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# Peace Education and Colombia's Efforts Against Violence: A Literature Review of Cátedra de la Paz

## Educación para la paz y los esfuerzos de Colombia contra la violencia: una revisión de la literatura de Cátedra de la Paz

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### ABSTRACT

As long as there has been violence in organized societies, achieving peace has been a goal through different means, including education. In Colombia –a country where the national government and the guerrilla FARC reached a peace agreement–, education was set to be essential to promote a culture of peace. Accordingly, this article presents a literature review of Cátedra de la Paz, a peace education course that seeks to encourage and strengthen a culture of peace in every educational institution in Colombia. The literature review suggests that, whereas this course reveals a positive impact in the communities, a lack of institutional support –which could stem from larger-scale political and societal conflicts over what peace means and how to achieve it– impedes its implementation. Furthermore, this paper argues that –if Cátedra de la Paz or other future peace education courses aim to promote a culture of peace grounded in contextualized needs and opportunities– critical lenses towards the topics and pedagogy are necessary.

Keywords: peace education, Cátedra de la Paz, Colombia, literature review

### RESUMEN

Al tiempo que ha existido violencia en las sociedades organizadas, se ha intentado lograr la paz por diferentes medios, incluido el de la educación. En Colombia, país donde el gobierno nacional y la guerrilla FARC llegaron a un acuerdo de paz, la educación se planteó como fundamental para promover una cultura de paz. En consecuencia, este artículo presenta una revisión de la literatura de la Cátedra de la Paz, un curso de educación para la paz que busca promover y fortalecer una cultura de paz en todas las instituciones educativas de Colombia. Esta revisión sugiere que, si bien se considera que el curso tiene un impacto positivo en las comunidades, su implementación está siendo **impedida** por la falta de apoyo institucional, que podría derivarse de conflictos políticos y sociales de mayor escala sobre lo que significa la paz y cómo puede lograrse. Además, este artículo sostiene que, si la Cátedra de la Paz u otros cursos futuros de educación para la paz tienen como objetivo promover una cultura de paz basada en necesidades y oportunidades contextualizadas, se necesitan lentes críticos hacia los temas y la pedagogía.

Palabras clave: educación para la paz, Cátedra de la Paz, Colombia, revisión de la literatura

Violence –contrary to what popular culture might lead us to believe– does not seem to be innate to human nature (Adams, 1989). Indeed, most organized societies over history have deployed a wide variety of strategies, tools, and actions to achieve peace among themselves and others (Cortright, 2008; Kester, 2012). These efforts to achieve harmony –better exemplified by the many peace negotiations and social mobilizations against war that have existed in our history– further emphasize peace as an essential collective aspiration. However, the reasons why different communities claim they want to achieve peace can be diverse, ranging from wanting to encourage harmony between individuals, wanting to avoid hurting others, because they consider peace of value to society and it can help to conserve order, or simply because they are concerned about how people relate to one another (Page, 2004). Nevertheless, no matter the reason behind their intentions to achieve peace, one thing has become clear over time: education is necessary to promote a sustainable culture of peace in order to achieve any of these different societal visions (Galtung, 1983; Harris, 2010). This idea is the basis of peace education, a field that upholds education as an essential element to build enduring peace (Reardon, 1988). Certainly, peace education is critical in post-conflict societies such as Colombia, a country going through profound changes as it seeks to rebuild itself after the end of a long and bloody armed conflict.

Founded a little more than 200 years ago, Colombia's history has been permeated by violent conflict (Karl, 2017) that has left a long trail of inequality, poverty, and injustice (Velásquez *et al.*, 2017). In 2016, the Colombian government and the guerrilla group *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) –the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia in English– reached a set of peace agreements that ended one of the longest and most violent conflicts in the hemisphere (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2016; Presidencia de la República Colombia & FARC-EP, 2016). In the context of the peace talks that would eventually lead to the agreements, the Colombian government created a peace and citizenship education course called Cátedra de la Paz (translated as Peace Lecture or Chair of Peace) to promote peaceful relationships among young people and foster their active engagement in society (Ministerio de Edu-

cación Nacional, 2015). And, although this initiative has been in place for over five years, it is not clear how Cátedra de la Paz is being implemented across different contexts and what it has achieved. This lack of information regarding its implementation could be explained by the fact that the course is designed to be contextualized to better address each classroom's needs –and thus, each classroom is encouraged to have a different reading of the course: instead of one, unique Cátedra de la Paz, there ought to be many, localized versions of Cátedra de la Paz. Nevertheless, if the government expects to promote a culture of peace in Colombian schools effectively, it is necessary to know if the course is being implemented appropriately and if its design is responding to the community's needs. Certainly, information that responds to these questions regarding Cátedra de la Paz is not widely available nowadays.

In response to this gap, this paper presents a literature review focused on Cátedra de la Paz. This paper begins by exploring the theoretical discourse on peace education, outlining its foundations and current applications, to then discuss Cátedra de la Paz's development and how the course is being framed and practiced in Colombia. Overall, this review article seeks to outline a contextualized and critical approach to peace education in Colombia, comparing theoretical and conceptual discussions on the field to Cátedra de la Paz's actual implementation. This literature review seeks to support Cátedra de la Paz's future implementations and other peace education initiatives, guiding teachers, administrators, and policymakers who design, enact, and support these courses' educational initiatives.

## FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS: PEACE EDUCATION

Peace is a complicated term to define, and even more so when applied to the educational endeavour of peace education. In this sense, Kurian and Kester (2019) argue that peace education cannot be narrowly defined, but instead it must be seen at the same time as a philosophy, a process, and a pedagogy. Furthermore, Kester (2009, p. 2) says that peace education is “a dialogical experience conducted through participatory learning, where learners communally and

cooperatively grapple with contemporary issues... related to local and global contexts”, thus emphasizing the contextualized processes of peace education instead of a rigid definition. Accordingly, Ben-Porath (2003, p. 525) argues that peace education is hard to define due to its very nature, claiming that “when a nation declares war, it rarely takes time to define the concept. When a peace treaty is signed, governments and peoples assume that they know what to expect”. Additionally, Reardon (1999) argues that peace education lack of a thorough definition can be explained by the wide range of contexts where it has been simultaneously practiced and developed, thus refusing to take a single form but many shapes and definitions. Indeed, this widening scope of peace education has been translated into a broad range of practices. In official educational settings, it has been implemented as higher education courses and K-12 programs. In non-official settings, it has been translated into an array of community-based programs, NGO initiatives, and after-school courses, to name a few (Brantmeier & Bajaj, 2013). Additionally, the concept of peace education has been embraced by policymakers, especially within institutions such as UNESCO, the United Nations, and UNICEF, who advocate and implement various peace education initiatives around the world (Gómez, 2015; Kester, 2012; Lerch & Buckner, 2018). Certainly, and although some authors argue that the field lacks a cohesive theoretical and conceptual framework (*e.g.*, Ben-Porath, 2003; Cremin, 2016; Page, 2004), peace education has a long tradition of theoretical, pedagogical, and practical experience useful in understanding and framing initiatives such as Cátedra de la Paz. To further explore some of the avenues of inquiry into what peace education is and how it relates to the implementation of Cátedra de la Paz, the next section of this paper is centred within three discussions on the field: 1) defining peace and violence, 2) pedagogies of peace education, and 3) critical peace education.

### **On Peace and Violence: Foundations of Peace Education**

While peace education has traditionally eluded a thorough definition, it is easily identified by what it intends to do: understand and reflect on violence, empower to act on peace (Harris, 2004). Nev-

ertheless, how are peace and violence usually understood within the field? Johan Galtung (1969, 1998), attributed as the father of peace and conflict studies, outlined three forms that violence can take. Direct violence is visible and is enacted by either physical or verbal means. Structural violence is invisible and comes from societal order, such as laws and rules. Finally, cultural violence, which is also invisible and usually comes from the myths embedded in society—in many cases legitimizing both direct and structural violence (Galtung, 1990). These three forms of violence are neither linear nor exclusive of each other. Instead, they interact in vicious cycles whereby direct violence can lead to invisible violence, and cultural and structural violence can produce visible violence. Indeed, while some authors (*e. g.*, Cremin, 2016) have called for an expansion of the theoretical repertoire of peace education to include frameworks that afford a more solid foundation for research and practice (such as Bourdieu's (1989) symbolic violence), Galtung's conceptualization of peace and violence continues to be central in peace education to this day.

Furthermore, Galtung's definition of violence as a complex phenomenon led to a corresponding definition of peace (Galtung, 1969, 1983), which is usually divided into two strands. Negative peace is understood as the absence of direct violence, whereas positive peace is understood as a form of social justice that explicitly addresses invisible violence. Accordingly, these two visions of peace must be defined as complementary, as negative peace cannot be fully achieved in a society with cultural and structural violence, and positive peace cannot be realized without eliminating direct violence within communities (Cremin, 2016). Moreover, there are three ways in which this framework of peace and violence is turned into actionable strategies: peacekeeping, to reduce direct violence and stop ongoing conflicts; peacemaking, to promote structures that support communities when a conflict has occurred, hoping to bring agreement between the different involved parties; and peacebuilding, which is often assumed to be the broader concept as it embeds the two previous elements, and has the goal of encouraging long-term changes in societies that support the development and sustenance of peace (Galtung, 1976; Reyhler, 2010).

While the previously discussed framework of peace and violence comes from the field of peace and conflict studies and has implications that go beyond the scope of peace education, it guides both its pedagogical enactment and theoretical grounding (Cremin, 2016). Indeed, even as peace education can be framed to address either direct, structural, and/or cultural violence –and thus can be implemented to promote both positive and negative peace– peace education is often emphasized as a way to promote profound changes in societies by fostering a culture of peace among the communities where it is focalized. As Reardon (1999, p. 30) explains: “No other idea has informed peace education with such profound transformational potential as the concept and vision of a culture of peace”.

### **Pedagogical Approaches to Peace Education**

The previously discussed conceptualization of peace and violence is embedded into education through a wide range of teaching strategies, where the goal is to provide knowledge and reflection on problems to do with violence and create appropriate strategies to promote peace (Harris, 2004). Indeed, peace education aims to promote transformative learning (Kester, 2012), striving to promote critical reflections on learners’ assumptions about peace and violence, thus aiming to change their frames of reference (Mezirow, 1997). Accordingly, peace education has seen a wide variety of pedagogical approaches to respond to the multiple contexts in which it is implemented, following education scholars and philosophers such as John Dewey, Maria Montessori, Elisa Boulding, Betty Reardon, and Paulo Freire (Kester, 2012). Emphasizing how these pedagogical approaches could be classified, Haavelsrud and Stenberg (2012) argue that peace education pedagogies range from models that strongly control student participation, such as problem-based learning and behaviour modelling, to those that lightly control student participation, such as experiential learning and mindfulness practices. This broad range of pedagogies highlights the opportunity for educators within the field of peace education to embrace comprehensive approaches that better respond to both the contextual factors and the content that needs to be addressed inside the classroom.

Furthermore, the field of peace education frequently relies on critical pedagogy frameworks to inform transformative educational approaches (Freire, 1985). Critical pedagogy emphasizes a dialogic pedagogy of reflection and action (Reardon & Jenkins, 2015), where the ways in which the world is represented and shaped are the centre of the discussion (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Moreover, according to Giroux (2003), critical pedagogies have the mission of transcending teaching and learning as a technical issue to include moral and political dimensions. These dimensions are considered to be remarkably important when designing peace education and putting it into practice (Bajaj, 2008), as critical pedagogy outline theories of resistance (Giroux, 2003) that aim to emphasize the importance of social justice (Snauwaert, 2011) while offering practical tools to examine social, political, and cultural factors in relation to and within education (Giroux, 2011). As such, critical pedagogy introduces an educational framework for teaching peace that is consistent with peace education transformative goals (Reardon, 2015b) by providing an analytical lens through which to consider notions of violence within educational settings that do not exclusively rely on teachers' knowledge and beliefs.

### **Critical Peace Education**

While critical pedagogy in peace education brings an analytical perspective to the content of peace and violence education in the classroom, a critical lens to peace education seeks to question the underlying assumptions of the field as a whole. In this sense, Gur-Ze'ev (2001) outlined three problematic assumptions of the field: 1) that peace should be sought, longed for, or struggled for; 2) that peace is defined as the opposite of conflict; and 3) that it is possible to educate for peace, and it is desirable to do so. These assumptions, Gur-Ze'ev (2001) argues, are often treated as universal and unchallengeable, which makes them comparable to what Foucault (1980, p. 133) called a "regime of truth" where knowledge and values are unrivalled, thus truth "is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it". Following this line of thought, Gur-Ze'ev (2001, p. 315) argues that "peace



education not only serves various violences ... peace education is itself a manifestation of those violences". Namely, peace education can serve violence if it fails to tailor its frameworks, definitions and methodologies to the different contexts in which it operates (Ben-Porath, 2003). Moreover, peace education can be seen as a form of violence when it is taken upon universalistic terms, thus promoting post structural violence, defined as "unjust social arrangements, worldviews and behaviours that have been interpreted and enacted by a person or organization, who aiming to mitigate these injustices through its actions instead has the effect of maintaining the dominant social order" (Kester & Cremin, 2017, p. 1418).

In response to these tensions, critical peace education emerged as a new theoretical approach focussed on power relations, localized meaning-making, agency, and inclusive participation (Bajaj, 2015). While different forms of critical peace education have been around since the 1970's—such as the vision of peace education outlined by Wulf (1974), who draws from the Frankfurt School of Social Research—this theoretical framework has been recently reclaimed as a much-needed response to the growing globalized economic and political structures that tend to erase the agency of localized actors (Bajaj, 2015). Critical peace education is a framework to develop transformative agency and participatory citizenship among students that is in accordance with the contextualized understandings of peace and violence (Bajaj & Brantmeier, 2011). This theoretical framework emphasizes how peace could work as a structure of oppression if taught as a narrowly defined and monolithic concept (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2013), thus highlighting the need for situated perspectives on peace, violence, and education. In practice, critical peace education seeks to create strategies that respond to post structural violence by emphasizing an epistemological return to group consciousness, engaging in collaborative scenarios to rethink the ideologies behind peace education and promoting the reflexive study of individual motivations and rationales (Kester & Cremin, 2017). Indeed, while critical peace education seeks to promote effective approaches to address post structural violence, it also aims to situate the implementation of peace education without imposing its regimes of truth. Furthermore, it is difficult to track a single con-

ceptual trace of critical peace education, as different scholars have developed specific frameworks in which it could be understood and implemented. Decolonial and postcolonial peace education, for example, oppose a globalist view on the field and hopes to better adapt to different settings (Kurian & Kester, 2019) by focusing on colonial legacies, where it is understood that traditional peace education can serve as a neocolonial enterprise to impose ethnocentric understandings of peace and violence (Hokowhitu & Page, 2011).

The previous section outlined three theoretical and conceptual discussions from the field of peace education: peace and conflict studies, pedagogies of peace education, and critical peace education. These three discussions highlight the need to further conceptualize, situate, and criticize peace education as a scholarly field and praxis.

## BACKGROUND: COLOMBIA AND THE ROAD TO CÁTEDRA DE LA PAZ

Colombia, as described by Rincón (2020), is a nation built from violence that now does not know what to do with peace. From the bipartisan fights between conservatives and liberals in the middle of the twentieth century to the recent armed conflict between the government, guerillas, and paramilitaries, Colombia has had little time to envision itself as anything but a place of violence (Karl, 2017; Vanegas, 2019). Nevertheless, in 2016 a new hope arose when the guerrilla FARC and the Colombian government signed a series of peace agreements (Presidencia de la República Colombia & FARC-EP, 2016) that marked the end of an armed conflict that lasted over 50 years and left an estimated 220 000 people dead, 25 007 people missing, 1 754 victims of sexual violence, 6 421 children and adolescents recruited by armed groups, and 4 744 046 people displaced (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2016).

For many, the peace accords signified a moment of hope and the beginning of a new age for Colombia. Others, represented mainly by the right-wing political party Centro Democrático, argued that the peace agreements merely marked a political treaty between two actors and not a societal agreement at large. Support for this latter position was further emphasized in 2016 when 50.2% of Co-

Colombians voted against the peace accords' ratification in a national plebiscite (Basset, 2018; Echavarría-Álvarez *et al.*, 2020). Although the peace accords were eventually renegotiated and ratified, the plebiscite results pointed to the prevalent narratives of violence and economic crises that have polarized Colombian society and prevail into 2020 (Rettberg, 2020). Moreover, although the peace accords are still active, it has been found that both signing parties of the agreement are increasingly not fulfilling their obligations (CINEP/PPP & CERAC, 2019; KROC Institute for International Peace Studies, 2020). Unfortunately, the failure to achieve the agreed-upon obligations seems to be especially evident in the Colombian Government—currently led by Centro Democrático, the political party that promoted the vote against the ratification of the peace accords—and who is either impeding or slowing down the achievement of some of the peace agreement long-term goals, such as the proper reintegration into society of previous members of the guerrilla FARC and the redistribution of land (CINEP/PPP & CERAC, 2020; Gutiérrez Sanín, 2020). These struggles over the peace accords further show that—while agreements between armed actors in the conflict were achieved and must be considered a great triumph for Colombian society—to build a strong and durable peace is a much more complicated task (Grasa, 2014).

Recognizing the complicated task of changing prevailing narratives around violence in the country, it became clear for policymakers that education was an important, if not essential, step to reach peace in the country. Indeed, several studies have explored how the armed conflict and education are deeply interconnected in Colombia (*e.g.*, Chavez & Butti, 2020; Rodríguez, 2020; Rojas *et al.*, 2017). Thus, the Colombian government designed Cátedra de la Paz by the law 1732 of 2014 and the decree 1038 of 2015. Cátedra de la Paz is a peace and citizenship course aimed at strengthening a peace culture in all educational institutions in the country. It recognizes the role of schools and universities as active parts of the conflict and hence essential to reframe narratives around historical memory and reconciliation in the country (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2015; Torres, 2016). More specifically, the course aims to form citizens that interact peacefully, that participate actively and through peace-

ful and democratic means, that contribute to the strengthening of democracy and law, that value and respect differences, that know the history of the country and the conflict, and that respect animals and the environment (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2015).

Cátedra de la Paz is mandatory in all official Colombian educational institutions, whether private or public, rural or urban, schools or universities. However, the way the course is implemented in each educational institution varies significantly, as regulation of Cátedra de la Paz seeks to encourage each educational establishment to determine how they will organize the course and which topics they will address based on their understanding of their contexts (Álvarez & Marrugo, 2016; Velásquez *et al.*, 2017; Villada & Estrada, 2018). This approach is consistent with Colombia's current national educational policy, based on the premise that schools should have the internal capacity to develop and evaluate their curriculum and teaching practices (Patti & Espinosa, 2007) and aligns with the shift towards constructivist approaches to learning that the Ministry of Education has implemented over the last decades (Vásquez, 2020). Certainly, encouraging flexibility in implementing the course aligns with the pedagogical framing of peace education as experiential and grounded in specific contexts. Indeed, the Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2015) only provides teachers and administrators with a list of topics organized into six categories that must be integrated into Cátedra de la Paz, urging schools and universities to choose at least two of them that respond to their contextual needs. Not surprisingly, without instructions on how to implement Cátedra de la Paz, what happens in each school and university varies widely. The course situated implementation across the educational system makes it difficult to effectively track whether the course is being taught in ways that respond to the course's intended goals and in ways that sufficiently meet the contextual needs. Certainly, to achieve the after-mentioned intended goals of Cátedra de la Paz, its flexible design and implementation require consistent study and evaluation. However, to this day, there has not been a single report on behalf of the Colombian Ministry of Education about the state of the implementation of this educational initiative. Looking to respond to this gap, this paper seeks to provide information about Cátedra de la Paz's implementation and effectiveness.

## REVIEW: WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH CÁTEDRA DE LA PAZ?

This section reviews the available literature on Cátedra de la Paz, explicitly looking for evidence on the state of implementation of the course. It is worth noting that most of the available publications on the topic are either graduate-level theses (*e.g.*, Carreño, 2019; Carrillo, 2018) or student research projects undertaken in teacher training programs (*e.g.*, Medina *et al.*, 2019; Torres, 2017), which makes it hard to determine the quality of the study due to a lack of scholarly peer-review. On the other hand, of the available peer-reviewed research, the focus of most available articles has been either on the implementation of the course from a conceptual and political perspective (*e.g.*, Alba & Padilla, 2016) or on outlining possible pedagogical approaches for Cátedra de la Paz (*e.g.*, Flórez & Valencia, 2018; Pozo, 2016). Nevertheless, the available academic research on Cátedra de la Paz highlights an opportunity to conduct a comprehensive review of the course, particularly as it includes discussions around urban and rural settings, different level of education and geographical locations, and on an extensive range of topics such as historical memory and conflict resolution—that could provide insights into the course implementation and future opportunities for improvement.

This literature review will be organized in three educational institutions: schools, universities, and other settings. However, it is important to note that as the vast majority of available literature that discusses the implementation of Cátedra de la Paz is centred on schools and there is minimal material on universities and other settings, most of the findings in this paper will be focused on K-12 educational institutions.

### Schools

In some of the K-12 schools in Colombia, Cátedra de la Paz has focused on conflict resolution and the promotion of dialogue in their communities (García *et al.*, 2017; Maldonado, 2019; Vélez, 2019) in accordance with the perceived high levels of violence in

their communities and classrooms (Marrugo *et al.*, 2016; Martínez, 2017). Other schools focus on historical memory, concentrating on the origins, events, and consequences of the armed conflict in the country (Flórez, 2019; Mora, 2018). Furthermore, teachers often focussed their implementation of Cátedra de la Paz on immediate needs of the classroom (*e.g.* a fight between classmates) or the country (*e.g.* a massacre that needed to be discussed with the students), not having time to build or implement strategies that aim at a long-term change in Colombia (Morales, 2019) –a gap that could result in not addressing structural and cultural violence, thus sustaining the structures that created the acts of violence (Galtung, 1990).

Overall, literature shows that Cátedra de la Paz is perceived to have positively affected school communities. This positive effect can be seen in studies that discussed how Cátedra de la Paz had promoted positive change in communities, such as active citizenship among students (Díaz *et al.*, 2016), resolution of conflicts (Fernandez & Punto, 2017), positive coexistence (Martínez, 2017), collaboration among learners (Vélez, 2019), and the integration of rural populations that were heavily affected by the armed conflict (Monsalve, 2017). These findings are in accordance with the principles of the field of peace education, which maintains that integrating philosophies, pedagogies, and processes of peace into classrooms and educational institutions is beneficial for communities (Kurian & Kester, 2019) because it encourages students to become more conscientious, organized and prone to act on behalf of the improvement of their surroundings (Galtung, 1983).

Furthermore, the literature indicates that Cátedra de la Paz is implemented either as a standalone course (*e.g.*, Salas, 2017) or integrated into existing courses, such as social sciences or ethics (*e.g.*, Carreño, 2019). This flexibility to implement Cátedra de la Paz in ways that respond to the schools' context, while perceived to be a strength of the course, has also led to confusion among teachers and administrators regarding how the course should be executed (Villada & Estrada, 2018). These concerns are further reinforced by studies showing that while some schools seem to be complying with the law that requires them to integrate the course into their curricula, others are not implementing Cátedra de la Paz in any way (*e.g.*,

Fernandez & Punto, 2017). Indeed, several researchers found that although some institutions claimed to be implementing Cátedra de la Paz, they had just renamed or used existing courses to deliver the content rather than creating new spaces or making significant changes as had been expected (Grajales, 2018; Ortega, 2019; Zorrilla & Lopera, 2016).

Certainly, the available literature shows many challenges involved in implementing Cátedra de la Paz in schools. Some of these challenges come from a lack of understanding of the course objectives (Duarte, 2018; Vargas *et al.*, 2019), an absence of articulation between the different stakeholders inside the schools (Carreño, 2019), missing resources to implement the projects (Quintana, 2019; Skinner, 2020), and an overall lack of contextualization of how Cátedra de la Paz is enacted on the communities (Salas, 2017). Some of the reviewed studies signalled that schools and teachers should not be blamed for failing to appropriately respond to these difficulties, as the issues stem from both the Colombian Ministry of Education and local governments' failure to support the program's implementation in areas of training adequately (Carreño, 2019; Huertas *et al.*, 2018), evaluation (Carrillo, 2018), and guidance (Huertas & Ramos, 2017). Indeed, even as researchers acknowledge that Cátedra de la Paz was created with the best intentions (González, 2019), they argue that this lack of systemic support has led to uncertainty about the sustainability of the initiative (Vélez, 2019).

When it comes to instructional strategies inside the classrooms, Cátedra de la Paz's implementation can take many shapes and forms. For example, some teachers use case studies to encourage the students to reflect on real-life situations (*e.g.*, García *et al.*, 2017); others aim to motivate students by using art (*e.g.*, Echavarría-Álvarez, 2019; Giordano *et al.*, 2016) or games (*e.g.*, Bermúdez, 2017; Bravo & Ruiz, 2017); and others integrate technology into their teaching practices, hoping to promote interactivity among their students (*e.g.*, Ballestas, 2018; Durán & Morales, 2019). It is important to note that implementation of Cátedra de la Paz often relies on the teacher's knowledge (Morales, 2019; Vélez, 2019), which could lead to deemphasizing students' and local narratives on peace and violence. This emphasis on teachers' voices aligns with authors such

as Diaz *et al.* (2016) and Giordano *et al.* (2016), who have called out the lack of emphasis on criticality and contextualization in the implementation of Cátedra de la Paz.

Finally, it is important to explore the degree to which educators have critically engaged with the concepts taught in Cátedra de la Paz. The literature shows that only a few schools have worked on situating the narratives of peace and violence in their contexts, as schools most commonly draw from concepts of peace as either positive or negative (*e.g.*, Hernandez *et al.*, 2017; Salas, 2020), or on institutional definitions of peace, such as those proposed by the United Nations or the Colombian constitution (Vásquez, 2020). Nevertheless, there are examples in the literature of projects intended to situate their understandings of peace and violence according to the communities they work with. For example, Del Pozo *et al.* (2017) explored specific narratives of the Caribbean region, or Miranda (2016), who worked with a participatory approach to high-light decolonial narratives of peace with high school students. These examples highlight the positive effects of taking Cátedra de la Paz as a participatory space where students, teachers, and other community members could voice their experiences and concerns (Carreño, 2019; Martínez, 2017). Furthermore, Skinner (2020) argues that the Colombian educational system is seen for many scholars and practitioners of Cátedra de la Paz as an obstructing framework for the promotion of a culture of peace. This happens, Skinner (2020, p. 16) argues, because the Colombian educational system engenders competition among students instead of stimulating harmony peace among them, which is counterproductive to achieve the goals of Cátedra de la Paz: “the education system drives conflict, competition and a feeling of difference between pupil[s]”.

## Universities

Although the literature on the integration of Cátedra de la Paz in universities is limited, studies show that it has been implemented in the design of undergraduate and graduate courses and programs and through the creation and transformation of dedicated research centres. For example, the Universidad Autónoma del Caribe created



an undergraduate course and an academic centre to promote discussions about peace in the institution (Santos *et al.*, 2018), while the Universidad del Norte integrated Cátedra de la Paz into their existing curricula and created a graduate program focused on citizenship competencies (Pozo, 2016). It is important to note that literature on the implementation of Cátedra de la Paz in universities is located in mid to large urban centres, aligning with the geographical and socioeconomic distributions of higher education in Colombia (Patiño, 2017). Furthermore, studies highlight the importance of contextualizing the implementation of Cátedra de la Paz, such as Paz and Cabrera (2020), who show the importance of integrating a view of peace into the university's plans that corresponds to the geographical conditions of Cauca; or by Salazar and Marín (2017), who examined the contextualization of peace narratives in a graduate course in the University of Medellin. These examples further highlight how critical peace education could benefit the implementation of Cátedra de la Paz in universities, as it offers a lens to adapt the course to the different local, regional, and national contexts, emphasizing localized meaning-making and inclusive participation (Bajaj, 2015).

Certainly, universities focus on a wide range of topics on their implementation of Cátedra de la Paz. For example, literature shows that universities focus on themes such as historical memory (*e.g.*, Romero & Camargo, 2015), conflict resolution (*e.g.*, Guevara & Espinosa, 2016), environmental sustainability (Solís & Barreto, 2018), and citizenship competencies (Buitrago & Vergara, 2015; Martínez, 2019). These topics further highlight specific areas in which Cátedra de la Paz is perceived as useful in the universities' contexts. While these examples show the broad range of forms that the initiative could take, there is insufficient research available to understand how broadly Cátedra de la Paz has been implemented at universities across the country, if its proposed goals are being achieved, or whether the pedagogical approaches respond to the contextual needs of the local community. While several factors could explain this lack of empirical evidence regarding Cátedra de la Paz's implementation in universities –such as the preference of educational research to focus on K-12 settings– further emphasis

on these scenarios could prove critical to achieving the goals of the course. Indeed, as Colombian universities are crucial stakeholders that connect communities, academia, private companies, and policymakers (Patiño, 2017), future studies must focus on better understanding Cátedra de la Paz's implementation in these settings.

### Other Settings

Scholars such as Brantmeier and Bajaj (2013) show that peace education often transcends traditional educational settings. Indeed, Cátedra de la Paz is being implemented in multiple non-official settings, as shown by studies that have examined the course's implementation in foundations and associations, to name a few. For example, Martínez (2017) describes the course's enactment in a social foundation that works with young people with mental disabilities. Carrion and Muñoz (2019) discuss another example, examining Cátedra de la Paz's implementation in a youth association focused on arts. These cases highlight that Cátedra de la Paz is seen as a positive initiative to promote attitudes and skills that could support a culture of peace beyond the traditional schooling system.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Even as peace in Colombia seems to always be out of reach, the 2016 peace accords allowed Colombians to imagine what a peaceful society could look like. Since educational institutions are centres of dialogue that connect communities all over the country, Cátedra de la Paz was deemed to be vital to building and sustaining a durable state of peace in Colombia. Accordingly, this literature review aimed at reviewing the available literature on the implementation of Cátedra de la Paz, connecting and comparing the theoretical, conceptual, and practical discussions from the field of peace education. This review of the literature suggests that teachers and students in the K-12 education system, universities, and other unofficial settings consider Cátedra de la Paz to be a necessary and useful initiative to advance more peaceful and active communities. Furthermore, this review highlights that Cátedra de la Paz aligns with the overall per-

ceived value the field of peace education can have in post-conflict societies (Galtung, 1983), particularly in the Latin American context (Gómez, 2015).

However, this literature review also suggests that the course's positive impact is constrained by a lack of institutional support, which could stem from larger-scale political and societal conflicts over what peace means and how it can be achieved. Indeed, local and national governments' lack of investment seems to drive Cátedra de la Paz to depend on local (and often, individual) efforts to sustain its implementation over time. Accordingly, if Cátedra de la Paz is to promote peace culture in communities across the country –as initially intended in the course design– a long-term national commitment to provide the resources to support, promote, train and evaluate its implementation is required. Moreover, such commitments to promote peace education sustainably and effectively in the country must not depend on the will of the political party in power –as proven by the current's administration disdain for strategies such as Cátedra de la Paz (*e.g.*, Caracol Radio, 2017). Instead, the course design ought to ensure a focus on grounded and critical perspectives that better reflect local understandings of peace and violence while guaranteeing its support over time.

Beyond these obstacles and opportunities within the implementation of Cátedra de la Paz, this literature review also reveals that –although teachers rely on a wide variety of pedagogical strategies that respond to the local, regional, and national contexts where the course is implemented– there seems to be little discussion about critical pedagogies that would assign active roles to the students. Additionally, the review of the literature suggests that only in a few cases do teachers and school administrators take a critical and contextualized stance towards narratives of peace and violence in Cátedra de la Paz (*e.g.*, Carreño, 2019; Martínez, 2017; Miranda, 2016). This deficiency of critical approaches towards both the topics and the instructional strategies in the course is not unexpected, as teachers have not been supported or trained in any way to contextualize its implementation of the course. Nevertheless, this lack of criticality highlights how the Cátedra de la Paz risks acting as either a form or an enactment of violence, as it fails to properly contextualize its

conceptualization and implementation to local lived experiences (Bajaj, 2008; Gur-Ze'ev, 2001). Accordingly, critical peace education perspectives such as decolonizing (Zembylas, 2018) and feminist approaches (Reardon, 2001) could be of value to the course, as they provide conceptual and methodological tools to explore the cultural and structural violence present in Colombian communities. Another useful approach towards critical peace education is to emphasize the role of the land and nature in constructing peace—concepts that are central to Colombia's foundation as an independent nation and its future as a sustainable country (Davis, 2020). Moreover, a territorial lens to peace education could promote a cultural change that integrates the communities' geographical conditions into their narratives of the conflict (Echavarría-Álvarez & Cremin, 2019). These critical lenses further highlight the need to see peace as a contextualized, critical and dialogical endeavour—an endeavour in which Colombian schools and universities must play a central role that could indeed promote and strengthen a culture of peace across many Colombian communities.

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