

Memory in schools as a pedagogical and research strategy

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Abstract

This research article shows the results of a classroom experience in which the school becomes a stage for the reconstruction of the memory and history of Colombia, bringing students closer to the traces of the armed conflict, not so much from the master class and the consultation of specialized texts, but going to the living memory of the peoples, present in the older adults of society. This helped us establish communication and links between these vernacular stories of history and those built in the academy, as well as involving the different members of the educational community around issues such as oppression, contempt and violence. The results of this research experience in the school result in the participation of students throughout the process of formulating the project, presenting it to the educational institution and parents, learning activities, class forums, conducting and transcribing the interviews and the commitment to writing and artistic appreciation. The most important effect of this participation and orientation was not only to approach the phenomena derived from war, human rights and the State, from the specialized texts and official versions of history, but also from the memory of the people, of the community. Knowing the history and recognizing the memory of that history in the family and neighbors of the community led

us on a path in which it is possible to contribute to the construction of peace and education in Colombia.

Keywords: Memory, armed conflict, education, research, interviews.

Introduction

Germinating in the heart of history and philosophy, we present in this research article the results, at the pedagogical level, of research with secondary school students on the possibilities of the construction of national and communal memory, the understanding of the repercussions of war and the options that open up from peace and reconciliation. The main question guiding this text is the following: How can research, as a component of teacher training, at the same time serve the learning interests of students in relation to the history of Colombia in general and to the situated history of the armed conflict in particular?

Conceptual Premises: Degradation of Violence, Contempt and Oppression

In a scenario that is at the mercy of the generation of traumas and affectations derived from *armed violence, contempt* and *oppression*, education plays an essential role since it is in educational scenarios that the necessary conditions for freedom, justice, participation and social recognition can be created, in which the care and respect for life go beyond the normative frameworks. We say this on the basis of three documents essential to this research, namely, first, the book “¡Basta ya! Colombia: memorias de guerra y dignidad” (That’s enough, Colombia! Colombia: memories of war and dignity), published in 2013 by the “Memoria Histórica” group which, in its first part, dedicates its pages to describe and statistically detail the degradation of armed violence in Colombia. These pages reveal something already appreciated by other authors such as Alfredo

Molano, Renán Vega, Darío Fajardo or Sergio de Zubiría Samper (2015), among others, and that is that the rural population, that is, peasants, Afro-Colombians and indigenous people, has contributed the victims of the war in Colombia in their different periods (General report historical memory group, 2013 y Molano, 2015).

According to the Historical Memory Group (2013), the modalities of warfare were often carried out under a “frequent and low intensity violence” materialized, on the one hand, in direct violent actions against human integrity or life such as selective assassinations and massacres, harassment, torture and forced disappearances, sexual violence, anti-personnel mines, warlike actions and terrorist attacks. On the other hand, these actions have also focused on personal freedom and private property in acts such as kidnappings and hostage-taking, forced displacement, dispossession and extortion, illegal recruitment, attacks on civilian property and threats.



Given the development of these modalities, it is possible to see how this is a war that has spread to various areas of social, political and cultural life. The control of specific populations and territories, with an abundance of natural resources in dispute, the presence of geo-strategic corridors throughout the national geography, the interference of foreign capital, in addition to the presence of particular interests on the part of sectors of the national economy, are factors of great relevance for the understanding of the targeted forms of violence, as well as its most direct consequences. In this way, war has affected the countryside and the city, the private and public interests of citizens, the basic rights of the human person, their lives, their freedom, their bodily integrity, their goods and their mobility. It is a war of great diversity in terms of its forms of violence, in relation to local and regional dynamics and to the interests of the governments in power and their economic, social and agricultural policies. These forms of violence have not only affected people's physical integrity, freedom and property, they have also wounded the forms of social recognition and the ways in which human groups shape their particular cultural universes.

Secondly, as for these "wounds", from Axel Honneth's work, *La lucha por el reconocimiento. Por una gramática de los conflictos sociales* (The Struggle for Recognition. For a grammar of social conflicts), published in Spanish in 1997, we take the concepts related to social contempt, that is, those phenomena that affect reciprocal recognition and generate loss of trust, respect and esteem in people, and that, in the long run, this author relates to the lack of human realization, the very root of modern social conflicts. For Honneth (1997), phenomena such as offense, humiliation or contempt, directly affect injustices against subjects not only in their "freedom of action" but also in the "positive understanding of themselves that they must gain inter-subjectively", that is, "the danger of

an injury appears, which can shake the identity of the person in its totality", manifested in a "moral wound" (p. 160). Now, how do the phenomena of non-recognition affect the affective plane of people to the point that these experiences of contempt, humiliation or offence become part of resistance and social conflict? According to Honneth (1997), forms of non-recognition should be measured by the "degree to which they can disrupt a person's practical self-reference in such a way as to rob him or her of the recognition of his or her particular claims to identity" (p. 161), which can be clearly seen when communities suffer from degraded violence, poverty, non-realization of basic rights, and at the same time suffer from negative esteem at the level of their social status, in which they are generally blamed for poverty, their culture is stigmatized, and they are easily linked to drug trafficking or illegal armed groups.

Thirdly, from Iris Young's work, *La justicia y la política de la diferencia* (Justice and the Politics of Difference), written in 2000, we take the concept of oppression, in its various faces such as violence, marginalization, exploitation, lack of power and cultural imperialism, as necessary categories to understand the realities lived by these communities, historically injured by war and state neglect. Although Young (2000) analyses contemporary social movements in the United States through the notions of justice, politics and difference from the perspective of political philosophy and feminism, starting from the premise that "justice is the main theme of political philosophy", the author proposes the following definition for the word oppression:

In a broad structural sense, oppression refers to the great and profound injustices suffered by some groups as a consequence of often unconscious assumptions and reactions of people who in ordinary interactions have good intentions, and also as a consequence of cultural stereotypes and structural aspects of bureaucratic hierarchies and market mechanisms; in short, as a consequence of the normal processes of everyday life. (Young, 2000, p. 75)

Inspired by a context of daily, standardized and systematic oppression such as the American one, Young divides oppression into 5 faces that we present below:

Exploitation: refers to oppression that “takes place through a sustained process of transferring the results of the work of one social group to the benefit of another”. Exploitation lies in the fact that someone performs tasks for someone on whom they are dependent in conditions of inequality, according to gender and race structures (p. 83).

Marginalization: refers to “people whom the labor system cannot or will not use,” such as “black or Latino” people, single mothers, the unemployed, the elderly, the disabled, and indigenous people from reserve areas (p. 94).

Lack of power: designates people “who do not have authority” or power, i.e. “those persons over whom power is exercised without them exercising it” as is the case with professional and non-professional people (p. 102).

Cultural Imperialism: refers to “how the dominant features of society render invisible the particular perspective of one group while stereotyping it as a group and pointing to it as the other” (p. 103).

Violence: for Young “what makes violence a phenomenon of social injustice, and not just a morally bad individual action, is its systematic character; it is existence as a social practice [...] it is systematic because it is directed at members of a group simply because they are members of that group” (p. 109).

Educational Premises: Western Canon, Curriculum Axes and Citizenship

However, based on phenomena of degraded violence, oppression and social contempt, we believe that several essential components of the education system must be

transformed according to the social, economic and cultural specificities, and according to the ups and downs of the world economy and the globalization we are experiencing today. The first one is related to the Western educational canon which, like many other aspects of European culture, such as legal principles, science, democracy, religion, among others, has been erected as universal, completing the first relationship of colonial domination of previous centuries, with another, more profound domination in the field of conscience and behavior. Political systems use this to their advantage and when it is not possible to exercise control without threatening life and physical integrity, they are willing to sacrifice the principles of any order of knowledge, institutions or systems of normative regulation of democracy. Hence, the educational canon must integrate the most essential aspects of local culture in order to build the necessary dialogue of knowledge that a globalized world demands, towards an ever wider opening in relation to the real participation of people in the spaces of power where decisions are made that affect thousands of people, in relation to the generation of equal opportunities for work and study for citizens, as well as the recognition of their cultural differences.

In modern societies, alongside the vestiges of the domination and violence of colonial and modern times over the body, other techniques of domination over behavior through control of the mind survive today. This is a matter that has become very well suited to education systems as they disseminate the fields of scientific knowledge, under methodologies, criteria or forms of evaluation based on the exact sciences, related to the knowledge of administration, statistics, engineering and competency-based approaches. Thus, although we have come a long way since the Political Constitution of 1991, education still misses a real inclusion of diversity and cultural differences, with an offer of academic

programs in conflict resolution, care for nature and peace building; with a profound lack of modification, at the state level, to welcome the possibility of deploying public policy platforms or programs from the territories, culture and nature, beyond the capitalist economy, democratic institutions and religious values, once erected as universal.

This is why it is necessary, in second place, to rethink the curricular axes that make up the knowledge matrix of educational institutions, leading to real inclusion and dialogue of knowledge, the appreciation and care of nature, and the preservation of life and culture, as forms leading to "trust, respect, and esteem for people and communities" (Honneth, 1997). This rethinking begins with the transformation of curricula in higher education institutions, offering academic programs that include culture, nature, and peace as professional emphases, for example, in the case of basic education degrees in many of the country's universities. Thus, education as a response to violence, social injustice and non-recognition, emerges as a tool for the appropriation of constitutional mechanisms of development and defense of freedom and rights that, although coming from a western canon with the air of impartiality and universality, must be used to the fullest, in the heat of solidarity, dialogue of knowledge, construction of peace and mutual recognition of differences.

Finally, the construction of peace, hand in hand with care for nature and the use of democratic institutions, also depends on the social and cultural construction of citizens in their ways of being and expressing themselves, recognizing the other not only as a person but also as a living, thinking and feeling being. The achievement of scenarios that allow for the weaving of links around trust, respect and esteem will be vital in this regard, since the relations between the family, the State and society establish the parameters, principles

and practices necessary for living, sharing and democratically building peace.

Methodology

In essence, within the framework of a research process for the Master's Degree in Philosophy at UNIVALLE, Colombia, I developed a set of activities that not only allowed me to respond to the main questions of the research project at a historical and philosophical level, but also made it possible to share the pedagogical experience of researching with secondary school students about war, human rights and the social, political and cultural relations that are woven into daily life on these phenomena. This process was accompanied by the consultation of specialized material on the subjects in journals, press and books, consultations in libraries and on the Internet.

Thus, in an official institution, 11th-grade students, corresponding to the 2018 and 2019 promotions, carried out a work of building life stories and forming an archive of oral testimonies in the region that covers the jurisdiction of the municipality of Jamundí, adjacent to the capital of Valle del Cauca, Cali. As a general idea, the field work was based on local history in relation to the war, divided into several parts: explanation of the topics, elaboration of hypothetical questionnaires, socialization with the directives of the educational institution and with the parents, configuration of technical cards about the people interviewed, sensitization of the students about the realization of the interview in terms of the technical part, time, place and types of questions, to finish with the transcription of the interviews and the submission of an academic text - elaborated by the students of the class of 2018 - and a photographic repertoire of the daily life - elaborated by the class of 2019; actions that, developed together with the students, allowed for the construction of two collective works on history, memory and human rights.



Various documents had to be prepared in the course of this pedagogical process, some for the institution’s management and the teaching staff, and others specifically for the students. The first ones, which we will omit, are for example, the documents corresponding to the “Project Formulation” and the “Progress Reports”. The ones we will see next are called, on the one hand, “General File: Oral History, Peace and Memory”, and on the other hand, “Oral History. Research for peace and memory of the armed conflict”.

Document 1. General file: oral history, peace and memory. First format for receiving data from the people to be interviewed, which was handed over once the directors of the institution were fully aware of it as well as the parents of the young interviewers.

Table 1. *General information: oral history, peace and memory*

First and last names:		Nickname:
Place of birth:		Profession or post:
Age:	Gender:	Date of birth:
Date scheduled for the interview:		Signature of the interviewee’s authorization:

Document 2. Oral History. Research for peace and memory of the armed conflict. Document that summarizes several parts of the process and in which, at the end, a series of optional questions for the interviews appear that could be substituted or mixed with questions and with totally different topics.

**Oral history
Research for peace and memory of the armed conflict**

Below, I present a series of optional questions that can serve as a guide or route to follow for the development of the interviews.

To be considered before interviewing:

1. *Thematic axes:*
 - History of Villa Colombia.
 - Memories of the armed conflict.
 - Other (specify).
2. *About the interviewee before video or audio recording:*
 - They keep their identity secret if they wish so.
 - Inquire about their knowledge.
 - Let them know what they are going to be asked about so they do not get caught off base.
 - Let them know that it is an academic and research paper on the above topics and if they are willing to have it compiled into a school book.
3. *Technical aspects:*
 - Check and test the device with which the interview will be recorded.
 - Look for a quiet place, without outside noise, where there is no interference.
 - Look for a place that does not affect the recording and especially the audio.
4. *In the course of the interview:*
 - Do not ask questions that lead to a yes or no.
 - Do not interrupt the interviewee.
 - If you feel that the information provided by the interviewee is too relevant, do not cut the interview off within ten minutes. Let them proceed and it will be fixed later.
 - Never judge the interviewee by his or her opinions. Always respect them in their opinions and positions.

- Make the interviewee feel that he or she is important and that you value his or her testimony.
- Go slowly. Begin with simple questions to break the ice, develop the interview progressively, without any effort or pressure.

5. *Optional questions: (Description)*

- Origin and identity: what is your name, where do you come from, etc.
- What do you know about the history of Villa Colombia?
- What are the main crops in the area?
- How does the war in Colombia originate?
- What is peace?
- What is being a victim?
- Why do you think the victims are important?
- How did you feel about war?
- How has war affected you?
- What do you think is the way out of the conflict?
- Which armed groups have generated the most violence in the area?
- What does this area need for progress?
- What rights have people been violated in war?
- What repairs are needed to make peace?
- What episodes of the war have you experienced?
- How do you imagine the future of Colombia?

As a large part of the interviews were conducted in the rural sector of this municipality in Valle del Cauca, and given the conditions of the area, with the presence of drug trafficking and various armed actors, the interviews were more pertinent if they were conducted by the students in an atmosphere of trust and familiarity, with an even more specific narrative,

being told to family members, as some of the students chose to interview parents, grandparents, close relatives and neighbors in the community, who in addition to transmitting their wisdom and memory through orality, gave their emotions, expectations and desires in a more lively and lasting way, which would surely have been sacrificed if the interviews were given to a stranger to the community. Thus, the interviews, when corrected, revised and compiled, resulted in a transcendental source not only for the research work itself, but also contributed pedagogically to the experience of the students who researched, created and recognized in the interviewees the human value of orality, their experiences and their points of view, while they inquired about the past of the war, a past that is not commonly seen in school textbooks or in the media.

This methodology allowed for the integration of the educational community insofar as teachers, students, and parents participated, who from different viewpoints and perceptions made it possible, in practice, to answer the following question: How can research, as a component of teacher training, serve the learning interests of students in relation to the history of Colombia in general, and to the situated history of the armed conflict in particular?

Results

Now, we present the results at a historical and pedagogical level of this research method. First, the characterization of the population interviewed - 11th-grade students, class of 2018 and 2019 - and of those interviewed- parents, grandparents and neighbors of the community; second, the previously selected testimonies; and third, the sample of two examples of creation in the school by the students. What we will see, as a result of the research in books, newspapers and internet, was complemented by the testimonies and experiences compiled, testimonies that we present with nicknames in all cases -students, parents and community neighbors- for safety reasons.

Social, Economic and Political Characterization

In the extreme southwest of Valle del Cauca, the village of Villa Colombia, composed of multiple paths on the slopes of the mountains in the municipality of Jamundí, is the space where the people who participated with their questions and testimonies live. Their voices and memories, plus the versions commented orally with teachers of the educational institution, plus the information coming from the periodic press, make up the main sources for this brief historical characterization.

An area of varied climates, abundant rivers, fertile land, whose natural resources progressively exploited by its inhabitants have resulted in timber, mining, extensive livestock, the cultivation of coffee, blackberries and bread products such as bananas, cassava, cane, corn, beans and fruit trees. Given the proximity to the Farallones, it has a great diversity of animal and vegetable species. And on its mountains, plateaus and plains, there are small villages or paths, among which are, "Las Brisas, Las Pilas, El Descanso, Loma Larga, La Meseta, La Playa, La Borrascosa, Las Pilas, El Silencio, Santa Rosa, El Tabor, Alto de la Cruz," among others, bathed by multiple tributaries such as Rio Claro, Rio Guachinte, Rio Pital, and countless secondary streams. Among the maximum heights, La Meseta stands out with 2,000 meters above sea level and Loma Larga with 1,100 meters of altitude, as the lowest zone (Campo & López, 1987, p.4).

Still lacking some remarkable industry, the area is outstanding in agriculture, livestock, poultry and mining, with a large presence of illicit crops in the higher areas. The main road to the urban area of Villa Colombia, the heart of the area for reasons of infrastructure, education and trade, is in good condition. The main road that goes from Jamundí, is 80% in good condition, passing first through the town of Ampudia and the paths of La Pradera and

El Descanso, being the highest mobility road and where the State barely manages to make presence. For educational reasons and also for military reasons, the State limits its presence among officials of both sides (with a high prevalence of teachers), with occasional visits from the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare, the Ombudsman's Office, the National Police and various foundations. In the urban area of Villa Colombia, there is a permanent presence of the Catholic parish priest and several pastors from different Christian churches. The education workers, who are attached to the public teaching profession, work in places of great distance, with isolated populations, with relative proximity to the different armed actors in the area. Given that the headquarters of the educational institution are in the urban area of the village of Villa Colombia and they bring together the majority of high school students, it is possible to concentrate the population in a common space for personal, political and economic development.

With the permanent presence of merchants around the main square, where the majority of the houses are made of cement in the middle of a handful of *bahareque* (wood) houses, commerce is active, with the presence of basic establishments associated with food such as shops and bakeries, as well as drugstores, hardware stores, an internet room, hairdressers, and several places dedicated to mechanics related to motorcycles, mainly. Although there is a lot of movement between these streets, Sunday is the main day of trade with the sale of grain, agricultural and meat products, clothes, shoes, the fortuitous presence of merchants from the urban area and many bars, here and there. The life of its inhabitants is active and difficult, the climate is hot during the day and cold at night, in the midst of wonderful landscapes, occasionally disrupted by violence and abandonment.



Present Populations

Over the immensity of these mountains reside two social groups: the indigenous people and the peasants, almost two different worlds in the same land. According to some testimonies from the community in general, plus the contact with minors, parents, people of different ages and professions, teachers and community leaders, the history of Villa Colombia goes back to its first foundation, hillsides aside, in El Tabor, a place of timber exploitation and mining. Although it was the habitat of the Timbas tribe in colonial times, its mountains were drilled from the end of the 1880s by different colonizers, among whom stand out “Manuel Antonio Quitumbo, Los Castillo, Feliz Bravo, Camilo Anaya, Pedro Acosta, Ezequiel Gómez, etc.” (Campo & López, 1987, p. 9).

According to Campo and López (1987, p.9), the population before their transfer to the current

zone –between 1919 and 1930- did not exceed 300 inhabitants, fed by the agricultural bonanzas of coffee and coal, plus a certain freedom in terms of control and security, given the little state presence, were shaping what today is the *corregimiento* (town) itself. With references still diffuse about its origin, the Rota Suplemento – special segment dedicated to the townships of Jamundí from the local newspaper *El Rotativo* (Campo & López, 1987, p.10)- comments that its name came from a “patriotic feeling of exaltation”, while Carlos W., inhabitant of the area, says that these lands at some point sold and colonized by its owner Francisco Villa, eventually adopted his name as the name of the fledgling population, which would later add the name of Colombia (Sanchez, 2018, p. 148). However, there is no consensus about the transfer of the farmhouse from El Tabor to Villa, but oral and written sources show that it took place between 1919 and 1930 (Campo & López, 1987, p.10).

With the presence of the Kwes Kiwe Nasa reserve –which has a radius of influence over the villages of Chorrera Blanca, Las Pilas, Berlin, El Cedro, La Ventura, Bellavista and Nasa Shix, and whose approximate number of inhabitants is 700- the ancestral roots of the community are mixed with the cultural roots of the majority of the peasant population from the different departments of southwestern Colombia. This population which, in principle, in the 19th century was adjusting to the ups and downs of civil wars, the gradual liberation of slaves and the forms of mining and agricultural exploitation that followed slavery, grew over time as it received people from the western zone, with a prevalence of Cauca and Valle del Cauca, to the presence of people from Nariño, and more distant departments such as Putumayo, Cundinamarca, Huila and Antioquia.

Historical and Present Problems

With a presence, but also with difficulties in the provision of services in electricity, local water supply and education, the community suffers from various problems associated with two central points: war and state neglect. However, through the following list we can see other problems that were already present in the July 1987 Rota Suplemento (Campo & López), even today, 30 years later, they are still present in the region:

Road infrastructure. The general problem in Colombia is the precariousness of secondary roads and the inexistence of tertiary roads that connect the paths with the urban villages. The main road, built in the late 1990s, is undoubtedly the basis for the area's progress, since it replaced the traditional form of mobility that depended on horses, capable of moving through mudflats and landslides, with motorcycles and carts. Since then, this secondary road that connects Villa Colombia with the urban area of Jamundí, lies at the mercy of the weather, repaired by its own inhabitants.

Sources of employment and social investment in the countryside. Without going too far, we will only say that its inhabitants complain, as in many other rural parts of Colombia, of state neglect and low social investment for its inhabitants. Demands for improved education, health and housing services have been traditional among the inhabitants, along with real policies against illicit crops, an inevitable economic source for many of its inhabitants.

Lack of housing and fundamental services on distant or recent communities. It goes without saying that many of the communities emerge in spontaneous processes of illegal appropriation, in the open of beautiful landscapes, in the midst of deficiencies in sewage, health, electricity and access to water. As these forms of land appropriation become disorganized, specific territories are invaded with geological and environmental risks for their human and non-human inhabitants.

The culture of drug trafficking present in the different areas of collective life. As in many other areas of the political and social order in Colombia, drug trafficking plays a decisive role in the economic configuration of the region and in the interests of the various armed groups in conflict.

The presence of different armed groups in the region. With the departure of the FARC under the peace process with the Santos government, the zone is suffering from various re-accommodations of the armed groups, as well as the establishment of alliances between drug trafficking gangs, dissidents of the FARC-EP, the M-19, the EPL and the ELN, in the face of the intermittent presence of the public forces in the zone.

Environmental deterioration. Hand in hand with the permanent colonization, extensive cattle raising and the progressive felling of trees, historical problems of the countryside,

other problems are aggravated by the increase in population, the abandonment of legal crops for illicit crops, the presence of laboratories, occasional confrontations, among other actions harmful to the life of animals and nature.

Minors' risk. The child population is exposed to war in the form of murder, forced recruitment and sexual abuse. In addition, the culture of drug trafficking and the expansion of illicit crops as accessible forms of social advancement, as well as rural customs such as alcohol consumption and the establishment of kinship relationships at a very early age. Exposed, children grow up in contexts of lack of affection, presence of armed and structural violence and labor exploitation, aspects very typical of the rural sectors of Colombia.

Armed Conflict, State Abandonment and Social Undervaluation

At the level of the proposed investigation, two premises are necessary to make explicit from what has been said so far: first, the peasant, indigenous and Afro-Colombian populations have been the historical victims of the war in Colombia, and second, along with large sectors of the urban population, the majority of people in the rural sector suffer from poverty, have few possibilities for public participation and few educational opportunities, are exploited as cheap labor, most of the time informally, and suffer the degradation of the war in many of its details. Having said this, let us look at some brief insights that this paper was able to investigate and compile in school according to the following points. Firstly, the testimonies in three senses: in relation to the armed actors and the degradation of violence, in relation to the State and in relation to social perception. And secondly, two contributions from the students' creations.

Presence of Armed Actors T4

An important part of the testimonies shows that violence on corporal integrity, torture, rape, exposure of the lifeless body of the victims,

animalization, the gathering of people around the celebration of death, the establishment of a new order based on terror and fear, served to hurt, according to Honneth (1997), the confidence of people to feel safe and to have freedom over their body and mobility. For example, Inés K. affirms this when she recalls, in relation to the paramilitaries, that:

Right there they took the men out of the little store and they ate, drank, when we saw that they began to take out machetes and hit the refrigerator with them and knocked down the egg combs, broke them, broke drinks and threw everything away and they had the man right there, the one I fed, they had him there and right there they told him: Look, we are gathering the people to see the kind of people you have in your town, stop being silly, you are among bad people and you do not realize it! (Bolaños, 2018, p. 34)

Not caring about "children, pregnant women, or adults," the paramilitaries threatened, organized, and insulted, and when they found their direct victims, they proceeded to kick them and intimidate them with expressions such as "Well, here we are going to give these dogs to you," and others in the same tone: "He is leaving or tomorrow we will kill him" (Bolaños, 2018, p. 34). Forms of violence to the physical and moral integrity of persons and to their sense of community belonging, were translated into forms of animalization of the other, in public spaces, under verbal attacks, threats, destruction and requisition of goods, in the midst of total lack of protection. Such events were repeated in the village of Villa Colombia, where, according to Aurelio C., "they made the people in the square take out the things from the cooperative and that is how it was" and those who resisted were attacked and told them "Ah well, you did not take things out, come here and have this and kicked them or slapped them!" (Bolaños, 2018, p. 44).

Precarious State Presence

In the face of the fear and terror of the practices of violence of the armed actors

in conflict, people have felt disrespected because the institutions of the State have failed to realize the normative ideals included in the Political Constitution of 1991: the communities have been deprived of their essential rights because they are not only in a state of institutional abandonment, but also intermittently suffer the consequences of armed violence and social marginalization. Corrupt, absent, unknown, the institutions of the State are perceived negatively by the inhabitants of the countryside, an aspect already symptomatic, according to Honneth (1997) of a "social pathology" such as the high level of distrust felt by the people, the feeling of not being present in their social and economic agendas, the feeling of not being respected or esteemed by both the government in power and the rest of civil society. Examples of this can be seen in the words of Victor C., when he says that the government "is against us", in the words of Salvador I., when he affirms that "the peasant receives nothing", or of José G., who believes that they want to "have peasants subjugated there in the countryside, in misery", and foresees that, in time "we will be marginalized", among many other maxims. To finish these testimonies, the comment of Néstor H., is revealing; he points to the question about the particular perception of the peasants by the government and civil society, saying: "they do not see them; they have never really seen them" (Bolaños, 2018, pp. 48, 55, 39; 2019, p. 47).

To the "the peasant receives nothing" exposed by Salvador I., Julio V., adds that "peasants have no other support than their coca bushes and the government promises them something different so that they can cultivate other things and nothing comes of it" (Bolaños, 2018, p. 88). Perceived in the abandonment, in a context of institutional precariousness, where violence breaks into daily life, people hide or avoid facing power, since their expectations in the horizon of fundamental rights are, according to Honneth

(1997), diminished in terms of trust, respect and esteem. The crisis of rationality immersed in this institutional poverty, in combination with the context of war, makes the same institutions lose their degree of validity as they are seen as perpetrators of the same decadence, which undermines confidence, respect for equal rights and the social appreciation of people in their qualities and capabilities. Hence, in the relations between the State and the rural communities, "the peasant, the Afro and the indigenous people end up being sacrificed," since resolving the armed conflict depends, according to Karol R., on "the State looking at the peasant, looking at the indigenous people, looking at the Afro-Colombian people, looking at the mestizo people, looking at the fact that they are the ones who are really affected by the armed conflict", adding "a different view of the area, which is a sector that has been almost forgotten by the State" (Bolaños, 2019, p. 44).

Social Valuation and Identity

Since these victims come mostly from territorially and culturally defined social groups, according to Axel Honneth (1997), their social esteem is undermined, devaluing their ways of being, their qualities and their capacities as invalid and undervalued; and, at the same time, supporting practices of oppression that, according to Iris Young (2000), go beyond violence and marginalization, to forms of exploitation, lack of power and cultural imperialism against their differences and traditions, assimilated or destroyed by massacres and exile. This is how Angel X., expresses it when he points out: "The peasant and ethnic groups are perceived as if we were from a low level. Therefore, the government does not take us into account to participate in the projects" (Bolaños, 2019, p. 25). Evidence of this type of negative esteem on others, in the deprivation of rights and the prolongation of unsatisfied needs, are, for example, Karol R.'s comments on the needs of the region:



This area needs so many things for progress: education, a quality education, we need recreational parks for our family environment, we need more job opportunities, we need more investment in the countryside, more productive projects, we need to be looked at differently, not to be looked at as a red zone as they describe us sometimes. (Bolaños, 2019, p. 44)

This research process allowed not only to glimpse these dynamics of oppression and social disdain that the inhabitants of the rural sector in Colombia suffer with prevalence, with differences or similarities according to local and regional specificities, but also to know firsthand the creations of the students that, together with the interviews, also went on to be compiled. Let's see some examples.

Creation in the School

In the development of pedagogical practice, special emphasis was given to the processes

of creation as a form of appropriation, free expression and synthesis of the academic processes carried out in the framework of interviews, readings, explanations, examples of interviews, foreign guests, among other aspects. Let's see just two examples of the result of this pedagogical practice.

Example 1. Corresponding to the 2018 Promotion:

For a long time, the war in Colombia has been one of the main problems that do not allow the good development of our society. The war has been the same for years and will remain so as long as people live as slaves of those who claim to have power. This is not a question of looking for culprits but of acting at the right time in order not to allow the atrocities and injustices that we have lived through for years. Colombia is a country with great wealth, but people sadly do not know how to take advantage of it, they only think

about having illicit crops and getting close to drug trafficking or doing what gives them money more easily. The Colombian war is not a thing of the past, but it is a war that has always been, because of the State that instead of penalizing the criminals as it should, the only thing it does is get its hands dirty and have associations with people who seek to ruin almost everyone for the benefit of a few.

To all this, we must add the pain of the people who have had to abandon their homes, who have suffered the war from close quarters and, worst of all, who saw how people just like them, but with immense evil, ended the lives of many of their loved ones. The war has been a disgrace to the country and so far has claimed thousands of innocent lives, all because of a State that preferred to let all those criminals go free and decided to make a peace agreement without even making a part of them pay for everything, although the reality is that not even with thousands of years would they pay for all the damage they have caused; but death would not be a solution either, would it? Many people are full of resentment and seek justice by their own hand but do not think about the consequences and do not think that instead of making things any better, what they do is to lead the country to increased violence.

In short, generally in the smallest crimes, criminals are caught and, once caught, they are released within a couple of weeks, days and even hours supposedly for lack of evidence. In reality, they are released because the supposed justice of the country allows itself to be bribed in the lowest way and hide the truth of everything that happens. *You can't block the sun with one finger.* Mario G. (Bolaños, 2018, p. 87)

Example 2. corresponding to the class of 2019:



Photograph of Y. B. Villa Colombia 2019, Symbol of protest of a town that seeks peace (Bolaños, 2019, p. 67).

In summary, the main results are as follows:

Collective research with a diversity of roles and fields of knowledge. Understanding of the experience of research using different methods and diverse sources for writing processes and artistic creation.

Diversification of sources for the understanding of historical phenomena, such as reading specialized texts, consulting secondary sources, internet research, recognition of life stories, etc.

Interdisciplinarity insofar as this pedagogical work allowed the integration of areas such as social sciences, philosophy, democracy, human rights and Spanish language, in what is related to the experience of writing and creating.

Interrelation and dialogue of knowledge among the members of the educational community. Recognition and integration of popular stories into the history of Colombia in general and of the armed conflict in particular.

Conclusions

A first conclusion, of sociological characteristics, is related to the importance that the rural sector and the peasant, indigenous and Afro-Colombian population have historically played, since they not only experience alternative social orders in scenarios where different armed actors, legal and illegal, dispute their territories, but also experience the weak presence of the State, reduced to educational establishments. This pedagogical and research work with the students allowed them to learn firsthand the stories and testimonies of their own neighbors and family members about the war, state neglect, and the way they are perceived and socially valued. The students' approach to these realities of social injustice and oppression made it possible to recognize how social stereotypes play an essential role in the processes of stigmatization and marginalization, realities that, due to the minimal opportunities for education, do not manage to guarantee social advancement, citizen participation and critical sense, condemning many of the students to undervaluation, laziness and informal work, if not to be absorbed, in the worst case, by the networks of criminality linked to the war and drug trafficking. Knowing these phenomena and being aware of this history may provide the possibilities to avoid its repetition.

On the other hand, in pedagogical terms, this research experience at school leaves the following conclusions. It enabled the 11th-grade students to approach the learning experience of investigating the past through interviews, consultations and review. This is very important because it provided students with research and writing tools that will be very useful in a future university environment. Through social research, students were introduced to the history of Colombia in general and to their

community in particular, especially as it relates to the armed conflict, social injustice and human rights. To do this, it was not necessary for the students to go exclusively to books and the web, but rather to the living history of the community in which they live and the war that we have suffered in Colombia for decades. Doing this exercise allowed, on the other hand, for a recognition and a dialogue of knowledge among the members of the educational community that is very enriching in that it values the common past, memories of others are recognized, registered, take shape and begin to become visible. Additionally, in linguistic terms, there are multiple ways of analyzing the discourses revealed in the testimonies, the grammatical forms, the oral forms and traditions, among other elements, already out of our reach. Finally, this work allows for pedagogical introspection to the extent that it leaves room for reflection on the work itself, the ways to enrich it and expand it from the different artistic expressions, to the ways in which it can vitalize memory, build peace and contribute to the teacher's training and the civic education of each of our students.

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