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ABSTRACT AND KEYWORDS

Abstract

This article explores the role of non-verbal communication, emotions and tensions in co-productive research on peace and memory. Drawing on the work of peace and memory activists in early twenty-first century Peru and Colombia and data generated at the Peace Festival encounter, an event organized by the authors in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia in 2017, it addresses the lack of site-specific critical analysis of South American knowledge and experience in the scholarship in these areas. It argues that the work of these groups shows that cultivating non-verbal communication and emotions can foster horizontality within co-productive research spaces, and that when practised in this way, co-productive memory work can generate a community of care and commitment.

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Keywords

Peace – Memory – War – Co-production – Creative Methodologies – Emotions – Peru – Colombia

MAIN TEXT

This article explores the affective, material and substantive dimensions of co-productive research, drawing on the knowledge and experiences of peace and memory activists working in Colombia and Peru. It analyses the processes through which knowledge was co-produced by members of seven Colombian and seven Peruvian memory initiatives, along with representatives of two partner organizations, the *Biblioteca Nacional de Colombia* and *Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres*, at a three-day Peace Festival encounter in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia. The event was organized to co-produce a creative and critical space in which participants collectively explored the obstacles, challenges and opportunities of peace and memory work in the two countries, a space for the ‘cultivation’ of knowledge (Shilliam, 2015: 15) within the context of the ‘emotional spaces of international development’ (Jenkins and Baillie-Smith, 2012). The analysis presented here draws on insights from our experiences of organising/participating in the event, interviews with participants, co-produced visual, textual and embodied material (including art, textiles, poems, performance), and audio-visual material captured by a Colombian filmmaker.

Our findings reinforce recent work on the geographies of memory that has revealed the ways in which groups and communities in other world regions have used creative methodologies to tell their stories and overcome state or community repression of their truths. Memory work has been shown to relate to political and geographical heritages in complex fashions. By focusing on examples from South America, we show how memory activists here draw from a long tradition of creative public memory work in the continent, placing as much emphasis on process as product, drawing on the work of Orlando Fals-Borda and others. This focus on the process of memory production as much as the output, has created the space for interesting

reflection on the role of non-verbal communication, emotions and in-group tensions. Without attention to these aspects, we argue, co-productive memory projects, at least in Peru and Colombia, risk being overwhelmed by the long-term legacies of the historical atrocities they seek to memorialize (Drozdowski and Birdsall, 2018; McAtackney, 2018; De Nardi, 2019).

Attempts to co-produce knowledge of peace and memory should be located explicitly within the political and historical context in which the participants operate. The first section of the article presents these circumstances and positions the process, ethos and overall aims of the activists who participated in the Peace Festival within them. The article then addresses three dimensions of the process through which co-production unfurled in the Peace Festival: the role of non-verbal communication, the significance of emotions as a vehicle of knowledge production, and the ways that in-group tensions shaped knowledge production. Overall, we argue that thinking about non-verbal communication, emotions and in-group tensions can foster horizontality within co-productive research spaces, and that when conceived in this way, co-productive memory work can generate a community of care and commitment. These learnings from peace and memory activists in South America can be of use to those working in different temporal and geographic spaces.

Historical and Political Contexts: Memory in Peru and Colombia

Memory and peace activists are inspired by immediate, local episodes. Their work locates their stories within national and international contents, unlocking the relationships between past and place (Schindel and Colombo 2014). The historical context and the emotional ramifications of the pain and loss caused through political violence are essential to the memories being

recounted. In the second half of the twentieth century there was an upsurge in political violence in South America from state and non-state armed actors inspired by both left- and right-wing ideologies, with vast variations across the continent. This was most visible in the use of violence by state actors against their own citizens, in particular by the military dictatorships of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay (Brown, 2014). Within Peru and Colombia, memories of the violence of this period remain politically contested, and even the terms used to refer to the period are disputed. Emotional reactions to the pain caused by these events continue to shape people's view of this history, although scholars have not engaged with the role of emotions in the experience of historical knowledge. Our work embraces the ways that emotions matter in the reception of this history (Askins and Swanson, 2019) and how these are grounded in diverse relationships to place and identity (Drozdewski et al. 2016). The peace and memory activist groups that we worked with are consciously adopting creative methodologies for their memory work in order to reach new audiences and counteract what they see as exclusive official histories.

Peru's internal war is usually portrayed as taking place between 1980 and 2000, although the political violence and structural causes of the conflict are recognized as having a much longer life. These years are variously labelled the 'period of violence', 'the times of terrorism', 'the internal war', or the 'internal armed conflict' (Drinot, 2014; Degregori, 2013; Wilson, 2016). In its simplest depiction, this was fought between state forces and armed groups after the latter declared a war against the Peruvian state. The main armed groups were the Maoist Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) founded in 1980, and the smaller Cuban-inspired Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA), created in 1984. The war also involved *ronderos* (peasant militias) and self-defence committees, paramilitary groups, and a business community linked

to the military. Almost 70,000 people were killed or disappeared in this period, most of them rural and indigenous poor. Seventeen years after the TRC's Final Report in 2003, struggles over memory continue. The official narrative emphasizes a state's successful fight against 'terrorism' with crimes committed by both armed groups investigated, its leaders and members killed or imprisoned.

It has taken a long time for knowledge of the crimes committed by state actors to emerge, however, and this has largely been the result of the work of groups who have dedicated themselves to remembering them. One of these, *ANFASEP (National Association of Families of the Kidnapped, Detained and Disappeared, Peru)*, was created in 1983 by the mothers and wives of people from Ayacucho who had been detained and disappeared by the military. Some of the stories that ANFASEP and other groups struggled to make known were later disseminated by the *Colectivo Desvela* with the *Chalina de la Esperanza* initiative, which used craftwork and weaving to highlight the stories of the disappeared.

An emblematic case was that of Accomarca. In 1985 an army patrol entered the Andean village of Accomarca, in Ayacucho, and assassinated 79 individuals including children and elderly. Many survivors and relatives of the victims were displaced to Lima. Using non-verbal communication to share memories of this event over more than three decades, since 2011 the *Association of the Children of Accomarca* has participated in carnivals with music and performance that retells their history and traditions, demanding justice for the crimes committed by the military. The Accomarca memory group has consistently focused on appealing to the emotions of participants through play, music and re-enactment, finding these methodologies more efficacious than text or speech.

The work of these well-established groups has been built on by newer Peruvian initiatives that use dance, street interventions and art to claim a place for their memories in public spaces. *Colectiva Trenzar*, a feminist dramatic arts collective, has focused its work on past and present gender violence through the case of Manta and Vilca, two communities in Huancavelica where sexual violence against women was systematically used against the population by soldiers stationed at military bases. The Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) reported 534 cases of sexual violence, but the National Registry of Victims estimates 4,657 cases.

The women's collective *Mujeres de Arena*, based in Villa El Salvador in Lima, works on the histories of women and how the war affected their social fabric, especially in the capital, which remained relatively isolated from the war until the 1990s. The collective was started by women who were colleagues of the celebrated leader María Elena Moyano, who was killed by Shining Path in 1992. *Mujeres de Arena* reclaims the history of women leaders and highlights their role in improving their community through collective action.

By the mid to late 1990s both armed groups were defeated. President Fujimori fled the country and resigned when evidence of widespread corruption emerged in 2000. When he later attempted to return, several collectives were formed to remember the crimes perpetrated under his regime. The *Coordinadora Contra la Impunidad* and *Museo Itinerante Arte por la Memoria* were among those groups that called for the extradition and trial of Fujimori for crimes against humanity and corruption charges. Their influential work in public and street art played a large role in mobilising the public, and the relatives of those affected (Burt, 2009). Most accounts and scholarly analyses of the internal war focus on the Shining Path and the

military, with much less attention to the MRTA. *HIJXS de Perú* is a collective of children of former MRTA militants who were killed, exiled, disappeared or remain in prison. Their stories challenge the current laws that prohibit relatives of the armed groups from being considered as victims of the internal war. They have displayed an openness towards creative methodologies for storytelling alongside more conventional text-based memory work.

In Colombia, similarly to Peru, remembering the past has become a way of resisting dominant narratives that have been complicit with violence (Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 2013). Public memory initiatives attempt to contest the official histories presented by state and military institutions, and often, as in Peru, the use of non-verbal communication strategies has circumvented hegemonic text-based histories. The armed conflict in Colombia has undergone multiple transformations with the arrival of new actors and new forms of violence, involving guerrillas, paramilitaries, drug cartels and the state. The FARC-EP (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-Army of the People) guerrilla group founded in 1964, whilst the right-wing paramilitary project formally began its activities at the end of the 1980s. The growth of income derived from drugs-trafficking from the 1980s, and the strategy of terror launched by state agents, transformed the violence. These have all shaped the types of memory work that have been possible in Colombia.

In an attempt to tell the story of what has happened in the country, women have used emotional ties and solidarity to claim a prominent public space. On 25 November 1996, women from all over the country undertook a Solidarity March in support of the women of Urabá, Antioquia, who were under attack from paramilitary forces. This first march made visible what the women victims of war had long felt to be a truth – that their bodies were considered as a territory of

war. As a result, in 1997 the *Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres* was born, a feminist umbrella organization that unites over 300 organizations under the slogan ‘Women do not give birth to sons and daughters in order for them to go to war’.

In the narration of these histories of horror and resistance, the *Peace Community of San José de Apartadó* and the *Mujeres de Mampuján* stand out for their creativity, resistance and persistence. At the end of the 1990s the paramilitary project had consolidated its model in several parts of the country. Gradually, the grim reality of forced displacement and massacres started to emerge. On 23 March 1997 a small group of families in Urabá who survived recent massacres perpetrated by paramilitaries and the Colombian army chose to stand firm. They declared themselves and their homes as neutral territories, choosing to physically embody their claims to peace and their rejection of violent histories and violent futures. This was the beginning of the *Peace Community of San José de Apartadó*, a collective of peasant families who would henceforth be neutral in the war, refusing entrance to their territory to any armed actor. Further to this, in March 2000 paramilitaries arrived in Mampuján, just two hours’ drive from Cartagena de Indias, the most visited tourist centre of the Colombian Caribbean, with the declared intention of killing the inhabitants. Their violence triggered massive displacement within the area. In its wake, the remaining women wanted to find some meaning in the pain they felt, to express their emotional turmoil and to demonstrate to the rest of the country that they continued to resist. They began to represent their experience through textile art, retaining and disseminating memories of the violence they lived through by producing and sharing visual depictions of the massacre. Their initiative, the *Tejedoras de Mampuján*, received the National Colombian Peace Prize in 2001.

Armed actors in Colombia have sought to intimidate and displace rural communities, leaving several millions internally displaced. Many of these displaced communities have used non-verbal communications to protect their memories of the past (Torres del Rio, 2015). The group *Hijas e Hijos por la Memoria y contra la Impunidad* emerged in 2006 to resist attempts to silence critical voices during Alvaro Uribe's administration, and to remember the political and affective projects associated with groups that the paramilitaries sought to destroy.

The replacement of Uribe by Juan Manuel Santos led to a change of strategy on the part of the government in 2010, and the beginning of a negotiated peace process with the FARC-EP which, at the time of writing, is being challenged in its implementation. The peace process provided a significant boost to projects looking to reclaim memories of the war as it seemed to be coming to an end. In 2015 the *Red Colombiana Lugares de Memoria* was formed. The initiative draws together many places which have recovered memories of the war, with a view to creating a collective memory that guarantees non-repetition. Another example is the *Cartongrafías* project that emerged out of the Centro de Memoria, Paz y Reconciliación in Bogotá. This is the world's only publishing operation that works with cardboard and is led by victims of forced displacement. In their research and publications, participants narrate their sadness and pain, communicating in a way that surpasses the limitations of data presented in analytical reports. In the terrible circumstances of war, the mobile activities of the *National Library of Colombia* have also become spaces that transmit memories and strengthen local identities by promoting reading, literary production and local arts. At the national level, the National Library has awarded prizes for peace promoting library-work. These last examples demonstrate the ways in which memory has become institutionalized in Colombia, in stark contrast to the obstacles encountered in Peru.

Peace Festival: Process, Ethos and Aims

These groups, and others, have negotiated the complex, uneven terrain of memory work in contemporary Colombia and Peru in creative and nuanced ways. When we brought them together at the Peace Festival, we hoped to contribute to a rebalancing in the struggles over memory in the two countries, in favour of those groups that have been silenced and stigmatized. Like most research pursued with a co-productive ethos, we sought to centre the expertise of participants throughout (Facer and Enright, 2016).¹

Before the Peace Festival event, we conducted a mapping of memory initiatives in Colombia and Peru, snowballing through existing networks and online research. We carried out twenty face-to-face interviews with experts and practitioners, about their histories, working contexts, ethical orientations and methods, as well as the tensions and challenges faced. We then invited seven groups from each country to nominate two people to attend the event, where we hoped to co-produce new knowledge about strategies for successful peace and memory work for reconciliation. We sought to maximize possibilities for fruitful, critical exchange through inviting groups using similar or related methodologies, or challenges, across both contexts. In the following sections we highlight the role of non-verbal communications and emotions during the event, and the tensions of co-production itself, along with their significance for co-productive memory work.

Non-Verbal Communication and its Role in Co-Production

¹ Our film can be viewed at www.bristol.ac.uk/news/2018/april/peace-festival.html

Non-verbal communication of various kinds –gestures, movement, drawing, rhythm and melody– played extremely important roles in the PF event, reflecting participants’ experience of working in these ways, in many cases over years or even decades. These roles were enabling, in that they helped create conditions for effective sharing and co-production. They were also performative: non-verbal communication was itself a tool for transmitting and co-producing knowledge. These enabling and performative roles were, to some extent, a result of conscious decisions on our part. These included our framing and facilitation of the event, and our determination not to seek to control every element of the agenda. We left space for what Tina Cook calls a ‘messy area’ – ‘a communicative space where participants delve into individual and collaborative understanding to disturb current knowing’ (2009: 281). Perhaps more importantly, these roles were also by-products of the trust we had in the participants, who were all invited because we knew that they were skilled at communicating in a range of registers.

The enabling role of non-verbal communication could be observed from the beginning of the event, which began with a walking tour of Cartagena, a port which played a key role in the Atlantic Slave Trade. This created a space for us to question the role of the UK in its history, and to share jokes around the irony that a UK research council was funding our work. The walking, looking, listening and feeling we experienced together on this tour helped set the tone for the encounter overall, and began to foster a sense of trust, curiosity and willingness to share amongst the participants, us included.

Similar opportunities for sharing non-verbal experiences were threaded throughout the event, through exercises that invited participants to draw, make collages, and participate in theatrical performance and other forms of movement (discussed below). We saw non-verbal experiences

as central to the co-productive ethos and purpose of the event, and a symbolic recognition of the memory work being carried out by participants (Beebeejaun 2014: 48). It also responded to the context in which we were working, where those involved in memory work are often invited, particularly in the Colombian context, to workshops with talks by ‘experts’, often from outside the country. Weaving arts-based methods through the event served as recognition -both symbolic and instrumental- of participants’ own expertise in this area.

We also made good use of the surrounding spaces to communicate and enact our participatory ethos, recognizing the role of the place of encounter in shaping the work we would do recalling memory sites elsewhere. All participants stayed in the same hotel in Cartagena for the duration of the event. It had a small swimming pool, direct access to the sea, and a large, airy function room, which we arranged as we wished. The hotel and its amenities provided a closed and comfortable environment, which allowed us to construct our own social and symbolic world over the three days of the encounter. We ate together, swam together, walked and sat on the beach together. Slowly but surely, we took over the function room, adding co-created collages, artwork, and murals to the walls. We surrounded ourselves with the photographs, books, and textiles representing participants’ initiatives to tackle silences in their specific contexts that they had brought with them.

The physical activities and sharing of experiences and knowledge in these spaces were a powerful contributor to the trust and rapport built amongst all of us in a relatively short space of time. Our physical and visual occupation of the space, similarly, provided important cues about the co-productive ethos of the encounter and the value we placed on recognizing and celebrating participants’ existing work. All of these helped to create an environment in which

participants felt comfortable sharing painful memories and experiences and could engage with the activities set up despite differences in their approaches to memory work, as discussed below.

Other enabling aspects of non-verbal communication emerged through the use of art and creative visual practices. Anticipating that participants would respond well to arts-based activities, we had supplied a variety of pens, markers, coloured card, patterned paper, felt, fabric, sequins and other materials. We used them throughout the event: in activities designed to generate trust and mutual understanding of the contexts in which our invited participants were working at the start, and for more explicitly co-productive activities towards the end. On the first day, for example, we paired representatives from Colombia with counterparts from Peru, and asked them to create a visual representation of their counterparts' organization. The manual work of drawing, cutting and pasting materials into collages provided a context for participants to share and reflect on their personal experiences, and prompted more fluid exchanges at that point in the proceedings than verbal communication did. On the third day of the encounter, to give another example, we asked participants to work on creating visual representations on a large canvas. This artwork forms the centrepiece of the travelling exhibition displayed in Bristol in 2018.

Our participants also embraced the social and symbolic potential of the space and the opportunities it provided for meaningful non-verbal exchanges. On the second day, building on the growing trust and familiarity that were developing, we invited them to co-produce knowledge of the challenges of building inclusive memories of armed conflict in Colombia and Peru. After a plenary discussion to establish a shared terrain, we split participants into three

groups and asked each to work with a particular creative medium to explore and communicate their group's responses. One group worked with visual representation, another with drama and another with movement. Each group had a facilitator (one of the participants) with expertise in the creative form that the group had been asked to work with.

The group that worked with visual representation produced an intricate, life-sized drawing of a human body, the head, torso and each limb representing different registers and methods for working together to produce what the group called 'memory for change'. The group that worked with drama developed a five-minute performance, which consisted of its members standing in a line, taking turns to express fears and challenges before they all stepped forward in unison, in a chain of solidarity and hope. The group that worked with movement chose to take their performance beyond the formal space of the encounter. One of them held a small drum, which she used to beat out a rhythm to summon the rest of us to move and join a line of people holding hands that began to snake out of the hotel, across the beach and towards the sea. Around five metres from the water's edge, the group members indicated through the placement of their bodies and expressions that they wished us to take positions in a line facing out the sea. Once everyone was in place, they returned to using words, a rhythmical chanting of fears, wishes and pledges addressed as much to each other as the sea and the sky. Participating in this ritual, it was hard to disagree with Diana Taylor's (2003: 2) contention that '[p]erformances function as vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory and a sense of identity'.

This example also illustrates the performative role played by non-verbal communication in the Cartagena encounter. Non-verbal communication (in this case movement through spaces and

performance) transmitted and created knowledge –a particular kind of embodied knowledge– amongst the participants. This embodied knowledge, which overlaps but also exceeds the knowledge produced through conscious, cognitive processes, is a product of multiple senses and layers of experience. It is knowledge that, as Virginie Magnat puts it, ‘must be experienced through doing’, and which bypasses verbalization and cognition, at least in the moments in which it is transmitted and produced (Magnat, 2011: 225; see also Crang, 2003: 499). In our case, the knowledge created consisted of a sense of solidarity, strength and purpose, and an embodied, extra-cognitive understanding that acting together helps a group of people recognize, face, and challenge legacies of armed conflict.

The performative role of non-verbal communication was also evident in many of the presentations of groups’ ongoing memory work. Some brought images, posters and photographs that explained their stories. The representatives of *Trenzar* facilitated a session on sexual violence in Peru’s internal war using performance art. The facilitators enrolled the bodies of participants in their session as instruments to enact and transmit knowledge. They guided their audience through a series of physical and sensory activities designed to increase bodily awareness, then displayed the text of testimonies of women who were raped by the military in the communities of Manta and Vilca in Huancavelica in the 1980s. The audience were asked to gather round the text, and to read it aloud together: to collectively perform and feel resonances of the pain communicated through the words of the testimonies in their own bodies. The act of standing, reciting and feeling the testimonies through the body added an element of immediacy and sensory experience which made the meaning of the words much clearer. The layering of words, performance and sensory perceptions elicited from participants in the session engaged both cognitive and extra-cognitive processes, such that it became

‘impossible to distinguish between being, doing, sensing, feeling, imagining, remembering, thinking and understanding’ (Magnat 2011: 224-5; Taylor, 2003: 164). The use of performance thus served as an instrument for transmitting and bearing witness to traumatic memory, embedding this memory and the sensations it provoked in the bodies of those who participated in the session, revealing the ways in which memory can be embodied through the different senses and through places (Cole, 2017).

The Role of Emotions in Fostering Horizontality

Peace Festival participants embrace the role of emotions in their peace and memory activism, looking to laugh and cry as they rebuild their communities in the wake of unspeakable violence. Attendance to emotions similarly facilitated co-production in Cartagena. Together as a learning community we emphasized the value of feeling something together, alongside producing something collectively, as a basis for co-productive research. We draw on Fals-Borda’s notion of *sentipensar*, which is often translated as ‘to think-feelingly’. We propose that *sentipensar* – feeling-together, recognition, empathy and empowerment– can be felt collectively and used productively to overcome hierarchies and tensions within a group of participants (Fals-Borda and Moncayo, 2009). Examples of this included being attentive to participants’ sense of disorientation as a result of travel, and the repeated pauses that were made to critically analyse the way activities were making participants feel, and signalling clearly where changes to the structure of the event were being made as a consequence of those conversations.

Emotions are an intrinsic part of the terrain of memory work, albeit one which is seldom engaged with at the methodological level, as Elizabeth Jelin has observed. Our event brought together campaigning survivors of violence from Peru and Colombia, and in so doing implicitly

invited them to remember and share tragic moments from their lives. We were asking members of ANFASEP and Chalina de la Esperanza to remember their loved ones and relive the pain of knowing that, besides being secretly arrested and murdered, they might have been tortured. We were asking the collectives of children of guerrilla militants (HIJXS de Peru) and leftist organizations (Hijos e Hijas por la Memoria y Contra la Impunidad) to re-experience feelings of impotence and desolation caused by the loss of loved ones and the injustice of judicial systems. We were asking the women from Cartongrafías, Tejedoras de Mampuján, and Ruta Pacífica to remember the pain and sense of despair caused by their or their loved ones' suffering rape or torture. But we hoped that some part of this process of sharing their emotions could also contribute to their memory work, that the 'power to narrate' would strengthen and revitalize the work that these women and men do (Jelin, 2017; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

One emotional touchstone was the histories of pain inscribed in the objects that we asked each group to bring to Cartagena. The participants from Cartongrafías shared the histories behind a number of images painted by displaced people, for example, one of four people sleeping in a bed. They told us that the first time they exhibited a *gigantografía* [literally: a massive print] of this image, viewers (people internally displaced by armed conflict) cried upon recognizing a shared experience. In Cartagena, where most of us were distant from the horrors being described, we also felt sadness. Nevertheless, the participants from Cartongrafías reminded us of the mobilizing power of another emotion –laughter– when they shared the story of how, when in a workshop they asked displaced people if they had lived in similar situations, one of them replied that no, in their family, although they did all share a bed, they did so horizontally,

rather than vertically as in the image. This had caused laughter, and that laughter was recreated amongst us in Cartagena.²

The emotions inherent in memory work also enabled sharing and community-building. Even though this was not our conscious intention, the emotions of sadness and happiness became means of bringing empathy and empowerment to those participants who found themselves sharing histories in solidarity. Emotional moments of *testimonio* connected the participants in a common community of sadness and laughter that recognized and brought compassion. Those who did not have direct personal experience of pain were not excluded from the emotional encounter. They joined it through the capacity to share a silence, an embrace, or a laugh. The participants acknowledged this empathy and solidarity in different ways:

‘I don’t feel alone, I have felt accompanied’.

‘We have developed a fraternal bond; we are joined by love. Well, love and struggle’.

This emotional register also helped to overcome potential obstacles to empathy. Some of the participants saw memory as primarily emancipatory and, therefore, as a means towards social change. Others conceived of memory as a spiritual experience: religious orientations shaped their views and practices regarding the function of emotions and memory. One group, for example, reads their experiences of violence by paramilitaries from a profoundly religious worldview, as an integral part of their community’s journey towards forgiveness and reconciliation with the perpetrators of violence. At the PF, they framed their suffering as a divine test, and explained how they had subsequently met with the perpetrators of the horrors

² This episode can be seen in our film.

and accepted their apologies as a sign of reconciliation. They sought to create a shared emotional space by asking the whole group to stand up and pray. The request to pray together, and create a moment of shared emotion, could have created distance between participants, as not all of them were religious. But it did not generate an immediate fracture in the co-production, as might have been expected. The pain experienced by all participants through the sharing of *testimonio* had created compassion and empathy. Shared sadness was the tool that enabled participants to listen and hear each other, enabling the exchange of knowledge.

The process of sharing *testimonio* and bearing witness to the history of armed conflict also created new bonds and renewed courage to continue speaking out. Sadness and weeping established a basis for knowledge exchange and communion that would break apart the silencing practices that participants experience in both Peru and Colombia, such as persecution, stigmatization, ridicule, and threats of violence. In this way we created a space that disrupted the lines, as the Peruvian TRC clearly recognizes, between ‘those “who have the right to speak” and those whose grievances go unheard’ (Bakiner, 2015: 196).

Laughter can be another way of disrupting those boundaries. As has been recognized in studies of memory in transitional scenarios, laughter can be empowering as it challenges silences and narratives that perpetrators of violence seek to impose (Sheftel, 2012). If sadness had generated a space of recognition and empathy between the participants, laughter and smiling recreated the need to use memory to challenge self-justifying narratives from repressive actors. It facilitated the building of trust and was subsequently recognized by participants as a way of transgressing and subverting official memories. When we later revisited the materials and memories created in Cartagena, we found the symbolic certificate which we gave to every

participant, which stated that ‘You have argued, *laughed*, *sobbed*, debated and *dreamed* in the Peace Festival and you have earned this certificate in recognition of your contribution’ (*our emphasis*). The certificate, which was written and designed on the morning of the emotional final day of the event, was presented to each individual in a ceremony that was full of laughter and song and extended long beyond the scheduled end of the day. These words, and the participants’ responses to them, reminded us that emotions had run throughout the three days. They had played a role, both through accident and design, in enabling and empowering the process of co-production.

Engaging Tensions and Contradictions

While creating the Peace Festival we expected tensions to emerge among the groups who participated, and their visions for the event. The conditions under which the event took place meant that some of those tensions were absent or diffused, though others did arise. In this section we explain how we engaged with tensions and the extent to which they were productive and/or creative in and of themselves (Hale, 2008; Fals-Borda and Moncayo, 2009; Maddison and Scalmer, 2006).

One of the conditions that diffused some of the potential tensions was our early decision to make the Peace Festival a closed event and to share a substantial amount of control over the running of the sessions. All participants enthusiastically accepted our invitation to present their work on their own terms, using their own methodologies. A consequence of this was a sense of intimacy and complicity amongst participants. They were all exposing themselves, their memories and their work, which fostered a space of shared vulnerability. We also invited participants to draft collective rules and expectations, which they did so easily, emphasizing

respect, listening and dialogue. This meant that when encountering different positions on controversial topics, participants handled themselves with care instead of taking a confrontational position, as might have been the case in a more open, public event.

The diversity of the groups might have been a potential source of tension, but in fact served to enrich the event and its participants. Differences of gender, race, education and nationality, for example, did not appear as sources of observable tension. We anticipated possible tensions due to nationalisms between Colombians and Peruvians, yet these failed to materialize during the Festival (perhaps because both countries had recently qualified for the men's football FIFA World Cup finals). Neither did we encounter tensions based on the substantial inequality between rural and urban territories, and their different experiences of war and violence. Different beliefs, experiences and relationships with religious institutions, while certainly noticed and commented upon, did not become problematic. The same was true for differences in educational background, which is partly attributable to the use of creative methods. Because speaking and writing were not the only ways of communicating, as is the case in more conventional academic settings, participants were able to become more involved in creative representations such as painting, knitting, performing and singing. This reduced possible tensions between participants' different abilities for engaging in the more conventional workshop sessions.

Some tensions did, however, arise as a result of the creative methodologies adopted. One moment of tension emerged when the participants from *Colectiva Trenzar* were leading the exercise on body awareness in order to generate knowledge of violence discussed above. Touching was not a comfortable exercise for all. Although the participants leading the session

had often used these techniques successfully in other spaces, they presumed a willingness to explore the boundaries of what was comfortable as part of memory work. During the exercise it became quickly clear that not all participants shared this willingness. Tension was apparent in the room, expressed in whispers, humour and eye contact. No one withdrew from the exercise, however, though many participants expressed their discomfort.

Another significant difference between participants revolved around the political and historical circumstances in which they were working. In Colombia, recent peace negotiations had rekindled the force of memory being produced on the margins of society. In Peru, in contrast, the 2016 presidential elections (that ultimately brought about Fujimori's pardon and the censoring of artistic representations of political violence) meant that participants were acutely conscious of the political space in which they were intervening. Our decision to invite participants in Peru to an event in Cartagena was an ever-present reminder of the historical opening for work of this type in Colombia. It also confirmed the extent to which memories are at the same time produced by, and producers of, place and identity (Drozdowski et al. 2016; Schindel and Colombo 2014), with differences in their respective historical political and military contexts often being raised by participants. We found, however, that the focus on non-verbal communication and emotions, discussed above, was at times able to surmount the local distinctions and divisions presented by memories of the past.

Because of the weight of this historical moment, naming the events of the past remains a persistent challenge. The politics of representation of war are linked to ongoing struggles over the narratives of war. We encountered sticky problems about naming throughout the project; in the initial interviews; when describing the groups for the brochure we produced for the event;

in the groups' presentations in Cartagena; and once again when writing this article. On some occasions we found it easier to reach agreement, for example by talking about armed conflict rather than political violence. On others the privileging of non-verbal communication allowed us to circumvent potential tensions.

Perhaps the most significant tension revolved around differences in participants' visions about what memory work was actually for. Some groups found that the testimonial was the most pressing issue, and wanted to use the space to record, remember, and share their memories of violence. Others wanted to talk about immediate difficulties that their group was experiencing, either in terms of political persecution or lack of resources. Several of the groups wanted to use the space to develop a critical reflection on the challenges of contemporary memory work. The continuing legacies of the lived experiences of war meant, however, that many of the participants felt an urgency to share memories rather than analyse working practices. The reflective space sought by some participants did emerge, but in the margins of the event when faced with other groups' testimonial necessity.

The co-production of space and content opened up new ways of thinking about memory work in the public realm which we had not envisaged. We have come to understand this tension as between those doing memory work as a means of social change, and those doing memory work as an end in itself. This is a tension between those whose activism poses the question 'Memory for what?' and those for whom memory has a value in itself. The encounter of these two approaches created a productive tension that could be felt during our time together. These tensions were not resolved. They were either set aside or ways were found of working through them.

The most important of these was through emotions, as explored above. Tensions were felt and acknowledged, but this did not lead to the collapse of the co-productive space that was being built. Participants' emotions ranged from feeling uncomfortable with particular methods, sad at hearing painful stories, or unhappy with meanings ascribed to violence and visions of reconciliation. And yet, sharing and caring were possible in the space that had been co-created, which allowed a respectful way of bearing witness to one another to develop.

Hearing stories of violence from different standpoints can, for example, provoke emotional reactions. Participants who are not officially recognized as victims shared painful stories of living with the impact of state repression and social stigma. One of them was overwhelmed by tears while sharing her experiences. As a result, some participants became more empathic towards her, whilst others felt uncomfortable with her tears, unsure of how to understand her story and position themselves accordingly. Some participants wanted to better understand the story and its characters, but amidst the tears there was little space for questions and explanations. There was instead a space for solidarity that some explored and expressed by embracing the person in tears, and others by providing a silence that demonstrated their acceptance of these emotions. Other responses included an opening for inner reflection and for conversations at a later moment, during meals or walks.

The co-created space allowed tensions to be absorbed and channelled by the group because, we suggest, of its affective foundations and participants' creativity. Trust was built over the lifecycle of the research, from the preliminary interviews with participants to our shared experiences in Cartagena. This allowed us to engage with the participants' proposals and co-

facilitate their collective reflections and interactions in ways that proved useful and interesting for us all. The event required the peace and memory activists who participated to trust the support we would be able to construct around the risks that opening up, exposing themselves and making themselves vulnerable in front of others would entail. In the words of one participant:

‘Creating involves having discussions and arguments but that doesn’t mean you can’t agree and achieve something. It’s part of the creative process itself, encounters and dis-encounters, the dynamic we created reflects that. It’s something you learn in day-to-day life too, to not close up when getting to know someone whose experience is the complete opposite of yours. Being open, listening in a different way. These things have to be learned and are part of the intricacy of being human’.

According to the participants, the Cartagena event also gave them the opportunity to re-think where they were as a collective and reflect on their experiences. This was valued because within the rhythm of their activism, there is little or no time for reflection on themselves as a collective:

‘We’ve been together in public squares, we’ve shared streets... but we’ve never sat down to listen and look at all the work that’s been done over the years. Maybe that’s what we need in Peru, to sit down with other groups not only to coordinate campaigns but to get acquainted and value all the work that has been done and all the knowledge gained from this practice’.

Conclusion

The role played by non-verbal communication and emotions, and the ways these helped participants navigate tensions, at the Peace Festival in Cartagena, point to several lessons for those engaged in the co-production of memory.

Firstly, we propose that one way of approaching horizontality, and therefore of breaking pre-existing hierarchies in co-production, is by curating encounters where exchange between the participants is generated around *both* rational intellectual argument, *and* emotional spaces of dialogue around feelings. We discovered that sharing and co-producing knowledge was enhanced by the embodiment created by active engagement with emotions. Further to this, we consider that in the moments of laughter and weeping, horizontality was performed. The shared pain and laughter opened space for the co-production of knowledge on the methodological, thematic and logistical challenges that the participants had faced. The generation of a community of feeling complements knowledge in the field of co-production. Our experience shows it is possible to build trust in a short time (cf Brown and Tucker, 2017: 1199) with emotions and creativity as facilitators, drawing on the experience and knowledge of peace and memory activists who are experts in these fields.

Our research highlights, secondly, the creative force inherent in embracing participants' own goals and strategies. On our last day together, participants created artistic pieces in which they reflected on their views of memory work. In them a community run through with emotions and commitment is at the centre, variously envisaged as an organic plant stubbornly growing over a wall and sprouting hope and remembrance, as a gathering of stories around a fire surrounded by feet and hands, or as a human body made of several interconnected parts that need each

other to live and produce change. These are all powerful metaphors for the co-productive space we created together in Cartagena.

Finally, tensions between participants around process and goals, once acknowledged, can be productive. These tensions can serve as a common act, producing a collective focus on creating an affective community. In our experience, the sharing of experiences and emotions, be it in a testimonial account of lived violence or more reflexive practice accounts of activism, has resulted in community-making. As the participants explained, and as the Peace Festival illustrates, one of the things that memory work generates is the creation of a community: a community of care and commitment across boundaries. Participants were able to co-produce a sense of what their ideal society might look like, in the mirror of the moment of co-production itself, and a sense of community where bearing witness to each other is not only about pain in the past, but also about struggles in the present, and the vision of a different society in the future.

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