DESCONTAMINA

Conmemoración de la Diversidad Cultural

MAYO 2014



EN ESTA EDICIÓN

{ENG} The construction of an inclusive reality in Colombia

{FRN} Syrie. Bilan de la situation et forces de changement

{ESP} Perfil: Afganistán y la Contaminación por Armas

{ESP} Cantando por la democracia; Afganistán

{ESP} Una nota de agradecimiento al exiliado que dedicó su vida por hacer una mejor Colombia

... y más



Índice

{FRN} Syrie. Bilan de la situation et forces de changement Pg. 08.

{ENG} The conflict of racism & The construction of an inclusive reality in Colombia . Pg. 14

{ESP} "Yo… mujer": Oración de empoderamiento. Pg. 10

{ESP} Una nota de agradecimiento al exiliado que dedicó su vida por hacer una mejor Colombia. Pg. 24

{ESP} Perfil: Afganistán y la Contaminación por Armas. Pg. 26

{ESP} Cantando por la democracia: Afganistán. Pg. 27

{ESP} Nota sobre la publicación del informe "La Verdad de las Mujeres víctimas del conflicto armado en Colombia". Pg. 06

{ENG} . The need for the protection of cultural diversity in present times. Pg 4

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THE NEED FOR THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN PRESENT TIMES

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend´s or of thine own were: any man´s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee.

John Donne (2011, p.118)

In these changing times, cultural diversity is a matter of paramount importance for humanity. Carl Sagan, astrophysicist, philosopher and humanist, talked about the need for "social experiments" to enlighten global society and bring it towards new paradigms that could assure our survival as a species in the universe (Sagan, 1986). For its nature and vastness (in space and time), cultural diversity is the prime "social experiment" we humans will ever have access to. The many ways in which humans relate to their environments teaches us, among many things, that "reality" is but a socio-historical construction, not a predetermined state; and as such, it can be consciously transformed. However, cultural diversity is at high risk in the present, and if we lose it, we will lose a fundamental asset to accomplish the most needed objective of a better global society for us all.

To understand the importance of cultural diversity and the main risk that threatens it, it is first necessary to understand what culture, at its core, really is. Biological Anthropology studies human beings from an evolutionary perspective, and understands culture as an evolutionary adaptation that humans developed -through millenniums of interaction with specific environments- as a way of survival. In the same way that some animals developed claws or camouflage to survive, human groups developed many kinds of culture to fit their many kinds of surrounding environments. That flexibility is what made *Homo sapiens* the dominant species on earth, literally able to survive in any climate and in any place on the globe. In this sense, any form of culture and every cultural action is equally rightful, for in the fight for survival against natural selection, there is no good or bad, only the survivors and the perished*.

There are many threats to cultural diversity. Some relate to political issues, others to economic interests and the control over resources, others even, are simply erroneous ideas from the distant past that have endured throughout history. However, the main underlying threat to cultural diversity, the common denominator, is ethnocentrism. Some theoreticians have cataloged ethnocentrism as "natural", because it stems from social interaction and, by repetition, becomes an intuitive and mechanical process. Ethnocentrism basically consists, of valuating and interpreting the ways and actions of others (individuals or groups) from the exclusive criterion of one's own culture. In this way, the 'other' is conceived, perceived and understood from one´s ethic, esthetic and moral model. This act of incomprehension constitutes the main obstacle for proper interaction with 'otherness'. In extreme situations and circumstances, ethnocentrism can lead to exclusion and discriminatory acts from individuals or collectives.

Even if ethnocentrism wer natural, this does not mean that it should not be challenged by a collec-

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The ones that have perished due to human action (e.g. war, conflict, cultural take over, etc.) are not considered in this equation, because human action is not part of natural selection.

tive and individual reflection process. Such a process is in fact a cultural approach to a form of peacebuilding action that involves the transformation of reality. As Avruch said, "culture needs to be not only analyzed and understood for purposes of activist conflict resolution, but rethought and re-imagined – reengineered – as well" (in Ramsbotham, Wookdhouse & Miall, 2010 p. 302).

Margaret Mead, the famous anthropologist who worked for many years in Colombia and was an exemplary pupil of Franz Boaz, one of the forefathers of anthropology, expressed the need for the protection of cultural diversity in a most concise and clear way:

> [She] spoke of her singular fear that, as we drift toward a more homogeneous world, we are laying the foundations of a blandly amorphous and singularly generic modern culture that will have no rivals. The entire imagination of humanity, she feared, might be confined within the limits of a single intellectual and spiritual modality. Her nightmare was the possibility that we might wake up one day and not even remember what had been lost (In Davis, 2009, p. 33).

The protection of cultural diversity is a venture for the common good, for when a culture weakens, we all weaken; because "no man is an island, entire of itself"; because we urgently need a basis for change; and because it is imperative that we understand that reality is constructed, not determined.

This does not mean that we should replicate ethnic groups or other exponents of cultural diversity in their ways; this calls for the creation of social spaces for free, not biased or imposed cultural hybridization, where stakeholders relate to one another as equals. It calls for a joint construction of knowledge for the active search of a reality(s) that corresponds better to our expectations as individuals and collectives.

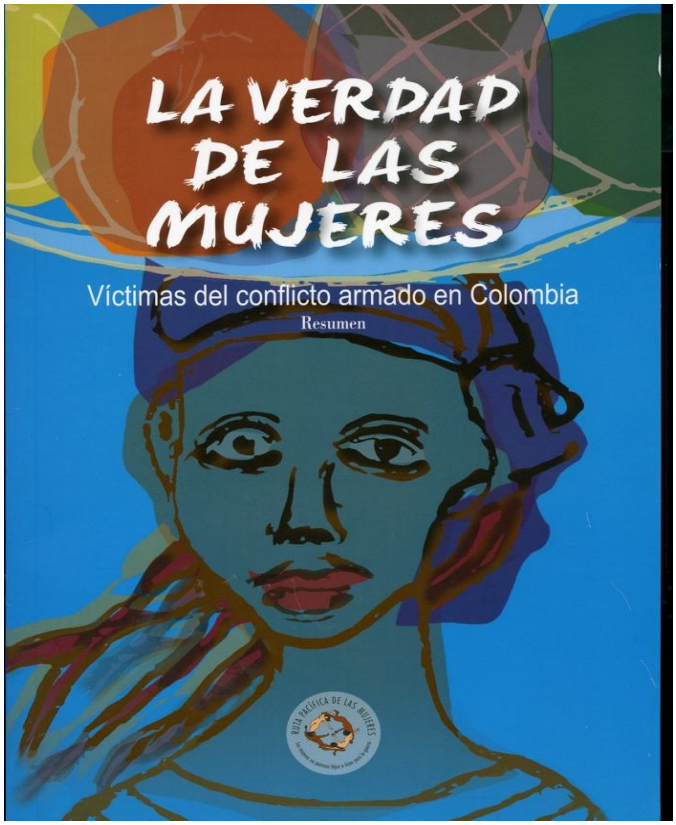
Julián Facundo Rinaudo



Actualidades

Nota sobre la publicación del informe "La Verdad de las Mujeres víctimas del conflicto armado en

En febrero de 2014, *Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres* ha publicado un informe muy completo sobre las mujeres víctimas del conflicto armado en Colombia que "constituye un esfuerzo colectivo por recoger una memoria de las víctimas del conflicto armado, y una verdad que trata de abrirse paso en el país, entre los discursos políticos, los análisis académicos o los enfoques jurídicos cuando se habla de las violaciones de derechos humanos" (RPM, 2013: 11).



El informe salió en una coyuntura sociopolítica donde es preciso preguntarse cuál es el rol de las mujeres en el posible escenario posconflicto en Colombia: tanto las elecciones como los diálogos de paz nos han significado una mayor participación de las mujeres. Es por lo tanto, importante resaltar el trabajo asiduo del equipo detrás del informe constituido por dos tomos, con más de 500 páginas cada uno. El primer tomo analiza las experiencias de las víctimas "a partir de los marcos conceptuales que han dialogado con ellas y que provienen de un feminismo emancipador" (RPM, 2013: 11), entrevistando a más de mil mujeres que han sufrido los múltiples horrores del conflicto colombiano. El segundo tomo recoge los testimonios, las narrativas y los relatos de las mujeres que se pronuncian sobre los hechos violentos como las ejecuciones extrajudiciales, las



desapariciones y los desplazamientos forzados así como la violaciones masivas: es la violencia contada por mujeres (RPM, 2013: 13).

Este documento nos permite reflexionar sobre el hecho de que si bien las mujeres han sido por la mayor parte de la historia colombiana (y siguen siendo) invisibilizadas de los procesos socio-históricos, no es cierto que han sido inactivas. Al contrario, sus cuerpos fueron territorio de dominio, poder y violencia, pero también de resistencia y resiliencia. Este informe es una excelente manera de empezar a comprender las diferentes dinámicas de género del conflicto interno colombiano, ya que, como constructores y constructoras de la paz, debemos emprender un camino imprescindible hacia el mejoramiento de nuestras interrelaciones de género a diario.

Priscyll Anctil Avoine

SYRIE: BILAN DE LA SITUATION ET FORCES DE CHANGEMENT

Le 15 mars dernier, c'était le tragique troisième anniversaire du conflit armé syrien, une des plus grandes catastrophes humanitaires de notre époque. Selon le site Internet Libération, le conflit syrien a fait plus de "146.000 morts, le plus grand nombre de déplacés au monde" et ne presente toujours pas d'issues posibles à la fin des hostilités qui opposent les rebelles aux forces armés de Bashar Al-Asad (2014).

Rappelons que le conflit armé en Syrie a pourtant comencé de façon tout à fait nonviolente, peu après le debut des soulèvements dans le cadres des Révoltes Arabes. Il s'est avéré que la répréssion militaire du régime de Asad fut tellement impitoyable (Libération, 2014), que peu à peu, la révolution pacifique s'est radicalisée. Malheureusement, il n'y a pas de solution militaire viable: comme le suggère "l'envoyé spécial des Nations unies et de la Ligue arabe pour la Syrie Lakhdar Brahimi", la première nécessité est de cesser d'armer les différentes parties en conflit afin de pouvoir relancer les pourparlers pour la paix (Ria Novosti).

Cependant, le panorama n'est pas totalement sombre: malgré les atrocités qu'il urge de décrier, il existe des espaces de résistence à la violence partout sur le territoire syrien.Le femmes en sont le plus grand témoignage: leurs constante implication dans la lutte nonviolente est un exemple à suivre. Comme le soutient le site Inclusive Security (2014), elles se sont entre autres impliquées dans l'organisation des protestations nonviolentes, la distribution de l'aide humanitaire, la documentation des abus et actes violents, la sensibilisation sur les processus de paix, etc. Leur engagement politique et sociale nous démontre bien la nécessité de comprendre les multiples facettes de l'agentivité féminine dans cette región du monde, pour enfin surpasser les stéréotypes que nous avons par rapport à la place de la femme dans les sociétés musulmanes. Cela nous permet de mieux comprendre les différents rôles sociaux qu'elles occupent et déconstruire les préconception de passivité.

Priscyll Anctil Avoine





DESCONTAMINA

NOVIOLENCIA

"Yo... mujer"

El siguiente texto, recientemente recuperado y transcrito de los archivos personales de su autora, Elvira Ramos de Rinaudo, fue escrito en la década del 70 como una oración y mantra de fortalecimiento personal de una mujer que, consciente del principio de interexistencia, se hace participe-constructora de todo aquello que la rodea.

En una época donde la equidad de género estaba recién iniciando su arduo camino, este escrito –de toques nacionalistas e indicios globalistas- resalta por su vanguardismo feminista y ambientalista. Avanzado también, en por lo menos una generación para su época, es su enfoque armonizador entre la espiritualidad, la ciencia y la cultura, donde Dios se concibe no desde el sectarismo religioso, sino como una fuerza para el desarrollo de la totalidad de la experiencia humana.



Soy… luego existo. Cada vez que escucho esta frase, o que las circunstancias del diario vivir me enfrentan conmigo misma, en un examen de conciencia o subjetivo; me pregunto si soy… si realmente soy Yo, individuo, persona… ser racional y consciente. Si cumplo con la suprema voluntad divina que me ha brindado el don de hacerme a su imagen y semejanza, y la obligación de actuar a su imagen y semejanza.

Yo Mujer… Yo individuo social, Yo consciente y actuante (no sólo en la medida de mis necesidades, sino en la medida de mi capacidad y posibilidades), me pregunto si realmente participo de cuanto me rodea, tanto en el orden espiritual, cuanto en el cultural y material.

Si mi alma se prodiga hacia todo aquello que constituye el Supremo ideal; si me esfuerzo por valorar la bondad consciente y concreta; si la verdad es mi único patrón; si siento el dolor con el estoicismo que él exige, para ser constructivo y si vivo la alegría intensamente con el ánimo de ofrecerla y compartirla con quienes me rodean. Me pregunto si estoy realmente informada de cuanto sucede a mí alrededor; si participo con mi inquietud en el desarrollo y difusión de las ciencias, las artes y el progreso. Si, con mi esfuerzo diario, contribuyo real y efectivamente al mejoramiento ambiental, físico, económico de mi familia, mi Ciudad, mi ambiente y mi país. Y me preocupo si in-



Con su esposo Ulises Renato Rinaudo

tervengo activamente en el quehacer ciudadano y político Si opino, me integro y me preocupo para que mi país tenga autoridades dignas y capaces para dirigir su presente y preservar su futuro.

Y Yo Mujer, individuo social, Persona, me doy cuenta que no estoy actuando ni viviendo de acuerdo a esas premisas. Me doy cuenta de que a veces quiero, exijo participar en las cosas que me interesan permanente o transitoriamente; pero que en otras circunstancias me escudo en mi femeneidad para dejar pasar mi existencia en una mediocridad tibia y condicionada.

Advierto, como iluminada por un chispazo de consciencia, que me dejo llevar por la comodidad propia de los seres mediocres. Siento que estoy cambiando mi condición de persona por la de ostra inactiva, sin siquiera la excusa de crear dentro de mí una perla espiritual.

Por esto (que desde el subconsciente me alerta permanentemente aun cuando a veces acalle su reclamo) me he impuesto esta oración que trato de tener siempre presente:

¡Señor, Tú, que me has creado a tu imagen y semejanza, que me has dado capacidad de amar con profundidad de mujer, ayúdame a que ame sin limitaciones a mis semejantes; pero que ese amor no se limite a mis sentimientos sino que se transforme en obras, en dones, hacia mi esposo, mis hijos, mi comunidad y mi patria.

Tú que me has dado inteligencia, lucidez, equidad; no dejes que desperdicie estos dones y haz que me esfuerce por ilustrarme, superarme, ser activa, imparcial y participante.

Tú que me brindaste la suprema capacidad de ser madre, haz que a lo largo de toda mi vida pueda, por mi

esfuerzo, actualización y voluntad, dar a mis hijos el alimento espiritual que de mí esperan y necesitan.

Haz Señor, que brinde al hombre que me acompaña, la voluntad de compartir sus penas, sus alegrías, sus desvelos, sus inquietudes, esfuerzos e ilusiones. Que no me sienta inferior a él, pero que tampoco sea un lastre para su proyección como individuo social.

Dame voluntad y capacidad para participar en el esfuerzo del mundo por lograr la Paz, la Justicia, el bienestar social y la convivencia pacífica y el desarrollo de las artes, las ciencias, la cultura.

…

Hazme, Señor, más mujer, haciéndome más capaz, más útil, más informada, más activa y más femenina.

Elvira



Con sus hijos Ulises, Silvia y Daniel





"Señor:

Dame voluntad y capacidad para participar en el esfuerzo del mundo por lograr la Paz, la Justicia, el bienestar social y la convivencia pacífica y el desarrollo de las artes, las ciencias, la cultura.

- Elvira Ramos de Rinaudo -

The conflict of racism & The construction of an inclusive reality in Colombia

Racism is one of the many causes that are slowly suffocating cultural diversity into extinction. Even though there is awareness on its regard and dangers, the efforts against it arrive more often than not only after the situation has escalated into dramatic social crisis expressed in gruesome violence. Racism, including the invisible day to day version of it, needs to be conceptualized as the extreme danger it is, and the menace it represents for cultural diversity, the Ethnosphere and humanity. The present paper conceptualizes racism as an intractable conflict, and using the post-modernist approach for conflict resolution, analyses the mechanisms through which it is institutionalized and perpetuated. The case of Colombia and its struggle against racism is used to illustrate how this approach can be translated into actions for its eradication.

The conflict of racism

Conflict is defined as "a confrontation between one or more parties towards incompatible or competitive means or ends" (University of Peace, 2005. Pp 22) or, in a more general way, as "the experience of incompatible activities (goals, claims, beliefs, values, wishes, actions, feelings, etc.)... [that] prevents, obstructs, interferes, injures" (Coleman, 2003). On the other hand, Essed (1991, 1992, in Wodak and Reisigl, 1999, p. 179) understands racism as "ideology, structure and process in which inequalities inherent in the wider social structure are related, in a deterministic way, to biological and cultural factors attributed to those who are seen as a different ´race´ or ´ethnic group´". From a conflict resolution perspective; and drawing from Jeong´s (2008) analysis of the role of human needs in conflicts; racism can be understood as the confrontation resulting from the incompatible experiences of one party´s procurement of its basic human needs (identity, recognition and security), and its obstruction by another´s party legitimization of privileges and exclusionary practices.

Racism is an act of social violence in the sense that "a society commits violence against its members when it forcibly stunts their development and undermines their well-being" (Barash and Webel, 2009, Pp. 8); or when it tries to do so. Violence can have three forms: direct, structural, and cultural. Direct violence is when "there is a sender, an actor who intends these consequences of violence" (Galtung, 1996, Pp. 2). Some examples on racist *direct violence* are racist comments and jokes; denying access to a good or service by reason of ethnic affiliation; and ethnocides. Violence that is indirect because it comes from the structure itself is *structural violence* (Galtung, 2004). A legal system that does not recognize the rights of a particular group of citizens because of their ethnic affiliation; forbidding cultural practices, collective tenure of traditionally owned lands, or the autonomy of exercising traditional law; are some examples of structural



violence in contexts of racism. Finally, *cultural violence* relates to "all of it symbolic, in religion and ideology, in language and art, in science and law, in media and education" (Galtung, 1996, Pp. 2). Racism through cultural violence is expressed in racist stereotypes, the invisibilization of an ethnic group in the media, the neglect to make education pertinent to the reality of an ethnic group, and aesthetics paradigms that associates certain ethnic physical traits with pejorative connotations, among others.

While racist direct violence -for being usually tangible and undeniable- tends to obtain fast and strong political and societal opposition (at least in its more dramatic expressions), racist structural and cultural violence is more often than not left unattended for the pursue of more "immediate" and "pressing" needs and problematics, allowing its perpetuation and reproduction throughout generations. Sometimes even, its escalation into social or violent crises.

Due to its protracted and deep-rooted nature, racism is, as called in conflict resolution studies, an inractable conflict. Intractable conflicts are characterized for being "recalcitrant, intense, deadlocked and difficult to resolve" (Coleman 2003, Pp. 5). They are usually represented by "struggle by communal groups for such basic needs as security, recognition and acceptance, fair access to political institutions and economic participation" (Azar, 1991 in Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, 2011, Pp. 99); same type of issues as in the eradication of racism.

Not surprisingly, intractable conflict most times emerges from a "history of colonialism, ethnocentrism... or human rights abuses in the relations between the disputants" (Azar, 1986 in Coleman, 2003, Pp. 11). After colonialism and through settlement processes, the ideologies used to relieve moral and ethical constrains from the cruelty of dominance through violent means, and the narratives created to justify them, become institutionalized in the social, political and cultural structures. The institutionalization of racism assures the self perpetuation of hierarchical relations via unilateral constructions in which the dominant party defines "the criteria for what is to be considered good, just, fair and normal" (Coleman, 2003, Pp. 11). As Bar-Tal (2007) points out, a conflict that has endured for more than one generation entails that all subsequent generations have not know another reality but that of the conflict.. This is where the post-modernist approach comes into play.



Sociopsychological infrastructure of racism

Cultural Diversity, throughout the wide variety of ways in which human beings make sense of their reality and interact with it, teaches us that reality itself is but a construction, not a determination. Post-modernism, in turn, emphasizes the importance of "consciousness, communication, and social interaction in the construction of meaning" (Coleman, 2004, Pp. 218) and states that the sense of reality (i.e. constructed meaning) of parties at conflict plays a key part, not only in how the conflict is engaged, but also in assuring its perpetuation and intractable nature.

A society that has coexisted with a protracted conflict adapts its sociopsychological infrastructure in order to cope with that conflict. The mechanisms responsible in shaping that infrastructure present particular dynamics according to each conflict characteristics. These mechanisms are explained in the scenario of racist conflict.

Collective memory

According to Bar-Tal (2007) the collective memory creates a bridge between past and present, and has the double function of integrating new members into the society´s perception of the conflict, while at the same time providing an explanation of the present estate of the society in relationship with the *otherness.* Bar-Tal carries on explaining that the narrative constructed around the conflict is a black and white biased depiction that fits the present society´s needs.

In a society where racism happens against part of its own population, the collective memory is narrated from the perspective of the hegemonic group as the official history. It is generally characterized by one or a mixture of the following scenarios: a) the *other* does not exists in society´s history, or its existence is so insignificant that is regarded as irrelevant, b) the actions and behaviours of the *other* in the past accounts for its present disadvantaged circumstances, or c) the other is responsible for society´s present problematics.

Ethos of conflict

The ethos of conflict is a society´s understanding of what the conflict is about and what its root causes are. It has the moral function to justify cultural, structural and even direct violence towards the *other*. The ethos of conflict materializes in stereotypes, as they provide explanations of why and how the *other* is "lesser".

Not surprisingly from hierarchical relations, stereotypes not only denigrate the *other,* but also praise - by sometimes explicit but generally tacit comparison- the stereotype user; thus their enticing nature as a reinforcers of positive in-group identity. Jeong (2008, Pp. 75), explaining through attribution theory how stereotypes work, states that with them "the causes of behavior are relegated either to an actor´s basic disposition or external circumstances". In this dualistic manner, all negative behaviors or perceived negative characteristics of the discriminated *other* are explained by reason of its basic disposition ("its nature"); while any virtuous behaviors "is seen more in terms of situational causes than the actor´s inner qualities or good intentions, thus taking away credit" (Ibid.). Similarly, any negative behavior by an individual or group of individuals is extrapolated as intrinsic characteristics of the entire group. As a result the *other´s* "undesirable behavior is often over-attributed to group characteristics, but is under-attributed to difficulties in the environment" (Ibid.). The exact opposite is applied to in-group members.

The latter relates to how in-group wrongdoings of the past are perceived in the collective memory, for they are usually explained as related to or consequence of external factors outside the group´s control. Taking away the hegemonic group´s responsibility of past wrongdoings deters future scenarios of reconciliation, because accepting responsibility is necessary for genuine regret, and regret is a building block of reconciliation (Mellor, Bretherton and Firth, 2007).

Collective emotional orientations

The collective emotional orientations are part of the cultural framework of a group, and consist of shared emotional experiences toward the *other*. Very commonly, cultural violence in a context of racism is associated with feelings of fear or hatred towards that *other*. Allport (1954 in Bar-Tal 2007, Pp. 12) explains that hate has behavioural implications as it is an "enduring organization of aggressive impulses toward a person or class of persons. Since it is composed of habitual bitter feelings and accusatory thoughts, it constitutes a stubborn structure in the mental-emotional life of the individual". Jeong (2008) develops the idea and explains that feelings of hatred affects social identity, engenders hostile behaviour by ethical legitimization of violent acts and promotes the display of superiority and demeaning behaviour towards the *other*; ultimately distorting the reception of reality and thus cognitive functioning in the bearers of hate (Jeong 2008). The receiver of hate, in turn, usually responds with more hate, fear and/or anger.

Institutionalization and perpetuation of racism

The three elements of the sociopsychological infrastructure are interdependent to each other in a causality chain that reinforces itself as a conflict spiral. The tendency in relationships of racism is that the parties (both victim and perpetuator) frame any interaction in the preconceived schema of what is expected, which leads to self fulfilling prophecies (Jeong, 2008, Pp. 160). The general processes can be appreciated in the graph above.





The construction of an inclusive reality in Colombia

One of the key aspects in resolving a conflict is the transformation of the relationships between the disputing parties (Lederach, 2005; Kelman, 2010). The post-modernist approach focuses on the de-institutionalization of racist structures (Gray, Coleman and Putman, 2007) and the disruption of mechanisms that perpetuate racism.

The use of a post-modernist approach has been evident in Colombia since the National Constitution was changed in 1991. The creation of the new Constitution was the result of a long history of social struggle for the reclamation of rights in which many sectors of the society, including ethnic groups, participated. The post-modernist nature of its repercussions in the eradication of racism was most likely more the result of perceived needs than a theoretical effort. Nevertheless, in more recent years the Ministry of Culture of Colombia, particularly the Populations Office, has used the approach in a more systematic manner.

It is very important to stress that the progress made in Colombia in this regard is mainly the product of 500 years of cultural resistance and social struggle from those who represent the diversity of the country. Lorenzo Muelas*, indigenous from the *Pueblo* Misak, in reference to indigenous participation in the creation of the new constitution stated:

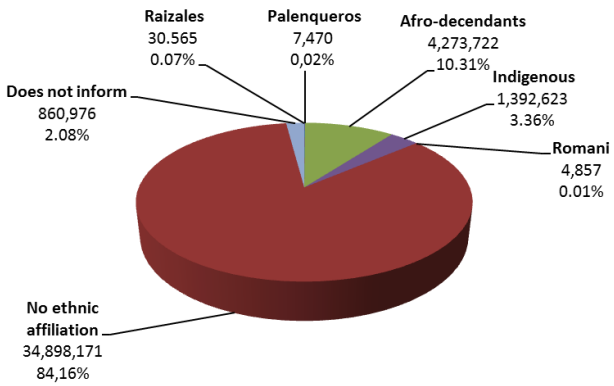
> "*... our achievements in the Constituyente were not a gift from the Government; it was the harvest of what we planted with pain, tears, jail and the death of many of our leaders" (*In Sanches and Molina, 2010, Pp. 327)

Due to the scope of this investigation, the history that has lead to the present state of affairs will not be included**.

Nevertheless, a brief description on the nature and extent of cultural diversity in Colombia will be developed as a general context.

Cultural Diversity in Colombia

Colombia is a multicultural a pluriethnic Estate. Its rich cultural diversity is the result of historical and cultural processes that began with the arrival of its first inhabitants, the indigenous peoples, and their long lasting process of cultural adaptation to the differentiated territorial contexts of the country. That original diversity was enriched by colonization processes from Europe and the arrival of Romani (gypsy) populations that accompanied them. Furthermore, the African Diaspora resulted in the advent of different ethnic groups, mainly from the west coasts of Africa. The historical nation building process, and the interaction of the ethnic and non-



*Lorenzo Muelas Hurtado was a key member in the creation of the new constitution. The people who were involved in the effort are known as *Constituyentes*. He was also one of the first indigenous to be a senator of the republic and has been elected governor in different occasions as Governor of his *Cabildo.*

**More information in Sanches and Molina, 2010.

The National Constitution of 1991: a peace agreement

> *"The National Constitution, ruler of rules, mother of all laws, finally and for the first time in the history of the country, recognizes our rights by proclaiming Colombia as a diverse nation, multiethnic, pluricultural".*
>
> Lorenzo Muelas Hurtado – *Pueblo* Misak
>
> *"The most transcendental event in contemporary indigenous history is, without a doubt, the creation of the Carta Política [National Constitution] of 1991, in which for the first time the indigenous peoples participated".*
>
> Sanchez and Molina, 2010, Pp. 295

Although not officially recognized as such, the National Constitution of 1991 acted as a peace agreement between ethnic groups* and the Estate. A peace agreement is not solutions in content "but proposed negotiated processes, which if followed, will change the expression of the conflict and provide avenues for redefining relationships" (Lederach, 2005, Loc. 979). In this sense, a peace agreement represents the guidelines through which the conflict will be resolved. It is a point of departure, not an end in itself (Lederach, 2005).

The Constitution was a breakthrough in relation to recognition and protection of collectively own territories, recognition of traditional law and authorities, autonomy and self-governance, among others. In relation to the conflict of racism the following two articles are central:

> **Article 7th:** The Estate recognizes and protects the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Colombian Nation.
>
> **Article 13th:** All people are born free and equal in the eyes if the law, and will receive the same protection and treatment from the authorities and will be entitled to the same rights, liberties and opportunities with no discrimination of gender or race… The State will promote the condition for the realization of an equalitarian society.

By means of declaring the nation as pluri-ethnic and multicultural, the new constitution created a unifying mythos, a national supra identity that was not based on the denial of its cultural diversity –as before- but on the embracement of it. It created a mythos of "unity through the preservation of ethnic diversity" (Arocha, 1998, Pp. 71). Following world tendencies related to the conceptualization of diversity, there was a fundamental shift "between regarding difference as a problem, a threat, a nui-

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Unlike indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants and Romanies were not fully represented in the creation of the New Constitution. The recognition of Afro-Colombians rights as ethnic group was another hard and long struggle that gave fruits in the Law 70 of 1993. For the Romanies was the Decree 2957 of 2010. Although the Constitution did not fully recognize all their rights, these latter legal developments were based on it. For more information of Afro-Colombians reclamation of rights see Arocha 1998.

sance, or an insurmountable barrier, and viewing difference –any difference- as a opportunity" (Burbles and Rice, 1991, Pp. 1991).

Moving from the legal discussion, the *Constituyente* Lorenzo Muelas gave the following reasons for the need to incorporate the proposals from the indigenous populations into the new Constitution.

> *To allow indigenous peoples, once freed from moorings and oppression that constrains us, to initiate with endeavor the path of development that was truncated to us.*
> *To reconcile the different pueblos and cultures of Colombia after 500 years of confrontation, and hence plant the foundations of solidarity and mutual collaboration.*
> *Because they [the rights] can become the fraternal link between Abya-Yala [The American Continent] and the world.*
> *To guarantee by our existence and future progress, the continuity of our contributions to Colombia and humanity...*
>
> *Lorenzo Muelas Hurtado, 1991. (In Sánchez and Molina, 2010, Pp. 299)*

The New Constitution of 1991, opened the path for reconciliation by creating the guidelines for the *incorporation of pluralism in the collective memory* and the *transformation of polarized collective identities*. Additionally, by proclaiming as responsibility of the Estate the protection of the cultural diversity, it was possible to elicit appropriate responses through the development of specialized public policy. This is how in 2008 the Population Office of the Ministry of Culture was born. Following, a brief description of how, from a post-modernist perspective, it has developed those guidelines traced by the Constitution.

The incorporation of pluralism in the collective memory

This is part of what in reconciliation processes is called "understanding the patterns of the present" (Lederach, 2005) or "coming to terms with the past" (Wessells and Bretherton, 2000). Particularly, from the post-modernist approach and in relation with racism, these processes aim to fill the gaps of history, to replace biased and linear narratives for multidimensional ones were "many things are true at once" (Wilmot and Hocker, 2007). The aim is for true understanding of the processes of the past and how they are reflected in the present conditions of those discriminated against. This of course, implies recognition of wrongdoings and acceptance of responsibility.

With this aim, the Populations Office developed a program called *Reescritura de la Historia* (Rewriting History) under the following premise: "Only by recognizing each other as a collective project, we can build a common future for us all" (Ministry of Culture 2012a). The program, whose objective was "positioning in the country the topic of diversity and pluralism from the voice of history" (Ibid.), included the compilation of historical documents, development of historical research and academic activities, and revitalization of local memory with an emphasis on women histories. The program was materialized in four main projects and two supporting activities.

The program gave birth to the book *Rutas de Libertad: 500 Años de Travesía* (Liberty Routes: a 500 Year Journey) which was the product of a colossal joint effort where thirty historians participated under the coordination of consecrated academics and a poet. The book brings to light the hidden history of Afro-Colombians, their social struggles, and never ending cultural resistance; their heroism of the fight for liberation and the processes through which they have contributed to the construction of the Colombian Nation. The promotio-



nal text of the book -in which it is evident the effort for reconciling the Nation under a unifying mythos- states: "to know the book today is an indispensable duty for the promotion of connivance and the national sentiment; and, to make possible the ideal of democracy" (Ministry of Culture 2012b). The book was distributed through all public libraries of Colombia, Universities, Research Centers and schools. The book was also the spinal column of the theater play called *Esta Negrura Mia* (This Blackness of Mine). Aimed for a less academic, wider audience, the play used the dramatic arts to elaborate on the principles of the book.

The Indigenous and Afro-Colombian Library was a reconstruction of history from the literary arts. Released on the commemoration of the 200 years of Independence from Spain, it included 18 essays, letters, and literary writings from outstanding indigenous and Afro-Colombian writers of the last 200 years (Ministry of Culture 2012c).



Logo Colombia, Colombias. Ministry of Culture

This collection was distributed among all public libraries of the country.

Other complementary projects are is the *Slave Route* and the *Afro-Colombian Documentation Centre*.

Transforming polarized collective identities

These initiatives aim to create a perception of the *other* based in the understanding of its characteristics, values, interests and motivation for action. In a context of racism and multiculturalism, the aim is to shift preconceived images of the other, avoid recurrence of self-fulfilling prophecies, and transform the relationship itself by making parties acknowledge that their perception of reality is fundamentally different. This understanding and acceptance of the existence and simultaneity of differentiated cultural schemas –i.e. realities, is in fact a task of creating a new filter of interaction. A filter not based on stereotypes and preconceived images of the *other*, but on the concept of cultural relativism where moral and ethic codes, as well as the aesthetic values, and communication styles, are intrinsically valid in the cultural system that fathers them. Thus, the objective is not that of replacing negative stereotypes for positive ones. The objective is to bring a higher degree of objectivity into the perceived reality of the *other*.

Since the core of the transformation of polarized identities is the culture, the institutional mission of the Ministry of Culture is the perfect niche for the development of activities in this line of action. This is how the Populations Office created the program *Vizibilization of Ethnic Groups,* whose objective is to counteract the reproduction of stereotypes by providing opportunities of interaction with a richer and more objective depiction of the cultural reality of Colombia and the peoples that represents it (Ministry of Culture 2012e). The logo used for the promotion of these activities was built on the notion that there are many Colombias within Colombia, and that that diversity fills the Nation with richness (see logo below). The activities include the production of accurate information, facilitating access to that information and creating spaces for direct interaction between ethnic groups and the rest of the civil society.

Some of the projects associated to this initiative are: Especial Expositions, which uses the work of internationally renowned photographers for the production of expositions that itinerate through the main plazas of Colombia (Ministry of Culture 2012f); *Cartography of Diversity* involves the official recreation of the perceived territory through maps based on the cultural diversity of the nation (Ministry of Culture, 2012g); and *Forgotten Commemora-*

tions, which rescues the iconographic dates associated to national and international cultural diversity, and creates spaces for their celebration where all the society of Colombia collide.

Eliciting contextually appropriate responses

Based on the premise that every conflict is unique and each is associated to a very particular sociopsychological structure, the post-modernist approach places privileged importance in valuing knowledge and strategies developed by those that coexist within a conflict. By using participatory and empowering techniques, post-modernist approach builds, from local capabilities, strategies that are capable of responding to each set of particular needs, dynamics and characteristics.

The Population Office, in order to imbed its national policies with the flexibility and adaptability required to respond properly to the rich diversity that characterizes the Colombian territory, has incorporated two approaches into its endeavor. On the one hand it works with the public officers in charge of the attention to ethnic groups in each of the 32 *departamentos* (territories) of Colombia (Ministry of Colombia 2012i), to break from public institutions the circle of racist perpetuation. On the other hand, the Population Office works with grass roots organizations by supporting and strengthening activities associated to increasing representation and recognition through cultural processes.

Conclusions

Colombia is currently living a tension between new and old sociological infrastructures and relationships. Although the process of eradicating racism is slow, just because it has already begun a great leap has been done. The fact that racism is neither conceptualized by the Colombian Estate as a conflict nor its eradication as a reconciliation process hampers effectiveness in the efforts. This for example limits the reach of the peace agreement, the Constitution of 1991, which in some ways have remained an ideal written in the paper, but it has not materialized into a reality of social justice.

The progress Colombia has done since 1991 is not a small one though. The new Constitution and the effort to eradicate racial structural and cultural violence have produced other legal developments in tune with the new multicultural and pluri-ethnic official narrative. A law anti racism was passed mid 2012 in which racist acts can be punished by jail and/or in economic penalties. The Native Languages Law –which was also developed in recent years- protects the right of ethnic group for the use of their languages and bestows responsibility in the Estate for their protection. Additionally, International laws of indigenous peoples have been systematically ratified, being the most important ones the Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Declaration of the United Nations for the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples.

Julián Facundo Rinaudo



For more information on the initiatives described:
Ministry of Culture of Colombia. Populations Office.


IMAGINE

Una nota de agradecimiento al exiliado que dedicó su vida por hacer una mejor Colombia



Ulises Manuel Rinaudo Ramos

18 de marzo de 1952 — 24 de septiembre de 2002

En 1978, directo de la cárcel donde padeció dos años (uno de ellos como “desaparecido”), arribó a Bogotá el Mendocino Ulises Manuel Rinaudo; desde donde -hasta el día de su muerte- dedicaría su vida a construir una mejor Colombia. Fue uno de tantos exiliados Argentinos que migraron a causa de la represiva y violenta dictadura militar; fue también uno de los pocos que sobrevivieron al terrible cautiverio.

Como muchos de su época, seducido por la corriente latinoamericana pos-Che Guevara e inspirado por el triunfo de la Revolución Cubana, en su patria buscó la transformación social en el uso de la acción violenta. El terrorismo de Estado que caracterizó la década y la inescapable repercusión violenta a su violencia se materializó en tormentoso y cruel modo a través del Decreto Secreto y Reservado No. 3608 - Arrestos de 1975; hecho público sólo hasta el año 2012 en el marco del proceso de verdad y memoria que llevaría a cabo la Argentina por la sanación de las desgracias que dejó tras de sí la perversa Dictadura. En el año 1977, su exilio se numeró 1523 y decretó para siempre.

Llegó a Colombia como preso, su pasaporte retenido y portando las únicas pertenencias permitidas en su cautiverio: un par de mudas de ropa, sus lentes y las obras completas de Jorge Luis Borges, selladas en su primera página con el “Aprobado” de la penitenciaría. Como preso que era, el piloto que lo voló desde su patria tenía la orden de entregarlo a las autoridades; sin embargo, en uno de esos casos de azarosa bondad humana hacia desconocidos, el piloto decidió devolverle su pasaporte y desembarcarlo como hombre libre en Colombia.

Cuentan quienes lo conocieron en su infancia que siempre destacó por inteligente y revoltoso. Como excéntrico y apasionado activista social lo describen otros, aquellos que lo conocieron después en sus años juveniles. Para los que lo conocieron en su patria anfitriona, Colombia, era un personaje único que resaltaba por su obsesión por los buenos ingredientes y maestría en la cocina (definida por él como una reconstitución proteínica); el rock Argentino a todo volumen que lo acompañaba siempre -y que él a su vez siempre acompañaba con característico voleo de cabeza; y una forma al volante que simulaba ruta de escape apocalíptica.

Bailarín milonguero y romántico por vocación; hedonista, poeta y en la estética su corazón; fue un eterno estudioso y autodidacta que se aburría pensando demasiado tiempo un mismo tema. Mientras en Colombia, fue amplio el rango de



Ulises en su infancia

ciencias y disciplinas que rondó en su cavilar académico, profesional y puramente deportivo-intelectual. Sin embargo, sus áreas de principal interés se mantuvieron siempre en los derredores de la pedagogía, la justicia social, el mejoramiento de la calidad de vida de las y los colombianos, el control social del Estado y el mejoramiento de la gestión pública. En la dedicatoria de su libro póstumo "Gestión del Desarrollo Territorial", publicado por la Universidad Piloto de Colombia, su tercera esposa, Claudia Lucía Velandia, lo describe así:

> *"A lo largo de la lectura de este texto, quienes conocieron a Ulises traerán al presente tanto al docente excepcional, por su permanente recurrencia a las definiciones como elementos necesarios para estructurar el conocimiento, como al investigador social, con sus fuertes y fundamentales argumentos teóricos, y desde luego al estadista, con su insistencia en la verificación de las hipótesis planteadas o problemas identificados por medio de trabajo de campo y análisis cuantitativos".*

A causa de su exilio -y gracias a su exilio- su enorme fuerza vital e intelectual la dedicó la mayor parte de su vida a Colombia, una patria foránea que lo acogió y, el 24 de Septiembre del año 2002, inesperadamente lo vio morir mientras dormía. Fue una muerte buena, sin dolor, una muerte que le debía la vida.

En el mes de Abril del año 2014, después de 36 años de forzoso exilio y según sus deseos expresos, sus restos humanos han sido devueltos a la ciudad de su infancia donde también reposan sus ancestros: Alvear, localizada en la provincia de Mendoza, de la patria Argentina.

Con profundo cariño y reconocimiento; por su excelente trabajo, férreo compromiso e imparable dedicación; en nombre de Colombia, de sus estudiantes, amigos y familia; un inmenso y exaltado ¡Gracias, al argentino que dedicó su vida por construir una mejor Colombia!

Julián Facundo Rinaudo

Tanto a él como a tantos foráneos que han dedicado parte o toda su vida para construir una mejor Colombia, un profundo

¡Gracias!

Me voy…

O los versos del próximo regreso

….

Al fin, no sé en que tiempo próximo,
moriré sin tu llanto de despedida
y la noche anterior no tendré tu risa,
ni tus sueños,
alborotándome la vida.
Después de todo, morir,
no es más que otra forma triste
de perderte, sin haberte tenido



Ulises Rinaudo

Perfil: Afganistán

DATOS GENERALES

- Población: 35,32 millones (2011)
- Esperanza de vida al nacer: 48 (2010)
- Clasificación IDH: 172
- PIB: $19,18 millones
- Años de educación promedio: 3,3
- Índice de desigualdad de género: 0.709

***PNUD**

PERFIL DE LA VIOLENCIA ARMADA.

Según la EPB, el país vive en conflicto armado desde la invasión de las tropas soviéticas en 1979. La retirada de estas tropas en 1989 y el ascenso de los muyahidines en 1992, lleva al surgimiento del movimiento talibán. En 2001, tras los atentados del 11 de septiembre, EEUU invade y derrota al régimen talibán. Desde 2006 se ha producido una escalada de violencia en el país, motivada por la recomposición de las milicias talibán.

CONTAMINACIÓN POR ARMAS

Tratado de Ottawa. **Estado**: Adhesión
Convención de municiones en racimo.

Estado: ratificado

Según las Naciones Unidas, Afganistán es el país más minado del planeta, y según el ICBL, el que registra en 2011 el mayor número de víctimas en el mundo. Alrededor de 200.000 civiles han muerto y 400.000 han sido heridos. Todos los días, alrededor de 20 civiles inocentes, incluyendo niños y mujeres son víctimas de las minas, la mitad de los cuales perdieron la vida debido a la falta de instalaciones médicas. Sólo en 2011, el ICBL identificó 812 muertes debido a la contaminación por armas. De éstos, el 88% eran civiles y al menos 49 víctimas civiles eran niñas y 51 eran mujeres. El ICBL advierte que Afganistán se ve afectada por una amplia gama de tipos de minas de fabricación de Irán, Pakistán y de la Unión Soviética. También por municiones en racimo. Las estimación de contaminación por armas en 2007 era de 852km^2; un año después se redujo a 689km^2. Afganistán informa la limpieza de más de 863km2 en los últimos cinco años, pero como resultado de nuevos descubrimientos, la estimación global de la contaminación se ha mantenido cerca de 600km^2.

José Bolívar Durán



Cultura de Paz:

Cantando por la democracia en Afganistán

El mes de abril fué, para el pueblo afgano, un mes particular, ya que por primera vez desde la caída del régimen de los Talibanes hace 12 años, se organizaron elecciones presidenciales (Kashi, 2014). Muchos son los que duden de tal proceso democrático en un país tan volátil como Afganistán y teman que las elecciones provoquen un incremento en las violencias y en la inseguridad general del país. De igual forma, y a la luz de los dos últimos fracasos electorales afganos, temen que se vea incrementado el comercio de opio (Kashi, 2014) y las numerosas violencias hacia la población civil a través de los atentados y asesinatos políticos.



Foto: Raperos Afganos. Autor: anónimo

En este escenario, el periódico *The Atlantic* resaltó una iniciativa de jóvenes raperos en perspectiva de las próximas elecciones, expresando su deseo de conocer un país democrático. El artículo, titulado *The Afghan Election Gets Its Own Hip-Hop Anthem*, insista en el hecho de que 70% de la población del país está por debajo de 25 años, y que por lo tanto, el hip-hop podría volverse una importante estrategia de resistencia civil y promoción de la democracia. La iniciativa hip-hop fue lanzada para encontrar un himno a las elecciones: jóvenes hombres y mujeres participaron en el concurso. Verdadero hecho a destacar en la sociedad patriarcal afgana, la cantante Sonita Alizadeh ganó en la categoría femenina, con un potente vídeo que se puede visualizar aquí.La iniciativa tiene como principal objetivo motivar a las y los jóvenes a la participación política. El reto es grande, pero la esperanza de las y los raperos lo es aún más…

Priscyll Anctil Avoine

Llamado a contribuciones

Call for papers



Escribir, crear, transformar! Corporación Descontamina está buscando contribuciones para su revista semestral. La idea es que cada uno y cada una puedan aportar al esfuerzo por la descontaminación de violencia, la construcción de paz y la promoción de la noviolencia. Sus textos deben tener una extensión máxima de dos páginas y seguir una de nuestras líneas de acción: **Medio ambiente y economías de paz**, **Noviolencia**, **Diversidad cultural** y **Pedagogía para la paz**. Los textos pueden ser publicados en español, francés o inglés. Los textos podrán ser enviados ala siguiente dirección de correo:

corporacion@descontamina.org.

Write, create, transform! *Corporación Descontamina* is looking for papers for its biannual publication. The idea is that each and everyone can contribute to the effort of violence "decontamination", peacebuilding and nonviolence action. Papers should not be longer than two pages and should follow at least one of our lines of actions: **Environment and Peace Economies**, **Nonviolence**, **Cultural Diversity** and **Peace Pedagogy**. Texts can be written in Spanish, English or French and should be sent at the following email:

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DESCONTAMINA

Noviolencia y Construcción de Paz

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Corporación Descontamina es una organización apartidista y sin ánimo de lucro que, fundamentada en el principio de noviolencia y en el precepto de que la realidad no es una determinación sino una construcción, dedica su accionar a la eliminación de violencia de la experiencia humana. Con este propósito desarrollamos acciones encaminadas a lograr una paz positiva, donde el conflicto y la diferencia se aprovechen en la construcción de una sociedad equitativa y sostenible que, consciente de su interexistencia, busque su continuo mejoramiento.