



**Against the Militarisation of Humanitarian Action: the  
Establishment and the Role of Civil Peace Corps in the Italian  
Scenario**

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## ACRONYMS AND TRANSLATIONS

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- ECPC: European Civil Peace Corps
- PbP: Peacebuilding Partnership
- DCNAN: Comitato di consulenza per la difesa civile non armata e nonviolenta (Unarmed and Nonviolent Civil Defence Advisory Committee)
- RCB: Rete Caschi Bianchi (White Helmets Network)
- Rete CCP: Civil Peace Corps Network
- CPC: Civil Peace Corps
- IPRI-CCP: Italian Peace Research Institute – Civil Peace Corps
- ICP: Interventi Civili di Pace (Civil Peace Interventions)
- Tavolo ICP: Tavolo Interventi Civili di Pace (Civil Peace Interventions Forum)
- GWOT: Global War on Terrorism
- CIMIC: Civil-Military Co-operation
- NGOs: Non-Governmental Organization
- UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
- OSCE: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
- QIP: Quick Impact Project
- PRT: Provincial Reconstruction Team
- IED: Improvised Explosive Device
- ICRC: International Committee of the Red Cross
- ICC: International Criminal Court
- UNSC: Ufficio Nazionale per il Servizio Civile (National Bureau for Civil Service)



## ABSTRACT

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During the Post-Cold War era a transformation overwhelmed the international humanitarian system putting the basis for a new trend known as 'New Humanitarianism'. The New Humanitarianism fostered the integration of humanitarian and military agenda, with concerning consequences on the Dunantist humanitarianism. Humanitarian assistance has indeed become highly politicised and relief and development agencies working in conflict zones tend to be abused in their mission and subjected to military instrumentalisation.

However, if on one hand some humanitarian agencies have been caught up in a counterproductive collaboration with the military, on the other hand there are still excellent examples of civilian forces that refuse military protection and operate in the name of nonviolence and civil defence, keeping up the values of the 'old-fashioned principled humanitarianism'. This study explores the theory and the practice of the role of Civil Peace Corps, civilian contingents composed of qualified individuals intervening in conflict or conflict prone areas through employment of nonviolence popular defence means, with a main focus on the grassroots movements in the Italian scenario. The study aims to propose an alternative to the main trends influencing humanitarian field and argues that the concept of nonviolence embedded by Civil Peace Corps can represent a solid counterpoint against the need of an increased militarisation of aid operations and, if fully applied, may give birth to a new idea of foreign policy.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Title of the Research

Against the militarisation of humanitarian action: the establishment and the role of Civil Peace Corps in the Italian scenario

## 1.2 Background and problem statement

*“And I want you to know that I have made it clear to my staff here and to all of our ambassadors around the world that I am serious about making sure we have the best relationship with the NGOs who are such a force multiplier for us, such an important part of our combat team.”*

Secretary Colin L. Powell  
Loy Henderson Conference Room, U.S. Department of State  
Washington, DC  
October 26, 2001

The study takes root in the process of militarisation and politicisation of humanitarian action, exacerbated from the Post-cold war. The transformation of the Dunant-principled humanitarianism led to the creation of the so-called ‘New Humanitarianism’, characterised by being strongly politicised and, in some cases, subjected to military interests. The ambiguous relationship between politics, military and humanitarian interests represented by the New Humanitarianism is inscribed in the concept of stabilisation agenda. Stabilisation agenda is an open-ended framework that aims at creating stability and reducing security threats through interventions where ‘hard’, military, and ‘soft’, civilian, powers are integrated (Collinson, Elhawary and Muggah, 2010).

Chapter 1 will analyse how the relationship between civilian aid organisations and military agencies has developed in an increasingly integrative way after the Cold War and the 9/11 terrorist attacks, to the detriment of humanitarian assistance. Military agenda began to manipulate humanitarianism, using it as a good excuse for expanding in new countries under the banner of humanitarian assistance and human security. In particular, the connection between hard and soft forces strengthened when the military assumed also civil/humanitarian tasks, facilitating aid delivery on the field. This trend will be concretely observed in the role assumed by Quick Impact Projects (QIPs), Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and peacekeeping operations.

The study adopts a double-phase approach. The first part aims at presenting the current situation in humanitarian field at international level, in order to raise awareness on the ongoing transformation of humanitarian action and underline how humanitarianism has been compromised and gradually detached from its principled origins. This phase will be interesting and useful for introducing the role of Civil Peace corps as a genuine alternative to a strongly 'interested' humanitarian action. The connection between the two phases lies on the fact that if, on one hand, humanitarian agencies have ended up collaborating with military forces, on the other hand, instead, examples of unarmed civilian forces refusing military protection and operating in the name of nonviolence and civil defence still survive, highlighting that staying true to own roots it is still feasible.

### 1.3 The Civil Peace Corps in the Italian panorama

After having built a solid background for the analysis, the research proposes to adopt a new (or different) perspective as far as humanitarian action is concerned, in particular through the study of the Civil Peace Corps. The analysis and the role of the Civil Peace Corps represent the core of the research. Used as example to explore nonviolent approach, Civil Peace Corps are mainly expression of civil society and grassroots movement constituted by professionals and voluntary workers, who, under the slogan of a nonviolent popular defence and the adoption of techniques of conflict-prevention, interposition and popular diplomacy they are able to gear conflicts in a constructive and peaceful way (Camera.it, 2014).

The chapter will first make an overview of the origins of Civil Peace Corps, outlining the leading international projects in this field in particular 'White Helmets initiative', pioneer initiative in the domain of civil defence launched by Argentinian government and supported by UN system and the European Civil Peace Corps, a project proposed by the European member of Parliament Alexander Langer that aimed to provide European Union with a civil alternative to the use of armed force in conflict prevention and conflict management.

The study will then concentrate on the Italian case, narrating the history and the legacy entailed by Civil Peace Corps project, from the birth of first nonviolent popular defence initiatives to the analysis of main grassroots movements and civil peace corps networks such as the 'Rete Caschi Bianchi' or the 'Tavolo Interventi Civili di Pace'. The chapter will also

outline the main juridical steps towards the creation of an official Italian Civil Peace Corps, initiative that is just now under discussion.

The second part of the chapter instead, will address the operational framework, the criterion of intervention and the main tasks Civil Peace Corps entail. The association Operazione Colomba will be taken as practical example of an Italian Civil Peace Corps, thanks of its level of expertise built up during the years and the massive background in the field of civil peace intervention in conflict areas.

#### 1.4 Research Objectives

The main focus of the study is understanding the figure of Civil Peace Corps in the Italian scenario through a careful reading of their history and an in-depth analysis of their operational framework. Moreover, the study will also concentrate on the function that Civil Peace Corps undertake in the process of empowerment of Italian Civil Defence.

These contents will be mainly covered in chapter 3, dedicated to literature review. Chapter 5 instead, built from the analysis of primary data, will complement information collected through literature review. This chapter aims to gain knowledge about the organisations that are promoting civil peace interventions; it will illustrate major risks for peace operators taking part in peace missions in conflict area, and it will investigate the type of relationship Civil Peace Corps establish with military forces.

#### 1.5 Research Design and Methodology

The study will adopt a mixed methods research, explained in the methodology chapter (4), based on the integrated use of quantitative and qualitative analysis. The combination of the two methods will provide a robust investigation into the topic. In particular, the data analysis design will follow the model of 'explanatory sequential mixed methods' that is a mixed methods strategy involving two-phase scheme in which, in the first phase, quantitative data are collected and analysed and the results are then used to integrate the second qualitative phase (Creswell, 2003). The research will harvest primary data through online surveys (via mail) or interviews (face-to-face or via Skype). Surveys and interviews will adopt the same structure in order to facilitate the analysis and classification of data (see Annex 1). Data will be then explained and commented. Presentation of data will be complemented with the use

of graphics. Considering the focus of the study a certain degree of flexibility will be allowed in the research analysis. For privacy reasons, the names of the respondents, or of the organisations they are members, will not appear in the analysis. Collected data will be presented anonymously.

### 1.6 Utility of the Study

Bearers of values such as nonviolence, open dialogue and neutrality, Civil Peace Corps are taken as case study to demonstrate they represent a valid and genuine alternative in front of the progressive instrumentalisation of humanitarian action. Their refusal of taking side in a conflict and their hard struggle for maintaining a neutral and impartial attitude re-establish a virgin space for civil action where this does not risk to be affiliated with military forces.

The academic relevance of the research lies on the general lack of thorough and in-depth analysis about Civil Peace Corps and their field of action. Raising awareness on this topic may lead to increase interest both in the Italian context and across borders and illustrates how violence, in terms of military forces, has always showed not to be the solution to any conflict situations. The implementation and the strengthening of Civil Peace Corps can contribute to a non-armed foreign policy for each state and can reinforce the climate of security and peace at global scale. The modality of intervention is exclusively based on non-violent methods.

### 1.7 Limitations

Although the research will mention also international initiatives in the field of civil peace operations, the focus will be restricted to Italian case. Moreover, not all the associations reached for the collection of data have a direct experience in civil peace interventions; some respondents contributed on the basis of their theoretical knowledge. In fact, these interventions have not become far-reaching initiatives yet and just a few actors detain a robust preparation and background to implement them. Because of the lack of a sound bibliography on the theme, it was difficult to obtain specific information from official literature. As a consequence, the study will also make a use of organisations' websites and internal reports to enrich its contents.



## 2. THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE HUMANITARIANISM

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The present chapter aims at reproducing the story of the humanitarian action after the Cold war and it will mainly focus on the impact politicisation and militarisation had on its essence. The chapter will go through the concepts of stabilisation agenda and Civil-Military Cooperation and analyse the tenets of the New Humanitarianism, which emerged in particular after the 9/11 attacks. These ideas will create the right context to discuss about the growing linkage between political/military sphere and the humanitarian-civilian one, which will be the common thread of the whole study.

### 2.1 The Post-Cold War Era

Humanitarian assistance faced a huge change in the post-Cold war era. If during the Cold War humanitarian actors were considered as a group of “politically naïve do-gooders” (Walker and Maxwell, 2009), a series of events at global level, in particular the Balkans War, the Somalia crisis and the Rwanda genocide, transformed the clear perspective of humanitarianism into a blurred agenda that began to be strongly dependent on political and military interests. The ‘lessons’ gained from these years inspired the idea of integrating humanitarian and political response to solve conflicts, especially using humanitarian aid to exert political pressure on strategic zones. However, the initiatives that stemmed from this combination between political and humanitarian agenda, would have threatened the principles of neutrality, impartiality and also independence of humanitarian assistance, compromising access and putting humanitarian workers at greater risk of attack (Macrae, 2002).

Post-Cold Era was characterised in particular by a change in the nature of warfare. Despite the fact that a new concept of war, based on the multiplication of warring parties, without border and less worldwide but strongly globalised, finds its origins in much older colonisation and decolonisation conflicts, the real shift can be recognised in the mid-1980s when the world began to assist to a new generation of violence and misery, after the end of the URSS-USA bipolarism. Modern conflicts have been characterised by “militia activity, the use of child soldiers, the flow and currency of small arms, the privatisation of security, the deliberate goading of civilian population movement to accompany or counterbalance

military power and by the political manipulation of refugees and diasporas” (Pugh, 2001). As far as humanitarian and civil action were concerned, the XXI century wars seemed to be more particularly threatening in terms of security.

In these years it became clear-cut that security was not just about defending the country from external attack or internal upheaval but it had also something to do with the concept of development. In the post-Cold war era, in fact, the rising number of intra-state conflicts and civil wars, with an increasing incidence of civilian targets, generated the need of a new paradigm of security. In 1992 the UN Secretary General Boutros Boutrosu Ghali launched the Agenda for Peace (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). This official report, together with the Human Development Report launched by the UNDP in 1994 (UNDP, 1994), emphasised the importance of human security over state security, including social, economic, humanitarian, ecological but also personal determinants in the spectrum of the security agenda (Macrae, 2002; UNDP, 1994). Moreover, this focus on human security, on the individual as human being, on the freedom from fear and freedom from want, contributed to involve into the political agenda concepts rooted in the humanitarian world.

The involvement of humanitarianism in political affairs was also a consequence of the post-cold war “political disengagement of major powers from the geopolitical periphery” that led very often humanitarian and development agencies and actors to play the role of representatives of West countries in non-strategic zones (Duffield, Macrae and Curtis, 2001). In this way, the definition of humanitarianism began to stretch; humanitarian agencies became political players whose role extended well beyond ‘life-saving’ operations.

In the 1990s a global consensus between states and humanitarian aid professionals emerged to establish closer integration and dependency between aid and political system in order to address the root causes of conflict-based crises (Maitra, 2015). This created a miscellaneous and complicated, if not ambiguous, relationship between political-military agenda, state interests and humanitarian principles that can be summed up in the concept of stabilisation agenda.

## 2.2 The Stabilisation Agenda

Stabilisation operations “involve a combination of military, political, development and humanitarian objectives, resources and activities to tackle trans-national and domestic threats through short term security promotion” (CCDP, HPG, 2010).

In more detail, the term emerged as a “process of establishing peace and security in countries affected by conflict and instability [...] (and as) the promotion of peaceful political settlement to produce a legitimate indigenous government, which can better serve its people” (Civcap.info, 2016).

The stabilisation agenda is an open-ended framework that incorporates actions of foreign diplomacy, security and humanitarian aid to control countries, usually labelled as fragile states, affected and lacerated by armed conflict and complex emergencies. The tools used by the stabilisation agenda framework to create stability and reduce security threats in weak states are international interventions integrating “hard” and “soft” forms of action, both military and civilian (Collinson, Elhawary and Muggah, 2010).

However, the concept of stabilisation has been very often adopted to manipulate humanitarian and development resources as means of support of political-military strategic - usually western, goals. Western countries began to incorporate, more strongly from the post-Cold war era but to some extent also beforehand<sup>1</sup>, humanitarian assistance and development projects into their military agenda (Collinson, Elhawary and Muggah, 2010). For this reason, humanitarian community has been worried by the overlap between humanitarian and military operations in complex emergencies and has warned against the securitisation and politicisation of relief assistance (CCDP, HPG, 2010). In fact, as Collinson, Elhawary and Muggah (2010) claim, even though stabilisation is a construction built on “broader-ranging policy arenas, including peace-making, peace-building, peace-

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<sup>1</sup> For a deeper knowledge about first attempts of stabilisation operations - Philippines (1898–1902), Algeria (1956–62), Vietnam (1967–75) and El Salvador (1980–92), see: Barakat, S., Deely, S. and Zyck, S. (2010). ‘A tradition of forgetting’: stabilisation and humanitarian action in historical perspective. *Disasters*, 34, pp.S297-S319.

enforcement, reconstruction, state-building, development and humanitarian action”, it is also true that its field of action is tied to “security objectives associated with counterterrorism, counter-insurgency, counter-narcotics, transnational crime prevention and the control of (unregulated) migration flows”. As a consequence, the combination between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ efforts goes very often to the detriment of the civilian humanitarian bodies, involved in the reconstruction and stabilisation actions. In this way, humanitarian assistance has been seen as a product in the hands of powerful states seeking to forge or sustain a political order in line with their particular strategic objectives (Collinson, Elhawary and Muggah, 2010). The heavy intrusion of politics, but most of all, military power into humanitarian space has had a negative impact on humanitarian principles. The original humanitarianism, relying on the Dunantist viewpoint, antithetical to stabilisation concepts, that fully rejects engagement with states, politics and military action, and prioritises principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence, seems doomed to be overcome by a more “politically-partial” humanitarianism (Barakat, Deely and Zyck, 2010).

### 2.3 The New Humanitarianism and the Trends Post 9/11

The humanitarianism of the new millennium appeared as more involved in political affairs but also more institutionalised. Humanitarian system that once included a very narrow set of ‘life-saving’ activities, expanded significantly. It grew in number of actors but also in terms of funding and budget. This change in the humanitarian system could be encapsulated in what Claire Short, a Labour Party activist who in 1997 became Secretary of State for International Development, called ‘New Humanitarianism’. In particular, main tenets of the New Humanitarianism are:

- The recognition that all aid is strongly politicised and the rejection of the naïve principle of neutrality;
- The awareness that humanitarian operations can cause as much harm as they do good and that humanitarian system need to be held accountable for both consequences;
- The ability to cope both with causes and with symptoms of crisis and to contribute to conflict resolution and peace-building activities;

- The adoption of other than humanitarian resources to reach stated goals (Walker and Maxwell, 2009; Macrae and Leader, 2001).

The last point underlines how the new 'politically-conscious aid' linked humanitarian system to "military and diplomatic tools in a coherent conflict-resolution strategy" (Fox, 2001). Humanitarianism began to be seen as a palliative for intervention in conflicts or complex crisis, a good excuse to expand in new countries under the banner of the human rights defence. In the coherence agenda framework "humanitarian assistance lends itself to social and political calculations and becomes part of mechanical conflict resolution, peace promotion and development strategies" (Duffield, Macrae and Curtis, 2001).

This trend appeared very clearly after the 9/11 attacks, when the then US president George W. Bush baptised the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). The strategy of the War on Terror began as a fight against the presumed organisations which perpetrated the heinous attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> but soon became a global and ambitious enterprise whose parameters "remain frustratingly unclear" (Record, 2003). This approach had repercussions also on humanitarian action, which became increasingly subservient to military goals. Through the principle of coherence, which promoted the simultaneous adoption of wide-ranging resources in order to reach a strategic target, humanitarianism was aligned with major powers' foreign policies. This connection was beneficial in financial terms because ensured a constant flow of funding from donors, but ethically speaking, it was dangerous since undermined the principle of independence of action of humanitarian system (Walker and Maxwell, 2009).

A study published by the Feinstein International Center in 2006 summarised the main challenges faced by humanitarian system during the post-9/11 era into the following four points of discussion: the concept of universality of humanitarian action, the implications of terrorism and counter-terrorism in the humanitarian agenda, the political-humanitarian relationship and the question of security for both humanitarian actors and beneficiaries of the action.

With respect to the principle of universality, humanitarian action is widely viewed as an enterprise motivated by interests other than human need, which incorporates principles and

believes of northern/western countries, with little regard to values and habits of civilians affected by conflicts.

Doubtlessly, terrorism and GWOT operations incremented the need for humanitarian interventions to assist vulnerable civilian populations; however, state governments and non-state actors opportunistically take advantages of these concepts manipulating humanitarian assistance and “frustrating the needs-based work of humanitarian agencies” (Donini and Minear, 2006).

As far as the political-humanitarian nexus is concerned instead, the relation between these two spheres is far from being collaboration among equals. The so-called coherence agenda, based on the linkage between political and humanitarian sphere, is advancing to the detriment of the latter, putting it into peril, especially in high-profile or complex crisis where conflicts are still on-going. Hence, the risk that humanitarianism and human rights are made subservient to political interests and instrumentalised to reach also military goals is shocking but recurrent.

Post 9/11 conflicts are charged with greater dangers to the security of both civilians and humanitarian workers. Humanitarian staff, local and international, pay a high price, sometimes also with their life, their commitment to alleviate the suffering of vulnerable people, especially in conflict-affected zones. In asymmetrical war, such as the GWOT, humanitarian agencies may be perceived by locals as skewed in favour of the official or state army, becoming thereby more vulnerable to attacks of non-state actors or rebel militia groups. As a consequence, also the deep analysis of local communities’ perceptions of security is fundamental to create a safe(r) environment (Donini and Minear, 2006).

The study has demonstrated that, in particular after the widespread fear of terrorism and terrorist attacks “action aimed at alleviating the suffering of the world’s most vulnerable has been for the most part incorporated into a northern political and security agenda”, leaving out local perspective, and concluded with an insight important to bear in mind: “if the disconnect between the perceived needs of intended beneficiaries and the assistance and protection actually provided continues to grow, humanitarianism as a compassionate

endeavour to bring succour to people in extremis may become increasingly alien and suspect to those it purports to help” (Donini and Minear, 2006).

## 2.4 The Civil-Military Relations

After the Cold War the relationship between civilian humanitarian organisations and military agencies has developed in an increasingly integrative way. Civil-military relations involve a wide range of actors and activities. In the particular framework of military operations, the acronym CIMIC that stands for Civil-Military Co-operation, is a cardinal point of civil-military liaison and represents the coordination in support of a mission, usually a peace support operation, between a military body and civil population “including national and local authorities, as well as international, national and non-governmental organisations” (Pugh, 2001).

The elaboration and consequential application of civil-military co-operation has been institutionalised by military establishment. As external forces, military corps need to rely on civilian authorities and organisations and on local communities to gain information, resources and freedom of movement and to attain their strategic plans on the country involved (Pugh, 2001).

A typical aspect of the CIMIC is the provision of military security to humanitarian and relief agencies, that in order to intervene in conflict area need to negotiate their access with warring parties. After the Cold War, with the raise of new types of conflict, providing humanitarian aid has become even more dangerous and involved the acceptance of working in a high and incessantly risky context. Therefore, in some cases “civilian organisations considered that principles of moral conduct were no longer adequate protection against deliberate attacks on workers and supplies” and to avoid the withdrawal from the country they decided to turn to military organisations (peacekeepers, local police or armed guards) in order to receive a solid and reliable form of armed protection (Pugh, 2001). Nonetheless, it is important to underline that the majority of NGOs refused and refuses to apply for protection to military forces, preferring to rely on their own capabilities.

However, the connection between military and humanitarian work got tighter with the involvement of the military in fields other than the provision of protection and security in

relief operations. From the 1990s “military actors have been deployed into on-going conflicts under a humanitarian banner” (Macrae, 2002), and “the roles of military forces have expanded beyond traditional war-fighting to encompass a range of tasks related to humanitarian goals, including support for humanitarian and rehabilitation efforts” (Wheeler and Harmer, 2006). Military and government assets began to be used in ‘non-protection roles’ such as in the logistic, engineering and communication fields, but also to rebuild key infrastructure for the country, and in particular they were directly involved in the provision of humanitarian assistance facilitating aid delivery, for example through the use of military aircrafts in order to have a more capillary ray of action in the intended area. This collaboration extended the capacity and the efficacy of the action of NGOs in on-going conflict and natural disaster zones (Duffield, 1997; Macrae, 2002).

#### 2.4.1 The QIPs and the PRTs

One of the first example of the civil-military interaction in the humanitarian framework have been the Quick Impact Projects (QIPs), used officially for the first time in the Balkans during the 1990s but already attempted in the Philippines at the end of the XIX century (Barakat, Deely and Zyck, 2010). QIPs were studied to be “small-scale, local development projects, such as the rehabilitation of a health clinic or the digging of wells” or “the restoration of essential public infrastructure”, aiming “to foster a ‘peace dividend’ by demonstrating the potential benefits of an end to the conflict” (Barakat, Deely and Zyck, 2010, Wheeler and Harmer, 2006). These units were supposed to create a safer and more secure environment in order to conquer local trust, through tactics of winning population “hearts and mind”: instead of using a coercive approach, they adopted an operational model based on the minimum use of force and the distribution of goods and services as rewards in exchange for information, cooperation and political support (Dixon, 2009; Wheeler and Harmer, 2006).

However, their success was limited since they indirectly instilled a sense of pessimism among beneficiary communities that were sceptical about their economic and technical abilities in carrying on the progress started by foreign forces. Moreover, these projects were mostly seen as a military product, also in terms of financial funding received, which was provided in conjunction with government forces, but rarely in coordination with humanitarian agency or UN headquarters (Wheeler and Harmer, 2006).

Another relevant example of civil-military cooperation in complex emergencies or in conflict areas date back to military intervention in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, main concrete steps of the above mentioned Global War on Terror. In this operational framework, civilian and military roles began to reverse and the strong line that once clearly divided their functions started to get blurred. Humanitarian action began to be addressed as a “force multiplier” of the war on terror. After the military intervention in Afghanistan, in fact, U.S Secretary of State Colin Powell coined this epithet praising NGOs representatives for the strong collaboration they showed with military forces on the ground.

Both in Afghanistan and in Iraq, U.S government “in order to address the need to conduct stability operations centred on governance, reconstruction and development” adopted the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) (Bebber, 2008). Provincial Reconstruction Teams were *ad interim* civil-military units designed to assist local government in a process of socio-economic reconstruction and institutional capacity development. Although models varied from Afghanistan to Iraq, the main duties of PRTs were “to provide comprehensive assistance for all aspects in the operation and development of a provincial governing body.” The core concept of PRTs “brings together all agencies which have resources dedicated for their specific mission. It entails a combination of military, government, tribal, religious, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working together to achieve progress and a more stable and productive society for the population” (Drolet, 2006). Inserted in the stabilisation agenda framework they were international interventions trying to stabilize and reduce security threats in a fragile state integrating ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ forms of action, both military and civilian.

Although PRTs were predominantly studied to have a civilian guidance and to be harnessed to civilian expertise, military forces always played a significant role, if not preponderant, both in the governance and in the economic reconstruction of the target country.

#### 2.4.2 Peacekeeping Operations

The transformation of the warfare and the military involvement and expansion in “operations other than war - into ‘nonkinetic’ or nonviolent facets of operations”, is also visible in the growing number of peacekeeping operations (Roberts, 2010).

The term peacekeeping indicates a whole set of operations launched by combined military and civilian units that rely on three principles:

- Peacekeeping missions can be set up only with the on-going consent of belligerent parties;
- Peacekeepers, also known as 'blue helmets', must be neutral and impartial between parties. They cannot take side or advance the interests of one of the two belligerent actors;
- In case of armed operations, "it had become an established principle that they should use force only to the minimum extent necessary and that normally fire should be opened only in self-defence" (Goulding, 1993).

Peacekeeping operations have been inserted in the new and expanded UN agenda. Initially studied as useful and multifaceted means to face new warfare challenges, with time they scraped together more and more tasks of humanitarian nature. This became official with the 1999 Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations – commonly known as Brahimi Report by the name of the Chair of the Panel, which suggested the integration of humanitarian and peacekeeping activities, "whereby humanitarian resources would be subsumed into wider peacekeeping".

Standard peacekeeping missions include separation of combatants, guarding of demilitarised zones, monitoring and supervision of cease-fire and armistice agreements, observations of border areas, helping of troops' withdrawal. The collaboration with civilian units and humanitarian agencies enlarged the mandate of peacekeeping operations which began to incorporate also stabilisation and reconstruction tasks, such as monitoring and running elections and rebuilding political and social institutions. Civilian and military forces work in strict coordination but both have their specific duties and obligations: civilians are more prone to deal with elections, while military units usually police demilitarized zones. However, the limit between civilian and military activities has become more and more blurred and difficult to identify; as stated by Roberts (2010) "the challenges of IOCs (informal interorganizational cooperation) in these cases result from 'mission creep', when the goals of operations are redefined and expanded, thus requiring the renegotiation of the rules of engagement for both civilians and the military".

## 2.5 The 'Side Effects' of the new Humanitarianism

The trends recorded in the new humanitarianism call to mind the famous saying of Carl Von Clausewitz. If according to the Prussian general and military theorist, war was the continuation of politics by other means, in the analysed case, humanitarian action can be seen as an “extension of political, economic and military strategy” (Burke, 2009). Humanitarian assistance has become highly politicised and relief and development agencies working in conflict zones tend to be abused in their mission and subjected to military instrumentalisation.

### 2.5.1 Humanitarianism and Politics

The politicisation of humanitarian aid is one of the most dangerous effects of the new humanitarianism. Though the stabilisation and coherence agenda, humanitarian assistance has become the West's favoured strategy to respond to political crisis beyond its borders. The 'humanitarian interventions' through relief or development programs are strongly conditioned by the Western governments' interests in a particular area of the globe. It is not so uncommon, in fact, to hear the parallelism 'new humanitarianism = new colonialism' in particular vis-à-vis multi-million-dollar NGOs that, strong of the support of Western armies' march into fragile states, ignoring the principle of national sovereignty and decide what are the best ways to solve internal conflicts or crisis (Fox, 2001; Duffield, Macrae and Curtis, 2001). A direct consequence of this trend lies on the fact that, being humanitarianism the primary form of political involvement in fragile states, West governments very often leave aid workers, who do not have the right skills and resources, to deal with political dimension internal to these countries, 'depowering' themselves from their duties.

Another effect of the political humanitarianism is related to the attitude of new humanitarians, who increasingly feel the need to speak out towards the aggressors in a conflict, accepting in this way the implicit risk of being attacked and losing access to vulnerable people. This led to a shrinking of the humanitarian space and an alteration of the principle of impartiality. In this regard, Hugo Slim affirms that “agencies cannot expect immunity or 'humanitarian space' if they are leaning towards solidarity” (Slim, 1997). Although it appears to be 'ethically correct', speaking out has more to do with politics than responding to human needs and providing first aid assistance. If on one hand governments'

aid strategies have usually more to do with promoting national interest than providing relief programs during a crisis, humanitarian agencies are not in a position “to demand that governments separate aid from foreign policy” when they are also actors “doing politics with aid” (Fox, 2001).

Speaking out means also take side with one part, the victim, towards the other, the aggressor. This attitude can raise a hierarchy dividing the victims in two categories: deserving and undeserving victims. To quote an example of this trend, during and after the Balkans war it was almost impossible to attract funds for Serbian people under the president Milosevic, because internationally these people were seen as the evil part of the conflict; as a consequence, tens of thousands of Serbian refugees struggled to survive due to the limited support received from outside. This shows how the slogan written in every humanitarian manual professing humanitarian aid is delivered without regard for nationality, political or ideological beliefs, religion, sex, race or ethnicity, does not stand up in practice (Fox, 2001, Duffield, Macrae and Curtis, 2001). In this regard, Stockton (1998) states that “the concept of the undeserving victim is morally and ethically untenable, and practically counter-productive. It represents an outright rejection of the principle of universalism, a fundamental tenet of human rights and humanitarian principles.” In front of the current world division between good and evil, civilised and barbaric there is a palpable risk that more and more population would be labelled as “undeserving victims”, in particular when they do not conform with western values. As a consequence, it is evident that this conditionality in delivering aid has become another strong tool in the hands of western governments used to control and manipulate situations in developing countries (Fox, 2001).

#### 2.5.2 Humanitarianism and Military Forces

Civil-military operations have revealed a puzzling nexus between military forces, civilian corps and NGOs action in conflict-affected areas. However, this compromising linkage has showed to be detrimental, in particular, to the ethics and the practice of humanitarian action. In fact, although military actors can be capable of performing humanitarian tasks, as showed by peacekeeping and CIMIC operations, their combination with civil forces pushes humanitarian assistance to be ancillary to military goals, and as last scenario to lose its classical, Dunantist cut of independent, neutral and impartial movement.

The partnership between civil and military corps is not balanced and especially humanitarian actors tend to be sidelined from the decision-making process and co-opted into a pattern dominated by western operational agenda (Duffield, Macrae and Curtis, 2001). According to Pugh (2001) "CIMIC is hierarchical and hegemonic and a significant challenge to an ethical humanitarian politics [where] states and their military forces set the agenda of civil-military relations and the agenda is not debated."

In the case of PRTs, for example, the relation between civilian and military parties were highly controversial and the supposed civilian-led approach of the teams resulted to be inefficient and blacked out by a military leadership, both in Afghanistan and in Iraq. As a result, the civil-military approach of PRTs was increasingly "gear(ed) towards an expanding insurgency rather than towards long-term development" (Dale, 2008) and internal management resulted to be flawed because of the divergent nature, vision and culture of civilian and military groups.

In fact, civilian organisations, and in particular NGOs, should rely on ethical principles, mainly humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. They usually reject being instructed by external forces and "eye with suspicion any attempts to organize or integrate with others, lest they compromise their freedom of operation." They are built on a decentralised authority structure in order to be more flexible and ready to respond quickly to emergencies. They proclaim values such as transparency, accountability towards beneficiaries and consensus-based decision making. Military organisations instead operate on an opposed rationale. They strictly rely on a strong "hierarchical authority, clear lines of command and control, and explicit rules of engagement to ensure accountability to policy makers" and "clear delineations of roles, responsibilities, and unity of command are viewed as necessary for mission success". Their operations are structured to conform to their general mandate, which is maintaining public order, eliminating external threats, ensuring overall security and force protection. They accent with pride their skills in advanced planning, and their systematic execution of operational orders (Roberts, 2010).

As a consequence, coordination costs are higher for the civilian part than for the military. Close alignment with military and armed forces hinders the neutral work of civil organisations. If NGOs are viewed as partial or 'interested', it can be denied their access to

assist vulnerable population, their actors are exposed to higher risk of attack and physical violence by combatants. This fear has been highly confirmed in the recent years, when humanitarian workers and NGOs have been increasingly targeted by terrorist attacks. According to the Aid Worker Security database, from January 2000 to August 2016 the number of aid workers that have been killed – due to a wide range of causes: i.e. kidnapping-killing, shooting, IED (Improvised Explosive Device)<sup>2</sup> etc., is 1379, with an incidence of 1215 for national staff and of 164 for international staff (Aidworkersecurity.org, 2016). Saying so, it is clear that the risk humanitarian workers are exposed to in conflict environment is already high but it is also exacerbated by the affiliation of humanitarian and military sphere. In this regard, it is emblematic to report the words of the Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid that, justifying the Taliban attacking and killing of International Rescue Committee aid workers in Afghanistan (News.bbc.co.uk, 2008), declared that there was no distinction between civilian and military units working in the country because they were both “foreign invader forces” -calling aid workers “foreign spies”, and all belonging to those countries that took Afghanistan’s freedom away (Roberts, 2010; News.bbc.co.uk, 2008). It is highly probable that the loss of perceived neutrality has led aid workers to be more exposed to security risks and as happened to Irish aid worker Margaret Hassan, director of Care International, abducted and killed in Iraq in November 2004 (The Independent, 2008), even deliberately attacked because of their activities (Duffield, Macrae and Curtis, 2001).

The term ‘New humanitarianism’ is fraught with ambiguities. Stabilisation and coherence agenda, politicisation of humanitarian aid, cooperation between civil and military forces have had deleterious effects on the classical concepts of humanitarian assistance, built on the four ICRC principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence and born with the aim of saving lives, alleviate suffering and maintain and defend human dignity in

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<sup>2</sup> The first countries in which IED were deployed in 2008 in attacks against aid workers have been, not surprisingly, Afghanistan and Iraq. Stoddard, A., Adele, H. and DiDomenico, V. (2009). Providing Aid in Insecure Environments: 2009 Update. *HPG Policy Brief*, 34, pp.1-12.

crisis situations. In order to regain credibility in their original mandate and avoiding external and compromising dependency, humanitarian action needs to assume a more modest cut, to get closer in ambition and intent to its original principled mission and to choose ethics over political interests. Paraphrasing the words of Donini, a solution for humanitarian enterprise could be adopting some form of secession or insulation, which “would only be possible through a return [...] to a more rigorous Dunantist position.” Humanitarianism, now blotted by its involvement in political agenda, if not dishonoured by its association with military interventions, needs to step back from its central position in conflict management, and be replaced to the margins where it can reassume purely lifesaving and protection duties. Refocusing on traditional humanitarian values and functions is the main step to regain credibility and a higher level of acceptance also among rejectionists or anti-humanitarian movements (Donini, 2010).

The chapter illustrated the main trends adopted by humanitarian agenda at international level. After having dived into the global panorama, the second chapter will conduct to the discovery of the Italian scenario through the analysis of Civil Peace Corps, chosen as case study in order to offer a ‘rosier’ alternative that counterbalances the worrying logics of the New Humanitarianism.



### 3. CIVIL PEACE CORPS: THE ITALIAN EXPERIENCE

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To counteract the tendency to accept a more militarised humanitarian action it is important to raise awareness about other nuances assumed by current humanitarianism. In particular, the present chapter will focus on the action of Civil Peace Corps. Civil Peace Corps can be defined as groups, contingents, operative units unarmed and nonviolent formed by peace operators that aim to put into action strategies and mechanisms of prevention, mediation, peacebuilding and civil reconstruction in conflict or conflict-prone areas (Camera.it, 2014). During the present chapter Civil Peace Corps will be taken as valuable and efficient example of civil defence of the nation. Civil defence is defined as the active contribution citizens can bring to create a safer environment in their country or outside their nation, in opposition to aggression threats or infiltration by states, armed groups or external power, which may destroy internal order. It also addresses the preservation and the safeguard of nation's democratic institutions and civil society, in order to protect them from risks of internal implosion (Tullio, 2000).

The research refers mostly to the Italian experience; nonetheless to depict a satisfying and explanatory framework of the topic, also major international initiatives implemented in this field will be mentioned along the chapter.

#### 3.1 Roots, History and Origins of Civil Peace Corps

Theoretical basis for the foundation of Civil Peace Corps can be identified in a series of documents and events which have enriched the international panorama since the end of World War II. These initiatives mainly focused on human security, underline concrete possibilities to avoid use of force and violence and abate atrocity, at international and national level (Barbiero, 2010):

1. The Charter of UN, issued in June 1945, established the role of UN as watchdog for the safeguard of international peace and security and for the promotion of an approach based on 'universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and freedoms' (United Nations: Charter of the United Nations, 1945),
2. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, dated December 1948, emphasised, after the outrageous happenings of the war, the utter importance of the principle

- of humanity and the respect of human beings. It recognised equal and inalienable rights to all people and the “foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world” (Un.org, 1948),
3. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, published in 1966, recognised that incitement to “discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law” as much as any propaganda for war or any other kind of brutality (Ohchr.org, 1966),
  4. The UN Document “An Agenda for Peace”, signed by the former UN secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1992, stated the importance of identifying “at the earliest possible stage situations that could produce conflict, and to try through diplomacy to remove the sources of danger before violence results [...]” (Boutros-Ghali, 1992).
  5. The foundation of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 1998. The ICC was the first permanent international court “established to investigate, prosecute and try individuals accused of committing the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole, namely the crime of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression” (ICC, 1998).

### 3.1.1 The White Helmets Initiative

The implementation of UN White Helmets initiative has represented the real incentive for the future concretisation of Civil Peace Corps. The term White Helmets was employed for the first time by Argentinian Government in 1993, when the then president Carlos Menem decided to found the White Helmets Commission “with the aim of selecting Argentinean civilian personnel to employ in humanitarian and development tasks” (Martinelli, 2002). After this ‘pioneer initiative’, on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1994, UN General Assembly signed the UN Resolution 49/139/B in which it welcomed alternative projects “such as the establishment of a national volunteer corps called ‘White Helmets’”. This program should be implemented to prevent humanitarian emergencies and crisis at national level, and internationally “to support the United Nations activities in the area of humanitarian emergency assistance” (UN General Assembly, 1994). The overall idea was to provide UN system, with an additional force that could complement the work of peacekeepers - allowed to use the armed force,

with “a body of unarmed civilians ready to intervene in conflict zones” (Barbiero, 2010). In the UN Resolution, General Assembly boosted this national volunteer corps to develop appropriate skills and capacities in order to support UN system and NGO in their on-going work, and appealed to governments to engage themselves in the financial support of such initiatives. It also requested the Secretary General to submit a report to the Economic and Social Council “considering the feasibility of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Volunteers to co-ordinate all those activities undertaken by the national volunteer corps” (UN General Assembly, 1994; Martinelli, 2002).

With the issue of the report entitled “Participation of Volunteers: ‘White Helmets’ in activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development” presented by the UN Secretary General to the Economic and Social Council on 27<sup>th</sup> June 1995, a concrete step towards the institutionalisation of national volunteer corps was carried out. This report included directives about planned modules and programs and generalised standards of training to instruct volunteer corps to be coordinated and effective in various field of intervention. Furthermore, it listed a wide range of tasks and activities they can be deployed for, such as delivery of food, provision of relief and general services (basic health, sanitation), assistance in conducting census of return refugees or internally displace people and following initiatives for their resettlement in their country of origin or their effective reintegration in the host countries, monitoring of respect of human rights, support of confident-building activities, technique of conflict prevention and conflict resolution at the grass-roots level, demobilisation, retraining and reintegration of former combatants and support for a more efficient reorganisation of local services (UN General Assembly, UN Economic and Social Council, 1995; Martinelli, 2002).

On 16<sup>th</sup> December 1997, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 52/171 that recognised the remarkable potential and the progress achieved by White Helmets. The General Assembly underlined that ‘White Helmets, as an operational partner of the United Nations Volunteers, is an efficient and viable mechanism for making pre-identified and trained homogenous teams available to the United Nations system, in support of immediate relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development activities, in the light of the increasing

number and growing magnitude and complexity of natural disasters and other emergencies” and, in this respect, invited states to support “their respective national focal points for White Helmets” in order to establish a network for rapid response actions, in the event of humanitarian crisis. In addition, the document highlighted the potential use of these corps as a means of prevention for the consequences of emergencies and post-conflict humanitarian catastrophes (UN General Assembly, 1997; Martinelli, 2002).

The General Assembly has been renewing its support for the White Helmets Initiative every three years, underlining the importance of the Argentinian experience in the implementation of civil volunteering corps. The last resolution on the subject, Resolution 70/105, was signed on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2015 and, once again, it recognised the potential showed by the White Helmets Initiative in boosting regional partnerships and in involving also beneficiaries and vulnerable populations “in the tasks of planning, training, mobilizing and providing an immediate response in disaster situations and complex emergencies”. Moreover, it stressed the ability of White Helmets “in disseminating information regarding the importance of a trained and organized volunteer corps” (UN General Assembly, 2015).

In its assessment the General Assembly referenced the report of the Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, which declared that White Helmets have grown 20 years of experience in “supporting and facilitating humanitarian assistance around the world” becoming an efficient tool in humanitarian action. Since the adoption of this initiative, White Helmets have taken part in more than 262 humanitarian assistance missions around the world, such as Rwanda the Balkans, Palestine, the Eastern Caribbean, Lebanon, Haiti, Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica (UN General Assembly, UN Economic and Social Council, 2015).

The White Helmet Initiative has shown to be an efficient mechanism based on “trained homogeneous teams” acting upon request of an affected country or “within the framework of a call for international humanitarian assistance” able to give immediate response to disasters, specialised in risk prevention and management as well as in deploying rehabilitation, reconstruction and development tasks (UN General Assembly, UN Economic and Social Council, 2015).

### 3.1.2 The European Civil Peace Corps

The push towards a solid discussion about implementing civilian contingents at European level came from some members of the Green Party, who, fronted by the Italian Green Member of the European Parliament Alexander Langer proposed, in 1995, the institution of a European Civil Peace Corps (ECPC). The establishment of this Corps would have provided European Union with an additional and civil instrument to improve external action in terms of conflict prevention and conflict resolution.

Given the success of two missions in the Balkans, carried out by the Italian NGO 'Blessed the Peacemakers', respectively 'Anch'io a Sarajevo', in December 1992 and 'Mir Sada', in August 1993, through the exclusively adoption of nonviolent methodology, Alexander Langer proposal was meant to "raise awareness in the EU-member states about the effectiveness of constructive civilian engagement" (Gourlay, 2004; Barbiero, 2010).

On 17<sup>th</sup> May 1995 the European Parliament, in its plenary session in Strasbourg, adopted the report 'Bourlanges/Martin', recognising that "a first step towards a contribution to conflict prevention could be the establishment of a European Civil Peace Corps (including conscientious objectors) with training of monitors, mediators and specialists in conflict resolution" (Alexanderlanger.org, 1995).

On February 10<sup>th</sup> 1999, the European Parliament adopted a recommendation (A4-0047/99) (Europarl.europa.eu, 1999) for the Council to prompt the European Commission to start a feasibility study on the establishment of ECPC (Martinelli, 2002). As a consequence of these documents, two feasibility studies "about the possibility of establishing an ECPC within the framework of a stronger and more effective Common Foreign and Security Policy" (Europarl.europa.eu, 1999) were conducted, one published in 2004 (Gourlay, 2004) and the second led in 2005 (Robert, 2005).

The aim of Langer's project was to create an institutional body engaging professional civil forces, such as European NGOs, in situation of political conflicts and military intensification. Ideally ECPC was studied to have an independent structure from military bodies but it could cooperate with them during peacekeeping missions. The proposal marked the importance of expanding involvement of civilian capacity in EU missions "before the outbreak of violent

conflict as well as during such situations, in order to successfully sustain de-escalation and peacebuilding through local capacities” (Berg and Gahrton, 2009). The original proposal previewed that the ECPC should function only under a mandate backed by UN or regional organisations. This recommendation depended mainly on the fact that, after the end of the Cold War, the eruption of complex conflicts increased the need of a stronger and more effective common foreign and security policy on regional and international basis (Berg and Gahrton, 2009).

The ECPC personnel would be composed of a permanent and full-time team of experts appointed for the management of administrative tasks and for ensuring continuity, and of a specialised unit to send in field operations, “adequately trained to operate in specific missions, recruited either on a part-time basis or as short-term field workers” (Martinelli, 2002).

The first priority of ECPC is based on the transformation of conflict throughout civil means. ECPC work would be articulated, on one hand towards strategies of conflict prevention and violence escalation, and on the other hand, towards robust mechanisms of combatants’ disarmament that could contribute to the de-escalation of conflicts and disputes. These goals were supposed to be achieved through a more solid collaboration and networking among diplomatic bodies and civil society, by strengthening relations between humanitarian aid agencies and “actors promoting economic development and increased inter-state dependencies” (Berg and Gahrton, 2009).

According to the original idea of Langer, the involvement and the adoption of ECPC should not be confined to a particular region and its working approach should be holistic in nature, including also political and economic efforts. As the White Helmets, also the European Civil Peace Corps needs to work on a multi-functional base, in order to address all levels of ongoing and protracted conflicts. Some example of activities they can conduct are: mediation and establishment of an acceptable degree of dialogue between warring parties, confidence building, disarmament and reintegration of belligerents, monitoring and improving of human rights situation, political empowerment for example through monitoring of free elections or creation of *ad-interim* administration, legislative and juridical support, humanitarian and development cooperation, educational programs and

informational campaigns, activities aimed at reducing the stereotypes among belligerents (Martinelli, 2002). None of these activities can be coercive or imposed from outside but a political support can help to create cooperation between warring parts. Furthermore, the chances to achieve these objectives are directly proportional to the efficiency of the ECPC in enhancing relationships among humanitarian assistance, economic cooperation and the creation of a trustful working environment in which it is possible to establish a mutual confidence between all the actors involved. None of this environment can be sufficiently sustained without a strong connection with the others (L'Abate and Porta, 2008).

Nonetheless, the proposal for the creation of a European Civil Peace Corp has not been applied yet and the project seems to have turned into a death-end path. The latest update about ECPC project has been made in the European Parliament's resolution, dated February 19<sup>th</sup> 2009 (Europarl.europa.eu, 2009). The resolution mentioned briefly that the Parliament believed that the peace-making partnership should be developed to a European Civil Peace Corps but did not examine the subject in depth.

The EU's Peacebuilding Partnership (PbP) is thus far the applied initiative that came closest to Langer's idea of ECPC. The PbP aims at enhancing civilian expertise and skills in peacebuilding activities and has been involved in the discussion about ECPC as the right tool to tackle modern crisis and complex emergencies by civilian means (Eas.europa.eu, 2016). However, the European Peacebuilding Partnership covers only managerial and organisational tasks and it is not an operative body, moreover the 'military-prone' mechanism on which European Security Policy is based continues to dominate the agenda. Therefore, beyond the interesting premises, the future of ECPC remains to be seen (Berg and Gahrton, 2009; Marchi, 2013).

### 3.2 The History of the Italian Model: from Nonviolence to Civil Peace Interventions

During the last decades, Italy has showed a greater interest in implementing operational Civil Peace bodies. However, when talking about Civil Peace Corps in the Italian context, it must be underlined that the panorama is vast and the topic is just now under discussion. The central scene is mostly occupied by local and grassroots groups, formed by qualified and expert people who have been operating in the national and international context for very

long time. Adopting mechanism of popular nonviolent defence and constructive conflict management strategies they intervene in crisis situations deploying activities of prevention, interposition and popular diplomacy (Berruti and Mazzi, 2003). Although not officially recognised by institutions, these 'local' Civil Peace Corps have gained a great expertise on the field. However, the proposal for the realisation of an institutional Civil Peace Corps, formed by professionals who can intervene with civil means in crisis situation, has been raised for years both at European and Italian level, but until now the outcomes have been scarce. Nonetheless, if at European level the institutionalisation of Peace Corps has not crystallised yet, the Italian panorama has been making fruitful steps ahead in this domain. While at institutional level the project to create an official Italian Civil Peace Corps is 'at the planning stage', numerous bottom-up experiences are able to provide a clear view on main tasks, expertise and values carried out by civilian peace contingents (Berruti and Mazzi, 2003).

### 3.2.1 The Nonviolence Popular Defence

Expressions such as civil defence and popular defence are very likely to be defined through a 'one way and all-inclusive' meaning. However, their denominations, insofar they can be similar in their content, do not exactly coincide in the meaning. If the civil defence represents a model for the defence of the territory through civil infrastructures, with means other than the military, nonviolent popular defence detains a surplus value. Even though it also represents an example of alternative defence which, like the former, does not turn to military means, its model is mainly based on the adoption of methods and practices directly inspired to Ghandi's idea of nonviolence (Pisa, 2013).

In the Italian landscape, the pioneer of nonviolence movements was the politician and philosopher Aldo Capitini, who in a document called "Defence and Nonviolence", published in 1968, proposed for the first time in the Italian history the application of Nonviolent Popular Defence as a solution for the question of institutional defence. According to Capitini, the new perspective of nonviolent defence was innovative because was able to make clear how the 'absolute' which needs to be defended is much more than a physical territory, it is a universal nation, enriched with principles and universal values (Drago, 2005).

Capitini, together with the contribution of a few other partisans and exponents of nonviolence defence, was able to “educate” Italian communities to this innovative method, in a way that did not happen elsewhere in Europe. His critical thinking tied ethics and nonviolent politics together and highlighted the power of nonviolent politics in interventions of social transformation.

Capitini and nonviolent supporters rejected military conscription but believed that Italian jurisprudence could be enhanced. For this reason, they began a protest for the juridical acknowledgement of conscientious objection and for their empowerment as citizens endowed with the right to choose, despite their refusal of military structure. Their action has been fundamental for the diffusion of nonviolent culture in Italy, both from an institutional and a social perspective.

### 3.2.2 Main Juridical Steps toward a Civil Defence of the Nation

The Italian juridical path towards the creation of Civil Peace Corps starts with the article 11 of the Constitution of the Italian Republic, signed in December 1947. Art. 11 states that:

*“Italy rejects war as an instrument of aggression against the freedoms of others peoples and as a means for settling international disputes; it agrees, on conditions of equality with other states, to the limitations of sovereignty necessary to create an order that ensures peace and justice among Nations; it promotes and encourages international organisations having such ends in view”* (Einaudi, 1948).

From the foundation of the Italian constitution, several steps have been conducted towards the creation of a civil defence for the nation, to be deployed, ideally, as an alternative method to the use of military force.

The first important achievement of this long process was reached in 1972, when following some protest campaigns led by nonviolent organisations and the growing interest towards conscientious objection from civil society, Italian Government approved law n. 772 (Serviziocivile.gov.it, 1972), which officially instituted the civil service, recognising the right to conscious objection and offering an alternative to the obligatory military service. Before the institution of law 772, young people who were called up for military service but refused

to take part in it because of ethical reasons - in particular the aversion towards the idea of an armed defence of the nation, were often condemned for civil disobedience and scorned for their cowardice.

On 24 May 1985 also the Constitutional Court with the sentence n. 165, declared that the obligation to the national defence can be honoured also without the use of force or armed military service (Drago, 2005; Sciarrotta, n.d.).

The Italian debate about the Civil Peace Corps foundation reached a turning point in 1998, when in July law n. 230/98 (Serviziocivile.gov.it, 1998) on conscientious objection was approved by Italian Parliament and gave birth to the National Bureau for Civil Service (Ufficio Nazionale per il Servizio Civile UNSC). The approval of law 230/98 marked a decisive and important moment for the establishment of a national civil defence since it officially granted the right to Italian citizens to take part in civil service projects and to experience forms of nonviolent and unarmed civil action through which they could serve their country.

Furthermore, the law prescribed the four specific circumstances where conscientious objectors could be employed in missions and operations out of the Italian territory:

1. civil service could be conducted in a country different from Italy “in organisations that would avail themselves of the work of conscientious objectors”;
2. civil service could be implemented in areas and territories where Italy carries out development or aid projects;
3. civil service could be adopted in humanitarian missions even where Italian contingents are not employed;
4. civil service could be carried out in missions where Italian personnel were engaged (L'Abate, 2005).

This provision contained two very innovative elements: first, the presence of Italian army was no longer a compulsory condition to implement civil service and second, conscientious objectors could be associated with state projects, marking a real opening from governmental institutions, which before have always refused to take any responsibility for their deployment (Tullio, 2000; Martinelli, 2002).

Italian Parliament officially recognised the importance of the concrete help that civilian volunteers could provide operating in humanitarian contingencies. It underlined also their positive symbolic value in creating favourable conditions for dialogue and resolution of conflict by peaceful means. For this reason, “the Parliament recommended the establishment of an Italian contingent of White Helmets to be made available to the UN and requested the Italian Government to conduct a feasibility study of the project” (Camera.it, 1998; Martinelli 2002). Italian government officially agreed to establish a contingent of White Helmets working in collaboration with NGOs and voluntary organisations. Their role would consist of actions aimed at expanding and supporting promotion and defence of human rights and the establishment of a positive environment as a prerequisite for the construction of a solid dialogue between warring parties. According to initial plans, White Helmets’ working methods would enhance and mobilise local capacities, supporting local NGOs and promoting new peace constituencies (Martinelli, 2001). However, Parliament recommendation concerning physical elaboration of an Italian contingent of White Helmets remains only on paper and, so far, it has never been applied (Berruti and Menin, n.d.).

In 2000 the law n. 331 (Serviziocivile.gov.it, 2000) abolished the obligatory military conscription in view of the institution of a completely professional army. A year later, the law n.64/01 officially constituted the National Civil Service: a voluntary service of the duration of one year, open both to women and men between 18 and 26 years old -later extended to 28 years old, who wish to enrich their personal and human experience in projects of civil, cultural and professional education, based on principles of social solidarity, international and national cooperation and defence of national heritage (Serviziocivile.gov.it, 2016).

Four year later, in 2004, with the aim of identifying and consolidating strategies and actions beneficial for the elaboration and experimentation of an unarmed and nonviolent civil defence, the Unarmed and Nonviolent Civil Defence Advisory Committee (Comitato di consulenza per la difesa civile non armata e nonviolenta DCNAN) has been appointed, under the presidency of the Council of Ministers (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri 2006,). The DCNAN has been the first institution designed by law in view of the establishment of a defence system alternate to the military one. Nonetheless, the activities of the Advisory

Committee have never been sufficiently supported by governmental authority and as a consequence, the body stopped its functions on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011 with no following appointment (Consorti, 2013).

Despite the numerous shortcomings, this set of structures, built and sharpened over decades, constituted fundamental passages towards the crystallisation of a structured model for the civil defence of Italian nation.

### 3.2.3 The Grass Roots Unarmed and Civil Movements

Alongside the judicial schemes that gave a legislative frame to civil defence, Italian panorama has been particularly marked by nonviolent local movements that showed to detain a prominent role in supporting the propaganda for Civil Peace Corps.

Thanks to the legacy left by the young conscientious objectors' movements, in Italy the question of civil defence has been for a long time discussed and highly sustained mainly among grass-roots associations, which very often worked and work in total autonomy from institutions. Their main strengths lie on their ability to implement projects in conflict zones, where nobody could manage before, through the employment of teams of professional activists working to forestall spreading of violence against civil population and monitoring the evolution of the mission. Among the most relevant pioneer examples of grass-roots pacifist missions there are the nonviolent march '500 a Sarajevo', that in 1992 managed to bring 500 Italian activists to the Bosnian capital, at that time under siege for eight months and the march Mir Sida (Peace Now) of the following year which brought over two thousand Italian volunteers in Bosnia – Herzegovina with the purpose of contributing to build peace and justice and promoting popular diplomacy together with nonviolent activities in the Balkans (Corritore, 2013; Sciarrotta, n.d.). In the Middle East instead, Palestinian territories have welcomed Italian nonviolent activities from 1989. Missions in Palestine started with the journey 'Time for Peace' promoted by the organisation Assopace and were followed by the campaign 'Action for Peace' in 2001 and other thousands in the years to come. All these network of organisations operated with the purpose of creating a pacific interposition body that could be engaged for protection of vulnerable people and for the construction of a dialogue between Palestinian and Israeli civil societies (Zambelli, 2002).

### 3.2.4 The Italian White Helmets

In 1998, year of the approval of law n.230 concerning the conscientious objections as alternative to military conscription, a group of associations already very active and with an expertise in the field of civil service and conscientious objections abroad, promoted the establishment of a coordination project called 'Rete Caschi Bianchi' – RCB (White Helmets Network). In particular, founder organisations were: Operazione Colomba and its 'parent organisation' Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII, Assopace, Gavci, Caritas Italiana and Focsiv. The decision to call the teams of young people involved in the network as White Helmets marked the pacific and nonviolent character of the missions promoted. The White Helmets responding to the RCB network are defined as "young volunteers involved in civil service abroad. They are engaged in activities to promote peace, human rights, development and cooperation between peoples, [...]". Their action relies on the principle of popular nonviolent defence to be applied in all situations of armed conflict, structural and widespread violence or denial of human rights (Redazione Antenne di Pace, 2016). They operate for the construction of a positive peace that, according to the definition of Johan Galtung is not just the static absence of war or "organised, collective violence" (Galtung, 1967) but involves also "human integration" (Galtung, 1964) through promotion of human rights and human welfare.

#### 2.2.4.1 The Values of White Helmets project

The White Helmets project aims at sending young volunteers as conscientious objectors in peace missions whose target is the promotion and the support of conflict prevention and reconciliation initiatives, in order to enhance the role of young generations as peace operators and peace mediators. The slogan of Italian White Helmets is in fact "to be the voice of the voiceless" and constitutes one of the basics of their mandate.

Their educational program proposes a direct involvement of beneficiaries of the actions through methods of dialogue and cultural mediation, an active presence on the field and the sharing of the same, often uncomfortable, spaces and living conditions, the acquisition of a deep knowledge about operational context and social-political or cultural issues present in the affected area.

The major purpose of their action is to raise awareness and enhance local capacity in terms of peace building and confidence building so as to increase the accountability towards beneficiaries and, as a consequence, strengthen local networks and provide a model of self-development for the future (Redazione Antenne di Pace, 2016).

### 3.2.5 'Rete IPRI-CCP' and 'Tavolo ICP'

The creation of the 'Rete Caschi Bianchi' represented a turning point for the establishment of the Civil Peace Corps Network (Rete CCP), a congregation of association born in 2003 on behalf of advocates of nonviolence thinking and Civil Peace Corps. Civil Peace Corps Network was later, in 2005, 'embedded', as operative section to the 'Associazione Rete IPRI-CCP', where IPRI stands for Italian Peace Research Institute, founded in 1978 and representing Italian nonviolent and peace researchers (Sciarrotta, n.d.).

These initiatives have been vital for the foundation, in 2007, of the 'Tavolo Interventi Civili di Pace' also called 'Tavolo ICP' (Civil Peace Interventions Forum). This forum arose as a tool of communication among the main bodies involved in the implementation of Civil Peace Forces: the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Bureau for Civil Service and Civil Society Organisations. The Table became a flexible and dynamic reality able to play a representative role in the contacts with institutions. The term 'corps' of Civil Peace Corps was replaced by 'intervention', by the then Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Patrizia Sentinelli, in order to reduce the implicit military nuance of the name, but denaturing the innovative character of Civil Peace Corps in respect to military forces (Sciarrotta, n.d.).

In its entirety, the 'Tavolo Interventi Civili di Pace' is a network of associations and individuals operating in the field of peace research and education, managing cooperation and assistance tasks in conflict areas, which was born with the purpose of gathering together grass roots proposals and bottom-up initiatives. It offers an open space for confrontation among Italian civil society which, involved in peace missions on the national territory or abroad, has as common goal the enhancement of civilian unarmed peacekeeping and peacebuilding mechanisms in vulnerable areas. The network offers a platform for sharing and confronting participants' ideas and positions and it coordinates all the actions directed to promote Italian Civil Peace interventions, sustaining also the respective decisional

process. In this regards, all decision-making processes finalised by the Table adopt consensual methods (Tavolo Interventi Civili di Pace, 2012).

Despite the efforts to propose a transformation and institutionalisation of the above-mentioned Table, as a first step toward a common path of action and the raising of a better understanding between civil society and political decision-makers, the 'Tavolo Interventi Civili di Pace' has never been institutionalised. This was mainly due to political turmoil, with the fall, in 2008, of the government Prodi – the then Italian Prime Minister who was approving the initiative at that time, but also because of the low priority that was assigned to such operations in the political agenda. As a consequence, the associations involved in the forum began to prepare pilot projects on their own, on the grounds of their previous experience, but still adhering to the framework of the 'Tavolo ICP' (Sciarrotta, n.d.).

#### *2.2.5.1 Main Goals of the 'Tavolo Interventi Civili di Pace'*

The objectives that the 'Tavolo Interventi Civili di Pace' aims to fulfil are based on four directives:

1. Stimulating the dialogue with national institutions and political bodies and the consequential official construction of a set of civil peacekeeping and peacebuilding infrastructures at national and European level;
2. Launching civil peace interventions in coordination with international network and associations, under political acknowledgment and through public funding;
3. Supporting the action of the Italian pacifist movements' network to enhance the ability to intervene independently in nonviolent transformation of social and political conflicts in crisis areas;
4. Promoting an active nonviolent culture over Italian territory in order to raise awareness about role and activities of Civil Peace Interventions.

All the associations taking part in the table can intervene in these missions only after an expressed request made by actors or local associations in the beneficiary country. Members of the table firmly stated their position neither to collaborate with military forces, nor to benefit from their armed protection, so as to carry out an independent and neutral action (Farruggia et al., 2009).

Despite the 'Tavolo ICP' was born as a spontaneous expression of civil society, it is hoped that, in the near future, it will be involved in a process of formal legalisation for the obtainment of legal personality. Such a transition would ensure a sounder recognition from Italian institutions, more stability and ongoing activities thanks to the establishment of a real and operative Organisational Secretary and the possibility to receive and manage directly public funding (Tavolo Interventi Civili di Pace, 2012).

### 3.2.6 The Peace Decalogue

The Rete IPRI-CCP together with other dynamic Italian realities working in the field of nonviolence, human rights, international justice and conflict prevention (Movimento Nonviolento, Centro Studi 'Sereno Regis', 'Berretti Bianchi', 'Operatori di Pace-Campania' etc.) decided, in 2012, to submit to political and social forces, some explanatory points for the realisation of a genuine policy of peace, gathered and synthetized in the following Decalogue of peace:

1. Defence of art.11 of the Constitution of Italian Republic: the increase of military expenditure and armed aggressions from Italian troops has contradicted with the spirit and the values of art. 11 of Italian Constitution. For this reason, it is urgent to change this tendency repudiating the logic of military solution in international controversies and fight for a nation free from imperialistic 'impulses', but author of a peace-oriented foreign politics based on neutrality, disarmament, equality and international justice.
2. Transformation of the Defence system: the current system should be revolutionised in the direction of a gradual but progressive 'transarmament' based on the effective replacement of armed forces with physical and social structure supporting nonviolence defence in the long term and the reform of the official army. History revealed how expensive and ineffective in terms of national and border protection can be a military defence. For this reason, it is necessary to work for reshaping and depowering industrial-military complex, in favour of a logic that applies concepts such a sustainability, reconversion and "transarmament".

3. Rebalance conflict prevention strategies and military expenditure: the current proportion between funds directed to armed forces and the budget used for conflict prevention plans is 10.000 : 1, that means that for each euro spent for preventing disputes, 10.000 euro are 'invested' to 'do war'. This proportion needs to be reversed since it increases risks for international security, intensifies country's exposition to external threats and jeopardises efforts towards cooperation and peace at international level.
4. Full transparency in the Defence budgetary headings: in order to implement a correct peace policy and restore the balance between military and civil expenditures it is fundamental to have a clear budget available. Historically, Italian Defence budget is one of the less transparent among OSCE states. Drawing up clear, explicit and detailed budgetary headings is not only a necessary requirement for transarmament and peace policy but it is also a question of democracy.
5. Empowering of an international police force directed by United Nations: the attitude United Nations assumed after the 'Agenda for Peace' in 1992 contradicted *in toto* the premises of Boutros Ghali's document. Peacekeeping has been increasingly shaped in favour of a more aggressive military agenda, with peace-forcing activities, for example, and little focus on civilian conflict-prevention strategies. In front of the overall unwillingness to involve national contingents to implement UN security forces, it is high time for Italy to move forward in the launch of a civilian peacekeeping and an international police force, under the direction of United Nations.
6. Reconfiguration of military presence abroad and withdrawal of non-legitimate missions: despite the economic crisis and its effects, governments have kept on renewing Italian involvement in international military missions. However, reducing Italian military contingents abroad, withdrawing from non-legitimate missions because not covered by a Security Council mandate, stopping the tendency to adopt armed corps for the protection of private interests and increasing civilian

commitment in terms of support towards a more peace-oriented society is a political rationale more than an economic need.

7. Provide more incentives to the civil projects: this can be achieved through mechanisms that strengthen civil service and Nonviolent Popular Defence movements, empower conscientious objection over military expenditure and through the opening of a conscientious objectors national register. Civil service represents a model of active citizenship for all young generations, offering the chance to acquire knowledge and experience about Italian socio-cultural landscape or be involved in international panorama through humanitarian and development projects in crisis areas.
8. Reconstitution of Unarmed and Nonviolent Civil Defence Advisory Committee (DCNAN): Substantial reductions in the funding of public structures and services have affected also the proposal of restoring the DCNAN Advisory Committee, which represented, in the past, a historical turning point in the institutionalisation of a Civil Defence Department. The DNACN has been an important achievement for nonviolent movement and for conscientious objection, and if re-established could assume the role of main mechanism of elaboration of military reduction policies and positive conflict-resolution strategies.
9. Approval of the law for the institution of Civil Peace Corps, as a registered national body: in the framework of a rebalance between conflict prevention strategies and military expenditure and of an unarmed and civil solution for international and national conflict transformation - perspectives in line with art. 11 of the Italian Constitution, it is urgent to approve the law for the official institution of Civil Peace Corps. This step would lead to the establishment of a national peace-building infrastructure and the creation of a national register for professionals and experts in the field of conflict prevention and conflict transformation.

10. Empowerment of the role of ‘Tavolo Interventi Civili di Pace’ in the dialogue with institutions. It is of extreme importance to re-establish a mechanism that works officially as mediator and enhances the dialogue and the coordination among institutional authorities and civil society, in order to address public policies to the prevention and transformation of conflicts, to provide civil peace interventions with a common framework of actions and principles and to underline the value of pilot experiments regarding Civil Peace Corps (Unimondo.org, 2012; Polo, 2013).

The Decalogue of peace is a nonofficial document meant to reassert the fundamental pillars to take into consideration as a *vademecum* in the debate for the establishment of a civil defence of the nation.

### 3.2.7 The Campaign “Another Defence is Possible” and the First Official Pilot Project for a Civil Peace Corps Contingent

From June 2013 Italian networks working in the field of nonviolence, disarmament, and civil service<sup>3</sup> promoted a campaign named ‘Another Defence is Possible’ (Un’Altra Difesa è Possibile). The campaign has been the tool adopted to launch the popular initiative law called ‘Institution and funding methods of an Unarmed and Nonviolent Civil Defence Department’ and it was presented for the first time on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2014 in Verona and spread across the whole national territory in occasion of the international day of nonviolence on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014.

The campaign aims at the institution, through a bottom-up proposal, of a Department for the Civil Defence that would enumerate among its tasks: the safeguard of Italian Constitution and tutelage of civil and social rights enshrined in it, the establishment of unarmed means of intervention in international disputes, the defence of life integrity and

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<sup>3</sup> In particular, the associations that promoted in the campaign are: Conferenza Nazionale Enti di Servizio Civile, Forum Nazionale per il Servizio Civile, Rete della Pace, Rete Italiana per il Disarmo, Sbilanciamoci!, Tavolo Interventi Civili di Pace. For more information about the campaign see the official website: <http://www.difescivilenonviolenta.org/>

the protection of environment and ecosystem. Cornerstone of the campaign is the request for a corresponding reduction of military expenditure.

The 50.000 signatures obligatory to present a popular initiative law have been successfully collected between 2014 and 2015, and in May 2015 the legislative text of the popular initiative has been registered to the Chamber of Deputies (Valpiana, 2014; Difesacivilenonviolenta.org, 2015;). The popular proposal has been relaunched in December 2015, this time by a Parliament initiative for a law proposal (n.3484) (Camera.it., 2015), supported and signed by six deputies from different parties<sup>4</sup> in order to back the grass-roots campaign and push for beginning an institutional procedure (Difesacivilenonviolenta.org, 2016).

However, the proposal of an official body for the civil defence of the nation was already raised in 2013 when it was officially declared, through the budget law of 27 December n. 147 (Gazzettaufficiale.it, 2013), that an expenditure of nine million euro could be invested in the span of three years for the institution of Civil Peace Corps contingent as a pilot project, involving – according to the draft proposal, up to 500 young volunteers in non-governmental peace missions deployed in conflict areas or conflict-prone areas or zones affected by natural disasters (ControllArmi, 2016).

The statement of budget law n. 147 was shortly after backed by the law proposal n. 1981 named 'Institution of Civilian Peace Corps' (Camera.it, 2014), presented by MP Giulio Marcon on 21 January 2014, which contained details about definition and structure of an official Civil Peace Corps contingent, and reinforced by sentence n. 119/2015 issued by the Constitutional Court. The sentence reiterated the importance and the necessity of an unarmed and not-military defence for the nation (Cortecostituzionale.it, 2015).

The first official Pilot Project for the establishment, on experimental basis, of a Civil Peace Corps Contingent has been launched in December 2015, as published on the website of the UNSC, and it have been inserted in the operational framework of the National Civil Service, although maintaining its own specificity. Organisations which are willing to take part in the experiment and start projects under this framework had time until February 2016 to present

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<sup>4</sup> Marcon from 'Sinistra italiana', Zanin from 'Partito Democratico', Basilio from 'Movimento 5 Stelle', Sberna from 'Centro democratico', Artini from 'Alternativa Libera' and Civati from 'Possibile'.

their proposal. The number of places for young applicants offered by the current governmental project was reduced from 500 to 200. However, only 20 projects have been approved in the final stage, for a total amount of 106 places. The volunteers that will apply to this round will be involved, for 12 months, in projects of civilian and nonviolent peace-building, on national and international territory. At present, the application phase for the young volunteers has not started yet (Info-cooperazione.it, 2016a; Info-cooperazione.it, 2016b).

Despite the discrepancies between the initial proposal and the effective realisation, for the first time in Italy an institutional experimentation towards a structure that for several times was theorised by scholars and pacifist groups but never put into effect, has been finally settled. Although the way towards the actualisation of a Civil Department for the Defence, that according to the campaign 'Another Defence is Possible' would include an institutional, regular contingent of Civil Peace Corps, is still long and steep, this first experiment seems to be a meaningful turning point towards this ambitious project.

### 3.3 Developing a Civil Peace Corps: Operational Structure, Principles and Activities

After having focused on the wide range of actors working for an effective and monitored implementation of civilian activities in the field of nonviolence, this section will offer a more detailed picture of the role that Civil Peace Corps are covering and what are, or what are supposed to be, their main tasks when deployed in missions 'on the field'.

Civil Peace Corps' mandate refers to Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They are an operative branch of civil society, composed of qualified individuals, appropriately prepared to intervene through employment of nonviolence popular defence means that carry out functions of prevention, interposition, mediation, conflict transformation by useful means and popular diplomacy in conflict-affected countries.

#### 3.3.1 Civil Peace Corps: Criteria of Intervention

Civil Peace interventions are civilian unarmed and nonviolent actions, deployed by both experienced professionals and volunteers who support local actors and communities' endeavours, directed to prevent and transform conflict situations. Main purpose of these interventions is the promotion of a positive peace, achieved through cessation of

widespread violence and simultaneous consolidation of human rights and social welfare. Operators usually intervene in Italy or abroad, directly in conflict areas or in conflict-prone territories where phenomena of social or structural violence are likely to happen.

The deployment of Civil Peace Corps on the field can be authorised under a preventive mandate to work on a simmering conflict; under a civilian peacekeeping mandate when the violence is widespread and the conflict is already in its “high intensity” phase, or during post-conflict phase to conduct peacebuilding and social infrastructures reconstruction.

Interventions are carried out only upon request from a conflict-affected civil society, and they have to be managed and monitored with the entire collaboration of local partners and NGOs. Local organisations, in order to collaborate in the framework of a Civil Peace Intervention, need to operate under the principles and the rationales of unarmed struggle, they have to show deep knowledge and expertise in coping with the reality of the conflict and advocate total respect for human rights towards all the parties involved.

In the affected areas, Civil Peace Corps can start collaboration with other NGOs, INGOs or governmental institutions only if these relations do not undermine the independence and the impartiality of their mission. No collaborations, synergies or forms of armed protection are allowed with armed forces, with both regular and irregular bodies. However, Civil Peace Corps can maintain with the military a dialogue with the aim of starting a nonviolent management of the conflict or for the exchange of information about security and safety of the working context. This should occur without jeopardising the core values of nonviolent missions, in terms of operational framework and reception among local communities (Tavolo Interventi Civili di Pace, 2012).

#### *3.3.1.1 Core Principles of Civil Peace Interventions*

Although each organisation has its own specific mandate and operating in different parts of the world is consequently in contact with different ranges of contexts and cultures, when involved in a Civil Peace Intervention it has to adhere to some common principles, in particular:

1. Nonviolence: assuming a nonviolent and peaceful attitude both in the relations with the other operators, and in the dialogue with all the parts affected or involved in the conflict;
2. Independence: remaining autonomous from political, economic, governmental and military influence in order to maintain freedom of action;
3. Impartiality: the mission must be carried out only depending on the needs of the beneficiaries “giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress and making no distinctions on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class or political opinions” (Bagshaw, 2012), without taking side with one part over another in the conflict, or interfering in the work of local NGOs, but supporting the defence of human rights;
4. Equality: assuming a respectful attitude towards both other operators and local communities during the missions but also in private contexts;
5. Respect of local culture and adoption of a simple lifestyle: in order to be well-accepted and work more efficiently with local networks it is recommended to share same standards of living of local communities, promoting an ethical harmony in the use of resources, structures and spaces (Tavolo Interventi Civili di Pace, 2012).

#### *3.3.1.2 Operational Framework and Main Activities of Civil Peace Corps*

The whole of actions and tasks accomplished during a civil peace intervention responds to an operational framework based on some common concepts and strategies useful to best manage a conflict situation. The main strategies are:

1. **Prevention:** the prevention of offensive situations or violent conflicts can be defined as a set of strategies and measures aimed at forestalling political, social or religious controversies between states or non-state actors from escalating to violence, and “at strengthening the capacity of the parties involved to resolve disputes peacefully, and gradually solve the problems of political, economic and social fields which are the basis of the litigation”. These strategies can be distinguished in two different main areas of intervention: prevention opera, which focuses on an ongoing crisis in its immediacy, and structural prevention which deals with structural causes of different nature (political, economic, social or cultural) that are the roots of the dispute. The

former copes directly with possible and concrete acts of violence and has an impact in the short and very short term, whereas the latter involves mainly strategies and plans for the socioeconomic empowerment of the area and the establishment of structures of political integration in the medium and long term (Barbiero, 2010).

2. **Conciliation:** conciliation can be defined as a “voluntary, flexible, confidential, and interest based process. The parties seek to reach an amicable dispute settlement with the assistance of the conciliator, who acts as a neutral third party” (Greggersen, 2013). Conciliation represents both the process itself, that is the activities tending to a particular result, and the outcomes of the process.
3. **Interposition:** “There is interposition every time that a person is given the opportunity to enter into the sphere of another person. This also applies to groups, associations, institutions” (Barbiero, 2010). Etymologically, the term interposition means ‘place between’. In the case of a dispute, it refers to the role of a third party that tries to separate two warring or fighting parties in order to cease hostilities (Bercovitch and Jackson, 2009).
4. **Management:** Conflict Management refers to “the diagnosis of and intervention in affective and substantive (intractable) conflicts at the interpersonal, intragroup, and intergroup levels and the styles (strategies) used to handle these conflicts” (Afzalur Rahim, 2002). It is usually a long-term process and includes a variety of ways people use to handle grievances. Kenneth W. Thomas (1992) lists the “conflict handling modes” in five main categories: competition, collaboration, compromise, avoiding, accommodation, and he orders them in two variables: their level of assertiveness and their degree of cooperativeness. However, it is important to remember that Civil Peace Corps usually avoid any partisan attitude.
5. **Mediation:** the term mediation, according to its Latin etymologic roots, means “a division in the middle”. It refers to a “process of resolving conflict in which a third party neutral (mediator), assist the disputants to resolve their own conflict. The process is voluntary and the mediator does not participate in the outcome of the mediation process (agreement). The disputing parties themselves have control over the agreements to be reached” (Amoh, 2006). The actor can be a possible mediator only if he is perceived as “reasonable, acceptable, knowledgeable and able to secure

the trust and cooperation of the disputants” through an impartial and independent attitude towards all the parts involved (Bercovitch and Jackson, 2009).

6. **Monitoring:** this activity involves a process of detailed observation and analysis of a conflict situation carried out over a certain period of time “in order to ascertain whether the principles, standards, or other agreements are met and to identify possible strategies and actions”. Monitoring phase requires a dynamic and routine collection of information and data, their analysis and their immediate use in order to address issues of conflicts (Barbiero, 2010).
7. **Reconciliation:** “Ideally reconciliation prevents, once and for all, the use of the past as the seed of renewed conflict. It consolidates peace, breaks the cycle of violence and strengthens newly established or reintroduced democratic institutions” (Bloomfield, Barnes and Huyse, 2003). It is a long-term non-linear and unpredictable process, that involves not only a pragmatic reestablishment of order, or a cease-fire between enemies, but also a psychosocial approach involving emotional aspects of the process of rapprochement between former antagonists (Rosoux, 2008).
8. **Resolution:** Conflict resolution is a complex process that aims at moving warring parties away from a “zero-sum position towards positive outcomes” and when successful helps parties to “achieve a new and better modus vivendi” (Barbiero, 2010). It is usually carried out throughout the help of external actors and it is based on a long process of negotiations and bargains studied to reduce and stop violence and reach an agreement “through a joint decision-making process involving all parties to a conflict” (Bercovitch and Jackson, 2009).
9. **Restoration:** the process of restoration refers to the recreation of just relationship based on equity and fairness between former enemies whose contact has been deteriorated temporarily. It is the reestablishment of a positive order at social and political level and contains a surplus value, if compared to the pre-conflict situation. In fact, the biblical meaning of the word ‘restoration’ is receiving back more than what has been lost during the process “to the point where the final state is greater than the original condition.” As a consequence, it ratifies a new restored relation between former enemies where all actors have improved their conditions beyond measure (Reference, 2016).

10. **Transformation:** Conflict transformation involves a wide range of actions through which conflicts and disputes are turned into peaceful outcomes. According to the definition given by Barbiero (2010) the process of conflict transformation “recognises that contemporary conflicts require more than the reframing of positions and the identification of win-win outcomes. The very structure of parties and relationships may be embedded in a pattern of conflictual relationships that extend beyond the particular site of conflict. Therefore, it is a process of engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests, discourses, and, if necessary, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict”. Very often conflict transformation strategies are characterised by long-term horizons and by operations at multiple levels, that are implemented to reshape perceptions between opposing parts, to increase the level of communication and address the root causes of conflicts, analysing also the psychosocial issues such as inequality, social injustice, or lack of confidence.

From a more practical perspective, the mentioned concepts are usually applied in a vast range of concrete activities accomplished by Civil Peace Corps:

- Monitoring of human rights and denounce of human rights’ violation,
- Monitoring of electoral measures and support to democratisation process and capacity building of local government,
- Promotion of the peace process between warring parties,
- Mediation and confidence-building between opposing actors,
- Improvement of reconciliation mechanisms,
- Unarmed interposition between warring parts,
- Physical and psychosocial support to human rights’ defenders and people under threat,
- Peace education in conflict-prone areas,
- Empowerment of the most vulnerable people and promotion of their psychosocial resilience,
- Capacity-building of local communities,

- Community-building and start-up of new networks among individuals, organisations and institutions,
- Marches for peace and nonviolence,
- Organisation of events to raise awareness about the conflict,
- Support and assistance to programs for the reintegration of former combatants and assistance to refugees and displaced people,
- Ability to adopt a 'Do no Harm' approach in the everyday missions. (Tavolo Interventi Civili di Pace, 2012).

### 3.3.2 Operazione Colomba: experience from an Italian Civil Peace Corps

Operazione Colomba (Operation Dove) is one of the most excellent examples of Italian Civil Peace Corps. Born in 1992 as the nonviolent peace corps of the association Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII, it is a significant and successful case of civilian intervention in conflict areas. Operazione Colomba was promoter of a wide range of projects, implemented in different areas of the world through the use of a common methodology consisting, mainly, in adopting a nonviolent approach in everyday living, with both actors of the conflict. Pillar of this methodology is also the 'proximity' to local people, that means being a constant presence alongside the affected populations, living in close contact with local communities that share with the volunteers their conflict experiences and establishing forms of cooperation with beneficiaries. Operazione Colomba is based on popular participation, meaning that everybody can join the association, provided that there is adherence to the nonviolent model and predisposition in working in groups. Participants are classified in two categories: long-term volunteers -people involved in the association for more than one year and that acquired a particular experience of the context, and short term volunteers – people involved in projects for a shorter period. From 1992 more than a thousand of people have been volunteering with Operazione Colomba (Operazionecolomba.it, 2016).

The main concrete activities carried out by the movement are:

1. Ongoing life-sharing with the most vulnerable people affected by conflict, through activities that can support them in their basic needs, and sharing with them, not only

the discomfort of the emergency situation, but also fears and risks directly associated to war;

2. Protection of civilians exposed to conflict hostilities thanks to Operazione Colomba neutral and international presence, which works as deterrent towards the use of violence and thanks to concrete, direct and nonviolent actions the association carries out such as: physical interposition, observation, monitoring and reporting on human rights conditions and consequent public denounce of violations, protection of minorities, support to internally displaced people, refugees and people under threat, identification of divided families and non-formal educational activities with children;
3. Promotion of dialogue and reconciliation, based on a process of mutual confidence-building between teams and hosting communities that takes into account both “fronts” of the conflict. Operazione Colomba implements reconciliation programs that mediate between opposing parts in the conflict and initiates process of inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, aiming at raising respect in the ‘diversity’.
4. Advocacy at political and institutional level, since Operazione Colomba is part of the Tavolo Interventi Civili di Pace and campaigns for a stronger acknowledgement of nonviolent peace operations, and for the realisation of efficient and credible alternatives to military action to adopt as a valuable mean of conflict intervention (Operazionecolomba.it, 2016).

Operazione Colomba has carried out activities and missions in a wide range of country, in particular: Croatia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Yugoslavia, Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, Sierra Leone, Timor Est – Indonesia, Chiapas - Mexico, Chechnya– Russia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gaza Strip and West Bank - Palestine, Darfur – Sudan, Colombia, Uganda, Georgia, Castel Volturno- Italy, Greece, Lebanon-Syria.

At the moment the movement is actively involved in projects in:

- West Bank – Palestine: in some South Hebron Hills areas (in particular the village of Al Tuwani), exposed to the Israeli occupation. Concretely, Operazione Colomba teams support the grassroots movement in its nonviolent popular resistance, monitor the route children have to take to go to school because exposed to risk of attacks and they accompany shepherds and Palestinian families to cultivate their

land, reclaimed by Israeli settlers, working in this way as an interposing body. On the Israeli front, Operazione Colomba adopts advocacy activities in partnership with Israeli NGOs and pacifist groups which stand up against illegal occupation.

- Colombia: in Colombia the association works in strict relation with 'Comunità di Pace San José de Apartadó' in the village of Apartadó - Antioquia, north-west of Colombia where civilians are 'torn apart' by the reality of a fragmented and highly dangerous conflict. As in Palestine, teams help communities in their everyday actions and they work for protection and monitoring of former displaced families' reintegration.
- Lebanon/Syria: from 2014 Operazione Colomba has established an ongoing presence in the village of Tel Aabbas and in the surrounding refugee camp, in the north of Lebanon, close to the Syrian border. In the village there are around 2000 Christian Orthodox, 1000 Sunni Muslim and, in the last two years, 2000 Sunni Syrians, escaped from the war, have found refuge in the village. The main purpose of the project is to share life with refugees and IDPs, help them, when it is possible, in their immediate needs and to lower tension between Syrian and Lebanese people in order to enhance dialogue and solidarity between the communities.
- Albania: in Albania Operazione Colomba works in the municipality of Scutari, in the north of the country. The aim of the mission is to enhance the diffusion of a culture based on nonviolence and on respect of human rights, in a context where the phenomenon of blood feuds is still widely adopted. Operazione Colomba team, which over the years has grown a meaningful experience in the field, works hard for the implementation of solid reconciliation process among families in 'vendetta'.

The work of Operazione Colomba shows how civil society has been able, during the years, to compensate the absence of institutional civil corps. A civil peace intervention represents a real need for societies that aim at being endowed with a more efficient instrument (than the military) of national defence, composed of professional trained to deploy missions that can solve conflicts with means other than the war. The chapter presented a cross section of the major movements, initiatives and campaigns carried out by 'local powers' in the Italian context, and showed how humanitarian action can still adhere to the ancient principles of neutrality, independence, impartiality and most of all humanity. Through grass-roots

movements, in fact, humanitarian action is able to reset its genuine origins and grounds of action and to wash out, or at least weaken, the linkage with political and military agenda of which new humanitarianism has been blotched. This shows how the refusal of an armed collaboration can reach a higher degree of effectiveness in conflict situation and how the concept of nonviolence embedded by Civil Peace Corps can represent a solid counterpoint against the need of an increased militarisation of aid operations, and may give birth to a new idea of foreign policy.

The main goal of the current chapter was to explain the common ideology embodied by Civil Peace Corps in the modern Italian panorama. The theoretical concepts presented in the chapter will be reinforced and further valorised through the data analysis section that will be discussed in the following chapters.



## 4. METHODOLOGY

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This study adopts a mixed methods research based on the combined use of quantitative and qualitative analysis. Considering the scope of the study objective, a certain degree of flexibility in the research design will be allowed. Mixed methods research is defined as ‘a methodology for conducting research that involves collecting, analysing and integrating quantitative (e.g., experiments, surveys) and qualitative (e.g., focus groups, interviews) research’ (FoodRisc Resource Center, 2016). In mixed methods, quantitative data are usually collected through closed-ended responses while qualitative data use open-ended format without predetermined responses. This integration of approaches will provide a deeper understanding of the research question than either of each alone.

Quantitative research will be useful for the purpose of the present study, because it allows a generalisation of results gathered from sample of actors to a wider population of interest and provides ‘the measurement of the incidence of various views and opinions in a given sample’ (ATLAS.ti, 2016). However, since the goal of the research is to observe trends in the field of civil peace intervention, investigating their mechanisms of action, qualitative research will be adopted to explore select findings further (ATLAS.ti, 2016). “The rationale for mixing both kinds of data within one study is grounded in the fact that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient, by themselves, to capture the trends and details of a situation. When used in combination, quantitative and qualitative methods complement each other and allow for a more robust analysis, taking advantage of the strengths of each” (Ivankova, 2006).

In particular, the data analysis design will follow the model of ‘explanatory sequential mixed methods’ designed by methodologist John Creswell, who introduced a systematic framework for approaching mixed methods research.

### 4.1 Description of the Research Design

Explanatory sequential is a mixed methods strategy that involves a two-phase project, where quantitative data are first collected and then analysed into results. These results will be used to build into the second, qualitative phase. The overall intent of this design is to use qualitative data explaining in more detail the initial quantitative results (Creswell, 2003).

The study will collect data through a questionnaire based on eight questions: three multiple choice questions, three rating scale and two open format questions. Multiple choice and rating scale questions will mostly provide quantitative data for the analysis and will be effective for the understanding of main trends and variables among respondents. Despite the closed-ended structure, in each of these questions respondents can add additional information if not being covered by the four given options. Presentation of data will be complemented with graphics (histograms for multiple choice questions and pie charts for rating scale questions) and numbers (percentages) and further explained by overall comments about main tendencies that were possible to observe in regard to a specific topic. The two open-ended questions, instead, represent a fast and efficient way to collect qualitative information about core points targeted by the study. Since they are unstructured questions they allow respondents to provide free-form answers. The harvested answers will be examined through macro-categories of meaning. These “designate the grouping together of instances (events, processes, occurrences) that share central features or characteristics with one another” (Willig, 2008). This method will identify recurrent concepts that will integrate the conceptual framework discussed in the literature review and, in this way, it will allow to ultimate the study. Their design aims at investigating how CPC function in the Italian scenario and how they can make a difference on the ground, providing insights from direct experience.

Nonetheless, weaknesses of the adopted method are lengthy time and difficulties in designing a questionnaire that could be applicable to a different range of actors.

The study will be conducted through online surveys (via mail) or interviews (face-to-face or via Skype). Surveys and interviews will adopt the same structure in order to facilitate the analysis and classification of data (see Annex 1).

Respondents have been chosen according to certain criteria: they are organisations involved in the campaign for a civil defence of the country, they are member of the ‘Tavolo Interventi Civili di Pace’ or the ‘Rete Caschi Bianchi’, they are non-violent movements or associations working in the field of nonviolence or they are research institutes that, although not directly involved in projects on the ground, they contribute on a theoretical level to strengthen the role of CCP in Italian panorama.

Respondents have been contacted via mail or telephone calls. In total 35 among individuals and organisations were reached and 16 agents gave their feedback, responding by mail to the survey or participating to face-to face or virtual interviews. Four actors, 11% of the targeted audience, replied to the mail or to the call in an assertive way but they did not submit their feedback in later stage. As a consequence, the research will be built on the answers of 46% of the selected audience.

For privacy reasons, the names of the respondents, or of the organisations they are members, will not appear in the analysis. Collected data will be presented anonymously.



## 5. UNDERSTANDING CIVIL PEACE CORPS: DATA ANALYSIS

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After having discussed at theoretical level the role of Civil Peace Corps, building up a sound literature review, the fifth chapter will report about the direct experience of a selected sample of organisations working in the context of civilian peacekeeping.

### 5.1 Research Design

The present chapter will focus on the analysis of data collected through questionnaire addressing a wide range of organisations operating in the domain of Civil Peace Corps.

Data analysis represents the core of the research, since it adds value and consistence to the whole information gathered through the literature review. This section will complete the picture of Civil Peace Corps drawn in previous chapters, providing a cross-section of their operational mode, through the analysis of concrete experience of main implementing agents on this ground. The primary data analysis will be focused on three core points: delineate the profile and main activities of CPC implementing actors, illustrate the most frequent obstacles and the major risks operators face in peace intervention, and to reconnect to chapter two, observe the type of relationship they have with military forces.

The surveyed associations have been selected on the basis of their membership to networks, mainly the 'Tavolo Interventi Civili di Pace', working for the official establishment of an Italian Department of the civil defence and for the institutionalisation of Civil Peace Corps at national and European level.

The range of actors taken into account is not restricted to organisations with a physical presence in the field, but it also involves research institutes or nonviolent movements, which despite the more political and advocacy-oriented cut, they are also in the front line in the promotion of legislative framework for Civil Peace Corps action. As explained beforehand, in the field of civil action the Italian context is predominantly characterised by grassroots movements and local associations. Moreover, these actors are very often involved in a wide range of topics beyond promoting peace and nonviolence, such as respect of environment, denial of war and NATO mechanism, campaign against nuclear power and awareness raising process about forgotten crisis. Despite the diversity of their mission, all adhere to a common framework of respect, humanity and respectable quality of life.

As a consequence, interacting directly with them through interviews and questionnaires will draw a more precise picture of how civilian teams work on the ground.

The research methodology will adopt both quantitative and qualitative approaches to present primary data, through a mixed methods research. The questionnaire contains eight questions: three multiple choice questions, three rating scale and two open format questions. To facilitate the analysis of the data collected, the same structure has been adopted for the questionnaire and the interview. A copy of the format has been attached in Annex 1.<sup>5</sup>

## 5.2 Data Analysis

The following section will be dedicated to the analysis of questions proposed in the questionnaire. Results harvested will be used to create comparisons and verify discordances among respondents' background and opinion, delineating, when possible, general tendencies on the basis of their direct experience in the field of civil defence and civil peace interventions.

### Question n. 1: What is or what are the main means of action of your movement?

- a. *Social inclusion and non-formal learning programs*
- b. *Post-Conflict rehabilitation and construction of a dialogue between opposing parties*
- c. *Development Cooperation*
- d. *Campaigns aimed to promote civil awareness and support the respect of human rights*

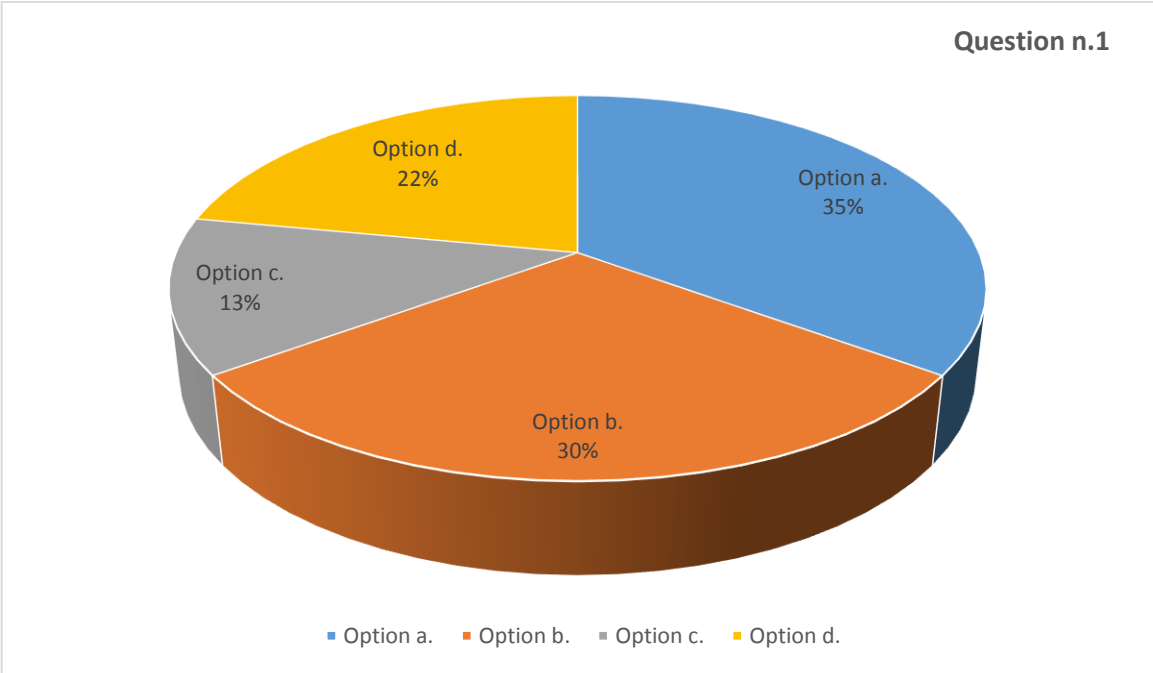
In order to understand the operational mode of Italian Civil Corps on the field, the first question aims at investigating the operative profile of associations and movements targeted. This would help to categorise the actors that can take part in civilian interventions and the type of background and expertise applicable in conflict context.

According to the answers received, 35% of the respondents replied that their organisation operated in the field of social inclusion and non-formal learning programs (option A); 30% affirmed to deal with post-conflict rehabilitation strategies and mechanisms of dialogue construction between opposing parties (option B), 22% of the interviewees ticked option D, campaigns aiming to promote civil awareness and to support respect of human rights, and

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<sup>5</sup> For further information about research methods please see chapter 4 'Methodology'.

the last tranche, corresponding to 13%, answered that their association was more centred on development cooperation (option C).



Graphic 1

As the pie chart clearly shows, options A and B are prevalent over the other choices, indicating some common operational lines among the recipients. The majority of the actors selected for the analysis are organisations, informal movements or NGOs adopting mechanisms of civil promotion, implementing non-formal strategies for the social inclusion of beneficiaries -usually highly vulnerable people in every day contexts, or tightening up socio-cultural and political relations between former enemies, such as in case of a conflict or a protracted dispute. Another significant portion of the pie chart, 22%, is covered by associations dealing with advocacy roles (option D), which fight for the respect of inalienable human rights through informational campaigns and civil peaceful propaganda. Only a small portion of the interviewees, 13%, is instead involved in projects of development and cooperation (option C).

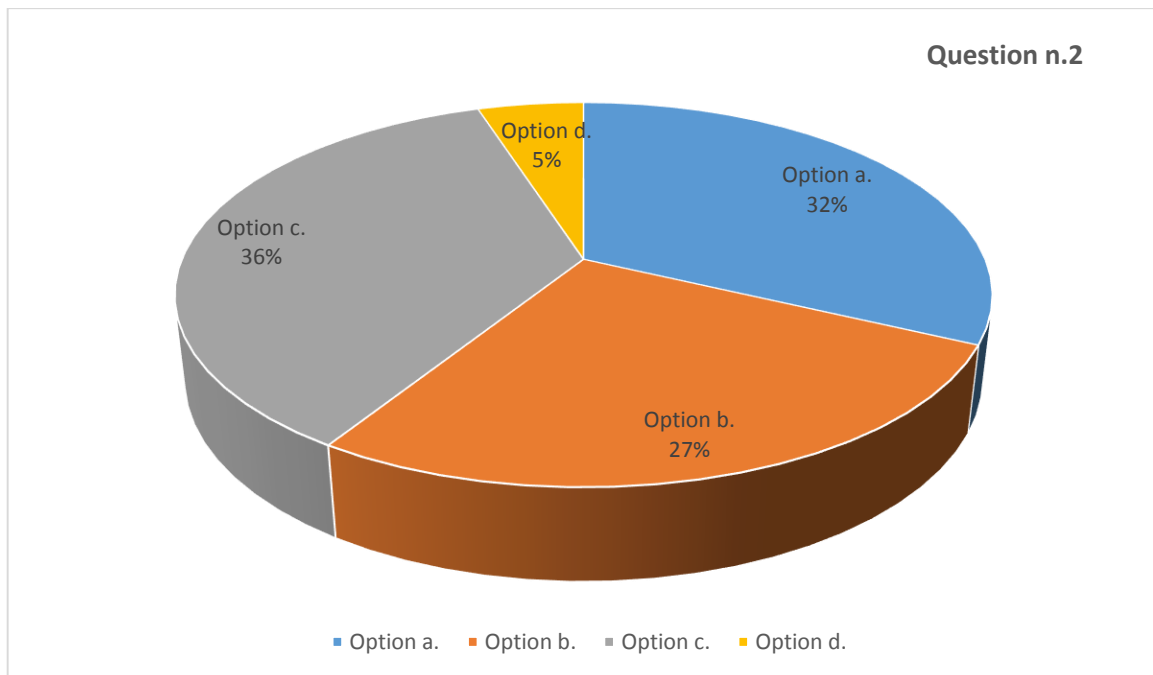
Furthermore, as additional choice, respondents have listed a few other activities they focus on: nonviolent methods of conflict study and conflict transformation, post-conflict rehabilitation, nonviolent protective accompaniment, cultural campaigns and direct support to initiatives on the field, formative activities addressed to empower project participants in

terms of self-protection and security, workshops and training courses about peacebuilding in conflict areas, adopting nonviolent methods for the promotion of the 'welcome culture'.

Question n.2: What is or what are the main outcomes achieved by your organisation in the involved areas?

- a. *Improvement of project beneficiaries' living conditions*
- b. *Decreasing of tension related to conflicts or crisis situations*
- c. *Strengthening of the collaboration with local NGOs and dissemination of analogous activities*
- d. *Political change in the beneficiary country*

After having gained a structured idea of the actors targeted by the research, it is now time to focus on their capabilities, with the analysis of the main outcomes they managed to achieve implementing their projects. From the answers collected during the questionnaire session it emerges that with a percentage of 36% the main result achieved corresponds to option C, representing the ability to establish a strengthened collaboration and cooperation with local NGOs or movements and the diffusion of analogous community based activities in the project area. The second most achieved outcome is the effective improvement of beneficiaries living conditions (option A); this makes almost one third of the total participants (32%) to agree. 27% of the surveyed organisations instead, voted as first outcome the reduction of tension related to conflicts, disputes or crisis situations, achieved in the course or in the aftermath of a mission (option B). Lastly, only 5% affirmed to have started a political change in the beneficiary country (option D).



*Graphic 2*

The most selected outcome, option C, highlights how ‘foreign organisations’, promoters of missions in a third country, are able to gain an in-depth knowledge of the context to establish a ‘peer to peer’ type of relationship with local partner. They avoid assuming a bottom-up attitude so as not to be labelled as strangers, or invaders, during their activities. The integration with local communities is fundamental for the mission of a Civil Peace Corps, because, as analysed in the previous chapter, CPC invests an important part of its mission in creating a dialogue between opposing parts, playing the role of the mediator, role that can only be possible if the third actor is recognised as neutral and impartial. This indicates the mediator has to detain certain knowledge of the context in which he operates and be careful of the type of activities he suggests or attitudes he assumes, due to cultural or religious reasons, political instability and lack of security. Hence, although a real drawdown of conflict-tensions is not indicated among one of the most attainable results, the enhancement of a durable linkage between local and international actors and a major visibility on the ground can be a good start towards that specific end. As far as option D is concerned instead, being a trigger for a political change in a country is not an impossible outcome for a Civil Peace Corps but it represents a long-term result which needs an ongoing monitoring for a certain period of time. Furthermore, a Civil Peace Corps can be a promoter

through its attitude and with the aid of advocacy campaigns, of a new political idea but if the result is attained it all depends on local community and civil society.

Research respondents have also quoted among others some additional outcomes they managed to achieve in the field of civil defence, such as advocacy campaigns for the institutionalisation of a Civil Peace Corps with a regular mandate both at Italian and European level, establishment of mechanisms for the enhancement of human rights defenders' security and awareness raising among young generation in the field of nonviolence and peaceful conflict resolution.

*Question n.3: What would you include or analyse more deeply in the training course for a peace project in a conflict area?*

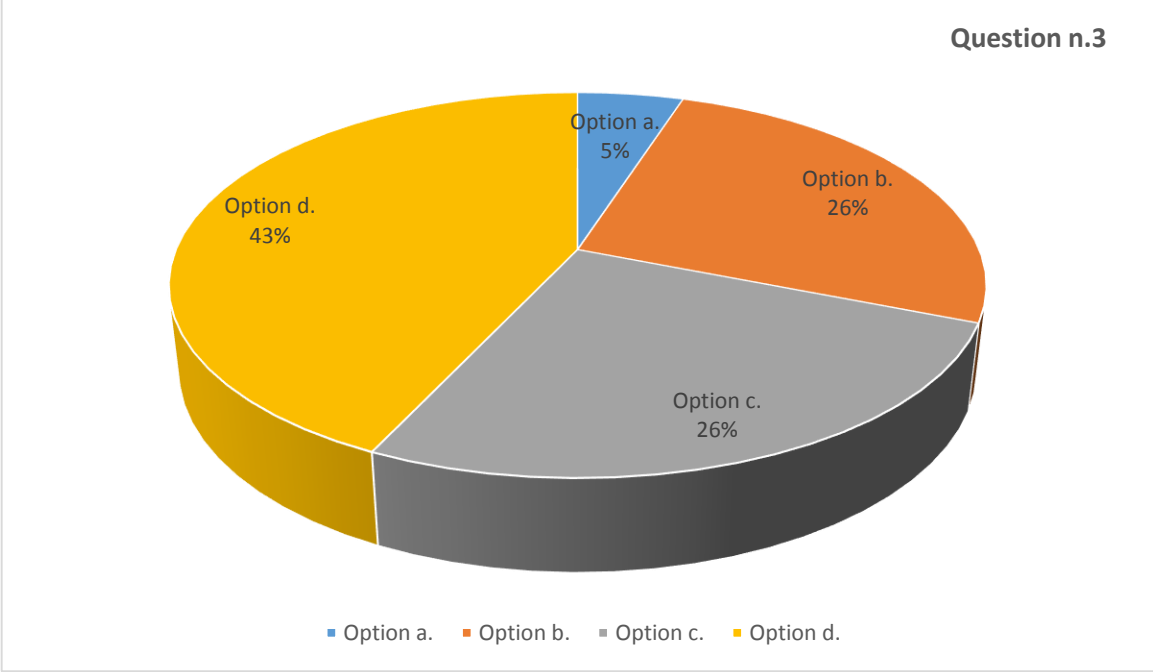
- a. Basic First Aid course*
- b. Ethnological study about the work context and the project destination*
- c. Risk analysis of the working environment*
- d. Knowledge and practice about multicultural workgroups*

The third question can be applicable to projects already activated but presenting, during the course of their implementation, some particular flows and need to be readjusted for the next turn, but can also be evaluated as a suggestion, an 'enriching assumption' concerning expertise and skills that civil personnel need to detain in view of a professionalisation of Civil Peace Corps.

A quantitative analysis of the answers received shows how almost half of respondents, 43%, claimed that the most important asset for succeeding in a peace project is a right knowledge and a right practice in working in groups composed of different individuals, in terms of gender, age, culture and religion (option D). An equal reception, 26%, has been recorded both for option B and option C. Option B and option C belong to the same macro-category of option D, and in the whole, they underline how powerful can be a multicultural collaboration when performed with knowledge and open-mindedness. They reveal a great need of raising awareness about the working environment, both in terms of the specific characteristics of the context – ethno-cultural aspects, social habits, customs and values of population, history of the country, level of socio-economic development, and in terms of risks and threats that

such context can entail, such as the degree of exposition to violence, the recurrence of conflicts, the disruption of socio-political order.

Option A instead, referring to the need to insert a Basic First Aid course in the training of CPC, has not been considered as a priority, gathering only 5% of the answers.



Graphic 3

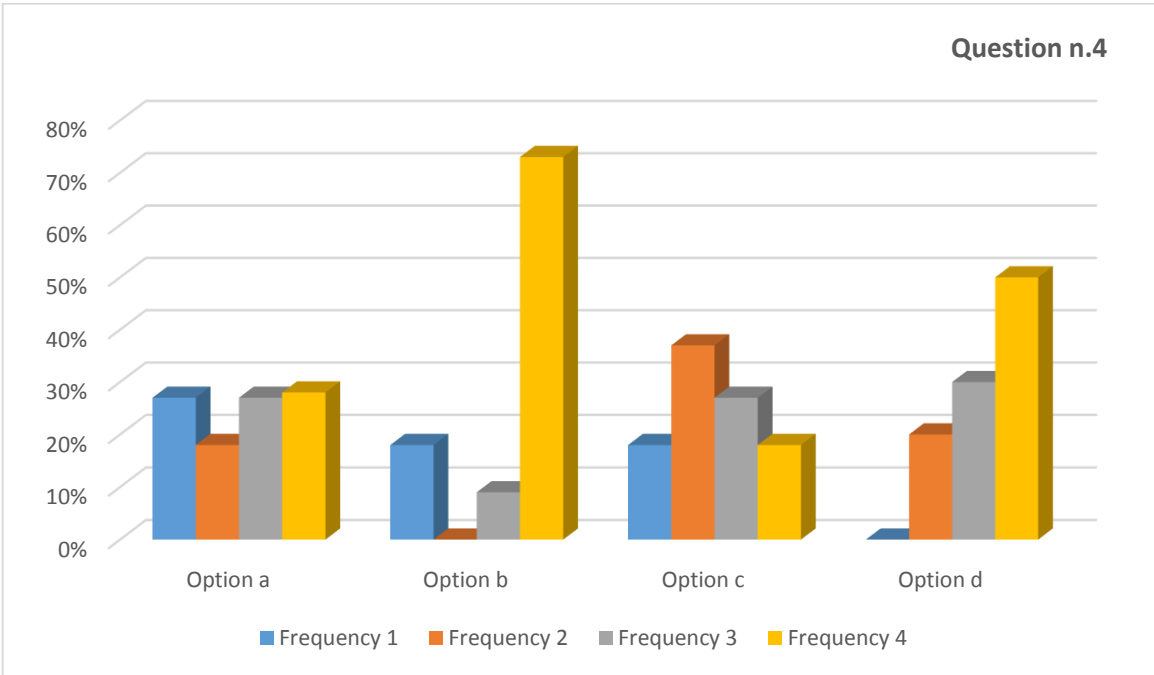
Furthermore, the organisations taking part in the survey, suggested other engaging activities to be inserted in the preparation of CPC, in particular: a risk-focused training for volunteers which could educate about main threats peace operators can face during missions, a structured learning course about nonviolence communication and civil defence, a more in-depth explanation of peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms, a country-focused analysis with a correspondent evaluation of the conflict. A very inspiring suggestion was the introduction of a ‘moment of practical experience’ on the field in which volunteers can live in strict contact with beneficiaries, sharing their dire living conditions and experiencing the reality and the tension of a war context. This is a way to have a real grasp of how different, and difficult can be such existence, sometimes just a few kilometres away from home.

Question n.4: Rate on a scale from 1 to 4 (1: infrequent, 2: rather frequent, 3: frequent, 4: highly frequent) the level of frequency of the following contexts in the Civil Peace Corps or nonviolent movements operations:

- a. Erosion of state unity and presence of civil war
- b. Poverty and social exclusion of the most vulnerable
- c. High migration rate
- d. Widespread violence

Civil Peace Corps are usually deployed in fragile states, ravaged by the violence of a conflict or weakened by acts of brutality perpetuating along the years. Their civil role can have a decisive function in the support of crisis management.

Question four aims at exploring what can be the most recurrent scenario in the deployment of a Civil Peace Corps, or a nonviolent body in a conflict area. The use of a bar chart will help in the understanding of the trends among respondents.



Graphic 4

Starting with an overall analysis, the graph shows clearly how a context of poverty where the most vulnerable live in a situation of social exclusion and precariousness (option B), is the most recurrent according to the background and the experience of involved organisations.

This option was indeed evaluated as highly frequent (4) by 73% of respondents. For the rest, option B has been evaluated as infrequent (1) by 18% of people and rather frequent (2) by 9%. The second most voted context, in terms of degree of frequency, is option D indicating widespread phenomena of violence. A high level of violence has been considered as highly recurrent (4) by 50% of surveyed people. In reference to option D it is interesting to notice that nobody, 0%, evaluated this choice 1, as totally infrequent, demonstrating in this way, not only that a certain degree of violence does come up in the operational context of Civil Peace Corps, but also that the 'violence factor' is a 'silent' implicit prerequisite for its deployment in a crisis area. Option D has been appraised as rather frequent (2) by 20% of surveyed people and as frequent (3) by the remaining 30%.

Option A, erosion of state unity and presence of civil war has been, instead, classified in a rather homogeneous way, without a clear prevalence in terms of level of frequency, meaning that, experience and background of respondents were too diverse to allow to draw a dominant tendency in their answer. In fact, option A has been voted both as infrequent (1) and frequent (3) by 27% of target people, highly frequent (4) by 28% and rather frequent (2) by 18%.

As far as option C is concerned, the high migration rate has been, curiously, classified as infrequent (1) and highly frequent (4) by the same percentage of respondents, 18%. 37% considered instead migration as a rather frequent phenomenon (2), while 27% considered it as frequent (3). If on one hand, as clarified by a respondent, the presence of a civilian contingent in a certain geographical zone is not at all, itself, linked to the natural phenomenon of migration, on the other hand its drastic effects can impact the stability of the concerned country and the presence of a civilian body as a mediator may play an important role, because acting as international force, it can succeed in polarising international community attention on the issue.

In addition, organisations that participated in the survey highlighted also some other meaningful frameworks that appear frequently in the management of a crisis by civilian teams. These are: environmental, social and ethnical disputes, widespread violation of human rights and deprivation of fundamental freedoms, violence against most vulnerable groups, women and children, discrimination of minorities, abusive political and military

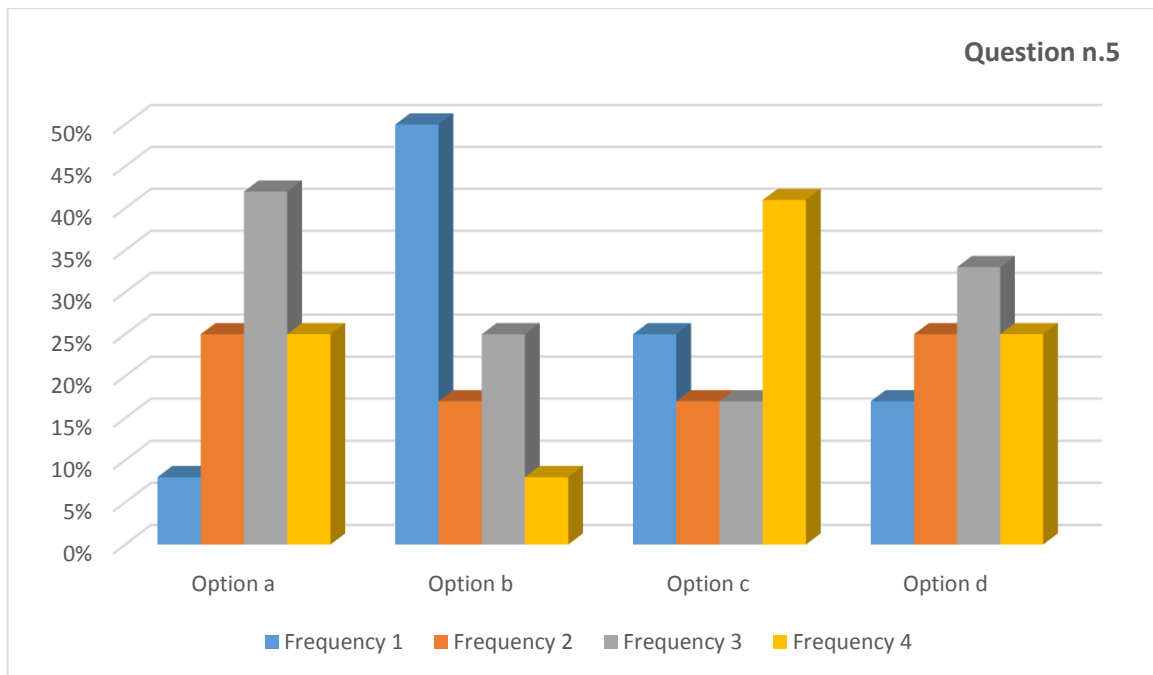
occupation of territories, abuses and threats perpetrated by national states, juridical strategies of criminalisation of disagreement and relevant economic interests.

Question n.5: Rate on a scale from 1 to 4 (1: non influential, 2: rather influential, 3: influential, 4: highly influential) the level of influence of the following factors in impeding the starting and the achievement of a project:

- a. *Limited funding*
- b. *Poor participation in the project*
- c. *Poor collaboration with local governments and with the beneficiaries of the project*
- d. *Political opposition from local government or institution*

Before putting into practice a project, it is important to draw some hypothesis about main obstacles that can hinder its start or even its entire achievement. The logical framework at the basis of a project can help to identify assumptions which may be critical for the success of planned activities. In some cases, however, critical assumptions can be outside the control of the program and lead to an invalidation of the project management.

Question 5 aims to explore 'what can go wrong' in the project implementation phase. The analysis of the data is tailored on the specific experience of organisations selected for the survey; as a consequence, it gives an idea about the main difficulties they encountered during the *mis en oeuvre* of a civil peace operation.



*Graphic 5*

The findings collected during the survey illustrate that the most influential obstacle, among the four options proposed and considering as highest mark 4, is a poor collaboration with local governments and with the beneficiaries of the project – option C, with 41% of the answers. Nonetheless, it is interesting to observe that option C is also labelled as totally non influential: 1, by 25% of participants in the survey. Some of them even attributed to this option a score of 0. This is highly connected to the working context, in particular the geographical region in which the mission is deployed, and the operational structure adopted by organisations. Sometimes the hostility raised in the working environment can be due to a lack of information about the action deployed by Civil Peace Corps who, consequentially are tagged as external invaders -usually western, by communities and the government. For the rest, option C has been classified 2: rather influential and 3: influential by the same percentage of respondents, 17%.

Likewise, a lack of funding (option A) is seen as a major problem among 42% of respondents that assigned it a score of 3: influential. In general, it is possible to state a limited budget is an overall problem, since only 8% considered it a minor issue. 25% of respondents evaluated it rather influential (2) and another 25% highly influential (4), demonstrating that the classification presents a high variance among the four levels of influence.

The same consideration applies to option D, where there is a significant difference in the respondents' evaluation of the degree of influence exercised by local government or institutions in impeding the success of a program. In fact, a hostile attitude from local authorities has been defined non influential (1) by 17%, rather influential (2) by 25%, influential (3) by 33% and highly influential by another 25% of respondents.

Focusing upon a poor participation in the project of volunteers, the graphic illustrates how option B polarises opinions of almost the majority of surveyed organisations, 50%, which classified this issue as non-influent if at all existent. Only 8% gave it a 4 score (highly influential). A more 'middle-of-the-road' evaluation (2: rather influential, 3: influential) was attributed to option B, respectively by 17% and 25% of respondents.

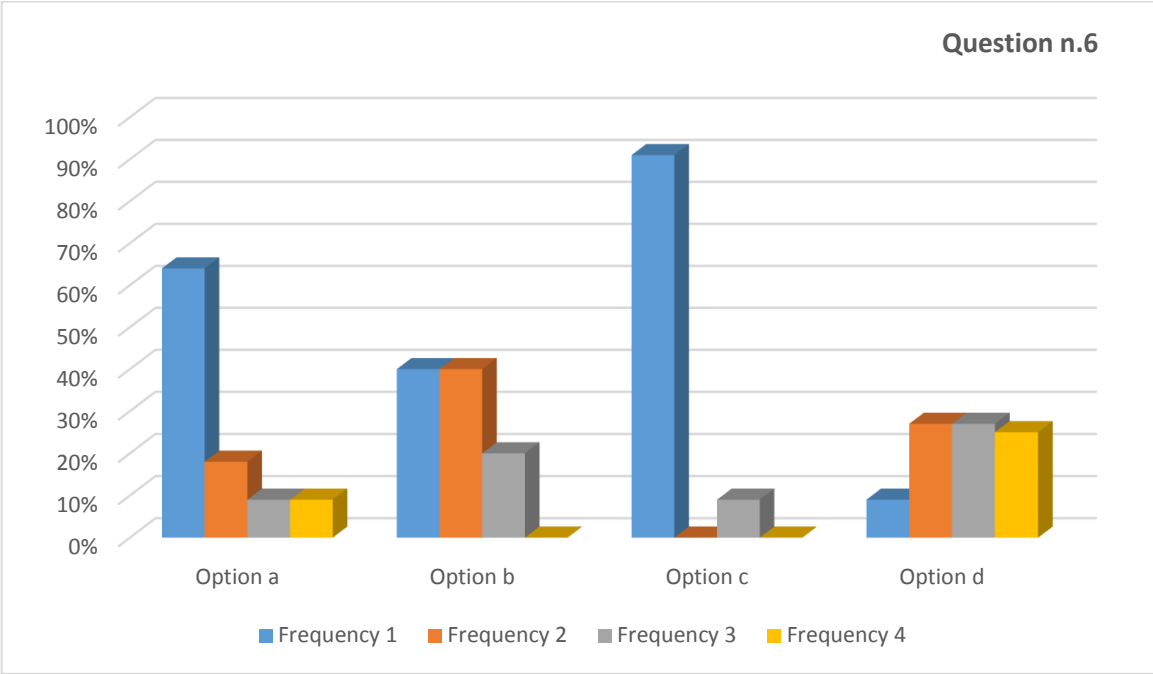
Among other factors impeding a smooth start and a correct implementation of a program there are: restriction to freedom of movement due to alert state or antiterrorism security measures, lack of credibility towards Civil Peace Corps from governmental institutions, scarce understanding of the operational context and consequential poor response to beneficiaries needs, disorganisation in the decision-making process, inefficiency of communication and inadequate awareness raising tools, weak training program for peace operators.

Question n.6: Rate on a scale from 1 to 4 (1: infrequent, 2: rather frequent, 3: frequent, 4: highly frequent) the level of frequency of the following risks for a peace corps in the development of project in a crisis area:

- a. *Direct physical attacks*
- b. *Direct verbal attacks*
- c. *Rejection from the hosting local community*
- d. *Exposition to stressing context and consequent burn out*

Acting as a neutral and nonviolent body in a conflict area entails also a certain degree of risk. Risk is an intersection of two main elements, threats and vulnerability and is defined as the likelihood that a physical event will affect vulnerable people resulting in a disaster (Van Brabant, 2000). In order to reduce risk, it is important to identify main threats operators in a peace intervention can face and the level of frequency these can occur. Question 6 aims to

explore the frequency of a four-option list of dangerous situations, in order to identify, through respondents' choices, main risks volunteers have run up against during a peace, or more generally, humanitarian operation.



Graphic 6

On the whole, the histogram reveals that none of the four options offered represents a concrete and 'frequent' risk for operators, since only option D, correlated to the exposition to stressing factors and a tense environment with consequent phenomena of burn out, has been defined highly frequent (4) by a rather large tranche of respondents, 37%. Option D is also the answer where the variance of the 1-to-4-scale rate has been the slightest: 9% of survey participants defined it an infrequent situation (1) while 27% found it rather frequent (2) and the same percentage rated it frequent (3).

Rejection phenomena from the hosting local community, represented by option C, seem to be very rare, if not totally unlikely. In fact, respondents' choice strongly polarised around score 1, infrequent, shared by 91% of people. The remaining 9% selected score 3, frequent, while nobody evaluated option C as rather frequent (2) or highly frequent (4).

Focusing upon options A and B, it is possible to see a strict correlation between the two since the former, direct physical attacks, can be, in some cases, a direct consequence of the

latter, direct verbal attacks, although with more serious implications. It is rather surprising, and also relieving, to observe that both options have been for the most evaluated as infrequent, respectively 64% option A and 40% option B, and physical attacks, option A, have been appraised only by 9% of respondents as highly frequent (4).

Concerning other references about risks and threats overcome by operators in developing a peace mission, respondents mentioned also: a lacking planning and monitoring of activities and a scarce preparation/experience of the operators, a poor knowledge of local culture and community customs and socio-relational behaviours, lack of time to explore the country and its inhabitants, an extreme closeness and sharing with local civil society which can lead easier to burn out phenomena, the fact of being an isolated reality in a dangerous context, the proximity with conflict situations fraught with danger, violence, bombing and military incursions, mass media attacks and the possibility to contract a serious disease or to be caught in an incident or dangerous events not related to the conflict.

*Question n.7: As far as the risks to which workers are exposed in crisis areas, what are the means used, or that can be used, in terms of security, to reduce them?*

One of the main goals of the present research is to understand the link between military and humanitarian forces. Since Civil and Peace Corps have inscribed in their DNA the principle of nonviolence, it is thus interesting to explore how they can deal with violent environments while refusing every kind of support from military bodies. This would allow to open the horizon towards a defence not compulsorily based on an 'arms race'.

The opinions of the respondents about how to develop a risk management turn around four principal arguments

- Knowledge of the operational context: as already observed in question n. 3, a deep understanding of the working environment is highly helpful in reducing risks related to a threatening environment. Lack of profound cultural knowledge and an inadequate communicative and operational preparation are factors that could easily endanger operators.

Some respondents stressed the fact that an in-depth knowledge means being familiar with the history and the culture of the country in which the mission will be deployed, but also being aware of dynamics and origins of the conflict ongoing in the area.

Furthermore, having a longstanding experience in a specific context is a valuable asset that helps to identify major security threats and facilitates creation of tight relations with local institutions. This strategy leads foreign operators to be less vulnerable and less exposed to external threats. A good knowledge of the context, together with a well-studied and well-built mission, is also advisable to understand if, according to the model of 'do no harm', an international presence can cause more danger than relief to the country, putting into risk local community.

- Collaboration with local networks: in order to reduce the vulnerability of external peace operators in a third country, it is recommended to create a tight collaboration with local actors, institutions, communities or nonviolent movements so that it will be possible to set up a climate of confidence and trust, fundamental for working side by side and run a successful project. In this regard, local communities and networks should become direct partners, involved in the design, realisation, implementation and monitoring of the project, acquiring accountability for their work. This liaison is very important to enhance resilience of vulnerable communities, beneficiaries of the program, and to empower local actors so that the project can be sustainable also in the future.

In some situations, instead, Civil Peace Corps operations have been launched to respond to an explicit request made by accredited civil society organisations that asked for an external international intervention *in loco*. In these cases, it is easier to establish a strong bond and a fruitful collaboration with local networks.

- Neutral Attitude: as stressed also in chapter 3, principle of neutrality is a fundamental important value volunteers need to take into consideration when involved in a peace mission. Adopting a nonpartisan approach, even in situations where inequalities are very strong and in some cases upsetting, has been evaluated by the respondents as essential for safeguarding security of the operators. Participants in a mission have to remember they always have to operate as an impartial third part. However, neutrality does not have to be confused with proximity

to the other actors involved. It is indeed valuable, as stated also in the previous point, trying, when possible, to be 'equally close' and attempt to open a dialogue with all the active parties in the local scenario, avoiding mere labelling as 'good part' and 'bad part', but considering all of them as individuals, as human beings, above any meaningless categorisation. In fact, the work of CPC is a rebalance of forces. Although there is major inclination towards the defence of most vulnerable and weak parts, civil operators should seek to interact with all the subjects showing an interest in ending violence and atrocities. They have to be prone and available to set up a dialogue with all the contracting parties and try, in this way, to lower tension among them. Getting in touch personally with all the actors 'on the scene', helps to decrease threats towards external operators and allow to acquire a wider perception of the risk. According to some respondents, once teams are inserted in the local network they stop being seen as 'rich, western foreigners' and to be treated as strangers, and as a consequence they are more likely to be warned against major risks.

- Adoption of special protocols: having a security protocol, which provides the guidelines of actions to be used as an indicative *vademecum* during missions, to be shared with the entire team taking part in the project -and when possible with local partners, has been indicated as a useful way to reduce risks in critical situations. A complete and well-studied protocol can stress the importance of adopting sustainable conducts, adequate and coherent at local level and respectful of local *milieu*. Security protocols have to be updated and tailored on the specific operational context and they have to contain a security plan studied to reduce risks and enhance security of volunteers. Moreover, a person in the team should be appointed as security officer and should constantly interface with operators to systematically monitor the situation.

Several other interesting focus points which can be seen as sub-categories part of a standardised protocol, emerge from the comparison and the evaluation of the answers harvested through questionnaires and interviews. These are: specific education trainings on the topic of security aiming at increasing teams risk management, to be deployed before the mission and on the field, a periodic evaluation of risks related to the working environment, exercises and activities to

increase mental and psychological wellbeing, a careful selection and training of the personnel to be evaluated also on the basis of personal resistance, a turnover system tailored on the specificity of the mission, presence of networks that can support operators, in their home country, once the mission is over.

*Question n.8: Does being a nonviolent movement mean a total non-collaboration with military forces?*

The aim of the question is to investigate further how a nonviolent movement can operate in a conflict area or conflict-prone country without receiving any assistance from military body. The question wants to offer a new model of action for humanitarian workers, in contrast to the model of the 'new- more militarised-humanitarianism', presented in chapter 2.

Respondents' opinion in this regard can be classified in two main macro-categories. The first one proclaims the establishment of a total distance with military part. In this case, the term collaboration acquires the meaning of a biased inclination towards military forces, a form of partisan collaborationism, more than a useful relation of coordination and constructive dialogue with armed forces as represented by the second line of thoughts. In fact, the second category contains different nuances of the term collaboration, in line with the specific interpretation of each respondent.

Some respondents define non-collaboration as paramount to safeguard the full autonomy and independence of civilian missions, when there is co-presence of military forces in the same local scenario. The peace contingent, in fact, should always present a civilian profile and a proper distance from military apparatus is fundamental not to compromise its autonomous character and the credibility of its nonviolent mission. Although a collaboration can appear necessary in some case, it would be, most of the time, a hindrance in the relation with local population. Moreover, it is fundamental that each mission has an overall clear position shared by all the group about this matter and that nothing depends on the attitude of the individual. Collaboration, in this sense, is perceived as instrumental to military purposes, and not fruitful for the peace mission. The climate of security should not derive from the adoption of armed guards as a direct form of protection, because this would be

disrespectful towards humanitarian values, but it would naturally raise through engagement and involvement with local society.

As remembered by a surveyed participant, in the official document that regulates the 'Tavolo Interventi Civili di Pace', shared by all principal Italian organisations active in the field of civil peace interventions, it is stated that it is possible to activate collaborations with NGOs, INGOs, or governmental institutions on the ground, only if these relations do not jeopardise the independence and the impartiality of a mission. Regarding the association with armed forces – regular or irregular- no form of collaboration, synergy, or armed protection is allowed. It is possible to establish a dialogue with the purpose of a nonviolent conflict management or information exchange about security issues, but this must not undermine the 'nonviolent legitimacy' of the mission, as far as working mechanisms and the reception from the parts are concerned.

In regard to the other category of respondents, who showed to be more interpretative of the term collaboration with military forces, it is necessary to underline that collaboration is never intended as 'taking side' with the military. In fact, some respondents highlight the importance of having a relation, a dialogue with the military, provided that there is a total disassociation with the concept of militarism, reminding also there is a great difference between the military and armed forces, difference that should be taken into account.

When military forces are present in a specific context, a confrontation with them is necessary, first to reduce prejudices about their action, and second because they are also actors operating in the same context (as civilian teams) and it would not be useful to avoid contacts because of the different objectives of their mission. In addition, a compresence with the military is inevitable in certain contexts. For example, in mine clearing the military intervention is indispensable to free the way to civilian activities, and when military forces efficiently operate in defence of civil rights in a certain area, civilian contingents can collaborate with them pointing out endangered populations, monitoring conflict propagation and mapping operation zones, in order to promptly inform them about civilians present in risky areas. Moreover, for some respondents in situations of crisis distillation, coordinating with military is of paramount importance. These scenarios reveal that, in certain circumstances civilian and military activities are complementary and their interaction

helps to safeguard human rights and widens the concept of defence of the nation, involving also nonviolent mechanisms.

However, there can be interaction between civilian and military forces, but not collaboration, since civilian contingents exist to prove that the use of armed force is an invalid model of national defence.

### 5.3 Conclusion

Primary data analysis reveals that despite a certain degree of variance among the operational standards adopted, it is still possible to delineate some leading trends among surveyed organisations.

Reconnecting to the three main points of discussion that the data analysis meant to cover, mentioned in the introduction of the chapter, it is possible to observe that, in terms of operational profile, organisations involved in the implementation of Civil Peace Intervention present very different backgrounds, but there is a predominance of activities related to social inclusion and non-formal education and post-conflict rehabilitation. In terms of outcomes achieved instead, they appear to be less efficient in realising a concrete political change in the beneficiary country but highly powerful in enhancing local performances and creating tight collaboration with local networks. This result is particularly important in regard to the sustainability of the project and community resilience. In this respect, efficiency can be enhanced through a thorough knowledge and a deep understanding of the working context, in terms of culture, history and geographic assets.

Focusing upon main obstacles and risks faced by operators in peace interventions civil peace interventions are mainly deployed in fragile states that usually present broad socio-economic disparities and a high level of violence. Moreover, the analysis illustrates that a scarce collaboration with beneficiary community and opposition from local government towards an 'external' intervention represent, together with lack of funding, the main hindrances that can jeopardise a good start of the achievement of a project. In terms of risk faced by volunteers it was not possible to delineate a leading trend due to the high level of variance among collected answers, but it seems that, beyond expectations, phenomena of direct violence, physical or only verbal, are not so widespread or frequent. As far as the

means to reduce threats and risks are concerned, the organisations agreed that acquiring pre-knowledge on working environment, becoming familiar with local networks, assuming a neutral attitude and adopting some special protocols to manage smoothly operations, are helpful tools to increase security and reduce vulnerability of civilian operators in a threatening environment.

Concerning the type of relationship established with military units, surveyed organisations gathered around two main positions: a neutral attitude that involves a total distance with military part and a more 'collaborative' approach which instead accepts a higher degree of interaction between civilian and military assets. However, they all reject the term collaboration as submission to military agenda.



## 6. CONCLUSION

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The exploitation of humanitarian action for military interests led to the raise of a new humanitarianism where military and humanitarian operational framework began to intersect and concepts such as ‘humanitarian war’ and ‘military humanitarianism’ became less uncommon. In front of the increasingly offensive response that national states are giving to crisis – trend adopted especially from 9/11 attacks and the following Global War on Terrorism, the need to endorse and organise efficient policies alternatives to war, able to replace the use of armed forces with civilian tools for the prevention and nonviolent conflict management, is becoming more and more urgent.

The study has presented the main characteristics of Civil Peace Corps, in relation to the Italian experience and has showed their ability in establishing a nonviolent approach in high-risk situations. Analysing the roots of conflicts in order to impede the escalation of violence is of extreme importance for the development of concrete strategies of intervention. In fact, nonviolent conflict resolution cannot work without a deep knowledge of social, cultural, political, economic and environmental context and a direct dialogue with warring parties. These are the rationales for starting a process of confidence building and put the basis for a future peaceful coexistence.

Implementing civil peace intervention forces as mechanisms for enhancing pacification process and civil, social and economic recovery of conflict or conflict prone areas represents a major step towards this objective. Their efficiency lies on the fact that, in opposition to main trends in the new humanitarianism, Civil Peace Corps remain genuine and loyal to their mission and focus their action on the eliminations of barriers between operators and beneficiaries. They avoid top-down decision making process and dive into local context, creating natural and human relations with local communities. This approach allows the establishment of a mutual confidence and increases the degree of security in operating in dangerous environment. In fact, since total elimination of risk is an unreachable goal, a robust preparation of operators and a deep knowledge of the context and awareness of major threats are winning strategies to reduce the level of vulnerability operators are exposed to.

The authenticity of Civil Peace Corps stands out also in their relation with military structure. Although they always work in complete autonomy and without the help of military forces, not even for protection tools, they do not assume an anarchist or rejectionist approach but in line with the principle of neutrality they rather treat military forces as other agents acting on the same physical ground, and when possible – or needed, they establish a civil dialogue. In any case, any form of collaboration with military assets is highly banned with the purpose of maintaining ‘untouched’ the principle of neutrality.

Referring to the actors involved in the implementation process, the research presented the main initiatives carried out at national level. However, the insight into the Italian landscape showed that CPC are more the result of grassroots effort than a solid and professionalised structure with a high degree of autonomy. Operators involved in the projects are often not remunerated and even organisations and movements themselves are largely – and sometimes totally, run by volunteers dedicating themselves part time or full time to project organisation and general management of the association. As a consequence, if in terms of operational framework, they adopt a winning approach and promote authentic values, from an organisational point of view their power and their influence are restrained by the lack of capillary and their scope, in terms of capacity and numbers is still rather limited.

In fact, the multidimensional approach adopted by Civil Peace Corps which takes into consideration demographical, social, environmental and economic challenges, should be rooted in a solid institutional architecture and not only in the action of local NGOs and civil society, important as they are (Grimaldi, 2003). Structurally speaking it is necessary to invest in long-term initiatives instead of small ‘spotty’ activities. The inexistence of a common model aligning the efforts of organisations working in the field of nonviolence and civil peace intervention represents a concrete obstacle to the future evolution of such projects.

Furthermore, the ‘First Official Pilot Project for a Civil Peace Corps Contingent’ -first attempt to create a temporary national civil peace corps which is now a ‘work in progress’, is not considered unanimously as a real progression in the institutionalisation of CPC. Scepticism derives from the idea that, in this way, Civil Peace Corps would be an initiative promoted by government. This linkage would evolve –or involve, in a dependency jeopardising the

autonomy of the civil body which, as a consequence, risk being an embedded product of the state.

However, it seems that the role that civilians could play in prevention and transformation of conflict is hugely underestimated. In fact, until the state will rely mainly on military defence, incrementing armament purchasing and production for defensive or offensive ends, without investing in mechanisms of unarmed protection there will be little space for the civil actions. Moreover, as the actual situations stands, military structure and legislative-institutional apparatus are still very far from giving custody of the 'defence' to specific non-armed contingents such as Civil Peace Corps. Berruti and Mazzi (2003) states that non-armed civil contingents have been employed in high risk situations only in limited interposition missions and their experience does not seem enough to recognize to civil society a fundamental role. However, it seems evident that the strategy of violence, begun with the first Gulf War in 1991, followed by the armed attacks in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and now Syria is highly inefficient in solving major crisis. Despite the fact that also the Global Peace Index recorded, between 2008 and 2015, an increase in the number of countries threatened by terrorism and military violence, both at political and social level war seems to be the only effective choice to defend oppressed population and face acute conflicts (Dogliotti Marasso, 2016).

Therefore, if it is a utopia thinking about an 'extinction' of military forces, a fair rebalance of their power seems, instead, reasonable. In this line of action works the campaign 'Another Defence is Possible' for the establishment of an Unarmed and Nonviolent Civil Defence Department. If this step was achieved, it would be a historical landmark for Italy because it would ratify the end of the monopoly of armed forces on the concept of National Defence, which would acquire a wider and more concrete meaning. It would entail the defence of fundamental freedoms, of the territory, of the right to work, of the institutions, of the solidarity (Difesacivilenonviolenta.org, 2016).

Italian state needs to invest in the professionalisation of civil defence and the legislative recognition of Civil Peace Corps as national peace-building infrastructure without leaving the 'burden' on local actors and voluntary movements. The achievement of such goal would provide CPC with a solid structure, and their action would be free from negative dependencies and, as a consequence, more autonomous and neutral.

On their hand, grassroots movements have always proved to be fully devoted to the accomplishment of their mission and in standing out for nonviolence they have always demonstrated their authenticity in a genuine respect towards humanity. Hence, if it is true that Civil Peace Corps project needs to be inserted in a regulated professional framework, the institutionalisation process should retrace values and principles embedded by local movements.

Reflecting upon the future of humanitarian action and the progress in the field of civil peace intervention, investing in a co-operational strategy between CPC and NGOs engaged in vulnerable contexts would be a fruitful initiative for both domains. This integration could enhance visibility of CPC peaceful missions and help NGOs to create meaningful contacts with the population, lowering tension in the field. A synergy of action between pure humanitarian actors and civil peace contingents can be a successful mechanism for reinforcing the idea that collaboration with the military comports dangers for the entire humanitarian field and highlighting that aggression and violence are not a solution to any issue. In an already tense environment in fact, the presence of armed forces on the ground can increase the climate of insecurity. CPC aims at eliminating the root causes of conflict through a nonviolent approach, protecting civilians, activating processes of confidence building and civilian empowerment and safeguarding the rule of law, a strategy undeniably more successful than any formed of armed intervention.

*“Nonviolence requires a double faith, faith in God and also faith in man.”*

*Mahatma Gandhi*

**ANNEX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE**

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As part of the Civil Peace Corps network, or as a non-violent movement you could be a very useful contribution to my research, thanks to your direct experience or your knowledge, also theoretical, of the field. To this end, I kindly invite you to answer to the following questions:

- 1. What is or what are the main means of action of your movement?
  - a) Social inclusion and non-formal education activities
  - b) Post-Conflict rehabilitation and construction of a dialogue between opposing parties
  - c) Development Cooperation
  - d) Campaigns aimed to promote civil awareness and support the respect of human rights
  - e) Other:.....
  
- 2. What is or what are the main outcomes achieved by your organisation in the involved areas?
  - a) Improvement of project beneficiaries' living conditions
  - b) Decreasing of tension related to conflicts or crisis situations
  - c) Strengthening of the collaboration with local NGOs and starting of similar activities
  - d) Political change in the beneficiary country
  - e) Other:.....
  
- 3. What would you include or analyse more deeply in the training course for a peace project in a conflict area?
  - a) Basic First Aid course
  - b) Ethnological study about the work context and the project destination
  - c) Risk analysis of the working environment
  - d) Knowledge and practice about multicultural group works
  - e) Other:.....

4. Rate on a scale from 1 to 4 (1: infrequent, 2: rather frequent, 3: frequent, 4: highly frequent) the level of frequency of the following contexts in the Civil Peace Corps or nonviolent movements operations:
- a) Erosion of state unity and presence of civil war
  - b) Poverty and social exclusion of the most vulnerable
  - c) High migration rate
  - d) Widespread violence

Do you know any other relevant contexts to mention? If yes, which ones?

.....  
.....

5. Rate on a scale from 1 to 4 (1: non influential, 2: rather influential, 3: influential, 4: highly influential) the level of influence of the following factors in impeding the starting and the achievement of a project:
- a) Limited funding
  - b) Poor participation in the project
  - c) Poor collaboration with local governments and with the beneficiaries of the project
  - d) Political opposition from local government or institutions

Do you know any other relevant factors to mention? If yes, which ones?

.....  
.....

6. Rate on a scale from 1 to 4 (1: infrequent, 2: rather frequent, 3: frequent, 4: highly frequent) the level of frequency of the following risks for a peace corps in the development of project in a crisis area:
- a) Direct physical attacks

- b) Direct verbal attacks
- c) Rejection from the hosting local community
- d) Exposition to stressing context and consequent burn out

Do you know any other relevant risks to mention? If yes, which ones?

.....  
.....

7. As far as the risks to which workers are exposed in crisis areas what are the means used (or can be used) to reduce them?

.....  
.....

8. Does being a nonviolent movement mean a total non-collaboration with military forces?

.....  
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