

**Transitional Justice and Educational Memory Policy / Justicia transicional y políticas educativas de la memoria**

**Veranstalter:** German-Colombian Peace Institute – CAPAZ (Universidad de los Andes, Universidad del Rosario, Freie Universität Berlin) and Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research (GEI)

**Datum, Ort:** 31.10.2017–01.11.2017, Bogota

**Bericht von:** Mónica Contreras Saiz, Zentral Lateinamerikanisches Institut Abteilung Geschichte, Freie Universität Berlin; Tatjana Loui, Departamento de Lenguas y Cultura, Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia

At this international event, supported by the German Federal Foreign Office and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the organizing institutions opened a space for different actors working in the field of Colombian education policy to come together and dialog about the role of memory and education in the peace process. School teachers, national, international experts and NGO representatives discussed the role of memory policy within the context of peace education and the teaching of history in post-conflict societies.

The first day of the event was organized as a public conference and had three panels. The first panel, „The teaching of history and the transformation of conflicts: International experiences,“ moderated by TATJANA LOUIS (Bogotá) offered from an international point of view the place of education and, more specifically, of teaching history in the context of post-conflict transformation. In the first presentation, ECKHARDT FUCHS (Braunschweig) discussed the role of international textbook revision in the context of political transition. He showed the possible challenges and analyzed the power, the risks and the impact history schoolbooks can have. Fuchs presented different possibilities of historical narration on conflicts present in the books. While there are cases where countries managed to agree on a common representation of the past, in other contexts negotiation is more difficult and result in books where two versions of the past have to be kept, such as the Israeli-Palestinian history

book. The question how to achieve that the schoolbooks are actually used in history class remains unanswered, as it turns out that binational books often find more use in language class than in history class. In the second paper, MARIO NOVELLI (Brighton) pointed out from a global and critical perspective that education plays a minor role in the democracy building programs led by the UNO and the international community, as these programs' focus lies mainly on questions of security. Education within these programs is directed towards former fighters and is designed as a peace education that concentrates on values and interpersonal relationships without understanding the conflict's structural reasons. Novelli argued that the situation of not facing the structural inequalities undermines the potential of education in promoting peace with social justice. CLARA RAMÍREZ BARAT (Sao Paulo) then explored the aspects that have to be considered from a perspective of transitional justice in the educational agenda in post-conflict or post-authoritarian societies, based on concrete examples from different parts of the world. Ramírez Barat argued that the transitional justice process is an opportunity that allows promoting and strengthening initiatives related to the access to education, curricular reforms, and the improvement of school governance, amongst others. CHRISTIAN VÖLKEL (Bogotá) closed the first panel presenting a project on historic memory of the ProPaz program, operated in Colombia by the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ). In December of 2015, the ProPaz program had organized a visit to Germany with a group of persons leading processes of historic memory in Colombia, coming from government organizations as well as from the civil society. The purpose of the visit was an exchange of experiences in the field of memory pedagogies.

The second panel „Peace Education and Memory after Internal Armed Conflicts in Latin America,“ moderated by LALY PERALTA (Bogotá), started with the presentation given by CARLOS ALDANA (Ciudad de Guatemala) about the Guatemalan experiences in education during the 21 years after signing the peace agreement. Aldana described the initial weaknesses in Guatemalan

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peace education that turned out to be very bureaucratic, extremely standardized and apolitical in nature. In addition, he showed how this historic memory converted into a traditional teaching of history (dates, persons, events) instead of an understanding of the events that led to the conflict. Aldana proposed a comprehensive and respectful understanding of history and reality, as well as a balance between an education from and for historic memory and peace culture. IRIS JAVE (Lima) discussed the progress and the tensions that exist in Peruvian public memory policy and the teaching of the recent past in school. Her main critique was that the narrative constructions of the Peruvian conflict have not only simplified but also reproduced the war without clarifying the processes that created the conflict. Furthermore, she pointed out how in this context the low social esteem Peruvian teachers have is problematic and showed that every intent of institutionalizing memory policy has to come out of the teachers' proper experience. MARÍA EMMA WILLS (Bogotá) focused on the invitation the Colombian National Center of Historic Memory has made in the area of memory pedagogy in order to open the debate and generate spaces where „those who think differently can meet.“ She emphasized the necessity of an intergenerational, interinstitutional dialogue, particularly between actors with different political positions. Her presentation also invited to value the pedagogic capacity of the victims. This panel closed with a comment of JAKOB KIRCHHEIMER (Braunschweig), who pointed out the importance of local social disputes in the moment of promoting a peace culture and the risk that the paradigm of historic memory can create and immobilize the relevant events and their meaning.

In the third panel, „What type of history and citizenship teaching Colombian education does need?“ moderated by ALESSANDRA MERLO (Bogotá), ALICIA BARREIRO (Buenos Aires) analyzed the historic knowledge of a group of young Mapuche in Argentina and showed the necessity of including positive aspects in the process of identity construction. She stressed the moral dimension in the construction of a collective memory and the impact it has on the

different ways of teaching history. JAVIER GUERRERO (Tunja) showed that the discussion about the relationship between memory and history still exists in Colombia. His presentation discussed arguments why history is an important input in the construction of memory. RUTH AMANDA CORTÉS (Bogotá) analyzed the arrival of education and citizenship policy in the context of construction of modern states and explained the role of teaching values and new practices within this context. SERGIO GUARÍN (Bogotá) commented on the presented papers and got back to the differentiation proposed by Alicia Barreiro between the two intentions behind history teaching (the first promoting a critical education towards the past and the second justifying the creation of heroic narrations). He pointed out that although the first option would be ideal, the question remains whether within society there is a desire for a critical perspective towards the past. Guarín explained that in the context of peace building programs it is necessary to develop a feeling of regional identity, something that is difficult to find in Colombia due to the lack of social fabric. Therefore, it seems that the Colombian regions are far from claiming a critical consciousness towards the past and that it is more important to create and strengthen regional identities, often built up of their „own heroes.“

The final discussion of the day closed with a very interesting debate about the role school has in the transformation of society. Guarín asserted that this has been overestimated. School alone cannot change society nor form social structures; it is more likely that school reproduces the dominant social dogmas. In this regard, it was discussed that although school cannot be the definitive solution for a positive social transformation, it must not be excluded, as there are cases where school programs aiming explicitly at peace education prevent youth being recruited by different armed actors of the Colombian conflict. Higher education should also be included in this debate, particularly in a context of transition where all types of disciplines and expertise are needed.

Finally, the international experts recommended for Colombia that the structural un-

derstanding of war and peace must not be neglected. These developments need decades, cost a lot of money and have to be conducted without the presence of the illegal armed groups. They also pointed out that, although the public education policy has to be legitimized „from above,“ it also needs legitimation from below. Additionally they stressed that the State’s institutions often are not connected as they do not represent one only entity, so it is very important to encourage the dialogue between them.

The second day was organized as a workshop and was closed to the public. It started with two round tables. In the following, we present a short summary of the central topics discussed during the day. The German-Colombian Peace Institute (CAPAZ) will publish a working paper presenting the results of this workshop in the near future.

The participants of first round table on Peace agreement and educational memory policy coordinated by MÓNIKA CONTRERAS SAIZ (Berlin), discussed the role education has in the peace agreement concluded last year between the Colombian government and the FARC. Every participant analyzed from his/her point of view the challenges and opportunities this agreement has had in education. OLGA LUCIA ZARATE (Bogotá) suggested that a first step must consist of an evaluation of the Colombian education system in order to determine if it is prepared to face the agreement’s challenges and mentioned the gap in school coverage that still exists between rural areas and urban centers. JUAN DIEGO CARDONA (Medellín) pointed out that the document does not offer a clear proposal of how to articulate the agreement within the school and university system or how to incorporate other institutional and social actors, for example families. JORGE CELIS (Bogotá), taking into account his experience in the Bogotá school authority and the city’s statistics of interpersonal violence, highlighted that the schools above all are facing a crisis of peaceful coexistence. The focus should therefore be on the school climate. Furthermore, he stressed the necessity of aligning the legislative system with the agreement and its normative prioritization. ARIEL SÁNCHEZ (Bogotá) emphasized that

although education is present in the agreement, schools are not considered being the central setting for the social construction of peace and that it is not clear how to build a stable and long-lasting peace with an education system that deepens social differences. All participants agreed that teachers are generally overwhelmed by fulfilling the expectations put on them in times of transition and that they need to know not so much what to teach, but how to teach it. Another challenge to be faced is the promotion of civic and socioemotional competencies. While the former have a key role in political education, the latter are essential to the formation of empathy and the awareness for the country’s reality.

The second round table about Memory in the classroom, coordinated by TATJANA LOUIS (Bogotá), explored the reality in the classrooms and the impact education policy might have, that is to discuss if and how the abstract teaching goals defined in curricula are translated into meaningful learning. Another central question of this panel analyzed the role of the teacher in the transitional panorama, as he / she is not an outsider, but a part of the society experiencing the conflict and the structural tensions. MARIELA SÁNCHEZ (Bogotá) described her work with Colombian teachers and pointed out the great interest teachers have in this new challenge, but also the urgent plea for more support in terms of training and teaching materials. NESTOR MUÑOZ (La Florida) and EDGAR ROMERO (San Juan Nepomuceno), both Social Sciences teachers at Colombian schools, agreed, but also showed in an impressive way their personal commitment to facing the challenge. They determined their students’ need to talk about the conflict and its impact on the students’ reality. Muñoz additionally emphasized the importance that the children and teenagers have to understand their own agency in history and the construction of historic memory in order to make learning meaningful. Both Muñoz and Romero agreed on the importance of including the education community in this process, making clear that the construction of historic memory must not be isolated but integrated in social practices. It became clear that although there may be memory projects in schools, the success and

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impact of education policy so far very much depends on the commitment of single teachers.

The final discussion of this international conference was organized by LA TERCERA MIRADA (Bogotá) as a collaborative exercise with the participation of all contributors. They concluded that although the political will is essential to promoting an effective civic education and bringing the recent past into the classroom and other possible learning settings, the knowledge of and the search for „improbable encounters“ is also required, that is, offering the meeting space for those actors that under different circumstances would not meet. Another necessity that was identified is the articulation of the activities of different actors. This articulation has to happen inside and outside of Colombia, taking into account the diversity and the possibility of integrating public and private spheres as well as academia and the community. Academic and international organizations in particular, for example Instituto CAPAZ, have a key role in this context, because they can be the mediators and promoters of these encounters. With regard to the construction of historic memory, it has to go hand in hand with the formation of civic competences and the generation of empathy. At the same time, it should allow to understand the structural reasons of the multiple violences that have hit the country and still do so.

### Conference Overview:

#### *Introduction*

Hugo Ramírez (Director of Departamento de Lenguas y Cultura, Universidad de los Andes)

#### *Panel 1: The Teaching of History and the Transformation of Conflicts: International Experiences*

Chair: Tatjana Louis (Universidad de los Andes)

Eckhardt Fuchs (Georg Eckert Institute Braunschweig): International Textbook Revision - Experiences, Challenges, Trends

Mario Novelli (Centre for International Education, University of Sussex): Peace and Social Justice in and through Education: Global Reflections

Clara Ramírez Barat (Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation): Education reform in post-conflict or post-authoritarian contexts from a perspective of transitional justice  
Christian Voelkel (German Society for International Cooperation): Reconstructing historic memory in Colombia. The perspective of German cooperation

#### *Panel 2: Peace Education and Memory after Internal Armed Conflicts in Latin America*

Chair: Laly Peralta (Universidad del Rosario)  
Commentator: Jakob Kirchheimer (Georg Eckert Institute Braunschweig)

Carlos Aldana (Universidad de San Carlos, Guatemala): When those who teach history want oblivion – Insights from Guatemalan society and its education system

Iris Jave (Instituto de Democracia y Derechos Humanos, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú): Public memory policies: Progress and tensions within the teaching of recent history in school

María Emma Wills (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica): Historic memory in the classroom: evaluation of a process

#### *Panel 3: What Type of History and Citizenship Teaching Colombian Education does Need?*

Chair: Alessandra Merlo (Universidad de los Andes)

Commentator: Sergio Guarín (Fundación Ideas para la Paz)

Alicia Barreiro (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, Argentina): Collective memory, moral judgement and identity: The case of the Conquest of the Desert in Argentina

Javier Guerrero (Universidad Pedagógica de Tunja): The peace of the bicentennial: Beyond a war memory, for a national narrative in service of peace

Ruth Amanda Cortés (Instituto para la Investigación Educativa y el Desarrollo Pedagógico): Political education and citizenship in the construction of modern states

#### *Final Discussion*

Chair: Leonardo Velazquez (La Tercera Mirada)

*Introduction*

Franz D. Hensel (Director Académico, Universidad del Rosario)

*Round Table 1: Peace Agreement and Educational Memory Policy*

Chair: Mónica Contreras Saiz (Freie Universität Berlin)

Ariel Sánchez (Centro de Memoria Paz y Reconciliación del distrito)

Juan Diego Cardona (Universidad de Antioquia)

Olga Lucía Zarate (Programa Nacional Competencias Ciudadanas del Ministerio de Educación Nacional)

Jorge Enrique Celis Giraldo (Subsecretaria de Integración Interinstitucional de la Secretaría de Educación de Bogotá)

*Round Table 2: Memory in the Classroom*

Chair: Tatjana Louis (Universidad de los Andes)

Néstor Aurelio Muñoz (Profesor, Institución Educativa San Bartolomé, La Florida, Nariño)

Edgardo Romero (Profesor, Instituto Normal Superior Montes de María, San Juan Nepomuceno, Bolívar)

Mariela Sánchez (Universidad Santo Tomás)

*Closing Remarks*

Chairs: Leonardo Velazquez (La Tercera Mirada)

Tagungsbericht *Transitional Justice and Educational Memory Policy / Justicia transicional y políticas educativas de la memoria*. 31.10.2017–01.11.2017, Bogota, in: H-Soz-Kult 01.02.2018.