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CULTURAL DIVERSITY, MULTICULTURALISM AND NEW PARADIGMS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION IN COLOMBIA

William García-Bravo

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ABSTRACT

Cultural Diversity, Multiculturalism and New Paradigms in Public Education in Colombia

William Garcia, Ph.D.
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An interdisciplinary theoretical framework drawing from political science, sociology, anthropology, education and social psychology, is the approach used to examine the social context in which educational policies are decided in Colombia. Chapter 1 introduces the approach of Hermeneutical Deconstructive Interpretation, a relatively new tradition of inquiry, taking into account the human agency of the researcher in reading a text. Therefore, this dissertation reflects a certain level of subjectivity, metalanguage, power of representation of official texts and human agency of the author.

Chapter 2 examines the historical context of Colombian legislation, in relation to other Latin American countries, with their ethnic and native centered tendencies to interpret cultural diversity, gradually moving away from intercultural paradigms towards multiculturalism, in the public education sector.

Chapter 3 is devoted to a close reading of the 1991 Colombian Constitution as well as related texts in order to describe the situation in Colombia related to cultural diversity issues and their manifestation in educational policy making.

Chapter 4 examines and critiques the current situation in the public education system in Colombia from several angles, in particular the negative effect of an intercultural approach, which is dysfunctional in the attempts of Colombians to build a unified vision for the country, where all groups are well represented in the State structure on an equal basis, and individual rights are respected.

Chapter 5 aims to encourage the opening of a new era of deliberations at the societal level about the potential of a multicultural approach as found in the work of two Canadian authors, Will Kymlicka and Charles Taylor, thus meeting the goal of this thesis to offer a multicultural perspective in enriching the current interpretative framework of cultural diversity as applied to the case of Colombia.

Throughout the dissertation, it is noted that the Colombian Constitution of 1991 can be read as opening spaces to encourage Colombian academics, practitioners and policy makers to move towards a multicultural framework for institutional renewal, including education policy, structures and curricula. The absence and paucity of research and publications in this respect is noted with regret.

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- Each and every member of my dear family.

To my beloved beings

Those who are gone and those who still remain...my grandparents

Arquímedes Bravo & María Virgelina García

José Ochoa & Rosa García

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INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation, I advance a hermeneutical study of Colombian public legislation and policy, produced in the last 15 years, concerning the formulations that guarantee the cultural diversity of the Nation, with an emphasis on the education sector. The Political Constitution of Colombia (1991) secured cultural pluralism as a fundamental ideology, important for the organization of the Colombian State with a vision of cultural diversity. It validates achievements concerning human rights, responsibilities and freedoms for each Colombian, distinct groups and for the nation as a whole. Consequently, Colombian society has given culture a political role to establish responsibilities and achievement goals for the development of the country.

In the Latin American context (Chapter 2-History), the "Nativist ideology" of the State in the 1950s and 1960s in some countries, as well as, the Native social movements of resistance of the 1970s and the 1980s, gave an ethno-Native focus to the new formulations of rights that vindicated cultural diversity, embedded in national constitutions produced during the 1990s in the majority of Latin American countries. In addition, in the Colombian case during the 1990s, the ethnic afro-descendent component also reinforced the ethnic stamp with which was understood and promoted the cultural diversity of the nation. This markedly ethnic character has still some political repercussions for the governability of the country that must be analyzed.

By applying hermeneutical interpretation to several long pieces of quotations (Chapter 3-Corpus), I state the main political, legal, institutional and academic outcomes about cultural diversity and education in Colombia. The legal formulations about the cultural diversity of Colombian society, barely including their theoretical and philosophical bases, contrast with the political, institutional and social practices that continue to exist in the country. In addition, the scholar

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or academic contributions about the topic of cultural diversity in Colombia stand out to be insufficient, barely pertinent and shed little light for further developments of this field in the country. The social theorists working about cultural diversity have their own roots in former ethnic activisms, new international agendas like de-colonization and cultural studies, as well as, sectarian divisions of scholar groups that contribute very little in finding a solution to the multiple problems experienced by society and governance in Colombia.

The previous corpus prepares the ground for the discussion of some central problems (Chapter 4-Critique), that the country has around the topic of cultural diversity in the education sector in particular, and to propose a critique about our current intercultural political approach in public educations system. New approaches and perspectives about cultural diversity and education could enrich our vision and agenda, for the sake of guaranteeing a development of shared well-being, peace and governability. Among the main problems, we can mention:

- A markedly ethnicist focus inside the Colombian policy and politics as the point of departure for the cultural diversity of the Nation. The sector of Education is a good example of this.
- A resulting self-segregationist model of social and intergroup relationships that is promoted through the intercultural approach.
- A lack of pertinent and context-based body of social studies on the complete spectrum of cultural diversity in Colombia that give theoretical and conceptual inputs for the formulation of policies adapted to the Colombian reality.
- A separation between policies and institutions in different sectors of the development, as regards cultural diversity; among them the education sector.

After my critique in Chapter 4, further discussion is presented (Chapter 5-Deliberation) about pluralism, cultural diversity and cultural public policies, from

different philosophical, theoretical and political perspectives, in order to enrich our vision and agenda. In this respect, some problematic and complex concepts in the Colombian scenario are set under deliberation such as "interculturlity", interculturalism, "multiculturality" and multiculturalism. Even if some translation problems come up, an effort to maintain the closest meaning and sense, as well as, the embodied voice of the Colombian political actors, has been made. The philosophy and the political proposal of the multicultural approach can be explored as a new source analysis that re-orients the agenda of the country, around the recognition of rights as regards cultural diversity for the whole Nation. The experience of other countries that have achieved high development levels, sustainability, governability, and shared well-being, without giving up the political recognition of their cultural diversity framed by social cohesion and territorial unity can be made explicit, so that Colombians, in turn, benefit from this model. In this respect, the Colombian public education sector is viewed as a potentially promising context to experiment with these new perspectives as well as to promote them or to transform them to adapt to the Colombian reality.

The method that finally helped me to carry out my academic elaboration was the hermeneutical deconstructive interpretation (Chapter 1–Methodology), which I applied to several documents from the government, official institutions, laws and bills, Native organisations, universities and well-known theorists in the country. Deconstructive hermeneutics is a relatively new tradition of inquiry linked to the post-modern agenda of revisionism and production of knowledge taking into account the human agency of both the researcher and the text. For hermeneutics, any social relation, cultural tradition and human interaction can be viewed as a text that is susceptible of being interpreted by the researcher (hermeneutist) in order to inquire for a certain kind of knowledge and understanding that resemble explanation but must reach validation and verification through experience (Van Young, 1999). Therefore, interpreting texts is the main rational resource of inquiry in the hermeneutic method. Interpreting

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text requires a certain level of subjectivity, metalanguage, power of representation and human agency as vital part of understanding.

In this thesis, I have resorted to some theories and concepts from an interdisciplinary matrix (political sciences, sociology, anthropology, pedagogy and social psychology) contrasted with the current social context and reality in order to frame the elaboration of my critique and my dissertation. Holding an interdisciplinary theoretical framework of interpretation, I go into the revision of policies, institutions, subjects and practices of Colombia education system in relation to cultural diversity approaches. Theoretical elaborations coming from Canadian authors such as Will Kymlicka and Charles Taylor regarding multiculturalism and cultural diversity were the basic theoretical tools to reach the analytical and rhetorical texture I sought for expressing my own thoughts. Then, researching and writing about neo-conservative ideology and practice, radical critics, multiculturalism, and a comprehensive-inclusive model of education, I reach the point to explore some causes and foundations in the process of change and new representation of public education in Colombia dealing with cultural diversity and ethnicity. In other words, I come to explore the close relationship between: Cultural Diversity, Multiculturalism and New Paradigms of Public Education System in Colombia. In doing this, I discuss the problem and hypothesis stated in my Thesis proposal as follows (Garcia, 2007):

> "2. The Problem Statement
> Colombia lacks a clear and context-based philosophical, theoretical and conceptual framework to give clarity and support to the public policy of the Colombian State toward the acknowledgement of specific rights based on ethnicity and cultural diversity into the public education system. Such rights must be granted according to the ideals of nation, citizenship, participation and common wellbeing contained in the 1991 Constitution instead of relying on specific group interests raised from social struggles. The above-mentioned situation has a negative repercussion on the quality of the debates, reforms, and institutional administration of the whole public education system due to each group holding somewhat different

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political positions on the matter that are not always collaborative in nature but rather cause intergroup conflicts..."

"3. Hypothesis
The conception of cultural diversity expressed in the Colombian public education policy, particularly in the ethno-education model, promotes groups segregation and it does not contain the entire cultural diversity of the nation. Such a conception has negatively affected the original educational initiatives of Natives and Afro-Colombians as well as the education system for all Colombians. Firstly, the ethno-education model contributed to restrain (co opt) the educational proposals advanced by natives, during the seventies, pursuing to democratize the public education system. Secondly, the ethno-education model's lack of clear and proper philosophical and theoretical framework about cultural diversity in the country, has brought some extent of degradation to the general public education system due to the conflict of inter group relations that it has generated as well as complicating the ability to govern some regions. In some way, the ethno-education policy did not carry out the ideals of nation, citizenship, pluralism, participation and common wellbeing contained in the Colombian Constitution of 1991, limiting the conception of cultural diversity to the sole ethnic dimension..."

In this thesis, I have used the term Natives instead Aboriginal, Indians, Indigenous or First Nations in order to maintain certain consistency with the scholarly literature that I reviewed alongside this research. Nevertheless, all the above-mentioned terms are synonyms and attempt to name peoples who inhabited this continent before European settlers came to the Americas. Also, I have mostly used the term Afro-Colombians instead of Blacks or Afro-descendents for the same reasons.

In addition, pluralism is a term used in this thesis to address the explicit ideology of acknowledgement that some contemporary societies have made of different cultural groups that co-exist on a common territory sharing the boundaries of a nation and country. In turn, different interpretations and practices about this acknowledgement are analyzed, from competitive groups with corporate-like behaviour, to the confrontation of integrated groups, or the cooperation of accommodated groups, in societal culture (Guibernau, Montserrat and Rex,

1997; Roth, 2002). Then, I state that concepts like contact, crash, rejection, assimilation, integration and accommodation need to be further re-signified in the social and political context of Colombian pluralism, in order to develop a cultural policy, which could resemble the best practices from multicultural or intercultural approaches developed from different contexts and countries. In this respect, I just shed some light for further research on such a goal. Finally, culture here is understood in the sense that UNESCO gives to the concept when they state that culture is a way of life that any particular social group holds in order to survive before other groups and the natural world. Then, art, objects, symbolic and material culture are just different resources that groups created to maintain their existence and solve their problems. Bullivant (2004) offers quite a similar interpretation when he refers to culture as the program of life (software to live) that any specific group creates and maintains in order to keep the group alive throughout history.

I hope this dissertation will make a significant contribution to the history, theory and practice of educational policy development in Colombia, but above all, I hope this work will help Colombians to understand and improve our educational proposals toward a society where all Colombians can live together.

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¡Un país donde quepamos todos!

A country where we all belong!

Un pays juste où nous sommes tous chez nous.

</div>

CHAPTER ONE

METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

The method used to conduct this study was deconstructive hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is, in plain terms, the capacity and the talent to interpret a text, to understand it, to place it in context, to understand the author, his content and his agency (intention). Presently, an intellectual convergence has emerged to state that interpretation is essential to produce any explanation or understanding in the human sciences (Gadamer, 1995; Ricoeur, 1965; Taylor, 1986). To study the theme of social and cultural diversity, be it from a disciplinary or interdisciplinary angle[1], is to enter the arena of human sciences and the humanities; reflection on human diversity takes us to the human sciences and the humanities in as much as it forces us to examine the themes of identity, being, the other, agency, the meanings of actions, impressions, ideas, imagination, passion, morality, justice, dignity and in summary the meanings related to the fundamental values, the essential and customary beliefs and practices of the individual and the group. "Thus, if we look at human behaviour as an action done out of a background of desire, feeling, emotion, then we are looking at a reality which must be characterized in terms of meaning. But does this mean that it can be the object of a hermeneutic science as this was outlined above? " Taylor (1986: 24).

Interpretation is the intention to provide clarity and meaning to the object of study. Said object must be a text, that is confusing, incomplete, contradictory

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1 The Ph.D. Program in Humanities at Concordia was an important opportunity to approach the subject of cultural diversity and education in Colombia from an interdisciplinary focus. Academic advisers coming from different disciplines and expertise such as sociology, anthropology, political science, pedagogy and psychology encouraged a dialogue of many subjects and topics in this work.

and unclear; the interpretation therefore seeks to illuminate the coherence and meaning of the text. In order to achieve this, the hermeneutic interpretation must be able to explain and express a confused meaning in clearer terms in a clearer expression. Therefore, hermeneutic interpretation allows more than one form of expression by and about a subject. "The art of hermeneutics does not lie in grasping what somebody has said, but in understanding what in fact was meant" (Gadamer, 1995: 62). Then, uncertainty is part of the methodological predicament of hermeneutics. In search of clarity, the meaning of a text is susceptible to several interpretations, (several expressions of the meaning) creating a set of interpretations that are related, known as "hermeneutical circle"; this "hermeneutical circle" becomes an essential part of the method that stabilizes when the distinct interpretations are engaged in dialogue, and an agreement is reached about which expression is the clearer one[2].

To apply the hermeneutic method, at least, three elements must be combined: the author, the text and the reader. The author gives meaning and subjective nuance to a text that he develops from a reality or phenomenon, or another text; this text reaches the hands of the reader or interpreter, who using a code, attempts to decipher the meaningful contents of the text. In this relationship between the author and the reader, the meeting ground is the text, and the motive that links them is the authentic meaning of the text, relying on interpretation or the hermeneutic method with the objective of clarification and analysis. In summary, the common project is the understanding of the text; that is to say, to put a text in its context and to apply it to a present context, (Beuchot, 1997). Nevertheless, the application of the method is a more complex topic.

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2 In preparation of this chapter, I used sources in different languages, which brought me to understand that the clarity of a meaning is not only affected by the capacity to interpret a text, but, sometimes, the capacity to translate it, in order to interpret it; which in fact takes us to a double interpretation, two overlapping interpretations or one hermeneutical circle with two parallel edges.

Firstly, the current use of the hermeneutic method has led to an increase in the range of what is considered a text. Text does not only refer to written discourse, but also to oral discourses and practices themselves[3]. An archival document, an oral recording, a social relationship, a cultural tradition, a human interaction, etc., can be understood as a text that can be read and interpreted by the reader (interpreter or hermeneutist); who try to decipher the meaning that the author tries to transmit in his message as well as the agency of the author in transmitting said message. Therefore, not limiting itself exclusively to the speech analysis and the written word, as does philology for example, hermeneutics extends its range to the field of symbolic production (images, icons, representations, behaviours). Within this extension, it is understood that the hermeneutic method can be applied to the study of the totality of the dimensions of the being, man, society, culture and history, circumscribed not only in the so called fields of human and social sciences, but in the philosophy itself and the humanities[4].

Secondly, if everything can be codified and read as a text, a reader would have to be capable of understanding any phenomenon, from the de-codifying/re-codifying of the meanings and sense contained within a text produced by the primary author about a reality or phenomenon[5]. In such a case, the interpretation would be the new meaning constructed by the reader (or the

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3 Ricoeur (1982) indicates that instead of text, we would have to specify if it is a written document, a dialogue, or a significant practice that is placed under the hermeneutic interpretation.

4 This research was fundamentally conducted from numerous written studies. Therefore, in this case, the hermeneutic method was more faithful to its orthodox tradition of interpreting written texts.

5 It is worth to point out that the literary author and the humanist have certain objectivity but produce a text with the intention that the public or interpreter can recreate it; therefore, it does not obtain the "monosémic" (single meaning) exactitude of scientific discourse, which is conventionally accepted. It is necessary to take this into account when discussing the hermeneutic scope in natural sciences.

interpreter) of a text. However, the imminent risk will be that this interpretation does not correspond to the authentic and original meaning that the author of the text wants to transmit. Therefore, an original or authentic meaning could have numerous modifications as it passes through the distinct secondary interpreters that can deviate from the primary text the author initiated.

In other words, the primary text risks losing its original or authentic-meaning as it passes through each reader or interpreter. In this case, any degree of certitude in knowledge can only be reached through the clarity of the interpretative argument, that is to say, the new expression of the meaning; this is, the inductive-inference. The empirical rationality, based on the influence of sensorial data, that allows construction of knowledge without reference to readings, judgments or interpretations is not possible through the hermeneutic method since the rationality, in this case, is configured through reference of the field of texts, words, practices, sense and meanings. "In any case, the modernization of writing always demands an interpretation in the sense of interpretative understanding, as occurs with a word that somebody says to us" (Gadamer, 1995:62)[6].

In the mentioned passage of a text among several readers-interpreters, there exist four basic factors that can modify or affect the authentic meanings of the text: the circumstantial, the temporal, the type and the agency of the interpretation. Regarding the first and second factors, the author of the text and interpreter can totally agree on the authentic meaning of the text, but the

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6 That a text can undergo numerous interpretations does not mean that it is "polisémic" (it admits multiple meanings). I deviate from the opinion that for a text to be susceptible to being interpreted it needs to be "polisemic". In fact, the meaning can admit several ways of expressions; some of them being closer than others to the sole meaning of the original text. It seems to me that the author of a text tries to imprint and build one meaning over a phenomenom or text which can be called the authentic or original meaning of the text. This is a basic principle in assuming the quality of the human communication not only in the academic field but also in social relations as well. A good interpreter is the reader who in principle manages to elucidate the original meaning that the author wants to transmit in his text.

circumstantial conditions (context and temporality) are not necessarily the same between the historical moment in which the text was written and the moment at which it is read and interpreted. An inexorable change happens throughout time to the subjectivity, the sense, and the meanings as well as to the forms of expression of a text. So then, this puts forward the idea that something such as universal, un-temporal and absolute composition does not exist in a text.

> The Italian expression, unfairly prejudiced in favour of the original, is an erroneous generalization that conflates difference with treachery. The idea that literary translations are inherently inferior to their originals is, for Borges, based on the false assumption that some works of literature must be assumed definitive. But for Borges, no such thing as a definitive work exists, and therefore, a translator's inevitable transformation of the original is not necessarily to the detriment of the work. Difference, for Borges, is not sufficient criterion for the superiority of the original. (Kristal, 2002: 1)

Thus for example, at the turn of this century, the reading and interpretation of a text on social movements, written in the seventies, can be totally authentic when corresponding with the meaning that the author wants to transmit; but it is necessary to understand that if the meaning can maintain its authenticity, the social reality upon which the first interpretation is produced has changed inexorably. Therefore, interpretation is not necessarily linked to context and time, whereas meaning is.

Thirdly, a text is an initial type and contains an original meaning when an author describes and gives an account of a social phenomenon in direct contact with the phenomenon or reality; the text and the interpretation are of secondary type when the understanding is elaborated by the interpretation of a primary or secondary text produced by a third[7]. When the text that is being interpreted is

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7 For the purpose of this investigation, I have gone over numerous written texts of secondary type, related to the theme of education and cultural diversity in Colombia. With very few exceptions, I have not compared the study texts with the social and cultural practices of the

itself a product of another interpretation, a concatenation of meaning takes place. The interpretation of the interpretation would be a new circle of meaning that is added to an "interpretive spiral" constructed by each interpreter, throughout time, in the effort to understand the text, the discourse or the practice. In this case, the idea is better represented by the metaphor of the spiral, and not the circle. The dynamics of the text can be illustrated by the spiral, whose movement opens a range of possibilities such as authentic understanding of the meaning, misrepresentation, supplanting and above all the fusion or hybridization of meaning[8].

Fourthly, another basic factor that contributes to the interpretation of a text is agency, be it carried out by actors of a social practice, by the author of the primary text or by the secondary interpreter. Human beings are moved by motives and intentions, they give sense to their actions, and for that reason they imprint agency upon behaviours and discourses. Each individual and social practice looks for an objective and has agency whether or not it is declared explicitly. Therefore, it is useful to question about human agency, what exists behind the practices, the discourses and texts, with the purpose of understanding not only the author but its context, and add other dimensions of the meaning of the text which have not necessarily been declared by the author, but can enrich the interpretation, or even originate a different meaning. Therefore, it is not possible to fall into ingenuous functionalism believing that the interpretation is a mere movement of precise texts and meanings. On the one hand, there is the expectation that the hermeneutist or interpreter forms an opinion about the meaning and produces greater clarity on the subject. On the

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mentioned groups, or to the social historical pursuit that produced the written texts that I have studied.

8 In this investigation it was possible to state that ethnic groups mainly resorted to the three first possibilities to interpret many of the official texts (a law, a decree, etc.) on the subject of the cultural diversity in Colombia; the possibility of fusion or hybridization of meaning on this very important matter for the country, does not appear clearly in the agenda nor the practice of many of the groups.

other hand, sometimes the source of many texts is the unconscious of the author who is not completely rational or aware of what he is saying. In this sense, subjectivity is a categorical imperative that cannot be disregarded in the act of understanding and explanation within the human sciences through the hermeneutic method.

> That the pertinence of the "interpreter" combined with the stories he tries to understand obliges us to think about objectivity in another way which is customary in natural sciences and it is something that seems evident to me. (Gadamer, 1986: 180)

We then have, in the application of the hermeneutic method, the possible existence of something like a rank of interpretive quality about meanings on the basis of the capacity to tune in to and synchronize the four factors alluded to previously, which would give an advantage to one or the other interpreter according to their handling of the production of the new interpretation. The meaning as well as the interpretations have circumstances, a temporality, type and agency that can characterize and categorize them. Therefore, certain ability and talent is necessary on the part of the interpreters to unravel each one of the characteristics and to produce understanding, sense or explanation, as close to the original or authentic meaning of the text as possible; in passing, being methodologically rigorous with the interpretation as is done with the author and his text, as well as with the foundations of the new ring that will be linked to the interpretative spiral.

All the previous considerations permit the introduction of my methodological position adopted in this investigation: It is important for the reading of texts to use the same interpretative frame of reference of the groups producing them, or to make an effort to approach them. This way, one does not fall into a formal ethnocentric rationality, when approaching these important themes for a society that is trying to organize itself, on the basis of the recognition of its high social

and cultural diversity and inter-group relations. On this matter, the issues raised by the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor are very enlightening.

> Getting the kind of human understanding of someone which we can formulate involves coming to be able to apply what I want to call (following Elizabeth Anscombe) the 'desirability characterizations' which defines his world. I come to understand someone when I understand his emotions, his aspirations, what he finds admirable and contemptible in himself and others, what he yearns for, what he loathes, and so on. Being able to formulate this understanding is being able to apply correctly the desirability characterizations which he applies in the way he applies them. For instance, if he admires sophisticated people, then understanding him requires that I be able to apply this concept 'sophisticated' in the sense it has for him...
>
> Thirdly, and for some thinkers decisively, the use of desirability descriptions seems to endanger the aspiration to a universal science of society. For those descriptions are culturally specific. The values of one culture are frequently not replicable in another; we can find nothing exactly corresponding to them. To describe people in their terms is to describe each culture in different terms, and terms which are incommensurable, that is, which have no exact translation into other languages...
>
> If we stick with these, we may fall into the most distorted ethnocentric readings. (Taylor, 1986: 120)

Following the theme-recurring pattern about the manner to apply the hermeneutic method, Beuchot (1997) raises an interesting idea about the way an interpreter manages to decipher the basic characteristics of the meanings. This is achieved, according to Beuchot, through refining the reading of the subtleties of the text, the visible as well as the implicit ones[9]. It is necessary to refine certain abilities of observation, association, criticism and suspicion, and find those subtleties of the original meaning of the text like the context, the temporality,

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9 Gadamer refers to the subtlety as part of the competitive spirit of the Renaissance that consists of always finding a possibility where others do not see it; it has to do with the theory of distinctions in the interpretation since the distinctions carry a greater degree of precision and synthesis.

the type and the agency that were fused in the original text. The subtlety consists in the capacity to penetrate the superficial meaning to arrive at a more profound meaning, including the hidden one; also to find several meanings when it seems that there is only one; and, on occasion to find the authentic meaning, that is linked to the authors intention, embodied in the text and that resisted being reduced to the single intention of the reader.

> I have said that traditionally hermeneutics was associated with subtleties. For that reason, hermeneutic methodology can be revealed in three stages, which are three modes of subtlety: i) the *subtilitas intelligendi* - I would prefer to call *subtilitas implicandi* -, ii) the *subtilitas explicandi* and iii) the *subtilitas applicandi*. Also, these focal points could be transferred to semiotics: the first point would be related to syntax. In that first step one goes to the textual or intra-textual meaning and to the inter-textual one. The reason is that the syntactical meaning is the one that is inferred-adopted in the first place, without it, it cannot have semantic nor pragmatic aspects of the analysis. In addition, the explanation belongs to the semantics, because it has to do with the connection of the text with the objects that it designates. The application focuses on the pragmatic aspect, which can be understood as translating or transferring through oneself what could have been the intention of the author, to capture his intent through oneself... With the pragmatic application, the objectivity of the text that is the intention of the author is achieved. (*intentio auctoris*). (Beuchot, 1997)[10]

Another important element to consider within this reflection regarding the application of the hermeneutic method is the division of the method itself. At least three classes and two types exist. As far as the classes are concerned, we

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10 In social groups and movements it has been observed that pragmatics is the most important sphere for creating meaning even before semiotics and semantics; even these last two take form at the moment in which the practice of the groups shows which are the authors or protagonists, the purposes, the intentions, the agendas, the scenes; only at this moment can the signifiers and meanings be asserted with more clarity within the texts, discussions and new practices. It is important to take into account the previously mentioned because it allows us to understand the fact that certain groups interpret a text (a law, a decree, a policy etc.) in accordance with their social and historical practices and are not necessarily governed by the linguistic canons of semiotics and semantics of the group coined in the discourse. Pragmatics is the intention of groups in action, in practice and in fact. Because of this, putting Hermeneutics into practice requires above all reading groups in their practices and actions, in an ordinary and current ethnography, before their writings and manifests.

can speak of an intransitive or recognitive hermeneutic (such as the philological and historiographical) whose purpose is the understanding of itself; a transitive hermeneutic (reproductive, representative, "traductiva") as the theatrical and musical whose purpose is to make us understand; and a normative or dogmatic hermeneutic like the legal and the theological, whose purpose is the regulation of institutions. Therefore, we can speak of a theory of interpretation (hermeneutic *docens*) and of a practice of interpretation (hermeneutic *utens*); that is to say, the theoretical and the practical aspect of hermeneutics. In this sense, we can see the hermeneutic method not only as a theoretical but practical application as well, providing an internal unity between knowing and modifying. It is not only a question of finding meanings and signifiers but also of how these affect and mobilize to transform the practices. In this last characteristic, the hermeneutic method has a point of contact with other methods of the social sciences like the PAR-Participatory Action Research (*Investigación acción participativa* in Spanish) and the participant observation, which have traditionally been established within the social critical paradigm in terms of the production of knowledge more than within the hermeneutic historical paradigm itself. "Thus, hermeneutics is fundamentally theoretical and derivatively practical, because what can be practical derives itself from its own theoretical being. For that reason, I have said before it is both science and art simultaneously" (Beuchot, 1997)[11]. Beuchot also proposes that in terms of classification we could speak of two classes of hermeneutics a synchronous and a diachronic one, according to the predominance given in the search for the systematization or the historicity of a text; likewise we could use the hermeneutic syntagmatic and the hermeneutic paradigmatic, congruent with the requirement of horizontal linearity and the contiguity or the vertical linearity of associations, that is to say, a superficial or in depth reading.

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11 On this point I deviate slightly from Beuchot, or should I say that I lean more towards the concepts of Charles Taylor, as far as considering that hermeneutics is fundamentally practical and derivatively theoretical; the discourse is forged in social practice.

In practice hermeneutics should succeed in finding a balance between types that were both mentioned previously; a mixed science, since knowledge implies participating, the above can be explained by the interests of the investigator, the academic conjuncture or the social necessities that they bring up in the investigation. However, in the same manner, the act of interpretation must obtain a balance in the negotiation of meaning and signifier that occurs between the author and the reader since the emphasis can point towards one extreme or the other. A priority placed on the reader's meaning and signifier renders a subjectivist reading of the text whereas a priority on the author's meaning gives an objectivist reading of the same text. It is necessary to have clarity on the position of the two intentions and on the mediations and negotiations that are established between them. It is necessary to recognize the author's meaning within the text that still belong to him and the meaning that the reader or interpreter imprints on the text that overtakes the intentionality and transforms the text in some way[12]. Then, the updated text (the new link in the new circle or the new ring in the hermeneutic spiral), is the summary of the original meaning and signifier of the author plus the meaning and signifier generated by the reader with the purpose of understanding and/or transforming, giving each other a continuous dialectic relation between both through the text and a negotiation of its meaning.

> In this way, an hypothetical-deductive method, or "abductive" (as Peirce called it), is carried out; interpretative hypothesis are devised before the text in order to try to rescue the intention of the author, after which the consequences of the interpretation are seen, most importantly through the dialogue with other interpreters. (Beuchot, 1997:4)

As far as this last point, we can gather that the consequences of an

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12 Gadarmer (1994) proposes the ideas of belonging and distance whereas Ricoeur (1982) suggests the ideas of nearing and distancing to distinguish between the author's and reader's intentionality alluded to in the text.

interpretation are not only seen in the dialogue but also in the same practices that they engender. The verification or validation of an inference or conclusion, that is achieved through the hermeneutic method in an investigation, is not only provided through the dialogue and the consensus found with other investigators or interpreters but above all in the impact that the consequences and new meanings have over the social practices in order to explain or modify them. In other words, it is the social practice that validates the understanding that is produced in the sphere of hermeneutic interpretation, be it in the field of social sciences, the humanities or philosophy.

> Put a third way, we can say that while natural science theory also transforms practice, the practice it transforms is not what the theory is about. It is in this sense external to the theory. We think of it as an 'application' of the theory, but in politics, the practice is the object of theory. Theory in this domain transforms its own object…

> This brings us back to the question of validation. What is it for a theory to be right? We cannot just reply that it is right when it corresponds to the facts it is about. Because, to oversimplify slightly, political theories are about our practices (as well as the institutions and relations in which these practices are carried on), and their rise and adoption can alter these practices. They are not about a domain of fact independent of, or resistant to, the development of theory.

> Put tersely, our social theories can be validated, because they can be tested in practice. If theory can transform practice, then it can be tested in the quality of the practice it informs. What makes a theory right is that it brings practice out in the clear; that its adoption makes possible what is in some sense a more effective practice. (Taylor, 1986: 101, 104).

As far as the characteristics of the author and the reader, they must be able to differentiate themselves with certain clarity in order to increase the quality of the interpretation and the creation of the new meaning. Umberto Eco (1992) for example, differentiates between an empirical author, an ideal author and a tacit (liminal) author. The empirical author is the one who leaves a text with errors and sometimes, ambiguous intentions. The ideal author is what we construct

removing or modifying such deficiencies and the tacit (liminal) author is the one who was present in the text, but with unconscious intentions (that doesn't know that he knows or that does not know that he doesn't).

Likewise, it is possible to speak about an empirical reader and an ideal reader. The first reader who as a matter of fact, reads or interprets, with his errors in understanding and mixing much of his intentions with those of the author and sometimes preferring his own intentions. The ideal reader would be the reader that captures perfectly or at best, as close as possible the intention of the author. In each one of these actors the historical dynamics of configuration move in a complex manner from their own subjectivities and agencies. The existence of a universal or objective interpreter is not possible, given the characteristics of the hermeneutic method indicated in the previous paragraphs, however it is possible to arrive at a level of comprehension that is true to the meaning and signifiers and the original sense and meaning of a text and to declare a position with respect to the interpreter, not only academically and intellectually but also politically.

The previous allows us to add a new meaning that enriches the dialogue with the author without distorting, supplanting or making the original meaning of the text imperceptible; in such a case, the fusion of the author's meanings with interpreters meanings, when it is done in an explicit manner, founded on, and serving-acting to safeguard the authentic sense of the text, it would be one of the spaces in which the interpreter can be moved to carry out a reasonable investigation. This would be something like the maximum limit of objectivity possible, within the linking or new spiral of meanings that occurs in the hermeneutic method.

In addition to knowing the author's and reader's characteristics, it is also important to know the characteristics of the text itself: content, meaning and

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reference. The content is the realization of an intention or purpose, which denotes and connotes, materialized through a document, of an oral discourse or a practice. The content of the text also has a sense susceptible to be understood or included, not necessarily overlapped in the matrix of the logic; something can be illogical but to have sense. The text also has a reference as soon as it aimed at a real or fictitious, indicated or created world within the same text.

It is important to understand that the intentionality of the hermeneutic method itself can be of several classes. We can speak of an explicit intentionality, that the author as much as the reader can capture. A conscious and tacit intentionality is one that the author grasps and the reader comprehends with difficulty. An unconscious and explicit intentionality is one that escapes the author but that the reader finds thanks to his subtlety or with the use of certain thought resources such as psychoanalysis. Unconscious-tactic intentionality is hidden from the author as well as the reader and remains hidden unless a third reader comprehends it or a brilliant resource keeps it afloat. In that case, we accept that the intentionality of a text can be conscious or unconscious and at the same time explicit or tacit.

At this level, it is possible to indicate some of the steps of the interpretative process or the hermeneutic endeavour that leads us to produce the interpretation of a text and elucidate its meaning, which we can then confront with our context and time, and derive a practice, in a new text or a discourse that at the same time allows us to carry out a new intentionality or agency. According to Beuchot (1997), faced with a text, what arises first in the application of the hermeneutic method is an interpretative question for the sake of understanding: What does this text mean? What is it trying to say? To whom is it directed? What is it saying to me? What is it saying now? The question is a prospective judgment, a task for judgment to solve, that becomes a real judgment when doubt is resolved through a process that permits the transfer

from hypothesis to thesis. The thesis is reached through the path of eliminating the conditional response of the hypothesis, or rather verifying that it is indeed achieved. Therefore, it is about hypothetical-deductive reasoning and argument-outline. This way we obtain an interpretative question that arises from an interpretative answer that is nothing else but an interpretative judgment in the state of hypothesis or thesis, which will have to be verified by means of interpretative reasoning, or a social practice.

In the beginning of this chapter, I indicated that the method used for this research was deconstructive hermeneutics[13]. I personally find that hermeneutics is deconstructive by its proposition "to destroy the boundaries in order to reconstruct them again". In this sense, the hermeneutic method acquires an epistemological dynamic that allows the understanding to be linked and attained through one or several disciplines of the human sciences (disciplinary) with the comprehension that is reached by combining several disciplines (inter-disciplinary).

Nevertheless, more interesting still, is the possibility that contributes to the deconstruction-construction dynamic of the hermeneutic method in order to reach an understanding from the relation between the human and social sciences and other modes and dimensions of the being and culture (trans-disciplinary), for example, the philosophy, art, literature, the history and/or the local cultural

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13 Professor Moya (1992) at Stanford University helps us to better understand this term. She states: "And yet the aim of deconstruction is fairly straightforward: to challenge underlying beliefs. The French philosopher-cum-literary theorist Jacques Derrida coined the term, a combination of "destruction" and "construction," and did the most to develop the theory, which also owes a lot to the philosophical work of Nietzsche and Heidegger. Derrida argued that Western history was based on a language of binary oppositions -- good versus evil, straight versus gay, rational versus irrational -- which, if scrutinized, turn out not to be opposites at all but elements of a continuum that have been hierarchies somewhat arbitrarily, often on the basis of entrenched cultural beliefs.

The theory's most lasting effect has been to take a sledgehammer to the marble bust of truth with a capital "T," leaving it in shards. But post-structuralism also has been used to broadly critique the notion of identity in literary and cultural studies".

knowledge of some groups (also called mode II of knowledge). The understanding that can be acquired through deconstructive hermeneutics overcomes the limit of logic and the systematic in order to reach a different and in depth understanding; in this sense, it goes further than critical rationality, instrumental reason, enlightened reason or the search for illumination and the autonomy through a scientific method, be it in the field of natural or social sciences. When involving the study of the meaning and purposes of the being, interwoven in their social practices, hermeneutics penetrates different fundamental dimensions of the being, the group and the culture.

In order to attain knowledge, rational logic is sometimes not fulfilled when faced with texts produced in different social and cultural matrices. A dream, a premonition, a beat, a predestination, for example, can be fundamental signifiers in the composition of a text that give meaning to a social practice, an individual or group decision or a political position. Nevertheless, rational logic is diminished in order to understand these types of meanings and signifiers so as not to find oneself in the euro-centric cultural matrix, and even less so in the category of empirical phenomena that attempt to elucidate through reason. At best, this type of social practice is elevated to a simple and sometimes pejorative category of myth or belief. Therefore, what can be a transcendental truth of self-understanding in the universe for one group, interwoven in a constitutive manner in their social practices, is not taken seriously in order to understand their social practices and culture. The virtue of deconstructing facilitates a shift of the rational ethno-centric lens, in order to understand the texts of these groups that have constructed their own universe and social relations based on other ontological foundations of action, philosophical reflection and epistemological arrangements. For this reason, the field and method of humanities facilitate the task of investigation and understanding when studies are carried out on diversity-culture-education connection, since they introduce a new dimension of analysis to the traditional scientific methods of investigation in disciplines like

pedagogy, political sciences, social anthropology, psychology and other sciences[14]. The above has lead hermeneutic investigation into the post-modern movement of revisionism being also necessary to establish some distinctions with several variants such as postcolonial studies, cultural studies, and alternative studies, among others.

In summary, deconstructive hermeneutics is a tradition of inquiry, investigation and study, framed in the post-modern agenda of the revisionism and production of knowledge that demands social practices and the human agency be taken into account, including the investigator as well as the text that is being interpreted. In this methodological variant, the interpretation of the meaning of a text leads to a certain class of knowledge or understanding that assimilates the explanation and understanding, and that can only be validated or verified through experience. (Van Young, 1999). In this sense, the interpretation of a text involves a certain level of subjectivity, inter-subjectivity, meta-language, the ability of representation and human agency as intrinsic part of the production of understanding and comprehension, without resigning the human enterprise to understand - with deep sense- our universe.

> What is the meaning of this new revisionist tendency? What is it that troubles Stephen Haber? Could it be that his followers do not believe in the objective realities that can be established without considering the subjective beliefs of the observer? At heart, the debate is not about the existence of objective facts, nor about the relevance of the efforts to determine what these are. By definition, when the investigators try to verify certain empirical facts, they try to separate such facts from their own belief systems, from the beliefs of the people who produced the documents that provide the facts and the power relations, which underlie

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14 In some way, this proposition is a criticism of the orthodox methods of social sciences due to its ethno-centric matrix in the investigation. Deconstructive hermeneutics allows a displacement towards what is the other in order to be able to understand what the other proposes. In this sense, the humanist has the advantage in having cultivated sensitivity which gives the study of the arts and the human dimensions of the being, to try to put oneself in the shoes of the other with fewer limitations. It does not mean that the researcher has to neglect his own ethnic, social, cultural or epistemological identity, which in addition, would be impossible and undesirable.

the production of all the resources of evidence. That is not the discussion here. In its place, the discussion is about the process through which we managed to determine which and what are the facts. Can we determine these without considering the subjectivities that we have described? The new cultural historians think that we can not. Unless these subjectivities are considered in the foundations of the discussion, they are simply underlying subjectivities, and any attempt to separate them from the facts, will not go very far. (Mallon, 1999)

According to Mallon (1999), this methodological approach is different from other approaches of the positivist and orthodox type not because it is lacking in empirical evidence, but because of advancement in the design and use of new analytical tools of the evidence and in the formulation of the narrative of the investigator. Similarly, it is clear that there is a political agenda in the way in which the investigator raises the search and produces the results, the knowledge and the social transformation. Some central concepts and terms like hegemony, gender, power, subjectivity, and representation, among others, are an essential part of the construction of this new narrative, that express in a complex way the social transformations of the new epoch, considering the events of the past. The responsibility and intellectual "nobility" reside in the form of how the usefulness of the different interpretations is valued and validated and their susceptibility to a fact or a text. The hermeneutic method raises the challenge to rethink, expand or extend, those methods and hierarchies through which it is compared, and the explications and interpretations of the conventional social sciences that are verified and generalized, without falling into epistemological anarchism as certain relativist intellectuals have claimed. Hermeneutics is neither a rejection of our historical heritage on sciences and knowledge nor any underestimation of our intellectual and cultural advancement as human species.

> Including abandoning the explanatory arrogance of science, and accepting the inevitable and the diffused line between objectivity and subjectivity, hermeneutics does not have to abandon its inexhaustible efforts to distinguish between fact and illusion. (Mallon, 1999).

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Taking into account the methodological premises previously annotated, and with the purpose of reaching the objective and argumentative development of the hypothesis, this investigation diverges from the revision of some themes and basic concepts of social sciences that illuminate the construction of an initial methodological and theoretical-conceptual framework in order to understand, discuss and deepen through analysis the formulated problem. Some themes and central concepts of sociology and anthropology, as well as political science, pedagogy and social psychology set up the interpretative and interdisciplinary framework that was applied to the revision of the legislation, policies and the education institutions in Colombia with the purpose of dealing with the problem and the hypothesis[15]. History became a cross-sectional discipline when it positioned the problem, the hypothesis and the objective in a temporary historical axis of the fifteen years and offered some analytical tools from the approaches of some cultural historians who are indicated in the body of the work. The theoretical frameworks proposed by the Canadian authors Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka, regarding cultural diversity and multiculturalism from Canadian political science, political philosophy and social practice, was the conceptual base in analyzing the problem in the social, political and educational field, and in obtaining the objective pursued.

Therefore, examining the social and political context in which educational policies are decided in Colombia, I came to research and write about those trends that the Colombian education system has experienced in the last years around themes such as pluralism, cultural diversity, ethnicity, interculturalism/interculturality as well as a new approaches like multiculturalism.

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15 Some theories and concepts detected as important until this moment have been: Nation, State, citizenship, pluralism, people, minorities, inter-group conflict, multiculturalism, inter-culturalism, cultural policy and human rights (from political science); also, cultural diversity, community, ethnicity, interethnic relations and ethnocentrism (from sociology and anthropology); Also, self knowledge, conformation, stereotype, segregation as well as human formation, multicultural education, critical pedagogy and intercultural bilingual education (from social psychology and pedagogy respectively).

In short, this study states the causes and foundations of change and new representation of the public education system in Colombia, which has given an expression to the theme of cultural diversity and ethnicity.

The method was applied to the intensive review of bibliography and literature on education, educational policies and experiences dealing with cultural diversity in the public education system in Colombia during the last fifteen years. The political, legal and academic corpus was reviewed, as well as the corpus of international organizations and nongovernmental organizations on the subject. The collection of the information involved several trips to Montreal on various occasions to discuss the advances of the investigation, as well as a prolonged stay in Spain (ten months) to collect information and to compare the phenomenon and social theory being used by the author with other realities. Also, this work required the research and formalization of many requests of material printed in several Colombian cities; to a great extent, the required information was obtained in order to compose the entire indicated corpus, as well as to construct the theoretical and methodological framework. The investigation and the resources were carried out in reference to the education enrolment in Colombia and dedicated to basic education, that is to say, education that takes care of children and young people (first to ninth grade) during the period of 1994 to 2009.

In this study, the deconstructive hermeneutic method was applied to the main corpus of the texts and documents in order to investigate, in a specific manner, the themes related to social and cultural diversity and education as follows:

- Juridical-Legal Corpus: Articles of the Constitution of 1991; debates of the Constituent debates; explanatory preambles, panel discussions and work forums; Constitutional Court rulings, The State Council and Judges with respect to the topic. Law 115/94, Law 397/97, Law 21/91 (Agreement 169 OIT), Ministerial and

Institutional as well as prescribed decrees and regulations on the topic of social and cultural diversity and education.

- Political Corpus: The five national development plans between 1990-2010 as well as governmental programs, projects and reports (Office of Ethnic Groups, Network of Solidarity, Presidential Council, ICBF principally), on the subject of social and cultural diversity and education in Colombia.

- Academic Institution Corpus: ethno-education and ethno-linguistic university programs as well as cultural management programs registered at the National Information System of Higher Education; symposium reports and a range of topics from the latest congress of ethno-education as well as anthropology conducted in Colombia; also, some investigative reports within System of Science and Technology through COLCIENCIAS.

- Corpus of the International Organizations working in ethnic sectors: Official reports and expert documents on the subject of social and cultural diversity and public education, such as UNICEF, ACNUR, PMA, UNESCO, CEPAL, FLAPE.

- Corpus of Civil Organizations: ethnic-political organizations, public organizations, churches, and NGOs handling ethnic and cultural work.

In this first chapter I presented the methodology adopted for my dissertation: hermeneutical deconstructive interpretation. I also detailed the different documents from government, official institutions, laws and bills, Native organisations, universities and well known theorists. Deconstructive Hermeneutics is a relatively new tradition of inquiry linked to the post-modern agenda of revisionism and production of knowledge, taking into account the human agency of both the researcher and the text. For hermeneutics, any social relation, cultural tradition and human interaction can be viewed like a text that is

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susceptible to being interpreted by the researcher (hermeneutist) in order to inquire for a certain kind of knowledge and understanding that resemble explanation but must be reached at by validation and verification through experience (Van Young, 1999). Therefore, interpreting texts is the main resource of inquiry in the hermeneutic method. The interpretation of text requires a certain level of subjectivity, meta-language, power of representation and human agency as vital elements in arriving at an understanding.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF EDUCATION FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN COLOMBIA

In Colombia, out of a population of 42 million, 2% are Natives belonging to 86 different Native groups, who still use 67 Native-local languages as well as Spanish as a national language. In addition, 15% of Colombia's population are of African ancestry who speak Spanish as well as local English and a Native-African language in the Caribbean islands (San Andrés and Providencia) and the coast (San Basilio del Palenque, Bolivar), respectively. There are approximately 15,000 Romas (Gypsies) going back several generations in the North-Eastern region of Colombia who are predominantly bilingual (Roman/Spanish). Similarly, third and fourth generation immigrant communities from Palestine, Lebanon and Turkish communities have settled mainly on the Atlantic coast, as well as, Japanese communities in the Southwest. Mestizos (European and Native parentage) make up the majority of the Colombian population and they are spread all over the country. More recently, a few new comers and their families from different countries have settled in the big cities of Colombia (mainly Spaniards, Cubans, Chinese, and Ecuadorians). In addition to ethnic diversity, Colombia is also characterised by its historic-geographical regions: Costeños, Paisas, Cachacos, Vallunos, Opitas, Pastusos, and Llaneros, as well as, some cultural communities voluntarily constituted by people getting together on the basis of cultural preferences other than ethnicity (gender, social class, disability, sexual orientation, age, etc.). Most of these groups gained political recognition in the new Constitution of 1991, which declared Colombia a multiethnic and poly-cultural country, driving the country to the contemporary agenda of pluralism. Then, culture, pluralism and cultural policies are key concepts under discussion and construction in/for our current social, legal and political scenario.

Nevertheless, the social and political recognition of all these groups did not come easily nor were they completely taken into account in the official Colombian landscape. Different groups and sectors in the country still hold a general feeling of ideological, political, institutional and pragmatic emptiness about the sense and meanings of such recognition, political rights to be granted, and the practices of inter-group relations to be promoted into a national political framework of rights and freedoms in the country. Unfortunately, history shows that coping with these types of matters in both social and political scenarios is a tortuous task for most societies. Colombian history proves that it is not the exception.

2.1 Cultural Recognition and Public Education in the Context of Latin American Countries, a Historical Approach

Despite their ancestral pre-Hispanic settlement, Natives have only gained political visibility in Latin America since the 1970s. Reduced to minority status (along with other cultural groups), Native rights were excluded from all political participation in the building of the states, public institutions and social representations in the new "democratic" societies that were created in the early XIX Century. Furthermore, Native contributions to build the new Latin-American nation-states during and after the independence wars were totally ignored or rejected by the patriots[16]. Being reduced to a cheap labour force, Native participation in

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16 It is very important to take into account that Natives in Central and South America had a very different process of conquest and colonization compared to Natives in North America. Most Native groups in North America signed treaties with explorers and conquerors, which have been added to the new Constitutions. Therefore, Native North-American groups and their confederations claim their status as First Nations and truthful negotiators of legal treaties that must be honored to protect their social, cultural, linguistic, political and economic rights. Most of their claims can be resolved in legal courts. Natives in Central and South America were completely surrounded by war, dominated and subjugated. Therefore, their current position as negotiators has been reached through struggles and social movements. Most of their claims have been carried out in political negotiations after violent clashes between communities and the armed forces of the state.

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economic, political and social settings was totally suppressed. Furthermore, Natives were oppressed by leading patriots in order to have them culturally and socially assimilated into the North-Western canon adopted from those European countries where they had been educated. Education, "*castellanización*"[17], and evangelization were some of the main devices of this ideological agenda of acculturation. The Catholic Church played a core role in this enterprise. Of course, traditional Native ways of education (called own education in the current literature), socialization, and cultural transmission were totally rejected. (Findji, 1985; Varese and Rodriguez, 1983; Cortes and Suarez, 1979).

In addition, in the late XIX Century, German, French and American commissions were contracted by the new republican governments to design and implement the policies and structures for the national public education system in several Latin America countries. At that time, the Vatican and several Catholic denominations signed contracts with Latin American governments in order to undertake educational responsibilities through mission-campaigns in Native regions. (Batalla, 1983; Calvo, 1994; Cortés, 1985; Findji, 1985). So, ideology and practice of cultural and linguistic assimilation inherited from the Colony characterised the beginning of inter-group relations in the new liberated Latin American nation-states since the XIX Century, bringing with it some problems that still remain. Since Mestizos became the new hegemonic majority in the new countries, Natives and other groups were referred to as the "others", the "minorities", the minority-status groups, the ethnicities, being commonly grouped under the label of ethnic groups.

Throughout most of the first half of the XX Century, Natives along with other minority and ethnic groups remained in a much subjugated condition. Poverty,

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17 This refers to learning the Castilian language as the only official and national language. Brazil being the exception, Castilian is the most common language brought to Latin America by Spaniards.

starvation, social and cultural de-structuring, linguistic persecution as well as land and natural resource shortages made this period one of the worst in history for Natives after the wars of independence. Looking to solve their social, economic and political problems, Natives, with non-Native support, formed their own political organizations, gradually began community and later social movements, in the early seventies of the XX Century. Little by little, these local and regional movements grew in most countries, becoming a social phenomenon on the whole continent[18]. In addition to land claims, recognition of traditional-authorities, and privileged treatment as First Nations in some public matters, groups demanded a revision and reform of school-based education in their communities. Despite school-based education Native culture was not being taken into account, it was not totally rejected, but structural changes in administration, boarding, curricula and budgeting were expected (Cortés, 1985; Varese and Rodriguez, 1983). The education literature from this period states many examples of some of the main educational problems faced by Natives, which political organizations began to resist since the late 1970s. It follows some of the main problems stated below (MEN-ONIC, 1986; UNESCO, 1980, 1982, 1983, 1985):

- Education is not well regarded in the productive and social processes of Native communities; it is for social, cultural and economic subjugation
- School reproduces an imbalance between ethnic identity and society at large
- Teaching-learning processes do not take into account Native languages

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18 These changes and social movements in Latin America were influenced by international, worldwide movements searching for new economic, social, civil and cultural rights. In 1975, UNO consecrated two new generations of fundamental human rights well known as collective rights (economic and culture). Similarly, social actors' struggles for human and civil rights such as hippies, Afro-Americans, feminists and students, alongside the Cuban, Nicaraguan and Salvadorian revolutions, were part of such backgrounds. Lately, a set of international guide lines regarding this matter were issued by UNO and other different international organisations, mainly the Convention Against Racism (1968) and the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2002), where the right to cultural-based education at public school settings is enacted, among many others rights.

- Schools are in bad condition and there is a lack of proper materials

- There are no curricula for Native education

- Nobody takes into account the Native cultural pedagogy or the traditional ways of teaching and learning

- Politicians use education to proselytize in Native communities

- Summer's Linguistic Institute[19] and other religious groups are creating cultural and ethnic confrontation among Natives

- Native traditional authorities, political organizations and Native educational programs are not recognized

- Native culture is not valued in schools

- Continuity is not guaranteed from basic to secondary education for Natives

- Teachers are not well trained to teach in Native regions

- Institutions do not coordinate among themselves before they come into Native communities.

Looking to move forward from this problematic situation in school settings, in the seventies and early eighties, Native organizations in Latin America initiated their own bilingual educational programs with the economic support and humanitarian help of non-governmental organizations from developed countries. In addition, social scientists during these years engaged in a more critical and activist role in their academic and intellectual agendas, looking for social and political changes in these countries. Therefore, Natives and some non-Natives alike joined to fulfil specific educational goals in Native communities, such as the recruitment of teachers, establishment of schools, administrative functions, research projects, teacher-training programs, school-media publishing and curriculum development. Thus, the late seventies and early eighties became years of active resistance against the educational policies set up by the national governments. The goal

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19 SLI is an evangelical organization from the United States working in Latin America since the 50s. Their main goal is to translate the Bible into Native languages; in some regions, its doctrinal teachings have clashed with some Native cultural traditions and they have been accused of masked-colonialism and spy activities.

was to generate a kind of political resistance and social struggle (mostly symbolic, initially) to create an education system where Natives (and their organizations) would have presence, certain levels of control and empowerment. During this decade, the first generation of Native teachers came from the peasants or community men and women chosen by political organizations according to their ideological affiliation and political commitment. These teachers had no pedagogical training at all. Most of the first generation teachers were, with few exceptions, illiterate Spanish speaking people with one or two levels of school-based education that were very active militants in Native communities.

If the seventies were years of resistance, the eighties were years of negotiation and reorganization for all the actors: states, international organizations as well as Native communities and their political organizations. The fight to have a profound impact on official education produced some negotiations and changes as well as united communities and foreign economic supporters in order to pursue other common and general social aims. During the eighties, Latin America began a gradual process of change towards recognition of some Native rights and how these rights could be respected and incorporated into some development sectors (education for instance). Native political organizations grew stronger and increased in number during this decade. Different international forums to defend Native interests were created. Many conferences around the world were organized by international organizations like UNO, UNESCO, UNICEF, OAS, III and CREFAL. Most of the countries organized their own conferences, symposia, and technical meetings in order to discuss and incorporate changes into public education systems regarding Native claims. Public education systems were impacted in each country, beginning a process of institutional change; in addition, non-Native professionals from different disciplines (sociology, anthropology, linguistics, biology, among others) entered institutions and political organizations willing to engage in the social movement, study all these social phenomena, or both.

Nevertheless, with very few exceptions, there is still no way to talk about "Own", Native or Bilingual Education and pedagogical models as such during these years[20], since pedagogy and didactic proposals were almost the same as the official ones for other areas (curricula, texts, school calendars, physical locations, etc.). For Native political organizations, Bilingual school was just a flag to promote political autonomy, community unity and land recovery ahead of child development, language acquisition, culture promotion and so on. Therefore, political activists more than pedagogy experts came to be the main advisers, who oscillated between a partial rejection of school and public policies, because of its non-legitimate Native tradition, and a total acceptance of it but in Native's hands. In fact, educational programs during this decade were created more by non-Native sociologists, anthropologists or religious men and women coming from leftwing political parties than by Natives themselves. Then, traces of paternalism, positive discrimination, undervalorization, idealism and "caudillism[21]" became common features in the proposals and practices of Native education during this period, in addition to feelings such as solidarity, compassion, equality, fraternity and political militancy.

But something compelling took place during the eighties. Within very interesting political and academic circumstances, the political and theoretical framework of ethno-development, elaborated by ethno-populist-social scientists from Mexico (Julio de la Fuente and Gonzalo Aguirre Beltran earlier and, Guillermo Bonfil Batalla and Hector Diaz Polanco later), was widely adopted by most governments and proposed to Native and ethnic organizations in Latin America with no

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20 These proposals of education in Native communities are further explained in Chapter 4.

21 Caudillism is a common political practice in Latin America which consists of looking for a great leader (caudillo) who solves the community's problems instead of engaging in a democratic participative process of change.

resistance at all[22]. Ethno-development framework came to be a very useful political and institutional device for regularization, normalization and centralization of Native education proposals. Most Native education experiences –a great diversity of experiences because of different histories, foundations and goals- were leading to unification by the institutional offices, located in the ministries, in order to get funds, technical support, school media publishing, public acknowledgement and so on. Even though many education matters continued to be decided at local and regional levels by Native political organizations, the institutional teams (mainly composed by anthropologists, linguists and psychologists), undertook the task of funding projects, visiting and advising activities, calling national and regional meetings and producing national guidelines for the groups under the only political concept of inter-culturality, proposed by ethno-development.

Some developed countries became active defenders and promoters of this new proposal in the southern Andean region (Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador) as well as Central America (mainly Guatemala), under the label of "*Educación Bilingüe Intercultural*" (EBI or EIB). First world countries gave economic, technical and political support to some Native movements through their international aid programs. Germany, Switzerland and Spain increased their presence in the Native communities of Latin America, almost always working directly with Native political organizations instead of public institutions[23]. Curiously, expressions, names, words, senses, meanings, concepts and practices commonly used before the governmental proposal of ethno-education (contained in "Bilingual

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22 Brazilian literature on the subject has not been reviewed in depth. So, most of these analyses are applied to Central and South American countries with the exception of Brazil.

23 The consequences of this vision and practice have still not been fully evaluated in the region. While the local political organizations and social movements became strengthened, public representatives in Native areas, besides government and states became weaker in these regions. Presently, this situation is reflecting a deep crisis of governability and stability in Native areas of several regions, making the states and governments weak in international arenas and, of course, for any international negotiation.

Education", "Native Education", "Own Education", "Inner/Internal Education" and "Endogenous Education" experiences), disappeared from the literature as well as from the academic, institutional, community and political scenario at the end of this decade. Taking into account a few exceptions where some groups claimed their own names for their own education experiences (Guambianos in Colombia for example), EBI and ethno-education are extensively used at present in Latin American and Colombia respectively, to deliver education and schooling for Natives as well as for Afro-Colombians in Colombia.

In the following decade, the nineties were years of "officialization" and legalization of Native rights in most Latin America countries. All the past struggles came together in 1991 due to the commemoration of the "500" anniversary of Christopher Columbus' arrival in America. Most of the governments were under pressure to introduce legal, political and social changes in each country because of the crisis of the current state model everywhere: centralized, vertical, hegemonic, non-inclusive, benefactor, against environment, against basic human rights, against ethnic rights, among others (Santos, 1998). Most of the constitutions of the countries covered were changed in order to incorporate an active recognition and defence of human, Native and cultural rights. With few differences in concept and expression, most of the countries were constitutionally declared multiethnic, multilingual and multicultural: Bolivia, 1994; Brazil, 1988; Colombia, 1991; Mexico, 1992; Paraguay, 1992 and Peru, 1993 (Arango and Sanchez, 2004). Most of the cultural policies and ministries of culture were established in the region during this decade.

Finally, at the turn of the century, most of the Latin American states and governments had accepted a segregated school-based education targeted at Natives and minority-status groups as an official proposal. Presently, official budgets are allocated to support Native educational experiences and specific teams have been incorporated into most institutions in order to address Native

and ethnic demands. The second and third generation of Native teachers have grown in number and they have been trained by official institutions and Native organizations (sometimes together, sometimes separately), giving their professional identities a wider instructional focus. Undergraduate and graduate programs in several universities have been opened, taking into account new social and cultural recognition[24]. Several research projects and field studies have been carried out on different ethnic education topics. Theories of popular and critical education (especially those of Pablo Freire and Giroux) have been adjusted to frame the pragmatic Native education proposals. New academic and intellectual agendas such as cultural studies and post-colonial studies have given further theoretical support to some of the proposals.

In fact, the Native social movement and its educational proposals reshaped the whole public education system in most of the countries of the region. These changes have impacted the public education systems and all social and political dimensions of Natives as well as non-Natives, bringing a necessity for further philosophical, theoretical, political and pragmatic studies in order to understand, envision and invigorate our democracies on the basis of social and cultural recognition as well as unity, peaceful inter-group relations and development. The single focus of cultural diversity based on ethnicity has begun to move, little by little, from just Natives and ethnic relations toward a whole array of cultural factors such as gender, social class, religion, exceptionality, among others, as well as a more comprehensive dynamic of the entire society and groups which should be targeted in any agenda of pluralism.

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24 In Colombia for example, seven undergraduate programs of ethno-education were opened in different universities as well as some undergraduate and graduate programs in cultural management and ethno-linguistics during the nineties. The University of Cauca launched the first undergraduate program of ethno-education in 1994 following the general tendency of intercultural education of this period. In addition, The University of Cauca is the first and only university offering a graduate program in Multicultural Education since 1995 and a Master Program in Education with a research-major in Multicultural Education and Ethno-education since 2009.

2.2 Colombian Distinctiveness in the Latin American Movement for Recognition of Culturally-Segregated-School-Based Education

In addition to the three above mentioned decades, Colombia passed through quite similar periods of active resistance in the 70s, negotiation in the 80s and legalization in the 90s regarding Native and ethnic political rights as well as social accommodation of society at large. Therefore, pluralism and the acknowledgement of cultural diversity in Colombia have been mainly interpreted through the single dimension of ethnic recognition, as well. Despite the pluralism and multicultural aspirations of the new 1991 constitution, Colombian legislation, public policies, institutional development and social practices are stated entirely in the intercultural political concept carried out by ethno-development framework.

In Colombia particularly, the main strategy of resistance used by Natives, since the late 1970s, was to establish an "*Escuela Bilingüe*" (Bilingual School) directly opposite an official school, removing children from one and placing them in the other with parents' support. "Bilingual School" and "Bilingual Education" were the very first names and practices coined by most Native political organizations during this decade. Nevertheless, curriculum, school organization and the general concept of schooling remained unchallenged at the time. A Native teacher, coping with a friendlier teaching role and being able to communicate in a Native language, was the single difference between a bilingual school and a public one. Before, some of the first generation Native teachers were bilingual peasants, without any pedagogical training, chosen by political leaders on a ideological and community commitment basis (Garcia, 1998).

During these years, the Colombian state promoted the first educational reforms

taking into account the new Native dynamics within some institutional settings[25].
Targeting both Natives and peasants located in rural areas, the government
promulgated the Bill 1142/1978 (named "Native Education") to bring schooling to
Natives as well as the "New School" program to bring schooling to peasants[26].

During the eighties, while trying to cope with the same type of educational
problems mentioned in section 2. 1, both Natives and governments (sometimes
working together, sometimes working separately) began to negotiate and
allocate some international aid and national funds for establishing formal and
institutional programs of Bilingual and Native education in different regions of the
country. One of the biggest economic investments in the education sector was
made in the early eighties by the Colombian government through a foreign debt
with the International Development Bank. The allocated economic resources
were mainly destined to establish the "New School" program all over rural areas
in the country. Nevertheless, intense lobbying and negotiations between
government, Native political organizations and The University of Cauca at the
time, allowed the allocation of some of these resources to promote Native
education initiatives in Native rural areas through quite similar strategies such as
teacher training programs, school libraries, school building improvements and
schooling furniture.

In addition, the first generation of Native teachers grew in numbers during the
first half of this decade, being peasants with no teaching education but well-
trained as leaders in the communities' ideological and organizational goals.
"Native Teacher" or "Internal/Inside Teacher" was the most common name given

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25 In 1984, The University of Cauca became the first public institution of higher education
engaged in the research of a Native education field with a grant from the government obtained in
a public contest in 1983, from the Presidency and the Ministry of Government (Interior).

26 While the first Native education programs designed by both political organizations (Bilingual
Education) and governments (Native Education) have come into multiple modifications in names,
concepts and contents in the following decades, the "New School" program is still running in
most rural areas of the country.

to this new labour identity in communities in contrast with those "External/Outside Teachers" sent and funded by the government (Cortes, 1985; Garcia, 1998). Since the mid-eighties, an open confrontation and competition between State and Native political organizations addressed the main political and pragmatic aims and programs of Native/Bilingual Education, under different concepts and understandings about education, school, pedagogy and teacher's roles in Natives communities.

Philosophical discussions about the country, nation, cultural groups, national identity, unity, common good and general well-being were totally absent in the speeches on cultural diversity. Those speeches on cultural diversity rights were specifically located in the Native dimension. Also, theoretical, political and practical frameworks, beyond those brought about from classical sociology, Marxism and Pablo Freire theories, were absent in the discussions and debates about these reforms and changes in education. Changes and adjustments reached at the negotiation tables and talks were based more on political levels of community mobilization, negotiators' abilities, international pressure, and official bureaucracy incapacities than in profound and serious discussions about the future of the whole country. Despite this, Bilingual Education experiences had come to produce some original and interesting proposals that challenged government proposals (maybe with the exception of some pedagogical propositions from the "New School" program). Bilingual Education proposals from Native political organizations had a momentum of creative and inspirational work regarding the participation of communities in school and education, bilingual immersion at school, community evaluation, community-school researching pedagogical practices, and grassroots editorial processes for publishing school media. Official proposals had not even stated some of these matters neither for Native schools nor non-Native schools into the public education system when Native political organizations were already promoting some of these pedagogical outcomes in regional and national conferences.

Observing the momentum of the Native dynamics during the eighties, the Ministry of Education in Colombia formed a major status office into the official structure of MEN and engaged a non-Native team formed by two anthropologists and one psychologist to lead a process of regularization and normalization of Native educational proposals. Thus, the Ethno-Education Office at the Ministry of Education was created in 1984 and the intercultural policy coming from Mexican-ethno-development framework found a window to enter into the Colombian institutional framework for the very first time[27]. In the following five year period, for example, the ethno-education office organized seven national events about different Native education matters as well as funded and published an immense quantity of projects and material from different Native political organizations. Similarly during this period, at least five new regional Native organizations were created and around twelve educational programs were better established in the regional-Native organizations with the occasional support of MEN bureaucracy. (García, 1995; 1998)

In their own way and in a context of community mobilizations and political negotiation between "Bilingual Education" from Natives and "Native Education/New School" from governments, Native organizations became stronger in communities and society at large, as well as, gaining international recognition like the new social movements in Latin America. In Colombia in particular, Afro-Colombians during these years gained more visibility and strengthened similar processes of organization and political struggles for similar rights, but those processes were still lagging behind the Native ones in the social and political organization. So, the second ethnic actor in Colombia, the Afro-Colombians, came to the social and political arena thanks to the new ethno-development

27 Checking the proceedings of the International Conference on Ethno-development held in Costa Rica in 1982, one notices that a Colombia team attended the Conference bringing later some of the same proposals into practice in 1984 like the intercultural policy of ethno-education into the MEN that finally affected all of the public education system.

framework and its intercultural policy. Afro-Colombians before the mid-eighties formed very active cultural communities and groups from all over the country, but their status as an official minority-ethnic group came after the government adopted its political framework of ethno-development. Ethno-development and interculturality gave the governments a general framework to set the official policy for dealing with Natives and the rest of new ethnic groups coming to the Colombian scenario in the following years such as Afro-Colombians in the mid eighties and Romas in late eighties.

As was mentioned before, in the mid eighties governments in the region found a way to regularize, normalize and centralize all the Bilingual (from organizations) and Native (from governments) education initiatives through the single ethno-development framework promoted in Mexico, embracing the inter-group-relation policy of interculturality. In Colombia, the ethno-development framework and its concept of the political expression of "interculturality" generated and gave support to the ethno-education model officially established in the Ministry of Education (MEN) since 1985. This model was designed and promoted from the MEN with the technical participation and political support of some national and regional Native political organizations. The Ethno-education model brought together, authorized, and grouped, all the different and original Bilingual and Native education experiences from all over the country at that time. All the past and new Afro-Colombian educational experiences were also grouped under the same ethno-education policy and at the office at the Ministry of Education as well as adjusted to the same political and theoretical framework launched for Natives. In a very intriguing and quick turn, most of the official political platforms, legislation, education programs and educational literature were modified and carried out under the ethno-education label and its expression-concept of interculturality without any resistance at all from Natives and Afro-Colombian

groups to replace their own names[28].

In the early nineties in Colombia, the new Constitution (1991) gave broad recognition to the cultural diversity of the nation from the very founding principles of the Charter, overcoming the concept of ethnic diversity to other new social and cultural factors (age, gender, social class, religion, nationality, etc.). It has been stated in several studies that the Colombian Constitution embodied a concept of pluralism/multiculturalism since it protects and promotes the very social, cultural and ethnic acknowledgement of diversity in the country, based on the principles of liberal democracy and the cultural-political citizenship, along with the construction of the nation -just a nation and a country- (Bonilla, 2006; Gross, 2000; Rappaport, 2005). Nevertheless, the understanding and adoption of all the Constitution's new paradigms and its philosophy have neither come easily and comprehensively in society nor in the institutions, academia, Native and ethnic political organizations. The Education sector, again, shows a very good example of this latest assertion.

The very same pre-constitutional concept, term and focus of inter-culturality

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28 In April 1985, The University of Cauca organized the First National Meting (Conference) of Native Education in Colombia. During this event, several regional experiences carried out by Native political organizations, Catholic Church and Public institutions gathered to discuss core issues of the social, political and pedagogical experiences in bilingual education, Native education and "the New School" program. The governmental policy on this matter, contained in the General Guidelines of Native Education (1984) was one of the most quoted materials during the event. Nevertheless, in the summer of 1985 (a few months later), the Ministry of Education in addition to the National Native Organization (ONIC) called the First National Symposium of Ethno-education in the city of Girardot. During the event, they also delivered the same material (a new print release, 1985) to all the participants with the only exception that every single Native or bilingual-education word was replaced by the ethno-education term. The philosophical, theoretical and political foundation of such a radical and quick change is still an unsolved mystery that no body questions. The data from both of these events was published. Something quite similar is happening today in some Native political organizations where the term ethno-education is dynamically replaced back and forth for "*Educación Bilingüe Intercultural Indígena*" or "*Educación Indígena Comunitaria*" with no further discussions on the conceptual and political understandings behind these changes. It seems that the sense and meanings embodied in all these terms reflect the social and pragmatic experience; or maybe that, words, meanings and concepts are not so important, leaving the mystery still unsolved.

from the eighties was re-entered in the new nineties-post-constitutional scenario to develop the Organic Law of Education 115/94 (Chapter III Ethno-education), as well as to guarantee the new multicultural approach. Education for cultural diversity in a multicultural nation and country like Colombia came to be understood and promulgated as an education service to be addressed and delivered in a segregated manner for/by ethnic-minority-status groups in the country (Natives and Afro-Colombians). Therefore, public education policy to guarantee cultural diversity rights in Colombia is currently formulated under the policy of ethno-education, which is based on the concept-expression of interculturality and delivered exclusively for/by Natives and Afro-Colombians. There is something that does not fit very well here since we have a constitutionally declared multicultural country trying to cope with social and political development based on intercultural policies. Further explorations of meanings, principles, and theoretical and political frameworks about these two political expression-concepts are required. Since it seems that EBI resembles ethno-education in the rest of Latin American countries, the same contradiction can be expected in these countries, with a still strong ethnic focus in operation. As for the cultural sector nothing really different can be said. The Ministry of Culture in Colombia was created in 1997 and the ethno-cultural policy to be addressed for/by ethnic status groups is still under discussion.

During the nineties two major movements can be highlighted. First of all, several official universities all over the country have taken into their own hands the task of educating the second and third generations of Native teachers as well as Afro-Colombian teachers in the undergraduate ethno-education programs. These programs have been running with little cooperation from Native political organizations and in some cases even with some levels of confrontation. In a few cases, Native political organizations have continued educating their own teachers with foreign and national cooperation but ultimately, they look for university agreements and validation in order to certify their teachers. Colombian legislation

does not allow any other institution that differs from the university or "Normal School[29]" to educate and certify teachers. Secondly, the official and public education system has split into at least four different education and pedagogical models to serve different populations throughout the country: Ethno-education for Natives, Ethno-education for Afro-Colombians, "New School" programs for peasants and "Automatic Promotion" (*Promoción Automática*) for urban areas. This concept and practice is reinforcing the establishment of a segregated[30] public education system in Colombia on a political basis and principles of interculturality. In Chapter Three, I will give further details about the changes that occurred in the Colombian education sector during the nineties, especially in the fields of legislation, public policies, academia and civil organizations. In Chapters Four and Five, I will further discuss my assertions about multiculturalism and interculturality from philosophical and theoretical perspectives about this issue.

2.3 Intercultural/Interculturality, Entering the Stage in the Latin American and the Colombian Scenario

The use of intercultural/interculturality[31] in the mid eighties as an adjective or as

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29 Normal School is a public institution in the range of College which is dedicated to a vocational training for teaching early childhood education and elementary school (I to IX grade). It is an institution inherited from the German missions in Colombia during the late XIX Century that I mentioned in the 2.1 section.

30 It could be said that the model is more self-segregated since most of the groups' struggles have been to segregate their own educational models, schools, funding and practices from the others in the country. Of course, the intercultural concept of ethno-education gives further support to this initiative.

31 Interculturalism (as homologous to multiculturalism) is not a word commonly used in either scholarly literature or in the social and political discourse of ethnic organizations of the region. In Chapter five I refer to the history of the word "intercultural" in order to discuss the main understanding and concept that it refers to, in contrast to multiculturalism as such; therefore, this is why these words cannot be used interchangeably in academic, political, literary or social discourse. I mainly argue that "intercultural" became the focal point in social and political discourses in Colombia during the eighties from Mexican ethno-populist anthropologists who took it from the work of their people at the beginning of the XX Century with a complete

a noun to refer to inter-ethnic relations in Latin America and Colombia has come a long way from the beginning of the Twenty century. As I mentioned before in Chapter One, the language and words used in our current discourse are used not just in our social practices but also in our cultural and historical records. Therefore, we often need to remember their conventional and traditional meanings in order to clearly communicate our thoughts or at least in the most understandable way possible. Therefore, the historical sense and meanings of such an important concept and related words cannot be misleading in our texts and interpretations. If any free use is allowed, it should at least require further explanation, and the history and tradition of the original meaning should be mentioned. Educational policies for cultural diversity in the region and the impact on public education systems can be better understood by a follow-up on how these concepts and words came to be and the role they play in our political and social discourses about culture and education.

Education for cultural diversity is commonly perceived as intercultural education which is addressed to Natives (and lately Afro-Colombians as well) in Latin America[32]. It has had a different degree of impact in each country depending on the historical experience of inter-group relations. From Mexico to Chile, and lately

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misinterpretation of the original sense and meanings of the term and the social practice that it embodies.

32 Currently, most of the Native education experiences in Latin America are being grouped under the term and pedagogical proposal of EBI (*Educación Bilingüe Intercultural*) promoted mainly with German support and economic assistance. In Canada and the United States, education for cultural diversity has been focused on differently in each country depending on different historical, social, cultural and economic factors. Native treaties, immigration processes, civil rights movements, feminist waves and critical theories of social sciences and humanities have shaped a particular way of conceiving and practicing the agenda for cultural diversity in education in these two countries. Multicultural education, intercultural education, non-racist education, citizenship education, are some of the names currently used, which reflect different concepts and practices about diversity in these societies and how it is addressed in their public education systems.

Argentina[33], public education policies for cultural diversity are a new political proposition designed exclusively for Native pre-Hispanic groups as well as Afro-Colombians groups in some countries. The last thirty years could be considered the most important period of development of this interesting phenomenon, which has impacted the life of Natives and non-Natives as well as the entire public education systems in Latin America. However, countries such as Mexico and Peru as well as Bolivia, Ecuador and Guatemala report some educational activities for Natives in the 1920s and 1950s respectively. It has been frequently named "State Indigenism" because of the leading role of the State in organizing, funding and evaluating all educational activities in Native communities. "State Indigenism" has been openly criticized because its agenda of assimilation carried out by States and governments to assimilate Natives into Mestizo-hegemonic culture. Cultural homogeneity was the most often used linguistic-political device to frame public cultural policies, and as such it appears in the literature of the period (Aguirre, 1963, 1967; Cortes and Suarez, 1979; De la Fuente, 1948).

In the 1970s, a widespread critical movement toward acknowledgement of Native cultural rights, along with other civil rights, took place under major influences of non governmental organizations, civil society movements and new generations of social scientists. This period has been named "Critical Indigenism" because their opposition to the assimilation policy of States and governments. Cultural integration (occasionally referred to as cultural articulation), instead of cultural assimilation, is the main term and concept conducted in political proposals from ethnic political organizations as well as some progressive groups and governments in the region. Biculturalism and Bilinguism were the first linguistic-political devices used to frame the texts and speeches in this period (Chiodi and Citarella, 1990).

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33 It is important to remember that Brazil has not been included in this study because of the limitations in reviewing some scholarly literature. Therefore, most of the assertions do not apply to this country in particular.

In the mid eighties, interculturality and its adverbial form (intercultural), instead of bicultural, became one of the most recurrent words in Latin America in expressing a more mature stage of "Critical Indigenism" which promoted a more structural and political form of Native integration and participation in societies and institutions. In the early nineties most of the proposals were legalized by the States and other minority-status groups were incorporated into the same political framework. In Colombia, Afro-Colombians in early nineties and Roma in the late nineties were some of social groups included as new ethnicities into the political framework of ethno-development and interculturality. At this point, cultural diversity of the nations turned out to be recognized solely on the basis of ethnic status. In this view, any concept of education for cultural diversity targeted any group with ethnic political status. From the onset, Natives in Latin America (besides Afro-Colombians and Roma in Colombia) were politically included and began a process of social and political participation for contributing to the development of their countries. Public education systems became one of the main arenas to discuss, negotiate, and exercise these new forms of inclusion and political participation. As is typical of all social phenomena, such a change has had both a negative and a positive impact on the stability and development of each country, ranging from governing difficulties in some regions to school attendance and alphabetization rates rising in most of them.

Because words contain ideas and practices, the variety of names used in Latin America, throughout history, to address educational changes based on cultural diversity is a good clue to understand the complexity of such a phenomenon, the contrasting points of view and challenges yet to be faced. As I mentioned before, Ethno-education (*Etnoeducación*) is the name given in Colombia to educational policy addressing groups of ethnic minority-status (Natives, Afro-Colombians and

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sometimes Roma)[34] since mid eighties. This name is used officially only in Colombia. "Intercultural Bilingual Education" or EBI (*Educación Bilingüe Intercultural*) is the name most commonly used in countries such as Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile and Venezuela. Central American countries use EBI or Native Education (*Educación Indígena*) interchangeably. Native political organizations themselves oscillated until the end of the Century between these two institutional names and their own historical names such as Bilingual Education (*Educación Bilingüe*), Own Education (*Educación Propia*), Internal Education (*Educación Interna*), Endogenous Education (*Educación Endógena*) and lately Community Education (*Educación Comunitaria*) (Garcia, 1993; 1998; Garcia y Cortes, 2003). Lately, most Native educational programs defend "Native Bilingual Intercultural Education" (*Educación Bilingüe Intercultural Indígena*) and "Community Education" (*Educación* Comunitaria). Afro-Colombians in Colombia defend Ethno-education in name and policy. Within this array of names and concepts, texts and interpretations, and actors and agencies, multiculturalism and its educational agenda appeared in the mid nineties, bringing some new categories of analysis, political perspectives and experiences into the discussion and reforms. Again, education is one of the main fields that has carried out some of these new ideas.

In terms of quality, EBI has been strongly criticized. Important matters such as proposals to write Native spoken languages; certain types of teaching methods; didactics and curricula; and appropriate school textbooks are presented as great achievements of intercultural education. Nevertheless, in many cases these proposals have also been criticized as carriers of neo-colonial perspectives instead of Native cultural agendas, facilitating the transition of Natives into the

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34 In Latin America, Colombia is the only country that has implemented an educational policy addressing both Natives and Afro-Colombians under the same label. Educational policies and activities toward Afro-Colombian populations in other Latin American countries are not mentioned in the literature. In addition, educational rights based on different social and cultural distinctions such as gender, exceptionality, religion, social class, displacement and so on, are not well developed and these are included in the general policies as special-attention groups or populations at risk.

hegemonic cultural canon of literacy, market, consumerism and institutionalization. EBI does not question the foundations of school as the only suitable alternative to educate people with different cultures. EBI is still not considering culture and traditional ways of teaching-learning as a constitutional and alternative model to provide education and not just schooling to some groups. School-based education has gained complete prestige to educate Natives, Afro-Colombians and the rest of the groups in our societies; critiques about neo-colonization and acculturation through school no longer apply. What is a real Native and Afro-Colombian model of education? Is there a real Native or Afro-Colombian pedagogy or educational discipline? Have we reached the social and political conditions to talk about a real post-colonial Native and Afro-Colombian education? What are the philosophical and theoretical foundations of EBI and intercultural policy? Could cultural diversity be interpreted in a larger context than ethnicity?

> Problems emerge when it is questioned that such a noble and advanced type of education (EBI) in Guatemala has a specific dedication to Mayas, especially monolingual Mayas; It is obvious that this kind of education will create second-class citizens in Guatemala (Chiodi, 1990).

It appears that Natives, minorities, ethnicities, etc. are the targeted populations for inclusion policies and they should learn about diversity and plural policies instead of hegemonic majority. Therefore, real ideologies, perspectives and practices of pluralism, diversity, multiculturalism and so on are essentially absent from the public education system implemented for the rest of society. In such terms, talking about quality of education system in terms of cultural inclusion and political recognition is a euphemism and absurd discussion between groups who still hold different, and some times divergent, perspectives about the meaning of nation, pluralism, participation and development. Moreover, no one minority-status group presents a comprehensive and philosophical framework, a vision of nation or a political platform to support a new vision of the country

where all citizens and groups could be included under the same or equivalent rights and opportunities, keeping in mind the individual and collective identities as well as the common good and general wellbeing.

In addition to what I have mentioned above, bureaucratization and corruption are also some of the problems recently uncovered in the reviewed literature related to EBI in the region. Since the state gave Native and Afro-Colombian political organizations certain levels of control over budgets and administrative decisions in public education matters, small groups of privileged Native people have risen above the rest. Many non-Native people historically involved into Native organizations are taking advantage of Native privileges; some Natives have also acted against communities and traditional authorities in order to keep their privileges, leading people toward institutional and private goals rather than community ones. This causes divisions and fractures in communities and sometimes, internal struggles among Natives or among groups.

It must be acknowledged that ethnic communities themselves have not achieved a drastic change in social, economic and cultural conditions in their countries despite all the political recognition and economic investments in the last three decades. All of those new perspectives in school-based education must bring social, political and economic changes in the community life in order to be considered really suitable proposals. Generalized poverty, new levels of corruption, segregation and under-valorization, social violence, drug and alcohol consumption, and some criminal activities are some of the problems that still remain or just emerged in ethnic communities, those being strongly linked to education opportunities and quality of education.

Native rights, cultures, identities and traditions opposed to state and national values will continue influencing the path to understanding the value of the EBI and the Ethno-education in the region. National society (a way to say

governments and non-Native citizens) has stated inclusion and openness since the nineties is a progressive move for "the others", "the ethnics" but it is not willing to move ahead itself. An education model developed to enhance a specific set of groups instead of society at large could lead us to new inter-group social and political problems regionally as well as in each country. A real and more suitable philosophical, theoretical and political framework is required to form our practices and experiences in order to build the type of society of our wishes and dreams, based on what we are, what are our social and cultural practices as well as our natural and social conditions.

In the next chapter, I present some political, legal and institutional changes in the country, after the implementation of the ethno-education and intercultural agenda, trying to cope with cultural diversity into the public education system. In Chapter 4, I discuss the main problems and dilemmas faced by Colombian governments, ethnic groups, scholars and society at large, concerning our option for "interculturality" as the cultural policy (in education for example). Finally, Chapter 5 allows me to bring together all the above information in order to do a general philosophical deliberation on cultural diversity, multiculturalism and multicultural education as a different point of view and agenda to address cultural diversity in school and society at large. Chapter 5 further comments on the Canadian experience of building a peaceful and prosperous society in the social and cultural matrix (or mosaic as it is called) formed by contrasting, complementing, and accommodating agendas of Natives, Afro-descendents, immigrants and majorities; as an engaging source of new ideas and practical experiences. The Canadian view of cultural diversity that includes an array of factors such as gender, social class, religion, exceptionality, lifestyle and many others goes further than a consideration of just the ethnic dimension. At this point, in our ethno-development framework, it is timely to look for a new cultural agenda toward the entire national population, instead of just the minorities, bringing to the scenario many other factors to define cultural diversity in our

country. This new perspective could bring hope for change, peace, governability, and prosperity that all Colombians dream of. Two theses will be addressed in the next chapters, regarding the Colombian experience on this issue.

Firstly, a Governmental education proposal for cultural diversity in Colombia, such as ethno-education (for Natives and Afro-descendants exclusively and separately) has been qualitatively and quantitatively improved after the turn of the century, but Native traditional proposals as such (*educación propia, educación indígena y educacion bilingüe)* were totally unstructured or eliminated as the last century ended. General pedagogical, educational and political differences between the mentioned-models must be researched and discussed in order to understand the transition or the elimination more clearly.

Secondly, ethno-education has had some advancement related to new educational legislation, co-administration of the system and official budgets in the country. Nevertheless, the general concepts of pluralism, cultural diversity, ethnicity, cultural policy and education have not been up-dated and remain unchanged despite the Constitutional change in 1991. So, there is a necessity for a new philosophical interpretation and theoretical framework, based on our idiosyncrasy as well as on the new ideological and political vision stated in our Constitution, in order to organize several issues in the country. Because of the limited concept of cultural diversity in the ethno-education framework, the public education system is going through new challenges, problems and limitations, reaching at times, levels of degradation and confusion that must be studied, explained and avoided in the future. It seems that looking to invigorate the public policy for promoting cultural diversity-based education in Colombia, some critical contrasts between interculturality and multiculturalism − from philosophical, ideological, political, theoretical and practical perspectives, should be discussed, cleared up and promoted in order to move forward.

CHAPTER THREE

PUBLIC POLICY, LEGISLATION AND INSTITUTIONS OF ETHNO-EDUCATION IN COLOMBIA

As discussed in the previous Chapter, culture won a central role in the public arena of the country at the turn of the 21st century. From being a means for development, the nation's cultural development became the goal of development. Starting in the 1990's, the majority of Colombian public politics conformed to this new interpretation of development and culture, promoted principally by international institutions and agencies after the summit of the Ministers of Culture in Stockholm in 1988 (UNSECO, 1988). In Colombia, politics, legislation and institutions emerging after the 1991 Constitution were notoriously influenced by this agenda. In the academic arena, language and culture began to play a central role in the new epistemologies and theoretical productions; the traditional social and economic categories of modern social studies lost strength compared to the new linguistic and cultural categories of contemporary cultural and postcolonial studies. In so far as social practices are concerned, the cultural dimension was not only contemplated but demanded, as a fundamental and essential component of national, regional or local development plans. Certainly, most of the contemporary education studies and public education systems have come to engage this new culturalist tendency.

Nevertheless, there is still much to be done in the country in order to achieve a well conceived understanding of the approach and role of culture, as an essential element for development. The principal views that we have constructed in the last three decades (legal, political, institutional and academic) are not always congruent and on occasions are contradictory. Meanwhile in the political and legal arena important advances have been made, the institutional as well as the

academic sector have a pending task in this matter. The philosophical, theoretical, political and pedagogical reflection on the subject of education and culture, for a country such as Colombia, is an immediate imperative to improve the public education system and the stabilization of society. We still have to advance in the creation of interpretations, understandings and views that are more suitable to our social and cultural reality, in the search for rights in a social state that protects and unites the Nation, to think, dream and design a country where all Colombians are included.

With the aim of constructing a more detailed criticism with respect to the concept and practice of certain cultural categories within public education in Colombia, an analysis can be done from the four previously mentioned perspectives: juridical-legal, political, institutional and academic.

The juridical-legal view is studied on the basis of the Colombian Constitution of 1991 and some subsequent regulatory laws, especially the Law 115/94 (General Law of Education) and the Law 397/97 (General Law of Culture). The political view is analyzed from the contents of the cultural and educational subject matter that appears within the last five National Plans for Development (PND); these plans have secured the official political course of action during the last twenty years, the post-constitutional era. The institutional and academic perspective can be constructed based on the previous ones, supported by the information obtained from some MEN´s officials responsible for education in Colombia, as well as reports from some academic events such as the Ethno-education congresses as well as the Anthropology ones. Finally the set of the four previous perspectives (political, legal, institutional and academic) exhibits the corpus and the evidence of Colombian public policy in order to serve cultural diversity in the education system; in other words they demonstrate the model of Ethno-Education.

From my point of view, the ethno-education model strengthened a markedly ethnicist and divided view population wise, in relation to the way that culture and cultural diversity are incorporated within the Colombian public education. This view has also generated a tendency that only obscures and complicates other expressions of cultural diversity in our society and the political essence of constitutional pluralism of 1991, but also said tendency is highly dangerous since it can engender future ethnic radicalism, weaken the State, make official institutions illegitimate and break the collective project of Nation and Colombianidad[35]. Poor political management of our cultural diversity would not only contribute to deepen our current social crisis but will weaken us as a country in confronting the challenges that appear in the international arena. If inter-ethnic relations in Colombia are not managed with caution we could be setting ourselves up for a time bomb in the future. Public education has an enormous responsibility to achieve peace; education should be studied and managed in relation to an inclusive cultural policy.

3.1 The Role of the Juridical-Legal View of Culture in Public Education in Colombia[36]

"Therefore, the legislative developments, internal and external politics and the legal and administrative structure in general in the country, have been complying since 1991, the year that the current political constitution was

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35 What does it mean to be a Colombian? Due to the particular historical process of genetic combination that has happened in Colombia, in regard to the demographic proportions of each group and political power, it has been very difficult to come to a common understanding and meaning about a common Colombian identity.

36 In addition to the above-mentioned constitutional and legal developments, Colombia adheres to several legal regulations at the international level ratified by several governments; 169 Convention, The International Organization of Labor on native and tribal rights, was ratified by the Colombian government by Law 21 in 1991. Further information can be obtained by visiting the Juriscol data base at the Banco de la República, the native legislation compilation at Inter-American Bank of Development, the information uploaded on the "Dirección de Etnias del Ministerio del Interior y de Justicia" link (2004), and the data base at Hemera Foundation. The current President, Dr. Álvaro Uribe, has not ratified the Convention on Cultural Diversity, issued by UNESCO in 2008.

promulgated. This situation has oriented the design of special guidelines for ethnic groups that contains the course of action of the contemporary State: from the administrative political organization of the country, the jurisdictional structure, the education and health models, up to the formulation, implementation and monitoring of local, regional and national plans of development. The Constitutional Court has harmonized constitutional and international treaties that Colombia has ratified on the matter of human rights; special rights oriented to protect the ethnic and cultural diversity make up part of the set of human rights and consequently developing the concept of a Constitutionality Block. The prevailing regulations for ethnic groups, is then ordinated in constitutional norms, laws, decrees, resolutions, guidelines, and jurisprudence." (The Office of Ethnic Affairs, Minister of the Interior, 2004)

Among the principle statements raised in the Colombian Constitution, with respect to culture and education, we can highlight 22 articles of the 380 that make up the complete constitutional text. In addition the Preamble, the following are the articles 1, 7, 8, 10, 13, 18, 19, 27, 38, 43, 63, 67, 68, 70, 71, 72, 96, 107, 171, 176, 246, and 330.

Also, in Table 1 some post-constitutional legislative developments are highlighted. They contain a special mention in recognizing rights in relation to the country's ethnic and cultural diversity; among these we have:

Table 1 Legal Development that Protect the Cultural Diversity of Colombia

LAW OR DECREE	SECTOR IT REGULATES
Law 99 of 1993	Creates and regulates The Ministry of Environment
Law 100 of 1993	Creates and regulates the Social Security Health System
Law 115 of 1994	Creates and regulates The Public Education System in Colombia
Law 141 of 1994	Creates and regulates The National Royalties Fund
Law 160 of 1994	Creates and regulates Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
Law 397 of 1997	Creates and regulates the Ministry and System of National Culture
Law 691 of 2001	Regulates the participation of ethnic groups in The General Social Security System

Law 715 of 2001	Dictates organic standards in terms of resources and responsibilities
Decree 1088 of 1993	Regulates the creation of Cabildo/Town Association and/or Traditional Native Authorities
Decree 1396 of 1993	Creates the National Commission for the Human Rights of Native Peoples
Decree 1397 of 1996	Creates the National Commission for Native Territories
Decree 1320 of 1998	Regulates The Prior Consultation for Native and Black communities in order to exploit natural resources within their territory

In trying to better illustrate the study of this subject the following transcription highlights some of the more prominent constitutional articles and a few others apart from The General law of Education and The General Law of culture[37].

The COLOMBIAN POLITICAL CONSTITUTION

Preamble

The people of Colombia in exercising their sovereign power, represented by their delegates in the National Constituent Assembly invoking the protection of God, with the aim of strengthening national unity and ensuring its members life, peaceful coexistence, work, justice, equality, knowledge, freedom and peace within a legal, democratic and participatory framework that guarantees political order, economic and social justice and committed to promote the integration of the Latin American community, decree, sanction and promulgate the following
THE COLOMBIAN POLITICAL CONSTITUTION.

Article 1
Colombia is a legal social state organized in the form of a unitary republic, decentralized with autonomy of its territorial entities, democratic, participatory and plural founded on respect for human dignity, and in the work and solidarity of the individuals who belong to it and the predominance of general interest.

Article 7

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37 Constitutional quotations have been excerpted from the book: Constitución Política de Colombia. Basic Texts. (2004). Twelfth Edition. Santafe de Bogota: LEGIS Editores S. A. The Law 115/94 and 397/97 have been taken from the Juriscol Data Base at the Banco de la República. All underlining is by the author of the thesis.

The state recognizes and protects the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Colombian nation

Article 8
It is the states obligation, as it is of the people, to protect the natural and cultural wealth of the nation

Article 10
Spanish is the official language of Colombia. The languages and dialects of the ethnic groups are also official languages in their territories. The education provided in communities with their own linguistic traditions will be bilingual.

Article 13
All individuals are born free and equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection and treatment by the authorities, and to enjoy the same rights, freedoms, and opportunities without discrimination on the basis of gender, race, national or family origin, language, religion, political or philosophical opinion...

Article 18
Freedom of conscience is guaranteed. No one will be persecuted because of their convictions or beliefs or compelled to reveal them nor obliged to act against their conscience.

Article 19
Freedom of religion is guaranteed. Everyone has the right to freely state and disseminate their religion in an individual or collective form.

Article 27
The state guarantees freedom of education, training, research and professorship.

Article 43
Men and women have equal rights and opportunities. Women will not be subjected to any form of discrimination.

Article 63
Public assets such as natural parks, communal territories of ethnic groups, security zones, the archaeological patrimony of the nation and other assets determined by law are inalienable, imprescriptible, and inembargable.

Article 67

Education is a person's right and a public service that has a social function; with the pursuit education comes access to knowledge, science, technology and any other cultural assets and values.

Article 68
... Parents will have the right to select the type of education for their minor children. In state institutions, no person may be obliged to receive religious instruction. The members of ethnic groups will have the right to training that respects and develops their cultural identity.

Article 70
....Culture in its diverse manifestations is the basis of nationality. The state recognizes the equality and dignity of all those who live together in the country.

Article 72
The nation's cultural heritage is under the protection of the state...and will regulate the special rights that ethnic groups may enjoy when they occupy territories of archaeological wealth.

Article 96
1. The following hold Colombian citizenship
    a. Native-born Colombians...
    b. The children of a Colombian father or mother who were born abroad...

2. Citizens by naturalization
    a. Aliens who apply for and obtain their naturalization card...
    b. Citizens by birth from Latin America and the Caribbean who are domiciled in Colombia...
    c. Members of the Native peoples who share border areas...

Article 107
All citizens are guaranteed the right to establish, organize, and promote parties and political movements and the freedom to become affiliated with them or to withdraw from them.

Article 171
The Senate of the Republic will consist of 100 members elected in one national electoral district. There will be an additional two senators elected in a special national electoral district for Native communities.

Article 176
... The law may establish a special electoral district to ensure the

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participation in the Chamber of Representatives of ethnic groups, political minorities and Colombians residing abroad...

Article 246
The authorities of the Native peoples may exercise their jurisdictional functions within their territorial jurisdiction in accordance with their own laws and procedures provided these are not contrary to the Constitution and the laws of the Republic...

Article 330

In accordance with the Constitution and the laws, the Native territories will be governed by councils formed and regulated in keeping with customs of their communities...

As is noted, the advances of culture in Colombian politics are wide ranging and enshrined at the constitutional level. Consequently, culture began to play a central role in postcolonial legislative development. Some of the legislative developments that establish the role of culture within Colombian public education can be seen in the following policies:

<u>The general Law of Education, 115 from 1994</u>

Article 1
The object of the law; Education is a permanent, personal, cultural and social training process based on a integral understanding of the concept of the individual human and his or her dignity, rights and obligations.
- In accordance with Article 67 constitutional policy,(this law) defines and develops the benefit of formal education in preschool levels (primary and secondary) and middle school, not formal and informal, directed towards children and young people of school age, adults, rural people, <u>ethnic groups,</u> sensorial and physical handicaps, exceptional capacities and people that require social rehabilitation.

Article 5
The aim of education...-2. Training in a respect for life and for other human rights, peace, democratic principles, coexistence, pluralism, justice, solidarity and equity as well as the exercise of tolerance and freedom. -4

Training in a respect for a legitimate authority and the law, <u>national</u> <u>culture</u>, Colombian history and its patriotic symbols. -6 The study and critical understanding of <u>national culture and the cultural and ethnic diversity of Colombia as a basis of national unity and identity.</u>

Article 13
Common objectives on all levels ...-h) Fomenting interest and respect for the cultural identity of ethnic groups.

Article 14
Obligatory training...-b) development of free time, the promotion of diverse cultures, the practice of physical education, formative recreation and sports, so that the government will promote and stimulate its diffusion and development.

PARAGRAPH
The study of these subjects and the training of said values, except numbers a)[38] and b), do not require a special subject. This training should be incorporated into the curriculum and developed throughout the entire study plan.

Article 21
Specific objectives of basic education in the primary cycle ...-a) instruction in fundamental values for coexistence in a democratic, participatory and <u>pluralist</u> society...

TITLE III
Education alternatives serving specific groups

CHAPTER 1
Education for individuals with limited or exceptional capacities

Article 46
Integration with educational services: Education for individuals with physical limitations, as well as, sensorial, physic, cognitive and emotional exceptional intellectual capacities, are part of education public service.

Article 49
Students with exceptional capacities: The national government will facilitate the organization of programs for the early detection of students with exceptional abilities or talents and the necessary curricular adjustments that permit their integral training.

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38 Item a) deals with the practical study of constitutional and civic instruction. Article 14 consists of five items but item b) is the only one related to cultural diversity.

CHAPTER 2
Education for adults

CHAPTER 3
Education for ethnic groups

Article 55
*Definition of **Ethno-education**: is understood as education for ethnic groups that is offered to groups or communities that integrate nationality and posses a culture, language, their own traditions and autochthonous rights.*
PARAGRAPH
The operation of Native territorial entities will be assimilated into the municipalities to put into effect the benefits of education public service, previous fulfillment of the established requisites in law 60 from 1993 and in accordance with what the law of territorial ordinance provides.

Article 56
*Principles and goals: The education of ethnic groups will be guided by the general principles and goals of education established in integrality, **inter-culturality** linguistic diversity, community participation, flexibility and progressiveness. With the goal to strengthen the process of identity, knowledge, socialization, the protection and appropriate use of nature, system and community practices of organization, the use of vernacular language, teacher training and research in all areas of culture[39].*

CHAPTER 4
Rural and farmer education

CHAPTER 5
Social rehabilitation education

The General Law of Education is both extensive and precise in regard to the recognition of cultural rights within the public system of education. It is important to highlight that the law mentions various social groups and categories of groups as subjects of laws (people with limited or exceptional capacities, adults, ethnics, farmers and marginalized people). Nevertheless, the Law 115/94

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39 Other articles in this Chapter relate to mother tongue, teacher training programs for ethnic groups, professional counsel, international organization interventions, current education organizations, selection process for teaching and contracts to serve in education.

further entitles developments on education for ethnic-status groups (ethno-education). At the same time, the Law 397/97 highlights the followings rights regarding culture and education:

The general Law of Culture, 397 from 1997

Article 1
...This law is based on the following principles and definitions:

1. *Culture is a set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize human groups and include, beyond the arts and literature, lifestyles, human rights systems values, traditions and beliefs.*

2. *Culture in its various manifestations, is the basis of nationality and activity of Colombian society as a whole, as a process generated individually and collectively by Colombians, these manifestations are an integral part of Colombian identity and culture.*

3. *The State will promote and encourage the processes, projects and cultural activities within a framework of recognition and respect for the cultural diversity and variety of the Colombian nation.*

4. *Under no circumstances, will the State exercise censorship on the form and ideological content of artistic achievements and cultural projects*

6. *The State guarantees the ethnic and linguistic groups, communities, and Raizales, Native peoples right to preserve, enrich and disseminate their cultural identity and heritage, to create awareness of the same according to their own traditions and to benefit from an education that ensures these rights. The Colombian State recognizes the specificity of Caribbean culture and provides special protection for its diverse expressions.*

7. *The State shall protect Spanish as the official language of Colombia and the languages of Native peoples and Raizales in black communities and their territories. It will promote the strengthening of Amerindian languages and Creole spoken in the country and undertake to respect and recognize those in the rest of the society.*

8. *Economic and social development must be closely linked to cultural*

development, science and technology, <u>The National Development Plan will take into account the National Culture Plan formulated by the Government</u>. Public resources invested in cultural activities have, for all legal purposes, the status of public social spending.

*9. Respect for human rights, coexistence, solidarity, **interculturality**, pluralism, tolerance and cultural values are the fundamental and essential basis of a peaceful culture.*

12. The State shall promote the interaction of national culture with universal culture.

13. The state, in forming its cultural policy, will take into account both the creator, the promoter and the recipient of culture and ensure equal opportunity access for all Colombians to demonstrations, cultural assets and services, giving special treatment to people with physical, sensory and mental limitations, the elderly, children and youth and the social sectors most in need.

Article 2
...The functions and services in connection with culture will be met in accordance with the preceding article, taking into account the primary objective of state policy on the matter of the preservation of Cultural Heritage of the Nation and the support and encouragement of individuals, communities and institutions to develop and promote artistic and cultural expressions in the local, regional and national levels.

Article 3
The Ministry of Culture will coordinate the action of the state for the formation of the new citizen as established by Articles 1 to 18 of Act 188 of 1995, the National Development Plan.

Article 66
...The Minister of Culture is established as the lead agency of culture, ... The Minister of Culture will be a member with a right to a voice and a vote, in the National Council of Social and Economic Policy, CONPES.

Article 67
...Paragraph 2. The government upon establishing and regulating the organic structure of the Ministry of Culture will create The National Office of Ethno-Culture with the respective offices in the territorial entities.

Likewise, the previous paragraphs provide clear evidence of the new political role

of culture in Colombia's public life. The General Law of Culture (*Ley General de Cultura*) was enacted in 1997 thus giving birth to the National Cultural System. Having reached the status of public policy, culture became a sector of development thereby receiving a yearly public budget allocation for the Ministry's activities. Culture was also integrated in the formulation of economic and social macro policies and of course, it began to have an influence in other sectors of development among them, the educational sector.

However, it is necessary to spend some time considering some aspects of these new cultural rights enshrined in the Constitution and the laws. The first aspect would be "scope", followed by "type" and then "level" in the third place.

First of all, the formulation of an ideology of pluralism for the country results from the existence of a broad concept of culture and cultural diversity. The text of the Constitution and several pieces of legislation mention factors such as ethnicity, language, sex, race, country of origin, family origin, religion, political affiliation, philosophical opinion, social class, physical condition, mental condition, academic-cognitive conscience, association, gender, artistic activity, age and region among others[40]. Secondly, the Constitution and the laws provide different types of legal recognition to each cultural diversity factor.

Ethnicity is the most comprehensive, substantially developed factor of cultural diversity and in my opinion, a bit problematic. On the one hand, the only social groups in Colombia with a recognized ethnic status are the Native people, the Blacks or Afro-Colombians, the "Raizales" and the Roma (Gypsies) [41] .

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40 Be aware that ethnicity is just another factor of cultural diversity in the Constitutional text that now holds a special importance that it never had before.

41 Rom or Gypsies received official ethnic status in Colombia in 1998; the rest of the groups were enshrined as ethnic groups at the time of the initial writing of the Constitution. No other social group in Colombia has requested official status as an ethnic group despite the fact that

Nevertheless each group has had a very distinct historic process of social construction which eventually led them to establish specific and different relations with the State and the Nation. Even the Native category is a generalization, as every Native group developed differently both socially and historically.

In the third place, the level of political protection of cultural rights as stated in the text of the constitution is always based on the idea of Nation – a unitary, unique Nation. There is a legal recognition of cultural diversity in Colombia under a principle of social and territorial cohesion. When referring to diversity there is always a glimpse of Nation, the *Colombianidad*. It is remarkable that the constitutional text not even once singles out any of the ethnic groups as different but rather as a component or as part of the cultural diversity of the Nation. Nowhere in the Constitution or the laws is there mention of the words multinational State for example, as just happened in our neighbouring country of Ecuador (Ecuadorean Constitution of 2008). While several pieces of legislation after the Constitution resort to the use of terms like "different", "foreign", "own", "other", etc, the Constitutional text and the body of law to date are more based on the conceptions of diversity and alterity than on difference and otherness. (Numerous rulings of the Constitutional Court support this assertion).

Based on the above, it is appropriate to question two things: first, the way in which we have understood all this and second, the way in which these factors, types and levels of diversity –both real and legal- are included in Colombian public education. The legal progress is significant. However, a critical look at the political and institutional aspects of culture in the public education system shows

several of them inhabit the country, as I have mentioned in the last Chapter. Nevertheless, those groups are part of our cultural diversity and are therefore entitled to some cultural rights, as well.

that, in the Colombian case we have "translated[42]" ethnicity as diversity[43]. This limited interpretation has led the Colombian State, the governments of the moment, society, public policies, institutions and the country in general to the conception and promotion of an ethnicist agenda in order to recognize and guarantee the collective and individual rights of Colombians based on culture. Obviously the wider concept of cultural diversity which deals with other factors and social groups is not present in legislation, politics, institutions and the academic world. The last mayor of Bogotá, Mr. Lucho Garzón, has been the single exception to the above-mentioned assertion due to his political statements toward different groups in the capital city.

The above implies a political and social risk as the out and out ethnicization of our inter-group relations can bring about problems of governability, institutional illegitimacy and crisis of the State. Moreover, national unity could become fragmented and affect territorial integrity, all of which would leave us in very bad standing to face the international challenges of this new century as a country and as a nation. These examples of group contradiction are many and have become increasingly frequent in the Colombian media[44]. The Constitutional principle of cultural diversity plus social cohesion is not honoured in Colombian institutions. On their part, the academic world and the social movements have also devoted themselves to promoting the reduced ethnicist agenda as the only way to promote our cultural diversity.

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42 I have purposely used the Word "translation" in order to compare the constitution's intentions to the intentions of later regulations. It is seems to me that both were written in different languages. Rigorous use of terminology and concepts are not well established traditions in Colombian academia and even less so in the political arena.

43 Role of social movements must be also considered on this matter due to Natives and Blacks in Colombia have leaded the political changes toward pluralism and diversity recognition.

44 A follow-up to the news in the local newspaper "El Liberal" shows that inter-group confrontations and clashes have escalated in the last five years in Cauca, mainly due to land shortage.

It is strange that while the Colombian Constitution has an inherent multicultural aspiration summarized in Article 7° (Pineda, 1995; Gross, 2000; Zambrano, 2006), public policies of an ethnic nature (among them ethno-education) suggest an intercultural aspiration[45]. This intercultural approach is based on the ability ethnic groups would have to determine the discreet and self contained limits of culture, that is what is own and alien to them. More than highlighting the common aspects and affinities of the groups there is a marked emphasis on the things that make us different. This vision of interculturality has immediate repercussions in the roles we give to groups and to culture itself, as part of the country's educational and cultural project. It is my view that in many cases legal and institutional developments distance themselves from the constitutional approach to culture, diversity, pluralism and Nation. Legislating specific educational standards based on ethnicity creates an ethnic segregationist policy for the education system and the inter-group relations of the Nation; it would be akin to a legalization of educational segregation in Colombia.

3.2 The Role of Culture in Colombian Public Education from a Political Standpoint.

Past National Development Plans[46] (PND – Spanish acronym), especially those written after the new Constitution of 1991 are a good source to study the contribution of culture to the development of the country from a political standpoint. Respective PNDs are shown on Table 2.

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45 Regarding this matter, it is important to shed light on some concepts from Canadian political theory. It distinguishes between an intercultural model like Quebec and the multicultural model like Canada. During my academic sojourn in Spain, I learned that European theorists have a different interpretation and use of those concepts from American theorists. To Spaniards, social reality is multicultural; therefore, intercultural policies are required. In Canada, diversity is a social reality, and inter or multi are cultural policies. Diversity is a social reality that requires a cultural policy. In Latin America the situation is a little bit confusing only because rigorous conceptualization is absent, as I mentioned before, as well as the role that some academics play with regard to politicians. A deeper discussion on this issue will be presented in Chapter five.

46 The National Plan of Development (PND) is a political project for campaigning and governing by each President that is elected in the country. By law, any elected President must realize his/her PND.

Table 2 – National Development Plans (PND) After the 1991 Constitution in Colombia

PRESIDENT	PERIOD	NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
Cesar Gaviria	1990 - 1994	The Pacific Revolution
Ernesto Samper	1994 - 1998	The Social Leap
Andrés Pastrana	1998 - 2002	Change in order to Build Peace
Álvaro Uribe	2002 - 2006	Towards a Community State
Álvaro Uribe	2006 - 2010	Community State. Development for All

President Cesar Gaviria (1990-1994). The Pacific Revolution[47]

Former President Cesar Gaviria's Development Plan was presented to the country in a period of great changes: strategic blows to the guerrilla movement, escalation of the war against drug trafficking, the legislative reform of the eighties, the economic opening, the inrush of new social groups and movements in the political landscape and the demand of the country's regions for greater autonomy (DNP, 1991). Although this plan did not quite cover all the aspirations and ideas set out in the new Constitution for they were born at the same time, former President Gaviria's plan produced structural changes in the country's life. Among them, the most significant was undoubtedly the new Constitutional charter of 1991.

The "Pacific Revolution" Plan was aimed at transforming the structure of the State in keeping with the trends of the time, which favored a less protective, more regulatory State; a nation based on the demand for goods and services and a blind hope in the economic technical model to solve the country's problems. That may be the reason for the weakness of the social policy mentioned above. Although education and the educational sector were part of the plan, culture was not even given the honor of being the great absentee for

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47 This and the rest of the Government Plans were retrieved from National Department for Planning at: www.dnp.gov.co.

its weight in public life was so insignificant that none of the other sectors perceived its absence. The main focus of the plan was a citizen with greater economic and political opportunities rather than a nation of diversities and social groups articulated in a project of a country with different regional and historic realities. The most notable references of the above mentioned Plan in the educational and cultural policy were:

Educational Opening
The program of educational opening requires the strengthening of social infrastructure. From this perspective education plays a leading role: a greater educational level of the working population or an accumulation of human capital means a greater productive capacity for the entire economic system. Better education for women means smaller families and healthier and better fed children, and in general, more education means more social mobility. In addition to the economic virtues linked to the teaching of basic knowledge, the educational process must create critical, free, creative and solidarity spirits, committed to the search of peace and tolerance and with a conscious participation in collective processes. (DNP, 1991)

Ethno-education
There are close to 600 000 Natives in Colombia in around 87 ethnic groups who speak 64 different languages and an Afro American population of approximately 100 000 with specific characteristics of bilingualism. The cultural and multilingual plurality of Native communities has been legally recognized since 1978, as well as their right to an education based on their cultural needs and characteristics. In 1982, an educational policy based on the concept of ethno-development and its ethno-education component is formulated as part of the government's economic development plans. The ethno-education program outlined in 1985 has been advancing several actions for ethnic groups to be the ones designing, carrying out and evaluating their education programs as an alternative for the qualitative improvement of education and to facilitate its objectives. Although significant progress has been made in ethno linguistic research, training and professionalization of Native teachers as well as in the training of ethno educators there are still problems like poor coverage, insufficient educational materials, scarce positions for Native teachers and lack of qualified human resources for research. (DNP, 1991).

President Ernesto Samper (1994-1998). The Social Leap

Former President Ernesto Samper's motto "Time belongs to people" reflected his government plan's aspiration of alternative development which aimed at turning citizens into receivers in the quest for progress by society and the State. The letter of the plan quite extensively covers the technical, political and financial ideas of one of the most ambitious social policies of the last four presidents backed by a very generous budget law. Culture, ethnicity and education are thoroughly developed in the plan which includes many of the constitutional and legal ideas after 1991. For the first time, culture acknowledgement played a main role in the political life of the country as a public policy issue and in close relation with the education sector.

From a political point of view, culture and education were clearer, more coherent and were given more space in the Constitution of 1991 with President Samper's government plan.

> *Therefore, the Social Leap attempts to consolidate the profound transformation in the country and to guarantee that its final result be a more peaceful and egalitarian society...Thus, its final goal is to create the new Colombian citizen: ... more culturally complete and therefore more proud of being Colombian.*
>
> *A. Education, axle of the country's development.*
> *Education must be the fundamental axle of economic, political and social development in today's and future Colombia ... and must be intrinsically linked to the concept of culture, for education is essential in cultural conservation and renovation. Culture and recreation are factors that enrich social relations and allow for the expression and reaffirmation of national identity.*
>
> *<u>Curricular content will take into account the country's cultural diversity.</u> Ethno-education programs, which rescue ancestral values and knowledge and strengthen the cultural identity of Native peoples, will be supported by providing bilingual material and through the training and professionalization of teachers. Likewise, the cultural particularities of Afro Colombian and "Raizales" communities will be taken into account.*
>
> *B. Culture, the foundation of Nationality.*

Colombia is a scenario where different cultures interact with each other. This richness is threatened by multiple forms of intolerance and violence as well as by the social uprooting of large sectors of the population. At the same time the country is going through an increasingly participatory social and political process which allows for a leading role of the social forces that represent a sentiment of renovation, tolerance and change.

<u>Culture is the foundation of nationality</u>. Additionally, this is closely linked to the human ability to innovate, to improve its understanding of the world and how to influence it.

The Social Leap requires a cultural leap as the foundation of a new concept of coexistence, respect of diversity and peace. The time of the people is also the time of transition into a new civilization that is not only a consumer but also a creator of culture. In order to attain the goals of the cultural policy, programs will aim at institutional reform and the decentralization of cultural management, the promotion and encouragement of creation and research, access to cultural services and goods and the protection and promotion of the Colombian heritage.

The Colombian society will begin to pay back its social debt to women. The priority programs will target the creation of a culture of equality among men and women and the offering of timely attention to women in need...

VI - Native peoples and Afro Colombian and "Raizales" communities.
Ethnic and cultural diversity is one of the greatest riches of Colombian society. For this reason the national government will pay attention to the development and consolidation of the rights of Native peoples, Afro Colombian and "Raizales" communities. In this context, their participation in national life will be guaranteed when organizing the existing educational programs and spaces of coordination and when creating whatever is necessary to gain the respect to their social and cultural particularities and their own forms of organization.

Through a very wide and democratic conception of culture, cultural diversity and pluralism, the government Plan of former president Samper introduced a cultural policy and an educational policy that focused on the recognition of constitutional, historical and social rights under the concept of a project of nation and territorial integrity. His policy refers widely and in detail to issues like education, culture, social security, habitat, disaster management, women's equity, youth, Native

peoples, Afro Colombian and "Raizales" communities, solidarity economy, justice, human rights and public safety[48].

President Andrés Pastrana (1998-2002). Change in order to build peace.

Former President Andrés Pastrana offered the Nation a Government Plan that was based on several strategies aimed at restoring peace in the country as a prerequisite for any development process. His proposal was designed to share responsibility among the several agents of society so that each could assume their commitment to the administration of development. The Plan invited agencies not only from the State, but also from civil society to participate in the administration and to commit their resources. The wording of the Plan contains a social policy based on participation and reconstruction of the social fabric thereby highlighting several rights and responsibilities of the State and society towards culture and education. With respect to culture, Andrés Pastrana was the first President that incorporated the term multicultural/ multiculturalism in Colombian politics, especially in his Government Plan. However, along with his multiculturalism proposal there is mention of political aspirations for integration, Ethno-education and interculturality. This validates my assertion that, the philosophical clarity and conceptual precision of these types of political concepts and terms in the country are not very rigorous, nor were they for the President or his team of academic aides in those days. President Pastrana´s plan (1998) states:

> *Social equity is based on the recognition of differences and the search for harmonious exchanges through development of the potential of both men and women in all their spaces of existence and coexistence. Differences are determined among other things by socioeconomic status, rural or urban location, gender, specific culture and ethnic belonging. For this*

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48 Former President Ernesto Samper was well known at the international level due to the "Eight Thousand" trial. This trial demonstrates the close link between politics and drug-trafficking in the country. The former President's promise, "El salto social", did not come to fruition due to the crisis of the trial and confrontational relationship with the US government.

reason, social policy starts by recognizing the differences, inequalities and disadvantages among men, women and minorities to access and control goods and services.

Building peace must have a comprehensive effect in the structure of values that make up culture, upon which customs, traditions, mind contributions and sensibilities also act. Culture fills and over-determines human life, and necessarily turns it into the heart of any long term political project.

Only culture as a fundamental dimension of development and through a process of multiple horizontal dialogues and coordination between State and society allows for the reconstruction of identities broken by war, the creation of the concept of citizenship that lets us participate in decisions of mutual interest and build the ethics of coexistence that provides us with the abilities for a solidarity, participatory and tolerant life in common.

Education is one of the pillars for peace and the policies in this plan are designed with the basic premise of building it. To this end the State, in recognizing ethnic and cultural diversity as one of the greatest values of the country, must guarantee access to all levels of education to the entire population. The participation of education and culture in the process to build a sustainable peace must be a priority for all society, for peace is both a main objective of culture and an instrument to promote it.

The role of the State towards culture should be one of facilitator and agent, reducing the obstacles and regulations that hinder the promotion of cultural goods. Direct financial support for cultural creation or subsidizing reduced groups of amateurs should be gradually replaced by a policy of stimulating private participation in the production and wide and efficient distribution of cultural goods...In addition the educational institution is recognized as a privileged scenario of cultural activity.

The main objective of the national government with regards to the treatment of the Afro Colombian population will be to integrate these communities into its objectives to fight poverty, achieve equity, build peace, strengthen human and social capital, promote competitiveness and increase productivity.

To carry out these tasks, the Plan will respect the legal principles that define the right to equality of all the cultures that make up the Colombian nationality, the respect to the integrity and dignity of cultural life in the Black communities, the participation of Afro Colombians and their organization in the decisions that affect them without detriment to their

autonomy, and their role in protecting the environment thanks to the relations that these communities have established with nature.

The constitutional changes of the last decade demand the transformation of relations between State, national society and Native peoples so that these are based on the effective recognition of ethnic and cultural differences. In the case of the Native peoples, the policy will be aimed at the defence, support, strengthening and consolidation of ethnic and cultural rights enshrined in the constitutional and legal regulations.

Said policy will develop the following objectives: - To develop Ethno-education programs with special emphasis in the development of bilingual and multicultural education in primary education and the extension of coverage and relevance in secondary education through innovative and relevant methodology for groups of scattered population. (Pastrana, 1998).

President Álvaro Uribe (2002-2006). Towards a Community State.

The first National Development Plan (PND) of President Álvaro Uribe (2002-2006) was formulated in one of the most hopeless moments in the country due to the failure of negotiations by former President Pastrana with the FARC guerrilla. Faced with the violent onslaught the country was suffering on the hands of the guerrilla, paramilitary groups, drug traffickers, ordinary criminals and at times the very forces of the State, the Colombian society set its hopes on President Uribe and elected him for his proposal of Democratic Security and the firm character he showed during his campaign. The "Towards a Community State" PND can be resumed in four objectives:

1. To offer democratic security.
2. To boost a sustainable economic development and job creation.
3. To build social equity.
4. To increase the State transparency and efficiency.

As can be expected, the third objective includes the entire social policy of the Plan, which is presented in Chapter III of the eight chapters contained in the document. Therefore, the majority of the proposals revolve around the issue of

democratic security, economic growth and administrative reorganization of the State. If instead we study Chapter III of the PND we can establish that the issue of culture places ninth, before the issue of sports promotion and after issues like: education, health, solidarity economy, social countryside management, public services, microenterprise development, urban life quality and prevention of natural risks. This "shameful" ninth place gives us a hint about the importance of culture in the political agenda of President Uribe. Based on this, we could assert that the little space that culture gained in the country`s political arena after the Constitution of 1991, began to lose ground with the arrival of Dr. Alvaro Uribe to the Presidency. Title 9 of Chapter III related to culture contains the following:

> *9. Strengthening of ethnic groups*
>   *a. Native people*
>   *b. Afro Colombians*
>   *c. Raizales of San Andres, Providencia and Santa Catalina*
>   *d. Romas*

The above content also clearly illustrates the ethnicist conception of the President and his advisors in their approach to the issue of culture and cultural diversity of the Colombian Nation. The vision and agenda of the PND for meeting the needs and protecting the rights of the above mentioned ethnic groups is outlined in barely six pages of the 284 pages in the entire document. The other categories and groups of national diversity were made completely invisible in the official political discourse of this Plan (with the exception of gender as a social and economic category) and subsumed in those chapters that refer to the issues of democratic security, economic development and reorganization of the State. Some sections of the PND on the issue of culture are shown below:

> *iv. Strengthening of cultural institutions*
> *This line of action responds to the need to consolidate institutions in the cultural sector in order to develop the objectives formulated in the National Culture Plan 2001-2010 and follow the guidelines of Conpes 3162 of 2002. The following activities are necessary for this:*

Consolidation of the National System of Cultural Information.
Elaboration of a Plan of Statistics and Indicators for the Culture Sector
Prioritization and investment of resources in cultural initiatives of high social impact.
Definition of an inter-sectorial agenda.
Regulation of the General Law of Culture.
Creation of an agenda for the promotion of Colombian culture.
Design of a policy of international cooperation and financing of cultural projects.
Qualifying of training in culture management.
Evaluation of the National Cultural System.
For these ethnic groups (Native people, Afro-Colombians, Raizales and Romas) the government will develop a strategy aimed at overcoming poverty and the social, legal, political, economic and cultural inequalities affecting them; strengthening their participation, autonomy and cultural identity as well as achieving their recognition, respect and appreciation on behalf of the Colombian society in general. The Ministry of Interior, in coordination with other ministries, will be in charge of defining and designing policies that are conducive to increasing their living standards and their participation in decisions of their concern.

As seen in the above paragraph *"The Ministry of Interior, in coordination with other ministries, will be in charge of defining and designing policies ..."*, ethnic groups are the object of a public policy not the active subjects participating in their formulation. This approach contains the entire conception and agenda of the current President with regards to the issue of cultural diversity in our country. As expected, the public education system incorporates this conception in its Plan entitled The Educational Revolution. Thus, the ethno model is the only model promoted during the mandate of the current President to promote cultural diversity in the country within the public educational system.

President Álvaro Uribe (2006-2010). Community State: Development for all

In his current PND (2006-2007) President Álvaro Uribe introduces newer and wider developments of the cultural issue in his political agenda for the country. Chapter VII, entitled Special dimensions of Development, incorporates diversity factors like gender, ethnicity, age and region. On the issue of ethnicity

"palenqueros" are mentioned as a new ethnic group along those already mentioned before. Although his conception of cultural diversity within public policy now goes beyond the sole ethnic dimension, the political conception of cultural diversity remains subordinated to development factors that are more important to the President such as democratic security, economic development and reorganization of the State. The current PND also shows progress in the formulation of a concept of interculturality as a framework for intergroup relations in the country. Strangely, the content formulated by the President under the title of interculturality does not match the traditional concept of interculturality stated by academic groups in Colombian political theory neither the pragmatic suggestions of ethnic social movements. This theoretical-conceptual vacuum once again shows the need for a stricter philosophical and theoretical framework for the formulation of public policies with cultural content in Colombia.

7.3.3 Interculturality

It is important to not only recognize that we are diverse but that respect to the rights of the different population sectors and groups is required, as well as to encourage their interaction regardless of their belonging so that progress can be achieved in the construction of a national collective project based on its rich ethnic and socio-cultural diversity. In this respect both State institutions and ethnic organizations in general have a responsibility to promote intercultural processes that lead to a recognition of diversity and the development of proposals of pluri-cultural strengthening. In this context, inter-culturality is enriched by sharing own knowledge, practices and forms of organization that contribute to guarantee the existence and coexistence of different societies in a united way.

The new PND reintroduces and presents several working strategies agreed upon by the State and Native organizations in a more concrete way to achieve the goals set out by the Plan. In the issue of Native education for example, agreement is reached within the political model of Ethno-education by putting emphasis on the premises of coverage and quality contained in the global

political strategy for the educational sector the "Educational Revolution". In this respect the Plan states:

> The strengthening of Native education through an agreed definition of Ethno-education programs to be articulated into the educational system ensuring wider coverage in the different levels and quality improvement[49].

3.3 The Role of Culture in Colombian Public Education from an Institutional and Academic Standpoint.

The juridical and political standpoints discussed previously help us characterize the institutional and academic standpoint in order to understand the importance given to culture within the structures of Colombian education. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the Office of Ethno-education was created within the structure of the National Ministry of Education in 1985 under instructions of former President Belisario Betancourt (1982-1986), although the Norm (regulation) was issued in 1984. At the time, a team of five officials –among them two female anthropologists- was hired at the national level to design and promote a public educational policy to meet the claims that Native groups were only then started demanding from the Colombian State in terms of education[50]. The MEN (National Ministry of Education) team dealt mainly with the tasks of organizing the First Colombian Symposium on Ethno-education (Girardot, July 1985), the first edition and publication of General Guidelines of Ethno-education and the formulation of

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49 I would like to call attention to the rhetoric stated in the political manifestos and different PND plans of the current and former presidents in Colombia. Concepts and ideas come more from PND consultants´ academic capacity than a serious discussion about the future of the country. In this sense, political and legal changes in Colombia have become a reality due to the pressure of social movements. Natives and Blacks have been better organized and supported in this kind of social pressure. A hermeneutic reading on these types of actors would be more focused in order to understand the Constitutional and legal outcomes related to cultural diversity.

50 By this time, native groups had already gained experience from their own education programs, thanks to international economic aid as well as some national non-native collaborators. Similarly, the University of Cauca had formed a research team on this matter in 1993 supported by the Colombian State.

the Plan of Native Teaching Training and Professionalization[51]. From the beginning the MEN team embraced the concept and term of Ethno-education to designate the different regional educational experiences and proposals of the time under the direction of Native organizations themselves[52]. The ethno development and the policy of interculturality that serve as a framework to the model of Ethno-education in Colombia since the 1980s could be analyzed in the light of other approaches and experiences like Canadian multiculturalism commented on in Chapter 5.

The Ministry team undertook the systematic task of organizing meetings of Native teaching training and professionalization. Among the highlights was the work at Mitu, Llanos Orientales, through the project: "Ethno-education as a socializing horizon" and the seminars of the "Training for Ethno-educators Program" in several regions of the country (MEN, 1990). This experience served to consolidate policy and institutions within MEN, consolidate and develop a team of experts and begin the task of theorizing on the issue. In this regard, the support of Native organizations that rapidly aligned themselves to the institutions of Ethno-education and the role played by academics, public and private

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51 Regarding these three initial tasks, MEN had published The First General Guidelines on Native Education in 1992. Also, the University of Cauca had organized the First National Meeting on Native Education Experiences, April 1995 in Popayán. At this event, the research team at the University of Cauca officially issued the first academic research in Colombia on the subject-matter of curriculum development for native education as well as some guidelines for teacher training programs geared to native regions.

52 This unexpected "tournage" from native education to ethno-education in the Ministry, which was passively accepted by natives, entered the national scenario over the length of a few months. Backgrounds for this "tournage" are in The San José Declaration (Costa Rica, 1982) on Ethno-development. The San José Declaration was introduced at the International Meeting on Ethno-development and Ethnocide in Latin America, called by FLACSO and supported by UNESCO at the end of 1981. This event brought together an important group of Mexican social scientists like Guillermo Bonfil Batalla. This Mexican author became a central figure in proposing and defending the philosophical and theoretical framework of ethno-development and its respective policy of interculturality for Latin America. The event was attended by some Colombian bureaucrats and native representatives that later on became promoters of this political framework in Colombian institutions.

universities as part of the institutional apparatus was very important. Since then, the concept of ethno-education has been a staple of Colombian public policy:

> *Ethno-education is a permanent social process that begins with culture itself and consists of the acquisition of knowledge and the development of values and skills that prepare the individual for exercising their thoughts and their social decision making capacity according to the needs and expectations of his/her community. (MEN, 1990)*

In its first period (1985-1992) the institutional development of ethno-education also benefited from the availability of economic resources for the educational sector thanks to a big loan the country had received from the World Bank in 1987 for the implementation of the New School in the Rural Area Program and the Automatic Promotion in the Urban Area Program (Sanabria y otros, 1993). The negotiators of the Native movement (Native organizations and similar institutions) succeeded in making the government accept the implementation of the Ethno-education Program and not the New School Program in the Native reserves through four strategies (funding for ethno-libraries, new school furniture, training of ethno-educators and building of school civil works).

This agreement gave birth to an institutional movement in the country that has not yet been studied in depth. From that moment on, the State started to transfer institutional responsibilities and official financial resources to the Native political organizations in order to co-administer public education. In this way, Native political organizations —once in resistance and confrontation- started to play an institutional role on behalf of the State and assume public duties in the educational sector: hiring of teachers, teaching training, educational evaluation, curricular design, and textbook publication, among others. This type of agreement was in a way reminiscent of the one between the State and the Catholic Church to administer education in Native territories only this time the new agreement was reached with the Native ethnic organizations themselves.

The anti-hegemonic nature of the Native educational proposal was partially proven; no longer was it about the promotion of a new educational proposal but rather about handing over total control of education to the Native people. In this regard the ethno-educational model and the political platform of interculturality have been successful and have remained in the spirit of the Declaration of San Jose, Costa Rica, on Ethno-development: "... elevate the social control capacity of the group through the exercise of autonomy over its own cultural resources and avoiding the imposition of foreign cultural resources" (Batalla, 1982).

Two other events helped strengthen the institutional development of ethno-education in the country. First, the celebration of the 500 years of Christopher Columbus' arrival to America boosted a series of political, economic and bureaucratic actions both in Europe and the Americas that created a climate of acceptance, even admiration, for the Native and ethnic agendas in the continent. National and local governments were forced to incorporate changes in their political, legal and financial systems and structures that provided space for the Native and ethnic issue in general. The majority of institutions created attention programs for Native and Afro-descendant communities. The different sectors of development (education, healthcare, communications, environment, etc) introduced working teams on Native issues. The media started to feature more Native subjects in their programming and civil society in general started showing affinity towards ethnic and Native causes.

Secondly, the country advanced a Constitutional reform in 1991 as mentioned before. This reform took place through a National Constituent Assembly that included three Native members: Lorenzo Muelas (guambiano), Franciso Rojas Birry (embera) and Alfonso Peña (nasa). These three constituent members in addition to the team of advisors and the whole force of the Native social movement, which by then was in full swing, achieved the inclusion of a series of ethnic and cultural rights in the text of the constitution. Later the groups have

demanded compliance with those rights thereby forcing a change or adaptation of the existing institutions as well as the emergence of new institutions in the country.

During the second period of institutionalization (1992-1998) ethno-education was further consolidated within the public educational system in Colombia. The Ethno-education Office became a Division in the Ministry's structure (a third level structure right behind vice-ministries), thus gaining not only greater budgetary allocation but also greater status and responsibility in the entire country[53].

By 1992 the Ethno-education Division had a working team made up of eight professional officials, three Native people and an Afro-Colombian woman in addition to two secretariats and an advisor for the Agreement with the GTZ (German cooperation body). During this period many national and international events on this issue were held; a large number of books were published; close to 2000 teachers throughout the country were professionalized as ethno-educators; several bilingual/ethno-education/ Native education programs were born or consolidated in various regional Native organizations and a large number of research projects by Native activists and academics were financed.

Four ethno-education university programs were formulated and started precisely during this second period. The University of Cauca pioneered a Degree course in Ethno-education Program in 1993 which started in 1994. Then the University of Amazonia, the Technological University of Pereira and the University of Guajira opened university programs of Native education and/or ethno-education; some of these universities even offer advanced studies of specialization and Master's degrees in Native education, intercultural education, ethno-education and

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53 During this era, MEN adopted the educational proposal of Afro-Colombian organizations into the policy and structures of ethno-education. Since then, Ethno-education has become the official educational model to serve natives and Afro-Colombians in the public education system.

multicultural education. All these programs are offered from diverse philosophical, theoretical and pragmatic perspectives. Presently, there are several universities throughout the country offering special facilities and criteria of admission to Native aspirants to different undergraduate and graduate programs.

The involvement of the Colombian academic world around the issue of ethno-education has not been very clear. First, many collaborators and activists of the Native social movements from the seventies were leftist academics who gave a political role to their disciplines and professions. Many of these academics later became advisors of the Native constituent members, then senators and elected representatives in later periods. The effort and commitment of these intellectuals and academics is evident in many of the political, legal and constitutional changes that have taken place in the country in the past three decades. On the other hand other academics joined universities from which they advanced research and teaching projects on the different lines and perspectives of education and cultural diversity (Native education, bilingual education, intercultural education, ethno-education, multicultural education). Some devoted themselves to advanced studies on the issue and many of them to the bureaucratic administration of offices, departments, projects and activities related to ethno-education. The academic sector has organized four university events on ethno-education to date: Riohacha, Guajira (1998), Popayán (2000), Santafé de Bogotá (2003) and Riohacha, Guajira (2007). These events have shown, not so much the diversity but rather the disparity of philosophical, theoretical and political conceptions on the issue of cultural diversity in education. On many occasions Native organizations have pointed out the futility of these efforts as they are not closely related to their social needs; some of them have even opted for setting up their own Native universities and offer university programs from their own logic, capacities and needs. The lack of theoretical and conceptual rigueur and seriousness on these issues by some

academics in the country has made it difficult to build an interpretation that is more pertinent and contextualized to our social, cultural and political conditions.

> *While it is true that the ministry was sensitized to the issue of diversity, to which the existing climate in the country with the opening towards ethnic groups was also a contributing factor, ethno-education did not gain much for it was neither not understood nor assumed by the other authorities. The approach of universality absorbed that of specificities, there was no better understanding, different languages were spoken, for example there was marked contrast between different approaches to PEI, etc. Besides, the dialogue between the regions and the ethno-education team faded a bit and the team became less dedicated in part as the result of four of its members leaving the ministry and the remaining four taking other responsibilities thus affecting Native education mostly. However the number of officers in Afro Colombian education grew from one to three[54].*

During its third institutional period (1998-2006), ethno-education lost momentum, budget and officials as a public policy[55]. First of all, the authorities at MEN created the working group on ethno-education in other departments of MEN in order to ensure the transversal nature of the model. The goal was for all officials at MEN, appointed to work in different tasks, to take into account not only the specificity of Native education but also the complete diversity of all population groups dealt with in Law 115/94. This idea managed to sensitize and alert the officials at MEN to their responsibility on this issue. However, real impact in every educational and curricular dimension (textbooks, curriculums, teaching training, etc) is still minimal. In the year 1998 only two officials were in charge of the Ethno-education program; without a budget they took to the huge task of transversalizing the ethno-educational dimension in all the work of MEN. The proposal of integration was not realistic for in such a plan, not only the

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54 This is a personal interview with Antonia Agreda, a MEN agent, working with the ethno-education group. Santafé de Bogotá, September de 1998.

55 Analysis about this era was obtained from Alberto Artunduaga, a former MEN agent in the ethno-education program (July 1998) in companionship of the well-known sociologist on these topics, Pedro Cortés.

Native but the ethnic in general is relativized and minimalized. In this way, ethno-education started to gradually fade away in the institutional field.

The plan of decentralization that the country went through during the nineties did not quite benefit the institutional development of ethno-education during the decade. While general education was in the hands of the Education Secretariats, Pilot Experimental Centers (CEPs) were in charge of ethno-education as direct representatives of MEN, which resulted in an administrative and financial type of decentralization but never pedagogical or curricular. Institutional Educational Projects (PEI - Spanish acronym), also called Community Educational Projects (PEC) by Native organizations were an alternative to the already mentioned problem of decentralization. However, the Education Secretariats and the officials did not understand such proposals —or they may feel afraid or guilty of the Native issues- and many of the proposals would die at the desks or at the doors in the offices of education secretaries or educational nucleus directors. On the other hand, ethno-education did not improve educational quality and management indicators in the areas where it was implemented. This has affected the credibility of the model and its institutions. The efforts and resources invested in the past fifteen years in teacher training, production of textbooks, curricular design and institutional adaptation for ethno-education are huge. However, the achievements in the classroom are still poor. There is a great gap between a thought curriculum, a designed curriculum, an implemented curriculum and an accomplished curriculum. We could assert that in this last institutional period, ethno-education was left without a clear interlocutor within the structure of MEN. Now, communities and organizations do not know specifically who they should go to, as every official at MEN should be in a position to clarify concerns and requests under his responsibility. But in the most refined logic and the most common sense of the word, we know that everything and nothing are the same.

The last three years must be better documented so as to propose several analyses and categories of study about the turn of events for ethno-education in our country. Native political organizations, Native communities, the academic world, institutions, the State and the Nation are going through a period of repositioning of their visions, agendas and working proposals vis-a-vis the issue of cultural diversity. Due to the fact that the four views analyzed above are not clear, there are no precise official directives either to guide the main actors of the public educational system with regards to the issue of cultural diversity. The educational policy and the cultural policy in Colombia are not in sync.

A hermeneutical practice of the previous ideas (constitutional, legal, political, institutional and academic) allows us to establish that while the ideas and objective have been outlined, the reality and the course of society do not coincide with them. The rights consecrated to Colombians by virtue of culture and their group belonging are not protected within the official policy and institutions. The Ministry of Culture has concentrated its efforts in an artistic-folkloric look at culture. The Division of Ethno-culture for example was absorbed by the Division of Cultural and Artistic Promotion thereby losing any specificity for the work with ethnic groups. The Ministry of Culture coordinates the National Cultural System through local and regional authorities (local culture committees or councils) that are not always participatory or democratic. This poses a problem of representation and legitimacy that deepens the institutional crisis. This same Ministry does not advance actions for inter-institutional adaptation and coordination with the Ministry of Education for the synchronization of the public policy of education with the public policy of culture.

In the educational sector there is a similar situation of lack of coordination between theory and reality. There are numerous regulations that enshrine the right to an education based on language and culture but these are not implemented by regional institutions. The interpretation and implementation of

the regulations are left in the hands of each official who in turn are not trained or updated as to the educational and cultural regulations. The social relevance as well as the conception and practical implementation of each regulation depend more on the strength of local negotiators and social forces than on the political and ethical reasons set out to build society. Therefore, there is an evident theoretical and conceptual shortage on the cultural issue in relation to issues like Nation, participation, autonomy and common well-being.

The national development plans lack continuity, which causes the dispersion of projects, programs and resources. This clearly shows the need to first have State policies[56] before government policies, so as to harmonize these two sectors of development in a longer time frame. But at the same time, ethnic and population groups as well as other sectors of cultural diversity should think about a project of Nation and *Colombianidad* to propose to the entire country that includes the views of their communities and groups which they can jointly administer taking into account the needs of the Colombian people. Such a vision does not exist.

For its part, the Colombian academic world faces a great challenge with respect to clarifying many of the concepts and terms that are used in the formulation of public policy and its later practical implementation. Policies are built with concepts and concepts are built with ideas and words. Words, ideas, concepts and policies are social expressions of power relations and negotiations. Then, the cultural, multicultural and ethnic subject dealt with in the political and legal dimension for which institutional programs are designed is an abstract and artificial entity that does not match the idiosyncrasy of our groups and communities. Conceptualization works have failed to shape the historic subjects with social sense, cultural body and political relations that inhabit the country.

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56 In Colombia, a 10-year Development Plan for Education is compulsory by law. Such a Plan must be maintained by all successive presidents in power. The current Development Plan is valid until 2017.

Therefore the groups represented in the institutional and legal texts are artificial stereotypes of the Native, the Afro, the farmer, the disabled person, etc, which later become dysfunctional subjects for public policies. The groups and subjects of cultural diversity express their artificial dysfunctional nature through proposals of self-exclusion or self-segregation that complicate the administration of the country. Finally, the academic world has devoted itself to the study of the cultural and educational issue from a perspective that is merely enlightened and encyclopaedic rather than from the social and human praxis of the groups in Colombia, who in the end are the ones positively or negatively affected by the social policies that we design today in the country. Therefore they are the ones with whom we should first think, consult, associate and design any educational and cultural policy for all Colombians.

CHAPTER FOUR

A CRITICAL REVISION OF THE ETHNO-EDUCATION MODEL IN COLOMBIA

As is stated in chapter two, since the 1970s, the Native political organizations in Colombia began their own efforts to adopt educational programs that are coherent within their own context and culture (Romero, 2002). Various models and proposals appeared on the national scene due to the diverse groups, social dynamics and educational expectations that they proposed. Therefore, the genesis of these models cannot be thought of as orderly, chronological nor as an evolutionary process since it is possible to find some of them in the same time frame as well as overlapping within each other in the same educational proposals. (Singui y Henao, 2009). Among the most outstanding models we could cite Native Education, Bilingual Education, Own Education and Ethno-Education. The latter is the one we are interested in analyzing in this chapter as it was instituted in the official model of the Colombian State, contained in the law and the public service of education (as is presented in Chapter 3) oriented exclusively toward those groups of the Colombian population with ethnic status. On the other hand, because Ethno-education gathers and foments the political model of interculturality/interculturalism for the establishment of inter-group relations in Colombia, I would like to discuss it under the lens of the approach of multiculturalism.

4.1 Models and Educational Approaches that Serve Ethnic Diversity in Colombia

Four main models and educational approaches that serve ethnic diversity in Columbia will be discussed in this section: Native Education, Bilingual Education,

Own Education and Ethno-Education.

4.1.1 Native Education: An educational approach led by Native organizations beginning in the 1970s, this approach proposes that any educational project should be designed with the people in accordance with their specific situation. As a model it refers to an endogenous socialization process whose objective is the reaffirmation of culture and to teach Native people to live within the community and work for the community with the aim of guaranteeing the survival and reproduction of its people. (Romero, 2002). In the early 1980's, the Colombian State temporarily moved toward this model primarily through the Minister of Interior and the University of Cauca, who began the process of support and consolidation of these types of educational experiences through the offices and programs of Natives education within some institutions.

4.1.2 Bilingual Education: A political and educational proposal by the Native organizations (led by the CRIC) aiming to move towards more self determination, control and autonomy for Native peoples (CRIC, 2004) through the promotion and reclaiming of the use of mother tongue in school as well as obtaining fluency in Spanish as a second language. An educational model in accordance with the linguistic and cultural characteristics of the Native population is being considered, but the major focus will be put on the political agenda of the proposal. This is an anti-hegemonic proposal with the aim to take control of the school apparatus from the hands of the state and into the hands of the Native organizations themselves (Romero, 2002).

4.1.3 Own Education: An educational proposal that goes outside the limits of school without forgetting the responsibility that the Native community has to define, organize and control education under their own cultural dynamics and worldview. As a model it promotes the return to ancestral traditions, beliefs and values in order to train all of the members of the community; it focuses on

integrality. This proposal has gained strength lately among Native organizations in Colombia, for many people it is the most suitable proposal in order to return to a life centered on community and culture.

4.1.4 Ethno-Education: An educational proposal that arose initially as a government political education project during the mid 1980's, under former President Virgilio Barco, in order to normalize and regularize most of the education experiences initiated by Native organizations. The most prominent characteristic of this proposal is the role that education and school must play in integrating Native people into national society and the development of the country. The political and ideological agenda of ethno-development, based on the philosophical and interpretive framework of interculturality, came to give support to this approach as a social, political and institutional model. Ethno-education was adopted by the Colombian State, by converting it into a state policy. Nevertheless, the more it was considered a state policy, its use became less common among the Natives and Afro-Colombians, returning more often to the first ideas mentioned above or proposing more contemporary hybrid ideas and terms, intercultural bilingual education, community education and multicultural education (CRIC 2004) among others. As I have mentioned in the previous chapter, the model of ethno-education was also applied in the early 1990's to people of African descent in Colombia (Rojas y Castillo, 2005); meanwhile in the other countries of the Andean sub region, with larger Native populations, it was consolidated exclusively for Native communities under the name Intercultural Bilingual Education (EBI or EIB).

Ethno-education then became the official policy of the Colombian State in order to guarantee the right of basic education for groups with ethnic status in Colombia and is currently administered by the Public Education System. Therefore, it is important to comprehensively revise the characteristics of this political and pedagogical model that achieved standardization and normalization

of the different approaches that existed before the 1980's. A comprehensive re-examination of the ethno-education model permits us to analyze the concepts, philosophies, theories, ethics and policies that underlie the current public education system in Colombia in order to serve the high level of social and cultural diversity in the nation; and to later compare said concepts with those in other areas and countries in order to deliberate about its successes, failures and possibilities for the country.

4.2 Problems that Arise in the Context of Colombia's Public Policy of Ethno-Education

At the turn of the century in Colombia, culture-based education has converged into more of an official, institutional and academic subject through the ethno-education model. Most official programs as well as education programs for Native organizations are running on the framework of interculturality proposed by the ethno-education model. On an annual basis, national and local governments regularly allocate some of the official budgets toward ethno-education initiatives. In addition, the MEN bureaucracy and its local representatives are playing a standard role as ethno-education promoters in some Native and afro-Colombian regions. MEN also are allocating substantial official budgets for Native political organizations to manage public education responsibilities on an ethno-education basis. In addition, there are seven functioning undergraduate programs in Colombian universities, offering teacher training programs in ethno-education (Universities of Cauca, Amazonia, Guajira, Tecnológica de Pereira, Bolivariana de Medellin, UNAD and Tecnologica del Choco). Also, two postgraduate programs on multicultural education and ethno-education began in 2000 and 2009 at the University of Cauca. At the same time, Native organizations have organized complex educational teams of research and administration on this matter. Currently, the Colombian government is contracting with Native organizations over some of the educational responsibilities in the Native territories

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(resguardos). The economic factor, due to the estimates that the government annually allocates to the Ethno-education program in the National Minister of Education, has a lot to do with the acceptance of this model on the part of some organizations, communities, institutions and academics. As mentioned previously, the ethno-education model was introduced more recently, sharing some features of overlapping and fusion with other models; therefore, ethno- education in Colombia also has the characteristics of co-participative construction between the state and some Native political organizations that are backing this model.

Because all of these are relatively new phenomena in the country, some changes in educational institutions, administrative levels, governmental programs, Native organizations, Native communities, teacher training programs and so on should be realized after in depth analysis, discussions and deliberations. At the same time, a comprehensive public policy to deal with the cultural diversity of the nation as a whole is required. In this complex context of change, ethno-education is just one way or focus to deal with cultural diversity based on ethnic criteria. Intercultural political focus began to show some limitations in embracing the complete diversity of the country and new paradigms and traditions should be taken into account in order to solve some current problems and avoid future ones. Different factors of diversity such as social class, gender, region, religions, age, etc. have come to play a role in the Colombian political scenario after the constitution. Therefore, the time has come to enrich and improve our model of public education policy for cultural diversity in Colombia which dates from the 1980s.[57].

Based on all of the above mentioned issues, I come to the first set of problems regarding the ethno-education model and its intercultural policy. To begin with, the concept of cultural diversity expressed in the current Colombian public

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[57] In Chapter Five, I will discuss and propose new up-dated angles to see this phenomenon, based on Canadian theory and experience on multiculturalism.

education policy, particularly in the ethno-education model, promotes group segregation and it does not encompass the entire cultural diversity of the nation. Second, such a concept negatively affected the original educational initiatives of Natives and Afro-Colombians that began during the 1970's. Third, the national public education system for the rest of Colombians was, to some extent, degraded. Fourth, the ethno-education model lacks a clear and proper philosophical and theoretical framework regarding cultural diversity in the country.

Delving into historical reviews about bilingual education or Native education proposals generated by Natives since the 1970's, I believe that the ethno-education model, adopted by governments in the mid 1980's, was a strategic political device used to restrain (co-opt) Native educational proposals due to their ideological nature of community resistance[58]. Ethno-education affected the original Native initiatives because it stopped the education projects started by Natives and from their own political platforms and social struggles, in the pursuit of the democratization of the public education system. The Native educational project in the 1970's was not just an academic or a curriculum proposal; it was a historical construction of many social, political and cultural projects in the regions where education played a core role. Native education and schools were seen as battle flags to bring communities together and organizing them to move forward to economic and political aspirations and rights. Ethno-education limited such historical construction giving greater weight to scholarly and institutional emphasis, grouping all the experiences under just one label and reducing the intensity of any ideological component of the Native Education Project. These projects had reached some very interesting pedagogical and community innovation levels as well as being well integrated into the new social and ethnic

58 Nevertheless, I must mention that Native social movements have become an emblem of social resistance in Colombia; they are the actors facing the war as well as the elite's economic and political model.

movements. Nevertheless, centralization, regulation and unification were the main principles adopted and promoted by Columbia's Ministry of Education in order to get control of the different Native and afro-Colombian education proposals under the single label of ethno-education.

Curiously, this device created an institutional and governmental matrix where each ethnic status group (Native or afro-Colombian) was segregated (self-segregated, in some cases) from the education system of the rest of the population. In some ways, the ethno-education policy did not carry out the ideals of nation, citizenship, pluralism, participation and common wellbeing contained in the Colombian constitution of 1991, limiting the concept of cultural diversity only to the ethnic dimension. The above mentioned focus gave weight to "ethnic minority status" as the unique factor of cultural diversity in the country, affecting, in turn, the whole public education system; and neglecting, the right to diversity for the rest of Colombians.

The other side of the coin is that the ethno-education model affected not just Native and afro-Colombian original initiatives. Paradoxically, the whole education system in Colombia has been affected, in a certain way. It has brought to some extent the degradation of the general public education system due to the conflict of inter group relations that it has generated as well as complicating the ability to govern some regions. First, ethno-education has not contributed to improving national education standards in relation to mathematics, reading and writing, TIC´s and modern languages, widening the gap between rural and urban education. Second, ethno-education has complicated the ability to govern and to administrate the education system in regions where groups compete for public education budgets.

Finally, ethno-education did not re-adjust nor develop concepts such as nation, pluralism, citizenship, and participation debated and accorded in the 1991

constitution because these debates were absent in the 1980's when the model began and was adopted. This was mainly because the public education policy was designed and implemented without a clear and context based philosophical and theoretical discussion about the current cultural and social diversity in the country. Social and cultural groups in Colombia cannot be grouped under just one abstract and general label of ethnicity. Each group is a social and historical subject that must be represented in a particular way according to its historical, social and cultural relations to other groups and the rest of society in order to build a more effective public policy. Public policies are constructed from interwoven ideas, concepts and words but, they only get their meaning and purpose after social practices are adopted and implemented.

Currently, there is an ongoing debate in many Colombian scenarios regarding the acknowledgement of specific rights for ethnic-status groups (Natives and Afro-Colombians) contrasting with the more complex cultural diversity of the country. Coming from pragmatic social movements and political negotiations of power, the debates show neither substantial philosophical vision nor standing theoretical arguments that nurture the discussions and reforms in order to envision a new society keeping in mind the new 1991 constitution. For instance, some of the main problems that have arisen since the promulgation of the new Law 115/94 of Education and Chapter III concerning Ethno-education are related to the different understandings of basic concepts (such as pluralism, cultural diversity, cultural policy, ethnicity, multiethnic, polycultural, cultural community, cultural right, historical right, ethno-education, intercultural, multiculturalism, etc.) by each social and cultural participant in the country. There is no consensus and much less a unified political theory or anthropological and sociological studies that could offer solutions to help cope with this problematic issue. The Government, Afro-Colombians and Natives interpret the law and the constitutional mandate regarding the ethnic-based educational rights and cultural status according to their own perspectives, interests and historical experiences.

The discussions have lead to an array of different political interpretations and positions not always collaborative or cooperative but instead, some interpretations have caused more frequent inter-group confrontation and conflicts among the sectors of a single group[59]. As I mentioned in the last chapter, not handled with caution, ethnic relations and cultural diversity in Colombia could become a time bomb added to an already complicated and unclear future of the country.

Throughout the last three decades, confrontations and political negotiations between governments and ethnic organizations have transpired most often in the context of those schools which are located where Natives and Afro-Colombians live. Historically, school is not part of either the Native or the afro-Colombian tradition. Ideologically, school has been used as the main device for cultural assimilation. Pedagogically, bilingualism, didactics and cognitive models are not similar for each group. Politically, ideas and plans of social development are not necessarily congruent for Natives and non-Natives. These issues have been stated and discussed as the most prominent problems of the educational agenda causing a step-by-step change in the whole education system in the country. Nevertheless, social research, strong theoretical developments and inputs from basic disciplines to support and qualify the proposals and changes are absent in the Colombian debates, documents, programs, laws, etc. The above-mentioned situation causes general confusion and institutional problems since any decision taken is based on opinions, levels of power, group interest and conjuncture situations rather than a rationality of governability and development of the country. Thus, the education system has been improved or degraded according to different points of view which are not necessarily well informed, documented or intentioned. In 2010, the policy of Ethno-education will reach twenty five

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59 In March of 2009, for example, a new regional Native organization was formed in Cauca with the support of the national government. This new Native organization was rejected by the traditional Native organization (known as the CRIC) who accused the government of a strategy of breaking up the unity of the Native movement (ACIN, 2009).

years of implementation in Colombia and a broad-critical review of its success and failure as well as its scopes and challenges has not been done until now. There are local studies and short-term reviews of the policy and experiences in some regions of the country, but those are not comprehensive at all (The University of Guajira, 1999; The University of Cauca, 2002; Instituto Colombiano de Antropología, ICAN, 2002).

In order to get out of this limitation, new context-based philosophical, ideological, theoretical and political frameworks, as well as an ethical one are urgently required in order to give clarity and support to Colombian public policy to acknowledge specific rights based on ethnicity and cultural diversity in the public education system. These rights must be granted according to the ideals of nation, citizenship, participation and common wellbeing contained in the 1991 constitution instead of specific ethnic group interests raised from social struggles. Their absence has a negative repercussion on the quality of the debates, reforms, and institutional administration of the whole public education system since each group holds somewhat specific political positions on the matter. This fact does not always lead to cooperation but rather causes some intergroup conflicts.

At this point, several questions become relevant for discussion. I will offer some partial answers and shed some light on the path we should follow, in the near future, in order to get a better understanding regarding the problems and challenges in our public education system. Taking cultural diversity into account, what is the actual relationship between public education and the social project in Colombia? Considering the ethnic and cultural diversity of the nation, what should be the impact of the education system on social change and development? What approach better informs the public education system and institutional arrangements in Colombia regarding international standards on pluralism and goals toward diversity? Is ethno-education contributing to address

a public educational policy for cultural diversity in the country? How can reconciliation be achieved between the educational proposals of government, Natives, Afro-Colombians and the rest of society based on justice and common well-being as well as an appropriate interpretation of the constitution? What are the pedagogical foundations supporting the different proposals of educational change in a highly diversified country like Colombia? How are the different theories and disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, political sciences, pedagogy and social psychology contributing to the construction of a pluralistic public education system in Colombia? Also, what can be done by academia or scholars and by professionals in contributing to find a way out of the present situation of conflict and low standards of quality in the public education sector?

Despite all efforts, ethno-education (and its intercultural framework) is not a well-established model in Colombia or in Latin America for multiple reasons. Firstly, it exists as an educational proposal toward ethnic groups, more than a public policy of education delivered to society at large, and connected to a pedagogical model, for addressing cultural diversity in education and society. This is not going to change until further philosophical and theoretical developments take place to bring more clarity and context based models to address this issue. EBI and ethno-education have made some advancement but those are still not sufficient. Political advancements were expected by the historical origin of this type of educational project (decolonization) as well as the governmental goal of the project in the last decade (centralization, normalization and regulation). Therefore, basic education rights for Natives and Afro-Colombians have been acknowledged in the last two decades at the political and legal levels. It is now necessary to reach greater advancement at the pedagogical level in order to bring the policies into practice as well as extending such rights to society as a whole. Nevertheless, rights are not completely protected and promoted by the state agencies or by official institutions since the bureaucracy is not clear about what these rights really mean and they do not

receive effective support from governments about this matter. Governments have taken advantage by co-administering and transferring these responsibilities to international humanitarian organizations, Native organizations, religious groups or relaxing the time frames for taking any serious decision on major matters.

Secondly, given the previously mentioned situation, the educational policy has not been well designed. There is a tendency from the state and from ethnic social movements to hold radical opposing positions concerning educational decisions at regional and local levels. The state's public education system has been divided or fragmented into at least three political models and strategies: education for Natives, education for Afro-Colombians and education for non-Natives, adopting a purely ethnicist focus and rejecting the multicultural options and experiences of the majority of citizens in the country. Different factors of diversity such as gender, religion, social class, exceptionality, etc. are commonly ignored or underrepresented because pluralism is focused only on an ethnic dimension. The political and interpretative framework of interculturality, at least as it has been understood in Colombia, has put Natives, Afro-Colombians and non-Natives at different poles or extremes, giving each one the illusion of an artificial purity that allows it to be self-contained, discrete and easily separable from other groups. Of course, this illusion is transferred to public policies, plans of development, education models and so on, complicating the co-existence and inter-group relations in the country. Ethno-education is a very good example of such an illusion.

Thirdly, there is a lack of critical discussion, new concepts and open mentalities about pluralism, diversity and cultural policies closer to Latin American values, cultures, societies and development projects in the globalization context and reality. It will be difficult to evaluate and adjust the policy until some institutional, academic and non-governmental groups are able to open the

spaces and discussions to include a range of different critiques and concepts. Some university and Native groups have become true mafias or cartels in managing education in Native and afro-Colombian regions. The Ministry of National Education in Colombia has made some mistakes on this matter by giving backing to a few institutional and Native proposals under the social pressure principle. Therefore rigorous studies and critiques taking into account cultural diversity as a wider concern are covered up, rejected or ignored by the ministry's bureaucracy because those have come from groups and individuals with different concepts and state expectations about this matter. In the absence of an educational and pedagogical model that brings together cultural diversity articulated to ethnicities and social movements in the public education system of the country, we are fertilizing the soil for segregation and inter group conflicts in education. "All bilingual educational projects in Latin America are being affected by no articulation with national educational systems. Nevertheless, administrative unity is an essential requirement for effectiveness in education" (Citarella, 1990).

Taking into account that Natives and Afro-Colombians resisted 300 years of conquest and colonization plus another 200 years of republican rule in a subjugated condition, it is a pertinent question how these groups have survived in keeping, developing and transmitting their languages and cultures until now. Culture-based education could be the key to assist Latin American governments to find a way to reform and improve their national educational systems keeping in mind the inclusive agenda of the new constitutions in the region. The great challenge at this time is to develop a new perspective about cultural diversity that takes into account intergroup co-existence, territorial unity, cooperation and solidarity as being important factors for public policies. It is not only about cultural inclusion or integration, which still masks the colonialist agenda moving minorities to be included into majority perspectives. It is about building common spaces and representations of society, culture, nation, public, economy, wellbeing, etc., which move all groups to collective agreements about society

and ways of life. Multiculturalism and its educational agenda, which I will discuss in the next chapter, could give some input in order to develop educational models, policies and strategies keeping in mind the Latin American perspectives on development and wellbeing. Cultural diversity must be an option for everybody and the foundations of multiculturalism should be considered in helping Latin American countries cope with some of the problems and artificial barriers raised during the last few years. The general perspective of ethno-education in Colombia must be improved in the near future. Even though Natives and Afro-Colombians have made some social improvements in the past two decades, until education in the country is re-oriented to serve the nation as a whole, any structural solution for the improvement of ethnic communities as well as national education in the country will be delayed.

In the above-mentioned framework, it makes sense to follow-up, to do an analysis and to produce a critique[60] about the main development of public education policy in Colombia regarding cultural diversity and ethnicity in the last decade, looking for some kind of theoretical framework and philosophical deliberation to interpret the conception, impact and contributions of some policy approaches like interculturality and multiculturalism, leading to the creation of a better education system and peaceful society in Colombia. Delving into some philosophical deliberations and accounts it is possible to arrive at an understanding and detailed interpretation on the political, sociological and pedagogical requirements for a new education policy in Colombia. A new policy and model of education that pays attention to some demands from ethnic groups, as well as, maintaining constitutional foundations about cultural and educational rights, is urgently required in the country. With this task in mind, some critical issues must be studied that allow the understanding of

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60 Critique must be understood, modestly, in Kant's proposition of producing understanding, explanation and interpretation of any phenomenon by using a kind of rationality leading to enlightenment.

contemporary educational problems and demands that ethnic status groups and the Colombian government have concerning the quality and improvement of the public education system as well as the inter group relations in the country. Qualitative changes or adjustments not only in the political and legal levels but also in some theories of education and social sciences, teacher training programs, training of bureaucracy and institutions are essential to any reform and improvement in the near future. Philosophical deliberation on this issue is the first step in such a direction.

A second set of problems is related to the institutional developments of ethno-education. Currently, in some sectors, including the education sector, it seems that the gap between the widely recognized juridical rights of ethnic groups versus the institutional capacity of the state to guarantee them is widening, on the national level as well as the regional and local level. The gap is widening between the strengthening of Natives´ legal and political rights versus the state's capacity to respond to this social demand. Finally, in the national and international legislation rearrangement, new paradigms and situations of ethnic and cultural diversity appear which should be assumed by the institutional structures and the organizations based on their own experiences.

At the regional level (departments y municipalities), where the institutions of ethno-education has always been weaker than on the agency level of national character, the organizations are experiencing a growing frustration, antagonism and radicalization toward the educational entities. There is also a growing uncertainty and rejection on the part of official institutions and non-Native teachers toward the radical and ethnicist attitudes of some organizations, advisors, leaders or Native teachers. Consequently, a source of conflict lies beneath the historical and political juncture that must be managed with much responsibility on the part of the institutions and organizations in order to asses ethnic and cultural diversity in the spirit of coexistence, unity and peace

enshrined in our Constitution and not through destructive clashes between ethnic sectors, those with institutions and between the institutions themselves by their functions and interpretations of the rights granted to ethnic groups.

Institutional weakness on the national and regional level has intensified due to the fiscal and political crisis that has, in the last few years, severely affected the state, including the education sector, and consequently ethno-education as well. Likewise, the appearance on the national and international scene of other sectors of the population that claim ethnic status in order to connect themselves to the state (the case with Romas and immigrants in Colombia) as well as the enrichment of the concept of diversity beyond the ethnic and cultural has put forward other concepts and political agendas in the political arena for the institutional treatment of pluralism and diversity which complicates matters further. Diversity does not end with Native, Afro-Colombian and Mestizo expression but rather in the meeting points and contact that really enrich their cultures as was mentioned before.

It has been less than two decades since the constitutional reform of 1991, and it seems as if ethno-education has lost much in the institutional arena, as much in the ministry as in the departmental and local levels. It gives the impression that for ethnic groups, its chance has come and gone in less than ten years, at the beginning of the past decade. Likewise the efforts to conceptualize and produce political guidelines on this subject at the Ministry are at a standstill. Some parts of the pioneering team on this subject in the ministry were dismantled due to a set of ideas and dynamics of an administrative nature, and they were not able to demonstrate the importance of this subject for all of the public education system in the country.

4.2.1 Local and National Institutions
With the motive of successive restructuring by the National Minister of Education,

from Law 115, ethno-education was degraded from Division level (1994-1995) to a subgroup of the Educational Community Group, which belongs to the Research and Pedagogy Development Division (1996-1997). Subsequently, the term ethno-education itself disappears and becomes two programs: *Programa de Mejoramiento de la Calidad de la Educación para Comunidades Indígenas* and, *Programa de Mejoramiento de la Calidad de la Educación para Comunidades Afro-Colombianas* (1998). Currently, the team that takes care of specific matters of ethno-education is part of the collective of the "*Grupo de Atención a la Comunidad Educativa y a Grupos Poblacionales*", with only four out of the ten of the initial officials[61] and the responsibility to "integrally" serve all of the so called demographic groups.

From a budget perspective, ethno-education quickly became severely affected by the cutbacks of the present economic crisis, reducing the initial estimate Ca$ 550.000 to Ca$ 355.000 in the 1997 term, as well as, losing the autonomy that they had up to this point regarding the allocation of said resources as they were later managed by a Division of the Education Ministry and directly implemented by agreements with the departments and municipalities. In the term of 1998 an estimate was not allocated for ethno-education, thus, the only contracts carried out during 1999 were financed by the unused funds from the previous term (1998). The designated estimate for ethno-education, generally included in the respective investment plans of the PND of Presidents Samper (1994-1998) and Pastrana (1998-2002), were not included in the following development plans of the current President Uribe. (2002-2006, 2006-2010).

The first attempt to dissolve the ethno education team occurred in 1994, with the commendable intention to impede the isolation of ethno-education and its ghetto status, which in reality tends to occur in institutions. As for the authorities

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61 Currently (April 2009) there is only one official at MEN with specific duties and time to attend to ethno-education matters.

responsible for ethnicity, it was stipulated that its members be redistributed to other institutional offices so that they could contribute in sensitizing them and ethno-education would be carried out throughout the ministry's structure[62]. If the Ministry did indeed achieve a better awareness of ethnicity, the Ministry did not totally assume the responsibility of ethno-education in its totality, rather much was lost of the dialogue and the dynamic that was developing in the different regions of the country. The experiment only lasted eight months.

Currently, a small component of the original team that was set up to promote ethno-education is located within the *Atención a Grupos Poblacionales* team: adults, the displaced, extremely gifted, the handicapped, and the socially rehabilitated, among others. It is argued that in this way, in being with other groups with special characteristics they will have more strength, and a better possibility to influence the diversification of education and that all these groups will be served "integrally" by one interdisciplinary team. The focus here was put on differences before diversity, accomplishing a concept of double society where hegemonic groups open some political and institutional spaces to "the others".

Once again good intentions clash with reality, because these groups with special characteristics, and such specific dynamics, require different treatment and consequently, full time specialists to serve them, which does not imply an extrication from the rest of the institutional structures nor the national system of education. Included within the field of ethno-education itself the individuals who have for years specialized in the practice of Native education, are not qualified to direct Afro-Colombian education, much less to deal with other types of special

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62 In 1995 on this matter it was pointed out that: "...experience demonstrates that the treatment of ethnicity in a different manner, as specificity demands, requires the involvement and specialization of institutional agencies of said cause. With the breakup of the Division of Ethno-education, there is the risk that ethnicity will become diluted and marginalized once again, the conditions are still not right for assimilation for those who have experience with these issues". Mondragón, Héctor; Suárez, Teresa y Cortés Pedro. (995). La Constitución y los Derechos Indígenas. In Los derechos sociales, económicos y culturales en Colombia. Santafé de Bogotá: Consejería Presidencial para la Política Social-PNUD: 186.

education. The same would occur in claiming that, for example, specialists in education for the disabled direct Native education or vice-versa[63].

These reflections bring to our attention that policy for diversity is one thing and policy for those that are different is quite another. While the first stimulates diversity and emphasizes the identity and richness of each culture, including the majority culture, the second denies such diversity and leads to actions reminiscent of the remedial approach in "special" education. Likewise, these reflections make us think about the conceptual complexity, policy and management that are required in order to institutionally assume the challenge of the nation's diversity and pluralism, ethnic as well as cultural, in the education sector and in our constitutional framework as well as the new tendencies worldwide.

The necessity of a different treatment in the multiculturalism framework (not the differences that isolate) affirming the identity of certain collectives, such as the ethnics and may others; but also, the national identity and the possibility of shared meanings (common and inter-subjective) of human beings and groups, as well as the need to construct an institutional framework for it, is still unresolved and is something we should all contribute to. It is not a matter of training the Natives as a ghetto within these entities or backing ethnic fundamentalism but also not allowing the dynamic itself to become institutionally diluted, confused and destructured. Ethno-education cannot be isolated from the dynamic of the Education Ministry because when it comes time to make decisions and allocate resources they are not taken into consideration. More importantly: Ethno-education is not a matter for ethnic groups only but rather a subject for all of

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63 Up until now, I do not know of one single evaluation that was done with the Colombian experiment of joining Native education and Afro-Colombian education under the same model and policy of Ethno-education. If they did indeed have a few workshops together each group was left with their respective conclusions. A similar interrogation could be formulated about ethno-education policy in regards to assimilating the new actors that appear on the national scene as they begin to reinstate their rights.

society and the state in order to construct a pluri-ethnic and multi-cultural nation: it is not part of an ethnic policy but rather cultural diversity for the nation as a whole.

Likewise, a new institutional actor, the Minister of Culture, has entered the Ethno-education field since 1997 with duties determined by a law, which should be considered in the debates about the future of institutions in this matter. Law 397/97 created the Minister of Culture and not only put the Ministry of Culture in charge of the task "to coordinate a state action in order to form a new Colombian citizen", bringing culture to the political arena, but rather assigned to the Office of Ethno-culture (now assimilated by the *Dirección de Fomento*), the task of coordinating and supporting the action of the Ministry of Education in regard to Ethno-education. Therefore, at the State and central level the subject of Ethno-education acquired an inter-ministerial responsibility that should be understood and carried out.

On the other hand, at the regional and local level there is a feeling that there is little capacity on the part of the administrative agencies of education to lead these processes and to act in a coordinated, coherent and effective manner as it corresponds to Ethno-education as a public function. Clearly, one characteristic of Ethno-education is that it has been led by social organizations more than it has by the state. From the reviewed literature is possible to point out that a direct relation with the Ministry of Education has generally been more productive than with the territorial and local organizations. The majority of the departments (provinces) requested do not have a structure in the interior of the *Secretaria Pública de Educación* that carries out these matters; as well, there are no officials that are dedicated to these matters they are not qualified nor do they have adequate conceptual, political or administrative tools to solve the problems that present themselves.

Frequently, the contradictions or a lack of coordination between different entities (Secretaries of Education, Secretaries of Ethnic Affairs, Native Affairs Commissions, Universities, etc.) hindered the efficiency for action. As an apparatus of the state it would be difficult to escape manipulation by partisan politics or political intrigue, thus leading its functions becoming redundant.

Also, contradictions are emphasized between the ethnic groups and the institutions in the regional and local boundaries in the rest of the social and cultural matters, which in part explains why this tends to reoccur at the central level where less resistance and stronger alliances are found. At the international level solidarity with Native people has been defining influence in their struggle.

The dialogue, which in the case of the Natives has always been more favorable with the central state, has been greater with the ministry than with the Secretary of Education, during its time it was even more difficult with the CEPs, agencies that were directly dependent on the ministry and that ultimately complicated the work in the region, instead of facilitating it (García y Sanabria, 1993). Nonetheless, to the extent that the decentralization of the country deepens, the entities at the departmental order and especially the municipalities, are increasingly called upon to respond to the public function of joint education in articulation with the national policies of the state and of course in the framework of our constitution and recognized rights.

In the last few-years the official actions of the departments were in many cases left in the hands of the officials for Native education and another for Afro-Colombian education, which seemed rather detached from the Secretariat of Education, an ideal situation for personal agendas, loose cannons, misinformation, and bureaucratic attitudes, etc. This is indeed the situation in various departments. With the end of the CEPs, these individuals were relocated or dedicated to very different tasks, in such a way that the new individuals in

charge had to begin almost from zero since in this type of work, experience, approach, concepts and methodology are not improvised nor are they grasped when the replaced officials did not act correspondingly.

Government changes affect the stability of the programs and many times the ground that has been won is lost. Part of the problem has to do with the fact that decentralization has been administrative and financial not pedagogical, therefore this aspect continues to develop from the centre. The economic penury of the administrative education entities and the significant labor problems erode the directives in the administration of poverty, leaving little room to think, orientate, advice and consult in education. The Natives complain of a lack of will and political involvement, technical capability to advise them, economic resources, including administrative capacity on the part of the secretaries.

On the part of the educational programs of the Native organizations, dialogue has been better at the central level, leaving the departmental levels more and more isolated while developing a growing antagonism with the respective organizations. On the other hand, the state's process of decentralization grants greater responsibilities to the municipalities in regards to educational services and in this way reduces the role of the departments. The latest trend of the Colombian State in regards to the institutional and financial theme has yet to be evaluated and has to do with the direct transfer of economic resources that the Colombian State has been sending to the Native organizations since 2007 with the goal of co-administering education within the resguardos (reserves). Law 715 and the new system for hiring teachers (*Sistema de plazas oferentes*) permits for example, that in a department such as Cauca, the regional Native organization CRIC administers approximately Ca $15´000.000 (fifteen millions of dollars) per year from the estimate of the nation for educational services of Native communities under their influence.

4.2.2 Social Dynamics

Contrast the previous with the fact that, the social, political and cultural dynamic of ethnic movements in Colombia, has not only been sustained for two decades but has become broader. In addition, currently there is a proliferation of educational programs on the part of ethnic group organizations, with a number of innovative experiences. There is a growing demand for implementation of ethno-education in all of the municipalities with this type of population. Advances have been made in the processes of training and curriculum design for basic primary education. University programs have been created leading to university degrees including specialization and masters degrees [64] and encompassing initiatives that Native organizations are in charge of [65]. Nevertheless, State guidelines to put order and synchronize these matters are absent today.

The strength of this social dynamic also expresses itself in capacity and autonomy that the organizations and communities have been accumulating for the administration, financing, training and curriculum development. They practically function as departmental secretaries for ethno-education (at least the Native ones do), with specialized consultants, ONGs and universities. They demonstrate a great capacity for the management of national and international financial resources including on the part of the state itself, with the capacity to co finance through the transfers that the reguardos are receiving. They also maintain permanent communication and exchange of experiences on the national

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64 The following universities have ethno-education programs: Universidad de La Guajira: Bachelor in Ethno-education and one administrative agreement with other big region (Vaupes); Universidad de La Amazonia: Bachelor in Linguistics and Native Education; Universidad del Cauca: Bachelor in Ethno-education and postgraduate program (Diploma and Master level) in Multicultural Education and Ethno-education; Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira: Bachelor in Ethno-education; Universidad Distrital de Bogotá: Bachelor in Ethno-education; Universidad Tecnológica y Pedagógica de Tunja: Bachelor with a component in Native Education; Universidad Nacional a Distancia: Bachelor in Ethno-education. Also the National University invested two years on a feasibility study for a master's degree in Ethno-education, which was not definite.

65 El CRIC at Cauca has a degree program in community education underway and the creation of the first Native university of Colombia (Universidad Indígena en Colombia).

and international scale as well as a direct dialogue with the ministry. But they are also developing their own institutional framework, based on the cabildos (Native councils), that are also part of the state, with special jurisdiction, and with the perspective, for the Native territories to set themselves up as territorial entities and consequently, to manage themselves. This includes everything that refers to education or to influence directly and efficiently the institutional framework that manages education. This is the case, for example, in the north of the province of Cauca where the cabildos (Native councils for government) have designated their own representatives to officially coordinate with the Municipal Secretaries of Education. The possibility of promoting an Own Education System (*Sistema de Educación Propia-SEP*) nationwide is being explored (which is Native at the moment). Precisely one of the topics of discussion at the *XIII Congreso Indígena del Cauca*, that took place between the 26th and the 30th of April in 2009, was related to the implementation of *Sistema de Educación Propio* (SEP), in the hands of the Native political organizations, which is a topic of discussion with the Colombian State that will affect not only the lives of Native communities but the rest of Colombians in the coming years. Again, State bureaucracy is not well prepared as a fair interlocutor on these types of proposals.

The above suggests that the gap tends to widen between the social dynamic formulated by the ethnic groups, and the institutional capacity of the state to direct, advice, finance and train its teachers and to support itself in fulfilling all of its functions that have been assigned by law 115 and its regulations[66].

With the restructuring of the educational administration from Law 715 and the circumstance of initiating a new regional and local governmental period (the gubernatorial and mayoral elections of 2008), a great expectation is introduced regarding the institutional service and the adjustments to the policy of ethno-

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66 Especially Decree 804/1995, which develops Chapter Three in Law 115 de 1994.

education because, if indeed the law could be a good opportunity to place institutions at the level of jurisdictional development, it could also, on the contrary, widen the gap between the acknowledgement of jurisdictional rights and the institutional capacity of the state to guarantee them, as is the case between social dynamics and the institutional capacity to carry them out.

In the current and fragile conjuncture of national policy, with the effort towards dialogue and the harmonization of alternative changes, it is the responsibility of all Colombians, in all fields including that of education and of course Ethno-education to bring alternatives that contribute in resolving the current crisis and problems among the different social sectors and contributing to the success of constitutional aspirations to make Colombia a unitary nation of cohabitation, democracy, justice, peace and pluralism (art. 1.), in which the ethnic and cultural diversity of the nation is recognized and protected (art. 7.).

Ethno-education is a specific and concrete field where we can confront and measure ourselves in meeting these challenges. The construction of a pertinent set of institutions, at the level of the current and future requirements of the country and the world, must be a joint effort, inclusive of all the institutional actors such as the organizations and communities. Academically, the universities have a wide variety of disciplines, just as the organizations have specialized human resources and a considerable amount of experience with specific groups and communities. Administratively, other than the official authorities, the *cabildos* are also public entities with a special character that can exercise significant and efficient support in the exercise of education as public function. Financially, these organizations have also demonstrated an ability to manage national and international resources. So that, in the middle of such a crisis, there are possibilities to move forward when there is a sincere willingness on all sides.

A participative strategy is required from all actors. Efforts are necessary on the

part of all of the actors to understand their own limitations and the point of view of others; to make one-self sincerely available for dialogue, to not turn meetings into power struggles, condemnation and waste.

It is clear that with the state we have, we will not achieve the society that we want; that institutional transformations are necessary and that we have to construct these with everyone's efforts, from a global interest of society in order to guarantee the rights of all the social sectors and make them fulfill their duties with the state and society. The state is an essential part of social life and in the current circumstances the necessity of its transformation is urgent so that it responds to social requirements and does not become an obstacle but rather supports and guarantees rights and cohabitation. It is important that the state not be above or against the projects and social aspirations but rather an instrument at their service. In some way, ethnic groups in Colombia are leading the process of transforming the State and institutions.

The conjuncture that we are living today shows that peace and development for Colombians is not achieved with more arms and revenge; nor with the infamous impunity of our justice system; or by erasing from public and private memory the atrocities committed by armed individuals and the state itself. There is hope for peace only if we begin to make inroads with dialogue and reconciliation among all Colombians, as an opportunity to methodically propose, design and construct an adequate institutional framework for present and future needs. If this new opportunity is lost, it will condemn us to hopelessness and the atrocities we have been running from for many years... a hundred years of solitude, again!.

4.3 Ethno-Education under Multicultural Categories

The political, ideological and historical foundations of ethno-education have changed from the 1970's and 1980's to this first decade of the 21st century.

Therefore, the ethno-education policy should be updated with new concepts about pluralism, culture, diversity, ethnicity, and autonomy that we have today in the post constitutional era. Several problems are stated in the regional and local level referring to ethno-educational policy due to differences between the focus of the policy and the reality of the communities. From the two set of problems mentioned above, five problems could be selected in order to initiate the debate from a multicultural perspective. The first problem is the short focus of the policy because it is oriented only toward Native and Afro-Colombians. The second problem is the multiple dimensions and factors that diversity and pluralism have and should be taken into account, for all groups in society. The third problem is the policies that focus on difference rather than diversity. The fourth problem is the separatist tendency produced by different public educational policies in Colombia rather than a unique public educational policy, which should bring together different pedagogical models. The fifth problem is a lack of contemporary paradigms about culture, contact, migration, globalization, and so on.

The Ethno-education model, then, could be studied and interpreted by using the Sleeter and Grant's theory (1999) of multicultural education. By dealing separately with Natives, Afro-Colombians and mestizos, the Colombian public education system reinforces ethnicity as the only factor of diversity in the country. Such a policy can be described as a Single Group Studies approach in relation to Sleeter and Grant's theory.

Sleeter and Grant propose five different approaches that teachers can use to deal constructively with race, culture, language, social class, gender and disability in multicultural schools and classrooms[67]. These approaches are as follows: 1) Teaching the Exceptional and the Culturally Different, 2) Human

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67 Sleeter, Christine and Grant, Carl. (1999). Making Choices for Multicultural Education: Five Approaches to Race, Class and Gender. New Jersey: Prentice Hall

Relations, 3) Single-Group Studies, 4) Multicultural Education and, 5) Education that is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist. According to the first approach, modifications are made in schooling to facilitate student's academic achievement and their transition into the mainstream culture that white, middle-class children are learning. The main goal of schooling is to assimilate the young into society by giving them the cognitive skills, concepts, information, language and values required by hegemonic society. Educators help children who are different become part of the mainstream through education. The human relations approach promotes positive feelings among students and reduces stereotyping, thus promoting unity and tolerance in society composed of different people. Teachers support students to communicate with, accept, and get along with people who are different from them and empower students to feel good about themselves and about the groups of which they are members. This approach is aimed at the emotional level.

The Single Group Studies approach advocates the reduction of social stratification and raises the status of the group with which they are concerned. This approach empowers an oppressed group through critical teaching in order to transform unjust social conditions and benefit the identified group. This approach goes from a single unit or course regarding the culture of a group to a complete program of studies based on the perspective of that group.

The multicultural education approach promotes respect for alternative life choices taking into account the human rights framework in general. It strengthens cultural diversity and social justice by promoting equity in the distribution of power among groups. It builds on students learning styles and skill levels involving students in active thinking and cooperative learning.

Finally, education that is multicultural and socially re-constructionist in its approach deals more directly with oppression and social structural inequality

based on race, social class, gender and disability. This approach prepares future citizens to reconstruct society so it better serves the interests of all groups of people. At the school level, it organizes content around current social issues and use students' life experiences as starting points for analyzing oppression, teaching critical learning skills and analysis of alternative viewpoints. It teaches social action skills and empowerment skills.

So, how does the Colombian model of ethno-education work according to these approaches? Based on the Sleeter and Grant's theory, I have monitored the official policy of ethno-education in Colombia since 1994 when the new Law of Education was promulgated. As I mentioned in chapter one, I have followed a hermeneutical method in order to analyze the government documents, scholarly publications, Native political organizations declarations and so on in order to understand the model and type of multicultural education adopted by Natives, Afro-Colombians and the government in Colombia. Ethno-education is the term used to identify the Colombian policy that deals with ethnic diversity in the public education system. Ethno-education would resemble the Intercultural Bilingual Education (EBI) adopted by other Latin American countries.

Based on the ideological agenda of multiculturalism and the political framework of multicultural education, it could be stated that a policy of multicultural education in Colombia does not exist since diverse factors such as race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, and so on are neither legally nor politically acknowledged. Ethnicity is the one and only dimension acknowledged in Colombia concerning the social and cultural diversity of the country. The social situation of the minorities and the lower socio-economic classes at large has not changed and political policies have made little sustained attempt to change inequality in the country. Similarly, EBI, in other Latin American countries, is a very segregationist model of education aimed at Natives, separating them from the rest of society and bringing new problems to these countries.

In addition, the programs and projects of ethno-education are increasingly acquiring a multi-dimensional aspect that goes beyond the limits brought up in chapter III of Law 115, dedicated to ethno-education. At the academic gatherings and deliberations we can assess, for example, that the experiences that are narrated go beyond the limits of the merely ethnicist approach of ethno-education through other lines such as: Native education, Ethno-education for the Natives, Ethno-education for rural people, Ethno-education for re-socialized people (*reinsertados* or former guerrilla members), Ethno-education for Blacks and it has been commented at an event in the Guajira province to offer ethno-education programs for sex workers. For the above, the limit fixed by the law is broken by the reality of local experiences which take on diversity from a wider concept than merely ethnic or at least that they involve other factors not necessarily contemplated by Ethno-education in the official policy and that they are related to diversity from a more multicultural concept. Nevertheless, we are producing and legitimizing different education policies for each sector of the country, fomenting the fragmentation and disunion of the country. If we do indeed have only one General Law of Education (*Ley General de Educación* 115/94), the regulation of this law has obeyed the political, administrative, territorial, regional concepts and union interests that are not coherent nor do they unify the state and the nation. We are currently talking about and promoting educational policies for urban zones (automatic promotion), rural zones (new school) and for rural Native zones (Ethno-education) instead of integrating under one public policy for education of the Colombian State with specific pedagogical models that serve said specificity of diversity. In this sense, the multicultural approach offers some possibilities in resolving the problems detected.

The interpretive formulation of interculturality is based on a political principle that emphasizes the recognition of autonomy and appropriation on cultural

resources but also rejects the alienation and the imposition of foreign groups, when dealing with subjugated groups like Natives for instance. These concepts are not sustainable viewed from other interpretative approaches such as multiculturalism that emphasizes those common and shared aspects of the groups, supporting the cohabitation, unity and social cohesion, and the unity of national territory. This could trace a path that avoids some outbreaks of ethnic and other types of violence that are beginning to escalate in the country. It is not gratuitous that other state and institutional sectors are starting to formulate a multicultural framework as the basis for the development policies for the country, especially, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of the Environment and National Planning. Thus, the Ministry of Education and its education policies must begin a gradual adjustment in the present ethno-educational policy that permits the modernization of its foundations in line with the reality of national society.

Therefore, the ethno-education model in Colombia fits into the Single Group Studies approach, which could be considered the method that Natives and Afro-Colombians are using in Colombia according to Sleeter and Grants' theory. Presently, Natives and Afro-Colombians are developing educational programs based on their own cultures and languages. Nevertheless, those programs are being carried out only for Natives and Afro-Colombians separately and they do not incorporate Mestizos [68] (mainstream) or other cultural communities. This schema of inter-group relation is causing a segregationist lifestyle among ethnic groups from the mainstream bringing some new problems of governance and inter-group cohabitation in some regions. Historically, there has not been a strong cultural minority group with the power to challenge the hegemony and bias of the Mestizos and the upper social classes. Therefore, the absence of power and real interlocutors makes Afro-Colombians and other cultural

68 I still am not totally clear about think Mestizos like ethnic group in Colombia. From my talks with sociologist Pedro Cortés about this issue, he suggests that Mestizos is something like the matrix where other social groups find social and political arrangements configuring the societal culture a kind of net that should facilitate the accommodation of each piece of a cultural mosaic.

community's dependant and subjugated to the central benefactor state and its educational proposals appear as leading to marginalization and adoption of counter-hegemonic models.

Schoolwork is directed more toward hegemony's ideological, political and sometimes academic issues rather than a real social project of pluralism and cultural development of all groups of the country. The Ethno-educational reforms are not linked to other wider educational movements and reforms in the country such as rural education, adult and popular education, environmental education and free basic public education. Curricula, instruction, school materials and administrative styles are being changed in order to give more power to ethnic groups. Nevertheless, the general structure and essence of western patterns of school based education is not being challenged. In this way, pluralism is an inconclusive and euphemistic project which is masked by ethno-education (and its intercultural policy) in Colombia.

> In this epoch of humanity, groups tend towards contact and communication. Thus, multiculturalism proposes advancement towards the reformulation of a more profound spirit of interculturalism, adapted to a world of movement, contact, exchanges and negotiations that give a place to flexible and dynamic cultural identities that are not static nor rigid. (Document, Intergovernmental Conference for Cultural Policies for Development UNESCO Stockholm Sweden, 1998).

This reformulation calls for a new relationship based on ourselves, which identifies us and unites us and brings us together culturally, while still maintaining a specific policy that belongs to a group, ethnicity or other. The reality of a wider and diverse cultural dimension produced by contact (pluri or multi) does not eliminate the ethnic option. Likewise, cultural diversity is found not only within ethnicity but also within the ethnic group. Pluralism, then, proposes an intergroup but also an intra-group plan of acknowledgement. This

characteristic allows us to think that the cultural institutional scene must respond to two things. On the one hand it must respond to a multicultural policy, as an articulator of diversity, and on the other hand a differentiated action that respects diversity.

The fact that the principles of the law incorporate the idea of citizen training from the perspective of cultural diversity, solidarity and respect for a culture of peace, introduces new necessary variants in the discussion of culture that links it with the political system. It is necessary to see that when speaking about the cultural in relation with the political we are speaking about a cultural policy and of a political culture in place of a more complicated convergence: the effect of the cultural in the definition of the political system of the state and the nation; a political system that enables the ethnic and cultural diversity of the nation as a communal option for all Colombians. Our citizenship and nationality are not based on difference or equality, but on our similarities: what we have in common, in the things and matters that bring us together and that for which in the spectrum of diversity, all Colombians opt for in unison. Nevertheless, the human groups because of their cultural characteristics that do not fit into the economic, political and social order established by the majority, have the right to have their differences recognized as a foundation in the principles of human dignity, pluralism and the protection of minorities (Constitutional Council, Sentence T-605, 1992). In constitutional terms, cultural diversity is related to lifestyles and world concepts in aspects of race, religion, language, economy and political organization that do not always coincide with the customs of the majority of the population.

Cultural diversity is a frequent human experience for all Colombians, thus, multi-ethnicity and multiculturalism are common options for each and every inhabitant of the nation. Common because each Colombian irrespective of formal ethnic, class, or other social label experiences daily, albeit at different levels, the

dimensions of ethnic and cultural diversity of the nation. It is an option because it serves to a major or minor degree in the promotion of one-self as a human being depending on the knowledge and the values each person has regarding cultural diversity in their social setting.

Multiculturalism (as philosophy, ideology and concept) includes not only the Afro-Colombian, Raizal, Native but other groups such as the Roma, cultural minorities (immigrants), cultural communities (gays, exceptional, regions, etc.) and the rest of Colombians, who are currently moving forward the process of the search for peace and wellbeing, contributing to the development of the regions where they live. Such a possibility widens the democratic horizon of Colombian institutions and of their own policy adjusted to the complicated cultural reality of Colombia (*Dirección de Etnocultura*, 1998). Thus, education in general and Ethno-education in particular require a modernization of its foundation with new approaches that link the changes of the concepts about ethnicity, culture, diversity and pluralism that today are part of the political arena in the country and the world. The historical conditions of Colombian society, as well as the groundwork produced in the 1970's and the 1980's that permitted them gain ground at the beginning of the 1990's in the constitutional reform are not the same in this new century. Thus, it is time to take into consideration, to analyze and to learn new philosophical and political frameworks that have resulted in peace, prosperity and governability in other countries. Multiculturalism, and the example of other countries, could be a path full of opportunities for Colombia that we should explore today.

CHAPTER FIVE

PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF INTERCULTURALITY VS MULTICULTURALISM APPLIED TO THE COLOMBIAN CONTEXT

Quibdó is a regional city on the Atrato River; it is the capital of the Department of Chocó. It has a population of about 60.000 inhabitants who are for the most part civil servants, employees, and merchants. It is situated in an intercultural zone of Black, White and Indian populations. Indians live in the forest remote from the city, near the headwaters of the rivers. They are being driven further inland by the pressure of the growing Black population with concomitant loss of their lands. The cultural mechanism of subordination used to bring Indians into contact with the people of the regional city of Quibdó is the "Fiesta of the Indian", which takes place during the Easter week.

The Emberá Indian group accepts an invitation to the fiesta and defencelessly enters a territory foreign to their habitat and culture. Their reception by officials and the public has been organised for the past forty years with the object of "civilising the Indians" by dressing them and persuading them to enter the Catholic Church. Both blacks and whites do their best to make Indians drunk. The public posture of the white Catholic priests, both Spanish and Colombian, is expressed in the condescending charity of old clothes and public dressing of the recipients in the streets. Finally, they select one or two of the Indians who are dressed to be part of the group that acts out the scenes of the Last Supper of Jesus Christ and the twelve apostles in the cathedral. The Indian becomes a comedian who amuses children and adults alike. His personal adornment, his language, his physical traits, his obvious ignorance of the Catholic ritual, which pervades the life of Quibdó during Easter week, become(s) the factors that structure the stereotype of the Indian. The fiesta takes place in a context of general drunkenness in which the blacks and whites do violence to the dignity, rights, and cultural identity of the Emberá people. It is also the opportunity for reinforcing and spreading attitudes in favour of the cultural ethnocide, which occurs in these fiestas.

The climax of the fiesta is reached on Saturday and Easter Sunday, after the Indians have been drinking all week in the various bars and cantinas. Often the Indian families fall asleep on the sidewalks or in the doorways

of houses. When drunken quarrels occur between Indians, the townspeople urge them on in the hope of enjoying a foot and fistfight. Other people load the Indians into jeeps and trucks and drive them through the streets of the town. A high-ranking white government official once condescendingly commented...'these poor Indians simply love to ride in cars'. On Saturday of Easter week, Judas is given to the Indians... a healthy-white stereotype Judas. Then, the parade begins. Judas is seated in a chair and carried on the shoulders of the Indians... The parade passes with jubilant crowds through the main streets of Quibdó. The band is playing trumpets, drums, flutes and cymbals. The Indians who dance in the parade become foolishly drunk... According to the custom, the Indians then (Sunday Easter) receive the body of Judas and tore it to pieces, amusing themselves by putting on the costume and shoes and dancing with the torn-up pieces of the head and body. The crowds of townspeople stayed, enjoying the spectacle until the organisers decided to begin the last act of fiesta and ordered lunch to be served to the Indians. They sat down on the ground in the same plaza and each receives a plateful of rice and beans. The whites and the Blacks then left the plaza. Easter week as well as the Fiesta of the Indian is over... The evening of the same day and the following morning, Indian men, women and children began to leave the town for the banks of the Atrato River (Friedemann, 1976).

5.1 Race, Ethnic and Intergroup Relations in Colombia

The above-narrated picture about the context and development of ethnic, race and intergroup relations in Colombia has been changing over the past 30 years. Nevertheless, there is still a long way to go before Colombians get a full understanding about the challenge and advantages of cultural diversity, political pluralism and new cultural policies for democracy, peace and development of the country... a long way to go before understanding that human beings do not require any other essential condition to be respected, be it culture, gender, social class, whatever... just being another human being[69].

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69 The current data and statistics shown by several national and international organizations about the social and political situation in Colombia, as well as, day-to-day media reports, do not need to be replicated here in order to sustain this assertion. In the Global Peace Index, Colombia ranks 130 between 144 countries. Further details at http://www.visionofhumanity.org/gpi/results/rankings/2009/

Although the social, economic and political situation of minorities in Colombia has improved in the last thirty years, the above-mentioned picture illustrates the vision and policy of cultural integration addressed by the hegemonic society and the Colombian State toward minority-status groups, looking for a certain kind of deculturation and homogenisation, needed for the building of the nation and development of the country. Social and cultural integration, by means of intercultural policy and on a political basis, was, and still is, the main framework of ethnic and race relations in the country. It was developed under a long experience of contact and relationships among different groups in the country, as well as, following the experiences and the policy interpretative frameworks from other Latin American countries. Reducing cultural diversity to ethno-cultural group presence was the initial way of Colombian society to understand and manage pluralism. For our case, multicultural approaches are relatively new ones on the Colombian political scenario, to understand and manage ethnic and race relations as well as an array of new cultural factors. Western societies in the past tended to be neutral in terms of recognition of ethno-cultural diversity into their territories.

> Liberal states should be neutral with respect to ethno-cultural identities of their citizens and indifferent to the ability of ethno-cultural groups to reproduce themselves over time... Just as liberalism precludes the establishment of an official religion, so too there cannot be official cultures which have preferred status over other possible cultural allegiances. (Kymlicka, 1998)

Although this issue has come to be widely discussed and challenged in the new political arenas of Western countries, the final goal of such a policy was the promotion of a societal culture and this latter has not been openly challenged. Cultural diversity in a societal culture is a fact or reality that liberal democratic systems did not destroy; therefore, it is a fact that we must continuously question ourselves and our assumptions about what, how, why and for whom we

should be managing cultural diversity, keeping in mind the well being of each cultural group as well as society at large.

> By a societal culture, I mean a territorially-concentrated culture, centred on a shared language which is used in a wide range of societal institutions, in both public and private life, covering the full range of human activities... societal cultures within modern liberal democracy are inevitably pluralistic. (Kymlicka, 1998).

A societal culture is needed in order to pursue the goal of nation building, which is regarded by many liberal theorists as very important to legitimate democratic goals (Patchen, 1999). The promotion of a common national language, a sense of common identity and membership and a societal culture are seen as foundations of liberal democracy. Michael Levin (1993) also complements this assertion with a distinction between ethno-cultural and ethno-nationalist groups. The ethno-cultural groups are ethnic groups holding a particular cultural and linguistic identity with aspirations of being recognised into the nation but these groups do not have aspirations of sovereignty, secession, or separation from the larger nation like the ethno-nationalist groups have.

Pluralism in contemporary societies has been promoted through an array of cultural policies formulated by each country according to its history, context, groups composition, and so on. For instance, multiculturalism and interculturalism are just some of the political agendas and policies that address and acknowledge cultural diversity and pluralism in some societies. Pluralism denotes diversity, formal or official acknowledgement of it, and stands in opposition to one single approach or method of interpreting society (monism). Cultural pluralism is a term used when small groups within a larger society maintain their unique cultural identities. In a pluralist culture, unique groups not only co-exist side by side, but also consider qualities of other groups as traits worth having in the dominant culture. The existence of such groups, institutions

and practices are possible if the cultural communities responsible for them are protected by law and/or accepted by the larger society in a pluralist culture.

Regarding ethnicity in Colombia, I may momentously affirm that Natives (2%), and Afro-Colombians (15%), with different levels of political power and cultural tradition, compose just one part of the official Colombian ethnic and race relation spectrum and this fact needs to be discussed in the context of a broader political framework of cultural diversity. More accurately, Natives and Blacks are the only groups with visibility and collective political power in the country today, establishing intergroup relations with Mestizos (82%), Romas (0.3%) and immigrants (0,6%) on the basis of ethnic status and contemporary-intercultural approaches. The "Fiesta del Indio", excerpt cited at the beginning of this chapter, exemplifies this type of integration oriented approaches which can be found in the public education system since the late 19th Century. Although the constitutional reform of 1991 has strongly stated a broader political conception of pluralism and cultural diversity, it has so far had only a moderate impact in legal outcomes, institutions, government and civil society at large. The Ethnic dimension still continues to be the major focus of each policy recognizing cultural diversity in Colombia.

Due to the over-emphasis on ethnic dimensions, there is not a policy of culture addressed to the entire nation, but instead, there are different policies depending upon the each group's political power and capacity of social mobilization. In this way, interculturality serves the political pluralism proposals by promoting a societal culture where groups can compete. Until now, Natives and Blacks have been the most visible ethnic groups demanding and negotiating ethnic and collective rights with the State and the rest of society as previously explained. Romas and some small cultural minorities (mainly immigrants from some Arabic and Asian countries, as well as, from Japan) are still not consolidated political

communities capable of negotiating collective rights with the Colombian State[70]. These latter groups are usually neither mentioned in the national media discussions nor taken into account regarding the political agenda of the legislative and executive powers. Therefore, changes addressing cultural diversity issues in major institutions, governmental settings, provincial and local programs and so on are only related to Natives and Blacks in Colombia. A new focus on society where all groups in the country can cooperate, as well as, on multiple social and cultural factors introduced by multiculturalism agenda such as gender, social class, region, exceptionality, among others is notoriously absent in the current intercultural framework.

Then, many problems inherited from intercultural integration policies still remain and some of them have become worse in the last decade. The Colombian nation as such is still a collage and abstraction of different images, interpretations and powers in the country. Whites (mestizos with economic power), Mestizos, Natives, and Blacks are still the main social groups trying to find their own balance in the intergroup relations of society, culture and power arrangements. Colombian political forces are still trying to adjust all the public systems and institutions to the new dream and mandate of 1991 Constitution regarding multiculturalism.

The changes promoted by the new Constitution are aimed at all levels. Regarding ethnicity, terms such as Natives, Afro-Colombians, cultures, ethnic group and minority gained relevance into the State, governments, institutions, social movements as well as in the social sciences literature. New ethnic groups and political communities have challenged the notion and assumption of the Colombian nation –*Colombianidad*–, forcing to incorporate a more comprehensive

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70 It is important to mention that cultural minorities (immigrants) and cultural communities in Colombia are mostly urban phenomena, making it necessary to extend the cultural diversity discussion from traditional ethnic rural groups to urban groups in the country.

approach of cultural diversity and a more cooperative framework for political pluralism. Colombian governments have been forced to adopt new political policies for the whole nation dealing with issues of culture, language, ethnicity, region, gender and social stratum in order to find a balance between ethno-cultural groups, cultural minorities, cultural communities and societal culture in the country [71]. Therefore, the multicultural approach moves forward from conventional intercultural approaches by promoting a wider set of cultural factors as well as a more collaborative agenda for intergroup relations.

Romas and many other communities self-represented before as peasants have claimed ethnic status during the last years; but these claims are still not fully resolved. Having ethnic status bestows on the owners all the benefits of holding two citizenships -as individual and as member of a collective- to participate in the State process. From these positions, ethnic groups have really impacted the life of the society at large. Immigrants (Arabs, Asian and Japanese) that have a low representation and political power in the country are seen more as cultural communities. These groups participate in the life of the nation and they are called cultural minorities. Those cultural minorities maintain some of their cultural traditions and social identity but they are neither totally entitled to cultural diversity rights nor taken into account in further political and legal developments. Some of them are not even looking for special status within the nation and have engaged in the societal culture. These groups are citizens like Mestizos with no special rights. Only ethnic-status groups (Natives and Blacks) are covered by both the individual and collective rights guaranteed by the Colombian government's ratification of the last three-generations of universal Human Rights Declarations (civil, political, economical and cultural ones) as well as the 169 Convention of International Labour Organisation on Native and tribal rights.

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71 Natives and Afro-Colombians could be considered like ethno-cultural groups in the country. Arabs, Asian, Eastern Europeans and some immigrant communities come to be known as cultural minorities. Cultural communities are constituted by people grouped around other cultural factors as gender (feminist groups, for example), religion, exceptionality, region, etc.

Ethnic status groups in Colombia do not have explicit claims of sovereignty, self-determination, independence and separation prompting the conditions for a multinational or even a different nation state. Therefore, the nation-building project is still a common goal in the country. Furthermore these do not possess the social and political conditions for secession from the country. Although Natives represent 2% of Colombia's population, they own 25% of the Colombian territory given by special collective titles that defend the Native right to administer and develop it in coordination with the government and public institutions (Arango and Sánchez, 2004). Thinking about ethno-nationalist aspirations requires more than a common legacy of culture and ethnicity. Historical conditions of economic power, social stability, and political strength are basic conditions to pursue any ethno-nationalist project. The social and economic conditions of Natives are still precarious and their political power and community organisations still need to grow up. In addition, Blacks are not too well organised like Natives in terms of political community. Some Black communities have received big properties of land in the Pacific coast through collective titles that granted them some forms of co-governance into the framework of the new Constitution. They are recently acquiring experience on local government, resources administration, public matters and so on. They still have some specific matters to deal with in the near future with the national government in terms of constitutional recognition, development and participation as ethnic group.

In addition to the above-mentioned social landscape, some ethnic groups in Colombia are still struggling for a complete reform and change of the Colombian State in terms of multicultural recognition[72], social reconstruction and equality-based development. Multicultural recognition was consecrated in the New

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72 I came to find the very first references to multiculturalism in Colombia in the work of two well-known anthropologists: Ann Osborn (1989) and Roberto Pineda (1995). Similarly, Cauca University has lead since 1995, an array of discussions in political and academic scenarios about this political approach and its convenience for the interpretation of the country.

Constitution and the current task is in knowing how to translate this recognition into the legislation, political contexts, institutional settings, media, civil society and so on. Social reconstruction is expected to follow at the heels of the settlement of basic societal problems such as guerrilla and paramilitary groups, drug cartels and foreign debt. Equality-based development has proceeded by negotiation with all social and cultural groups in the society (ethnic groups, unions and syndicates, bankers, business men, etc.). These latter mentioned issues are macro challenges in the present life of all Colombians in order to get out of the current social crisis.

Nevertheless, this on-going process of constructing a multicultural State and nation with contributions from different groups is a very difficult dream in Colombia. Despite the fact that the New Constitution captures well a fair representation of our nation by promoting a balance of interests, things do not work as well in reality. Social cohesion, national unity, cultural inclusion and sustainable development are just a fiction today, after almost 20 years in the new Constitutional order. Colombia, by its geography, is also a very highly-diversified country on the basis of physical, geographical and environmental factors[73]. Furthermore, contemporary scholars define at least nine complete different social and cultural regions in Colombia (Jaramillo, 1994, Martinez, 1996). The United States of Colombia was one of the big dreams of the liberator. Simon Bolivar after the Independence (1819). It can never come true since we have a very fragmented country and divided society. Internal political divisions between federalists and centralists, conservatives and liberals, catholic church and liberal elite, and so on have driven the country to endless periods of continuous battles throughout its history. Political power has been well distributed in such a manner that each group and region has had the chance to resist, survive and sometimes rule, becoming the country in a chaos well known

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73 In the international ranking, Colombia is the second country in the world containing the biodiversity of the planet. Information available at http://www.cbd.int/

in the international arena. Generation after generation each group has been unable to recognise the other groups in the country to share a common destiny, a feeling and a history expressed eloquently by the Colombian Nobel Prize winning author in *A Hundred Years of Solitude*. (Garcia-Marques, 1967).

Despite the constitutional declaration of pluralism/multiculturalism in Colombia, the society at large and some ethnic group representatives have assumed a particular and still narrow perspective on the intercultural relations in Colombia. Cultural diversity is understood and guaranteed on the basis of ethnic roots. Each group competes for its own interest over the Nation´s interest. Natives and Blacks are the only groups with State protection over their cultural and language matters. Cultural minorities, cultural communities and other minority groups still are targets of assimilation policies. The conception of culture and cultural diversity is applied only to groups with official ethnic status. A broader and holistic concept of culture promoted through the multicultural agenda is blinded. Cultural factors such as gender, religion, social class, disabilities, etc. are not much taken into account for the development of public policies, loosing important opportunities to promote both, cultural diversity and social justice. The Mestizo group continues being hegemonic in power and still dictates the levels and grades of openness for ethnic participation. It is a case where a majority group decides how, when and where minority groups can participate in order to de-escalate tensions and social protests. It is just another contemporary face of "La Fiesta del Indio". New social theories and applied interpretative frameworks to the Colombian context do not show up in the academic horizon. Furthermore, it is a fact that the economic and structural matrix of Colombia is worsening day by day.

Ethnic and minority movements have moved forward with their own political agenda but this agenda does not really encompass the nation as a whole. Natives and Blacks have been concerned with their specific Native and Black

issues, foregoing the opportunity to engage all groups of the nation in their political project. Although they are not openly looking for territorial separation or sovereignty, some of their proposals address issues of parallel governance, self-government and co-government. It is not really clear how these proposals can address the interests of the entire nation. Besides that, Natives, Blacks, cultural minorities, and cultural communities do not have a strong political organisation, structure of work and economic resources. Internal disputes, corruption, abuse of power, among others are some of the new problems that ethnic groups are facing with their leaders.

The multiculturalism agenda in Colombia for orienting a new ethnic and race relations process, as well as, bringing a whole array of cultural factors to the political scenario is still far from being what is stated in the international multicultural policies and it is much further from being a self construction. Capturing the social dream of the new 1991 Colombian Constitution implies the recognition of the social and cultural diversity as well as the real possibilities that the new multicultural approach offers to such a complex context. In the Colombian paradox not one agenda should be taken for granted. There is still a big distance between representation (Constitution) and reality (society) in Colombia. Frequently, fiction before ethnography is the only way to get a picture and understanding of the country. It is not gratuitous that "Magic Realism" is a literary genre born in this country.

With the light shed by the above-mentioned information, one could attempt to move forward with an interpretation about ethnic and race relations in Colombia. Nevertheless, the cultural policies, nation-building project, liberal democratic principles and so on became irrelevant when one is confronted with the social reality of Colombia. The long standing and on-going process of violence, the escalation of the war in recent years, the unsuitability of institutions and policies, the instability of economy, the presence of guerrillas, paramilitaries, the

army, the drug cartels, constitute the background for understanding ethnic and race relations. The building of the nation and the development of a societal culture were and still are the main goals set up by Mestizos in order to reach the governmentability and the development of the country. Although the perception of these goals have been adjusted after the Constitutional reform of 1991, the pure fact is that there is not any guarantee of political rights for any ethnic group under the current situation of war in the country. Law and order are euphemisms in many regions of the country. Ethnic and race relations are based on the power of the guns more than on the power of the ideas or political negotiations. Natives for example have openly declared and developed very creative mechanisms of resistance and survival. In terms of the principles of a liberal democracy ideology (rule of law, freedom of the press, freedom of conscience, habeas corpus, free elections, etc), Colombia is far from fulfilling the aspirations of many of its citizens. Ethno-cultural groups have no real chance to negotiate and establish more suitable forms of ethnic and intergroup recognition. Taylor (1992) for example argues that people in the modern world have a basic need for recognition and without minority rights many groups feel misrecognised or simply invisible. Without recognition people do not engage in the nation-building project and they feel alienated in their own lands. Today, it is a rhetorical euphemism in Colombia where minority groups are much more concerned for their own life and survival than their recognition. Social and physical inclusion is becoming increasingly more important than cultural recognition (Cortes, 2003[74]). The latter mentioned scenario is the real stage where groups are playing their ethnic and race relations in Colombia today. Therefore, the set of concepts and theories become useless, sometimes, when one tries to approach such a complex and dramatic situation. Images and metaphors still are the best resources for

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74 Among the main tendencies in the military conflict in Colombia, in relation to the displacement of natives, Afro-Colombians and peasants, are: the expansion of war over the all national territory including native regions; the conflict escalation from the mid nineties due to the increase in number of paramilitary groups and; the social degradation manifested in massacres, human rights violations and international humanitarian rights remain unacknowledged. Also, displacement of many communities is one of the major consequences. (Cortes, 2003)

understanding. New academic ideas about intergroup relations and cultural diversity for our common destiny and social reality are highly desirable.

5.2 Interpretative Frameworks to Understand Ethnic Relations in Colombia

Discussion about ethnic dimension in Colombia is compulsory regarding any public policy of cultural diversity due to the reasons showed in the previous section. In such discussion, intercultural and multicultural approaches to such an issue, from different traditions, could help us to elucidate some of the new social and political arrangements we must face in the near future.

Ethnicity became increasingly crucial in the social arenas and sciences since the 1960s. Changes such as decolonization processes in Africa, worldwide social movements for equality, collapse of Communist regimes and an array of immigrant movements have brought ethnic and cultural discussions to the academic and political scenario in the last few decades (Guibernau and Rex, 1997). Also, new theoretical and political perspectives on ethnicity have brought some problems to the theory and exercise of nation and nationalism. The eighteenth-and nineteenth-century notion of nation, in its European shape, is increasingly seen as irrational, unrepresentative, unfair, and with no real bonds to the groups in contemporary societies at large. This is causing resistance and opposition to the one-State-one-Nation policies from ethnic and minority political communities. Culture, traditions and identity have been some of the main symbolic and material resources used to resist and advance such matters. Old-fashioned explanations from classical sociological traditions, based on economic and social class issues, have not fostered further explanations of how to link culture, traditions and social identity with new social movements and power arrangements around the world.

Max Weber was one of the first theorists in conceptualizing ethnicity in contrast to notions of class, status and party. Weber (1997) called ethnic groups 'those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of custom or of both, or because of memories of colonisation or migration'. Ethnicity becomes a political category of identity by in-group members in order to establish social relations with out-groups. This political category has an objective dimension -having specific physical or cultural characteristics-, as well as, subjective dimension -wanting to belong to an in-group-. Both types of dimension and characteristics must be fulfilled in order to sustain such an ethnic status. Nevertheless, having an ethnic status is also a political negotiation of power and relationships among groups who are willing to recognise or not such a political status and entitle all the benefits and social arrangements that it conveys.

> Weber did not believe that shared ethnicity of itself leads to group formation. It only facilitates group formation, particularly in the political sphere. It is political community, however it is organised, which appeals to shared ethnicity and brings it into action. (Guibernau and Rex, 1997).

Weber had a strong sense of the role of history in shaping ethnic groups, which he perceived as having memories of a common past, attachment to a clearly demarcated territory and certain traditions or ways of life; these are factors involved in the nationalism of subordinate and minority groups appealing to their collective consciousness and history. This can also be understood as a necessary mechanism to locate each individual into self and in-group, which help to put order in one's existence, identity and social relations. Ethnic identity is seen as a model of representation for action (Cohen, 1994).

In this order of ideas, several cultural communities were invigorated by anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-oppression arguments from the 1960s leading to the creation of real political communities with group boundaries. These groups began

a social, cultural and political process of consolidation through the development of positive feelings of belonging toward in-group members as well as some hostility toward out-groups. Some of these political communities went forward to claim their ethnic political status. This phenomenon was quite extensive all over the planet as reported in the social sciences literature. Over the world, ethnic bonding and ethnic identity were becoming more important for social disciplines such as political sciences, sociology and anthropology. Social psychology was strongly supported and developed in order to deal with new theories of social identity, categorisation, attribution, stereotype, prejudice and discrimination in group relations (Taylor and Moghaddam, 1994; Sthepan and Cookie, 1996; Brewer, 1997).

These processes of belonging and social identification give important elements to discuss how the ideas of nation and nationalism have been built. Social identities were either chosen or imposed in order to build our nations and ideas of belonging in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Dahbour and Ishay, 1995). Dynastic unions, conquest, and annexations established most of common ethnicity based nations even though most of them had a multiracial, multilingual and multiethnic character. The very idea of a nation's common destiny was instilled in all citizens in order to shape strong political communities. This type of social and political arrangement was required for the development of the new economic order. Workers and labour forces were required rather than slaves and servants. Loyalties to the monarch and landlord were replaced by loyalties to the nation, government and system. People became citizens and strong feelings and emotions of loyalty and nationalism were reinforced through public institutions. Public school education was one of the main agencies used to reach such a goal. Ideologies of liberalism, conservatism, socialism, capitalism, communism and so on were installed in the rhetoric of promoting a common cultural and territorial identity. Therefore, cultural homogeneity into each nation

was actively promoted by appealing to symbolic common values as well as a common identity and ethnicity.

> The concepts of ethnicity and nationalism imply a certain commonality among members of a group, the ethnic group in one case, the nation in the other; these are constructed symbolically and presuppose the existence of boundaries which separate one group from another. In fact they both emphasise minimal differences between the members of certain groups. The nation predicates continuity with the past and common descent and this is how ethnicity is brought into nationalism. (Guibernau and Rex, 1997).

Nevertheless, Greenfeld (1992) challenges the notion of defining nationalism based on the ideas of uniformity and common ancestral origin from natural grouping and ethnicity. He distinguishes between ethnic and civic nationalism. The latter is identical with citizenship then, nationality is open and voluntaristic, it can sometimes be acquired. Ethnic nationality has nothing to do with individual will. It is a genetic characteristic. It is a legacy because culture and ethnic identity are not a voluntaristic matter. Therefore, common ethnicity is not a constant in all nationalisms and ethnicity is in no way conductive to nationality. Ethnic nationalism is defended when a shared ethnicity is made a condition of establishing membership of particular nation. Depending on the political ideologies it might lead to violence and xenophobia. Some nationalist movements struggling for self-determination actively defend common ethnicity that emphasises commonality of culture. In this order of ideas, some minority group movements are struggling to survive within nation states, which did not take into account the language, and cultural diversity of their nations to constitute the State. These cultural movements can turn into social and nationalist movements when they acquire strong political ties and capacity to negotiate power with the hegemonic group. They can force the nation state to become a multinational state or even negotiate a separation into a new sovereign state. In this sense,

the complexity of ethnicity and nationalism are shaping the political future of several modern nations.

The changes toward a new representation of nationality taking into account ethnic relations as well as social and cultural diversity are not only happening in Colombia. Several societies around the world are going through processes of defining themselves as multicultural ones, generating a conflict between the real meaning of being a unified nation and a multicultural one (Goldberg, 1994). The essential condition in such a new arrangement is that the dominant ethnic group is no longer hegemonic and corrosive of subordinate ethnicity and the possibility of negotiating power and political representation is established on an equal basis.

> The notion of a multicultural society is sometimes confused with that of a plural one, but unfortunately the concept of the plural society has been developed to analyse the nature of colonial and post-colonial societies rather than those which are modern, industrial and democratic, though it is also true that something called pluralism is a virtuous feature of these more democratic societies. The concept of multiculturalism may then be used to refer to features which are both democratic and egalitarian, and those, which are antidemocratic and hierarchical. (Guibernau and Rex, 1997).

In this scenario, an interesting political and theoretical debate is going on about how to reconcile the ideals of liberal societies based on individual human rights and multicultural societies based on collective and group rights. This discussion is closely related to the notions of nation, nationalism, immigration, minority, individuality and citizenship. Therefore, this is what constitutes the recent theoretical and practical agenda in most countries.

Today, the unitary republic of Colombia and its State is facing challenges toward the protection of individual human rights but also toward the protection and promotion of cultural group heritages and identities into the nation. Furthermore, issues of globalisation, transnational migration, diasporic communities and so on

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are causing new social and group arrangements in the country, which have come to demand for a larger understanding of what constitutes the nation state. According to the outcomes of our recent experience on intercultural policies to deal with these kinds of issues, we need to take into account new and promising frameworks of political theory and experience in other countries in order to adapt these to the Colombian context. In this case, models and frameworks are useful for their content before their origin. The Canadian multicultural political thought is just another option to be considered and put in contrast with our current intercultural framework.

Regarding ethnic issues in Colombia and Latin America, intercultural policies were initially proposed by Mexican social scientists[75] from the fifties, to address the relationships between the *'indios'* (Natives) and *'ladinos'* (Mestizos) in places of ethnic contact. Natives were allowed to maintain their cultural and linguistic traditions as long as they adopted the societal culture and engaged in the nation-building project of the country. Therefore, into the intercultural framework, they obtained the licence of exercising cultural control and decision making over their own cultural resources as well as the possibility of adopting and appropriating the cultural values from the Mestizos. It seems that Natives gained the right to move to integration (Aguirre, 1963). The social reality for Natives was that this possibility became a self-imposed necessity for survival with all the negative impact on cultures and social organization. Mestizos have not had the necessity to adopt Native values and traditions; so, integration and intercultural relationships have been happening in one single direction: from Natives to Mestizos. In general, places of ethnic contact (namely intercultural regions) were the small towns where Natives settled besides the big plantations and properties

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75 Mexicans such as Gonzalo Aguirre Beltran and Julio de la Fuente earlier as well as Bonfil Batalla and Hector Diaz Polanco later, are well known as ethno-populist social scientists in the policy theory literature of the region. Most of their thought was later adopted by Latin American groups and governments to address political plans and actions in order to integrate Natives into the large society. From my review, these Mexican authors were the first ones to coin and promote the intercultural concept in Latin America.

of mestizos. Natives inhabited these places when they changed their relationship with the land passing from being owners to being a cheap labour force. Mestizos used to come to intercultural regions looking for Native workers during the harvest season and it was called intercultural contact. Many different festivities (like Friedemann told us above) and rituals were institutionalised in each town to bring ethnic groups together and exercise intercultural relations with such a negative bias. Natives were grouped and State policies and programs for integration were more easily addressed. Such an intercultural framework of intergroup relations in Colombia is far away from contemporary visions and agendas of pluralism formulated by United Nations in recent declarations[76] as well as, from the approach promoted by multiculturalism.

The manifesto of the intercultural political approach is best summarized in the Declaration of San José de Costa Rica (1981|) and the book: *América Latina: etnodesarrollo and etnocidio* (1982). In the framework of the 25th anniversary of FLACSO (Latin America Social Sciences Faculty), this organization called an international meeting under the subject "ethno-development and ethnocide in Latin America", which took place in Costa Rica in December, 1981. In this event, as well as, in its proceedings, the Mexican writer Guillermo Bonfil Batalla proposed his analytical tool to guide the political practice of Natives versus the hegemonic society. This proposal, named "Ethnodevelopment", guided the political practice of governments and Native organizations in Latin America for the following decades, under the principles of interculturality and social integration. The following chart could better illustrate his proposal.

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76 The most prominent political instrument on this matter is: UNESCO. (2001). Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. Paris. "[On line] July, 25, 2009; 19.02 West. Available at: www.unesco.org

Chart 1. Cultural Control Sectors in the Ethno-development Proposal

DECISIONS

	OWN	OTHER
Autonomy	Alienation	

		OWN	OTHER
R	0		
R	W	Autonomy	Alienation
E	N		
S			
O			
U			
R	O		
C	T		
E	H	Appropriation	Imposition
S	E		
	R		

SOURCE: Batalla, Bonfil et al., 1982.

Cultural minority groups (ethnicities like Natives, for example) should look for Autonomy (own decisions to own cultural resources), into the societal culture. On certain occasions, those groups could come to the possibility of Appropriation (own decisions to other cultural values), which would be useful for their own community survival. Both, Alienation (other´s decisions to own resources) and Imposition (other´s decisions coming with other´s resources) are the worst sectors of intergroup relations that Natives should reject into the societal culture. In this sort of intergroup relationships, it is assumed that each cultural group is discrete, self-contained, isolated and able to delimit the boundaries of its own

and the other cultural resources (material and symbolic ones). Although, it is not a reality for most of the Latin American groups, intercultural policies ruled during the three following decades the political though and practice into the most nation states –including Colombia-. In this way, minority groups had to search and access more than one cultural tradition, more than one language, and more than one symbolic and material world. In contrast, the hegemonic group did not have to follow suit because of their hegemonic cultural status. The hegemonic character is such that minority cultures are compelled to learn and adopt from the Western world but they are not compelled to teach or share their own values with the hegemonic group. In conclusion, cultural and political pluralism continues to be a euphemism under social conditions of colonialism and dominance as is the case in Colombia and intercultural policies did not help in improving the situation.

> What is observed here is two diverse cultural orders constituted by ethnic groups that they don't speak the same language that they have different forms of subsistence, dress, shelter, gods and traditions; but this diversity or cultural pluralism doesn't necessarily imply the existence of plural societies. It settles down, only and exclusively, a double society composed by the dominant group, from metropolitan origin, and the dominated or colonized group. Balandier notes, with reason, that in the colonial case the phenomenon of the pluralism lacks importance; the essential thing is the racial base in the division of the groups, their radical heterogeneity, the antagonism of the relationships and the obligation of coexisting inside the limits of a unique political mark, that is to say, the important thing is the domination mechanism (Aguirre, G., 1967: 12).

The well-known Canadian theorist, Will Kymlicka, offers yet another perspective of multiculturalism and multicultural citizenship from which to discuss ethnic issues. We, in turn, could also examine the political dynamism of ethnic groups and minorities in Colombia from a similar perspective.

In his well-known book Multicultural Citizenship (1995)[77] Will Kymlicka shows some morally acceptable and politically suitable points of view concerning the most important challenges that contemporary states face regarding social and cultural diversity. He considers it to be important to draw a liberal theory able to cope with tensions and problems that arise by increasing cultural and ethnic contacts around the world. An alternative liberal theory should take into account the particular circumstances of each plural context in order to take advantage of it and improve the life of individuals and communities in each society.

Paradoxically, this line of enquiry and political search has remained isolated and weak despite the numerous cultures that have been part of western states throughout history. In fact, western political philosophy has dedicated little work to these issues because classical liberal theory has always taken a homogeneous ethnic-cultural-and-linguistic community as a point of reference. Political theorists have traditionally constructed their lines of inquiry from an idealisation of the Greek polis: a community formed by individuals whose differences are secondary in relation to the cultural, ethnic and linguistic elements that are common to all. It is only after the second half of the twentieth century that the west began taking an interest in the protection of minority group rights. Extending the classical-individual human rights agenda to in-group minority members has been the main mechanism proposed for any type of practical and theoretical protection. So, it is stated that group rights are protected indirectly by protecting the individual human rights.

Nevertheless, today it is clear that the human rights agenda alone is not enough to respond adequately to all the demands of minority groups. Issues such as minority status-based elections for national legislature, public funds and bilingual

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77 The contributions of this book have been widely extended in more recent works such as Kymlicka, W. and Norman, W. (2000). (Ed). Citizenship in Diverse Societies. New York: Oxford University Press as well as Kymlicka, W. (2001). Politics in the Vernacular. Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Citizenship. New York: Oxford University Press.

education, school curricula, official-status languages and other such matters cannot be satisfactorily addressed based solely on the classical human rights principles and categories. These matters require some different understanding and instruments that allow a comprehensive and adequate management based on group characteristics. Self government, special political representation, autonomy, and other such agreements and concessions should be granted on the basis of belonging to a cultural group and the search for a fair balance between minorities and the majority group.

Kymlicka begins with the discussion of the term multiculturalism trying to establish some categories from where he can more clearly present his theory. Often, multiculturalism is used in scholarly literature to refer to groups with very different characteristics, necessities and demands: homosexuals, women, people with disabilities, and ethnic minorities as well as the complex phenomena of modern life. This ambiguous definition comes from the ambiguity of the term culture itself. In this way, all the states could be considered multicultural ones taking into account that contemporary states are complex entities formed with diverse groups and associations. But also, multiculturalism can be taken as a particular political focus regardless of the structural and contextual reality. Kymlicka proposes to apply the term multiculturalism solely to ethnic and minority-status groups (ethnocultural groups) in order to differentiate the groups and satisfy the demands of each one. There is an assumption that according to the ways in which different groups have been linked to the general political organisation determines the criteria and distinctions of intergroup relations. According to Kymlicka, Natives should be recognised as national minorities,

> ...Groups which formed complete and functioning societies on their historic homeland prior to being incorporated into a larger state. The incorporation of such national minorities has typically been involuntary, due to colonisation, conquest or the ceding of territory from one imperial power to another, but may also arise voluntary, as a result of federation".

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Immigrants constitute "groups formed by the decision of individuals and families to leave their original homeland and emigrate to another society, often leaving their friends and relatives behind. This decision is typically made for economic reasons, although sometimes also for political reasons, to move to a freer or more democratic country". Afro-Americans are considered to be in a different category all together, "who are descended from the Africans slaves brought to the America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Under slavery, blacks were not seen as citizens or even as persons, but simply as the property of the slave owner, alongside his buildings and livestock. Although slavery was abolished in the nineteenth century, Afro-Americans were subjected to segregation until recent years. (Kymlicka, 1998).

In addition to the above-mentioned groups, a hegemonic group constitutes a group with the most power in society and it is not necessarily the statistical or numerical majority of the population. Historically, it has been hegemonic groups who have unilaterally set up the rules for intergroup relations. Because all the above-mentioned groups have different historical roots and ways of coming to participate in our present-day societies, those differences should be considered in the development and implementation of any cultural policy for improved ethnic and race relations.

The relation among all the above-mentioned groups can lead to the creation of two new category of states; multinational states or polyethnic states. Multinational states consist of more than one nation; this composition could be voluntary (consensus) or involuntary (military conquest for example). Polyethnic states are those that accept the immigration of individuals from different cultures and languages and are willing to protect and promote the maintenance and development of such cultures and languages. Most modern states are polyethnic and some of them are multinational states. So, the challenge faced by these types of states is to reach acceptable levels of governing by proposing multiple alternatives to deal with this political, juridical and social dynamism. Kymlicka proposes that democratic states should recognise individual rights as well as some special group rights. A group-differentiated right is the term used to

distinguish those rights recognised by the State to individuals on the basis of group-membership which contribute to the survival and development of a group's culture. Therefore, cultural survival of minority groups no longer solely rests in the hands of majorities. He distinguishes among multiethnic rights, special representation rights and self-government.

Multiethnic rights apply to immigrant groups, ethnic-religious groups and minorities without territory. These rights protect and promote the cultural differences for the above-mentioned groups as long as they want to make use of them. These rights protect against discrimination procuring state funding for cultural activities, culture-based education and national media campaigns among others. Rights of representation try to guarantee the equal participation of ethnic groups and national minorities at the high levels of political processes and structures of political representation. The voice of minorities must be guaranteed in administrative and directive levels. Self-government rights are restricted to nations (national minorities). These rights promote a certain grade of political autonomy and territorial jurisdiction in order to guarantee the full development and defence of in-group individual's interest. Some public competencies are transferred to a specific political unity governed by a specific national minority.

Group-differentiated rights try protecting cultural minorities before hegemonic culture. But those rights are not absolute ones. Those rights are limited by liberal principles of individual freedom, democracy and social justice. That is why Kymlicka distinguishes between internal restrictions and external protection in order to protect the cultural minorities and reach societal stability. Internal restrictions stress the possibility that minorities have of making decisions in order to neutralise non-consensus within the group. External protection refers to the relationship between minorities and hegemonic culture. These latter distinctions promote intergroup justice, protection of identity and existence of minorities under limits of political and economical decisions of the dominant culture.

Therefore, a multicultural liberal policy from Kymlicka's point of view should promote the recognition of group-differentiated rights by upholding intergroup equity while protecting minorities from the hegemonic group's attacks and internal restrictions. This commitment is understandable in the basic liberal principle of liberty and the free choice of living-well that each individual has.

It is very important to differentiate collective rights from group-differentiated rights from Kymlicka's point of view. Collective rights are more related to economic and political human rights declarations (union activities, environment protection, social class struggles, etc.). Those are not necessarily related to minorities and ethnic groups. Collective rights are also in permanent tension with individual rights and this is not the case between group-differentiated rights and individual rights. A multicultural perspective from a liberal theory, it establishes a harmony between individual and group-differentiated rights. Group-differentiated rights can be exercised by groups as well as by individuals at the same time. The individual continues being the core actor in the multicultural perspective but an individual who is defined by his/her own cultural boundaries. The important matter here is how justice is celebrated because certain groups obtain recognition for certain rights when other citizens do not have the same rights. The priority of community above some individuals helps to explain why, in certain cases, some internal restrictions are necessary as well as why some external protection applies.

It seems that there is a problematic tension between Group-differentiated rights and liberalism, and especially due to those basic principles such as freedom and equality of all citizens. It seems that Group-differentiated rights are more concerned with a community perspective and the well being of the group than individual's ones, seeing individuals more as carriers of group identities. But, Kymlicka considers that group-differentiated rights are compatible with foundational principles of liberalism. In order to understand his position it is

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necessary to dig deep into the roots and sources of the philosophy of liberalism. Individual freedom, which is the right of each person to choose and project his/her will of living-well as well as the right for questioning, transforming and abandoning it, constitutes the central core of this philosophy. But this freedom is not an abstraction developed in absolute isolation. It is actually developed into a societal culture. It means that freedom is developed in a group of traditions, memories, values, language, and other such factors shared by a group of people and these are transmitted through common practices and institutions. Societal culture gives the individual a full spectrum of vital options with a range of values and orders from which each individual can freely choose. Therefore, if liberalism wants to protect individual freedom it must protect societal cultures. This protection is enabled through group-differentiated rights. So, the individual's capacity to make significant choices is directly linked to the possibility of access to those choices in the societal culture. Free access to a specific culture is one of the most profound human necessities in each individual and it does not matter which project of living-well is chosen, minority culture could be one of the choices. Language and culture are basic human necessities of well being for each individual. Liberal freedom does not mean that the individual transcends his/her own history and culture rather it is the free development of the individual into his/her culture with the possibility to review and change the goals.

Finally, Kymlicka defines more precisely the group-differentiated rights and justice. Liberal philosophy has traditionally defended the idea that the state should maintain such a position vis-à-vis of ethnic groups and minorities which allows the movements of the cultural market to decide which groups can find arrangement within the society at large. Citizens and cultural markets decide which cultures must be projected into the future. So, he considers that it is an erroneous position because in a democratic society, hegemonic groups usually have imposed their points of view and they have real advantages. It is important that the state protects some group-differentiated rights in order to maintain a

liberal justice by neutralising some disadvantages of minority groups facing hegemonic society. The justification of these claims is based on the arguments of equality, historical pacts and diversity. Group-differentiated rights eliminate the inequalities generated unfairly by the cultural market. Special rights of representation, for example, allow minorities' participation in the decision-taking process at local or federal levels; self-government allows that minorities decide, without interventions from majority culture, the destiny of their community; and multiethnic rights allow that in-group members express themselves and their cultures without fear of discrimination. Group-differentiated rights always target the elimination of disadvantages and injustices and never to promote privileges for differentiated groups.

Similarly, the existence of historical agreements between groups must be honoured. The content of the agreement generally establishes the type of group-differentiated rights and the agreement also determines the conditions, principles and rules to follow in order to guide the life of the groups. But also, agreements can be reviewed, up-dated and changed in negotiation by concerned groups when it is considered that certain arrangements are unfair or no longer necessary. A pact is a historic argument for equality as well as it is always partial because it must complement with a normative argument of equality. Cultural diversity is considered within liberalism as an important value because it offers the possibility of many options, styles of life and ways of organising. Therefore, it is expected that the existence of more than one ethnicity and minority group is part of the richness in any state. Members of majority groups can have interest in the different models of organisation, life, production, etc. in order to solve some of their own problems. Therefore, states are created to protect individuals as long as its culture is protected.

Kymlicka's framework is also a very useful resource in understanding the political dynamism of ethnic and race relations in Colombia under the new order of

multiculturalism adopted by the 1991 Constitution. Colombia is inhabited by an array of different types of minorities. Each type has come to be part of the Colombian state in a different historical way and therefore, each one has been struggling to establish a particular relationship with the state based on its own necessities and aspirations. Due to such complexity regarding diversity, Colombian constitution and society are still not very clear about the distinctions drawn between political and civil rights entitled to each ethnocultural group, cultural minority, cultural community and so on.

Despite their diverse backgrounds, the Colombian legislation entitles similar recognition to Natives and Blacks by labelling them ethnic-status groups. Ethnic status should entitle some group-differentiated rights in Colombian political life. This way, the two groups, from two different historical experiences, were encapsulated into a single-group category in order to facilitate and organise the intergroup relationship. Ethno-education policy discussed in a previous chapter is a very good example of this assertion. Mestizos do not assign ethnic status for themselves, thus illustrating the dark side of "ethnicisation" of "the other" as a way of victimisation and vindication of majority over minorities. Hegemony is not really challenged. This way, any further aspiration of ethno-nationalism by Natives was limited. Therefore the distinctions between multinational and polyethnic groups regarding Kymlicka's political theory does not really apply in the Colombian context where Natives and Blacks are considered ethnic-status groups entitled to some rights at the constitutional and legislation level, depending on hegemonic will and political juncture.

It appears that a general aspiration of the 1991 Constitution was to guide the political framework of intergroup relations in the country towards unification. First of all, it declares the individual's right to free will in choosing the project of living-well as well as reviewing and transforming it according to individual wishes. Along with this, individuals have the possibility of simultaneously

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belonging to different groups and deciding the level of loyalty to each one. The Colombian Constitution defines citizenship in a very general way making it compatible with complex community dimensions. Also, Natives acquired group-differentiated right to self-government before other groups but it leaves the possibility that Natives may freely move from their cultures' territories. Ethnic status groups in Colombia are subjected to law and right differently than an in-group member. Therefore, Kymlicka's political categories regarding self-government, polycultural rights and political representation are partially guaranteed in Colombia in different grades and contexts. The only constitutional limit to the cultural diversity and group-differentiated rights is the unitary character of the Colombian nation state.

5.3 Ideas for moving towards a New Interpretative –Hybrid Model for Ethnic, Race and Intergroup Relations in Colombia

As a result of the discussions in the sections, multiple questions and problems arise for discussion to help move forward the multiculturalism agenda in Colombia. What are the necessary conditions to declare a country multicultural? Under what conditions may we call a country multicultural? Could Colombia be declared a multicultural country taking into account that Colombia is a state following a liberal framework of rights, democracy and participation where equality is a core goal in the country's Constitution? What are the main political, economic and social consequences of such recognition for minorities and the rest of society? What are the criteria that guide ethnic and race relations under such recognition? What is the level of autonomy that these groups hold? What are the implications for public education taking into account that education is one of the main systems for transmitting and developing minority cultures as well as maintaining unity in the country?

Based on a reading of the 1991 Constitution presented in this dissertation, my
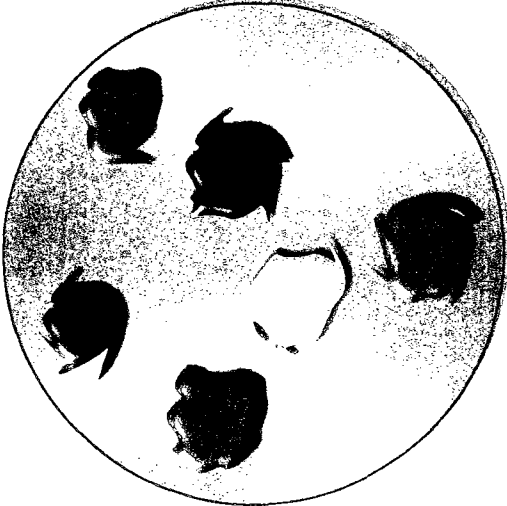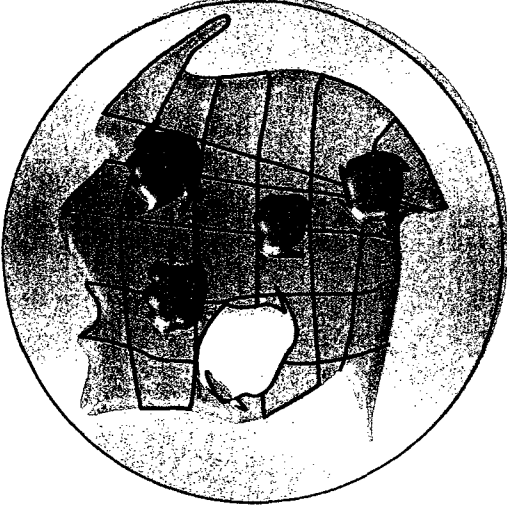
hope is that there are enough spaces opened in the political framework of Colombia to be able to gradually move towards accommodation of multicultural principles as defended by Will Kymlicka and Charles Taylor leading towards the unification of Colombia while respecting and supporting the cultural rights of its different constituent groups. It is incumbent on the intellectuals of Columbia to start working towards providing the necessary theoretical framework to shape political action and institutional change within the legal framework of Colombia to move away from divisive policies towards a unified Colombian vision allowing peace and prosperity to reign in this country blessed with incredible geographic and cultural diversity. It is also incumbent on researchers and educational practitioners and policy makers to start developing enabling frameworks, curriculum and other educational materials as well as exemplary practice methods taught in teacher education programs to bring about the necessary contribution to the process in the national education sector in Colombia. This dissertation is an attempt to open the path to this new vision. The questions at the beginning of this section are meant to stimulate answers towards this vision.

Chart 2. COLOMBIAN SOCIETY'S GROUP CONFORMATION

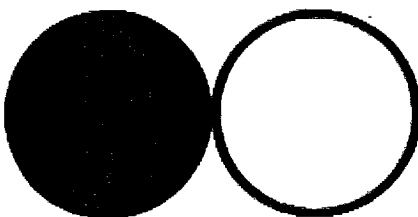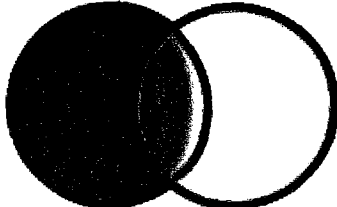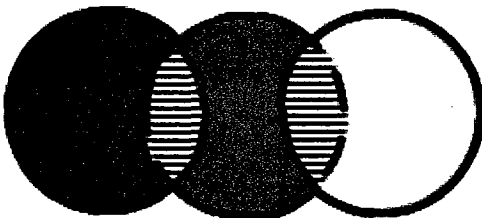The Colombian society is constituted by at least six different types of groups:

- Natives: Descendents of groups with pre-Hispanic settlement in the Colombian territory who came in contact with Europeans in the XV Century.

- Afro-Colombians: Descendents of Africans involuntarily brought to Colombia in XIX Century.

- Gypsies: Descendents of Gypsy families, brought to America by Spaniards, who got into the Colombian territory alongside XIX Century

- Minorities: Immigrants and their descendents who have come voluntarily to the country.

- Mestizos: Descendents from Spanish-Native parentage born in the Colombian territory after independence

- Cultural communities: groups voluntarily constituted by people getting together in Colombia on the basis of cultural preferences other than ethnicity.

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Chart 3. TYPES OF SOCIETY TAKING INTO ACCOUNT CULTURAL DIVERSITY RECOGNITION

PLURAL SOCIETY	DOUBLE SOCIETY	MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY
Roth, André. (2002); Guibernau and Rex. (1997)	Aguirre, Gonzalo. (1967); Bonfil, Guillermo. (1982)	Kymlicka, Will. (1995); Taylor, Charles. (1992)
A nation with several different ethno and cultural groups,	A nation with at least two social-and-cultural groups,	A nation with a high cultural diversity of both, groups and cultural communities,
living into a country declared to be like a plural society,	living into a country declared to be like a plural society,	living into a country declared to be like multicultural society,
with a State and governments organized on political pluralism basis.	with a State and governments promoting some kind of intercultural political basis.	with a State organized on political multiculturalism basis.

Political pluralism perspective: groups compete for the social and cultural control of all resources (symbolic and material ones); State and governments must guarantee some equitable and transparent political, legal and institutional mechanisms for group competency by regulation and discretion.	Intercultural policy perspective: groups confront each other for the social and cultural control of all resources (symbolic and material ones); being some kind of Colonial relationship; State and governments determine and establish the political, legal and institutional openness to any different group for integration.	Multicultural perspective: groups collaborate for the social and cultural control of all resources (symbolic and material ones); State and governments must guarantee public common spaces of dialogue, negotiation and cooperation, besides legal and institutional adjustments by accommodation.
"The notion of a multicultural society is sometimes confused with that of a plural one, but unfortunately the concept of the plural society has been developed to analyse the nature of colonial and post-colonial societies rather than those which are modern, industrial and democratic, though it is also true that something called pluralism is a virtuous feature of these more democratic societies. The concept of multiculturalism may then be used to refer to features, which are both democratic and egalitarian, and those, which are antidemocratic and hierarchical" (Guibernau and Rex, 1997). "With this focus (*corporative one*), the public policies are no longer conceived as the result of the competition among groups, like it is postulated in the pluralistic pattern, or between classes or class fractions like in the models of Marxist inspiration, but as the fruit of a negotiation between the State and the representatives of the involved groups" (Roth, 2002).	"What it is observed here is two diverse cultural orders constituted by ethnic groups that they don't speak the same language that they have different forms of subsistence, dress, shelter, gods and traditions; but this diversity or cultural pluralism doesn't necessarily imply the existence of plural societies. It settles down, only and exclusively, a double society composed by the dominant group, from metropolitan origin, and for the dominated group or colonized. Balandier makes notice, with reason that in the colonial joint the phenomenon of the pluralism lacks importance; the essential thing is the racial base in the division of the groups, their radical heterogeneity, the antagonism of the relationships and the obligation of coexisting inside the limits of an unique political mark, that is to say, the important thing is the domination mechanism" (Aguirre, G., 1967).	"I have tried to show that for the Natives from the oriental Andes of Colombia, the ethnic limits, including the territorial ones inside the mountainous area, are not fixed neither rigid... For the ethnographer or the archaeologist, the learning is clear: the monolithic classificatory divisions, as those "XYZ is this or that", should be avoided in societies of this type. Those classifications come from our own society concepts and of our necessity of communicating in comprehensible terms with our colleagues in these disciplines. However, when having to do with the society type described in this article, instead of standardization, we find institutionalizing variable between the beliefs and the practices of the different groups. These groups are recognized themselves as members of the same society, and they interpret the variations in different aspects of their culture like part of a wider patron U'wa, inside which these variables have a seemed meaning, being also susceptible of similar interpretations" (Osborn, 1989).

Chart 4. TYPES OF CULTURAL OUTCOME TAKING INTO ACCOUNT TYPES OF SOCIETY

PLURAL SOCIETY	DOUBLE SOCIETY	MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY
Competition	Confrontation	Collaboration
Regulation	Integration	Accommodation
Pluralism Policy	Intercultural Policy	Multicultural Policy/Multiculturalism
Tolerance	Overlapping	Fusion

As we stated in Section 5.1, pluralism denotes diversity as opposed to monism, in the sense that different groups can maintain their cultures in society at large on the basis that there is not one consistent set of truths about the world, but rather many. Nevertheless, some subtleties must be addressed when we come to the political arena with such an agenda. In this respect, political pluralism stresses that political power in society does not lie with the electorate but is distributed between a wide number of groups, which are formal and officially recognised by the State and society at large, because it is in the general interest of all citizens and society. So, political pluralism has become one of the most important formats in contemporary liberal democracies to set new power distribution arrangements, and prepare the groundwork for group competition by engaging in good-faith negotiation under state control and regulation.

One of the earliest arguments for pluralism came from James Madison in The Federalist Papers 10. Madison feared that factionalism would lead to in-fighting in the new American republic and devotes this paper to questioning how best to avoid such an occurrence. He posits that to avoid factionalism, it is best to allow many competing factions to prevent any one dominating the political system. This relies, to a degree, on a series of disturbances changing the influences of groups so as to avoid institutional dominance and ensure competition...

Pluralism is connected with the hope that this process of conflict and dialogue will lead to a definition and subsequent realization of the common good that is best for all members of society. This implies that in a pluralistic framework, the common good is not given a priori. Instead, the scope and content of the common good can only be found out in and after the process of negotiation (a posteriori).

Therefore any group with a philosophy that purports to hold both absolute truth and identify the common good necessarily rejects pluralism- their belief system does not consider as valid the opinions of others who do not hold to their given beliefs.

Still, one group may eventually manage to establish its own view as the generally accepted view, but only as the result of the negotiation process within the pluralistic framework. This implies that, as a general rule, the "operator" of a truly pluralistic framework, i.e. the state in a pluralistic

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society, must not be biased: it may not take sides with any one group, give undue privileges to one group and discriminate against another one.

Proponents of pluralism argue that this negotiation process is the best way to achieve the common good: since everyone can participate in power and decision-making (and can claim part of the ownership of the results of exercising power) there can also be widespread participation and a greater feeling of commitment from society members, and therefore better outcomes. By contrast, an authoritarian or oligarchic society, where power is concentrated and decisions are made by few members, forestalls this possibility...

For pluralism to function and to be successful in defining the common good, all groups have to agree to a minimal consensus regarding shared values, which tie the different groups to society, and shared rules for conflict resolution between the groups: The most important value is that of mutual respect and tolerance, so that different groups can coexist and interact without anyone being forced to assimilate to anyone else's position in conflicts that will naturally arise out of diverging interests and positions. These conflicts can only be resolved durably by dialogue which leads to compromise and to mutual understanding.

However, the necessary consensus on rules and values should not unnecessarily limit different groups and individuals within society in their value decisions. According to the principle of subsidiarity, everything that need not be regulated within the general framework should be left to decide for subordinate groups and, in turn, to individuals so as to guarantee them a maximum amount of freedom...In ultimate consequence, pluralism thus also implies the right for individuals to determine values and truths for themselves instead of being forced to follow the whole of society or, indeed, their own group.

Available at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pluralism. September 10, 2009 at 18:51 West]

In the above-mentioned new social and political arena of pluralism, countries have come to develop some particular kinds of cultural policies to deal with groups and society. Interculturality/interculturalism in some Latin American countries (such as Colombia for example), and Multiculturalism in Canada, are very good examples of theses cultural policies developed to carry on the pluralism agenda.

Interculturality, interculturalism and multiculturalism in a country such as Colombia have gained very particular and non-orthodox connotations. In general, interculturalism is the philosophy of exchanges between cultural groups within a society. Exchange requires openness to be exposed to other cultures and the capacity to know about our own culture; therefore, intercultural relations involve comparison, dialogue and decision capacity in order to know what is mine and what is not... a certain capacity to establish the clear frontier and border between two cultures in order to distinguish what is my culture and what is not.

> Interculturalism requires an inherent openness to be exposed to the culture of the "other". Once a person is exposed to an element of a different culture, a dialogue will ensue, where everyone embarks upon understanding the culture of the other, and usually this involves comparisons. Thus, interculturalism breeds dialogue, in order to be able to look for commonalities between that element of one's culture and the culture of the other.

> Interculturalism seeks to enhance fusion by looking for commonalities. Hence, various cultures merge. The differences that remain make up the subcultures of the world.

> Available at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pluralism. September 10, 2009 at 18:51 West]

A major problem in intercultural policies happens when such a relationship is commonly established between two or more cultural groups with different levels of power. Integration, then, seems to be the agenda of intergroup relations that best suit the group´s interests in dealing with some kind of constant confrontation among different groups, in order to obtain most of the resources of the country. In the end, hegemonic groups with the most power open some kind of inclusion and integration venues to minority-status groups, since they no longer feel that these minority groups constitute a real threat of their power; thus, coming to an unequal social relationship between integrated minority groups and society at large, which is under the general control of the hegemonic

group.

For instance, multiculturalism is also commented on in Section 5.2 from the theoretical framework of two well-known Canadian writers Will Kymlick and Charles Taylor. Canada has been pioneering and leading the multiculturalism approach better known as the "cultural mosaic" since the 60s, becoming an important model for the world. Multiculturalism's aim is to recognize and allow members of distinct groups within that society to celebrate and maintain their different cultures or cultural identities as a way to promote social cohesion. In this context, multiculturalism advocates a society that extends equitable status to distinct ethnic and religious groups, with no identifiable ethnic, religious, and/or cultural community values around which to unite.

> The term multiculturalism generally refers to the acceptance of various cultural divisions for the sake of diversity that applies to the demographic make-up of a specific place, usually at the scale of an organization such as a school, business, neighborhood, city or nation...
>
> Canada has the highest per capita immigration rate in the world, driven by economic policy and family reunification. In 2001, 250,640 people immigrated to Canada. Newcomers settle mostly in the major urban areas of Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. By the 1990s and 2000s, the largest component of Canada's immigrants came from Asia, including the Middle East, South Asia, South-East Asia and East Asia. Canadian society is often depicted as being very progressive, diverse, and multicultural. Accusing a person of racism in Canada is usually considered a serious slur. All political parties are now cautious about criticizing of the high level of immigration, because, as noted by the Globe and Mail, "in the early 1990s, the old Reform Party was branded 'racist' for suggesting that immigration levels be lowered from 250,000 to 150,000."
>
> Available at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiculturalism. September 10, 2009 at 18:54 West]

In the multiculturalism framework, groups are called for cooperation and collaborative agendas, while maintaining their specific cultural and group

identities (ethnic, religious, class, gender). In this way, groups are willing and able to mobilize their own cultural and political horizons in order to share values, resources, identities and whatever is necessary to the point of forming cohesion and new social and cultural entities where each group and all groups together can respond effectively to any social or natural situation. Therefore, cultural accommodation is a better metaphor than integration to represent the social and cultural mobilizations required from all groups, in this cultural policy.

Nevertheless, again, these definitions of terms lead to confusion and fall short when we try to follow the Colombian interpretation and how it has been applied to political, institutional and social scenarios. At first glance, Colombian academic, and social movements tend to state that we have a multicultural society; therefore we need an intercultural policy to deal with such an acknowledgement. In this sense, both terms gain meaning as adjectives that qualify a noun: multiculturality qualifies the society, and interculturality qualifies the policy. From the same perspective, multicultural society is a reality, a fact, therefore an intercultural policy is the required manifesto or political program to deal with multicultural society. Thus, interpretation came to the country in part from the work of several Spanish writers in the field of intercultural education and social and political studies in general. In this sense, there is confusion between the factual content of diversity and the possible range of the normative corpus of cultural policies to address it. Both inter and multi are just two different normative proposals or political manifestos to deal with cultural diversity in the pluralism agenda.

The second wave (or I should say generations) of interpreters on these issues in the country state that while multiculturality (*multiculturalidad*), as a noun, is a fact or reality, multiculturalism is the political manifesto and praxis needed for the social, political, institutional and practical recognition, reaching the point of public policies for all sectors of development in the country. Both terms are

nouns with different movements in the pluralism agenda.

Something quite similar is stated for the concepts of interculturality (*interculturalidad*) and interculturalism in Colombia, taking into account that interculturalism is a noun that we do not use often in scholarly literature or political manifestos. Interculturality means group relations; it means ethnic relations in the particular case of Colombia. Interculturalism is a political proposition for group coexistence in society, following some principles like equity, difference, and interaction.

A third way of understanding these terms, found in different generations as well as locations (universities, ministries, political organizations and NGOs), states that interculturality is a political project that challenges subjugation and neo colonialism proposals brought out in the new format of multiculturalism. For this group, pluralism in the Colombian scenario must be promoted through new variants of intercultural policies. Ethno-education and its intercultural framework widely narrated in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 is a very good example of this agenda. In this interpretation, then, interculturality is a means to challenge and expose the policy of multiculturalism due to its linkage to the colonialist developed countries and contemporary agendas of modernity, capitalism and globalization. Interculturality is a political project of resistance against foreign agendas developed for different contexts other than Colombia. In this respect, political projects like intercultural education, ethno-education, bilingual-intercultural education and so on are undertaken in the current Colombian context as a means of confronting multicultural policies and the multiculturalism agenda.

The theoretical and political confusion came up, again, when both pluralism and multicultural aspirations are clearly stated in the 1991 Colombian constitution, but some legal outcomes, institutional practices, social manifestos and academic

production explicitly state a rejection of multiculturalism and multicultural approaches. Giving priority to ethnic solidarity, community manifestos and mobilizations, feelings of guilt, and other hidden agendas, instead of a profound and mature reflection concerning the complete diversity of the whole nation is the only way I have come to understand this academic, political and social confrontation about the terms and concepts used. Its impact is a negative one in terms of the waste and loss of immense economic resources, human talent, institutional time and every other aspect of life in the country.

Finally, something that really calls my attention regarding the confusion and misunderstanding of the representation of the concepts and terms is that some North American and German scholars are among the main promoters of this third way of understanding multiculturalism in Latin America. These scholars are found in some universities in Latin America (Ecuador for example) and are working directly with some ministries, defending intercultural approaches that are playing an important role in transforming many of our political, legal, institutional and social practices. New agendas of postcolonial studies, cultural studies and intercultural studies, have served this goal very well.

At this point, there is a clear observation that there is neither conceptual clarity nor real standards and criteria to determine whether the Colombian State and society are ready to promote a cultural policy in education in other spheres of life to maintain its declaration of pluralism at the Constitutional level and incorporate some - multicultural approaches. Best practices from both interculturality and multiculturalism approaches should be taken into account to enrich a Colombian context-based cultural policy. Presently, ethnicities, group clashes, community mobilizations, tragic memories, historical pacts, cultural differences, and so on are pieces that can be freely moved around the country according to political contexts and necessities to justify any political agenda for pluralism and cultural diversity. Ethnicity can be used as a resource of empowerment as well as a

resource of victimisation. Inclusion or segregation depends not only on the political agenda but also on the political dynamism of each group in the country. Mestizos provoked the process of grouping many citizens in order to deal with the nation building process with greater ease, without de-centralizing or affecting their real hegemony. Despite the sustained resistance of many ethno-cultural groups' oppression, there is still much work to be done in the future against segregation, self-segregation and oppression. A tension is visible between the ethnic status groups' constitutional rights and some fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution. While the former brings to the centre the diversity of moral perspectives, the latter demands the protection of the moral perspective for togetherness. So, it determines an on-going balance between the different types of rights oscillating between reality and simple rhetoric. The principles and rights about cultural diversity are beyond any dispute as long as there is no major constitutional limit of the principles of life, liberty, personal integrity, and well being, which did not come easily through the integration, fusion or accommodation agendas, proposed by some modern theorists.

Also, the fact, that the principles in legislation and policy incorporate the idea of citizen building from a multicultural perspective, solidarity and respect for diversity gives a new hope in understanding how culture is linked to the political system in the country and how culture acquires a political role in relation to the development of a new citizenship. Talking about culture in relation to politics is talking about both a policy of culture and a culture of politics as a place to converge; it gives culture an important role in the construction of the political system of the state. It is a political system that represents the ethnic, social and cultural diversity of the nation offering a new COMMON OPTION to be chosen by all Colombians. This way, Colombian citizenship and nationality is not based only on differences vs similarities, competition vs confrontation, but it is based mainly in affinities, similarities, common things and cooperation that should bring together the groups and every person in the country. There is no such utopia in

any other Latin-American country until now. Although there are several efforts made to see the Colombian citizen in terms of diversity and self, the new definition of a political individual from this cultural perspective brings new hope to the nation building project that all Colombians want and the type of citizen that society needs.

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GLOSSARY

ACIN	Northern Native Council Association. Regional Native Political Organization in Cauca province.
ACNUR	United Nations´ High Commissioner for Displaced People.
Cabildo	Native council of governing, which serves into a territory called Resguardo.
CEP	*Centro Experimental Piloto* in Spanish. It was the official institutional link of the Ministry of Education in the regions. After 1994, this role was transfered to local secretariat of education in each municipality
CEPAL	Economic Commission for Latin America. An international organization linked to the UNO.
COLOMBIANIDAD	To be Colombian people in group basis.
CONPES	National Council of Economic and Social Policy. Official organization for strategic planning in the country.
CREFAL	Regional Center of Functional Adult Education for Latin America. Hosted in Mexico, this institution is a collaborative effort from different government of the region.
CRIC	Regional Council of Natives in Cauca. Political organization and traditional authority of Natives in Cauca province.
EBI/EIB	Intercultural Bilingual Education/Bilingual Intercultural Education. Name used as analogous to Ethno-education in other Latin American countries
FLACSO	Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences. International institution of high social studies in the region.
FLAPE	Latin American Forum for Education Policy. A collaborative effort from different countries to keep on-line up-dated information about education matters in the region.
GTZ	Official organization of German cooperation for development.
III	Inter-American Indigenous Institute. Hosted in Mexico, this

	institution played an important role to develop studies and policies to deal with Native issues in Latin America.
MEN	Ministry of Education and Culture in Colombia.
OIT	International Labor Organization. This is an organization of UNO undertaking labor rights watch over the world.
ONIC	National Organization of Natives in Colombia. Native political organization at national level.
PEC	Community Education Project. This is a compulsory instrument of education planning for schools located in Native areas.
PEI	Institutional Education Project. This is a compulsory instrument of education planning for schools located in non-Native areas.
PMA	World-Wide Food Program. This is an organization of UNO undertaking responsibilities of supplying food aid to endeavor countries
PND	National Plan of Development is a political project for campaigning and governing by each President that is elected in the country. By law, any elected President must realize his/her PND
Roma	Gypsy in its traditional claimed name.
Roman	Gypsy´s language.
SLI	Summer´s Language Institute. This was a USA organization of cooperation that brought a lot controversy in the region.
TICs	Technologies of information and communication
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Je me souviens

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