Student university practices as scenarios to build cultures of peace[1]

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Abstract

This article aims to give an account, from the development of two main theoretical categories, the importance of student practices in higher education, assumed as a transforming power and constructor of peace culture that is sometimes hidden in academic purposes, but also flourishes as a social experience. One of the contributions of student practices, is the generation of constant dialogues between the disciplinary knowledge and the real contexts of the territories in which they develop, besides making evident the contribution that higher education makes to build fair and peaceful forms of coexistence.

Key words: University practices, Peace cultures, Higher education, Imperfect peace, Education legal framework.

By way of introduction

Student university practices in higher education help to decentralize knowledge and to put into tension the theoretical and methodological contents offered in the curricula. In conventional terms, the practices are defined as spaces, scenarios, devices and interactions to generate contrasts, appropriations and learning in which theories, concepts and methods deployed in multiple and diverse socio-economic and cultural scenarios come into play.

In Colombia there is not abundant literature available on the relationship between culture of peace and student university practices. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a documentary review of educational practices and their relation to peacebuilding -such as the one offered in this article- allows identifying, understanding and displaying values, strategies, actions and learning related to the role that can be fulfilled. Higher education in the generation of nonviolent societies and the cultivation of pacifist societies. This article is the product of a research carried out at the University of Manizales, within the framework of the Master's Degree in

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Education and Human Development. In the center of the text are revisions of literature as well as reflections on the links of university practices with social responsibility and its transforming nature, given the way they intervene and regulate human and social actions.

The biggest recent challenges of Colombian society have to do with the construction of peace at all levels and scenarios. It is not enough to sign political agreements between actors historically confronted with weapons. Perhaps the greatest challenge for the construction and cultivation of nonviolent forms of conflict management is in daily relationships, in the daily management of coexistence and in the way education can contribute to the formation of more sensitive and responsible people.

For the university practices to be a socially effective device, in the conclusions of this article the reader will find a statement of usefulness: The University can be contributory in the cultivation of peace only to the extent that its student practitioners and teachers, know and understand the problems in which they register and live.

Some notes on the legal framework of education and university practices

The legal aspects that determine and generalize the framework related to higher education are embodied in Law 30 of 1992 and Law 115 of 1994 and their respective regulatory decrees, they constitute the path that defines the organization of higher education in Colombia. In a recent manner, Law 1188 of 2009 and Decree 1295 of 2010 establish the specific requirements on the conditions for qualified registrations. Of these, what concerns the relationship between higher education institutions and their environment, their context and the national reality can be highlighted (UGC, 2010).

Article 67 of the Political Constitution of Colombia establishes education, among others, as a public service that has a social function. With this, in addition to seeking access to knowledge, science, technology and other goods and values of culture; it also seeks to define the responsibility of education over society as a whole. In the same line, article 1 of Law 30 defines education as a process of permanent, personal, cultural and social formation, which raises an integral conception of the person and invites to conceive education in deep relation with and for the society.

With respect to service activities, article 120 of Law 30 of 1992 defines them as those that seek the general welfare of the community and the satisfaction of the needs of society. This aspect also appears as an evaluation variable according to the guide for the evaluation of academic programs of the ICFES (2002), in which the Social Projection is considered as a permanent institution-society dialogue on common purposes, interests and projects. Finally, decree 1295 of 2010 of the Ministry of National Education regulates the specific aspects that the program must meet in terms of social projection in paragraph 5.6 of article 5.On student university practices.

"It is useless any social or political reform, any economic change, if the people in its high schools are sick and stunted, drowned and despised by those who should most care. Any change in government will be useless, if the soul and the national culture are not reformed, and for this the University can not be abandoned ".

Claudio Sánchez Albornoz

The socioeducational intervention can be crucial to produce events that generate multiple expressions of peaceful coexistence between people and the natural environment. In recent years, studies on the quality, coverage and relevance of higher education have gained strength and have broadened their outlook, not only in Colombia - for the moment and historical context that is living in terms of reconstruction of social fabric with a view to peace - but also in Latin America. Nowadays, different ways of understanding the role that universities can play are sought, not only in the training of subjects with specific knowledge, but also of participative, tolerant and democratic citizens, with the capacity to resolve conflicts peacefully as stated in the Political Constitution of 1991, in the same way contribute in a substantive way to counteract the crisis of coexistence in which society is debated.

One of the duties of universities is to facilitate the processes of social appropriation of knowledge that occurs in the academy: university education, like all human activity, can be improved so that it can fulfill its purposes with greater efficiency and effectiveness, Among them are the training of competent professionals, scientifically prepared and capable of providing adapted and flexible responses to a complex and constantly changing society (Sánchez, JNG, Fuerte, ADC, Redondo, RF, & Gundín, OA 2005) as well as the Colombian one; In this logic, universities are or at least should seek to be spaces for participation and management of the social.

"The social, objective reality, which does not exist by chance but as the product of the action of men, is not transformed by chance either. If men are the producers of this reality and if it, in the "inversion of praxis", turns on them and conditions them, transforming the oppressive reality is a historical task, it is the task of men "

Paulo Freire in Pedagogy of the Oppressed

(Chapter I)

1. The University-Society relationship, which enables the practitioner to approach a lasting awareness of their responsibility in social dynamics; not only as a productive professional, but as a co-agent, with the State, of the construction of alternatives. The redefinition of this relationship will allow to visualize a long-term project avoiding activism and assistentialism (Estrada, 1997).

2. In University State relationships, universities define their role as agents of society and of the State itself, and in this sense the coherence of their project and activity with State policy. (Estrada, 1997). If the University understands its role as part of the political organization, and of the same political proposal, its participation in the application of the administrative and financial policies of the State will be more significant (Estrada, 1997).

3. The relations between the University and the Productive Sector, on which the concept of the productive being can be developed, but even more so the concept of citizen that is approached in the practices, far from the utilitarianism of a market society. (Estrada, 1997).

In this necessary and significant effort of the foundation of the university practices, four key reflections are rescued from Estrada's work by means of which the formation toward a culture of peace can be defined:

1. Practices as construction of knowledge: besides being conceived from a multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary perspective, it is, in turn, a unidisciplinary exercise, insofar as it allows evaluating the construction of knowledge that can be done from every knowledge. Although scientific knowledge is not always built (Estrada, 1997), because due to the thematic or thematic emphasis that can be given in the experience, not all programs will have the same role.

2. Practices, rather than universities, are communitarian: they must empower, fundamentally, the construction of subject actors of their own realities, capable of understanding their problems and of structuring their own transformations. (Estrada, 1997).

3. The practices are a social process: it is necessary to understand that the times of the practices differ from the times of the communities, and the results of the same can not be directly related to the achievements of the community. Their purposes must transcend the internal objectives of the program. On the one hand because the processes of the communities are extensive in time, in the variables that intervene and that modify predetermined courses. That is, no intervention of a practice can limit the long-term projection of the university social projection.

4. Practices as reflective action fields: By their nature they must generate, procure and promote the reflection of the community on its own exercise. In a dual or dialectical sense, communities must become increasingly complex levels of reflection action to the extent that the practices are developed one after another (Estrada, 1997). Beyond the fact that the practice produces or does not know for its own program, its reason lies in the need to generate knowledge to the community. Knowledge with which you can, likewise, understand and transform yourself.

From the principles emanated in the Constitution and in the legislation of the Colombian educational system, outlined above, Universidad de Manizales, in its principles and foundations raises a close relationship between knowledge and practice. Under the postulates of modernity the UM is thought, designed and planned in the dialectical relationship between theory and action plans and practices, (SPI - UM, 2014). Thus, with this, it conceives the region and the country as the ethical setting of a university, in this respect the document SPI - UM (2014) states:

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Thought of life, culture and society, sensitivity to social conditions and a high sense of politics, ability to deliver timely responses to the environment. Ability to always be in context, programmatic aspirations with high levels of social and academic relevance, ability to act in defense of the public interest, capacity for interaction and social response, capacity for action from the (global-local), which incorporates and integrates constantly the universal and the particular. (p.427).

Hence, the whole set of its activities is oriented, long, short and medium term, towards the integral formation of the subjects and conceived from the construction of the curricular and programs whose characteristics correspond to a relevant reading of the environment.

Approaches to the polysemies of peace

There is a generalized idea according to which the concept of peace refers to an attainable social, political, cultural, economic and spiritual stage at the end of the path of violence. Contrary to the foregoing, it can be concluded that it is a dynamic field of research and in permanent extension. The research that has been done about it has generated that a concept of appearance that is simple, understandable and univocal, will be transformed significantly. In contemporary terms, the notion of a peace as a stadium without conflicts has been questioned permanently; Investigating peace in epistemological terms involves twists and transformations like those announced by Professor Vicent Martínez:

> ... [work for peace involves transforming] the relation between subject and object through a relationship between subjects, objectivity through intersubjectivity, the perspective of the observer through that of the participant, the objective attitude through the performative attitude, neutrality through commitment with some values and the rejection of others. (1999; 108).

In this way it is understood that peace does not have a single form, but that its diversity arises in the same variety inherent in people and their cultures. Peace research had its seat in the studies of human values, which drastically contradicted the theories of knowledge and epistemologies of Western modernity, which, in its eagerness to answer all questions in a unique, quantitative and universal way, they doubted the many ways in which human beings began to answer other questions such as: How to live in peace? In this way, research on peace challenges the prevailing idea of modern science:

> ... that helps us understand each other in different ways about the multipleways in which human beings can unlearn wars,violence and exclusions and learn to make peace. (Martínez, 2000; 4).

Research or studies on peace have had three determining stages and have marked their epistemological turns; the first was between 1930 and 1959, the period was characterized by a violent approach, by a scientific study of war, by a negative peace as absence of war or direct violence, by the emergence of polemology with Gaston Bouthoul, and with it, the study of the war between states; between 1959 and 1990, the Oslo Peace Institute was created and the

concept of positive peace emerged, emphasizing justice and development to the satisfaction of needs for security, well-being, freedom and identity; from 1990 until now the concept of cultural violence is developed and from there the idea of a culture of peace is born, emphasis is placed on education and communication for peace, which in turn takes a central position with new searches epistemic and methodological, which ultimately lead us to the analytical category of imperfect peace. (López, M. 2010; 8).

Studies on peace have had different views and approaches throughout history, these have gone through religious views (San Ignacio de Loyola), philosophical (Kant, Habermas), educational (Lederach, Jares, Rouseau) and even spiritual (Mahatma Gandhi) that have consolidated concepts such as Nonviolence, which can not be omitted if we understand peace and its evolution.

Negative peace (as absence of war) has acquired different meanings and denominations; an antecedent is found in the Pax Romana, the peace of the tombs, a peace where fear reigns, where there are no bullets or bombs, but there is fear, the result of some losers and some victors, that drags speeches of heroism, which requires agreements between belligerents, that peace that protected only by the right ends up being a fragile peace. This is why there was a need to think about other perspectives of peace; among them a structural, positive peace (Galtung, 1985 and 1998), where there is no need to negotiate, and putting it in the same terms of negative peace, here there would be no absence of war but the presence of conditions of inequality, of injustice, that if it does not happen, it should not be discussed with the enemy, but with capital, with the economic and political model, but in its most perfect expression, strengthen the democratic bonds of a just and equitable society that respects human rights above any premise.

From the nineties, a group of researchers proposed an epistemological turn in peace studies, it is a transit with cognitive implications that invite peace transit, in the singular, to peace. The polysemic notion of peace contrasts with the univocal and violent tradition associated with the absence of war.

However, peace also appears in scenarios of conflicts and violence in a different way, not absolute, a peace that understands conflicts as something inherent to the human condition, the human being is inherently conflictive, lives in constant tension and is In this scenario of conflict, but not violence, there is that positive transformation to which Muñoz would call, imperfect peace. In his research on this type of peace, developed in the Institute of Peace and Conflicts of the University of Granada, Muñoz states: "Break with conceptions of peace as something perfect, infallible, utopian, finished, distant, unattainable. Reachable in the other world, in glory, in heaven, with the mediation of the gods, away from worldly affairs, out of reach of humans, recognize peaceful practices wherever they occur, better plan future conflicts and always incomplete , to think of peace as an unfinished process (...) that is recognized and built on a daily basis "(Muñoz, 2001 y 2007b).

Already at this point, there is an approach to the place of enunciation of this revision work: the cultural peace that is built in the university formation, from the symbolic, the one that touches with imaginaries and the construction of the future is played, that which is achieved

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at restitution of the word, by restoring the feminine, by restoring the other in scenarios of alterity, the one that faces a culture of war, that is constantly between us.

Cultures of peace

Talking about cultures of peace in the world is not something new or novel, it is a topic that for many years has been working, discussing and analyzing different academic, cultural and social scenarios that have been concerned about the importance for humanity, the nations, the people among many other actors have this concept; which has even led to the creation of foundations, projects, conferences, agreements, which promote it and has been a central theme in the discussions of the General Assembly of the United Nations. In countries such as Colombia, this topic is not widely discussed, or at least not in everyday scenarios, it refers more to the academic spaces that have been commissioned to put it as a concept to be analyzed, especially now in our current context in which announcing peace has become almost mandatory for all people, especially in educational settings:

> "The culture of peace consists of a series of values, attitudes and behaviors that reject violence and prevent conflicts, trying to attack their causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation between people, groups and nations." (United Nations, 1998, Resolution A / 52/13).

This aforementioned resolution called the *Declaration and Program of Action on a Culture of Peace*, approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations, on October 6, 1999, for Education, Science and Culture, recognizes within many other premises, that "since wars are born in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the bastions of peace must be erected" and that "peace is not only the absence of conflicts". Conformed by 9 Articles, *it seeks that governments, international organizations and civil society can guide their activities by their dispositions in order to promote and strengthen a culture of peace in the new millennium.*

The document invites individuals, groups, associations, educational communities, companies and institutions to include in their daily lives an effort to respect life above all, to reject violence, to be generous, to preserve the environment and to be supportive, recognizing education at all levels as one of the fundamental means to build cultures of peace. (Art. 4, p4)

From the Ministry of Education of Colombia develops the concept of culture of peace with a view to the current chair of peace as follows: "is understood as the meaning and experience of citizenship values, Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law, democratic participation, the prevention of violence and the peaceful resolution of conflicts ".

Having said all this, then, cultures of peace are understood as those that are increasingly concerned with the problems of cultural violence (Galtung, 1990), those that seek to understand each religion, each ideology, each science, each other; those who do not believe in those only individual infrastructures that seek social domination and power; those who seek a democratic culture that does not recognize only masculine hierarchies, but that transform them into cooperation, that peace that has its seat in respect for

difference and for the diverse, that distorts the idea of enemy and transforms it into an adversary, promotes solidarity.

To create and empower it, it is necessary to intervene in the learning of any type of violence and the psychological and socialization processes that sustain it. While cultures of violence transmit hatred, and oppression between generations; cultures of peace cultivate cooperation and interdependence: values of equality, diversity, social justice and economic health. They also cultivate norms, beliefs and attitudes that support conflict resolution in a nonviolent way and reconciliation. They bring active commitment processes and spiritual realization that lead to a positive social change (García, 1998).

Culture of peace and their values

Culture of Peace is an idea that has its seat in the United Nations, and it is not by chance that it has had its origins in the section for Education, Science and Culture, as a proposal to the Nations of the world to involve in their cultures , behaviors and values that allow to pave the way to build peace between human beings and peoples, not from political and economic agreements, since these would not have their unanimous, sincere and lasting support (UNESCO 1946), but based on a construction of universal values of respect for life, liberty, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human rights and equality between women and men (UNESCO 1989).

To build Culture of Peace it is necessary to promote all those values, attitudes and behaviors that allow a peaceful coexistence from the different areas established in the Declaration and Program of Action on a Culture of Peace (UN 1999):

1. A culture of peace through education
2. Economic and social sustainable development
3. Respect for human rights
4. Equality between women and men
5. Democratic participation
6. Understanding, tolerance and solidarity
7. Participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge
8. International peace and security (with priority in disarmament).

In this way, this review seeks to understand these values, attitudes and behaviors from the educational point of view as the primary driver of these transforming powers, which are hidden but also flourish in the daily routine of their practices, as well as understanding, tolerance and solidarity, which they give in the work with others, in the setting in real scenarios of their role as a social, creative and transforming actor, which impacts with their knowledge on the dynamics of the human family, contributing to build conditions for peace to be given despite the brief and the urgent of the institutional dynamics.

The educational scenarios

> "The culture of peace implies for education four areas of action: the learning of a democratic citizenship, education for peace and human rights, the improvement of coexistence and the prevention of violence". (Vera, 2008, p.122)

When we talk about building cultures of peace, many ideas come together, many values appear, many responsibilities and bets appear; but they are perhaps the educational bets, those crossed by the language, by the word, those that recognize the plurality as a fundamental human condition, that also start from the idea of the social as its base, that are not subordinated to the economic, to the It is a mercantilist and yes they incorporate that ethical component, which allows them to be located as architects of significant and inclusive social changes that avoid inequalities at all costs and that would be in constant reflection, as Bárcena (1994) would say:

> "It is necessary to reflect on educational intents destined to break with the dominant ideologies and hegemonic control to generate a critical ethic that empowers and gives voice to the marginalized subjects, who have traditionally been deprived of it, in order to achieve the achievement of the liberation and emancipation of the subjects and the development of their capacities for critical resistance against hegemonic control, the transformation of social injustice and the achievement of equality "(p.56).

It is against these scenarios and these calls that the school takes a leading role; education is the best antidote to extremism, fanaticism, arrogance, intransigence (Zaragoza, 2013), characteristics that are contrary to what is sought with cultures of peace. The cultures of peace in education seek to confront it in several important aspects, the first would put in tension its institutionalized model given and instrumentalized, the second would ask itself why kind of comprehensive and participatory practices would be taken into account for that construction of cultures of peace, they also include different social sectors, and finally they would ask about those values that sustain the cultures of peace from that educational goal, often disciplinary that allows finally to form autonomous citizens with individual responsibility, capable of resolving conflicts positively.

> "... but, in turn, the values that it inspires should constitute basic purposes and contents of such education. Culture of Peace and education thus maintain a constant interaction, because if the first is what nurtures, guides, guides, sets goals and educational horizons, the second is what makes possible, from its ethical perspective, the construction of new cultural models and meanings "(Tuvilla, 2004, p 406).

In this sense, many efforts have been made not only in educational environments but also governmental and global to consolidate the contribution of education and school to the construction of cultures of peace, an example of this was the Regional Conference on Higher Education of Latin America and the Caribbean (CRES) that took place in 2008 in Cartagena de Indias, promoted by UNESCO for Higher Education in Latin America and the

Caribbean (IESALC-UNESCO) and the Ministry of National Education of Colombia, where it was stated that:

> "In a world where knowledge, science and technology play a leading role, the development and strengthening of Higher Education is an irreplaceable element for social advancement, the generation of wealth, the strengthening of cultural identities, social cohesion, the fight against poverty and hunger, the prevention of climate change and the energy crisis, as well as for the promotion of a culture of peace ". (CRES, 2008).

The concern for the development of cultures of and for peace from education is a global discussion of which various events in much of the world's geography give an account of this is shown in the declaration of the 44th meeting of the International Education Conference, held in Geneva, Switzerland, in the month of October, 1994 where the following was said about education and cultures of peace:

> "We are convinced that education policies should contribute to fostering understanding, solidarity and tolerance among individuals and among ethnic, social, cultural and religious groups and among sovereign nations, convinced that education should promote knowledge, values , attitudes and aptitudes favorable to the respect of human rights and active commitment to the defense of such rights and the construction of a culture of peace and democracy ... "(Unesco, 2008, p.23).

The General Assembly of the United Nations in the declaration of the first ten years of this millennium as the "International Decade of the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for Children and Youth of the World" (2001 - 2010), emphasized the responsibility that concerns the institutions and especially the universities as a privileged educational space, of moral responsibility, in terms of building peace and extending peace cultures especially among children and young people.

The academy through university research and its practices in different areas of knowledge, can show many results that contribute to the construction of peace, not of that negative peace that is the mere absence of war, but of that peace that arises from the state of the relationships between people and societies, which favors the satisfaction of human needs and also the respect for human rights that are the backdrop to the construction of peace. In this sense, on many occasions researchers, teachers, students and actors from the academic communities in general, contribute frequently, often without knowing it, to its construction. (Martínez, M. L. 2004).

Although the construction of peace is done hand in hand with education in its different spaces, in this opportunity the focus is on university scenarios specifically, which is where this review is located, to begin with, from the university teaching practice a continuous and constant contribution to the construction of pacifist cultures through its legacy of knowledge of the history of humanity, of its intervention in the peaceful management of conflicts, as well as the theoretical resources that account for improving in a way or another the quality

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of life and the human relationships of the people it touches. On the other hand, the student is traversed in the classrooms of the university class and in their different practices for experiences of peace, perhaps without imagining it, that go from the knowledge that receives and that opens the view to the world from a more rigorous and careful point of view, until the relations that it constructs with the others and its subjectivities. It is finally in this university coexistence where clear examples are shown, which can be improved in their own way, of peaceful but imperfect encounters, such as the human condition itself, of dialogical, critical, disputed and democratic approaches to conflicts.

> "The university is already a privileged space for the flourishing of cultures of peace ..., it is desirable that the commitment of the university institution with peace be deepened and contribute to reduce the situations of violence that surround us, whether these are in the domestic environment, in our closest social environment or in international relations "(Aguilar, D. 2004, p, 17).

Conclusions

There is a key relationship for the contribution of the practices to the construction and cultivation of pacifists. This relationship is evident to the extent that each of the actors is finding a reason and commitment to the existence of others: the recognition of the role that the practitioner can and should fulfill in front of the university and in the community must be reflected in the response and legitimation made by the community of the university project and the practitioner's practice, responding to the need for approximation with society that the university demonstrates and the improvement of student training. The relationship between student university practices and pacifist culture, translates into feelings and acknowledgments about others and the ability and possibility to help them, and these in actions increasingly more comprehensive, humane and effective.

The contributions that from the university practices can be made to the construction of cultures of and for peace, are characterized from the essential and substantial differences that circumscribe each one of the fields of knowledge in each program that is taught in the university. (Estrada, 1997).

In general terms, the contributions are determined by the degree of knowledge that the practitioners have about the community to intervene. Only to the extent that the university, through its student practitioners, knows and understands the problem, can the impact be measured as well, and that understanding is only determined by the degree of approach to that everyday reality.

In this collective construction of practices, an effective dialogue is clearly visualized between the knowledge that is configured in practitioners from the university and reality, represented in the communities and their problems; and it is in the bidirectional relationship between knowledge and reality that the interpretation of the symbols and values of peace that emerge

there and in turn, allow the objectification of a different, more peaceful, more collaborative and solidary culture.

It is through these university practices that the student is crossed by different pacifist experiences, perhaps, without imagining it, they go from the knowledge that he receives and that opens the view to the world from a more rigorous and pertinent point of view, to the relationships that he builds with the others and their subjectivities, evidencing values of peace cultures such as solidarity and tolerance. It is finally in this university experience that examples of peaceful but imperfect encounters are given, such as the human condition itself, of dialogical, critical, discussed and democratic approaches to conflicts in that relationship with society and nature.

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