

The Paradigm of Imperfect Peace in a Refugee Camp: Pacifist Empowerment of Sahrawi Adolescents*

[English version]

El paradigma de paz imperfecta en un campamento de refugiados:
empoderamiento pacifista de adolescentes saharauis

O paradigma da paz imperfeita em um campo de refugiados:
empoderamento pacifista de adolescentes do Saarawi

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Abstract

Objective: to identify the paradigm of imperfect peace based on pacifist empowerment, built through the identity of resistance and the transmission of historical memory in a group of adolescents residing in the Sahrawi refugee camp in Tindouf, Algeria. **Methodology:** this qualitative research focused on social constructionism. Photo-elicitation, social cartography and artistic creation were the data collection instruments, as well as focus groups and semi-structured interviews. **Results:** the narratives, feelings, concerns and experiences of nine adolescents were collected, recognizing them as carriers and generators of knowledge, who account for their perceptions and alternatives about their past, present and future. It was also found that the history of resistance of the Saharawi people constitutes an example of pacifist empowerment, since they are recognized and recreated daily from their discursive practices and their peaceful community commitments, as well as in the strengthening of their social fabric, based on values such as cooperation and solidarity. **Conclusions:** it is concluded that imperfect peace is elucidated as a process and or an unfinished path, where social and environmental realities evolve, being in continuous movement, as well as the conflicts.

Keywords: Adolescents; Refugees; Imperfect peace; Empowerment; Historical memory; Identity; International Solidarity; Research on peace.

Resumen

Objetivo: identificar el paradigma de la paz imperfecta sustentado en el empoderamiento pacifista, construido a través de la identidad de resistencia y la transmisión de la memoria histórica en un grupo de adolescentes residentes en el campamento de refugiados saharauis en Tinduf, Argelia. **Metodología:** se trata de una investigación cualitativa, enfocada desde el construccionismo social. Por medio de la fotoelicitación, también se aplicó la cartografía social y la creación artística, además de grupos focales y entrevistas semiestructuradas, como instrumentos de recolección de información. **Resultados:** se recuperaron las narrativas, sentires, inquietudes y vivencias de nueve adolescentes, reconociéndolos como sujetos portadores y generadores de conocimientos, que dan cuenta de sus percepciones y alternativas sobre su pasado, presente y futuro. También se halló que la historia de resistencia del pueblo saharauí se constituye en ejemplo de empoderamiento pacifista, pues éstos se reconocen y recrean cotidianamente desde sus prácticas discursivas y sus apuestas comunitarias pacíficas, así como en el fortalecimiento de su tejido social, basado en valores como la cooperación y la solidaridad. **Conclusiones:** se concluye que la paz imperfecta se dilucida como

un proceso y/o un camino inacabado, en dónde las realidades sociales y ambientales evolucionan, estando en continuo movimiento, así como las conflictividades.

Palabras-clave: Adolescentes; Refugiados; Paz imperfecta; Empoderamiento; Memoria histórica; Identidad; Solidaridad internacional; Investigación sobre la paz.

Resumo

Objetivo: identificar o paradigma da paz imperfeita sustentado pelo empoderamento pacifista, construído através da identidade da resistência e da transmissão da memória histórica em um grupo de adolescentes residentes no campo de refugiados do Saarawi em Tinduf, Argélia. **Metodologia:** trata-se de uma pesquisa qualitativa, com enfoque no construcionismo social. A foto-elicitación, a cartografia social e a criação artística foram utilizadas como instrumentos de coleta de informações, bem como grupos focais e entrevistas semiestruturadas. **Resultados:** as narrativas, sentimentos, preocupações e experiências de nove adolescentes foram recuperadas, reconhecendo-os como portadores e geradores de conhecimento, que respondem por suas percepções e alternativas sobre seu passado, presente e futuro. Verificou-se também que a história de resistência do povo saharauí constitui um exemplo de empoderamento pacifista, visto que são reconhecidos e recriados diariamente a partir das suas práticas discursivas e dos seus compromissos pacíficos comunitários, bem como no fortalecimento do seu tecido social, com base em valores como cooperação e solidariedade. **Conclusões:** conclui-se que a paz imperfeita é diluída como um processo e/ou um caminho inacabado, onde as realidades sociais e ambientais evoluem, estando em movimento contínuo, bem como conflitos.

Palavras-chave: Adolescentes; Refugiados; Paz imperfeita; Empoderamento; Memória histórica; Identidade; Solidariedade Internacional; Pesquisa de paz.

Introduction

The imperfect peace proposed by Muñoz (2001) facilitates the understanding of the tensions that emerge between peaceful paths in relation to the violent ones, and the social mediations that occur in such circumstances. Thus, it recognizes that all human groups have capacities for the development of peace, making use of pacifist empowerment; that is, the exercise of integrative power (Boulding, 1993) or from peace as an internal and personal decision to act and transform their environment, by becoming aware of the capacities for peace and endorsing the potentialities of other beings for their development (Loaiza, 2016).

From this perspective, this article identifies the paradigm of imperfect peace based on pacifist empowerment, built through the identity of resistance and historical memory in a group of adolescents living in the Sahrawi refugee camp in Tindouf, who in their stories expressed conceptions of their situation of refuge and exile, as well as the history of forced migration and the conflict of their people, which has transformed imaginaries and environments, generating tensions and fragmentation of the social fabric that are overcome by the decision to live together in peace.

The Cartagena Declaration (Refworld, 1984) defines refugees as people who have fled their country because their life, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order.

Due to the condition of the camps, which, for the most part, are closed and delimited areas where a kind of relationship of assistance and protection has been configured between the refugees and those who assist them, discourses have been built around the refugee, either as victims or as recipients of humanitarian aid; this has generated a stigmatization of them as lacking and limited, underestimating or ignoring (in some cases) the management and empowerment capacity of its inhabitants (Valdivia, 2013).

However, in the Sahrawi refugee camp - a people that despite experiencing the drama of exile and daily facing the systematic violation of their human rights - has shown interest in finding a peaceful solution to the conflict, turning this resistance into an imperfect peace initiative. This shows “that the phenomena of peace and violence co-exist (probably in different scales and manifestations); and even in the most adverse and infamous situations it is possible to make life emerge and spread peace” (Loaiza, 2016, p. 63). [Own translation]

Faced with this scenario, it is convenient to speak of peace understood as a cultural construction and constitutive element of social realities and as a symbol of interpretation and action, where plexuses of emotions and subjective and intersubjective cognitions are involved (Muñoz and Martínez, 2011). Therefore, the importance of recognizing "those spaces and instances in which actions that create peace can be detected, even though they are in contexts in which conflicts and violence exist" (López, 2011, p. 9)), including and recognizing from a conflict perspective the different experiences of peace, both of individuals and of groups.

In the framework of this research, the experiences of pacifist empowerment in a group of adolescents were identified, recognizing them as carriers of information and their importance in the construction of knowledge, and discursive practices. In addition, understanding adolescence as a collective image that is historically modified depending on the structural situation in which it is found, which accounts for various experiences and representations about what it means to be an adolescent in different sociocultural contexts, as well as from the dimensions of diversity and social inequality (Colangelo, 2014).

The studies on the transnational migratory phenomenon and the refugee situation through the perspective and the paradigm of imperfect peace, are relatively recent and their advances from empirical research, theoretical understanding and methodological orientation are under development; These scenarios need to be approached in a comprehensive manner, taking into account various dimensions for their understanding (Sandoval, 2009; Egea and Soledad, 2011).

Therefore, this article sought to answer the questions: In what way is the paradigm of imperfect peace expressed in the Sahrawi adolescents in the Tindouf camp? Is there a pacifist empowerment configuration? Through what mechanisms is historical memory and the identities of resistance recreate the conditions to understand peace as a process and/or an unfinished path, understanding that social and environmental realities evolve and are in continuous movement, as well as conflictive forms?

Background and Theoretical Framework

Investigations on the Sahrawis in the Camps.

Until the first decade of the 21st century, academic research on the Tindouf refugee camps was scant. Canales (2009), pointed out that the camps are a "*dramatic part of the Saharawi people with little bibliographic reference*" (p. 1).

Los Saharawis (The Western Saharans), written by Hodges (1984) and translated by Portillo (2014) is so far the most significant document published in Spanish. The Hogdes report was commissioned and published, at the time, by The Minority Rights Group (MRG) to promote public understanding of the issue.

Hodges's investigation has proven validity, since in 2012, the New York Bar Association used it in its Report on the legal aspects of the conflict in Western Sahara (Portillo, 2014).

Other references on the Sahrawis are reports from NGOs, cooperation agencies and official documents from the UNHCR and IOM. In addition, there are reports from the mass media, but in the last decade (2010 to the present) there have been important advances, especially in understanding the teaching and learning process within the camp.

Pozuelo and Gimeno (2010), stand out for their theory committed to post-colonial analysis and anthropological practice through research carried out by mixed teams: Sahrawis and non-Sahrawis and mentioning the works of Mato (2000) and Gimeneo and Ali (2007) In addition, Pozuelo and Gimeno (2010) state that studies have been carried out on Sahrawi youth in 2005 and the possible creation of a desert university in 2009, in addition to research on the reality of the Sahara (in 2008), the Vacations in Peace project for Sahrawi children (in 2006), labor market research (2007), studies interested in Saharawi oral poetry (2009) and the scientific recovery of Sahrawi graduates in Cuba in 2010 (Pozuelo and Gimeno, 2010, p. 2).

For their part, Aranda, Arias and González (2012) described the Saharawi teacher training project in the camps; Jiménez (2015), in his doctoral thesis studied the profile, context, competences, needs and interests of teachers who teach Spanish; Calero, Cruz and Campos (2016) and Abdala (2017) presented studies on the training of health promoters and on inclusive educational practices in the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR).

Investments into Pacifist Empowerment

Both pacifist empowerment and the paradigm of imperfect peace are conceptual categories of recent appearance and study. The most outstanding investigations in Colombia are those carried out by Anacona (2019), Fernández (2018), Hernández, (2014, 2015).

Anacona (2019) proposed the dialogue between the perspective of imperfect peace and the decolonial paradigm to explain the process of pacifist empowerment of the women of the Yanakuna Indigenous Council of Cali, Colombia. In her work, the researcher epistemologically and methodologically triangulated

the worldview of the Chakana or Cruz del Sur, with research-action-participation and decolonial community feminism. Thanks to this, she found conceptions of peace as a principle that mobilizes and integrates her people and nonviolent actions, expressed, for example, through weaving, “women point out that the construction of peace is a constant reflection that implies unraveling whenever possible. It is necessary to always look for the best fabric” (Anacona, 2019, p. 452).

Fernández (2018) studied the pacifist empowerment of Afro-descendant women from La Toma, in Suárez, Cauca (Colombia). It concluded that they chose to use nonviolent mechanisms such as mobilizations, solidarity scenarios for territorial planning, and legal mechanisms for the protection of their rights, despite living in a context with expressions of violence. Thus, they manage to resignify power with the implementation of “their potentialities and capacities for dialogue, agreement and mobilization of processes with which they share worldviews typical of black communities” (p. 97), that is to say, those typical of their collective identity.

For his part, Hernández (2015) explained the peace process between the Colombian government and the Farc-Ep as an attempt at pacifist empowerment. He highlighted the transformation generated by this empowerment: the meeting of divergent ideological and military shores, the dialogue between enemies, the definition of a negotiation roadmap, the overcoming of deadlocks and saboteurs, and the reaching of agreements in general and in part, which allow the configuration of a new reality. Pacifist empowerment is defined here, firstly, as the awareness of the capacities that exist for the peaceful transformation of conflicts and, secondly, as “the processes in which peace, the peaceful transformation of conflicts, the satisfaction of needs or the development of capacities occupy the largest possible personal, public and political space” (Hernández, 2015, p. 183). [Own translation]

In his doctoral thesis “Pacifist empowerment of local community experiences in Colombia (1971-2013)”, Hernández (2014) addressed the experiences of civil resistance as an expression of pacifist empowerment because there is generation and appropriation of nonviolent power. So, those who resist, in this case: the Cauca Regional Indigenous Council (CRIC) and the Carare Peasant Workers Association (ATCC), recognize their power and potential for change and action, coupled with the ability to oppose the dominant power. In addition, he defined pacifist empowerment as:

Perfectible processes that allow the development of capacities and competences, individual, community or collective, to build imperfect or unfinished peace; they recognize and position experiences of the same nature; they appropriate and promote a concept of nonviolent power in their own organizational forms, their social and political participation, when designing a more democratic and peaceful future; and they create spaces for interaction and dialogue for the peaceful transformation of conflicts. For all these reasons, they give power to peace (Hernández, 2014, p. 22). [Own translation]

Regarding pacifist empowerment as a concept and its developments in Latin America and Mexico, Sandoval (2015) concluded that it is based on thinking, feeling, acting differently, so that conditions are socially transformed in a nonviolent manner “based on the knowledge, respect and application of human rights, the search for social justice and freedom in the society of which he is a part” (p. 93). [Own translation]

Concerning the involvement of children, adolescents and young people in peacebuilding processes, the investigations are diverse and dispersed, since they are enunciated and interpreted from a wide categorical spectrum; they are approached from the collective action, political agency, subjectivities and territorialities that make up the conceptual repertoire in which these investigations are framed. The truth is that a good part of them highlight the situated nature of the experiences they analyze, being a determining factor for their understanding, as is the case in this article. In Colombia, the work of Posada et al. (2018); Salas, Valenzuela and Prada (2019); Parra (2014) and Alvarado, Patiño and Loaiza (2012) is highlighted.

In relation to the experiences of peacebuilding in a refugee situation, the works of Romariz (2012) stand out, “You have your Lebanon and I have mine: conflict-induced displacement and identity”, there he explained how fundamental it has been the transmission of historical memory to Lebanese adults who have had to grow up abroad, after their parents were forced into migration and forced exile during the war that took place in Lebanon between 1975 and 1990. AND Valdivia (2013), who analyzed the experience of the musical group Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars as refugees in the Kalia and Sembakounya camps, in Guinea after the civil war in Sierra Leone from 1991 to 2001.

Imperfect Peace, Historical Memory and Identity of Resistance

Fisas (1998), clarified that peace is something more than the absence of armed conflict; it has to do with overcoming, reducing or avoiding all types of violence and with the ability that citizens may have to transform these conflicts into creative opportunities for meeting, communication, change, adaptation and exchange, which will allow the construction of a culture of peace. However, this process is not straightforward. For Mayor (1994), going from war to peace includes the transformation of a society dominated by the State, as the sole guarantor of security in a world at risk, to a civil society, “in which people work, create and they develop the fabric of their existence in communities freed from the fears inherent in a culture of war” (p. 16). [Own translation]

The approach of understanding peace from a complex and conflictual perspective, recognizing the ways in which human beings, in the face of extreme violence situations, act cooperatively and in solidarity, opens the scientific dialogue within the framework of peace research to a new paradigm, which Muñoz (2001) called imperfect or unfinished peace.

Muñoz (2001) poses a break from the conceptions of a perfect and utopian peace, and on the other hand, he recognizes peaceful practices where they occur, helping to plan for future conflict. This perspective has become an instrument for peace research, since it incorporates the debate and construction of new paradigms to understand and build more peaceful, just and durable worlds over time, with greater equity between genders and ethnic groups (Muñoz, 2001).

Thus, imperfect peace could be understood as:

... all these experiences and stages in which conflicts have been peacefully regulated, that is, in which individuals and/or human groups have chosen to facilitate the satisfaction of the needs of others, without any cause beyond their will preventing this (Muñoz, 2001, p. 14). [Own translation]

Since *imperfect peace* is present in life on a daily basis and all human beings have enormous potential for building peace, a new challenge for the social researcher is to identify spaces and situations in different contexts where human beings build, foster and enhance relationships.

Muñoz (2001) proposes the generation of a connection between past, present and future, where the processes of construction, recreation and feeding of collective identities, in this case of refugees, can be constituted as key factors for the recognition of the exercise of their citizenship, of their human rights and the recovery of their human dignity, as well as in a form of pacifist empowerment and mediations between conflicts and pacifist practices.

Muñoz and Martínez (2011) understand power as an intrinsic aspect of human relationships, therefore, all people and groups have power and exercise it in different ways and intensities.

At this point, it can be said that all human conditions (capacities, potentialities, projects, needs and conflicts) and social formations (cultures, religions, migrations, peace, violence) Muñoz and Martínez (2011), as well as circumstances, experiences and context are part of the construction of our identity, and the use of power or empowerment must contribute to the recognition and maintenance of said identity, whether individual or collective, strengthening the capacity to understand and transform social dynamics and changes (as necessary and possible). Empowering oneself, as Muñoz (2001) expresses, supposes a negotiation with the various organizations and institutions in the environment.

Hence the importance of appropriating a pacifist conception of power and the ability to exercise it either individually or in a group, where the fight for the guarantee of their rights has a nonviolent strategy as an ethical and rational decision since violence is renounced, “Because they are convinced of it or because in their analysis of the advantages and disadvantages they come to the conclusion that nonviolence will bring more benefits to avoid a negative escalation of the conflict” (Girela, 2016, p.125). [Own translation]. Thus, the efforts and processes are directed towards the construction of a more peaceful reality, recognizing all those capacities, practices and actions that contribute to the strengthening of a peaceful environment and a social fabric, in which the actors are interested in promoting and maintenance of this environment.

In the case of the Sahrawis, these processes of resistance and pacifist empowerment have been developing in recent years after the signing of the peace accords in 1991, strengthened in a physical space such as the camp. According to Castillejo (2000), in the camp, the conception of transience is transformed and configured in an environment. It is there, where it begins, despite the lack of certainty in the future. The camp is constituted in a place of experiences and experiences of empowerment where “people negotiate their existence, their spaces of meaning and their identity” (Valdivia, 2013, p. 136). [Own translation]. Thus, refugee camps are assumed as liminal spaces where meanings and relationships are configured. The latter germinate in memory, understood as a process that grants meaning and significance, an “intersubjective process, of dialogue between individuals and society, all this framed in a system of values and beliefs and materialized in experiences and representations (Carrizosa, 2011, p. 38). [Own translation].

Thus, the past does not invade the present, but rather informs it, strengthening the sense of belonging of the individual and the communities. For this reason, if the social and collective character is recognized, memory is constituted as an element of identity (both individual and collective), since it is decisive in the way in which subjectivity is apprehended and constructed. For all these reasons,

Memory, apart from the constructions that each individual produces and shares, is rooted and situated where spaces, ties of belonging, solidarity and sociability are shared. The community is the setting where the language games that are part of a way of life take place and are sustained, it is there where the expressions and actions with which the subjects face adversity are built and, in this case, they build memory (Carrizosa, 2011, p. 38). [Own translation].

Identity in the framework of this study was approached from a sociological and anthropological approach, establishing a direct relationship with the subjects' discourse (their personal experience) and social interaction, Giménez (2000). The “we” that results from this, serves to advance in the constitution of a common action, necessary to conform the social patrimony. Berger and Luckmann (1999) affirm that it is through the socialization processes that a person constitutes their identity, and this is a function of the social group in which this process is historically carried out, that is, a dialectical relationship is configured between the individual and their social context.

Thus posed the question, it is pertinent to introduce the concept of collective identities (Giménez, 2009) focused on the development of the concept of identity of resistance in the framework of studies for peace; the importance of shaping the identities of refugees is recognized, rescuing the existing diversity and, above all, valuing differences and contributions in light of the need to achieve peaceful coexistence among human beings.

Castells (1999), argues that the identity of resistance is conceived by those actors who find themselves in some conditions of undervaluation, stigmatization, social exclusion and/or domination (politics), a description that is considerably close to the reality of the Saharawi refugee camp. In these contexts, identity is appealed to as defense of the community and spaces of resistance, opposition, alternative and survival are built as forms of self-identification, based on various cultural or material elements of their territorial, national, ethnic history, among others. In this way, social groups or marginalized communities,

continuing with Castells's (1999) approach, resist with what they have because they cannot do it as citizens, because as citizens they are minorities who do not have their rights represented.

The Historical Context and the Reality of the Protagonists of this Research

The history of the Saharawi people is scattered, therefore, the present approach to the origin of the conflict and its evolution was based on primary sources (interviews with social and political actors in the camp) and the Saharawi website, relating this information to that offered by the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

After having been under the colonial control of Spain until 1958, during the 1960s, they tried to access their right to self-determination and achieve their independence by holding a referendum like the majority of the African peoples who were under the dominion of some European power. However, in view of the difficulties in successfully completing this process, they decided to organize militarily, giving birth, in 1975, to the Movement for the Liberation of Western Sahara, called the Polisario Front, being protagonists of the struggle for their independence at the popular, military, political and diplomatic level.

Spain did not grant sovereignty and allowed the intervention of Morocco and Mauritania who assumed a new power. Despite this, on February 27, 1976, the same day that the last Spanish soldier left the territory, the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) was born, officially proclaimed in Bir Lehlu.

In 1979, Mauritania signed a peace agreement with the Polisario Front, withdrawing and renouncing any intention over the territory, a situation that the Moroccan government takes advantage of, thanks to the military, political and economic support of some powers, maintains the illegal occupation of the territory and the war against the Polisario Front, promoting the migration and exile of a large part of the Saharawi population. Between 1980 and 1984, Morocco built a set of seven defensive walls (with a length greater than 2,720 km.) With the aim of creating a dividing line between the territories invaded by them and the territories liberated by the Polisario Front. These walls guarded by approximately 100,000 soldiers and where more than 7 million anti-personnel mines were planted around them, consolidated into a military zone that made it difficult for the Saharawi refugees to return to their legitimate territory, presenting different human rights violations in the framework of a war that lasted until the end of 1989.

In September 1991, they signed the peace accords through resolution 690 of the UN Security Council, initiating a ceasefire in order to resolve the sovereignty of the SADR, promoting the holding of a referendum on self-determination. It is important to note that, since the signing of the peace accords, the Saharawi people decided not to keep political prisoners and to carry out any armed attack or violations of international humanitarian law, strengthening the idea of civil resistance in search of a final resolution to the conflict by peaceful and nonviolent means.

At present, more than 200 thousand Sahrawis continue to live in exile somewhere in the Algerian Sahara Desert. In the oldest camp in the world, its inhabitants symbolically evoke the memory of their country of origin, through the administrative distribution of space in five wilayas (provinces), which bear the same names as the cities of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic. In each Wilaya, precariousness is experienced daily, water, electricity and food are increasingly scarce, a situation that worsens due to the difficult climatic conditions of the territory where they are settled.

Methodology

This is a qualitative research based on the reality of 9 adolescents between 11 and 16 years old who voluntarily agreed to participate in the activities¹, residents in the Tindouf refugee camp, selected through a non-probabilistic convenience sampling by Hartani Buseif, director of the Jalil Sidi Mohamed middle school located in the Wilaya de Bojador. They are: Tislem (14 years old), Embarka (13 years old), Bichu (13 years old), Mariam (16 years old), Nayat (15 years old), Mohamed (14 years old), Nafi (13 years old), Chej (12 years old) and Elhga (15 years old), who shared the necessary profile for the present study: they had been born and lived all their lives in the camp, they recognize themselves as Saharawi, they were in school at the time of the research and they understood and spoke Spanish fluently, they constitute the skeleton and above all heart of this study.

The methodological focus of the research is social constructionism, based on Berger and Luckmann (1995), to understand how adolescents self-produce

1. Regarding informed consent, the endorsement was obtained with the director of the educational institution who selected and consented to the participation of adolescents, framing the research proposal as an activity of the educational institution. In addition to this, there was the endorsement, support and evaluation of the Association of Friendship with the Saharawi People of Seville, Spain (AAPSS).

socially, and at the same time they create and resignify the symbolic frameworks of culture and the world of social relations. from the language, allowing to approach in a reliable way and their own narratives, to their conceptions in relation to their context and the way in which they have constructed their reality from their situation of refuge, trying to understand their lived experience and social reality through of the interpretation of what is expressed (verbal, written and graphic). In this way, it was possible to understand the importance of the transmission of historical memory, not only with respect to a present reality, but also in light of their beliefs, political formation and identities, as well as recognizing adolescents as valid interlocutors and constant producers of knowledge.

The field work was developed in four phases:

1. Contact with leaders, teachers and significant adults through informal conversations to create relationships of trust with the community, as well as with the group of adolescents with whom the information gathering would be carried out. After explaining to the participants, the artistic intervention proposal, framed in the focus group technique, social cartography, creative writing workshops and photo-elicitation were carried out. With this, it was possible to observe and specify the perceptions that the participants have about their context in the camp and what they know about the history of the conflict and the forced migration of the Saharawi people.

2. Development of collective audiovisual creation workshops for filming films facilitated the relational understanding between the historical memory transmitted by adults to adolescents and the configuration of their collective identities framed in their past, present and future.

3. Application of semi-structured individual in-depth interviews, which, based on the analysis of narratives, provided detailed information on their knowledge and perceptions of their environment and history (their own and of their people) that allowed to detect common elements related to the configuration of their collective identities, as well as in the construction of their discourse regarding the struggle of their people and processes of pacifist empowerment. To finalize the fieldwork, the photographs and filmstrips were screened, so that the participants knew the audiovisual products created by themselves, and recognized their creative capacity as bearers and generators of individual and collective knowledge.

4. In a transversal and continuous way, thanks to the support and accompaniment of the Association of Friendship with the Saharawi People of Seville (AAPSS), visits and interviews were carried out with members of different organizations and public institutions such as the Polisario Front delegation in Andalusia, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Human Rights Council, Association

of Relatives of Saharawi Prisoners and Disappeared (AFAPREDESA), Ministry of Education, the organization of Sahrawi women, Nova Sahara Occidental, Ministry of Justice and the Bojador hospital, which allowed access to complementary information on the social and political dynamics of the Saharawi people.

It is important to note that the audiovisual material produced by the adolescents was presented to significant adults in the community, allowing them to recognize their creative capacity as bearers and generators of individual and collective knowledge.

To analyze the information, the induction process proposed by Bartolomé (1990) was used. The defined categories are: refugee status, identity of resistance, transmission of historical memory and processes of pacifist empowerment.

As an analysis technique, the critical analysis of discourse was used where discourse is defined as a social practice (Santander, 2011) with a socio-cognitive approach, highlighting that discourses are practices that generate social realities, in the present analysis it was possible to reveal the forms of domination that adolescents conceive in the face of the past of their people, as well as the forms of resistance developed in adolescents based on the configuration of their collective identities and on the transmission of historical memory and the power relations between discourses and the attributed meanings. At this point, discursive practices emerged that were put into circulation based on the proposed categories.

Results

Experiences of (up) Rooting of Sahrawi Adolescents: Between Refuge and Return

The knowledge that adolescents have about the conflict and the forced migration of their people is based on the actors that initiated the conflict and the role of other States in the forced migration and resettlement process.

When it was inquired about what they knew in relation to the actors in the conflict and the reasons for the migration of their people, the adolescents identified Morocco as the main cause of the conflict due to the dispute over territory, apparently due to the domination and exploitation of natural resources such as oil, phosphate and fish from the Sahara. In addition to this, they expressed that the Moroccan government has used intimidation techniques and human rights violations against the Sahrawis at the time of the occupation of the territory,

such as the poisoning of water, the planting of antipersonnel mines, imprisonment and assassinations. Two of the adolescents interviewed said they knew of cases in their close family circle of victims of this conflict: an aunt was murdered in the area occupied by the Moroccan army and a brother was also imprisoned in the occupied area for carrying the Saharawi flag.

Algeria is perceived by the participants as the State that has provided them with a “temporary” solution to be able to resettle and Mauritania as another actor in the dispute over territory and natural resources.

Spain appears in the discourse less frequently, however, there is an imaginary of Spain as a *good* actor or as a colonizing State, compared to the dichotomy of being perceived by some participants as the State that sold the Sahara to Morocco “for having many beautiful things” (Mohamed, creative writing exercise, May 4, 2017). Likewise, France appears with a negative connotation in the interviews for being an actor interested in oil that has supported Morocco.

Despite the clear recognition of those interviewed about Morocco's role in the entire conflict and how its actions have affected the lives of its people, none of the participants expressed feelings of resentment or anger. This is partly due to the fact that adults are continuously transmitting to adolescents the need to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict and to keep alive the desire to return.

With the elaboration of the social cartography, an approach to his present and life in the camps was achieved. In the first instance, the participants made known the places that they considered most representative of their wilaya. In this aspect, an approach to the collective dimension was observed, determined by cultural practices such as religious and cultural celebrations, as well as by community life.

Figure 1. Representative places of Wilaya, according to participants



Source: prepared by the participants Tislem, Nayat, Nafi, Chej and Embarka

When it was inquired about significant people in the daily community dynamics, the group highlighted the work of the teachers and women, considering a recognition of the role of women in the organizational dynamics of the camp. However, it should be noted that some of the participants emphasized the importance of the role of women in the family environment (domestic), presenting conflicting perceptions regarding the freedoms of women, due to their religious beliefs. In the script of the film made by three adolescent women, they relate:

The Sahrawi woman is a strong, independent woman, confident in herself and her ability, she makes a good contribution to the camp (...) Women, we have a very important role and that is to maintain order, not only in the haimas, but in everything in the camp. Our struggle helps us to stay on our feet and dream of a better future (Embarka, Nayat and Tislem, audiovisual creation workshop, May 10, 2017).

Although there are problems, the participants stated that they feel safe in the camps, a perception that is directly linked to the fact that there is no Moroccan presence in the camp that could harm them.

It is therefore convenient to clarify the importance of the idea of return and its future in the discourse of the participants. Expressions such as: “it is my country, when I live there, I feel rather good, because I see my land, as long as there is no presence of Moroccans” (Bichu, focus group, May 6, 2017), show their desire to live in the occupied zone. However, a participant who stated that: “I would like to know it because it is our country from before, to know it and so on”, but that she would not like to live there because “I am used to here, I don't like that there is so much fighting there” (Nayat, focal group, May 6, 2017), from which we can deduce the lack of possibilities that she sees in the face of the end of the conflict or the return to her land in the short or medium term.

For them, *the Sahrawi struggle* focuses on the recovery of their territory and the return of all the people, which is linked to their idea of the future, for this reason, in the event of return, the participants agree on the importance of recognition of the sovereignty of their country at the international level and that they can walk through the streets of their people carrying their flag freely without being attacked or restricted.

The Construction of the Identity of Resistance

If the territory is configured as a meeting space where behaviors converge and emerge, as well as individual and collective practices, in the case of the participants, this concept can be associated with the idea of physical territory related to the refugee camp, or symbolic when they refer to the occupied territories.

With reference to the current physical space they inhabit, this can be considered as a liminal space, in accordance with Valdivia (2013). There they have developed survival strategies, established a daily life as well as social and community dynamics, strengthened by the cultural practices of their people and their relationship with the inhabited space, which is evident for example, in the importance for adolescents of the celebration and active participation in the country festivities such as May 20th, which is day of the struggle for the cause of the Saharawi people and February 27th where they commemorate the proclamation of independence of the Saharawi Democratic Arab Republic.

In the focal group and the participants *narrated* on the matter of *these celebrations*: “On May 20th all the children in charge of decorating, we will meet from all the wilayas and we are going to have those May 20th parties, we go to

Awswert (wilaya) there all. There are many foreigners and many people" (Embarka, focus group, May 6, 2017).

There's a (party) that takes place on February 27th, it's the big party where all the people dress their top in white and the bottom in a black skirt we put on one thing that we put in our hair. We go dressed up in a black melffe on top and from here you dress a few things like a skirt, it's a melfa but it's a white skirt and you put one thing in your hair, what you put on your hair is just for women. (...) In the February 27th party all the people go to the square, they hold up a man and say things, they sing (Tislem, focus group, 6 May 2017).

Here, the sense of a temporary stay in the camp is visible and in turn, the desire and the idea to return to their country, despite having lived in this place all their life and not being sure how much longer they will be there.

In this context, the group as a whole denoted an optimistic attitude towards the camp as a place of residence, because they feel free and safe, and not least because there are their family and friendship networks, which, in this context is especially significant, both individual (interpersonal and family links) and collectively (woven and social ties in the community), situations that are associated with the resistance with which they have endured, exiled in the camps.

This is evident in expressions like "we've fought for that, but well we've put up with a lot, (...) they are always together, to be able to return" (Tislem, semi-structured individual interview, May 13, 2017) and that "they are good people, for me they are the best people" (Mariam, semi-structured individual interview, May 16, 2017). These manifestations of solidarity, unity, resistance and empowerment that have been strengthened in adversity are the result of the ability to adapt to the environment, the camps and interaction with the other, in this case, the other refugee, which refers again to Castillejo's approach (2000) with regard to how the camp space is reconfigured from and according to those encounters with others.

In the face of symbolic space, i.e. the occupied area, it was possible to show an allegorical bond based on the roots and a form of idealization based primarily on what adults have told them (stories) and transmitted (feelings), evidenced by the way they maintain their cultural practices (dance, music, clothing, food, tea), the conception of animals such as goats and dromedaries, as they conceive of the organization of their community, religious and national celebrations and the name of the wilayas referencing the cities of SADR. This is evident in the responses that participants expressed in the focus group when a comparison was made between the camp and the occupied area:

"Well, like the beach because they have a beach and there are houses, flats (apartment buildings) that we don't have here" (Nafi, focus group, May 6, 2017).

"That it is very nice that it has nice houses and such. There are trees that we don't have here in the camp. Here in the camp it's hot, it's not hot there, it's another country" (Elhga, focus group, May 6, 2017).

In this way, the identity adscriptions and collective discourse regarding the history of the Saharawi people associated with Spanish decolonization, the conflict with Morocco, forced migration and arrival at the camp, events that participants did not live, in accordance with Osorio (2004), are a direct consequence of the use of cultural practices and the transmission of the historical memory of adults; this led to an interaction between past and present that has allowed those who were not there to have a version of what happened despite the physical separation, in this case, of the occupied territories. Mariam (focus group, 6 May 2017) states:

"There are trees, here there are no trees, there are many things that here (camp) there are not. There are beaches there which we don't have here, they have schools for the elderly that are not here (...) Everything's nice over there. I have been told of the occupied area, my father told me that before there were houses and haimas, and lands that have herbs" (Mariam, 2017).

While memory is built subjectively, it is always through collective narratives within the framework of a social context. Thus, one might consider that memory is the meeting point of the Saharawi people; this allows us to talk about the construction of a collective memory linked to the idea of return, which also guides their life project.

In the case of the Saharawi people, it could be suggested that in the face of their history of forced migration and refuge, as well as the response of the international community and absence of a response of a lasting and satisfactory solution to their exile, they have begun to build an identity of resistance, deciding to act collectively in the face of their situation (initially through armed life, currently through politics and pacifist empowerment) recognizing themselves as subjects protagonists of their own stories with the feasibility of voluntary intervention in all social and political processes that concern their community.

It is important to emphasize that refugees do not lose their identity after forced migration or resettlement in a new territory, but, from their memories and historical memory, together with reintegration into an unknown space, generate new nuclei of meaning in relation to their present and sense of the

world, which leads to the (re)configuration of their individual and collective identity processes through cultural, political and social processes, in a context determined by plurality. All this becomes an opportunity to re-register their projects and senses of life, as well as to update the past (what was before the event) in the conditions that the present allows, in order to project in its future, redefining its reality within the camp.

Community organizational experiences demonstrate how community actors have turned to identity as a defense of their social and political structure; the camp has been constituted as a symbolic space of resistance where numerous meeting points are established, either from their situation of oppression or vulnerability, or from their empowerment and articulation of common interests to overcome these situations creating their own discourse in this particular context, while they can return to the place they consider their legitimate territory. Thus, in line with Alvarado, Patiño and Loaiza (2012) the territory allows the emergence of the political subject, where it is acted to transform it.

According to the information collected, especially in the films and the photo-elicitation exercise, for participating Saharawi adolescents, the transmission of historical memory has become a tool to build their realities and configure their collective identities. The Saharawis, in the face of conflict and direct violence, have fully developed their capacity as an agency, not only reorganizing in an unfavourable context but at a symbolic level in the social and political sphere. All this is recognized by the participating adolescents, where no intention is perceived to be revictimized, but on the contrary, agents of change are recognized as subjects with the capacity to contribute to return, as well as in the recognition of their country as a sovereign state.

This is supported by the position of Jelin (2002) who points out that the past does not invade the present, but informs it, strengthening the sense of belonging of the individual and communities, which is increased in oppressed, violated and discriminated groups. In this way, adolescents are clear and present their refugee status linked to the idea of territory and return, as explained by one of participants *"because I live in a village that is not mine"* (Embarka, focus group, 6 May 2017).

The most interesting thing that was detected in the speeches exposed by the adolescents is what they consider right to materialize the return of their people. In their entirety, they agreed that the best form is the peaceful way, delegitimizing any violent actions that may have occurred in the conflict. In this regard, one participant expressed not wanting to be part of the Saharawi struggle (which for her has a military connotation), but manifests how she would resolve the conflict:

It would resolve the conflict, by joining all the towns who go with Sahara to win the fight, I would invite Spain, Algeria and many (...) I would tell them you can help me because my lands are occupied and I want to win the war. But I don't want to kill anyone, I just want to ask them to get out of my village, because I want to live happily" (Tislem, semi-structured individual interview, May 13, 2017).

In the focus group, two participants established a relationship between the Saharawi struggle and their participation in it through ideas and their academic training: "I feel part of the Sahrawi struggle and would contribute to it with ideas" (Mohamed, focus group, 6 May 2017), "I have to study to help my people and so I am helping them", (Mariam, focus group, 6 May 2017). Finally, one participant stated, "It is my country, when I live there I feel better, because I see my land, as long as there is no presence of Moroccans" (Bichu, focus group, 6 May 2017), where the genuine desire to return to the occupied area is perceived as long as its compatriots do not have violent clashes with the Moroccans again.

Despite the recognition of the actors responsible for their refugee situation, there are no feelings of anger, revenge or hatred towards them in their speeches, on the contrary, one perceives what Jelin (2002) calls a political and educational purpose through the transmission of political struggle, which gives an account of the repressive acts of which their people have been victimized, showing other alternative paths that make it possible to not repeat violent acts.

In the case of the Saharawi people, it could be suggested that in the face of their history of forced migration and refuge, as well as the response of the international community and absence of response of a lasting and satisfactory solution to their exile, they have begun to build an identity of resistance, deciding to act collectively in the face of their situation (initially through armed life, currently through politics and pacifist empowerment) recognizing themselves as subjects and protagonists of their own stories with the feasibility of voluntary intervention in all social and political processes that concern their community. In this way numerous meeting points are established, either from their situation of oppression or vulnerability, or from their empowerment and articulation of common interests to overcome these situations creating their own discourse in this context.

These actions, evidenced in their discursive practices in relation to the context and history of the Saharawi people, can be recognized from the paradigm of imperfect peace and framed as processes of pacifist empowerment, fuelled by the configuration of collective identities, in this case of resistance. The Saharawi people through their community, social and political organization exercise power in a non-violent manner to transform their reality in a positive way, deci-

ding to act collectively in the face of their situation (initially through armed life, currently through the political path and pacifist empowerment), guarantee their rights and prevent their continued violation, as well as, to have greater political and public impact, not only by making their situation visible but by transmitting this discourse to the new generations, as Muñoz (2001) proposes, with intent and interest in promoting peace.

Conclusions

Understanding refuge from a perspective of peace implies, as a primary step, recognizing the empowerment of the leading subjects, which is strengthened by different identity processes both on a personal level enhancing their own subjectivity (internal process of self-dignification and recognition), as a social group that collectively and prominently legitimizes and surrenders its history and place in society. It could be said that the experience of this camp is an example of materializing the analytical category of imperfect peace in practice, as a space and experience where the different actors of the community have decided to regulate and peacefully transform the conflict, emphasizing the need to recognize the non-violent contributions of each.

In this process of making peace framed in the Saharawi struggle, the transfer of the historical memory of adults to younger generations has become the central axis for the configuration of a collective identity of resistance and the consolidation of processes of pacifist empowerment in this group of adolescents. This has not only enabled knowledge of the history of the conflict of the Saharawi people and of the repressive acts and violation of their rights, but has built a connection between present and past of not repeating these acts of violence, based on a system of values and principles related to their identity, together with the development of clear and consistent discursive practices of resistance in the face of forms of domination in relation to their future, which is directly linked to their return.

The construction of the reality of adolescents in their immediate environment, in dialogue with space and social relationships and dynamics, is mediated by their culture, beliefs and transmission of memory, which has strengthened the symbolic link with their territory of origin (occupied area) and has allowed

the redefinition of the current settlement territory (camp). In this way the spectrum is opened to recognize the uniqueness of the processes of each refugee community, in this case The Saharawi, with an identity approach, as well as the plurality of the narratives and social processes of empowerment, which will allow to break with the homogenization of the experience of refuge coupled with the classification of victims.

For this reason, the importance of recognizing the process of pacifist empowerment of the Saharawi community as an action typical of the paradigm of imperfect peace, as well as the visibility of these experiences of peace of a historically excluded and violent community, is reiterated to contribute to their social recognition, generating hope, cultural change and mobilizing the other to participate in these practices. Thus, the history of resistance of the Saharawi people is an example of building world peace, a people that is recognized and built daily from local perspectives and peaceful community and cultural practices, as well as in the transfer and strengthening of their social fabric based on values such as cooperation and solidarity. Therefore, the Saharawi people have demonstrated the possibility and capacity of all people and social groups to be continuous, momentary or conjunctural actors in the construction of peace.

In the case of participating adolescents, it was identified as thanks to the transmission of historical memory they have assumed their reality from cultural values and enhancing their capacities, building discursive practices strengthened in a political decision based on nonviolent responses, and in a pacifist power approach, setting themselves up in an experience within the framework of the imperfect peace paradigm, where still unfinished peace is built day by day, from below and horizontally.

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