



*Emotions in children and adolescents from the experience of displacement and linking to armed groups in Colombia*



# EMOTIONS IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF DISPLACEMENT AND LINKING TO ARMED GROUPS IN COLOMBIA



Emoções em crianças, meninas e adolescentes desde a experiência do deslocamento e a vinculação aos grupos armados em Colombia

Emoções em meninos, meninas e adolescentes desde a experiência do deslocamento e a vinculação aos grupos armados na Colômbia

RECIBIDO: 10 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2015

EVALUADO: 2 DE MARZO DE 2016

APROBADO: 25 DE MARZO DE 2016

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## ABSTRACT

Colombia is a country that has experienced multiple periods of violence and very little is known about the emotional affects of children and adolescents victims of armed conflict. This paper recovers the experiences of forced displacement and its linkage to armed groups, through a qualitative investigation, using the state of art methodology where the emotional area of this population is highlighted. It was decided to construct a documented review and to investigate through four fundamental stages the different texts that mention or refer to this social problematic: the search for information about the subject in different texts, papers, books, etc. found in scientific databases like Redalyc, SciELO, among other sources; the selection of the most relevant documents of the subject, which were used to construct a bibliographic database; the selection of themes which emphasize in the emotions of children and adolescents in conditions of forced displacement and linked to armed groups; and, lastly, the production

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## RESUMEN

Colombia es un país que ha vivenciado múltiples periodos de violencia y muy poco se conoce sobre las afectaciones emocionales de los niños, niñas y adolescentes víctimas del conflicto armado. Este artículo recupera las experiencias del desplazamiento forzado y la vinculación a los grupos armados, a través de una investigación cualitativa, utilizando la metodología del estado de arte donde se resalta el área emocional de esta población. Se optó por construir una revisión documentada e indagar a través de los diferentes textos que mencionan o refieren acerca de esta problemática social, por medio de cuatro etapas fundamentales: la búsqueda de información en los diferentes textos, artículos, libros etc. acerca del tema en bases científicas como Redalyc, SciELO, entre otras fuentes; la selección de los documentos más relevantes de la temática en estudio con los que se construyó una base de datos bibliográfica; la selección de los núcleos temáticos que tienen como objetivo principal las emociones de los

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## RESUMO

A Colômbia é um país que tem vivenciado múltiplos periodos de violência e muito pouco se conhece sobre as afetações emocionais dos meninos, meninas e adolescentes vítimas do conflito armado. Este artigo recupera as experiências do deslocamento forçado e a vinculação aos grupos armados, através de uma pesquisa qualitativa, utilizando a metodologia do estado de arte onde se resalta a área emocional desta população. Optou-se por construir uma revisão documentada e indagar através dos diferentes textos que mencionam ou referem acerca desta problemática social, por meio de quatro etapas fundamentais: a procura de informação nos diferentes textos, artigos, livros etc. acerca do tema em bases científicas como Redalyc, SciELO, entre outras fontes; a seleção dos documentos mais relevantes da temática em estudo com os que se construiu uma base de dados bibliográfica; a seleção dos núcleos temáticos que têm como objetivo principal as emoções dos MMA em condições de

of a critical analysis on what was found. It is important to mention the consequences of these violent acts because they violate their fundamental rights, especially those related to: the right to life, a family, healthy recreation, freedom; among others. Children develop emotions motivated by the hostile and aggressive context in which they develop and are even forced to participate in.

NNA en condiciones de desplazamiento forzado y vinculación a los grupos armados; y finalmente la producción de una reflexión crítica sobre lo encontrado. Es importante mencionar las consecuencias generadas en estos hechos violentos porque atentan contra sus derechos fundamentales, especialmente los relacionados con: el derecho a la vida, a una familia, al sano esparcimiento, a la libertad; entre otros. En los niños y niñas se desarrollan emociones motivadas por el contexto hostil y agresivo, en el cual se desenvuelven e incluso están obligados a participar.

deslocamento forçado e vinculação aos grupos armados; e finalmente a produção de uma reflexão crítica sobre o encontrado. É importante mencionar as consequências geradas em estes fatos violentos porque atentam contra os seus direitos fundamentais, especialmente os relacionados com: o direito à vida, a uma família, ao sadio lazer, à liberdade; entre outros. Nos meninos e meninas desenvolvem-se emoções motivadas pelo contexto hostil e agressivo, no qual desempenham-se e incluso estão obrigados a participar.

**Keywords:** Forced displacement, violence, social problematic, emotional affections.

**Palabras clave:** Transconflicto, educación para la paz, construcción de paz, mantenimiento de la paz.

**Palavras chave:** Deslocamento forçado, violência, problemática social, afetações emocionais.

**PARA CITAR ESTE ARTÍCULO / TO CITE THIS ARTICLE / PARA CITAR ESTE ARTIGO:**

Guzmán Moreno, K., Fernández Cediel, M. C. y Villalba Herrera, L. Y. (2016). Emociones en niños, niñas y adolescentes desde la experiencia del desplazamiento y la vinculación a los grupos armados en Colombia. *Panorama* 10(19), p.85-96.



## INTRODUCTION

In Colombia, a constant confrontation between different armed groups has existed for decades, and in which the civilian population has been the most affected party (Tapia and Cidoncha, 2012; Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013; Bácares, 2015). In different circumstances, these groups have reached agreements for the cessation of hostilities, but they have not taken into account the emotional consequences said conflict generated in infants and adolescents.

The content of this article consists of looking at children and adolescents who have experienced the Colombian armed conflict, including their emotional experiences. A qualitative research was carried out with state of the art methodology. We decided, in four fundamental stages, to build a documented review and to investigate different texts that refer to social problems. In the first stage, we searched different texts, articles, books, etc. in scientific databases such as Redalyc, SciELO, for information, among other bibliographic sources, and then the sources used were characterized.

In the second stage, the most relevant documents for the subject under study were selected, and used to construct a bibliographic database. In a third moment, the thematic nuclei were chosen, which mainly target child and adolescent emotions in conditions of forced displacement and its connection to armed groups. In the fourth stage, the final production was reached. This paper is a synthesis of said production.

It can be seen that this type of research that although there is a great deal of literature about the

armed conflict, very few authors have researched emotions in this situation (Blom and Pereda, 2009, Carmona, 2013, Hewitt et al., 2013, Mülberguer, 2014, Portilla, 2014). Most of the texts the research reviewed are of a qualitative nature. Among them: Vanegas, Bonilla and Camacho (2011); Hewitt et al. (2013); Andrade (2013); Portilla, (2014); Moreno, Carmona and Tobón (2010); Carmona (2013). In these, authors work with displaced children through the drawing of the human figure and art (Vanegas, Bonilla and Camacho, 2011, Hewitt et al., 2013, Andrade, 2013, Portilla, 2014), while the authors Moreno, Carmona and Tobón (2010) and Carmona (2013) used the narrative method in order to elicit infants and adolescent experiences.

This document is a brief account of the armed conflict's context and how children and adolescents are immersed in situations of power and domination through different acts of victimization (Pachón, 2009, Toro, 2011, Tapia and Cidoncha, 2012, Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013, Vera, Palacio and Garzón, 2014, Arias and Roa, 2015). Emphasis is placed on two victimizing events which frequently occur in Colombia and affect the child and adolescent population: forced displacement and becoming members of armed groups. Finally, these events' emotional dimension was recovered.

## *A COUNTRY'S MARK AFTER ARMED CONFLICT*

Violence cannot be reduced to a numerical factor because within it exists something ineffable in the individual and collective memory of the facts, a kind of painful surplus that installs itself in the victims as a permanent aftereffect and constitutes the center of the victim's emotional symptomatology.

The armed conflict in Colombia has gone on for several decades and it carries a tradition of violence represented in the fighting, the massacres and the threats made by different armed groups (Segura, 2010, Toro, 2011, Tapia and Cidoncha, 2012; 2015). It hinders the country's development through submission, subjection, barbarism and other acts that affect society's free development, its families, children and adolescents (Bayo-Borrás, 2010; Arias and Roa, 2015).

The Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica (National Center for Historical Memory, 2013) divides this violence into four main periods. The first period is from 1958 to 1982, which was characterized by a bipartisan struggle for power. The second period occurred between 1982 and 1996, and it saw the largest expansion of illegal armed groups in the territories, the conflict was greatly magnified by victimizing acts, and this gave rise to a third period (1996 -2005) characterized by the eagerness of the State to provide solutions through humanitarian exchanges, clearance zones and negotiations. In the last period (2005-2012), the state tried to "weaken" the armed groups, with great blows to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) by the bombing of camps, killing its main ideologues, operations to free kidnapped persons, demobilization, among others.

groups, or between such groups, within a State" (Ruling C-291 of 2007). This criterion recognizes that Colombia is a place of armed conflict, because different organized armed groups have acted violently in the territory (Cifuentes, 2015, Calderón and Barrera, 2012, Ospina-Alvarado, Carmona-Parra and Alvarado-Salgado, 2014; Torres, 2015).

This armed conflict, according to the Single Victims Registry (Registro Único de Víctimas, 2016), estimates that 7,675,032 people have been victimized in the period ranging from 1 January 1985 to 1 September 2015, but this figure is not accurate because it excludes the people before 1985<sup>1</sup> and there is underreporting because some people have not reported the victimizing facts to the different institutions that protect them (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013).

But to what kind of victimization is the civilian population exposed? The civilian population is the victim of a variety of acts, and children and adolescents are involved in some, forced abandonment of land, terrorist acts, anti-personnel mines, unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive devices, kidnappings, homicides/massacres, crimes against sexual liberty and integrity, threats, torture and forced disappearance (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013). In addition, victimizers produce unconformity to dominate the community through terror, panic, fear, despair, mistrust, and anxiety produce (Ortiz and Chaskel, 2009, Calderón and Barrera, 2012, Andrade, 2013). These acts of hostility, aggression and violence leave an

attacking the underage population was intended to demonstrate that there were no moral limits and generate fear in the non-combatant population.

emotional imprint on the civilian population, which affects life in society (Bayo-Borràs, 2010, Toro, 2011, Gómez, 2013, Vera, Palacio and Garzón, 2015, Mülberguer, 2014; Arias and Roa, 2015).

These situations of violence lead the population to alter its social and familial dynamics and thus leads to the fragmentation of their biopsychosocial state, and this can be observed in the isolation, distrust, relationships with the community and the emotional exhaustion they feel; in addition to anger, shame and fear, because most adults have grown up in violent contexts, under the domination, aggression and power exercised by the different armed groups (Portilla, 2012, 2014; Andrade, 2013; Rosa González, 2015, Castillo-Sabogal and Navarrete-Canchón, 2015).

### *BOYS, GIRLS AND ADOLESCENTS IN COLOMBIA'S ARMED CONFLICT*

Due to this scenario of a hostile and violent society, boys, girls and adolescents grow up in situations that generate pain and force them to participate in the different victimizing acts of multiple conditions. Boys and girls inside the armed conflict are exposed to death, threats, displacement, disappearance, recruitment in illegal armed groups and revenge, among others; mediated by multiple feelings like fear, hatred, distrust, despair and deep desires of revenge, all as an expression of the varied experiences in the armed conflict (Ruiz 2002: 22).

The conflict's actors use displacement as a way to expand and keep territory, and in order to do so they violate the population's human rights. Segura (2010) states that 32.7% of the displaced people come from 17 departments. Vanegas, Bonilla and Camacho (2011) state that 41% of the total displaced population was less than 14 years old when displaced. Toro (2011) states that more than

50% of displaced people were minors when displaced.

Armed groups also force boys and girls to join their ranks. Colombia is one of the countries with the largest number of boys, girls and adolescent soldiers, with approximately 13,000, that is, 25% are minors. Human Rights Watch (2005) gave the figure of 11,000 children, while Save the Children (2005) gives a figure of 14,000 (cited in Pachón, 2009). Segura (2010) states that 30% of the members of illegal groups are under 18 years old and Tapia and Cidoncha (2012) states that 1 of 4 fighters is an infant or a teen soldier.

Taking into account the different statistics we have presented and the facts to which child and adolescent populations are exposed to we chose to review the two most frequent and important events in Colombia, such as forced displacement and boys, girls and adolescents joining illegal armed groups.

### *FORCED DISPLACEMENT*

Forced displacement is a phenomenon with more than sixty years in Colombia, and it is one of the countries in which armed actors actively use forced displacement to defend, keep or expand the territories they dominate. It also ranks first in the world as regards the largest number of displaced persons (Segura, 2010, Vanegas, Bonilla and Camacho, 2011, Vera, Palacio and Garzón, 2013). According to Bello (2002), displacement begins with two substantial events: the first when events occur, in the place where people live, due to ideological motives, murders or fear of being linked to armed groups, as well as aggression and sexual violence against women, girls and adolescents (Tapia and Cidoncha, 2012; Torres, 2015); and the

second occurrence is due to the deterioration of the social fabric, and as applied to children it expresses itself in the repression of child behavior;<sup>2</sup> that is, displacement is caused after there is emotional exhaustion caused by a series of harassments that can be collective, organized or spontaneous (Toro, 2011; Andrade, 2013).

Authors such as Vanegas, Bonilla and Camacho (2011), who study forced displacement, explain that in this situation boys, girls and adolescents are confronted with three particular moments full of ambivalences: a before, a during and an after. The first moment consists of anxiety, fear of happiness, because they are with their loved ones but feel afraid of losing them. In the second moment, we can see the tranquility in the face of sadness, because they move away from violence but leave behind everything that they know. At the last moment, we see joy in the face of anxiety, because they believe they have left the violence in the past, but they finally reach a new place to which they are not accustomed and where they do not know anyone, so they feel isolated, lonely and, many times, the population that receives them imposes prejudices that isolate and stigmatize them (Vera, Palacio and Garzón, 2013, Fernández, 2015, Torres, 2015).

When boys, girls and adolescents are immersed in a territory and displacement occurs, there is a negative loss of the social scene's imaginary and symbolic, there is a rupture in the social fabric, an uprooting, a loss of identity and social memory, isolation and frustration (Cifuentes, Aguirre and Lugo, 2011, Portilla, 2012, Andrade, 2013,

Cepedal, 2013, Ospina-Alvarado, Carmona-Parra and Alvarado-Salgado, 2014).

The traces by displacement in boys, girls and adolescents by displacement depend on different factors, such as the fact that displacement occurs, how much time they were exposed hostile events, whether the original family is fragmented or not, among other aspects (Vanegas, Bonilla and Camacho, 2011, Portilla, 2012, Andrade, 2013).

This situation causes fear, mistrust and aggression. Portilla (2012), in drawings made by a child, found expressions of fear and sadness, of uprooting, frustration and isolation. In the drawing of a human figure that Andrade (2013) studied, he revealed signs of shyness (30%), impulsivity (17.6%), anxiety (19%), and aggressiveness (16.4%) that were expressed by the boys and girls. In addition, he explained that these behaviors can be observed through play.

Boys, girls and adolescents feel disoriented in their flight (displacement), because they do not know what really happened; they leave everything they knew behind and they are thrown into a new world, where a process of giving new meanings to experiences arises and they mature early because many of them will perform labors that are not suitable for their age<sup>3</sup> (Vanegas, Bonilla and Camacho, 2011, Andrade, 2013).

Infants and adolescents use strategies to "unload" all the negative emotions they feel in this situation and help reduce psychological consequences such as the stress and anxiety of displacement through play, art, drawings and fantasies, where they project

as children are subjected to control and repressed, they are forced to lie, to be silent and not to ask (Bello, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> Work such as caring for siblings, caring for older adults, working.

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<sup>2</sup> Community relations generated through mistrust and fear, that is to say, the deterioration of the social fabric, imply that children's spontaneity and the condition to express themselves

ambivalent feelings, fragility, insecurity, fears, which, in turn, help strengthen their abilities and affective expressions (Portilla, 2012; Andrade, 2013). Despite the unfavorable situations what this displacement seeks it occurs to save lives and protect the family (Segura, 2010, Castillo-Sabogal and Navarrete-Canchón, 2015).

### *LIFE IN ILLEGAL ARMED GROUPS*

Life in an armed group is divided into three main moments in which boys, girls and adolescents experience different experiences and emotions. The first is joining, this is the beginning of life in the armed group. They are welcomed in a pleasant and nice way, where they are given the support they need. The second moment deals with permanence in the group, here they realize that these supporting and welcoming gestures pass, and they suffer greatly and this triggers the detachment (third moment), and this is why they try to leave by any means they can (Romero and Chávez, 2008; Carmona; 2013; Torres, 2015).

According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (2013), by 2000 there were approximately 6,000 children in armed groups in Colombia, a figure supported by the Defensoría del Pueblo and the Instituto colombiano de Bienestar familiar (ICBF) (2010). Others estimate that there are between 8,000 and 14,000 child soldiers in Colombia (Tapia and Cidoncha, 2012).

forces minors to join their ranks or on other occasions they are handed over as war tax to the group that dominates the area. The third occurs if the parents belong to an armed group, therefore, the child is considered to belong to the armed group and not to the parents, it does not matter if the parents are deceased (Romero and Chávez, 2008; Pachón, 2009 Blom and Pereda, 2009, Segura, 2010, Moreno, Carmona and Tobón, 2010).

Pachón (2009) states that the recruitment of minors happens between 7 and 17 years of age, while Tapia and Cidoncha (2012) show that there are children and adolescents that have joined since the age of 6.

Being in the armed group, children and adolescents modify their role, create new expectations and are vulnerable. The armed actors recruit them because they can poorly differentiate between good and evil and they are ignorant about dangers. They are also easy to manipulate. They are also cheap labor and, for the most part, they take risks, are submissive, and the state gives them greater benefits in terms of criminal law, because they are underage (Romero and Chavez, 2008, Pachón, 2009, Blom and Pereda, 2009; Moreno, Carmona and Tobón, 2010).

Armed groups also motivate boys, girls and adolescents to be leaders through power and the adventure of weaponry. They teach them to have an important relationship with their weapons, to follow orders, subjection is established, and repression and punishment exist along with severe behavioral rules, which limits autonomous thinking and the elaboration of alternative solutions (Romero and Chavez, 2008, Moreno, Carmona



and Tobón, 2010, Tapia and Cidoncha, 2012, Carmona, 2013).

Through the training given to boys, girls and adolescents, the armed groups seek to alienate and desensitize them (Romero and Chavez, 2008, Blom and Pereda, 2009, Cifuentes, Aguirre and Lugo, 2011, Carmona, 2013). This is done in four fundamental stages: the first is based on military training, where they are taught the rules, how to defend themselves against the enemy and to survive. In the second stage, adaptation occurs, in which they are monitored and encouraged through gifts and prizes. The third is the implantation and hardening stage, this is the most painful phase for the children, because the armed group try's to modify the structure of the child's identity through pain and fear. The violence and aggression they receive plays an important role for the herein discussed actions. And finally (fourth stage) is submission, where they must obey orders from a superior at any cost and if they do not they will face severe punishment (Pachón, 2009).

In the armed group, boys, girls and adolescents are forced to commit violent acts: they kill, torture, injure, install and manipulate explosives, they are spies, they kidnap, they guard kidnapped people, they recruit other minors, they sell drugs, they are combatants and they attack the population (Pachón, 2009, Segura, 2010, Tapia and Cidoncha, 2012).

commanders and if they are enemies they can be raped as the prize of the winning soldiers or to damage the moral of the enemy (Segura, 2010, Carmona, 2013, Tapia and Cidoncha, 2012).

These are some figures of the actions carried out by boys, girls and adolescents in armed groups.

We have to highlight that 25% of child combatants have witnessed kidnappings, 13% have kidnapped, 18% admit to having killed at least once, 60% have seen killings, 78% have seen mutilated corpses, 18% have seen tortures, 40% have fired at someone and 28% have been injured. Children that no longer belong to these groups have stated that they were forced to kill people and dismember their bodies. Some children reported being forced to drink human blood, in some cases mixed with gunpowder, in order to "conquer fear" (Tapia and Cidoncha, 2012, p. 28).

Children leave because of three different reasons: voluntary,<sup>4</sup> the group<sup>5</sup> and capture.<sup>6</sup> For the first reason, children and adolescents present a post-traumatic stress disorder because they fear reprisals from another armed group (Romero and Chavez, 2008). In the second, they feel disoriented, lost and abandoned, because they do not find some sort of safe support, as was provided by the armed group. And in the third reason, boys, girls and adolescents feel more traumas, because they undergo interrogation and have a greater probability of joining once more due to the strong rupture that occurred with the armed group (Romero and Chavez, 2008, Carmona, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Through capture occurs when boys, girls and adolescents are detained by the Army or the Police.

Panorama | More often, girls are raped and used as sex slaves,  
pp. 85-96 | and, as part of the war strategy: If they really belong  
Volumen 10 | to the group they have to grant sexual favors to the

Número 19 | \_\_\_\_\_  
Julio-diciembre | <sup>4</sup> It happens voluntarily because boys, girls and  
2016 | adolescents escape the armed group.  
<sup>5</sup> Through a group happens when a squad or column  
demobilizes with their minors.

Minor and adolescent peasants suffer the greatest impact, because they are apathetic and indifferent, develop distrust and generate isolating and silent behaviors, and thereby limiting their interpersonal contact and social support. In general, boys, girls and adolescents react with hopelessness and uncertainty, because they do not know what to do with their future, they do not have a clear life project, and in extreme cases, they ponder suicide and even carry it out (Romero and Chavez, 2008, Segura, 2010, Carmona, 2013).

All the violence these boys, girls and adolescents have suffered through leaves an indelible mark in the construction of their identity and life-knowledge. They sometimes fail to break all ties with the armed group, especially if they live in areas where fighting takes place, which favors a war imaginary where they believe that arms and violence are always right and they exert limits without control (Romero and Chavez, 2008).

Many boys, girls and adolescents, linked to these armed groups that try to return to their home community are stigmatized by the people, due to the actions they carried out while in the armed group. Others feel guilty, ashamed and guilty and are afraid to return in fear of reprisals from the community (Tapia and Cidoncha, 2012).

There are no accurate statistics on how many boys, girls and adolescents belong to illegal armed groups and there are no specific statistics to show the damage this experience causes, partly because of difficulties in working with this population due to institutional barriers, the rights intended to protect, the territories are hard to locate and access territories, even many boys, girls and adolescents cut off all families ties for fear of reprisals (Patiño,

2015). In addition, armed groups expulse boys, girls and adolescents and do not report it to the respective institutions; it is said that they only report 10% of the total of boys, girls and adolescents (Pachón, 2009, Tapia and Cidoncha, 2012).

### *EFFECTS ON THE EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF BOYS, GIRLS AND ADOLESCENTS*

The emotions of an adult human being cannot be understood unless one understands the history of his early childhood.

Martha C. Nussbaum

After learning about the experiences of forcibly displaced boys, girls and adolescents and how they joined armed groups, they developed negative emotions that intensified depending on the victimizing act, how much time they were exposed to it, how they experienced it, the impact it had on them and if they used their own strategies to overcome such an experience (Blom and Pereda, 2009, Vanegas, Bonilla and Camacho, 2011, Andrade, 2013, Carmona, 2013, García, Ortega and Rivera, 2013). According to Hewitt al. (2013), the strategies that most boys, girls and adolescents use are these: let the situation fix itself, forget the situation, use the good side of the situations, do not blame themselves, do not blame others, do not use shouting, calm down, do something different and try to feel better.

These facts generate psychological, social, organic and emotional consequences that alter the development of the identity and the morality of the boys, girls and adolescents (Blom and Pereda, 2009, Segura, 2010, Cifuentes, Aguirre and Lugo, 2011, Cepedal, 2013; Hewitt at. 2013, Vera,

Palacio and Garzón, 2013). The conflict brings with it an indelible mark on the bodies, emotions and thoughts of boys, girls and adolescents. Some facts only remain as memories, others generate trauma that lasts a lifetime (Ortiz and Chaskel, 2009, Arias and Roa, 2015, De la Rosa González, 2015, Torres, 2015).

In different stories we found, that there is a discourse of fear of conflictive situations, sadness of the witnesses and in some cases participants of violent acts, revenge when they or their families were assaulted in some violent act, loneliness, distrust, isolation, anguish, shame and guilt; (Bayo-Borràs, 2010, Carmona, 2013, Hewitt et al., 2013, Ospina-Alvarado, Carmona-Parra and Alvarado-Salgado, 2014 and Torres, 2015).

Although not all are bad, we also found stories of solidarity, resistance to what was experienced, interest in participating in a different future, in protective networks and guarding the environment. All these elements contribute to peace building (Ospina-Alvarado, Carmona-Parra and Alvarado-Salgado, 2014).

However, research on boys, girls and adolescents in the armed conflict (Romero and Chávez, 2008; Ortiz and Chaskel, 2009; Toro, 2011; Pereda, 2012; Cepedal, 2013; Salazar, 2013; De la Rosa González, 2015; Patiño, 2015) mentions that they have emotional consequences such as: anxiety, apathy, anxiety, disgust, guilt, disappointment, mistrust, anger, fury, frustration, humiliation, hostility, ire, impotence, insecurity, irritation, indifference, hatred, panic, pessimism, rage, rejection, rancor, resentment, fear, terror, sadness, shame and revenge.

As observed in boys, girls and adolescents, negative emotions prevail, they dominate them, paralyze them and transform them; their behaviors change, they refrain from daily activities, such as leaving the house, walking, meeting with friends, among others, and this is due to constant threats, confrontations, recruitment, pressure and the criminal actions of illegal armed groups. These situations tend to develop lock-downs, isolation, silence, nightmares and disinterest (Quintero, 2005; Aristizábal, Howe and Palacio, 2009; National Center for Historical Memory, 2013).

In addition, other emotional consequences develop, and they manifest themselves in nightmares, sleep apnea, night terrors, insomnia, headaches, vomiting, enuresis, crying, parental incomprehension, tantrums, low self-esteem, delusions persecution, distorted ideas, separation, substance abuse and sexual relations, difficulty in establishing affective ties, regression, difficulty in creating their life project and making autonomous decisions, loss of confidence, uprooting, isolation, hopelessness, impulsivity, depression, indifference to death, insensitivity emotional and detachment (Pachón, 2009, Segura, 2010, Andrade, 2013, Carmona, 2013, Cepedal, 2013, Garcia, Ortega and Rivera, 2013, Hewitt et al., 2013, Mülberguer, 2014).

Sexual violence is very frequent during armed conflict, and it harms the sexual organs of boys, girls and adolescents, some girls become pregnant and in many cases are forced undergo abortion, and this generates depression, fear, anger and hatred toward aggressors. Sometimes, the abuser can become the abused (Blom and Pereda, 2009, Pachón, 2009, Moreno, Carmona and Tobón, 2010, Segura, 2010, Cifuentes, Aguirre and Lugo,

2011, Calderón and Barrera, 2012, Hewitt et al., 2013, Carmona, 2013).

The identities of boys, girls and adolescents are transformed through violence, as demonstrated in language, games, in the way they interact with the world; all relate to war meanings and symbols, and use aggression as a means of solving conflicts, and leave dialogue, negotiation and agreements aside (Toro, 2011, Andrade, 2013, Hewitt et al., 2013, Portilla, 2014).

Colombia's conflict is transgenerational, because it has existed for several decades, today's adults grew up in a violent and hostile environment, and this affects the next generations, because they learn past behaviors, such as being submissive when faced with abusive acts, and violence as a natural response to conflicts (Toro, 2011, Gómez, 2013, Vera, Palacio and Garzón, 2013, Arias and Roa, 2015).

## ***DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS***

Based on the assessed texts, we observed that there is a great variety of research about the armed conflict, in addition there are innumerable authors who have studied this subject, but there is very little literature on boys, girls and adolescents and research on the populations' emotions is even less; different studies mention them, but none of them stop to study them, only briefly mention this theme (Blom and Pereda, 2009, Moreno, Carmona and Tobón, 2010, Portilla, 2012, Cepedal, 2013).

In the few texts that speak about this scourge, we found that most research was qualitative and the instrument used most frequently was to make the forcibly displaced boys, girls and adolescents draw a human figure due to their scant verbal

expressiveness and narratives for the child and adolescent population that joined illegal armed groups since most of them tell their experiences (Moreno, Carmona and Tobón, 2010, Carmona, 2013, Hewitt et al., 2013, Portilla, 2014).

The assessed literature emphasizes that Colombia is experiencing an armed conflict that has been going on for decades, and is marked by a tradition of violence (National Center for Historical Memory, 2013). Although there are laws that protect children, this country is far from implementing these measures. The main victims are boys, girls and adolescents, who are witnesses to violent acts and even forced to participate; they are affected by a hostile environment (Aparicio, 2014).

This leads to the development of an altered, force-based identity as the only argumentative option when words fail (Andrade, 2013, Hewitt et al., 2013, Portilla, 2014). Boys, girls and adolescents develop in an aggressive environment in which they have to overcome situations that violate their rights (Tapia and Cidoncha, 2012). In addition, this conflict has affected past, present and future generations because the emotional and rational component is transmitted to the next generation (Bayo-Borràs, 2010; Gómez, 2013).

In these moments when Colombia is living through a post-conflict stage, it is not possible to only speak of what adults have suffered, without talking about what they felt when they were children in times of war. Likewise, today's boys, girls and adolescents will be marked by experiences of suffering and pain that they will continue to feel as adults, unless these emotions undergo transformative experiences (Espinoza, Maier and Gómez, 2015).

It is important to study emotions, because they aid in the construction of identity and social interaction (Cholíz, 2005; López, 2005; Torres, 2015). Emotion carries with it a story that makes us react to the present. Emotional regulation is paramount for the formation of an educational process that benefits a peaceful coexistence and culture (Torres, 2015, Espinoza, Maier and Gómez, 2015).

Reparation policies are not enough if applied to boys, girls and adolescents, because on certain occasions they are not seen as affected parties but as the companions of those affected. In addition, the programs are limited, they lead to a cultural uprooting, they are very paternalistic and do not help their reintegration as citizens (Cifuentes, Aguirre and Lugo, 2011; Vanegas, Bonilla and Camacho, 2011; Tapia and Cidoncha, 2012; De la Rosa, 2015).

If Colombians want to build a better country, they must start by supporting children, and making them participate in democratic spaces through public policies that support them, ensure their rights and duties, and adults must respect these autonomous decisions (Gómez, 2013). Also, we must recognize that reparations for them must be different from that of the adults, in a transformative, symbolic way that restores meaning, where there is integration between different affected populations, as well as respect for multiculturalism, in order to help the reconstruction of cultural memory which forgives but does not forget, and also to reconstruct its life project. The State must support it by improving supporting family and social networks (Gómez, 2013, De la Rosa, 2015, Aguilar-Forero and

Muñoz, 2015; Arias and Roa, 2015, Fernández, 2015, López, 2015).

In this population, reparation has been approached through drawing, art, play, music and social beliefs, because they bring out all negative emotions and help to transform and strengthen positive situations (Blom and Pereda, 2009, Pp. 39-43). Individual aspects, such as resilience, empowerment, recognition of the other, and the construction of narratives (Romero and Chavez, 2008, De la Rosa, 2015) should be taken into account in order to strengthen society's reconstruction and reparation process.

In addition to recreational and play spaces, education plays a fundamental role in building peace as a training and academic place, that provides elements for the strengthening the emotional, cognitive and social learning processes (Aparicio, 2014). For this reason, we must build a post-conflict education based on integration, respect for diversity, historical memory, which will treat all as equals, be non-discriminatory, victimizing or stigmatizing, so society's prejudices can change and thus guarantee support in order to repair memory and not repeat the acts, where values are instilled in order to forgive and remember without pain (Gómez, 2013, Vera, Palacio and Garzón, 2013, López, 2015, Torres, 2015). And this whole process must go hand in hand with emotional education, and together with reason they can guide the individual towards action (Goleman, 2012).

This should not only be important for the boys, girls and adolescents, but for the population as a whole, because the child and adolescent populations have a great innovative and

transformative capacity. In addition, as the country develops over time and it will be in the care of said populations. The performance, technology, innovation and progress of Colombia and the world will depend on them, because they will be the future scientists, teachers, athletes, politicians, among many other professions that make the world evolve (Toro, 2011).

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