

Pedagogies of Solidarity in the Midst of War: The Intercultural University of the Peoples in South West Colombia

Executive Summary

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Nomadesc & the Intercultural University of the Peoples (UIP).

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Introduction

Despite being one of the most dangerous places in the world to be an activist, Colombia is a country with a long and vibrant history of protest and organising in pursuit of social change. Trade unions, rural indigenous, black and peasant communities, students, urban dwellers, women, LGBTQ and many more sectors of society have formed social movements which have led important struggles in defence and pursuit of dignity, autonomy and equality. As the cradle of the country's indigenous and black movement, as well as a historical stronghold of the trade union movement, the southwest region of Colombia has provided more than its fair share of emblematic struggles, right up to the present day. Despite, or perhaps because of this civic vitality, the region's social movements have also been targeted for violence and repression, and the Colombian armed conflict has presented a permanent threat to activists and their struggles.

Around the world, at the beginning of the third decade of the twenty first century, the outlook for forces struggling for social and ecological justice would appear to be grim. From Asia to the Americas, right wing, nationalist and authoritarian leaders have taken power in contexts of conflict, neoliberalism, ecological crises and austerity. Nevertheless, social movement struggles continue to take place across the globe, led by social movements and civil society actors from a variety of standpoints and perspectives - yet unity and collaboration between movements and across territories, cultures and borders remains fragmented. At a time when the survival of the human race would appear to depend upon such unity and collaboration of counter-hegemonic forces at local, national and international level, it is vital for critical academics to engage with and seek to understand social movement efforts which seek to generate such unity and collaboration between social movements.

This in-depth case study from southwest Colombia provides a rare, hopeful example of such an initiative. It examines the learning and knowledge which have emerged from an intercultural social movement popular education intervention which over the course of two decades has brought together activists from diverse movements and territories across southwest Colombia in order to empower them to deal with the violent context, reimagine alternatives, and strengthen and interweave their struggles. Our case study provides an insight into the learning and knowledge processes of social movements operating in the conflict-affected, repressive context of southwest Colombia.

The organisation behind the pedagogical-organisational strategy which constitutes the focus of this research is a small, radical human rights NGO based in southwestern Colombia, the Association for

Research and Social Action Nomadesc (henceforth Nomadesc). Over the course of more than two decades, Nomadesc has developed an inter-scalar, radical approach to its work with communities and social movements in defence of human rights in the region. The pedagogical initiative in question initially began in response to a large-scale offensive of right wing paramilitaries against social movements in southwest Colombia at the turn of the century.

Throughout its history, this pedagogical-organisational strategy has taken place alongside some of Colombia's most emblematic social struggles. The trade unions and social movements involved in the pedagogical process have led historic struggles of national and international significance, such as the 36-day occupation of the headquarters of the regional public utilities provider in Cali by Sintraemcali trade union in 2001 in opposition to planned privatisation; the Social and Communitarian Minga led by the indigenous movement of Cauca which brought together social movements from across the country in 2008 to oppose the government's militarised neoliberal economic policies; or the 22-day civic strike in the predominantly black city of Buenaventura in 2017 to demand dignity, rights, respect and social investment in Colombia's principle port city on the Pacific Coast. It is in this context, characterised by vibrant, militant social movement organising and high levels of repression and violence from state and paramilitary groups, that Nomadesc's pedagogical strategy has sought to strengthen social movements by connecting struggles and networks, providing tools and information for the defence of human rights, and developing an intercultural knowledge dialogue between the diverse social movements which converge within the pedagogical process.

Within the full case study document, chapter 1 presents the research methodology, and chapter 2 goes on to set out the socio-economic and political context in order to lay the basis for a deeper, embedded understanding of the case study. Chapter 3 presents an in-depth discussion of the history of the pedagogical process, foregrounding the voices of the protagonists in order to track its evolution and the dialectical relationship which it has had with the changing conjunctures of the region. Chapter 4 further unpacks the question of how Nomadesc and the social movements it works with learn and produce knowledge, outlining the different ways in which the cultural, political and organisational diversity of the social movements is converted into a movement resource, and the knowledge construction and learning processes involved. Chapter 5 takes the reader on a journey through the epistemological approach and content of the pedagogical process, which are rooted in notions of epistemological justice and the horizontal, collective construction of knowledge. Chapter 6 addresses the political economy and geographical dimensions of Nomadesc's work with communities and social movements on the frontlines

of the Colombian armed conflict. Chapter 7 explores the situated learning which has emerged from the experiences of Nomadesc and the social movements it works with in their organising in southwest Colombia, to explore how the context shapes and affects their organising processes, and what learning has emerged. Chapter 8 draws upon a mini-case study in order to present a discussion of the impacts of the pedagogical process upon individuals, collectives and social struggles. Finally, in Chapter 9 we present the overall research conclusions in order to directly address the research questions.

As set out in chapter 1, with our case study we sought to create a methodological route which functioned as a critical-reflective process of organising the ‘experience’ (in this case, the Nomadesc pedagogical process) in order to arrive at a deeper understanding, and to create new knowledge and learning processes in the process. From the outset, members of the Nomadesc team were involved in each stage of the research design and implementation. The design aimed to create a research process which allowed for collective reflection amongst the individual and collective subjects – the activists and social movements- who have themselves created the history of the pedagogical process. Rather than an objective, externally imposed academic process of interpreting and analysing, this research sought to draw upon and prioritise the interpretations of the subjects themselves, and their critical reflections, providing the possibility of enriching and developing these perspectives through their interaction and interconnection with the experiences of others. We sought to develop a process which facilitated grassroots, participatory knowledge construction, which was flexible enough to engage with the perspectives, desires and experiences of those who have participated directly in the processes, and understand what was important from their subject position. This is in line with the call of Boaventura de Sousa Santos (1999) for the researcher to move away from ‘messiah’ to ‘translator’ for the protagonists of social struggles. A process of co-production, with the movements firmly in the driving seat.

The discussion in chapter 2 demonstrates that Colombia is a country with an abundance of valuable natural resources such as gold, carbon, nickel, oil and water. It is also one of the world’s leading producers of coffee, bananas and flowers. The country occupies an important geostrategic position at the North tip of South America, and its vast and diverse territories include 3 Andean mountain *cordilleras*, Pacific and Caribbean coastal regions, Amazon rainforest, the *llanos* or plains region, as well as a series of islands in the Caribbean and Pacific oceans. These varied and challenging terrains have historically made it difficult for the Colombian state to project its authority across swathes of the national territory, which can partly help to understand why the country remains one of the world’s leading producers of illegal drugs such as cocaine (Giraldo, 2015; Novelli, 2004; Richani, 2007,).

A series of continuities have endured throughout Colombia's history, all the way back to European colonisation of the Americas which began in 1492. A historic continuity which has shaped Colombia's political, economic and cultural landscape is precisely that of intervention by foreign colonial and imperialist powers bringing with it practices of genocide, slavery, exploitation (of people, environment and natural resources) and domination (Galeano, 1973). Throughout Colombia's history of independence, and particularly from the last 19th century onwards, the country has been firmly within the orbit of US imperialism, which has arguably been the single most influential aspect of the country's political economy, in the country's political economy, in a relationship of 'subordination and dependence' (Vega Cantor, 2015, p1). The use of widespread, brutal elite violence and repression underpinned colonisation and has remained a continuous feature of political and social life in Colombia, a defining characteristic of class relations in the country. Forming the other side of a dialectic with this violence and repression, has been the other key continuity which has characterised the country's history ever since the arrival of European conquistadors: the resistance and agitating of those subaltern classes who have for centuries struggled against domination and exploitation.

Brief history of the pedagogical process

Chapter 3 traces the evolution of Nomadesc's pedagogical strategy, and gives an overview of the history. It seeks to locate the pedagogical process in relation to the broader contexts and conjunctures of the region.

Prior to arriving in Valle del Cauca, the human rights activists who founded Nomadesc had experience of accompanying social movement organising processes in areas of the north-east of the country. There they had developed an overtly political and emancipatory approach to the defence of human rights, advising social movements including campesino communities, trade unions, and student organisations. Adherents to the principles of social humanism, an endogenous praxis-based ideological fusion of liberation theology, radical humanism and Marxism, not only did they identify with the political struggles of the communities and social movements with which they worked, but they also saw it as part of their role to strengthen and support those struggles:

...a holistic approach to the defence of human rights, that is to say that education can't be detached from research; education and research can't be detached from the legal support and advice to communities and from actions to support them in demanding their rights, and all the rest of the work with communities... we put a lot of emphasis on education and participatory action research: working not from outside of the communities, but rather being immersed in communities- that is, going to their territories and being immersed in the communities. (Nomadesc founding member, interview, 2018)

They shared the conviction that education and the empowerment of communities and social movements should be at the heart of human rights work, and that part of their contribution was to provide the tools to empower communities and social movements in order to defend their rights and strengthen their struggles. They also held the conviction that the achievement of advances in the pursuit of human rights in Colombia had historically been achieved through collective action and mobilisation:

all of the rights that communities have, and this is central to our pedagogy, have been a product of social struggle, of protests, of peaceful occupations of state institutions, of marches on the roads, this type of thing have been historic, and at least in what we have lived directly, they have played an important role. (ibid).

Towards the end of the 1990s, Valle del Cauca was a region characterised on the one hand by a vibrant, militant social movement and trade union movement spearheaded by the trade unions and the peasant movement; and on the other hand by the high levels of systematic violence being targeted against the movements, particularly with the arrival of paramilitary squadrons to the region in 1998. A significant driver of both the protest and the violence was the deep neoliberal economic restructuring from 1991

onwards, as a result of which this region (along with the rest of the country) experienced a wave of mass layoffs of workers, closures of companies and erosion of working conditions.

In Cali, the emblematic struggle of the Sintraemcali union against the privatisation of EMCALI, the municipal state-owned utilities company, had spawned a powerful, diverse civic movement in the city involving trade unions, urban and rural communities and human rights organisations. The Sintraemcali struggle served as a totem around which a strong, solidarity-based civic movement coalesced in order to struggle against privatisation around the city but also to confront the violence that activists were facing.

Nomadesc's initial involvement in the region entailed working with Sintraemcali in 1999 to develop a broad-ranging strategy that sought to prevent human rights violations and strengthen the union's struggle against the privatisation of Cali's public services company, Emcali. Nomadesc's arrival played an important role in this coming together between diverse sectors of the movement, as an articulating force which helped to forge unity through its human rights work. The issue of human rights served as a unifying theme for the social movements and trade unions in the region.

Nomadesc's pedagogical strategy began in 1999, initially as part of this broader human rights organising strategy. The pedagogical element involved an ad-hoc series of human rights workshops for trade unions in the Valle del Cauca region, which at the time were primary targets for paramilitary violence due to the militancy and effectiveness of the region's workers' movement. Leading on from these initial workshops, in 2001 a human rights popular education diploma programme was developed in coordination with trade unions and social movements, in response to the continued paramilitary expansion and violence against communities and social movements.



Photo 1: Diploma workshop in Buenaventura, 2004. Credit: Nomadesc

The first cohort of the programme in 2001-2002 was a self-funded pedagogical initiative based on solidarity and collaboration with sister organisations and movements, rooted in the network of relationships which was being consolidated between individuals, collectives and movements in the region. International funding through a partnership with the British NGO War on Want permitted a large expansion in the numerical and territorial scope of the pedagogical initiative. Nomadesc collaborated with allied organisations and social movements to run the diploma in in 4 different ‘zones’ of the region. Between 2003 and 2011, 14 cohorts of the diploma programme ran across the five different zones (see table 1 below). Between 2001 and 2011, 547 social movement leaders across the southwest region participated in the diploma (Araujo, 2015, p83).

These diplomas ran until 2010-11, at which point Nomadesc and the social movements involved decided to develop a proposal for a social movement-based and led popular university, leading to the creation of the *Intercultural University of the Peoples* (Universidad Intercultural de los Pueblos, henceforth UIP), an alternative educational process that challenges Western notions of the university and brings together 37 diverse movements and grassroots social organisations in the Valle del Cauca, Cauca, Nariño, Huila, Chocó and the Coffee region.

Year	Zone	# graduates	Women	Men
2003	Santiago de Cali	40 personas	18	22
2003	Buenaventura	38 personas	16	22

2004	Central Valle	45 personas	18	27
2004	Popayán	40 personas	19	21
2005	Santiago de Cali	38 personas	20	18
2005	Buenaventura	36 personas	14	22
2005	Popayán	45 personas	25	20
2005	Central Valle	38 personas	10	28
2005	Huila	45 personas	25	20
2006	Santiago de Cali	35 personas	18	17
2006	Buenaventura	36 personas	22	14
2007 -2008	Cali	31 personas	15	16
2009 -210	Cali	38 personas	20	16
2010-2011	Huila	42 personas	28	18
Total		547	268	281

Table 1: Diploma graduates 2003-2011, Source: Araujo, 2015, p83

The intercultural nature of the diploma was part of the broader political organising strategy to foster collaboration and solidarity between the sectors, through networks of social action and human rights defence. Aside from seeking to provide knowledge of basic tools and strategies for the defence of human rights, there was also a deeper, emancipatory political intentionality in the diploma, or as one protagonist put it:

...there were needs, but there were also expectations, there were also dreams...
 ...(Trade unionist involved during early years of pedagogical process, interview, 2018).

The pedagogical approach, which took as a starting point the experiences of the participating activists, represented a rupture with pedagogical approaches being employed by Colombian social movements at the time:

It really was a break with the education model that had been the norm in social movements, because people felt they could relate to the topic, not just on the micro terrain of their problem within their community, but also in the understanding of the global nature of issues...knowledge was built from below from everyday life but also reflected in the macro framework and that was a novel relationship, because the norm was to go from the macro to the small, it was very systemic in how it approached problems- political economy says this and is reflected locally here in this way, but we said let's start from the problem and the community and understand the macro, so that inversion of categories allowed people to understand

things better and relate them to their own situation. (Trade unionist involved during early years of pedagogical process, interview, 2018)

The pedagogical-organisational strategy has been constantly updated and adapted over the years, in relation to various factors including the changing political, social and economic situation of the communities in the southwestern region and at the national level; the ebbs and flows of the struggles of social movements and mobilisations at regional and national level; and the learning that has taken place through praxis throughout the years of the strategy.

The pedagogy and thematic content of the process during the early years of the diplomas reflected the predominance of trade unions within the early phases of the process. As Nomadesc subsequently found itself working increasingly with black and indigenous communities at the forefront of paramilitary violence, so too the focus of the diploma programme would begin to broaden out from the trade union agenda as the broader demographics, and the mix of political struggles, cultural identities and epistemological paradigms began to influence the thematic and pedagogical construction of the process.

Nomadesc's ongoing and deepening human rights work and network collaboration with trade unions, social movements and communities across the southwest region allowed them to deepen their understanding and analysis of the dynamics and the structural causes of the situations being faced across the diverse territories of the region. In terms of the pedagogical work, the knowledge dialogue which developed through the coming together of diverse collective subjects ensured that the thematic focus could be dynamic and kept relevant to the movements, the conjunctures they faced, and the challenges which they pose for organising:

Education, and especially alternative education, cannot be static, it has to be in movement and based on reality, and reality isn't static, it is constantly changing, and in the same sense the economic model and its impacts are not the same today as they were in the 1990s, [the elites] are constantly updating and perfecting their strategies to be able to control and take over territories and resources (Nomadesc founding member and currently a leading member of the organisation, interview, 2018)

Our research also demonstrated a sense that from the beginning this was a collective pedagogical construction between Nomadesc and the movements involved, as demonstrated by the collaborative approach to coordination and implementation. This meant participants were recognised in their capacity as political actors, as activists who belonged to collective subjects engaged in social struggle:

the participants are also involved in the construction of the model, not passive subjects who are going to receive knowledge - those who arrived were active subjects...this allowed the analysis of the reality to become richer and richer, and

this enriched the content and the themes of the diploma in its construction, based on the realities of the communities, their lived experiences etc (Trade unionist involved during early years of pedagogical process, interview, 2018).

The protagonists in the development of the pedagogical process were critical of traditional popular education models which they felt were not receptive to the particularities and diversity of social subjects which exists in a country like Colombia, and tended to offer a 'one size fits all' ideological solution or model to the oppressed classes.

...[we aimed] to generate transformational processes which are not based on the idea that we all have to be the same, but rather that we respect our differences. Rather than generating moulds, and that those moulds come as if like a recipe with the first step, second step, third step, for us what we saw was that the reality [in the region] required the opposite, which meant building the process hand in hand with the communities and generating processes which weren't static but which were permanently changing and were permanently creative, in which people felt they were the protagonists of the process, not others coming in and taking the protagonism....It was about thinking really critically, including of the concept of popular education from the 1960s and 1970s, and building something different based on the elements which we had been provided by social humanism and the principles of knowledge dialogue, in order to generate our own unique process that would break from the paradigms in order to generate transformative organising processes which weren't based on the idea that we all have to think the same or be the same, but rather based on respect for our differences (Nomadesc founding member and currently a leading member of the organisation, interview, 2018)

The creation in 2010 of the *Intercultural University of the Peoples* (Universidad Intercultural de los Pueblos - hereinafter UIP), was a result of the social movements' desire for a more comprehensive pedagogical process that could support their struggles by aiding the emergence of a new generation of leaders.

The thinking behind the UIP challenged the traditional conception of the university as an institution for the academic production of elite knowledge within Western modernity. The UIP is based on an endogenous, emancipatory, autonomous notion of the university. This alterity runs through every aspect of the university, including the structure and organisation of the university. The UIP is conceived as a dynamic process of collective construction in progress rather than a complete, fixed process, in order to continuously respond to the ever-changing needs of social movements in the political, social and economic contexts of southwestern Colombia. The organisational structure is horizontal, with general political, philosophical and organisational decisions taken during three annual meetings general assembly.

The shift to the UIP represented the consolidation of the alternative epistemological approach and framework which had developed through over a decade of intercultural dialogue and praxis-based

learning. From the beginning of the UIP, the process sought to put these 'epistemologies of the South' at the very centre of the university's pedagogical content and processes.

For me it is important to have a university based on our own thought, because that generates identity, and so it allows us to think in different logics, in alternative forms of exercising authority in our territories, to think about autonomy, to think about cultural practices. I think that we are trying to change the world, and for me education is central to that, as Malcolm X said we can either educate ourselves to be slaves or we can educate ourselves to be free, I think today we have to think about the environment and nature, because we aren't the owners but we are part of nature... so I think we have a challenge of building together from the basis of our differences, if we have the capacity to do that then I think we can advance, I don't necessarily have to think or organise the same as the indigenous compañeros or the peasant movements, we each have our own logic in the way we see the world, our own logic n how we organise, but we also have things in common, and we can come together and think together respecting our differences...(Rural Afro-Colombian community leader, former student in later phases of diploma).

The UIP deepened the intercultural dialogue which formed a central part of the diploma programme. The extended and deepened pedagogical programme seeks to strengthen social movement struggles by providing participants with tools for diagnosis and strategic planning; deepening the exchange and revindication of the alternative and ancestral knowledges held and produced in the social movements and their struggles; and forging stronger and deeper links among social movements in the region in an effort to foster collaboration on the basis of strategic and thematic unity. In this way, the UIP seeks to support, foment and inter-weave communities and social movements in their autonomous, traditional alternative forms of organising.

The UIP has been developed as an 'itinerant' process: as opposed to having a fixed site as is the common perception of a university, the UIP takes as its site the territories of the communities and social movements across the southwest of Colombia which form part of the process. Within the pedagogical practice, this means that a central aspect of the approach is to carry out 'recorridos territoriales'- in which the group travels to a community and the residential workshops are held in the territory of the community, based upon dialogue exchange through which the students learn out about the history, culture and contexts of the community in the area, and exchange experiences and generating processes of embodied, experiential learning.

Summary of research findings:

Research question 1: How do social movements, located in complex conflict affected situations, learn and produce knowledge, and how does this process of learning and knowledge production assist in the development of strategy to achieve the demands of their constituencies?

- Political education rooted in struggle makes for a dynamic process of constant learning

In response to the first research question on the subject of how Nomadesc and the social movements it works with learn and produce knowledge, our systematisation of experiences research process has demonstrated that as an emancipatory initiative which emerged from and is embedded within the social movement struggles of southwest Colombia, the Nomadesc pedagogical process is itself a continuous learning process:

It can't be detached from the process of building to seek social transformation... that is the key, the education and training is linked to a political initiative ..the whole point of the process is to contribute to the social movement, to strengthen the social movement, to create social movement. (current leading Nomadesc member, and diploma student during early years, interview, 2018).

- A learning dialectic whereby emancipatory education is shaped by the very struggles which it seeks to strengthen

Throughout its two decades of existence the process has been shaped by a dialectic of learning which exists between the pedagogical initiative and the struggles of the social movements involved. This dialectic, and its embeddedness within social struggles, allows for a dynamic, horizontal process of collective knowledge construction, as well as the constant renewal and rapid adaptation of the process in order to respond to the ever-changing conjunctures and the requirements of the region's social struggles:

...we don't take academia literally – we learn from the organising processes of the movements we work with, and I could give three examples: the struggle of Sintraemcali was a school for us from which we learned so much; the Minga of Social and Communitarian Resistance of 2008 was a school which we learned from - we learned to walk the word; and the Buenaventura civic strike [2017] was a school. (Nomadesc founding member and currently a leading member of the organisation, interview, 2018)

- Intercultural knowledge dialogue between diverse subjects of struggle in all dimensions of their humanness holds emancipatory potential

Central to understanding the learning processes associated with the pedagogical process is the way that it seeks to create an intercultural knowledge dialogue between diverse subjects of struggle. Within this intercultural knowledge dialogue, the diversity of the movements is understood as a key source of emancipatory potential. This diversity is the multiple dimensions of the participants' humanness: including their collective and individual identities, languages, emotions, struggles, experiences and histories. Within this praxis, culture is understood as a dimension in which resistance is reproduced:

Culture underlies all communities, peoples and sectors, it is part of their philosophy and it goes beyond traditional dance etc: culture is also the way they see the world and it brings with it an identity which allows them to be different. So for example, indigenous cultures which haven't lost their own languages have a very different way of seeing the world to Western modes of seeing the world, because the ways that they communicate with each other and with nature is completely different from the imposition of a [European language], be it English, Spanish or French, which happened with colonisation. Sometimes people think it is a cliché to keep talking about that, but there is part of the essence of what we are. Where did the black communities arrive from? What was their culture? How did they live? What was their language? Why were they forced to come to another continent? Who resisted? That is part of their culture too, and how that culture of resistance from those particularly violent periods has to do precisely with a strong culture of resistance, and this culture of resistance is rooted in a philosophy and concepts which are part of the character of each of these communities. [Culture includes] the issue of protecting territory, for example the indigenous guards or the maroon guards, these are part of a culture of organised community work, in minga to defend a territory. When we talk about interculturality it is about identifying the diversity of these cultures that exist in the territories and seeing each of them as complementary, and as part of our wealth, not as cultures which have to impose themselves over others. (Nomadesc founding member and currently a leading member of the organisation, interview, 2018)



Photo 2: A UIP workshop demonstrating cultural diversity. Hanging from the ceiling are the symbols of the different movements which are part of the process. Credit: Patrick Kane

- *Culture and diversity as strategic resources for building counter-hegemonic resistance*

While historically treated by many movements as a deficit to wither away over time, culture and diversity can be a huge asset to social movement knowledge production and learning when understood as repositories of counter-hegemonic knowledge for sustaining and reproducing struggle. The different conceptual constructions, experiences, histories, cultures, symbols etc of the participating movements become collective pedagogical resources which generate and shape learning processes within the intercultural learning space and the knowledge dialogue of the UIP. Through this generative dialogue, cultural divergence between the movements is converted into a tool and resource to build intra and inter movement solidarity, bring innovation in social movement strategy and build ties, trust and bonds.

- *Generation of subaltern class consciousness and new counter-hegemonic semiotic processes through non-homogenising intercultural dialogue*

Through the interaction with other subjects in struggle, participants alluded to a shift in consciousness, developing a sense of intercultural, gender inclusive, territorial subaltern class consciousness which is facilitated through the recognition of the interconnectedness of struggles and the identification of common oppressors. Participants described how the process generated in them a feeling of belonging to a social movement which extended beyond their own movement or territory to regional and national level, made up of very diverse peoples and organisations with very different stories.

The pedagogical process can be understood as a patchwork quilt of epistemologies, which interact and are interwoven to form part of a broader whole, and through their interaction generate new counter-hegemonic semiotic processes. This dialogical interaction serves not only to deepen the critical consciousness of participants, but also to facilitate the collective construction of new meanings.

This does not mean that participants replicate the thinking or values of another movement and begin to think in the same way, but rather that all knowledge and ways of thinking are valued, celebrated, and seen as important elements, and alongside other cultures and knowledges, they feed into the semiotic processes which occur for the collective construction and circulation of counter-hegemonic knowledge for the strengthening of social struggles. Within this cross-pollination of ideas and culture, there has been a notable impact of the epistemologies and struggles of socio-territorial movements upon other movements whose struggles may not be directly related to the defence of the territory, but which nevertheless have been influenced, inspired and affected by this interaction.

- *Decolonial intercultural praxis means collapsing rather than inverting the epistemological hierarchies of modernity*

The UIP is an intrinsically decolonial process in its epistemological approach, in the way that it brings together diverse epistemologies which have been historically subjugated (as well as so-called expert or professional knowledge) in an intercultural, non-hierarchical knowledge dialogue, thus collapsing the knowledge hierarchies which continue to operate within capitalist societies. The pedagogical process creates a deeply prefigurative learning space characterised by alternative (non-capitalist) values and social relations, yet at the same time focussed upon urgent, immediate tasks of confronting the violent and powerful structures responsible for oppression in southwest Colombia.

- *Pedagogical praxis which seeks to benefit collective subjects through generating learning and consciousness in individual subjects*

As an emancipatory social movement pedagogical process, the initiative seeks to ensure that the learning and knowledge construction processes which occur serve to benefit and strengthen collective subjects (via the individual participants) through pedagogical strategies such as replication workshops and participatory action research. Through the participatory action research component, a strong emphasis is placed on the importance of research within social movements struggles, so as to 'awaken the spirit of the researcher' in participants (*Activist of the Black Communities Process, former student of diploma programme during early years, current facilitator for UIP*). The process seeks to enhance the natural

leadership qualities of participants and provide activists with skills so that the movements they represent are able to actively gather information and generate knowledge about the issues which they face in order to struggle and develop structural solutions. In this way the praxis seeks to broaden the spectrum of participants' learning processes and ensure that these processes are beneficial for communities.

- *A duality of collective identity learning processes which are mutually reinforcing rather than in opposition*

The intercultural encounter which takes place within the pedagogical process generates learning processes relating to identity. It serves on the one hand to reinforce the diverse collective identities of the different subjects, and at the same time to also generate a sense of collective subaltern identity and belonging which does not collapse or subsume other identities. These identity-related processes are mutually reinforcing, as opposed to the historical tendency for social movement organising processes to counterpose and ultimately subsume collective (cultural) identities under a broader, overriding (political) identity. The pedagogical praxis understands the peoples and their knowledges, cultures and histories as holding emancipatory potential, but recognises that it must begin with repairing, recovering, strengthening and valuing that which has been so violently subjugated for centuries. These collective identities are recognised as dynamic processes which are themselves constantly being produced, reproduced and altered:

...the indigenous movements of today are not the same as the indigenous movements of a few years ago and nor are the peasant movements, nor is the black movement, or the urban movement the same today, so this interculturality is also a dialogue with time, with the historical identities but also with these new identities that are forming, it may sound cliché, but forming in the heat of the struggle, that is, those identities that are formed and inter-woven, and in the university this process has a very important class component, which makes it a common identity which exists based upon the cultural differences ... these differences are there and recognised but also there is a common identity of class and territorial defence that gives the interculturality a common purpose, it doesn't separate them, which is the big theoretical discussion of interculturality, it is often used to end up separating peoples, but in this case on the contrary it ends by uniting them through dialogue. (movement intellectual allied to process, interview, 2018)

This is why a key element of the pedagogical process is the aim that participants recognise the value of the collective identities that they carry, and that they are aware of the history of struggle and sacrifice that is part of each of those identities. This approach sees cultural identity as a key strategic resource in the struggle for social justice:

...to have clarity of what we have and what our identity is to understand who our ancestors were, how they have struggled and built liberation processes in situations of slavery, feudalism, neoliberalism... (Nomadesc founding member and currently a leading member of the organisation, interview, 2018).

- *Mistica can be an important element for an intercultural praxis of hope which seeks to harness emotions, experiences, collective memories and alternative histories of diverse subjects in order to generate a fabric of solidarity*

Participants emphasised how the intercultural learning space provided them with a strong sense of hope. The coming together of representatives of diverse struggles can be understood as a praxis of hope: the aggregation of the hope which is contained in the struggles and histories of each of the movements involved. During collective activities, Nomadesc employs the praxis of *mistica* in order to harness emotion (including hope), spirituality and the collective memories and histories of social movements for the benefit of the movements struggles. In the intercultural learning space characterised by different identities and histories, the praxis of *mistica* is used to integrate the group and generate feelings of affection, trust, love and solidarity with each other and with their different struggles and histories, in order to generate a 'fabric of solidarity', a process which has been deepened with the creation of the UIP:

There are possibilities for cooperation and exchanges which are outside of the logic even of the university itself, so that people get to know each other in their resistance processes, and emotional bonds are created and behind these links there can be new exchanges and collaborations, new solidarity, affection, and that for me is a fabric of solidarity, the weaving is done at the emotional level, then later the head is what explains and justifies it. (Activist expert in participatory action research - UIP facilitator, interview, 2018).

The praxis of *mistica* within the pedagogical praxis also serves to collectively remember the deceased and hence to emphasise to participants that the struggles of today are built upon the struggles of those who are no longer here and in many cases who lost their lives as a result of their activism.

- *A dialogical pedagogy which builds upon activists' experiences and everyday realities in order to deepen their understanding of the interconnectedness of their struggles and experiences of injustice, violence and repression*

The concrete, localised experiences of injustice and violence of the communities and social movements involved in the pedagogical process provide them with an embodied understanding of the violent modus operandi of the capitalist system in southwest Colombia. The intercultural encounter provides an opportunity for activists to collectively reflect upon each other's experiences, struggles and praxis. The

process draws upon the experiences of the diverse participants in order to illustrate their interconnection and systemic nature. By reflecting upon and engaging with their own and each others' experiences, participants learn about the macro-economic processes and concepts which shape the violence that affects the participants' territories.

the paramilitarism is not isolated from these [corporate development] projects, and Plan Colombia was never isolated from that either, nor is the assassination of the leaders detached from that, nor the road to Buenaventura...if you look all of capital's development projects, that coincides with the maps of the paramilitarism violence, we can't ignore that (current leading Nomadesc member, and diploma student during early years, interview, 2018).

Through facilitating these encounters between activists from diverse territories, Nomadesc is also able to maintain an ongoing, panoramic analysis of the conjunctures for social movements in territories across the region and to trace the macro-processes, the changing conjunctures, and the inter-connections related to the armed conflict and the expansion of the extractivist neoliberal economic model in the southwest region.

- *Harnessing social movements' territories as part of a counter-hegemonic 'outside' of capitalism which become learning spaces characterised by alternative value systems*

Nomadesc has developed a multi-scalar strategy to defend human rights and to build counter-hegemonic power, linking territories of struggle which are spatially distant and seemingly isolated, with other organisational processes, territories, and networks organising in defence of human rights at regional, national and international levels. This involves supporting social movements in their processes of resistance within their own territories in terms of generating actions which can transcend the social, economic and armed conflicts to generate sovereignty. At the same time it means implementing a territorial pedagogy which harnesses social movements' territories as learning spaces characterised by alternative value systems and autonomous organisational forms, what De Angelis (2006:p34) would term a counter-hegemonic 'outside'.

- *Geographies of counter-hegemonic knowledge which circulate and reproduce knowledge, tools and information between social movements and their territories*

Through linking up these different territories of struggle, Nomadesc creates *geographies of counter-hegemonic knowledge* which facilitate the circulation of knowledge, tools and information which increase the capacity of social movements to defend human rights, resist displacement, consolidate their organising and build solidarity with other movements:

For example take the issue of food sovereignty and the dialogical learning exercise between different regions [involved in the pedagogical process], in the Centre of Valle [the peasant movement] have a very high level of food sovereignty, but in the Pacific [rural black communities involved in the process] communities they have a very low level, so in the process they have learned from each other, they share that knowledge and this is part of how resistance is created and sustained (Nomadesc founding member and currently a leading member of the organisation, interview, 2018).

- *Territorial-experiential pedagogy generates unique incidental and embodied learning processes*

Along with the emphasis on the interaction between diverse actors in resistance, the process also employs a territorial-experiential pedagogical approach. This is based on the learning potential of participants travelling to the different territories of social movements to learn directly about their struggles, interweaving, building and multiplying knowledge among different territories of social movements. Participants particularly valued the varied incidental and embodied learning processes which arise from collectively travelling to social movement territories. Travelling collectively to the territories of social movements allowed participants to put theory into dialogue with the social realities of the region:

The learning for me was about going to Cerro Tijeras or Honduras (indigenous communities) or going to the peasant community in Tulua, being there and seeing it, that is the best learning space there is and that is what the university is all about (Rural Afro-Colombian community leader who was an diploma student in the early years).

- *Strategy of counter-hegemonic globalisation bridging between reality in social movement territories and spaces of hegemonic power*

Through its human rights work, Nomadesc often plays the role of a bridge between the reality of what is happening in the territories, and spaces of engagement at regional, national and international level, as well as with international solidarity networks. In this way, it seeks to leverage the power and capacity of social movements and make them visible within spaces of hegemonic power. This can be understood as a strategy of counter-hegemonic globalisation.

[Nomdesc] was that link to national and the international level, that was the link. We had made a criticism of human rights defence in our region regions, that we were stuck in the region and that we needed the information to get out, and Nomadesc facilitated that...and we had also criticised the way that national human rights organisations came to Cali, took information, registered it and then took it off to Bogota and we didn't hear more, but Nomadesc was different. (participant in territorial workshop, Cali, 2018)

Within this geographical strategy, the headquarters of Nomadesc is a physical space that becomes a nodal point, linking the different territories of the organisations participating in the pedagogical process.

Research Question 2) What knowledge have the movements developed and what have they learned in relation to key thematic areas?

- Radical pedagogy can harness, reproduce and circulate the peaks of learning which occur during periods of intense social movement mobilisation and organising

The intellectual, discursive and conceptual production of the pedagogical process is dynamic and is driven by the learning dialectic identified in chapter 4 between the pedagogical process and the struggles of the social movements of the southwest region of Colombia. Nomadesc's pedagogical approach seeks to harness the rich learning and knowledge processes which occur during peaks in social movement mobilisation, such that these nourish the learning of participants within the pedagogical process, and hence serve to strengthen the collective subjects which they represent, in what can be understood as a kind of cross-pollination learning process. At the same time, participants emphasised the value of the practical tools and knowledge which they gained and which were directly useful in their social movement praxis, for example in relation to the defence of human rights or community-level participatory action research.

- Social humanism provides a praxis-based, endogenous ideological framework which centres the social subject without losing sight of their location within broader systems of social relations, allowing for a bottom-up, radical approach which retains an anti-imperialist analysis

Social movements (and their pedagogical processes) do not emerge from a political and ideological vacuum. Nomadesc, and the pedagogical process, is rooted in and influenced by ideological and political lineages and struggles of Colombia's social movements. Nomadesc emerged from a particular political lineage within Colombian social movements, and hence the pedagogical process since its inception has been heavily influenced by the praxis-oriented ideological framework of social humanism. Social humanism emerged in Colombia from the ideas of radical scholars including revolutionary icon Camilo Torres, scholar activists Orlando Fals Borda and Eduardo Umaña Luna. It posits a radical humanist praxis (with a strong emphasis on agency and knowledge of communities), influenced by liberation theology, and rooted in a non-determinate historical materialist class analysis:

[You could understand social humanism as] an ecosystem of ideas shaped ... in the 60s by several basic problems - the problem of what to do with Marxism and with socialism and its inability ... to see the stories from below, the history from below but also its inability to see beyond the structure, then a series of theories emerge

[in Colombia], because [Eduardo Umaña Luna] comes from the discipline of law, and Orlando Fals Borda comes from the world of sociology and Camilo [Torres] also with strong influence of theology, so let's say it was an ecosystem of people concerned about social change and social justice who came together, but also aware that much of the deficiency of social struggles in Colombia had been the failure to propose a strong and solid alternative paradigm based on our reality... so that spurred them to seek to generate ideas on how to understand that reality and in the case of [Eduardo Umaña Luna] there was a very specific problem ... so he said, 'I want a social humanism that intends to think about the centrality of human rights but based on the agenda of the Rights of the Peoples [Algiers Charter], that is, that allows us to see the collective: Human Rights are rights centred on individuals, as understood from a liberal perspective - individuals included in the social pact, included in the forms of social organisation, whilst collective rights are rights geared towards collective social claims of peoples which have been marginalized and who seek inclusion [within the social pact] but also transformation, then and that is interesting part about the Rights of Peoples, it was a way of saying 'yes, human rights are very important for those who are included and those who are outside have to look for an inclusion which in itself implies transformation, it is not simply inclusion: it is, include me but also [seeking broader] transformations, so I think that was their concern and the difference. (scholar-activist, facilitator on the UIP, interview, 2018)

- *An expansive, radical conception of human rights rooted in collectivity, social justice and struggle*

This has meant an expansive conception of human rights and a radical praxis of the defence of human rights which is closely linked to struggles for social justice; which is receptive to and rooted in the reality of peoples and communities, with their knowledges in all of its dimensions -including their cultures, stories, emotions and experiences; and which seeks to empower the social subjects with whom it works.

The pedagogy of the UIP seeks to draw upon the *humanness* of the participants:

I think the UIP is a good example of social humanism in practice, because it generates a practice of exchange between communities which think as collectives...but which also develop a critical analysis of the systems from the perspective of the social struggles and the trajectories of their communities. These aren't anonymous communities, but communities made up of people who think, who feel, who have expectations...and these ways of thinking, these cosmovisions can't be understood in isolation from a specific place, from a set of social relations, from a territory, and this is why you see in the UIP there is music, they talk about territory, there are seeds, they do the mandala....because there is this frame of social understanding and they understand that communities are made up of and move because of people, and people are the focus...it isn't simply the land for the sake of the land, or the air for the sake of the air, or opposition for the sake of opposition, it is also about living culturally, socially, humanly...(Activist involved in early years of the diploma programme working as part of the Nomadesc team, interview, 2018).

- An epistemological paradigm shift can be brought about through counter-hegemonic learning processes generated by the intercultural dialogue with indigenous and black social movements which retain alternative modes of thinking and models of social relations rooted in values such as upon interdependence; collectivism; solidarity; and the indigenous concept of *buenvivir*

Social humanism's centring of the human subject, which is at the same time understood as a *collective being*, provided the ideal basis for an activist praxis which could open itself up to the epistemologies and cultures of the social movements involved. With the expansion of the pedagogical process to include more social movements and territories (particularly indigenous and Afro-Colombian movements), the knowledge production processes have been transformed by the epistemologies and struggles of these movements and have brought about a deeper paradigm shift, as the demographic character of the participating movements has shifted away from the early predominance of trade unions, with their tendency to adhere to fairly rigid Marxist class politics with clearly defined ideological route maps for the struggle, and to reproduce the knowledge hierarchies associated with modernity.

It was difficult for many of us at the beginning, or for me particularly, the break that we see very clearly today at the time it was very blurred, very tangled because we were so rooted in Western thought ... epistemologically for me it was very complicated... (interview with trade unionist who has been involved in the process since early phase of diplomas until present day, interview, 2018)

With this paradigm shift, the knowledge production processes have become even more bottom-up and dialogical in which where teachers and learners, old and young, leaders and activists engage in a collective process of meaning making that transforms both participants and organisers in new, exciting and innovative ways.

The alternative 'ancestral' rationalities of indigenous and Afro-Colombian social movements which have become increasingly influential within the pedagogical process and its knowledge production processes are rooted in alternative conceptions of social relations (including between humans and nature) based upon interdependence; collectivism; solidarity; and the indigenous concept of *buenvivir*.

Within our thinking we do not understand the need to accumulate - why accumulate? Because we don't live with what is necessary to live well and be in harmony with nature, be happy and grateful to be able to feed ourselves, to have a roof, to have clothes, what we need but without having to accumulate and destroy ... (indigenous activist and university academic, facilitator in UIP).

Within the Afro-Colombian epistemology and discursive constructions, the concept of *renaciente* is often employed, and holds connotations relating to the Colombian black population's African heritage and

history of slavery and resistance. A veteran activist in the black movement described how it relates to the underlying consciousness and resistance of the black community:

...there are people who say that the black struggle was invented in 1990 [with the struggle for recognition of black communities] but I believe our people already had their consciousness... I remember so much that my grandmother whenever we had an argument she'd say 'you are white!' and with that she closed the discussion... they were clear on things and what had happened, that is my story but we've picked it up all over the place ... maybe they didn't express it in the same way that we can express it today, it was expressed another way and what we did was understand that that was there... in that sense my generation ... those of us that had the opportunity to go to the university and study, all we are is translators, that was in the language of the people somehow we got some things out of here we translated them into the other language, and other things we translated and took them to the communities...but this consciousness was already there, for example I remember so much a word which they use in the Pacific, the word 'renaciente' for me that what I'm going to tell you is like the holy grail, a conversation we had in Yurumangui [remote Pacific region jungle river community]and we started talking about what the word 'renaciente' meant and the elders told me 'it is as if we were before on one side and now we are here, as if we had an accident and now we are reborn in another place' and I asked the old men, 'and where were we before?' And they said, 'in Africa', and 'what was the accident?'... Blacks have always known what happened... That day, talking to those elders, I came to understand that when they speak of renaciente it has two senses, that we are not from here and that we are here because there was slavery ... it was already there in the memory of the elders, it was there hidden behind the word, of course it is the same as we know now, but they already knew it and what we did is translate it in another way ... we weren't the first to say that we must defend our territories as black communities, our people have been saying that for a long time. (historic leader of black movement at regional and national level, historical ally of Nomadesc and pedagogical process, interview, 2018)

For indigenous ethnicities such as the Nasa people, their epistemology is closely tied to their language, and the preservation and recuperation of the language has formed an important part of their struggle over recent decades. The central role of territory, and the human relationship to territory, within the thinking of indigenous, Afro-Colombian and peasant communities has been increasingly influential within the Nomadesc pedagogical process in recent years, and differs from Western notions of territory:¹

For me, territory means everything ...a space that is the territory, not seen as something material that I can sell it and leave it and turn it into a an asset, but as a living space, a space for dignified life, let's say that for me that is the territory, Leila Arroyo says that for others the territory is a space of the accumulation of wealth, for us the territory is a life space and not only human life, but of life in the sense of all the beings that there, for me that is the territory, we have risked life itself for our

¹ For further reading on Latin American conceptualisations of territory, see Escobar, 2008 and Halvorsen, 2019

territories, these are where our culture has been reproduced, where we have reproduced life and dignity despite all the systematic and structural violence imparted by the state against us, in spite of the structural racism of the economic, political and legal system, we have lived together as a community, we have made community in our territories. (Rural Afro-Colombian community leader, former student in later phases of diploma, interview, 2018).

- *Intercultural feminism which is sensitive to the diverse cosmovisions, identities and cultures of the movements involved and rooted in a class-based analysis of the broader structures which create and sustain patriarchal oppression*

Through its work with diverse social movements, Nomadesc has developed an intercultural, class-based feminism which is sensitive to the diverse cosmovisions, identities and cultures of the movements involved, and which at the same time is able to empower women and challenge practices which reproduce patriarchy both within and external to social movements. Within a repressive context in which generations of both male and female activists have been murdered, disappeared and exiled, concrete experience has taught the organisation that only such an organic feminism rooted in a class-based analysis of the broader structures which create and sustain patriarchal oppression can be effective in the struggle for emancipation.

- *The repressive, violent context requires social movements to be innovative, strategic, and militant in their approach to organising. In such a context, trust, friendship, humour and joy are important resources for sustaining struggle*

In terms of the ways that the learning and knowledge processes of Nomadesc and the social movements they work with are shaped by the conflict-affected, repressive context of southwest Colombia, the historical constant of state terrorism and repression against the civilian population, and the systematic extermination of social leaders and activists in recent decades, have been the main factors which have defined the relations between Colombian social movements and the state, and Nomadesc and the movements it works with are no exception to this rule. Such a context often requires social movements to be innovative and strategic in their actions, and social mobilisation has historically been an important element of any strategy that seeks to not only to achieve social transformations but also to defend basic rights. Activists highlighted the importance of human relationships and close bonds of trust and friendship, along with morbid humour, joy and camaraderie. These elements generate hope and resilience in the face of the fear generated by the constant threat of violence:

...an important element, we came together and connected and we really made possible the right to joy even in the midst of conflict...we knew that we were living

in the midst of a terrible conflict, and when we got down to work we worked very seriously and for hours on end, but the recocha [horseplay] was vital. (participant, territorial workshop, Cali, 2018)

- Collective memory becomes more important for social movements in repressive contexts, not only to reproduce knowledge but also as a source of resistance in contexts where violence seeks to erase and disrupt counter-hegemonic knowledge processes

For Nomadesc and the social movements it works with, the strong emphasis given to the maintenance and reproduction of collective historical memory can be understood as a mechanism for preservation of social movement knowledge (and hence as an act of resistance) in a situation where it is threatened. Our case study also demonstrated that as well as the emotional impact, the enforced and sudden physical removal of an activist (through murder, exile, incarceration etc) can also have a devastating impact on social movement knowledge processes, and therefore on the capacity of their organisational process. This is an area in which more research is required. Within its pedagogical praxis and broader work in defence of human rights, Nomadesc treats the trauma and pain caused by acts of violence and repression against social movements as a collective issue concerning all of the movements involved, not only the individual or organisation which has been the direct victim of the action. In this way, such an issue is experienced and processed collectively, and understood as an attack on the collective organisational process as well as the individual, allowing for a collective response in defence of the organisational process, and at the same time providing emotional solidarity and resilience. This approach is not unique to Nomadesc within the Colombian social movement, but rather is reflective of the ways that social movements across the country have developed as a response in a country where repression and violence are everyday occurrences for social movements.

- Transformative territorial peace requires the participation of marginalised civil society actors, particularly those most affected by the conflict

The experience of the rural social movements which Nomadesc works with demonstrated that there exists a disconnect between the discourse of the protagonists of the peace process, and the reality of ongoing violence that is lived in the territories of the movements that are part of the UIP. The fact that Nomadesc and the social movements of the UIP do not participate in the armed conflict or belong to any of the armed actors does not imply a 'neutral' stance with regards to the conflict. Rather, for them the point of departure for any analysis of the conflict (and the peace process) has to be the repressive and violent character of the Colombian state, and the recognition that the Colombian conflict cannot be understood without reference to the class struggle that exists in the country. Nomadesc and the social movements

they work with have campaigned for civil society actors to be given a central role in the construction of peace, and have developed the concept of transformative and territorial peace which implies radically transforming the existing historical injustices which serve as drivers and structural causes of the conflict.

- Colombian social movements have converted 'victim' from passive agent to a collective social and political subject

For Nomadesc, the accompaniment of the victims of human rights violations' next of kin after an act of violence (for example, an extrajudicial execution) implies not only the human rights and humanitarian aspect, but also a pedagogical process in helping relatives to understand the systematic criminal behaviour of the state, and how these crimes are part of the modus operandi of the security forces. In this way, the category of victim is transformed from one of passivity to a political category and spur to activism. During the period under analysis, the category of 'victim' has emerged as a social and political subject in itself, with its movements, its cognitive framings and its repertoires of struggles and actions – embedded in , but also alongside trade union, peasant, afro- Colombian movements.

Research Question 3) What have been the effects of these movements on the promotion and realisation of peace with social justice within their country context?

For this case study, in our collective research design we reinterpreted this research question, to ask what have been the impacts of the pedagogical process and the related learning and knowledge production processes upon the social movements involved and their struggles for social justice. The Nomadesc pedagogical process is a long-term collaborative initiative whose impact must be examined beyond the immediate participation of a particular cohort in the diploma or the UIP and to the collective subjects which have participated in the process over the past two decades. The process seeks to strengthen the collective subjects, through work with individual representatives of these collectives.

- *For a radical pedagogical process, impacts must ultimately be judged at the collective level*

One indicator of the impact which the process has had at individual are the examples of activists who have passed through the diploma programme have gone on to take up leadership roles within their organisation, community or movement (Araujo, 2015). In most of the organisations participating in the process, we were able to identify key leaders who identified their participation in the Nomadesc pedagogical process as an important moment in their own political development as a leader, some of whom would later lead important social struggles in the southwestern region.

Another impact which could be identified at the individual level relates to how activists reported that their praxis of organising was altered as a result of their participation in the diploma programme, for example in increasing their focus upon historical collective memory within their own organisation or movement. This is an example of a mechanism through which the learning processes at individual level can go on to lead to a transformation in the praxis at the collective level (organisation, movement, community).

At the collective level, an important dimension in which the impact of the pedagogical process can be identified is in the implementation of the human rights knowledge and tools and in the praxis of the movements involved. As has been demonstrated in this document, there was a strong sense from activists that the knowledge acquired had been applied in to the struggles of their own organisations, particularly in cases relating to human rights violations or threats to territorial autonomy such as attempts by multinational corporations to gain licenses to extract natural resources. The case of COPDICONC is one example of a rural community who's leaders argue that the impact of having participated in the Nomadesc pedagogical process has been an increase in the community's organisational ability to defend its territory:

if you go now to our territory to try and do some kind of activity...they [will] talk to you about the community's rights...they stand up for themselves (Rural Afro-Colombian community leader, ex-student of diploma from early phase, interview, 2018)

At the collective level, the learning processes related to a deepening of critical consciousness are difficult to trace and evidence. However it is clear from our research that the cumulative impact of the intercultural drive of Nomadesc's work to bring together different sectors and movements - particularly but not exclusively through the pedagogical process - has had a deep impact upon the praxis at the collective/institutional level. This has occurred in terms of increasing solidarity and collaboration between the movements and organisations and their different struggles. Following their participation in the pedagogical initiative and their broader work with Nomadesc, many of the collective subjects come to be involved in broader social movement unity processes such as the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE) or the *Congreso de los Pueblos* (Peoples' Congress).

Another important impact has been the way that the process has made tangible the sense of a subaltern social movement, made up of movements struggling in different ways and different territories across the southwest region:

I think that the pedagogical process] contributed to the consolidation of the social movement in the region...as well as the diplomas in the regions - Cali, Buenaventura etc, there were also spaces for reading and analysing the context at a regional level ([the Tejiendo Resistencias annual events], that contributed to helping us understand the problems on a regional scale, and it has been a sustainable process because up until today we continue thinking in terms of the southwest region...so in this sense there was an integration in our thinking in terms of the southwest, it is an important contribution which is sustained into the present. (leading activist, Black Communities Process, facilitator and ally throughout history of the pedagogical process, interview, 2018)

Whilst impacts are qualitative and often intangible, through our case study of the PCN in Buenaventura we identified 'learning ripple effects' in order to demonstrate the transformative impact which one social movement's participation had upon its praxis, and subsequently upon its struggle. Our case study demonstrates how the PCN's organising process was strengthened; changes in the praxis of the PCN were generated through its participation in this pedagogical process; and how it played an important role in the conscientisation process of individuals who were already prominent activists, or who would later become leading activists.

PCN activists described how their participation created a shift in the collective consciousness of their movement in the way that they understood the structural causes of the violent context they were experiencing, as well as gaining practical tools to be able to respond to the human rights crisis:

The whole situation of violence began - all the massacres, displacements, assassinations... and the human rights situation in Buenaventura became very complex... we hadn't made an association in terms of what it meant and what was really going on, the link between violence and territory, or violence and capitalism - those relations of capital that were driving the violence, yes? In every meeting ... there was the issue of violence, but that it could be... a war strategy based on trying to empty the territories, and then appropriate those territories, I came to hear that analysis on the Nomadesc diploma ... because those of us who did the diploma were the core of our PCN activists, very qualified activists with a lot of experience ... it had a very big impact ...especially the sections when the teacher talked about the whole topic of capital and development, but in the context of what Buenaventura meant for the world economy at that time as a key international port, when he explains all that and then explains that the violence that is happening in Buenaventura is not a coincidence but actually part of a strategy, we were all stunned...and he told us to get ready ... I do feel that the diploma served to help us to locate ourselves and give us a different perspective on what was happening in Buenaventura, and that analysis is just as relevant today. (Activist of the Black Communities Process, former student of diploma programme during early years, current facilitator for UIP)

The citation above helps us to understand how the participation of the PCN in the diploma course had an impact at the organisational level, in terms of how the movement came to understand the violence which was so affecting the communities in Buenaventura. They state that as a result of this participation, the PCN as an organisation began to understand that the violence that was being experienced was simply a strategy for the appropriation of the territory. It is important to note that in the view of the interviewee, this change was not something temporary: it was something more profound than a change in the way viewing the situation: it was a shift in collective consciousness which manifested in terms of the way the organisation collectively analysed the context and conjunctures . Participation within the diploma course not only helped generate a deeper and more political analysis of the factors which were driving the violence, but also provided tools for the defence of human rights to respond to the immediate and urgent situation they were facing, and how these tools were implemented by PCN:

I think that divided it into before and after in terms of the approach of the PCN, at least in Buenaventura, because we began to see a more political and organised approach to the violence, not just about picking up the dead bodies that were left in each massacre, but for example we started to make a more serious and accurate documentation and make our own reports because the state reports always underestimated and under-reported(...) for me that diploma marked the turning

point for the PCN to begin to understanding and transcend what was happening with the violence and how it related to a much larger strategy great strategy linked to the megaprojects... (Activist of the Black Communities Process, former student of diploma programme during early years, current facilitator for UIP)

This shift would lead to changes in organisational and political strategies as a result of the change in the organisation's way of understanding the context and the issues they faced. According to an interviewee, beginning to understand violence as a strategy to move communities aside spurred the development of a new urban organisational strategy by the PCN in defence of urban territories, under the same banner of the defence of territory which they used when organising in rural territories. Hence, the urban situation in Buenaventura began to be articulated as a struggle for the territory, and an organisational-pedagogical process was initiated in order to raise awareness of urban communities and organise them in defence of their territory.

- Radical pedagogical processes in which diverse collective subjects participate can influence and inspire social movements to create or develop their own pedagogical initiatives - one manifestation of a ripple learning effect

One element which emerged in our research was how the Nomadesc educational process methodologically philosophically and pedagogically influenced the pedagogical approach and activities of the participating organisations, generating new processes in some cases. The quotation below shows an example of how the educational process of the PCN inspired new pedagogical processes in the PCN's sister organisations, replicating aspects of the methodology:

[we set it up as] an initiative of our own, based on the experience we had already gained with Nomadesc, and from there the PCN began to run many diploma programmes with other organisations, and I think in turn this also served as an example or guide for others to begin their own processes (ibid)

- Radical pedagogical interventions can create ripple learning effects whose chains of influence can be traced through social movement struggles and organising processes over the long-term

Without arguing the causality nor ignoring the multiple factors and complexities involved in bringing about such large scale social uprisings, our PCN case study gives a sense of a chain of influence of the pedagogical process, which we understand as a ripple-effect learning process which, through the participation of individual subjects representing the PCN, had a large impact at the collective level upon the political consciousness of one of Southwest's most prominent social movements, and by extension upon PCN's sister organisations in Buenaventura. It demonstrates how it can be argued that the pedagogical process

contributed to the Buenaventura Civic Strike in 2017, one of Latin America's most emblematic social struggles of the 21st century:

...the accumulation that led Buenaventura to the great strike didn't happen overnight because a leader appeared saying that it was a good idea to have a civic strike: it was an accumulation of organising and education in which these processes that we are talking about played an important role, we had an influence in Buenaventura, we worked with the leaders and they were part of this pedagogical process ... and gradually this started to have a cumulative effect... I am not saying that it is the only factor or that somehow the civic strike is the direct heritage of this process, but it plays a part... we are talking about an entire city that is fed up and angry, but why does it get fed up and angry? [the situation that caused the strike] ... did not appear here in the 21st century, that has been a historical issue, so why then? ... It was achieved by creating an understanding amongst the population that they are just as valid citizens as those in the capital, they are bearers of rights and above all that they stand on a treasure chest, when people in Buenaventura understand the importance of the city's port strategically not only for the country, but for the world economy...that is part of the accumulated impact of the diploma, of the UIP, of all the organising, working with the leaders all that travelling back and forth, taking international delegations to meet activists there... it has been quite a process. (interview with trade unionist who has been involved in the process since early phase of diplomas until present day, interview, 2018)

It is important to highlight the temporality of this influence: it begins at the beginning of the 2000s with the start of the diplomas in Buenaventura, and continues right through until the 2017 civic strike: the participation of the PCN in the pedagogical process has been permanent, and some UIP participants even played important roles during civic strike. Throughout those two decades, the pedagogical process was only part of a broader Nomadesc strategy of strengthening social movements in Buenaventura in their struggles in defence of human rights and to improve the living conditions of the population of Buenaventura. It would be impossible to understand the learning process described above, without taking into account that it has gone hand in hand with close strategic collaboration between Nomadesc and PCN, and that Nomadesc has also played an active role in the struggle of social movements in Buenaventura, which has included inter alia mobilisations, research, and publicly denouncing human rights violations, and developing legal strategies.



Photo 3: A huge, historic march during the civic strike in Buenaventura, 21st May 2017. Credit: Patrick Kane

These impacts are facilitated by Nomadesc's long-term approach to working with social movements, in which the pedagogical process is often just part of a broader collaboration with the movements to support their struggles in defence of human rights and dignity. In our PCN case study, we argue these ripple learning effects can be traced from the beginning of the diploma programme in the early 2000s through to the historic civic strike in Buenaventura in 2017.

Conclusion

Overall, our case study of the Nomadesc pedagogical process demonstrates the transformative potential of social movement education for those engaged in struggles for social change. At a time when far-right political forces are seeking to fuel division and hatred around the world, the Nomadesc pedagogical process demonstrates that cultural, political and organisational diversity can be converted into a resource for social movements through intercultural organising and political education. In order to fully grasp this approach, it is necessary to overcome the tendency to replicate knowledge hierarchies, both within activist organising as well as within academia: to prioritise academic, expert, professional, theoretical knowledges over organic, praxis-based, embodied, ancestral, non-codified knowledges (and knowledge practices). Rather than inverting the knowledge hierarchy to create a new order, the value of Nomadesc's

pedagogical approach is in seeking to abolish the hierarchy in order to create a process which is able to see the value of and draw upon a range of different knowledges, epistemologies and knowledge practices, in a praxis which exemplifies the ecology of knowledges imagined by Boaventura de Sousa Santos. This case study has demonstrated the immense potential of such an approach, not only in terms of the ethical value of the process itself, but also in terms of the search for alternative knowledge and forms of organising at this time of multiple crises for humanity.

Our research has also shown the need for social movement learning research to engage with the role which subjective dimensions such as culture, emotion, collective memory and experience play within social movement struggles, and the ways in which they may be harnessed within political organising and pedagogical praxis in order to strengthen identity-related learning processes and deepen critical consciousness. If social movements around the world are to develop a new class consciousness which reflects the rich diversity of those struggling for social change, then much deeper thought and attention will have to be given to the way that these dimensions are harnessed within activist organising processes in order to generate a shared sense of hope, identity and purpose.

- *The false dichotomy between pre-figurative forms of organising which seek to construct and expand an 'outside' to capitalism, and those which engage in struggles in the here and now to win concessions from hegemonic power configurations*

To paraphrase Karl Marx, social movements make their own history, but not in conditions of their own making. Our case study has demonstrated how the most violent, repressive and challenging of circumstances can generate some of the most innovative and effective responses on the part of social movements seeking to transform the social realities in question. It is often argued that social movements fall into two types: those pre-figurative struggles seeking to build alternative models and utopias in the here and now; and those which seek to engage with the hegemonic system in order to win concessions and improve living conditions. Yet Nomadesc's work with social movements in southwest Colombia gives lie to this simplistic dualism: on the one hand, the UIP is undoubtedly a prefigurative process which seeks to facilitate the collective construction of alternative, intercultural models and utopias. On the other hand, in a repressive, violent context such as southwest Colombia where violence is routinely employed in order to further elite interests, processes of enclosure continue to ravage rural and urban territories, social movements simply cannot afford themselves the luxury of disengaging from the institutional apparatus of the state and the contextual realities of the day. Hence an effective political organising strategy in this context must seek to engage with state institutions in an effective, practical way, whilst retaining a

broader focus upon constructing alternative, pluralist models outside of the hegemonic system. In this way, the engagement with state institutions is seen as one element of a broader political strategy, and the alternative organising forms, models, and utopias of social movements are seen as containing the seeds of another world.

The Nomadesc pedagogical process is a rare example of an endogenous praxis, influenced by Marxism but very much embedded in Colombian social and intellectual traditions, which is rooted in both an analysis of global capitalism and its historical evolution in Colombia and a sensitive and open approach to the diverse history and culture of popular movement resistance in Colombia. This combination produces a new type of bottom up, intercultural, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist unity which feels pregnant with hope and possibility.

Finally, from a methodological perspective we hope that our research has demonstrated the value of research which engages meaningfully with the knowledge processes and learning which occur within social struggles. We feel that it is urgent that more researchers seek to bring together academic research closer to social movement organising processes, to the mutual benefit of both of these seemingly separate worlds. This requires a willingness on the part of academic researchers to take up the 'translator' role which Boaventura de Sousa Santos has advocated. Our co-production research process for a pedagogical process with a time span of two decades was immensely challenging, and required improvisation, flexibility, opportunism, and a non-dogmatic approach. It was, in the spirit of any systematisation of experiences process, a genuine learning process from start to finish. Yet we believe that it is precisely in this type of work – engaging with the knowledge and learning processes of those who are engaged in struggles for social change around the world – that we can develop the potential for academic research which can inform and inspire activists and researchers around the world who believe that another world is still possible.