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The collective resistance of Afro-Colombian women surviving victims in Colombia: A counter-hegemonic bet [1]

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ABSTRACT
Colombia's 2011 *Victims and Land Restitution Act* opened a political space in which the voices of surviving victims were considered in the reconciliation and reparation hearings. In connection with the aforementioned Act, the paper sets out the experiences of a counter-hegemonic political group of Afro-Colombian women surviving victims. To this end, a general summary is given of the place occupied by these victims in Colombia's internal armed conflict. It goes on to illustrate several initiatives that paved the way for Afro-Colombian Movements in their quest for reparations. Said initiatives show the need to think hard about reparations in ways that respect local ancestral strategies for healing and making amends. Here, such strategies not only need to take account of the damage and harm arising from armed conflict but also the ethnic-racial historical dimension — something that goes beyond the scope of the Act. A decolonial methodological approach is adopted and is based on two emblematic cases. The paper reveals the organisational experience of surviving Afro-Colombian women victims. Their collective initiatives place counter-hegemonic bets on various concepts of reparation. These initiatives reveal a social movement whose resistance came up with new alternatives for action on the Colombian armed conflict in relation to the remedies available under the Act.

Keywords: Resilience; victims; women; Afro-descendants; armed conflict; Colombia.

1 This paper stems from research projects in the Ethno-Political Teaching field. In particular, it bears on folk knowledge in the actions taken by Afro-Colombian Women Survivor Victim Organisations within the Reparations Framework of Act 1448 and the project 'Design of a Model for the Evaluation of Ethical Education in Colombian Universities [*Diseño de un modelo de evaluación de la formación ética en las universidades colombianas*] (Stage I).'"

SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

Colombia's bitter internecine strife has lasted over 50 years. The records of the country's National Center for Historical Memory [*Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica* — CNMH] (2018) show that "almost three hundred thousand Colombians lost their lives or were abducted" (p. 11) during this period. Official data shows that those killed reached 267,850. The various kinds of violence that have been documented (by fatal and non-fatal categories) are shown in Table 1. The CNMH list of wrongdoers includes paramilitary groups, guerrillas, State agents, post-demobilisation groups, bandits, and others, in order of relative importance (Memory and Conflict Observatory, 2021).

Table 1 **Modalities and victims of violence in the Colombian internal armed conflict (1958-2021)**

Category	Fatal Victims
Attacks on towns/villages	1.493
Kidnapped and killed in captivity	1.156
Events by Mines, UXOs, and IEDs	1.205
Combat actions	48.361
Damage to civilian property	379
Massacres	24.850
Sexual violence (victim killed)	886
Selective killings	180.475
Kidnapped and found dead	8.287
Terrorist attacks	758
Kidnapped, presumed dead	80.674
Category	**Non-fatal victims**
Kidnapping	37.694
Recruitment and Use of Girls, Boys, and Youths	17.892
Sexual Violence	15.750

Source: National Center for Historical Memory Observatory (2021) Cut-off date: 31st March 2021

Some NGOs say these figures are likely to be underestimates. Indeed, even a State agency — the Unit for Comprehensive Victim Care and Reparation [*La Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas* or UARIV] — puts the total number of victims entered in many ways in their unique registry at 9,123,123 (Victims Unit, 2021).

According to Ríos (2016), the recent history of this confrontation highlights the main lines of inquiry, which lie in the birth and development of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) and the National Liberation Army (ELN), as well as paramilitarism. At the same time, research has been undertaken on the various groups' sources of funding.

In recent years, studies have begun to explore the impacts of the war on its victims, especially on those who have been muzzled but are now speaking out forcefully: "In this country, the victims and their experiences cannot be ignored or swept under the carpet" (National Center for Historical Memory, 2018, p. 12).

With passing of The Victims and Land Restitution Act [*Ley de Víctimas y Restitución de Tierras*] (Congress of the Republic of Colombia, 2011) — henceforth, Act 1448 — sundry measures began to pave the way for a post-conflict nation. Then, in 2016, with the signing of peace agreements with the FARC-EP, many social sectors believed that the end of the conflict was nigh.

In seeking to go beyond the provisions of Act 1448, many things emerged that went beyond the Law's narrow definition of victims (Aranguren Romero, 2017; Ramírez Hernández & Leguizamon Arias, 2020; Ortega, Sánchez, Merchán & Vélez, 2015). Such things emerged from the lived experiences

of those whose rights had been trampled on, and of their individual and collective resistance to wrongdoers, in which victims struck counter-hegemonic positions to the aforesaid Act. By way of illustration, there is a growing number of studies on aspects of: surviving victims and their families (Ospina-Alvarado, Varón-Vega & Cardona-Salazar, 2020; Moreno Acero, Díaz Santos & Rojas García, 2021); children and youths (Castaño & Karen, 2020; Cerquera Córdoba, Matajira Camacho & Peña, 2020; Cardona-Isaza & Díaz-Posada, 2021; Díaz, Amézquita, Zuluaga & Arcila, 2021); teachers (Olave-Arias, Gómez-Arcila & Cisneros-Estupiñán, 2021; Ortega-Iglesias & Valencia-Espejo, 2020; Ortega, Silgado & Villa, 2019); transgender and LGBTQ+ communities (Martínez, Sánchez Tamayo & Ibarra Padilla, 2021; Colectivo Virus Epistemológico, 2020); female victims (Gómez S., 2020; Martínez Merlo, Guerra Ramírez & Suárez Villa, 2020).

In any event, showcasing such cases of victimisation has prompted reflections on: the restoration of rights (Besalduch, 2021); forgiveness, and peace initiatives (Vasquez Santamaria & Alzate, 2021; Romero & Gómez, 2021; Gomajoa, 2021). Such actions highlight: resistance and empowerment practices in the face of conflict (Bello Tocancipá & Aranguren Romero, 2020; Ríos Sierra, 2016); the role of women as surviving victims (Romero & Gómez, 2021; Chavez Plazas, Camacho Kurmen & Ramirez Mahecha, 2021; Buitrago Echeverry, 2021; Echeverri Arias & Hernández Bolívar, 2021).

TRAJECTORIES AND REACTIONS TO ACT 1448

Even though the Act was seen as a legal opportunity to acknowledge the harm caused to victims of the armed conflict and to make reparations, it fell short. For a start, it was set to expire on the 8th of January 2021 but it was extended — in part due to pressure from victims' movements — up until the 10th of June 2031 (enshrined in Act 2078 of the 8th of January 2021).

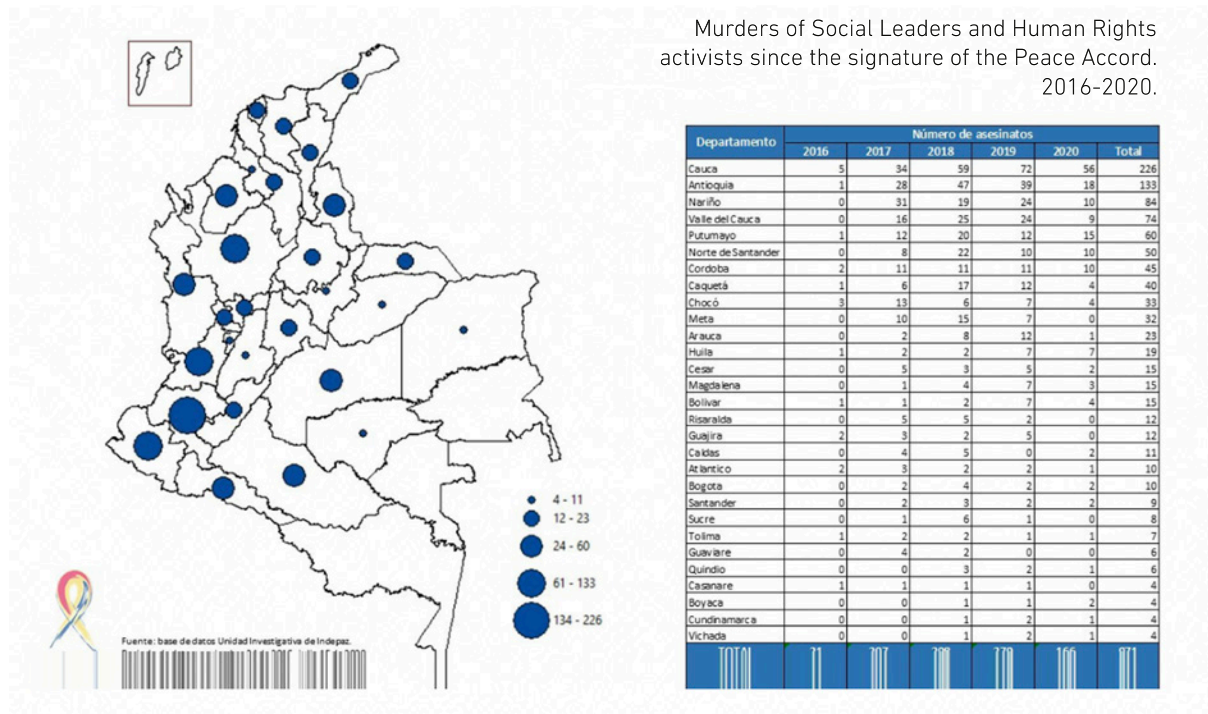
One of the reasons victims gave for demanding this extension was the need to align the Act's implementation period with the peace agreement reached by the National Government and the former FARC-EP guerrilla group. This agreement, above all, set criteria for truth, justice, reparation, and non-repetition. Furthermore, as the victims' movements saw it, the government had not met either the surviving victims' expectations or demands (Castillo, 2019).

The State's ineffectiveness in this regard is compounded by Columbia's endemic corruption, with some far-right political factions seeing the chance to amend the legislation to their benefit. These proposals suggest that victims and land claimants should provide evidence themselves — an approach that would greatly benefit landowners accused of stealing peasants' properties. In response to this, the victims' movement has exposed the corruption of those who have a vested in interest in thwarting the quest for truth, justice, reparation, and non-repetition.

Another major demand from victims' social movements focuses on the need not to distort and water down the notion of armed conflict in the legal drafting of legislation to the point that it denies its existence. As a result, there has been pressure to review the reports prepared by the Legal Monitoring Commission because there are perceived shortcomings in the implementation of Act 1448 and an urgent need to improve institutional co-ordination mechanisms (Castillo, 2019).

These demands and monitoring made by victims regarding Act 1448 have made major contributions to the reparation processes. However, they have also sparked death threats to those defending human rights defenders as a way of muzzling the victims (Pacifistas, 2018). According to the Institute of Studies for Development and Peace (Indepaz), social leaders and human rights defenders were systematically murdered during the conflict and these killings have risen greatly over recent years (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Murdered Social Leaders 2016-2020



Departamento	Número de asesinatos					
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Cauca	5	34	59	72	56	226
Antioquia	1	28	47	39	18	133
Nariño	0	31	19	24	10	84
Valle del Cauca	0	16	25	24	9	74
Putumayo	1	12	20	12	15	60
Norte de Santander	0	8	22	10	10	50
Cordoba	2	11	11	11	10	45
Caquetá	1	6	17	12	4	40
Chocó	3	13	6	7	4	33
Meta	0	10	15	7	0	32
Arauca	0	2	8	12	1	23
Huila	1	2	2	7	7	19
Cesar	0	5	3	5	2	15
Magdalena	0	1	4	7	3	15
Bolivar	1	1	2	7	4	15
Risaralda	0	5	5	2	0	12
Guajira	2	3	2	5	0	12
Caldas	0	4	5	0	2	11
Atlantico	2	3	2	2	1	10
Bogota	0	2	4	2	2	10
Santander	0	2	3	2	2	9
Sucre	0	1	6	1	0	8
Tolima	1	2	2	1	1	7
Guaviare	0	4	2	0	0	6
Quindio	0	0	3	2	1	6
Casanare	1	1	1	1	0	4
Boyaca	0	0	1	1	2	4
Cundinamarca	0	0	1	2	1	4
Vichada	0	0	1	2	1	4
TOTAL	21	207	[illegible]	[illegible]	166	971

Source: Indepaz (2021)

These killings are clearly a systematic effort to wipe out Colombia's social victims' movement. In early 2021 alone (as at the 26th April), 74 leaders and former combatants have been killed or kidnapped and presumed dead (Indepaz, 2021). This has brought the need to protect and guarantee social leaders rights to the fore, especially for those people who are land claimants and, above all, those belonging to ethnic and Afro-Colombian groups:

> National-level data indicates that 9.67% of victims across the country (813,080) are of Afro-descendant descent. The most common events among the Black, Raizal, and Palenquera population are: forced displacement (around 792,000 people); threats (approximately 41,000 reported incidents); murders (about 34,700 direct and indirect victims), combat and harassment (14,195 reported incidents); crimes of assault and rape (2,584 reported cases). It should be noted that each person may have suffered more than episode of victimisation (Victims Unit, 2017).

Many surviving victims have been displaced Black women who have led counter-hegemonic strategies on reparations. This is reflected in the case of Afro-Colombian populations, where what has been termed 'eco-ethnic genocide' has occurred. This is a silencing orchestrated by State institutions that extends to all areas (Arboleda Quiñones, 2018, p. 94). This highlights the tension suffered by Afro-Colombian victims regarding socio-historical and legal truth to bring to light: their struggles; dissident memories, and dignifying resistance — something for which Afro communities have long been famed. Thus, in Colombia, the strong mobilisation of this population segment should not be seen as a case apart but rather the sign of a counter-hegemonic force with great political potential.

METHODOLOGICAL HORIZON

From a decolonial perspective, this work is guided by three key principles (stages) that give voice to dialogue with the accompanying communities or subjects (Smith, 1999; Ortiz Ocaña & Arias López, 2019). These are:

(1) *Communal Contemplation*: In this approach, each and every one of the decolonial actors contemplates one another and themselves. It is an emotional and collaborative approach where one not only observes 'the other' but also places oneself before others so that they can also observe us. This involves an exercise in biopraxis.

(2) *Alternative Conversation*: A focus on intercultural dialogue as an affective and reflective conversation without assumptions, expectations, or prejudices, allowing the other to also ask questions and express their emotions, judgments, and evaluations. It is a respectful, supportive dialogue among equals. It is not an interview where one culture prevails over the other but a spontaneous and fluid, emerging conversation.

(3) *Configurative Reflection*: The decolonial mediator must not only contemplate and converse with the other but also configure decolonial knowledge that departs from the modern/colonial power pattern. This is achieved through reflection, where we express our configured communal thoughts and feelings.

Adopting this decolonial horizon, the research sought to showcase the counter-hegemonic political agency of a group of Afro-Colombian women survivors getting to grips with Act 1448. Support was provided to 120 Afro-Colombian women between the ages of 26 and 60 from the Colombian Pacific region, belonging to two organisations (Afromupaz and Afrodes), and who were declared Subjects of Collective Reparation through resolutions issued under said Act, and whose actions enshrine counter-hegemonic resistance. Twenty-six workshops and 35 interviews were conducted, along with field diary records, in which participants and researchers adopted the three principles mentioned above. Some publications from these groups, and media interviews were also used. This information was interpreted using content analysis methods (Krippendorf, 1990; Navarro & Díaz, 1999).

COUNTER-HEGEMONIC RESISTANCE OF AFRO-COLOMBIAN WOMEN SURVIVORS

In is estimated that 550,354 survivors of Colombia's armed conflict are Black women, Afro-Colombian, Raizales, and Palenqueras (Victims Unit, 2019). Many of them have organised and become promoters of counter-hegemonic initiatives through which they put forward ways, tools, and demands that should be considered in fostering reparations.

According to the International Center for Transitional Justice [ICTJ] (2015), the journey of Black communities within the reparation framework highlights the need to tweak support models so that they acknowledge ancestral knowledge and the worldviews found in these communities. This not only allows the communities themselves but also The State to visualise other social and cultural dynamics in which healing processes take place, to stress the relational and experiential aspects of survivor victims (Walsh, 2009).

In this context, two reparation strategies emerge as survivors' collective resistance experiences. They are *La Huerta del Perejil* led by Afromupaz, and *La Comadre-Trenzando la paz* led by Afrodes. The reparation approaches taken are based on ancestral knowledge and healing methods. This leads to a kind of 'ethopolitical teaching' that "sustains life and that is deeply rooted in spreading ancestral knowledge to reproduce a way of life, fostering discourses that manifest themselves through care and specific practices of reproducing it for others" (Cruz Castillo, 2021).

The experiential construction of ancestral knowledge has an element of ethnic-popular power that

both emerges from collective practices and that also reflects the subjective values shaped by war. For this reason, coping and strengthening strategies are employed, with formative processes based on Afro identity in the context of peace based on recognition. Forgiveness and reconciliation play a central role in the collective reparation that the women themselves have created in keeping with their worldvision:

> "(…) then there was so much resentment, so much pain, so much pent-up hatred when Afromupaz was first formed that the women would say 'as soon as we organise, we're going to take revenge on the men,' I mean, on men in general and on 'those' men. Some of us would say 'No, what we want is to empower ourselves to say 'You won't victimise me, I am not a victim of anyone', I mean, it was tough…" (Leader 12, La Huerta al Perejil).

The challenge faced by women leaders in the struggle to educate for peace through training processes based on ancestral knowledge and care implies symbolically surviving in a world of forgetfulness and discrimination. Therefore, they must defend their own existence and, in addition, teach others "How to navigate it, build it, and live it" (Quintar & Quiñones, 2016, p. 24). This path is enshrined in *Ethopolitical Teaching*, which involves at least four elements.

The first refers to the fact that the emerging teaching method in community settings starts from the *alternative political agency of being Afro*, understanding Alternative Political Agency as practical, discursive, popular consciousness. That is, it is reflection on the discourses and actions that arise in a given setting, taking account of socio-cultural conditions — as is the case of Afro communities, a context historically plagued by violence. Furthermore, this agency reveals the ability to express narratives interpreting lived events and fostering alternative spaces for resistance by social movements. These spaces also allow subalternised voices to question institutional hierarchy and to create horizontal relationships that support *alterity*.[2] Therefore, the critical understanding of history and formative practices for emancipation can be identified as collective power.

Thus, agency has a collective character; that is to say, actions are always carried out in coexistence with other actors (Copete Torres, 2014). This is evident in the exercise of narrating the past, where the role of storytelling is highlighted, and by positioning subjects' ancestral knowledge, they create spaces for exploring pain to heal and empower:

> "You see, these spaces sprang up in our territory because we only have ourselves, we don't have The State! So, we talk among ourselves to create ways of associating and organising ourselves, how we prevent violence in the territory, how we stop, for example, a neighbour from going and fighting with another, how we should help them settle their differences" (Leader 2, La Comadre).

Thus, alternative political agency from the Afro perspective begins with acknowledging power mechanisms shaping the history of communities. In other words, they delve into their memories to grasp the hierarchical relationships that violate rights, whether by action or omission. Therefore, they question social, cultural, political, and legal dimensions to define their position regarding reparation and healing. Through their speech, one can grasp their ability to analyse their context. Consequently, they see themselves as a collective that plays a leading role in their intersubjective constitution to assert their rights from a different, territorial, transformative perspective that highlights survivors' voices:

> "We don't benefit from The State's proposals because, as I explained, when it comes to healing and psychosocial support, it doesn't understand

2 Translator's note: Altereity refers to the concept of recognising and respecting the otherness or differences of individuals or groups who have been historically marginalised or oppressed. It stresses acknowledging and valuing the unique experiences, perspectives, and identities of people who have been subject to discrimination based on factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, or other characteristics.

> us. Worse, it is not interested in gaining insights into our dynamics; they make us invisible. That's why we base our approach on our own healing processes, psychosocial support, and collective reparation based on our ancestral practices. That's crucial for reparation!" (Leader 19, La Comadre).

> "I remember that day when we had former combatants from the FARC and the Paramilitaries, where most of us were victims of paramilitaries. They didn't expect the surprise they got, encountering such strong and empowered survivors; they were sweating. The idea is to build. It's a very difficult step because it's tough to face the person who harmed you, and those people wept" (Leader 11, La Huerta al Perejil).

The second element is the strengthening of identity processes through collective resistance actions, with a reflective component covering historical events. Thinking about an alternative teaching approach that links the knowledge of an Afro community is to question the sociocultural impacts they have collectively experienced against a historical background of violence and armed conflict. It is vital to acknowledge the sundry kinds of collective resistance they have built through actions that arise from the appropriation of their identity. Here, one can see that Afromupaz and Afrodes reproduce processes to boost Afro-black dignity based on elements history-laden meanings for people with these roots:

> "(…) as an Afro people, we heal through practices, and we have our way of healing. This is what we propose now through a project called 'ancestral peace,' and what we want to convey is that we, being different, have other ways and notions of healing. For example, we don't heal through talking practices (…)" (Leader 4, La Comadre).

This allows them to approach the history of discrimination and violence against these communities, and to foster critical thinking about the past. It also helps them insist on the ethnic reparation rights of black communities through resistance repertoires against the conflicts of a country marked by war. There is constant reflection on collective memory that shifts away from a colonial perspective of the history of Afro peoples to take on a decolonial perspective. Such reflection questions the parameters of reparation imposed on victims from other epistemologies that are swift to reject their ancestral knowledge (Díaz Meza, 2010). This implies talking about conflict and harm to these peoples beyond the conflict. With this, these women's collectives stress spaces where recalling their roots means building the group identity. It also means appropriating certain Afro ways of being, and passing them on to future generations. This conveys a sense of belonging and thus gives meaning to healing and the politicisation of pain:

> "Memory is not forgetting who we are, right? Its role is very important because in what we have done, in the things we've experienced, we realise that when we remember our land, the people we once were, it fills us, and it also helps redefine all the bad things we experienced" (Leader 27, La Comadre).

As a result, the ethopolitical elements bear on being, feeling, existing, doing, thinking, looking, listening, and knowing differently, from one's own Afro identity. The stories, metaphors, alabao[3] chants, and art in general that emerge to make injustices against Afro communities, particularly women, visible, yield a worldview for redefining pain:

> "People always ask me, 'Why the chants? What good are the chants to us?' Chants are a way to reconcile oneself with one's body — both through chants and dance — it's a way to move again, to speak again. Women and for that matter, men, children, and youth experience violence — especially during a conflict — one starts to protect oneself by clenching one's fists... one become tense, the body stiffens. It is as if one is saying 'Don't touch me, don't

3 Afro funeral rituals on Colombia's Pacific coast. The chants are used to recreate grief and relate it collectively.

> look at me'. It's a way to reconcile oneself with one's body again, to open one's mouth again. Singing does that — one opens one's mouth instead of staying silent. Giving free rein to one's senses lets one live again. Living involves feeling — pinching oneself, as it were. Tasting food again reveals the simpler pleasures of life that are forgotten when things are bad. One ends up eating because everyone has to eat. It is about sharing things with oneself and with life in general" (Leader 32, La Huerta al Perejil).

The third element is the *recognition of the imaginative and narrative as a bridge to healing*, which also takes in the collective nature of suffering and its alternatives. Walsh (2014) describes the use of these elements as destabilising a hegemonic, linear, precise order. Thus, the teaching use of the symbolic and ancestral underpins the collective narration of the many readings made by critical subjects, all containing an intrinsic message that is almost hidden to outsiders, who cannot see beyond the pain and its meaning. One of the examples is the alabao chants, stories, and dances in which they metaphorically recount the moments they went through to reach their truth, forgiveness, and resurgence. One of these *alabao* chants is titled *Las setenta de la Huerta*. According to María Eugenia (a leader), it tells the story of the metaphoric journey of seventy women in a canoe, with the aim of narrating their strength:

> "For those seventy who are now so different, brave, hardworking, committed, they rise every day, fight, identify opportunities, and confront things from their strengths. They propose, give life, and they dignify what they are; healing is not wealth, but it's not poverty either, it's just feeling good about oneself and others" (Urrutia, 2014, p. 42).

This particular element gives presence to the persistence, insistence, and survival of the decolonial; that is, the work of maintaining and preserving memories of pain, as well as memories of healing, is framed in creative repertoires that shape an intrinsic and critical Afro language. In this way, they "open a window to insurgent, political, social, cultural, epistemic, and existential practices that teach how to rebel, resist, continue, thrive, and live" (Walsh, 2014, p. 32). This is reflected in the alabao chants, in the stories created around women who relive the pain, and in the use of ancestral words adapted to relate to their peers today, such as "Sawabona" and "Shikabona." Metaphors about territorial elements that foster hope are also used:

> "In that 'Huerta al Perejil,' what we do is sing, dance, and say what we feel, it's about letting everything out. First of all, it's about letting out all that bad stuff we feel, when we've done that, we embark on the 'canoe of dreams,' we start to see everything differently, we reach a point called 'Sawabona' and 'Shikabona,' where it highlights everything important about us as individuals and for our community. There, we have high self-esteem and can say to ourselves, 'I am important to my group, and I am important to the people here. I am a person who is always ready to serve because I am responsible, and I want to be part of the community'" (Leader 8, La Huerta al Perejil).

In this use of the imaginative and narrative, anchored in reparation processes, there are actions for humanisation, meaning a transition to being and existing, deconstructing categories of vulnerability, as well as reinforcing tactics and strategies of liberating heritage, which emerged under oppression. These tactics are still alive today amid armed conflict and fear, such as *comadrazgo*[4] and the spiritual essence in rituals:

> 'La Comadre' is like a way to see how we come together, how we help each other to get out of this situation, so she entered 'La Comadre' at the national level... looking at the issue of Black women, the vulnerability that many of us face, like those factors of vulnerability from racial discrimination, gender discrimination, and also

4 The *comadrazgo* is a women's community body and is found in Colombia's Pacific coast region. It is based on collective solidarity, empathy, care, commitment, providing food, caring for children and generally meeting the needs of others and giving them unstinting support.

> sexual violence. So, Black women have special features that exacerbate the conflict, so she wanted to highlight it so that it would be recognised as a group of politically active women. And as political women, the proposal was 'La Comadre'" (Leader 28, La Comadre).

The fourth element describes these spaces and consolidates an ethnopolitical teaching approach that consists of *making visible the cultural elements that build an ethnic-popular power.* That is to say, it helps empower the Afro community by reflecting on its history, acknowledging the role played by its identity, and the liberating, political power of storytelling. This element involves positioning that identity repertoire in political life scenarios, and in collective places in institutional dialogue, where proposals can be managed. That is why these two collectives are part of *La Coordinación Nacional de Sujetos de Reparación Colectiva* (CNSRC) [National Board for Collective Reparations], set up in 2016, to ensure victims take part in decision-making and help build public policies in this field.

All of the elements and Afro association experiences discussed above show new ways in which victims can raise their voices, acknowledge the wrongs done, and help them approach political circles. This is what has made Colombia's Afro associations iconic among victim organisations and those who are the objects of collective reparations. As such these associations have won broad recognition from sectors of both Colombian and international civil society.

CONCLUSIONS

As a political exercise, the two iconic experiences presented here show critical resistance through empowerment practices against the traditional institutional order that attempted to implement Act 1448. Afro-Colombian women in these counter-hegemonic experiences demonstrate new ways of dealing with pain and reparation, in this case from community dimensions in which they resist merely being dismissed as surviving victims of war in Colombia.

Thus, as iconic cases, Afromupaz and Afrodes deploy learning strategies in which women acquire and develop capacities based on their ancestral and territorial knowledge. They appropriate their collective-cultural identity to heal traumatic historical events and then pass them on from generation to generation, fostering a legitimate teaching approach from the Afro perspective. Consequently, social practices and justice are articulated to politically position collective subjects with an active role in reparation and community protection processes.

Both Afromupaz and Afrodes have joined forces with other organisations and collectives declared as 'Collective Reparation Subjects with National Impact' in an effort to get the victims themselves to come up with strategies. The special features of the harm inflicted have thus been made visible, and with this, they have driven popular, local, and territorialised processes that have made a political impact through victims speaking out. They have also shown the limitations of Act 1448, and its conceptual, political, and operational contradictions that sometimes lead to revictimisation but do not address the root causes of the conflict.

The way in which these communities have agency in their experiences has led them to propose an ethnopolitical teaching approach to shed light on nature of the victimisation. This route includes at least the following elements: generating processes of alternative political agency for being Afro; strengthening identity processes through collective resistance actions; historical reflection; boosting recognition of the imaginative and narrative as a bridge to healing; revealing the cultural elements that build ethnic-popular power. This path, born from specific experiences, can serve as a route-map for addressing similar victimisation contexts.

The experience of the Afro-Colombian women's collectives presented here has placed the notion

of victim at the centre of the discussion, giving way to a logic of suffering survivors rather than mere victims. This demonstrates their agency and, at the same time, the need to be heard from a non-racialised perspective of life and territory. Such an approach makes their actions not only a matter of staking claims but also an epistemic exploration of their experiences, where naming people and politicising have been part of their exercise of a collective political will.

Broadening the scope of Act 1448 will not necessarily ensure reparations. That is why victim organisations have opened the debate on what is understood by reparations and the conflict this involves, given that the legislation only partially recognises such aspects. In this discussion, reparation for the victims should address more extensive, plural, ethnic, gender, and territorial processes in which the historical nature and impacts of the conflict have stemmed from the nature and patterns of colonial power in Colombia.

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