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COLLECTIVE MEMORY AS AN EMANCIPATING STRATEGY FOR CULTURAL SURVIVAL OF THE BLACK COMMUNITIES OF GAMARRA CESAR

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Abstract: This article contributes to the construction of the historical memory of black communities from the study of the logic of maroonage, palenques, black towns, their survival practices and their struggles for recognition up to the present. It is an investigative advance on the construction of the doctoral thesis “Cultural identities of the black communities of Gamarra Cesar”, to identify the origin of the black communities settled on the banks of the Rio Grande de la Magdalena in the municipality of Gamarra Cesar, as an element of their cultural identity and the construction of their collective memory. This document is the product of a qualitative investigation, under the understanding of phenomena and meanings of social reality, within the hermeneutic approach; however, it is necessary in the rigor of Action Research, to mark a field route that contemplates the critical approach of Latin American studies such as the need for awareness approach, consolidated by Hugo Zemelman throughout his works and life. In addition, approaches are presented on the need to return to the origins of the Afro communities in the municipality of Gamarra, their struggle for the recognition of territorial rights, legitimized by their ancestral roots that are immersed in the need to comply with procedural requirements becoming in a utopia to exercise authority in their territories. In conclusion, the need to make visible the formative didactics of the community is configured, such as the narrative contained in the cantao dance that accompanies the tambora, on the way to the defense of knowledge and orality. It proposes to talk about emancipation from the construction of their collective community memory, as a practice of socio-historical survival, as peoples who transform their pain and suffering into songs of joy, shared in the chores of their daily lives.

Keywords: Black communities, cultural

diversity, cultural identity, collective memory.

INTRODUCTION

The subregion of the Middle Valley of the Río Grande de la Magdalena, is a territory rich in its cultural and natural diversity; however, the teaching-learning methodology implemented in Colombia, starts from the Eurocentric, encyclopedic epistemological positions, which require reading, writing and the knowledge that the demonstration of the scientific phenomenon requires; as well as permeated by the interests of the hegemonic and political discourse of the dominant model.

This formative dynamic has had an impact on the loss of historical memory of the communities, since their languages, their symbology, meanings, their orality, their senses that are woven in daily life with others, which constitute their collective nucleation, are invisible. to survive. While entering the educational system, they must adapt to the linguistic parameters of the contemporary world and the knowledge that it brings with it.

This ancestral memory collects in the collective the philosophical tradition that by naming it is related to good living, with the dynamics of communication based on orality, the symbology and meanings of the myth, transferred generationally by the elders and elders of the community black from Gamarra Cesar, in its amphibian cultural identity that Orlando Fals Borda (1979) spoke so much of in his research on the Magdalena Medio.

The families of the community rooted in the rural area between the corregimientos of Puerto Viejo, Palenquillo and the Station in Gamarra Cesar, are descendants of black slave peoples who fled and took refuge in these parts of the world; as well as those who arrived after the abolition of slavery.

Insofar as these relational subjects have a cultural identity of symbiosis with the aquifer complex of the swampy complex and the Rio

Grande de la Magdalena, in their practices it is evident that they have stopped in a temporal loop where it seems that time does not pass, the community He continues to replicate the life of his ancestors, in a passivity, which is only interrupted by the movement, the social, environmental and cultural struggles that began in 2014, with the constitution of the Martín Pescador community council of black communities.

This is a fight no longer of arms, but of resistance against the political invisibility that forces them to take part as citizens of the contemporary world or as black peoples with philosophies of life far removed from development in the industrialized modes of production.

This article is the result of the progress of the research project called: "The cultural identities of the black communities of Gamarra Cesar", of the doctorate in diversity training of "Universidad de Manizales", whose purpose is "To make a reading about cultural identities from the process of the black communities settled on the banks of the Rio Grande de la Magdalena, in the geographical location of Gamarra Cesar, applying a hermeneutic interpretation of ethnocultural-political narrations and dances, as contributions to the construction of historical memory and appropriation of knowledge.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The epistemological foundations rest on the reflections of Hugo Zemelman on Epistemic Thought and the historical subject, as a relational subject that is forced to rescue memory as a forgotten inheritance of rebellion; being so, the historical subject is approached from his need for consciousness, to transform his daily life into experiences that decant to achieve experiences and in his decision or future, contemplate in his conscious awakening, multiple possibilities

of transcending to utopian visions of us (Zemelman Hugo, 2010).

Hence, the relevance of memory (Quintar, Estela, 2015), is its historicity, understanding the repetition or transcendence of its generational steps, to notice their pain, suffering and rebellion and understand what precedes the construction of new knowledge from their experiences. Fighting against the dynamics of political action as a threatening externality that from the state system condemns them to repeat over time, the same living conditions imposed on communities with these peculiarities from the policies of oblivion (Guarín-Jurado Germán, 2015).

With these considerations, knowledge is built from the "doing" of objectivity (Zemelman, 2009), revealing the subject as "an individual, personal, foundational entity of the world. The subject is a world" (Guarín-Jurado, 2018, p.56); recognizing that each subject is a world in modernity (Heller as cited by Guarín-Jurado, 2018).

In principle, the subject in need of life, is to be natural, faced with relating to him or with others, constantly developing survival activities, maintaining his essence of being - inhabiting the territory. It is his natural obligation to transform subjectivity towards the understanding of his determined reality from an "idea of a field on which one can act" (Zemelman, 2011, p.62); the real is conditioned to the contour where man develops his practices, while reality as a life option in time and space, is a reality of knowledge that admits semantic logics of understanding, in logics of movement between the "potential given" or "structure joint".

The interpretation of human realities, exposed by Guarín-Jurado (2018), is addressed in the following meanings:

"...to investigate is establishing the proxemia with human realities, achieving processes of subjective experience that come

close and create closeness, intimacy, and immanence with human events. The same is establishing a relationship of knowledge with the human world, with the human in the world, constituting a vital act of human learning according to an epistemological link that contacts us with reality from exploring, being amazed, being surprised by the sudden and the strangeness of the human and doubting, questioning, problematizing, being shocked by the human situation, with the human condition, with its essence-existence.” (p.14).

Under this connotation, the challenge of thinking requires the articulation of elements contained in reality, generating a double movement:

“1. The requirement of articulation as such, as it arises in a moment of time and space. 2. The demands that this articulation poses to us, insofar as it is dynamic, in terms of reading not just a moment but a sequence of moments that can be incorporated into that articulation; Or to put it another way, the articulation alludes to a moment in reality that we can define as the given or determined situation; but it is also including what is not given, but is contained in what is given as a possibility while expressing the movement of what is given. It is a challenge for the construction of thought, as a necessary challenge because it alludes in fact to the evolution of reality. This evolution also occurs at the same moment as we link the different component elements of the articulation” (Zemelman, 2020).

In this regard, daily life is the meaning of life, it is the meaning of the world, they are constructions, individual, relational or collective interpretations, whose essence problem is rooted in the cultural dimension, it is not always scientific truth (Guarín-Jurado, 2018).

However, the need for scientific truth is imposed by the dominant thought that introduced the reading of the contemporary world, the submission of man, the reification of meanings, his quiet identity, his agonizing

struggle (Zemelman, 2010).

In any case, man remains as a sleepy figure, unconscious of his racking, in constant denial, in his passive identity, in submission, accepting the parameters that reify him, according to his dying condition and need to be controlled, he has the option to reflect, recognizes his need for awareness and observation and gives life to the subject, as a thinker who struggles for detachment from the conceptual structure, creating his own identity from the logic of intuition, emotions, subjectivity, in confrontation between the problem of intellectuality and emotionality (Zemelman, 2009, 2010).

Currently, it is the constant alert, the awakening of consciousness, “the sciences of the present question, problematize, historicize their own formulas and truths, axioms and postulates give them life, prove their limits” (Guarín-Jurado, 2015, p.18), It is the division between the theoretical and epistemic, the approach to a problem that has existed since the origin of humanity, the constant discernment of reality and truth, the constant need to recover the sense of incompleteness and completeness, as escape routes of the subject. in its emergent totality, unable to assimilate in one fell swoop.

Consequently, the subject under its agonizing connotation, in its search to transcend death, generates and builds memory, as a multiple possibility of survival that transcends. For Quintar (2015), memory: “it is configured in the plot of senses and meanings that the concrete subjects give to the experiences that we live from the present that we transit” (p.3); Incidentally, narratives as substrates of memory are sustained by the presence of these elements: i) Resignified time; ii) Living space; iii) “The other in intersubjective relationship-present or absent in their narrations” (p.3).

Consequently, history is also gestated from memory as “intentional construction of the

organization of that historical plot” (Quintar, 2015, p.3); In turn, that history conditions its permanence in time in the form of memory, as “a thinking about the challenges of life together” (Guarín-Jurado, 2015, p.73), as a legacy of rebellion that urges to understand and transcend failure, loneliness, the history that the subject has condemned.

For the State, the memory of the black communities is an input to prove a causal link of legal decisions of recognition emanating from the political constitution of Colombia of 1991, and especially in the framework of Law 70 of 1993.

So, it is not approached as a socio-cultural construction in the sense of truth and positivist result, rather as a classifying form, which segregates them as a vulnerable population group with special protection of rights that depends on recognizing their cultural diversity, but not as a political actor. autonomous, since it will always be tied to regulatory protocols and authorizations to inhabit the territory and recognize itself.

In this complexity, the interest of recognition keeps the black communities and the interests of the State over the territory in conflict; This has not changed over time, nor have the meanings of Territory, memory and culture as components of the ethnicization of black communities.

METHODOLOGY

Basically, the doctoral thesis project has a qualitative approach from the articulated reconstructive hermeneutics proposed by Zemelman, in the sense of interpreting the practices coming from the expressions or manifestations of the cantao dance, metaphorically used as a literary figure that personifies political, economic and cultural social action. of these communities affected by the historical legacy that guides their ways of life, towards the generation of knowledge,

based on their cultural identity and the constant construction of their historical memory and philosophy of life that is transmitted in their orality.

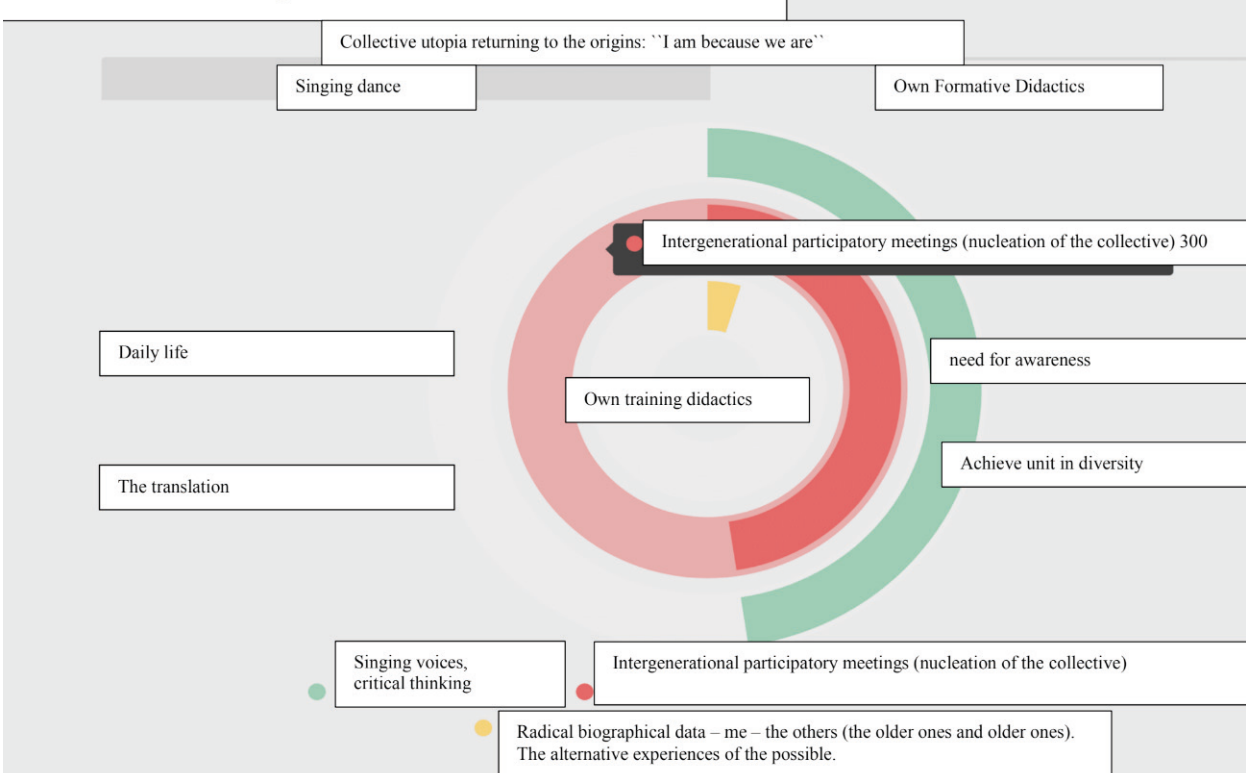
Now, to reach this level of qualitative understanding, it was necessary to alternately build the thesis project from the techniques and tools generated by the academy such as Research - Action - Participation; and, from the recognition of the cantao dance as a formative didactic typical of the families of black communities that live on the bed of this majestic river. Cultural manifestations of the cantao dance that are transmitted from different rhythms and airs of the cantao dance (the tambora, the Chandé, the guacherna, the bullerengue, the mapalé and the garabato).

Thus, the deployment of the IAP is illustrated, under the structure of the dancing hermeneutic circle, as an articulated constructive hermeneutics, as a circular process of relationships founded on the collective nuclei to which the relational subject belongs and its complexity that addresses the construction of experiences. from the experiences and their direction, towards the utopian vision of the return to the origins that are anchored to the philosophy of life “I am because we are” evidencing this cycle of intervention in the social field from the structure of the dancing circle (Graph 1), recognition of the cantao dance as its own formative didactics for the conservation of the collective historical memory.

Every time these relational subjects expand their collective nucleation, a new cycle in the construction of knowledge begins (from the traditional world to the contemporary world, today from tradition to the philosophies of the South).

These collective groups do not have hierarchical orders; rather a constant reconstruction that implies the restitution of recognition from the rapprochement between

Structure of the dancing hermeneutic circle



Graph 1: Structure of the dancing hermeneutic circle

Source: Own Elaboration (2023).

the philosophical traditions that put the traditional world and the contemporary world to talk; that is, the tradition of the community and the critical theories of the epistemologies and philosophies of the South.

RESULTS-DISCUSSION

To speak of collective memory is to cite the historicity of peoples in the search for an understanding of their reasons; Since the colonial process, the Dignified Life is a utopia that is configured as a collective vision around survival from the social networks that are woven around the great river of La Magdalena, "Yuma", as a life-giving subject, which originates the amphibian culture, described by Orlando Fals Borda (1979).

The documentary review and the stories told by the Afro residents of Puerto Viejo in

Gamarra Cesar, about their ancestors, ratify them as residents of the ancestral territory, but in the view of the political administrators of the municipality of Gamarra, they are residents settled on vacant land. available to the planning of territorial ordering in the utopian vision of development articulated to the fulfillment of Sustainable Development Goals, as a way of stripping them of their territorial rights, rooted in their cultural diversity.

Historical memory marks them as Afro relational subjects who, in their community, reflect a worldview founding in the philosophies of the African cultural tradition visible in their cultural manifestations of the cantao dance and the narrative they contain. The political position of oblivion brought about by colonization is determined

to maintain a policy of domination, which it seems has not been defeated.

The replica of life of those who fled from the yoke of slavery, is sustained in their descendants; They are no longer shackles on their feet, they are shackles nailed to their thinking, nailed from the educational formation that erases them as collective subjects with an African diasporic philosophical tradition reflected in their cultural manifestations present generationally.

As it is also highlighted, that this colonial process was not the same in the Colombian Caribbean compared to other parts of Colombia; natural wealth (gold mines, large cattle and agricultural estates) influenced the prioritization of interests and access to territory.

On the Caribbean coast between the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, the resistance processes of the “enslaved black population” (Castaño, 2015, p.65) against colonialism were evident, in search of a dignified life, reinforcing settlement dynamics and appropriation of the territory. Knowing that in the flat areas of the Magdalena River, towards the south side of Bolívar; that is to say, crossing the great Yuma river, in front of the corregimientos of Puerto Viejo, Palenquillo and the Station in Gamarra, there were black towns not constituted in palenques such as: Tiquisio, Papayal, Morales, Masanga, Corrales and Ladera de Judas (FalsBorda, 1979) and (Castaño, 2015).

Under the previous connotations, it is probable the existence in space time of a small palenque (Palenquillo, near the port where the commercial activities of the Spaniards were carried out) in the rural jurisdiction of Gamarra (between townships of Puerto Viejo, Palenquillo and Estación); as well as this territory could be a space of permanent transit of maroon peoples.

The recognition of historicity is recognition, which must be registered in the memory of

this group by the academy. It is evidence of the existence of a richness of cultural identities with ancestral roots in the black peoples from Africa who left their legacy and is maintained as the collective conscience of these families, transferring the ancestral knowledge of the territory and the non-human as a capacity to Survival of oblivion practices woven into the public policies of the State.

CONCLUSIONS

The historical memory of the black communities of the municipality of Gamarra Cesar, especially of the rural riverside settler of the corregimiento of Puerto Viejo, allows us to know the fabric and social and cultural networks framed in the daily life that has been lived since the arrival of the African people and their descendants to the territory.

This way, black culture is present, making it necessary to build the documented collective memory, which crosses events from different perspectives, as an explanatory dynamic of the current conditions of the Afro-descendant population and their recognition of their historical legacy and as holders and owners. of his territory.

The determination of class imposed from the colony, is present and observed in the political constitution of Colombia of 1991, a social treaty that classifies the rights of the State and citizens; however, it is evident the pre-established classification and categories of rights that generate conflicts and do not allow a consensual field of action between the ruler and the governed.

There is a direct correlation between the events that gave rise to the classification in the social composition that places tributes (indigenous) and slaves below the pyramid; this condition is maintained over time and is the basis of the present inequalities.

Suffice it to say that, despite the great conflicts and resistance struggles of the

black peoples and groups on the Caribbean Coast, the strengthening of their palenque organizations and the advanced process of maroonage, the black and Afro-Colombian communities must undertake the legal struggle to obtain their cultural recognition as a requirement to demand the titling of the lands where they have exercised their cultural practices for centuries.

Puerto Viejo is the original territory of roots of the black communities, settled for centuries in the corregimientos of Puerto Viejo, Palenquillo and the Station. The construction of memory, obeys an act of recognition and validity before the political actions of the local government, regional or national.

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