THE BASTA YA! REPORT: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN TEACHING RECENT HISTORY IN SECONDARY BASIC AND MID-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN COLOMBIA

RAMIRO GÓMEZ SALGADO (10701117)
MSC. INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM
Master’s Thesis:

The Basta Ya! Report: Challenges and opportunities for implementation in teaching recent history in secondary basic and mid-secondary education in Colombia

RAMIRO GÓMEZ SALGADO (10701117)
MSc. INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM
FIRST SUPERVISOR: DR. MARGRIET POPPEMA
SECOND READER: DR. XAVIER BONAL
8TH OF FEBRUARY 2015
# Table of contents

Acknowledgments ......................................................................................................................... 4  
List of figures ................................................................................................................................. 5  
List of acronyms ............................................................................................................................. 6  
1. Introduction ............................................................................................................................... 7  
2. The Research Context .............................................................................................................. 10  
   2.1. The Colombian Complexity ............................................................................................... 10  
      2.1.1. Historical Background: The history of violence ......................................................... 11  
      2.1.2. The current situation ................................................................................................ 14  
   2.2. The Colombian Educational System .................................................................................. 14  
      2.2.1. The Structure: A decentralized system ...................................................................... 15  
      2.2.2. The Foundations: A competency-based learning ...................................................... 16  
      2.2.3. The Data: An unequal system ................................................................................... 18  
3. Theoretical Framework ............................................................................................................ 20  
   3.1. The Strategic Relational Approach .................................................................................... 20  
   3.2. Transitional Justice, Truth Commissions and Truth Reports .............................................. 21  
      3.2.1. Transitional Justice ..................................................................................................... 22  
      3.2.2. Truth Commissions and Historical Commissions ....................................................... 23  
      3.2.3. Truth reports and its implementation ....................................................................... 26  
   3.3. History Education and Peacebuilding Education .............................................................. 29  
      3.3.1. History Education ...................................................................................................... 29  
      3.3.2. History teaching in postconflict societies ................................................................... 30  
      3.3.3. Peacebuilding Education ........................................................................................... 32  
4. Research Design ....................................................................................................................... 33  
   4.1. Research Questions ........................................................................................................... 33  
   4.2. Ontology and Epistemology .............................................................................................. 34  
   4.3. Methodology .................................................................................................................... 35  
   4.4. Methods and Data Analysis .............................................................................................. 35  
      4.4.1. Analysis of the policy framework ............................................................................... 35  
      4.4.2. Semi-structured interviews ....................................................................................... 36  
      4.4.3. Data analysis ............................................................................................................. 39  
   4.5. Limitations, challenges and ethics .................................................................................... 40  
5. The Results .............................................................................................................................. 42  
   5.1. The National Framework .................................................................................................. 42
5.1.1. The General Law of Education................................................................. 42
5.1.2. The Curriculum Guidelines.................................................................. 43
5.1.3. The Basic Standards of Competencies.................................................. 44
5.1.4. The state examination: Saber11 test....................................................... 47
5.1.5. Summary of the findings....................................................................... 48
5.2. Recent History Teaching.......................................................................... 50
5.2.1. PEI and school curriculum: Following the curriculum guidelines....... 50
5.2.2. Structure of the content: The centrality of 9th grade......................... 51
5.2.3. Teaching strategies: Four approaches................................................... 52
5.2.4 Skills: Historical, critical, reflexive and... the other three skills............ 55
5.2.5. Values and attitudes: Respect, respect and respect............................ 57
5.2.6. Motivations and demands: commitment and scarcity....................... 58
5.2.6 Summary of the findings........................................................................ 59
5.3. The Basta Ya!: General Perceptions......................................................... 62
5.3.1. General Assessment: It is a good report but....................................... 62
5.3.2. Truth, Historical Memory and Justice: It depends............................... 65
5.3.3. Reparation, reconciliation and non-repetition: just a little................... 67
5.3.4. Peace and democracy: A lack of orientation....................................... 68
5.3.5 Summary of the findings....................................................................... 69
5.4. The Basta Ya!: Perceptions about the Implementation in Education........ 70
5.4.1. National level implementation: The need of integration.................... 70
5.4.2. Awareness-raising and capacity-building: A duty............................... 72
5.4.3. School-level implementation: The need of contextualization............. 73
5.4.4. Values, attitudes and skills: a starting point...................................... 75
5.4.5. Summary of the findings.................................................................... 76
6. Discussion and Conclusion........................................................................ 77
6.1. Discussion on the research sub-questions and theoretical reflection.... 77
6.2 Conclusion: The Challenges and Opportunities for Implementation....... 83
7. References.................................................................................................. 85
8. Appendix.................................................................................................... 96
Acknowledgments

There are a number of people I would like to acknowledge for their valuable contribution to this thesis. First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Margriet Poppema, for her patience, insightful academic advice and continuous support. She has guided me throughout the research and writing of this thesis and encouraged me to take a step forward. Additionally, I want to thank Dr. Xavier Bonal for agreeing to be my second reader.

I also would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the respondents and every person who helped me throughout the research period. I have to acknowledge Centro Nacional de Memoria Historica (Bogotá), Centro de Memoria, Paz y Reconciliación (Bogotá), Casa Museo de la Memoria (Medellín), and especially Escuela del Maestro (Medellín). Without their participation and input, this thesis could not have been successfully conducted.

My sincere gratitude goes out to my friends, here and there.

Finally, I take this opportunity to thank my family and, in particular, my sister.

Pero a mellor palabra é a que queda por dicir.

 History is a prophet who looks back: because of what was, and against what was, it announces what will be.

(Eduardo Galeano, Open Veins of Latin America)
List of figures

Table 1. Research Questions ........................................................................................................ 9
Table 2. The Organization of the Colombian Education ............................................................. 15
Table 3. List of Educational Stakeholders ................................................................................... 36
Table 4. List of Schools and Participants .................................................................................... 38
Table 5. The topics of the generator axes ................................................................................... 43

Figure 1. Map of Colombia ........................................................................................................ 10
Figure 2. The competency-oriented learning ............................................................................ 17
Figure 3. Visualization of the values promoted in recent history teaching .............................. 58
Figure 4. The Four Approaches of Recent History Teaching .................................................... 60
List of acronyms

*Basta Ya* – ¡Basta Ya!: Memorias de guerra y dignidad (Enough Already!: Memories of war and dignity)

CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis

CNMH – Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica (National Centre for Historical Memory)

ELN – Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army)

FARC-EP – Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People’s Army)

ICFES – Instituto Colombiano para la Evaluación de la Educación (in English Colombian Institute for Educational Evaluation)

M-19 – Movimiento del 9 de abril (in English Movement 19 of April)

MEN – Ministerio de Educación Nacional (in English Ministry of National Education)

PEI – Proyecto Educativo Institucional (in English Institutional Educative Project)

SRA – Strategic Relational Approach

UP – Unión Patriótica (in English Patriotic Union)
1. Introduction

In the year 2013 the National Centre for Historical Memory (CNMH, in its Spanish acronym) published a report called ¡Basta Ya!: Memorias de guerra y dignidad (in English “Enough Already!: Memories of war and dignity”), the result of 6 years of research regarding the history of the Colombian armed conflict during the period 1958-2012. The project was initiated by the Group of Historical Memory (GHM) created by the National Commission for the Reparation and Reconciliation, under the provisions of the law 975 of 2005, which was later absorbed by the National Centre for Historical Memory, created in concordance with the law 1448 of 2011. The historical reconstruction provided in the report is built upon the testimonies of the victims of 24 emblematic cases and complemented with secondary sources, national and local archives, judicial files, records from mass media, and academic research. Moreover, the information and findings were complemented with research of other centres, Human Rights organizations and other state institutions. Additionally, the report sets out a list of recommendations for how to apply public policies to fulfil the rights of victims and "foster a democratic society and a lasting and sustainable peace". The present thesis arises from the recommendation 23, in regards to the Right to Reparation, which demands to the National Government and the Ministries of Education and Culture, schools and academia, to integrate the Basta Ya! Report into the “curriculum, pedagogical projects, manuals and history books and social sciences”.

The purpose of the present thesis is to explore the challenges and opportunities for the implementation of Basta Ya! in recent history teaching in secondary basic and mid-secondary education in Colombia, and how its findings and recommendations can be integrated into the teaching of recent history. In order to investigate the potential for the implementation of the report in education, the thesis examines the current policy framework, the current practices of recent history teaching and the perceptions of educational stakeholders about the Basta Ya! and its potential implementation. Therefore, this study aims to elucidate the multi-scalar structures, from the national to the classroom level, that configure and shape the teaching of recent history.

---

1 From now on it will be cited as the Basta Ya!. in English “Enough Already!: Memories of war and dignity. 
2 The article 50 of the law 975 of 2005, known as the Law of Justice and Peace, stated that the aim of the CNRR was to elaborate and divulge a narrative about the armed conflict in Colombia that identifies the reasons for the emergence and evolution of the illegal armed groups, and explore the different truths and memories of the violence, with a differentiated approach and a preferential focus on the voice of the victims that have been suppressed and silenced
3 The article 147 of the law 1448 of 2011, known as the Law of the Victims and Land Restitution, provided the creation of the CNMH with the aim of collects and recovers all the documentary material, oral testimony and any other means concerning the violations defined in the article 3 of the law.
The role and functions of education in conflict and postconflict societies, and how it can contribute to promoting and building peace, or conversely, to exacerbating and (re)producing conflict, has been an issue of growing interest in the academic literature (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000; Buckland, 2006; Davies, 2006). In postconflict societies, attention has been paid predominantly to the structural issues that contribute to social reconstruction (Cole & Barsalou 2005). On the contrary, except for some studies (Oglesby, 2004; Paulson 2006), the relation between history education, transitional justice and peacebuilding has hardly been investigated, either theoretically or empirically (Cole, 2007). Moreover, the issue of historical narrative(s) transferred through history education has been a heavily contested arena in conflict and postconflict contexts. However, the literature has been predominantly focused on the content of the curriculum and textbooks, and less towards “the way history is taught” (Cole & Barsalou 2005). This thesis assumes that teachers occupy a central position in education and curriculum implementation, and the essential role that they have in postconflict contexts as a “critical agents of transformation” (Vongalis, 2006, p. 103).

The recent history of Colombia is the point of departure of this thesis. The historical review helps to understand the complexity of the Colombian conflict, and is an essential requisite to understand the controversy of history teaching and the potential of the implementation of Basta Ya! In the first chapter, the contextual review includes an overview of the Colombian educational system: the structure, the foundations and the data. The second chapter outlines the theoretical framework. The first element introduced is the Strategic Relational Approach (SRA), which is the guide for the analysis of this thesis. Subsequently, a set of fundamental concepts are presented, providing a complete understanding of the theoretical dimensions in which the research is endorsed. The theoretical review starts with transitional justice, continues with the discussion on truth commissions and the implementation of such reports in education, and from there all the way to peacebuilding education, through the discussions on history teaching and history teaching in postconflict context. The third chapter is focused on the design of the research, the methodology, the methods, as well as the challenges, limitations and ethical issues.

After the revision of the design, formulation and development of the research, the thesis will focus on the presentation of results, in the fifth chapter. First, the formulation of history teaching in the current policy framework is examined through the analysis of the policy documents that delineate the curricular orientations for recent history teaching. The second sub-section is focused on the current practices of history teaching. The two last sub-sections present the perceptions of the educational stakeholders about the report and the main challenges and opportunities for the implementation of Basta Ya!. The last chapter critically analyses the
findings, and provides an answer to each of the research sub-questions through a discussion of the findings, and contrasts the results with the theoretical reflection. The thesis is concluded with a general summary that recapitulates the main challenges and opportunities for the implementation of the report. Despite its inclusion in the design chapter, the table below presents the research questions that have guided this investigation.

Table 1. Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the main challenges and opportunities according to the different educational actors for implementation of the <em>Basta Ya! Report</em> in teaching recent history in secondary basic and mid-secondary education in Colombia?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How is recent history addressed in the Colombian policy framework and how is it integrated in the curriculum orientations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the current practises of recent history teaching, in secondary basic and mid-secondary education, particularly in terms of the transmission of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the general perceptions of the educational stakeholders (national policy makers, trade unions, civil society organizations and academia) about the <em>Basto Ya!</em> report?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do the different educational stakeholders perceive as the main challenges and opportunities for the implementation of the <em>Basta Ya!</em> in education?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. The Research Context

This chapter provides a brief description of the political and social context in Colombia, and examines the main characteristics of the configuration of the Colombian educational system. Firstly, an overview of the recent history of the country is outlined, highlighting the complexity of the conflict and its evolution, along with the contemporary context of the country. Subsequently, the main characteristics and structure of the educational system are examined.

2.1. The Colombian Complexity

The Republic of Colombia is a country located in the Northwest of Latin America, which shares borders with Venezuela, Ecuador, Brazil, Peru and Panama. In 2012, Colombia had an estimated population of 47,704,000 (UN, 2014). According to the World Bank (2014), the GDP of Colombia in 2013 was $378.4 billion, and it is categorized as an upper middle income country. However, the poverty ratio in the same year was 30.6%, and the Gini coefficient 53.5 in 2012 (World Bank, 2014). This data reflects the profound economic and social inequality of the country, which positions Colombia as one of the most unequal countries in the world. The economic and social inequalities, poverty and conflict are deeply rooted in Colombia.

The Colombian conflict constitutes the longest internal armed conflict in the Western hemisphere, and one of the bloodiest in the contemporary history of Latin America (CNMH 2013). The CNMH estimates that approximately 220,000 people has been killed during the period 1958-2012. Moreover, in the recent history of Colombia, the forced displacement has been massive and systemic, with more than 390,000 refugees and more than 4,700,000 internally displaced persons (UNHCR, 2012). The number of internally displaced persons represents around an 8% of the total population, and this data positions Colombia as the second country in the world with the largest number of internally displaced persons (Ruiz, 2011).
The main driver of the Colombian conflict, running for more than half a century, has been deeply-rooted in the legitimacy and control over territory. However, in the last decade the conflict has been greatly influenced by the dispute over control of natural resources and also in a significant way, by the production illicit crops (Cuchumbé & Vargas, 2007). Therefore, the Colombian conflict is based on a complex interaction of territorial, political and economic interest. It can be categorised as a chronic conflict, and characterized by the consolidation and normalization of violence (Trejos Rosero, 2013). In regard to the dynamics and strategies, the Colombian case can be classified as a low-intensity conflict. This implies that the conflict is less random and more targeted, with high frequency but low intensity violence (Novelli, 2008). Moreover, the situation is commonly categorised as an internal conflict, that is, as an intra-state conflict. Other aspects that add complexity to the categorisation are the external interactions and impacts, which has become more internationalized and regionalized than its origins (Demmers, 2012, p.11).

2.1.1. Historical Background: The history of violence.

If providing a definition of the Colombian conflict is contentious, locating the origins of the conflict is equally complex. For some authors, the origins of the conflict are based on the dynamics of confrontation between liberals and conservatives during the mid-20th century, with its maximum expression on the so-called “La Violencia”. For some others, the conflict has been present throughout the century, with some writers claiming the violence was related with the history of Colombian independence from Spain in 1819. For the aim of this paper, the time frame selected corresponds with the period of Basta Yá!, which acknowledges the heritage of the bipartisan violence, but focuses on the contemporary conflict since the emergence of the revolutionary guerrillas.

The advent of the revolutionary guerrillas in the decade of the 1960s responds to several factors, but predominantly, due to the situation of political exclusion derived from the establishment of

---

4 It is contentious whether to the conflict as a civil war or not. The Colombian conflict present most of the criteria commonly used to define a civil war, as Sambanis proposes (as cited in Demmers, 2012), in terms of territory, government involvement, representation of the main insurgency organizations, and political and social organisation of the parties of the conflict. One of the arguments against its classification as civil war is the civil involvement in the conflict, because the majority of the population do not interact or take a direct position in the conflict (Nasi, Ramirez & Lair 2013).

5 The main example is the relevance of the United States supporting military and strategically the Colombian state and the counter-insurgent movements.

6 La violencia, in English “The violence”, was a period of high violence originated in 1946. In 1948, the violence reached the peak after the assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán presidential candidate of the liberal party, and the resulting riots known as El Bogotazo. It was extended until the conformation of the Frente Nacional in 1958. An estimated of 200,000 deaths and around 2,000,000 people was displaced (Kerr, 2010).
The period of the National Front was mainly characterised by political repression, associated with their attempt to gain hegemony at the local and regional levels, the dynamics of violence in which the country was immersed, the persistence of land distribution issues and confrontations, and the influence of international geopolitical forces during the Cold War. These factors layed the foundation for the rise of the guerrilla groups such as, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia- Ejército de Pueblo (FARC-EP)\(^8\), and the Ejercito de Liberación Nacional (ELN)\(^9\).

The conformation of FARC-EP was closely related with the persistence of the agrarian conflict and were the continuation of the Autodefensas campesinas \(^10\), that had been active during the Violencia period\(^11\). In its origins, they were closely related with the communist party. Although the international context also influenced the conformation of FARC-EP, it was a fundamental factor for the emergence of the other guerrilla forces. The ELN was inspired by the Cuban Revolution and the focalism theory of Ché Guevara. The ELN had the support of a number of students and the urban working class, but it was strongest in rural areas. Despite the establishment of others guerrillas groups, the levels of violence were relatively low until the beginning of the 1970s. A new guerrilla entered the conflict, the Movimiento 19 de abril (M-19)\(^12\). The M-19 began as an urban guerrilla group, with an operative style oriented to high-impact actions\(^13\), and grew substantially during the 1970s.

Throughout the decade of the 1970s, the guerrillas progressively expanded their forces and strengthened their areas of influence. However, it was in the first years of the 1980s when that expansion reached a new dimension. The dynamics of the insurgent groups\(^14\) soon combined with the armed confrontation, political action and strong influence over social movements (CNMH, 2013). At the time of the guerrilla expansion, the president Belisario Betancur (1982-1986) opted for a strategy based on the dialogue and launched a peace negotiation process. Along with the consolidation of the Union Patriótica (UP)\(^15\), this was interpreted by some military and police sections, as well as national and local elites, as a threat and led to the emergence of the contra-

---

7 In English, ‘National Front’.
8 In English, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People’s Army
9 In English, the National Liberation Army.
10 In English, Peasant Self-Defence.
11 In 1964 the Autodefensas were transformed into mobile guerrillas but until 1966 they were not constituted as FARC-EP (Palacios 647).
12 In English, Movement 19 of April. The M-19 had its origins in the fraudulent presidential elections of 19 April 1970.
13 As the assault to the Dominican Republic embassy and the bolivar’s sword theft.
14 The military strategy of FARC-EP in 1982 turned into an offensive scheme/tact.
15 In English Patriotic Union. The UP constituted the mechanism of political representation of demobilised combatants and other left-willing spectrum, and was configured as legal arm of FARC.
insurgent groups, the Autodefensas. However, the emergence of the autodefensas would be closely related with the irruption of one crucial element that would transform the dynamics of the conflict, the drug trafficking. The last years of the decade of the 80s were characterized by the radicalization of the guerrillas groups’ actions, the progressive weakening of the state, the expansion of the paramilitary forces, the consolidation of the drug cartels, and the expansion of violence against political and social leaders.

The early 1990s witnessed the establishment of the Constitutive National Assembly. It soon led to the promulgation of the Constitution of 1991, interrelated with the demobilization of the M-19 and other smaller guerrilla groups, the assassination of several presidential candidates and increased pressures from student mobilizations. Due to the political situation, the democratic deficit, and the expansion of the paramilitary expansion, FARC-EP and ELN declined to participate in the process, and opted to continue with their armed strategies. The paramilitary expansion was consecrated with the foundation of the Autodefensas Campesinas de Córdoba y Urabá (ACCU) in 1995, and the constitution of the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) in 1997.

The confrontation based on the struggle between guerrillas, paramilitary forces and the army for control over the territory led to the escalation of the conflict, which reached a violent peak during the first years of the twenty-first century (CNMH, 2013).

The beginning of the 21st century was characterized by a situation of high hostility, the failure of a new peace process between the government of Pastrana and FARC-EP (1998-2002), and the signature of the so-called Plan Colombia, a bilateral agreement with the government of the United States oriented towards combating drug cartels and the insurgent groups. This operation represented a significant military boost to the Colombian Army. Likewise, Plan Colombia was an essential element in the so-called policy of Defence and Democratic Security, implemented during the two mandates of the president Álvaro Uribe (2002-2010). The strategy developed under the Uribe’s administration was concentrated on military action to confront the guerrillas and recover the territory. At the same time, a negotiation process with the paramilitary forces was initiated in 2003, which culminated in 2006 with the demobilization of the AUC. Nevertheless, instead of eliminating the presence of paramilitary groups, it led to a reconfiguration and rearmament of some groups, who were more closely integrated with the drug trafficking groups.

---

16 In English Self-Defence Forces.
17 In English Peasant Self-Defence Forces of Córdoba and Urabá.
18 In English United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia.
19 The process led to the demobilization of the AUC, but was highly controversial for the guarantees to the paramilitary.
2.1.2. The current situation.

In 2010, Juan Manuel Santos was elected president of Colombia. The situation of the conflict in the beginning of the decade was characterized by the strategic re-location of the guerrillas and a fragmented rearmament of the paramilitary groups (CNMH, 2013). The Santos administration has developed a hybrid strategy, combining military action and the reformulation of the policy of Defence and Democratic Security, with an important emphasis on the victims and the orientation towards a new peace negotiation process. In this respect, in 2011 law 1448 was enacted, known as the Law of the Victims and Land Restitution, based on the recognition and reparation of victims. Furthermore, after some exploratory secret contacts, in August 2012 president Santos and FARC announced that the procedures and agenda for peace negotiations had been defined, and this meant a discontinuation of military operations.\(^\text{20}\)

The peace negotiations were initiated in La Havana on the 19th of November, 2012. The agenda established for the negotiations covers six topics: a programme for rural development (land reform), political participation, drug trafficking and illicit crops, rights of victims, disarmament of the rebels and the implementation of the peace deal.\(^\text{21}\) It was particularly relevant that the announcement was launched in June 2014 because the agreement catalysed a truth commission to investigate the deaths and human rights violations, as well as the first hearing of victims, which was held on the 16th of August 2014. Lastly, the Colombian government and the ELN announced that exploratory talks had been held since January and an agreement was reached to discuss an agenda during formal talks.

2.2. The Colombian Educational System

The Colombian Constitution of 1991 consecrated a social state under the rule of Law. The Constitution enriched a number of fundamental rights and established in article 67 that education is a right and a public service with a social function.\(^\text{22}\) The General Law of Education, Law 115 of 1994, defines formal education and establishes the configuration of the formal educational system. It determines that formal education is organized in three levels: pre-school, at least one

---

\(^{20}\) A bilateral ceasefire has been claimed in several occasions for FARC-EP, but has been frontally rejected by the government, due to the fear that would have been used by the guerrilla group to strengthen.

\(^{21}\) In September 2014, the Colombian government and FARC-EP decided to publish the complete drafts over the three points on which political agreement was reached.

\(^{22}\) In this article, the state, the society and the family were appointed as responsible for education, and it established that education is mandatory for those aged between five and fifteen years old, and should cover at least one year of pre-school and nine years of basic education.
mandatory grade; basic education, nine grades in two periods, five grades of primary basic and four grades of secondary basic education; mid-secondary education is comprised of two grades.

Table 2. The Organization of the Colombian Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Ages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>3(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary basic</td>
<td>1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Basic</td>
<td>6-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-secondary</td>
<td>10-11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MEN (2009)

According to the grades offered by the educational establishment Colombian system distinguishes two modalities: ‘educational institutions’, which offers from 0º grade to 11º, and ‘educational centres’, which provide the service only until grade 8º. The academic calendar covers a total of 40 weeks, and the provision of education in public establishments must be offered in a single journey, but only 10% of the students of the public system have a single-journey.

2.2.1 The Structure: A decentralized system.

The adoption of the Constitution of 1991 initiated a process of decentralization in the country. Colombia is a unitary republic organised in a regime of decentralization, subdivided into different territorial units, in which the departments and the municipalities are the most important (Vidal, Atehortúa, & Salcedo, 2013). The decentralization in Colombia, particularly in regard to education, has been oriented to the delegation of competencies related with resources and personnel management, i.e., an administrative decentralization (MEN, 2009). The Ministry of Education (MEN, in its Spanish acronym) remains the organism responsible for drawing educational policies and for designing the guidelines and objectives, as well as regulating and evaluating the provision and examination of education. The responsibility for the direct provision of education lies with the regional entities: the departments, districts and municipalities. Each

23 Only 12% of primary institutions and 11% of secondary institutions. In the case of private education, 45%.
24 From a political perspective, the Constitution of 1991 maintains the political centralism.
25 The Law 715 of 2001, in the Title II, defines de distribution of the competencies in regards to the educational system in the Colombian state.
26 Exclusively, the certified municipal entities assume competencies on education, that is, those with more than 100.000 inhabitants according to the Law 715 of 2001.
administrative level has competencies and responsibilities, but these are shared and coordinated with the other levels (MEN, 2009).

Despite education’s status as a public service, the provision of education can be dispensed directly by the state and also particulars. Next to state-run schools, two main models of public-private partnership have been developed. The state can contract the service to a third party, transferring resources to private entities to cover the supply of the services, or by transferring public infrastructure to a private institution, which will manage the provision of education (MEN, 2009). The latter system is known as Colegios de concesión.

In the process of the decentralization of the education in Colombia, the transmission of competencies has been completed with another fundamental pillar, the autonomy of the educational institutions. The General Educational Law established the autonomy of each educational institution to formulate their own Proyecto Educativo Institucional (PEI). In article 73, the basic elements of the PEI’s are outlined, including “the principles and aims of the establishment, both available and required teaching and learning resources, the pedagogical strategy, the rules for teachers and students and the management system.” Moreover, and according with the article 77, the principle of autonomy implies that the educational institutions decide the distribution and contents for each level, i.e., each institution has flexibility to determine the curriculum, as well as pedagogies and methodologies, as long as they follow the general guidelines set out by the Ministry (MEN, 2010).

2.2.2. The Foundations: A competency-based learning.

Under the normative framework created by The General Law of Education and the supplementary laws, educational institutions are responsible to synthesise their own curriculum. The curriculum is defined in the article 76 as “the set of criteria, study plans, programs, methodologies, and processes that contribute to the integral development and the construction of national, regional, and local cultural identity.” Despite their autonomy to formulate their own curriculum, the national laws established that at least 80% of the curriculum should be composed by the 9 mandatory areas. Moreover, the curriculum has to follow the main principles and objectives

---

27 In English, Concession schools. The first experience of this modality of public-private partnership was implemented in Bogota in 1999 (Delgado, 2014), and has being also implemented in other cities, as in Medellin from 2002.
28 In English Institutional Educative Project.
29 The elaboration of the PEI, inclusion of the community, and should be participative and consensual.
30 These areas are: natural science and environmental education; social sciences, history, geography, constitution and democracy; art education; ethics and human values education; physical education, recreation and sports; religious education; humanities, Spanish language and foreign languages;
established by the MEN, as well as their own PEI. Two main instruments constitute the orientations provided by the MEN: the curriculum guidelines and the basic standards of competencies.

Firstly, the curriculum guidelines, published in 2002, were elaborated under the provisions of The General Educational Law. The aim of the curricular guidelines is to organize the epistemological, pedagogical and curricular orientations for each of the mandatory areas\(^{31}\). The MEN defines the competencies as “flexible know-how that can be updated in different contexts”, and requires the application of knowledge, skills and attitudes (MEN, 2004). However, even these competencies are based on the processes\(^{32}\); it is not independent of the thematic contents, composed by the knowledge or know-what, know-how, know-why and know-what-for (MEN, 2004, p.12).

Figure 2. The competency-oriented learning

\[ \text{Source: Adaptation based on MEN (2006)} \]

\(^{31}\) The composition of the guidelines vary according to each discipline, but in general they are composed by the thematic axes, fundamental contents and basic competencies.

\(^{32}\) The MEN distinguish three different competencies that the educational system should develop: basic competencies, citizenship competencies and labour competencies (MEN, 2009).
On the other hand, the curricular guidelines are complemented with these basic competencies standards, published in 2004. These standards set out common criteria to evaluate the achievements and quality of education. The MEN defines the standards as a “clear and public domain criterion for evaluating whether the formation of a student achieves the social and national expectations of quality in education” (MEN, 2004). Consequently, the standards configure a guide to the design of the curriculum, the evaluation at the institutional level, as well as external evaluation. Additionally, Decree 1920 of 2009 established the evaluation criteria for basic and middle education, and set three levels of evaluation: international, national and institutional. The institutional evaluation is established in the PEI’s, and lays down the criteria to measure - in monthly and annual bases - the evolution and long-term performance of the students. The national evaluation is based on the basic standards, and is run by the Instituto Colombiano para la Evaluación de la Educación (ICFES)33. The only official national exam is the so-called Saber11, but recently two additional standardised tests, Saber5 and Saber9, have been implemented34.

2.2.3. The Data: An unequal system.

The Colombian educational system35 in 2012 was consisted of 22,937 educational institutions of basic and middle education, 316,714 teachers, and 10,674,609 children. Whilst, most of the students are enrolled in public schools, a total of 8,939,203 students, private institutions also cover a significant percentage (16.26%) of the students. The public provision of education has grown from 78% in 2002, to 83.74% in 2012. Education is significantly more highly concentrated in urban settings, with just 24.25% of the total amount of students enrolled in rural areas. In terms of public expenditure on education measured as a proportion of GDP, there has been a modest increase and has ranged between 3.9% and 4.8% per year. Literacy rates have also increased from 93.48% in 2002, to 94.68% in 2011 (Delgado Barrera, 2014).

In the past 10 years, Colombia has incremented the rates of gross and net coverage, from 90.57% to 100.76%, and from 84.39 to 88.31% respectively (Delgado Barrera, 2014). But the coverage rate is not the same at all levels. It is significantly relevant that the net coverage in basic education in 2012 was 87.1%, but the net coverage in mid-secondary education was 40.98%. The

---

33 In English Colombian Institute for Educational Evaluation
34 The Saber11 is an annual examination which involves the students of grade 11, and covers different thematic areas. The Saber5 and Saber9, which involves students of grades 5 and 9 respectively, carried out every 3 years, is focused on mathematics, language and sciences.
35 These data was retrieved from the statistical tool in the MEN website: http://bi.mineducacion.gov.co:8380/eportal/web/planeacion-basica/
distribution of the coverage is not only different between educational levels; there are also gaps between regions, socio-economic levels and gender (Garcia, Espinosa, Jiménez, & Parra, 2013). Despite the progresses on coverage rates, the results in the international standard test, ‘PISA’, remain quite low. Colombia reached the position 62 of the 65 participant countries. Indeed, the results are lower than many other Latin American countries. The differences of performances between public and private schools are particularly significant, but the gap is lower than in other Latin American countries. Based on the disparities between the performances on PISA and Saber11 test, Garcia et al. (2013) sustain that the basic education in Colombia reproduces the social hierarchy, and perpetuates already established inequalities. They claim that in the Colombian educational system students are clustered in educational institutions according to their economic status, and this socio-economic segregation is contributing to the disparities in the quality of education, resulting in a worse education for poorer sectors of the population. Furthermore, taking into consideration the inequalities between regions and the rural-urban gap, Garcia et al. (2013) argue that there is a kind of apartheid in the Colombian educational system.
3. Theoretical Framework

Firstly, the chapter introduces the Strategic Relational Approach (SRA). Then, the next chapter addresses the debates on the field of transitional justice and the issues regarding truth commissions, the reports and its implementation. Subsequently, the theoretical discussions regarding history teaching, particularly in postconflict contexts, and the interplay of education and conflict are presented.

3.1. The Strategic Relational Approach

This research will seek to explore the current practices of teaching recent history in secondary education in Colombia and the challenges and opportunities for the implementation of the *Basta Ya! Report*. In accordance with the identified purposes, the research will employ the SRA. The selection of this critical realist approach to guide the analysis of the research comes from the possibility that the SRA offers to transcend the dichotomy between structure and agency\(^{36}\). From the perspective of this approach, the establishment of the two different categories is constructed exclusively with an analytical purpose, assuming that structure and agency interact and are interrelated in practice (Hay, 2004, 126-127). The idea of them both being related to each other is conceptualized by Jessop (as cited in Hay, 2004, 128), who explores this relational and dialectical interaction, and states that such interactions and reconfigurations leads, ultimately, to an interaction between strategic actors and strategically selective contexts. Additionally, Hay (2002) states that the actors are presumed to be conscious, reflexive and strategic, as well as intentional. Hence, “actors internalise perceptions of their context and consciously orient themselves towards that context” (Hay 2002, p.129). This implies that actors are neither rigid nor determined by the environment, and that in similar circumstances different actors will have different interest and, therefore, different actions.

The potentiality of the SRA that, as Hay (2004) states, is to overcome the dualism and “concentrate instead upon the dialectical interplay of structure and agency in real contexts of social and political interaction” (p.127). Moreover, the application of the SRA reflects the distinction between policy implementation or innovation and the ‘real’ change itself. Therefore, in respect to the specific applicability of the SRA to the research, it will allow to identify the multi-scalar structures that interact with teachers (strategic actors), determining their actions.

---

\(^{36}\) Hay (2002) defines context as “setting within which social, political and economic events occur and acquire meaning”, and agency as “the ability or capacity of an actor to act consciously and, in doing so, to attempt to realise his or her intentions”. (p.94)
While the issue of teacher agency has been addressed in the literature in relation to broader discussions, the agency of teachers at the school level has received scant attention in the literature (Priestley, Biesta, Robinson, 2012). One of the few and most prominent authors have been Vongalis (2006, 2007, 2013), who has analysed the teacher agency in multiple scales, but particularly in contexts of educational reform and change. Vongalis (2007) suggests that teachers should be seen as critical agents in their contexts, what in postconflict settings results in “critical agents of transformation” (2006, p. 103). She suggests that the educational systems are composed by the structures, the agents and their relationships (2007, p.430). Moreover, according to Vongalis, the interrelated components that frames teacher’s agency are their obligations, authority and autonomy (2007, p.428). Obligations are described as the boundaries and limitation to the teacher position, and its conformed by the regulations and legal construct that demarcate their action, and oriented towards student achievement and the school. Authority is defined as the capacity to learn and teach knowledge, and currently mainly identified as the teaching skills and the achievement of the learning outcomes. However, Vongalis also acknowledges the ethical and moral dimension of teaching, and therefore teachers’ authority is also described a “critical, conscious-raising” act. Finally, autonomy is described as the level of independence to act, and determine and pursue their interests.

### 3.2 Transitional Justice, Truth Commissions and Truth Reports

Since the 1970s, coinciding with the beginning of the so-called ‘third wave of democratization’, the adoption of truth commissions in post-conflict states and societies has been wide-spread. A full range of forms and experiences with truth commissions have taken place, and more than 30 official commissions have been established around the world: Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala and Peru, in America; Nigeria, Sierra Leone and South Africa, in Africa; or Philippines and Timor-Leste, in Asia. The configuration of truth commissions, as well as the experiences and results achieved, have differed widely from country to country. Nonetheless, the primary nature and underlying reasons for the establishment of these bodies have rested on attempts to clarify past abuses of human rights and, therefore, it has been mostly articulated as a mechanism of transitional justice.

---

37 In this research is employed the term truth commissions but, in both the literature and some country cases, other nomenclatures have been used to refer to this bodies, often including the term reconciliation.
3.2.1. Transitional Justice.

Transitional justice constitutes a fundamental element of the United Nations framework for promoting the rule of law, who define it as the:

[...] full range of processes and mechanisms associated with a society’s attempt to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation. (UN, 2010, p. 3)

Consequently, and in concordance with this definition, the primary nature of the different mechanisms and transitional justice itself relies on the respect and promotion of human rights and humanitarian law (International Centre for Transitional Justice [ICTJR], 2005, p.1). The procedures encompassed under the definition of transitional justice cover a set of both judicial and non-judicial processes and mechanisms, including: national and/or international prosecution, truth and reconciliation initiatives, and institutional reforms; which may be implemented independently or combined (UN, 2010; ICTJR, 2005). The main theoretical dilemmas in the field of transitional justice are grounded in the extent to which they contribute to genuine reconciliation and non-repetition (Freudenreich & Florian, 2008). Therefore, the discussion is based on how states and societies design the transitional processes and the different strategies to deal with the past, promote reconciliation and in turn, facilitate social reconstruction and peacebuilding. Moreover, the transitional process has to respond to the victims’ right to an effective remedy, which includes the right to know the truth (González & Varney, 2013). At the heart of the debate are the tensions between legal and ethical issues, justice and peace, and responsibilities and pardon.

On the one hand, there are academics in favour of the prevalence of legality and justice, who support processes oriented to investigate, prosecute and punish those involved with human rights violations. The arguments are based upon the prevalence of retributive justice in order to ensure accountability and to avoid the high risk of promoting impunity with truth commissions (Rigby, 2002; Thoms, Ron & Paris, 2008; Bakiner 2013). On the contrary, the scholars who oppose to trials as leading elements of transitional justice claim that they are selective and that the results are dubious, whilst simultaneously producing less information. Moreover, they claim that judicial prosecution does not pay attention to the political requirements of transitional processes and contributes less to clarification, and they claim that the implementation of truth telling mechanisms is necessary in order to promote victim reparation, to lessen the likelihood of future repetition and ensure a lasting peace (Allen, 1999; Rigby, 2002; Thoms et al. 2008, González & Varney, 2013). Therefore, the theoretical discussion is centred in whether is sufficient judicial
truth provided by the prosecution, or historical truth, as knowledge about the events and historical clarification is required in contexts of past human rights abuses. Despite the debates presented in this section, a great number of academics, recommend a combination of instruments, on the basis of an integrated approach, and the adaptation of the process to the specificities and requirements of each national context (Marko-Stöckl, 2008, Freeman & Hayner, 2003; Umprey 2003; Olsen, Payne, Reiter, and Wiebelhaus-Brahm, 2010). Consequently, truth commissions are portrayed not as an alternative to justice, but as a necessary complement in transitional justice processes, taking into account the value of truth and admissions in postconflict societies. The next sub-section explores more in-depth truth commissions and the debates around this bodies.

3.2.2. Truth Commissions and Historical Commissions

Over the past 30 years, truth commissions have become a prominent mechanism within transitional justice, particularly after a fall of an authoritarian regime or in contexts of negotiated transitions, and as a result of peace agreements (Hayner, 1994, Thoms et al. 2008). There is no single formula or model for the creation of truth commissions. The differences on the design and establishment depend on the different motivations and rationales underlying the constitution of these bodies, which are based fundamentally on the debates presented in the previous section (Roper & Barria, 2009; Freudenreich & Florian, 2008). Roper and Barria (2009) underline the great significance of the rationale behind the adoption of truth commissions. They set a cause-consequence relationship between reasons and results, suggesting that if the establishment is motivated by political interest rather than by seeking transitional justice, it might not enhance human rights prevention, nor democratization. Despite this consideration, and the relatively recent development of truth commissions, their potential has been extensively acknowledged and its application has grown over the past decades, being extended to almost all transitional processes (Freeman & Hayner, 2003).

Truth commissions have been primarily conceived as a non-judicial mechanism of truth seeking with an emphasis on the victims (Freeman & Hayner, 2003). Hayner (1994) established one of the most used definitions of truth commissions, defining them according to four parameters: focused on the past; investigating patterns of abuses over a period of time, rather

---

38 According to Roper and Barria (2009) these differences correspond with the degree of past human abuses and violations, the type of transition, the pressure from civil society organizations, and the pressure from the international community.

39 Primarily as a domestic mechanism, but it should be taken into consideration that in some cases it has been promoted and supported by international organizations and other countries.
than single events; temporary bodies, which disband after the completion of the report; and those assembled with some degree of authority. In later work, Hayner (2002) outlines the main functions and goals of truth commission as to:

[...] discover, clarify, and formally acknowledge past abuses; to respond to specific needs of victims; to contribute to justice and accountability; to outline institutional responsibility and recommend reforms; and to promote reconciliation and reduce conflict over the past. (p.24)

One of the main debates in regard to truth commissions is in relation to the definition and nature of the term truth. The notion of truth and how this truth is constructed, and whether such a construction is achievable and even desirable, are problematic issues in the literature (Chapman & Ball, 2003; Colle, 2005; Marko-Stöckl, E. 2008). Together with the epistemological constraints, other factors have to be taken into consideration, such as technical and methodological limitations (González & Varney, 2013). Additionally, the truth sought by the commissions is shaped for their mandates, which define the investigatory powers, frame the period of time and may even define the abuses and violations to investigate (Hayner, 1994; Freeman & Hayner 2003; Bakiner, 2013). Hayner (1994) claims that commissions with more flexible mandates and broader terms of reference may provide a more exhaustive “description” of the truth. Moreover, she states that “the importance of truth commissions might be described more accurately as acknowledging the truth rather than finding the truth” (p.607).

The testimonies of the victims commonly constitute the primary source of information for the investigations40. Nevertheless, the function of the commission is not to merely compile the individual experiences and testimonies. The mandate of truth commissions generally encompass the identification of the causes and magnitude of violence, as well as the larger patterns and trends, providing a record of the past abuses (Chapman & Ball 2001). The essential function of the commission is to balance these testimonies in the elaboration of the findings and results, i.e., the construction of the narrative that constitutes the report41. The way in which the findings are presented is particularly relevant. The resulting report could tend to constitute a common narrative, seeking to be integrative and broadly accepted, or respect the multiplicity of narratives. This can become problematic and reflecting the tensions between the individual and

40 The testimonies as primary data is problematic, as Chapman and Ball (2001) states “memory is inherently subjective and open to change over time” (p.5)
41 The relevance of the narratives in regards to collective and individual identities will be explored in the section of history education.
collective dimensions of the right to truth. This point of convergence of the individual\textsuperscript{42} and collective memories\textsuperscript{43} have been particularly relevant in the Latin American transitional processes, and has been generally referred as historical memory\textsuperscript{44} (Oglesby, 2007). The individual and collective memories are the sources for the construction of historical memory, which can be defined as the reconstruction of the past events with the data from the present moment (Betancourt, 2004). This notion of historical memory\textsuperscript{45} is based on the idea of the need for a historical narrative based on events of collective traumatic events, while reflecting as well the individual experiences (Gaborit, 2006). Therefore, both historical truth and historical memory are commonly amalgamated in the operations of truth commissions. Likewise, both terms have been used indistinctly in the literature, and more particularly, in the Latin American context\textsuperscript{46}. Nonetheless, historical truth is focused on the clarification of the historical facts, what happened, and how historical memory is centred on the (social) reconstruction, the account of what happened\textsuperscript{47}

Other truth-seeking mechanisms focussing on past human-rights violations, are the so-called historical commissions. Freeman and Hayner (2003) suggest that historical commissions have been generally focused on how certain ethnic, racial or other groups have been affected rather than large scale conflicts. According to their typology, historical commissions contribute to clarifying historical truth, but their main feature is that they are “present-day inquiries into state abuses that took place and ended many years, or even decades ago”.

\textit{The Colombian peculiarity}

Colombia is going through a process of transitional justice without transition (Uprimny, 2006). In this complex scenario, CNMH has been constituted as a non-judicial mechanism of transitional justice, which aims to contribute to a victim’s and society’s right to truth. However, the CNMH

\textsuperscript{42} The individual memory is not independent from to the social memory, it is simultaneous and a result of our social existence, and is nourished with others’ memories (Betancourt, 2004).

\textsuperscript{43} In his classic work about collective memory, Halbwachs states “The collective memory, for its part, encompasses the individual memories while remaining distinct from them. It evolves according to its own laws [...]” (as cited in Rueda, 2013).

\textsuperscript{44} The notion of historical memory has been contested in the literature. There is an ambiguous relationship between collective memory and historical memory, which have been used indistinctly in the social sciences (Sebares, 2008).

\textsuperscript{45} However, some authors, such as Ruiz-Vargas (2008), argue that the term ‘historical memory’ lacks an epistemological justification, but rather, it does have social, political and moral functions.

\textsuperscript{46} The terminology used for this bodies in the Latin American context add complexity to the issue, as in some cases the truth commissions are entitled as historical memory and reconciliation, like in the Guatemalan case.

\textsuperscript{47} Portelli (1990) suggested that historical memory is less about “what happened” than about what is remembered and the meaning made through it (as cited in Bellini, 2011, p. 2)
distances itself from being a truth commission, as it combines truth-seeking and historical research methods to produce historical truth by creating space for public discussion (CNMH, 2013). Due to its mandate and terms of reference, as established in the provisions of the laws 975 of 2005 and 1448 of 2011, it establishes an inquiry mechanism which shares several features with truth commissions. The previous research and reports of CNMH has been event-specific inquiries, but with Basta Yal!, they attempt to contribute to the historical clarification of the causes and consequences of the armed conflict in Colombia. Consequently, and taking into account the typology proposed by Hayner and Freeman (2003), due to its distance from the object of study, it cannot be considered a historical commission.

For the reasons set forth above and for the purpose of this thesis, CNMH is considered a truth commission-like body. The present research will not go in-depth into the whole spectrum of debates over the design, methodologies and other issues related with the processes of truth commissions48. The next sub-section is focused on the issues related with the reports, impact and implementation of its recommendation.

3.2.3. Truth reports and its implementation

Truth reports constitute the ultimate product of the operations of truth commissions and represent, and in most of the cases, the end point and the dissolution of the institution. The findings and historical narrative(s) produced are not the only output of the commissions. In general, the reports are supplemented with a list of concrete recommendations which outline the legal and institutional reforms and requirements needed to respond to the perceived grievances of the victims, to encourage the transition to and consolidation of democracy (Freeman & Hayner, 2013; Bakiner 2013). However, the lack of implementation of the recommendations after the publication of the reports has been one of the major issue confronting them, seriously dampening the impact of the work of the commissions, even in the cases in which the governments had legally binding obligations (Freeman & Hayner, 2003). The externalization of the report, that is, the communication and socialization of their findings have central role to ensure the impact of truth commissions (Chapman & Ball, 2003, p.30). Bakiner (2013) defines this impact as “causal effect of a truth commission process on individuals’ and institutions’ decisions, interests, beliefs and values” (p.8). Additionally, he suggests that the findings and recommendations should be reflected in the judicial processes and policies.

48 Freeman and Hayner (2003) outline the main elements to analyze on the mandate of truth commissions, being: objectives, period of operation, types of violation under investigation, period of time under consideration, functions, powers, sanctions and follow-up.
The impact of commissions is particularly relevant in regard to education because, as Paulson (2009) states, the references to education in the reports have increased over the years, and these are the transitional justice mechanism with practical influence in education and children. In practice, the relationship between history education, transitional justice and peacebuilding has received scant attention in the literature (Cole, 2007). In order to examine the impact of past commissions in educational reforms and the enhancement of the reports within education, the following short review presents the experiences of four cases: Argentina, Guatemala, South Africa and Sierra Leone.

Firstly, the Argentinian commission regarding the past abuses of the military dictatorship 49 received large international attention and has been used an example of truth and justice for other countries 50. The commission published the results of the investigation in a report called Nunca Más 51. In its recommendations, the commission called for the mandatory implementation of human rights education, reflecting the centrality that the premise of “remembering to not repeat” had in the Argentinian transition (Carretero & Borreli, 2008). However, until 1996, the dictatorship period was not included in academic textbooks, and the absence of pedagogical support has constituted an impediment for its implementation. Moreover, the main efforts have been oriented to the promotion of responsible citizenship, and there has been a tendency to create an “official narrative” based on the contraposition of heroes and villains 52 (Carretero y Borreli, 2008; Fiedrich, 2014).

Secondly, the Guatemalan commission that resulted from the Peace Accords of Oslo (1994) also represents one of the most studied examples. The Peace Accords addressed several needs for an educational reform, but most of them have not being implemented (Poppema, 2009). Moreover, and despite the recommendations done by the commission in the report Memorias del Silencio 53, they have not been included in the curriculum, even when a reduced version for distribution to the population and a pedagogical adaptation were created (Oglesby, 2004; Oglesby 2007; CNMH, 2013). Furthermore, Bellino (2011) suggest that historical memory has been relegated to the

49 It was called Comisión Nacional para la Desaparición de Personas, National Commission on the Disapeared in English.
50 The Argentinian transitional process combined bringing military to justice with the Commission investigation of the abuses.
51 In English Never Again. It documented the cases of almost 9,000 people who had disappeared (Hayner, 1994)
52 Carretero and Borrelli (2008) also claim that historical simplifications can lead to an uncritical acceptance of the past. Moreover, they suggest that “the repetition without variations over the time may not indicate the triumph of memory, but its defeat” (p.213).
53 In English, Memories of silence
unofficial spaces, due to the absence of public spaces for debate and reflection, both within and outside the school\textsuperscript{54}.

Thirdly, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone also incorporated educational recommendations, like the inclusion of the report and its findings in the curriculum. Similarly to the Guatemalan case, adapted materials, including pedagogical guidelines for teachers, were produced in Sierra Leone. According to Cole & Murphy (2009), it has not been sufficiently integrated and promoted within education. However, some educational reforms have taken place, and some advancement on the directions outlined in the recommendations have been reached. Nevertheless, as Paulson (2006) argues, the changes were not motivated to give response to the requirements established for the commission and were driven for different interest.

Finally, the South African commission\textsuperscript{55} represents the largest and most studied experience (Marko-Stöckl, 2008). The commission was strongly influenced by the previous Latin American experiences. Contrary to the Argentinian transition however, at first the tendency was “to forget the past” in order to construct a common future. The report produced for the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission was considerably implemented in the educational policies and in the curriculum (Cole & Murphy, 2009). Nevertheless, despite the official discourse promoting that the past should be confronted in order to deal with the present, the interest seemed limited. (Stolten, 2006). Moreover, the lack of plurality of histories has been also criticised, particularly in regards to black communities.

Despite the disparity of experiences and impacts achieved with the implementation of the recommendations regarding educational reform, as was illustrated with the four cases, the mere fact that education constitutes an integral part of those recommendations, and therefore of the rationale of commissions, reflects its relevance.

\textsuperscript{54} Bellino (2011) also suggest that not address the conflict in the curriculum may lead to simplistic explanations, which involves the “risk mystifying atrocity and the historical agents and forces responsible for it” (p14).

\textsuperscript{55} It should be noted the peculiarity of the South Africa Commission, which has subpoena power and conferred amnesty in change of testimony (Wiebelhaus-Brahm et al, 2010, p. 475)
3.3. History Education and Peacebuilding Education

Within education, and particularly in conflict and post-conflict contexts, history education has been given a central role, which is also reflected by the increasing attention paid to the literature related to the particular issues regarding how the recent past should be taught the schools.

3.3.1. History Education.

History education in (post)conflict societies is not only influenced by the need for peace-building, but as well by the current trend of modernization followed in the majority of countries\(^{56}\). Contemporary reforms have been influenced by neoliberalism and are predominantly oriented towards adapting education to the requirements of capitalism and the global market, according to the principles of efficiency, efficacy and quality (Alfaro, 2009). Rooted in the human capital theory, the curriculum design and pedagogical adaptation, has been articulated through the competencies approach\(^{57}\). Smith et al. (2011) refer to this shift as a (re)orientation of the curriculum towards “learning outcomes”, referring “to skills, attitudes and values as well as factual knowledge” (p.20). Likewise, the (re)orientation towards learning outcomes within history teaching is obvious in the definition of the goals established for Pendry et al. (as cited in Blanch, 2004):

> History teaching is about all of these things (“transmission of ‘content’”, “acquisition of skills”, “a vehicle of ‘political education’ and values”, development of ‘historical concepts’) [...] (p.160)

This definition contrasts with the traditional and widespread notion of history as a boring subject centred on memorizing dates. Prats and Santacana (2001) delineate four essential objectives for history teaching: understanding historical events within their context; understanding the multiple perspectives within historical analysis; understanding the multiple sources of information and methods of evaluation; and the transmission of what has been learnt (p.16). Carretero and Montero (2008) identify the comprehension of the historical time and casual reasoning in history and the critical analysis of historical information as the cognitive competencies which are involved in the so-called skill \textit{historical thinking}. They define historical thinking as the ability of students to “comprehend the process of change in the historical context and its influence in the present

\(^{56}\) Apple (2001) describes what he defines as “conservative modernization” as the result of three kinds of reforms: neoliberal market-based reforms, neoconservative reforms, and technical and managerial tendencies (p.182)

\(^{57}\) The competencies approach was first developed for Chomsky in the 60s in relation to the linguistics and language learning (ICFES, 2007)
moment” (p.135). They highlight the relevance of historical thinking due to the tendency of students to simplify casual explanations, personalise history and the tendency towards presentism.

On the other hand, Carretero and Montero (2008) also identify the cultural dimensions of history teaching, stating that it remains closely interrelated with the construction of national identities and the transmission of collective memory. This remains mostly focused on issues regarding the role in national identity building and citizenship formation, which have been predominantly addressed from political science-oriented literature (Freedman, Weinstein, Murphy, & Longman, 2008). According to Cole (2007) and Carretero & Kriger, (2011) in its essence, history education has predominantly followed a conservative formulation, controlled by the state and oriented towards promoting loyalty and social cohesion.

3.3.2. History teaching in postconflict societies.

The question of how to introduce educational reforms and curriculum (re)design in postconflict settings in order to fulfil the requirements of the transitional process becomes very important. Especially the issue of the historical narrative(s) has been a particularly contested arena in conflict and postconflict contexts. The problem here is that it relies on the specific version of history transferred through education, which will ultimately influence the individual representations about the past and therefore, individual identity (Barton & McCully, 2005; Smith, McCandless, Paulson, & Wheaton, 2011). The controversial role of history can be better understood with the widely extended notion in the literature that defines it as a domain that deals with the past, helps to interpret the present and constructs the future. As Cole and Murphy (2009) highlight, history education brings "insights into the difficult pasts and contemporary dilemmas of their societies" (p.3).

McCully (2012) argues that if the reform of history education seeks to contribute to postconflict transformation, there are two alternatives: a history based on multiple narratives, or a history based on one narrative, which should be to some extent inclusive and broadly acceptable. However, the arguments of Oglesby (2004) should also be taken into consideration, which state that “officialising history” should be understood as setting up some foundations for discussion and therefore, should not be translated into a static narrative. The main dilemma remains which

---

58 Carretero and Montanero (2008) defines presentism as an egocentric bias, based on the lack of understanding of the actions and emotions in its historical context, and therefore related with the absence of historical empathy (p. 136)
59 According to Anderson (as cited in Freedman et al., 2008) “If nations are imagined communities, then historical narratives are key to shaping how communities understand themselves.” (p.666).
narrative(s) are represented and included, i.e., which “version” of the history has to be taught in schools. Furthermore, the version of history included in education should not repeat an intentional or unintentional distortion of history, due to the commission and/or omission of historical facts and events (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000).

In the literature, the principal focus of the scholars has been directed towards curriculum content and textbooks (Cole, 2007) Moreover, the theoretical debates have been mainly based in whether knowledge in the curriculum or the teaching practices should be first transformed in postconflict societies. McCully (2012) claims that curriculum design should first promote the necessary skills to ensure an adequate approach to the new content, which may also prevent resistance from teachers and students. Other authors, as Cole (2007), argue that in transitional context the “way history is taught” should be prioritized over content revision and curriculum reform, prevailing the new pedagogies and teacher training. Along the same line, Crawford (2000) highlights that neither curriculum nor textbooks inexorably define what will be taught in school, and claims that in order to analyse what will be taught, the focus should be placed on the teachers, and how they “re-select, re-define, and re-interpret textbook knowledge in their teaching” (p.5). The centrality of the role of teachers was also reflected in the research on the history and social science teachings of Thornton in 1991 (as cited in Blanch, 2004), who defined history teachers as the ‘gatekeepers’ of the curriculum.

The strategic position of the teachers presented above, which is particularly relevant in contexts of structural change and political reform, reflects the potential usefulness of the application of the SRA model that was introduced in the first section of the theoretical framework. Therefore, the teacher may be seen as an actor, whose role is to stimulate and contribute to the learning processes of their students, but who is also constrained by the structural aspects from of the educational system, which assemblage their agency (Vongallis-Macrow, 2007 and 2013). In conflict contexts, the individual psychological level should also be taken into consideration, acknowledging the emotional dilemmas confronting the teachers, because “interpretations of history are a living reality” (Gallagher, 1996, p.31). Therefore, dealing with the recent history

---

60 This perception of the role of teachers is opposed to teachers as mere messengers (Smyth & Shacklock as cited in Vongallis-Macrow, 2007)
61 This could be particularly relevant in the Colombian case, where teachers have been the target of political violence (Novelli, 2009).
62 In the literature it has received multiple nomenclatures: recent history, present history, contemporary history, immediate history, among others. The theoretical discussion has been centred in whether it is a necessary and legitimate field, as the study of the present is interrelated with other social sciences, and the potential bias due to different issues as: the absence of temporal distance, the absence of objectivity, the problem of the sources, or the threat of political instrumentation (Soto, 2004)
becomes particularly challenging in contexts of ongoing conflicts, in which history not only addresses a past with direct consequences for the present, but the subject of study is still present in societies, and it is therefore simultaneously a living experience.

### 3.3.3. Peacebuilding Education.

Throughout this paper, the need of history education in analysing the past, promoting truth telling, the acknowledgment of the multiple memories, and the promotion of reconciliation are concepts that have been explored. But the potential contributions of education go, or at least could go, far beyond and can play a facilitating role in peacebuilding, engendering social cohesion, and can ultimately contribute to fostering a stable and lasting peace (McCully 2012). For this purpose, the knowledge, attitudes and values transmitted and the skills that are promoted through education are particularly relevant. Besides promoting positive values as a foundation for peace or respect for human rights, education can contribute to the renovation of inclusive national identity, especially through history education, by promoting non-violence (Cole & Barsalou, 2005; Cole & Murphy, 2009; Freedman, Weinstein, Murphy, & Longman, 2008; McCully, 2012). Education can also enhance more critical and reflexive thinking, which may promote a deeper understanding of the underlying reasons of the conflict and society, whilst also stimulating a more comprehensive and sensitive approach to another’s perspective, providing some sort of conflict resolution skills (Smith et al. 2011).

However, education does not contribute to peacebuilding by itself, and if used inappropriately it can do more harm than good, particularly in postconflict contexts, as it may reproduce the problems of the past. Therefore, the complexity relies in determine how education and peacebuilding can support to each other, and contribute positively to social transformation. The duality of the relationship of education and conflict is explored by Bush and Saltarelli (2000) in their classic study, ‘the two faces of education in ethnic conflict,’ who acknowledge the risk of manipulating history for political purposes. Similarly, Davies (2010) determines that education in conflict situations can reproduce or contribute to inequality, exclusion, social polarization, aggressive masculinity, fear and militarism. In her famous Education-war interface, Davies (2006) identifies tolerance, conflict resolution, education for humanitarian law, the dialogue and encounter, and the active challenge to violence as positive contributions; and in opposition, negative conflict contributions are presented in the form of omission, portraying war as routine, stereotypes and allegiances, the defence curriculum and hate curriculum (p.13).
4. Research Design

This chapter summarizes the design and formulation of the present thesis in order to ensure full transparency. The several aspects regarding the planning, management and execution of the investigation are presented. This research was carried out during a period of ten weeks in Colombia, and took place in two main locations, Bogota and Medellin. The research follows a qualitative approach, and data was primarily gathered through semi-structured interviews: 9 educational stakeholders were interviewed in Bogota, and 17 teachers and 8 school coordinators in Medellin. Additionally, the research includes the documents that set out the policy framework and guidelines for recent history education.

Firstly, the research questions that guided this investigation are outlined. Secondly, the ontological and epistemological stance are addressed. Thirdly, the methodological approach followed in this research is presented. Fourthly, the methods of data collection and data analysis are reviewed. Finally, the limitations, challenges and ethical issues are addressed.

4.1 Research Questions

This study investigates the potential of the implementation in education of Basta Ya! report. Therefore, the main research question of this thesis is:

What are the main challenges and opportunities according to the different educational actors for implementation of the Basta Ya! Report in teaching recent history in secondary basic and mid-secondary education in Colombia?

In order to answer this question, the research examines the current policy framework, the current practices of recent history teaching and the perceptions of educational stakeholders about the Basta Ya! and its potential implementation. These objectives were formulated in four sub-questions:

- How is recent history addressed in the Colombian policy framework and how is it integrated in the curriculum orientations?
- What are the current practices of recent history teaching, in secondary basic and mid-secondary education, particularly in terms of the transmission of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values?
- What are the general perceptions of the educational stakeholders (national policy makers, trade unions, civil society organizations and academia) about the Basta Ya! report?
What do the different educational stakeholders perceive as the main challenges and opportunities for the implementation of the *Basta Ya!* in education?

The present thesis is structured following these scheme, and aims to provide an answer to the main research question through the analysis of those dimensions. The formulation of history teaching in the current policy framework is examined through the analysis of the policy documents that delineate the curricular orientations for recent history teaching. The second sub-question is answered by analysing the practices of 17 history teachers, and it is complemented with the information regarding the school-curriculum and PEIs. The two last questions are answered by analysing the perceptions of 9 educational stakeholders about the report and the main challenges and opportunities for implementation. But before proceeding to present the results, this section address the methodological and practical aspects.

4.2. Ontology and Epistemology

The research draws on theoretical insights from the Strategic Relational Approach (SRA) and, therefore, is unfold within a critical realist perspective. Critical realism sustains that there is reality and this reality exist independently of our knowledge of it (Priestley, 2007). This reality is composed for three domains: (1) the empirical, visible and experienced; (2) the actual, experiences and events; (3) the real, underlying mechanism and deep-power (Archer as cited in Priestley, 2007). From a critical realist perspective, theory should be seen as the tool to explore and explain these three domains, that is, the explanatory framework which allows to “make sense of the (in)visible world around us” (Cardozo, 2011, 23).

However, the assumption of the existence of an independent reality does not involve that absolute knowledge about reality is possible. The knowledge produced through critical theory is open to critic and challenge (Wikgren, 2005). In order to understand reality, it is necessary to address the mechanisms, the agents and the casual powers. Therefore, critical realism allows to see “Humans reflexive and creative, acting counter to societal constraints, but also how individuals are enabled and constrained by their social and material environments”. (Priestley, Biesta, Robinson, 2012).
4.3. Methodology

The present thesis integrates the SRA approach to interpret the potential implementation of the report and to determine how recent history is currently taught in Colombia. The potentiality of the SRA, as Hay (2004) states, is to overcome the dualism and “concentrate instead upon the dialectical interplay of structure and agency in real contexts of social and political interaction” (p.127). Therefore, in respect to the specific applicability of the SRA to the research, it will allow to frame the potential the Basta Ya! has to penetrate and influence the educational system, by focusing in the understanding of structure-agency relations (interplay). The focus is placed in teacher agency, due to the central role of teachers, particularly in post-conflict societies, as “critical agents of transformation” (Vongallis, 2006, p. 103).

The rationale of integrate the SRA approach, and the focus on the teacher agency, is clear if education is view as “shaped by the learner, guided by the teacher, in a web of local and global learning situated in a complex terrain between the personal, the local and global” (Vongallis, 2007, p.437). This this investigation explores the multiple structural factors, from the macro-national level to the local and even micro-community level. Therefore, the application of SRA in the present thesis helps to visualize how the multi-scalar structures shapes the agency of teachers and their practices. Moreover, even the scope of this research explores the structures from the national to local, it is acknowledge the impact of supra national influences, particularly the global trends of modernization, what is fundamental to understand the configuration of the educational system in Colombia.

4.4. Methods and Data Analysis

4.4.1 Analysis of the policy framework.

The policy framework is analysed in order to outline and examine the current formulation of the guidelines and curricular orientations for recent history teaching. The sources of data for the analysis of the policy are the legal documents that constitutes the legal framework of curricular design in Colombia: The General Education Act, Law 115 of 1994; the curriculum guidelines and the basic standards of competencies; and in accordance with the Decree 1290 of 2009, the guidelines proposed by ICFES for the national examination. The contents and recommendations of these documents regarding history education are described, but the document analysis goes further. The analysis explores what is said, but also to how is said, focusing on the linguistics; but
it also pays special attention to what is not said, the omissions. Moreover, the analysis aims to interpret the documents within the socio-historical conditions in which these were formulated, in order to explore the underlying rationale of the policies. Therefore, it can be argued that the analysis of the policy is aligned with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach. According to Van Dijk “CDA is concerned with studying and analysing written texts and spoken words to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias” (as cited in Waymer. 2012, p.36). Therefore, the analysis of the current policies is also focused in the meanings and the implication.

4.4.2. Semi-structured interviews.

In order to investigate the challenges and opportunities for the implementation for the implementation of *Basta Ya!* in-depth semi-structured interviews were held with two differentiated groups of respondents. On the one hand, during the first research period in Bogota, relevant educational stakeholders were interviewed in order to investigate about the perceptions about the report and its implementation. Moreover, after the research period, an additional interview with one stakeholder was conducted via Skype. On the other hand, during the second research period, held in Medellin, social science teachers and school coordinators were interviewed in order to explore the current practices of recent history teaching.

During the first research period, held in Bogotá, and in order to investigate the perceptions about the *Basta Ya!* and the challenges and opportunities for implementation, (strategic) educational stakeholders were interviewed. The actors interviewed\(^63\) were selected as representative of influential sectors in the current debates on the *Basta Ya!* report and education. They include a representative of the Ministry of Education, members of civil society organisations, involved with formal education and victims’ rights, the teachers union and academics. Due to the time limitations, and with the purpose of ensure that the people included in the research were key respondents, purposive non-probability sampling was employed. In order to identify those key strategic actors, and guarantee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTORS</th>
<th>RESPONDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of education</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational NGO</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims’ organization</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers Union</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^63\) In Appendix I the actors are listed.
the appropriateness of the sample, different academics and actors from different institutions collaborated, like CNMH, Centro de Memoria, Paz y Reconciliacion\textsuperscript{64} or the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation.

The interviews with the educational stakeholders consisted in two different parts. The first section of questions was focused on the general perceptions about the \textit{Basta Ya!}, and the second section was centred on the potential implementation of the report. This interviews followed an interview guideline with open-ended questions. The same questions were posed to the participants, using the same wording to ensure that the same question was asked to all of them\textsuperscript{65}, but the order was changed trying to maintain the sequence of the interview. Additionally, the non-fixed structure of the interviews allowed to include questions according to the evolution of the interviews and answer of each respondents.

The second research period was held in Medellin. A total of 17 teachers and 7 school-coordinators from 12 different schools were interviewed\textsuperscript{66}. The participants were teachers of Social Science in the last two grades of secondary basic education, grades 8\textsuperscript{th} and 9\textsuperscript{th}, and first year of mid-secondary education (grade 10\textsuperscript{th})\textsuperscript{67}. The selection of those grades was done attending to the curriculum orientations, and due to the age of the students in that level of education, because students are still “highly impressionable and politically ‘pure’” (Cole, 2007). In the process of identification of schools and contact the teachers, there was a mix of snowball and stratified purposeful sampling. It was essential the support of different institutions, particularly Casa Museo de la Memoria\textsuperscript{68} and Escuela del Maestro\textsuperscript{69}. Furthermore, it was decided that the sample of schools should cover the variety of institutions that conforms the spectrum of the Colombian educational system. Therefore, the selection of the schools responded to different criteria: social position of the students (social economic status), location (urban, semi-rural, rural), and funding (public, private, concession). Therefore, the selection of the schools was established trying to cover those different features, but also maintaining some degree of coherence with the distribution of students in the Colombian system, in which the private institutions cover 16.26% of the educational system, and the bulk of students is concentrated in urban settings, with just

\textsuperscript{64} In English, Centre of Peace, Memory and Reconciliation.
\textsuperscript{65} Trying to use the same words, to try to limit alterations that the use of different wording may have, that is, ensure reliabilityconsistency (Cohen, 2000)
\textsuperscript{66} In the Appendix II the teachers and school-coordinators are listed.
\textsuperscript{67} In some cases the teachers impart class in more than one grade or in other cases they have experience teaching in more than one grade. (In all cases grade 9\textsuperscript{th} was included, but the inclusion of other grades differs)
\textsuperscript{68} In English, Museum House of Memory.
\textsuperscript{69} In English, School of the Teacher, dependent institution of the Secretary of Education of Medellin
24.25% of the total of students in the rural area. The characteristics of the schools are summarized in the following table.

**Table 4. List of Schools and Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>FUNDING</th>
<th>STRATUM&lt;sup&gt;70&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>TEACHERS</th>
<th>COORD.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 2</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 3</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 4</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 5</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 6</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 7</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 8</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>3, 4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 9</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>5, 6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 10</td>
<td>Semi-rural</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 11</td>
<td>Semi-rural</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 12</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Own elaboration*

Furthermore, it should be clarified that the 9 urban schools were distributed in different spots of the city, the 2 semi-rural schools were located in the so-called corregimientos<sup>71</sup> of the municipality of Medellin, and the rural school was located in Eastern Antioquia<sup>72</sup>. Moreover, depending on the number of students of the institution, more than one teacher was included in some institutions.

---

<sup>70</sup> This category refers to the stratum of the student population of the school. The Colombian Government use the social-economic stratification of the housing in order to determine the taxes that will be applied for the services. It is constituted by 6 categories: 1. Low-low, 2. Low, 3. Medium-low, 4. Medium, 5. Medium-upper, 6. Upper.

<sup>71</sup> Corregimiento is a term employed in Colombia for the subdivision of the rural areas of the municipalities.

<sup>72</sup> This school was included due to its proximity to the region of Valle del Abarre, but out of the metropolitan area.
The interviews with the teachers were focused on identifying the current practices of history teaching, but a variety of topics were covered. The interviews included questions regarding the planning of the academic year (structure of contents), the main contents and knowledge about recent history of Colombia, the skills they seek to promote on the students, the values and attitudes, and the methods and resources they use. An interview guide approach (Cohen, 2000) was used in order to cover all the topics identified, but the sequence of the questions was also adapted on each interview to facilitate the course of the interview. The interviews covered these general questions about knowledge, skills, values and attitudes without making particular questions of the aspects those dimensions, neither providing examples. The intention of use this interview strategy was to not condition the answers of the teachers and, particularly, avoid the issue of acquiescence or social desirability bias. Relevant information regarding the formulation of the PEIs on each school was also retrieved in the interviews with the teachers. The inclusion of the questions regarding the PEIs and school-curriculum responds to the impact of those in the practices of teacher, framing their agency. For that reason, in addition to the teachers, 7 school coordinators were interviewed, in order to obtain more information about the process of PEI and curriculum formulation. These were unstructured interviews as that was the only aim of deepen into the design and formulation.

In the majority of cases the interviews were recorded with a tape recorded, but in three cases permission to record was not provided. In those cases, notes were taken during the interview, trying to be as loyal as possible to the original answer of the interviewee. Moreover, the participants decided the location to conduct the interview. The intention was to allow them to select an atmosphere where they would feel more comfortable.

4.4.3. Data analysis.

The data gathered during the interviews was first transcribed in order to be analysed. For that purpose, the data was processed using the software for data analysis QDA Miner. The programme was used for the creation of the domains and clustering the information, analyse the frequencies and structure the information. The categories of the analysis were pre-ordinate, that is, not responsive; but at the same time the categories were open, in order to include new categories or eliminate redundancies if necessary. It should be pointed the challenge that the interpretation of the data represents, and the special attention paid to avoid any influence in the data.
4.5. Limitations, challenges and ethics

Interviews were considered the core method for gathering data, assuming that it is the best method to investigate about perceptions, and due to the flexibility of the method, particularly appropriate when there is only one opportunity to talk with the participant. Next to in-depth interviews as the main method, participant observation and focus group had been planned in order to achieve the triangulation of methods, to overcome the weakness or intrinsic biases. Nevertheless, due to the different planning of each school and teacher, and time limitations, participant observation within classrooms became difficult and was finally rejected due the difficulty to really provide a comparative basis. To carry out focus groups, some attempts were done to organise them, yet due to issues of coordination and availability of teachers, it was finally discarded.

Another limitation is represented for the potential bias in the selection of schools, despite the efforts to cover the different institutions that conform the Colombian educational system, through the use of purposive sampling. It might be that the sample of teachers within the research include those who are more engaged and that the institutions in which the head, coordinator or other teachers were interested to collaborate. Therefore, the sample might represent the most interested and active teachers and schools, what has a direct consequence for generalizability. Moreover, the results cannot be extrapolated to other areas and regions, due to the particulates of Medellin, and the great attention and investment that the regional and local governments have placed on education.

During the formulation of the present thesis, as well as during the whole research process, guaranteeing the quality of the research was one of the main concerns. Consequently, safeguarding validity and reliability was very central during the research planning. Validity was seen as crucial to guarantee the effectiveness of the research. Some different dimensions of validity were taken into account, but one of the predominant concerns was cultural validity. Cultural validity was understood in the sense of warrant that the research was adapted to the participants, culture and circumstances being studied (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000, 139). During the first weeks of the research, but also during the whole period of research, different researchers, academics, representatives of different governmental institutions, and other key agents and actors were contacted and informed about the research purpose, and they assisted to accurate and adjust the research. This assured that the research was adapted to the Colombian context. The relevance of the research topic and the growing interest in this emerging field was supported by those actors, and also by those interviewed.
Other major concerns were related with the ethical issues. To the classical ethical issues of social research, it was added the challenge represented by doing research in a conflict affected society. The interpretations of history are highly controversial in conflict and postconflict scenarios, because it represents a potential threat to those included in the research (Lee, 1993). Therefore, in a context of ongoing conflict and researching a sensitive topic, the need to guarantee the principle of *do not harm* is crucial. Furthermore, it is particularly relevant in the case of Colombia, where teachers have being a significant target of political-related violence (Novelli, 2008). In order to do so, anonymity, confidentiality and non-identifiability was guaranteed to the participants during the whole process and in the resulting thesis. The teachers were informed, about the purpose of the research and privacy conditions before the interview, and consent to record was requested. Moreover, at the end of the interviews and before signing the consent form, and in accordance with the same, the participants were “fully” informed of the purpose of the research, information was provided about the future treatment of the data, as well as the right to request the withdrawal of the information provided during the interview at any time.
5. The Results

5.1. The National Framework

How is recent history addressed in the Colombian policy framework and how is it integrated in the curriculum orientations?

The purpose of this first chapter is to review how recent history is addressed in the national Colombian educational policies. Firstly, the references to recent history in the General Law of Education are assessed. Secondly, the analysis moves on to the curriculum guidelines, in which the orientations for each of the mandatory areas are defined. Thirdly, the basic standards that complete the curricular orientations are analysed. Finally, the State examination run by ICFES, the so-called Saber11 exam, is evaluated.

5.1.1. The General Law of Education.

The General Law of Education, Law 114 of 1994, established “social sciences, history, geography, political constitution and democracy”73 as one of the nine fundamental areas for basic secondary education and also a mandatory field for mid-secondary education. Various objectives determined by the law for basic secondary education in the article 22, are to some extent related with the social sciences74. However, the most relevant is the ‘paragraph H’, which states as an objective “the scientific study of national and world history aims at understanding the development of society, and the study of social sciences, with a view to analysing current conditions of social reality” (1994, p. 7). In the article 30, the objectives for the mid-secondary are described. In regard to recent history, the paragraphs C. and G. are particularly significant, as it establishes the goals for mid-secondary education “the incorporation of investigation to the cognitive process, both at the laboratory and the national reality, in their natural, economic, political and social aspects” and “the reflective and critical capability about the multiple aspects of reality and the comprehension of ethical, moral, religious and social coexistence values” (Ley 1994, pp. 9-10).

In article 14875, the general law placed within the policy and planning functions of the MEN, the responsibility of “designing the general guidelines for the curriculum processes, and “establishing

73 Article 23 of the General Law of Education.
74 Particularly f, h, i and j.
75 As well as in the paragraph 78.
the indicators of curricular achievements”, paragraphs B. and D. respectively (CRC, 1994, p. 31). Following this commitment, in 2002 the MEN launched the curriculum guidelines and also the basic standards in 2004, which are analysed in the following sub-sections.

Table 5. The topics of the generator axes

| 1. | The defence of the human condition and the respect for its diversity |
| 2. | People as subjects of rights and the protection of human rights |
| 3. | The conservation of the environment |
| 4. | The socio-economic inequalities |
| 5. | Our planet Earth, common house of humanity |
| 6. | Identity and collective memory |
| 7. | The cultural knowledge: possibilities and risks |
| 8. | Conflict and social change |

Source: MEN, 2002, p.38

5.1.2. The Curriculum Guidelines.

In 2002 the MEN launched the curriculum guidelines in a format of a guide for each of the mandatory areas, defined in the General Law of Education\(^\text{76}\). The MEN defined these guidelines as “footholds and general orientations that are published with the aim to give teachers elements of conceptual and pedagogical nature to invigorate their pedagogies” (MEN, 2002, p.1). The document establishes as one of its main goals and objectives to “help to understand the national reality (past-present) to transform the society in which the students develop – wherever necessary–”of the Social Sciences (MEN, 2002, p.13).\(^\text{77}\) The MEN proposes to address Social Sciences education through transversal topics, which calls generator axes, problem posing and conceptual areas; with a flexible, open, integrated and in spiral structure; and aiming to develop competencies. In the fourth and fifth section, the guidelines develops the structure of the curriculum for the Social Sciences, articulated in eight cross-cutting topics. The following is a revision of the most important aspects, but it is only reviewed the topics in which recent history is addressed.

\(^{76}\) The guides were also accompanied with a guide regarding the achievement of the curricular indicators

\(^{77}\) The other four objectives are related with active citizenship (within society) and adaptation to the demands of education, science, technology and labour market.
The first topic is the defence of the human condition and respect for its diversity. The cultural, ethnic and gender diversity, as well as the personal choices, are defined as part of the Colombian identity. Moreover, diversity is also connected with the confrontation of cultures, and it is identified as a source of violence and war. In this axe, there is a reference to the school as a space for dialogue and inclusion and integration of diverse social groups. The second axe is centred on people the defence and protection of human rights as mechanisms to build democracy and seek peace. It highlights the necessity for the Colombian case, particularly for the armed conflict, to reach peace through dialogue and values of negotiation. The confrontation of violence and conflict through negotiation is also included in the sixth topic, which is related with the cultural constructions of humanity as sources of identity and conflict. The curriculum guidelines also state that the promotion of negotiation and non-violence must be emphasised as a formative task of education. In the eighth axe, centred on the political and social organizations as structures to channel the different powers and deal with necessities and changes; where non-violence and democracy are presented as an important device for rule to coexistence and as a fundamental practice of humanity to oppose deficiencies of power, such as war.

The curriculum guidelines are closed with a section which includes a suggestion for curriculum implementation. One of the examples proposed is to use the topic of the second axe - people as subjects of rights - through the following problem posing: “How can we establish limits to the atrocity of war?” (MEN, 2002, p.1). The example suggests the Colombian conflict as one of the possible conceptual areas, and the competencies related to the recognition and promotion of international humanitarian law and values. This example is illustrative of the prevailing tendency in the curriculum guidelines, in which the approach to the conflict is mainly rooted in the citizenship and coexistence prospective, rather than from taking a historical approach. Moreover, and despite what the general topics may suggest, the references to Colombian history, and particularly recent history, are rather limited.

5.1.3. The Basic Standards of Competencies.

Additionally, in 2004, the MEN launched the basic standards of competencies for Social Sciences in order to complete and develop the curricular orientations of the guidelines. The MEN defines these basic standards as common referents to determine the quality of education, guarantee

78 The main objective of the problematizing questions is defined in the Curriculum Guidelines as “to encourage continuous investigation and generate new knowledge in the classroom.”
access for all students to basic learning and maintain essential elements of national unity (MEN, 2006, pp. 10-11). They maintain the open, critical, problem-oriented and interdisciplinary perspective of Social Science proposed in the curriculum guidelines. The basic standards are structured in a “sequence of growing complexity and are clustered in groups of grades establishing what students should know and know-how” (MEN, 2006, pp. 14-15). For each group of grades, three general standards are proposed, referring to the basic knowledge and know-how. Subsequently, the standards are disaggregated in three columns: approximation to the social scientific knowledge, managing specific knowledge of social sciences, and developing personal and social commitments. The second column regarding the specific knowledge is also composed of three dimensions: relations with history and culture, spatial and environmental relations, and ethic-political relations.

For grades 8 and 9, three general standards are proposed, two being particularly relevant for recent history. The first general standard is defined as “the identification of the potential of diverse social, political, economic and cultural legacies as sources of identity, promoters of development and sources of cooperation and conflict in Colombia” (MEN, 2006, p. 128). The third general standard involves “critically analysing the constitutive elements of democracy, the rights of people and the Colombian identity”. In regards to the approximation to social scientific knowledge, the prevailing focus is on problem posing and formulating hypotheses, the comparison and critical analysis of sources, as well as the recognition of multiple perspectives and the multiplicity of relations in the historical events, in terms of causes, consequences, actors, and so on. In the first sub-category of management of social sciences knowledge, regarding the relations with history and cultures, the greatest social changes and the process of modernization in the first-half of the twentieth century are mentioned, but there is no allusion to recent history made. In regards to the spatial and environmental relations, there is a reference to compare the social and political impact of migration and displacement in the first half the twentieth century with the actuality. The ethical-political relations column includes the comparison of the political processes that took place in Colombia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and more specifically, the National Front and the Constitution of 1991 are mentioned. In the last column, which refers to the development of personal and social commitments, it is relevant to mention the allusions to respect for others’ perspectives and ideologies, the recognition of fundamental rights, the participation in debates and discussions and the use of mechanisms for participation promoted in the Constitution.

---

79 The second general standard is related with the interaction between geography and the human beings.
For grades 10 and 11, the three general standards are more significant for recent history: identify the cultural and social characteristics of the political and economic development of Colombia; the causes and consequences of the economic models and theories in Colombia; and finally, the power relations between states and within them, “understanding that the political exercise is the result of the efforts to solve conflicts and tensions” (MEN, 2006, pp.130-131). The approximation to the scientific knowledge in these grades is oriented to investigative skills and knowledge, and the aim is to “carry out research as a social scientist does”80. In the dimension of historical and cultural relations, the following events are referred to: the origin of the bipartisanship regime; the period of La Violencia and the relation with the current forms of violence; the causes, characteristics and consequences of the National Front; and the emergence of the guerrilla, paramilitary and drug trafficking in Colombia. Furthermore, there is a reference to the changing status of women in Colombia and its incidence, and the struggles of the ethnic groups for social recognition and equality. The spatial and environmental relations are mainly based on globalization, the economy and economic models, as well as the relationship between ideology and the economic development models implemented in Colombia. In the last sub-section of the managing of specific knowledge, the ethical-political relations, several themes related with contemporary history are mentioned: the impact of the political events during the mid-twentieth century in the social, political and economic organizations of the country; the transition from a democratic representative to a participatory democratic system; the consequences of the crisis related to bipartisanship, the changes and continuities of the guerrilla movements; the consequences of the forced displacement and the rights of displaced population; the functions of surveillance and control of the state; and the institutions that preserve the fundamental rights of the citizens. Finally, in the column of personal and social commitments, the respect for other’s perspectives and ideology, the participation in debates and discussions, and the recognition of fundamental rights are again mentioned. Furthermore, the document points to the development of a critical position towards media, the violence of the armed groups in Colombia, and also the peace process in Colombia.

This sub-section has reviewed the curriculum orientations included in the basic standards of competencies for Social Sciences, which are summarized in the Appendix III. Despite what could be interpreted from the general standards proposed for 8th and 9th grades, the recent history contents are rather limited. There is a prevalence of content related with knowledge about the Constitution and fundamental rights, as the treatment of political and social issues exemplifies,

80 The skills and knowledge of this column are divided in three categories: formulating projects, developing researches and presenting the results.
and is mainly based on a citizenship and human rights perspective. For the grades 10 and 11, there is an increasing role of the investigative skills and knowledge, and more attention is paid to the more recent period in history. The bipartisanship regime, the National Front and the period of La Violencia are included in this group, and in the case of the latter, it is related to the current forms of violence, like the emergence of guerrilla and paramilitary groups and also drug trafficking. The development of personal and social commitments is similar for both groups of grades, based on the respect of others’ perspectives and fundamental rights. Additionally, for the 10th and 11th grades, it also incorporates the development of a critical position towards media, the violence of armed groups and the peace processes in Colombia.

5.1.4. The state examination: Saber11 test.

The article 80 of the General Law of Education endorses the MEN in coordination with ICFES to establish a National System of Evaluation of Education, in order to evaluate the quality of education. Due to the mandatory character of the test, it has a great impact and influence on education, and it conditions the teaching of social sciences. From the year 2000, the exam included components of political science, economy, sociology and anthropology in two different tests, history and geography (ICFES, 2013, p.75). This division remained until 2006, the year in which the ICFES adapted the exam to the recently launched basic standards, and reconfigured the social sciences into one test.

In 2013, the ICFES published a document with a proposition of changes for the exams, embedded within the general guidelines for 2014. This included a significant transformation of the Social Sciences exam, as it introduced the evaluation of the Citizenship Competencies, and resulted in the Social Science and Citizenship test (ICFES, 2013, p.27). The test evaluates three basic competencies: social thinking, interpretation and analysis of perspectives and reflexive and systemic thinking. Firstly, the social thinking is related with the social historical and contemporary events, evaluating the use of social science tools to analyse information, and the acknowledgement of multiple relations between historical events and the interactions between

---

81 The state examination for mid education emerged in 1968, but was in 1980 when it turned mandatory (ICFES, 2013, p. 14)
82 ICFES acknowledge this position in a document launched in 2007 regarding the theoretical foundations of the former Social Sciences test. It said that “The Social Sciences teaching in Colombia is conditioned by several factors, but there are two particularly central: the curriculum normative [curriculum guidelines and basic standards] and the state examination” (Ortiz, Ayala, Chaparro, Sarmiento, & Restrepo. 2007.p.16)
83 The Law 1324 of 2009, which regulates the National System of Evaluation, transformed the ICFES into a state-owned enterprise, which administrate the national examination, and established that the structure of the exams must be maintained for a period no shorter than 12 years.
84 The sections represent 30%, 40% and 30% of the questions, respectively.
geography and human beings. The ICFES establishes as standards of reference the period of *La Violencia* and the relationship with current forms of violence and the emergence of the guerrilla and paramilitary groups and the drug trafficking organisations. Moreover, it also includes the causes and consequences of forced displacement and migratory flows. Secondly, the interpretation and analysis of perspectives are evaluated in everyday, interpersonal or historical situations. This section assesses the critical analysis of documents, the comparison and interpretation of sources, the respect for other perspectives and also the diversity of perspectives. The standards of reference includes the causes and consequences of the National Front, the changing status of women, and a critical analysis of mass media. Furthermore, it mentions the analysis of discourses that legitimize violence, the needs and points of view of people in conflict situations and violations of human rights, and the dilemmas of exclusion. Thirdly, the reflexive and systemic thinking evaluates the comprehension of social reality and its complexity, and it is related with the causes and consequences of economic theories and models in the twentieth century. The standards of reference are mainly focused on economic development and on modernization processes, but the impact of political events in Colombia is also mentioned.

This sub-section has examined the guidelines proposed by ICFES for Social and Competencies test within the exam Saber11. From the previous analysis, it can be seen that the guidelines for the test are closely aligned with the basic standards, employing predominantly the same terms of reference and terminology. Therefore, the document reproduces the prevailing orientation towards citizenship and human rights, and the references to recent history events involve the period of the bipartisanship, *La Violencia*, National Front, and the emergence of guerrilla and paramilitary groups and also drug trafficking organisations.

5.1.5. Summary of the findings.

This section has reviewed the key elements of the policy framework regarding Social Science education in Colombia. From the General Law of Education to the guidelines for the national examination proposed by ICFES, there are references to connect past events with the interpretation of the current social reality and more particularly, the national context. However, the references to national history are mainly focused on the first half of the twentieth century, and in regards to contemporary history, there is a great emphasis on the events of the mid-twentieth century: the bipartisanship regime, the period of *La Violencia*, and the National Front.

---

85 Along with the standards of reference a set of related concepts are proposed.
86 It should be noted that it employs the same terminology of the basic standards.
The emergence of the guerrilla, paramilitary and drug trafficking is also mentioned in the basic standards and the guidelines proposed by ICFES. Moreover, some issues related with the conflict are included, as causes and consequences of forced displacement and migration flows. The language and terminology employed in both documents is particularly significant due to its implications. Analysing the content, it can be said that there is an outstanding omission, as there is no mention of the armed conflict, and it only refers to “current forms of violence”. This diverges from the conceptualisation exposed in *Basta Ya!*, in which the armed conflict is extended throughout the entire analysed period, and therefore includes the present moment. Additionally, the curricular orientations do not refer to the state or the military as actors in the conflict, and they only mention the institutions and the functions of control and surveillance of the state. Likewise, it differs from the historical account proposed in *Basta Ya!*, which acknowledge the implication of the State and military forces in the conflict. Therefore, it can be interpreted as a lack of historical comprehension about structural factors and agency.

The armed conflict is explicitly mentioned in the curriculum guidelines, in relation with the requirements to achieve peace. The main focus is on non-violence, negotiation and democratic values, that is, from a citizenship and coexistence perspective, addressing the formation and promotion of responsible, critical and participative citizens, and giving citizenship and democratic competencies a significant role in the curriculum’s structure. The transformation of the national test from Social Sciences into Social Science and Citizenship can be interpreted as the most important expression of this orientation. That is particularly relevant given the impact of the national examination in education, as it constitutes an indirect control about what should be taught. While not ignoring its importance, the great focus on the current and future democratic attitudes of students, can present a serious threat to current history teaching. As has been discussed in the theoretical chapter, history education is not only about dealing with the past, it also helps to interpret the present and construct the future, and it is a precondition to prevent further violent outbreaks.
5.2. Recent History Teaching

What are the current practices in regard to recent history teaching, particularly in terms of the transmission of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values?

This chapter describes the current practices in regard to history teaching in Colombia. The results derive from the data gathered in Medellín during the second period of the research, in which 17 teachers from 12 schools were interviewed. The findings are structured in five sub-sections. Firstly, the structure of recent history teaching between different grades and institutions is compared. Secondly, the main contents, methodologies and teaching strategies are analysed. Thirdly, the skills encouraged through history teaching are delineated. Fourthly, the values and attitudes promoted in the teaching/learning process are discussed. The last sub-section address the motivations of the teachers and the perceptions regarding the main weaknesses and the requirements for improving history teaching. But before proceeding to examine the findings, it is necessary to address a significant aspect that configures the practices, the PEIs and the school-curriculum.

5.2.1. PEI and school curriculum: Following the curriculum guidelines.

The educational institutions have a great level of autonomy within the Colombian educational system87, and therefore this element has to be included in the analysis. Along with the curriculum guidelines and basic standards, the PEI is the parameter for the formulation of the curriculum and the syllabus and therefore, the basis to structure the thematic content for each grade. In order to understand the elaboration of the PEI and the curriculum at the school level, the teachers were asked about these processes in the interviews. Additionally, the educational coordinators of seven institutions were interviewed to enrich the information.

In the majority of institutions, the PEI was elaborated five to 9 years ago and has not been renewed since. Only one of the schools, school 7, elaborated a new PEI in201388. This does not mean that the institutions did not make minor adjustments to the PEIs. All the coordinators, as well as some teachers exemplified some changes, showing that the PEIs were not rigid, but flexible to be adoptions. However, some participants shared the notion that a continuous renewal

87 As was described in the chapter 2.
88 It should be also noted that in theory the whole (scholar) community was involved in the process, with a strong emphasis on adaptation to the needs of students.
is unnecessary, because, as one respondent said, it “just constitutes the main outlines” (R22). This implies that the newest teachers were not included in the PEI process. However, most of the participants remarked that teachers, students and their families were involved in the school government council and have therefore, taken part in the adjustments to the PEI.

In contrast, the curriculum and syllabus elaboration was subject to an annual redesign and reconfiguration. In the majority of the schools, the beginning and the end of the academic year were the moments for revision, and the respondents also claimed that it is evaluated during the year. Nonetheless, the answers seem to suggest that the extent of the changes were more a response to the problems confronted during the year, than a process of continuous adaptation and innovation. The formulation of the curriculum was predominantly seen as part of the teacher labour, in coordination with the other teachers of the department. In regards to the way to elaborate the curriculum, the most recurrent answer was that they follow the curriculum guidelines and basic standards. In general, the curriculum was seen as an orientation to maintain the continuity and logic regarding the grades and guarantee that the basic contents are covered in each grade. However, the majority of teachers mentioned the “freedom” to use their own methods and techniques, as long as they follow those goals.

From the previous results, it can be argued that once established, the PEIs remain rigid for a considerable timeframe and in practice, the extent of adaptations are limited. On the contrary, the social sciences curricula and syllabi seem to be more dynamic and adapted with more regular frequency. Interestingly, despite the autonomy of the schools, the distribution of contents was remarkably similar in the institutions, as is further examined in the upcoming sub-section.

5.2.2. Structure of the content: The centrality of 9th grade.

In the majority of schools, the recent history of Colombia in secondary basic education was mainly taught in the 9th grade, except in the two private schools, schools 8 and 9, in which the contemporary history of Colombia was taught in grades 8th or 10th respectively. In general, the content of the history syllabus in the 8th grade was more focused on global history, particularly European history. Colombian history, however, only reviewed up to the first decades of the 20th century. However, some teachers began to address the conflict in the 8th grade. In the majority of cases, the Colombian conflict was included only when other conflicts were addressed, or when issues related with the conflict were examined, using it primarily to compare and contrast. In a few cases, the Colombian conflict was a specific part of the contents; the main focus was directed at the present situation and in relation to violence, rather than from a historical perspective.
The historical content of social science in 9th grade was predominantly focused on the 20th century. In general, it was composed of world history, principally the World Wars, the cold war and the national history of Colombia during the 20th century. In most of the schools, the contemporary history of Colombia was taught during one of the semesters of the academic year. However, as will be further discussed, there were a range of different approaches to the recent history. It is also significant that the vast majority of teachers also signalled the relevance of geography and Constitution in this grade, and the interrelations with the history.

The contemporary history of Colombia was also part of the 10th grade social sciences. Many of the respondents claimed that according to the curriculum guidelines, this grade and also the following one were those in which the recent history contents should be addressed more in-depth. They also pointed to the maturity of the students in this grade, and their reflexive capacity, as an advantage for a more profound analysis. Nevertheless, the limited time available for the study of social sciences, and therefore for history, was pointed as the main impediment for properly addressing the topic. They claimed that the increased attention on economic science, politics and philosophy has a direct negative impact on the social sciences in schools, reducing of the importance attached to history. For that reason, the contemporary history of Colombia in the 10th grade was part of the syllabus, but the topic did not constitute a whole unit for a period.

5.2.3. Teaching strategies: Four approaches.

Having defined the structure and distribution of recent history among the different grades, the next sub-section analyses the different strategies used by the teachers, and also the similarities found in their practices. It should be clarified first that each teacher had a different strategy to address recent history. However, depending on the focus, the contents emphasized and the methodologies and techniques employed, they can be classified into four categories: the conventional approach, the inquiry approach, the coexistence approach, and the memory approach.

The conventional approach (R4, R5, R10, and R15) address recent history similarly to how they address history in general. It does not mean that they followed an orthodox approach to history.

89 In the vast majority of institutions, the academic year consisted on 3 or 4 semesters. The period in which the recent history is addressed varied in each school.

90 Only 1 to 3 hours per week depending on the institution.

91 As was stated in the chapter 2, these areas are included to the mandatory thematic areas in mi-secondary education. However, the way to incorporate these areas was also different in each school. In some of the institutions they were included as separate subjects, while in others some were unified or even all attached under social sciences.
based on dates and events, but recent history did not receive any special treatment in their practices. This approach is predominantly focused on the factual knowledge, and no particular skills or attitudes and values are emphasized. However, there were differences among their practices. At one end, there was a teacher (R5) who mentioned that she does not like to emphasize political issues, because it is a sensitive topic for her and the students, and “even if you are trying to help them, you can hurt their sensibilities”. Additionally, this teacher was the one who employed the most traditional methods, like timelines, short essays and readings. At the other end, there was a teacher (R15) who promoted discussions and debates about the topic, particularly in regards to the peace talks, comparing Colombia with other countries that have achieved peace.

The *inquiry approach* (R7, R8, R11, R14, and R17) is characterized by the use of research to address the recent history. In this approach, along with knowledge, the so-called investigative skills play an important role. The students were required to investigate certain aspects of the conflict, such as the modalities of violence, the victims, or issues taken from the peace talks, such as the land distribution. The students were required to consult different sources and compare the information. In some cases, the texts and documents were provided by the teachers, while in others, the students had to search for them. The information was later presented in a variety of forms such as short essays, presentations, role-play simulations, or performances and dramatizations. However, the role of the debate was also highlighted by the teachers, in order to allow the students to discuss and reflect upon the issues.

The *memory approach* (R1, R2, R6, R9, and R16) is focused on the experiences, testimonies and memories of the students. This approach combines investigative skills with a strong focus on the promotion of values and skills in relation with respect for others and multiperspectivity. However, the underlying rationale of this approach is the psychological dimension. The students were challenged to present their personal stories, to undertake research in their family history or in their communities. In some cases, the stories were presented in roundtable discussions or as written narratives, which later could be shared with the classroom if the student wanted. The freedom of the students to share their stories was pointed out as a vital element of this process by the teachers. They remarked that the students can never be forced; they have to take the initiative themselves. All of them mentioned that, in many cases, during the discussions the students would open up and share their histories. For this reason, the roundtable discussions and the group reflections were pointed as the key element of the approach. The memories function as the entry point to address recent history. The same logic sequence or pattern was identified
by all the teachers of this approach: from the personal memories, to the memories of the community, to conclude with the national level.

The coexistence approach (R3, R12, and R13) is characterized for the prominent focus on the interpersonal relations. The main focus of this approach are the behavioural skills, particularly conflict resolution and negotiation skills, and peace and democratic values and attitudes. The main method used by the teachers was the roundtable discussions. The discussions were aimed to resolve the problems between the students and also to share the problems the students are confronted with in their lives. As one interviewee said, (R13) “the students bring to the classroom the problems from outside”, arguing that the same problems of society are later reproduced in the classroom\(^92\). Interestingly, this approach followed the same sequence of logic identified in the previous approach. The teachers would start from the students’ problems and coexistence issues at the classroom and school level, moving to the community and local problems, and finally addressing the national level. Similarly to the previous approach, the teachers mentioned the indispensability of letting the students take the initiative, and also creating an environment in which the students would feel safe and not to be judged. Therefore, psychological dimension is also relevant in this approach. Furthermore, the school governance, and particularly the election of the student’s representative, were an essential part of the coexistence approach. They claimed the experienced-based learning as a vital element for the promotion of values and attitudes. Therefore, this approach addresses the conflict and violence from the perspective of interpersonal and citizenship competencies, human rights and peaceful coexistence.

The approaches described should not be interpreted as closed categories or pure models. In many cases, the teachers used a melange of approaches, but the classification given to them refers to the predominant one used. Interestingly, some teachers of the memory and coexistence approaches had formulated their strategies as projects, in which they developed and defined the mission, vision, planning and goals. Additionally, it should be clarified that factual knowledge was an element present in all the approaches. Therefore, despite the different use of diverse styles in each school and the different approaches of the teachers, some baseline or key contents and ideas were recurrent throughout all the interviews. These main issues are presented below.

Firstly, the origins of the violence. Some teachers argued that the origins of the conflict should be dated back to the independence of Colombia, while others pointed to events in the early years of the 20th century. However, all of them underlined the heritage of the bipartisan confrontations

\(^92\) It should be noted that in many cases the teachers of public institutions signalled problems related with gangs and micro-trafficking in the schools.
as an essential element to understand the ongoing conflict. Secondly, the identification of actors. A widespread perception among the teachers was that the students do not properly distinguish the actors in the conflict. As one of the interviewees (R6) put it:

“Some of them [students] say the guerrillas are bad because they kidnap, and the paramilitaries are good because they kill guerrillas, or the other way around [...]. They do not see it clear because they listen to the news and they reproduce the bias of the adults.”

Thirdly, the drug trafficking and the local history. The role of the drug trafficking within the conflict and its relationship with the local history were prominent topics. As one interviewee (R4) said, “It is impossible to talk about drug-trafficking and not to talk about the history of Medellin”. The local context was a crucial component for the majority of teachers, especially in relation to the promotion of historical thinking as will be further discussed in the upcoming subsection. Finally, the connexion with the actuality. Maintaining a connection with the present can be interpreted as one of the main concerns of the teachers. Every teacher mentioned it as one of the main challenges of history teaching. One of the teachers (R2) summarized the issue saying that “If you do not show the link with the present, the student loses interest, because they do not see the usefulness of history”. One of the most prominent examples of this connexion with actuality was the integration of the peace conversations in their lectures.

To sum up, the approach to recent history was different in each case, but attending to the focus on historical contents and the integration of the students’ experiences, four categories can be established. Despite the disparity of contents and methodologies, as well as in the distribution of contents, some basic elements and ideas were common among the teachers.

5.2.4 Skills: Historical, critical, reflexive and... the other three skills.

The common themes identified in the previous section can also be seen as a reflection of the main concerns of the teachers. For example, the special attention paid to understanding the origins of the conflict and the connection with the present moment are closely related with the main skill to be developed: historical thinking. This skill was alluded to several times during the interviews, and despite the different interpretations, there was a shared perception among the participants. This common notion of historical thinking was principally based on the capacity of the students to understand the multi-causality, interrelation and complexity of historical events,

---

93 As the interviews took place in Medellin, the local history is intimately interrelated with the drug cartel of Medellin and the figure of Pablo Escobar
and overcome the simplistic and diachronic perspectives of history. One teacher (R9) defined it as “show them that history is not just a moment, but transcends”. This teacher also pointed something that also some others mentioned in regards to how the students should transform the perception of history and the Colombian conflict, saying that “The history [of the conflict] is the same. The names have changed but the problems remain the same”. Another teacher (R14) put it as “in Colombia, the past does not pass, because the problems are not solved”. Therefore, teachers pointed the difficulties of students to understand the complex evolution of history and the prevalence of the structural problems, like land distribution or the unequal access to resources within society.

The ability of the students to connect the past events with the present moment was linked with another relevant issue, mentioned by an overwhelming majority, the capability to identify how the conflict affects their lives. They considered that the students do not attribute some problems that they confront in their daily lives to the conflict. It is significant that many exemplified the unawareness of students with the security issues, particularly the invisible barriers. One teacher (R16) said that “they cannot see it [the conflict] as something inherent to their lives, but as something that has its causes.” This capability to identify and interrelate the conflict’s past with the present situation was in most of the cases also identified by the teachers as reflexive and critical thinking. Moreover, there was a majority of teachers that also related critical thinking with the comparison of different sources, and especially with assuming a critical position towards the mass media.

The approach followed by the teachers also shared a relationship with the skills promoted. In the case of the teachers who followed the inquiry approach, the so-called investigative skills were at the core of their practices. On the other hand, those classified under the coexistence approach remarked the promotion of conflict resolution and mediation skills. Nevertheless, there were a substantial number of teachers that mentioned the promotion of three skills: interpretative, argumentative, and propositional; skills that correspond with the cross-cutting competencies proposed from the MEN. However, some of them needed some time to think about it and remember how those three were named, as well as how they promote them. It may suggest that they had integrated these three skills in their vocabulary, but it is not so clear if they do it within their practices. The interpretative skill was mainly associated with the historical thinking described, but in many cases it was also related with comprehensive reading. Likewise, the argumentative competence was generally connected with writing skills, but also with the respect

---

94 The invisible barriers divide one gang’s territory from another’s
95 It is relevant that the majority of teachers mentioned the problems of the students with reading.
of others’ perspectives. The propositional skill was exemplified by many of them with the capability to propose solutions to social problems, or once again, for the peace talks. Moreover, in the schools with students from a lower socioeconomic status, the propositional skill was also related with seeking alternatives for their lives and with the hope of change, which will be addressed in the coming sub-section.

This subsection has reviewed the key skills promoted through history teaching, in which the so-called historical thinking is at the core, along with the critical and reflexive thinking. The implication of the approach in the promotion of certain skills was also outlined. However, regardless of the approach followed, several teachers named the three skills proposed from the MEN as relevant in their practices.

5.2.5. Values and attitudes: Respect, respect and respect.

When the teachers were asked about the values and attitudes that they promote through history teaching, there was one that was mentioned in all the interviews: respect. Respect was understood in a variety of ways, but particularly three conceptions can be distinguished. Firstly, respect for others’ opinions. The acceptance of others’ perspectives, ideologies and ideas was closely connected with the prevalence of debates and discussion, but also with the promotion of historical thinking. Some of the teachers related the multi-dimensional notion of respect with the multiplicity of interpretations and narratives in history. Secondly, respect was also understood as respect for the difference and related with the rural, indigenous and afro-Colombian values. Many of them shared this concern that can be summarized using the words of one of them: “here in Medellin the afro, the indigenous, the peasant are seen as backward. It [history teaching] is about bringing the students those worldviews” (R1). Likewise, the respect for the difference was in many cases associated with sexuality and sexual orientation. In several cases, the teachers exemplified how they had confronted cases of discrimination for these reasons. However, the fact that many of them claimed to have confronted cases of discrimination may suggest that it is reaction to that particular problem, rather than proactive promotion. Thirdly, respect for others in broader terms, in the sense of non-violence and peaceful co-existence, as well as the promotion of democratic values and active citizenship.
Furthermore, the promotion of values and attitudes was related with the students’ perceptions of violence, which is part of their daily life, the normalization of violence, and how through history teaching they aim to transform it. Therefore, it seems to suggest that this is aligned with the capability to identify how their lives are affected by the conflict. The public sector teachers placed a great emphasis on raising their hope and showing the students other alternatives for life. This issue was a major concern in the public schools, particularly for those with students from lower-income families. One of the teachers (R16) said that she aims to show students that “they have to seek for opportunities and not resign to be part of the conflict”.

Figure 3. Visualization of the values promoted in recent history teaching

Source: own elaboration

5.2.6. Motivations and demands: commitment and scarcity.

The promotion of “hope” and alternatives in life was mentioned by many of the public school teachers as a motivation to address the recent history and the conflict. The teachers mentioned that the students in poor areas have a high risk of being drawn towards illicit activities or being enrolled in armed groups. As one of them said: “with the students, the most important thing is not that they memorize the content, it is to keep them [as] good [person]” (R6). Another motivation indicated by many of the teachers was the fact that some of the students themselves or somebody from their families had been victims of the conflict. One of the teachers (R7) even claimed that “almost everyone has a dead [person] in his household”. However, the examples of how their students were affected by the conflict were different between public and private

96 Many of the teachers referred to the way some media portrayed the lives of the drug dealers, as Pablo Escobar. It was related with the perspectives of children about life.
schools. While the teachers of private institutions mentioned murder, kidnap and extortion; in the public institutions teachers referred to displacement, involvement in armed groups, and murder. Additionally, some of the teachers related their motivation with their personal experiences, as they recognized how it feels to be a victim themselves. Finally, and on the contrary, a large number of teachers also mentioned the lack of knowledge and ignorance of some students. They claimed that those students who have not been affected directly by the conflict are commonly unaware of the dimensions of the conflict, and often “they are surprised when you explain the conflict” (R8).

In regard to the demands, the teachers were asked about the main weaknesses and requisites for implementing history teaching effectively. The answer from the public sector teachers was unanimous: resources. Many of them pointed to the absence or lack of textbooks, which implies that they had to create their own materials or use one book for 3 or 4 students, and even 7 as one of them claimed (R13). The majority also pointed to the lack of electronic sources, like computers, televisions and DVD players. Moreover, the lack of resources had a collateral effect; in many cases they had to use their own money to purchase them. They signalled that they had to buy their own books, documentaries or other resources to support their practices. They also provide photocopies to their students, which is particularly challenging with the absence of textbooks. However, several teachers mentioned the poor quality of textbooks in regard to their inclusion of the recent history of Colombia. Some of the teachers also pointed to the poor quality of teacher education in general and the labour conditions as an impediment. Finally, another relevant issue came up in the interviews. Teachers were asked about their perceptions on the curricular guidelines and, in general, the evaluation was positive. However, some teachers, particularly those who followed the inquiry and memory approaches, said that they have to use the loopholes of the curriculum to introduce some of the contents regarding recent history. Additionally, some teachers that taught in mid-secondary grades signalled during the interviews that what they teach has to be oriented to prepare the students for the national examination (ICFES).

5.2.6 Summary of the findings.

This chapter has reviewed how recent history is addressed at the school level and how it is integrated within the teaching practices. The chapter began reviewing the formulation of PEIs and thematic curricula. The findings revealed that although the conceptualisation of the PEIs was a participatory process, it seems to have become quite rigid afterwards, while the thematic history curriculum is reviewed frequently. However, the extent of how adaptable it is, is also put
into question. Recent history is mainly taught in the 9th grade of basic secondary education, and the difficulties in addressing the contents in mid-secondary, due to the time constrain. The chapter moved to the strategies followed by the teachers, and on the basis of the relevance of recent history contents and the introduction of personal experiences, the four main approaches were: conventional, inquiry, memory and coexistence. In the conventional approach recent history has the same treatment as history en general, and no particular skills or values are promoted. The inquiry approach has a strong emphasis on investigative skills and critical with recent history. Some minor investigation on the family or community were also included in the memory approach. Roundtable discussions were a key element in this approach, creating a space for students to share their stories. The coexistence approach is oriented to the promotion of peace and democratic values and put them into practices, but also discussion and spaces for reflection were a relevant element of this approach. The significance of the psychological dimension within their strategies was pointed for teachers that followed the memory and inquiry approach. The same logic sequence or pattern was identified by all the teachers of this approach: from the personal memories, to the memories of the community, to conclude with the national level. Moreover, the creation of spaces for group reflection, particularly through roundtable discussions, was also present in both approaches. The diversity of approaches also revealed that within the same schools, and therefore same curriculum, teachers demonstrated a multitude of different strategies in their teaching practices, although the coexistence and memory approach were not implemented in the private schools.

**Figure 4. The Four Approaches of Recent History Teaching**

![Diagram of the Four Approaches of Recent History Teaching](source)

**Source:** Own elaboration
However, and despite the approach followed by the teacher, some base line knowledge and contents were identified among the participants. The identification and elucidation of the structural factors and actors was a significant concern of the teachers, paying special attention to the sources and origins of the conflict and its complex evolution, as well as the influence and interplay with the actors. An essential topic in their teaching was the drug-trafficking, which was used for illustrate the complexity of the Colombian history, as well as to encourage critical and reflexive thinking. Additionally, the participants pointed that teaching the conflict, and particularly the issue of the drug-trafficking necessary requires to address the local history. Moreover, a major concern shared by the teacher was the connexion with the actuality. The link with current issues was used to visualize the evolution and interrelation of historical events.

Their main concern was to develop the historical thinking, and subsequently critical and reflexive thinking. Only some mentioned the three competencies proposed from the MEN as relevant in their practices. However, it was not clear if those are really integrated in their practices. On the contrary, there was no doubt about the main value promoted through history teaching: respect. Despite the different notions of respect among the participants, three main notions were distinguished: respect for others’ opinions, respect for their differences and respect for the others, in broad terms and in relation with peaceful coexistence.

The chapter concludes with the motivations and demands of the teachers. Neither, teachers nor students were exempt from violence in their own lives, and that seems to constitute a strong motivation to address recent history. Public teachers were motivated to show students alternatives for life away from activities related with the conflict and they intended to increase awareness from those who had not suffered the conflict. The lack of resources affects history teaching and demands creativity from teachers, as well as financial input, but there were also critics to teacher education and the labour conditions.
5.3. The Basta Ya!: General Perceptions

What are the general perceptions of the educational stakeholders (national policy makers, trade unions, civil society organizations and academia) about the Basta Ya! Report?

This chapter presents the general perceptions of the education related actors about the Basta Ya!. The findings synthesize the data collected during the first research period in Bogota, and correspond with the answers to the first section of the interview. The coming section is organized around four axes. Firstly, the insights regarding the general assessment of the Basta Ya! are summarized, as well as the perceptions in regard to the elaboration and diffusion of the report. Afterwards, the main results are clustered in three key thematic areas, in relation to the report’s contribution to the following dimensions: truth, historical memory and justice; reparation, reconciliation and non-repetition; and peace and democracy. The chapter is concluded with a synopsis of the main perceptions.

Despite the classification of the perceptions around these four large categories, it must be clarified that some issues, as will become evident throughout this section, are interrelated with others, and also some of them are repeated over multiple categories. Additionally, another preliminary remark must be made in regard to the position of the MEN towards the report. The MEN made no comments in respect to the Basta Ya! and its contents, because the official position of the state is adopted by the ministry. Consequently, the MEN assumes ownership of the report without judging it, and the organisation just comments and evaluates the issues concerning education.

5.3.1. General Assessment: It is a good report but...

This sub-section is focussed on the evaluation of the report as whole, as a product, as well as the way it has been elaborated and disseminated. The sentence “It is a good report, but” is illustrative of the overall appraisal of every actor interviewed. All respondents pointed out that in general terms, Basta Ya! is a good report, and besides, the vast majority underlined the relevance of the report for the crucial moment the country is currently going through. However, every interviewee also pointed to aspects of the report’s limitations and weaknesses.

The academics concurred in highlighting the preciseness of the report, particularly in regard to the documentation. On the contrary, a variety of perceptions were expressed with respect to the
collection of testimonies and the inclusion of the victims’ perspectives. Various academics and civil society organizations argued that, in some cases, the victims were not duly consulted, stating that their testimonies were not adequately included in the *Basta Ya!*. Moreover, there was a shared sense among the victims’ organizations that they were not sufficiently identified in the histories reflected in the report. One interviewee (A6) alluded to a notion of a “certain marginalization” from the narrative of the report and selectivity, because “only the great leaders are recognized”. This may be due to different causes, but another interviewee (A5) pointed to an underlying reason for this feeling:

> When the victim takes the report, perhaps [she] is interested in Bojayá, and all the massacres. But no. In that report, [the victim] is seeking for an answer. And do you know what answer [the victim] is seeking? [She] wants to find her village. [She] wants to search for her essence. It is like that you are told that, there is a part of your DNA in this book which belongs to you.

On the other hand, one of the academics (A3) referred to the same problem, but indicating that the victims remain at the core of the narrative and that the problem rested on the “analytical level”:

> *Basta Ya!* tries to look at the national level and, let’s say, to expand the focus to that national analytical scale, involves various complexities. However, it places victims at the core as well, that’s also important. It says certain things about the victims, but the victim in these cases, I would say, remains in the anonymity of figures. [...] I feel, that it is precisely the analytical scale, let’s say that from a macro level, we cannot reach the specific data of the particular name of the person. [...] To visualize the names of the victims with proper names, places, putting a face to the pain, would have been difficult.

Another facet heavily criticized by some interviewees, was how the information is presented in the report in terms of writing style and its length. Whilst just two representatives from civil society organizations claimed difficulties due to the academic lexicon and the use of technical jargon, a common perception amongst respondents was that the text was too extensive. It can thus be assumed that the 431 pages of the *Basta Ya!* were seen as one of the main obstacles to reach society at large. Talking about this problem, one of the respondents (A5) commented that the extensiveness restricts the report to those directly interested in the topic. However, some of the respondents recognized that they had not read the report in full.

The format of presentation itself, i.e., the distribution of the report as a book-like report was likewise called into question by some interviewees. This topic was also addressed by several
respondents in relation to the report’s implementation in education, as is further discussed in the next chapter. A common view among those who claimed for the need to adapt the Basta Ya! to other formats, was the necessity to do so in order to guarantee the proper dissemination of the report and fulfil the needs and requirements to reach society at large. The low average education level and the traditional culture of oral storytelling in Colombian society were mentioned by two academics, as the main reasons for such adaptation. In relation to the diffusion and socialization of the report, some other challenges were identified. While recognizing that some steps have been made, although the Basta Ya! has been recently published, the vast majority of the interviewees claimed that a great effort must be taken. Furthermore, it was generally agreed that the fact that the state has assumed ownership of the Basta Ya! constitutes its main strength. According to them, this breaks with the tradition and past position of the state of neglecting the conflict97 and likewise, represents the main opportunity to guarantee the socialization of the report. As the representative of the teachers’ union (A7) said: “Here amnesia has been systematically practiced. We have to make many efforts in this country to empower the process of the recovery of memory”.

Last but not least, the criticism regarding the specific contents and information included in the report is presented. This issue has been left to conclude the sub-section due to its great relevance and implications. As it is shown in the following sub-sections, these content-related issues remain at the core of the debate for the other three key dimensions that are discussed, as they constitute the basis for the discussion. Firstly, it should be highlighted that the historical time frame covered was firmly criticized by the representatives from academia. The year 1958 as the starting point of the historical reconstruction included in the Basta Ya! was criticized, because according to them it implies that the origins of the conflict correspond with emergence of the subversive groups. Different alternative dates were suggested, but they all agreed that at least the period of La Violencia should have been included. They claimed that it is not just a chronologic matter; the problem relies on the interpretative and explicative historical implications. This aspect is interrelated with the second issue, the gap regarding the clarification of casual relationships and structural factors. Notwithstanding the fact that the predominant aspects and dimensions are mentioned, the vast majority of respondents criticized the lack of in-depth historical explanations of those dimensions. In turn, these perceived analytical and explanatory constraints were closely related with the last main objection identified in most of interviews, the clarification of the role of the actors involved in the conflict and the elucidation of responsibilities. These two themes

97 CNMH (2012) in the report of Truth and Justice, claimed that “[We] are witnessing a phenomenon of weakening of the tradition of forgetting the atrocity and invisibility of victims […] (p. 20)
were recurrent throughout all the interviews, which reveals their significance, and due to the divergent interpretations, it seems to suggest that they represent the benchmarks for evaluating the contributions of the *Basta Ya!* to the dimensions analysed in the coming sub-sections.

To sum up, in general the *Basta Ya!* has been considered a good piece of work, and both the preciseness and the thorough documentation got a good review from the academics. Yet there were diverse critiques, especially from the civil society organizations, regarding the way the testimonies were incorporated and the selectivity of the stories included. Another critique was based on the timeframe, as several respondents considered that *Basta Ya!* should have included at least the period of *La Violencia*. Likewise, there was a general agreement on the lack of focus on the structural factors and the role of the different actors. Moreover, many interviewees disapproved the length and the use of overly academic and technical language. However, all respondents agreed that the fact the state has recognised the report constitutes an enormous success and deviates from decades of state-level amnesia.

### 5.3.2. Truth, Historical Memory and Justice: It depends.

Before proceeding to the examination of the perceptions regarding the contributions of the *Basta Ya!* to these dimensions, two observations should be taken into consideration. On the one hand, it must be recalled that CNMH openly states that they are not a truth commission and therefore, they do not pretend to present an inflexible truth. Rather, they present an element of reflection for the social and political debate (CNMH, 2013, p.16). This position was also claimed by the representative of the CNMH interviewed (A2) who said “We have always said that historical memory [CNMH reports] were not truth reports and, indeed, we are more interested in the public debate than in the dogma of history”. In spite of this statement, it is assumed that, to some extent, it implies a level of truth.

On the other hand, in most of the answers there was a distinction of different degrees of truth. However, only the academics questioned the notion of truth itself. Despite this slight difference, it can be interpreted that all of them were pointing to the same issue, the degree of that truth.

The most recurrent answer to the question was “it depends”, and it depends, therefore, on the understanding and extent. If truth was considered as judicial truth, the general response was no. As one interviewee (A8) said, “here [in the report] the judicial truth is not present”. This

---

98 The conception of truth within the interviews must be clarified. The discussion came up with all the academics when they were asked about the report’s contribution to truth. The question was formulated in the same terminology/terms to all the interviewees and, therefore, no definition of the concept was provided, it was open to the respondents’ interpretation. The question formulated during the interviews was “Do you consider that the BY contributes to truth?”
judgement was largely grounded on the basis of the recognition of responsibilities of perpetrators. Due to the nature of the Basta Yal, at the individual level, perpetrators remain in the anonymity, but some of the interviewees suggested that neither in general terms the implications of the actors are duly evidenced. Overall, both at the personal and societal level, the restricted contribution to justice was closely related to the clarification of truth. Several interviewees also argued that impunity and a lack of justice have been the reality in Colombia. Therefore, they claimed that complementary judicial mechanism, as well as truth-seeking process, should be implemented in order to break with that tradition.

On the other hand, in terms of truth as historical truth, the overall response was more positive, but in all cases pointing to some limitations. Despite disparities on the perception of how the different actors were portrayed in the Basta Yal, as well as in the designation of responsibilities to the different groups, over a half of the respondents highlighted the role, interactions and responsibilities of the state attributed in the report to exemplify such shortcomings. It can thus be suggested that the implication and responsibility of the state were not seen properly stated in the report and due to this omission, the state was perceived as having a privileged position in the historical account of the conflict. However, the fact that the state has taken ownership of the report and therefore, assumes some responsibility over the involvement of the army in the conflict, was perceived as a significant advancement.

The blurring boundaries between truth and historical memory outlined in the theoretical chapter are reflected in the interviews. There was a strong and prevailing tendency towards confusing the terms and using them indiscriminately. Consequently, both categories were judged in quite similar terms. Nevertheless, and in accordance with the definition stated by CNMH of historical memory, the general viewpoint was the acknowledgement of the Basta yai’s contribution, but with certain reservations. The foremost aspect mentioned was the deficiency of the report in explaining the underlying causes and motivations behind the genocide of the political members of the UP. Furthermore, over a third of the respondents suggested that it should be a requirement to be more representative of different truths and historical memories, along with the need to “take into account more directly the people who have been affected by the conflict.” (A6). One of the academics (A4) argued that the victims “want to speak for themselves”, and hence “tell their own story, not others telling it for them”. Despite these insufficiencies, it is significant that over two-thirds recognized that Basta Ya! contributes to providing knowledge to those who still do not know about the history of the conflict. Similarly, the majority of respondents highlighted the contribution to visualize and bring more clarity about the extent of the conflict, particularly due to the information provided regarding the modalities of violence and figures of victims.
Taken together, these results suggest that, despite certain limitations in explaining the underlying reasons and factors behind the conflict, *Basta Ya!* represents a contribution to the clarification of truth and historical memory. However, the report was not perceived as an asset in terms of judicial truth and justice, neither at the individual or collective level, and the necessity of additional measures was demanded in several cases. Justice, along with truth, were the main dimensions employed to evaluate the contribution to reparation, reconciliation and non-repetition, addressed in the next sub-section.

5.3.3. Reparation, reconciliation and non-repetition: just a little.

The contribution of the report to these three dimensions was the least valued by the respondents. The *Basta Ya!*, by itself, is not considered as sufficient to reach either reparation, reconciliation or non-repetition. Moreover, it should be noted that the critics in these cases were not exclusively focused on the report. The arguments of the interviewees were mainly based on additional requirements. All respondents agreed that political action is needed that goes beyond the report and point to the important role of the government to implement law and policies. One of the academics (A3) referred to the limitations of historical memory reports to contribute to these dimensions saying that “no book has transformed the social reality of any country”.

Over a half of the respondents acknowledged the difficulties of the report to accomplish reparation\(^9\). At the individual level, reparation was seen as restricted to those who had participated on the elaboration of the reports, i.e., limited to “the victims who had the opportunity to tell their stories” (A4). Whilst a minority pointed to some contribution to symbolic and collective reparation, for the majority of respondents it was inadequate. As one respondent (A7) said “both at the personal and social level, the report remains insufficient to overcome all the open wounds of the Colombian people”. It is interesting to note that three of the respondents referred to issues related with the role of perpetrators and former combatants. According to these interviewees, demobilized combatants were not properly included nor consulted, because their testimonies and knowledge are perceived as essential to achieve reparation, as well as clarifying truth and responsibilities.

In general, reparation and reconciliation seem to be subordinated to the achievement of truth, as the majority of respondents pointed truth as an essential pre-requisite for their involvement.

\(^9\) The contribution of the report to reparation was generally understood as recognition (of victims and their suffering). Some of the interviewees also referred to reparation as compensation, particularly land restitution and economic/financial reward, but it was related to the complementary laws and policies which should be implemented by the Government.
In regard to promoting reconciliation in society at large, the need to integrate the whole society in the process was highlighted in several interviews. Furthermore, the extent of the socialization and dissemination came up as an essential condition to guarantee it. Likewise, issues related with the diffusion of the *Basta Ya!* and the transmission of its contents were connected with the requisites to encourage non-repetition. The promotion of non-repetition was supplanted by truth as a pre-requisite too. Some respondents also claimed that non-repetition will never be reached if the causality underlying the conflict is not completely clarified.

Overall, these findings seem to suggest that the contribution of the report to reparation, reconciliation and non-repetition was seen as very limited, and a greater effort towards the clarification of truth was demanded. The lack of deeper historical explanations was, in several cases, pointed to as the main restriction, particularly in regard to human rights violations and democratic participation. The limitations regarding these two themes were also recurrent in the evaluations of the contribution to peace and democracy, which is covered in the next sub-section.

### 5.3.4. Peace and democracy: A lack of orientation.

In several cases, justice and reparation were pointed to as fundamental pre-conditions to ensure peace and democracy. The attribution of responsibilities to the state and the assumption of the ownership of the report by the state were pointed to as great advancements towards the strengthening of democracy. Nevertheless, the explanatory deficit of the *Basta Ya!* regarding human rights violations and political participation was, once again, highlighted as a great limitation in several cases. Some interviewees alluded again to the UP genocide to illustrate the absence of political participation guarantees and the exclusion of the opposition. In a few cases the criticism was centred on the absence of propositions for alternative participatory instruments or tools.

The majority recognized that the *Basta Ya!* in itself, as a contribution to historical memory, whilst simultaneously providing a contribution to peace. However, for several respondents, an explicit orientation towards peace is missed in the report. Those who indicated that the emphasis on peace was lacking in the *Basta Ya!* claimed that it is mainly focused on violence, and the stories about recovering dignity are “pushed somewhat into the background” (A8). Moreover, the limitations of the narrative were, once again, related with the explanatory deficit. As one of the interviewees (A9) put it “It properly addresses the armed conflict but no other issues of violence. (...) The other forms of violence are not shown. The mix of direct, structural and cultural violence”. A minority of respondents also suggested that *Basta Ya!* should have included a proactive perspective, in order to “provide some hope” (A5).
In general, the contribution of the report to promote peace and democracy was recognized, but several interviewees critiqued the content, claiming that a greater emphasis on peace would have been welcome. This lack of emphasis was in several cases associated with the requirements to overcome the conflict and foster a lasting peace. The theme came up again in relation to the challenges and opportunities for the implementation in education, which is addressed in the last sub-section of the coming chapter. In contrast, whilst just over half of the respondents mentioned the issue in this part of the interview, the vast majority pointed to the inclusion of peace-oriented perspective and contents as a requirement for the implementation of the report in education, as is further explained below.

5.3.5 Summary of the findings.

In this chapter, the main perceptions that the different educational actors have regarding the report have been presented. Overall, Basta Ya! was seen as a good report and the quality of the labour of CNMH was acknowledged, recognizing that it brings some clarity about the conflict and contributes to the recovery of historical memory. However, there was an extended criticism from the civil society organizations in relation to the victims and their testimonies, claiming that the victims do not feel they are sufficiently acknowledged in the report and they feel excluded from the narratives. Some other issues were pointed out by the interviewees, particularly in regards to the timeframe and the lack of in-depth clarification of the casual relation and the responsibilities of the actors. These issues were also identified as constraints for the contribution to truth and historical memory, as well as for reparation, reconciliation and non-repetition. It can therefore be assumed that they constitute one of the major (perceived) limitations of the Basta Ya!.

To contribute to the achievement of the right to truth and justice, as well as reparation and the guarantee of non-recurrence, the majority of respondents claimed the need for complementary laws and policies. They considered that the government should endorse additional mechanisms and processes to break with the tradition of denial of the conflict and impunity, and embrace a transitional process. A possible explanation for this claim might be the extended perception of the restricted accounting of the responsibilities and the roles of the actors in the report.

With respect to what can be taken from the report, the dissemination and the socialization of the report were perceived as vital preconditions. There was a general perception that no advancement can be achieved if society at large is not reached. Nevertheless, over half of the respondents claimed that prior adaptation or reconfiguration is required. The length of the report and the linguistics were pointed as a problem by some respondents, but the prominent focus on violence and the lack of a peace-oriented approach were criticised too. Despite those issues, all
recognized the potential of the report, especially because the state has taken ownership of the report, which can be interpreted as the strongest aspect of the report. The next chapter moves to the perceptions regarding the challenges and opportunities for implementation.

5.4. The Basta Ya!: Perceptions about the Implementation in Education

What do the different educational stakeholders perceive as the main challenges and opportunities for the implementation of the Basta Ya! in education?

After having discussed the general perceptions of the *Basta Ya!*, the analysis is now focused on the perceptions regarding the potential implementation of the report in education. The findings correspond with the second part of the interviews held in Bogota. This chapter begins by describing the perceived requirements for ensuring its implementation at the national level, and argues that the report should be adapted, as well as accompanied by a pedagogical toolbox. The next sub-section moves onto the discussion with regard to the training of teachers to address recent history and memory. Subsequently, the insights about the challenges for implementation at classroom-level are exposed. To conclude the chapter, the last sub-section examines the different perceptions about the values, attitudes and skills that can be promoted with the inclusion of the *Basta Ya!* into education.

Before proceeding to examine the perceptions it is necessary to clarify that a greater level of agreement among the respondents was reached in regard to the implementation. Unlike the previous section, in which more diverse and even divergent perceptions were expressed, all the interviewees agreed with the appropriateness of the implementation of the report within education. However, it must be highlighted that in many cases the interviewees specified that it should be considered as a first step or a starting point for introducing these topics in education, claiming that further efforts are required.

5.4.1. National level implementation: The need of integration.

There was a general agreement among the interviewees on the desirability to integrate the contents of the *Basta Ya!* into education. However, different opinions were expressed in regard to the mode and extent of such implementation. On the one hand, over half of the respondents
suggested the requirement of an integral educational reform, which would imply more than merely an integration of the report on the social sciences curricula. They pointed to the need to rethink and reconfigure the scope and objectives of education, in order to adapt them to the necessities of addressing recent history and memory, particularly in regards to social science. In a few cases, it was related to the criticism on the focus towards competencies of the educational system, stating that it was opposed to the requirements of a conflict affected society. On the other hand, the rest of the respondents recognized the convenience of incorporating it into the national policies and curriculum guidelines, but without the need for structural educational transformation.

A recurrent theme when discussing about how to integrate the report into national education policies and curriculum orientations, was the dilemma between whether to create a new subject or transversal integration. All of them claimed that cross-cutting integration would be more desirable. Talking about this issue, the representative of the MEN (A1) commented “to achieve transformation the inclusion of these topics would have to be through a pedagogic process, it cannot be as an independent subject”. A common view among respondents was that the main integration should be through the social sciences, but maintaining relation with other areas. Particularly, the relationship with the future peace subject was pointed out, as well as with the other cross-cutting themes within social science, primarily afro-colombian identity, democracy, co-existence, ethics and human rights.

Another relevant issue that came up when discussing the method of integrating the Basta Ya! was the need to adapt the report to make it accessible for youngsters. As in the previous section, some of the interviewees made reference to the complexity of the language used to highlight that it needs to be adapted prior implementation. Likewise, as discussed in the general perceptions, other respondents referred to the style of narratives and the focus on violence, arguing that the report must encompass a peace perspective. Interestingly, the MEN (A1) also considered that the narrative must be adapted, because it is inadequate to bring the report to the schools in “such an open way”. Similarly, the requirement of adaptation was related, in some cases, with the inclusion of the report in the textbooks. Almost a third of the respondents acknowledged the deficit of the current textbooks in regard to recent history and memory and they appreciated the Basta Ya! as a good basis for incorporating the topics.

Turning now to the requirements for the implementation at the national level, there was a shared perception among the respondents that the document should be accompanied with pedagogical tools. The creation of a pedagogical toolbox was seen as necessary pre-condition to
properly address the contents and to guarantee the appropriate use of the *Basta Ya!*. This matter is closely connected with the need for teacher training and capacity-building covered in the next sub-section. But some preliminary considerations must be made before. Firstly, it should be acknowledged that CNMH is currently working on developing the toolbox. The person interviewed from the CNMH (A2) also pointed to the indispensability of a future process of accompaniment to "not throw the toolbox from a parachute". Secondly, it is particularly significant that half of the respondents pointed to the need to take into account and learn from the innovative projects that some teachers are already implementing, and that the toolbox should be developed with these experiences in mind. As one of the respondents (A4) said “many of them have being doing this for 5 or 7 years”.

So far this chapter has focussed on the perceived requirements for implementing the report in education at the national level. Despite differences regarding the degree of reform that should accompany the implementation, all the respondents argued that transversal integration would be the best option, rejecting the proposal to create a completely new subject. However, several respondents suggested that the report cannot be transposed into education without adaptation and to do this effectively, the contents should be linguistically accessible to the youngsters. Additionally, the vast majority of respondents agreed that accompanying the report with pedagogical tools and processes is vital. The following sub-section further examines the perceptions in regard to the pedagogical training of teachers.

5.4.2. Awareness-raising and capacity-building: A duty.

A common view amongst respondent was the need for awareness-raising and capacity building. All of the interviewees suggested that teachers must be trained in order to properly address recent history and memory related topics, as well as be provided with the methodologies to do so. Several respondents pointed to and the lack of awareness and experience to introduce these difficult and sometimes controversial aspects in their teaching practices. According to them, this represents one of the main threats to the appropriate implementation of the *Basta Ya!*, because it can lead to reverting to the use of the report as a traditional textbook, just focusing on the data. One of the respondents (A6), when asked about the issue of teacher training, said that teachers must “un-learn to relearn”. It was also generally agreed upon that the training must be included in the academic formation of teachers and therefore, must start from the educational faculties. It is significant that the majority of respondents also recognized that this will be a time-consuming process, and that it is not possible to change from one day to another.
A theme that came up during the discussion of this issue in several interviews was the teachers’ understanding of history and their approach to it. The matter was somewhat related to the conception of history in itself. The respondents who referred to this problem highlighted that including the Basta Ya! contents would imply breaking with the traditional focus of history on heroes and dates, and learning by heart. Therefore, they claimed that the training should help them to overcome the old-style history approach. Moreover, a few respondents pointed out that the current integrated social sciences and the competency-oriented scope tends to reduce the relevance of history and it is thus contrary to the introduction of topics regarding memory and recent history.

Finally, another prominent aspect related with the experience and awareness of teachers mentioned was the teacher-student relationship. Although the need for change was alluded to in general, in terms of the inclusion and participation of the students, it was especially emphasized in regard to students who have been victims. However, it was also claimed that many teachers have also been victims of the conflict and these cannot be ignored. Therefore tools and mechanisms should be provided to them in order to allow teachers to include their experiences into their practices.

This sub-section has reviewed the three key issues in regard to the training of teachers: the renewal of the approach to history, the transformation of the relationship with the students, and the provision of methodologies and tools to properly integrate recent history and memory. What follows is a description of the perceptions regarding the integration of the contents into classroom practice.

5.4.3. School-level implementation: The need of contextualization.

The vast majority of the interviewees highlighted the centrally of the teachers to guarantee a successful implementation of the Basta Ya!. Firstly, due to the process of decentralization and secondly, due to the privileged position that teachers occupy, they are essential to ensure the transmission of the content to the students. As one representative of a civil society organization (A8) said: “there may be many public or educational policies, but it is the teacher who has the opportunity and possibility of take all that to the classroom”. Therefore, this perception of the essentialness of teachers explains the concern about their training and the provision of methodological and pedagogical tools. However, the concern was also based on the complexity of contextualizing the report at the local-level and to each classroom, what was seen as a vital requirement for implementation.
Ensuring the report was relevant and inclusive of local history and realities was considered imperative, as *Basta Ya!* cannot be implemented in the same way across the country and it should thus be adapted. Several interviewees made reference to the different needs of the urban and rural settings and also between those areas where the conflict is still latent and those where it is not. Moreover, in regards to the locations most affected by the conflict, some respondents recognized the difficulty to introduce these controversial topics to the classroom, as the security of the teachers may be at risk. Interestingly and in reference to the adaptation in urban contexts, over half of the interviewees pointed out that the labour of the teacher should pay special attention to visualizing how the students are also affected by the conflict. The respondents suggested that urban students tend to perceive the conflict as something distant and relegated to the rural areas. Consequently, according to them, a broader view of the structural factors must be promoted, allowing the students to see the effects of the conflict on their lives and thus enabling them to connect history with the contemporary reality. Therefore, they claimed that through history-teaching, students should become more critically aware of the events surrounding them.

Similarly, there was a common view on the need to adapt the implementation of the report to each classroom. This process of contextualization to the environment and realities of each classroom was closely related with the need to deal with sensitive topics. Interviewees perceived a strong correlation between the classroom-level adaptation and the integration of personal memories and testimonies, particularly of those whom had been victims. Therefore, this was directly associated with the change of the student-teacher relationship, as well as between students, and also the need for the inclusion of innovative and sensitive pedagogical approaches. The majority of respondents pointed out that participatory pedagogies should be endorsed, like roundtable conversations, in which the students and teachers related as equals and the students are also recognized as sources of knowledge. Likewise, the latter was another prominent issue throughout the interviews. Several respondents suggested that students should learn to recognize and value themselves and their experiences and furthermore, see themselves as part of history. As one of the academics (A3) put it, the students should perceive that “history does not flow and has never flown outside my body, my loved ones, and myself.” To connect students with the history by transforming their perceptions about it from something anchored in the past was mentioned by most of the respondents as one of the main challenges. Consequently, they demanded that history teaching should stimulate conceptual learning and that it should encompass participative and experimental learning.
This sub-section has analysed the perceived requirements for the implementation of the report at the school-level, which is mainly rooted in the need for adaptation to the local context and the realities of each school and classroom. The integration of sensitive topics was seen as particularly challenging in regard to the inclusion of the personal testimonies of those who have been victims. Another relevant issue was the students’ relationship with and perception of history, which several respondents claimed should be transformed with the inclusion of participatory and experimental learning. This broader view of learning was intimately related with the promotion of values and attitudes, which will be covered in the next sub-section.

5.4.4. Values, attitudes and skills: a starting point.

The promotion of values and attitudes through recent history teaching was largely conditioned to the renewal of history teaching, that is, requiring pedagogical and methodological accompaniment. In general, the inclusion of more content covering recent history and memory was aimed at achieving a transformative learning process, oriented towards overcoming the conflict and fostering a lasting peace. However, a variety of perspectives were expressed in regard to what these values actually are and the degree to which they can contribute to the promotion of the ultimate aims. The potential of Basta Ya! to contribute to peace was acknowledged by the vast majority of respondents. However, most of the interviewees demanded a greater emphasis on peace-oriented values. Moreover, the capability to change the students’ perceptions regarding the conflict and violence was seen as the main strength of the report in this respect.

Several respondents claimed that school structures should allow students to put participatory, peace and democratic values into practice. One recurrent example was democracy at the school governance, as one of the interviewees (A9) commented: “the educational institutions should be more democratic, more horizontal [...] Schools must be a space to put democratic values into practice”. Similarly, a significant number of respondents mentioned the need for applying self-experience in reference to human rights, stating that teaching them as a mere enumeration does not encourage the respect for human rights. Moreover, the promotion of human values was related to the respect for others and the respect for difference. Over two-thirds of the interviewees highlighted the necessity of encouragement this through the implementation of recent history teaching, such as issues related with multiculturalism, along with indigenous and afro-Colombian identity. In a similar way, some of them pointed to the respect for others’ opinion, but indicating the weakness of the report in regard to acknowledging ideological differences.

Last but not least, another relevant issue mentioned was the issue of skills and the need to encourage reflexive and critical thinking, a point which was recurrent throughout the majority of
interviews. It was especially related to the comparison of sources, mass-media and internet, and to the promotion of historical thinking, referring to a broader view of history which overcomes the diachronic perspective of history. Therefore, they claimed that the introduction of the contents of the *Basta Ya!* should encourage the students’ capabilities to understand the complexity of history and the interactions between past, present and future.

5.4.5. Summary of the findings.

This chapter began by describing the perceived requirements for implementing the report in education at the national level. The creation of a specific subject was seen as an inappropriate formula and there was a general agreement on the need for cross-cutting integration. However, an overwhelming majority suggested that an adaptation of the report is required before it is inclusion in education. Similarly, the vast majority demanded the creation of a pedagogical toolbox with the accompaniment of pedagogical processes. This pedagogical accompaniment should comprise training and capacitation of teachers, which many claimed, should start from the educational faculties. The concern about providing teachers the methodologies and tools to include recent history and memory into their practices can be seen as reflection of the essential role of the teachers.

The centrality of the teacher in ensuring effective implementation was seen as crucial for guaranteeing the contextualization of the contents to local and classroom realities. Furthermore, the teachers were given the duty of changing the perceptions and relationships of the students with history, by transforming their own relationships with the students and redesigning their approach to history and therefore, abandoning orthodox techniques. Another two main issues were identified in regard to the challenges for implementation at the classroom level: the sensibility of the topic, especially in cases when the teacher and/or students have been victims; and the lack of experimental learning of history. The renewal revision of teaching and learning approaches were seen by the majority as an essential step to enable students develop critical historical thinking, overcoming the lineal perception of history and allowing them to understand its complexity and the connection between the present and future.

To conclude and before proceeding to the discussion on the findings, a relevant observation should be taken into account. These findings show that all of the respondents recognized the potential of the report and the imperativeness of its implementation in education. However, these findings must be interpreted with caution. The *Basta Ya!* was seen by several respondents as a first step, and therefore, they claimed that the introduction of recent history and memory into education would require further development, as well as the inclusion of other materials.
6. Discussion and Conclusion

What are the main challenges and opportunities for implementation of the Basta Ya! Report in history education in secondary basic and mid-secondary education in Colombia?

This final chapter critically analyses the findings presented in the previous chapter, by addressing each of the sub-questions and contrasting the findings with the theoretical reflection. The chapter will follow a different sequence than the previous chapter, starting from the general perceptions, and later moving on to examining the perceptions regarding the implementation in education, moving to the current practices of history teaching and also addressing the national policy framework. Moreover, the analysis brings back the SRA framework and the three components of teacher agency outlined by Vongalis (2007). Throughout the discussion of the research findings and theoretical reflection, this chapter identifies the main challenges and opportunities for implementation of the Basta Ya!. The chapter is concluded with a general summary that recapitulates the main challenges and opportunities.

6.1. Discussion on the research sub-questions and theoretical reflection

The third sub-section of the findings chapter was aimed to answer the research sub-question “What are the general perceptions of the educational stakeholders (national policy makers, trade unions, civil society organizations and academia) about the Basta Ya! Report?”. In general, the report was positively evaluated, and its contribution to the clarification of the historical memory was acknowledged. Nonetheless, the respondents pointed certain limitations of the report, but one main issue was recurred throughout the interviews: the lack of the historical explanations in regards to the structural factors, the casual relations, and the role and responsibilities of the actors. The issues concerning the elucidation of responsibilities were extensively mentioned, due to the traditional deficit of justice in Colombia and the risk of promoting impunity. Therefore, some interviewees demanded additional mechanisms of truth-seeking and complementary judicial processes in order to achieve a greater level of truth and ensure accountability. A greater clarification was also pointed to as a prerequisite to contribute to reparation, reconciliation and non-repetition. Therefore, as in the theoretical discussion, at the heart of the debate was whether judicial or historical truth are required to promote reconciliation and enhance human rights accountability (Allen, 1999; Rigby, 2002; Thoms et al. 2008, González & Varney, 2013), and the
kind of truth produced and achieved for commissions and reports (Chapman & Ball, 2003; Colle, 2005; Marko-Stöckl 2008).

Despite CNMH rejects that the report constitute an official narrative and claims that it is constructed from the testimony of the victims and the multiplicity of experiences, the civil society organizations argued that the victims do not identify with the report, and that they feel marginalized from its narrative. Moreover, the prominent focus on violence and the lack of a peace perspective in the narrative of the report was also criticised, particularly by civil society organizations, who claim that in the current context a peace-oriented approach is required.

The fact that the state has taken ownership of the report is seen as an extraordinary advancement, and it was perceived as one of the core strengths of the report. This is a particularly relevant issue taking into account that one of the major issues has been the lack of implementation of the recommendations (Freeman & Hayner, 2003). The dissemination and socialization of the report were signalled as a key elements to ensure the impact of the report, conforming one of the main challenges. This perception is consistent with the central role assigned by Chapman and Ball (2003) to the externalization of the report. Thus, greater efforts were demanded in order to ensure the impact and reach society at large, what for many respondents require that Basta Ya! must be adapted, due to the length and the academic style of the report. However, the experiences of other reports in postconflict contexts, such as Guatemala and Sierra Leone, illustrates that the creation of adapted materials and pedagogical guidelines, does not guarantee the impact of the report (Oglesby, 2004; Paulson, 2006).

The need for adaptation was also a prominent issue in regard to the requirements for implementing the report in education, what was addressed in the research sub-question “What do the different educational stakeholders perceive as the main challenges and opportunities for the implementation of the Basta Ya! in education?”. Along with the demand of reconfiguration, a common view among the interviewees was that the report must be accompanied with pedagogical tools, as well as training and capacity-building processes. Therefore, this perception matches with the ideas of Cole (2007), who claimed that transforming the way history is taught should be prioritized in transitional contexts. The training of teachers, in order to properly introduce history and memory in their teaching practices, was seen as an essential requisite, starting from its integration in the education of teachers. This also accords with the claims of several teachers interviewed, who signalled the poor quality of teacher education as a weakness. These demands for pedagogical accompaniment can be interpreted as oriented to transforming
the capacity of teaching, and therefore, related with the enhancement of the agency of the teachers (authority).

The implementation of *Basta Ya!* was perceived as imperative, and the participants agreed that transversal integration is the most desirable formula, rejecting the creation of a new subject. The majority of participants also considered the renewal of the teaching-learning processes as fundamental, overcoming orthodox approaches and promoting participative and experimental learning. This was perceived as particularly relevant for the promotion of peace and democratic values and attitudes. Moreover, some interviewees pointed out that the teacher-student relationship needs to be transformed to integrate recent history and memory, positioning the students as a source of knowledge and part of the history. Thus, the transformation of the teaching-learning processes can be interpreted as a reconfiguration of the orientation and the expected achievements teacher, and re-framing the teachers’ agency (obligations and authority). This transformation is also motivated by the sensibility of the topic, and most particularly, the need to integrate the memories and experiences of students and teachers who had been victims. This is especially relevant, in a context such as in Colombian, in which the teachers have been a target of violence (Novelli, 2008). However, in order to introduce such a controversial and sensitive topic, the contextualization to the local, school and classroom reality was signalled as a requisite for its implementation, a duty that would devolve upon the teacher.

From the great emphasis placed on the role of teachers, and the acknowledgement of their privileged position determining what is taught, it can be interpreted that they are seen as a crucial element for the implementation. This vision of teachers’ role is aligned with the theoretical representation of teachers as “gatekeepers of curriculum” (Thornton as cited in Blanch, 2004) and “critical agents of transformation” (Vongalis, 2006). Moreover, some respondents pointed that through the implementation of the report teachers should pay special attention to the promotion of critical historical thinking and, in urban settings, raise awareness on how the conflict affects the lives of students. However, the analysis of the current practices revealed that these are already some of the major concerns of teachers.

The second sub-section of the findings chapter sought to determine “*What are the current practices in regard to recent history teaching?*”. As explained above, the promotion of historical thinking represented one of the main concerns of the teachers. Despite slight differences in the interpretation of this skill, the common notion was aligned with the description proposed by Carretero and Montero (2008), who defined it as the cognitive competence to comprehend historical time and (multi)casual reasoning, along with the critical analysis of information.
Furthermore, the majority of teachers associated this capability of interrelate the conflict’s past with the present situation and identify how conflict affects their lives, and therefore, aim to transform their perceptions. The majority of teachers also emphasized the relevant role of promoting values and attitudes to confront the normalization of violence. Therefore, teachers tried to challenge the view of the conflict and violence as “something inherent to their lives” (R16), a point which was identified by Davies (2006) in her education-war interface as a positive contribution in conflict situations, in opposition to portraying “war as a routine”. Moreover, only some participants mentioned the promotion of the three skills proposed by the MEN as relevant in their practices, which are: interpretative, argumentative, and propositional skills. However, it was not clear if those are really integrated in their practices or just integrated in their vocabulary, as some had to think about how they promote them and even how they are named.

The analysis revealed that some major contents and basic knowledge were present among teachers, in relation to: the origins of the violence, the identification of actors, and the drug trafficking and the local history, and the connexion with the actuality. The identification and elucidation of the structural factors and actors was a significant concern of the teachers, illustrating the complexity of historical events and the interplay between structural and agential factors within the Colombian conflict. The link with the actuality was oriented to raise interest in the students, because teachers identified as one of the major challenges in history teaching the confrontation of the students’ perception of history as something boring and useless. Moreover, there was a general agreement on respect as the principal value and attitude promoted trough history teaching. However, three different notions of respect were distinguished: respect for others’ opinions, respect for their differences, and respect for the others in relation with peaceful coexistence.

Despite the similitudes in regards to the promotion of certain skills and values and attitudes, and the existence of some baseline contents, teachers employed different teaching strategies. Taking into account the methodologies, the relevance of historical contents and knowledge, and inclusion of personal experiences, the strategies were classified into four categories:

- **The conventional approach.** It has a predominant focus on factual knowledge, and no special skills or attitudes and values are promoted. Recent history received the same treatment as history in general, but there were significant differences among participants.
- **The inquiry approach.** In this approach, along with knowledge, the so-called investigative skills play an important role, as students as to research a topic related with the conflict. The critical analysis of

- **The memory approach.** The focus is place in the experiences, testimonies and memories of the students, their families and the community. The approach combines the promotion of investigative skills, through minor researches, and values and attitudes in relation with respect for others and multiperspectivity, with roundtable discussions.

- **The coexistence approach.** This approach has a prominent focus on interpersonal relations and peaceful coexistence. Behavioural skills, particularly conflict resolution and negotiation skills, are promoted along with peaceful and democratic values and attitudes, which are also putted into practice.

The diversity of approaches revealed that even within the same schools, and therefore same curriculum, teachers demonstrated a multitude of different strategies in their teaching practices. However, the memory and coexistence approach was only followed by public sector teachers.\(^{100}\) Following Hay’s (2002) definition of strategic actors, teachers should be seen as reflexive and strategic agents who “internalise perceptions of their context” and consciously orient themselves towards that context (p. 129). Thus, these findings may suggest that the memory and coexistence approaches, and therefore the teaching practices, are the resulting strategic action of teachers, influenced by the strategically selective context in which the teachers are situated within. Therefore, the agency of teachers is influenced by the (school) community context. This interpretation may be also supported by the shared concern of public school teachers about the promotion of hope and alternatives in life. Therefore, the experiences with(in) the conflict or the socio-economic status of the students, and the risk of being drawn towards illicit activities or being enrolled in armed groups, are factors that shape and configure the agency of teachers and, ultimately, their practices. These concerns also reflect the moral and ethical dimensions of teaching pointed by Vongalis (2007). Moreover, in many cases teachers pointed to their own experiences as a motivation to address recent history, reflecting the influence of the life histories in the agency of teachers. The school-curriculum and PEI’s also framed the agency of teachers, but in general they claimed to have “freedom” to use their own methodologies and techniques (autonomy). Despite the autonomy of schools to formulate their own curriculum and syllabus, the structure of the contents was similar in the majority of schools, because they followed the curriculum orientations.

---

\(^{100}\) Due to the nature of the research and the size of the sample, these results must be interpreted with caution.
The curricular orientations were addressed in the first research sub-question, “How is recent history addressed in the Colombian policy framework and how is it integrated in the curriculum orientations?”. The curricular orientations frame the boundaries and orientation of education, and therefore, demarcates the agency of teachers (obligations). The Colombian educational national policies are structured towards the development of competences, requiring the application of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, what reflect the influence of the current trends of modernization and the shift towards leaning outcomes (Smith et al., 2011). In the orientations for social science, there was a strong emphasis on the complexity of historical events, multiple perspectives, the critical analysis of sources, and investigative skills. Therefore the essential elements outlined by Prats and Santacana (2001) for history teaching are included. Moreover, as the analysis of the current practices has shown, these elements have been integrated by teachers in their lessons.

However, in the curriculum orientations the application of those elements to recent history is rather limited. As teachers pointed, according to the curricular orientations, recent history should be addressed more in-depth in the 10th grade. However, they signalled the limited time available for the study of social sciences as an impediment. Therefore, recent history was predominantly, and more thoroughly, addressed in the 9th grade. The references to contemporary national history in the 9th grade were mainly focused on the events of the mid-twentieth century: the bipartisanship regime, the period of La Violencia, and the National Front. In the content proposed in grades 10 and 11th, the emergence of the guerrilla, paramilitary and drug trafficking are included, as well as some other issues related with the conflict, as causes and consequences of forced displacement and migration, or the critical analysis of the past peace processes. This structure of contents, proposed in the basic standards, entails a significant risk. Mid-secondary education is not mandatory in Colombia, and a large proportion of the population do not access to that level, as is reflected in the rates, with a net coverage of 40.98% in 2012 (Delgado Barrera, 2014). Furthermore, as the regional and socio-economics gaps widen in mid-secondary education, it may imply that this content may be excluded from the education of a great part of the population, particularly students from lower-income families and rural areas.

Furthermore, the analysis of the basic standards revealed an outstanding omission. There is no mention to the armed conflict, as it only refers to “current forms of violence”. The implication of the state or military is also omitted, referring exclusively functions of control and surveillance of the state. This is a particularly relevant issue, as the omission of historical events and the distortion of history can contribute negatively to the conflict and exacerbate social polarization (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000; Davies 2006, 2010). This omissions is also reproduced in the guidelines
proposed for the national examination, which use the same terminology as the basic standards. The armed conflict is only explicitly mentioned in the curriculum guidelines. However, the conflict is predominately addressed from a citizenship and coexistence perspective, and related with peace and democratic values. The focus on citizenship and democratic values is the predominant tendency in all the curriculum orientations. This tendency is also reflected in the transformation of the national test from Social Sciences into Social and Citizenship. Some mid-secondary teachers claimed that the test determines what they teach in class, as they have to prepare the students for the national examination. Therefore, the national test constitutes an indirect control about what should be taught, and therefore, constrains their agency (obligations).

6.2 Conclusion: The Challenges and Opportunities for Implementation

The purpose of this thesis was to determine “What are the main challenges and opportunities for implementation of the Basta Ya! report in history teaching in secondary basic and mid-secondary education in Colombia?”. In order to avoid repetition, this final section shortly recapitulates the main findings of the research. Before proceeding to answer the main research question however, a consideration has to be done. Due to the scale, nature and limitations of this research, it does not attempt to establish generalizations. Acknowledging my position as a foreign researcher and my own personal conviction, no recommendations are formulated. However, the challenges and opportunities outlined in this thesis can be interpreted as the path for future political action.

The research has shown the potential of the implementation of Basta Ya!. The report had a general good assessment, although it has certain limitations. Therefore, the dissemination and socialization of the report and its implementation in education are seen as an imperative. The fact that the state has taken ownership of the report is seen as one the main strengths, as it is essential to guarantee its impact. Furthermore, the adaptation of the report is seen as a prerequisite, both for the inclusion in education and the socialization of the report in general. The cross-cutting integration of the findings and contents of the report in the curriculum orientations is seen as the most desirable formula. However, the integration of the report is seen as the starting point for the inclusion of recent history and memory in education, as at the moment those contents are rather limited.

The current curriculum orientations have been designed and oriented towards the development of competences, and in social sciences the focus on the promotion of the so-called citizenship competences have significantly increased over the past year. In the curricular orientations, the
contents regarding national history in basic secondary are mainly focused in the first half of the 20th century, and in mid-secondary the study of guerrilla, paramilitary and drug trafficking is included, along with other issues related with the conflict. However, neither in the basic standards, nor the guidelines for the national examination include an explicit reference to the armed conflict, referring to “current forms of violence” instead. Despite the structure proposed on these orientations, recent history is mainly taught in the 9th grade, and there are difficulties in addressing the contents in mid-secondary education, due to the time constraints and the focus on preparing the national examination.

In order to implement Basta Ya! in education, along with the adaptation of report, the creation of pedagogical tools, as well as training and capacity-building processes are seen as necessary steps in the implementation due to the perceived central role of teachers in this a process. The tools and pedagogical accompaniment are thought to guarantee the proper inclusion of the contents, not as merely textbook, and renew the approach to history, transforming the student-teacher relationship and allowing the integration of the experiences and memories of the students. Moreover, for the creation of these pedagogical resources, it is important to take into account the innovative projects that are already being implemented.

The analysis of the current practices of recent history teaching provided examples of some teachers who are already including the experiences and memories of the students in their teaching strategies. Furthermore, and despite the different approaches and strategies to address recent history, the analysis revealed that special attention is already paid to some basic knowledge, as the identification and elucidation of the structural factors and the interplay with the actors and local history; the promotion of critical-reflexive-historical thinking and the promotion of values of respect.

In sum, the research has demonstrated that Basta Ya! has a great potential to be implemented in education. This may bring history and memory into education, adapting it to the requirements of the transitional process in which the country is immersed. Furthermore, the implementation of the report may constitute a significant experience for any truth report resulting from a future truth commission.
7. References


CNMH. (2013). ¡Basta Ya!: Memorias de guerra y dignidad. Bogotá: CNMH.


## APPENDIX I. List of educational stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTION</th>
<th>IDENTIFICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondent A: Ministry of Education</td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent B: CNMH</td>
<td>A2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent C: Academic</td>
<td>A3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent D: Academic</td>
<td>A4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent E: Victims’ Organization</td>
<td>A5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent F: Victims’ Organization</td>
<td>A6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent G: Teachers Union</td>
<td>A7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent H: Educational NGO</td>
<td>A8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent I: Educational NGO</td>
<td>A9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX II. List of teachers and school-coordinators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>GRADE(S)</th>
<th>EXPERIENCE</th>
<th>IDENTIFICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6-9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>R1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7-11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>R2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>R3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>R4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>R5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8-11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>R6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>R7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>R8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6-11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>R9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9-11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>R10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>R11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>R12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9-11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>R13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>R14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7-11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>R15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>R16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>R17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Coord.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Coord.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Coord.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Coord.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Coord.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Coord.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX III. Summary of Recent History in the Basic Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GRADES 8-9</th>
<th>GRADES 10-11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **General Standards** | 1. Social, political, economic and cultural legacies as sources of identity, promotors of development and sources of cooperation and conflict  
2. Interaction between geography and the human beings  
3. Elements of democracy, the rights of people and Colombian identity | 1. Cultural and social characteristics of the political and economic development  
2. Causes and consequences of the economic models and theories  
3. Power relations: political exercise as the result of the efforts to solve conflicts and tensions |
| **Approximation to scientific knowledge** | • Formulate questions  
• Formulate hypothesis  
• Collecting information  
• Comparison of sources  
• Critical analysis  
• Comparison of results  
• Diversity of perspectives  
• Multiple relations in historical events | “Carry out researches as social scientist does”  
• Formulating projects  
• Developing researches  
• Presenting the results |
| **Managing Knowledge** | **History and culture**  
• Greatest social changes and the process of modernization (½ 20th century) | • The origin of the bipartisanship regime  
• *La Violencia* and relation with the current forms of violence  
• National Front: causes, characteristics and consequences  
• Emergence of the guerrilla, paramilitary and drug trafficking  
• Change of the status of women in Colombia and its incidence  
• Struggles of the ethnic groups for social recognition and equality |
|                  | **Spatial and environmental**  
• Social and political impact of migration and displacement | • Relations between models of economic development and ideologies |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADES 8-9</th>
<th>GRADES 10-11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Ethical-political** |  | • Impact of the political events during the mid-20th century in the social, political and economic organizations  
• Transition from democratic representative to a participative democratic system  
• Consequences of the crisis of the bipartisanship  
• Changes and continuities of the guerrilla movements  
• Consequences of the forced displacement and the rights of displaced population  
• Functions of surveillance and control of the state  
• Institutions preserving the citizens’ fundamental rights |
| | • Political processes in the 19th and 20th century (National Front, Constitutions 1886 and 1991) |
| **Developing personal and social commitments** | • Respect for others’ perspective  
• Criticism towards ideological discrimination  
• Recognition of fundamental rights  
• Participation in debates and discussions  
• Mechanisms of participation promoted in the Constitution. | • Respect for others’ perspective  
• Criticism towards ideological discrimination  
• Recognition of fundamental rights  
• Participation in debates and discussions  
• Criticism towards media  
• Criticism towards violence of the armed groups in Colombia and the world  
• Criticism towards peace process in Colombia |

Source: Adaptation based on MEN (2004)