

UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À MONTRÉAL

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE COLOMBIAN MUSEUM OF HISTORICAL
MEMORY AND THE CURATORIAL CHALLENGES OF ITS FIRST
EXHIBITION

TRAVAIL DIRIGÉ
PRÉSENTÉ
COMME EXIGENCE PARTIELLE
DE LA MAÎTRISE EN MUSÉOLOGIE

PAR
MARIA JULIANA ANGARITA BOHORQUEZ

SOUS LA DIRECTION DE
JENNIFER CARTER

OCTOBRE 2018

UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À MONTRÉAL
Service des bibliothèques

Avertissement

La diffusion de ce document diplômant se fait dans le respect des droits de son auteur, qui a signé le formulaire *Autorisation de reproduire et de diffuser un travail de recherche de cycles supérieurs* (SDU-522 – Rév.01-2006). Cette autorisation stipule que «conformément à l'article 11 du Règlement no 8 des études de cycles supérieurs, [l'auteur] concède à l'Université du Québec à Montréal une licence non exclusive d'utilisation et de publication de la totalité ou d'une partie importante de [son] travail de recherche pour des fins pédagogiques et non commerciales. Plus précisément, [l'auteur] autorise l'Université du Québec à Montréal à reproduire, diffuser, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de [son] travail de recherche à des fins non commerciales sur quelque support que ce soit, y compris l'Internet. Cette licence et cette autorisation n'entraînent pas une renonciation de [la] part [de l'auteur] à [ses] droits moraux ni à [ses] droits de propriété intellectuelle. Sauf entente contraire, [l'auteur] conserve la liberté de diffuser et de commercialiser ou non ce travail dont [il] possède un exemplaire.»

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first like to thank the team of the Colombian Museum of Historical Memory, not only because of their generosity, but because their work inspired me and encouraged me throughout my research. I would also like to thank my advisor Dr. Jennifer Carter. Her guidance and input made of this academic and human endeavour a rewarding experience.

Finally, I would like to express my love and gratitude to my family and my husband Simon, for providing me with unconditional support and continuous encouragement. This TD would not have been possible without you. *Gracias por todo!*

To the people whose lives have been devoted to the construction of peace and social justice in Colombia and to those Colombians who have opened and who will open their hearts and minds to the pain and opinion of others.

A las personas cuyas vidas han estado dedicadas a la construcción de la paz y la justicia social en Colombia y a aquellos colombianos (as) que han abierto y que abrirán su corazón y mente al dolor y la opinión de otros.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	i
LIST OF TABLES.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	v
RÉSUMÉ	v
INTRODUCTION	1
A brief introduction to the Colombian conflict (1960s -)	4
The challenges of creating the Colombian Museum of Historical Memory (MMH)	9
Research questions.....	15
Research methodology for the study of a museum under construction	15
Conceptual framework.....	19
Memorial museums and the commemoration of mass violence	19
Repairing past injustices and the politics of memory	23
Curating difficult knowledge	28
Structure of the <i>Travail dirigé</i>	30
CHAPTER 1	
MEMORIAL DYNAMICS IN CONTEMPORARY COLOMBIA	33
1.1. The institutionalization of historical memory in Colombia	34
1.1.1. Colombia's Justice and Peace Law and the creation of the Historical Memory Group	34
1.1.2. The Victims' Law and Colombia's National Center for Historical Memory	38
1.2. Activist memories: victims' demands for justice and recognition.....	41
1.3. Counter-insurgent memory: a "heroic narrative" of the Colombian conflict.....	43
CHAPTER 2	
SETTING IN MOTION COLOMBIA'S MUSEUM OF HISTORICAL MEMORY	46

2.1 Developing the MMH: structure, projects, and actors	46
2.1.1. The genesis of the MMH: positioning a memorial museum in the nation's capital and acknowledging its social dimension (2012-2014).....	47
2.1.2. The emergence of the MMH's identity: choosing an architectural design and synthesizing the Museum's mission after consultations (2015-2017).....	49
2.1.3. The launch of the MMH: testing and breaking the ground (2017-present)	52
2.2 The MMH's philosophical construction: the conceptual path towards the Museum's first exhibition.	53
2.2.1 MMH's concept	54
2.2.2 MMH's functions.....	56
2.2.3 MMH's guiding principles.....	57
2.2.4 MMH's publics	58
2.2.5 MMH's dimensions and platforms	58
2.2.6 MMH's messages.....	59
CHAPTER 3	
MMH's <i>VOCES PARA TRANSFORMAR A COLOMBIA</i> EXHIBITION	64
3.1 Exhibition objectives	64
3.2 Defining a structure.....	66
3.2.1 <i>Tierra, Cuerpo y Agua</i> : the innovative narrative and conceptual axes of the exhibition	67
3.3 <i>Voces para Transformar a Colombia's</i> first iteration: <i>FilBo</i> 2018.....	71
3.4 Communicating through historical, memorial and activist language.....	74
CONCLUSION.....	79
APPENDIX A	
METHODOLOGICAL INFORMATION	87
APPENDIX B	
MAPS	95
APPENDIX C	
TIMELINE.....	101

APPENDIX D	
IMAGES OF THE MUSEUM PLAN	105
APPENDIX E	
2018 MMH's <i>FILBO</i> PAVILION.....	111
APPENDIX F	
INTRODUCTION TEXTS.....	119
APPENDIX G	
IMAGES OF MMH's <i>VOCES PARA TRANSFORMAR A COLOMBIA</i> EXHIBITION, BOGOTÁ, SPRING 2018.....	125
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	143

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AUC	United Self Defense Forces of Colombia, or <i>Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia</i>
CNMH	Colombia's National Center for Historical Memory, or <i>Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica</i>
CINEP	Popular Research and Education Center, or <i>Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular</i>
ELN	National Liberation Army, or <i>Ejército de Liberación Nacional</i>
FARC-EP	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army, or <i>Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Ejército del Pueblo</i>
FilBo	Bogotá's international book fair, or <i>Feria Internacional del Libro de Bogotá</i>
GMH	Historical Memory Group, or <i>Grupo de Memoria Histórica</i>
MMH	Colombian Museum of Historical Memory, or <i>Museo de Memoria Histórica de Colombia</i>
CNRR	National Commission for Reparation and Reconciliation, or <i>Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación</i>

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Messages of the MMH

66

ABSTRACT

This *travail dirigé* (TD) is the result of three years (2015-2018) of interdisciplinary research on the current construction of the Colombian Museum of Historical Memory or *Museo de Memoria Histórica de Colombia* (MMH), in Bogotá, the country's capital. This research focuses on the challenges confronted by the museum professionals (curators, museographers, architects) responsible for implementing the institution's mandate, sanctioned through a national law, into the design of a national memorial and human rights museum. Specifically, this TD analyses the complexities involved in the conception process of the MMH's general framework, as well as the curation of its first official exhibition, *Voces para transformar a Colombia*, or *Voices for Colombia's transformation*.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce travail dirigé est le résultat de trois années de recherche interdisciplinaire (2015-2018) sur la construction actuelle du Musée colombien de la mémoire historique (MMH) ou *Museo de Memoria Histórica de Colombia* à Bogotá, capitale du pays. Cette recherche porte sur les défis auxquels sont confrontés les professionnels du Musée (conservateurs, muséographes, architectes) responsables de traduire le mandat de l'institution, sanctionné par une loi nationale, dans la création d'un musée national de mémoire et des droits de la personne. Plus précisément, ce travail dirigé analyse les complexités qui opèrent dans le processus de conception du cadre général du MMH, ainsi que les enjeux des pratiques commissariales lors de la réalisation de sa première exposition officielle intitulée *Voces para transformar a Colombia* (Des voix pour la transformation de la Colombie).

INTRODUCTION

This *travail dirigé* (TD) is the result of three years (2015-2018) of interdisciplinary research on the current construction of the Colombian Museum of Historical Memory (MMH), or *Museo de Memoria Histórica de Colombia* in Bogotá, the country's capital. This research focuses on the challenges confronted by the museum professionals (curators, museographers, architects) responsible for implementing the institution's mandate, sanctioned through a national law, into the design of a national memorial and human rights museum. Specifically, this TD analyses the complexities involved in the conception process of the MMH's general framework, as well as the curation of its first official exhibition, *Voces para transformar a Colombia*, or *Voices for Colombia's transformation*.

The MMH team had the challenging mandate of working within the reality of the Colombian war: a prolonged and ongoing internal armed conflict that started in the 1960s with the emergence of left-wing guerrillas and was exacerbated by the rise of right-wing paramilitary groups during the 1990s.¹ The Colombian conflict is undergoing a new stage of resolution.² Its main contemporary participants have either signed peace accords—such as the FARC-EP guerrilla—, agreed to demobilize—as in the case of the AUC paramilitary groups—, or engaged in negotiation talks—as have the ELN guerrilla. Consequently, the Colombian State has implemented measures

¹ According to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and the International Committee of the Red Cross, an “internal armed conflict” is an armed confrontation between a sovereign State and one or more non-governmental armed groups, occurring in the territory of the concerned State [International Committee of the Red Cross, 1949; International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), 2008]. The term “civil war” or “civil conflict” is also frequently used to refer to the Colombian situation, however, these imply the absence of a legitimate and identifiable central power, which is not the case of the Colombian political situation, along with the active involvement—support and participation—of the civil population in the confrontation, something that remains open to interpretation in the case of Colombia (Pizarro Leongómez, 2015).

² During the 1980s, a peace deal was reached between the Government and the M-19 (*Movimiento 19 de Abril*). In 1991, other guerrilla groups such as the EPL (*Ejército Popular de Liberación*), the indigenist group Quintín Lame, and the PRT (*Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores*) agreed to lay down their arms.

of transitional justice which indicate the beginning of a social and political path towards peacebuilding. Therefore, the MMH museum professionals must design and build a national memorial institution in the contentious context of the country's transition into peace.³

Although the inauguration of the Colombian Museum of Historical Memory is scheduled for 2020, its curatorial department worked on a first official travelling exhibition, displayed off-site at the *Feria Internacional del Libro de Bogotá (FilBo)* in April 2018. *FilBo* is Bogotá's international book fair, and one of the most important cultural events of the country.⁴ According to Cristina Lleras, MMH's chief curator, following *FilBo*'s installation, the exhibition *Voces para transformar a Colombia* will be displayed in other Colombian cities (Medellín, Cali, Riohacha, and Bucaramanga, among others). Through this project, the MMH seeks to present, before different audiences and Colombian society in general, the first draft for a permanent exhibition, thereby putting the Museum's conceptual approach to the test.⁵

MMH's construction is the responsibility of the *Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica*, or Colombia's National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH). According to Colombia's National Law no. 1448 of 2011, commonly referred to as the 'Victims' Law,' Colombia's Museum of Historical Memory has the mandate of 'strengthening the collective memory' of the political violence that took place during the country's long armed conflict. The Law equally considers the Museum to be a measure of symbolic reparation for the victims⁶, and a mechanism for the Colombian State to

³ See Appendix C which presents a general timeline including contemporary Colombian political milestones and events related to the conflict's recent history; events related to Colombia's historical memory institutions; and the MMH milestones.

⁴ The event welcomes approximately 500,000 visitors every year.

⁵ Here, the term *permanent* exhibition refers to a display representative of the MMH's mission, designed to occupy the main galleries of the Museum for an indeterminate period.

⁶ Symbolic reparation is defined by the Law as any service provided in favour of the victims or the community in general in order to ensure the preservation of the historical memory, the non-repetition and public acceptance of the victimizing events, the request for public forgiveness and the restoration of the dignity of the victims.

honour its *deber de memoria* (duty to remember).⁷ Accordingly, the timeline of this research paper extends over the MMH's process of conception and development, from the Museum's legal conception, in 2011, to the display of the exhibition *Voces para transformar a Colombia* in Spring 2018.

The results presented in this paper reflect not only comprehensive documentary research but also extensive fieldwork in Colombia. During the spring of 2017, I had the privilege of joining the MMH's museology team at its headquarters in Bogotá, while conducting participant observation of the team's work. This experience allowed me to increase my understanding of the Museum's creation process and gain insight into the form, content and curatorial methodologies of this evolving institution. I conducted more than 40 hours of participant observation, attending team meetings of the MMH's museology department and various Museum events. Furthermore, I individually interviewed seven of the professionals involved in the project.⁸ In April 2018, I completed a second period of fieldwork in Bogotá, at *FilBo* 2018, which allowed me to experience first hand the installation of *Voces para transformar a Colombia*, thereby enriching my understanding and appreciation of the overall project.

Through this case study, one of the first academic and museological studies of the MMH, I seek to participate in the analysis of the growing institutionalization of memorial practices in Colombia and to contribute to a broader, intercultural dialogue on the curation of mass violence and the potential effects of these practices on society.

In this introductory chapter, I will be presenting the main elements of this case study. First, I will briefly introduce the history and evolution of the Colombian conflict, in order to define the research problem and introduce the central questions that guided my investigation. Second, I will describe the research methodology. Third, I will trace the conceptual framework of the project by reviewing scholarship on memorial

⁷ Articles 141 and 143 of Colombia's National Law no. 1448 of 2011.

⁸ Martha Nubia Bello, MMH director (2015-2017); Cristina Lleras, Chief curator; Lorena Luengas, curator; Luis Carlos Manjarrés, curator; Sofia González, curator; Catalina Orozco, Coordinator of Pedagogical Actions, Department of Cultural Programming; Camila Medina, Head of CNMH's Directorate for the Construction of Historical Memory; and Luis Carlos Sánchez, MMH director (2017).

museums, the politics of memory, and the curation of difficult knowledge. Finally, drawing on the former elements, I will introduce the structure of this *Travail dirigé*.

A brief introduction to the Colombian conflict (1960s -)

Colombia's internal armed conflict is a long-term confrontation that involves at least three main parties —State forces, left-wing guerrillas and right-wing paramilitary, or pro-government militias—, with the participation of “opportunistic parties” like criminal bands and drug traffickers (Pécaut, 2016a; Pizarro Leongómez, 2015). The confrontation of these groups reveals significant ideological differences, and their rise has occurred owing to geopolitical and economic causes, most of them linked to the distribution of land and the control of the multiple resources available in the country. As Eduardo Pizarro Leongómez affirms, Colombians

have not been and (...) are not currently in the presence of a bipolar conflict with two clearly defined contenders, but in the face of a multipolar and highly fragmented conflict, whether one take into consideration the organizations involved or the affected regions (Pizarro Leongómez, 2015, p. 61).

The conflict started in the 1960s with the emergence of various guerrillas, notably the FARC and the ELN, in response to the inequitable distribution of land and the exclusion of large segments of society —and their political ideologies— from political participation through a bi-partisan pact to alternate power between the Liberals and Conservatives, known as *Frente Nacional*, or National Front (1958-1974).⁹ Although the ideological positions of each of the guerrilla groups are different, these left-wing armed organizations claim in their majority to represent and defend the rural and

⁹ There are different theories as to when the Colombian conflict began. Some experts affirm that the emergence of the guerrillas in the 1960s is the turning point that marks the beginning of the Colombian conflict. However, several experts affirm that, in order to fully comprehend Colombian warfare, it is essential to refer to the partisan confrontations between Liberals and Conservatives prior to the internal armed conflict during the period known as *La Violencia*, or The Violence (1948-1958).

impoverished population of the country, by combating the Colombian State and its political elites, attacking the wealthy classes, and defending the people from U.S. imperialism and right-wing —civil and armed— extremists. Each insurgent group has its own evolving *modus operandi*.

The confrontation between the State's Armed Forces and the guerrillas in Colombia can be divided into two significant periods. The first, up to the 1980s, is characterized by a low-intensity dispute. The second, from the 1980s onwards, constitutes a period of high-intensity confrontation, which reached its peak during the 1990s and 2000s with the rise of paramilitary groups and the influx of money from drug trafficking. During this period, the guerrillas, mainly the FARC and ELN, operated in several regions of the country, performing attacks against the military and *tomas*, or sieges of townships, as well as battling the paramilitary groups over territorial power and economic resources. The guerrillas also targeted the country's infrastructure, mainly energy towers and pipelines.

Besides sieging townships and subsequently forcing the displacement of their inhabitants, the guerrillas conducted political and economic kidnappings and extorsions as well as extorsions within the broader civil population (resulting in at least 26,000 victims), urban terrorist attacks (173), massacres (757) and selective assassinations (around 28,000 victims). These groups have been criticized for resorting to child recruitment, their use of landmines (claiming at least 6,000 victims), and for keeping soldiers as prisoners under extreme conditions for several years.¹⁰ Although the guerrillas have, through time, built strong and even cooperative relations with some communities in the most remote regions of the country, Colombian citizens, in general, condemn their violent actions.

As previously stated, the Colombian conflict reached its peak in the late 1990s and the first half of the 2000s, when right-wing paramilitary groups, or pro-government

¹⁰ Statistics provided by the CNMH's *Observatorio de Memoria y Conflicto* (<http://centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/observatorio/>).

militias—who emerged officially in the 1990s in response to the leftist insurgency—extended their power throughout the Colombian territory (See Appendix B. Map No. 3). This led to an upsurge of the armed confrontation and the significant increase of crimes against the civil population (Gomez Sánchez, 2011; Pécaut, 2016a).

Except for a brief period in the early 1990s, paramilitary groups are illegal in Colombia. According to Gutiérrez Sanín, their emergence is supported by four types of actors: members of the rural elites, groups of drug traffickers, right-wing political sectors, and some factions within the armed forces (2015, p. 473). Colombian paramilitary groups are responsible for 60% of the massacres and assassinations committed between 1985 and 2018 (numbering 94,579 victims) and 63% of the forced disappearances whose perpetrators have been identified by the authorities—which is equivalent to almost 26,284 people.¹¹ Their tactics and capacity to incite terror and hold control over communities and their land have been particularly successful (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2018b). The Inter-American Court of Human Rights has recognized in a series of rulings that the Colombian Armed Forces have developed on several occasions *de-facto* alliances with the paramilitary as part of their counter-insurgent offensive;¹² similar alliances have been established between the AUC paramilitary groups and certain groups of public officials (Gutiérrez, 2015; Romero, 2007). The paramilitary forces have played a significant role in human rights violations against community leaders, activists, and human rights advocates whose work has been stigmatized as insurgent-friendly.¹³

¹¹ Statistics provided by the CNMH's *Observatorio de Memoria y Conflicto* (<http://centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/observatorio/>).

¹² Case of the Afro-descendant Communities displaced from the Cacarica River Basin (Operation Genesis) versus the Colombian State, Judgment of November 20, 2013 (http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec_270_esp.pdf); Case of the Rochela Massacre v. the Colombian State, Judgment of May 11, 2007. Series C No. 163. (http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec_163_esp.pdf).

¹³ It is important to stress that such a brief definition of the parties involved in Colombia's conflict does not provide a fair account of their evolution through the prolonged period of this confrontation. For a comprehensive account of the Colombian armed conflict see the General Report *¡Basta ya!* published in 2013 by the CNMH. Another useful publication for the understanding of the conflict is the wide-ranging compilation of texts produced by a group of prominent historians and experts on the Colombian Conflict

Following the failure of the negotiations of Andrés Pastrana's Government (1998-2002) with the FARC in 2002, the Government of Álvaro Uribe (2002-2010), which was elected and re-elected under a campaign in favour of a stern military offensive against the insurgency, reached an agreement for the demobilization of the AUC. This process of demobilization lasted from 2003 to 2008. The agreement led to the extradition of the AUC's leaders under charges of drug trafficking and the implementation of a transitional justice system under the auspices of the 2005 Law of Peace and Justice.

Uribe's counter-insurgent offensive, heavily financed by the United States, succeeded in reducing the power of the country's guerrillas and rallied the public opinion in a so-called war against terrorism. The divisive and populist rhetoric of his administration exacerbated the conservative majorities of the Andean country, stigmatizing large sectors of the population, such as human rights defenders, left-wing politicians, peace advocates, and even victims of the State's crimes (Avilés, 2012; Chambers, 2013; Echavarría, 2010).

In 2011, despite the lack of support from public opinion, president Juan Manuel Santos —former defense minister to Uribe— began peace talks with the FARC. Against all odds, Santos' negotiating team successfully achieved a peace agreement with this guerrilla group, which was signed in Cartagena in September 2016, with the support of the international community. The agreements addressed not only issues of disarmament, demobilization, and transitional justice, but also included the parameters for the political participation of former FARC members and opened the path to ambitious reforms related to land distribution, political participation and alternatives to solving the problem of drug trafficking. Although acclaimed by experts and external observers, the Peace Agreement of Cartagena failed to pass by a small margin when

as requested by the negotiating teams of the agreement with FARC (*Contribución al entendimiento del conflicto armado en Colombia*”, or “Contribution to the understanding of the armed conflict in Colombia” (Comisión Histórica del Conflicto y sus Víctimas, 2015).

submitted to electoral approval in October 2016 (49.78 % voted in support of the agreement; 50.21 % did not).

After including a series of propositions presented by the political leaders of the “No” camp—led by former president Uribe—, the Government and the FARC reached a new agreement signed in Bogotá, at *Teatro Colón*, in November 2017. The new pact and a transitional justice regime —the *Sistema Integral de Verdad, Justicia y No Repetición*— are currently under implementation via the Colombian Congress. The conciliatory efforts of President Santos were acknowledged by the Nobel Committee who awarded him the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize.

Colombia is now officially in a period of transition towards peace, with members of the AUC and FARC demobilized, and the ELN in negotiations with the Government. Nevertheless, Colombia’s transition toward peace remains fragile. Dissident factions from the AUC, FARC, and ELN, along with a substantial number of emerging illegal armed groups, continue to operate in the country. Most of these groups exercise territorial control linked to the illegal exploitation of resources and drug-trafficking, and continuously attack regional community and social leaders who contest their influence (See Appendix B. Map No. 4).

Without a doubt, Colombia faces a significant challenge in building a path towards reconciliation and peacekeeping. Colombia’s public opinion continues to be deeply divided regarding the country’s post-conflict scenarios. For instance, judging by the results of this year’s presidential election, in which the candidate of former president Uribe’s party, Iván Duque, obtained the presidency, a significant part of the electorate continues to reject the Peace Accord with the FARC. Duque’s campaign promised to carry out substantial transformations to the transitional justice model implemented through the Peace Deal with the FARC. This in response to the widespread disapproval of the participation of former guerrilla combatants in the country’s political life without having spent a day in jail for their alleged crimes.

The damage inflicted on Colombian society by the armed conflict is considerable. The hostilities have profoundly affected Colombian citizens, mainly in

rural zones. The Government estimates that at least 8 million people are direct victims of the conflict, of which 6 million have been internally displaced, and more than 80,000 declared missing during the decades-long hostilities. As for casualties, 80% of the more than 260,000 deaths related to the conflict are civilians.¹⁴ Colombia's record of human rights violations during this time is a staggering one, not only because of the number of victims—one-sixth of its current population—but also because of the range of modalities of such crimes—torture, massacres, kidnapping, sexual violence, disappearance, child recruiting, land-mines, forced displacement, collusion of State agents with paramilitary groups, terrorist attacks, political genocide, and persecution of trade unionists, community activists, human rights advocates, and journalists.

The challenges of creating the Colombian Museum of Historical Memory (MMH)

From the perspective of a museum professional, the task of conceptualizing and creating a museum in general, as well as producing its first exhibition, is a demanding process. In the case of the Colombian Museum of Historical Memory, there are multiple layers of complexity that make this endeavour a particularly challenging one. I have identified three overlapping sources of this challenge: the characteristics of Colombia's internal armed conflict, the MMH's mandate and public nature, and the country's present context of transitional justice.

A first challenge for the conceptualization of the MMH stems from the very nature of the Colombian conflict. Contrary to other episodes of political violence in South America, Colombia's situation does not involve a dictatorial regime, and the number of illegal armed groups is considerably larger—and their methods and ideologies wide-ranging—than in other internal conflicts, such as in Peru or El Salvador, in Central America. Colombia's conflict is one of particularly complex

¹⁴ Due to the long duration of the conflict, victims' statistics are approximate. One of the most recent and complete assessments can be found in the General Report *¡Basta ya!* by the *Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica* (CNMH).

circumstances. From a military point of view, the Andean country's territory — specifically its physical geography— is highly propitious for the intricate logic of guerrilla warfare, and the lucrative and ever-expanding drug traffic constitutes an aggravating element of this situation (See Appendix B. Maps No. 1 and 2). The multiplicity of political ideologies and contending actors is further compounded by competition over the control of the country's territory and its resources.¹⁵

The long duration of the conflict —more than five decades—, the extent of its damage and the diversity of its victims, make the task of representing this violent phenomenon, and its complicated dynamics, a demanding museological endeavour, especially within a national memorial institution.¹⁶ This type of 'social catastrophe,' as defined by Elizabeth Jelin (2002, p. 11), poses, for instance, profound dilemmas when it comes to representing victims in their full context within the Museum, which leads me to the second source of curatorial challenges.

A second challenge emanates from the MMH's very own mandate. As previously mentioned, according to Law no. 1448 of 2011, the Colombian Museum of Historical Memory (MMH) has the mandate of 'strengthening the collective memory' of the political violence that took place during the country's armed conflict, and thereby it represents a mechanism for the Colombian State to honour its *deber de memoria*.¹⁷ How can the collective memory of a violent confrontation be reinforced, when the conflict has not yet stopped? Creating a museum without a temporal distance from the

¹⁵ When mentioning the actors or parties of the Colombian conflict, I am referring not only to the armed groups in dispute and the Government, and the victims of their confrontation, but also to other "opportunistic" actors who have taken part and benefit from the war, for example criminal bands and narcotraffickers, corrupted civil servants, businesspeople, and even international actors.

¹⁶ The vast repertory of human right violations committed during the Colombian conflict results in a highly diverse universe of victims and survivors. They are not only from different regions and therefore different local contexts, but also from different socio-economic classes and political allegiances. The conflict's victims are not only civilians, but also children forcibly recruited by the guerrilla and the paramilitary, as well as soldiers harmed by land mines and subjected to long captivity periods. In addition, there is an ethnic and cultural component to victimhood in Colombia, since Afro-Colombians and indigenous groups have been affected by the conflict in much larger proportions than the rest of the population.

¹⁷ See Footnote 7.

events it commemorates poses difficulties to the development of a historical perspective. With this in mind, it is important to mention that Colombia's political and social actors have substantially different understandings and viewpoints about the armed conflict, its definition, causes, development, and the path towards its full resolution. As Pizarro Leongómez recalls, this "war without a name" elicits unsettled debates regarding its nature — observers differ on whether to name the confrontation an internal armed conflict, civil war, or even an irregular war against a terrorist threat (Pizarro Leongómez, 2015). The strategy for the resolution of the conflict is also the subject of profound differences among Colombians. For instance, some prefer a military victory of the army over the insurgency to a solution via a peace agreement. The question of how the MMH will curate the multiplicity of memories arising from Colombia's prolonged confrontation is key, as is the question of how the Museum will position itself in light of these multiple narratives.

Including and representing the plurality of the Colombian conflict's victims within the MMH's *Voces para transformar a Colombia* is a challenging task. This requires that museum professionals develop a consistent and rigorous process of selection of cases to be included in the exhibit. Curators must choose and judge the contents of the various victims' memorial practices and testimonials in function of their communicative value. The Museum team must produce a comprehensive narrative that is able to effectively communicate a coherent message that will not only contribute to the reparation of the victims but also lead to the strengthening of Colombian collective memory.

Additionally, building on the public character of the MMH, its professionals must also address a certain mistrust towards the capacity of a government-sponsored institution to provide an objective interpretation of a conflict in which the State has played a significant role (Carter & Orange, 2012).¹⁸ Some will argue that there is the

¹⁸ The funds for the construction and management of the MMH come from the Colombian State and the substantial contribution of international cooperation agencies from countries that might be judged by the

possibility that the Museum will use the conflict's memorialization in order to support government interests. After all, national museums are perceived as "institutions, collections and displays claiming, articulating, and representing dominant national values, myths and realities" (Aronsson & Elgenius, 2011, p. 5). As such, they need to be analyzed "as historic and contemporary processes of institutionalized negotiations of those values that will constitute the basis for national communities and for dynamic state formations" (Aronsson & Elgenius, 2011, p. 5).

This research does not seek to identify if manipulations of the Museum's content by government officials have occurred within the construction of MMH. What *is* important in the present investigation is to identify *how* the Museum's mandate and mission statements—extending to its philosophical underpinnings—are interpreted in the institution's museographical approach and in the design of the exhibition *Voces para transformar a Colombia*.

The construction of a memorial museum within a research centre such as the CNMH imposes, however, additional curatorial challenges regarding the MMH's selection of content and the ways that this content is communicated. The MMH curators are relying on the reports, publications and knowledge dissemination projects produced by the CNMH during the past 10 years—which are the result of research and fieldwork undertaken by a vast group of historians, sociologists, anthropologists, social workers, and other social sciences scholars on the many dynamics of the Colombian conflict.¹⁹ The CNMH's legacy constitutes the primary input for the development of the Museum's exhibition. The MMH's curatorial team must reflect the premises of a very

Colombian public as influential in the country's political and economic agendas. Such is the case of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

¹⁹ Throughout the years, the CNMH has published more than 70 case-based reports on the different dynamics and episodes of the Colombian conflict. These publications are usually accompanied by knowledge dissemination projects such as documentaries, radio series, graphic novels, exhibitions, and short story compilations. In addition to this vast repertory, the CNMH has produced more than a dozen pedagogical tools and conceptual guides that support the Center's researchers during their fieldwork and also provide citizens, especially victims' organizations, with tools for the development of historical memory initiatives. The complete series of publications and tools is available for downloading on the CNMH's website <http://www.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co>.

extensive research corpus but also build upon it—and transform it—for the purposes of a museological construction, whose language and objectives differ widely from those of an academic publication.

The third source of curatorial challenges derives from Colombia's current political context and its transitional justice processes. When societies transition from a violent conflict to peacebuilding, they must cope with the rules defined by a transitional justice framework. These rules are the product of the negotiations held among adversarial groups and are established by proposing a balance between justice and social peace (Andrieu, 2012). In the case of Colombia, the current strategies to end the confrontation continue to profoundly polarize the country's civil society.

If an important segment of the Colombian society, as well as a significant number of political parties, have rallied in support of the country's historic agreement with the oldest guerrilla of the continent, and the opportunity this represents for reconciliation in Colombia, a remarkable segment of Colombian voters refuse to support the peace process with FARC. Among the arguments presented during the Peace Plebiscite of 2016 by the campaigns against the Government's agreements with the guerrilla, the rejection of the FARC's participation in politics stands out, as well as the refusal of several aspects of the transitional justice regime established by the agreement, especially the alternative sanctions to the crimes committed included in the pact. A significant part of public opinion does not trust the FARC's goodwill. The unresponsiveness of the guerrilla, when asked to inform victims' families of the whereabouts of hostages whose present location remains unknown, is an example of FARC actions that contribute to its negative image.

The polarization of Colombian public opinion towards the peace process with the FARC casts doubt and even animosity on governmental efforts such as the construction of a national memorial museum. The political struggles around the conflict's memorialization were constantly present during the 2018 presidential elections, which represented a considerable challenge, as well as a source of pressure, for the MMH's curatorial team. The impact of Duque's presidency (who at the time of

writing this paper was the President-elect and a fierce detractor of the peace process) brings significant uncertainty to the Museum's current and future stability.

Colombia's transitional context imposes specific parameters to the MMH project, related to the institution's role and exhibition content. The MMH must determine the best role for a national memorial museum to play in order to contribute to the country's transition towards post-conflict. The curatorial team must select and prioritize the information, seeking a balance —between providing the visitors with a narrative about the conflict *and* honoring and repairing the victims and survivors— that is able to promote both understanding and emotional engagement in relation to the magnitude of the harm inflicted by the conflict to the Colombian population and democracy.

The work of the MMH has the great potential to contribute to the citizens' comprehension of the positive outcomes that the peace accords with the FARC can bring to Colombian society, and to encourage its visitors to constructively participate in this period of transition towards peacebuilding. However, as much as there is the potential to contribute to peace, there is also the possibility of creating undesired effects. For example, publicly displaying the victims' suffering, or imputing responsibility onto any actor of the armed conflict might risk exacerbating the existing aversion manifested by a significant part of society towards the peace agreements and the country's resulting path towards reconciliation.

With this in mind, MMH curators faced the challenge of providing, through the museological framework of the institution and its first official exhibition, an appropriate balance between responding to the principle of symbolic reparation for victims of human rights violations, and the mission of reinforcing collective memory. Through the exhibition, and its activities in general, the MMH aimed to fulfill the Colombian State's duty to remember, but also, the State's obligation to create conditions that guarantee that the atrocities from the past will not be repeated —known as guarantees of violence non-recurrence (De Greiff, 2006; Mayer-Rieckh, 2017). These are both key factors for the success of the country's transitional endeavor.

Museum professionals responsible for the design of national memorial museums find themselves operating and mediating between diverse societal demands (Carter & Orange, 2012) and the constraints produced by the public nature of the organizations for which they work.

The case of the MMH constitutes a fertile terrain for the study of such dynamics since the institution, created as part of the resulting measures of the Victims' Law, has the double function of providing symbolic reparation, as well as reinforcing Colombian collective memory. The duration and complexity of the armed conflict, the scale of its damage, and the memorial practices developed in consequence, are all important features of this unique case study.

Research questions

- What was the process of adapting the legal mandate underpinning the Colombian Museum of Historical Memory into an institutional mission and a curatorial framework?
- How has the MMH conceived of and structured an exhibition about the Colombian conflict that is capable of addressing its complexity?
- What messages did the MMH seek to transmit with the exhibition *Voces para transformar a Colombia*?
- What were the strategies chosen by the Museum's team in order to integrate the victims' symbolic reparation measures and the 'reinforcement of collective memory' into the Museum's first official exhibition?
- How does the MMH contribute to broader reflections about the role of national memorial museums when it comes to the State's attempts to repair past atrocities?

Research methodology for the study of a museum under construction

The specific methodology of this research was adapted to the analysis of a museological institution under construction. The parameters of qualitative and

inductive methods applied, since the aim of the project was to analyze and “to understand phenomena based on discourse, actions, and documents, and how and why individuals interpret and ascribe meaning to what they say and do, and to other aspects of the world (including other people) they encounter” (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2014, p. 139).

In this case, the subject of research comprised the analysis of individuals’ actions—the members of the Colombian Museum of Historical Memory curatorial team—, as well as the study of interactions and processes within an institutional framework, the MMH and its umbrella institution, CNMH. Throughout this process, I have sought to understand and articulate the development of the Museum’s curatorial approach toward the design of its first exhibition. In order to achieve this, I conducted extensive documentary research with a transdisciplinary scope on the memorialization of mass violence in general, as well as on the subject of Colombia’s memorial practices in particular. It is important to mention that the characteristics of my research led me to consult a wide spectrum of sources. Furthermore, not only was I determined to articulate a very recent process, I was also assuming the task of participating in the ‘translation’ of a particular phenomenon of Colombia’s cultural and political life into an academic account to be presented as part of a Canadian graduate degree’s requirements.

Thus, I reviewed sources from several disciplines, including museum studies, political science, sociology, law, anthropology, memory studies, and history, which led me to study a varied documentary corpus comprised of monographs, articles, and theses. Furthermore, in order to analyze the institutional and societal contexts surrounding the emergence of the MMH, I also consulted various documents at the CNMH and MMH archives, in addition to legislative and governmental documents (laws and reports), and press coverage on the subject.

As mentioned above, I decided to enrich a traditional documentary methodology by undertaking fieldwork in Colombia. Owing to the particular nature of

the MMH —the absence of a building (ground breaking is scheduled for 2018), the lack of academic accounts of the Museum, and the volatility of the sociopolitical context— I was required to adopt a flexible methodology. This led me to conduct two periods of fieldwork in Bogotá, the first in spring 2017 and the second in spring 2018.

From March 22nd to May 19th 2017, I was invited by Martha Nubia Bello, then director of the MMH, to accompany the Museum's team under the supervision of Cristina Lleras, chief of the curatorial department, and to join them in the midst of the planning process of the Museum's first exhibition. It is important to state how privileged I was to be welcomed by the curatorial team of a national museum *during* the Museum's development, and how exceptional it was of the MMH to be open enough to invite an external observer in a critical —and even vulnerable— period of the Museum's life.

After completing the process of obtaining research ethics approval for my methodological approach, I was able to conduct more than 40 hours of participant observation in Colombia, joining various MMH meetings (curatorial, inter-departmental, with external advisors). I also attended a number of Museum events such as the 2017 International Museum Day celebration, whose theme was "Museums and contested histories: Saying the unspeakable in museums." In addition to this, I individually interviewed the Museum director, the four members of the institution's curatorial team, the MMH head of education and programming, and the CNMH chief of research in a series of one hour, semi-directed interviews.²⁰ The objective of these exercises was to enhance my documentary analysis with the personal input of the professionals involved in the MMH decision-making process and insight about their daily work.

While in Colombia, I also took the opportunity to attend numerous academic and cultural events related to the country's memorial practices, notably in the cities of

²⁰ See Appendix A for the questionnaire and the list of participants in the semi-directed interviews, the list of meetings observed, and the corresponding analysis grid.

Bogotá and Medellín. Furthermore, I was able to visit various memorial institutions — public and grassroots— as well as to discuss the expectations towards the Museum from a variety of publics —victims, social leaders, and scholars. This was a precious opportunity to understand the specific dimensions of the social negotiations in Colombia's memorial field.

Once the data was collected, I began its analysis. I made a general overview of the main topics, positions and arguments of the interviews and meetings I observed. I also proceeded with a critical revision of my project statements and previous assumptions, and an assessment of the scope of my findings in relation to my research objectives. This data analysis process was complemented by regular communication via Skype with Cristina Lleras, as well as by a continuing review of the latest literature on the subject. Once I was able to establish the structure of my argumentation, I proceeded to cross reference the collected data with the documentary sources at my disposal.

In spring 2018, after having completed the writing of the first three chapters of this TD, I returned to Colombia to attend the two-week display of *Voces para transformar a Colombia* in Bogotá. From April 17 until May 2, 2018, I toured the exhibition more than six times (15 hours total) and participated in different events that were part of its programming. During my visit, in addition to documenting the experience, I had the opportunity to exchange impressions with the Museum curatorial team and observe how various types of audiences interacted with the exhibition facilities. This endeavour was undoubtedly critical to achieving a fuller understanding of the project and envisioning its potential.

Undertaking a research project whose object of study is a museum under construction requires that the researcher continuously monitor the process and adapt to the unpredictability of project development, in the short term. However, this allowed me to fully understand several pragmatic realities and concerns related to these circumstances. Indeed, one of the overarching aims of my work is to document the MMH's conception process, given the country's political instability. The Museum's

approach could change radically during Iván Duque's mandate, who is at the time of writing this TD the country's President-Elect.²¹ I chose to document the MMH's conception process, and thereby to invest significant resources and time on the matter because I believe the external and internal circumstances surrounding its development make this curatorial exercise not only a very rich terrain of analysis, but also a socially relevant endeavor whose process must be preserved.

Conceptual framework

This section addresses the conceptual tools that provide theoretical support to the study of the MMH's development process. A brief literature review explores scholarship on the relationships between museums, collective memory, and curatorial practices, with particular attention to the memorialization of mass violence. First, I will discuss the notion of the memorial museum. Next, I will focus on the political dimensions of this type of institution through concepts developed in relation to the politics of memory and the paradigm of transitional justice. Finally, I will examine some of the recent literature regarding the curation of violent pasts.

Memorial museums and the commemoration of mass violence

The development of an international human rights regime after the Second World War changed social conceptions regarding episodes of mass violence (Levy & Sznajder, 2010). Traditionally, museums and other sites of public memory conveyed narratives

²¹ As will be further explained in Chapter 2, Iván Duque is a member of a right-wing alliance of conservative parties opposed to the Peace Accord with the FARC. This faction of Colombian politics promotes the opposition to the recent peace agreements and nurtures its political platform with a binary reading of the Colombian conflict—one that opposes the “good” versus the “bad”. According to this narrative, the guerrillas are the *sole* responsible groups for Colombia's violence and gross violations of human rights. This type of “heroic narrative” denies any responsibility of State actors or policy in the country's violence or its causes, and “portrays state security actors as heroes of the nation and the defenders of democracy” (C. Milton, 2018, p. 18).

that interpreted political events of extreme violence —mostly related to independence wars and international conflicts within the consolidation of nation-states— through the lens of sacrifice and glory. Their narratives portrayed individual suffering as an honorable price to pay in the name of a particular nation (Berger, 2015; Van den Dungen, 2017; Williams, 2007; Young, 1993).

In the second half of the 20th century, mass violence inflicted on civilians came to be considered an atrocity (Humphrey, 2002), and more precisely, a human rights abuse (Levy & Sznajder, 2010). This shift, along with the growing interest of scholars in the relationship between history and memory (Halbwachs, 1997; Huyssen, 2003; Nora, 1984), was followed by reflections on the mechanisms that societies develop for ‘coming to terms’ with their traumatic pasts (Jelin, 2002; Olick, 2007; Todorov, 1995; Torpey, 2003).

Along with memorials and monuments, memorial museums are one of the most common strategies used in contemporary societies to address painful or difficult events of the past and to provide a “public forum for dealing with memory of trauma” (Sodaro, 2011, p. 6). In his work *Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities* (2007), Paul Williams studies a wide repertoire of memorial museums in relation to their spatial, material, and political dimensions, making specific reference to a range of memorial museums in order to support his analysis. These include public and private museums, from all over the world, concerning different kinds of atrocities. In doing so, he broadens the field of study of memorial museums, which are often dedicated to memories of the Holocaust. If the unprecedented challenge of having to ‘come to terms’ with the Holocaust, and the Second World War in general, led to the emergence of many memorial museums, mostly in the 1990s, the process of democratization in Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Africa towards the end of the

Cold War, turned the need to tackle painful pasts into something unavoidable throughout the world.²²

Memorial museums defined by Williams as institutions “dedicated to a historic event commemorating mass suffering of some kind” (Williams, 2007, p. 8) have multiple purposes. As Jennifer Carter and Jennifer Orange argue while quoting Williams, this type of museum

(draws) on an evolving tradition that combines commemoration with the activities of research, representation, and interpretation, demonstrating ‘an increasing desire to add both a moral framework to the narration of terrible historical events and more in-depth contextual explanations to commemorative acts’ (Carter & Orange, 2012, p. 111).

From a similar perspective, Amy Sodaro assigns three primary functions to memorial museums:

First, they are intended to preserve the past and serve as a record, complete with material evidence, of what happened; in this way they are intended as a form of historical truth-telling. *Second*, they are meant to be places of healing and restoration; they are —after all— memorials, and are in this sense a form of symbolic reparation for the individuals, communities and nations that were injured. *Finally*, and most importantly, they are intended to be spaces for the moral education of their publics. Not only do memorial museums intellectually educate their audiences about history but they also seek to emotionally reach their visitors in order to transform them morally so that they embrace the ethic of never again. (Sodaro, 2011, p. 12)

Of public or private nature, memorial museums seek to compensate the damage caused to a specific segment of the population during violent events by publicly establishing human rights violations as irrefutable facts. The recognition of the victims’ suffering

²² Although there are early examples of memorial museums such as the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, founded in the 1950s, a widespread emergence of this type of institution can be observed since the 1980s (Carter, 2013).

is enhanced by the importance assigned to the premise of “never again” as a guiding principle in the development of these institutions (Carter & Orange, 2012; Erica T Lehrer, Cynthia E Milton, & Monica Patterson, 2011).²³

Memorial museums go beyond the mere representation of historical facts since, like any other museum—or exhibition—, they are narrative environments. Exhibitions not only engage in the transmission of information, but tell stories and stage discourses (Macleod, Hourston Hanks, & Hale, 2012). In his analysis regarding the Enola Gay controversy, Geoffrey White explores the communicative tensions in memorial museums’ exhibitions between their educational and commemorative approaches. He suggests that these displays navigate within dualities regarding their narratives’ *modality* (text-centered / object-centered), *voice* (disembodied / embodied) and *authority* (documentary / experiential) (White, 1997).

As for the voice duality, memorial museums present narratives in which the testimonials and memories of witnesses—often victims— of atrocities occupy a fundamental place. Given the centrality of individuals’ memories in these institutions, Silke Arnold-de Simine chooses to focus on the ways memory is narrativized and presented, rather than on the nature of the historical events that these museums depict:

(...) [memory] museums relate to the past through the framework of ‘memory’ (...) visitors are supposed to gain access to the past through the eyes of individuals and their personal memories, by ‘stepping into their shoes’, empathizing and emotionally investing in their experiences, (re) living a past they have not experienced first-hand and thereby acquiring ‘vicarious memories’ (Arnold-de Simine, 2013, pp. 10-11).

Leaving aside the narrativization and mediation of contents in memorial museums, it is necessary to address their connection to broader socio-political processes. The

²³ The premise of “never again” promotes the development of a culture of respect for human rights under which the repetition of atrocities is not possible.

relationship of memorial museums, activist practices and the defense of human rights reflects a noticeable feature in museums nowadays:

With the increased emphasis on inclusion and diversity that are the hallmarks of postmodern museology, museums are evolving as ideal venues for empowering community members to address social issues and human rights abuses, not only as buildings that house and represent memories, but more proactively as institutions engaged in activist practices (Carter & Orange, 2012, p. 111).

Carter underscores the promotion of human rights as the prevailing feature of a rising number of institutions and affirms that “this new genre (human rights museums) is an important cultural phenomenon for its potential to introduce fundamental discourses on human rights into the public arena in nontraditional ways” (Carter, 2013, p. 325). Carter and Orange emphasize the issue-based museums’ “reformist intention of incitement to social activism” [which] must be distinguished for its explicit intent, not only to change thinking and promote greater citizen responsibility, but also to mobilize communities into taking action” (Carter & Orange, 2012, p. 117).

The implications and undertones of such activist intentions are subjected to the type of governance of each institution. To address difficult social issues in memorial museums situated in the national and public sphere, and therefore that are built and supported by the State, can be particularly challenging. National memorial museums can be the stage of political struggles around public narratives relating episodes of mass violence. In order to focus on these questions, I will now examine the works of social science and political science scholars on the subject of the politics of memory.

Repairing past injustices and the politics of memory

Different forces intervene and participate in the emergence of memorial museums, such as governments desiring to repair past injustices and communities seeking recognition

or justice. Memorial museums are privileged spaces for societies in transition to deal with difficult issues of their past and to shape how to narrate traumatic events. This section discusses some of the general notions developed within the field of memory studies that have contributed to the understanding of the contexts in which memorial museums arise, and the character and implications of the functions attributed to them. I will explore notions such as the ‘political struggles for memory,’ and the ‘exemplary use of memory.’ Then, I will delve into some of the postulates of the transitional justice paradigm as it is the framework that encompasses such notions in the aftermath of mass violence.

Political struggles for memory and ‘exemplary’ uses of memory

The study of the politics of memory seeks to account for the power struggles emerging when political agents aspire to define how a societal group should remember its past. This research approach is useful when examining post-conflict contexts —as in the example of social groups in the aftermath of profound socio-political conflicts or episodes of mass violence.

Argentinian sociologist Elizabeth Jelin (2002) claims that when social and political conflicts come to an end, those narratives that were marginalized during the conflictual period are able to surface in the public sphere: “The memories of those who were oppressed and marginalized (...) emerge with a double pretension, that of giving a “true” version of history based in their memories, and that of claiming justice” (Jelin, 2002, pp. 42-43). As a consequence, the opening of this public space provokes the emergence of struggles to determine the various meanings of a controversial past. A wide range of actors and agents, with equally diverse demands, participate in these ‘political struggles over memory’ (in Spanish, *luchas políticas por la memoria*). In

Colombia, these struggles make evident the discrepancies of the different memory camps regarding how to narrativize and explain the nature and causes of conflict.²⁴

Like Jelin, authors such as Maurice Halbwachs (1997) and Paul Ricœur (2004) have argued that the elaboration of memory in the social sphere is a process that, though related to the past, emerges as part of our struggles for the future (Courtheyn, 2016, pp. 269-270). Tzvetan Todorov classifies the public use of painful memories into two categories: *literal* and *exemplary*. *Literal* memories refer exclusively to specific traumatic events without making further analogies with other violent events. He argues that a *literal* use of difficult memories can lead societies to deepen their grievances, ignite desires for revenge or lead to the exploitation of past sufferings in exchange for power benefits for some (Todorov, 1995, p. 28). An *exemplary* use of memory, in contrast, implies drawing lessons from past injustices, in order to fight those occurring in the present, transforming pain into positive public actions (Todorov, 1995, p. 32).

The quest for justice in our relation to a difficult past is often related to the construction of a democratic order in which human rights are assured for everyone. Those fighting for the public acknowledgment of atrocities, the recognition and honoring of victims, and the attribution of responsibilities for human rights violations, visualize their actions as necessary steps such that the horrors of the past never be repeated (Jelin, 2002, pp. 11-12).

In this context, memorial museums become venues for memory struggles, given their capacity to promote collective understandings of the past through institutional practices of representation and the public performance of historical discourses. They can productively address these power struggles by presenting diverse stories related to a traumatic event. The introduction of individual testimonials and these testimonials' combined multiple perspectives is one of the standard practices through which

²⁴ The first part of Chapter 2 will describe in detail the characteristics of the three main camps of memory —*institutional*, *activist* and *counter-insurgent*— intervening in Colombia's political struggles over memory.

memorial museums provoke empathy toward the pain of others but also give representation to previously marginalized actors claiming for justice.

The emergence of museums dealing with painful pasts and mass violence does not only relate to the development of a global culture of memory or the existence of political struggles for memory. This proliferation also derives from the consolidation of the transitional justice paradigm as the policy framework associated with the management of post-conflict situations and the defense of human rights in such contexts (Sodaro, 2011).

Memorial museums and the paradigm of transitional justice

The term transitional justice refers to “formal attempts by post-repressive or post-conflict societies to address past wrongdoing in their efforts to democratize” (Murphy, 2017, p. 1). Transitional justice consists of measures seeking to frame the passage of a society from a period of widespread human rights violations towards “the actual and symbolic birth of a new regime, a new social contract” (Andrieu, 2012, p. 26). Transitional justice measures include amnesty regulations, criminal trials, truth commissions, and reparation mechanisms.

The modern origins of transitional justice go back to waves of political change during the Cold War, including the transitions from Communist rule in East and Central Europe and the former Soviet Union, as well as to the end of repressive military rule in Latin America and Africa (Teitel, 2000, p. 4). Building on these experiences, the transitional justice paradigm has established itself as a set of procedures seeking to confront the legacies of violence (Murphy, 2017, p. 6) by establishing official narratives of past injustices, attributing responsibilities for them, and defining mechanisms of victims’ reparation.

Reparations are defined as “measures that may be employed to redress the various types of harms that victims may have suffered as a consequence of certain

crimes” (de Greiff 2006), in this case, crimes defined as human rights violations. According to international law, implementing these actions is an obligation for States in transition. Reparations can take the form of restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, and satisfaction and guarantees of violence non-recurrence. This last form —measures of satisfaction and guarantees of violence non-recurrence— includes a broad spectrum of mechanisms seeking to establish the dignity and reputation of the victims, among other objectives (de Greiff 2006).

States engaging in transitional justice are also obliged to develop public mechanisms in order to establish official narratives of violent events. The transitional justice paradigm thus revolves around new representations of past violence in public space. It establishes the implementation of measures that “offer new narratives, publicly sanctioned and framed by rituals of «memorialization»” (Andrieu, 2012, p. 27). Examples of these strategies include the building of monuments, issuing public apologies, forming truth commissions, creating public archives, and of course, founding public memorial museums.

By representing victims’ testimonials, offering a place for commemorating their suffering and presenting an official narrative about past violence, memorial museums are stages through which States engaging in transitional justice can offer reparation to the victims of human rights violations. Through pedagogical strategies, memorial museums can equally foster a sense of citizenship that advocates for the nonrecurrence of such crimes. The creation of memorial museums can be useful in contexts of transitional justice. These museums can operate as platforms for symbolic reparation and as a public stage for the promotion of national narratives of reconciliation. Through their content and programming, memorial museums can enable citizens to draw lessons from a difficult collective past, and promote a culture of respect for human rights, supporting the new democratic conditions that a transitional system seeks to implement.

Curating difficult knowledge

Having explored some of the most relevant literature on the emergence of museums as adequate venues for the commemoration and reparation of past injustices, it is now important to review reflections about the act of exhibiting and curating content concerning episodes of mass violence. I have presented a set of concepts illustrating the broad purposes of memorial museums. However, it is necessary to address the ways in which curatorial practices adapt and evolve vis-à-vis the memorial museums' specific features and functions.

As many authors such as Erica Lehrer and Cynthia Milton stress, the act of curation implies "caring for" something. In this sense, "to 'care for' the past is to make something of it, to place and order it in a meaningful way in the present rather than to abandon it" (2011, p. 4). Lehrer and Milton draw attention to the "profound sense of obligation" professionals feel when curating a past that "impinges painfully on the present" (2011, p. 4). The foregoing is linked to Paul Ricœur's emphasis of the notion of *travail de mémoire* ("work of remembering") over the famous expression *devoir de mémoire* ("duty of memory") (2004). In the context of a museum exhibition, to represent episodes of mass violence without perpetuating their logic requires curators to assume their role as a vital part of the "work of remembrance," and to do so with special *care* (Lehrer & Milton, 2011, p. 4).

Fully aware of the above, authors like Logan and Reeves (2009), Simon (2011b), Lehrer et al (2011), Arnold-de Simine (2013), Carter and Orange (2012), Carter (2013), and Failler and Simon (2015) have reflected, in recent years, on the complexities of the curation of what has come to be known in the field as "difficult knowledge". Deborah Britzman developed the opposition between "lovely" and "difficult" knowledge in the field of pedagogy (Britzman, 1998; Pitt & Britzman, 2003). "Lovely knowledge" refers to a type of knowledge that reinforces our previous ideas, making our encounter with new information easily acceptable and assimilable,

whereas a “difficult knowledge” confronts and challenges our previous understandings and beliefs (Lehrer & Milton, 2011, p. 8).

According to Roger I. Simon, an exhibition addressing difficult knowledge

[...] confronts visitors with significant challenges to their expectations and interpretive abilities. [...] As a consequence, such an exhibition might require some visitors to re-think their expectations, demanding they complicate their desire for relatively straightforward and conclusive ways of telling a story. [...] an exhibition might also be encountered as difficult if it is experienced as eliciting the burden of “negative emotions,” those vexing and troublesome feelings of revulsion, grief, anger, and/or shame that histories can produce, particularly if they raise the possibility of the complicity of one’s country, culture, or family in systemic violence. [...] Finally, exhibitions may be judged as consisting of difficult knowledge if they evoke the heightened anxiety (and the potential for secondary traumatization) that accompanies feelings of identification with either the victims of violence, the perpetrators of such violence, or those identified as bystanders passively acquiescent in regard to scenes of brutalization (Simon, 2011a, p. 194).

In the face of such limitations, Simon develops the notion of “pedagogy of witness” whose purpose is to prevent exhibitions consisting of difficult knowledge from simply recreating a traumatic past without generating positive outcomes for the present (Simon, 2011a, p. 207), echoing the literal use of memory coined by Todorov (1995). Simon encourages museum professionals to engage in “judgments that establish a *mise-en-scène* within which images and artifacts act as perlocutionary signs of entreaty, embodying an affective force provoking thought and action” (Simon, 2011a, p. 208).²⁵ Curators of difficult histories should aspire to reframe and contextualize traumatic events in order to contest their causes and purposes —considering that perhaps these causes and purposes are “still resonant with certain aspects of contemporary life”

²⁵ Here Simon refers to objects and images —as well as to different types of items taking part in exhibition displays— as discursive bodies “with the potential not only to mobilize the dialectical movement between affect and thought, but also to effect some degree of influence in regard to the direction and substance of this movement” (Simon, 2011a, p. 200).

(Simon, 2011b, p. 436). This type of curatorial judgment is what would generate a favorable space for the transformation of the visitors' shock of witnessing and acknowledging the pain of others into reflections, and, hopefully, positive actions.

The production of museological content based on the interpretation of violent events and the promotion of a public heritage of violence comes at a time when both access to, and the authority of, museums are being democratized (Lehrer & Milton, 2011, p. 5). We are witnessing a shift in the acknowledgement of neutrality in the museum in which authority is questioned (Bal, 1996; Falk, Dierking, & Adams, 2007; Karp, Kratz, & Szwaja, 2007; Tythacott, 2009). This is reflected, for example, in processes of the decolonization of museums' contents and practices, and in the promotion of the wider participation of museum publics. Museum professionals designing exhibitions addressing difficult knowledge are thus expected to lead their visitors into meaningful experiences of witnessing, and to provide environments for the public assessment of difficult issues from a critical perspective.

As previously mentioned, the scope of these democratizing and critical features greatly depends on the type of cultural institution in which they emerge. In the case of memorial museums, their patrons or main sponsors and the characteristics of their administrative structure and mandate are determining factors. This leads us to give special importance to the postulates of authors like Carter who stress the importance of memorial museums' professionals as mediators—or intermediaries—between several forces and dynamics—political, social and historical—but also as enablers for the development and strengthening of citizenship, arbitrating between institutional constraints and diverse audiences (Carter, 2013).

Structure of the *Travail dirigé*

In order to provide a thorough exegesis of the MMH's process of conception, starting from the mandate of Law 1448 of 2011, and having as a final reference point the 2018 *Voces para transformar a Colombia* exhibition, the ensuing work will be divided into

three parts. In Chapter 1, I will present the context of the MMH emergence by addressing the political struggles for memory and the various perspectives regarding the Colombian conflict's memory that have arisen in the process. In Chapter 2, I will trace the Museum's development from a pragmatic perspective reviewing its institutional, physical, and social construction, as well as from a philosophical point of view, focusing on its conceptual and museological guidelines. In Chapter 3, I will examine the museographical approaches adopted in the project *Voces para transformar a Colombia*. To this end, I will address the exhibition's objectives, its curatorial challenges and the characteristics of its first *mise-en-exposition* at the *Feria Internacional del Libro de Bogotá (FiLBo)* in the spring of 2018. Having developed these conceptual strands, I will proceed to conclude this TD with a general reflection about the contributions that a case like the Colombian one can make to contemporary studies on the curation of violent pasts in national contexts of memorialization.

CHAPTER 1

MEMORIAL DYNAMICS IN CONTEMPORARY COLOMBIA

In order to understand the context of the emergence of the Colombian Museum of Historical Memory (MMH), one must address the political struggles for memory and the various perspectives regarding the conflict's memory that have arisen in the process. With this objective in mind, this chapter will describe three general phases, or standpoints, in the contemporary memorialization of the Colombian conflict. These phases are characterized by diverse narratives that not only define the dynamics of the conflict but also assign roles and intentions to the parties involved (government and other state institutions, armed forces, guerrillas, paramilitary groups, victims, civil society, etc.). Such narratives have informed and shaped the different perceptions regarding the MMH's place in the Colombian transition from conflict to a post-conflict society. Indeed, each of these three phases has a distinct chronological evolution. However, my intention is to describe their general features and to present the ways in which they have framed and influenced the evolution of the Museum.

The first phase, which I define as *institutional*, is represented by the memory institutions dedicated to the promotion of historical memory and can be understood as a normative approach to representing memory in Colombia. The second phase corresponds to *activist* memories deriving from claims for justice, channeled mainly by victims' organizations. A third phase is linked to a *counter-insurgent* reading of the conflict and acts as the major counterweight for both the institutional/legal and activist phases.

The categorization presented in this section is not exhaustive and does not represent the totality of viewpoints regarding the memorialization of the Colombian conflict. However, it serves the precise objective of contextualizing the emergence of the MMH amidst Colombia's struggles for memory, which is vital in order to

understand the Museum practitioners' work and their decisions concerning the role and content of the institution.²⁶

It is important to note here that, as in any other violent episode, some segments of society, especially survivors, resist revisiting traumatic events through memory practices as part of their individual ways of dealing with traumatic events (Sánchez Gomez, 2008). Some authors such as David Rieff (2016) argue that even in the collective sphere, the continuous examination of disturbing memories from a violent past prevents the healing of social wounds. Rieff claims that revisiting painful episodes of a collective past hinders the re-establishment of social bonds necessary for peacebuilding. In the Colombian context, most of the contemporary scholars espouse a different viewpoint. The emergence of memorial practices and research on the Colombian conflict memories is perceived mainly as a mechanism to raise awareness on the endemic nature of violence in the country and to promote the development of negotiated mechanisms for its mitigation.

1.1. The institutionalization of historical memory in Colombia

1.1.1. Colombia's Justice and Peace Law and the creation of the Historical Memory Group

Colombia's National Law 975 of 2005, also known as the "Justice and Peace Law" or "*Ley de Justicia y Paz*," defined the legal framework for the demobilization of the grouping of paramilitary units known as AUC (*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*). It also introduced important notions related to the State's role regarding the memory of the armed conflict's preservation into Colombian legislation. The Justice and Peace Law established the "right to truth" (art. 7), and addressed the State's "duty to preserve

²⁶ The conceptualization of these three standpoints regarding the Colombian conflict memorialization is a formulation that I have developed for the purposes of this TD.

historical memory,” specifically —and exclusively— related to “the history of the causes, developments, and consequences of illegal armed groups” (art. 56). The Law also considered the collective dimension of truth (arts. 57 and 58), and the rights of victims to participate in the process of truth-telling (art. 58) (Riaño Alcalá & Uribe, 2016, p. 8).

In 50 years of conflict, Colombia has engaged in several negotiations with illegal groups and created commissions to investigate the dynamics of the conflict.²⁷ However, the Justice and Peace Law was the first legal precedent for the reparation of the conflict’s victims (Burbidge, 2008; Pécaut, 2016a; Porch & Rasmussen, 2008) via mechanisms of memorialization. Despite harsh criticism —several authors claim that Law 975 was poorly executed, highly politicized and did not attain significant levels of justice (Aranguren Romero, 2012; Pécaut, 2016a)— this law represents a first step towards the development of a State policy concerning the collective memory of the Colombian conflict and the creation of public spaces and institutions (Riaño Alcalá & Uribe, 2016).

The Justice and Peace Law brought about the creation of the National Commission for Reparation and Reconciliation (CNRR), or *Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación*. The CNRR’s mission was to manage the victims’ participation in the judicial processes linked to paramilitary demobilization; to oversee the process of the reincorporation of former combatants into society; and to present a public report on “the reasons for the emergence and evolution of illegal armed groups in Colombia” (art. 50).

²⁷ As stated in Chapter 1, during the lengthy Colombian armed conflict there have been several processes of negotiations between the Government and illegal armed organizations. Some of these include the peace process with the Guerrillas EPL, Quintín Lame, and M-19 in the late 1980s and early 1990s; the failed negotiations with the FARC in 1998 and the demobilization of the AUC in the early 2000s. As part of these negotiations, but also promoted by an initiative of the Colombian Government, a series of extra-judiciary mechanisms have emerged aiming at producing historical accounts of the violence in Colombia. For a complete review of such endeavors, please refer to Jaramillo Marín and Torres Pedraza (2015); Posso (2016).

In order to develop its public report, the CNRR created the Historical Memory Group or *Grupo de Memoria Histórica* (GMH) and nominated a number of renowned academics (lawyers, historians, sociologists, political scientists, social workers, anthropologists) to carry out the task (Camargo, 2013, p. 153). The nomination of experts for the development of the public report implied a turn vis-à-vis the original nature and scope of the Commission's project. The GMH researchers added a significant new item to the report's list of goals: "to identify the different truths and memories of violence, under differentiated approaches and with a preference for the victims' voices, which have been suppressed or silenced in the past" (Camargo, 2013, p. 153).

With the emergence of the GMH —today Colombia's National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH)²⁸— Colombia adhered to the historical memory trend in Latin America. Historical memory holds a particular connotation in the Southern Cone. The term refers to the work of memory (truth-seeking and truth-telling, and the display of these processes in public spaces) as a central mechanism in the pursuit of recognition and justice by human rights defenders and conflict survivors (C.E. Milton, 2015). The historical memory trend in Colombia has been influenced by positions of countries like Spain and Argentina, where "*nunca más*" campaigns promote the defence of victims' rights and stand against forgetting past atrocities committed under dictatorial regimes (Baer & Sznajder, 2015). However, historical memory in Colombia also holds a direct link with the present. The urgency of preventing new human rights violations within an ongoing armed conflict, together with the use of historical memory as a tool for negotiating peace, characterize the Colombian appropriation of this paradigm.

The GMH —now CNMH— researchers study "emblematic cases" and "different modalities of violence" that "exemplify systematic and generalized patterns of human rights abuses" within the conflict and explain how the violence has affected

²⁸ As of 2012, Colombia's Historical Memory Group became the National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH).

different segments of the population (Riaño Alcalá & Uribe, 2016, p. 13). Their methodology encompasses extensive fieldwork within the affected communities and thus incorporates the testimonial truths of victims as a constitutive element in the construction of historical narratives (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013). The CNMH has produced more than 80 individual reports comprising the basis of the General Report published in 2013; these include reports published under the previous institutional name (GMH). These publications opened up the space for unprecedented narratives about the Colombian conflict (Riaño Alcalá & Uribe, 2016, p. 23). They retraced, for example, specific processes of civil resistance in rural areas,²⁹ and the history of urban forced displacement,³⁰ and described specific types of victimization such as violence against women as a common *modus operandi* of the armed groups.³¹

Two distinctive features of the GMH were the placing of conflict victims at the centre of its actions and its institutional independence. Despite being a governmental institution, the majority of the GMH's financial resources came from international cooperation agencies (Riaño Alcalá & Uribe, 2016, p. 14). Over the years, the GMH has been able to structure itself as "a well-respected space for reflection, endowed with academic, research and operative autonomy" (Riaño Alcalá & Uribe, 2016, p. 8), a reputation that is still preserved by the CNMH today.

Since 2005 and parallel to this national trend of historical memory construction, other public institutions emerged with similar philosophical underpinnings in the municipal sphere. Bogotá and Medellín, the country's two largest cities, followed comparable institutional processes that led to the creation of Bogotá's Centre for Memory, Peace and Reconciliation in 2008, and Medellín's Casa Museo de la Memoria in 2006, respectively.

²⁹ As in *El orden desarmado : La resistencia de la Asociación de Trabajadores Campesinos de Carare (ATCC)* (Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación - Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 2011).

³⁰ As in *La huella invisible de la guerra : Desplazamiento forzado en la Comuna 13* (Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación. Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 2011).

³¹ As in *Mujeres y guerra: víctimas y resistentes en el Caribe colombiano* (Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación. Grupo de Memoria Histórica 2011b).

1.1.2. The Victims' Law and Colombia's National Center for Historical Memory

Colombia's National Law 1448 of 2011, or the Victims and Land Restitution Law, dictates measures of "attention, assistance and integral reparation to the victims of the internal armed conflict in Colombia." The legislation was the result of the initiative of a liberal sector of national politics in the aftermath of the paramilitary demobilization and of a series of recommendations and guidelines issued by the country's Constitutional Court (Cortés, 2013; Summers, 2012). For the first time, the conflict victims became the subjects of specific rights, and the State became responsible for guaranteeing these rights (Posso, 2016; Summers, 2012).

Under the Law's auspices, the Colombian state created a series of institutions and programs designed to offer financial, social and psychological support to the millions of victims of Colombia's lengthy armed conflict. With the coming into effect of Law 1448, the CNRR disappeared, and in 2012 the GMH became the National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH). The CNMH maintained the philosophy and administrative independence of the GMH. However, its purpose was significantly enlarged. As noted in Colombia's National Decree (Executive Order) 4803 of 2011 by which the CNMH structure was established, the mission of the CNMH is:

To receive, recover, preserve, collect, and study all documentary material, oral testimony and any other type of material related to human rights violations committed during the Colombian internal armed conflict. To achieve this, the Center must effectuate research, as well as to develop museological and pedagogical activities in order to help establish and clarify the causes of such phenomena (the conflict), promote the truth elucidation and help prevent the future repetition of these events.³²

The CNMH kept some of the functions assigned to the CNRR, such as the collection, analysis and preservation of information arising from the testimonials of paramilitary ex-combatants who have abided by the Agreements of Contribution to the Historical

³² Article 2. Colombia's National Decree (Executive Order) 4803 of 2011. Author's translation.

Truth and Reparation, or *Acuerdos de Contribución a la Verdad Histórica y la Reparación*, derived from the process of demobilization of the AUC.

In addition to this, the CNMH has been tasked with:

the design, creation, and administration of a museum of memory, intended to strengthen the collective memory regarding Colombia's recent history of violence, combining efforts from the private sector, civil society, international cooperation, and the state.³³

The Victims' Law tasks the CNMH with executing a Human Rights and Historical Memory Program, or *Programa de Derechos Humanos y Memoria Histórica*. This program must guarantee the public dissemination of research done by the GMH and the CNMH on the Colombian armed conflict. It must also develop a National Archive of Human Rights responsible for the collection and preservation of any archival body related to human rights violations in Colombia.

In accordance with the mandate and legacy of the GHM, the CNMH published the General Report *¡Basta Ya! Colombia: Memorias de Guerra y Dignidad* (Enough Already! Colombia: Memories of War and Dignity) in 2013. The lengthy document sums up six years of research and extensive fieldwork establishing an overall narrative of the Colombian conflict. It reviews the evolution of the armed conflict and describes the methods, mechanisms and dimensions of its violence. The Report also compiles the range of atrocities inflicted on civilians including an overwhelming selection of survivor testimonies that reflect both the pain and resilience of the Colombian people. The publication of *¡Basta Ya!* opened up a new space for Colombian society to acknowledge the extent of the damages caused by its "prolonged and degraded war" (Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 2013).

The report *¡Basta Ya!* was published during the Colombian government's peace talks with the FARC. Given this context, the CNMH director, Gonzalo Sánchez, sought

³³ Article 5. Colombia's National Decree (Executive Order) 4803 of 2011. Author's translation.

to give the Center a relevant role in the promotion of public openness towards peace and reconciliation. He has noted that public exercises of historical memory, such as those performed by the CNCMH, are a practice of democratic expansion and a peacebuilding tool (Sánchez, 2016). Importantly, the CNCMH's work highlights processes, mechanisms and dynamics, and not only specific events of the Colombian conflict, thereby establishing their causality and impacts. As a memory practice that relates to an ongoing conflict, "it is set as an effective device to question the *here and now* and invent the immediate future" (Sánchez, 2016).

The institutionalization of historical memory has evolved both since the signing of the Peace Accord with the FARC and the implementation of transitional justice measures arising from this Peace Accord. Along with the creation of the National Archive of Human Rights and the Colombian Museum of Historical Memory, both under the auspices of the Victims' Law, Colombia's transition into a final stage of conflict resolution has led the country to implement other comprehensive measures of conflict memorialization. The most relevant of them is perhaps the creation of the Truth Commission, as stipulated in the 2016 Peace Accords with the FARC.

The vast work of the CNMH embodies the consolidation of an institutional trend in Colombia that regards historical memory and truth elucidation as key elements for the reparation of the conflict's numerous victims. Although the special tribunal created by the Peace Agreements (*Justicia Especial para la Paz* JEP) will use the reports produced by the CNMH and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights has operated similarly in the past, historical memory institutions in Colombia lack the judicial power to impart justice, significantly undermining every state effort to establish and construct an inclusive narrative of the conflict (Aranguren Romero, 2012; Riaño Alcalá & Uribe, 2016). The next two sections concern two parallel trends in the construction of a narrative of Colombia's conflict seeking to reveal aspects that are either considered absent or have been omitted by the country's institutional and official memorial endeavours.

1.2. Activist memories: victims' demands for justice and recognition

The widespread emergence of memorial practices *during* the Colombian war is a unique feature of memorial dynamics in the Andean country (Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 2009). The vast repertory of memorial practices in Colombia ranges from commemorative events to the construction of monuments and parks, but also includes initiatives such as the creation of *casas de la memoria* or “memory houses”³⁴ and community museums, as well as artistic, academic and political actions (Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación, 2008; Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 2009).³⁵

Although the range of the victims caught up in the Colombian conflict is extremely diverse, those invested in memorial practices have tended to establish alliances with human rights organizations. It is important to note that a significant part of these memorial initiatives has emerged from victims of crimes perpetrated by State agents.³⁶ These initiatives are not only commemorative and do not only seek to make sense of the past. The memorial practices of the Colombian conflict victims are mechanisms developed to document the violent events, to elucidate the truth, and to formulate public demands for the respect of the victims' right to truth and justice (Courtheyn, 2016; Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 2009).

³⁴ In the Colombian context, a *casa de la memoria* is a form of memory place (*lieu de mémoire*) and a cultural community institution dedicated to memorial practices. It is usually created by victims' organizations and funded by private or international cooperation funds. Examples include the *Casa de la Memoria de Tumaco* and the *Casa de la Memoria del Salado*.

³⁵ The *Red Nacional de Lugares de Memoria*, or National Network of Places of Memory, consists of 24 institutions ranging from community and local memorials to regional and national museums. Its existence is an indicator of the degree of development of the citizen and grassroots movement of memory in Colombia. For a general panorama of this phenomenon consult *Memorias en Tiempos de Guerra*, or “Wartime memories” by the Historical Memory Group (Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 2009) which establishes a typology of memory initiatives and analyzes some cases of grassroots organizations and communities that have funded and created memorial initiatives.

³⁶ In Colombia, there has been a significant tradition of memory exercises and investigative work carried out by victims and citizen groups since the 1970s. Historically, these memorial practices have sought the elucidation of truth and the defence of the rights of victims of State crimes committed in the context of the armed conflict. These exercises have been compiled by projects such as *Colombia Nunca Más* (Colombia Never Again), and carried out by organizations such as *MOVICE* (*Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado*, or National Movement of Victims of State Crimes), among others.

The trend of Colombian “activist” memory is characterized by the formulation of accountability demands to the State for its direct or indirect responsibility in human rights violations and for its incapacity to guarantee the political and economic rights of Colombian citizens. Those linked to this memorial approach also consider that identifying the structural causes of the longstanding, chronic violence of the country is a fundamental aspect in the process of the construction of historical memory (Antequera Guzmán, 2011; Sánchez, 2016). These structural causes include ethnic discrimination, profound inequity, the concentration of land property amongst economic elites, and the systemic exclusion of certain political ideologies from public discourse (stigmatization of the Left).

Authors such as Virginie Bouvier (2009) have also stressed the importance of grassroots movements’ memorial practices in the country’s long path towards conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Furthermore, victims’ memory initiatives have underscored the relevance of gender and ethnic dynamics within the logic of armed violence in Colombia. A significant part of these organizations defends the rights of women as well as black and indigenous communities as targeted segments of the population within the Colombian war.

Colombia’s official policies on historical memory, and the related institutions that enact these, comprise some of the principles attached to the “activist” memory — they concede a central role to victims’ testimonies and practices and consider truth-seeking an essential part of victims’ reparation and peacebuilding. Indeed, institutions such as the CNMH have built strong ties with victims’ organizations throughout their years of community research. However, the official policies on memory fail to satisfy the survivors’ urge for justice (Aranguren Romero, 2012). For instance, if several of the CNMH reports have established numerous cases of State agents’ involvement in human rights violations, these reports, unfortunately, do not have a legally binding effect.

Another distancing factor between the aspirations of the activist memory advocates and the scope of narratives promoted by the official memory institutions is

the weight given to structural causes, such as economic inequality, as the origins of contemporary violence in Colombia. Some authors deplore the fact that most of the CNMH's reports focus on specific events, and fail to highlight some of the structural causes of Colombian violence or mention the numerous waves of violence throughout the consolidation of the Colombian state over 200 years which have led to the contemporary armed conflict (Antequera Guzmán, 2011; Posso, 2016; Sánchez G, 2014).

Public projects such as the construction of a national memorial museum provoke diverse reactions in Colombia. The relationship between the official memory institutions and some sectors of activist memory is one of significant influence in the process of development of the MMH. However, some victims' groups and human rights' organizations continue to manifest attitudes of mistrust and lack of support towards State-sponsored memorial initiatives stressing the States inadequacy to attend the country's human rights crisis. Furthermore, the perspective of activist memory does not represent all the conflict victims.

The final section of this chapter will present a third perspective on the dynamics of war and memory in Colombia, which represents a counterbalance to the official and activist memory initiatives described above.

1.3. Counter-insurgent memory: a "heroic narrative" of the Colombian conflict

The counter-insurgent approach of Colombian political struggles for memory defends what Cynthia Milton defines —referring to the case of Peru's armed conflict— as a "heroic narrative" (2018). According to this narrative, guerrillas are the sole group responsible for Colombia's violence and gross human rights violations. A "heroic narrative" denies any responsibility of State actors or policy in the country's violence or its causes, and "portrays state security actors as heroes of the nation and defenders of democracy" (Milton, 2018, p. 18). Often, this narrative also defends the idea that

human rights violations committed by state agents should be considered an exception, and an acceptable price to pay in the war against terrorism (Milton, 2015). In the case of Colombia, some supporters of this type of narrative also defend the emergence of paramilitary groups as a valid and acceptable response to the guerrilla threat.

This binary reading of Colombia's armed conflict—one that opposes the “good” (the Establishment and the Armed Forces) with the “bad” (the political Left, and the leftist insurgents)—interprets it, exclusively, as a problem of public security, one that confronts the State with terrorist groups who do not have the legitimacy to voice social claims. Those who defend this type of narrative argue that the only suitable solution for the conflict is an armed confrontation—one where the Armed Forces and other state agencies combat and eliminate the insurgent threat—combined with ordinary judicial procedures that will punish the guerrillas with the “full weight of the law.” The defendants of such a posture reject the recent peace accords with the FARC and their resulting transitional justice measures.

On October 2nd, 2016, when the Colombian government summoned the electorate to vote a plebiscite in order to validate the peace agreement with the FARC, the counter-insurgent viewpoint obtained 50.2% of the vote. Its popularity is due to various political and cultural features of Colombian society. For instance, there is a strong anti-communist sentiment inherited mainly from the Cold War. The intense years of military offensive against the guerrillas during Uribe's administration—and its unprecedented success—³⁷ as well as the undeniable crimes committed by the

³⁷ During Uribe's government (2002-2010) the policy of Defense and Democratic Security, or *Política de Defensa Seguridad Democrática*, led the Armed Forces to achieve unparalleled results in the war against the guerrillas. This policy consisted of a heavily funded military offensive in order to gain control of parts of the territory under the influence of guerrillas; it also brought about the enhancement of universal military service, the implementation of incentives for the desertion of illegal combatants and the active cooperation of citizens in the war against the insurgent threat. Consequently, several leaders of the guerrillas and a high number of their combatants were killed in action, often through bombardments. Extraordinary intelligence operatives, such as the Operation “Jaque” of 2008, resulted in the liberation of a group of high-profile kidnapped persons including former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt and three US citizens. Although effective in terms of reducing the power of the guerrillas, the *Política de Defensa Seguridad Democrática* is widely criticized by victims' organizations and human rights defenders for having increased the levels of violence in the Colombian territory,

guerrillas against civilians and state forces, contribute significantly to the widespread support of the counter-insurgent reading of the Colombian conflict.

The counter-insurgent memory and position are represented by charismatic and populist former president Álvaro Uribe and his coalition of conservative parties formed by right-wing politicians with specific electoral agendas and contradictory claims. For instance, these groups defend the AUC demobilization of the early 2000s, a very controversial process that has proven to be unsuccessful in dismantling the paramilitary and resulted in high levels of impunity and human rights violations (Porch & Rasmussen, 2008). However, the viewpoint of counter-insurgent memory is diverse: it also rallies families and supporters of members of the state forces and survivors of crimes committed by the guerrillas.

The Colombian conflict is complex, lengthy and has degraded to the extent that the methods of violence that sustain this conflict have become normalized. The number and range of its actors have evolved and increased during its development, which makes a binary reading of the situation a simplistic and narrowing account. Colombia's latest policy regarding the conflict's memory recognizes the plurality of its narratives and gives particular importance to the memories of victims and other accounts previously excluded. Historical memory entities such as the CNMH and its memory museum are required to consider the plurality of narratives regarding the conflict including the challenge of addressing a significant segment of the population that refuses to acknowledge some of the complexities of prolonged violence in Colombia.

encouraged military corruption and promoted the advancement of the paramilitary influence in the country. A specific example of the prejudicial consequences of this policy is the increase in cases of extrajudicial executions of civilians; once executed by the Army, they were presented as guerrilla combatants in order to claim financial and other benefits offered to the military when successfully "neutralizing" the insurgency.

CHAPTER 2

SETTING IN MOTION COLOMBIA'S MUSEUM OF HISTORICAL MEMORY

This chapter focuses on the conception and planning of the Colombian Museum of Historical Memory (MMH). I will refer to the Museum's development from a pragmatic point of view, reviewing its institutional, physical, and social construction, as well as from a philosophical perspective, tracing the path from the Museum's mandate—as established by the Victims' Law—to its *lineamientos conceptuales* and *guion museológico*, or conceptual and museological guidelines.³⁸

This chapter represents one of the first attempts to trace the MMH's chronological and conceptual evolution. It is the result of a series of interviews with key actors involved in the process and a thorough consultation of institutional archives. For the purposes of this TD, this chapter is necessarily succinct and descriptive. A more analytical approach will be adopted in Chapter 3, when studying the museographical interpretation of the MMH's philosophical underpinnings within the exhibition *Voces para transformar a Colombia*.

2.1 Developing the MMH: structure, projects, and actors

This section presents the institutional evolution of the Museum as a department of the CNMH (Colombia's National Center for Historical Memory) but also as an entity in itself. Since its constitution, the Museum has had three directors: Juan Carlos Posada (2012-2014), Martha Nubia Bello (2015-2017) and Luis Carlos Sánchez (2017-present). This section aims to introduce the main features and challenges of their

³⁸ MMH's museological guidelines are contained in the document "Museo Nacional de la Memoria: un lugar para el encuentro. Lineamientos conceptuales y guion museológico" (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2017).

administrations, as well as the evolution of the Museum's projects, institutional objectives, and organigram.

2.1.1. The genesis of the MMH: positioning a memorial museum in the nation's capital and acknowledging its social dimension (2012-2014)

During its first two years, the Colombian Museum of Historical Memory operated with a small team under the direction of Juan Carlos Posada, an architect with previous experiences at Medellín's Modern Art Museum, and the Museum *Casa de la Memoria* of the same city.

The tasks of the Museum were assigned to three areas, each of them overseen by a coordinator: pedagogical, artistic and "special projects." The first coordinator was responsible for managing curatorial and pedagogical projects linked to the knowledge dissemination of the CNMH's research projects;³⁹ the second oversaw cultural projects in collaboration with victims' organizations and artists; the third managed a series of open calls and the Museum's relationship with international cooperation agencies [Catalina Orozco (MMH pedagogy department), 2017].

Meanwhile, Posada led the process of visiting and evaluating 25 potential sites in Bogotá for the construction of the Museum [Martha Nubia Bello (MMH director 2015-2017), 2017]. These sites included the National Administrative Center (CAN), the National University of Colombia, a house expropriated from the drug trafficker Gonzalo Rodríguez Gacha, the *Tercer Milenio* Park, the old *Andina* Brewery and the *San Francisco* Palace (Museo de Memoria Histórica de Colombia, 2018a).

The process culminated with the cession on behalf of the City of Bogotá of a site denominated "*Ala Solar*" or "Solar Wing" located in the *Eje de la Paz y la Memoria*, or Peace and Memory Axis. The idea of Bogotá's *Eje de la Paz y la Memoria* was developed by the municipal government of Bogotá in 2014, in order to interconnect emblematic places of memory of Colombia's violent history. These places include El

³⁹For example, the exhibitions "*Imágenes por la memoria*" (2012) and *¡Basta ya!* (2013).

Dorado airport (site of the assassination of the presidential candidates Bernardo Jaramillo and Carlos Pizarro in 1990) and the Central Cemetery (burial place for Jorge Eliécer Gaitan and thousands of victims of the riots that followed the assassination of this politician and presidential candidate in 1948). Located on the line that connects the airport with the emblematic *Cerros Orientales*, or eastern mountains of Bogotá, is also the capital's Center of Memory, Peace and Reconciliation as well as several commemorative murals.

The decision to build the MMH in Bogotá was not a simple one. Most of the conflict's victims come from the country's rural and peripheral regions, which has resulted in the disconnect between the urban centres and the main locations of the conflict's violence. The State's diminished control over the peripheral regions — characterized by a lack of provision of essential services and infrastructure— increased the gap between urban and rural Colombia. Some of the victims' leaders did not and still do not welcome the idea of building a national memorial museum in the capital because this centralizes the conflict's memorialization, which could result in the alienation of the memories from the regions. However, the MMH's team defends the argument that placing the Museum in Bogotá entails making visible the vast repertoire of violence inflicted to a large segment of the country's rural population, in Colombia's main urban center. The Museum thus commits itself to “(introducing) the rural country to Bogotá, so that historically marginalized communities are represented in a common place, where their demands and acts of resistance may have more visibility” (Museo de Memoria Histórica de Colombia, 2018d).

The projects developed by the Museum under Posada's leadership were very limited, generating few advances towards the overall design and conception of the institution. In its early years, the CNMH was mainly focused on its own establishment as a national institution with wide-ranging functions, and it gave less attention to the project of a Museum among these. From 2012 until 2014, the Museum operated in response to specific external demands, mainly related to victims' reparation

measures.⁴⁰ Some of these projects reflected the need to create new departments within the CNMH, such as the Territorial Initiatives Department and the Judicial Sentences Section [Catalina Orozco (MMH pedagogy department), 2017].

Perhaps one of the major advances during Posada's period at the head of MMH was the establishment of the social construction of the Museum as a priority [Catalina Orozco (MMH pedagogy department), 2017]; [Martha Nubia Bello (MMH director 2015-2017), 2017]. The MMH's social construction is understood by the Museum team as the development of links and strong relationships with various sectors of society, especially, and most importantly, with the victims of the Colombian conflict. These groups have significant experience developing memorial practices in the *territorios*, or territories—a common expression that refers to the peripheral and rural zones of the country (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2015).

The social dimension of the MMH draws on and is informed by the expectations and the participation of victims and citizens, as well as experts and other similar museums. Following this approach, the MMH proceeded to identify a vast array of memorial initiatives developed by victims' and human rights organizations in the country. This project derived from the idea that it is the Museum's responsibility to acknowledge and contribute to the work and expertise that several grassroots organizations cultivated during the years of the Colombian conflict.

2.1.2. The emergence of the MMH's identity: choosing an architectural design and synthesizing the Museum's mission after consultations (2015-2017)

⁴⁰ On many occasions, there were judiciary sentences (most of them from the paramilitary demobilization processes) that ordered the CNMH to develop symbolic reparation projects for a specific group of victims. This resulted in artistic and memorial projects by victims' organizations which were elaborated with the collaboration and technical guidance of the Museum [Catalina Orozco (MMH pedagogy department), 2017; Lorena Luengas (MMH curator), 2017], for example, the Project of the *Museo Itinerante de la Memoria y la Identidad de los Montes de María*, or the Itinerant Museum of Memory and Dignity of Montes de María.

From January 2015 until June 2017, Martha Nubia Bello performed the functions of MMH Director. Bello, a social worker specializing in human rights and psycho-social support to victims of violence, was one of the founding members of the Historical Memory Group and led research projects on important cases in the history of the conflict, such as the cases of Bojayá (Chocó), *Comuna 13* (Medellín) and San Carlos (Antioquia). She was also the coordinator of the groundbreaking report *¡Basta ya! Colombia: memorias de guerra y dignidad*”, published in 2013.

During her time as Director of the Museum, Bello made structural changes that allowed the MMH to better define its institutional identity. She created the Museology Department, assigning its members the tasks of conceptualizing the Museum’s guidelines and designing the museographical approach of MMH’s first major exhibition, *Voces para transformar a Colombia*. Furthermore, Bello consolidated the artistic and cultural programming of the Museum, enhancing the *Coordinación de Prácticas Artísticas* and transforming it into the MMH’s Department of Artistic and Cultural Programming, a unit that develops a wide-ranging calendar of activities and artistic memorial practices. Bello also created the Collections Department, responsible for the design of the MMH’s acquisitions policy, and the Communications Department, in charge, among others, of developing the Museum’s virtual dimension. The Special Projects section disappeared, and the pedagogy section was transformed into the Education Department.

In 2015, following the acquisition of the “*Ala Solar*” site in Bogotá, the MMH launched an international architectural competition in order to select its building design. The jury evaluated 72 local and international proposals and chose as the winning design the proposal submitted jointly by the Colombian firm *MGP Arquitectura y Urbanismo* and the Spanish firm *Estudio Entresitio*. Their proposal was awarded the first place because of its ability to create various spaces for both exhibitions and public interaction, in what the jurors called a “processional circuit” that is altogether memorial, hopeful and in harmony with the geography of the city (Bello

& Forero, 2017).⁴¹ Bello managed the first stages of the Museum's building construction (technical studies, completion of permits) and created the Infrastructure Department for this purpose. To date, the building has not yet been built. However its completion is scheduled for 2021.

This period of the Museum —from 2015 to 2017— was key for the development of its institutional identity. The National Center of Historical Memory developed various initiatives and organized multiple events to gather useful information about the development of the MMH's guidelines and approach (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2015). One of these projects was the *Voces de la Memoria* or the "Voices of Memory" project, produced by the CINEP (*Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular*, or Popular Research and Education Center). The purpose of this endeavor was to collect the perceptions and recommendations of victims and different sectors of society through a series of guided discussions and studies. Throughout the project (2014-2015), 35 regional and 5 national workshops were held in 13 different regions of the country, where victims and members of their organizations participated and gave their input concerning the Museum's content and form. Experts, research centers and international advisers were also involved in a series of open calls and events such as the *Semana Nacional de la Memoria* (National Week of Memory), and the *Seminario Internacional de Museos y Lugares de Memoria* (International Seminar of Museums and Places of Memory). This was done with the purpose of getting to know their ideas, expectations, and recommendations concerning the Museum's role and significance in a context of peacebuilding, as well as its museographical approaches and location (Museo de Memoria Histórica de Colombia, 2018c).

Following the consultation stage, the MMH Museology Department worked on the design of the conceptual structure of the Museum, producing a synthesis that would reflect the appropriation of the Museum's mandate and its initial institutional identity

⁴¹ Some images are provided in Appendix B.

[Lorena Luengas (MMH curator), 2017]. The MMH's conceptual structure is described in the document "*Museo Nacional de la Memoria: un lugar para el encuentro. Lineamientos conceptuales y guion museológico*" (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2017) whose main components are presented in section 3.2 of this TD.

It is important to note here that during the first two administrations of the Museum (2012-2017), the institution operated under the name of *Museo Nacional de la Memoria* or National Museum of Memory and would be replaced by *Museo de Memoria Histórica de Colombia* in 2018. The change followed a request by Colombia's Ministry of Culture, before the Museum's official launching of the project *Voces para transformar a Colombia*, as will be further explained in section 3.1.3.

2.1.3. The launch of the MMH: testing and breaking the ground (2017-present)

In June 2017, Luis Carlos Sánchez took over as Director of the MMH. Sánchez is a political scientist, historian, and philosopher who worked as a researcher at the Historical Memory Group and the CNMH witnessing first-hand the evolution of these institutions. He was also the coordinator of the Victims' Reparations Office of the CNMH from 2014 to 2017.

Sánchez's administration has been focused on the production of the 2018 exhibition *Voces para transformar a Colombia* and the continuation of the programmatic and institutional development of the Museum. Sanchez also has the responsibility of determining how the Museum will contribute to, and liaise with, the transitional justice regime and especially with the Truth Commission, implemented by the Peace Accords with the FARC.

Prior to the presentation of the MMH's first exhibition and the launch of its official website in April 2018, the Museum was renamed the Colombian Museum of Historical Memory. The institution decided to change its name as per the request of the national Ministry of Culture which argued that the new institution needed a more specific name that would differentiate it from Colombia's National Museum or *Museo*

Nacional de Colombia.⁴² Sánchez embraced the name change as an opportunity to emphasize that the Museum does not promote a master and unifying narrative of the Colombian conflict. He also saw this as a means to indicate that its methodologies and trajectory were closely related to the historical memory camp in Colombia and did not seek to promote specific discourses on Colombian nationhood [Luis Carlos Sánchez (MMH director 2017-present), 2018].

The exhibition *Voces para transformar a Colombia* sought to present the MMH's main narratives to the public and to elicit their reactions, prior to the physical construction of the Museum. The launch of the Museum and the presentation of its exhibition to more than 70,000 visitors (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2018c) at *FilBo* enabled the new institution to test its messages and methods, and to deepen its process of social construction with victims' organizations, civil society and the general public.

The exhibition was also an opportunity for the whole of the institution —and all of its departments (museum, communications, collections, infrastructure, education) to work together on a common project. This represented a significant moment in the construction of the MMH's collective identity and strengthened its programmatic dimension [Luis Carlos Sánchez (MMH director 2017-present), 2018]. *Voces para transformar a Colombia* also allowed the CNMH to acknowledge how vast the MMH's potential was in regard to reaching out to larger audiences than those normally convened by the CNMH, through the specific language of a memorial museum.

2.2 The MMH's philosophical construction: the conceptual path towards the Museum's first exhibition.

⁴² Colombia's National Museum was founded in 1823. It collects and displays objects that are symbols of Colombia's history and heritage and reflects on the concept of Colombia's nationhood. Its collection is divided into four groups: art, history, archeology and ethnography.

This section presents the main components of the MMH's conceptual foundation and its philosophical underpinnings, which include the Museum's concept, functions, guiding principles and messages, as well as the ways in which the institution defines its publics and the strategies to meet them. These notions are developed in the Museum's "Guidelines document".

2.2.1 MMH's concept

As previously mentioned, Colombia's National Decree (Executive Order) 4803 of 2011 states that the MMH must "strengthen the collective memory regarding Colombia's recent history of violence, combining efforts from the private sector, civil society, international cooperation, and the State."⁴³ The Victims' Law also dictates that the Museum must "carry out actions that reestablish the dignity of the victims, and share the truth about what happened."⁴⁴

Following this mandate, the first task assigned to the MMH's Museology Department (created in 2015) was to establish a museum concept that would not only be able to appropriate the legal mandate of the institution, but also to acknowledge the information gathered through initiatives related to the social construction of the MMH. These initiatives included the project *Voces de la Memoria* of CINEP and other consultations made with victims' organizations and members of the academic community.⁴⁵ As previously mentioned, throughout the MMH's consultation stage, 35 regional and 5 national workshops were held in 13 regions of the country, where victims and their organizations participated.

⁴³ Colombia's National Decree (Executive Order) 4803 of 2011 regulates the Victims' Law. Author's translation.

⁴⁴ Colombia's National Law no. 1448 of 2011, commonly referred to as the 'Victims' Law'. Author's translation.

⁴⁵ Seven research papers were commissioned to experts on different aspects of memorial museums (architecture, relation between memory and art, functions of a national memorial museum, among others) and the implications of such concepts in the Colombian context.

One of the main mandates that the Museum received from the victims during these consultation exercises was to create a *museo vivo*, or a “living museum”, with spaces for the creation and expression of the victims’ memorial practices [Luis Carlos Manjarrés (MMH curator), 2017; Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular, 2015; Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2017].

The results of this series of consultations are reflected in the Museum’s “Guidelines document,” which outlines the philosophical underpinnings of the institution. In this document, the Museum defines itself as an

educational and cultural platform for the promotion of participatory processes of creation, production, discussion and transmission of the armed conflict’s historical memory, while mobilizing critical reflection on the causes and consequences of this phenomenon. In the same way, (the Museum) strives to be a space in which a pedagogy of coexistence and peacebuilding is promoted, and the development of critical and responsible citizenship with respect for life and human rights is encouraged (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2017, p. 29).⁴⁶

Following the institutional line of the CNMH, the MMH not only undertakes the Colombian war victims’ mandate to represent and give voice to their memories of pain and resilience but also engages in featuring them in relation to the present and the future of the country’s quest for peace. The MMH is thus defined as a museum

that shows the relationship between violence and violations committed in the past and those that continue in the present. Likewise, the [MMH] promotes critical reflection and the formation of people committed to respecting life and human rights, and is presented as a space that values dissent and plurality of voices, thereby safeguarding respect for human rights (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2017, p. 14).⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Author’s translation.

⁴⁷ Author’s translation.

2.2.2 MMH's functions

Relying on the State's duty to remember, the MMH constitutes a measure of reparation and compensation for victims of the Colombian armed conflict. Its commitment to the function of truth-seeking and truth-telling also serves the function of the conservation of historical memory. In this sense, the MMH engages in safeguarding the testimonials, objects, and memories linked to human rights violations that occurred during the conflict and also in preserving the *musealia* related to the resilience and resistance of its victims, and therefore contributing to the emergence of a heritage derived from the conflict's violence (Ashworth, 2008) as well as from the experiences and knowledge produced in result of such violence (C. Lleras, personal communication, 2018).

Beyond the function of truth-seeking and truth-telling, the MMH undertakes a pedagogic function that is closely tied to its role in the promotion of guarantees of non-recurrence of violence and the enhancement of a democratic culture (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2017, p. 29; Iniesta González, 2014). In order to prevent human rights violations from happening again, society must adopt a commitment to the defence of human rights. This change is partially made possible through pedagogic endeavors that encourage the strengthening of a democratic culture where political and cultural differences are respected above all. The MMH has decisively opted to put a significant emphasis on the promotion of the social conditions that contribute to guaranteeing the non-recurrence of human rights violations and the strengthening of democratic values.

According to the MMH's chief curator Cristina Lleras, the promotion of conditions aiming at guaranteeing the non-recurrence of violence is something that although included, was not clearly defined in the Victims' Law, despite being of central importance for the mission of a national memorial museum. Lleras points out that the quest for symbolic reparation and the reestablishment of the victims' dignity can only be achieved through an array of institutional and societal actions broader than those of the Museum. The Museum alone is not able to fulfill the victims' reparation needs. It

is, however, capable of investing itself decisively in promoting a culture of respect towards human rights and the enhancement of democratic values among its visitors, aiming to prevent the repetition of atrocities [Cristina Lleras (MMH chief curator), 2017].

The MMH has also adopted a memorial function, which is linked to its capacity to provide visitors with a space for mourning, honouring, and commemorating one another's stories and suffering. The MMH seeks to become a place for conflict victims and Colombian society to grieve "the human, material, social and cultural losses" caused by the violence in Colombia (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2017, p. 29; Iniesta González, 2014).

2.2.3 MMH's guiding principles

- **Participation.** The MMH guarantees the participation of the conflict victims and diverse social groups in its construction and management. This means, for instance, the acknowledgment of the victims' voices and memorial practices but also the implementation of strategies aiming at the decentralization of the Museum and the contribution of regional memorial initiatives in the MMH's activities.
- **Acknowledgement of diversity.** The MMH recognizes the differentiated impact that violence has had on specific segments of Colombian society. This entails, for instance, the recognition of cultural pluralism, and the different positions from which indigenous peoples and other groups, such as Black communities, have navigated the war in Colombia. Similarly, the MMH recognizes the differential impacts of the conflict on social groups such as women, children, sexual minorities, and others.
- **Plurality.** The MMH recognizes the plurality of languages and narratives that characterize the vast array of memorial practices in Colombia and therefore aims at becoming a platform for their representation.

- **Autonomy.** Aware of the institution's public nature, its development at arm's length from government, and the difficult issues it tackles, the MMH establishes autonomy as a principle guiding its decision-making processes.
- **No harm.** The principle of no harm is an ethical dimension of the MMH's principle of plurality. It seeks to exclude any narrative that justifies or displays violent or discriminatory purposes towards any social group. The MMH also takes the responsibility of implementing actions towards the protection of the emotional and physical integrity of the victims and citizens involved directly or indirectly in the Museum's activities.

2.2.4 MMH's publics

Once the core of the MMH—its foundational concept and principles—was outlined, the museology team had to clearly identify the Museum's audiences. For this purpose, the MMH classifies its publics into two groups. The first is a direct public, encompassing diverse social groups and communities, including the academic community, education sector, public officers, households and foreign visitors who are interested in visiting the MMH and are attentive to the historical memory processes in Colombia. The second group consists of a more indirect audience, that is indifferent or opposed to the Museum and its themes but nevertheless a portion of the population that represents an important segment in the attainment of the MMH's objectives.

2.2.5 MMH's dimensions and platforms

Seeking to address its two groups of audiences, the MMH proposes to be present under three dimensions: physical, territorial (in the country's regions), and virtual, as well as

through an array of platforms⁴⁸: exhibitions, research, communications, heritage, and memorial.

The MMH's exhibition platform comprises permanent and temporary displays including those that are virtual and travelling. The research component relates not only to the CNMH's investigations but also to the Museum's function of truth-seeking and truth-telling, as well as the Museum's relationship with the National Archive of Human Rights, whose creation is also a responsibility of the CNMH and will be under the MMH's care. The communications platform entails a series of resources such as cultural spaces, programming and a communications agenda that provide support to the various functions of the Museum. The heritage component reflects the MMH's commitment to the conservation of its collections, composed of material and intangible items (testimonials, objects, and documents) that are considered to be part of the conflict heritage of Colombia (Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular, 2015). As for the Museum's memorial platform, it represents the various dimensions through which the institution provides its audiences with spaces for commemorative acts and social dialogues around the issue of memory in Colombia.

2.2.6 MMH's messages

The previous sections have presented the conceptual structure that supports the MMH. The final part of this chapter focuses on the core messages meant to be conveyed by such a structure. The following table displays the set of statements that the Museum seeks to communicate to its audiences. They are divided into three categories: (1) *sentidos* or global understandings for the public to acquire, and the associated

⁴⁸ The concept of platform positions the MMH as a hub that facilitates the dialogue between the memory processes that take place in various regions and diverse sectors of the country (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2017, p. 66).

messages, both (2) explicit and (3) implicit. This is the matrix that guided the Museum team in the construction of the exhibition *Voces para transformar a Colombia*.⁴⁹

When visiting the MMH and the exhibition <i>Voces para transformar a Colombia</i>		
The public should recognize	Via	
	Explicit Messages	Implicit Messages
<p>... the magnitude and complexity of the Colombian conflict in its historical, social, political and cultural dimensions (Iniesta, 2014);</p> <p>...the conflict's origins and transformations as well as its causes, mechanisms, repertoires of violence and impacts (Del Pino, 2014);</p> <p>... the different actors participating in the armed conflict;</p>	The costs of war are too high, and the damage war provokes is immeasurable.	Nothing justifies the violation of human rights. War is much costlier and more inefficient than peace.
	Our war is always changing; it is fragmented, regionally diverse and constantly exacerbated.	War is long and complex, and this characterizes the way it can be narrated.
	The war in Colombia is intentional and linked to economic dynamics and interests, both of political and institutional nature.	Although the Colombian war is complex and hard to explain, it is not random nor irrational. There are interests in dispute, and responsibilities yet to be acknowledged.
... the conflict's victims as subjects with a face, history, as well as with a capacity for	War affects us all, but not everyone in the same way.	Responsibilities must be assumed, and victims recognized.

⁴⁹ This table was conceived based on information shared by the Museum team during my fieldwork in Colombia in 2017.

action and resistance to violence; ... the differentiated responsibilities of the parties involved in the human rights violations during the war in Colombia.	The violence of the conflict is rooted in and deepens other kinds of violence such as sexual, gender, domestic, racial, ethnic, and social violence.	We need to think and imagine a plausible present for Colombian society, in which everyday violence will be rejected.
	Stigmatization, intolerance, the elimination of differences and political dissent have characterized the Colombian conflict.	The strengthening of democracy resides in the acknowledgement of differences, dissent, and diversity in all our interactions.
	Colombia's history is interwoven with war and violence, as well as with initiatives of peace and resistance, political reforms, peace processes, and the institutionalization of peace.	To end the war and sustain peace we must assume our responsibility as agents of change.

Table 3.1 Messages of the MMH

Some of the ideas represented in this matrix might seem elemental and basic. One would think that it is not necessary —after fifty years of war— to make Colombians aware of the diversity of actors and the differentiated impacts of the conflict's violence on different segments of Colombian society. However, these are things to which the MMH decided to give particular attention when defining the messages of its first exhibition, because they are elemental understandings that should be reinforced in order to effectively promote the non-recurrence of atrocities committed during the conflict.

As a national memorial museum featuring difficult stories related to the Colombian armed conflict, the MMH provides a space of encounter and public representation of voices previously excluded from the public sphere, such as those of the victims (Jelin, 2002). Besides providing the country with a platform for democratic

debate on its contemporary struggles for memory, the MMH establishes a set of common understandings from which to start such national conversations. The MMH also seeks to confront its visitors with the magnitude of the violence in Colombia, generating more questions and reflections than answers and certitudes and by doing so inviting them to embrace narratives of the Colombian war that provide un-conclusive interpretations of the historical events and stress the complexities of the social dynamics that have intervened in the Colombian violence.

The key messages proposed by the MMH's curatorial team open the discussion further, beyond the notion that the war in Colombia was the confrontation between the Army and a group of guerrillas. These messages stress the importance of dynamics that are often overlooked in the media and the electoral debates, such as the distribution of land and the exploitation of resources, something that transcends the logic of a counter-insurgent struggle. These messages thus bring into the discussion themes such as the ownership of land, economic inequality, cultural diversity, and diversified roles in the war.

As explained in Chapter 1, Colombian struggles for memory are intense and ongoing. Those who argue for a salvation narrative of the Colombian war have profound disagreements with the proponents of historical and activist memories in their understanding of what is fundamental when seeking the non-recurrence of violence. If the "salvation" camp argues that punishing leftist guerrillas via the ordinary justice system will suffice to repair victims of the conflict and prevent the emergence of more violence, the camps of historical and activist memories stress the importance of recognizing and tackling the *continuum* of different forms of violence (ethnic, gender, economic, political) as well as the mechanisms and intentions that make possible the prolongation of war in Colombia. Ideas such as individual and cultural change, and democratic reinforcement, as opposed to military and judicial actions, lie behind the MMH's messages when tackling the challenge of promoting conditions for the eradication of violence in Colombia.

CHAPTER 3

MMH's *VOCES PARA TRANSFORMAR A COLOMBIA* EXHIBITION

In the final chapter of this TD, I will examine the museographical approaches adopted in the *Voces para transformar a Colombia* project, the first MMH national exhibition and a prelude to the Museum's permanent exhibition. To this end, I will begin by outlining the exhibition's general objectives in Section 3.1. In Section 3.2, I will address the curatorial challenges and choices associated with presenting a comprehensive narrative of the Colombian conflict while adequately representing the plurality of its victims, events, and dynamics. In Section 3.3, I will elaborate on the characteristics of the first *mise-en-exposition* of *Voces para transformar a Colombia* at the *Feria Internacional del Libro de Bogotá (FiLBo)* in the spring of 2018. I will be looking specifically at the exhibition's content, architectural and scenographic design, public programming and mediation strategies. To conclude this chapter, in section 3.4, I will focus on the types of language that were prioritized in the exhibition in order to fulfil its different objectives.

3.1 Exhibition objectives

In accordance with the MMH's mission and the postulates presented in Table 1, the curators of *Voces para transformar a Colombia* aimed to present the Colombian conflict's victims as agents with capacity for resistance by displaying their voices, narratives, and memorial practices. Along this line, the exhibition sought to contribute to the symbolic reparation and vindication of the survivors' dignity by challenging stereotypes and, in several cases, reestablishing the good name and reputation of

specific groups⁵⁰ [Martha Nubia Bello (MMH director 2015-2017, 2017; Luis Carlos Majarrés (MMH curator), 2017].

Curators also intended to bring to light connections between the contemporary Colombian conflict and other types of preexisting violence in the country. These include ethnic discrimination and the use of war as a means to gain control of the land. In addition to this, MMH's team sought to raise awareness of the mechanisms of, and intentions underlying the Colombian war; its modalities of violence (sexual, environmental, cultural, armed, political); and its regional implications. Curators were also interested in making the exhibition visitors aware of the diversity of actors — armed and unarmed— involved in the conflict, like the case of civil servants such as notaries who played an essential role in the dynamics of land dispossession (*despojo*) (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2018a).

The consultation project *Voces de la Memoria* (2014-2015) revealed how important it was for victims and citizens in general to hold perpetrators accountable for their crimes, in the Museum and its exhibitions [Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular, 2015; Lorena Luengas (MMH curator), 2017]. However, the MMH curatorial team considered that focusing on individual responsibilities in the first exhibition of the Museum could exacerbate antagonisms among visitors and lead them to pointing out others' responsibilities before engaging in personal reflection. The team therefore opted to emphasize the social dynamics and collective responsibilities behind the episodes of violence in Colombia, and to present how armed and unarmed actors actively participated in the conflict. They argued that this type of approach would allow

⁵⁰ The stigmatization of a significant part of the conflict's victims characterizes the war in Colombia. This is the case of communities living in the country's most violent regions or victims with leftist allegiances such as human rights activists, union leaders, and members of some political parties. The idea that victims are somehow responsible for their grievances has resulted in the public opinion's indifference toward their realities. This is reflected in the common expression "*algo malo tuvieron que haber hecho para que les pasara lo que les pasó*" (there must be a reason for what happened to them, they must have done something bad or engaged in *wrong* activities). This reasoning produces public mistrust towards the circumstances of several of the country's human rights violations and attributes part of the responsibility of the violence to its victims (Chambers, 2013).

visitors to reflect critically on their own agency as well as that of society in general in the conflict.

In this sense, for the curators, the exhibition had to be capable of eliciting unexpected reflections in its visitors which would lead them to leave the exhibition with more questions than certitudes [Cristina Lleras (MMH chief curator), 2017; Lorena Luengas (MMH curator), 2017; Sofía González (MMH curator), 2017]. Therefore, a central objective of the exhibition was to provide its publics with a display capable of accounting for the magnitude and complexity of the Colombian conflict. The MMH thus embraced the difficult nature of the exhibition subject matter and sought for its visitors to “re-think their expectations, demanding they complicate their desire for relatively straightforward and conclusive ways of telling a story” (Simon, 2011a, p. 194), in this case, the Colombian conflict story.

3.2 Defining a structure

The design of the thematic and narrative structure of the exhibition *Voces para transformar a Colombia* sought to address two types of challenges which I will briefly describe before presenting the strategies developed by the curatorial team, in section 3.2.1.

The first challenge arises from the representation of the conflict’s victims and events. Accounting for the diversity of actors and their life stories, as well as regional characteristics and different periods of the Colombian conflict’s history, had to be weighed against the need to respond to the victims’ demands and expectations. For the curators, it was clear that the voices of victims and survivors had to be at the centre of the project [Martha Nubia Bello (MMH director 2015-2017), 2017; Lorena Luengas (MMH curator), 2017]), however, they were also aware of the impossibility of successfully representing the full range of victims and their contexts in a single exhibition (Museo de Memoria Histórica de Colombia, 2018b).

According to Bello, several groups of victims demanded the attribution of spaces within the exhibition dedicated to their type of story exclusively. Nevertheless, Bello considered that separating and compartmentalizing victims' experiences and secluding them within different spaces was not desirable for the MMH because it would have undermined the promotion of awareness that war affected *all* Colombians, albeit in different manners [Martha Nubia Bello (MMH director 2015-2017), 2017].

The second challenge related to defining the exhibition's structure stemmed from the CNMH's research legacy and the Museum's necessity to develop its own language. For the Center's researchers, the common reflex was to adopt the same structure of the general report *¡Basta Ya!* for the exhibition [Cristina Lleras (MMH chief curator), 2017; Sofía González (MMH curator), 2017].⁵¹ However, the Museum's team determined very early in the process the need to distance itself from the Center's research paradigm and to find different ways to communicate its messages and tell the story of the Colombian armed conflict. In order to detach itself from the Center's objectives and those of the general report, and to resignify the Center's research contents according to the objectives of a national memorial museum, the exhibition had to have a different structure, narrative and themes.

3.2.1 *Tierra, Cuerpo y Agua*: the innovative narrative and conceptual axes of the exhibition

In light of the challenges explained previously, the MMH's curatorial team opted for a unique conceptual approach and decided to structure the exhibition around three narrative axes: *Tierra, Cuerpo y Agua* (Land, Body and Water). Seeking a creative way to approach the conflict's history without compartmentalizing the victims' voices and stories into different categories, the curators of *Voces para transformar a Colombia*

⁵¹ The Report *¡Basta Ya! Colombia: Memories of War and Dignity* (2013) is divided into five sections: 1. Dimensions and methods of violence; 2. Origins, dynamics and growth of the armed conflict; 3. War and Justice in Colombian society; 4. Impacts and harms caused by the armed conflict in Colombia; and 5. Memories: the voice of survivors.

found in Land, Body and Water concepts which allow survivors to tell their stories and portray their memorial practices.

This approach, which is both analytical and narrative, is “an effort to look at the war in a historical, relational and systemic perspective” (Museo de Memoria Histórica de Colombia, 2018b). Land, Body and Water have the narrative capacity to present and encompass the dynamics of the Colombian conflict in a holistic way without presenting a master narrative of the conflict. These elements allow the exhibition to detach itself from a strictly chronological reading and propose different temporalities. The cycles of the land, the body and water have other temporalities than the linear interpretations of history and enable curators to adequately account for the multiple forms of violence (cultural, environmental, economic) that have taken place in the Colombian conflict, as well as their possible causes.

According to Failler and Simon

(t)he distinction between learning *about* and learning *from* has to do both with the ontological status given to knowledge and with the learner’s imagined proximity to that knowledge. In learning *about*, knowledge is taken to be an object separate from or outside the self that can nevertheless be acquired, owned, or mastered; in learning *from* something, knowledge is understood as a relation contingent on a willingness to recognize one’s connectedness to an event or experience that might well be “separate” in the sense of belonging to another time, place or people but can nevertheless be seen for its enmeshment with the structures, privileges and constraints of one’s own life (Failler & Simon, 2015, p. 173).

Land, Body and Water are vectors to which any citizen-visitor can relate. They enable the emergence of what Failler and Simon have called ‘elastic narratives’: “discursive environments that allow multiple possibilities within certain limits to be projected” (Failler & Simon, 2015, p. 174). Such narrative forms dissolve the difference between what happened or could happen to oneself and what happened or could happen to others in different cultural, economic, or political circumstances. The trilogy of elements

selected by the MMH in order to narrate the Colombian war seeks to allow the exhibition visitors to learn *from* the conflict as opposed to *about* the conflict.

The notions of land, water and the body are not merely territories of the war but witnesses and direct actors of the confrontation. They account for the intricate relationships between human beings, social groups and their environments. They are also fundamental to the construction of cultural and political identities (Museo de Memoria Histórica de Colombia, 2018b). The land is a source of economic and political power. Since the Spanish colonization and throughout Colombia's history, land ownership has been at the centre of violent confrontations as well as sociopolitical and economic disputes. The fight over land control has resulted in unequal distribution and the delimitation of land by armed and unarmed actors. Assigning a central position to the land in the MMH's exhibition means giving particular attention to the processes of *despojo* (land dispossession) and forced displacement, and to the intentions underlying these dynamics in the long Colombian conflict [Cristina Lleras (MMH chief curator), 2017].

Land as the vital space of any community does not only provide a means of subsistence; it is also essential for the construction of its inhabitants' identity and cultural belonging. The Land axis of the exhibition thus ascribes notable importance to the *defensa del territorio* (defense of territory) as an emblematic aspect of the resistance of communities during the Colombian conflict.

The Body axis of the exhibition is based on two notions: experience and memory. The following two quotes epitomize these notions: the body is "the means by which a person feels, lives and learns and as such is the vehicle of experience" and "when bodies experience war, they become depositaries of the memories, wounds and marks of violence" (Museo de Memoria Histórica de Colombia, 2018b). Curators recognize likewise that the body is an organism that exists in connection to others, and belongs to a network of emotional, social and political identities and bonds that are 'collective bodies' (Museo de Memoria Histórica de Colombia, 2018b). Addressing the body as the bearer of individual memories and the collective carrier of political and

cultural affiliations, allows for an account of both the strategies of dehumanization and the *continuum* of diverse types of violence (ethnic, political, cultural, sexual) that have taken place in the Colombian conflict. The Body axis speaks of stigmatization as a key mechanism in the Colombian war but also provides the space to explore the resistance and resilience of individual and collective bodies in the face of the wounds of violence [Luis Carlos Majarrés (MMH curator), 2017].

Aquatic spaces have also played significant roles in the Colombian armed conflict. Controlling rivers, ports, and *cienagas* (swamps) implies controlling the access to specific regions or resources. In addition to this, throughout the lengthy and bloody conflict, thousands of corpses have been thrown into the country's rivers. To delve into the aquatic dimensions of the war in Colombia contributes not only to an exploration of the country's violent episodes, but also to displaying the cultural and environmental dimension of the damages caused by war [Lorena Luengas (MMH curator), 2017]. Water is understood by the curators of *Voces para transformar a Colombia* as an element that "personifies connections of living processes" (Museo de Memoria Histórica de Colombia, 2018b). As such, the Water axis is designed to illustrate the different ways in which victims' groups have defended their cultural expressions by safeguarding and resignifying their relations with water [Lorena Luengas (MMH curator), 2017].

Having determined the conceptual structure of the exhibition, the curators then had to decide on which cases would represent adequately the messages assigned to each axis. The team had to consider the resources at its disposal and rely not only on the CNMH's research corpus, but also on the repertory of victims' memorial practices associated with each theme and section of the exhibition. The MMH's team thus identified a dozen "central cases" (*casos nodales*) to present. A *caso nodal* is defined by the curatorial team as an episode of the Colombian conflict that evokes other similar incidents, although it is particular and specific. These cases were selected as being

representative of the different geographic regions, periods, and forms of violence and resistance characterizing the Colombian conflict.⁵²

3.3 *Voces para Transformar a Colombia's* first iteration: *FilBo* 2018

The first version of the MMH's permanent exhibition, *Voces para transformar a Colombia*, was presented for the first time to the public from April 17 to May 2nd, 2018, at the *FilBo* (Bogotá's International Book Fair). For this event, the CNMH (the institution responsible for the creation of the Museum) had designed a pavilion in which it sought to represent the main elements of the new museum.⁵³ The architectural design of the pavilion was developed by the firm *Yemail Arquitectura* and the project's art direction by Laura Cuervo; the project's concept was that of a space under construction equipped with a wooden structure and warm lighting and colours (See Appendix G).⁵⁴

The MMH pavilion featured most of the areas included in MMH's museological plan: a space for the presentation of a permanent exhibition; an area for pedagogical programming (which includes a library and a creative space); a room for radiophonic production; an agora for discussion; a memorial space; and a theater for cultural programming. The Museum's pavilion at *FilBo* consisted of approximately 1,450 m² and was divided into six zones: Introduction Hall, Earth Axis, Body Axis, Water Axis, Exile Space and Exit Hall (See Appendix E).

In the first zone, at the exhibition entrance, the characters Land, Body and Water presented to the audience a brief account of their experiences during the war (See Appendix F). Upon crossing the Entry Hall, visitors were asked about the feelings that

⁵² See Appendix E which includes a table where the different *casos nodales* are related to their respective axis, and linked to regions, dynamics, and historical periods of the Colombian conflict.

⁵³ The *FilBo* takes place every year at the *Corferias* Convention Center in the center-west of the Colombian capital. The venue has a roof-covered area of 44,430 m² (478,200 sq ft) divided into pavilions and 15,000 m² (160,000 sq ft) of open spaces.

⁵⁴ For a complete visual of the architectural project, please visit: <http://yemailarquitectura.co/portfolio/pabellon-museo-la-memoria-proceso/>.

war had provoked in them, to which they could respond with positive notions such as hope, empathy and solidarity, or negative notions such as hatred, resignation and isolation. A subzone introduced the exhibition project, in which the Museum's approach was defined as a "work in progress." This section comprised a series of self-reflexive questions about the challenges emerging when seeking to narrate the armed conflict.

Each axis portrayed different cases (See Appendix E). In order to present each one of them, the curators used narrations made by Land, Water and Body, as well as infographics and maps providing general information about the conflict's dynamics, and lists of the different armed groups and civil organizations involved in each case. Each zone presented an array of audiovisual productions, installations and artistic expressions developed, in many cases by victims and depicting a wide range of memorial practices. During their tour, visitors heard sounds, accents and stories from all over the country; for example, the *corridos*-style songs of Putumayo that tell the stories of the displacement and stigmatization of this region's population, and the Afro-Colombian music and rhythms created by citizen organizations of Buenaventura to manifest their social and political demands. The visitors could also view everyday objects such as the black tunics and stones used during the pacifist demonstrations of the Popular Feminine Organization (*Organizacion Femenina Popular*), and artifacts evoking the stories of resilience of bodies scarred by war, in the installation "*Cuerpos biográficos*," or Biographic Bodies (See Appendix G, Images 20 and 21).⁵⁵

The notion of "home" was central in *Voces para transformar a Colombia*. The pavilion's pedagogical space (located on the second floor) featured an area called "The

⁵⁵ The installation *Cuerpos Biográficos* (Biographical Bodies) features the life stories of survivors of the conflict who have suffered a vast range of harm inflicted to their bodies (forcibly recruited ex-combatants of the guerrillas; transgender victims of sexual abuse; victims of terrorist attacks on wealthy classes of Bogotá; soldiers of the Colombian Army who were wounded by landmines). *Cuerpos Biográficos* was one the most visited and emotionally intense parts of the exhibit. This was in great part because in spite of featuring a diverse group of victims, the installation was able to successfully create a space to commemorate their suffering collectively, focusing on the universality of pain and resilience and not on the potential differences of their individual stories and the conflict narratives they might evoke.

House” in the walls of which visitors could leave messages. This space was directly, and physically, linked to the Exile area located in the centre of the first floor, which sought to evoke the distance between the Land and the millions of Colombians living in exile, as well as the emptiness of the houses they abandoned. (See Appendix G, Image 9).

The Exit Hall provided visitors with tools for engagement in the defense of human rights and collected the public’s ideas for Colombia’s transformation (See Appendix G, Image 32). In this area, the public could also sign the visitors’ book, available in physical and digital formats, as well as respond to the public survey carried out by Museum mediators.

During the two-week span of *FilBo* 2018, more than 70,000 people visited the MMH pavilion. The public was able to experience the exhibition and also had access to an extensive programming agenda of more than 100 events organized by the CNMH, on the temporary premises of the MMH. These events included talks, commemorative events, workshops, concerts and plays, with the participation of victims’ organizations from across the country, as well as national and international experts.⁵⁶ A group of more mediators⁵⁷, including the exhibition’s curators and representatives of victims’ organizations, provided guided tours during the two weeks of the event.

The exhibition space design, the project’s mediation strategies and its programming coalesced as a very dynamic two-week happening. During their visit to the exhibition, visitors could take part in commemorations and memory workshops offered in the “memorial” space. They were also welcomed to visit the library, where the CNMH publications were distributed for free; attend live radio broadcasting sessions; and visit grassroots museums and places of memory throughout the country, with the help of virtual reality technology (See Appendix E).

⁵⁶ For the complete programming offer, please visit: <http://museodememoria.gov.co/programacion/>.

⁵⁷ The exhibition’s mediation team consisted of more than 20 students who attended a series of comprehensive workshops and conferences for an intensive six-month period (C. Lleras, personal communication, 2018).

The first iteration of *Voces para transformar a Colombia* in Bogotá has successfully started the process of introducing the MMH project to Colombian society. The arrangement of the space, as well as exposure to the programming and exhibition content allowed the public to have direct contact with victims' representatives and researchers resulting in spontaneous encounters and discussions. The event also facilitated the meeting between organizations of victims from inhospitable regions of the country, where encounters in person are otherwise difficult. The Museum team was able to collect the impressions and opinions of a significant group of citizen-visitors while offering a space for listening to the voices that had been silenced for too long and had rarely, if ever, been heard in the country's capital⁵⁸.

In the upcoming months, the MMH intends to take *Voces para transformar a Colombia* to other cultural events in Colombian regions such as in Medellín (September 2018), Villavicencio, Riohacha and Cali. The Museum aims to present the project to as many citizens as possible while at the same time collecting their opinions, which will nourish the comprehensive development process of this unique national memorial museum.

3.4 Communicating through historical, memorial and activist language

To conclude this chapter, I will now present the different languages and discourses interacting in the exhibition, from the perspective of its narrative script. Exhibitions not only engage in the transmission of information, they also tell stories and stage discourses (Macleod et al., 2012). In a memorial museum, truth-seeking and truth-telling must be harmonized with the commemoration of the victims' suffering in order to achieve the museum's institutional objectives. In the case of the MMH, attending to the victims' needs and requests and strengthening the collective memory of the Colombian armed conflict implies communicating at least three levels of information.

⁵⁸ During the exhibition, the Museum conducted an ethnographical study as well as a qualitative study consisting of several thousand surveys (C. Lleras, personal communication, 2018).

I will refer to these levels as three different discourses: scientific, derived from the research legacy of the CNMH; testimonial, conveyed by the survivors' stories, and that discourse which is related to the memory practices of the victims' communities. Lleras refers to these narrative levels as historical, of memory and activist (Cristina Lleras, 2017).⁵⁹

Authors such as Geoffrey White (1997) and Edward Linenthal (1995) explain the differences and even potential tensions between historical and survivors' discourses in memorial museums. They assign a pedagogical or museum-like educational function to the historical discourses, and a more emotive or memorial-like function to the survivors' discourses (White, 1997). According to Linenthal, the commemorative voice is individual and intimate; "It speaks with the authority of the witness." On the other hand, the historical voice is more detached and reflective: "It seeks to discern motives, understand actions, and discuss consequences that may have been difficult to analyze completely during the event itself." (Linenthal, 1995, p. BI).

Although distinct historical and commemorative voices are usually articulated in memorial museums, it is understood that detaching testimonials from any explanation regarding the social conditions, causes and consequences of violence can lead to what Posso has called the "trap of pain dramaturgy." This refers to the act of displaying the victims' pain and intimate emotions, expecting such a collective emotional exercise to allow the citizen-visitors proper mourning, impeding the emergence of feelings of hate or desire for retribution (Posso, 2016, p. 65).

For the MMH curatorial team, it was clear that the voices of victims and survivors had to be at the center of the project [Lorena Luengas (MMH curator), 2017; Martha Nubia Bello (MMH director 2015-2017)]. However, they were also aware of the limitations of such an approach. According to Bello, the MMH's first exhibition had to expose the victims' experiences but at the same time indicate the connections

⁵⁹ In this context, an activist discourse is one that derives from the organizational processes of communities and their memory practices in the regions, which have been characterized by the claim of constitutional rights in Colombia.

between these stories and the socio-political and economic dynamics of the country. There was a need to expose the reasons underlying the elicited events, thereby demonstrating that war in Colombia was not irrational, and that its atrocities exceeded the realm of irrational horror. Bello admits that the life stories of victims are powerful and compelling, but she thinks that much more has to be communicated for the exhibition to convey and explain the complexity of the intricate Colombian conflict. Furthermore, in the case of activist language, the curatorial team placed at the very centre of its messages the advocacy for individual and collective rights and the enhancement of democratic conditions through memory. These aspects were central for the selection of messages, themes, and displays of the exhibition.

Historical, commemorative, and activist discourses are intertwined throughout the MMH's exhibition. An example of this is the commitment of *Voces para transformar a Colombia* to the concept of shared authority, according to which victims and survivors are presented as experts on the dynamics of the Colombian conflict. For instance, in the Water axis, the communities from El Magdalena River developed a cartographic display to explain the transformations of the river during the war, along with the importance of the public nature of resources. These maps depict the course of the Magdalena River in the town of Gamarra, located on the Caribbean coast of Colombia. In them, María Benítez, a social leader of the region, represents the state of the river's surrounding areas before and after the conflict's irruption and the subsequent implementation of large-scale projects for the exploitation of natural resources in the region. Benitez's map features a set of transformations and adverse effects (pollution, deforestation, deviation of the river's course) imposed on the ecosystem of the Magdalena River, thereby affecting the lives of the local communities. (See Appendix G, Image 11.)

A unique choice of narrative voice enriched this *mise-en-espace*. The introductory zone of *Voces para transformar a Colombia* was preceded by three texts written in the first person by the land, the body, and the water in which each element

tells the story of the conflict from its particular perspective.⁶⁰ For example, the Land narration reads:

I am the smell of freshly sown black earth, I am a landscape, and I am root. The geography of feelings, roots and home are created over me. In me and for me, everyone defines themselves: the community in its territory; the neighbours in their town; the farmers and owners in their *terroirs*.

I am a roof and a home. Social links are created over me; I am the space of dreams and the land of the ancestors. In me live the voices of the past, present and future.

But, if I spoke... if I dared to say what they did to me, I would say that **it was not a matter of bad luck or chance.**

My soil has been the greed of many. From having enough space to feed a family, to grow dreams or to celebrate the rituals of indigenous or black people, I became a point on the map of war, on a route to seize and on land to exploit and benefit by a few. They reduced my horizons.

The war imposed on me such violence and fear that it forced many of my children and guests to abandon me or to bury their own, making them lose everything they had built. **But this war has not only been waged by the armed ones.** Many without rifles financed it and took advantage of the atmosphere of anxiety: they bought me, sold me, charged a price for me. They were enriched at the cost of the death, the uprooting and the pain of many.

Therefore, resisting has been the most laborious task. Because whoever cultivates the land knows what it means to return to it. The struggle of those who have been deprived of their land and exiled has been lengthy, often tortuous. It is a symbol of strength, conviction, dignity and honor to their dead. It is done for only one purpose: to re-cultivate and start over me, their home.⁶¹

Through this highly unusual and original narrative approach, the curators brought into play the organic nature of the exhibition's structure and attempted to unify the several voices within the *mise-en-espace*. These poetical texts are rich in metaphors and were written in a simple and evocative language. Through them the curators invited the

⁶⁰ These texts will re-appear in the exhibition space to introduce each axis.

⁶¹ Translated by the author. Text in bold as in the original version. For the original text, see Appendix F.

visitors to reflect on the consequences of war and the hardships imposed on those that have survived its horrors. These narrations present the main messages of the exhibition in an accessible way and set the tone of the experience that the public is about to undergo; one that is emotional but, at the same time, an experience expected to lead every visitor towards a thoughtful review of their understanding of the conflict.

When combining these different discourses and languages, a balance was sought between the publics' affective and rational responses. *Voces para transformar a Colombia* was an attempt to implement a "pedagogy of witnessing" in the sense that it fostered the public's empathy toward the survivors by making it possible for them to be the witness of their experiences and at the same time, provided the visitors with a *mise-en-espace* that was favourable to the enhancement of their critical analysis of the conflict's dynamics (Simon, 2011a, p. 208).

CONCLUSION

When I began this research in 2015, the Colombian Museum of Historical Memory (MMH) was a barely known institution, with a small team and minimal information available to its credit. Three years later, the Museum building is yet to be built. However, much has been done. The absence of a physical space provided the MMH with the opportunity to focus on its conceptualization and commit to submitting this conceptual process to the test. The project of a first major travelling exhibition, as a prelude to the Museum's first permanent exhibition, gave the MMH the unique occasion to collect the opinion of multiple audiences and to submit its work to their scrutiny. The first stop of the national tour of *Voces para transformar a Colombia* welcomed more than 70,000 visitors in the two-week period of its presentation in Bogotá. The show successfully launched the project of introducing the Museum to Colombian society. The MMH is an institution in full development, eager to find its home within a physical space. Its building is scheduled to become a reality in 2020.

The specific demands of undertaking a research project on an evolving subject such as a national memorial museum under construction has shaped the methodology and scope of this TD. I aimed to retrace the development of the Museum without knowing how such a process would ultimately unfold. These circumstances led me to embrace methodological and conceptual approaches that were versatile and entailed a significant amount of time and resources.

My commitment to this research was aided by the generous access granted to me by the Museum team to follow its development. This included gaining access to the conceptual process and to the early design stages of the Museum's first exhibition, which are formative moments for any institution. I was equally fortunate to attend the first display of the *Voces para transformar a Colombia* exhibition and thereby witness the concretization of the curatorial team's efforts, during a critical time for the country

before the presidential elections of May 2018 and amid a complex peacebuilding process.

This level of access to my subject and object of study provided me with substantial insight, enabling me to answer the questions that guided this research. Nevertheless, I also found that I needed to enhance my arguments with a considerable number of contextualizing elements —both historical and related to the memorial context in Colombia. This offered me and my readers essential pieces of information to understand the political struggles for memory that have played out in the MMH's development. I examined the institutionalization of historical memory in Colombia, in parallel to the activist and counter-insurgent standpoints regarding the memory of the country's violent episodes (Chapter 2). This undertaking gave me the relevant insight to analyze the process of adapting the MMH's legal mandate into an institutional structure and identity (Chapter 3) as well as to a curatorial framework (Chapter 4).

The MMH's social construction is critical to the understanding of the Museum's institutional development and its transition from a legal mandate to the concrete form of its first exhibition. The Museum's institutional framework, its museological program and philosophical underpinnings —conceptual and museological guidelines—, emanated from numerous consultations with a range of actors and the legacy of community work conducted by the CNMH.

The consultation strategies developed to foster the Museum's social construction led to the design of a first major travelling exhibition based and focused on the victims' memorial practices. Displaying *Voces para transformar a Colombia* in the country's regions sought to enhance visitor-citizens' participation in the continued shaping of this national memorial institution and to respond to the popular mandate of creating a decentralized museum rooted in the "*territorios*" (a common expression that refers to the peripheral urban and rural zones of the country). The particular importance given to the mediation, pedagogy and virtual dimensions of the MMH also reflected the requirement of creating a "living" and dynamic museum.

Responding to its legal mission —seeking the strengthening of the collective memory related to an ongoing and lengthy armed conflict— the MMH had to define its role in a society currently undergoing a peacebuilding process. Likewise, in order to provide measures of symbolic reparation to the victims of the war in Colombia, the MMH had to establish the terms and scope of its role in such an endeavour. Aware of its limitations, the Museum did not seek to define or to provide a unified narrative of the Colombian conflict, as one of several institutions dedicated to contributing to the victims' symbolic reparation.

The MMH acknowledges that as an institution it cannot aspire to successfully provide reparations to the victims and survivors of the conflict on its own. This is impossible as it is a subjective task which depends on a range of external institutions and measures. What the Museum *can* do is to feature the voices of the victims that remain unheard by the general public, relaying the stories of pain and resilience that do not have a platform from which to be heard, to Colombian citizens from the urban centers and others, to those whose sole source of information regarding the conflict is the press.

For the MMH, building a trust relationship with the communities directly affected by the war is essential. The MMH must demonstrate that its approach, characteristics and actions can be of great benefit to the victimized communities. As stated in Chapter 2, the institutionalization of the historical memory in Colombia has the challenge of responding to several of the arguments coming from the field of activist memory. According to this standpoint, historical memory efforts by the State must represent the victims' voices, establish who is responsible for violations of human rights and address the structural causes of violence in Colombia.

In what is a long-term vision and reflecting on its role in the process of peacebuilding, the MMH significantly aims at contributing to the reparation of victims and the healing of Colombian society by providing its publics with a platform and a *mise-en-espace* that promote reflections leading to the support of the social conditions that can make the recurrence of violence less probable.

The MMH does not limit itself to a repertory of set facts and stories. Instead, it aims to provide a conceptual structure capable of presenting the complexities of the Colombian war. Shedding light on the *continuum* of violence underlying the country's contemporary conflict and resorting to the metaphoric concepts of Land, Body and Water, the exhibition *Voces para transformar a Colombia* introduces the visitors to a creative and organic way of listening to the victims' and survivors' voices. This structure enables the Museum to convey its key messages regarding such a devastating and lengthy war.

While the MMH has specific goals regarding its relationship with the victims' organizations and the country's regions, it also has the mission of engaging with segments of the public that are less inclined to be enthusiastic about the Museum's existence and its role in the State's peacebuilding efforts, such as those who defend a counter-insurgent interpretation of the conflict. Land, Water, and Body are notions promoting a conceptual structure that allows any citizen to reflect on the dynamics of the war in Colombia in less traditional and even ideological ways. The Museum's proposal aims to highlight the defence of Colombia's regional, geographical, cultural, sexual, ethnic and political diversities as one of the keys to "the development of critical and responsible citizenship with respect for life and human rights" (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2017, p. 29). It also intends to acknowledge the pain of all the victims and Colombian citizens who, in different ways, have been affected by the conflict and would greatly benefit from a negotiated peace.

What was the process of adapting the legal mandate underpinning the Colombian Museum of Historical Memory into an institutional mission and a curatorial framework? How has the MMH conceived of and structured an exhibition about the Colombian conflict that is capable of addressing its complexity? What messages did the MMH seek to transmit with the exhibition *Voces para transformar a Colombia*? And what were the strategies chosen by the Museum's team in order to integrate the victims' symbolic reparation measures and the 'reinforcement of collective memory' into the Museum's first official exhibition? Thus far, I have explained the process of

the Museum's development from Law to its first exhibition, and the characteristics of its approach in relation to symbolic reparations and collective memory. I have also presented the curatorial approaches allowing the MMH to present the complexities of the Colombian conflict through a conceptual structure and a set of specific messages. It remains to be considered how the MMH contributes to broader reflections about the role of a national memorial museum as part of a State's attempts to repair past atrocities. This question is fundamental and addressing it meaningfully would require a lengthier TD. However, I would like to share a few final reflections in this respect.

As a national memorial museum featuring difficult stories related to the Colombian armed conflict, the MMH provides a space of encounter and public representation of voices previously excluded from the public sphere, such as those of the victims (Jelin, 2002). Besides providing the country with a platform for democratic debate on its contemporary struggles for memory, the MMH establishes a set of common understandings from which to start such national conversations. The MMH also seeks to confront its visitors with the magnitude of the violence in Colombia, generating more questions and reflections than answers and certitudes and by doing so inviting them to embrace narratives of the Colombian war that provide un-conclusive interpretations of the historical events and stress the complexities of the social dynamics that have intervened in the Colombian violence.

Although commonly associated with the past, museums are institutions reflecting a society's present and aim to shape its future. Present-day Colombia is witnessing an upsurge of memory practices and collective initiatives related to the memory of the conflict. The Truth Commission is expected to deliver its results in 2020. This event and the reincorporation of ex-combatants into civil life and their participation in politics are part of the context in which Colombians are adapting to the new realities of addressing political dissent in peaceful ways.

However, violence has not vanished. In addition to the ongoing activities of guerrillas and paramilitary groups, since the signing of the Peace Accord with the FARC, there has been the selective and continued assassination of social leaders. The

more than 400 victims include land restitution advocates, community organizers who defend the fair exploitation of natural resources, political leaders of parties supporting the peace process, as well as former coca leaf growers committed to the Peace Accord. This phenomenon indicates that violence in the country is undergoing transformation rather than diminishing. Therefore, one of the significant contributions of the MMH is highlighting the continued cycles of violence in Colombia and the logic underlying these dynamics —ethnic, cultural and sexual discrimination, unequal distribution of land and resources, political persecution and stigmatization, thereby striving to be “a space in which a pedagogy of coexistence and peacebuilding is promoted” (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2017, p. 29)

After my visit of the first presentation of the exhibition *Voces para transformar a Colombia*, I was very surprised by the positive reaction of the public and the communities who had participated in the project. The MMH is adequately responding to the particular moment of the country’s transition into peace. Part of the success of the exhibition is due to the elastic nature of its conceptual structure, which is enhanced by an institutional commitment to privileging the legacy of memory practices from the survivors. These factors will contribute to discouraging future violence, and help society to acknowledge that the Colombian conflict does not have a single narrative and that its solution and comprehension are the consequence of lengthy and continued efforts. The MMH’s inaugural exhibition contributes significantly to the future of this country in transition by transmitting the message that the violence experienced in Colombia needs to cease being normalized, and its mechanisms need to be addressed individually by the citizens and collectively as a society.

The connotations of creating a Colombian national museum require further examination to more adequately comprehend the implications of the MMH’s emergence in the country’s cultural and political landscape. Museums participate in the consolidation of citizenship, and the fact that in Colombia the network of museums, including national museums, remains poorly developed indicates the limitations of, and opportunities within, this field. Up to now, the MMH’s emergence has brought vitality

to the country's cultural landscape. This Museum has the symbolic importance of being both a state-sponsored *and* a cultural institution contributing to peacebuilding. Demystifying the museum institution, bringing it beyond its walls, to diverse regions and publics, is a noteworthy gesture towards the strengthening of citizenship and democratic values in Colombia.

The MMH —and the Human Rights Archive that will be housed in its building— will carry forward the legacy of the CNMH. Several questions remain regarding the contribution of the Colombian case to the study of the memorialization of past atrocities through national memorial institutions. Their answers will come with time as this is an emerging museum evolving in the crossroads of several social transformations. The ways in which the MMH will continue to address the challenges of the country's peacebuilding endeavour require continued study, which I intend to undertake during my doctoral research. I will continue this personal and academic journey and aim to analyze more profoundly the ways in which the memory practices promoted by the government and those developed by grassroots victims' groups will continue to coexist in the Colombian Museum of Historical Memory.

APPENDIX A
METHODOLOGICAL INFORMATION

1. List of participants in the semi-directed interviews

Name	Position	Interview date
Camila Medina	CNCHM's Head of Research (<i>Dirección de Construcción de la Memoria</i>)	March 30, 2017
Martha Nubia Bello	MHM Director (2015-2017)	April 5, 2017
Luis Carlos Manajarrés	Curator Axis "Body"	April 18, 2017
Sofia Gonzalez	Curator Axis "Land" and "Water"	April 18, 2017
Lorena Luengas	Curator Axis "Water"	May 2, 2017
Cristina Lleras	Head of the Curatorial Team and Curator Axis "Land"	May 12, 2017
Catalina Orozco	MHM's Head of Education and Programming (2012-2017)	June 14, 2017
Luis Carlos Sanchez	MHM Director (2017- present)	May 2, 2018

2. Questionnaire of the semi-directed interviews.

The following questions were designed to guide the semi-directed interviews with the above-mentioned participants.

- a) What is the Museum's mission? Moreover, how do you understand it?
- b) What is your role in the organization? What is the path that brought you to your current position?
- c) What is your contribution to the process of creating the Museum? How did you participate in the negotiations within the museum once the State created the institution? When were you hired?
- d) How would you characterize this first stage of the Museum? What was at stake? What had to be negotiated? Were there "red lines"/ limits not to be crossed?
- e) Can you give an example of negotiation (of the exhibition's content and approach) between the members of the curatorial team? What postures were adopted, what arguments or decisions were made?
- f) Each member of a team has his/her own personality and contributes to the collective effort in a unique way. How do you do this and what is your personal vision for the Museum?

- g) Which actors influence and inform the process of the Museum's conceptualization (e.g. victims, government agents, theoretical frameworks); which actors inform your standpoint?
- h) Has the Museum done a public study? How was the public opinion consulted? Which segments of the population were consulted?
- i) Is it possible to speak of a dichotomy 'victim citizen / non-victim citizen'? If so, how to differentiate their interests or expectations vis-à-vis the Museum? Is it possible to harmonize them?
- j) Do you think the Museum should contribute to Colombia's national reconciliation? If yes, how? Do you think the Museum will be judged in this regard?
- k) Do you think the Museum should contribute to the visitors' understanding of the conflict? If yes, how? Do you think the Museum will be judged in this regard?
- l) How will the Museum's philosophy be reflected in its exhibitions and programming? How will the public perceive the Museum's philosophy during their visit?
- m) What is the current stage of advancement of the Museum's first exhibition curatorial script?
- n) How are the testimonies of the victims harmonized with the global narratives of the conflict, in the Museum?
- o) How can one explain to external observers the Museum's relationship with Colombia's national government?

3. List of MHM meetings and events observed

Date	Attendees	Purpose of the Meeting or Event
March 24, 2017	MHM's curatorial team and CNCHM's Division of Victims' Participation	To present and discuss the exhibition axis and cases. To discuss the collaboration strategies between the curatorial team and the Division.
April 5, 2017	MHM's programming team and general public	Movie projection about victims of political violence in Chile at Bogotá's Cinematheque.
April 6, 2017	Curatorial team and research assistants of the axis "Land"	To present and discuss the advancement of the content selection process.
April 20, 2017	Curatorial team and representatives of the education section	To present and discuss the progress of each axis (content, sources, displays). To discuss the mediators' training and team composition.
April 21, 2017	Curatorial team and members of the <i>Observatorio de Poéticas Sociales</i> ⁵⁵	To present and discuss the progress of each axis (content, sources, displays). To discuss the audiovisual language to be included in the exhibition.
April 28, 2017	Curatorial team and representatives of the education section	To present and discuss the progress of each axis (content, sources, displays). To discuss the pedagogical dimensions of the exhibition.
May 11, 2017	Curatorial team and members of the <i>Observatorio de Poéticas Sociales</i>	To discuss the possibilities and limitations of including a timeline in the exhibition.
May 18, 2018	Museum team, national and international guests, general public	International Museum Day celebration, whose theme was "Museums and contested histories: Saying the unspeakable in museums."

⁵⁵ The *Observatorio de Poéticas Sociales* (Observatory of Social Poetics) from the Faculty of Arts at the University Jorge Tadeo Lozano in Bogotá is a consultative body that gave advice to the curatorial team of the Museum regarding the aesthetic language of the exhibition and the function of the artistic and audiovisual devices within the narrative of the exhibition.

4. Participant observation analysis grids

Date, place:

Meeting subject:

Participants (Organization of the meeting, configuration of the room):

Issues discussed:

Interventions and arguments conveyed:

Decisions:

Elements observed (a-l) and how they manifest (if observed):

- a. Interests of victims, respect towards victims
- b. Interests of the State, the government
- c. Ethical constraints
- d. Political constraints. Ideologies.
- e. Legal constraints
- f. National reconciliation
- g. Understanding / pedagogy of the conflict
- h. Global narrative
- i. Multiple accounts
- j. Museum challenges
- k. Theoretical sources

Date, place:

Event:

Attendees:

Interventions and arguments conveyed:

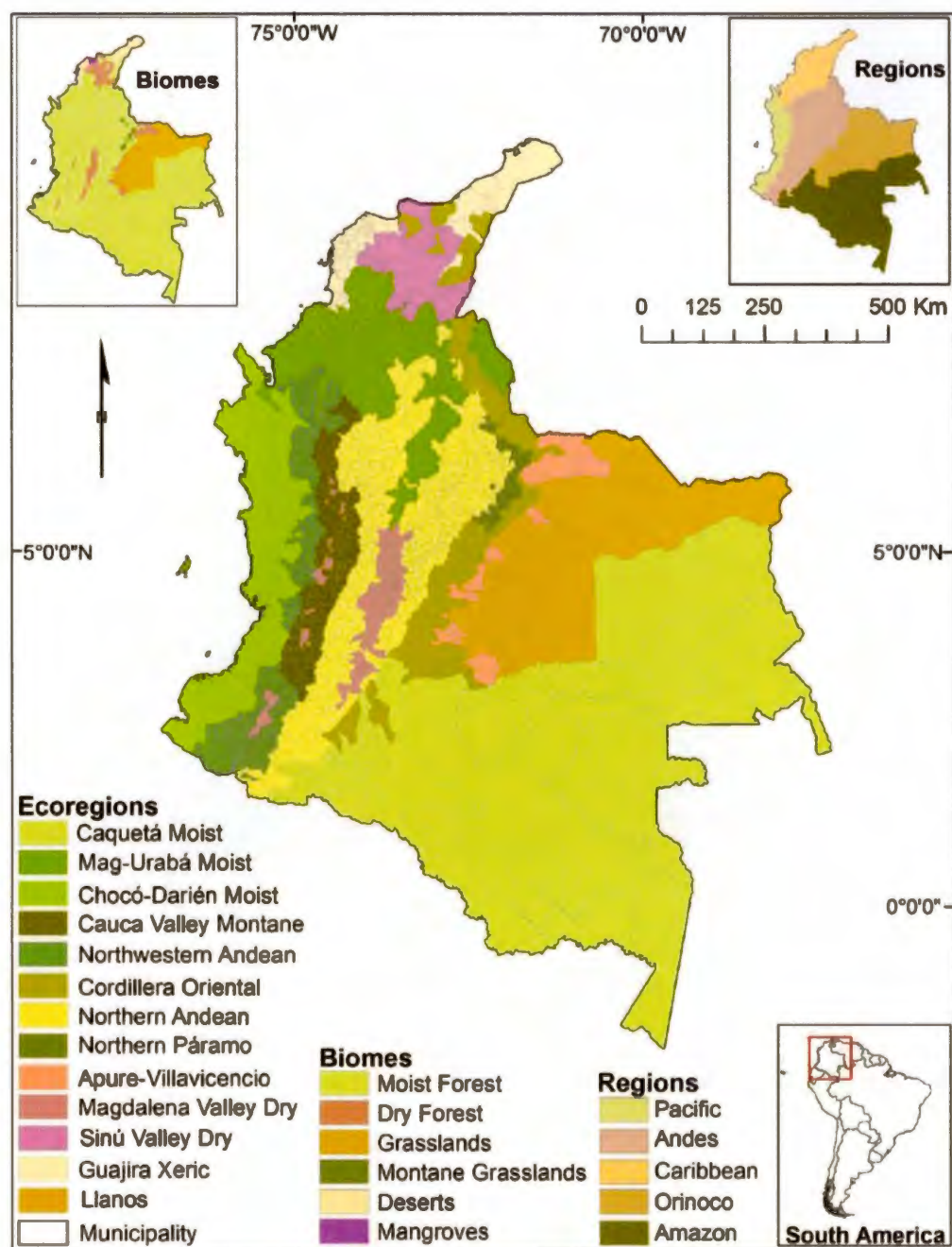
Elements observed (a-l) and how they manifest (if observed):

- a. Interests of victims, respect towards victims
- b. Interests of the State, the government
- c. Ethical constraints
- d. Political constraints. Ideologies.
- e. Legal constraints
- f. National reconciliation
- g. Understanding / pedagogy of the conflict
- h. Global narrative
- i. Multiple accounts
- j. Museum challenges
- k. Theoretical sources

APPENDIX B
MAPS



1. Colombia's physical map. Source: Instituto Geográfico Agustín Codazzi



2. Map of the 13 ecoregions in Colombia. Insert shows the distribution of the six biomes, and the five regions. Source: Sánchez Cuervo, A.M., Aide, M., Clark, M. & Etter, A. (2012) "Land Cover Change in Colombia: Surprising Forest Recovery Trends between 2001 and 2010." *PLoS ONE* 7 (8):1-14.



3. Map of Armed Guerilla Groups and War in Colombia, January 2006. Source: UN Environmental Programme (UNEP)



4. Map of Armed Groups and Coca Crops in Colombia, 2017. Source: Mike Shand/International Crisis Group

APPENDIX C
TIMELINE

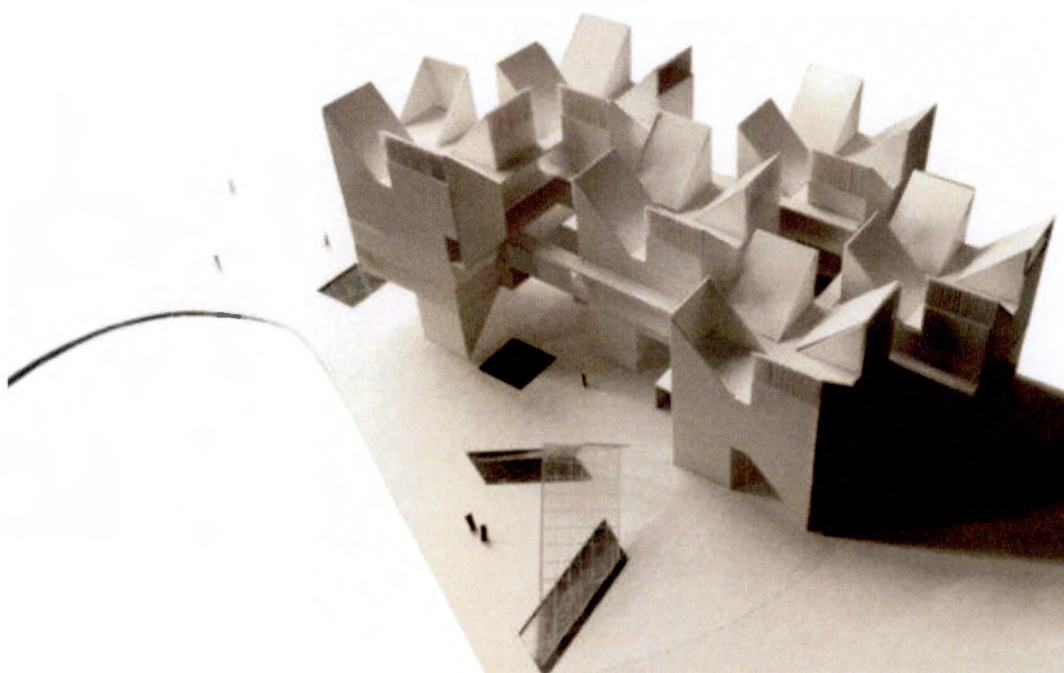
TIMELINE⁶³

■ 1991	Constitutional reform and adoption of Colombia's Political Constitution of 1991
■ 1998-2002	Andrés Pastrana's government
■ 1998-2002	Failed peace negotiations with the FARC
■ 2002-2010	Álvaro Uribe's government
■ 2002-2010	Democratic Security Doctrine
■ 2003-2008	Demobilization of the AUC
■ 2005	Peace and Justice Law (Colombia's National Law 975 of 2005)
■ 2005	Creation of the Historical Memory Group (GMH)
■ 2011	Victims' and Land Restitution Law (Colombia's National Law 1448 of 2011)
■ 2011	Creation of Colombia's National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH) and the Colombian Museum of Historical Memory (MMH), then known as <i>Museo Nacional de la Memoria</i> .
■ 2012 - 2014	Juan Carlos Posada's direction of the MMH
■ 2012 (November)	Beginning of the peace negotiations with the FARC
■ 2013	Publication of the <i>¡Basta Ya!</i> Report
■ 2015 - 2017	Martha Nubia Bello's direction of the MMH
■ 2015	MMH's architectural competition
■ 2016 (Mars)	Beginning of peace negotiations with the ELN

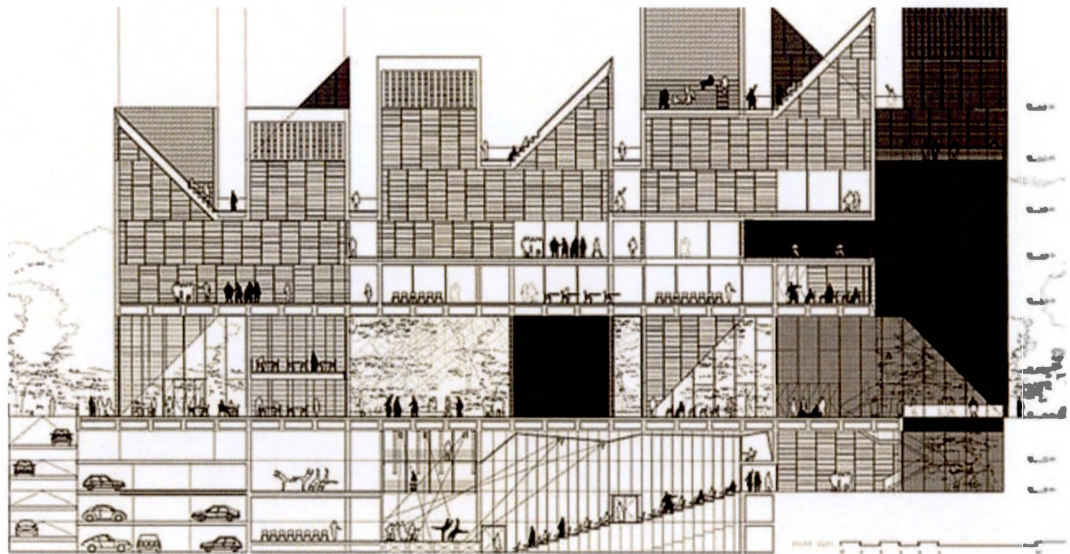
⁶³ ■ Contemporary Colombian political milestones and events related to the conflict's recent history.
■ Events related to Colombia's historical memory institutions. ■ MMH milestones

- 2016 (September) Signature of the Cartagena Peace Agreement between the Government and the FARC
- 2016 (October) Peace Plebiscite. Voters reject the Government's peace deal with the FARC by a narrow margin in a national referendum
- 2017 (October) President Santos is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize
- 2017 (November) Signature of the Final Peace Agreement (*Teatro Colón* Agreement) between the Government and the FARC
- 2017 - present Luis Carlos Sánchez's direction of the MMH
- 2018 (April 17-May 2) The first MMH exhibition *Voces para transformar a Colombia* is presented at Bogotá's International book fair (*FilBo*)
- 2018 (May) Beginning of the Truth Commission (*Comisión para el esclarecimiento de la verdad, la convivencia y la no repetición*)
- 2018 (August) Beginning of Iván Duque's presidential mandate
- 2018 MMH's scheduled ground breaking
- 2020 Scheduled opening of the MMH building

APPENDIX D
IMAGES OF THE MUSEUM PLAN



Architectural model of the MHM by estudio.entresitio + MGP Arquitectura y Urbanismo. All Rights Reserved



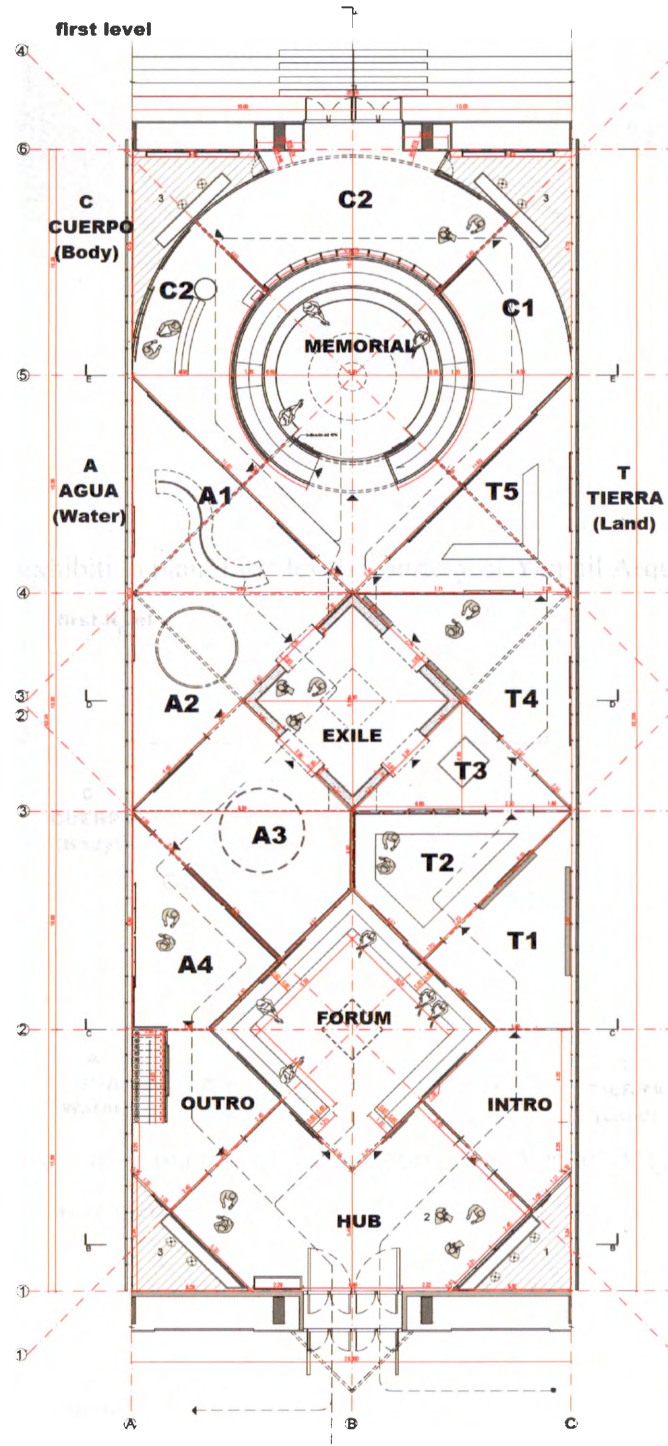
Section drawing of the MHM by estudio.entresitio + MGP Arquitectura y Urbanismo.
All Rights Reserved



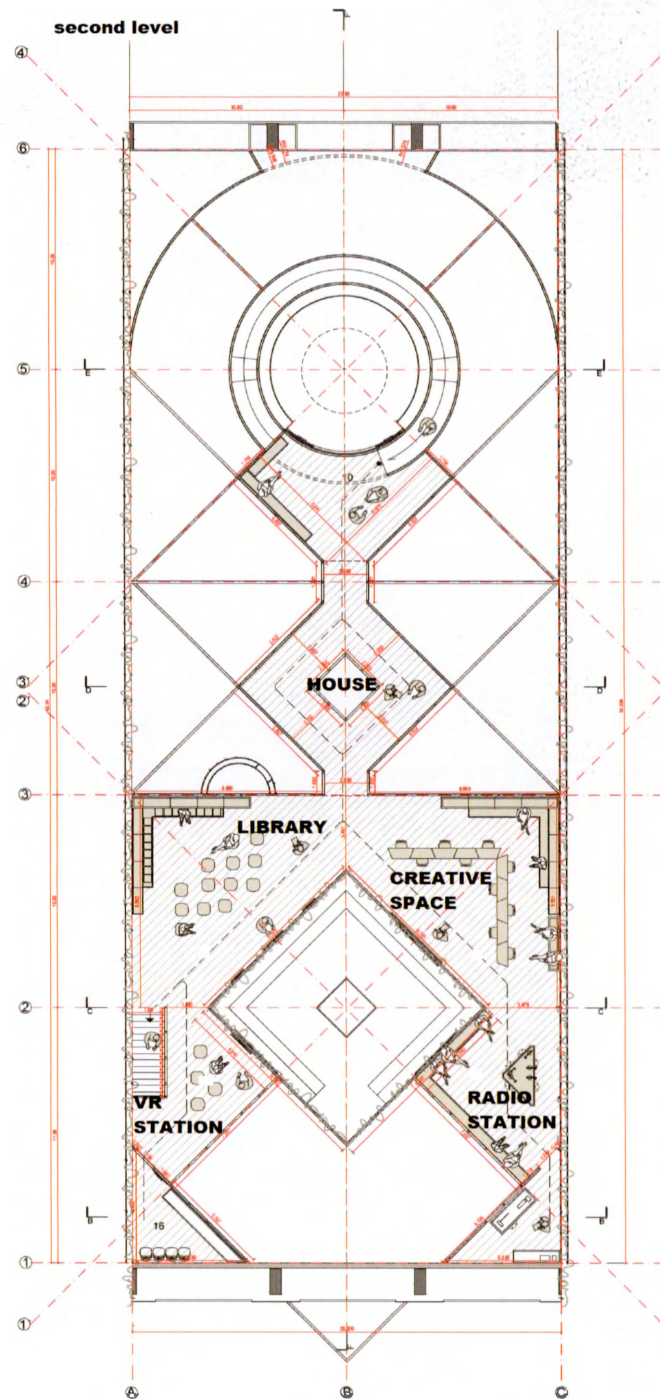
Rendering of the MHM building in Bogotá, Colombia, by Estudio.Entresitio and MGP. All Rights Reserved

APPENDIX E
2018 MHM's *FILBO* PAVILION

1. Pavilion and exhibition plan. First level. Courtesy of Yemail Arquitectura



2. Pavilion and exhibition plan. Second level. Courtesy of Yemail Arquitectura



2. Axes, zones and themes of the *FilBo* exhibition

AXIS	ZONE	CASE TITLE	ASSOCIATED THEMES	PERIOD	REGION
T. <i>Tierra</i> (Land)	T1	"Territories of the Wiwa, Kankuamo, Kogui, Arhuaco and Bari peoples. Before dawn" (<i>Territorios de los pueblos Wiwa, Kankuamo, Kogui, Arhuaco y Bari. Antes del amanecer</i>)	Dispossession and abandonment of lands; cultural damage to sacred places; cultural resistance	1492- today	Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and Highlands of Perija (Colombia's Northwest)
	T2	"La Pola and Palizua, Magdalena. Whoever is earlier in time is stronger in right." (<i>La Pola y la Palizua, Magdalena. Primeros en el tiempo, primeros en el derecho</i>)	Dispossession and land restitution; armed and unarmed actors of the conflict; State-paramilitary alliances	1980s - 2000s	Magdalena, Guajira, Cesar (Colombia's Northeast)
	T3	"Puerto Guzman, Putumayo. Living beyond the fumigation and other evils." (<i>Puerto Guzmán, Putumayo. Haciendo vida más allá de la fumiga y otros males</i>)	Coca leaf crops; forced displacement; fumigation and environmental damages; stigmatization of coca leaf growers; cultural resistance	1982 - today	Putumayo (Colombia's Southwest)

	T4	“Comuna 13 of Medellín. Never die in life.” (<i>Comuna 13 de Medellín. Nunca morir en vida</i>).	Urban military interventions; forced disappearances; extrajudicial executions; stigmatization; forced displacement; arbitrary detentions; State crimes; civil resistance; peace initiatives	1970s - today	Medellín, Antioquia (Centerwest)
	T5	“Urabá and Bajo Atrato, the land that roars.” (<i>Urabá y Bajo Atrato. La tierra que ruge</i>)	Forced displacement; clashes between various illegal armed groups; human rights violations against indigenous and Afro communities	1940s - today	Antioquia, Choco
C. <i>Cuerpo</i> (Body)	C1	“Union Patriótica. The fear of democracy”. (<i>Unión Patriótica. El miedo a la democracia</i>)	Political violence, stigmatization and persecution	1980s - today	All the country
	C2	“Biographical bodies. Corporal.” (<i>Cuerpos biográficos. Corpórea</i>)	State crimes, extrajudicial executions; sexual violence; massacres; land mines; terrorist attacks; forced disappearance; child recruiting; kidnapping; resilience	1950s - today	All the country
	C3	<i>Organización Femenina Popular</i> . Together and Invincible. (<i>Organización Femenina Popular. Juntas e Invencibles</i>).	Gender violence; peace initiatives; union leaders’ persecution; murder of social leaders	1960s - today	Santander and North Santander

A. Agua (Water)	A1	“Middle Magdalena. Yuma, a river for life” (<i>Magdalena Medio. Yuma, un rio para la vida</i>).	Forced disappearance, environmental damage; cultural damage and resilience	1960s - today	Middle Magdalena
	A2	“Flooding areas. I am not private property” (<i>Zonas inundables, no soy propiedad privada</i>).	Cultural heritage; forced displacement; stigmatization	1950s - today	Swamps throughout the country
	A3	“Buenaventura, Valle del Cauca. The people do not give up” (<i>Buenaventura, Valle del Cauca. El pueblo no se rinde carajo</i>).	Social organization; massacres; land dispossession; economic exploitation; unequal development; racism; sexual violence	1900s - today	Valle del Cauca, Colombian Pacific Coast
	A4	“Atrato River. A subject of rights.” (<i>Río Atrato. Un sujeto de derechos</i>).	Cultural and environmental damages	1980s - today	Atrato River

APPENDIX F
INTRODUCTION TEXTS

LAND⁵⁷

I am the smell of freshly sown black earth, I am a landscape, and I am root. The geography of feelings, roots and home are created over me. In me and for me, everyone defines themselves: the community in its territory; the neighbours in their town; the farmers and owners in their *terroirs*.

I am a roof and a home. Social links are created over me; I am the space of dreams and the land of the ancestors. In me live the voices of the past, present and future.

But, if I spoke... if I dared to say what they did to me, I would say that **it was not a matter of bad luck or chance.**

My soil has been the greed of many. From having enough space to feed a family, to grow dreams or to celebrate the rituals of indigenous or black people, I became a point on the map of war, on a route to seize and on land to exploit and benefit by a few. They reduced my horizons.

The war imposed on me such violence and fear that it forced many of my children and guests to abandon me or to bury their own, making them lose everything they had built. **But this war has not only been waged by the armed ones.** Many without rifles financed it and took advantage of the atmosphere of anxiety: they bought me, sold me, charged a price for me. They were enriched at the cost of the death, the uprooting and the pain of many.

Therefore, resisting has been the most laborious task. Because whoever cultivates the land knows what it means to return to it. The struggle of those who have been deprived of their land and exiled has been lengthy, often tortuous. It is a symbol of strength, conviction, dignity and honor to their dead. It is done for only one purpose: to re-cultivate and start over me, their home.

⁵⁷ Introduction texts for each Axis. Author's translation. Text in bold as in original version.

BODY

No body is born for violence. So what I will tell you will fall short of what I have experienced.

I tried to forget and keep quiet to calm the pain and protect myself from the violent ones. But now I want to remember with you, to heal, to seek rest and comfort, and to prevent new bodies from suffering like me.

The war transformed me. The violent ones have humiliated me, disappeared and tortured me. They have dismembered and raped me. **They have used me.** They have forced me to stay in silence. They wanted to erase my humanity. They wanted to teach us to be distrustful and to divide us.

They have also sought to subjugate my skin and mark it; to impose their stigma and infamy guided by prejudice and hatred. They have turned me into an enemy and an objective that must be eliminated. And they have instilled fear in me, believing themselves owners of my decisions.

Many want us to believe that there are lives more valuable than others. They promote it in their speeches, and they want to convince me that some deaths should not even be mourned.

My physical, emotional and spiritual scars are real experiences of pain and, beyond their indelible marks, they have filled me with courage. I speak so that we can care about others.

That is why now we speak in the plural: we are united in solidarity to resist. We persevered, and we took the streets and the fields. We break the silence, and we scream, because we want to be bodies at the service of life. Bodies for solidarity and not for helplessness.

To finally, find each other.

WATER

I am one, but I adopt many forms. I go through mountains and plains, swim seas and plows. On the coast, I am a marine fog and in the highlands, I am the mist that caresses.

For those who inhabit the sea, the river and the swamp, I am their territory. I am also the territory of the fish that travels by my currents, the tree that I refresh and the bird that flies over me.

I maintain the life cycles that violence broke.

I was the swamp that they dried. I was the river that they diverted and repressed. Many of those who lived next to me, and took care of me, have been murdered and others have been forced to abandon me.

They have used me for war. The armed actors move by my currents, dominate my banks and control me. They are poisoning me. They throw me bodies without life to disappear; they contaminate me with mercury and I am no longer navigable in many places because they preyed on my shores. The war has caused me and those who live on me, incalculable damages.

However, I am resistance. Like a wave, I may leave, but I will come back. I reclaim my shores when flooding, I modulate the earth, I create islands and I fill the fields with life. The communities want to recover me so that we can be a family again: they sing and care for me, they return to me, they want to protect me and become my guardians. They learn new skills and tell our stories. That is how we will survive.

APPENDIX G
IMAGES OF MMH's *VOCES PARA TRANSFORMAR A COLOMBIA*
EXHIBITION, BOGOTÁ, SPRING 2018



1. Exterior façade of the theater



2. Exhibition entrance



3. Exhibition entrance hall



4. Exhibition entrance hub



5. Exhibition entrance hub



6. Memorial space



7. "La Casa" (The House)



8. Pedagogic Space



9. "El Exilio" (The Exile)



10. Entrance hall



11. Magdalena River Map made by María Benítez, a grassroots leader who depicts in this piece the damages caused to the river by the conflict and large-scale resource exploitation projects (Zone A1)



12. A mediator explains the map of cultural damage caused to the sacred places of indigenous communities in the north of Colombia. The map was created by the community (Zone T1)



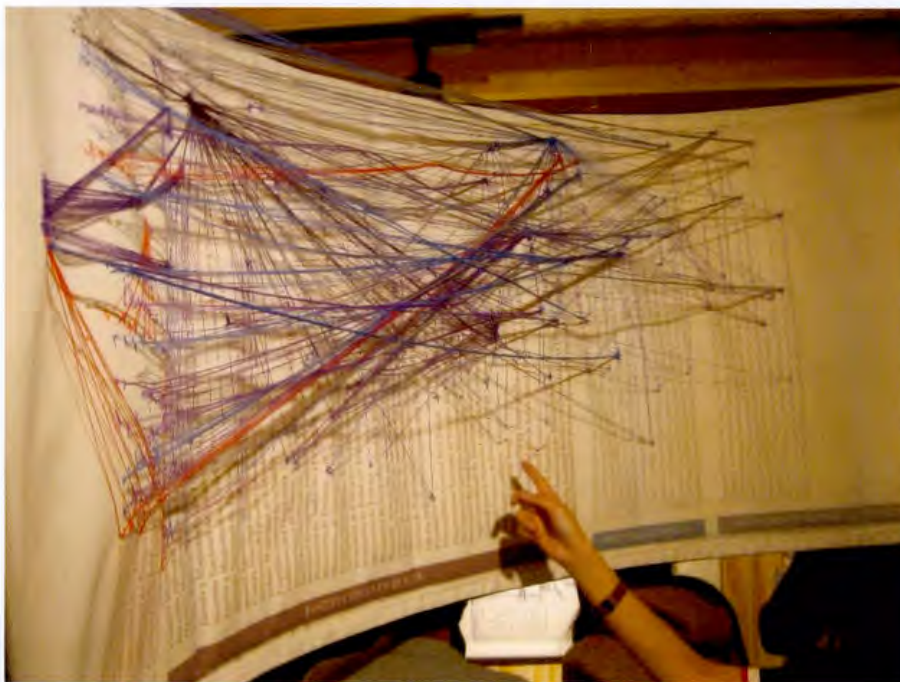
13. "Comuna 13 of Medellín. Never die in life." (Zone T4)



14. Two visitors watching the testimonial of a community leader of the Comuna 13 of Medellín (Zone T4)



15. "Puerto Guzman, Putumayo. Living beyond the fumigation and other evils". Coca leaf plant (Zone T3)



16. “La Maraña” (Tangled). The display features the intertwined connections among a range of political, bureaucratic and armed actors in the process of land dispossession. (Zone T2)



17. “The Gallery of Resistance.” Reproduction of the artistic project produced by the victims’ organization *Fundescodes* featuring the stories of the 26 massacres that occurred in Buenaventura from 1990 to 2013. (Zone A3)



18. A mediator and member of the community who created the murals talks to the public about Buenaventura's experience in the Colombian War. (Zone A3)



19. Commemorative mural made by the son of one of the members of the leftist party "Patriotic Union" (1985), which was exterminated and its genocide recognized by the Government in 2017. (Zone C1)



20. "Biographical bodies. Corporal." Detail (Zone C2)



21. "Biographical bodies. Corporal." (Zone C2)



22. “Organización Femenina Popular. Together and Invincible.” (Zone C3)



23. Rocks are among the symbolic objects used by the *Organización Femenina Popular* during their pacific manifestations. Their sound evokes the voices of those who are no longer with us. (Zone C3)



28. Workshop "Living memories" organized by the Collective AgroArte from Medellín's Comuna 13.



29. Book launch "*Un bosque de memoria viva desde la Alta Montaña del Carmen de Bolívar*" (A forest of living memory from the High Mountain of Carmen de Bolívar).

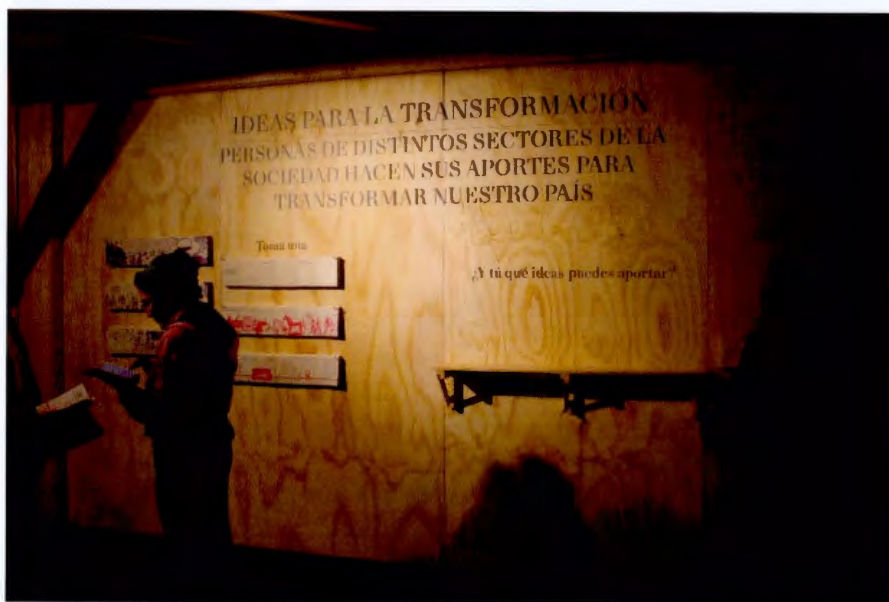
This publication is the product of a CNMH investigation and includes literary productions by the Carmen de Bolívar communities.



30. "Singing for life" concert. Performance of an ensemble of interpreters of traditional music of the Colombian Pacific. The groups that performed are based in Buenaventura and their members are part of victims' organizations.



31. Workshop "*Tejer la memoria y construir una historia de paz*" (Knitting memory and building a history of peace)



32. Outro of the exhibition. Participatory zone.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Andrieu, K. (2012). *La justice transitionnelle : de l'Afrique du Sud au Rwanda*. Paris : Gallimard.
- Antequera Guzmán, J.D. (2011). *La memoria histórica como relato emblemático*. Bogotá : Taller de Edición Rocca S.A.
- Andermann, J. (2012). Showcasing Dictatorship: Memory and the Museum in Argentina and Chile. *Journal of Educational Media, Memory & Society*, 4(2), 69-93.
- Aranguren Romero, J. P. (2012). *La gestión del testimonio y la administración de las víctimas: el escenario transicional en Colombia durante la Ley de Justicia y Paz*. Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre Editores, CLACSO.
- Arnold-de Simine, S. (2013). *Mediating memory in the museum: trauma, empathy, nostalgia*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Aronsson, P., & Elgenius, G. (2011, 28-30 April 2011). *Making national museums in Europe. A Comparative approach*. Paper presented at the EuNaMus, European National Museums: Identity politics, the uses of the past and the European citizen, Bologna.
- Ashworth, G.J. (2008). The memorialization of violence and tragedy: human trauma as heritage. In P. Howard, Graham, Brian, (Ed.), *The Ashgate research companion to heritage and identity* (pp. 231 - 244). Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing.
- Assmann, A., & Shortt, L. (Eds.). (2012). *Memory and Political Change*. UK: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Avilés, W. (2012). War, Peace, and Human Rights in Colombia. *Latin American Perspectives*, 182(39 (1), 140-146.
- Baer, A., & Sznajder, N. (2015). Ghosts of the Holocaust in Franco's mass graves: Cosmopolitan memories and the politics of "never again." *Memory Studies*, 8(3), 328-344.
- Bal, M. (1996). The Discourse of the Museum. In R. Greenberg, B. W. Ferguson, & S. Nairne (Eds.), *Thinking about exhibitions* (pp. 201-218). London, New York: Routledge.
- Bal, M. (1997). *Narratology : introduction to the theory of narrative* (2nd ed.). Toronto: Toronto : University of Toronto Press.

- Barkan, E. (2001). Legal Settlements as a Form of Cultural Politics: A Moral and Historical Framework for the Right to Reparations. *Human Rights in Development Online*, 7(1), 403-424.
- Barkan, E. (2016). Memories of Violence: Micro and Macro History and the Challenges to Peacebuilding in Colombia and Northern Ireland. *Irish Political Studies*, 31(1), 6-28.
- Becker, Howard S. (1963). *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. New York: The Free Press.
- Bedford, L. (2001). Storytelling: The Real Work of Museums. *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 44(1), 27-34.
- Bello, M.N. (2017) Personal interview. April 5, 2017.
- Bello, M.N., & Forero, M.A. (2017). *Arquitectura, memoria y reconciliación*. Bogotá: Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica.
- Berger, S. (2015). National museums in between nationalism, imperialism and regionalism, 1750 - 1914. In P. Aronsson & G. Elgenius (Eds.), *National museums and nation-building in Europe, 1750-2010: mobilization and legitimacy, continuity and change*. London: Routledge.
- Bianchini, M. C. (2014). When memory becomes heritage: Experiences from Santiago, Chile. *Culture & History Digital Journal*, 3(2), e023.
- Bickford, L. (1999). The Archival Imperative: Human Rights and Historical Memory in Latin America's Southern Cone. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 21(4), 1097-1122.
- Bonnell, J., & Roger I. Simon. (2007). 'Difficult' exhibitions and intimate encounters. *Museum & Society*, 5(2), 65-85.
- Bouvier, V.M. (Ed.) (2009). *Colombia: building peace in a time of war*. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace.
- Britzman, D. P. (1998). *Lost subjects, contested objects: Toward a psychoanalytic inquiry of learning*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Burbidge, P. (2008). Justice and Peace? – The Role of Law in Resolving Colombia's Civil Conflict, Editorial. *International Criminal Law Review*, 8, 557-587.
- Camargo, M.M. (2013). Memorias, historias y olvidos: Un análisis a algunos trabajos del grupo de memoria histórica de la Comisión Nacional de la Reparación y Reconciliación de Colombia. *Comunicación, Cultura y Política* (4)14, 149-162.

- Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. (2014). *TRI-Council Policy Statement. Ethical Conduct for the Research Involving Humans*. Canada: Government of Canada.
- Cancimance López, A. (2013). Memoria y violencia política en Colombia. Los marcos sociales y políticos de los procesos de reconstrucción de memoria histórica en el país. *Eleuthera*, 9(2), 13-38.
- Carter, J. (2013). Human rights museums and pedagogies of practice: the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos. *Museum Management & Curatorship*, 28(3), 324-341.
- Carter, J., & Orange, J. (2012). Contentious terrain: defining a human rights museology. *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 27(2), 111-127.
- Castillejo-Cuellar, A. (2013). On the question of historical injuries: Transitional justice, anthropology and the vicissitudes of listening. *Anthropology Today*, 29(1), 17-20.
- Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular. (2015). *Documento Lineamientos y recomendaciones para el Plan Museológico*. Bogotá: CINEP-PPP.
- Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular/ Programa por la Paz (CINEP/PPP). (2015). *Las voces de la memoria. Restablecer la dignidad de las víctimas y difundir la verdad sobre lo sucedido. Construcción del Museo Nacional de la Memoria*. Bogotá, Colombia: Impresol Ediciones.
- Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica. (2013). *Recordar y narrar el conflicto. Herramientas para construir memoria histórica*. Colombia: Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, University of British Columbia.
- Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica. (2015). *Documento de sistematización: Elementos sobre diálogos, participación y construcción social del Museo Nacional de la Memoria en documentos 2012-2014*. Bogotá: CNMH. .
- Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica. (2017). *Museo Nacional de la Memoria: un lugar para el encuentro. Lineamientos conceptuales y guion museológico*. Bogotá : CNMH.
- Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica. (2018a). *Museo de Memoria Histórica de Colombia. Textos curatoriales de la exposición Voces para transformar a Colombia*. Bogotá : CNMH.
- Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica. (2018b). *Paramilitarismo: Balance de la contribución del CNMH al esclarecimiento histórico*. Bogotá : CNMH,.

- Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica. (2018c). 70 mil personas visitaron el Museo en la FilBo. Retrieved from <http://www.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/noticias/noticias-cmh/70-mil-personas-visitaron-el-museo-en-la-filbo>
- Chambers, P.A. (2013). The Ambiguities of Human Rights in Colombia Reflections on a Moral Crisis. *Latin American Perspectives*, 192 (Vol. 40, No. 5), 118-137.
- Chaumier, S. (2012). *Traité d'expologie : Les écritures de l'exposition*. Paris: La Documentation Française.
- Comisión Histórica del Conflicto y sus Víctimas. (2015). *Contribución al entendimiento del conflicto armado en Colombia*. Colombia: Imprenta Nacional de Colombia.
- Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación - Grupo de Memoria Histórica. 2011. *El orden desarmado : La resistencia de la Asociación de Trabajadores Campesinos de Carare (ATCC)*. Bogotá, Colombia: Taurus.
- Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación. 2008. *Trujillo: Una tragedia que no cesa*. Bogotá : Planeta.
- Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación. Grupo de Memoria Histórica. 2011. *La huella invisible de la guerra : Desplazamiento forzado en la Comuna 13*. Colombia: Editora Aguilar, Altea, Taurus, Alaguara, S.A.
- Conley-Zilkic, B. (2009). *Narrativas públicas en los contextos del posconflicto*. Paper presented at the Museos, comunidades y reconciliación. Experiencias y memorias en diálogo. XIV Cátedra de Historia Ernesto Restrepo Tirado, Museo Nacional de Colombia.
- Cortés, P.M. (2013). *The Victims and Land Restitution Law in Colombia in context*. Berlin: FDCL, TNI.
- Courtheyn, C.E. (2016). *"Memory is the strength of our resistance": A critical performance geography of peace, memory, territory, and politics in the San José Peace Community, Colombia*. (Doctoral dissertation), Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global database. (Accession No.1805651128).
- De Greiff, P. (2006) *The Handbook of Reparations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Draper, S. (2012). Making the Past Perceptible: Reflections on the Temporal and Visual Enframings of Violence in the Museum of Memory in Uruguay. *Journal of Educational Media, Memory & Society*, 4(2), 94-111.

- Duffy, T. M. (2001). Museums of 'human suffering' and the struggle for human rights. *Museum International*, 53(1), 10-16.
- Echavarría, J. (2010). *In/security in Colombia: Writing Political Identities in the Democratic Security Policy*. New York: Manchester University Press.
- Failler, A., & Simon, R.I. (2015). Curatorial Practice and Learning from Difficult Knowledge. In A. Muller, K. Busby, and A. Woolford (Ed.), *The Idea of a Human Rights Museum* (pp. 165-179). Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press.
- Falk, J.H., Dierking, L.D., & Adams, M. (2007). Living in a Learning Society. In Sharon Macdonald. *A Companion to Museum Studies (Companions in Cultural Studies)*. (pp. 323-339) Malden, USA; Oxford, UK; Victoria, Canada: Basil Blackwell.
- Fleming, D. (2012). Human Rights Museums: An Overview. *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 55(3), 251-256.
- Franco Gamboa, A. (2016). Fronteras simbólicas entre expertos y víctimas de la guerra en Colombia. *Antípoda*, 24, 35-53.
- Giraldo, M. L. (2012). Registro de la memoria colectiva del conflicto armado en Colombia: un estado de la cuestión. *BiD: textos universitarios de biblioteconomía i documentació*, núm. 28.
- Gomez Sánchez, G. (2011). *Between Reconciliation and Justice: The Struggles for Justice and Reconciliation in Colombia*. (Doctoral dissertation), Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global database (Accession No. 866204917).
- González, S. (2017) Personal interview. April 18, 2017.
- Grupo de Memoria Histórica. (2009). *Memorias en tiempo de guerra. Repertorio de iniciativas*. Bogotá : Punto Aparte Editores.
- Grupo de Memoria Histórica. (2013). *¡Basta ya! Colombia: memorias de guerra y dignidad*. Bogotá : Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica. Departamento para la Prosperidad Social.
- Guglielmucci, A. (2015). El museo de la memoria y el Museo Nacional de Colombia: el arte de exponer narrativas sobre el conflicto armado. *Mediaciones*, 15, 10-29.
- Gutiérrez Sanín, F. (2015). ¿Una historia simple? In Mesa de Conversaciones (Ed.), *Contribución al entendimiento del conflicto armado en Colombia. Comisión Histórica del Conflicto y sus Víctimas*. (pp. 457-496). Colombia: Imprenta Nacional de Colombia.

- Gutiérrez, F. (2015). Conexiones coactivas: paramilitares y alcaldes en Colombia. *Análisis Político*, 85(28), 131-157.
- Halbwachs, M. (1976). *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*. Paris: Mouton.
- Halbwachs, M. (1997). *La mémoire collective*. Paris: Albin Michel.
- Humphrey, M. (2002). *The Politics of Atrocity and Reconciliation: From Terror to Trauma*. United States: Routledge imprint of Taylor & Francis.
- Huyssen, A. (2003). *Present pasts: urban palimpsests and the politics of memory*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press.
- Huyssen, A. (2011). International Human Rights and the Politics of Memory: Limits and Challenges. *Criticism*, 53(4), 607-624.
- Ibreck, R. (2010). The politics of mourning: Survivor contributions to memorials in post-genocide Rwanda. *Memory Studies*, 3(4), 330-343.
- Iniesta González, M. (2014). *Estudio Análisis - Plan Museológico del Museo Nacional de la Memoria*.
- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). (2008). How is the Term "Armed Conflict" Defined in International Humanitarian Law? *Opinion Paper*: International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).
- International Committee of the Red Cross. (1949). *Convention (I) for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field*. . Geneva, 12 August 1949.
- Jaramillo Marín, J. (2010). Narrando el dolor y luchando contra el olvido en Colombia. Recuperación y trámite institucional de las heridas de la guerra. *Revista Sociedad y Economía*. Universidad del Valle, 19, 205-228.
- Jaramillo Marín, J., & Torres Pedraza, J.P. (2015). Comisiones históricas y Comisión de la verdad en Colombia. Lecturas históricas y claves para entender desafíos entre unos y otros dispositivos. In Camilo González Posso & Carlos Eduardo Espitia Cueva (Eds.), *En la ruta hacia la paz. Debates hacia el fin del conflicto y la paz duradera* (pp. 29-58). Bogotá: Centro de Memoria, Paz y Reconciliación.
- Jelin, E. (1998). The minefields of memory. *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 32(2), 23-29.
- Jelin, E. (2002). *Los trabajos de la memoria*. España: Siglo XXI Editores.

- Jelin, E. (2003). Memorias y luchas políticas. In C. I. Degregori (Ed.), *Jamas tan cerca arremetió lo lejos. Memoria y violencia política en el Perú* (pp. 27-49). Lima, Perú: IEP Ediciones.
- Jelin, E. (2007a). Public Memorialization in Perspective: Truth, Justice and Memory of Past Repression in the Southern Cone of South America. *The international journal of transitional justice*, 1(1), 138-156.
- Jelin, E. (2007b). Victims, Relatives, and Citizens: Battles over the Legitimacy of Speech. *Cadernos pagu*(29), 37-60.
- Jelin, E. (2014). Memoria y democracia. Una relación incierta. *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales*(221), 225-241.
- Jelin, E. (2016). Investigating what happened: On truth commissions in processes of transition. *International Sociology*, 31(6), 764-773.
- Karp, I., Kratz, C.A., & Szwaja, L. (2007). *Museum Frictions : Public Cultures/ Global Transformations*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Lehrer, E. T., Milton, C.E., & Patterson, M. (2011). *Curating difficult knowledge: violent pasts in public places*. Houndmills, Basingstoke Hampshire, New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lehrer, E., & Milton, C.E. (2011). Witnesses to witnessing. In E. T. Lehrer, C. E. Milton, & M. Patterson (Eds.), *Curating Difficult Knowledge: Violent Pasts in Public Spaces*. Houndmills, Basingstoke Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Mcmillan.
- Levy, D., & Sznajder, N. (2010). *Human Rights and Memory*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Levy, D., & Sznajder, N. (2014). Remembering a sociology of Human Rights. *Culture & History Digital Journal*, 3(2), e013.
- Linenthal, E. T. (1995). Struggling with History and Memory. *The Journal of American History*, 82(3), 1094-1101.
- Lleras, C. (2017) Personal interview. May 12, 2017.
- Logan, W., & Reeves, K. (2009). *Places of pain and shame: dealing with 'difficult heritage.'* London: London: Routledge.
- Luengas, L. (2017) Personal interview. May 2, 2017.

- Macleod, S., Hourston Hanks, L., & Hale, J.A. (2012). *Museum making: narratives, architectures, exhibitions*. London; New York; NY: Routledge.
- Manjarrés, L.C. (2017) Personal interview. April 18, 2017.
- Mayer-Rieckh, A. (2017). Guarantees of Non-Recurrence: An Approximation. *Human Rights Quarterly* 39(2), 416-448. Johns Hopkins University Press. Retrieved September 10, 2018, from Project MUSE database.
- Milton, C.E. (2015). Curating memories of armed state actors in Peru's era of transitional justice. *Memory Studies*, 8(3), 361-378.
- Milton, C.E. (2018). *Conflicted memory: military cultural interventions and the human rights era in Peru*. Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Murphy, C. (2017). *The Conceptual Foundations of Transitional Justice*. Cambridge, United Kingdom; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press.
- Museo de Memoria Histórica de Colombia. (2018a). El Museo en el corazón de la ciudad. Retrieved from <http://museodememoria.gov.co/proyecto/un-museo-en-el-corazon-de-la-ciudad/>
- Museo de Memoria Histórica de Colombia. (2018b). Guion conceptual. Retrieved from <http://museodememoria.gov.co/curaduria/guion/>
- Museo de Memoria Histórica de Colombia. (2018b). Imaginando el Museo. Retrieved from <http://museodememoria.gov.co/proyecto/imaginando-el-museo/>
- Museo de Memoria Histórica de Colombia. (2018c). Una ciudad para el Museo. Retrieved from <http://museodememoria.gov.co/proyecto/Bogotá-ciudad-del-museo/>
- Nora, P. (1984). *Les Lieux de memoire*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Olick, J.K. (2007). *The politics of regret: on collective memory and historical responsibility*. New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- Opatow, S. (2015). Historicizing Injustice: The Museum of Memory and Human Rights, Santiago, Chile. *Journal of Social Issues*, 71(2), 229-243.
- Orozco, C. (2017) Personal interview. June 14, 2017.
- Pécaut, D. (2016a). Une lutte armée au service du statu quo social et politique. *Problèmes d'Amérique latine*, 1(100), 63-101.

- Pécaut, D. (2016b). Les configurations de l'espace, du temps et de la subjectivité dans un contexte de terreur : l'exemple colombien. *Problèmes d'Amérique latine*, 1(N° 100), 43-62.
- Pitt, A., & Britzman, D. (2003). Speculations on qualities of difficult knowledge in teaching and learning: an experiment in psychoanalytic research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16(6), 755-776.
- Pizarro Leongómez, E. (2015). Una lectura múltiple y plural de la historia. Comisión Histórica del Conflicto y sus Víctimas. In Mesa de Conversaciones (Ed.), *Contribución al entendimiento del conflicto armado en Colombia. Comisión Histórica del Conflicto y sus Víctimas* (pp. 21-102). Colombia: Imprenta Nacional de Colombia.
- Porch, D., & Rasmussen, M.J. (2008). Demobilization of Paramilitaries in Colombia: Transformation or Transition? *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 31(6), 520-540.
- Posso, C.G. (2016). *Memorias de verdad: en clave de paz*. Bogotá: Instituto de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Paz - Indepaz.
- Riaño Alcalá, P., & Uribe, M.V. (2016). Constructing Memory amidst War: The Historical Memory Group of Colombia. *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, 10(1), 6-24.
- Ricœur, P. (1999). *La lectura del tiempo pasado: Memoria y olvido*. Madrid: Arrecife.
- Ricœur, P. (2004). *Memory, history, forgetting*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rieff, D. (2016). *In praise of forgetting: historical memory and its ironies*. New Haven, Conn. : Yale University Press.
- Romero, M. (2007). *Parapolítica la ruta de la expansión paramilitar y los acuerdos políticos*. Bogotá : Corporación Nuevo Arcoiris.
- Sánchez Gómez, G. (2008). Tiempos de memoria, tiempos de víctimas *Análisis Político* (Vol. 63, pp. 3-21).
- Sánchez Gómez, G. (2014). *Guerras, memoria e historia*. Medellín: La Carreta Editores E.U.; IEPRI Universidad Nacional.
- Sánchez, Gómez. (2016). La memoria: Aliada para la paz. *Conmemora, 4 (Edición Especial: La memoria una aliada para la paz)*, 4-5.
- Sánchez, L.C. (2018) Personal interview. May 2, 2018.

- Sarlo, B. (2012). *Tiempo pasado : cultura de la memoria y giro subjetivo : una discusión*. Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno Editores.
- Serbin, K. P. (2006). Memory and Method in the Emerging Historiography of Latin America's Authoritarian Era. *Latin American Politics and Society*, 48(3), 185-198.
- Simon, R. I. (2006). The terrible gift: Museums and the possibility of hope without consolation. *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 21(3), 187-204.
- Simon, R. I. (2006). Museums, Civic Life, and the Educative Force of Remembrance. *Journal of Museum Education*, 31(2), 113-121.
- Simon, R.I. (2011a). Afterword: The Turn to Pedagogy: A Needed Conversation on the Practice of Curating Difficult Knowledge. In E.T. Lehrer, C.E. Milton, & M. Patterson (Eds.), *Curating difficult knowledge: violent pasts in public places*. (pp. 193-209). Houndmills, Basingstoke Hampshire. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Simon, R. I. (2011b). A shock to thought: Curatorial judgment and the public exhibition of 'difficult knowledge.' *Memory Studies*, 4(4), 432-449.
- Sodaro, A. (2011). "Politics of the Past : Remembering the Rwandan Genocide at the Kigali Memorial Centre." In E.T. Lehrer, C.E. Milton, & M. Patterson (Eds.), *Curating difficult knowledge: violent pasts in public places*. (pp.72-88). Houndmills, Basingstoke Hampshire. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sodaro, A. (2011). *Exhibiting atrocity. Presentation of the Past in Memorial Museums*. (Doctoral dissertation), Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global database (Accession No. 874962664).
- Summers, N. (2012). Colombia's Victims' Law: Transitional Justice in a Time of Violent Conflict? *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, 25(1), 219-235.
- Tamashiro, R., & Furnari, E. (2015). Museums for peace: agents and instruments of peace education. *Journal of Peace Education*, 12(3), 223-235.
- Teitel, R. (2000). *Transitional Justice*. USA: Oxford University Press.
- Todorov, T. (1995). *Les abus de la mémoire*. Paris: Paris Arléa.
- Torpey, J. (2003). *Politics and the past: on repairing historical injustices*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

- Tythacott, L. (2009). Politics of Representation in Museums. In Marcia Bates. *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences, Third Edition* (pp. 4230-4241). London: CRC Press.
- Van den Dungen, P. (2017). The Heritage of Peace: The Importance of Peace Museums for the Development of a Culture of Peace. In D. Walter, D. Laven, & P. Davis (Eds.), *Heritage and Peacebuilding* (pp. 8-16). Woodbridge: The Boydell Press.
- Villalón, R. (2016). The Complexities of Memory, Truth, and Justice Processes. *Latin American Perspectives*, 43(5), 3-11.
- Villalón, R., & Márquez, E. (2016). Colombia's Gallery of Memory: Reexamining Democracy through Human Rights Lenses. *Latin American Perspectives*, 43(5), 78-98.
- Violi, P. (2012). Educating for Nationhood: A Semiotic Reading of the Memorial Hall for Victims of the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders. *Journal of Educational Media, Memory & Society*, 4(2), 41-68.
- White, G.M. (1997). Museum/Memorial/Shrine: National Narrative in National Spaces. *Museum Anthropology*, 21(1), 8-26.
- Williams, P.H. (2007). *Memorial museums: the global rush to commemorate atrocities*. Oxford, New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Young, J.E. (1993). *The texture of memory: Holocaust memorials and meaning*. New Haven: Yale University Press.