

1. Introduction

2011 was declared by the General Assembly of the United Nations as The "International Year of African Descent", which is why the research project "*Woman, Black, Displaced: Memoirs of Black People*" takes in the tragedy that most of this particular Colombian population live in their ancestors' lands, the systematic violations of their rights and the massive forced displacement inflicted on women.

The figures derived from the internal armed conflict in Colombia have been very discouraging. In one approach to this phenomenon the National Planning Department of Colombia - DPN - based on information from the Social Solidarity Network, reported that between 1995 and 2005, 1,166,284 displaced people in the country, noting that in the last two years of that period there were decreases in displacement figures, reaching 219,315 cases in 2003, and 145,995 in 2004 (Ibañez & Moya, 2007, p. 10).

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre dependent of The Norwegian Displacement Council, reported in the first half of 2008 the highest levels of mobilization between 1593 to 3890 people in the south west of the department of Arauca, the southern department of Nariño, southern department Cordoba and the western department of Valle del Cauca, which added to the data offered by the UN agency for the refugees which in 2010 reported a total of IDPs in Colombia equivalent to 3, 5 million people (ACNUR, 2010).

Meanwhile the Centre for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Rights of the Republic of Colombia said that between January and October 2010 were presented by release date 108,472 cases of displacement, and by date of declaration of such status 183880; in 2011 by release date were reported 106,141 people and 286,758 the cases declared.

Within this terrible reality the black population is identified as one of the main victims because only in 2001, 37,000 of the 342,000 of the displaced people were from African descent (Human Rights Observatory of the Vice Presidency of Colombia, 2001). So because the research focuses on the testimonies of black women displaced from the departments of Chocó and Antioquia, is remarked from the Human Rights Observatory of the Vice Presidency of Colombia (2012) that in the period January to September 2009 in the department of Chocó were 5,536 displaced persons, and in the same months of 2010, 1,817. In the case of the department of Antioquia the number of people in 2009 was 16,694 in 2009 and 10,409 in 2010.

The violence of the armed conflict in Colombia makes it the second world country with the largest human displacement, making the Afro-Colombian population one of the most affected, together with the indigenous, and peasants, being among them, the black women the worst afflicted by suffering a kind of triple discrimination and victimization: As displaced homeless, as black and as women.

These women are the mother earth, they are life, "*They are the corner guaiacum or guayacán*"¹ (Restrepo Forero, 1997), the vital pillars of the Afro-Colombian families and their neighborhoods. They represent the hope for their own black communities and an invaluable contribution to the Colombian people; if we were aware and if we valued the richness of black culture, the leadership of their women, their experience of peaceful coexistence and solidarity in both urban and rural settlements as part of the diversity and Colombian nationality, we would understand the economic, social and political challenges that are subjected upon them on daily basis: moving to the city, finding expensive living standards in a context alien and unwanted, unemployment, discrimination, and inclusion in poverty.

2. What is displacement in Colombia?

And What is to be a victim?

The complex situation of black women displaced from the countryside to the city, those who open the memory of its people through their narratives, takes shape in this case in the form of two qualifying determinants: displaced and victims. Andrés Ibáñez Londoño defines displacement as the "migration phenomenon whose genesis lies in a multiplicity of causes inherent to situations of violence, whether political, economic, social or cultural," and to it he attributes that the inciting causes and the handling of the conflict that generates this displacement originate "within a permissive state, misdirected public policies, unsatisfying basic needs, unjust distribution of land, unstable victims reparation processes and discrimination that prevent the explicit recognition of the true effect this has on the population"(2009, p. 301).

The displacement in the words of Castillejo (2000) implies going from the "territorial - traditional to the uprooting of urban - modern," which should not reduce the identification of the displacement to a time-bound action, without extension nor durability in which the subject makes a particular change of place and condition, but, as explained by Correa de Andrei Palacio Sañudo, Jiménez Ocampo, and Díaz Benjumea. There is "*a change in the structures of representation about what is displacement in considering this phenomenon as a long-term, process highly de-structuring, due to a conflict that persists and experiences mutations supports and prolongs the state of displacement*" (2009, p. xii). From the legal field, Law 387 of 1997 in Article 1 defines the offset as follows:

(...) Any person who has been forced to migrate within the national territory, abandoning his place of residence or customary occupations, because his life,

¹ The woman mother of the family is represented as: "*The corner guaiacum or guayacán*". The guaiacum is a very much priced tree for its fine wood from the jungles of Chocó used as column mode or stakes to hold the stilts of the housing built on water, even in Quibdó, the city capital of the Afro-Colombian in Chocó.

physical integrity, safety or personal freedom have been violated or are directly threatened due to any of the following situations: internal armed conflict, internal strife, widespread violence, massive violations of Human Rights, violations of International Humanitarian Law or other circumstances originating from prior situations that can drastically alter public order.

The law also provides for the attainment of the rights of the displaced population, principles such as the right to request and receive international aid generates a corresponding right of the international community to provide humanitarian aid, the right to freedom from discrimination for their social status of displacement, because of race, religion, political opinion, place of origin or disability, the right to access solutions to their situation; the right to return to their place of origin, the right to freedom of movement subjected to no other restrictions than those provided by law, among others. (Act 387, 1997, Article 2).

Displacement has come to be seen in Colombia as a feature or parameter identification of the displaced person, but in correction of the above mentioned, this events must be understood as the phenomenon caused to an individual in the name of a third party which generates a state of transit or mobility that implies the ousting from the starting point and the shifting to a state of anxiety that outlines an unsafe point of arrival. The banishment triggers the uprooting and the vulnerability of a person in a determined socio-territorial context that brings about the violation of a number of rights of different hierarchies.

On the other hand the victim in the Colombian legal system is referred to as: "anybody who has suffered damages as a result of violations of international human rights or international humanitarian law in the context of armed conflict" (Ministry Justice and Law, 2012) which is clearly explained by the Government of Colombia in the book "Victim's Law and Restitution Act of lands" (2011):

For the purposes of the Law Act, victims will be *"those people who individually or collectively have suffered harm for events taking place from 1 January 1985 as a result of violations of International Humanitarian Law or gross and obvious violations to the International Human Rights, which occurred on the occasion of armed conflict"*. Consequently, a victim is any person who suffers harm as a result of violations of Human Rights standards and IHL infractions, regardless of who was the perpetrator.

In order to be coherent with the Colombian context in which only the grossest violation must be reported, all the violations occurred in the context of the internal armed conflict subsequent to January 1, 1985 will be included. The Restitution Act will cover the dispossessed after January 1st, 1991. In any case, the victims of acts prior to 1985 will accede to the symbolic reparation and guarantees of non-repetition. (Ministry of Justice and Law, 2011, p. 8).

It so happens that these women are no longer in their hometown, they are in Medellín as displaced victims of the armed conflict; told their stories there to everyone, the Colombian people make part of them and the world will understand only a fraction of the overwhelming conflict this country has lived. These stories are for us to relate, to sympathize with them, to understand that an armed conflict brings into play the whole society, the coexistence, democracy, justice, equity, the life itself, the dignity and humanity especially in women.

That is why this research proposed as objective to explore, beginning with the testimonies of the black women, the footprints and the effects left in them by the displacement and recognize the violation of their rights and the victimization that such displacement implies as well as its interrelation with other forms of historical and structural discrimination.

We wonder. What does having the black skin mean in a country like Colombia? What means that the black body is female? What consequences come along besides the black body being a displaced woman? How the body does evidence three victimizations? How does being victim in three senses impact in the inner self? ¿How is living in the public? It should be noticed that the emphasis of this research focused on the situation of women already living in the city of Medellín? Where they had arrived as displaced? How have they reorganized their lives? How do they resist and heal back? What kind of relations do they create after their displacement? How is their cultural memory affected by the displacement?

Colombia is one of the oldest democracies of the continent and has one of the most modern constitutions in which cultural diversity and the black population in particular are recognized; with international agreements ratified by the state in which is stated the guaranty and security of its citizens in general and of the ethnic groups in particular, but the internal armed conflict places the country as one with the highest levels of human rights violations in the world with crimes against humanity and breaches to the International Humanitarian Law.

In the framework of this conflict the displacement is considered a breach to the norms of that law, and also a violation to the human rights. This implies a violation of property rights, freedom, dignity, the good name, to name a few and at the same time linked to other violations such as threats, disappearances and killings. It even affects economic, social and cultural rights and also the special rights obtained by the afrocolombian and indigenous people that lead to multiple violence that intertwine and feedback from multiple actors, some armed and visible like the guerrillas, paramilitaries, and the State and others less visible with multiple economic and political interests.

It is a conflict in which secular, historical and structural inequities join together; the presence of the guerrilla, paramilitaries, groups that emerged after the demobilization

of the before mentioned and gangs in confrontation for the production and control of drug trafficking and other markets; private interests from nationals and foreigners, interests from the private megaprojects and/or the State. All of them actors in dispute for lands, for towns, for the natural resources and richness and, for the political control; violence is present in the framework of the globalization processes, markets opening and efforts of the country in joining and integrate to them as in the case of the free trade treaty with the United States and South Korea.

From the State the involvement of some of its agents on violations to rights either for action or omission, exposed and denounced by national and international organizations, with reiterative advocacy from them for an efficient action of rights protection, as were those pointed out the High Commissioner for the Human Rights office of the United Nations in the last report about the situation of those rights in Colombia 2010 (Pillay, 2010). The State is not able to provide effective protection to the rights of all its citizens, maintaining widespread impunity.

With the international pressure, from victims' organizations and the Colombian Constitutional Court by way of judgments (Law 387, 2007), that has not been effective, as evaluation from the Court confirmed, demanding from the State to have as a priority the development of policies for the prevention, care and compensation of displacement victims. (Colombian Constitutional Court, 2004, sentence T - 025).

This care must be timely, comprehensive ethnic and culturally integrated, with two fundamental components consisting in emergency humanitarian attention and socioeconomic stabilization. In April, 2011 the Congress of the Republic sanctioned the Law of victims and land restitution, in which compensation does not constitute a "gesture of solidarity" from the State, as assumed and established by the recent Law- but the fulfillment of its obligation-. This last Law does not make any special consideration of the victims either black or indigenous, and that is why the present government has been committed to make a previous consultation to sanction a specific Law for that purpose.

With respect to the black displaced communities, the Constitutional Court has recognized the disproportioned impact of displacement, its re-victimization as displaced, the massive violation of their rights, the worsening of their life conditions at all levels, their impoverishment getting even, to mendicancy. That is why The Constitutional Court compels the government to more efficient action, to formulate protection, special and specific care programs for the Afro-Colombian population (Colombian Constitutional Court, 2009, Court Act 005).

The black communities are entitled to their right to territory, one of the special ethnic rights, one of the most affected by displacement. For the Afro-Colombian population the territory is a central issue of their culture and ethnic identity, for this reason the forced displacement of which they are victims attempts against their existence as an

ethnic group (Rodríguez Garavito, 2009, p. 109) and against their special rights to the territory.

With regards of the great impact of displacement on the black population, the Constitutional Court identified three factors that place them at increased vulnerability (Rodríguez Garavito, 2009, p. 109) and: structural exclusion, which results in further marginalization and vulnerability, the existence of mining and agricultural processes in certain regions that impose severe strains on their ancestral lands that has helped their dispossession, and weak legal and institutional protection of collective territories of Afro-Colombian, which has encouraged the presence of armed groups that threaten the people to leave their territories.

However, having their rights recognized, having a public policy against displacement, despite the Court's judgments urging effective prevention, care and compensation to victims, of pointing out special rights of displaced people and the obligation of the State to implement special attention to people like the Afro-Colombians, the present reality is violence and forced displacement against the black population, which instead of diminishing, has increased in number.

Thus, the role played by the State is defined in a condition of expectation, because of the public policies that have been designed lately in relation with the humanitarian crisis that cause the displacement of the Afro-Colombian population, expecting to provide comprehensive care with a differential approach allowing access to the very roots of the problem that plagues this population.

It is expected not to fall in the response of simple handouts, it means, a differential approach to public Afro-Colombian-ethnic policy wishing to succeed in stopping and preventing displacement and in transforming the conditions of structural exclusion in which that part of the population live.

Since 2005, appears in Colombia the concept of transitional justice,¹ resulting in the demobilization of paramilitary groups. A regulatory framework through the courts was created as a setting for the search for truth, justice and reparation of the victims, prompting the issuance of Law 975 of 2005. The atoning paramilitaries would be able to enjoy alternative sentences of up to 8 years, even for crimes against humanity as long as they made known their crimes and repair the damage.

¹ Transitional justice is an answer to systematic or widespread violations of human rights. It aims to recognize the victims and to promote peace, reconciliation and democracy. Transitional justice is not a special form of justice but is justice adapted to societies that are transforming themselves after a period of widespread violation of human rights. In some cases, these transformations happen at any moment, in others it can occur after many decades. (Centro Internacional Para la Justicia Transicional CIJ <http://www.ictj.org/es/tj>).

For a peace and national reconciliation process this transitional justice alternative is well regarded and accepted internationally, as it seeks a greater good for society, especially to stop the spiral of violence, ensuring non-repetition of acts of barbarism to which it has subjected the civilian population. This first step was accompanied in 2008 by decree 1290 through which victim's reparation via administrative and not judicial venue was promoted.

With this rule, the compendium of legal issues to repair includes facts of armed conflict dating back to 1964 having as actors guerrilla and paramilitary groups, and leaving out the acts attributable to State agents. In this rule is established a "fee" of harm through which is offered to the victims of violence up to 40 legal monthly minimum wages (approximately 8,500 Euros). To date there are over three hundred thousand claimants¹ and official statistics speak for more than 30 thousand people "repaired". The law expired on April 22, 2010.

In 2011 was discussed in the Congress of Colombia the aforementioned new Victims Act aspired to be an improvement in all issues in recent years of their predecessors standards. Contrary to earlier legislation still in force, the words: woman, black, Afro-native islanders and palenqueras do make part of text. The so-called differential approach begins to have more space on this new approach in search of restorative justice with this population². But perhaps the biggest advance in the intention to integrate all state bodies around the exploration for the satisfaction of the rights of victims is at least the intention to make effective the constitutional principle of harmonious cooperation between State institutions to address the humanitarian crisis.

Among the main aspects that contribute to public recognition of the victims and their rights, the law passed contemplates the inclusion of farmers in the list of groups recognized as vulnerable, so that the State provide more guarantees and safeguards.

It contains specific provisions on gender, meanwhile, it contemplates that living free of violence is an autonomous right claimable by women. It consecrates as duty of the Public Defender Office to incorporate differential assistance criteria as well as a component of assistance for women victims, in all its actions as their legal representative.

¹ According to Acción Social 331,604 applications for administrative compensation were received

² Article 13. Differential Approach. The principle of differential approach recognizes that there are people with particular characteristics because of their age, gender, sexual orientation and disability. For this reason, measures of humanitarian aid, care, assistance and reparation established in this Act shall have that approach.

It widens legal action in matters of health and education that will benefit victims, such as exemption from any co-payment fee to those who are covered by the subsidized health plan, the possibility of exemption of charges for services including private academic institutions, the inclusion in health services and HIV testing for STDs, for cases where the victim has been subjected to rape or sexual violence.

It considers as one of the fundamental purposes the creation of a civilian transitional justice framework that overcomes the access barriers present in ordinary legislation as well as the implementation of a unified information system of stripped land to contribute to the restitution of rural properties. With regard to ethnic communities, provisions are made for them to be able to exercise their fundamental right to prior consultation. This is the overall framework of the situation of women resident in the new city; part of the population, victim, now the subject of initiatives and legislation such as the aforementioned.

That is why; to approach the displaced black woman in Medellín a qualitative methodological approach with a historic-hermeneutical focus was used along with strategies of oral stories from the testimony. As a technique was used a semi-structured interview on black displaced women from Chocó province from western Colombia and the Urabá coastal zone of Antioquia province, who were located after their displacement in the suburbs of Medellín.

Qualitative methodologies (Galeano, 2004, p. 20) and strategies such as oral stories are widely used by social sciences because they enable an approach and understanding of complex realities as those generated by human beings taking into consideration both their objectivities and subjectivities.

These methodologies proposed horizontal relations, humanistic, dialogical among subjects participating in research (researcher / researched) enabling knowledge and recognition of their reality by those involved in it. They put special emphasis on the experiential and "privilege the local, the everyday life and the cultural to understand the logic and meaning that the social processes have, for the actors, who are those living and producing the socio-cultural reality" (Galeano, 2004, p. 20) while they are transforming it.

As pointed out by Theodore Adorno, knowledge is generated by the recognition of real problems observed in everyday life of the society. Society as an object can be observed not only objectively, as it is also subjective (Galeano, 2004, p. 68)¹. He proposes that social science seeks the emancipation of man and society itself, in the social construction of scientific knowledge has to be a priority the interest in the

¹ Explaining the thinking of Thuillier: "No matter how great is your desire for objectivity, the researcher does not get rid once and for all of all their beliefs and prejudices, of all images or transmitted habits and more or less directly imposed by society".

transformation of reality, which become painful or contingent on those who experience them.

The qualitative enables to view the social actors such as the displaced black woman and build up from their testimonies and narratives other versions of history and from reality. From this methodology we wanted to approach the Afro-Colombian woman from their subjectivity and also from their particular culture; to know how they live, feel and fight against their situation of triple discrimination. The qualitative research implemented starts with the human actions as the core objective of the research, it folds around the intention of the individual and the collective context in which they live, address manifestations of human nature such as languages, experiences, conflicts, meanings and thoughts.

The possible qualitative visible social actors as the black woman displaced and build from their testimonies and narratives other versions of history and reality. Since this methodology was aspirated Afro-Colombian women get from their subjectivity and also from their particular culture, know how to live, feel and fight against discrimination triple your situation. Qualitative research implemented part of human action as the central object of inquiry, covers the intent of the individual and the collective context in which this unfolds, addressing manifestations of human nature as languages, experiences, conflicts, meanings and imagined.

It was by virtue of the oral stories through testimonies that the reality that black women face in Medellin was known. In this effort to approach the reality of these women from the language point of view, we rely on the philosophy of language and hermeneutics. The latter, as a research method, goes beyond mere literary episodes to address the human reality as meaningful text. Supported on the philosophy of language, it contributes to the understanding of the objectives, motives, and not only of the causes for social behavior but also it is how it helps to make sense of the society.

The philosophy of language focuses on the language from the meaning that it enables the gaining of knowledge and in turn is a means of expression, information and communication of thought. This leads to focus its study outside of logical analysis, in the games and concrete manifestations of language as a valuable human product. It originates in the open conceptions of reality, does not reject possible answers to the evidenced problems, it describes realities and its conclusions guide new scientific ideas and reflections, and it is more interested in the meaning that the description of the facts, since it is not limited to a mere descriptive observation.

These testimonials are part of a violent reality that muzzles the word; it is an act of bravery of these women to render their testimonies. With these tools we sought to "understand" what in their stories, in their own language they wanted to communicate: the unspeakable pain, the paralyzing and isolating fear, whatever was

stated or half stated out of that fear, the silences, the feelings, their frustrations and their dreams. The methodological challenges here were the effort, the rigor, the wittiness, the seriousness to achieve the understanding of their testimony, to "communicate" with them and "communicate" what they tried to communicate, the respect for their words, their context and an ethical commitment to society and reality.

These narratives are not only historical events that account for the processes that have lived and still live displaced black women, but they are also narratives of experiences that can organize experiences in the consciences of those who tell and of those who listen, granting a better understanding of the phenomenon of which we speak.

Memory is subjective, personal, and private; but its impact is still political and public. The displaced black woman that recalls the traumatic occurrence of leaving "their own" narrates her feelings and keeps silent about whatever it is she does not want to say or would rather forget. To this extent we did not want to settle for a fragment of the story or for its official version, we declare there is more! That is the reason we do not censor the words that express the experiences of black women victims of the armed conflict in Colombia from the moment they were cast out their homestead until the day we talked with them, so as to sense a violent road that is not over yet.

This research is thus a contribution to the liberation of speech that examines the phenomena of positions already created. The locals stepped in, subjectivities derived from race, class, sex and sexuality found in the particular context of an uprooted community in an armed internal conflict.

3. Africa: The first voices

Black, woman, displaced and victim are elements that together characterize human communities in Colombia in a symbiosis that has an invisible ancient origin, silenced by a society that, lost in the conflict and displacement, has led to the uprooting of the ancestor and secularization of the cultural richness. These women carry the heritage of a continent that injected in the history of Colombia one of the most distinctive and important cultural events that identify the territory of that country: being black.

But the problems and differences that black women have to face are bear in a journey where the root of their identity does not disappear, and the cultural practices of their people are not abandoned, at least not from their recollection. Thus, the condition of being a black woman recalls the story of people enslaved and subjected to the interests of colonists of continents who, since the imposition ousted these communities from Africa to new lands that required effort and work for the settlement of new civilizations and as part of the European nations interests to expand Catholicism and appropriation of wealth.

The narratives of black women illustrate some enriching samples of the experience of Africa in Colombia, a cultural variable of that country, living in a community monopolized by the white men, which on their own decided to narrate their stories and others' not letting the main characters' voices be heard, decided also to learn their world view and decided as well to see them as national peers with an enriched cultural heritage adding to the rich diversity of the nation.

In the attempt to identify and visualize the feelings, perceptions and difficulties of the displaced black women, the voice of Antonia and Roberta can be heard in their role of main characters in the custody their black African recollections to later on illustrate a reconstruction of the African ancestry that makes part of what is Colombia nowadays, and in it the displaced black woman. Calling upon their remembrances engraved in their soul as an inherent idea some black displaced women were asked to recreate in their minds what it was, what they understood, what ideas or images awakened in their minds the word **Africa**. In storytelling more than the living voices of the speakers, it is the arousal of their memories and their perception of the world before their eyes what is provoked. It is there and then when to Antonia's mind comes: (...) it is a country where there are more black than white, where there are sectors that are not as bad as they are portrayed, skinny ones and malnourished, the black's ethic is humbleness, the black one might have billions but always has his meekness, not as the white man who has had more opportunities from civilization and less abuse.

Roberta is innate, too, from her elder's continent of famine and poverty image that was sold to the public.

Africa, because Africa, I understand as Africa, is a country of black people, because I understand so, is like a country of blacks where much poverty is observed, (...) I have a picture, a present from a state representative, it depicts only black people in meager condition, undernourished, in and horrible, and you see those pictures and want to cry (...) those children.

To them, black women, Africa is a blacks' country or, at least a country where most of its inhabitants are but, as they are classified for their skin color there is also a bond established, focused on the material conditions in which they live, as it is for them scarcity and poverty. In Roberta the semblance of Africa promotes multiple sensations. Astonishment, uncertainty and struggle are expressed before her own representation of Africa and she even finds similarities between her images of Africa and her own experiences in Colombia.

Are these pictures real, my God? Or is it that people bring this out as to, as to demoralize the black people, for I think all that because they are very shocking pictures where people are seen practically as, like a thread out of malnutrition, unable to eat, there lying, and I put on much confusion, and I said once, to the state

representative I know: Have you really been in Africa? And he said that yes, that he had taken those pictures there, and I said : My God, that is true, that here, is true and, he said yes, that's how people in Africa look like, and I have that book I still keep it with me.

In Colombia no (...) not the same, not the same, because here there are children that struggle not only afros, here there are antioquians, indigenous, all of them with low malnutrition, so you can't say that is only us blacks that are in that situation, they are white and black in general, you go to several communes and see children with high malnutrition, rather skinny and all.

The image and perception of Africa goes beyond the idea of a country of colonized Negroes, it drives to a narrative of historical records in which the arrival of the ancestors and their cultural conditions are acknowledged. Antonia explains that her people come from Africa.

We, in fact, come from slave ancestry, but the people are not aware that we also come from royal ancestries, from very wise and intelligent people, our ancestors knew many things although we almost don't, now, even though we never forgot our dialect and culture. I love my people and my African people, and I miss all things I do with my people and our customs should never be lost; when my son passed away we did all the rituals and chants for him.

The alabaos, the songs, are manifestations of the cultural richness that survive and are transmitted among black people in Colombia, Antonia explains: "*The alabaos are some customs of our ancestors, are habits of the black race, then we say the prayers to learn how to enter the kingdom of God, because they are one thousand years of waiting to enter heaven (...)*". The alabao has shifted to black women in the department of Chocó and Roberta that is also now in the city of Medellín:

(...) There are many kinds of alabaos, alabaos that are sung, the alabaos when a person dies, the adult alabao the alabao of children, those are alabaos that are sung. When a person dies is that one makes his alabao, that's why I sing, cry and all that stuff. Have you seen that here in Medellín? Yes, because I once was with a lady who sang, here are many who sing that, but I'm sorry, but here are many, for example here when a person dies they are follices pa 'singing, but there are of them do not sing because several of them apparently angry because people say why when a person dies a celebration in honor, those are the alabaos, who sing their songs that they know pa 'their dead, which are different alabaos that the person when he was young, when the person was old, (...) are wonderful things, (...) Here people will feel sorry, here are many people who sing the alabao but I feel sorry (...).

The alabao emerges from the narratives of the black woman with with a history of the individual, the family, the community. That song is present during the different stages

of the life of a Negro and, beginning with the event with which it is associated, it impels the community to meet. The alabao represents the feeling of the blacks, the experiences of the customs that accompany those human groups to different territories where they spread those practices, territories they arrive for violence and aggression reasons, territories where the songs are silenced by pain and displacement.

4. Memories in the displacement

Josephine is a 39 year old woman with 4 children, three men and a woman. She has tried to give them all the opportunities she never had when she was a child in the Chocó province, one of the poorest of the country.

I am from Istmina. From a village near there, its name is Bazuru, they are two streams in the shape of a Y, and the town is in the middle of both. It is very small, with only a few inhabitants, with near, I think, a hundred houses or so. Now lonelier than ever, because the people have moved from there, to Istmina, to Cali, so people are diminishing because violence is harder there (...). Last year I went with my children, we had never visited there since I had left, and now it is more desolated, the rivers are gone, they are finished, they are dry because of the mining, no! Sadness.

When she came to Medellin, at 14, she started to work in a family house. There she experienced humiliation from other women, her employers demanded that everything had to be the way they liked it. Labor conditions for women working in houses are still deplorable and there, their condition of dignified human beings becomes altered for the imaginary of a culture that sees them as second category beings. They are women who arrive from displacement willing to study, but many do not get it, have only the rural teachings of the countryside and of the production for their families and the community.

The guerrilla followed us much where we lived and then now one (...) like we worked there on the mountain, there is much fear to go to the mountain and work because you never knew what was going to show up and guerrilla kept to the mountain and the people remained in their houses and the one who stays home starves and then we had to come here (...) It never is the same in the field (...) One there, at least I started to work from ten years and my son who is eighteen years old does not work yet, so I tell them my life has been very hard, that if I did not work I did not eat. They instead do not work like that, at eighteen they get up and get an arepa to eat, which I could not do in Chocó if I did not work.

The city is home for many displaced people and in it internal displacements happen and despite having friends and family does not feel like home.

There (in Bazurto) there are still a few relatives but most of them are here.

More than once I thought in returning, Chocó is now worse than before. Now there are more armed groups, besides in the town abuse women and because have children and they are very young I am afraid. It has always been like that, but I think people now are more like without pity. (...) I had to see the abuse on women from the armed groups, not somebody close but people I knew, then you are forced to leave because those are things that scare me very much. They had already committed many homicides. Although return well, yeah.

In memories you return to your land that you recognize and identify; a land where no matter how hard it is to live there are feelings of yearning, hopes and willingness. There humiliation does not exist, where the perspectives of working the land compared with the present situation makes you remember a better life in your hometown.

Antonia is a woman who comes from Apartadó, in Antioquia province. In her story the happenings are so painful and plentiful: To be stalked on because of a brother in UP¹, incarcerated, living the death of her husband and a son leave her own, her house, her lifestyle. But nothing has forced her to back up, stop being to help herself, to help others. Antonia is black woman that has been able to transform tragedy in opportunity to learn, to be a better human being.

To Antonia violence and displacement start when the multinational arrive to the Caribbean region of the Antioquia province. Peace, working the land, happiness give way to pain and dead, fear to opening the house and give a glass of water because she might be branded as of collaborator of some party or armed group.

(...) because people did not share whatever they had and ,people are never satisfied with what they have but they want more and more (...) their interests are for money, to get richer, even by killing their Colombian brothers, because people no longer look at what is inside.

Antonia is a fighter who cries every time she remembers her son recently killed in the city of Medellín, She lives with three daughters, after moving for different neighborhoods of the city in search for a place where she would be able to live peacefully and permanently. She has organized with other women and bravely they denounce the mistreatment of the victims, they work for justice in the country.

I live with a daughter who was raped and is ill (...) is mentally ill, I do not know what to do(...) most displaced have psychological problems and as in my case, there are too many, to many women happened the same thing they kill our children, what we love the most.

¹ Patriotic Union Political Party.

(...) I see my enemies as brothers because we are all brothers, White, black and all, because we walk on the same soil, rich and poor, just like the story of Cain and Abel the kill each other (...) I have remained silent for very long time but now my talk is from the heart , because one loves our children and the family , my little son used to wash cars to help me, sometimes he came so dirty from washing cars, for him to come to Medellin and get killed.

Finally, Roberta is a woman born in Condoto, Chocó; she “learned to responsible” taking care, since she was 10 years old, her nieces in the Municipality of Apartadó, in the region of Urabá in the Antioquia province.

There was my sister killed. They were looking for another woman by the same name, they got her, and they killed her and left her there dead. I always lived with my little sister and that was why I took care of her daughters and that made me be responsible, I got married had two daughters and any way I kept being responsible of my nieces.

We were threatened, because the problem was that we had to flee the zone, the case is that it was a wrong killing, they expect the family to take some kind of reaction and we because of her dead had to get out of there. At that time in Apartadó there was a lot of violence, and then it was that in those neighborhoods was the guerrilla, the paramilitaries killing people , there were many and we thought in coming here, because we thought Medellin being such a big city and maybe we can make a living.

Roberta is an example of the displaced woman who upon her arrival could not work to subsist due to the rejection of her condition. She said she avoided begging not only for all the contemptuous looks that situation attracts but also because an independent and proud of her skin color, woman, experiencing that humiliation is a painful blow. Humiliation that has been perpetuated ever since America received the African black slaves considered to be soulless and valueless, a memory we inherited and refuses to understand that we all are humans and deserve to be treated as such.

They are black women who yearn for a better life conditions for them and for the whole displaced population. Roberta, who has helped to cook in farms, serving peasants in her hometown Apartadó, has made brooms, mops, and a woman who does not stay still to go forward in life. She organized a group of women, she does workshops, manages to help people of her community who need it as much or more than her; she works restless so that the city, Medellín, understands that the displaced are people who suffer and need serious actions and committed with their situation, which is in itself burdensome as Roberta's is but it could be even more and, turn even worse in the city.

I was displaced from the neighborhood. You know that the work of a leader is very sensitive (...) the problem of displacement of the neighborhood was because I have

an association and I work for the community and I did a lot of social work and you know that the paramilitaries (...). The problem is that now the communitarian police that had always existed there was taken out of there, the police come to my home social because we do social work and you know that as these neighborhoods are hot, they think one is a snitch, a Police messenger; I do not know what they imagine.

I had a well put together program there in the neighborhood. We had several activities there, we made brooms and mops, we worked recycling. Then some women made brooms and mops and the others recycled in the same association program we had 160 boys and we gave them a glass of milk, then we moved a lot of little things with the city community in mind (...)

When I lived in Apartadó our idea was talent. Because we went, danced, at that time they took us to dance in comparsas or group dancers. Girly things. We danced in those events and all, now when I came out to Medellín, I lost my liking for the customs, I do not like to dance now, I lived now, lived like a different culture different from Apartadó, because there, there was music all over, and dancing and the ambient and all those things, I arrived here to Medellín and took to work.

(...) Here they celebrate San Pacho's holidays which is the patron's saint day in Quibdó, that is celebrated in Chocó but right here there are many Chocoans, now at the end of October was the holiday. I do not attend that now because I am no longer on those whereabouts, but I like to see it. They dance, dance every kind of talents. It is like here a holy week, they take the saints out on a parade, just like that is San Pacho's holiday, they take the saint out and many people come out. And they celebrate the Afro-Colombianidad. The mayor authorizes the celebration of the Chocoan fiesta, San Pacho's day, slavery day.

5. Conclusion

The socio-cultural richness of a country like Colombia perhaps has not been internally estimated and in less measure in the international context. The historical configuration of its diverse population comes together in the same multiculturalism of ideologies, beliefs, and customs which because of economic and political happenings have condemned a whole country to an armed conflict of multiple actors with huge consequences for more than 40 years.

After many atrocities and suffering, Colombia looks up various sectors of the population, to identify and recognize the victims as part of the experience of a crude process that has segregated differing social sectors to situations of profound vulnerability. Among them are the black women of the country, women who carry one of the most memorable and tangible legacies of the African colonial history that raise the foundations of much of Latin-American.

These black displaced, victimized women are Colombian, mothers, wives, sisters, workers, friends, neighbors, leaders, voices of courage and hope who materializing one of the clearest cases of forced displacement, discrimination and vulnerability have maintained the from color of their skin to the strength of their ancestral chants, the hope for the return to their territory and for the turn of history in a country they love in which they keep their most profound roots.

Memories of slavery, strength, community, submission, they are voices of truth that from the suffering of uprooting and lost, fight the memories of a conflict that forced them to a change their lives in a country that has not yet, been able to visualize them effectively for their recognition and protection of their rights. But similarly as with their chants they raise their voices together with the truth. Such a common truth that permits Colombia today to acknowledge and not to forget that it was worse and that we do not know everything yet but, that we are committed to listen and built together the memory of a population.

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