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The Role of the State, Civil Society and School in the Memories of Violence*

O papel do Estado, da Sociedade Civil e da escola nas memórias da violência

LUISA FERNANDA CIRO SOLÓRZANO*
MIGUEL ÁNGEL CARO LOPERA**

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** Bachelor's Degree in Social Sciences with emphasis in Basic Education. Student of the Master's Degree in Educational Sciences, Universidad del Quindío; e-mail: lfciros@uqvirtual.edu.co Universidad del Quindío, Colombia.

*** PhD in Educational Sciences. Professor at the Universidad del Quindío and member of the research group Didactics of the Mother Language and Literature (DiLeMa); email: macaro@uniquindio.edu.co; Universidad del Quindío, Colombia.

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UNIVERSIDAD
La Gran Colombia

ABSTRACT

This article aims to reflect on the role of the State, Civil Society and School in the memory dynamics of the periods of violence after the dictatorships of the Southern Cone and during the Colombian conflict. To do this, it relies on the postulates of Traverso (2007), Halbwachs (2011) and on the narratives of the specialized reports *Nunca más* (Argentina), *Rettig y Valech* (Chile) and *¡Basta ya!* (Colombia). It is framed in a methodology of a historical-hermeneutical nature with a documentary research design. After describing the uneven experiences of each country regarding the three categories of analysis, the article concludes that the State, Civil Society and School are responsible for repairing the social fabric affected by the violation of human rights. In the case of the State, from the validation in the reparation and justice processes; in that of Civil Society, from the struggle for identity and recognition; and in that of the School, from its condition as a meeting point for the critical discussion of the polyphony of memories.

Keywords: school; State; memory; Civil society; violence.

RESUMO

Este artigo tem como objetivo refletir sobre o papel do Estado, da Sociedade Civil e da Escola na dinâmica da memória dos períodos de violência após as ditaduras do Cone Sul e durante o conflito colombiano. Para isso, conta com os postulados de Traverso (2007), Halbwachs (2011) e com as narrativas das reportagens especializadas *Nunca más* (Argentina), *Rettig e Valech* (Chile) e *¡Basta ya!* (Colômbia). Está enquadrado numa metodologia de cunho histórico-hermenêutico com desenho de pesquisa documental. Depois de descrever as experiências desiguais de cada país nas três categorias de análise, o artigo conclui que o Estado, a Sociedade Civil e a Escola são responsáveis pela reparação do tecido social afetado pela violação dos direitos humanos. No caso do Estado, desde a validação nos processos de reparação e justiça; no da Sociedade Civil, da luta pela identidade e reconhecimento; e na Escola, desde sua condição de ponto de encontro para a discussão crítica da polifonia das memórias.

Palavras-chave: escola; Estado; memória; Sociedade civil; violência

Introduction

The memories of the conflict are a fundamental part in the reconstruction of the social fabric affected by the degradation of violence. How to approach memory and adopt it as an active tool in truth, justice and repair processes are interdisciplinary questions investigated by different areas and branches of knowledge (Uprimny, 2011; Jiménez, Infante & Cortés, 2012; Arenas, 2015; Castrillón, Villa & Marín, 2016)¹. “In Colombia, the armed confrontation runs in parallel with a growing confrontation of memories and public demands for justice and reparation” (Grupo de Memoria Histórica, GMH², 2013: 13). After more than five decades of armed conflict, the last twenty years have been characterized by the appearance of groups and minorities who demand recognition as victims and who demand from civil organizations and social groups, a space for their memories by the State and armed groups. Two demobilization processes, reparation policies, laws for the integration of memory into the educational system, debates and initiatives of all kinds³ around the conflict are currently building a multidisciplinary network to think about and promote historical transition towards a true post-conflict state.

In this reflection article, we will explore the processes carried out by Chile and Argentina, within the framework of the work with *memory*, for the repair and guarantee of non-repetition of the historical episodes that occurred during the dictatorships between the 70s and 90s of the 20th century. In the same way, we will enunciate some of the challenges

and advances given in Colombia. For the purposes of this work, we will delve into the role of collective memory in the transition phases of conflicts that involved human rights abuses, systematized violence, and groups of victims. We will outline the responsibility of the *School* in complementarity with the *State* for the dissemination of the reports in the present and future generation; and the importance of *Civil Society* articulated with the first two sectors.

Regarding the methodology, this work, which stems from a master's thesis in the process of implementation, is driven by an eminently comprehensive interest and from a historical-hermeneutical approach. In this effort, the *hermeneusis* that we are looking for here adheres to the features that Martínez proposes:

To discover the meanings of things, to interpret as good as possible words, writings, texts, gestures and, in general, human behavior, as well as any act or work, while preserving its uniqueness in the context of which it is part (2010: 102).

The design of the documentary research that supports the reflections proposed here is framed for this purpose. The basis of this analysis is made up of primary sources (official documents, specialized reports and research disseminated through books, chapters and articles in academic journals⁴) that conform to the conditions that, for strategic consultation of sources, argue Cisneros and Olave, in terms of *relevance, plurality and credibility* (2012: 66-68). This process involved four moments: selection and procurement of sources; reading the corpus; identification of categories; and analysis and textual construction, phase that leads to the elaboration of this article.

Memory and History: Two Routes to Remember

We can say that *memory* is a plural and interdisciplinary concept. For Traverso (2007: 22) “memory is a construction always filtered

1. These research works are developed in the areas of law, pedagogy, sociology and psychology.

2. The *Grupo de Memoria Histórica* (Historical Memory Group), later renamed the National Center for Historical Memory, is in charge of preserving the memory of the Colombian armed conflict.

3. Dialogue roundtables led by the Governments of the corresponding years: 1981, 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1998. In 1999, the Pastrana Government spoke in greater depth about points and agreements; however, the armed group gave up and the process did not end. In Uribe's government from 2002 to 2010, the paramilitary armed group AUC was demobilized. In 2012, the Santos Government once again assumed dialogue intentions and began the negotiation process with the FARC-EP, which finally closed the decades of confrontations with this armed group, the longest of the conflict. Political actions between the State and the Armed groups mobilized actions in all spheres of Colombian society that will be described in the development of this article.

4. A total of 29 documents categorized by country: Argentina (8), Chile (12) and Colombia (10).

by knowledge acquired later, by the reflection that follows the event, by other experiences that are superimposed on the original one and modify the memory". A vision of the past always nuanced by the present. Memory is an evocation of an event, interpreted by present circumstances that allow the individual to draw an identity and connect through it to a collective event. Halbwachs (2011) distinguishes two types of memory: one that is related to the personal level – autobiographical –, and the other to the social, collective and historical level. Both are closely related: the individual supported by the collective, and the collective responsible for the identities that emerge in groups and entire societies. Of the latter, Wertsch and Roediger (2008) mention that there are as many definitions as there are researchers, and there is only agreement that it is a form of memory that transcends the individual and is shared by a group. In this sense, Villa and Barrero (2017) categorize three lines of research from collective memory, which we will deal with in this article: two referring to the contents and social processes of memory: what is done, how it is done, who does it, why it is done and what it is done for; and a third of therapeutic nature.

We will talk, then, about the projection of the past on the present and the ways of making memories. On the one hand, what is already defined as *memory* and on the other, a term widely used to refer to the past: *History*. Both concepts emerge around what happened; For Traverso, *history* is a problematic, incomplete representation that strives for objectivity, retrospective and based on distance. In other words, a universal story that seeks to be constructed through concrete, reasonable and demonstrable facts to understand what happened. *Memory*, on the contrary, has a "unique vocation" (Traverso, 2017: 29); it is always filtered by the present and subsequent experiences that modify its understanding, interpretation and its very narration. Consequently, there are two ways of projecting the past. Traverso warns us that both

terms are not linear or consecutive: even if history is born from memories, there may exist *not contemporaneity or discordance of times*; memories that take time to be conceived in history, as a result of not recognizing or legitimizing them.

The first step in the elaboration of a historical sketch on the facts given in a conflict context would be, then, to collect the memories of those involved, to contrast, to fit in, to debate and to clarify. Build a *polyphonic story* that allows participation and consideration of all actors and events. In this instance, we will take the dynamics of memories as a parallel process or prior to *History*, a necessary instance to discover and legitimize the plurality and diversity of the past.

State: Between the Imposition and the Recognition of Memory

The custody and recognition of memories have taken place in the midst of an unbalanced struggle for power, resources and resistance. Research in the field of sociology coincides in the premise that the State, headed by the governments or leaders of the time, have ignored and silenced those who have a strong version of what happens in the different events for which their actions are questioned. However, "the *memory* of the oppressed does not stop protesting against the linear time of history" (Traverso, 2007: 39). In this way, the pressure of civil or international actors, the transfer of the governments themselves and the overcoming of conflicts lead to holding the State responsible, through the promotion of policies, for the creation of spaces and projects that make possible the expression and exaltation of subversive or silenced memories. For Jelin (2003), commemorations, monuments, places of memory and dates of celebration are carriers of social stories that involve a dispute over the senses and identities. From this perspective, those who choose what to remember collectively also define our social identity, the values and the objectives of the group we inhabit; this ultimately, is transformed into national

identities, idiosyncrasies and the culture itself. Hence the importance of memory polyphony⁵ to guarantee participation and diversity. Rothberg (2009) identifies three possible roles of the State and their respective dynamics to build memories: liberal, multidirectional and unidirectional. In the first, the State withdraws and allows civil actors to compete in the imposition of memories; a competition that privileges the majority and that spreads inequality. In the second, the State balances the balance by enabling participation platforms for minorities, offering resources and facilities for these memories to be recognized. In the third, the State assumes an active role, rewarding its interests and silencing its opponents. In this section, we will explore the role and dynamics adopted by the States of Chile and Argentina after the dictatorship. Then, we will observe the position of the Colombian State during the critical years of the internal armed conflict and what it intends to transform with the current legislation.

The first case that we will review will be that of Argentina. In his work on Human Rights in the military dictatorship, Cueto (2010: 124) describes the event in these words: "On March 24, 1976, the Argentine Armed Forces occupied the government buildings and the National Congress, staging a coup and installing a military government that lasted until December 1983." It also describes that "one of the main characteristics of this dictatorial period was the fierce illegal repression that the state unleashed against the opponents" (124). Torture, disappearances, theft of children from still pregnant women, intimidation and repression were modalities of

5. Underlying this approach to polyphony not only the roots of the musical phenomenon that reveal the presence of various voices at the service of a central melody, but also Bakhtin's conceptions that trace these configurations in literature (2003) and those of Ducrot (1984) who project the concept to the enunciative system in general. We are particularly interested in this latest contribution, since, according to the French theorist, "a linguistics of enunciation postulates that many grammatical forms, many words of the lexicon, turns and constructions have the constant characteristic that, by making use of them, one establishes, or contributes to establish, specific relationships between the interlocutors" (1984: 134). Consequently, Ducrot explores differences between key concepts such as *statement* and *sentence*, *meaning* and *signification*, *allocuter* and *hearer*, until he arrives at the most crucial for his purposes: the difference between enunciator and speaker. The revision of this conceptual pair arises, according to the author, from "the permanent possibility that language offers, and that discourse constantly exploits, of 'giving the floor' to people who are not the person who is speaking" (1984: 137).

violence carried out in a systematic manner⁶. Seven years of the regime leaves only approximate and unreliable figures, the report *Nunca más* in its prologue states "we have been able to verify close to 9,000 disappeared. But we have every reason to assume a higher figure, because many families were hesitant to report kidnappings for fear of reprisals" (1984: 5). After the restoration of democracy, President-elect Raúl Alfonsín brings together a diverse group of civil and state representatives to collect the memories of the victims. This group called Conadep⁷, published for the year 1984 the report *Nunca Más*. Crenzel (2008), after a careful study of the report, concludes that this official document "framed the truth in a new reading of the past" (53); and adds that, despite analytical and historical limitations, the report privileges "the testimonies of family members and survivors to reconstruct in detail and, in a realistic way, the materiality of the disappearances" (2008: 53). It also condensed not only the official perspective regarding the past of political violence in Argentina, but also a series of premises shared by different actors –survivors, groups of relatives of the disappeared, defenders of human rights– regarding these processes.

In Chile, the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet took place between 1973 and 1990 after the coup against the democratic government of Salvador Allende. The military disruption affected all political, economic and social processes; for Lira and Castillo, "their most extreme procedures were death, the disappearance of people stigmatized as enemies of society, and the systematic and generalized torture of detainees" (1993: 100). It is said that in 17 years of control, the regime did not leave a clear estimate of the victims; with regard to it,

6. Regarding the systematic category, CONADEP will declare in the foreword to the report *Nunca Más*: "From the huge amount of documentation we have gathered, it can be seen that human rights were violated at all levels by the repression carried out by its armed forces. And they were not raped sporadically but *systematically*, always the same, with similar kidnappings and identical torments throughout the territory" (1984: 2).

7. The National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons (CONADEP) was an advisory commission created with the objective of investigating the repeated and planned violations of human rights during the period of State terrorism during the dictatorship in Argentina.

the foreword to the report *Valech* calculates them, according to the information retrieved, at “more than thirty thousand people”, to which it adds verbatim that such a number of victims “have paraded in front of us, we have seen them and we have heard them” (2004: 9). The Truth Reports –*Rettig*⁸ (1991) and *Valech*⁹ (2004) - have contributed to the construction of a public truth, and have defined the historical and interpretive frameworks on the recent past in Chile. Oteiza and Pinuer (2010) analyze the implicit political discourses in both reports, recorded in the *forewords* of these publications. Both texts have aroused controversy due to the lightness of the judgments; In the words of Oteiza and Pinuer, “the victims are relegated to collective representations, without explicit (inscribed) moral judgments of Social Sanction being associated with them” (2010: 97). However, supported by Hiner (2009), they acknowledge contributions to the symbolic and monetary reparation of some of the victims.

Now, in the midst of these commemorative dynamics for reparation, Traverso, on the subject of these *dictatorships of the Southern Cone*¹⁰, notes that the transition mechanism towards democracies does not allow the passage of the *memories* of the dictatorship and violence to the category of historical fact. Well, although the victims have been recognized and spaces have been opened for the appropriation of memories in relevant social spheres -*Civil Society and School*- the State has not fully complied with the processes of justice and repair. Most of the perpetrators have discreetly disappeared from the public scene without sanctions, taking a part of the memories with them. In short, “it has not been possible to establish a distance from the past: there has been a chronological distance, but not a *separation* marked by strong symbolic ruptures” (Traverso, 2007: 47).

So far we have outlined the characteristics of the social conflicts surrounding the

dictatorships that occurred in Chile and Argentina. In Colombia, although the same dictatorial context is not registered, the extensive armed conflict makes us think of certain traumas of the national memory. It is, according to research, a social, political and economic phenomenon that has spanned several generations; the beginning of this is agreed from 1958 to date, and even after having carried out demobilization processes with the main armed groups, the country experiences episodes of political violence, attacks on the civilian population and confrontations with the Armed forces; This situation is aggravated by the uncertainty surrounding the fulfillment of said demobilization processes, drug trafficking and the appearance of new armed groups. Until 2018, the country registered, according to reports from the National Center for Historical Memory, 353,531 acts of violence that cause 262,197 deaths. The forms of violence identified in the national conflict correspond to selective assassinations, massacres, brutality and torture, forced disappearances, kidnappings, forced displacement, extortion, sexual violence, illegal recruitment and military actions against the population, among others. The right to memory of the conflict in Colombia has antecedents in Law No. 975 of 2005 - the so-called Justice and Peace Law¹¹ -; however, the State would speak clearly about its responsibility with *memory* in Law 1448 of 2011 - Law of victims and land restitution¹²; With this law, the National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH) is created, which takes up the functions of the Historical Memory Group, which has become a national entity¹³.

The CNMH brings together the testimonies and work carried out by other organizations related to the construction of memory, led by different civil organizations, groups of victims, state institutions, academic groups,

8. National Truth and Reconciliation Commission (*Rettig Report*, 1991)

9. National Commission on Political Prison and Torture (*Valech Report*, 2004),

10. Name coined to the Chilean and Argentine dictatorships that occurred in a same geographical space in temporal parallel.

11. Article 8 on the right to reparation determines that “symbolic reparation” means any provision made in favor of the victims or the community in general that tends to ensure, among others, the preservation of historical memory.

12. Article 143 makes the State responsible for the *Memory* of the conflict, for its collection, disclosure, appropriation and non-repetition processes.

13. The social understanding of the armed conflict, establish conditions for building peace and compiling the testimonial and documentary legacy of the war.

and the media. The figures of his work until 2018 ensure the custody of more than 381,545 documentary units placed at service in the Virtual Archive of Human Rights and Historical Memory. This documentation has served for the CNMH team to build its own library with a significant number of reports, methodological guides, pedagogical guidelines, ordered testimonies and valuable audiovisual material. Of this documentary collection, the best known and most convincing –on the same level as *Nunca Más*, *Rettig* and *Valech*, in the countries mentioned above, is *Colombia ¡Basta YA! Memories of War and Dignity*. In this regard, we adhere to the analyzes of Padilla and Bermúdez (2016) that compare the traditional narratives of the conflict condensed in textbooks of national circulation with the narrative proposed in the CNMH. In this regard, they found that the narrative of the *¡Basta ya!* is –contrary to traditional texts– focused on the problem of violence; in other words, it integrates the perspective of different actors, questions both the violence of illegal actors and the excessive use of force by the State, and describes the consequences of violence and the perspective of the victims.

By way of conclusion, we could indicate that a comparative look between the Argentine and Chilean reports already commented, and the one developed by Colombian academics at the CNMH, yields a favorable balance regarding the descriptive clarity of the violent events, which enables the reader to know, in a global and polyphonic way, the state of the memory of the conflict.

Civil Society: Surviving Memories

The societies in Argentina, Chile and Colombia keep deep wounds in their collective memory in their recent history. The generations framed by this violence have created great impact movements in groups and non-governmental organizations that mobilize the *State* and have repercussions on the *School*. For Arenas (2015), “the narratives of mourning are

created by people or groups that experienced catastrophic events or repression regimes” (2015: 193). To this we can add that these narratives of mourning, the result of experiences of violence, initiate the social task of memory in the search for recognition, justice and reparation. In this section we will talk about some NGOs –cultural and participation platforms for the protection and promotion of human rights– that originate from victims’ collectives, and have achieved public spaces and places for their memories.

In Argentina, the digital information network *Human Rights Organizations*¹⁴ groups together some of the most important NGOs; 24 organizations that originate from the need to report human rights violations during the dictatorship, and that remain to safeguard memories and participate in public and legal environments. Some of these organizations are internationally recognized, such is the case of the Abuelas y Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, two of several organizations of families of the disappeared, at the head of mothers and grandmothers who claim two generations: the disappeared children and the grandchildren stolen and delivered in adoption by the dictatorship. Since 1977 these collectives have met every Thursday to march around the Plaza de Mayo, a symbol of presence and resistance¹⁵. This public permanence has guaranteed –according to the advanced documentary review– important achievements of Civil Society, represented by the victims, on the path of memory. In Argentina, in 2014, the government handed over buildings and properties, which were scenes of dictatorial violence, at the service of memory; In the case of Las Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo, who support their cause for the right to identity, they were assigned one of the most emblematic clandestine detention and extermination centers in Argentina, the Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada. (ESMA);

14. International cooperation website for the dissemination of reports and complaints on human rights abuses. Outreach space on the work of different NGOs. <http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/>

15. Some of its slogans are: Where are the babies born in captivity? IDENTITY - FAMILY - FREEDOM; We are looking for two generations.

place where the narration of the work of this group is preserved: origin, actions, advances and defeats, within the framework of recent Argentine history¹⁶.

In Chile, the *Rettig* report (1991) in its final considerations suggests the promotion of a culture that respects human rights; hence the creation of the National Institute of Human Rights¹⁷ in 2005 that gathers and categorizes the social organizations that are present in the different national spheres. In total, there are 168 groups arranged into 19 categories, of which 3 are directly related to the impact on human rights as a result of the dictatorship: torture (1), memory (26), truth, justice and repair (28). In this sense, the mobilization of Chilean society around memory is ordered with the support of the State to act more forcefully through national organizations. The Chilean collectives have, like the Argentines, a significant public reach by attaining sites for memory in places where abuses and recruitment were committed. We highlight the case of Villa Grimaldi, an old house converted into a restaurant and cultural center in Santiago de Chile that was acquired under pressure by an agency of the dictatorship¹⁸; A torture barracks operated in this place until 1978. After its closure, the neighbors did not allow its demolition due to its historical value, and in association with other groups and political actors, mobilized the State for the expropriation of the property by the Ministry of Housing and Urbanism. On December 10, 1994 this space opened its doors as a memory space and in 1997 some remodeling and adaptation works were completed; From that moment on, it adopted the name of the Villa Grimaldi Peace Park Corporation, a space designed to share memories, but also to

promote human rights. This place is part of a set¹⁹ of *memorial sites* that are financed by the Government of Chile, through the National Service of Cultural Heritage and accompanied by different civil groups.

In Colombia, “the memory initiatives of the armed conflict are diverse among themselves and respond to varied meanings and purposes, in accordance with the goals of the social groups and communities that promote them” (GMH, 2013: 391). This diversity described in the report *¡Basta ya!* synthesizes the plural manifestation of memories and resistance in Colombia that arise from the temporal extension of the conflict and the multiple forms of violence exercised. We can also affirm that the contrasts and cultural nuances of the different regions frame the same memories, *diversify them*, to the point of turning them into a manifestation of idiosyncrasy. Another important factor in this idea is the actions of the conflict in peripheral and rural areas, which fragmented the narratives and left loose, isolated and unpunished memories throughout much of the national territory. In this context, social organizations become relevant when leading routes for resistance and participation, so that “memory becomes a claim when impunity prevails” (GMH 2013: 392). The Ombudsman's Office²⁰ registers in its official directory 555 social organizations that work at the community level in stimulating social processes, empowering communities and territorial productivity; the foregoing, mediated by the safeguarding and appropriation of memory. We will take as an example for the Colombian scenario the case of the Municipality of Trujillo, protagonist of the first report²¹ of memory compiled by the CNMH in 2008. This municipality located in the north of Valle del Cauca lived between 1988 and 1994

16. Other memory sites: Argentina Provincial Archive of Memory, Córdoba; Cultural Center for the Memory of Trelew, in Chubut; Tribute Commission to the Victims of the Clandestine Detention Centers 'Vesubio' and 'Protobanco', in Greater Buenos Aires; Open Memory and Memory Park, in the City of Buenos Aires; and Museum of Memory, in Rosario.

17. The National Institute of Human Rights (INDH) is an autonomous corporation of public law created by Law No. 20,405 aimed at promoting and protecting the human rights of all people living in Chile: [https:// www.indh.cl/](https://www.indh.cl/)

18. The National Intelligence Directorate (DINA) was an autonomous security service dedicated exclusively to the repression of left-wing political parties and social organizations.

19. Other places of memory in Chile are: Group of Relatives of Disappeared Detainees of Paine, Museum of Memory and Human Rights *National Stadium*, Human Rights Committee “Nido Veinte”, 1367 Foundation, José Domingo Cañas Memorial House, Association for Memory and Human Rights *Colonia Dignidad*.

20. The Ombudsman's Office is an institution that is part of the Public Ministry, with administrative and budgetary independence. Its main function is the promotion, exercise and dissemination of human rights.

21. “Trujillo: A tragedy that does not stop”, was published in the framework of the First Week for Memory (September 2008).

the disappearance, torture and murder of 342 of its inhabitants at the hands of different armed groups and state military forces. This place embodies the terror of the massacres experienced by the civilian population in Colombia. The recognition of this memory is carried out through the intermediation of international organizations, which give visibility and pressure the State to recognize its responsibility in 1995. Then, in 1996, the Trujillo Victims' Family Association –AFAVIT– was born, who would lead the memory process led by the construction of the Monument Park in Trujillo²², inaugurated in 2002. The park brings together physical elements that become commemorative monuments, spinning a loom of narratives that evoke the events of the massacre. The places of memory in Colombia are still under construction and the existing ones are not equivalent to the memories to be told. By virtue of the foregoing, in 2018, the members of the Colombian Network of Places of Memory²³ presented to state representatives and private companies their concern for the sustainability of existing and projected initiatives. Therefore, despite the tenacity of the communities and the current support of the government, there is no regulatory framework that ensures the autonomy and sustainability of places of memory in the face of the interests and political changes of future administrations.

The School: A meeting Point

The School essentially brings together the past, the present and the future. The social constructions that are achieved through school dynamics mark the individual and collective course of societies; therefore, decisions about what to teach must be a mediated and contextualized consensus. Teachers assume the responsibility of transmitting knowledge, but also identities associated with collective goals. School and memory become distant;

22. The park is made up of the following spaces: Ossuaries, Tree of Embrace, Wall of the Shadow of Love, Hermitage of Embrace, the Mausoleum in honor of Father Tiberio Fernández Mafla; Exhibition and meeting room, memory path, among others.

23. Social, community and participatory instance, which contributes from the regions to build memory. For 2018, the Network is made up of 27 places of memory of origin of the communities and 3 of the government; it is part of the Network of Latin American and Caribbean Sites of Memory (RESLAC).

Recent history, which frequently narrates debated and controversial events, represents a didactic and social challenge. For González (2011), “the arrival of recent history at school is a question that refers not only to political-educational decisions (or to their curricular and didactic reformulations), but also to school institutions in general and the teachers in particular”. Talking about conflict in school requires an environment rich in tolerance and empathy, since the political and emotional tint that the thematic axes entail crosses the emotional and personal sphere of students, families and teachers. In post-conflict processes, in general, policies and guidelines are decreed by the State to bring the reports to the classroom; however, this effort does not represent background work in schools. The entry of memory into the classroom depends, among other conditions, on the feelings and actions of the teacher.

In Argentina and Chile, numerous investigations have been carried out on the memory of the dictatorship at school; some of a curricular analytical nature and others of a reflective nature on the role of the teacher and the student in this didactic-pedagogical situation (Magendzo and Toledo, 2009; Oteiza and Pinuer, 2010; Rivera and Mondaca, 2013; Larralde, 2013 ; Bertola et al., 2015; Adamoli, Farias, Flachslund, 2015; Rubio, 2016; Rubio and Osorio, 2017; Méndez, 2017; González, 2011; González and Garate, 2017; Mardones, 2018; Torres and Amaya, 2015; Díaz and Rojas, 2018; Villalón and Zamorano, 2018; Crenzel, 2008; Toledo and Magendzo, 2013; Pagés and Moralla, 2018). From these works, we will synthesize two elements: memory in the curriculum and educational legislation for memory.

Memory in the curriculum is adopted, with the support of the State, through policies and legislative guidelines. In Argentina, the reactivation of memory is an achievement of the Civil Society that crystallizes in the State with the rise of Néstor Kirchner in 2003, a time in which human rights became a policy axis for Argentina and the participation is opened

to memory collectives in national public life. This feat of changes reached the *Argentine school* in 2006 with the National Education Law No. 26,206 (2006). There, in article 92, the inclusion of recent history - Malvinas War and Military Dictatorship - is explicitly stated, and State crimes are recognized, which replaces the traditional memorial conception of "the theory of the two demons²⁴". Along the same lines, resolution No. 269/15 establishes commitments and agreements for the curricular integration of this topic. In this order of ideas, the educational legal framework was translated in Argentina into the NAP²⁵ that structure learning in content. Regarding the approach to recent history and dictatorial memories in the Argentine curriculum²⁶, Pagés and Moralla (2018) conclude that "the perspective from which recent memory is worked is that of reconciliation and emphasis on the importance of the protection of Human Rights at a global level, without giving examples of the traumatic events experienced by Argentine society "(2018: 171). However, this deficit in the development of content described by Pagés and Moralla seems to be compensated by an input that reaches the classroom to support the work with memory: the report *Nunca más* as a pedagogical tool. The research by Adamoli, Farias and Flachslan presents figures on the impact of the strategy undertaken in schools with the *Nunca más* in a period of 10 years:

The program produced more than forty publications including books, magazines, posters, booklets to work in the classroom, diptychs and brochures, which were distributed in all schools for the different educational levels and also in multiple instances of teacher training. Along with ten calls in which 45 thousand students, along with as many teachers, wondered about the regional and generational marks of the recent past (2015: 232).

24. The "theory of the two demons" is one of the political and memorable statements referring to the past of political violence of the seventies of the twentieth century with the greatest force and circulation in Argentina. There is no corpus of ideas and no group is recognized as the author or promoter of it (Franco, 2014). This term is used to refer to two political forces violently confronted (right and left) in Argentina, a conflict situation that started the dictatorship. To broaden the topic, we suggest consulting the work of Marina Franco (2014).

25. Priority Learning Nuclei.

26. Pagés and Moralla (2018) analyze the curriculum of the province of Buenos Aires, which represents 40% of the national student body.

In this sense, we can infer a certain complementarity in the didactic processes, which makes it possible to balance the absence of real situational examples of the dictatorship and the intention to promote human rights that arises in the NAP, with the pedagogical work carried out on the basis of the stories in the report *Never again*. This shows a positive result in the analysis of the Argentine school.

In Chile, the collection of memories and the construction of these narratives have unfolded different debates about the projection of the past that the reports disseminated for the *public truth* (Rettig and Valech) construct. Rubio (2016) has studied in his work the dimensions about which the dictatorship is narrated; of the report *Rettig*, for example, argues that the narrative of forgiveness that prevails in the report is the way to democratic restitution, reconciliation and closure of an era of violation of human rights; a conception that leaves out the actors (victims and perpetrators), to the point of minimizing what happened in a historical development consequent on the inevitable and transitory world panorama. In this sense, the Chilean dictatorship is justified in three theses: the republican crisis, the determinism and inevitability of violence and the Cold War. The previous theses are recognized and ordered in the curriculum for the development of memory. During the years after the dictatorship in Chile, the educational system was reformed to adopt the value of democracy and respect for plurality, through reforms and ministerial publications of 1998, 2009 and 2013, which are condensed into orientations and curricular bases. However, the simplicity of the story is preserved, excluding from *the memory* the opportunity for the formation of critical thought. In other words, "the curriculum does not enable the transmission of a responsible memory that integrates human rights as a principle of understanding the social experience of the recent past and does not promote the discussion of the violation of rights as recognized and approachable historical facts" (Rubio, 2016: 71). For their part, Pagés and Moralla (2018) add that the Chilean educational system does not problematize nor stress the facts, which leads

to this content passes through the classrooms without further reflection.

It is important for this work to highlight the investigations carried out in Argentina and Chile that describe the role of the guiding teacher of post-dictatorial memory. Generationally, teachers witnessed and experienced, at different levels of experience, the episodes of violence caused by dictatorships, which represents a determining factor on the perception and projection of this issue in the classroom. Bertola *et al.* (2015) investigated in a group of teachers in charge of this thematic axis in Argentina about the tools, challenges and concepts that recent history implies in schools. The results can be specified in three ideas: 1) the teachers deny the didactic possibility of the subject because they consider it complex and not very feasible in primary school age; 2) teachers fail to specify significant thematic nuclei for didactic work; 3) the subject generates uncertainty, distrust and, by virtue of corresponding to facts linked to personal experiences, its treatment is not objective. Another position on the teacher's action is that described by Toledo and Magendzo (2013): the results of the research are constructed from the case study of a Chilean teacher who sequences the content of the recent story in interaction with the memories of its actors, with the intention of fostering dialogue and reflection. The researchers concluded that the disposition of the teacher and the preparation to assume and adapt the curricular proposal is decisive for the significant appropriation on the part of the students. To this, they added another interesting point: the students, due to their family experiences, are immersed in narratives of violence, develop postures and take judgments, although in the classroom these are tempered by the presence of the teacher. In the words of Toledo and Magendzo (2013: 157), "two memories are reproduced in class and appear in conflict in spaces not directly controlled by the teacher: when students work in groups". The inference, then, is a didactic

gap that neglects the familiar stories and focuses on academic stories. Integrating personal memories into a collective historical framework could enhance processes of empathy and recognition of the other. For these authors, the intuition and acuity of the teacher defines the relevance of the memory passing through the school. In this case, neglecting the underlying formative processes of recent history related to tolerance, respect, plurality, individuality, democracy, citizenship and critical thinking would be to limit a valuable learning opportunity to sequential storytelling of painful events.

In Colombia, memory in school is an early issue, a recent phenomenon generated by the country's socio-political context, configured in a post-conflict state, legally uncertain, but undoubtedly latent in the Civil Society, which worries the State and the communities. Consequently, the school grounds are little explored in Colombia. At this point, it is important to approach Jiménez, Infante and Cortés (2012), who developed an investigation for the elaboration of a state of the art, in which three elements interact: school, memory and conflict. The results found are important due to the characterization they carried out of the investigations developed in Colombia and in some countries of South America in the last twenty years, which allows them to be grouped into three large segments: History and narratives through orality (2000); Collective memories, environments and communities (2005); Memory for Justice and Reparation (as of 2006), as a result of the process of demobilization of paramilitary groups. These are three categories mediated by community actors, mostly inherent to school processes, which take into account the energizing value of schools in rural contexts, which are mainly affected by violence. With the renewal of the Political Constitution (1991), the General Law of Education (1994), the Curricular Guidelines (2002) and the Curricular Standards (2004), the State strengthens the responsibility of the school. Regarding the legal and curricular framework that is elaborated in these

documents, Torres and Amaya (2015) comment that the teaching of recent history at the national level is blurred in the conglomerate of disciplines that are grouped in the social sciences curriculum, a fact that relegates the curricular spaces of history to a sequence of events worked from the rote, without processes of reflection, analysis or connections with other facts. By detailing the curricular content proposed by the State for the thematic axis that concerns us, we can point out that the *public truth* implicit in the curricular guidelines is centered on the manifestations of violence resulting from warlike actions by groups margin of the law, counteracted by actions of governmental defenses; a confrontation without a socio-political context that limits their understanding. Another concern is the exclusion of polyphonic stories and memories from the Colombian curriculum, given that “the programs follow a traditional chronological structure to present recent history, and the subjects' perspectives are not exposed” (Pagés and Moralla, 2018: 175). Currently, with the Chair of Education for Peace (MEN, 2010), the State, Civil Society and the School meet to think about memory in the classrooms. From this still recent guideline, guidelines are given for the integral promotion of a democratic culture in the school, an ideal that has not been fully materialized, because, in the words of Díaz and Rojas (2018), the curriculum has been concerned with realizing “Activities to comply with the law without strengthening school participation” (2012: 22).

Conclusions

At the end of this journey through the three states described –State, Civil Society and School– it is convenient to specify for each one of them, a reflection by way of conclusion.

If we rely on Traverso (2007), in the sense that *memory is a vision of the past assumed from the present*, it is not easy to interpret the role of the State in the processes of tissue repair affected by the conflict. As we explained, in view of the demands of facilitating the processes of

construction of collective memory, the role of the State oscillates between imposition and recognition, between silence and the confession of one's own mistakes; in short, between complicit silence and self-critical denunciation. The difficulty of transcending gallant attitudes of recognition and contrition is verified in the Argentine and Chilean cases studied here. Indeed, for the former, the work carried out by Conadep is not enough, which suggests, from the report *Nunca más*, ways for the State to assume positions prone to justice and reparation. For the second, the truth reports -*Rettig y Valech*- are not enough either in their attempt to contribute to symbolic and monetary reparation. The still unsatisfactory result of these attempts to build memory from the State throws, for the Colombian case, a panorama of inevitable challenges. However, despite the difference in years with respect to the processes of Chile and Argentina (with 29 and 36 years, respectively), the incipient dynamics that the National Center for Historical Memory is beginning to mark - with its report *Colombia ¡Basta YA!* - open the light to a global and polyphonic construction of the memory of the conflict. The verdict of the years to come will be the judgment on the role of the State in said process; the role of the State in front of the *memory* will be complete if, along with the dissemination of the memories of the conflict, justice processes are developed that allow reparation; A not too distant future will tell us if, in the construction of the memory of the conflict, the State has assumed a vindictive stance with those who carried the worst part of the war or a complacent attitude with those who favored terror and violation of the human rights. It will be the future time which, on behalf of a *present to interpret the past*, tells us if the *memory* was on the side of a State that recognized it or imposed it, promoted it or conditioned it, that either favored it or silenced it.

The acts of violence and abuse created traumatic memories in the affected communities that united them in tragedy. By reviewing the documented experiences of the *societies*

from Argentina, Chile and Colombia, it was possible to identify points of common action: first, that the groups seek to validate the memory of their tragedy through *identities*; that is, elements loaded with meanings are taken as a representation of what happened to commemorate and make their struggle visible—the handkerchiefs of the mothers and grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, the mutilated image of the Cristo de Bojayá, the grandstand of the Santiago de Chile Stadium, among many other manifestations—, which frames the stories such as songs, narrations, places of memory, murals, monuments. Second, the imminent need to seek *recognition*, to resist and heal through public participation. Aligned to this premise, the report *¡Basta Ya!* concludes that “actions that commemorate and dignify the memory of the victims and sensitize civil society about what happened have been a constitutive part of living and surviving a prolonged war” (2013: 387). If *identity* and *recognition* are linked together, we find the meaning of these efforts: the claim of *justice* and not impunity which is ultimately the purpose of collectively remembering.

As for the third nucleus, we could well go back to the conjecture expressed in the subtitle that heads it: that of the school as a meeting point; a place to energize the processes of memory construction; a place for critical discussion beyond official interpretations; a place for reasoned argumentation around the interactions elicited by the teacher, the students and their context. From this journey, it is necessary to conclude that the teacher and their experiences, as a subject of memory, intervene in the classroom, not only in their professional role, but also in their role as an individual connected to a group and its history. It is to be expected that in Colombia teachers also involved in such sensitive violent processes will show a display similar to that of their Argentine and Chilean peers. This task opens the possibility to other investigations to determine exactly how the individual memories of the teacher can affect the

construction of the collective memories of the students. We can conclude that in the face of this challenge, the school is the best meeting point.

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The direct quotes in this article are translated from the original Spanish texts.