹ The situation has become extreme, such that in 2007 79% of those Afro-Colombians eligible to live on collectively titled land in the Pacific had been pushed off of it.³⁹⁰

Afro-Colombian and indigenous people have long been the poorest in the country, but they have become even more so. Hylton argues that since the mid-1990s the paramilitaries have been redistributing “wealth, political power, and property toward the light skinned top of the social pyramid.”³⁹¹ But the army itself has also been responsible for massive displacement from traditional Afro-Colombian areas, most famously in the brutal ‘Operation Genesis’ along the Atrato river systems in 1997, which led to the displacement of 15,000.³⁹² Some communities have bravely resisted displacement and formed peace communities and humanitarian zones, with the support of both national and

³⁸⁸ Arocha and Maya, “Afro-Latin American Peoples,” 409.

³⁸⁹ Oslender, “Violence in development,” 758; Ulrich Oslender, “Construyendo contrapoderes a las nuevas guerras geo-económicas: caminos hacia una globalización de la resistencia,” *Revista de Humanidades Tabula Rasa* (2004): 69.

³⁹⁰ AFRODES report 2007 cited in Rodríguez-Garavito, Alfonso Sierra, and Cavalier Adarve, *Racial Discrimination and Human Rights in Colombia: A Report on the Situation of the Rights of Afro-Colombians*, 35.

³⁹¹ Hylton, *Evil Hour in Colombia*, 94.

³⁹² That figure is an estimate by Arocha and Maya, “Afro-Latin American Peoples,” 402; For accounts of these attacks see Oslender, “Violence in development” Several brave communities have returned to that area, with international accompaniment, and are in protracted struggles with the palm oil companies that took their land.

international companions. Much of the international accompaniment happening in Colombia is happening in these regions.

Conclusion:

Those communities that are resisting or returning from displacement tend to be in these racialized ‘frontier’ regions, and as such the whiteness of companions stands out there. Companions are ‘out of place’ in these regions, making them more noticeable to the armed actors they aim to deter. But companions go against the racial script. Rather than come in to these regions to ‘modernize’ and develop them, they stand alongside those who have a different vision of dignity, those who are resisting both the incursion of armed actors and that of capitalist development.

The war is driven by desires for capitalist development and ‘modernity,’ which is imagined as white. Racial imaginaries are used to justify racialized violence, and the war has hit darker skinned people the hardest and reinforced white supremacy. It matters then in what way, that is, what direction, companions are ‘out of place’. A brown skinned companion in a light skinned community would be read very differently.

Whiteness is idealized and associated with power, modernity, and place. But neither space nor ‘race’ is created once and then done. They are always a doing, one that can reinforce or reshape power relations.³⁹³ It is not accidental that Antioquia ended up

³⁹³ As such there have been calls by geographers to pay more attention to the changing spatialities of whiteness, particularly outside of the US. This chapter has been an attempt to do so. J. Winders, J. P Jones, and M. J Higgins, “Making Güeras: Selling white identities on late-night Mexican television,” *Gender, Place & Culture* 12, no. 1 (2005): 79, 88; Alastair Bonnett,

‘whiter’, nor that the war hits Afro-Colombians and indigenous people the hardest. These social realities are (re)created daily through racist discourses, practices, and policies. But there is always agency and dissent.³⁹⁴ Brave communities are resisting displacement, organizing around their own visions of human dignity, and going against these scripts of their spaces as backwards and what it is they need to ‘modernize.’ One of the ways they are able to ‘stay in place’ and rework imaginaries of those places, is through the solidarity of companions who, when they walk with them in these places, are also going against these racial scripts and are seen as ‘out of place.’ In chapter eight I discuss what this looks like day to day and how companions negotiate these racial imaginaries.

White Identities: Historical and International Perspectives (White Plains, NY: Longman Publishing Group, 1999).

³⁹⁴ Appelbaum’s book, for example, is an in-depth historical study of how racialized and colonized people around one Colombian town have resisted, adapted and shaped the social order. Appelbaum, *Muddied Waters*.

Chapter 5: What kind of peace?

Nasepwesx ipi'kx fxi' Cenci read the holes, punched out of the paper made out of coca leaf that hangs in one of the most prestigious galleries in Bogotá.³⁹⁵ The artist, Miguel Angel Rojas, interviewed 'raspachines' - the people at the very bottom of the cocaine production chain, the migrant farmworkers who strip the coca leaves off the branch. He asked them what was missing in their lives. Peace, they said. Peace translated into the Nasa indigenous language is nasepwesx ipi'kx. Back-translated into Spanish, on the side panel next to the coca paper with holes on the wall of the gallery, it is rendered as "todos en compañía continuamente" (everyone always in company). For the Nasa, accompanying each other is not a way to peace, it is peace itself.

'Making space for peace' is the slogan of Peace Brigades. In this chapter I turn to the peace part of that equation and ask what peace means in general, in the Colombian context, to the groups that are accompanied, and to accompaniers. I begin by describing Galtung's distinction between positive and negative peace. I use these categories to make sense of two marches that happened in Colombia while I was there, and argue that one was a call for negative peace and the other for positive peace, though neither used those terms. Many Colombian organizations that receive international accompaniment were in the second group, and indeed, most of these groups work not just to end killing but for justice. I then turn to how accompaniers understand peace, and our discussions of the term. Accompaniment is sometimes portrayed as civilian peacekeeping, so I turn next to the history and nature of militarized peacekeeping. I end by arguing against understanding accompaniment as a form of peacekeeping.

³⁹⁵ Exhibit January 2008 in the Contemporary Art Galleries of the Botero Museum.

Positive and negative

The seduction of the word itself – peace – is that it is surrounded by, indeed drenched in, the blandishments of approval, uncontroversial eulogizing, sentimental endorsement.

– Edward Said³⁹⁶

“the peace of the rich is war against the poor”

– graffiti in Medellin³⁹⁷

There were a number of marches for peace and symbolic votes for peace across Colombia in the late 1990s that began with one organized by UNICEF and held by and for children.³⁹⁸ For these votes peace was not defined, the ballots simply offered a choice between war and peace. Colombian human rights activists argued that rights and justice were lost in these unspecified calls for ‘peace’.³⁹⁹ Others argue that these votes created the pressure for Pastrana to negotiate with the guerrillas,⁴⁰⁰ though not enough pressure to actually put a ceasefire in to effect and the negotiations stalled.

These differences can be understood as turning around different understandings of peace as either negative or positive. This distinction was first defined by Johan Galtung.

Galtung founded what was one of the first and continues to be one of the most well

³⁹⁶ E. W Said, “The public role of writers and intellectuals,” *Nation, Language, and the Ethics of Translation* (n.d.): 28.

³⁹⁷ Hristov, *Blood and Capital*, 24.

³⁹⁸ Tate, *Counting the Dead*, 69.

³⁹⁹ For more on the history of these divisions see Adam Isacson and Jorge Rojas Rodriguez, “Origins, Evolution and Lessons of the Colombian Peace Movement,” in *Colombia: building peace in a time of war*, ed. Virginia Marie Bouvier (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2009), 19–38; Mauricio García Durán, *Movimiento por la paz en Colombia. 1978-2003* (Bogotá, Colombia: Centro de Investigacion y Educacion Popular, Cinep, 2006); Mauricio García Durán, “Colombia - Nonviolent Movement for Peace and International Solidarity,” in *People Power: Unarmed Resistance and Global Solidarity*, ed. Howard Clark (London: Pluto Press, 2009), 64 – 75.

⁴⁰⁰ Tate, *Counting the Dead*, 70.

known peace institutes, the Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO), in 1958. In 1972 he introduced the concept of positive peace. He argued that negative peace was the absence of *direct violence*, i.e. bodily harm, and positive peace was the absence of *structural violence*, i.e. social structures with life-shortening consequences.

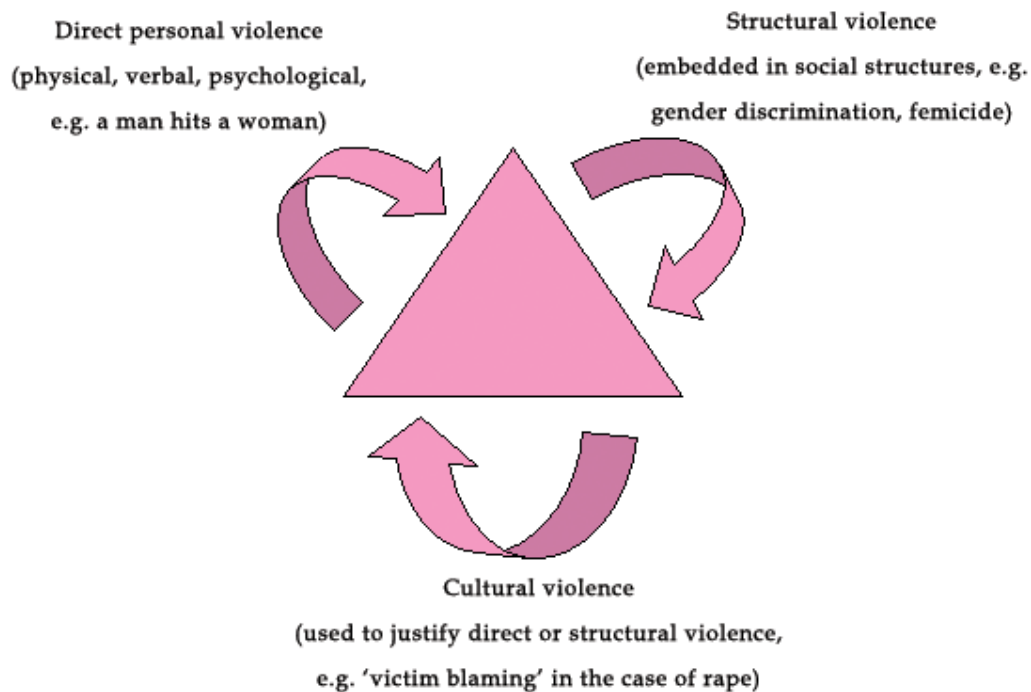


Figure 11: Galtung's triangle of violences,⁴⁰¹
© Bernadette Muthien, by permission.

Twenty years later Galtung added a third type of violence, *cultural violence*, i.e. the ideas used to legitimize both direct and structural violence. In Galtung's triangle structural leads to cultural leads to direct violence (see figure eleven). Negative peace is the absence of direct violence (though not the absence of all conflict, as is sometimes imagined). Positive peace, he now argues, is the absence of both structural and cultural

⁴⁰¹ Bernedette Muthien, *Engendering Security* (Johannesburg, South Africa: Engender, n.d.), <http://www.engender.org.za/publications/engenderingsecurity.html> (accessed November 16, 2011).



Figure 12: 'Facebook march for peace' in February 2008, photo by author.

'facebook march', as this was how organizing for it began by a group of individuals not affiliated with any group, though it was then widely promoted by the major media. In these marches everyone wore white and many carried classic peace symbols like the dove, though many more carried, or even wore, the Colombian flag. Yet the message on most t-shirts, which also had the colors of the Colombian flag on them, rather than saying no more war, said 'no more kidnapping, no more FARC' (see figure 12). Some, particularly the families of hostages, worried that these marches would be used to justify

violence.⁴⁰² Ironically though, even in his definition of positive peace, peace is being defined by what it is not - rather than by, say, the existence of justice or life-affirming values and structures.

Even as simply a negative peace, the term peace is often used in Colombia (as elsewhere) in ways that end up supporting military solutions (i.e., pacification). For example in February 2008 a huge march for peace was held in cities across Colombia and across the world that was widely called the

⁴⁰² Johan Galtung, *Peace by peaceful means: Peace and conflict, development and civilization* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996).

more war (i.e. peace as victory), and particularly militarized rescues, although the guerrillas had promised to kill hostages if they were attacked.



A different vision of peace and how to get there was taken to the streets a month later by MOVICE, the Movement of Victims of State Crimes. Their march was not quite a black march, but something like it. MOVICE formed

in 2005 and has played an increasingly greater role in holding the government accountable for war crimes. The marches they called for March 6th, 2008 were also held in various cities across Colombia and the world, and were officially held as an ‘homage to victims of paramilitarism, parapolitics and crimes of the State.’ In Bogotá this march was mournful, with thousands carrying different large photos of the dead and disappeared (see figure 13). The national flag was also in this march, but used by actors portraying torture (see figure 14)

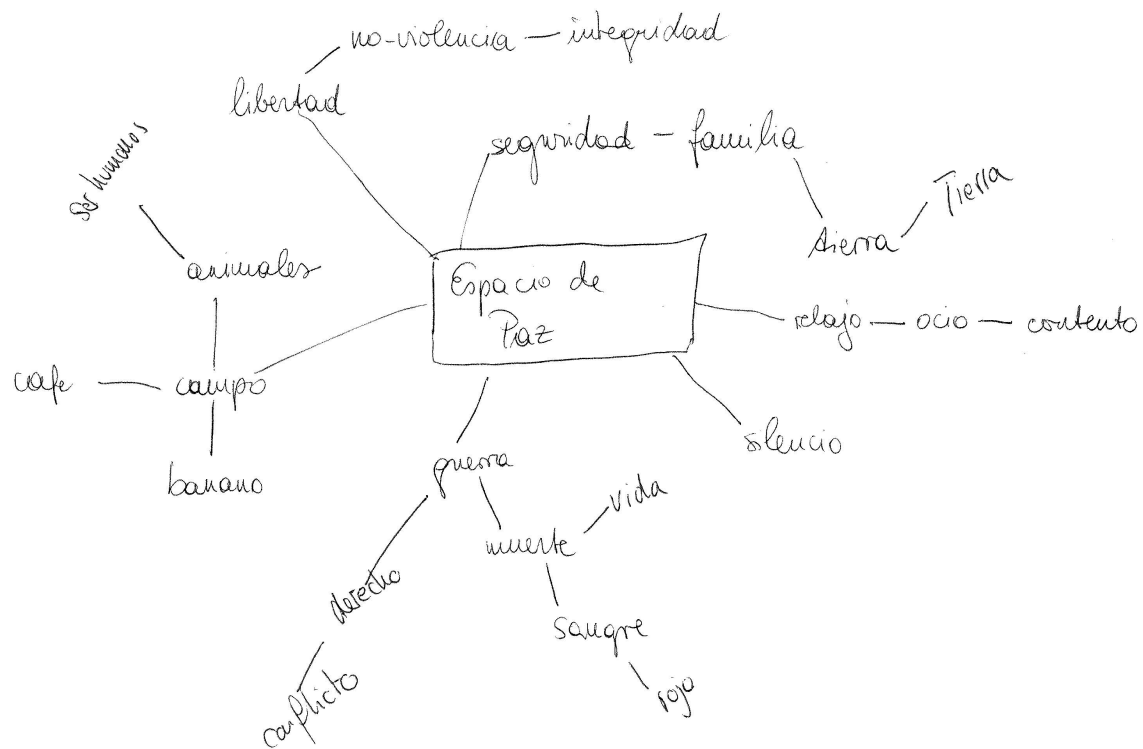


Figure 14: MOVICE march on March 6th, 2008.
Flag around head of both actors dressed in white, visible only on second actor.
photo by author

The second set of marches emphasized the lack of justice, and could be understood as promoting various different visions of a positive peace. Many of the organizations that are accompanied in Colombia were present in the later march in Bogotá. I would not characterize these groups not as members of a ‘peace’ movement, but rather as active in the broader ‘justice and human rights’ movement in Colombia – a movement that can be understood as working for a more positive peace, that is to say, against both physical and structural violence. But many of these groups avoid the term peace all together, feeling it has been so misused in Colombia to support war as to be bankrupt.

Although San José still calls itself a ‘peace community’ many other communities of displaced peoples who have returned to or near their lands, or are struggling to avoid

displacement, now call themselves ‘humanitarian zones’ (tapping into international law terminology). Each of these communities has their own understanding of what peace with justice means in their context. Clearly for all it means being able to stay on their land, but for the peace community of San José it also means keeping the mining company out, whereas other communities might want such a company to come in and provide jobs. In San José, for example, not allowing alcohol in the community is a key part of peace for them, something certainly not all communities resisting displacement agree with. This no alcohol rule is also something that some FOR accompaniers in San José have struggled with, and it begs the question of how accompaniers understand the meaning of ‘peace’.



PBI

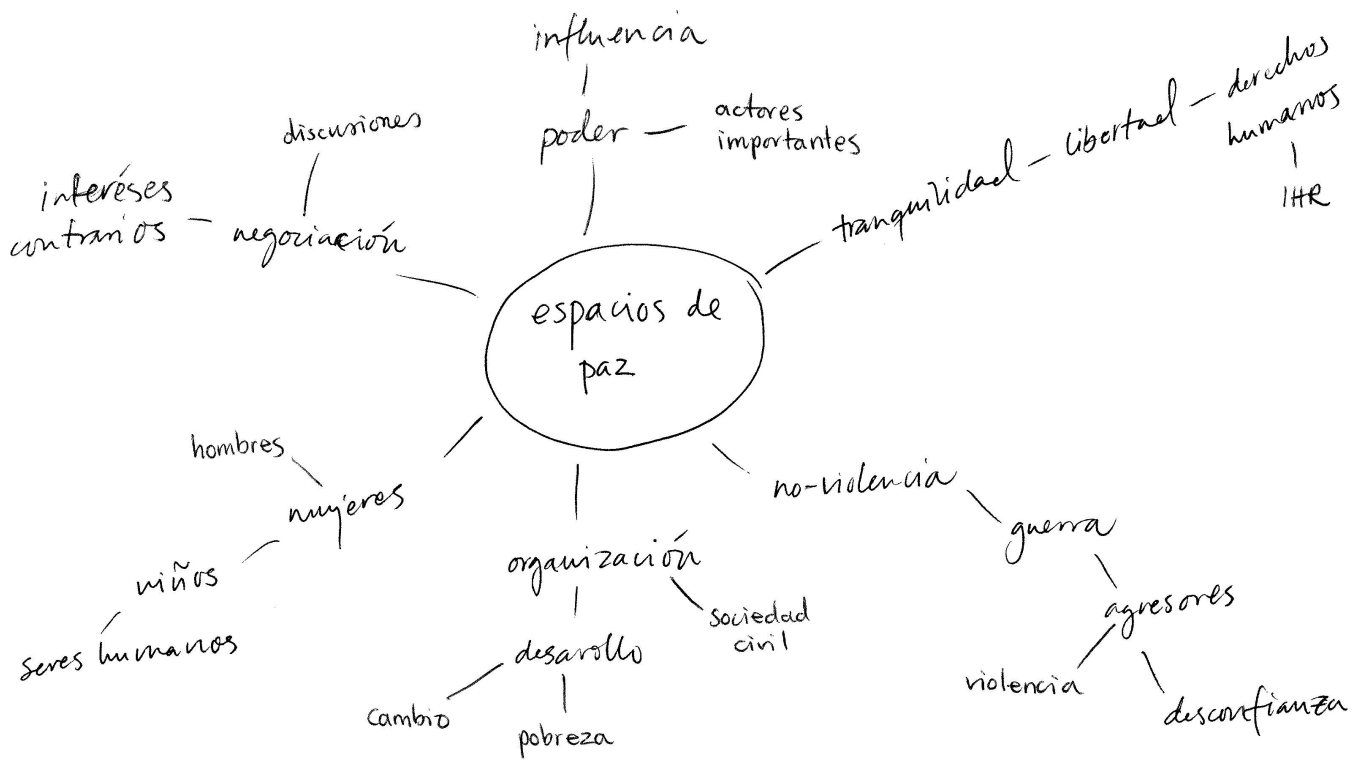
Figure 15: Mind map drawn during PBI workshop.

Accompaniers' understandings of peace

I opened the workshops that I held with accompaniers by asking them to draw a free association mind map, starting from the term peace space placed in the middle of a piece of paper. After a couple of minutes I asked them to pass their sheet to the right, and then to continue free associating off of the chains on the sheet they had received. I then had

them pass these to the right one more time and simply read over the third sheet (see figures 15 and 16).⁴⁰³ I then asked them to read out things on the sheet they now had in their hand which surprised them, as a way of opening a discussion about different understandings of and associations with the word peace. Most maps had lines of association with images of death and killing, and most of the maps also ended up having the word justice or rights or human rights on them. After some discussion I presented the idea of categorizing peace as either positive or negative. Most accompaniers had not heard of those terms, but were used to the distinction between peace as simply the ending of the armed conflict and political killing in Colombia vs. peace as social justice. Accompaniers widely agreed that the groups they accompanied were working for various visions of a positive peace, depending on their contexts and priorities. In some groups there was some debate as to whether they, as accompaniers, understood themselves to be working for some version of a positive peace, or whether they were simply supporting Colombians in *their* work for peace. A few understood accompaniers as working for a negative peace, as a prerequisite for Colombians to then be able to work for a positive peace. Many saw themselves as working for a positive peace.

⁴⁰³ This is a technique that I learned from Linda Tuhiwai Smith in her Decolonizing Methodology seminar at UBC in 2005. It is a way to do collective visualization where people can share ideas and associations that they may not feel comfortable saying aloud in a group.



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Some accompaniers said that the term peace was so problematic that they preferred to identify as human rights workers.⁴⁰⁴ To borrow from Galtung, human rights, like peace, can also be seen as positive and negative. The UN Declaration on Human Rights has two

⁴⁰⁴ workshop with FOR in San Francisco

separate covenants, one on civil and political rights and the other on economic, social and cultural rights. They were separated because not all states were willing to sign the latter. The right *not* to be enslaved, or tortured, is quite different that the right *to* an education. The existence of the first group of rights could be seen as one way of defining negative peace, and the existence of the latter as a definition of positive peace.

Mauricio García-Durán, a member of the Jesuit think tank CINEP in Colombia, identifies ten definitions of peace used by various Colombian movements for peace.⁴⁰⁵ One of these is peace as the full respect of human rights, which he also calls peace as social justice. This seems to be the definition both most accompaniers and most of those who receive accompaniment hold to – though as noted there is a wide variety of ways they define social justice in their local contexts. The other definitions of positive peace that García-Durán outlines are peace as reconciliation, peace as greater democratization, peace as recognition of gender rights, peace as recognition of ethnic rights and peace as recognition of LGBT rights. These are in contrast to the four versions of negative peace he found being used in mobilizations for peace: peace as military victory; peace as the defense of life, peace as truth, justice and reparations; and peace as the simple demobilization of armed actors.

No accompaniment groups working in Colombia describe themselves as peacekeepers, but several writers do describe accompaniment as ‘civilian peacekeeping’, or less

⁴⁰⁵ Durán, *Movimiento por la paz en Colombia. 1978-2003*, 253–262.

commonly, as unarmed peacekeeping.⁴⁰⁶ To make sense of this claim let me turn to what peacekeeping means and the understanding of peace that it implies.

The history of peacekeeping

Peacekeeping was born in and of the Cold War. The UN peacekeepers website names the deployment of unarmed military observers to Israel in 1948 as their beginning,⁴⁰⁷ but scholars widely consider the first UN peacekeepers to have been the first armed ones, deployed in 1956 to the Suez Canal after the invasion of Egypt by Israeli, British and French forces.⁴⁰⁸ The ongoing expansion of the scope of peacekeeping is often referred to by scholars in terms of generations. As Higate and Henry put it, “The earliest interventions were premised on the so-called ‘holy trinity’ of consent, impartiality and the minimum use of force. The second generation of peacekeeping combined traditional peacekeeping with humanitarian components and attempted to facilitate democratization, most importantly the holding of elections. Finally, the third-generation peacekeeping

⁴⁰⁶ Weber, “From Maude Royden’s Peace Army to the Gulf Peace Team”; Thomas Weber, *Gandhi’s Peace Army: The Shanti Sena and Unarmed Peacekeeping* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1996); *Civilian Peacekeeping: A Barely Tapped Resource*; For a typology breaking it into intercessionary and interpositional and other forms of peacekeeping see L. Schirch, *Civilian Peacekeeping: Preventing Violence and Making Space for Democracy* (Uppsala, Sweden: Life & Peace Institute, 2006).

⁴⁰⁷ “History of peacekeeping. United Nations Peacekeeping”, n.d., <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/history.shtml> (accessed May 30, 2011).

⁴⁰⁸ Paul Diehl et al., “Peacekeeping,” ed. Nigel Young, *Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), <http://www.oxford-peace.com/entry?entry=t296.e545-s1> (accessed May 30, 2011); *Civilian Peacekeeping: A Barely Tapped Resource*, 8 Schweitzer also argues that there were at least two missions of the League of Nations after World War I which could be considered peacekeeping but were not called such.

missions tend to be framed as quasi-enforcement operations.”⁴⁰⁹ These changes in peacekeeping are frequently related to two key UN reports.⁴¹⁰

After the fall of the Berlin wall UN peacekeeping grew dramatically,⁴¹¹ but so did questions about its mandate and scope. In 1992 the Security Council asked then Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali to write a report recommending reforms. His ‘Agenda for Peace’ written that year recommended expanding the peacekeeping and understanding it to have four phases: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and post-conflict peacebuilding. This built on the distinction first put forward in peace studies by Galtung in 1976 between peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding, the first two aimed at establishing a negative peace (by either keeping actors apart or bringing them together), and the later a positive peace (by addressing the structural violence at the root of the conflict).⁴¹² Said differently, peacekeeping refers to stopping the violence by preventing actors from destroying things and people. Peacemaking refers to negotiating solutions, generally through some sort of mediation or conflict resolution, be it at a diplomatic or citizen level. Peacebuilding addresses root issues like land inequity.

The second UN report often cited as the next shift in peacekeeping was issued in 2000 at the request of then Secretary General Kofi Annan and is known as the Brahimi Report,

⁴⁰⁹ Higate and Henry, *Insecure Spaces*, 9.

⁴¹⁰ Diehl et al., “Peacekeeping.”

⁴¹¹ “The Security Council authorized a total of 20 new operations between 1989 and 1994, raising the number of peacekeepers from 11,000 to 75,000.” “History of peacekeeping. United Nations Peacekeeping.”

⁴¹² Johan Galtung, *Three approaches to peace: Peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding*, vol. 2 (Copenhagen: Christian Ejlertsen, 1975).

after the panel chair. As the UN peacekeepers website notes, the report arose out of controversy over missions in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Somalia, where “there was no peace to keep.”⁴¹³ What shifted in the ‘third generation’ of peacekeeping was that it involved intervention that was now widely legitimized as ‘humanitarian’, often using the framework put forward in yet another report, this one on the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) issued in 2001 by an International Commission convened by the government of Canada. The norms of that report were adopted in the 2005 UN Millennium Goals World Summit and then in 2006 by the Security Council.⁴¹⁴ Higate and Henry argue that rather than reflect a moral shift, or a growing global humanitarian conscience, third generation peacekeeping reflects the geopolitical balance of power in the post-Cold war world.

Higate and Henry argue that these generational shifts did not question the underlying norms established at the end of the cold war of UN peacekeeping as a sort of ‘civilizing mission’, a way to promote the liberal project through a vision of peace in which neoliberal capitalism and liberal democracy are seen as the panacea for ‘failed states’. In the field of international relations this understanding of peace is widely referred to as the ‘liberal peace’ and is often traced back to Kant’s argument for a ‘Perpetual Peace’.⁴¹⁵

There are many strong critiques in international relations of this understanding of peace,

⁴¹³ “History of peacekeeping. United Nations Peacekeeping.”

⁴¹⁴ “The UN and RtoP”, n.d., <http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/about-rtop/the-un-and-rtop> (accessed May 31, 2011).

⁴¹⁵ Immanuel Kant, *To Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub, 2003).

most notably those made by Duffield.⁴¹⁶ Of these the most relevant to the issue of peacekeeping at hand here is the argument that the neoliberal reforms pushed in liberal peacebuilding efforts have destabilizing socioeconomic effects which then require more ‘policing’ by peacekeepers.⁴¹⁷ Pugh goes so far as to say that peacekeeping upholds a liberal peace in a way that can be considered a form of riot control directed against the unruly parts of the world.⁴¹⁸

Accompaniment is not peacekeeping

I did not discuss the vision of a ‘liberal peace’ with accompaniers because I did not learn the term until I returned and started reading about peacekeeping. Going back to Colombian media and academic texts I have found no mention of the term. Yet there was certainly much discussion of the pros and cons of liberalizing trade while I was in Colombia, as the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the US had been signed but not yet approved by the US Congress. Some proponents of the FTA argued that it would enhance peace. Most opponents argued that it would increase conflict. Most if not all of the Colombian groups that are accompanied were opposed to the FTA. All accompaniment organizations with US accompaniers were actively campaigning against

⁴¹⁶ Duffield, *Development, security and unending war*; Duffield, *Global governance and the new wars*; see also Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, *Rethinking the Liberal Peace* (New York, NY: Taylor & Francis, 2011); Richmond, *The Transformation of Peace*; Edward Newman, Roland Paris, and Oliver P. Richmond, *New perspectives on liberal peacebuilding* (United Nations University Press, 2009).

⁴¹⁷ Higate and Henry, *Insecure Spaces*, 10.

⁴¹⁸ Pugh 2004: 41 cited in *ibid.*, 13.

it. FOR even shared their office in Bogotá with Recalca, the Colombian coalition against the FTA.

If peacekeeping is understood as creating the conditions for a liberalization of trade, accompaniment is most certainly not any form of peacekeeping. But even if peacekeeping is understood more generously as keeping a negative, rather than a liberal, peace - most of those accompanied are working for a positive peace by raising issues of injustice that could be seen as increasing conflict. Indeed, accompaniment is not about eliminating conflict, but rather about making it safe for those with grievances (often about root causes of the conflict) to nonviolently present their demands for justice.

Presenting accompaniment as civilian peacekeeping seems to be a strategy of the Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) to be seen as more legitimate, and specifically to have the UN fund their work.⁴¹⁹ The term is widely used by authors affiliated with the NP.⁴²⁰ The

⁴¹⁹ They emphasize on their website that they are an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

⁴²⁰ Christine Schweitzer, "Civilian Peacekeeping: How Civilian International Interventions at Grassroots Level Contribute to Human Security and Stability," in *From early action? The debate on the enhancement of the EU's crisis response capability continues* (Brussels, Belgium: European Union Publications Office, 2008), 155–161; C. Schweitzer et al., *Nonviolent Peaceforce Feasibility Study* (St. Paul, MN: Nonviolent Peaceforce, 2001), <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/nonviolent-peaceforce-feasibility-study>; *Civilian Peacekeeping: A Barely Tapped Resource*; Tim Wallis, "Best Practices for Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping," in *Civilian Peacekeeping: A Barely Tapped Resource*, ed. C. Schweitzer (Belm-Vehrte, Germany: Sozio-Publ., 2009), 25–34; Stean A. N. Tshiband, "Peacekeeping: A Civilian Perspective?," *Social Social Research Network eLibrary* (July 8, 2010), http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1636360&http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1636360 (accessed April 5, 2011); Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan, "Grassroots initiatives in unarmed peacekeeping," *Peace Review* 8, no. 4 (1996): 569–576; Schirch, *Civilian Peacekeeping*.

NP is one of the few international groups that uses this term in their written materials.⁴²¹

Though some accompaniment groups receive funding from governments, none are anything close to the size of governmental peacekeeping missions. The NP is the only group to serve on a government established peacekeeping team – since 2009 they have served as part of the international monitoring team for the peace process in Mindanao between the government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front,⁴²² and they recently served as official monitors of the independence election in southern Sudan.

The danger of the NP presenting accompaniment as civilian peacekeeping is that accompaniment is then limited to upholding simply a negative peace, which can easily become a liberal peace. It is no coincidence that it is the NP that has pushed to move accompaniment to countries far outside its Latin American solidarity movement roots, as described in chapter two. They are also the group that most emphasizes that they are non-partisan and avoid any use of the word solidarity. In the next chapter I turn to how an insistence on accompaniment being ‘non-partisan’ runs this risk of then becoming keepers of the liberal peace and ultimately supporting the status quo rather than peace as justice.

⁴²¹ The Michigan Peace team also uses the term.

⁴²² They serve on the team with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Mindanao People's Caucus, and representatives of the governments of Malaysia, Japan, Brunei and Libya. The team monitors agreements signed by both parties. (NPF mass email sent December 9, 2009).

Conclusion

Accompaniers make space for struggles for positive peace(s). Others in Colombia mobilize for a negative peace, the absence of direct violence. The facebook march was a case of many Colombians defining peace as simply the end of the FARC and the end of kidnapping. Organizations with international accompaniment in Colombia are instead working for a positive peace, the absence of both structural and cultural violence. This is more commonly referred to as peace with justice. What this looks like will be different across space and time, which is why I have referred to it here as peace(s). However many of these groups avoid the term peace because of concern that it is widely misused in Colombia to support war (i.e., peace as victory). Accompaniers generally also see themselves as working for positive peace, but many have followed the lead of the groups they accompany and are likewise more comfortable describing themselves as doing human rights work.

Accompaniers are sometimes described as civilian peacekeepers. Militarized peacekeeping began in 1956 and has gone through several ‘generations.’ Current (‘third generation’) peacekeeping is often framed as humanitarian but continues to generally uphold the ‘liberal peace’, a vision of peace as free reign for neoliberal capitalism - and then police the discontent that often arises from the socioeconomic destabilization neoliberal reforms can cause. As such peacekeeping is not an accurate trope for understanding accompaniment. It is misplaced even if peacekeeping is understood more

generously as keeping a negative, rather than a liberal, peace – as most of those accompanied are working for a positive peace by raising issues of injustice.

Chapter 6: The professionalism of accompaniment

The limited literature about accompaniment refers to two different types of accompaniment that are presented as mutually exclusive: non-partisan accompaniment and solidarity accompaniment. Nearly all scholarly



Figure 17: "Solidarity Forever" image by Rini Templeton, www.riniart.org, creative commons.

writing about accompaniment has emphasized that it should be non-partisan. Often it is implied that to be professional, accompaniers must be non-partisan - based on unclear and confusing ideas about what both non-partisan and solidarity mean. Here I argue instead that to the push for 'non-partisan' accompaniment falls into the trap that comes with portraying accompaniment as 'civilian peacekeeping'. Accompaniment comes out of and is part of the solidarity movement. As the global history in chapter two illustrates, accompaniment is not something that can be effectively done anywhere by anyone at anytime. Accompaniers have largely been from the US (with some from Europe and Canada), and have repeatedly worked to protect the accompanied from state and parastate actors who receive support from the US (and sometimes from Europe and Canada). In doing so accompaniers have some leverage – they are able to pressure their own governments to pressure the client governments (and in some cases to pressure those governments to then pressure paramilitary actors). This pressure is best exerted through

expanding chains that spread through a larger solidarity movement in the US (and to some extent Europe and Canada). This is basic to how accompaniment works, and accompaniment can be more effective when organizations are more professional about cultivating those solidarity links. Being in solidarity in no way precludes being professional. Here I argue instead that accompaniment is most effective when it is both professional and openly engaged in solidarity. Proclamations of non-partisanship are often confusing and can do more harm than good.

I begin this chapter by looking at the different accompaniment organizations in Colombia. Only one group (PBI) presents themselves as non-partisan, but they also, as do all others, consider their work to be solidarity. I offer a brief description of each organization and the ways in which they are more or less professional. I follow this with a discussion of key elements of professionalism in accompaniment. I then turn to what accompaniers mean when they say they do their work in solidarity, followed by a discussion of what is meant by non-partisan, drawing primarily on writings about accompaniment that advocate for it. These authors emphasize that accompaniers should not work with those they accompany, so I then turn to how accompaniers in Colombia do and do not work alongside the accompanied, the different ways this is understood, and how accompaniers struggle day to day with whether and how to do this. One of the daily interactions I expected to see in groups working in solidarity was skills exchange, and in the next section I discuss how this does and does not happen between accompaniers and the accompanied. I then discuss how accompaniers negotiate other forms of daily intimacy with those they accompany. Appearances are key to how accompaniment works, so I then turn to the logos organizations in Colombia use to represent themselves

and how these reference solidarity or not. I conclude by coming back to the literature on accompaniment and its arguments against accompaniment as solidarity and review how the way accompaniment is being done in Colombia refutes these.

Professionalism of accompaniment organizations in Colombia

To begin the discussion of accompaniment as either non-partisan or solidarity and how this relates to professionalism, I begin here by describing the groups doing accompaniment in Colombia, in the order in which they entered the country, and how each group goes about their work in terms of professionalism. The only group that uses the term non-partisan to describe their work is PBI, which is highly professional. Within the groups that emphasize the term solidarity there is a wide range of professionalism.

Peace Brigades International (PBI) was the first group to do accompaniment in Colombia (1994) and continues to be by far the largest, best funded, and most well known group in Colombia. Indeed many of the other accompaniers say that Colombian government and military officials often confuse them with PBI and call them all ‘brigadistas’. One FOR accompanier told me that all other international accompaniers were able to do the work because PBI set up the model and got Colombian authorities to understand accompaniment through their many personal meetings with officials.⁴²³

The PBI team in Colombia is the most professional of the accompaniment teams in Colombia. It is also the largest and oldest of the four PBI teams now serving around the world. PBI in Colombia functions as four teams in four cities, with a separate support

⁴²³ fieldnotes

staff team. They have a team of 12 in Bogotá, nine in Barrancabermeja, 12 in Urabá, seven in Medellín, and a support team of 14 in Bogotá and four in Washington DC and Brussels.⁴²⁴ The organization has a fairly horizontal structure and decisions are made by consensus. Accompaniers serve for a minimum of one but often two or more years. Their expenses are covered and they receive a modest stipend. The support team is more permanent and better paid, and many of them began as accompaniers. PBI accompaniers are primarily from Western Europe, with a few North and fewer Latin Americans. No Colombian nationals or dual nationals are allowed so as to, as they put it, ‘emphasize impartiality.’ PBI accompanies a range of Colombian human rights organizations, communities, and individuals under threat (see Appendix B).

PBI, in its written materials, says *both* that they are non-partisan and in solidarity. On their site on the ‘About PBI’ page they write, “our work is based on the principles of *non-partisanship*.”⁴²⁵ And then on another page (entitled ‘about accompaniment’) they say:

*“Protective accompaniment has three simultaneous and mutually reinforcing effects. The presence of international volunteers protects threatened activists by raising the stakes for potential attackers. It provides moral support and international solidarity for civil society activism by opening space for threatened organisations thereby giving them the confidence to carry out their work. In addition it strengthens the international movement for peace and human rights by giving accompaniment volunteers with a powerful first-hand experience that becomes a sustained source of inspiration to themselves and others upon their return to their home countries.”*⁴²⁶

⁴²⁴ Personal communication, Bianca Bauer June 13, 2011

⁴²⁵ “About PBI: PBI”, n.d., <http://www.peacebrigades.org/about-pbi/> (accessed January 14, 2012).

⁴²⁶ “About Protective Accompaniment: PBI”, n.d., <http://www.peacebrigades.org/about-pbi/about-protective-accompaniment/?L=0> (accessed March 28, 2011) emphasis added.

The next group to do accompaniment in Colombia is the one that uses the term solidarity the most, and have the term in their very name. The *Red de Hermandad y Solidaridad* (Sistership and Solidarity Network), began accompaniment in Colombia five years later in 1999, though they formed as a network in 1994. Many of the member groups from outside of Colombia have anarchist or socialist leanings but certainly not all, and by no means do all or even most of the Colombian groups (see Appendix B). Many of these groups were doing various forms of sistering/ twinning and occasional visits and other forms of solidarity in the 1990s. They became better coordinated as a group in 1999. They established an office and residence for accompaniers in Bogotá in 2003. They give no one definition of what accompaniment means to them on their web site, presumably to respect the autonomy of the groups in the network, but they do specify that they see it as a form of, as they put it, ‘critical solidarity’ that goes beyond ‘simple solidarity’, which they say often verges on ‘*asistencialismo*’ (~ charity).⁴²⁷ They never use the term non-partisan and some accompaniers in this group are dismissive of accompaniment organizations that do. The Red includes a huge number of Colombian groups (see Appendix B). What is unusual about the Red is that some of the Colombian groups also accompany each other. Groups have considerable autonomy in decision making but there is a country coordinator.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

⁴²⁷ “REDHER - Proceso Histórico de REDHER”, n.d., http://www.redcolombia.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14&Itemid=46 (accessed June 13, 2011).

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Witness for Peace (WFP) is internationally the oldest accompaniment group and was the third group to begin working in Colombia, in 2000. Their materials regularly talk about their work as solidarity, and do not use the term non-partisan. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] They have a team based in Bogotá of four to five volunteers who serve for at least two years. When I was there the team had a director in Bogotá. They no longer do, though Witness has both an Associate and Executive Director in the US. Witness covers accompaniers' living expenses and pays a very small stipend. They host regular two-week delegations from the US and have the most active delegations program of any organization, averaging 10 a year.⁴²⁸ The delegations regularly visit the same threatened communities, organizations and individuals that Witness has an ongoing relationship with, and permanent team members visit them in between delegations. Witness is one of the largest and strongest organizations in the solidarity movement in the US, and delegations are largely aimed at getting participants more involved and energized to work in the US to change US policy towards Latin America.

Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) was the next group to begin work in Colombia, in 2001. They likewise speak regularly about their work as solidarity and do not use the

⁴²⁸ CPT has the next most active, with some 5 a year, and then FOR, with 2 a year. All of the other organizations have hosted delegations but they are rare and happen only every few years.

term non-partisan. They are perhaps a mix of more and less professional. Their team size varies but averages around six ‘long termers’ who serve for three years, as well as one or two ‘reservists’ (they explicitly use military terminology) who serve from two weeks to three months a year over three years and go through the same initial training. CPT covers living expenses and pays a modest stipend to long termers. US reservists are asked to raise money to cover their stay. Decisions are made by consensus, at both a national and international level. There is a country coordinator, who for some time has been a Colombian teammate. CPT overall has two co-coordinators, based in the US and Canada. The CPT Colombia office and home is in Barrancabermeja, and they moved in during the violent takeover of the city by the paramilitaries. They purposefully established their home and office when they arrived in 2001 in what was then one of the most dangerous neighbourhoods, where the mobility of those who lived there was most restricted by paramilitary checkpoints. From there they now travel in teams of two on regular week long trips across the regions of Magdalena Medio, Sur de Bolivar and occasionally Nariño. They accompany four communities in the region and eight human rights organizations (see Appendix B).⁴²⁹ They host several delegations a year, half for internationals and half specifically for Colombians, who generally come from Bogotá. Accompaniers are primarily from the US and Canada, but they also have, since 2005, had on average two long term Colombian accompaniers. In 2010 they trained and incorporated short term Colombian ‘reservists’ (primarily Mennonites from Bogotá).

⁴²⁹ Though with two of these (OFP and PDP) they do not have formal accompaniment agreements CPT does accompany them at specific events three to seven times a year, yet consider themselves to be ‘collaborating’ with those organizations. Email from C---- April 29, 2011.

CPT may be read as less professional because of their religiosity. Mennonites founded CPT, but they were soon joined by members belonging to other historic peace churches (see chapter two). They send weekly emails asking their supporters for specific prayers for the people that they are working with. The team worships together for an hour each morning, and considers their work to be a ‘peacemaking ministry’ and also speak of it as a ‘ministry of presence’.⁴³⁰

CPT may also be read as less professional because they engage in public political actions. I do not see these as unprofessional but they are a more dramatic expression of solidarity and again, solidarity and professionalism seem to be frequently misunderstood as opposites. CPT’s understanding of what it means to be a ‘witness’ is religiously based and includes *public* witness, i.e., regular protest and civil disobedience in both Colombia and the US where CPT is an active part of the solidarity movement, as well as speaking tours by accompaniers in the US and Canada to share the stories of those they accompany. They engage in regular public actions, both alone and with Colombian groups. These generally, but not always, involve prayer. Actions range from handing out flyers in front of the Colombian Congress to, most spectacularly, walking on to a runway, blocking a fumigation plane, and praying while holding up a banner against fumigation (see figure 18).

⁴³⁰ “Christian Peacemaker Teams | Getting in the way.”, n.d., <http://www.cpt.org/> (accessed February 23, 2011).



Figure 18: CPT delegation members pray on the tarmac in Barrancabermeja, September 23, 2005⁴³¹ (banner: YES to development, self-management and life, NO to gringo dollars for arms and fumigation), creative commons.

The US **Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR)** began accompaniment in Colombia in 2002. They write about their work solidarity and talk about themselves as observers, and also as a ‘peace presence’. They do not use the term non-partisan in their materials,⁴³² though some of their accompaniers may identify that way. [REDACTED]

⁴³¹ Ibid.

⁴³² Except for one page fairly deep in their website. It is a page recruiting volunteers and at the end of a long list of responsibilities is included “Provide the outside world with a non-partisan analysis and reports of the situation as viewed from within the country or communities.” “Volunteer with CPP | Fellowship Of Reconciliation Colombia Program”, n.d., <http://forusa.org/content/join-colombia-peace-presence-team#responsibilities> (accessed January 3, 2012).

██████████ The FOR is one of the oldest peace organizations in the world, founded in Europe in 1915. The US branch has had a project working on US militarism in Latin America since 1984, but Colombia is their first and only accompaniment project, and they often refer to it in writing as a ‘peace presence.’ FOR began with two companions living full time in the hamlet of La Union, part of the peace community of San José in 2002. In 2005 FOR established another team of two companions in Bogotá. That team regularly travels to Medellín and surrounding Antioquia to accompany three organizations there (see Appendix B). In 2008 the San José team was increased to three companions, and one of the Co-coordinators, who had both previously been based in the US, moved to Bogotá.⁴³³ Most volunteers have been from the US until the last three years, when several Western Europeans have served as volunteers. When FOR began they started with six month terms but quickly switched to a year, though some serve for two and some have served for less, particularly when going back for a second time. FOR covers living expenses and provides a very small stipend. Some companions have done speaking in the US when they return, but that is not the norm. The FOR team has two Co-directors based in the US⁴³⁴ who are permanent staff and active in the solidarity movement in the US, producing widely used reports⁴³⁵ and organizing protests in the US.

⁴³³ In 2010 that co-director moved back to the US and another staff person now directs the team in Colombia, though most decisions are made by consensus.

⁴³⁴ FOR-USA also has an Executive Director above them who has ultimate decision making authority over the accompaniment team.

⁴³⁵ Fellowship of Reconciliation, *Report: Military Assistance and Human Rights: Colombia, U.S. Accountability, and Global Implications*.

The **Projet Accompagnement Solidarité Colombie (PASC)** began accompaniment in Colombia 2003. As one might guess by the use of the term solidarity in their name, they emphasize solidarity and do not use the term non-partisan. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] As PASC puts

it, they see accompaniment as a way to “concretize direct solidarity by sending international witnesses to document human rights abuses and support communities affirming their rights to live as civilians in the midst of war.”⁴³⁷

A group of Presbyterians in the US formed the **Presbyterian Peace Fellowship (PPF)** in the early 1940s to support conscientious objectors in the US. They began their first and

⁴³⁶ IPO and the Red meet only infrequently with officials, all other groups meet with them much more regularly.

⁴³⁷ “Projet Accompagnement Solidarité Colombie”, n.d., <http://www.pasc.ca/spip.php?rubrique2> (accessed April 28, 2011).

only accompaniment project in Colombia in 2004. They regularly use the term solidarity and do not use the term non-partisan. [REDACTED] They have a rotating team of two accompaniers who serve for a minimum of a month but often several months and are based in Barranquilla. Two pastors in the US “provide leadership and oversight”.⁴³⁸ Accompaniers are unpaid and cover their own expenses. As the risk in Barranquilla diminished in 2010 the teams began also spending time in Urabá and Bogotá. Accompaniers are from the US and are primarily Presbyterians, though it is open to ecumenical partners. Applicants are asked for a pastoral reference and the endorsement of their church. They are the only team that does not require Spanish fluency, allowing for teams where one of the two accompaniers speaks Spanish.⁴³⁹ Though CPT is also a religiously based team, the PPF is the only team to accompany a church and consider their work a form of ministry.⁴⁴⁰ They accompany the Presbyterian Church of Colombia which connects them with various individual churches who are either in or supporting displaced communities. Several Colombian Presbyterian pastors and laypeople have been killed, disappeared and threatened for working with the displaced. PPF talks about their work as a ‘community accompaniment’ and a ‘church partnership’ and say that “many accompaniers come away with an invigorated sense of

⁴³⁸ “Colombia Accompaniment FAQ | Presbyterian Peace Fellowship”, n.d., <http://www.presbypeacefellowship.org/node/213> (accessed February 23, 2011).

⁴³⁹ CPT provides either Spanish or English outside training for those team members who are not fully fluent and seems to be the only team to do so.

⁴⁴⁰ CPT talks of their work as a “peacemaking ministry”, whereas PPF uses the term ministry alone

what it means to be church”.⁴⁴¹ Their accompaniment is unusual in that it includes worship life and accompanying pastoral visits.

The **Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation (SweFOR)** is the Swedish group of the international FOR. National FOR groups are quite independent and SweFOR in Colombia operates completely separately from the US FOR accompaniment team. Their website does not use the term non-partisan. Their site used to say that they aim to provide not only safety but moral support and solidarity to the organizations that they accompany.⁴⁴² It no longer uses the term solidarity on their main page, though other pages and materials by them do.⁴⁴³ [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] SweFOR has been doing accompaniment in Colombia since 2004. They have a team of four based in Bogotá who travel around the country and another four based in Quibdó who travel around the department of Chocó. Their living expenses are covered and they receive a modestly generous stipend. All team members are Swedish citizens. A few are first or second generation immigrants to Sweden with Latin American heritage. The team Director as of 2010 had recently relocated to Bogotá. She immigrated to Sweden from Colombia many years ago and is a Swedish citizen. Team members serve for two years.

⁴⁴¹ “Colombia Accompaniment FAQ | Presbyterian Peace Fellowship.”

⁴⁴² “Servicio de paz en Colombia | Movimiento Sueco por la Reconciliacion - SweFOR”, n.d., <http://www.krf.se/es/servicio-de-paz-en-colombia> (accessed February 24, 2011).

⁴⁴³ such as “Intercambio de experiencias sobre el acompañamiento internacional | Movimiento Sueco por la Reconciliacion - SweFOR”, n.d., <http://www.krf.se/es/intercambio-de-experiencias-sobre-el-acompanamiento-internacional> (accessed January 14, 2012).

The **International Peace Observatory (IPO)** was founded and began accompaniment in Colombia in 2005. ⁴⁴⁴ They regularly use the term solidarity and do not use the term non-partisan in their materials. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Their team size varies quite a bit, from four to 12. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] They have an office and home in Bogotá and travel around the country. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] with some from other European countries and some from the US, including some of the core organizers. Decisions are largely made by consensus but IPO did have two paid staff in 2009, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The organization is unusual in that it asks volunteers who apply to provide letters of recommendation from at least two social organizations, grassroots groups, or political movements with whom they have previously worked. These do not have to be solidarity groups per se. They write about accompaniment as ‘the best way to be in solidarity.’⁴⁴⁵ I was told by IPO accompaniers that of any of the groups IPO could most easily mobilize people to engage in civil disobedience in their home country on short notice, though they have not written on their site about actually doing so.

⁴⁴⁴ [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

⁴⁴⁵ “IPO: ¿Qué es el acompañamiento?”, n.d., <http://www.peaceobservatory.org/es/139/como-trabajamos> (accessed February 24, 2011).

There are three other accompaniment groups now in Colombia that I do not discuss in this chapter because they started accompanying after I left in 2009. **Operation Dove**, based in Italy, started work in Colombia later in 2009 and accompanies the peace community of San José.⁴⁴⁶ **Peace Watch**, from Switzerland, also began accompanying in Colombia in late 2009.⁴⁴⁷ **International Action for Peace** was founded in 2010 as a break off from IPO.⁴⁴⁸ And in October of 2011 the World Council of Churches announced their intention to launch the **Ecumenical Accompaniment Project** in Colombia in April of 2012, modeled on their accompaniment project in Palestine which has groups of volunteers come for three months.⁴⁴⁹

Elements of professionalism

Accompaniers in Colombia widely agree that PBI is the most ‘professional’ of the groups – which is perhaps why some accompaniers from other groups were quite insistent that therefore PBI was not doing solidarity. Yet the two are not exclusive and instead I argue here that the most effective accompaniment is both professional and explicitly engaged in solidarity. There are several contentious differences between groups related to what is perceived as ‘professionalism.’ The first is the level of training offered, the nature and length of which varies widely between groups. More training is considered to be more

⁴⁴⁶ “Our projects: Operation Dove.”

⁴⁴⁷ “Peacewatch Switzerland”, n.d., <http://www.peacewatch.ch/public/frameset.aspx?cat=1&lang=DE> (accessed April 28, 2011).

⁴⁴⁸ “International Action for Peace - IAP - www.actionpeace.org — international action for peace”, n.d., <http://www.actionpeace.org/> (accessed April 28, 2011).

⁴⁴⁹ Lynette Wilson, “Ecumenical accompaniment program seeks to address violence in Colombia,” *Episcopal News Service*, October 12, 2011, http://www.ecusa.anglican.org/79425_130162_ENG_HTM.htm (accessed October 25, 2011).

professional. SweFOR seems to provide the most in depth training, with a month long training in Sweden, held in conjunction with other Swedish groups doing human rights work abroad, followed by a month of training in Colombia. CPT asks applicants to first participate in a CPT delegation. They then attend a month long training in North America, and then receive on the job training in Colombia. PBI has an extended long distance combined training and assessment process. Once initially accepted applicants are sent monthly large reading packets which they write about and then discuss in monthly phone calls over several months. If they pass this stage they attend a week long training held in either North America or Europe, at the end of which a final decision is made about their acceptance in the program. Once in Colombia they receive another several weeks of training. The PPF training is one week long, as is the FOR training. FOR accompaniers receive on the job training during their first weeks. The WFP training is several weeks long. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The issue of how well trained accompaniers are is a bone of contention amongst groups. Those who do more rigorous training are highly critical of those who do not. Moser-Puangsuwan and Weber⁴⁵⁰ argue that accompaniers should receive at least the three months of training that US Peace Corps volunteers get.⁴⁵¹

The second dispute is around the question of uniforms. Wearing uniforms is seen as more professional, and some uniforms look more professional than others (such as the FOR grey tank tops). [REDACTED]

⁴⁵⁰ Neither of whom appear to be affiliated with any particular accompaniment organization.

⁴⁵¹ Moser-Puangsuwan and Weber, *Nonviolent Intervention Across Borders*, 331.

Others have different levels of uniform, and some wear them always and some only occasionally. I discuss this debate in more detail in chapter eight.

The third dispute is around accompanying in teams of two, which is seen as more professional. The Red, PASC and IPO were often serving alone while I was there – though IPO changed their policy in late 2008 to require two at a time. Even PBI however sometimes sends individual accompaniers to low risk activities, such as weekly check-ins to NGO offices or coordination meetings.

The fourth is the difference between those who pay their own way vs. those whose expenses are covered and receive a stipend, the latter being seen as more professional. PASC, ■■■ and Red accompaniers pay their way. WFP, FOR, SweFOR and PBI receive a stipend. CPT long termers receive a stipend and their short termers pay their way.

The fifth and perhaps most contentious difference is length of service, a longer term being seen as more professional. CPT, PASC, IPO, and the Red have “short termers.” The latter two in particular are primarily made up of short termers. Presumably there are not many people able and willing to pay their own way for an entire year, though certainly some do. Accompaniers from other organizations criticize these groups for having people ‘parachute in’ and work for a month, not long for gaining a deep understanding of the context and potentially difficult on accompanied Colombians who face such a high rotation. It is also hard for these groups to maintain institutional memory and consistency, particularly when it is unsafe to have hard copies of reports and the organizations have a limited number of older computers that run even slower with

encryption software running. Yet the premise of this model is that then more people will learn about Colombia and be inspired to support the work from their home countries – that is, that they will be able to generate the calls and visits to member of Congress that are key to how accompaniment works. The other model for achieving that goal is through hosting delegations, which generally last between a week and two. WFP, FOR and CPT host regular delegations. Many groups started with shorter term companions and then increased the minimum stay as they found the stream of people too problematic.

There are several other signs of professionalism that are less contentious. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Another issue of contention used to be the minimum age for serving. All groups now seem to be requiring a minimum age of 21. PBI used to require 25, now they say they require “maturity” and that most are over 25. I rarely heard companions express concern about the fluency of companions as a professionalism issue, but I occasionally saw companions with limited Spanish misunderstand subtle cues [REDACTED]

Other signs of professionalism are meeting regularly with government and military officials, notifying military officials of travel through dangerous areas, always having a functioning cell phone (which when traveling in Colombia requires having phones from at least two companies) or a satellite phone in rural areas out of cell range, having a director in-country, an office in Bogotá (where most offices and embassies are based), as well as having an office in the US and/or Canada or Europe, and a strong presence on the web, with regular reporting.

None of these various signs of professionalism impede solidarity, but rather could make solidarity more effective. Eguren does indeed argue that “the “ideal” peacebuilder should be a professional worker as well as a grassroots activist.”⁴⁵² This is surprising given that he has long worked with PBI, the organization least likely to be seen as ‘activist’. One of the common critiques other accompaniers make of PBI accompaniers is that they are doing the work for a good line on their resume and as a way into a career as a human rights professional. This mirrors some of the divisions and frustrations in the US between those that work for social change from an NGO job and those that do so as unpaid social movement activists.⁴⁵³ I did not interview accompaniers about their motivations for the work,⁴⁵⁴ but my sense from informal conversations with them is that only a few PBI accompaniers come in with experience as unpaid activists. Those in the Red, and even CPT, express frustration with PBI as the NGOization of a powerful peace testimony and organizing strategy. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

⁴⁵² L. E. Eguren, “Who Should Go Where? Examples from Peace Brigades International,” in *Peacebuilding: A Field Guide*, ed. Luc Reyhler and Thania Paffenholz (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 34.

⁴⁵³ for more on this debate see Violence, *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded*.

⁴⁵⁴ In part because my MA work looked at the motivations of international solidarity activists, see Koopman, “Imperialism Within.”



Understandings of solidarity

Most accompaniers told me that they considered their work to be ‘solidarity’ or ‘in solidarity’, though solidarity was understood to mean different things. PBI identifies widely as non-partisan, so I was surprised when accompaniers of PBI, in the workshop I led with them, all agreed that their work was also solidarity (I had actually not noticed at that point that their website uses the word solidarity since it is not emphasized there the way non-partisan is). I was also quite surprised when one FOR accompanier told me in no uncertain terms that they were there as observers, and that this meant they were *not* in solidarity.⁴⁵⁵ Yet all other accompaniers with FOR did say they considered their work to be solidarity. One said this was because “even though we are not interfering with their projects ... politically we are in line with their movement, their work, that’s why we’re there.”⁴⁵⁶ In doing so she addressed the common stereotype that solidarity means working so closely together that accompaniers would be ‘interfering’, an issue I will come back to.

Accompaniers do at different times and to different audiences either emphasize or downplay solidarity. One FOR accompanier told me that she considered FOR to be both in solidarity and ‘when we can, trying to play the other card as well’ (meaning

⁴⁵⁵ M---, fieldnotes

⁴⁵⁶ Interview with J----

emphasizing that they are non-partisan). She went on to say that in meetings with the military and the authorities they emphasize that the community has their own process “and it’s not like we’re collaborating with them. It’s that we are making space for them and at the same time we’re making space for them because we want to support them and we believe in what they’re doing.”⁴⁵⁷ In her use of the term here collaboration seems to imply doing the same work together.

Though not always as emphasized publicly, it seems to be widely recognized by accompaniers that one of the ways they understand accompaniment to ‘work’ is by providing moral support to the accompanied by being a tangible sign that they are part of a broader struggle and are not alone. One PASC accompanier said that the presence of accompaniers also made it more likely that those they accompanied would do an international analysis of the situation they were facing.⁴⁵⁸ In the case she recounted, a community was facing displacement by a corporation that was planting oil-palms on their land. She argued that because she was there community members were more likely to ‘track the commodity’ down the chain and see where and how the oil was being used, as well as talk about how this was happening elsewhere, how using oil palm for biodiesel is a global phenomena, and how others were resisting it in other places.

Solidarity implies that accompaniers see themselves as being part of a larger movement, or movement of movements, for peace and justice, that those they accompany are also a part of. Groups do not have to share exactly the same vision of the ‘different world’

⁴⁵⁷ Interview 1 with S-----

⁴⁵⁸ field notes, T----

under construction for it to be solidarity. Walking side by side does not require sharing all dreams, but it does mean sharing lives. Walking side by side is a sign of companionship. Companion translates into Spanish as *compañera/o* – but in Spanish the word has a triple meaning of companion, colleague and comrade. Much like those in the labour movement in the US and Canada call each other ‘brother’ and ‘sister’, activists in the US solidarity movement regularly call each other ‘compañera.’ I regularly heard accompaniers in CPT, FOR and Witness use this term.

Given their expressions of solidarity, I expected organizations to call the Colombian organizations they accompanied ‘partners’ in their English materials. WFP and PPF do regularly use the term. I particularly expected IPO and the Red to use it, given their more regular use of solidarity terminology, but they do not. The Red website instead talks about ‘counterparts.’ FOR oddly uses the term partners for the three other organizations they accompany, but not for the peace community. So too CPT on its web site used to list some but not all of the organizations that they accompany as ‘partners’.⁴⁵⁹ PBI and SweFOR never use the term partner on their sites or in other materials. PBI instead uses the term ‘client’, which implies a commercial rather than a solidarity relationship, another way in which PBI sends mixed signals about their solidarity with the accompanied.

Of course simply using the term ‘partner’ does not necessarily reflect solidarity. The NP Feasibility study, despite their emphasis on non-partisanship, argues for *partnership*, saying that, “Acting in partnership with a local organisation allows for intervention which is *less colonial* in nature. Partners must be selected for their interest and leadership in

⁴⁵⁹ this has since changed and some groups are now listed as ‘related organizations’

nonviolent solutions; NP may then enter the field at their invitation.” But they go on to say that “Partnership (formal or informal) with organisations from more than one side of the conflict can afford a deeper vision of what is needed for just resolution, and it is essential for non-partisan status. No partner at all may be preferable to affiliation with one side of the conflict, but the model which may serve NP best is probably “with no single partner but with a developed relationship to a network of groups.””⁴⁶⁰ Again this implies that the human rights and peace groups that would be accompanied could be on a, and even on different, ‘sides’ of an armed conflict. As an aside, this is the only part of the study that mentions attempting to be less colonial, which does not come up in their very brief mentions of race, though NP is known for having more accompaniers of color. I come back to the issue of race and colonial patterns in accompaniment in chapter eight.

The meanings, and danger, of ‘non-partisanship’

Despite the widespread recognition amongst accompaniers that their work is a form of solidarity, the limited literature on accompaniment insists that it should be non-partisan and understands this to be in contradiction with solidarity. Hunter and Lakey’s training manual for the Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) (which again, aims to be seen as ‘civilian peacekeepers’) repeatedly emphasizes non-partisanship and warns accompaniers to “avoid falling unconsciously into *solidarity* activities or partisanship which might

⁴⁶⁰ Schweitzer et al., *Nonviolent Peaceforce Feasibility Study*, 132.

contradict their policies."⁴⁶¹ They define non-partisan as “does not take sides, responds to objective and external criteria.”⁴⁶²

PBI says that they are "partial but non-partisan." As Mahony and Eguren, who have long been with PBI, put it "we will be *at your side* in the face of injustice and suffering, but we will not *take sides* against those you define as enemies."⁴⁶³ PBI uses this phrase on their website.⁴⁶⁴ This is a dangerous way to frame it, for it implies a certain paradigm about what is going on in the conflict and the role played by those that are being accompanied. Most members of the peace community of San José, for example, or human rights workers in Colombia more generally, do not talk about any of the armed actors as ‘enemies.’ To do so would imply that they were engaged in a fight with them. I would argue instead that the accompanied see all of the armed actors as a threat and source of danger.

CPT questions whether it is possible or right to be impartial when there is an imbalance of power, when being impartial can look like siding with or strengthening the status quo, with pacification (a liberal peace) rather than peacemaking.⁴⁶⁵ As one Red accompanier

⁴⁶¹ Hunter and Lakey, *Opening Space for Democracy* Though oddly one of the tactics they include in group exercise is “vigil outside embassy” (p.80), though neither PBI for NP seem to do these.

⁴⁶² Ibid., 304.

⁴⁶³ Mahony and Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards*, 236 emphasis added.

⁴⁶⁴ “Nonpartisanship: PBI”, n.d., <http://www.peacebrigades.org/about-pbi/how-we-work/nonpartisanship/?L=0> (accessed January 2, 2012).

⁴⁶⁵ Neufeld Weaver, “Restoring the Balance: Peace Teams and Violence Reduction in Chiapas, Mexico,” 111.

put it to me, “It’s not ethical to be neutral in the face of murder”.⁴⁶⁶ [REDACTED]

both of these statements [REDACTED] the terms impartial and neutral are conflated with non-partisan, though these terms do not necessarily mean the same thing.

Hunter and Lakey in the NP manual go so far as to say that accompaniers should not take a stand on issues of justice, for “our role as highly ranked outsiders invites a certain modesty in judging the claims of justice in other cultures.” They go on to say that “accompaniers may have individual views on what is just, but as a group their focus is on the human rights of all *conflictants*.”⁴⁶⁷ Aside from the repeated dangerous framing of accompanied Colombians as a party in the armed conflict, this implies that human rights are not about justice.

PBI sometimes argues that being non-partisan simply means not engaging in the direct work of those they accompany, as in “We are non-partisan and while we may provide conflict transformation workshops and nonviolence training, we do not take part in the work of those we accompany.”⁴⁶⁸ Strangely the ‘about PBI Colombia’ page in Spanish translates non-partisan (as it appears on the English version of that same page) as *aconfesional*⁴⁶⁹ – which means secular, though the main PBI page about non-partisanship

⁴⁶⁶ Interview with G-----

⁴⁶⁷ Hunter and Lakey, *Opening Space for Democracy*, 304 emphasis added.

⁴⁶⁸ “Peace Brigades International”, n.d., http://www.pbicanada.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=167&Itemid=163&language=en (accessed April 29, 2011).

⁴⁶⁹ “Sobre PBI Colombia: PBI”, n.d., <http://www.pbi-colombia.org/los-proyectos/pbi-colombia/sobre-pbi-colombia/?&&&L=0> (accessed January 2, 2012).

in Spanish does render it as the cognate *no partidismo*. That page, taken from Mahony and Eguren’s book, does talk about not embracing not only political parties or armed parties, but also religious or cultural ideologies, an understanding of the term which may have led to the odd translation.⁴⁷⁰ That page goes on to say “Accompaniment is made available to groups and individuals from varying political factions, the only criteria being that the accompanied group be committed to unarmed struggle for human rights and justice.” [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In one radio interview a PBI accompanier said that non-partisanship means that they do not come in with their own agenda, and do not even “necessarily” support the campaigns of the organizations that they accompany but instead see themselves as simply there to uphold human rights and international humanitarian law.⁴⁷¹ That accompanier then went on to argue that this makes it possible for them to have high level conversations with government and military officials. But other accompaniment organizations that present themselves as doing solidarity also have such high level meetings, and at these meetings can draw on the power of their network to get the attention of these officials, rather than simply reminding governments of commitments they have made through laws or treaties, which of course accompaniers that stress solidarity also do.

⁴⁷⁰ “Nonpartisanship: PBI.”

⁴⁷¹ “Peaceful Strategies for Protecting Human Rights Defenders.”

Outside of the context of accompaniment the term ‘non-partisan’ is widely used in the US to mean not affiliated with a political party. None of the accompaniment groups in Colombia are affiliated with a party, but if the concept is broadened from party to include other civil society groups, they could be considered supporters of the groups they accompany, but they are not actually members of those groups, nor engaging directly in the work of those groups. Given how often accompaniers use military terms like brigade and reservist, it is perhaps relevant that in military terms a partisan is someone in a guerrilla army opposing an occupying force. Clearly accompaniers are not that, but this is not what is widely meant or understood when they say they are non-partisan.

Legally in the US all nonprofits must be non-partisan, which means they are not allowed to support or oppose political candidates, parties – but they *are* allowed to take positions on political issues. Kinane argues that accompaniers *are* partisans of such values as peace, justice and democracy.⁴⁷² Coy, who has served with PBI, conflates partisanship and solidarity, saying “Peace Brigades is very careful to be non-partisan, to work with the diplomatic community, and to askew overt kinds of activities that demonstrate *solidarity or partisanship* with one side or another.”⁴⁷³ Yet as noted above, even the PBI website describes their work as a form of international solidarity, as did PBI accompaniers in the workshop I did with them - so there seems to be some general confusion as to the relationship between the terms non-partisan and solidarity.

⁴⁷² Kinane, “Cry for Justice in Haiti, Fall 1993.”

⁴⁷³ Julian Portilla, “Interview with Pat Coy,” *beyondintractability.org*, 2003, <http://www.beyondintractability.org/audio/10277/> (accessed April 5, 2011) emphasis added.

Working together

PBI says that “Our work is based on the principles of non-partisanship and non-interference in the internal affairs of the organisations we accompany.”⁴⁷⁴ Perhaps the side by side use of non-partisan and non-interference is used to mean that they neither engage in the work of the organizations they accompany, nor interfere in it. Yet none of the other accompaniment organizations in Colombia said that they either interfere in or engage in the work of the groups that they accompany, and I did not see them doing so. That is to say, they do not work on the campaigns of the organization as one more organizer among the others, nor express opinions about how the campaign should be conducted - which is how some authors draw the straw man figure of accompaniment as solidarity. But in some instances accompaniers do work ‘alongside’ those they accompany in several other ways.

Accompaniment groups sometimes compared each other by whether they ‘worked in the fields’, though this refers more generally to whether accompaniers engage in the same physical labour as the people they are accompanying, be that picking cacao, making cheese, or fixing a path. Generally accompaniers do not have the same skills as campesinos and so are not contributing significantly towards the completion of these tasks, but most say that they feel uncomfortable simply watching and want to participate. The guidelines of most groups specify that they should not participate, so as to appear separate (presumably to armed actors and government officials). [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The discomfort of standing to the side and

⁴⁷⁴ “About PBI: PBI.”

the temptation to participate, particularly in group work projects, seemed to be quite high. Many accompaniers told me of occasionally participating when it seemed that no one would see them. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] PBI seems to have the most explicit policy of not working alongside the accompanied.⁴⁷⁵

One FOR accompanier who was one of the first to accompany the peace community said that early on FOR accompaniers did much more work in the fields. She saw that as related to the dynamic that they were doing much fewer meetings with authorities and less “work on the computer” (checking the media and writing reports) and that members of the peace community had not yet returned to their hamlets in the mountains (much of FOR’s work now is accompanying community members out to visit these outlying parts of the community). She also saw it as tied to the higher risk the community was under, for the community was working in larger work groups for safety and always taking accompaniers with them when they went to work in their fields, neither of which they have to do today. But as she put it, “I’m really useless at pruning cacao trees, I’m slow and I probably cut the wrong things.” In general most accompaniers do not have skills at ‘*volando machete*’ (literally ‘making a machete fly’, i.e. weeding and pruning). Her sense was that now FOR accompaniers only go to the fields once a month or so, and if they help out it is just for a short while for their own fun. She thought that no one would

⁴⁷⁵ “Community Work by San Jose de Apartado Peace Community - YouTube”, n.d., <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jcKA3iYMk0>; The Hunter and Lakey manual includes a PBI handout which states, “PBI volunteers are not able to assist the client in undertaking their work.” Hunter and Lakey, *Opening Space for Democracy*, 171.

mistake them for members of the community – though with some of the Latino accompaniers seen from a distance that is debatable. She did say that the peace community’s council at one point actually asked FOR to not do physical labour in the fields.⁴⁷⁶

Meetings are another challenge. Some accompaniers sit outside large meetings and events held by those they accompany. Many sit inside and watch. Some stand to give a ‘*saludo*’ (greeting) introducing themselves and expressing solidarity and a small few, particularly from the Red, participate in meetings. Some accompaniers sit inside for smaller gatherings, such as a house visit by an organizer they are accompanying as she travels to an outlying family or part of a community. Some sit outside, but again may find this hard as it can seem rude - so it seems that this is more likely to happen for meetings in the city than in the countryside.

⁴⁷⁶ Interview 1 with S----



Figure 19: PBI and CPT accompanier (with red hat) try to stay to the sidelines of march,
photo by the author.

It is much harder for accompaniers to be clear that they are not participating when they are accompanying a protest. Though most try to stay on the sidelines this is not always possible when the sidewalks are full of people watching or there are no sidewalks (see figure 19). [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In 2005 three IPO accompaniers were accompanying a group of displaced people who were occupying a building in Bogotá. They were inside the building when the police arrived and were arrested along with those they were accompanying.

Skill exchange

One of the interactions I expected to see in groups walking and working alongside each other in solidarity is skill exchange. Some accompaniers did offer workshops and presentations to those they accompanied about organizing campaigns and tactics they used in their home countries. This was particularly true of Red accompaniers from the UK group Espacio. One Red accompanier also facilitated dynamic group reflection processes with a group, sharing popular education techniques she knew. One IPO accompanier with training in leadership development and group dynamics offered a workshop on those skills. All of these accompaniers struggled with how to share their experiences and skills without coming off as patronizing, particularly given differences in organizing contexts and privilege.

PBI offers workshops, though they do not talk much publicly about this part of their work. There is nothing on their website about it other than one page in their Colombia annual report. Two members of their permanent staff run workshops aimed at ‘reweaving the social fabric’ with organizations and communities that are accompanied by PBI who request them. These offer ‘psycho-social and comprehensive self protection tools’, such as risk analysis, phases of danger, stress and fear management, and emotional self-care.⁴⁷⁷ Workshops are participatory and experience based and PBI facilitators are

⁴⁷⁷ From their main site it seems that in other countries PBI offers workshops that focus more on conflict resolution skills.

careful to say that they do not give advice or impose solutions but aim to inspire group reflection.

IPO writes about sharing technical skills and divides their work, on their web site, into physical, political and technical accompaniment.⁴⁷⁸ IPO's online definition of how these each differ is vague:

*“IPO offers technical support through projects, workshops and short courses, while respecting the self-determination, culture and political realities of the communities. The projects may be proposed by volunteers as well as communities, but should always be carried out between the two parties. By technical support, we also mean projects that are carried out by other persons or organizations where IPO coordinates the work within the community.”*⁴⁷⁹

In 2005 IPO was nominated for the Betinho prize by the Association for Progressive Communications for their workshops that taught youth in the communities they were accompanying how to use video cameras and then took them in to Bogotá to teach them basic video editing and help them produce their own stories. Other accompaniment groups do not do any formal sharing of skills or expertise like this.

There is only a very haphazard skill exchange in the other direction. There was little acknowledgement by any of the accompaniment groups of how accompaniers were learning political organizing and analysis skills from those that they accompanied, and accompaniment rarely if ever seemed to be structured to facilitate or nurture this. Social movements in Colombia are in many ways much stronger than those in North America and as one accompanier put it to me, “there's a lot to learn from how movements

⁴⁷⁸ “IPO: ¿Qué es el acompañamiento?”.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid. translation by author.

continue to survive in Colombia”.⁴⁸⁰ Accompaniment could easily be spun as an organizing internship with some of the bravest and most creative organizers on the planet, which would help to place those accompanied as experts rather than as victims. But then, ‘interns’ may be seen as engaging in ‘the work’.

Most accompaniers are quite cautious to avoid interfering in the affairs of those that they accompany, and there has been some debate between and within groups as to what sort of skill exchange or technical support is interference and this also seems to be a major reason why it is avoided. One FOR accompanier helped the peace community establish contacts with international buyers for their cacao and bananas, using both her language and internet skills to help them find buyers and jump through organic and fair trade certification hoops. She was eventually told by FOR that she could not do this work as an accompanier and ended up quitting FOR and continuing to provide this support to the community independently. This was during a time when the peace community was facing serious economic pressure as the state was pressuring local buyers not to buy their crops and luring community members to leave with monthly payments. The community itself identified economic autonomy as crucial for maintaining their ‘space for peace’ so it seemed ironic that FOR chose not to support those efforts by the community. They seem to have done so out of a fear of appearing to be engaging too directly in the work of the community itself and a desire to appear more ‘non-partisan’, but again there seems to be mixed understandings of what that means and how it is that accompaniment works and is effective.

⁴⁸⁰ Interview with N----

Negotiating intimacy

Hunter and Lakey's Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) training manual repeatedly emphasizes being wary of 'crossing into partisanship.'⁴⁸¹ For example they suggest that accompaniers "be careful when "filling time" not to do so in way that may compromise your position, like getting overly friendly in conversation."⁴⁸² This reflects an attitude that the accompanier has nothing to learn from the accompanied in conversation. These down moments could be an opportunity for the outsider to learn from the experience and analysis of their partner. But Hunter and Lakey imagine expertise to only flow in the other direction and go on to say that "because you are an international observer many will seek out your advice, but be wary of playing 'expert' for sharing your opinions can be disastrous, be aware that people could be killed because of them." This warning may come from a wariness of paternalism, but ironically it comes across as even more so, for it assumes that the accompanied would ask for advice, and then could not weed out bad advice, and would necessarily put the advice of an international on a pedestal. The accompanied in Colombia are incredibly brave people who know that they have a much better understanding of their reality than any accompanier possibly could.

The issue of how 'close' people are also comes up between groups around differences in how much time accompaniers spend with the people that they accompany, which can also affect how well they know each other. Half of the FOR team lives full time in the peace

⁴⁸¹ Hunter and Lakey, *Opening Space for Democracy*, 46.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, 187.

community of San José, in a remote hamlet of the community which is a several hour hike up from the road. PBI regularly visits San José for a few days of each week but when they do so, they generally stay in the main community centre that is accessible by car. PBI also rotates which accompaniers are sent to San José. The FOR accompaniers are critical of how this limits the depth of their relationship with community members, but PBI seems to do this specifically so as to maintain some distance from internal community dynamics. Both groups agree that FOR accompaniers are more informed of internal community news and PBI regularly asks FOR about this.

Much of how close/distant accompaniers are to those they accompany has to do with personalities and whether people feel comfortable with each other or not. Some people who are accompanied want to be friendly and chatty with the accompanier. Some become close long term friends. Sometimes personal closeness is made easier by a sense of being in the larger struggle for justice together. Sometimes a person who is accompanied asks the accompanier to sit at the next table over in the restaurant. Sometimes the accompanied really do not want company. Accompaniment is a strange form of company. Accompaniers rarely talk about themselves as guests or those they accompany as their hosts. More awareness of the hospitality they are offered might be useful. Kern, a CPT reserivist, writes of CPT as the “guests in the house of the disenfranchised” who “find themselves better able that their hosts to greet the oppressors at the door.”⁴⁸³ But these global intimacies can be awkward.⁴⁸⁴ Strangely those

⁴⁸³ Kern, *In Harm's Way*, 209.

⁴⁸⁴ All accompaniment groups have policies against accompaniers engaging in physical intimacy with those they accompany, though some are much stricter about this than others.

accompaniers that are more distant, more likely to sit at the other table, might feel more like shadows than friends and allies – and actually feel more intrusive. Yet becoming friends with your 15th accompanier in four years could be exhausting. Accompaniers can also be wary of this intimacy. One FOR accompanier said, “you have to be careful not to get too close, not to let your personal relationships hinder you from making decisions in emergencies, whether we should go on this trip or not.” She implied that feeling too close would mean feeling like a *part* of the community, and instead “you still have to see things as a third party observer.”⁴⁸⁵ Again, the term ‘third party’ is problematic here as it implies that the community is a ‘party’ engaged in a conflict and the accompaniers are standing between the two fighting parties. Even this accompanier with FOR, which is more explicitly engaging in solidarity with the peace community, seemed to feel pressure to conform to the civilian peacekeeping model that is upheld in the accompaniment literature.

Some groups pray together, which could also be seen as an intimate moment. Six of the eleven groups currently in Colombia have a religious foundation (CPT, PPF, OD, WFP, FOR and SweFOR), a proportion similar to that internationally (see chapter two). Yet though FOR is internationally an ecumenical group, neither US FOR nor SweFOR talk about or perform religiosity in Colombia. OD began accompanying after I left but are an Italian lay organization of the Catholic Church. WFP does a morning and often also an evening prayer on their delegations, sometimes with those they are visiting but usually separately. CPT and PPF are not only religiously based but regularly enact religious

⁴⁸⁵ Interview with J----

rituals as part of their accompaniment. CPT does this much more publicly, engaging in public and politically charged prayer rituals such as the purification of the water of the Magdalena River where so many bodies are dumped by armed actors, or holding candlelight vigils at the sites of murders in Barrancabermeja and spray painting a candle on the site. They seem to be able to hold these public actions without being deported because they are framed as prayerful rather than political.

Visual presentation



Figure 20: Logo of the Red de Hermandad,

How accompaniment organizations present themselves shapes their effectiveness. The visual images that accompaniment organizations in Colombia use for their logos do not reference solidarity, other than that of the Red. Red in Spanish means network, and the Red, who also have the word solidarity in their title, have as a logo an image of a web, but one with a fair number of loose ends throughout that are more or less brought together by blobs the colors of the Colombian flag (see figure 20).



No other accompaniment organization in Colombia uses such explicit solidarity

Figure 21: Logo of Witness for Peace, images (such as figure 17, the image of hands held and raised which appears at the beginning of this chapter). Instead their logos reference peace and ‘the world is watching.’



The WFP logo is an eye with the world at the center (see figure 21), and IPO’s (see figure 22) is very

Figure 22: Logo of the International Peace Observatory, similar.

PBI’s logo (see figure 23) is simply the letters PBI.



Figure 23: Photo from PBI’s Colombia website showing PBI accompaniers in San José wearing logo on back, by permission.

CPT’s (see figure 24), likewise, is simply their letters in a circle.



FOR’s logo is also its letters, but with a dove inside the O

Figure 24: Logo of the Christian Peacemaker Teams,

(see figure 25).



Figure 25: Logo of the Fellowship of Reconciliation,
by permission.



Figure 26: Logo of the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, by permission.

PPF (see figure 26) uses a dove with the word peace around it in different languages. [REDACTED]

Having a logo helps accompaniment ‘work’ more effectively. These logos are used on uniforms and letterhead and are part of the performance used for getting the attention and respect of both Colombian and the US (and European and Canadian) government officials. A clear logo that emphasizes observing (or ‘the world is watching’) reminds officials of the larger network that accompaniers draw on and serve as an embodiment of.

Emphasizing peace in the logos seems to be a presentation of accompaniers as ‘civilian peacekeepers’ which again, can fall into the liberal peace trap, but may also be less effective in gaining the attention of officials than reminders of the leverage accompaniers can draw on, which the images of eyes and worlds used by WFP and IPO seem to do more clearly.

Conclusion

Other authors writing about accompaniment have argued that to be effective accompaniment must be non-partisan. I have argued here that this term is confusing and does not necessarily increase the clout or effectiveness of organizations, but it is based on a dangerous paradigm that places the accompanied as a party to the conflict and promotes a liberal peace. Accompaniment is more effective when it openly draws on solidarity networks, and when it does so in a professional way. Non-partisan has often been conflated with professional, and solidarity with informal, but there is no reason solidarity cannot be professional. Indeed, many of the organizations working in Colombia are both, and though accompaniment throughout Colombia is widely seen as effective, only one of the nine organizations working in Colombia in 2009 identified as non-partisan.

Early accompaniment, as described in chapter two, came out of a religiously based Central America solidarity movement in the 1980s, which provided financial support, volunteers, and a network of political pressure, using the telephone tree emergency response networks that those movements built.⁴⁸⁶ Accompaniment continues to be a part of and draw on that still existing solidarity movement, which has broadened from Central to Latin America. This is stretched when accompaniment moves outside of Latin America and to countries for which there is no solidarity movement in the US and/or Canada or Europe and it is precisely those teams that have done so (PBI and the NP), and the authors affiliated with those groups, that have emphasized that accompaniment works by being non-partisan. Yet PBI also says that their work is solidarity.

⁴⁸⁶ Such as the large network built through the Pledge of Resistance to respond to the threat of a US invasion of Nicaragua. Liam Mahony, "Peace Brigades International: Nonviolence in Action," in *Nonviolent intervention across borders: A recurrent vision*, ed. Y. Moser-Puangsuwan and T. Weber (Honolulu, HI: Spark M. Matsunaga Institute for Peace, University of Hawaii, 2000), 139.

Almost all of the limited academic literature written about accompaniment says that it should be done as non-partisan, understanding this to mean that it cannot be done in solidarity. In Burrowes' typology of forms of nonviolent intervention, accompaniment and solidarity are two different things.⁴⁸⁷ His primary distinction is that by being in the war zone solidarity activists "highlight the role played by local grassroots networks in working to end the war and demonstrate the commitment of activists in foreign networks to support them in this struggle."⁴⁸⁸ In Colombia all accompaniers do this, even those from PBI that emphasize 'non-partisanship'.

Moser-Puangsuwan and Weber argue that non-partisan and solidarity accompaniment are incompatible.⁴⁸⁹ They are opposed to accompaniers doing anything that might even seem like solidarity. They argue that the more clearly non-partisan a group is, the more money they will be able to raise, from individuals as well as governments. They say that otherwise individuals will have to be self-funding, and thus elite.⁴⁹⁰ It is true that the organizations in Colombia that talk most about solidarity (the Red, PASC and IPO) do not pay their volunteers, but this fundraising argument is unconvincing. Witness for Peace, CPT and FOR talk openly about solidarity and are able to raise funds and pay their accompaniers modest stipends. So too Project Accompaniment in Guatemala were very

⁴⁸⁷ Burrowes was a member of the Gulf Peace Team

⁴⁸⁸ Burrowes, "Cross-border nonviolent intervention," 61.

⁴⁸⁹ Moser-Puangsuwan and Weber, *Nonviolent Intervention Across Borders*, 333; Boothe argues this is because they are interpreting interposition narrowly as being a buffer that leads to instant conflict resolution, i.e. negative peace. Boothe argues that the goal of accompaniers should not be the creation of positive peace, but supporting local groups' own work towards it. Ivan Boothe, "Transnational Nonviolent Empowerment" (Swarthmore College, 2007), 115.

⁴⁹⁰ Moser-Puangsuwan and Weber, *Nonviolent Intervention Across Borders*, 327.

explicit that what they were doing was “true solidarity in action” and called it “walking together, working together”, yet received [REDACTED] money from the Canadian government through CIDA.⁴⁹¹ Effectiveness at raising funds has more to do with being professional about fundraising than with being non-partisan.

Coy, who served with PBI, also compares the work of PBI, CPT and ISM. Rather than call the later two groups ‘solidarity accompaniment’ he says that they engage in greater intervention through the use of what he calls ‘illegal activities’ such as civil disobedience. He argues strongly for the value of more non-partisan accompaniment, saying that “to aggressors, nonviolent protective accompaniment carried out by partisan organizations who engage in the work of those they also accompany may appear as aggression, albeit non-violent. The actions of a clearly partisan force – even a nonviolent and international one – may be interpreted as enemy actions and responded to accordingly.”⁴⁹²

Disturbingly he seems here to be again implying that the nonviolent groups being accompanied are ‘aggressors’ who are somebody’s ‘enemy,’ as if they were somehow a ‘party’ to the armed conflict rather than civilians working for peace and justice. This is dangerous rhetoric in Colombia where the military and the paramilitaries justify their attacks on these groups by saying that they are fronts for the guerrillas. His characterization of accompaniers who recognize their work as solidarity “engaging in the work of those they accompany” is also a dangerous straw man. Again, accompaniers are

⁴⁹¹ Beth Abbott, “Project Accompaniment: A Canadian Response,” *Refuge: Canada’s periodical on refugees* 13, no. 10 (March 1, 1994): 167–8.

⁴⁹² Patrick Coy, “Degrees and Dynamics of Nonpartisanship and Interventionism in International Nonviolent Accompaniment: A comparative Analysis of Peace Brigades International, Christian Peacemaker Teams and the International Solidarity Movement” (presented at the International Peace Research Association, Leuven, Belgium, 2008), 13.

not engaging in the same daily work of the organizations they accompany. Even when they are taking more openly political action, for example when CPT engages in civil disobedience, such as the fumigation runway action in figure 18, or less dramatically, when Witness for Peace stands vigil in front of the US embassy in Bogotá, they do so on their own initiative as another way to pressure officials – along with letters, calls and more formal meetings. These are not actions that those they accompanied are taking or that it would make sense for them to take.

Another argument, made by Boothe, for accompaniers avoiding expressions of solidarity is that he claims organizations that emphasize solidarity are more likely to be seriously injured or killed (he points out that CPT and ISM have both lost accompaniers, in Iraq and Palestine respectively, and PBI has lost none).⁴⁹³ I believe that those incidents had much more to do with where and when that accompaniment was being done than how (see chapter two). In Boothe's portrayals of solidarity organizations he, like Coy, Mahony and Eguren, and Moser-Puangsuwan and Weber, paints a straw man picture of groups that are dependent on their local partners and do whatever they tell them to do.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹³ Boothe, "Transnational Nonviolent Empowerment," 104.

⁴⁹⁴ Coy, "Degrees and Dynamics of Nonpartisanship and Interventionism in International Nonviolent Accompaniment: A comparative Analysis of Peace Brigades International, Christian Peacemaker Teams and the International Solidarity Movement"; Mahony and Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards*; Moser-Puangsuwan and Weber, *Nonviolent Intervention Across Borders*.

In Colombia even the organizations that most express solidarity do not fit this characterization.⁴⁹⁵

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

⁴⁹⁵ Indeed, all groups could have more formal accountability mechanisms with their Colombian partners as is common for more privileged groups working with less privileged groups in the US (e.g. antiracist organizing).

⁴⁹⁶ [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

It is the authors affiliated with the organizations that most emphasize non-partisanship (PBI, but particularly the NP) that are pushing for accompaniment to be seen as a form of ‘civilian peacekeeping’. Ultimately this is where the push for accompaniment to be ‘non-partisan’ heads, to a keeping of the liberal peace, which ultimately supports the status quo rather than justice. To attempt to distance accompaniment from its social movement origins weakens it rather than making it more effective. There is confusion about this amongst accompaniers because professional and non-partisan have often been conflated – but there is no reason why accompaniment cannot both draw on solidarity and be professional. Solidarity is what makes accompaniment effective - indeed solidarity networks are key to how accompaniment works, as I describe in the next chapter.

Chapter 7: Making space

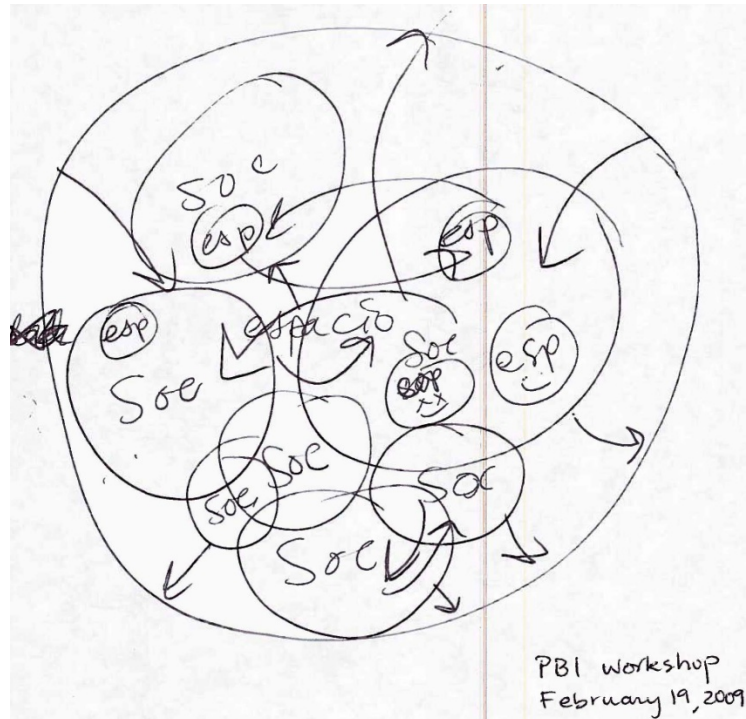


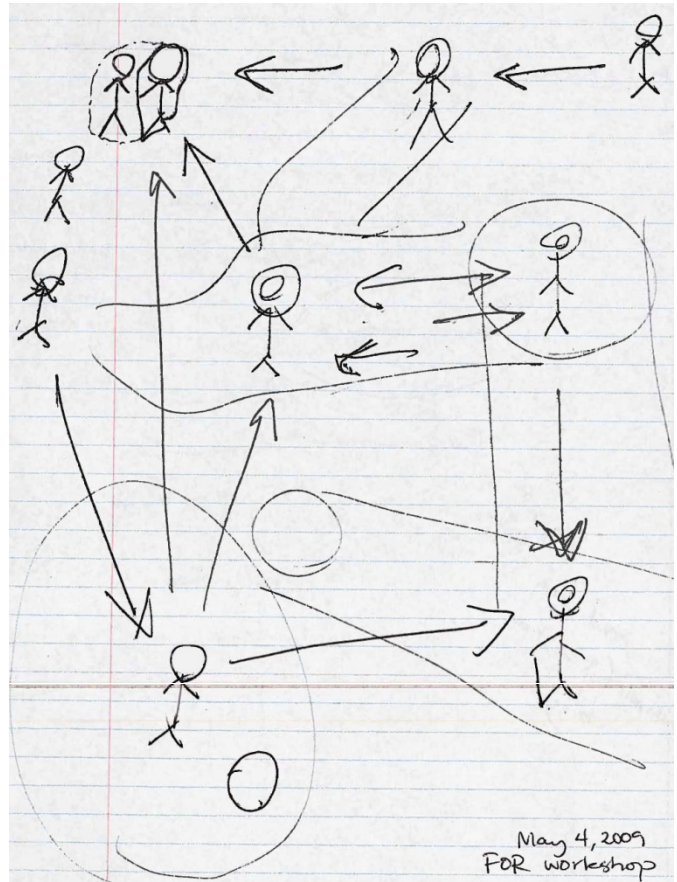
Figure 27: Diagram of various relationships between society and space, drawn in PBI workshop on February 19, 2009, photo by author.

The slogan of Peace Brigades is ‘making space for peace’, and it appears widely in their materials. Yet when I spoke to companions not only did they have a wide range of definitions of ‘peace’ (chapter five), but they also were using various understandings of ‘space’. In this chapter I discuss how companions, and those writing about accompaniment, have used the term ‘space’ and how they have understood accompaniment to ‘work’ spatially – that is, how it ‘makes space for peace’. Both companions and those writing about accompaniment tend to rely on ideas of space as abstract space. This is not only limiting but actually counterproductive for

accompaniment. Yet in their day to day strategizing of whether and how to go on particular accompaniments, companions do analyze the ways space is shaped by various actors. They also think a great deal about what to do with their bodies and how various actions might change the space. That analysis could be strengthened by explicitly thinking of space as relational space and recognizing the ways that different practices, productions and performances can shape space. Strategizing about whether and how to do specific accompaniments could also be strengthened by more explicitly recognizing the role of chains of solidarity in how accompaniment works and emphasizing connections to these networks in their practices, productions and performances of space. Seeing space as relational and emphasizing the role of solidarity networks in shaping it can make accompaniment more effective and keep both companions and those accompanied safer.

In this chapter I begin with the spatial diagrams drawn by companions in workshops and Mahony and Eguren's diagrams of how accompaniment works. I critique these for relying on ideas of space as abstract and describe what it means to understand space as abstract vs relational. I describe in detail some of the ways companions shape space through their practices, productions and performances of space while on an accompaniment. Many of these turn around their 'body idioms'. I then turn to how space is described on the websites of accompaniment organizations, and argue that again, these rely on ideas of space as abstract and rarely mention the role of solidarity networks in how accompaniment works. Next I turn to the literature about accompaniment and the metaphors that are used to describe how accompaniment works. Again, I argue that these sneak in ideas of space as abstract. Instead I argue for understanding accompaniment as

shaping space as relational, in large part through chains of solidarity. These can be seen as a network of sorts, but one that is precarious, shifting, and constantly being remade. I distinguish these from actor-networks and from solidarity as a ‘convergence space’. I then present Mahony’s diagrams that he uses to explain how what he calls ‘international pressure’ is part of how accompaniment works. I argue that these diagrams fail to show how international pressure is created. I end by presenting my own attempt at diagramming how accompaniment works spatially.



Diagramming accompaniment

I had many informal conversations with accompaniers, both one on one and in small groups, but I also held eight more formal group workshops with six different accompaniment organizations, with a total of 35 participants. Most of these organizations regularly held training workshops so I shaped my methods to their regular format. These workshops were two to two and a half hours long and involved discussion and small group activities.

Early in the workshops I asked participants

to diagram, in small groups, the relationship between space and society (see figures 27 and 28). They came up with quite different visions. There was considerable confusion as to whether society was inside space (space as a container/abstract space) or how society affected space and was affected by it (space as relational/spatiality). Given the context of displacement in Colombia it is not surprising that many drew parts of society as struggling for and over space. Many were then confused as to how to include and to diagram the relationship between what they often referred to as physical space and what they described, variously, as emotional space, space to speak, space for democracy, space for development, space for organizing, space for autonomy, economic space, legal space, political space, and moral space. I then asked them to put accompaniers in their diagrams and again, this was difficult for many. They described themselves, in their diagrams, as: opening space, increasing space, widening space, giving space, extending their 'safe space' to another, connecting different spaces, building or sustaining links between space and certain sectors of society, protecting space, joining or creating mutual spaces, bringing in to a larger whole parts of society that were marginalized in space, and a few

Each Actor's Political Space

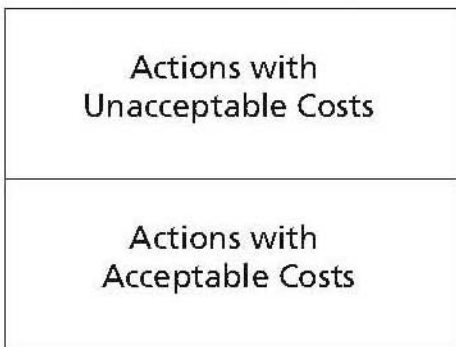


Figure 30: Mahony and Eguren's diagram of each actor's political space,
© Kumarian Press, by permission.

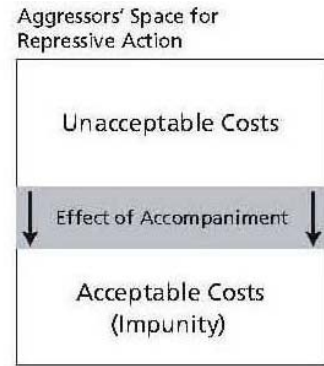
as creating space. One group showed themselves 'squeezing hegemonic space' but also getting into its cracks and widening them.

Mahony and Eguren, in their book *Unarmed*

Figure 29: Mahony and Eguren's diagram of the aggressor's space for repressive action,
© Kumarian Press, by permission.



Bodyguards, provide diagrams of how they understand accompaniment to work. Only one small group referenced these (with the dotted line in upper left of figure 28), though when I had talked to accompaniers individually, without asking them to draw their own diagrams, several referenced what they called Mahony and Eguren’s “space diagrams”.



Their diagrams and main arguments are also presented in the online manual *Side by Side* by Mahony. As he describes it there (he references his own figure numeration which I have replaced in [] with the numeration here for clarity),⁴⁹⁷

Figure 31: Mahony and Eguren's diagram of the accompanied actor's political space,
© Kumarian Press, by permission.

“Each actor in a complex conflict situation, whether a soldier or a human rights activist, perceives a broad array of possible political actions and associates a certain cost/benefit or set of consequences with each action. The actor perceives some consequences as acceptable, some not acceptable, thereby defining the limits of a distinct political space (see figure [30]). Accompaniment alters this mapping of political space for a threatened human rights activist (see figure [29])... Accompaniment tends to limit, or shrink, the aggressor’s options for violent or repressive action—which we will call “impunity space” (see figure [31])....

497 all figures used with the kind permission of Kumarian press.

Figure 32: Mahony and Eguren's diagram entitled "Activist's Political Space: Reality and Perception", © Kumarian Press, by permission.

Accompaniment is effective, in figures [29] and [31], in the gray zone... But no one knows where the borders are! ...People base their decisions on their own perceptions and projections of what consequences they might suffer. ...this uncertainty and the

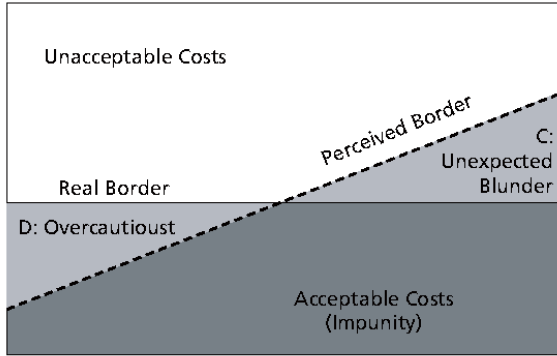
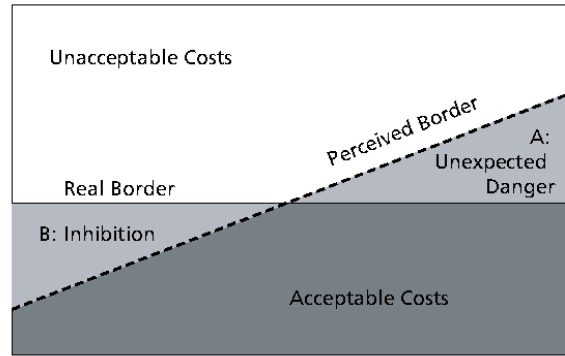


Figure 33: Mahony and Eguren's diagram entitled "Aggressor's Repressive Space: Reality and Perception", © Kumarian Press, by permission.

consequences on the impact of accompaniment is shown in figures [32] through [35]. In space A (figure [32]) the activist unknowingly walks into danger and suffers the consequences. In space B, fear has been instilled so effectively that the activist is

inhibited from taking actions that are in fact relatively safe.... Accompaniment expands this available space by pushing both the "real" and "perceived"

borders upwards (see figure [34]).

The actions in the dark gray shaded area are now available to the activists, but for a variety of reasons. Actions in B2, for instance, were not dangerous in the first place: The activist has simply overcome internalized inhibitions.

Accompaniment in this case functions as encouragement and not protection. Actions in A3 are now safer, but since the activists never saw them as unacceptably dangerous the accompaniment here is serving as pure protection, not encouragement. In area F both encouragement and protection are acting together: The activist is encouraged to take new action that was previously too dangerous and is now protected.

There is still fear: Area B still

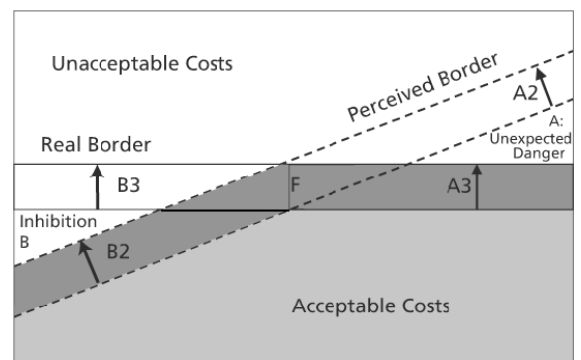


Figure 34: Mahony and Eguren's diagram entitled "Activist's Political Space & Effect of Accompaniment", © Kumarian Press, by permission.

exists with accompaniment. In fact, area B3 consists of additional actions that are now relatively safe, but the activist still does not trust in this safety. Finally, area A2 represents the accompaniment volunteer's nightmare: The activist

*believes these actions to be safer now, but in fact they are not. The activist may walk confidently into danger because of the encouraging international presence.*⁴⁹⁸

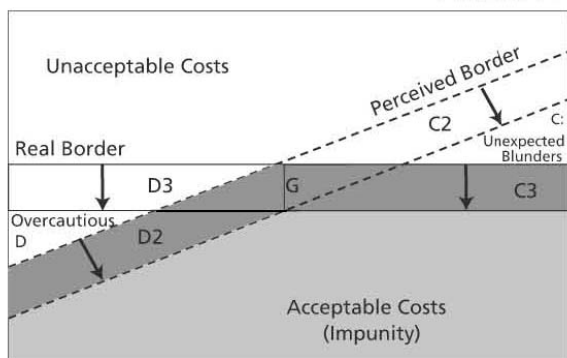


Figure 35: Mahony and Eguren's diagram entitled "Aggressor's Repressive Space & Effect of Accompaniment",

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With the next figure (35) Mahony and

Eguren go on to show how

accompaniment likewise shrinks the

aggressor's political space, which they

also call 'repressive space' and

'impunity space'. For the accompanied activist they distinguish protection from

encouragement, in reference to the attacker they speak of discouragement and deterrence.

One of the key areas for accompaniment in this model is area C3 in figure 35. This is where an attack happens and accompaniers have to show that they can exact, as Mahony and Eguren put it, a 'political cost' high enough to give credibility to future accompaniment.

In describing this model they slip between using the term 'political space' and simply 'space.' As Mahony and Eguren define it, 'political space' refers to the ability to carry out political actions and is determined by the consequences which either the accompanied person or the attacker decide are unacceptable. It seems that even when they use simply

⁴⁹⁸ Liam Mahony, *Side by Side. Protecting and Encouraging Threatened Activists with Unarmed International Accompaniment* (Minneapolis, MN: New Tactics Project of the Center for Victims of Torture, 2004), 14–15.

the term ‘space’ this is what they are referring to. Yet in the history of early accompaniments that makes up most of the book they emphasize ‘physical space’ by regularly discussing whether the people who were accompanied could as a result enter a particular physical area or not. In the book they never discuss the relationship between political and physical space, though the two are clearly intertwined in many of the stories they describe (organizers being able to meet, local activists occupying buildings, etc).

These diagrams rely on an imaginary of space as fixed – as something that there is simply more or less of, but the general ‘box’ of space remains the same. This is space as a container, as ‘abstract space’: an “empty grid within which objects exist and events occur.”⁴⁹⁹ Space here does not shape people or events, nor do people shape space other than to make more or less of it for someone else. Even when they write about “political space” it can appear as a passive fixed backdrop within which political activity either can or cannot happen. This conception of space, which is so dominant that it appears ‘natural’, is shaped by and props up capitalism and empire.⁵⁰⁰ Seeing space as abstract is not necessarily ‘wrong’ – it works well to explain certain things, like owning property, but it is not the best frame for understanding how accompaniment works, nor for thinking about how to do it more effectively. This understanding of space, for example, leaves no room for emotions and memory in shaping space. In the diagrams above it appears that all decision making is rational.

⁴⁹⁹ Derek Gregory, “Space,” ed. Derek Gregory et al., c (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 708.

⁵⁰⁰ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Malden, MA; Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 1992); Derek Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1993); David Harvey, “Space as a Keyword,” in *David Harvey: A Critical Reader*, ed. Derek Gregory and Noel Castree (Malden, MA; Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), 270–298.

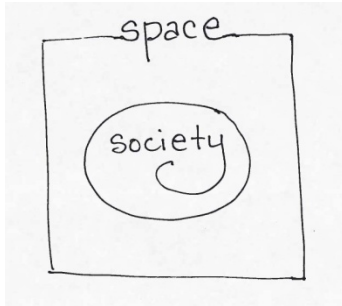


Figure 37: Abstract space

In the workshops I held with accompaniers after they did their own diagrams of the relationship between society and space I explained the concepts of abstract and relational space, pointing to how their different diagrams relied on one or the other.⁵⁰¹ I also drew the most basic diagrams of space as containing society vs space as both shaping society and being shaped by it (see figures 35 and 36). Abstract space can be imagined as dead, and relational as alive. Relational space is both a product of social relations (physical, mental, emotional, political, etc) and at the same time shapes those relations. But to phrase it this way can be misleading, for neither society nor space exist prior to this cocreation, “space is a doing that does not pre-exist its doing.”⁵⁰² Space is not something static that an accompanier enters and changes. Space is always actively being created and changed, by all of us in and through interaction - though some aspects of it are more sedimented and change more slowly than others.

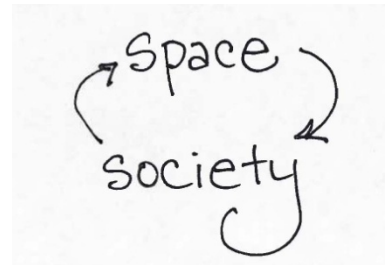


Figure 36: Relational space,
by author.

Space is not only shaped by things humans do and make. That there is a river running through San José shapes the space. But a river will not always shape space in the same way – it depends on how society sees, understands and uses the river. If people are afraid

⁵⁰¹ In the first two workshops I also included an explanation of relative space, but found it caused confusion and was not as useful for the discussion. For a clear explanation of the three see Harvey, “Space as a Keyword.”

⁵⁰² Gillian Rose, “Performing space,” in *Human geography today*, ed. Massey, Doreen, John Allen, and Philip Sarre (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1999), 248.

to cross the river, if they use it for irrigation, if it is used for travel - these interactions shape how the river shapes the space. Some socio-spatial relations are so naturalized that we no longer see them – of course we cross the river. Some are so sedimented they seem permanent - but everything changes, even the river may move or dry up. Space is shaped by memory, emotion and morality as much as by material things. The space of the river in San José is shaped by it being where Luis Eduardo and his family were killed and their bodies cut into pieces. This is not simply some ‘nonreal’ space in the mind – it absolutely shapes understandings of and thus practices around and interactions with the material world that may seem more ‘real.’⁵⁰³ Memories can shape how people respond to the space (say, avoiding where Luis Eduardo was killed, or making annual pilgrimages to the site, or building an altar), and these in turn shape the space again. Except that, again, it’s not a neat process of space shaping society and then society shaping space in some linear order – both things are happening at once. Space is not, however, infinitely changeable.⁵⁰⁴ Certain aspects of space recur and are more sedimented (the river will not dry up overnight unless a damn is put in). “Space is a performance of power and we are all its performers” writes Rose.⁵⁰⁵ An accompanier changes the configuration of power in the space – particularly by networking to power in and from other spaces (and times – both past and future).

An accompanier can never know all of the ways space will be shaped, say, tomorrow on the trip she has been asked to make to accompany a leader of the community down to

⁵⁰³ Rose, “Performing space.”

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid., 248.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid., 249.

town. But in deciding whether to go, whether the accompaniment is both safe and worth doing, she can predict that the space will be shaped not only by rains that have made the river hard to cross or opened potholes on the road, but also by stories that have been running on the local radio station saying that the peace community works with the guerillas, and by there being a new driver on the chiva (the jeep public transit), and that the paramilitary checkpoint was up yesterday. Her conversation last week with the General will also play a role, and how long it has been since she met with embassy staff or flooded them with emails. Having a complex understanding of the ways space is relational and constantly being created will also help her decide not only *if* but *how* to do the accompaniment, for that analysis includes having some sense of how she will be read by various others, which helps her to decide whether and which uniform to wear, whether to carry a satellite phone openly or not, and whether or not to take photos at the checkpoint.

Accompaniers in Colombia are regularly doing these sorts of analyses. But the priority placed on doing such an analysis and their ability to analyze the subtleties of these situations would be improved if they understood and talked about all of these components as together creating and shaping space, that is, if they recognized space as a relational rather than see space as simply *either* material or political, or as something they are trying to clear away or make ‘more’ of. Relational space is often what is meant when accompaniers use the term political space – but that term does not capture the materiality of, say, being able to get in to the plaza to hold a vigil.

In the limited literature on accompaniment I found only one essay that talks about different understandings of space. In a recent short essay Eguren uses the term ‘social space’ and talks about accompaniment allowing a movement to ‘expand’ it. He says, “this can refer to *literal space*, as in Colombia when communities of displaced people have asked for accompaniment to protect their attempt to ‘return’, or to settle in a particular area and establish a peace community. Social space is also *metaphorical*, as for example when new activities are launched, or are extended to reach social sectors or geographical areas previously not involved.”⁵⁰⁶ He does not talk about the relationship between these two, but in a textbox he describes the *malla de vida*⁵⁰⁷ (web of life) around the peace community of Cacarica and how it is both physical and symbolic, how it affects the perception of ‘community space’ both by those inside and outside of the fence.⁵⁰⁸ He does not connect that physical web to the solidarity network that it seems to serve to reference.⁵⁰⁹

That network also helps Cacarica be more visible not just on the ground, and not just in emails to Chicago, but as a result also to the General, to both the US and Colombian Congress, and to the media. That higher political profile makes it more possible for them

⁵⁰⁶ Enrique Eguren, “Developing Strategy for Accompaniment,” in *People Power: Unarmed Resistance and Global Solidarity*, ed. Howard Clark (London: Pluto Press, 2009), 99 emphasis added.

⁵⁰⁷ He translates this as a wire of life, I would translate it as web of life. The Spanish term, as does the English, references the web of all beings.

⁵⁰⁸ Eguren, “Developing Strategy for Accompaniment,” 101.

⁵⁰⁹ Inspired by the web around Cacarica I helped to organize the making of a long strip of cloth with the outlines of hands in different colors and with messages of support in them which was sent from the Seattle Colombia solidarity committee to the Balsita community of returned displaced peoples that we were supporting. They put it up around their open air school space.

to resist attacks by the military and paramilitary and stay in their physical space. Their ability to gather together and live in that physical space also makes it possible for them to organize to claim that political space. Each relies on and creates the other. Physical space is always socially produced (both the making of the fence and how it is understood). Social space is shaped by material productions (like the fence) and bodily practices (like staying inside the fenced-in area most days) and performances (like confronting the army trying to enter the gate). But these productions, practices and performances are not simply physical doings – they are both physical and social. Space is shaped not just by what people do with things and their bodies, but how people read and understand those (not just that there is a fence, but what putting up the fence means to different people). Space is not simply a reflection of social relations, it produces relations of power. The other way of framing this is that “social life is both space-forming and *space-contingent*.”⁵¹⁰ Soja calls this relationship the socio-spatial dialectic. He also uses the term ‘spatiality’ to indicate space that is socially produced.⁵¹¹

⁵¹⁰ emphasis in original Edward Soja, “The spatiality of social life: towards a transformative retheorisation,” in *Social relations and spatial structures*, ed. Derek Gregory and Urry (NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1985), 98.

⁵¹¹ E. W Soja, “The socio-spatial dialectic,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 70, no. 2 (1980): 207–225.

Shaping space on an accompaniment

In the workshops I had accompaniers share stories of incidents where they felt particularly effective. I then gave a brief description of how space can be shaped by performances, practices and productions,⁵¹² with examples like the Cacarica one above, but generally based on the space we were in at that moment. I used the basic diagram in figure 38. We then went back to the incidents that had been shared and used these

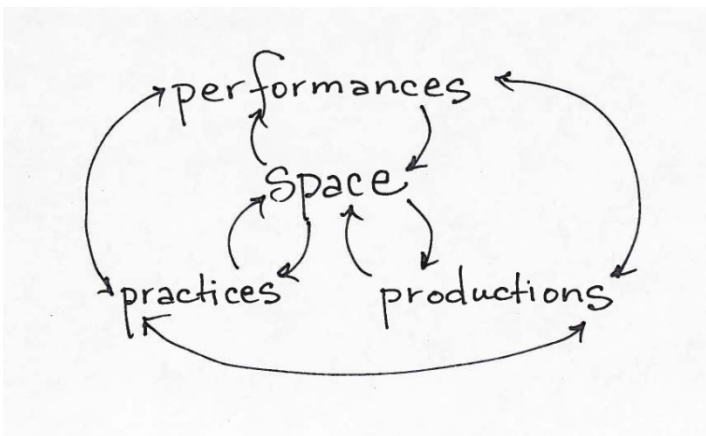


Figure 38: Space as shaped by and shaping practices, productions and performances of space,
by author.

concepts to think about the ways that accompaniers ‘made space’ in those moments.

Accompaniers talk of going on ‘accompaniments’. In the peace community of San José this can mean hiking for days with a group of hundreds searching for the bodies of members of their

community that have been disappeared. Or it can mean a six hours hike up the mountains with three community leaders who are going to speak with members of one of the hamlets of the community. It can also mean sitting next to a community member on the

⁵¹² Derek Gregory used these three ways space is shaped to structure the syllabus of a seminar I took with him in 2004. I found it clear and helpful to think of it this way, though I recognize that I oversimplify how various theorists have written about this, notably Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations*; Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*; Harvey, “Space as a Keyword”; Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 1st ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002); Edward Soja, *Postmodern geographies: the reassertion of space in critical social theory* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2003); Rose, “Performing space.”

chiva (collective jeep taxi) on the hour long ride into town, going through several checkpoints; or riding next to them on a bus for 10 hours for a trip to the capital. The trip could be for supplies, or for meeting with allies, or with state officials (though after many such negotiations the community broke off talks with the State after the murder of Luis Eduardo).

One of the FOR accompaniers described this accompaniment with the peace community of San José:⁵¹³

“This young woman was born in a very isolated area, where Antioquia borders with Córdoba in the mountains. It's an area that is totally abandoned by the state ... where the guerrillas are always passing through. So there was serious bombing of that whole mountain range and whole villages were shaking and hiding in the jungle and they joined the guerrillas to walk out, there was nothing more than that for protection ... Many of them displaced to places near San José. Two young men from those guerrillas surrendered to the army, but they had to show 'results' - so they started walking in the mountains with the army, looking for the entire villages who had walked out with them, although they were supposed to hand over militants ... They found this young woman near the hamlet of la Unión [the hamlet where FOR is based and which is part of the peace community]. She was pregnant and about 15 years old, and they said 'she walked with us, she is a guerrilla' They took the papers, her identity card, and told her 'tomorrow we'll come for you'. ... Her grandfather asked for help from the community. ... I accompanied a group of members of the community who went on a commission to meet with the army and tell them to please give the young woman back her papers. ... [The whole time I was] making calls to Amanda [another FOR accompanier] in Bogotá, I also called the Brigade ... and the Human Rights Ombudsman's office

They were afraid that from a distance they would think we looked like guerrillas, so I also had to show a lot of presence. I called the army a lot, saying 'I'm getting close to a battalion of yours on the mountain, can you tell them a commission is coming, that we are campesinos and an international accompanier, to not shoot us when we come close' ... So we're walking in the mountains, looking for the army, following their footprints in the mud, making sure we're visible, ensuring that everyone knows we're there, our office, the ombudsman's, and the army. We

⁵¹³ This conversation was held in Spanish on March 4, 2009 in Bogotá, translation by the author.

finally came up to them and Wilson, one of the community leaders, is standing in front of the officer in charge. So there I was standing next to him to show there was an international presence, ... Wilson is very hot-blooded and so he starts talking about the community and defending the young woman, but his tone is very stressed and ... so I say hello, I'm K---- with FOR, I try to bring it down a bit... not intervene in the discussion but show presence. ... They start to check, why am I here, what have I done in the past, I show them paperwork saying I'm in contact with your commanding officer of the 17th Brigade and then they go off to talk amongst themselves. So the community steps away a bit and we're waiting. We wait for an hour and I'm talking to the brigade, I'm still talking to Amanda and everything. In the end they gave the young woman her papers back and the next day the Ombudsman's office visited the community ...

... when they formed the commission ... everyone was afraid to go looking for the army in the mountains, and if I hadn't gone I don't think they would have gone

Sara: If you hadn't gone other people in the community wouldn't have felt safe to go?

K----: Like 15 years ago, before they had accompaniment, their commissions were of 200, 300 campesinos that would go to look for something, it had to be a very big number - but because I went it made it possible to go with 12."

K----'s body can 'count' like that of 200 campesinos in part because he symbolizes many more than 200 people supporting him in the US and Canada (K---- is from Quebec).

Much of what K---- talked about doing in this interaction aimed to remind others of that.

As he describes, he was in communication with the commanding officer and with his team mate by phone. We also talked about he made his phone calls with the Satellite phone and how he chose to perform them in an obvious loud way, both in front of the community along the walk, and in front of the army once they got there. In another FOR workshop other accompaniers talked about not wanting to obviously use the satellite phone in front of illegal armed actors – who will think you are reporting them to the authorities and take it from you. Clearly these performances are very context dependent. As far as using props goes, K---- also went on to say that after this he insisted they get a

flag to carry in situations like this to be more visible (he is a former PBIer and PBI Colombia has a large white flag). We discussed how that flag would be read wrongly if they held it while accompanying a march in the city, where it could be read as a form of participation in the protest.

In terms of what he did with his body, K---- talks about not only walking at the front of the group next to Wilson, but when they first saw the army they chose not to take the shortest route to get to them because they might not be clearly seen, so they went around so that they would walk up to them in an open field and the army would not feel ambushed. Just as they changed their behaviour to not be misread as guerrillas, and an FOR flag would be ‘read’ differently in a march in the city, we talked about how his tall white body would not stand out and thus would be read differently in Quebec, where he is from, than in a rural area of Colombia. Likewise his FOR t-shirt and Canadian passport are read differently there.⁵¹⁴ These performances are all context dependent, and just as they reference and are shaped by other spacetimes, these microspaces/moments can shape the broader space of, say, life throughout the peace community in the next month.

These are not performances on a fixed stage, a la Goffman. These are performances that create the stage itself. It may sound odd, but K---- was not doing a performance *in* space, but actually *of* space. Goffman writes as if the actor alone first establishes the ‘setting’ and then acts in it, through appearance and manner.⁵¹⁵ Yet it was K----’s actions, along

⁵¹⁴ I discuss these racial dynamics in detail in chapter eight

⁵¹⁵ T. Burns, *Erving Goffman* (Hove, East Sussex, UK: Psychology Press, 1992), 117.

with those of the community members and the army, that were creating the space. But some of Goffman's work on how what he calls 'body idiom' shapes interactions is helpful. He uses the term for "dress, bearing, movements and position, sound level, physical gestures such as waving or saluting, facial decorations, and broad emotional expressions."⁵¹⁶ These can express deference or challenge or flirtation in something as subtle as eye movements. These actions are understood through what Goffman calls 'rules of conduct' that, for example, interpret wearing a sleeveless shirt to a formal meeting as rude - though some rules are more firm than others. Not all body idioms can be controlled. Gender, age and race are harder to manipulate but greatly influence how a person's body idiom is read. Body idiom is more than simply nonverbal language – there is no time out from body idiom in an interaction.⁵¹⁷ Goffman emphasizes that there is a front and backstage for interactions.⁵¹⁸ This implies that all actions are planned and rehearsed, which is not true, but certainly some are, and an accompanier's performance could indeed be threatened if someone saw backstage and overheard the prep work and thinking about what to wear, where to go, what to say. That is if they, say, broke in to the FOR email accounts, as the Colombian DAS indeed did.⁵¹⁹

In discussing other moments with accompaniers and the productions, practices and performances they did with their bodies and props to shape the space there was a good deal of discussion about exactly how close and where accompaniers should stand (or sit,

⁵¹⁶ Goffman cited in *ibid.*, 38.

⁵¹⁷ G.W.H. Smith, *Erving Goffman* (Hove, East Sussex, UK: Psychology Press, 2006), 38.

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁵¹⁹ The national security agency, Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad.

or walk) in relation to the person or persons who were accompanied. Often they were accompanying people who were choosing to put their own bodies together themselves to affect change of some sort, such as the commission K---- describes, or a town assembly or a meeting. Some accompaniers sit in the circle of a meeting of those they are accompanying, some just outside, some far outside. Some listen, some make a point of reading or doing other things to show that they are not listening, like playing with children and babies. Hammocks kept coming up, and whether it was appropriate to lie in a hammock while a meeting (or in one case an excavation of a mass grave) was happening – and the danger of dozing off. The importance of walking with confidence and standing straight and looking vigilant vs. slouching or looking distracted was mentioned (particularly difficult during long meetings in hot weather). There was some talk of being more conscious of normally unconscious bodily practices, such as women not standing in a particularly feminine or ‘sexy’ way and men not moving their bodies (hands, hips) in ways that were coded as feminine. There was some question as to whether or not to smile with armed actors. The importance of speaking in English (or Swedish, etc) was regularly mentioned. One accompanier said if she had no one with her to speak English to she would make a phone call in English, even a fake one. One Red accompanier from Spain said that he made a point of speaking to the army so that they could hear his accent.

In other scenarios of interactions with the army some accompaniers chose to stand back and to the side, others chose to be the ones to approach the army on their own, without the accompanied person with them. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

██ Only FOR talked about the importance of ‘*cartas de aviso*’ (letters of notification) – and protocols with those they accompany that insist on a certain amount of time beforehand so that these can be sent to the military and other government offices telling them of the trip, rather than going on a moment’s notice. As K---- describes above, FOR companions also carry a physical copy of the letter and show it. As far as props go, I was surprised that no group seems to have formal identity cards to show in these situations (something like a press pass),⁵²⁰ or any sort of presentation card that would explain who they are, or even a standard business card. The Red companions did mention carrying the business cards of different officials and embassy staff that they could pull out in interactions with the army and say that they were going to call.

⁵²⁰ For a short while before I was there FOR was issuing their own identification cards to their companions but they were only very basic laminated photocopies. In a country where most official documents have several stamps and seals and you have to give your thumbprint even for a Blockbuster video card, appearance of legitimacy is important if the intent is to reference connections to networks with power.



Figure 39: FOR house in San José (with FOR accompanier wearing uniform),
photo by author.

Accompaniers could also have a lot more and better signage.⁵²¹ In San José PBI has a white PBI flag in front of their house and FOR has a sign on their house (see figure 39). IPO accompaniers mentioned sometimes putting their banner on the side of buses when they were accompanying caravans. Two PBI accompaniers who did not have their flag with them on one rural accompaniment instead creatively washed their dirty shirts and hung a line full of PBI shirts to dry to increase their visibility. We talked about how a line of their shirts behind their house in Bogotá does not mean much, but was more

⁵²¹ I talk about body signage in more detail, in relation to race, in chapter eight.

charged in that rural area where the organizers under threat that they were accompanying had not been able to go and hold a community meeting in several years.

Higate and Henry, in their study of UN peacekeepers, noted that their performances were enhanced by props that added depth and credibility to the performance.⁵²² Just as a waitress is more clearly understood as such when she carries an order pad, the accompaniers satellite phone is the clearest symbol of their connection to their network – though their vest or flag is likely to be far more visible. As Higate and Henry put it, “more and better equipment lends legitimacy to the security performance.”⁵²³ Whether accompaniers are trying to perform alternative security or solidarity, wearing a tank top as a uniform may not do much to convey a connection to those with power. An actor network theory analysis would see these ‘props’ as the non-human elements of the network, a point I will come back to.⁵²⁴

Many accompaniers mentioned the importance of what one group called ‘visual contact’ - of the armed actors being able to see the accompaniers but also the accompaniers being able to see the armed actors (as in the story told by K----, above). There were several incidents where accompaniers did not immediately realize that armed actors had entered the area – of course this is harder when they are not in uniform. There was also a good

⁵²² Higate and Henry, *Insecure Spaces*, 113.

⁵²³ *Ibid.*, 114.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, 115.

deal of discussion about how visible different accompaniers were from a distance, and how obvious their own uniforms were.⁵²⁵

Higate and Henry look at how UN peacekeepers use not only props but their very bodies, arguing that “peacekeepers bodies are central to how security is performed. This is evident in terms of the requirement for certain standards of able-bodiedness, but also in regard to its poise and choreographed movement”...“passive, inactive and sluggish bodies may lack credibility, whereas alert, observant and physically dynamic forms of peacekeeper embodiment are likely to engender its polar opposite – that of a reassuring performance.”⁵²⁶ They argue that these practices “flow from a stock of tacit mutually held expectational norms shaped by the interactional roles of co-present actors.”⁵²⁷ I am left wondering if army officers at a checkpoint have clear expectations for the performances of accompaniers, given that their role and identity is a fairly new one and not well sedimented with a long history of performative citational practices.

Accompaniers themselves had some disagreements about what practices and performances they expected from each other. In this case there is no clear equivalent to Butler’s example of ‘wearing pink’ to explain gender performativity,⁵²⁸ though many accompaniers would argue for ‘wearing a uniform.’ Whether or not accompaniers see themselves as (civilian) peacekeepers, they seem to hold some similar norms, such as

⁵²⁵ I discuss uniforms in more detail, in relation to race, in chapter eight.

⁵²⁶ Higate and Henry, *Insecure Spaces*, 116.

⁵²⁷ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁵²⁸ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York, NY and London: Routledge, 2006).

looking alert. In the chapter eight I come back to how accompaniment relies on not only certain types of bodily practices and performances but also certain types of actual bodies.

Playing the part

Conversation in the workshops repeatedly came back to accompaniers looking ‘appropriate’. To put this in Goffmanesque terms, performing in ways that fit established rules of conduct. But again, those rules are not always clear to all or agreed upon.

Accompaniers were criticized for wearing clothes that were too tight, for wearing sandals in the city, and generally not dressing up enough for meeting with officials. One accompanier told of always scrambling to borrow a purse to use for meetings with officials because the woven Colombian ‘mochila’ bag she usually used was read as something used by leftist students. When I was in Colombia PBI had recently told a prospective accompanier that she would have to cut off her dreadlocks, so there was also a good bit of discussion about hair and what it should look like. PBI has a standard policy of no dreadlocks, no body piercing

(no earrings for men), and no tattoos that cannot be covered for meetings. One of the core accompaniers of the Red is a man with very long dreadlocks and he argued that his dreads helped him to stand out as an international (the Red does not wear uniforms). IPO also had accompaniers



Figure 40: Photo from IPO website, www.peaceobservatory.org, by permission.

with dreads (see figure 40). Surprisingly there seemed to be no rule against buzz cuts, and

a Latino FOR accompanier regularly shaved his head while serving in San José – which it would seem would make it even easier to confuse him with an armed actor.⁵²⁹ Likewise there is no rule against men body building and having large obvious arm muscles, associated with the paramilitaries, nor against having a scruffy beard, associated with the guerrillas.

We also discussed physical appearance in relation to whether accompaniment is presented as non-partisan or solidarity. In the PBI workshop it was argued that:⁵³⁰

Man: ... having minimum appearance standards is a PBI strategy for coming closer to, how to say it, for being accepted by the armed forces, ... so they accept us as an interlocutor. ... the Red and IPO don't want to be interlocutors with them, because they are on the other side, and we are between the two, trying to open a space between the armed forces and the organizations. The others are more political so they struggle with their comrades against the system, against the State. ...

Woman: But it's not just the armed forces, but also the diplomatic corps, other international organizations, we try to do political work at a higher level, in that way I mean, and simply, it is clearly more professional. These people wear suits ... we have image standard for just this reason, because we want to get in to that more professional world

... Sara: Do you consider the work you do here to be solidarity work?

Man: Yes

Sara: ... When you talk to officials, what you emphasize is not solidarity

Woman: I don't think that's our objective. We use our weight as a tool. If we say we are here in solidarity, that could drop a bit. ... The idea is that when we go to an embassy we are more or less on the same level. If we talk to the armed forces the idea is to be on a higher level to exert some pressure and if you say I am here in solidarity ...

⁵²⁹ Interview with G-----

⁵³⁰ Workshop held in Spanish in Bogotá on February 19, 2009, translation by the author.

Yet FOR talks about their effectiveness with armed actors, or at the US embassy, being precisely because of the larger solidarity network behind them. It certainly does not hurt to be dressed well, but this debate seems to be a day to day reflection of the confusion around whether accompaniment ‘works’ by being nonpartisan and respected as some sort of professional civilian peacekeeping force standing between two opposing parties, or through the weight of a solidarity network. It seems to me that embassy officials will pay much more attention to an accompanier whose organization just sent 600 emails about an incident than to an accompanier because they are dressed nicely. Performances that remind the official of those 600 emails seem more important than dressing well. The difference between FOR and PBI here might also be a reflection of what embassies are in question. PBI has more European accompaniers, whose embassies may not need as much convincing through grassroots pressure to pay attention to human rights issues as the US one does. But then again, as one accompanier said to me, a call to a General from the US embassy is worth ten calls from European ones (because of the US involvement in the conflict, described in chapter three).

In talking about what they did at checkpoints FOR accompaniers joked that they would introduce themselves and FOR and say ‘and we have connections to US Senators’. They are not actually so explicit, but the appearance and presentation issues relate to whether the armed forces will, in the field, associate them with those connections or not – rather than whether they will respect them simply because they are more ‘professional’. The danger of certain appearances associated with marginalized groups is that the army might assume that the accompanier has few connections to power in their home country. In figure 40 one IPO accompanier has dreadlocks and the other is not wearing sleeves as

they confront a soldier. The soldier may have assumed that these ‘hippies’ would not be taken seriously by their own embassy since in Colombia a more formal appearance is particularly valued (i.e., it is a stronger rule of conduct).

Representations of companions and ‘space’ in cyberspace

Though companions in the workshops had widely varied understandings of what they were doing with ‘space’ and disagreed about the best ways to shape space, I expected that their websites would more clearly present them as ‘making space for peace’ given that this PBI slogan is frequently mentioned in literature about accompaniment. Yet even PBI, who has ‘making space for peace’ at the top of every page of their website, only once mentions space in their content, on their page ‘about protective accompaniment’, where they say:

“Protective accompaniment has three simultaneous and mutually reinforcing effects. The presence of international volunteers protects threatened activists by raising the stakes for potential attackers. It provides moral support and international solidarity for civil society activism by opening space for threatened organisations thereby giving them the confidence to carry out their work. In addition it strengthens the international movement for peace and human rights by giving accompaniment volunteers with a powerful first-hand experience that becomes a sustained source of inspiration to themselves and others upon their return to their home countries.”⁵³¹

Space here seems to be envisioned as abstract, as if to make or ‘open’ space meant simply to clear something away, as if death threats could be swept out. For the third effect they are in effect talking about a network, without being explicit about how that also affects space in Colombia.

⁵³¹ “About Protective Accompaniment: PBI” emphasis added.

SweFOR's website calls their team a "preventative presence" and says that the objectives of sending 'observers' are to

*"- increase the space of action of local organizations and diminish that of the aggressor
- collect and share information nationally and internationally
- offer moral support and hope"*⁵³²

Again here space appears to be abstract, something that can be increased. They are the only group to also say that they are diminishing the attacker's space. They do not, however make it clear if they are doing these two things through 'observing' or how the second two bullet points might also be part of 'increasing' space.

The FOR Colombia website is much more explicit about what they call 'the support network', saying that it can 'open political space':

*"The premise of accompaniment is that there will be an international response to whatever violence is observed by the volunteer. That request carries the implicit threat of diplomatic or economic pressure; a pressure that the perpetrators of violence want to avoid. ...Because of this, the armed actors and civilians in the conflict should have explicit knowledge of the physical presence of the international accompaniers as well as the support network that backs them up. ... The hope is that with a great visibility and higher level of international support we can open the political space for the very important work of the movements seeking justice and peace that does not exclude the poor and marginalized."*⁵³³

Though FOR focuses on ending US military aid, their site is not explicit about the importance and power of their network extending specifically into the US Congress. All

⁵³² "Servicio de paz en Colombia | Movimiento Sueco por la Reconciliación - SweFOR" translated from the Spanish by the author, emphasis added.

⁵³³ "Methodology of CPP Work | Fellowship Of Reconciliation Colombia Program", n.d., <http://www.forcolombia.org/peacepresence/methodology> (accessed March 8, 2011) emphasis added.

three of these sites (PBI, SweFOR and FOR) discuss ‘space’ in ways that seem to rely on notions of space as abstract.

Surprisingly none of the other accompaniment organizations mention space at all in their descriptions of their work on their websites. Several do mention networks however. The PASC site says that on returning to Canada accompaniers will, “help in building a direct solidarity network with the communities in civil resistance” through public events, media work, etc. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship website says: “Our primary goal is to be a supportive presence of solidarity, with the benefit of increasing awareness for our accompaniers and, through them, our US churches and the broader society through education and advocacy efforts.”⁵³⁴ Solidarity is emphasized and a network of support is alluded to but, again, the role of that network in creating safety for those accompanied is not spelled out, nor is the ‘special role’ that the US plays in Colombia that accompaniers and their support network leverage. The Witness for Peace site emphasises that their speaking tours in the US and delegations to Colombia strengthen their “network of 20,000 activists giving testimony, lobbying Congress and using nonviolent direct action to demand just US foreign policies in Colombia” but, again, does not explicitly connect this to their work on the ground in Colombia, which is made possible by that network.⁵³⁵

Spatial metaphors used to explain how accompaniment works

⁵³⁴ “Colombia Accompaniment FAQ | Presbyterian Peace Fellowship.”

⁵³⁵ “Witness for Peace : Colombia.”

The literature on accompaniment is rife with spatial metaphors that rely on notions of abstract space, and as such sneak in oppressive paradigms.⁵³⁶ Hunter and Lakey use what they call the "**greenhouse metaphor**", saying that "third party non-violent intervention is not about doing the work of growing the social movement, but about protecting it from outside forces that seek to destroy it."⁵³⁷ As Boothe describes it in his review of this metaphor, accompaniers have a passive role of being glass that lets sunlight in, and keeps strong winds out.⁵³⁸ The greenhouse metaphor presents accompaniers as a shield – though accompaniers generally avoid the term 'human shield', which others sometimes use to describe them, because 'human shields' are generally defined as those civilians held against their will by armed actors near a potential target to defer attack.⁵³⁹ Accompaniers are also more active than a still greenhouse – their work is premised on movement, on *walking with*, alongside the accompanied rather than covering them, or *standing between* them and their attacker. Accompaniers shape space, they are not just a

⁵³⁶ Katz and Smith call attention to how spatial metaphors can do this in N. Smith and C. Katz, "Grounding metaphor: Towards a spatialized politics," in *Place and the Politics of Identity*, ed. Michael Keith and Steve Pile, 1993, 66–83; Pratt more broadly urges cautious use of spatial metaphors that can ultimately be aspatial. G. Pratt, "Spatial metaphors and speaking positions," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 10, no. 3 (1992): 172.

⁵³⁷ Hunter and Lakey, *Opening Space for Democracy*, 248.

⁵³⁸ Boothe and Smithey, "Privilege, Empowerment, and Nonviolent Intervention," 96.

⁵³⁹ This is the definition given in most dictionaries, though a few online dictionaries (e.g. answers.com and the freedictionary.com) also include those who voluntarily take a position near a potential target. In the CPT newsletter in a dialogue on the term Claire Evans points out that even when modified as "voluntary human shields" it "places the people being protected in the role of victims, and the people doing the shielding as rescuers" - Signs of the Times: Winter/Spring 2003 Vol. XIII, No. 1 & 2, cited in Gada Mahrouse, "Transnational activists, news media representations, and racialized 'politics of life': the Christian Peacemaker Team kidnapping in Iraq," *Citizenship Studies* 13, no. 4 (2009): 327.

barrier in space. Accompaniers also aim to be much more visible than a transparent pane of glass – indeed their work is premised on being visible.

The slogan of the Christian Peacemaker Teams is ‘**getting in the way**’ which CPTers often say has the double meaning of getting in the way of violence and, playing on the term ‘the way’ as it was used by early followers of Jesus, that is, as a reference to getting on the path of discipleship.⁵⁴⁰ Getting in the way sounds rather like serving as a shield and putting oneself in between two parties, rather than walking side by side with the person that is accompanied.

Another metaphor that accompaniers used in discussions with me is that of accompaniers serving as a **lifejacket**. This carries a connotation of saving – a lifejacket is meant to keep a person from drowning. Here the accompanier is not shaping the space but simply keeping the accompanied person in the space with them, as it were, above water. Saving the drowning stranger is a classic image of the good humanitarian, of benevolent giving to a docile recipient. Yet as Orford suggests in her critique of global humanitarianism, this metaphor ignores how the international community itself may have, metaphorically, raised the water level that put the person at risk of drowning. She gives the example of IMF and World Bank policies that put people at risk.⁵⁴¹ She argues that these connections are denied by humanitarians. Some accompaniers emphasize these connections more than others, for example FOR repeatedly makes the connection to

⁵⁴⁰ “Christian Peacemaker Teams | Getting in the way.”

⁵⁴¹ Anne Orford, *Reading Humanitarian Intervention: Human Rights and the Use of Force in International Law*, 1st ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

military aid when discussing abuses whereas PBI rarely does so explicitly – yet the network they rely on is based on these connections. Those they accompany are also anything but passive victims to be saved - it is precisely because of their actions of resistance that accompaniers are walking beside them.

Accompaniers are not practicing humanitarianism (i.e., serving as a life jacket that keeps the accompanied afloat), but it is easy for others to read them in this way.⁵⁴² As argued in chapter five, there has been a rise since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 in a ‘new humanitarianism’. In the 1990s many regional wars were presented as humanitarian emergencies at the international level and in response between 1989 and 1997 the number of UN peacekeeping operations more than doubled that of the previous 40 years. Baines argues that these were often aimed at creating and supporting UNHCR created "safety zones, zones of tranquility" for the temporary resettlement of displaced people – and it was during this time that UNHCR started working with the internally displaced and not only those who had crossed national borders.⁵⁴³ Accompaniers could easily be read as doing similar work as ‘civilian peacekeepers’ protecting displaced people in ‘humanitarian zones.’ Indeed, some accompanied communities have chosen the term ‘humanitarian zone’ to reference international legal protections. Yet as I argued in chapter five, when accompaniers are seen as or presented as peacekeepers they are likely

⁵⁴² Accompaniers are also widely understood through tropes of caretaking and humanitarian work. One accompanier told me that her boyfriend in the US could never understand what she was doing and would say to her ‘Why are you there taking care of people you don’t even know, you could be here with me someone who loves you.’ Because this is the sort of work that people from more privileged countries generally go to less privileged countries to do, it is easy for accompaniers to be read this way.

⁵⁴³ Erin K. Baines, *Vulnerable Bodies: Gender, the Un, and the Global Refugee Crisis* (Aldershot, UK; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), 42–43.

to be imagined as keeping the ‘liberal peace’, maintaining the global order as good humanitarians to those poor suffering displaced people, rather than acting in solidarity with brave and creative resistance to that global order.

Chains of solidarity

Let me describe the spatial metaphor I find more useful for understanding how accompaniment works by first coming back to what Mahony and Eguren call ‘political cost’,⁵⁴⁴ how accompaniment relies on it, and how it is exacted. Accompaniers are primarily able to exact a cost on state actors and those connected to them, not on illegal actors. In Colombia that means the Colombian army and national police (who are both under the Ministry of Defense) and the paramilitaries who are linked to them, but not the guerillas.⁵⁴⁵ The ultimate cost in this context would be the reduction or elimination of US military and/or economic aid, either for a year, long term, or for it to be temporarily frozen.⁵⁴⁶ When Luis Eduardo Guerra, one of the key leaders of the San José peace community, was murdered in 2005 (see chapter three) activists in the US managed to get tens of millions of dollars withheld for five months as a direct response to the attack. In recent years the US Congress’ refusal to approve the Free Trade Agreement has also been seen as a cost, though after being held up for a remarkable five years it was passed in

⁵⁴⁴ The only group to reference this term on their site is CPT

⁵⁴⁵ The guerillas do rely on international support, but not of the sort that the networks accompaniers tap into could affect.

⁵⁴⁶ Much of the US aid is contingent on annual certification by the US State Department that Colombia is making progress on human rights.

October 2011.⁵⁴⁷ There are also less dramatic steps that can be taken short of blocking international agreements. When members of the US Congress write a Dear Colleague letter expressing concern about an attack it is front page news in Colombia. When the FOR office in Bogotá was broken in to in 2007, FOR got members of Congress to express their concern about it to President Uribe in person when he met with them soon afterwards on a visit to Washington DC. The US ambassador has also personally called the general in charge of a particular region to express concern about the safety of an accompanied Colombian activist under attack.

When an attack happens there are various ways that the accompanier may get the ambassador to make that phone call, or a member of Congress to say something to Uribe. The accompaniment organization prepares for this moment by building a relationship with staff at the embassy and with staff in Congressional offices. They do this through meetings and ongoing communication, but they get those meetings through pressure. That pressure is usually created through letters and phone calls from US activists who receive an urgent action alert from the organization about a threat or an attack. As John Lindsay-Poland, the co-director of FOR put it, they ‘harvested’ the 800 some emails the FOR alert generated about their email being hacked by the Colombian government into a high level meeting with the State Department. They were able to request specific actions

⁵⁴⁷ There is also the possibility of reduction of aid from other countries, particularly the EU, and the blocking of other FTAs, but given the primacy of the US role in Colombia I focus here on the US. In future research I hope to look more closely at pressure from the EU and Canada. The other potential cost is multi-national corporations pulling out or choosing not to invest. Pressure on corporations is a tactic emphasized by Canadian and UK activists, given the relative size of investment to government aid from those countries.

during that meeting, but also established a relationship so that in the future it is more likely they will be able to communicate without having to generate letters first.

Galtung argues that nonviolence

*“works better the shorter the social distance. More particularly, when the other party has been totally dehumanized in the mind of the oppressor, civil disobedience may be seen only as one more instance of queer, strange behaviour, uncivilized rather than civil in its disobedience ... It is when one’s own people, the Other inside the Self, or the Self in the Other, start reacting the same way, non-violently, sending a forceful signal that “we are not tolerating this any longer,” that chords of responsiveness are being touched. Doubts about legitimacy are generated.”*⁵⁴⁸

He recognizes that

*“The long-term approach would be struggle against the sources of dehumanization, bridging all gaps within and between societies. But the short-term approach would be to mobilize the in-between groups, have them act out their political conscience and consciousness on behalf of those too far down and away to have an effective voice. And then build social and human ties to solidify that political cooperation, in both directions, with the oppressors and with the oppressed.”*⁵⁴⁹

Writing this in 1989 he ends with,

*“Whose task was it to stay Washington’s ruthless aggression in Nicaragua, using the contras in that great chain of violence built from above? Above all, the task of the US people, in massive demonstrations ... students, for instance, particularly from elite universities.”*⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁸ Johan Galtung, “Principles of Nonviolent Action: The Great Chain of Nonviolence Hypothesis,” in *Nonviolence and Israel/Palestine* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Institute for Peace, 1989), 19–20.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

Martin and Varney argue that although Galtung presents this as a psychological chain, it can also be seen as a communication chain, where intermediaries can communicate more directly because of language, meaning systems, or other reasons.⁵⁵¹ As they see it, “The chain gets around power inequalities by utilizing a series of links, each of which is closer to power equality than the direct connection between resisters and their opponents.”⁵⁵² They surmise that Galtung uses the adjective 'great' in reference to the Christian concept of the ‘Great Chain of Being’ where all beings exist in a hierarchical order, from rocks up to God⁵⁵³ - which is rather different than the idea of Christian solidarity based on brotherhood and equality before God that those accompaniment groups that are Christian tend to reference.

As Clark puts it “when an oppressed community cannot directly influence power-holders in a situation, they begin link-by-link to construct a chain of nonviolence by approaching those people they can reach, planning that each link will in turn connect with others until the chain extends to people closer to the power structures and even to decision-makers themselves.”⁵⁵⁴ Clark cites Summy’s argument that this is useful when a power holder is not directly dependent on the cooperation of the subject population, and so the chain connects with those on whom the power-holder does depend.⁵⁵⁵ In this case the general

⁵⁵¹ Brian Martin and Wendy Varney, “Nonviolence and Communication,” *Journal of Peace Research* 40, no. 2 (March 1, 2003): 220.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*, 229.

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*, 219.

⁵⁵⁴ Howard Clark, *People Power: Unarmed Resistance and Global Solidarity* (London: Pluto Press, 2009), 215.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 216.

depends on US military aid, that aid depends on votes from US Congress, the member of Congress depends on votes from their constituency, and one of those constituents just got an email from, say, someone they go to church with whose niece is in Colombia serving as an accompanier. If this chain happens enough times, the accompanier may eventually be able to call the General directly when a threat happens, and without mentioning the chain the General will know that this kind of pressure can be generated. Indeed FOR accompaniers now not only meet regularly with, but also have the direct personal cell phones of the Generals in the area to call in case of emergency.

Networks of solidarity

Accompaniment is not based on one chain of relationships but many such chains. These chains of solidarity move closer to centers of power, and people on one end of the chain will have more access to resources than those on the other end. An accompanier ‘making space for peace’ in the peace community of San José does so by reaching out to and relying on kitchens in Berkeley, where a conversation can happen about San José than leads to an email to Congress, enough of which can lead to a call to the State department, which can lead to a call to the embassy, and eventually a call to the General of the area around San José.

These connections do not happen just in moments of crisis. These chains of solidarity are built up over time. Church basements across North America play a key role in these networks, as they are regularly the site of talks by accompaniers and the accompanied that make it more likely that people will understand and care when they receive an action alert. This sort of groundwork has been done for years by the solidarity movement,

building a culture of connection to struggles across Latin America, as well as national policies, paradigms and institutions that they can draw on (like Congressional subcommittees). The work of accompaniment may seem dramatic, ‘putting bodies on the line’, getting ambassadors to call generals - but it relies, through these chains, on more ordinary actions elsewhere – a church dinner, an email, a phone call.

New information and communication technologies have made these chains longer, wider, denser, and easier to access. The solidarity movement in the 1980s relied on faxes – activists were asked to pay a small fee in advance and authorize a fax sent in their name in case of emergency. Now software allows for pretty ‘quick click’ action widgets to be circulated as a facebook status update. Social media on the internet makes it much easier to take many more steps along the chains in the web – to find, say, someone who goes to church with a staff person from the Congresswoman’s office. The dramatically lower cost and smaller size of not only cellular but also satellite phones makes it possible for accompaniers to go into areas with little or no cell phone coverage, like the mountains around San José, and still be able to call out and reach that network. Likewise the lower cost of airfare has made accompaniment more possible, as well as the delegations and speaking tours that create the networks it relies on. Video recording and editing and subtitling are all now dramatically cheaper and more accessible and accompaniers are increasingly using short online videos to build and strengthen links on these chains.

Not an actor-network, not a convergence space

Proponents of ‘actor-network theory’ (ANT) would argue that these are ‘nonhuman’ members of the network (along with documents, money, buildings, etc.). Certainly they

shape the connections that are made, but I found no accompanier who considered their satellite phone, or their facebook page, to actually be ‘part’ of their network. Instead these are considered *tools* for building and maintaining connections with humans. However essential those tools may be for the work, stranger still to accompaniers would be the ANT argument that it is neither subjects (accompaniers) nor objects (satellite phones) in isolation that get things done (i.e. have agency), but that when they work *together* in an (actor-)network *each* is an ‘actant.’⁵⁵⁶ Actor-network is written with a hyphen because it understands actor-networks themselves to be what ‘acts.’⁵⁵⁷

The types of chains that accompaniers build and use are very different from those described by ‘actor-network theory’ (ANT) in that they are not only consciously built *as* chains, but they also purposefully cross and make use of hierarchies of power and privilege. ANT sees networks as flat: all human and nonhuman objects in them are potentially the same.⁵⁵⁸ A long standing critique of ANT is that it does not recognize the impact of differences of power, like race and class.⁵⁵⁹ It is true that some have used ANT in ways that do recognize existing power differences. Routledge and Featherstone in

⁵⁵⁶ F.J. Bosco, “Actor-network theory, networks, and relational approaches in human geography,” in *Approaches to human geography*, ed. Stuart Aitken and Gill Valentine (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2006), 136–46.

⁵⁵⁷ Nick Bingham, “actor-network theory,” ed. Derek Gregory et al., *The Dictionary of Human Geography* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

⁵⁵⁸ Bosco, “Actor-network theory, networks, and relational approaches in human geography”; Jon Murdoch, *Post-structuralist Geography: A Guide to Relational Space* (London: Sage Publications, 2005), 367.

⁵⁵⁹ Bosco, “Actor-network theory, networks, and relational approaches in human geography”; Bingham, “actor-network theory”; Kirsten Simonsen, “Networks, flows, and fluids—reimagining spatial analysis?,” *Environment and Planning A* 36, no. 8, *Environment and Planning A* (2004): 1333–1337.

particular have done so in describing international solidarity work⁵⁶⁰ - yet in doing so they seem to be using ANT only partially. Routledge explicitly writes that ANT is wrong to argue that differences in the distribution of power are solely relational effects within the network.⁵⁶¹ Routledge writes about how some members of the People's Global Action network, like himself, function as elites in the network and serve as what he calls 'imagineers' – organizing conferences, mobilizing resources, facilitating communications flows. He recognizes that they are able to do so not because they accrue more power through the network itself (though he recognizes that is also true), but because they speak English, have access to the internet, and are able to travel more freely, both in terms of finances and visas.⁵⁶² Yet Routledge seems to wish that the 'imagineers' did not hold quite so much power in the network.

Routledge argues that what he calls 'global justice networks' come together in and operate as a 'convergence space', which articulate collective visions and "facilitate an intermingling of scales of political action" and both "globalize local actions" and

⁵⁶⁰ Paul Routledge, "Transnational Resistance: Global Justice Networks and Spaces of Convergence," *Geography Compass* 3, no. 9999 (2009): 1881–1901; Paul Routledge, "Acting in the network: ANT and the politics of generating associations," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26, no. 2 (2008): 199 – 217; David Featherstone, *Resistance, space and political identities: the making of counter-global networks* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008); David Featherstone, "Spatialities of transnational resistance to globalization: the maps of grievance of the Inter-Continental Caravan," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 28, no. 4 (2003): 404–421.

⁵⁶¹ Routledge, "Acting in the network," 209 and 214.

⁵⁶² Routledge, "Acting in the network"; Paul Routledge and Andrew Cumbers, *Global justice networks: geographies of transnational solidarity* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2009).

“localize global actions.”⁵⁶³ Yet Routledge repeatedly presents power differentials across the network as an ‘obstacle’⁵⁶⁴ rather than a resource that the networks purposefully organize around and draw on. Routledge, writing with Cumbers, seems to bemoan that the ‘convergence space’ is not more horizontal, though he recognizes that large organizations in the network need some verticality to function.⁵⁶⁵

Routledge’s metaphor of a ‘convergence space’ blurs out the hierarchy of the chains that accompaniment relies on, which are not flat in any direction and are neither horizontal nor vertical but rather have connections in all directions, most aiming to move closer to centers of power.⁵⁶⁶ Unlike Routledge’s ‘global justice networks’, those in these chains do not all belong to a formal coalition – these chains include people who may only ever make one phone call, as well as the Congressional staff person who receives it. Unlike the networks Routledge writes about, people in these chains do not necessarily have similar visions, identities, or face similar threats, but their links to each other are built through seeing some connections, however distant, between their realities, ethics, and dreams.⁵⁶⁷ FOR repeatedly emphasizes that if US tax dollars were not going to the

⁵⁶³ Paul Routledge, “Convergence space: process geographies of grassroots globalization networks,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 28, no. 3 (2003): 345–346.

⁵⁶⁴ Routledge, “Acting in the network,” 212; Routledge, “Transnational Resistance,” 1895.

⁵⁶⁵ Routledge and Cumbers, *Global justice networks*.

⁵⁶⁶ Although the Red, which means network, does actually on their website both call themselves a “political solidarity convergence space” and emphasize the importance of Europeans pressuring their governments. “REDHER - Presentación Red Europea”, n.d., http://www.redcolombia.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=13&Itemid=47 (accessed June 22, 2011) translation from the Spanish by the author.

⁵⁶⁷ Featherstone does recognize that those in solidarity networks do not necessarily have, as he puts it, common interests or understandings. Featherstone, *Resistance, space and political identities*, 157.

Colombian army (ostensibly to fight the ‘drug war’) they could instead be spent on drug treatment and health care generally in the US. More recently they have been drawing the connection between the money the US is spending building bases in Colombia and people losing their homes to foreclosure in the US, linking displacement in both places.

Rarely is how accompaniment works explained in terms of these chains, much less their strength, though Mahony does say once that “The strength of an organization’s global network is a direct factor in the level of protection and solidarity it can offer.”⁵⁶⁸ These chains, however multiple and occasionally overlapping they may be, are not the image that seems to be commonly associated with a ‘network’. A network often seems to be imagined as fairly stable, with regular ‘members’, something the accompaniers could turn to again and again.⁵⁶⁹ But the chains I described above are constantly *in movement*, with new links growing, some links getting stronger and others breaking. Not all links have equal weight (as often depicted in diagrams of networks). Some of the chains can be quite fragile and ephemeral,⁵⁷⁰ while some links are connections last for decades. These chains are far from formal and are not fully visible to anyone. There is no magic view to zoom out to and see the whole thing, though certainly some of the key nodes can see their own many connections (and literally, the names on their email lists and if they use ‘salsa’ software even how often each responds to action alerts – but not necessarily if they pass

⁵⁶⁸ Mahony, *Side by Side. Protecting and Encouraging Threatened Activists with Unarmed International Accompaniment*, 19.

⁵⁶⁹ This is the impression Routledge gives when talking of international solidarity networks. Featherstone portrays them as more precarious. Routledge, “Convergence space”; Featherstone, *Resistance, space and political identities*, 91.

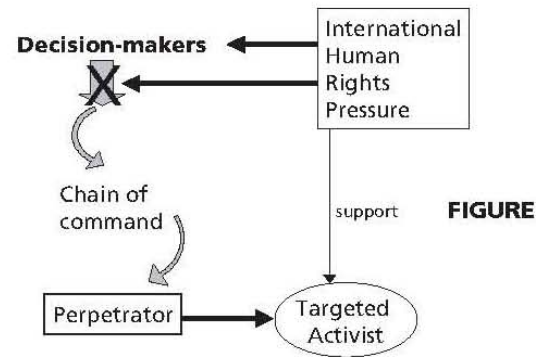
⁵⁷⁰ M. Edelman, “When networks don’t work: the rise and fall and rise of civil society initiatives in Central America,” *Social Movements: An Anthropological Reader* (2005): 29–45.

these on, tweet them, or talk about them at the dinner table). These chains are not a ‘natural’ or somehow inevitable process.⁵⁷¹ Networks are not a quality inherent in space, as some ANT theorists would have it. Mobilizing these chains requires work – imaginative, emotional, political and material labour. With each accompaniment traveled, each story told, each letter written, these chains must be made and made again.

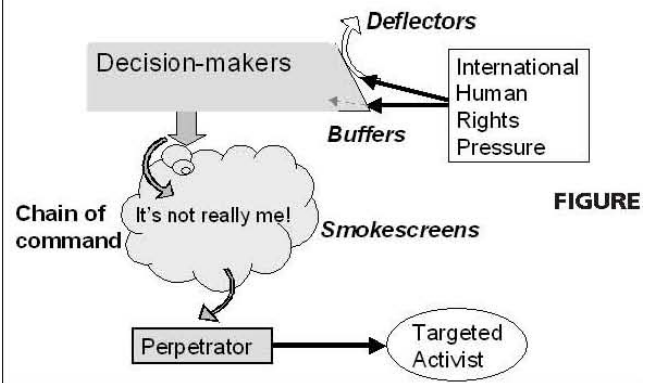
Diagramming chains

I started this chapter with the diagrams that Mahony and Eguren use to explain how accompaniment works. But those diagrams offer no explanation of why a perpetrator would change their behavior because of the presence of an accompanier. To explain this Mahony uses a second set of diagrams (see figure 41).⁵⁷² Mahony uses these to explain how an accompanier has ‘leverage’ to affect the ‘chain of

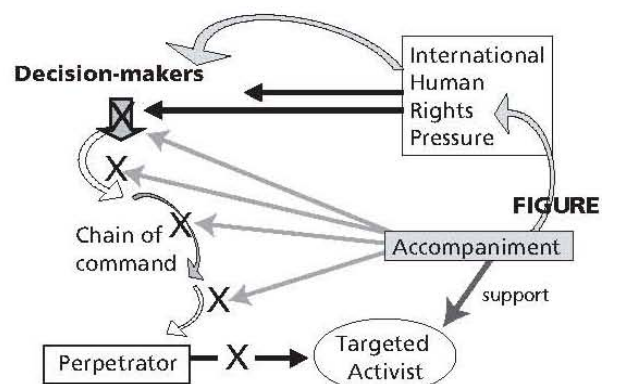
Intervention Pattern: 1
Conventional international pressure to protect



State strategies against human rights pressure:
Deflectors, buffers and smokescreens



Intervention Pattern: 3
Use of accompaniment to disrupt all levels in the abuse process



⁵⁷¹ Kirsten Simonsen, “Networks, flows, and fluids—reimagining spatial analysis?”.

⁵⁷² Mahony, *Side by Side. Protecting and Encouraging Threatened Activists with Unarmed International Accompaniment*.

Figure 41: Mahony’s diagram of how accompaniment works, appears only in Mahony’s Side by Side brochure, © Kumarian Press, by permission.

command'. In explaining the diagrams he emphasizes that the action alerts and letters generated through accompaniment work differently than other letters generated, say, in response to an Amnesty International alert, because the accompanier is there to get through the smokescreens. Yet it seemed to me in talking to accompaniers that they were not always sure what exactly the chains of command were, and were often guessing at the shadowy and changing connections between the army and different paramilitaries. The army seems more to have influence over paramilitaries than to necessarily directly command them. Accompaniers were certainly not standing in the way of *each* link on those chains, as these diagrams imply.

The other mischaracterization in these diagrams is that the only chain depicted is the chain of command. There are no chains of solidarity activated by and behind the accompanier. Instead all of the, say, letters come from one homogenous "international human rights pressure" box that would appear to be there whether or not the accompanier is there. Perhaps this image reflects the PBI pattern of more easily reporting abuses to the British embassy as opposed to, for example, CPT mobilizing chains of solidarity to generate calls to members of US Congress to sign a letter to the US State Department to then get the embassy to meet with accompaniers about a case and follow up with a call to a Colombian Ministry to pressure them to pressure the local land registry office.

Another mischaracterization in Mahony's diagrams is that it appears that the only resources the Colombian activist has for protection are those they receive through accompaniment and international pressure. But those are only one of the chains of solidarity that the activist turns to. Colombian social movements are well connected and

provide each other a good deal of solidarity. When an activist receives a serious death threat, for example, rather than make phone calls to decision makers, their own and allied movements are more likely to shape the space by holding vigils, doing street theatre, writing articles in the local paper, etc..

Perhaps the most serious mischaracterization in these diagrams is that they are separated from Mahony and Eguren's other set of diagrams (figures 28 through 35). Space does not appear in figure 41 and pressure does not appear in the other diagrams. Yet I understand that it is hard to bring all of this into one diagram. I have certainly struggled to do so, so please consider figure 42 an initial attempt.

As complicated as my diagram (figure 42) may seem, there is a good deal of complexity that is not captured in it. Inside "US decision makers" for example is a good bit of difference, most notably between Congress, the State Department, and the Embassy – and there are of course different offices within each of those. A key part of strategizing by accompaniers is figuring out who inside which of these to pressure, and who can then pressure whom. Likewise there are many Colombian decision makers and chains between them. The category of 'armed actor' is likewise very broad. I did not want to use 'perpetrator', as Mahony did, because armed actors are shaping the space whether or not they are actively threatening the activist. This category is broad and includes, notably, the army, national police, and neo-paramilitaries – but for this diagram at least, not guerrilla groups. The guerrillas are indeed shaping the space, but, as presented at the outset of this dissertation, international accompaniment does not work as a deterrent against guerrillas. Colombian activists may have other ways of trying to deter attacks on

guerrillas, which may even involve other international chains of influence, but accompaniment is not part of these.

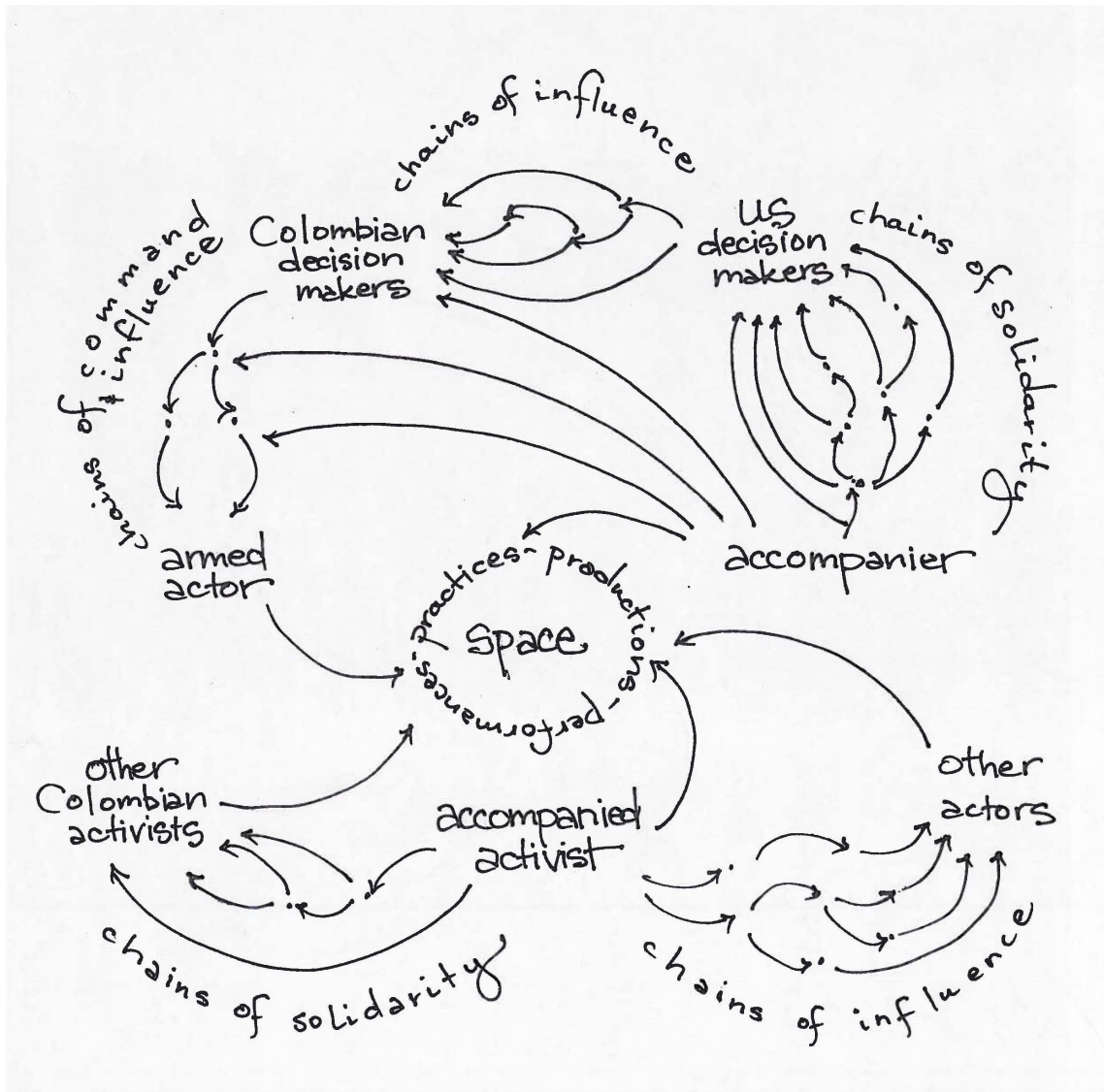


Figure 42: My diagram of how accompaniment works spatially, by author.

The categories of ‘other Colombian activists’ and ‘other actors’ are both very broad. They are each represented here with only one line affecting the space (through their practices, productions and performances of space) - but there are actually many. ‘Other actors’ can range from the other people on the bus that day, to the journalist covering a story, to a local large landowner. Though the activist is shown here as linked to them, these links may be very tenuous, like being on the same bus. The ‘other actors’ may also have connections to Colombian decision makers and to armed actors, which are not shown here. They may even have connections to US decision makers, say the editor of the newspaper who prints a letter from members of Congress about the situation.

The chains that are shown are also quite simplified. Some of the chains will at times be much shorter, other much longer, sometimes there will be many more, or many fewer. The chains will sometimes be activated by emails, other times by phone calls, office visits, a talk in a church basement, or a tweet. The connections along them may or may not exist outside of their activation. That is, perhaps people along the chain see each other regularly in church, but maybe a link is to a person who just happened to be forwarded an email or a tweet and responded once.

In Mahony’s diagram he has the lines from the accompanier to the different links on the chain of command ending with X’s. Rather than break that chain it seems that accompaniers are instead trying to influence it by being visible at as many points along it as they can to remind those on *that* chain of the pressure they have gotten from the chains of solidarity and influence that the accompanier has set in motion. As I argued earlier however, none of these chains are as visible as they appear in this diagram. Not only is

the accompanier unsure if the local General can influence the new leader of the local paramilitaries, she may be unsure how many calls her action alert actually generated to the Embassy and what the embassy official said when they called the Ministry of Defence. A good deal of estimation and guesswork is always involved.⁵⁷³ These chains are neither clear nor stable, but always in the making.

In this diagram space is not something that there is more or less of, but something that is constantly being shaped by the practices, productions and performances of space of the various actors who have lines going in towards it. Given how ubiquitously space is imagined as abstract, it is hard to diagram space as relational, in a way that it clearly does not appear to be a container. Ideally I would use java script to make the word space constantly move, the letters stretching in different ways to symbolize space as ever changing.

Conclusion

Though PBI's slogan is 'making space for peace' and the literature on accompaniment frequently references it, neither PBI nor other groups' web sites describe how they do this. In discussions with accompaniers about space they expressed confusion around what they often called 'political space' and 'physical space', and the relationship between the two. I expected the literature on accompaniment to be clearer on this point, but found that there too this distinction was muddy, and space tends to be imagined as abstract space, space as an empty container - even though accompaniers engage in day to day

⁵⁷³ Lesley Gill, "War and Peace in Colombia.," *Social Analysis* 52, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 146.

safety analyses of the charged and changing relationally constructed spaces around them. Those daily conjunctural analyses would be more effective and powerful if they explicitly rejected the normalized but socially constructed understanding of space as inert and fixed – as simply coordinates on a map, and recognized instead that the analyses they are already doing depend on an understanding of space as relational, as something we are all making together in different ways.

Accompaniers daily analyses could also be stronger if they more clearly recognized the importance of the network in how accompaniment works. For example, many accompaniers choose not to take photos or video of armed actors because they do not want to anger the actor in that moment. Yet recognizing the importance of mobilizing the network and the power of images to do so, the short term anger may be outweighed by the pressure that could be brought to bear on that actor with the use of such a photo. Or it might not be outweighed, but having clarity about how space is relational and the role the network plays in how accompaniment works could improve the daily strategizing of accompaniers.

In descriptions of how accompaniment works, the websites of several organizations do refer to the importance of their network. In workshops several accompaniers also used the metaphor of weaving a web to describe their work, most notably those with the Red, which literally means network in Spanish. Yet strangely this metaphor is rarely used in published work about accompaniment, although the Nonviolent Peaceforce Feasibility study does use the metaphor of accompaniers themselves serving as a net that can catch

the accompanied if they fall.⁵⁷⁴ Instead I see that web not as below the accompanied ('saving' them) but as including both the accompaniers and the accompanied.

Accompaniers serve both as a hub in, and their bodies serve as a physical symbolic reminder of, the networks that they can put in motion through chains of solidarity linking them to other people in other spaces. Accompaniers work to shape the space the person they are accompanying is in through practices, productions and performances that reference the power of the accompanier's network. A web does not make for a good greenhouse. If what is protecting the accompanied is this web, accompaniers do not need to stand apart as any sort of 'shield'. Instead they can recognize that they are walking *with* the accompanied in solidarity, not standing between them and their attacker as non-partisan peacekeepers. This is an ongoing walk. The accompanier does not make the space a 'peace space.' Accompanied Colombians are struggling for peace with justice, and, through connections to people in other spaces, accompaniers support them in their struggles to create a sort of space that allows for that ongoing work. These are not spaces for making peace that are made once, but, as the networks themselves, are always in the making, by multiple actors. Accompaniers can more powerfully and effectively be part of that making of space to work for peace when they analyze the complex ways space is made relationally, the role that chains of solidarity can play in that making, and the importance of both mobilizing and reminding others of these in their daily practices, productions and performances of space.

⁵⁷⁴ Schweitzer et al., *Nonviolent Peaceforce Feasibility Study*, 51.

Chapter 8: Wearing whiteness

The racial imaginaries of who belongs where in Colombia, and the idealization of whiteness, shape how companions are seen in Colombia. Here I turn to how this plays out day-to-day, what companions make of it and how they handle it, and what the literature on accompaniment has said about these dynamics.



Figure 43: PBI companioner in front of sign at entrance of San José. The sign lists the peace community's principles, photo by author.

As argued in chapter four, the communities that are resisting or returning from displacement tend to be in the racialized 'frontier' regions, and as such the whiteness of companions stands out there all the more as 'out of place'. The war is driven by desires for capitalist development and 'modernity,' which is imagined as white. But companions are not in these regions to 'develop' them, but rather standing with those who are struggling for a different vision of development. One of the ways the accompanied are able to 'stay in place' and rework imaginaries of those places, is through the solidarity of companions who, when they walk with them in these places, are also going against these racial scripts. As Creswell argues, 'know your place' refers

to place as both spatial and to one's intertwined place in the social hierarchy.⁵⁷⁵ But these expectations can be transgressed, either intentionally or not.

Yet companions and those who have written about accompaniment tend to either deny or minimize how racialization is part of how accompaniment works, rather than talk of how accompaniment might also engage in changing scripts of space, race and power. Occasionally some go to the other extreme and see inequities of nation, class, and particularly of race, as the *only* way that accompaniment is able to work. In the last chapter I looked at how accompaniment works spatially. Companions' performances, practices and productions of space are made powerful by references to the chains of solidarity they rely on, and their ability to leverage US involvement in the conflict to pressure US decision-makers to then pressure Colombian decision makers. But how companions can shape space is also conditioned by the dynamics of racialization detailed in chapter four. Companions stand out as and tap into idealizations of whiteness. I argue here that even companions 'of color' can 'wear whiteness', though it can be *wearying* on them to do so, because it contradicts companions' ideal of a world of equality and justice. I end by arguing that companions can indeed 'wear away' some of the privileges of whiteness, but will do so more powerfully if they have more clarity about how racialization shapes how accompaniment works.

I begin by looking at the experiences of companions who are not white and how they can be both more in danger and create more safety than white companions. I then turn

⁵⁷⁵ Tim Cresswell, *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 3.

to what is understood by the word 'international' in international accompaniment and how some are more international than others. There is great discomfort with discussions of race and whiteness amongst accompaniers, so I turn next to how issues of privilege are elided by individual accompaniers, their organizations, and in the literature about it. I then review the few pieces in the literature that do examine privilege. One of the things the literature emphasizes is the importance of uniforms in relation to race, so I then look at the different uniforms used by accompaniers in Colombia, and their mixed feelings about wearing them. Mixed emotions about using privilege also come through in arguments for accompaniers to lend it, give it up and give it back. I end by arguing that though none of those are possible, privilege may be worn down through accompaniment.

Brown faces with blue passports

Again and again when I told accompaniers I was interested in issues of race they would tell me the story of N---, an accompanier from the US who has Sri Lankan heritage and dark skin. As the story traveled it changed, but the versions usually involved him getting stopped by the Colombian army, along with a group of Colombians, made to lie face down, and kicked - as he kept trying to convince the army of his citizenship. These stories usually ended with him finally yelling 'gringo, gringo!' One version had him throwing his passport on the ground. When I finally, much later back in the US, had the

chance to ask N--- for his own version I was surprised to hear that he was not beaten but handled roughly until he showed them his passport.⁵⁷⁶

There was another N--- story which I also heard many times, though this one only within FOR, of a time when he was riding on the roof of the *chiva*, the jeep that takes passengers up into the peace community. The companions had heard that there was usually a paramilitary checkpoint on the road past the army checkpoint but had never seen it. They figured that this was because the army checkpoint called ahead to tell them internationals were coming and to take it down. N--- had apparently not set off that alarm, despite being on the roof, for he was stopped at that elusive checkpoint. The retelling and embellishment of these stories amongst companions reinforced their widely held understanding that companions who were not ‘white’ were treated differently by armed actors. The stories often seemed to be told by white companions as a way to show that they ‘got it,’ and recognized that accompaniment uses white privilege.

That companions are using racial as well as passport privilege becomes clearer through the experience of companions like N--- who have weighty passports but do not fit the Colombian imaginary for that country. Several Latinos from the US and Sweden have served with FOR and SweFOR, respectively. They have generally been children of immigrants, so often they seem to be understood by Colombians as Mexican, Chilean, etc – even though they were not born in those countries, do not have those passports, and may have few ties to them. FOR has also had two US citizens of Colombian heritage

⁵⁷⁶ When I heard the story from other companions it was rarely mentioned that he was not with FOR at the time [REDACTED]

(they both had one Colombian parent but were not born in Colombia). Both have been tall lighter skinned women not easily confused with local campesinas. There were no black accompaniers serving while I was in Colombia, but people told me about one black Swiss woman who had recently served with PBI. The only person with Asian heritage anyone remembered having served with any organization was N---

The racialization process in Colombia ascribes both regional and international identities with certain traits. Being from the US means you are widely associated with capitalist modernity and imagined as white, wealthy, and beautiful. But not all can or choose to perform to this script equally. An African-American does not fit this mold and some Colombians tried to make sense of a friend of mine by calling her an 'Afro-gringa' - because just plain 'gringa' would mean white. Likewise N--- got called 'el gringo negro' (the black gringo) in the peace community. Latinos from the US seem to fit the imaginary even less. Latina-gringa seems to not even register as a category. At least one Latino accompanier (with Mexican and Puerto Rican heritage) from the US serving with FOR was adamant that he was not a gringo. My sense is that as a result people all the more interpreted him as Mexican. Another accompanier who identifies as Chicana⁵⁷⁷ was repeatedly described by both community members and armed actors as Mexican. I was told by another accompanier that people in the peace community would say '*es norteamericana, pero no es gringa, es mexicana*' (she's North American but she's not a gringa, she's Mexican). Of course Mexico is technically in North America, but that is not what they meant.

⁵⁷⁷ Chicano is a term for Mexican American first widely adopted in the 1960s as the Chicano movement advocated the term as a way to show pride of identity.

Though PBI does not talk about it publicly, many companions from PBI as well as other organizations told me that PBI had a rule that no more than 15% of a PBI team could be people of color. In the city of Barrancabermeja this meant no more than one of the six people on the team. I was told by companions from other organizations that those PBI companions often felt isolated and quit long before their term was up. It seems that the PBI logic is to have enough white people on the team so that those who are not will be seen as whiter by association. Companions of color from various organizations did tell me that they were seen as whiter when they were with a white person, but most companions seem to have mixed feelings about this, and other teams approach it differently. CPT by policy could have a half Colombian team, though in practice a quarter or less of the team has been Colombian. For a brief time both of the FOR companions in San José were US citizen Latinas. This was not discussed by the team beforehand as potentially putting them at greater risk. But then, as one of them told me, ‘they [armed actors] don’t really distinguish us [from PBI], and the PBI team in San José was all white.’⁵⁷⁸ Most other teams seem not to have addressed this ratio issue, probably because they have not had many non-white companions.

Another strategy has been to place companions of color in particular places. Several companions told me that PBI had sent Latino companions to Afro-Colombian communities where they would stand out more. Kinane writes that in Haiti companions

⁵⁷⁸ M---, FOR, field notes

of color did not serve outside of the city.⁵⁷⁹ Coy suggests that companions of color do more office-based tasks.⁵⁸⁰

Accompaniers of color told me that their safety and effectiveness had a great deal to do with their performance of ‘international’, a role which most of those I spoke to performed more explicitly and actively than white companions. A Chicana companioner told me she was constantly working to establish her identity. She was asked to show her US passport a great deal more often than her white team-mates and her passport was examined more carefully. She made a point during these encounters to speak in English to her teammate and to carry herself with confidence.⁵⁸¹ Others made a point of wearing foreign style clothes beyond simply their team t-shirt, such as travel pants and hiking boots.⁵⁸²

Yet I was also told by several companions of color that people who are considered brown in the US and Europe that they were seen as “whiter” in Colombia. One woman of color from the UK serving as an companioner with the Red told me that, even without a uniform, “I’m less brown here.” Her sense was that people classified her as European, and assumed that she had economic resources since she could travel so far.⁵⁸³ Nationality

⁵⁷⁹ Kinane, “Cry for Justice in Haiti, Fall 1993,” 220.

⁵⁸⁰ P. G. Coy, “Protecting Human Rights: The Dynamics of International Nonviolent Accompaniment by Peace Brigades International in Sri Lanka” (Syracuse University, Maxwell School, 1997), 265.

⁵⁸¹ M---, FOR, Field notes,

⁵⁸² Gordillo, citing Weismantel (2001) notes that backpacks and hiking boots are racialized as white in the Andes. Gaston Gordillo, “Latin American Gringos,” in *The Gringo(a) Studies Reader*, ed. Samuel Vessiere, forthcoming.

⁵⁸³ R--, Red, Field notes

and class shape the way race is perceived. Accompaniers of color from the global North are imagined as whiter because their accent, clothes, attitude and other subtle performances are associated with a ‘where’ that is associated with whiteness (and with modernity and wealth).

One more link on the chain

Accompaniment makes and relies on chains of solidarity that step by step connect a campesina in San José to a member of the US Congress, as described in chapter seven. Latino and Colombian accompaniers serve as a particular sort of link on that chain. It is often easier for these accompaniers to build trust and connection with accompanied Colombians. They have, as the Colombian born FOR co-director Susana Pimento put it, higher “cultural proficiency”⁵⁸⁴ and often serve as a social bridge for the other accompaniers on the team. The Latina FOR accompanier in San José while I was there was closer to community members and as a result heard a good deal more about relationships in and outside of the community. Both she and other FOR accompaniers told me they felt this improved the analysis, and therefore the safety, of the FOR team as a whole. Another Latina former FOR accompanier spoke about the danger of this creating unhealthy dynamics with other team members and how, because of those closer relationships, she had to be more careful not to intervene in community dynamics and decisions.⁵⁸⁵

Mahony and Eguren also write that when accompaniers of color have served they

⁵⁸⁴ field notes

⁵⁸⁵ C-----, FOR, interview

*“have often sensed a deeper connection with those they accompany than their Northern or white teammates, with a correspondingly enhanced ability to empathize and encourage. Linguistic and cultural proximity, or a sense of shared oppression, can overcome trust barriers. A multicultural organization may have more credibility with the protected activists than one that is a mirror image of the globally dominant white power structure.”*⁵⁸⁶

They go on to say that these accompaniers face “potentially real differences in security” which they suggest can be addressed by increasing the clout of the organization and having a clear system of identification. They do not speak to how these accompaniers can also actually increase the security, both of other accompaniers and the accompanied themselves, by enabling a stronger analysis.

Another story that was frequently told to me was the story of Sandra calming down the paramilitaries. Sandra is a Colombian who works as an accompanier with CPT, and as she told me the story herself later, it happened on an accompaniment trip on the Opón river that she did with Scott, a tall white Canadian man. As they were walking along the river to the house of one of the community leaders that they were accompanying his daughter came running down the path to tell them that the paramilitaries had just gotten to the house and were threatening to kill her father. The daughter tripped and as Sandra helped her up, Scott ran ahead. When Sandra got there Scott was standing between the paramilitaries and the leader and his family, saying nothing. Sandra made a point of first meeting the eyes of the family, and then started talking to the paramilitaries, diffusing the tension. At several points during what turned in to a long back and forth she spoke to the family, asking for their suggestions and praying with them. Eventually the paramilitaries

⁵⁸⁶ Mahony and Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards*, 252.

left. At first Sandra felt that Scott's large white presence had been key, but Scott's Spanish was very basic and it turned out he was not sure what to say. The community leader has repeatedly thanked Sandra over the years, saying that he was sure she was the one that saved his life. This story has been used in various CPT trainings since, with particular emphasis on the various things that Sandra did to 'make space for peace.' Yet those paramilitaries have since told Sandra explicitly that if she ever comes back to that region without being with CPT they will kill her, so she herself no longer has 'space for peace' there.

The meaning of 'international'

Both armed actors and the accompanied, particularly in rural areas, call companions *'los internacionales'* rather than *'los acompañantes'*.⁵⁸⁷ I assume that when they say 'los internacionales' they do not imagine a team with Colombians on it, or even with Latinos from the US – much less a group of indigenous Bolivians. The imaginary that companions tap into is one of powerful wealthy whites from the US, Canada or Western Europe. Race, class and nation are not only intertwined, but often conflated. When I talked about this with Colombians I was told that Bolivians, or Venezuelans, would not be seen as 'neutral.'⁵⁸⁸ But then of course the US and most European countries are not neutral in the Colombian conflict at all – but rather the ones with more power to pressure the Colombian government. As Copp puts it, the countries most able to put pressure fall along neocolonial lines, for the threat of negative action that protective accompaniment

⁵⁸⁷ S-----, CPT; M---, FOR

⁵⁸⁸ field notes

uses as deterrent is based on those power imbalances.⁵⁸⁹ Europe does not give the military aid that the US does, but the EU has given over €160 million in humanitarian and development aid since 1993.⁵⁹⁰ They are also close allies of the US, as is Canada. There is also a well-known significant presence of Canadian mining companies in the country. Venezuela, meanwhile, has had very contentious relations with Colombia. FOR very briefly had a Venezuelan on the team in 2008, and given the Colombian state's recent propensity to tie up human rights workers in court with trumped up charges, other members of the FOR team were concerned that her presence could be used to frame them as agents.

Mahony and Eguren write that Latin American accompaniers serving in Central America faced more violence than their North American teammates. The incident they give as an example is one where a Canadian and a Colombian accompanier were arrested in El Salvador. The Canadian was released and the Colombian was not, but the Canadian refused to leave without her teammate and was able to pressure and insist and get them both out and turned over to the Canadian embassy.⁵⁹¹ The authors emphasize the lesser weight of Latin American accompaniers' passports and the lesser pull of their embassies. It is not until the end of the book that they mention race briefly, as if nationality were separate and more influential.

⁵⁸⁹ Miriam Copp, "Is the Peace Colonialism Charge a Valid Criticism of Peace Teams Engaged in Third Party Nonviolent Intervention?" (Castellón de la Plana, Spain: Universitat Jaume I., 2007), 30–32.

⁵⁹⁰ "Aid in action - Colombia," *European Commission*, n.d., http://ec.europa.eu/echo/aid/central_south_america/colombia_en.htm (accessed January 9, 2012).

⁵⁹¹ Mahony and Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards*, 176 – 179.

Discomfort with whiteness

Many companions emphasize their use of passport privilege and elide how nation is entangled with race and class. Yet companions cannot use their citizenship strategically, as Henderson puts it,⁵⁹² without using both the political, economic and, in the case of the US, *military* might behind their passport – as well as the whiteness associated with it. Their denial of this seems to be a reflection of the discomfort most companions and accompaniment organizations seem to feel about acknowledging that race and racism are part of how accompaniment works. Some seem to want to wish race away. Jan Passion, who was involved in the start-up of the Nonviolent Peaceforce, wrote at the time that white skinned volunteers are often thought to be more effective deterrents but that to "submit to such a strategy perpetuates global racism."⁵⁹³ Schirch, also involved in the Nonviolent Peaceforce, has written that accompaniment 'should not use racism.'⁵⁹⁴ One of the co-directors of FOR told me, "we've attempted to build a model in which race has little impact on FOR accompaniment."⁵⁹⁵ Yet whether or not companions are using it consciously, race is inevitably part of how companions are read by Colombians, and therefore part of how accompaniment 'works.' To recognize the workings of white supremacy is not to 'perpetuate racism'. Quite the opposite, it is an important step in dismantling it.

⁵⁹² Henderson, "Citizenship in the Line of Fire" Henderson writes about companions offering the accompanied "proxy citizenship." She does not mention the role of race.

⁵⁹³ Jan Passion, "Building nonviolent intercultural peace teams" (Brattleboro, Vermont: School for International Training, 2000), 8, http://www.janpassion.org/building_nonviolent_international_peace_teams.html.

⁵⁹⁴ 2006:53 cited in Copp, "Is the Peace Colonialism Charge a Valid Criticism of Peace Teams Engaged in Third Party Nonviolent Intervention?," 31.

⁵⁹⁵ J---, FOR, personal communication

Accompaniment is certainly not all or only about race, but it is shaped by it. For companions to ignore racial imaginaries and inequities looks like a liberal ‘race to innocence’ – Razack’s term for maintaining a belief in one’s non-involvement in the subordination of others.⁵⁹⁶ This is a disavowal of complicity. Accompaniment organizations cannot transcend race by adopting so-called colorblind policies.⁵⁹⁷ It is disingenuous for companions to say they are using only passport privilege, for that privilege is entirely entangled with racial privilege.

White women companions told me that others often thought they were each other – ‘we all look the same to the commander.’⁵⁹⁸ But not all companions do look so alike. Not all nationalities are read the same way, and some internationals are more “international” than others. For some their other identities break through, and their race, gender, sexuality, age, etc shapes their ability to be seen as ‘international’. Different identities intersect differently under specific circumstances. Sometimes they are compounded, work at cross purposes, and are otherwise altered.⁵⁹⁹ As Katz puts it, identity is not infinitely malleable, certain aspects matter more in certain circumstances. Yet amongst companions there seems to be a ‘norm against noticing’ this.⁶⁰⁰ Companions do talk

⁵⁹⁶ Fellows and Razack, “Race to Innocence.”

⁵⁹⁷ The back of PBI Colombia newsletters always say “Become a PBI volunteer (regardless of origin, race, sexual orientation or religion).”

⁵⁹⁸ S-----, CPT, fieldnotes

⁵⁹⁹ Crenshaw 95 cited in Cindi Katz, “Social formations: thinking about society, identity, power and resistance,” in *Key concepts in geography*, ed. Sarah L. Holloway, Stephen P. Rice, and Gill Valentine (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003), 255.

⁶⁰⁰ Much as there is against noticing race in studies of international relations in general. Harrison, “Global Apartheid, Foreign Policy and Human Rights,” in *Transnational Blackness: Navigating the*

about how the war has a disproportionate impact on Afro-Colombians and indigenous people, yet they rarely talk about the flip side of that racism and how they tap into idealizations of whiteness.

To ignore how racism shapes accompaniment can be dangerous. It appeared that accompaniers in Colombia were not always aware that people of color in their organizations were at more risk. They rarely talked openly about this or strategized how to handle it in different situations. The vast majority of accompaniers I spoke to, including racialized accompaniers, did not seem to know the stories from the Mahony and Eguren book of Latin American accompaniers facing more violence. Most also did not know about the 1999 deaths of Lahe'ena'e Gay, Ingrid Washinawatok, and Terence Freitas in U'Wa territory in Colombia. Lahe and Ingrid were racialized Native women from the US, Terence was a white man from the US, and all three were doing work with the U'Wa people that, though not protective accompaniment, was international solidarity work.⁶⁰¹ They were killed by the FARC in an area generally under their control, precisely

Global Color Line, ed. Manning Marable and Vanessa Agard-Jones (Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 26.

⁶⁰¹ The three were kidnapped by the FARC on February 25th, 1999. Their bodies were found a week later, blind-folded, bound, tortured, and shot in the face. They had visited the U'Wa people to help them establish a school for their children in their own language that would support the continuation of their traditional ways. Ingrid, 41, specialized in this. She was a member of the Menominee nation and rising leader in the struggle for indigenous peoples' rights, at the US and UN level. She was the director of the Fund for the Four Directions in New York City, founded by Anne Rockefeller, which promoted the revitalization of indigenous languages and cultures. Lahe'ena'e Gay, 39, was a member of the Kanaka Maoli Nation of Hawai'i. Lahe was the founder and director of Pacific Cultural Conservancy International, which works to preserve cultural as well biological diversity. Terence Freitas, 24, had been working with the U'Wa for several years after serving as an official observer at a Los Angeles meeting between Occidental Petroleum and U'wa leader Roberto Cobaría in May 1997. He co-created and coordinated the U'wa Defense Working Group. Terry was close to my age at the time, as was his girlfriend, Abby Reyes, who I met at the vigil to close the School of the Americas shortly after he was killed. His story has

the sort of area companions avoid – but I thought their story might have been more widely shared precisely for that reason, if not for the racial dynamics. In the Colombian media the three are widely referred to as ‘*los indigenistas*’.⁶⁰²

Not only are these stories not discussed, in general I was surprised by how rarely inequity and privilege were talked about explicitly amongst companions, given that the premise of accompaniment is that some bodies are less likely to be attacked, which ultimately means that some lives are valued more than others. Even CPT, the one team with an anti-racism coordinator, is committed to looking at personal race dynamics inside the team, but rarely discusses how it structures accompaniment.⁶⁰³ Though it seems to me that it is dangerous to *avoid* these subjects, one companion told me she thought it was dangerous to talk openly about how accompaniment uses privilege because it was important to give accompaniment a ‘human rights face.’⁶⁰⁴ Another companion told me that the danger in saying that accompaniment uses white privilege is that to say so reinforces that privilege

continued to grip me because he was so like me. I can so easily imagine me being him – which is precisely what helps companions build networks. The U’Wa did and do not collaborate with any of the armed actors. The FARC had publicly said that internationals were not welcome in the area, but Terry, who had been to the area several times, had met with them prior to bringing down Ingrid and Lahe, explained the reason for their trip, and had gotten word from the commander that they would not be harmed. There is of course much more to the story. For more details see <http://decolonizingsolidarity.blogspot.com/2012/01/story-of-ingrid-terry-and-lahe.html>

⁶⁰² Their story was in the media again in 2008, while I was there, because of the capture of a FARC guerilla who was thought to have ordered their deaths. “Guerrillero muerto en combates no era ‘El Marrano’, acusado del homicidio de tres indigenistas,” *El Tiempo*, May 13, 2008, <http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-4163736> (accessed January 11, 2012).

⁶⁰³ This is true even though their Colombia team’s mission says “We work together on grassroots initiatives to expose and transform structures of domination and oppression through active nonviolence in order to make possible a world grounded in respect, justice and love, even of enemies.”

⁶⁰⁴ T----, PASC, fieldnotes

and de-emphasizes the ways they are also trying to dismantle it.⁶⁰⁵ But the most common reason I was given for why these issues are not discussed is the focus on immediate danger. One accompanier told me that he did not worry much about whether he was perpetuating systems of domination in the long term because he was more concerned about creating safety in the present moment.⁶⁰⁶ Yet more clarity about how race shapes how accompaniment works could not only strengthen efforts to wear away at those privileges in the long term, but also increase the short-term safety of both accompaniers and the accompanied. I do not see that an open discussion of racialization dynamics would weaken human rights arguments – if anything it seems that it could strengthen them. Perhaps that accompanier was using ‘the human rights face’ as euphemism for presenting oneself as nonpartisan. But as I argued in chapter six, such a presentation does not make for more effective accompaniment.

Privilege in the literature on accompaniment

The limited literature on accompaniment, which stresses nonpartisanship, says little about privilege. Moser-Puangsuwan and Weber dedicate only one page of their book to issues of race.⁶⁰⁷ It is not discussed until the end, and it is presented as just one of various problems that peace teams face, rather than a core paradox. They say that all peace teams are based in “northern Euro-American wealthy countries” and that “to some extent members of the Euro-American based initiatives believe they are engaging in a kind of

⁶⁰⁵ S-----, CPT, fieldnotes

⁶⁰⁶ D----, FOR, fieldnotes

⁶⁰⁷ Moser-Puangsuwan and Weber, *Nonviolent Intervention Across Borders*, 331 all quotes below from this one page.

reverse racism, because white skin is frequently given respect in southern nations. This is a complex issue, and contains elements of both racism and elite economic power interests.” This is the only time I have seen or heard the term “reverse racism” used to describe how accompaniment works. They give no explanation of what they mean by the term, but it is usually used elsewhere to describe discrimination against whites by people of color, which does not fit this situation. They recognize that “Most peace team members find it ideologically inconsistent to profit from local racism, aiding and abetting it as it were” but go on to imply that it is more comfortable to rely on geopolitical privilege and use volunteers from ‘elite nations.’ They do not talk about how the two are intertwined.

The Nonviolent Peace Force presents itself as the first team to aim for a balance of staff from the global North and South, so it is disappointing that their training manual, written by Hunter and Lakey, never directly addresses how accompaniment uses privilege. The emphasis of the three-week training is on team building, with a good deal of kinesthetic activity based learning (which they do say works well to build cross-cultural teams).

There is a section on privilege and rank, but it focuses on how rank affects team dynamics and on how those with less rank can overcome that internally. As they put it,

"High rank gives people who have it a sense of entitlement - they "have a right" to step into other people's conflicts, confront authorities in countries not their own, stare down perpetrators of violence. Whether the high rank comes from color, class, national origin, or less obvious criteria such as psychological or spiritual rank, the holders of high rank have an easier time projecting the confidence which is a basic HELPR⁶⁰⁸ skill. They may have an unconscious belief that they

⁶⁰⁸ HELPR is their acronym for Handling fear (in oneself and others), Enlisting allies, Listening/observing, Projecting confidence, and Recalling and inventing nonviolent options, 39.

*will survive even highly dangerous situations, and therefore be more ready for high-risk actions. Low rank, on the other hand, usually undermines the self-esteem of those who hold it.*⁶⁰⁹

This is a limited focus on *sense* of entitlement. The manual includes a handout about co-counseling by its controversial founder Harvey Jackins which argues that people would not 'submit' to being oppressed if distress patterns were not first installed at an early age.⁶¹⁰ It implies that if these patterns are 'released' then people will be able to act with entitlement. The role of history and social structures in oppression are likewise ignored in the manual. There is no discussion of how, say, a paramilitary might actually treat a young Latina accompanier differently, no matter how confident she is. Again, it seems like a willful denial of these dynamics. Although there is a large section on 'relating to and understanding local players,'⁶¹¹ and the briefest of mention of 'dynamics with locals' in regards to 'close and sexual relationships'⁶¹² – there is nothing in the manual about understanding local racism, sexism and classism and how it shapes how accompaniers are seen and their impact. There is only a very brief discussion of how privilege shapes accompaniment, the sum total of which is,

*"It is important to help participants identify how and when they will use those privileges. In using privilege, you may be contributing to oppressive practices. Under what circumstances will you use your privileges? Help participants enter a conversation on the ethics of privilege."*⁶¹³

⁶⁰⁹ Hunter and Lakey, *Opening Space for Democracy*, 355.

⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 535.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁶¹² *Ibid.*, 54.

⁶¹³ *Ibid.*, 368.

These are difficult conversations that get to the heart of what accompaniment is about and how it works, but this manual does not offer any guidance for trainers.

Hunter and Lakey's use of the term 'rank awareness' however is useful and could help accompaniers do more effective analyses before accompaniments. Yet the way they frame it makes it easy to jump over race, class and gender and focus on more ephemeral rankings. They define rank as either social, structural (which they define as your position in an established hierarchy, i.e., the director), psychological (e.g., confident vs. anxious), or spiritual (sense of being connected to divine).⁶¹⁴ They go on to talk about privilege but do not make a clear connection to social rank. They ask, "Do you have travel/immigration privileges? Do you enjoy a sense of belonging to a community or to the majority? Do you have intellectual, social or financial power? What privileges are connected with being able-bodied and well? Think about your earning capacity, your education, how your family is treated, your age. Do others defer to your experience?"⁶¹⁵ These are all useful questions to ask accompaniers in their initial and ongoing training, but these discussions about individual privilege and rank need to be connected to broader discussions of how accompaniment uses privilege if accompaniers are to use it with more discernment.

The Nonviolent Peaceforce feasibility study likewise has little to say about race and passport privilege, and it conflates the two. Not until page 93 does it include a single paragraph breezing over the topic, saying that,

⁶¹⁴ Ibid., 381.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid., 370.

“Some incidents in the history of PBI teams have shown that (white) Northern volunteers are not only safer themselves, but may be able to protect their Latin American team-mates as well. On the other hand, it has been pointed out that protection has many sources and being a foreigner from a powerful country of the Northern hemisphere is only one. For instance, the Indian Shanti Sena proved that peacekeeping by local activists is not only possible, but may be very effective. In our sample we found insufficient information on mixed local-international teams in which the international participants came from not-so-powerful countries of the Southern hemisphere.”⁶¹⁶

It is not until page 219 of that study that race is briefly mentioned, where it is simply said that it is ideal to pair a white accompanier with one who is not and that it is best if teams are “multi-cultural”.⁶¹⁷ The study offers no further explanation about why this might be so. Given that the Nonviolent Peaceforce is the only accompaniment group to explicitly recruit teams that are largely from the global South, I had hoped that they would address these issues more.

Mahony and Eguren’s *Unarmed Bodyguards*, only addresses race briefly at the end. Earlier in the book they describe the arrest and mistreatment of Marcela from Colombia, cited above. Yet the emphasis in that story is how the Canadian accompanier arrested with her was able to pressure and insist and get them both out and turned over to the Canadian embassy in El Salvador.⁶¹⁸ The implications of differential treatment like this are not discussed until much later, with two brief pages of text in the final chapter, which is entitled “Looking ahead” and has a section titled “Challenges”. What Mahony and

⁶¹⁶ Schweitzer et al., *Nonviolent Peaceforce Feasibility Study*, 93.

⁶¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 219.

⁶¹⁸ Mahony and Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards*, 176 – 179.

Eguren list as the most pressing challenge is how to deter non-state aggressors. The second they describe as

“ the fact that most volunteers come from the so-called first world, and most projects operate in the third world.... Most accompaniment volunteers have been Western European and North American and white. The primary explanation for this is that all these NGOs were conceived and based in Northern countries, but this tendency is compounded by the common perception that the protective power of the volunteers is based on their skin color or national background.

There are several interrelated but distinct dynamics at play here: the imbalances of political-economic power among nations, the influence of colonial traditions and history, and stereotypes or prejudices connected to physical characteristics such as skin color.”

They go on to say that even though Mexico has more clout in Guatemala than New Zealand, a white New Zealander

“is symbolically more powerful than a Mexican volunteer. The dynamic is further complicated by the fact that different actors will respond to different influences – a high level policy maker, for instance, may be more affected by global politics, whereas a local thug may exaggerate visual or cultural biases. Any deterrence analysis has to be done within the context of these dominant political perceptions and local attitudes, regardless of their subjective character.”⁶¹⁹

This argument that different actors will respond to different influences is useful. They move on from there to say,

“Accompaniment organizations often suggest that, in a kind of moral jujitsu, they turn global structural inequities and prejudices against the oppressors by protecting the victims. But any tactic that relies for its effectiveness on a system of unequal worth may, to a certain extent, lend an unintended but insidious credence to that very inequality. A protective presence may be encouraging, but the constant physical reminder of global social inequities may be a heavy and

⁶¹⁹ Ibid., 251.

disempowering burden for the activists who live with it.”

Oddly here their emphasis is on the use of privilege being discouraging for the accompanied. They do not express concern about accompaniment reinforcing that “system of unequal worth,” nor how it might be working *against* “global structural inequities.”

I asked many accompaniers about this jujitsu argument.⁶²⁰ Most did not remember having heard of it, though most did say they had read *Unarmed Bodyguards*. Apparently it did not stand out to them, and it was not discussed in any trainings. Jujitsu is a martial art where attackers are subdued by using their own energy against them, using leverage to defeat a larger adversary by turning their strengths into weaknesses. When I explained the metaphor most were dubious about it. As one accompanier put it, how is it that the armed actor falls on the floor, as it were?⁶²¹ Would that mean the more racist they are, the more they are deterred?

Both Mahony and Eguren have gone on to write several articles, reports, and brochures about accompaniment.⁶²² The *Side by Side* brochure by Mahony in particular takes the

⁶²⁰ This is not a new metaphor, as Richard Gregg in his classic work (1934), spoke of Gandhian nonviolence as a kind of jiu-jitsu, according to Sharp who also writes of it in his 1973 classic. Gene Sharp, *The dynamics of nonviolent action* (Boston, MA: P. Sargent Publisher, 1973), 73; Martin argues against the metaphor in Martin, “Making Accompaniment Effective,” in *People Power: Unarmed Resistance and Global Solidarity*, ed. Howard Clark (London: Pluto Press, 2009), 93–97; Coy also writes of it Coy, “Protecting Human Rights,” 250, see chapter eight for Coy’s argument.

⁶²¹ T----, PASC

⁶²² Liam Mahony, “Unarmed Monitoring and Human Rights Field Presence: Civilian Protection and Conflict Prevention,” *Journal of Humanitarian Affairs* (2003): unnumbered; Liam Mahony,

key arguments from *Unarmed Bodyguards* and presents them in a summary form, but does not include these issues.⁶²³ Indeed none of their other writings speak to race or passport privilege, even Eguren's chapter entitled "Who should go where."⁶²⁴

There have been two research studies of accompaniment that do discuss issues of privilege and accompaniment. Patrick Coy's 1997 dissertation, based on his work as a PBI accompanier in Sri Lanka, has a chapter entitled "We Use It, But We Try Not to Abuse It" The Social and Political Constructions of Internationality and Privilege.⁶²⁵ Coy argues that to understand the work of accompaniment the legacy of colonialism "cannot be ignored." He writes that Sri Lankans told him that accompaniment works in Sri Lanka because of a combination of "the island's colonial experience, and the nation's dependence on the West for foreign investments, international trade, and monetary aid" – what I would call neo-colonialism – and that they also told him that as such white

"Protection: A Non-Governmental Organisation Experience, Peace Brigades International," in *The Human Rights Field Operation. Law, Theory and Practice* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 243–264; Mahony, *Proactive Presence: Field strategies for civilian protection*; Mahony, "Peace Brigades International: Nonviolence in Action"; Enrique Eguren, "Expanding the role of international civilian observers," *Peace News*, 2000, <http://www.peacenews.info/issues/2441/244122.html> (accessed April 1, 2011); Enrique Eguren, "Los observadores internacionales como medio de intervención en conflictos: análisis y perspectivas," *Revista de Conflictología* 1 (2000); Enrique Eguren, *Human Rights Defenders Under Threat: A Field Security Approach to Their Work* (Paris: Peace Brigades International, 2002); Enrique Eguren, "Acompañamiento in Colombia: international human rights protection of IDPs," *FORCED MIGRATION review* (1999): 4–6; Eguren, "Who Should Go Where?"; Eguren, "Developing Strategy for Accompaniment."

⁶²³ Mahony, *Side by Side. Protecting and Encouraging Threatened Activists with Unarmed International Accompaniment*.

⁶²⁴ Eguren, "Who Should Go Where?"

⁶²⁵ Coy, "Protecting Human Rights," 232. The quotation in the chapter title comes from Mary Link, former international secretary of PBI.

Westerners were the most effective companions.⁶²⁶ He cites a Sri Lankan media activist as saying “Because the police see the foreigners, they see white skin and react this way. So we are using a negative thing in a positive way. We can’t help it; we can just use it.” He immediately follows this with, “It is difficult to assess the roles racism plays in international accompaniment ... [because it] functions differently from one place to the next.”⁶²⁷

Coy goes on to describe PBI-USA adopting affirmative action policies in 1992 and their struggle then to address issues of race and recruit companions of color, despite the greater risks they face. He tells the Marcela arrest story described above as an example of these, as well as noting the differential treatment of a person of Japanese heritage on the Sri Lanka PBI team.⁶²⁸ He writes that some people of color from the US took it as a given that a US embassy would not work as hard to protect them as they would a white US citizen.⁶²⁹ He says that in those conversations in the USA chapter of PBI a shared agreement was reached that though accompaniment “may not have racism at its core, it does nevertheless engage the preferential dynamics of racism, and it *flirts* with colonialism.”⁶³⁰ He points out that this is in contradiction to the other ways PBI tries to be prefigurative and model the society they are trying to build, most notably through a flat structure and consensus decision-making.

⁶²⁶ Ibid., 236.

⁶²⁷ Ibid., 236–237.

⁶²⁸ Ibid., 240.

⁶²⁹ Ibid., 242.

⁶³⁰ Ibid., 244 emphasis added.

Coy offers a typology of five ways that those in PBI come to terms with the contradiction of accompaniment using privilege:

Pragmatic: Using privilege is the most effective way to protect those facing repression.

Strategic: Using privilege uses the system against itself, it is a form of nonviolent political jujitsu that uses not only racism but the uneven economic and political power of certain countries. Some in this camp believe that it actually subverts racism and classism by reordering traditional relations (putting the traditionally more powerful person in a support role).

Process/prophetic: Accompaniment is in the process of using privilege less and being more internationalist and is part of a prophetic effort to dismantle racism and classism and create a new social order.

Spiritual/moral: The moral power of nonviolence is stronger than the power of race or class privilege

Rejectionist: It is wrong to use privilege this way and therefore accompaniment should end (expressed by some of those leaving PBI).⁶³¹

Coy himself concludes that “PBI’s partial reliance on the dynamics of racism and privilege does little to dismantle those systems” and that though in the short run it “attempts to turn the power of racism and the international economic system back on itself and make it work on behalf of those usually victimized by it” ultimately in the long run “PBI’s apparent willingness to participate in those same systems can also grant them credence and help perpetuate them.”⁶³² Throughout Coy seems to speak of race and nationality privilege as if they were separate, and only at the end does he mention the economic system. He suggests three adaptations PBI could take to reduce their reliance on “race and privilege”: redefine job descriptions so that some team members at more

⁶³¹ Ibid., 248 – 264.

⁶³² Ibid., 270.

risk can do safer tasks, cultivate a higher organizational profile (through signage and media work), and wear uniforms.⁶³³ He sees these as ways to make accompaniment safer for people from a broad range of countries and thereby “internationalize and democratize” accompaniment.⁶³⁴

Coy’s suggestions are all good, but not enough. Rather than ‘flirt’ with colonialism accompaniment can ideally *use* colonial imaginaries to *challenge* ongoing colonial relations. I do not believe this happens through any form of jujitsu. Ultimately it is the work accompaniers do of challenging US (and European and Canadian) foreign policy and building alternative connections between the people in those places that will most change the systems that make some lives worth more than others.⁶³⁵ I will come back to this argument in the conclusion (chapter nine).

Gada Mahrouse’s 2007 dissertation “Deploying White/western Privilege in Accompaniment, Observer, and Human Shield Transnational Solidarity Activism: A Critical Race, Feminist Analysis” is the most extended written examination to date of privilege and accompaniment.⁶³⁶ She interviewed fifteen Canadian accompaniers after

⁶³³ Ibid., 265 – 269.

⁶³⁴ Ibid., 276 – 277.

⁶³⁵ I discuss this argument in more detail in the next chapter.

⁶³⁶ She worked with Sherene Razack at OISE. Gada Mahrouse, “Deploying White/western Privilege in Accompaniment, Observer, and Human Shield Transnational Solidarity Activism: A Critical Race, Feminist Analysis” (Toronto, ON, Canada: University of Toronto, 2007) She has published three articles based on it. Mahrouse, “The Compelling Story of the White/Western Activist in the War Zone”; Gada Mahrouse, “Race-conscious transnational activists with cameras: Mediators of compassion,” *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 11, no. 1 (March 1, 2008):

they had returned from working in various different contexts (though most in Palestine, none in Colombia) with several different organizations. I shared Mahrouse's own 30 page summary of her dissertation with several companions in Colombia. A frequent complaint from them was that her discussion jumped across widely different times and places without giving more context for each. Mahrouse herself recognizes this as a weakness of the research.⁶³⁷ Others companions, even though they were interested in how race shapes accompaniment, expressed frustration that Mahrouse "makes it all about race" without interviewing racialized companions and without discussing the other ways that accompaniment works.⁶³⁸ She never mentions the political work that companions do to create a deterrent effect. She does mention the "surveillance" they do by taking pictures and speaking to the media, but not the grassroots organizing they do, like speaking tours, action alerts, and meetings with officials. She gives the impression that accompaniment functions based on what she calls 'white/Western' privilege alone, and that any unaffiliated individual 'white/Western' person could have the same deterrent effect as a CPT companioner.

Though Mahrouse simplifies the way accompaniment works, it is indeed a racialized practice and her inquiry into how it may both disrupt and be reproductive of relations of racialized power is useful.⁶³⁹ She asked companions how they understood and negotiated their racialized positioning. She argues that companions recognize that they

87–105; Mahrouse, "Transnational activists, news media representations, and racialized 'politics of life'."

⁶³⁷ Mahrouse, "Race-conscious transnational activists with cameras," 35.

⁶³⁸ She writes that she had three such interviews lined up but that they fell through.

⁶³⁹ Mahrouse, "Race-conscious transnational activists with cameras," 2, 13.

have racialized power but also try to disavow and ‘divest’ themselves of it, trying to ease their discomfort by presenting themselves as ‘innocent’ and ‘neutral’, relying on the paradigm of universalism in ways that mask their complicity in and reproduce racialized dominance. But then she goes on to argue that for accompaniment to be effective companions must be careful not to ‘go brown’ and therefore be seen as ‘the other.’ In what appears to be a contradiction, she seems to argue for a distancing from the accompanied, in a neutral peacekeeper sort of way. Her analysis is hampered by seeing accompaniment as working solely through race. She doubts that companions of color can “represent power”, implying that this is how accompaniment works.⁶⁴⁰ This may sometimes be true with the rank and file soldier at a checkpoint, but it ignores the grassroots pressure that accompaniment uses.

Mahrouse concludes that accompaniment currently reinforces rather than disrupts global white hegemony, but that given the urgency of some crises it should be continued, but with more recognition of, training on, and vigilance to the ways in which it is a colonial encounter that, she argues, relies on Orientalism.⁶⁴¹ Though accompaniment in Colombia does run up against racialized colonial imaginaries of who belongs where, many companions are also challenging those imaginaries by being ‘out of place’, as well as challenging neocolonial relationships, particularly between the US and Colombia, by

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid., 82.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid., 147.

working to build different ‘people to people’ relationships.⁶⁴² Mahrouse does not give enough credit to this work and the paradoxical nature of accompaniment.

There are two other published pieces discussing accompaniment and privilege. Weber, in her book length history of Witness for Peace (WFP) and the US-Nicaragua sister cities movement, has a chapter entitled “Examining White Privilege.” Weber notes that activists with both organizations have been overwhelmingly white and middle class and argues that the political clout these organizations had in the 1980s was based on this. She argues that “These citizens drew on their privileged social locations to gain political access to elected representatives and claim authority to challenge the US government in regard to policy in Nicaragua.” Weber seems to be the only author to make this important argument that the organizational power accompaniers rely on (and feel more comfortable talking about) is also built on and relies on racial, class, and passport privilege. Weber also connects race to another way accompaniment is said to work, arguing that the movement claimed a “moral and religious authority” but that this “also rested on white skin privilege, for it was the predominantly White churches that were the most involved in WFP”.⁶⁴³ This is also true of CPT today.

Boothe and Smithey, in their article on accompaniment and privilege, argue that by relying on the “economic, cultural and military dominance of the Global North,

⁶⁴² Again, I come back to this argument in chapter nine.

⁶⁴³ Clare Weber, *Visions of solidarity: U.S. peace activists in Nicaragua from war to women’s activism and globalization* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), 54–55.

nonviolent intervention organizations can facilitate a relationship of dependency.”⁶⁴⁴ They argue for training for accompaniers so as to ‘mitigate the unintended consequences of using privilege.’ Their primary concern with using privilege does not seem to be reinforcing the systems that create that inequality, but rather the ‘pitfall’ that it will create relationships of dependency rather than ‘empowerment’. I struggled for some time to understand what they meant by ‘empowering’ the accompanied. I should clarify that in their article they do not use the term accompaniment but rather ‘non-violent intervention’ and they talk of ‘interveners’ ‘empowering’ ‘clients.’ This terminology seems to replicate a vision of people above reaching out to ‘help’ those below them, rather than the vision of walking alongside that accompaniment implies to me. Indeed the article ends with a striking image from a quote from Paulo Freire, implying that through ‘empowerment’ the ‘clients’ will less and less be ‘extending their trembling hands in supplication.’⁶⁴⁵ Accompanied Colombians are incredibly brave and powerful organizers that are hardly ‘supplicating.’ They do not need ‘empowerment’, they need protection from violence, and they are asking not for a handout, nor for training, but for allies to work with them to together create more power to build peace with justice.⁶⁴⁶

Boothe and Smithey, like Mahrouse, fail to recognize the ways in which accompaniment functions through grassroots organizing but instead portray it as working only through

⁶⁴⁴ Boothe and Smithey, “Privilege, Empowerment, and Nonviolent Intervention,” 39.

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid., 56.

⁶⁴⁶ Coy, in his 1997 dissertation writes that accompaniment is assumed to empower the accompanied but that the accompanied may find this concept culturally or politically offensive (282) and that accompaniment may at times do the opposite by diminishing the credibility of the local activists if they are portrayed as pawns of outside forces (278 -287). Coy, “Protecting Human Rights.”

what they call ‘rank.’ They suggest that accompaniers should receive experiential training on different types of privilege so as to not rely on race rank any more than other types of rank (gender, and gender performance, age, etc).⁶⁴⁷ This argument is clearly shaped by the Hunter and Lakey training manual, and indeed Boothe took courses from Lakey and has worked with Lakey’s organization, Training for Change. Yet what this argument misses is that it is colonial relationships (of race, class and nationality, intertwined), and tapping in to them through networks, that shape accompaniment and make it possible. A flood of emails from Bolivians would not have the same effect on a Colombian general as a call from the US embassy, made at the request of emails from US citizens. Certainly physical ability, physical energy, sexuality, age, height, parental status, religion, mental health, and other social locations (and social abilities like, as one accompanier put it to me, having ‘snap game,’ i.e., being beautiful and outspoken and witty) are important to take into account in doing power and safety analyses before each particular accompaniment scenario, but they are not the primary power relationship that makes accompaniment ‘work’.⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴⁷ Boothe and Smithey, “Privilege, Empowerment, and Nonviolent Intervention,” 56.

⁶⁴⁸ This is why I have not focused on gender here, but there are other resources on how gender shapes accompaniment. See especially Maria Delgado, *Engendering Peace: Incorporating a Gender Perspective in Civilian Peace Teams* (Alkmaar, The Netherlands: International Fellowship of Reconciliation, 2010); Mahrouse has a chapter on gender in Mahrouse, “Deploying White/western Privilege in Accompaniment, Observer, and Human Shield Transnational Solidarity Activism” She argues that accompaniment is a “masculinist site” and that women are required to minimize the sexual violence they are subject to and threatened by. Organizations in Colombia are more aware of these issues that she portrays and several have official policies on sexual harassment. For a one page handout see “What women in CPT want men in CPT to know” (Christian Peacemaker Teams, undated), <http://bit.ly/zSrftD> (accessed August 24, 2011). I am particularly interested in how women accompaniers are more easily seen as “civilian” and are more “out of place” in a war zone, and hope to write about this in future research. .

Public statements on privilege

Since the literature on accompaniment rarely addresses privilege, and accompaniers are not regularly discussing how they use privilege in their day-to-day work, it is not surprising that their public materials rarely address it. None of the basic explanations given by the different groups on their web sites about what accompaniment is and how it works mention privilege.⁶⁴⁹ None make public any policy or statement on their position about using either passport or racial privilege. Several do have sexual harassment policies,⁶⁵⁰ but I was expecting they would post something more like the statement by the movement to close the School of the Americas Watch (SOAW) that discusses how oppression shapes that movement and the movements' commitment to fighting it.⁶⁵¹ The SOAW statement expresses a desire to 'live the change' that we want to see in the world - yet accompaniment is in some sense premised on rather the opposite. Nevertheless, no

⁶⁴⁹ How organizations explain on their sites how accompaniment works is discussed in more detail in chapter six.

⁶⁵⁰ for example see "Undoing Oppression," *Christian Peacemaker Teams*, n.d., http://www.cpt.org/resources/training/undoing_oppression (accessed January 14, 2012).

⁶⁵¹ ...Working for justice for the people of the Americas in a principled way means that we acknowledge and address racism and other forms of oppression as a driving force behind the violence and domination perpetuated by current US foreign policy.... Because people in the United States are socialized in a society where prejudice is often accepted as the norm, systems that perpetuate oppression invariably enter communities dedicated to working for justice... Like all communities, SOA Watch is susceptible to the same systems of oppression that dominate our society. When these systems take root in social movements like SOA Watch, they weaken our collective power and divide us..... We have to actively work against these forms of oppression. Our movement should embody the kinds of relationships, social norms and behaviors that we want to see in the new world we are working to create. ...We must challenge personal and organizational supremacist practices which marginalize, exclude or de-humanize others. When we don't, we violate our commitment to justice and undermine the kind of alliance building that is so vital to real organizing victories. For the full statement see "Anti-Oppression," *iPresente! - the newsletter of the School of the Americas Watch*, n.d., <http://bit.ly/wqLsSt>. (accessed January 14, 2012) I am a long time core activist of the SOAW.

accompaniment group offers, much less makes central on their website, a similar statement recognizing the colonial legacies and global class and race inequities that make their work possible and powerful and their commitment to working against these and building a world where all lives are valued.

Deeper inside FOR's site there are several newsletter articles and blog posts that do mention privilege, but only briefly. A 2008 newsletter article that was later reposted on several areas of the site and then reprinted in the international FOR newsletter is entitled 'To whom are we accountable?' and talks about how the violence of the Colombian war is racialized and ends with, "How can we use the privilege we have to intervene on injustice in all its complexities, to perform action in struggle, in solidarity with those who need it most? To whom are we accountable?"⁶⁵² The article does not talk about how accompaniment actually *does* use privilege, nor what steps accompaniers take to be accountable to those they accompany.

In a 2008 post by FOR Board member Zara Zimbaro about the FOR delegation I was on with her and in which I regularly raised these issues she writes,

"Whose lives are given greater worth in the eyes of the state, the mass media, and the international community? Could I imagine a future time when not only the conflict in Colombia dissolves and ceases to hold populations in constant terror and trauma, but when Colombian nationals come to the US to provide strategic accompaniment for those in our country whose lives are dominated and made

⁶⁵² "February 2008 Peace Presence Update | Fellowship of Reconciliation", n.d., <http://forusa.org/february-2008-peace-presence-update> (accessed January 14, 2012).

*vulnerable by state injustice? Is it uncomfortable to imagine the reverse and if so, why?*⁶⁵³

Again, it seems to be easier to ask these questions than to answer them and discuss how accompaniment works because of unequal colonial relationships.

CPT is the one group which has several posts and newsletter articles on their site about racism, as well as several educational handouts about white privilege.⁶⁵⁴ Several of them are written by Sylvia Morrison, CPT's undoing racism coordinator based in Canada.⁶⁵⁵

Yet all of these discuss racism interpersonally rather than how accompaniment might rely on or reinforce racism. One post does struggle with how white privilege shaped the conflict in Kurdistan, but the only part of the site that mentions accompaniment using privilege is a biblical lesson.⁶⁵⁶ The exercise is written by Kathy Kern and looks at a bible passage that it says shows Paul using his Roman citizenship, in a context of Roman military occupation, "to preach the gospel in ways that non-citizens could not."⁶⁵⁷ It compares this to what it calls the "effective racism" that CPT accompaniers use. It says that this causes "moral dilemmas for CPTers, because by accompanying targeted people

⁶⁵³ Zara Zimbardo, "Solidarity and protective accompaniment", August 20, 2008, <http://forusa.org/blogs/zara-zimbardo/solidarity-protective-accompaniment/2431> (accessed January 14, 2012).

⁶⁵⁴ "Undoing Oppression."

⁶⁵⁵ such as Sylvia Morrison, "Restoring Balance Through Right Relationships," *Christian Peacemaker Teams*, December 1, 2009, <http://cpt.org/content/restoring-balance-through-right-relationships> (accessed January 15, 2012).

⁶⁵⁶ Claire Evans, "CHICAGO REFLECTION: A delegation leader ponders racism and White Privilege in Kurdish Iraq," *Christian Peacemaker Teams*, February 24, 2011, <http://cpt.org/cptnet/2011/02/24/chicago-reflection-delegation-leader-ponders-racism-and-white-privilege-kurdish-ir> (accessed January 15, 2012).

⁶⁵⁷ Acts 16, 21:17-22:30

they are acknowledging that the world considers the lives of CPTers more valuable than the lives of the people they accompany.” Kern suggests ending the session by burning the slips of paper people on which previously written their different privileges - to symbolize giving them up and offering these privileges to God. Rather than grapple with how racial and citizenship privilege interlock and shape accompaniment, this exercise blurs the two and suggests that the answer to the ‘moral dilemma’ they pose is simply to ‘give them up’.⁶⁵⁸

Most accompaniment organizations do not mention privilege at all on their sites.⁶⁵⁹ PBI and Witness only write on their sites about privilege in the sense of it being a privilege to serve, or to witness the courage and creativity of those they accompany. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

⁶⁵⁸ Kathy Kern, “Getting in the Way: Studies in the Book of Acts,” *Christian Peacemaker Teams*, n.d., http://cpt.org/resources/worship/reflections/acts_study (accessed January 15, 2012).

⁶⁵⁹ I searched the sites of all organizations working in Colombia for the terms: privilege, passport, race and racism.

⁶⁶⁰ [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

It would be useful for accompaniment organizations to more directly and regularly talk, internally as well as publicly and online, about how accompaniment uses privilege. As Pease puts it, “we need to articulate our distress about our complicity in oppression. We need to feel this distress to shatter our complacency.”⁶⁶¹ Only two individual accompaniers have mentioned this distress on their individual blogs.⁶⁶² Moira, a former FOR accompanier who now works for PBI in the US, posted three times about privilege. Before beginning as an accompanier she wrote:

*“I fully acknowledge that accompaniment presents a bit of a paradox: my privilege, based on a system of racial and cultural hierarchy that I disavow, helps keep me safe, even while I am taking on a role of solidarity. I do wrestle with this contradiction.”*⁶⁶³

A year later she wrote a post that quoted the post above and then goes on to tell of an incident where she was able to skip lines when she did a paperwork favor in town for a member of the peace community:

[REDACTED]

⁶⁶¹ Bob Pease, *Undoing Privilege: Unearned Advantage in a Divided World* (London: Zed Books, 2010), 186.

⁶⁶² Only a few accompaniers have kept individual blogs. I have followed all of them, often reposted from them, and linked to them on my own blog (decolonizingsolidarity.blogspot.com). The only other post besides Moira’s that expresses mixed feelings about accompaniment using privilege is at <http://gizzacroggy.blogspot.com/2008/10/gabos-story.html>. A former FOR accompanier had a blog that in the ‘about’ section described what she was doing as ‘using her privilege in the service of the underprivileged.’ Her blog is no longer online and the domain name is being used for another blog (pedalingforpeace.org).

⁶⁶³ Moira Birss, “What am I doing going to Colombia?,” *One Peace at a Time*, May 8, 2008, <http://1peaceatatime.blogspot.com/2008/05/what-am-i-doing-going-to-colombia.html> (accessed January 15, 2012).

“That little incident exemplifies the contradictions implicit in my presence and work here: in order to help someone, I took advantage of the fact that as I foreigner I tend to be considered in higher regard. My utility as an international accompanier relies on a similar assumption: an international’s life is seen as worth more than a Colombian’s life. Just as with the favor I did for my friend, as an accompanier I’m exploiting that assumption, all the while doing work that aims to create a more just world. I don’t always feel comfortable with this contradiction, but I tell myself that it’s for the greater good (at least the accompanier part - I’m not so convinced about the doing-favors part).”⁶⁶⁴

Just a few days later she posted a clarification to that post which was much closer to the explanation of how accompaniment work that is regularly given by FOR, which emphasizes their political work. She wrote

“I oversimplified things quite a bit and perhaps left readers with an incorrect picture of how human rights accompaniment works. In that post I equated the treatment I receive from low-level Colombian functionaries based upon how I look with my effectiveness as a human rights accompanier in preventing harm to the members of the Peace Community.

In fact, the power of accompaniment does not lie in the fact that I have blond hair and green eyes, and is only partially due to my US passport (my possession of which one might guess at, but not be sure of, just by looking at me). The majority of our power is based upon all the work we do behind the scenes: meetings with local, regional and national civilian and military officials; the political lobbying and other kinds of political pressure that FOR does in the US; the [media coverage we generate](#). True, my passport gives me greater access to the offices of many Colombian officials (and of course the US embassy) than most Colombians have. But without all of the work we do to open communication channels and demonstrate our ability to exert political pressure, that passport would not allow me, for example, to call up the cell phone of the general who commands the brigade that operates in this region when a combat breaks out nearby or a particular community member is threatened. That is not to say that accompaniers of color don’t have different experiences in certain situations than I do. [she tells the story of N--- and the checkpoint] Clearly, my blond hair and green

⁶⁶⁴ Moira Birss, “Using my privilege, for better or worse,” *One Peace at a Time*, May 19, 2009, <http://1peaceatime.blogspot.com/2009/05/using-my-privilege-for-better-or-worse.html> (accessed January 15, 2012).

*eyes do have an effect on the armed actors here, but are neither necessary nor sufficient conditions to be an effective accompanier.*⁶⁶⁵

Moira is a thoughtful and articulate accompanier and her analysis became more complex over these posts, from first emphasizing the role of race, to then emphasizing nationality, to the more complex argument of political pressure that is enabled and strengthened by both race and nationality. Unlike this personal post by Moira, FOR publicly tends to write and speak about accompaniment relying on political pressure without talking about how that taps into privileges of passport and race.

Standing out

The literature on accompaniment repeatedly emphasizes the importance of accompaniers being easily and clearly distinguishable through uniforms and symbols.⁶⁶⁶ Yet years later many teams still do not have uniforms, have uniforms that do not clearly stand out, or do not regularly wear the uniforms that they have.

⁶⁶⁵ Moira Birss, "Using my privilege: Clarifications & additional thoughts," *One Peace at a Time*, May 23, 2009, <http://1peaceatatime.blogspot.com/2009/05/using-my-privilege-clarifications.html> (accessed January 15, 2012).

⁶⁶⁶ Mahony and Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards*; Patrick Coy, "We Use It But We Try Not to Abuse It' Nonviolent Protective Accompaniment and the Use of Ethnicity and Privilege by Peace Brigades International", 2000.

FOR accompaniers wear grey or light blue t-shirts or tank tops with a small FOR dove logo in front and a larger one on the back, which says Fellowship of Reconciliation



Figure 44: Chicana accompanier and Colombian born US citizen co-director of FOR get a tour of the new cacao seed (chocolate) roasting plant in the peace community of San José, photo by author.

below, in English (see figure 44). FOR accompaniers often do not wear the t-shirt, both in the city and in the peace community itself. I heard one story of an accompanier who had to run to the house to put her t-shirt on when the army walked in to the community.⁶⁶⁷ One accompanier said to me that really they should even be sleeping in the t-shirts, since incidents are likely to happen at night, when they would be too groggy to find their shirts

⁶⁶⁷ J----, interview

and change quickly.⁶⁶⁸ It can be hard to keep clothes clean in countryside and the shirts quickly get dirty and stained - the reasons often given to me for not wearing the shirts more often. But for a group that is “armed only with t-shirts”⁶⁶⁹ it is ironic that FOR did not have more shirts, with larger lettering front and back, or hats. They have recently gotten khaki vests, but I very rarely saw them wear these.

I was surprised to see FOR accompaniers wearing khaki, as I associate it with explorers, the scouts, and the military. However armed actors in Colombia do not seem to wear khaki, but primarily camouflage or dark green. Colombian human rights workers however do widely use khaki vests with logos to identify themselves. The logos are frequently small without clear lettering of the organization’s name. They all seemed to blur together to me, and maybe that is the idea – to generally signify human rights worker. Journalists often wear similar khaki vests, but with “PRENSA” (press) written in large letters across the back. Not all accompanier vests are khaki – one of the accompaniment organizations, IPO, uses dark blue vests with a yellow stripe (see figure 47 below).

There seems to be no one color that ‘says’ accompanier - that is, color of *uniform*. I thought that perhaps FOR switched from grey (which they still sometimes use) to light blue because of the association of the color with UN peacekeepers – but I was told that light blue was not consciously chosen for that reason. White is frequently used as the

⁶⁶⁸ M----, field notes

⁶⁶⁹ Jay Gallagher, “Where politics are really rough,” *The Ithaca Journal*, Feb 27 07, <http://www.theithacajournal.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070226/OPINION02/702260327> (accessed March 1, 2007).

color of peace in Colombia, but it has also then been manipulated by the right in Colombia, who frame peace as meaning a soldier on every corner (see chapter five). PBI and SweFOR do use the color white for their uniforms (see figure 43 at the start of this chapter, page 253). FOR accompaniers repeatedly told me that they do not wear white because it is even harder to keep clean living in the countryside. CPT uses a blue shirt or vest with white lettering (see figures 45 and 46), and a red baseball hat, with white lettering. Their hats are easy to see from a distance and well recognized in the region. One light skinned Colombian human rights worker from the region told me that he often wore a red baseball hat in the hope that he might be confused from a distance with CPT and thus be more respected by armed actors. Only CPT seems to regularly wear hats, though SweFOR also has blue baseball hats with their logo. In general accompaniers will sometimes wear vests, sometimes t-shirts, and sometimes polo shirts with their logo, depending on the occasion. SweFOR even has their logo on rain ponchos. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Red is the only group that purposefully has no uniform at all. Though some in the Red were advocating for uniforms, others did not want to stand apart in that way.



Figure 45: Wearing CPT delegate vests: Sylvia Morrison, CPT anti-racism coordinator based in Toronto Canada on the left, author in middle, Colombian Mennonite delegate on the right, photo by Stewart Vieresinga, by permission.

Most groups have their group identified on their clothes only in Spanish, or only by acronym. CPT does list their name in many languages (see figure 46), but in small lettering. Most groups' uniforms only use their acronyms, and in small lettering that is hard to read from a distance. SweFOR is written on their uniforms in English and Spanish, but not Swedish. 'International' would be more clearly performed if there was more English on the uniforms in general and if groups listed their full name on their shirts. Only IPO and SweFOR have the word "international" on their clothes (see figures 46 and 50). It is strange to me that if accompaniment works through connections to international networks, this is not more explicit in accompaniers' body signage.



Figure 46: CPT delegate vest on the left, staff vest in multiple languages on the right, photo by author.



Figure 47: IPO accompanier, photo from IPO website, www.peaceobservatory.org, by permission.

‘International’ could also be signaled with the use of flags on uniforms. The flag proposal came up in the SweFOR workshop and there was much joking about how that was more nationalistic than they were comfortable with and not, in some sense, properly Swedish! They were sure that few Colombians would recognize the Swedish flag, but they did agree that most would probably know it was not from Latin America. Having the Swedish flag may also imply that it is a government program. SweFOR does in fact receive Swedish government funds, but it is an independent NGO. Interestingly Swedes do not have a great reputation in Colombia. ‘*Hacerse el sueco*’ (acting Swedish) is an expression used when someone pretends not to understand something.⁶⁷¹ Women in SweFOR also told me that in Colombia Swedish women are associated with porn. They said that the first pornography magazines widely available in Colombia were Swedish, tapping in to the imaginary of blonde buxom women as more desirable and sexually available. SweFOR companions also said that Sweden and Switzerland are widely confused in Colombia and they are regularly called Swiss – which given the association with the International Red Cross is perhaps a better imaginary for them to tap in to that Colombians associations with Sweden. Companions draw on imaginative geographies, but it is not always obvious what these are.

⁶⁷¹ I had never heard this expression but SweFOR companions said jokes were regularly made to them about it.



Figure 48: Community member carrying FOR flag, racialized accompanier walking directly behind, wearing FOR t-shirt, photo by Zara Zimbardo, by permission.

No accompaniment organization in Colombia uses the flag of a country on their uniform, but several do use white flags. Both PBI and FOR have large white flags with their logo that they use to identify themselves (see figure 43 on page 253 and figure 48). PBI flies it from their jeep and sometimes carries it on walks. FOR only very rarely carries it on paths in the mountain (see figure 48). On the FOR delegation I was on there was

some discussion as to whether to raise the white flag if we were caught in a crossfire. The co-director told us that the policy was instead to get low and hide (avoiding large rocks that could ricochet bullets), because if we were hit either side could blame the other. I was told that the PBI policy was to wave the flag. It seems there are mixed opinions about the role of signage.

I was surprised in talking about uniforms with accompaniers how few of them thought of uniforms as a way for accompaniers of color to stand out, though the Latinas from the US on the FOR team were very conscious of this and seemed to be more careful about either

wearing the t-shirt or having one in their bag (see figure 49).



**Figure 49: Who stands out more, the tall 'white' delegate
or the racialized companioner with an FOR t-shirt?**
Photo by author.

Coy writes in 2000 that PBI still did not have a general uniform policy, though the



Figure 50: Shirts get dirty fast and are often covered by bags and backpacks. FOR accompanier in the rear, author in front, wearing FOR t-shirt, photo by Zara Zimbardo, by permission.

Colombian team was sometimes wearing green windbreakers with a logo. He says that there had been much emotional discussion for many years beforehand of the need to use uniforms so as to rely less on race and better protect racialized accompaniers, but that uniforms were not implemented on any team until 1993, when an Indian citizen accompanier was mistreated by Sri Lankan police.⁶⁷² By 2007, when I arrived in Colombia, not only was PBI one of the groups with the most visible uniforms,

which seemed to be worn the most often, but the people I spoke to in PBI took this for granted and did not know that it had been a long coming much discussed decision in the

⁶⁷² Coy, “‘We Use It But We Try Not to Abuse It’ Nonviolent Protective Accompaniment and the Use of Ethnicity and Privilege by Peace Brigades International.”

organization, nor that the policy had been made particularly to protect racialized accompaniers.

Many authors have argued that it would help accompaniment be less race based if accompaniers were easy to identify (see figures 48 and 49).⁶⁷³ Mahony and Eguren argue for the importance of teams having a widely recognized symbol, and give the examples of the UN workers' blue caps and the Red Cross symbol. When they wrote the book, in 1997, they said most accompaniment organizations were not attempting to distinguish themselves visibly.⁶⁷⁴ By now most accompaniment organizations in Colombia are wearing some sort of visible marker, but have not settled on any one symbol or color to clearly identify accompaniers. Perhaps instead of one color, accompaniers could all use one name across their backs, perhaps a large "ACOMPANIANTE INTERNACIONAL", like the large "PRENSA" that is common for journalists. But then again, some use the term accompanier, some TPNI fieldworker, some observer, and many switch between these. SweFOR does currently have, in medium sized lettering, "OBSERVADOR INTERNACIONAL" on their vests (see figure 51), and the CPT delegate vests have a large "DELEGADO".

⁶⁷³ Baines, "International Accompaniment: The Role of 'Project A of Canada' in the Return of Guatemalan Refugees," 152; Coy, "Protecting Human Rights"; Coy, "We Use It But We Try Not to Abuse It' Nonviolent Protective Accompaniment and the Use of Ethnicity and Privilege by Peace Brigades International"; Mahony and Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards*; Moser-Puangsuwan and Weber, *Nonviolent Intervention Across Borders*, 331.

⁶⁷⁴ Mahony and Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards*, 252–253.



In theory what matters is not the lettering or appearance of the shirt but that the armed actors will recognize the group name and know of them, their work, and know, for example, that FOR can generate calls to the Colombian president from members of the US Congress.

But it is likely that a recent recruit working a backcountry patrol will not have received this report from his officer. It is more likely he will simply react to seeing someone ‘out of place’ whom he perceives as powerful. If the accompanier does not have white skin and blond hair that triggers that response, a uniform with certain associations might also.

Moser-Puangsuwan and Weber recognize that being visually different is important for accompaniment to work, but argue that this can be accomplished by uniforms and symbols and argue for developing a common symbol for peace teams along with doing more public education about their goals and methodology and say that this is the only way to “switch from reliance on the color of a peace team’s skin to reliance on the power of the organizations as an institution, thereby increasing the power of the method.”⁶⁷⁵ A

⁶⁷⁵ Moser-Puangsuwan and Weber, *Nonviolent Intervention Across Borders*, 330–331.

common symbol and more outreach could indeed be more effective, but being better recognized will not change that racial, economic and geopolitical privilege are part of how accompaniment works. Better branding as it were, with a clear symbol, would help accompaniers be seen as part of an international body (organization), even if the accompanier's own body is not read as 'international.' Organizations present uniforms as a sign of their organization, of the strength of the network of people they can tap in to, but again, it is the privilege that the members of those networks have, their ability to make calls to the US Congress, that makes them powerful. Organizations that use the word 'international' on their uniforms allude to this. But uniforms do not *replace* race with either organizational or passport power as some authors seem to suggest.⁶⁷⁶

Uniforms may actually accentuate race. Mahrouse argues that accompaniers' uniforms signify 'people from elsewhere' in a way that conflates with race, and as such that uniforms serve as markers of race.⁶⁷⁷ She does not say much more about this, but I would argue that wearing a white uniform shirt can be a way to wear whiteness itself. If 'international' is imagined as wealthy white Westerner, then wearing a white shirt that says international can be a way to be seen as whiter, just as accompaniers of color told me they were treated differently when they performed international and/or were with white people.

Accompaniers I spoke to seemed to have mixed feelings about standing out vs. wanting to build connection with community members, and maybe that has something to do with

⁶⁷⁶ Mahony and Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards*; Schirch, *Civilian Peacekeeping*; Coy, "Protecting Human Rights."

⁶⁷⁷ Mahrouse, "Race-conscious transnational activists with cameras," 77.

the haphazard uniform wearing. In general the reticence to wear clear signage on the body seems to be a reflection of mixed feelings about using privilege generally. White companions in particular would rather not so obviously ‘wear whiteness’. But then again, as described above, several have argued that uniforms are a way *not* to use whiteness. One FOR companioner told me that they aim for their dissuasion to be based not on skin color but rather their t-shirts. Yet he recognized that the t-shirts were ‘harder to see’ on companions of color.⁶⁷⁸ Some companions may prefer to rely on shirts rather than skin, but the shirt references not only the network of supporters of the organization, but more obviously references the passport the companioner (and their network) holds, which is hard to disentangle from the skin. This is particularly true when the power of that passport has been built on and through a colonial history of white supremacy.

Lending, giving back and giving up privilege

Of the different metaphors used to describe how accompaniment works that were discussed in chapter seven (opening space, expanding space, getting in the way, serving as a lifejacket) none clearly point to how companions use, and are complicit in, systems of domination. I suspect this is a reflection of discomfort and avoidance, though there is another metaphor used to describe how accompaniment works that does speak to it, which is that it ‘lends’ privilege. Neufeld-Weaver, a CPT part-timer, writes in his dissertation on CPT in Chiapas that “the mission of peace teams is to lend our privilege,

⁶⁷⁸ C----, FOR, fieldnotes

including the protection afforded us by our citizenship and race.”⁶⁷⁹ He sees lending his ‘voice and physical presence’ to the ‘marginalized’ as a ‘response to the imbalance and injustice of inequality.’⁶⁸⁰ I am dubious that privilege can be ‘lent’, though accompaniers do connect people to their privileges through chains of solidarity.

Similarly, PASC talks about ‘transferring’ the privilege of being white and Western to those they accompany.⁶⁸¹ CPT co-director Carol Rose, talks about ‘giving back’ privilege when she writes, “we don’t get to shed our skin ... that means when I’m in Palestine I have access to this unearned advantage. I have access to handing out this unearned advantage as well and one of the things TPNI [Third Party Non-violent Intervention] tries to do is hand some of that advantage back to the people it was stolen from in the first place in a very kind of direct way, recognizing that it is stolen property ...”⁶⁸² The accompanied may gain lasting advantage through accompaniment (the community of San José can now directly approach members of Congress whose staff visited the peace community because FOR asked them to) – yet accompaniers cannot ‘give back’ privilege in the sense of ‘giving it up’ and being rid of it, as much as they might wish to, as symbolized in the CPT exercise described above, of burning slips of paper naming privileges. It is ironic that some accompaniers seem to be so eager to be rid of privilege when accompaniment relies on it. Not only does it seem counter to their purpose, I doubt

⁶⁷⁹ Neufeld Weaver, “Restoring the Balance: Peace Teams and Violence Reduction in Chiapas, Mexico,” 10.

⁶⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁶⁸¹ http://pasc.ca/spip.php?article168&var_recherche=privilege

⁶⁸² 2006 interview in Copp, “Is the Peace Colonialism Charge a Valid Criticism of Peace Teams Engaged in Third Party Nonviolent Intervention?,” 47.

that it is possible. As Pease puts it, ‘while the structures that advantage the privileged remain, unearned benefits will follow’.⁶⁸³

Pease goes on to argue that you cannot use those structures without perpetuating dominant-subordinate relations.⁶⁸⁴ The question that drew me to this research was whether accompaniers were therefore reinforcing the structures that make some lives worth more than others, or if they were wearing these down. Privilege cannot be ‘given up’ all at once, but maybe it can be ‘worn down’ slowly if it is used to work against the very structures of geoeconomic and geopolitical power that create gulfs of privilege. Perhaps privilege can be ‘leveraged’ through chains of solidarity in ways that support organizing that ultimately aims to change relations of privilege. Privilege can be used in organizing work to change the colonial nature of US – Colombia relations which create some of that privilege. Accompaniers may not ‘use up’ their privilege when they use it,⁶⁸⁵ for privilege does not ‘wear down’ well that way, but through broader organizing, like using the stories of organizations they accompany to work against US military aid, accompaniers can work against the structures that create some of the very privileges they are using. At the very least accompaniers can more clearly aim to use privilege without reinforcing it. That is more likely if privilege is used with honesty, clarity and accountability.

⁶⁸³ Pease, *Undoing Privilege*, 184.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁵ Thanks to Judy Hopkinson for this turn of phrase, offered in discussion of a presentation of my research to Bellingham Friends Meeting, October 18, 2009.

Conclusion:

If accompaniers are using structures of inequality (of race, class and nation) to try and create a world with more equality, it is important for them to acknowledge that paradox - both ethically and to make accompaniment more effective. Another way of understanding the work of accompaniment is that it uses structural violence to stop physical violence, but in the process it needs to be wary of the danger of reinforcing the structural violence.⁶⁸⁶ But accompaniment can also be a tool for changing structural violence when on the ground stories from accompaniers are used to push for US policy change, be that related to military aid or economic violence like the Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Neufeld argues that most individual accompaniers tend to see their role as stopping the physical violence, though WFP has long been a notable exception,⁶⁸⁷ but all accompaniment groups have been moving towards more work on structural violence, particularly around the FTA.

Though this chapter has focused on race, it is inevitably entwined with class and nationality, particularly in the context of accompaniment. Mahrouse argues that “insofar as people from the West (or Global North) have access to material and cultural resources through the exploitation of racialized Others, globally speaking, being a member of a Western nation is always a class positioning *and* a racialized one”⁶⁸⁸ Class privilege

⁶⁸⁶ Thank you to Vanessa Kritzer, staff at the Latin American Working Group, for this way of expressing the paradox. personal communication April 9, 2010.

⁶⁸⁷ Neufeld Weaver, “Restoring the Balance: Peace Teams and Violence Reduction in Chiapas, Mexico,” 15, 18.

⁶⁸⁸ Mahrouse, “Transnational activists, news media representations, and racialized ‘politics of life’,” 17.

reinforces racial privilege, and works alongside passport privilege. As a member of the FOR network that receives action alerts I have not only US citizenship, but the luxury of owning a computer and internet access, and the time and confidence to write to my member of Congress.

Frankenberg argues that white people started naming themselves white at the same time as the creation of white dominant nation states, and that this is why “race, culture and nation slide so smoothly into one another in the present, providing alibis for each other”.⁶⁸⁹ Yet hegemony is never complete and uniform, and she argues that there is a continual process of slippage, condensation and displacement in the constructs of race and nation.⁶⁹⁰ As she put it, “whiteness is always in the process of being both made and unmade.”⁶⁹¹ Frankenberg argues that white people participating in politics of solidarity have only recently ‘interrogated whiteness close up’ – and that when they do so they tend to simply enjoin whites to ‘eschew racial privilege’ (i.e. give it up). Instead she suggests that we ‘examine whiteness as a daily practice, as a cultural assemblage, a site of identity or identification.’⁶⁹² Whiteness she argues is a historical construct that as she puts it is, “potentially alterable by means of careful political practice”. She urges us to think of

⁶⁸⁹ Ruth Frankenberg, “Introduction: Local whitenesses, localizing whiteness,” in *Displacing Whiteness: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*, ed. Ruth Frankenberg (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 9.

⁶⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁶⁹² *Ibid.*, 17.

how whiteness can be remade, and how to resituate whiteness and blackness in relation to each other.⁶⁹³

Accompaniers engage in the remaking of whiteness by literally resituating white bodies, putting them in a different physical relation with browner bodies as a way to build different social and political relations. Their bodies help to build new chains of connection. Perhaps if accompaniers are ‘out of place’ frequently enough – and build solidarity across places in ways that reworks their relationships – then maybe they slowly ‘wear away’ some of the power of whiteness, by affecting how it is spatialized. That is, if accompaniers are building solidarity. If they are serving as non-partisan keepers of the liberal peace, they are more likely to be reinforcing those relations. Accompaniers are ‘out of place’ when they walk alongside the *displaced*. They are not ‘expected’ to be in these places, though they *are* ‘expected’ to be there if they are ‘helping.’ Accompaniers might be resisting racial codes by redeploying them, or they might be reinforcing them. Accompaniers perform whiteness more ‘properly’ if they perform helper, humanitarian and peacekeeper - rather than ally, activist and peacemaker.

It is strange that even as accompaniers use various global hierarchies that give them more privilege, or rank, they seem to have such mixed feelings about it that they sometimes even deny they are doing so. They often downplay global inequalities rather than draw attention to them. Rather than claim innocence, accompaniers could recognize their responsibility, and choose to respond differently. They can be accountable, and give more accounts of how they are using these systems, internally to each other and to the

⁶⁹³ Ibid., 26.

partners they accompany, as well as publicly. This is not easy. On the FOR delegation I went on I intended to talk about privilege dynamics we had seen that day in our nightly check-ins, but I did not do this much – often because I was too exhausted, both physically and emotionally. It is my hope that this dissertation offers tools for accompaniers and others to more easily see and talk about the hierarchies that shape how accompaniment works - and understand whiteness as a performance that can be done with more discernment.

Over the course of my own research I have had wildly different opinions as to whether accompaniment could resist and perhaps even rework the systems of domination it relies on. I began very hopeful that accompaniment was doing so, then went through a period of despair when I thought that it was difficult if not impossible for accompaniment even to avoid reinforcing those systems. During that time I was also feeling very weary of wearing my own whiteness in Colombia. I was both exhausted by the attention it brought me, and dubious about what one could do with that. But in the process of writing this dissertation I have come back to some hope that accompaniers can indeed wear away some of the power of whiteness, even as they use it. By being ‘out of place’ accompaniers challenge not only racist scripts, but also their use for the accumulation by dispossession that tries to displace those they are accompanying. But ultimately it is the work of building alternative ties between people across places that will most change the systems that make some lives worth more than others. That work can be understood as engaging in an alternative form of geopolitics, as I discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Accompaniment is widely perceived as effective protection and support by Colombians that are accompanied and those that request accompaniment. Though Colombia has more international accompaniers than any other country, there continue to be more requests for it than can be met. Rather than ask ‘*does* accompaniment work?’ - an unanswerable question – I have asked here ‘*how* does accompaniment work?’ By this I mean not only how does it protect those who are accompanied, but also how does it strengthen their work for peace and justice.

I came to this research as a long time international solidarity activist, wanting to think about how solidarity handles privilege, and how it can avoid falling into colonial patterns. I turned to accompaniment as the solidarity tactic that most dramatically uses privilege. I was hoping that accompaniment was using privilege in such a way that it could ‘use it up’. I did not find that sort of dismantling, but I have come to think that accompaniment can wear down the structures of race and nation that grant privilege unequally – but it can also reinforce those, depending on how it is done.

It is easier for accompaniers to fall into colonial patterns and reinforce structures of domination that make some lives worth more than others when they understand themselves as nonpartisan civilian peacekeepers, rather than emphasizing building and activating chains of solidarity to make accompaniment work. It is also easier to fall into those traps when accompaniers see space as abstract, and elide how race and other privileges shape their work. When accompaniers want to be accredited by the UN, and

seen as equals by the diplomatic elite, then they are trying to engage in formal geopolitics as one of the ‘big boys’, rather than trying to change the rules of the game and doing geopolitics differently. I chose not to look at accompaniers’ motivations because I had previously done research on the motivations of international solidarity activists.⁶⁹⁴ Yet my argument from that work that the liberal good helper role is a colonial pattern that is damaging to international solidarity resonates with this argument that when accompaniers understand themselves to be ‘helping’ as ‘peacekeepers’ they keep the structures of inequality intact in a liberal peace. Indeed then they are, as Diane Nelson puts it, complicit in the ongoing production of relations of oppression.⁶⁹⁵

But that can actually feel good to accompaniers. As one accompanier told me, using a Spanish idiom, it is easy for it to ‘fluff up your feathers’ (go to your head) when those you accompany give you the best of everything and treat you as special. Because this can be such a seductive role it is all the more important that accompaniers have clarity about the implications of it. To change structures of domination, accompaniment needs not only to leverage difference, but also to simultaneously engage in and prioritize building connections *across* difference and distance, through chains of solidarity. One way of understanding that work is to see it as doing geopolitics.

⁶⁹⁴ Koopman, “Imperialism Within.”

⁶⁹⁵ Diane M. Nelson, *A Finger in the Wound: Body Politics in Quincentennial Guatemala*, 1st ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 70.

FOR has occasionally portrayed accompaniment as ‘citizen diplomacy’.⁶⁹⁶ But accompaniers are no ‘citizen ambassadors’. When accompaniers present themselves as doing diplomacy this way, and want to be accredited by the UN, as the Nonviolent Peaceforce does, it appears that they see themselves as engaging in geopolitics. But if accompaniment is doing geopolitics, it is not geopolitics as usual. Accompaniment does tap in to hegemonic geopolitics. That the US is so heavily involved in the Colombian conflict in traditional geopolitical ways then means that when accompaniers generate a call to a Colombian general from the US embassy it has for more impact than a call from the Bolivian, or even Swedish embassy. Accompaniers use that relative weight of US influence by mobilizing chains of solidarity to pressure US decision makers to then pressure Colombian decision makers, as described in chapter seven. In doing so accompaniers leverage and even influence dominant geopolitics.

But what may have more impact in the long term is how accompaniment is itself engaging in an alternative form of geopolitics. It is the ongoing work of building new and different connections between people in the US and Colombia, and North and South more generally, that will most change the political, economic and social systems that make some lives worth more than others, and ultimately wear away at the very privileges accompaniers use to do this work. One way to understand this work is as an *alternative* way of doing geopolitics.

⁶⁹⁶ “FOR Colombia Program | Fellowship Of Reconciliation Colombia Program”, n.d., <http://www.forcolombia.org/node/3> (accessed March 8, 2011).

Definitions of geopolitics

To understand how accompaniers are doing geopolitics let me first look at various understandings of the term. Outside of academia geopolitics is probably widely imagined as (depending on your generation) chess, the board game Risk, or the video game World of Warcraft. It's all on the map as little figurines, like the map of potential US bases in Colombia in figure five in chapter three (page 100). The term geopolitics was coined in 1899 by Kjellen. Around this time Kjellen, Ratzel, Mahan and Mackinder each developed ideas of how states are shaped by conflict over territory and resources.⁶⁹⁷ The difference between politics and *geopolitics* is an ongoing debate in geography, related to the difference between capital P politics (states) and little p politics (everything else?).⁶⁹⁸ Since geo means 'the earth', perhaps geopolitics has to be global. If it is only *geopolitics* if it has do to with the foreign policy of states, then accompaniment is not geopolitics.

'Critical geopolitics' is a subfield of geography that understands geopolitics more widely, as including the discourses and imaginaries of P/politics – that is, the way the world is understood and represented.⁶⁹⁹ Those doing this work have looked at these imaginaries in the studies, reports and arguments of academia and think tanks (formal geopolitics); political speeches, state actions (practical geopolitics); and mass media and public

⁶⁹⁷ Gerry Kearns, *Geopolitics and Empire: The Legacy of Halford Mackinder* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁶⁹⁸ Colin Flint, "Dying for a 'P'? Some questions facing contemporary political geography," *Political Geography* 22, no. 6 (2003): 617–620.

⁶⁹⁹ Critical geopolitics was popularized in the early 90s, in particular by Ó Tuathail, *Critical geopolitics*; and Dalby, *Creating the Second Cold War*; For what this thinking looks like today see the 2008 13:3 special issue of *Geopolitics* and the 2009 75:4 special issue of *GeoJournal*, in particular the roundtable hosted by Jones and Sage Laura Jones and Daniel Sage, "New directions in critical geopolitics: an introduction," *GeoJournal* 75, no. 4 (January 2009): 315-325.

opinion (popular geopolitics).⁷⁰⁰ In this framework accompaniers could perhaps be seen as engaging in popular geopolitics when they send action alerts to their supporters and ask them to write to the US ambassador in Colombia, but that does not seem to get to the heart of what accompaniment is doing.⁷⁰¹

Perhaps accompaniment could be seen as engaging in ‘anti-geopolitics.’ Whereas hegemonic geopolitics is traditionally carried out by those with political, economic and cultural power, anti-geopolitics, as Routledge has defined it, is “geopolitics from below”. Anti-geopolitics resists the material and/or discursive geopolitical practices of the ruling elite, through material *and/or* discursive forms of resistance.⁷⁰² This may be a resistance to the policies and representations of the state, financial institutions, or the media. As Routledge uses the term then, it is not necessarily, as the Zapatistas put it, “from below and to the left”, but rather *any* material or discursive challenge to geopolitical hegemony made by those who are dominated by it.⁷⁰³ But US citizen accompaniers are not dominated by US aid to Colombia. US citizens not in the high elite are certainly negatively affected since, say, more military aid to Colombia means less money for

⁷⁰⁰ Ó Tuathail, Gearóid, S. Dalby, and P. Routledge, eds., *The Geopolitics Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York; London: Routledge, 2006), 8.

⁷⁰¹ It may fit better under the rubric of “popular geopolitics 2.0” Jason Dittmer and Nicholas Gray, “Popular Geopolitics 2.0: Towards New Methodologies of the Everyday,” *Geography Compass* 4, no. 11 (2010): 1664–1677.

⁷⁰² Routledge has argued that it “challenges both material geopolitical power of states and political institutions and the representations imposed by political and economic elites upon world and its people to serve their geopolitical interests” Paul Routledge, “Anti-Geopolitics,” in *A Companion to Political Geography* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 237 but in personal communication (2007) he emphasized that it could be one or the other or both.

⁷⁰³ Routledge, “Anti-Geopolitics.”

schools in the US, but I would not go so far as to say that we are dominated. Routledge says that the “from below” of anti-geopolitics does not mean from the left. Several other geographers in briefly reviewing the concept seem to understand it to mean that it is resistance by social movements.⁷⁰⁴ Yet in his introduction to the anti-geopolitics section of the reader Routledge argues that, “Anti-geopolitics can take myriad resistant forms, from the oppositional discourses of dissident intellectuals, the strategies and tactics of social movements to armed insurrection and terrorism”.⁷⁰⁵ The term anti-geopolitics then seems both too broad (including all sorts of challenges, even violent ones) and too specific (depending on how one defines ‘from below’) to describe accompaniment.

Perhaps accompaniment can be understood as doing a feminist geopolitics.

Unfortunately the term ‘feminist geopolitics’ is widely misunderstood to mean simply gender and geopolitics. It is actually a much broader project which reworks what geopolitics means by re-envisioning who does it, how, and at what scales. Cynthia Enloe’s book *Bananas, beaches and bases* did not use the term feminist geopolitics, but was an important early feminist rescripting of what geopolitics means.⁷⁰⁶ She argued that the personal is international and the international is personal. This relationship is one that

⁷⁰⁴ E. Kofman, “Feminist political geographies,” in *A Companion to Feminist Geography*, ed. L. Nelson and J. Seager (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 527; John A. Agnew, *Geopolitics: re-visioning world politics* (NY: Routledge, 2003), 116; M. Power, *Rethinking development geographies* (New York; London: Routledge, 2003), 202.

⁷⁰⁵ Paul Routledge, “Introduction to Part Five: Anti-Geopolitics,” in *The geopolitics reader* (Oxford, UK: Routledge, 2006), 233.

⁷⁰⁶ Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics [Updated Edition]*, updated. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000).

feminists have continued to grapple with.⁷⁰⁷ The collection *the Global and the Intimate*, edited by Rosner and Pratt, understands these two as intertwining.⁷⁰⁸ It disrupts grand narratives of global relations by focusing on the specific, not by reifying the local. They argue that the intimate is not the opposite of the global but its supplement, its undoing, even as the global can haunt the intimate. The intimate is not a refuge but a politicized sphere, which feminists can use to approach the world.⁷⁰⁹

The term ‘feminist geopolitics’ was first used in print in 2001 when Dowler and Sharp organized a special issue of *Space and Polity* on feminist geopolitics and Hyndman published a separate call for feminist geopolitics.⁷¹⁰ Dowler and Sharp were grappling with this relationship between, as they put it, the international and the everyday - how identities and mundane practices shape reconstructions of the nation and the international,

⁷⁰⁷ Enloe herself has continued to do powerful work along these lines, see particularly her recent Cynthia Enloe, *Nimo’s War, Emma’s War: Making Feminist Sense of the Iraq War* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010) and its use of personal stories.

⁷⁰⁸ Victoria Rosner and Geraldine Pratt, *The Global and the Intimate: WSQ: Spring/Summer 2006* (New York, NY: Feminist Press, 2006).

⁷⁰⁹ Sara Koopman, “A Liberatory Space? Rumors of Rapes at the 5th World Social Forum, Porto Alegre, 2005,” *Journal of International Women’s Studies* 8, no. 3 (April 2007): 149–163; Koopman, “Imperialism Within”; For reviews of other work that has done this see Alison Mountz and Jennifer Hyndman, “Feminist approaches to the global intimate,” *Women’s Studies Quarterly* (2006): 446–463; M. W. Wright, “Gender and geography: knowledge and activism across the intimately global,” *Progress in Human Geography* 33, no. 3 (July 2008): 379–386.

⁷¹⁰ A. J. Secor, “Toward a Feminist Counter-geopolitics: Gender, Space and Islamist Politics in Istanbul,” *Space and Polity* 5, no. 3 (2001): 191–211; Lorraine Dowler and Joanne P. Sharp, “A Feminist Geopolitics?,” *Space and Polity* 5, no. 3 (2001): 165–176; L. A. Staeheli, “Of possibilities, probabilities and political geography,” *Space and Polity* 5, no. 3 (2001): 177–189; Fiona M. Smith, “Refiguring the Geopolitical Landscape: Nation, ‘Transition’ and Gendered Subjects in Post-Cold War Germany.,” *Space & Polity* 5, no. 3 (December 2001): 213–235; Jennifer Hyndman, “Towards a feminist geopolitics,” *The Canadian Geographer* 45, no. 2 (2001): 210–222.

just as global geopolitical discourse shapes daily lives and bodies.⁷¹¹ They argued for widening the realm of the political. This means not only writing women back in, but grounding geopolitics in practice and in place in a way that makes the experiences of the disenfranchised more visible. Geopolitical discourse can be understood more broadly, not only as representation but the ways that geopolitical discourse is worked out and always embodied in mundane everyday practices. They argue for bodies not merely as “surfaces for discursive inscription” but as “sites of performance in their own right”.⁷¹²

Hyndman similarly argued for feminist geopolitics not as any one new theory, but rather as an analytic or imaginary that not only exposes the investments of dominant geopolitical imaginaries, but then works to, as she puts it, put humpty dumpty back together again, to point to new ways forward in practice, recognizing the contingency of place, people and context in making change.⁷¹³ Hyndman lays out three steps that can be taken in a feminist geopolitical approach: using a ‘finer and coarser’ scale of security than the state that instead focuses on the safety and broader well-being of people, as both individuals and groups; analyzing spaces of violence that traverse public/private, domestic/international distinctions; and focusing on people’s varying mobility as a way to analyze geopolitical power across space. Hyndman has written that “A feminist geopolitics might be viewed at once as a critical approach and a contingent set of political practices operating at multiple scales that include, but are not restricted to, the nation-

⁷¹¹ Dowler and Sharp, “A Feminist Geopolitics?”.

⁷¹² Ibid., 169.

⁷¹³ Hyndman, “Towards a feminist geopolitics.”

state,”⁷¹⁴ and that “it seeks embodied ways of seeing and *material notions of protection for people on the ground*”.⁷¹⁵ Accompaniment seems to fit these descriptions, though the term ‘feminist geopolitics’ has been widely taken up as an analytical framework by geographers, rather than understood as a practice that is also engaged in outside of academia. I doubt that most accompaniers would call their work feminist but I consider them feminist in that they, to use a definition offered by Hyndman, “address the inequitable and violent relationships of power among people and places based on real or perceived differences”.⁷¹⁶

Accompaniers also do not talk about their work as “doing geopolitics”, I suspect because they think of geopolitics as only done by the state. They might see themselves as trying to *impact* geopolitics when they send emails to their supporters asking people to write to congress to oppose US military aid to Colombia, but not see their daily work of accompaniment as itself a form of geopolitics. But recognizing accompaniment as itself a form of geopolitics can allow us to see it in a new light.

The term ‘progressive geopolitics’ has recently been used by Kearns to argue for understanding geopolitics as more than what is done through states, force, and capitalist markets.⁷¹⁷ Kearns broadens the perspective of what geopolitics is to include non-state

⁷¹⁴ Jennifer Hyndman, “Beyond either/or: a feminist analysis of September 11th,” *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 2, no. 1 (2003): 4.

⁷¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 5 emphasis added.

⁷¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷¹⁷ Kearns, *Geopolitics and Empire*; “Progressive Geopolitics,” *Geography Compass* 2, no. 5 (2008): 1599–1620.

entities, cooperation, and non-commodified forms of labor. As he puts it, if we only study states engaged in force, we will never imagine, or understand, how peace is made in other ways.⁷¹⁸ Kearns argues for looking at how geopolitics is also being done non-violently by non-state actors, and for paying attention to these neglected practices and their possibilities of progressive change - not instead of, but alongside the important work of critique of state actions. Accompaniment absolutely then seems to be a form of geopolitics, and progressive geopolitics at that.

Accompaniers do geopolitics, but not just 'from below', understood in terms of scale. They reweave the connections between the everyday and the global, inserting the safety of chocolate farmers in the mountains of Colombia into Congressional discussions of US military aid to Colombia. Indeed Luis Eduardo's assassination inspired organizing across the US that led to much of that aid being frozen for many months. Accompaniers are not doing geopolitics 'from below', understood in terms of power. Indeed, they are explicitly using what privilege they have access to. International accompaniers do this by using the 'global' weight of their passport to get partners through daily checkpoints. They are also weaving their everyday work to build alternative securities into and through dominant geopolitics. Creating a binary between what is geopolitical/global/discursive and what is everyday/local/lived is artificial and misleading.⁷¹⁹

⁷¹⁸ Kearns, "Progressive Geopolitics," 1610.

⁷¹⁹ Rachel Pain, "Whose Fear is it anyway? resisting Terror Fear and Fear for Children," in *Fear, Critical Geopolitics, and Everyday Life*, ed. Rachel Pain and Susan J. Smith (Aldershot, UK; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 220.

Accompaniment works to build security in a broad sense. It is people coming together across difference not just to stay alive and be safe, but to live well, to live with dignity and justice. Positive peace is more than simply the absence of violence. Well-being also requires security of food and housing and health, for a start. Far too often though the first priority has to be physical safety. Accompaniment generally focuses on physical security, but the groups that are accompanied are working for broader securities, and these economic, food, environmental, health, and other securities are intertwined. Accompaniment does not focus on bodily security so as to ignore other securities, but rather to make struggles for broader securities possible.

Accompaniment as an alternative geopolitics

The global justice movement (or network of movements) has widely insisted in recent years that it not be considered *anti*-globalization, but rather as working for a different sort, an *alter*-globalization. The slogan of the World Social Forum is “another world is possible” and in recent years “and we are building it” is often added. In many of the movements that participate in the social forums there is an emphasis on prefigurative politics, which is to say ‘living the change’.⁷²⁰ In one sense accompaniment does not do this, for it works towards a world where everyone’s life counts, but uses the fact that in the current system some lives count more. But at the same time it does ‘live the change’ by building connections across that difference, and collectively creating alternative

⁷²⁰ Gandhi is widely quoted by activists as saying “be the change you want to see in the world” (attributed).

securities. It does this all the more when accompaniment is explicitly engaging in and building solidarity.

By putting bodies together for safety, accompaniers build different people to people relations. Their bodies help to build new chains of connection and solidarity. These are used not only to protect the accompanied day to day, but also to push for policy changes. Accompaniers put the voices of accompanied Colombians into debates about ending military aid (or free trade agreements) that address broader violences. But these two are not separate. Accompaniment intertwines the global and the intimate in various ways. It is the ongoing daily work of building alternative ties between people across places that will wear away at the systems that make some lives worth more than others. In doing so accompaniers are doing an alternative form of geopolitics.

In chapter eight I argued that accompaniers wear down their racial privilege by being ‘out of place’. Accompaniers wear away at and engage in a remaking of whiteness and its spatialization (who is expected to be where) by literally putting ‘white(r)’ bodies next to ‘brown(er)’ bodies in unexpected ways and places. As I have argued throughout, race is entangled with nation and class - and these too can be reworked and their imaginaries worn away and shifted as accompaniers rework who has access to what centers of power – that is, who is connected to who, and how.

Geopolitics is not simply some Great Game to be played by Great Men. Accompaniers and peace community members are doing it for themselves. They are doing geopolitics as pieces moving themselves on the map, not only changing the way they draw and see

the map itself, what colors, what *bodies*, they see where - but also changing who gets to move where.

A small peace community in the mountains of Colombia, three international companions living with them – this is an alternative form of geopolitics as done by small groups of people, but these are not “little things”.⁷²¹ It is my hope that accompaniment can have a bigger impact if I as an academic honor, listen to, learn from, contribute to, connect and share the work they are doing. Much as Gibson-Graham’s focus on alternative economic practices has been a way to re-imagine what economic geography can be,⁷²² my attempt here to understand accompaniment as a form of alternative geopolitics is also meant as a way of re-imagining what I can do as a political geographer.

Summary

I began this dissertation with two chapters that set out the broader context of accompaniment. In **chapter one** I look at different ways accompaniment has been defined, and clarify how I define it.⁷²³ In the first chapter I also describe why and how I went about doing this research. In **chapter two** I describe both the historical roots of

⁷²¹ Nigel Thrift, “It’s the little things,” in *Geopolitical traditions: A century of geopolitical thought*, ed. Klaus Dodds and David Atkinson (London: Routledge, 2000), 380–387; Martin Müller, “Reconsidering the concept of discourse for the field of critical geopolitics: Towards discourse as language and practice,” *Political Geography* 27, no. 3 (March 2008): 322–338.

⁷²² J.K. Gibson-Graham, “Diverse economies: performative practices for ‘other worlds,’” *Progress in Human Geography* 32, no. 5 (October 1, 2008): 613–632.

⁷²³ Again, I limit the definition to actions taken by unarmed civilians to protect other civilian individuals, organizations or communities under threat because of their nonviolent work for peace and justice - in a country that is not the companions own, by physically (as well as in other ways) being with them (either full time or off and on) for three months or more.

accompaniment and where and when it has been done around the world. I end by looking at trends that stand out across different accompaniment projects. Accompaniment has been done in countries with internal conflicts, at times when the conflict has been particularly “hot” – and where, and generally when, the US was a major player in the conflict. Accompaniment came out of and generally remains part of the largely Christian Latin American solidarity movement. It has been primarily done in Latin American countries, although it is now being done in much smaller numbers in countries like Nepal and Sudan that are outside of Latin America, have no solidarity movement in the US or Europe, and where the US is not playing a key role in the conflict. There accompaniment is done on a nonpartisan civilian peacekeeper (rather than solidarity movement) model. Accompaniment does not necessarily have to be in Latin America nor have Christian ties to work, but it appears to be most effective when it is done in countries where and when the US in particular is supporting one of the armed actors in the conflict, and when it is part of a broader solidarity movement.

After presenting this broader context for accompaniment, I turn to the context in Colombia, highlighting aspects of it that make accompaniment work particularly well there. In **chapter three** I focus on land grabs and US involvement. Displacement is a major crisis in Colombia as *campesinos* are being pushed off their land in a massive violent land grab, primarily by paramilitaries and their affiliates who want to ‘develop’ these lands with large agribusiness and mining projects. Many brave Colombians are resisting displacement, as well as returning to their stolen lands – and both are particularly spatial forms of resistance that can be more easily supported through the physical presence of accompaniers than, say, a hunger strike. Not all groups that are

accompanied are of displaced people, but those that are not are often of human rights organizations, who themselves are often working to end the abuses against the displaced and being attacked for it.

US involvement in the Colombian conflict jumped dramatically in 2000, with the passage of Plan Colombia. Though PBI started accompanying in Colombia in 1994, and the Red in 1999, it was in 2000 that a wave of organizations began accompaniment in the country, led by US based groups - though other European groups then followed (see Appendix B). Accompaniers came because of the military aid in several senses. The increased militarization was leading to more violent land grabs, displacement, and human rights abuses generally. Some accompaniment organizations were inspired by a sense of responsibility to work on the ground and support those struggling against the abuses that the military aid paid for by their tax dollars was facilitating. But the increase in US aid is important for understanding the workings of accompaniment because it, ironically, offers accompaniers leverage through the use of a US passport that was now even more powerful in Colombia. Chapter three is also where I introduce the story of the peace community of San José de Apartadó, which I then continue to weave throughout the dissertation as emblematic of accompaniment. Their story highlights both US involvement and resistance to displacement.

The third aspect of the conflict that makes accompaniment work well in Colombia, along with land grabs and US involvement, is that it is *campesinos* in racialized regions that are being displaced, and accompaniers generally stand out in these regions as being ‘out of place.’ In **chapter four** I describe the history and dynamics of racialization in Colombia

that make this so. I focus particularly on what whiteness has meant and means in Colombia today – and how space is intimately part of that construction. In Colombia race is regionalized, and regions are racialized. Whiteness is idealized and associated with capitalist modernity. These racial imaginaries are both changing and hardening through the armed conflict, and there continues to be a strong association between race and place that accompaniers, however unintentionally or reluctantly, use to make accompaniment work in Colombia.

In **chapter five** I turn to the peace part of ‘making space for peace’ and ask what peace means in general, in the Colombian context, to the groups that are accompanied, and to accompaniers. I begin by describing Galtung’s distinction between positive and negative peace. I use these categories to make sense of two marches that happened in Colombia while I was there, and argue that one was a call for negative peace and the other for positive peace, though neither used those terms. Many Colombian organizations that receive international accompaniment were in the second group, and indeed, most of these groups work not just to end killing but for justice. I then turn to how accompaniers understand peace, and our discussion of the term. Accompaniment is sometimes portrayed as civilian peacekeeping, so I outline the history and nature of militarized peacekeeping. Peacekeeping upholds a negative peace, which can mean a liberal peace, and it can fall into serving for pacification, propping up neoliberal capitalism. As such I argue against the characterization by some authors, and the Nonviolent Peaceforce, of accompaniment as ‘civilian peacekeeping.’ Accompaniment is not about eliminating conflict, but rather about making it safe for those with grievances (often about root causes of the conflict) to nonviolently present their demands for justice.

Chapter six both continues to outline the context of accompaniment in Colombia, and begins the discussion of how it works. I present the different groups doing accompaniment and how professional each is or is not. Only one group presents themselves as non-partisan: PBI. But even they, as do all other groups, consider their work to be solidarity. The limited literature about accompaniment emphasizes that accompaniment should be non-partisan, and presents this as incompatible with solidarity. Often it is implied that to be professional, accompaniers must be non-partisan - based on unclear and confusing ideas about what both non-partisan and solidarity mean. I write here about what accompaniers mean when they say they do their work in solidarity, followed by a discussion of what is meant by non-partisan, drawing primarily on writings about accompaniment that advocate for it. These authors emphasize that accompaniers should not work with those they accompany, so I then turn to how accompaniers in Colombia do and do not work alongside the accompanied, exchange skills with them, and how they negotiate other forms of daily intimacy. Appearances are key to how accompaniment works, so I also present the logos of accompaniment organizations in Colombia and discuss how these reference solidarity or not. I conclude by coming back to the literature on accompaniment and its arguments against accompaniment as solidarity and review how accompaniment in Colombia refutes these. Ultimately I argue that the push for 'non-partisan' accompaniment falls into the liberal peace trap that comes with portraying accompaniment as 'civilian peacekeeping'. Being in solidarity in no way precludes being professional, and indeed accompaniment is most effective when it is both professional, and openly engaged in solidarity. Proclamations of non-partisanship are confusing and can do more harm than good.

Having presented the Colombian context in chapters three through six, in terms of the three key elements of the Colombian conflict that are part of how accompaniment works (land grabs, US involvement, and racialization), what groups are doing accompaniment in Colombia and how, and what peace means in the Colombian context, I then turn in the next two chapters how accompaniment is working – spatially and then racially. These tie back to the three highlighted elements of the conflict, but I also look at each in a wider sense.

In **chapter seven** I discuss how accompaniers, and those writing about accompaniment, have used the term ‘space’, and how they have understood accompaniment to ‘work’ spatially – that is, how it ‘makes space for peace’. I begin with the spatial diagrams drawn by accompaniers in workshops and Mahony and Eguren’s diagrams of how accompaniment works. Both accompaniers and those writing about accompaniment tend to rely on ideas of space as abstract space. Yet accompaniers’ day to day strategizing of whether and how to go on particular accompaniments, accompaniers do analyze the ways space is shaped by various actors. They also think a great deal about what to do with their bodies and how various actions might change the space. That analysis could be strengthened by explicitly thinking of space as relational space and recognizing the ways that different practices, productions and performances can shape space on an accompaniment. We did this in the workshops I held with accompaniers and I describe these in detail, with a focus on their ‘body idioms’.

Chapter seven then goes on to look at how space is described on the websites of accompaniment organizations, and argue that again, these rely on ideas of space as

abstract and rarely mention the role of solidarity networks in how accompaniment works. I then turn to the literature about accompaniment and the metaphors that are used to describe how accompaniment works. Again, I argue that these sneak in ideas of space as abstract. Instead I argue for understanding accompaniment as shaping space as relational, in large part through chains of solidarity. These can be seen as a network of sorts, but one that is precarious, shifting, and constantly being remade. I distinguish these from actor-networks and from solidarity as a ‘convergence space’. I then present Mahony’s diagrams that he uses to explain how what he calls ‘international pressure’ is part of how accompaniment works. I argue that his diagrams fail to show how international pressure is created through chains of solidarity and present my own attempt at diagramming how accompaniment works spatially. Accompaniment can be more effective and keep those accompanied safer when accompaniers analyze the complex ways space is made relationally on particular accompaniments, the role that chains of solidarity can play in that making, and the importance of both mobilizing and reminding others of these in their daily practices, productions and performances of space.

In **chapter eight** I look at how accompaniment works racially. I argue that most accompaniers do not talk openly about how privilege shapes how accompaniment works. Both accompaniers and those who have written about accompaniment tend to either deny or minimize how racialization in particular shapes accompaniment, rather than talk of how accompaniment might also engage in changing scripts of space, race and power. As described in chapter four, the communities that are resisting or returning from displacement tend to be in the racialized ‘frontier’ regions, and as such the whiteness of accompaniers stands out there all the more as ‘out of place’. The war is driven by desires

for capitalist development and ‘modernity,’ which is imagined as white. But companions are not in these regions to ‘develop’ them, but rather standing with those who are struggling for a different vision of development. One of the ways the accompanied are able to ‘stay in place’ and rework imaginaries of those places, is through the solidarity of companions who, when they walk with them in these places, are also going against these racial scripts.

I write in chapter eight about the experiences of companions who are not white and how they can be both more in danger and create more safety than white companions. I also look at the term ‘international’, and how some are more international than others. I then review the few parts of the literature that do examine privilege. Occasionally some go to the other extreme and see inequities of nation, class, and particularly of race, as the *only* way that accompaniment is able to work. I argue here that even companions ‘of color’ can ‘*wear* whiteness’. One of the things the literature emphasizes is the importance of uniforms in relation to race, so I then look at the different uniforms used by companions in Colombia, and their mixed feelings about wearing them. Companions are both wary and often weary of using privilege, which comes through in arguments for companions to lend it, give it up and give it back. I end by arguing that though none of those are possible, accompaniment can indeed wear down privilege.

If companions are ‘out of place’ frequently enough – and build solidarity across places in ways that reworks their relationships – then just maybe they ‘wear away’ some of the power of whiteness, by affecting how it is spatialized. Companions remake whiteness by literally resituating white bodies, putting them in a different physical relation with

browner bodies as a way to build different social and political relations. Their bodies help to build new chains of connection. That is, if companions are building solidarity. If they are serving as non-partisan keepers of the liberal peace, they are more likely to be reinforcing those relations. But if companions are using structures of inequality (race, inevitably intertwined with class and nationality) to purposefully try and create a world with more equality, it is important for them to acknowledge that paradox, both ethically, and to make accompaniment more effective. By being ‘out of place’ companions challenge not only racist scripts, but also their use for the accumulation by dispossession that tries to displace those they are accompanying. Ultimately it is the work of building alternative ties between people across places that will most change the systems that make some lives worth more than others. This is what can change the political, economic and social systems that make some lives ‘count’ more, and ultimately wear away at the very privileges companions use to do this work. As I argue at the beginning of this conclusion, that work can be understood as an alternative way of doing geopolitics.

Future research

There are four gaps in particular in this research that I hope to address in future research. Before turning this dissertation into a book I want to deepen my understanding of how accompaniment ‘works’ through examining the stories companions tell about those they are accompanying. It is by sharing such stories through chains of solidarity that companions generate, say, a flood of emails to the US embassy. I am interested in how it is that these stories move people and what kinds of connection they generate.

As part of this research I have been compiling the stories told by companions for the past five years. I plan to organize these into an online digital archive, using free Omeka software, of stories told by companions in various formats (blogs, emails, video, newsletters, photo essays and articles). This site will also facilitate collaborative analysis through a password-protected section where I will ask companions to discuss the stories. I will then analyze these stories on the basis of these discussions, close readings, a quantitative discourse analysis, as well as interviews of both the companions who shared the stories and some of the Colombians whose life stories were shared. I also aim, through this extension of my research, to extend my thinking about how accompaniment is doing geopolitics and ask how it might also be engaging in an alternative biopolitics.

Biopolitics has been used to mean different things,⁷²⁴ but was used most famously by Foucault to mean the control of bodies - of individuals but also particularly of the collective social body.⁷²⁵ Kjellen, one of the first to use the term geopolitics, was also one of the first to use the term biopolitics.⁷²⁶ Dillon argues that to understand late modern war we must understand how it uses a 'toxic combination' of the two⁷²⁷ – but few have

⁷²⁴ Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* (Zone Books, 2002); Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, Reprint. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

⁷²⁵ Michel Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976* (New York: Picador, 2003).

⁷²⁶ R. Kjellén, *The State as a Form of Life* (Stockholm, Sweden: Gebers, 1916).

⁷²⁷ Michael Dillon and LUIS Lobo-Guerrero, "Biopolitics of Security in the 21st Century: An Introduction," *Review of International Studies* 34, no. 2 (2008): 265-292; Michael Dillon and Julian Reid, *The Liberal Way of War: Killing to Make Life Live*, New edition. (Routledge, 2009).

taken him up on this.⁷²⁸ Gregory, one of the few to trace the relationship between the two, argues that their shared visual detachment means that bodies can be counted and yet not ‘count’.⁷²⁹ I am interested in how protective companions change that gaze and make Colombian campesinos’ lives ‘count’ differently, and specifically how they do so through sharing personal stories. As part of this thinking I would also like to think more generally about the relationship between bodies and space in accompaniment.⁷³⁰

The other gap in this research is quantitative and comparative data. No one seems to have a clear sense of exactly how many companions are working exactly where in each country. In the future I hope to annually collect, through online surveys, both qualitative and quantitative data from accompaniment organizations around the world about the work they are doing. No such dataset currently exists. Accompaniment is a rapidly growing and changing technique and I want to both track and theorize its forms across different countries. I am particularly interested in developing a better sense of the gender and race ratios of companions around the world and how that shapes their work.

The third gap I hope to address in future research is a discussion of how gender shapes accompaniment. Gender came up in many of my conversations with companions but I set it aside in this dissertation in part because the International FOR was at the same time

⁷²⁸ though see David Roberts, *Global Governance and Biopolitics: Regulating Human Security* (London: Zed Books, 2010); Alan Ingram, “The Geopolitics of Disease,” *Geography Compass* 3, no. 6 (November 2009): 2084–2097.

⁷²⁹ Gregory, “War and peace.”

⁷³⁰ Butler recently gave a talk about this relationship in Tahrir square that I hope to engage with, as well as thinking generally about the relationship of how accompaniment works to the dynamics of Tahrir and “occupy” movements. Judith Butler, “Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street”, September 7, 2011, <http://www.eipcp.net/transversal/1011/butler/en>.

engaging in a study on gender and accompaniment.⁷³¹ I hope to engage with that work and extend it by thinking about how accompaniment uses the increasingly fragile figure of ‘the civilian’ and what work that does, particularly when women are both more likely to be seen as civilians (but as part of the category that Enloe calls ‘womenandchildren’), and less likely to be seen as full citizens.⁷³² The status of the members peace community of San José as civilians is questioned by the army because they stayed in a war zone, so this question of being civilian again comes back to issues of space.

I recognize that the understandings of accompanied Colombian activists are very much lacking in this dissertation. As described in the introduction, my physical and social location made it difficult to have critical conversations with them about how they understood accompaniment to be working. In the future I hope to do joint research with Colombian academics with long standing relationships with different accompanied peace communities where they lead discussions with those communities about their understandings of accompaniment, and then I come in and do follow-up workshops with them.

Making space for peace

Let me end by coming back to my title. ‘Making space for peace’ is the slogan of Peace Brigades. It can be understood as an explanation of what accompaniment does and how

⁷³¹ Delgado, *Engendering Peace: Incorporating a Gender Perspective in Civilian Peace Teams*.

⁷³² Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*; Helen M. Kinsella, “Gendering Grotius: Sex and Sex Difference in the Laws of War,” *Political Theory* 34, no. 2 (April 1, 2006): 161–191; Derek Gregory, “The death of the civilian?,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 24, no. 5 (2006): 633–638.

it works. Yet it can be interpreted in very different ways. It means something quite different if one imagines space as abstract and peace as a liberal peace than if you see space as relational and peace as multiple, positive, and always in the making. Even the ‘making’ in the slogan can be interpreted as clearing away death threats (space as abstract) or as using different practices, productions and performances of space to reference networks and ‘make’ relational space, which the accompanied are also part of making – in a shared struggle to shape space again and again such that it allows for ever more full and dignified lives, that is, for more positive peace(s).

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Appendix A: Accompaniment internationally

**Table 1: International accompaniment organizations
(past and present)**

acronym	full name	website
BTS	Maritimes Breaking the Silence	www.breaking-the-silence.ca
Carea	Cadena para un Retorno Acompañado	www.carea-menschenrechte.de
CJ	Cry for Justice Coalition	
CG	Collectif Guatemala	www.collectif-guatemala.chez-alice.fr
CPT	Christian Peacemaker Teams	www.cpt.org
EAPPI	Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel	www.eappi.org

acronym	full name	website
GSN	Guatemala Solidarity Network	www.guatemalасolidarity.org.uk
ICW	International Checkpoint Watch	www.canadazone.com/icw/
IAP	International Action for Peace	www.peaceaction.org
IPO	International Peace Observatory	www.peaceobservatory.org
IPT	Iraq Peace Teams	
ISM	International Solidarity Movement	www.palsolidarity.org
IWPS	International Women's Peace Service	www.iwps.info
MW	Mideast Witness	
MPT	Michigan Peace Teams	www.michiganpeaceteam.org
NISGUA	Network in Solidarity with Guatemala	www.nisgua.org

acronym	full name	website
NP	Nonviolent Peaceforce	www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org
OD	Operation Dove	www.operationdove.org
PAGQ	Projet Accompagnement Guatemala-Quebec	www.paqg.org
PASC	Projet Accompagnement Solidarite Colombia	www.pasc.ca
PBI	Peace Brigades International	www.peacebrigades.org
PW	Peace Watch	www.peacewatch.ch
PPF	Presbyterian Peace Fellowship	www.presbypeacefellowship.org
Quixote	Quixote Center	www.quixote.org
Red	<i>Red de Hermandad y Solidaridad</i> (Solidarity and Sistering Network)	www.redcolombia.org

acronym	full name	website
SiPaz	International Service for Peace	www.sipaz.org
SweFOR	Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation	www.krf.se/es
Voices	Voices in the Wilderness	
WFP	Witness for Peace	www.witnessforpeace.org

Table 2: Countries where international accompaniment is being done as of October 2011

Colombia	Guatemala	Mexico	Palestine	First Nations territory (No. Am.)	Honduras
<p>PBI (1994 -) WFP (2000 -) CPT (2001 -) FOR (2002 -)</p> <p>PASC (2003 -) SweFOR (2004 -) PPF (2004 -) IPO (2005 -)</p> <p>Red (1999 -) OD (2009 -) PW (2009 -)</p>	<p>SweFOR (2000 -) NISGUA (1995 -) CAREA (1992 -) CG (1998 -)</p> <p>BTS (2002 -) PW (1993 - 1997, 2003 -) PAGQ (1992 - 1996, 1998 -) PBI (1993 - 1999, 2003 -)</p> <p>GSN (2005? -)</p> <p><i>past:</i> <i>NP (2007 - 2008)</i> <i>and other small</i> <i>groups in the 1990s</i></p>	<p>SiPaz (1994 -) SweFOR (2000 -) Carea (1995 -) PBI (2001 -)</p> <p>WFP (1998 -) MPT (2010)</p> <p><i>past:</i> <i>CPT (1998 - 2001)</i> <i>OD (1998 - 2002)</i> <i>PW (1995 - 2001)</i></p>	<p>CPT (1995 -) MPT (2001 -) ISM (2002 -) EAPPI (2002 -)</p> <p>IWPS (2002 -) OD (2002 -)</p> <p><i>past:</i> <i>MW (1990 - 1992)</i></p>	<p>MPT (1996 -) CPT (1999 -)</p> <p><i>past:</i> <i>PBI (1992 - 1999)</i></p>	<p>Quixote (2010 -) HAP (2011 -)</p> <p><i>past:</i> <i>VW (1996 - 2005)</i> <i>IPT (1991 - 1996)</i></p>

Nicaragua	Iraq (Kurdistan)	Sri Lanka	Nepal	Phillipines (Mindanao)	Sudan
WFP (1983 -)	CPT (2002 -)	NP (2003 -) <i>past:</i> <i>PBI (1989 - 1998)</i>	PBI (2006 -)	NP (2007 -)	NP (2010 -)

Table 3: Countries where international accompaniment has been done in the past

Balkans*	Chechnya	East Timor	El Salvador	Haiti	Indonesia
<p>OD (1992, 1998 - 1999)</p> <p>PBI (1994 - 2001)</p> <p>Balkan Peace Team (1994 - 2001)</p> <p>CPT (Bosnia) (1996)</p> <p><i>* not quite accompaniment</i></p>	<p>OD (2000 - 2001)</p>	<p>OD (1999)</p>	<p>PBI (1987 - 1992)</p> <p>various small groups</p> <p>with returning refugees (1989 - 1992)</p>	<p>CJ (1993)</p> <p>CPT (1995 - 1997)</p> <p>PBI (1995 - 2000)</p>	<p>PBI (1999 - 2011)</p>

**Table 4: International accompaniment organizations (past and present)
with country information**

acronym	full name	from	to
BTS	Maritimes Breaking the Silence	Canada	Guatemala (2002 -)
Carea	Cadena para un Retorno Acompañado	Germany	Guatemala (2002 -) Mexico (1995 -)
CJ	Cry for Justice Coalition	US	Haiti (1993)
CG	Collectif Guatemala	France	Guatemala (1998 -)
CPT	Christian Peacemaker Teams	primarily US and Canada	Palestine (1995 -) First Nations Territory (1999 -) Mexico (1998 - 2001)

acronym	full name	from	to
EAPPI	Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel	various	Palestine/Israel (2002 -)
FOR	Fellowship of Reconciliation	primarily US	Colombia (2002 -)
GSN	Guatemala Solidarity Network	UK	Guatemala (1999 -)
ICW	International Checkpoint Watch	unclear	Palestine (2001 - 2002)
IPO	International Peace Observatory	various	Colombia (2005 -)
IPT	Iraq Peace Teams	primarily US	Iraq (1991 - 1996)
ISM	International Solidarity Movement	various	Palestine (2002 -)
IWPS	International Women's Peace Service	various	Palestine (2002-)
MW	Mideast Witness	UW	Palestine (1990 - 1992)
MPT	Michigan Peace Teams	US	Palestine (2001 -)

acronym	full name	from	to
NISGUA	Network in Solidarity with Guatemala	US	Guatemala (1995 -)
NP	Nonviolent Peaceforce	various	Sri Lanka (2003 -) Mindanao (2009 -) Sudan (2010 -)
OD	Operation Dove	Italy	Palestine/Israel (2002 -) Colombia (2009 -) Yugoslavia (1992) Sierra Leone (1997) Kosovo/Albania (1998 - 1999) East Timor (1999) Mexico (1998 - 2002) Chechnya (2000 -2001) DRC (2001) Uganda (2005 - 2006)

acronym	full name	from	to
PAGQ	Projet Accompagnement Guatemala-Quebec	Quebec, Canada	Guatemala (1992-1996, 1998 -)
PASC	Projet Accompagnement Solidarite Colombia	Quebec, Canada	Colombia (2003 -)
PBI	Peace Brigades International	various	Guatemala (1983-1999, 2003 -) Colombia (1994 -) Mexico (1998 -) Nepal (2006 -) Nicaragua (1983 -) Palestine (1989) First Nations Territory (1992 - 1999) Balkans (1994 - 2001) Haiti (1995 - 2000) West Timor (1999 - 2008)
PW	Peace Watch	Switzerland	Guatemala (1993 - 1997) Mexico (1995 - 2001) Colombia (2009 -)

acronym	full name	from	to
PPF	Presbyterian Peace Fellowship	US	Colombia (2004 -)
Quixote	Quixote Center	US	Honduras (2010 -)
Red	<i>Red de Hermandad y Solidaridad</i> (Solidarity and Sistering Network)	various	Colombia (1999 -)
SiPaz	International Service for Peace	primarily US, Canada	Mexico (1994 -)
SweFOR	Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation	Sweden	Mexico (2000 -) Guatemala (2000 -) Colombia (2004 -)
Voices	Voices in the Wilderness	US	Iraq (1996 - 2005)
WFP	Witness for Peace	US	Nicaragua (1983 -) Mexico (1998 -) Colombia (2000 -)

**Table 5: Timeline of international accompaniment
(by organization start date)**

1983	WFP PBI
1990	MW
1991	IPT
1992	Carea OD PAGQ
1993	CJ PW
1994	IPS
1995	CPT NISGUA
1996	VW MPT
1998	CG
1999	Red GSN
2000	SweFOR
2001	ICW
2002	EAPPI FOR ISM IWPS BTS
2003	NP PASC
2004	PPF
2005	IPO
2010	Quixote
2011	HAP

Appendix B: Accompaniment in Colombia

Table 6: Timeline of when international accompaniment organizations began working in Colombia

1994	PBI	Peace Brigades International
1999	Red	Red de Hermandad
2000	WFP	Witness for Peace
2001	CPT	Christian Peacemaker Teams
2002	FOR	Fellowship of Reconciliation
2003	PASC	Projet Accompagnement Solidarité Colombie
2004	PPF	Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
2004	SweFOR	Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation
2005	IPO	International Peace Observatory
2009	OD	Operation Dove
2009	PWS	Peace Watch Switzerland
2010	IAP	International Action for Peace

Table 7: International accompaniment organizations working in Colombia, as of November 2010

CPT: Christian Peacemaker Teams: since 2001. Team of around 6 ‘long termers’ plus one or two ‘reservists’ who serve for one to three months. based in Barrancabermeja, cover Magdalena Medio, Sur de Bolivar and have made trips to Nariño. [primarily from US and Canada, also have some Colombians on team] www.cpt.org

FOR: Fellowship of Reconciliation: since 2002. Team of 2 in peace community of San José, team of 2 in Bogotá, 2 coordinators in the US. [primarily from US] www.for.org

IPO: International Peace Observatory: since 2005. Team size varies from 4 to 12, based in Bogotá, travel around the country [from US, Catalonia, Spain, Italy and others] www.peaceobservatory.org

OD: Operation Dove: since 2009. Team of 2 to 4, based in peace community of San José. [from Italy] www.operationdove.org

PASC: Project Accompagnement Solidarite Colombie: since 2003. Team of one or two full time in communities of Jiguamiando and Curvarado, Chocó, occasional visits to Santander. [from Quebec, Canada] www.pasc.ca

PBI: Peace Brigades International: since 1994. Has 40 accompaniers total: 12 in Bogotá, nine in Barrancabermeja, 12 in Urabá, seven in Medellín, and a support team of 14 in Bogotá and four in Washington DC and Brussels. [primarily from Western Europe, a few North and fewer Latin Americans] www.peacebrigades.org

PPF: Presbyterian Peace Fellowship: since 2004. Team of two, stay for three months at a time, based in Barranquilla, in 2010 began also working out of Apartadó [from US] www.presbypeacefellowship.org/colombia/accompaniment

PWS: Peace Watch Switzerland: since 2009. Team of unknown size. Stay for minimum of three months. Working in communities of: La India, Santander; El Garzal, Bolivar; Las Pavas, Bolivar. [from Switzerland] www.peacewatch.ch

Red: Red de Hermandad y Solidaridad (Solidarity and Sistering Network): began organizing in 1994, first accompaniers in 1999, office and home in Bogotá since 2003. Varies from 4 to 12 [from various European countries] www.redcolombia.org

SweFOR: Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation: since 2004. Team of four based in Bogotá who travel around the country and another four based in Quibdó who travel around the Chocó. [from Sweden] www.krf.se/es

WFP: Witness for Peace: since 2000. Team of four based in Bogotá, host regular two week delegations. [from US] www.witnessforpeace.org

Table 8: Organizations working with the Red de Solidaridad⁷³³

Europe:

- Association France Amérique Latine AFAL- Comité Colombia-Lyon (France)
- Colectivo de Solidaridad Belgo-Andinoamericano- AYNI (Belgium)
- Colectivo Ginebrinos de Solidaridad con los Pueblos Colombianos –Ginebra (Switzerland)
- Colectivo Solidarité Colombia (French speaking Switzerland)
- Colombia Solidarity Campaign (UK)
- Colombia Solidarity Network (Ireland)
- Comité de solidaridad Carlos Fonseca (Italy)
- Confederación Cobas (Italy)
- Coordination Populaire Colombienne à Paris (France)
- CRIC (Italy)
- Espacio Bristol-Colombia (UK)
- FRACTAL Colectivo Paris (France)
- Grupo de Apoyo (German speaking Switzerland)
- KolumbienKampagne Berlín (Germany)
- Tribunal Internacional de Opinión SB-París (France)

Spain:

- Acción Sindical Social Internacionalista
- Asociación Internacionalista Paz y Solidaridad –AISPAZ (León)
- Asociación Paz con Dignidad
- Centro de Documentación y Solidaridad con América Latina y África-CEDSALA (Valencia)
- Colectivo de Colombianos Refugiados en España COLREFE

⁷³³ From http://www.redcolombia.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14&Itemid=46 for links to many of these organizations see http://www.redcolombia.org/index.php?option=com_weblinks&catid=26&Itemid=50

- Coliche (Logroño-La Rioja)
- Comité de Solidaridad con América Latina- COSAL - XIXÓN (Gijón-Asturias)
- Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT)
- Coordinadora Aragonesa de Solidaridad con Colombia- CASCOL (Zaragoza)
- Komite Internazionalistak (País Vasco)
- SODEPAU (Valencia)

Americas:

- México: Comité de Solidaridad con Colombia
- Canadá: Proyecto de Acompañamiento y Solidaridad con Colombia (PASC)
- Argentina: Pañuelos en Rebeldía, Frente Popular Darío Santillán y Patagonia Solidaria
- Ecuador: En Pie

Colombia

*(some of these organizations are accompanied by international organizations,
some accompany other Colombian organizations)*

- ACA, Asociación Campesina de Antioquia
- ANDAS
- ASFADDES seccional Medellín
- Biblioteca Amauta
- Cecucol, community center in Cali www.cecucol.tripod.com/
- CODHESEL, Colectivo de derechos Humanos Semillas de Libertad
- Colectivo de DDHH universitario
- Colectivo Derechos Humanos de Tuluá
- Comité de Integración del Macizo Colombiano –CIMA (Cauca)
- Comité de Integración Social del Catatumbo –CISCA (Catatumbo)
- Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los DDHH Héctor Abad Gómez
- Confluencia de Mujeres para la Acción Pública
- Coordinador Nacional Agrario –CNA
- Corporación Jurídica Libertad
- Corporación Nuevo Día
- Corporación Sembrar (Bogotá)
- Corporación Social para el Asesoramiento y Capacitación Comunitaria - COSPACC (Casanare, Boyacá y Bogotá)
- FCSPP seccional Medellín
- FCSPP seccional Valle
- Federación Agrominera del Sur de Bolívar -Fedeagromisbol (Bolívar)

- Fundación Comité de Solidaridad con los Presos Políticos -FCSPP (Bogotá, Barranquilla, Valle, Bucaramanga, Valledupar)
- Fundación Tomás Moro
- Iapes – Ofb
- Identidad Estudiantil – student group <http://identidadestudiantil.blogspot.com/>
- Instituto Nacional Sindical –INS (Bogotá, Valle, Huila)
- Nomadesc
- Organizaciones Sociales de Arauca
- Procesos de Comunidades Negras –PCN
- Red Antorcha
- Red de Hermandad Valle
- Red Juvenil de Medelin
- Red Libertaria Popular Mateo Kramer
- Red Revuelta
- SUMAPAZ
- Zona Pública – alternative communications collective zonapublicatv.blogspot.com/

**Table 9: Colombian groups receiving accompaniment,
organized by Colombian organization, with links**

(Red groups listed separately in table 8)

ACA, Asociación Campesina de Antioquia: www.acantioquia.org – FOR since 2005

ACA, Asociación Campesina de Arauca, IPO since 2005

ACVC, Asociacion Campesina del Valle del Cimitarra, IPO since 2005

ACIN (Northern Cauca Indigenous Council) <http://www.nasaacin.org/> - WFP

ACVC Peasant Farmers' Association of the Cimitarra River Valley, <http://www.prensarural.org>, PBI since 2009, Red

AMOR, Antioquia Women's Association: www.forcolombia.org/colombiapartners/amor – FOR since 2005

AGROMISBOL, Southern Bolivar Small Miners Federation – CPT since 2006

ASCAMCAT, Asociacion Campesina del Catatumbo, IPO

ASFADDES Association of the Families of the Detained – Disappeared, www.asfaddes.org, PBI since 1994

ASOCBAC, Asociación Campesina del Bajo Cauca Antioqueño, IPO

CAHUCOPANA, Corporation for Coexistence and Peace in Northeast Antioquia – CPT since 2009

CAVIDA, Cacarica Community of Life, Dignity and Self-determination – PBI since 2000

CCAJAR Jose Alvear Restrepo' Lawyers Collective, www.colectivodeabogados.org - PBI since 1995

CCALCP, Luis Carlos Perez Lawyers Collective, www.colectivodeabogadoluiscarlosperez.org, PBI since 2006

CISCA, Comite de Integracion Social de Catatumbo, www.ciscatatumbo.org - Red

CJL, Corporation for Judicial Freedom, www.cjlibertad.org, PBI since 2001

CIJP, Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz (Interchurch Commission for Justice and Peace) <http://justiciaypazcolombia.com/> - PBI since 1994, WFP, Red

Communities declared Humanitarian and Biodiversity Zones of Uraba: WFP

Community of displaced families of Argelia, Cauca: WFP

Communities displaced/affected by Cerrejon: WFP

Community of peace of San José de Apartadó: www.cdpsanjose.org PBI since 1997, FOR since 2002, OD since 2009

Communities of El Garzal and Nueva Esperanza, Bolivar: CPT since 2007, PWS since 2010

Communities of Jiguamiando and Curvarado, Chocó: PASC since 2003

Community of La India, Santander: PWS since 2010

Community of La Toma, Cauca: WFP

Community of Las Pavas, Bolivar: CPT since 2009, PWS since 2010

Community of Micoahumado, Bolivar: CPT since 2002

Community of Tiquisio, Bolivar: CPT since 2005

COS-PACC, Corporación Social Para la Asesoría y Capacitación Comunitaria - PBI since 2009

CREDHOS, Regional Corporation for the Defence of Human Rights in Barrancabermeja, www.credhos.net, PBI since 1994

CSPP, Solidarity Committee for Political Prisoners www.comitedesolidaridad.com PBI since 1997

CSPP, Santander (Committee in Solidarity with Political Prisoners): hwww.fcspasantander.blogspot.com, PASC since 2007

ESPACIO, Human Rights Workers' Forum of Barrancabermeja – CPT since 2003

FMCV: Manuel Cepeda Vargas Foundation www.fundacionmanuelcepeda.org – PBI since 2004

Fundartecp/AMDAE (Fundartecp/AMDAE (Foundation for Art and Culture of the Pacific/ Mutual Association for the Comprehensive Development of Afro-Colombian Businesses), <http://www.amdae.org/> - WFP

Iglesia presbiteriana de Colombia, Presbyterian church of Colombia – PPF since 2004

IPC, Popular Training Institute, Medellin, www.ipc.org.co, PBI since 1999

Jorge Molano, private attorney representing the peace community of San José – PBI since 2009

Memory Gallery, Cali – WFP

Minga (Association for the Promotion of Social Alternatives) <http://asociacionminga.org/> - WFP, PBI since 1998

MOVICE (Movement of Victims of State Crimes) www.movimientodevictimas.org - Red

MOVICE, Valle de Cauca – WFP

Movimiento Social de Mujeres Contra la Guerra y por la Paz, Women's social movement against War and for Peace – CPT since 2009

No Bases Coalition <http://colombianobases.org/> - WFP

NOMADESC (Association for Investigation and Social Action) <http://nomadesc.blogspot.com/> - WFP

OFF, Grassroots Women's Organization, www.ofp.org.co, in Barrancabermeja, PBI since 1995, in Bogotá PBI since 2001,

PCN (Process of Black Communities) <http://www.renacientes.org/> - WFP

Presbyterian church of Colombia – PPF since 2004

Red Juvenil: www.redjuvenil.org (young conscientious objectors) – FOR since 2005

RECALCA (Colombian Action Network in Response to Free Trade) <http://www.recalca.org.co/> - WFP

**Table 10: Colombian groups receiving accompaniment,
organized by international organization**

CPT:

AGROMISBOL, Southern Bolivar Small Miners Federation, since 2006

CAHUCOPANA, Corporation for Coexistence and Peace in Northeast Antioquia, since 2009

Communities of El Garzal and Nueva Esperanza, Bolivar since 2007

Community of Las Pavas, Bolivar since 2009

Community of Micoahumado, Bolivar since 2002

Community of Tiquisio, Bolivar since 2005

“Espacio” (Human Rights Workers’ Forum of Barrancabermeja) since 2003

Movimiento de Mujeres contra la guerra y por la paz (Women’s Social movement against War and for Peace) since 2009

OFP, Grassroots Women, (not officially accompanied but accompany events and collaborate with)

PDP (“Programa”, Program of Development and Peace of the Magdalena Medio) (not officially accompanied but accompany events and collaborate with)

FOR:

ACA, Asociación Campesina de Antioquia, since 2005

AMOR, Antioquia Women’s Association, since 2005

Community of San José de Apartadó since 2002

Red Juvenil since 2005

IPO:

ACA, Asociación Campesina de Arauca, since 2005

ACVC, Asociacion Campesina del Valle del Cimitarra since 2005

ASCAMCAT, Asociacion Campesina del Catatumbo

ASOCBAC, Asociación Campesina del Bajo Cauca Antioqueño

And other groups not publicly listed

OD:

community of San José since 2009

PASC:

communities of Jiguamiando and Curvarado, Chocó since 2003

CSPP, Committee in Solidarity with Political Prisoners, Santander since 2007

PBI:

ACVC Peasant Farmers' Association of the Cimitarra River Valley, since 2009

ASFADDES Association of the Families of the Detained – Disappeared, since 1994

Berenice Celeyta, in Cali, since 1999

CAVIDA, Cacarica Community of Life, Dignity and Self-determination since 2000

CCAJAR Jose Alvear Restrepo' Lawyers Collective Corporation since 1995

CCALCP, Luis Carlos Perez Lawyers Collective, since 2006

CIJP, Inter-church Justice and Peace Commission, since 1994

CJL, Corporation for Judicial Freedom, since 2001

COS-PACC, Corporación Social Para la Asesoría y Capacitación Comunitaria, since 2009,

CREDHOS, Regional Corporation for the Defence of Human Rights in Barrancabermeja, since 1994

CSPP, Solidarity Committee for Political Prisoners since 1998

FMCV: Manuel Cepeda Vargas Foundation since 2004

IPC, Popular Training Institute, Medellin, since 1999

Jorge Molano, private attorney representing peace community of San José, since 2009

MINGA Association for Alternative Social Advancement since 1998

OFP, Grassroots Women's Organization, in Barrancabermeja since 1995, in Bogotá since 2001,

Peace Community of San José de Apartadó since 1997

PPF:

Prebsterian church of Colombia since 2004

PWS:

Communities of: La India, Santander; El Garzal, Bolivar; Las Pavas, Bolivar since 2010

Red:

see table five

SweFOR:

Not public information

WFP:

ACIN (Northern Cauca Indigenous Council)

Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz (Interchurch Commission on Justice and Peace),

communities declared Humanitarian and Biodiversity Zones of Uraba

community of displaced families of Argelia, Cauca

communities displaced/affected by Cerrejon

community of La Toma, Cauca

Fundartecp/AMDAE (Foundation for Art and Culture of the Pacific/ Mutual Association for the Comprehensive Development of Afro-Colombian Businesses)

Memory Gallery of Cali, Minga (Association for the Promotion of Social Alternatives),

MOVICE of Valle de Cauca

the No Bases Coalition

NOMADESC (Association for Investigation and Social Action)

PCN (Process of Black Communities)

RECALCA (Colombian Action Network in Response to Free Trade)