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'El hombre sentipensante' and the Left: An analysis of entangled discursive practices of academia and politics in contemporary Colombia

Kordt, Xochilt Sofia

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'EL HOMBRE SENTIPENSANTE' AND THE LEFT

AN ANALYSIS OF ENTANGLED DISCURSIVE PRACTICES OF ACADEMIA AND POLITICS IN CONTEMPORARY COLOMBIA

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Introduction

At different moments in my life, I encountered several academic and political texts without obvious relation to each other. Nevertheless, in both texts, the demand for a global-local Latin American human (and a local-global Colombian being) creates an image of human and world construction that corresponds to a completely different concept than those I had gotten to know in my mostly European education. It reminded me of the 1970s ‘salsa intellectual’ of Ruben Blades and Willie Colon:

“[...]”

Olvida las apariencias | *Forget the appearances*

Diferencias de color | *Differences of colour*

Y utiliza la conciencia | *And use the conscience*

Pa' hacer un mundo mejor | *To make a better world*

Ya vienen los tiempos buenos | *The good times are already coming*

El día de la redención | *The day of redemption*

Y cuando llamen los pueblos | *And when the people call*

Responde de corazón | *Answer from the heart*

Las semillas son los niños que el tiempo hará crecer | *The seeds are the children that time will make grow up*

Pero hay que dar el ejemplo pa' que pueda suceder | *But you have to set the example so that it can happen)*

Olvida la trabotada y enfrenta la realidad | *Forget the nonsense and face reality*

Y da la cara a tu tierra y hacia el cambio llegarás | *And face your land and towards the change you'll come*

Siembra cariño, siembra humildad | *Sow affection, sow humility*

Y da frutos de esperanza a los que vienen detrás | *And give fruits of hope to those who come after you*

“[...]” (own translation, Blades, 1978).

I only discovered this connection when I read and reread the texts and began to follow them in their respective contexts. Orlando Fals Borda's Latin American sociology project became a sentipensante sociology, intellectual, human, and way of understanding the world. I found it again in a sentipensante (knowledge) politics of the new 'progressive' left and the prefaces, manifestos and footnotes of decolonial thinkers. The texts seem to contain the same understanding of societal crisis and its transformation in supposedly differentiated autopoietic social systems: Politics and Science/Academia. What overlaps is the discourse of the Left(s) in which both discursive arenas have taken and are taking shaping roles at their respective time and space. Who would shape an alternative? How would this actor have to shape such an alternative?

„To gain the political self-determination and intellectual self-realisation that will allow our region to articulate itself as a whole before the world, it is necessary to form a new Latin American man“ (own translation, Fals Borda, 1970, p. 44).

The statement gave rise to the questions: How is to be this new Latin American man? In which relation is it new (from what) and necessary? And to what extent can it explain the overlapping discursive actors and practices of the academic/intellectual left and the political left(s)?

The structure of this study is based on a series of theoretical presuppositions about the latent entanglement between academic production and political practice. Placed in the general discursive battle of modernity and its alternative discursive fields, about the contemporary experience and constitution of world in time and space, the theoretical framework indicates four main concepts that inform the perspective, the abovementioned assumptions, and the methodological approach that is to be applied to this case study of enunciation from and practices of the Left in Latin America: the Left(s), discourse, dispositif, and conceptions of men. The theoretical bases and resulting methodological approach to the examination are presented in the first chapter with an emphasis on the implications of the developed theoretical frame in relation to modernity/coloniality. This course of action facilitates the answer to the question if and to what extent the Colombian and Latin American Left constitutes another modernity or an alternative worldmaking conception different to the Eurocentric model, based on their reality and through 'sentipensante' (decolonial, feminist, antiracist, anti-capitalist) (discursive) practices of knowledge production and consequent political and social

practices. The second part of this chapter will discuss the general perspective on the research objects, starting with a brief discussion of the concept ‘discourse’. The most influential conceptualization of which was developed by post-structuralist thinker Michel Foucault, which focusses on power/knowledge complexes. His genealogical approach is expanded by the introduction of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmanns’ interactionist perspective on the social construction of reality as framing sociological theory. In both theories language and social action in society constitute as well as are constituted by certain structures of knowledge. Such an ordered stock of knowledge is suspected to be represented in a specific *dispositif* – a discursive infrastructure acting as mediator between discourses and fields of practice. The sociology of knowledge approach to discourse (SKAD), as designed by Reiner Keller, will here be introduced as main methodological approach that synthesizes the abovementioned theories and offers a method-open analytical toolbox concerning the analysis of discursive world and meaning making. Thus, working definitions and conceptual delimitations for the practical analysis conceptions of man as *dispositif* in entangled academic and political discourses are developed. Therefore, the analytical concept is operationalized by the indicated discourse analytical methodology as well as Foucault’s idea of man as doublet of the *dispositif* modernity. In this context, the functional differentiation of social (sub)systems according to Niklas Luhmann and as such their social and cognitive structures are discussed as ideal type¹ of rational modern social organization. When understood as overlapping discursive arenas and battlefields these differentiated social systems enter a state of entanglement, denominating referential and reciprocal social and discursive interactions. The third and last part of the first chapter takes a closer look at the multiple interpretations of the Left in Latin America creating an overview of the general definitions and approaches common in its review and this of related social phenomena, concluding that the outlined discursive and relational approach to its worldmaking practices bears potential for insight in the analysis of the presented problem.

The second chapter focusses on a discussion of the socio-historic development of the multiple Left(s) in Colombia and the instances of discursive entanglement and differentiation in order to contextualize the discussion of the conception of the new Latin American man in the subsequent chapter. Therefore, a closer look is taken into the

¹ In reference to the Weberian “*Idealtypus*”.

categories of violence, revolution and peace, which coincide with his conceptualization of societal transition, subversion and commitment. In the last chapter the emergence and transformation of the Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals Borda's 'hombre sentipensante'. The discourse analytical approach chosen for the analysis serves to explore his implicit normative anthropological concept, which he develops coadjacent to the methodological and theoretical concepts of subversion, commitment and social change between 1960 and 2008. The concept is then compared to that of the progressive Left's Pacto Histórico under current president Gustavo Petro in their government program from 2022. This review enriched by a selection of observations and discursive artifacts from the fieldwork to this master's thesis attempts to analyse potential transformations and the impact of the concept on the contemporary Left(s).

1 On the social constitution of modernity and its' alternatives

1.1 Modernity and Pluriversality

Modernity is a term used generally to describe either the historic categorization of periods regarding culture, art and literature, or as a philosophical and sociological concept that reunites a set of norms, narratives, and guiding principles that constitute the modern condition of 'the West' since the Enlightenment in the 17th and 18th century. Depending on the disciplinary perspective, the new experiences and forms of being, find themselves reflected in the cultural production of the historic period (centrality of modern experiences and values) as modernism; in the transformation processes of societal organization, politics and economy as modernization; as well as in the abstract moral and philosophical principles of rationality, individualism, development and progress. In other words, modernity can be defined as *"a mode of vital experiences – experience of space and time, of self and the others, of life's possibilities and perils – that is shared by men and women all over the world today."* (Berman, 1983, p. 15). By recognizing the self-referential reproduction of modernity as a practice of world-making the concept has been criticised by several intellectual traditions: the romanticist critique of capitalist-industrialization's social and aesthetic consequences (Löwy & Sayre, 2001), the Marxist critique of capitalism, the postmodernist critique of reason and modernism, as well as the post-colonial critique of the universality principle. While all offer a counterproposal or utopia², none have been cross-societally realized. Even such critical diagnosis and propositions, like Zygmunt Bauman's 'liquid modernity' (2000) or Anthony Giddens' 'high modernity' (Browne, 2017) are clearly enunciated from a euro-centric perspective and include a claim of universality. But what is the 'other side' of a concept pronounced universal? To what extent is the implied dichotomy of another side constitutive of modernity? What is the role of (hu)man in the constitution and experience of modernity? And what alternative to modernity exists?

As mentioned, the critique of the universality principle of modernity was mainly represented in academia by postcolonial theories. Colonialism is, in this context, one of the many oppressive organizational forms modernity takes as it expands into an othered non-western world. The socio-political aim formulated as postcoloniality is the decolonization of the subaltern other on the epistemological, socio-organizational and

² romantic escapism, communism, and postmodernity

political level through the visualization and enunciation of the ‘others’ experience in ‘difference’. Based on another colonial experience, consistently different then that post-colonial theorists develop their critique from (Bortoluci & Jansen, 2013), the Latin American decolonial tradition conceives the concept of coloniality in the socio-cultural (~ of power), the epistemological (~ of knowledge) and the ontological (~ of self) dimension (Lander & Castro-Gómez, 2000; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Quijano, 2000, 2001, 2007). While the scientific methodologies, socio-political strategies, and main critique points of the postcolonial studies are integrated dialogically in this perspective³, the long evolving genealogy of critical thought of the region is prioritized. This involves dependency theory, liberation theology, the critique of eurocentrism, and the adaptations of Marxism as well as world-system theory to the region’s reality (Kordt, 2020). The resulting dialectical and (de)constructivist lecture of modernity, as an infrastructure of world-making in discourse, realizes coloniality as a reciprocally constitutive ‘darker side of western modernity’ (Mignolo, 2011). In this context, decolonial scholars identify constitutional mechanisms of differentiation and oppression in the modernity/rationality project (Quijano, 2000, 2007): capitalism and racism. This has led to a dialogue with and decolonial reframing of other modernity-critical reviews and practices. For example, the concept of patriarchy and gender in decolonial feminisms (Anzaldúa, 1987; Lugones, 2008; Segato, 2003). Furthermore, they provide a diversity of concepts for a critical practice: interculturalidad, border thinking and epistemic disobedience⁴. The aim is to construct a transmodernity that has been decolonialized in all dimensions where unequal power relations are acting to dehumanize ‘the other’ and marginalize those forms of organizing, thinking and being different to the modern principles. Therefore, the provincialization of Eurocentric modernity and the recognition of multiple modernities and equal loci of enunciations would be necessary: *“If the crisis is then caused by this patriarchal capitalist modern world, it follows that facing the crisis implies transitions toward its opposite, that is, toward a multiplicity of worlds we will call the pluriverse.”* (Escobar, 2019b, p. 43). Arturo Escobar is not the only to conceptualize a ‘pluriverse’, which corresponds to the

³ The reception of postcolonial studies in Latin America was conflictive (Coronil, 2008).

⁴ The list is not exhaustive, the vast diversity of personal, class, gender, geographical, cultural, disciplinary, methodological or professional positions and alliances to other modernity critiques, that are situated in a ‘liminal locus of enunciation’ Mignolo suggests, create a diversity of similar and linked concepts, that respond to the multiple realities and localities of the margins.

requirement of multiplicity in dialogue inherent to the idea itself, the diversity and the evolution of thought that it presupposes.

This investigations' working thesis is derived from a comparative and relational perspective: The pluriverse is to transmodernity/decoloniality what modernity/coloniality constructs as universe. Followingly, pluriversality as fundamental principle of this approach to world(s)-making can be interpreted as functional equivalent to universality. If so, all other fundamental principles such as rationality may entail a functional counterproposal.

1.1.1 Differentiation and rationality as constitutive epistemological categories of modernity

“The differentiation concept enabled modern society to admire and criticize itself. It could regard itself as the irreversible outcome of history and look to the future with a great deal of skepticism.” (Luhmann, 2013, p. 2)

Etymologically, the word ‘modern’ started as descriptive adjective for the newness or contemporaneity of something or someone’s behaviour in differentiation from the ‘old’ or ‘traditional’. Differentiation acts in this case as a description of difference. For modernity differentiation represents its’ constitutional ontological process – as cause and effect of social change, evolution and structuration (Haferkamp & Smelser, 1992), but initially as a form of creating, categorizing and dominating a diversity of subjects, their forms of seeing, knowing, and acting in their realities, and objects of different worlds as its one and only ‘other’.

The first interpretation of differentiation as a characteristic process of distinction in social organization is situated within the modernity discourse. Specifically, the scientific discipline of sociology and its perspective, which produces knowledge about and thereby also creates the social structuration of (modern) societies is embedded in modernity as a self-reflecting observation and theory of the latter by developing social theories (Sozialtheorie) and theories of society (Gesellschaftstheorie), (Alvear Moreno, 2020). As Niklas Luhmann notes in his ‘Theory of Society’; “[H]ighly developed “form” is a correlate of differentiation as is the emergence of individuality for practically all the classical sociologists” (2013, p. 2) The functional-structuralist theorist

develops an own constitutional concept of differentiation for society, which would become one of the most influential contributions to the contemporary discipline:

“[M]y thesis is that other differentiations [than structural ones that are prone to ‘overdeterminations through connectivity options’] arise from the differentiation of systems and can therefore be explained by system differentiation; and this is so because every operational (recursive) connection of operations generates a difference between system and environment” (Luhmann, 2013, p. 2).

He distinguishes between biological, psychological and social systems. Society is understood in this construction as a comprehensive social system, which contains several social subsystems and communicative ‘relations’ between those, formed by the process of ‘outdifferentiation’. A process based on ‘system-rationality’ (Systemrationalität)⁵. The social subsystems classified according to the principles of autopoiesis, structural coupling and operational closure (Luhmann, 1984) are: science, law, politics, economics, art, intimate relationships, education, family and religion. Communication, understood as the basic operation of all social systems, provides the space and mechanism of differentiation of each subsystem. It formulates a binary code in the logic of the referent system (e.g. power – no power in politics or money – no money in economy) that distinguishes between system and environment. The mass media system performs an elementary function: the communication of realities between systems, and between systems and their environment (Luhmann 2017). Similar to the reception of Talcott Parsons as influence on modernization theories, Luhmann’s argument – system differentiation being the highest form of evolution for modern societies – has been interpreted as fundamental ideal of modern rational societal organization, especially because it is designed with a global/universal reach in mind⁶. Generating a form of measurement and self-understanding of how it is to be a modern society. Societies that do not match this ideal by consequence might appear as not modern (enough), an interpretation that leads to hierarchizations.

⁵ See Chapter 1 section 11 ‘Demands on Rationality’(Luhmann, 2012).

⁶ see discussion on ‘Worldsociety’ and ‘Globalization and Regionalization’ in (Luhmann, 2013)

To regain a relational perspective on the many realities that exist in the world it is necessary to question the differentiation of autopoietic social systems as ideal typus of modern social structure rather than empirical reality. Subsequently, the aim of the later analysis is not to test a hypothesis per se, that is, to examine whether Luhmann's complex theory of social systems as the 'ultimate' modern form of organisation is valid in (the Latin American) reality⁷. The objective instead is to understand it as a constitutive for the formation of the discursive arenas of modernity in the discursive field of world-making and thereby, enabling the examination of the extent of correspondence and relation between Luhmann's 'ideal model' of modern society (and man) and that of Orlando Fals Bordas and the Colombian Left(s) as (potentially fundamentally different) way of experiencing and constructing the world.

1.1.2 Anthropocentrism and rationality as ontological principles of modernity

In a more concrete and social scientific language than Bermann, the post-humanist sociologist Richie Nimmo defines modernity as:

"[...] form of order, as an ontological and epistemological formation, an ensemble of related ways of seeing, knowing, and being in time and space, the nature of which has both been emergent from and has profoundly conditioned and structured what has occurred in the field of events." (2011, p. 59).

This framework combined with the humanist assumption, that the human is subject of the experience and construction of modernity, allows to pose two subsequential questions: What is it to be human? And what does it mean to be human in the modern world? The first is the fundamental question of (philosophical) anthropology, whose answer defines capacities and qualities that refer to the ontological and epistemological derivatives and co-constituents of being, knowing and acting. Nimmo considers the centrality of the category 'human' in the world– its anthropocentrism – and the necessary distinction from 'non-human' foundational to modernity. Therefore, the second question develops the role of the ontological distinction of 'human' and 'non-human', as well as all its' derivatives for the constitutive ordering processes of modernity itself

⁷ Critics have already demonstrated the difficulty of operationalising its 'empirical emergence' even in the modern west. Nevertheless, there exist dialogical reflections, that argue for the analytical potential of the theory in the region (Estrada Saavedra & Millán, 2012).

(2011, p. 59). The dualism of subject and object as human and non-human becomes hierarchized to serve the centrality of the human in modernity:

“A ‘subject’ can only exist as a subject in a world irreducible to its subjectivity; while an ‘object’ can only exist as a distinct object [...]. But humanist discourse suppresses this dialectical interrelationship, rendering it an asymmetric dualism and inscribing humans and non-humans as incommensurable, as though they belong to different ontological domains or sectors of reality. This in turn enables humanity to be elevated and centralised, while its necessary other – its very conditions of existence – are suppressed and marginalised, relegated to the status of a ‘context’, a mere ground upon which the human subject stands.”(Nimmo, 2011, p. 61).

Hence, the ontological differentiation of human - nature, human - animal, and culture - nature is based on the same hierarchical dichotomy as human - world, human - non-human, subject - object and lastly self - other.

One of the specific derivatives of the ‘humanistic doctrine’ (Nimmo, 2011) of modernity can be observed in the influence of Cartesian philosophy. Maybe unknowingly of the consequences, Descartes statement “cogito, ergo sum” (I think, therefore I am) provides one of the anthropological as well as philosophical fundamentals for the rationality principle of Eurocentric modernity. The differentiation implied is that of a self that has mind and consciousness, who is capable of reason, thinking and being rational, whereas the other is body or matter: presupposed to not maintain these capabilities and characteristics or even opposing them in acting based on drive/emotion, feeling and being emotional. In his philosophical critique of Cartesian meditations and the categorization as secondary moment of (early) modern thought, Enrique Dussel argues that the Cartesian ego itself is based on the legitimization of colonial strategies of exploitation and oppression. These construct the colonial other as barbarian, wild, uncivilized, soulless, racially inferior and eventually dominable object in differentiation to the European Christian civilized self (ego cogito), which is therefore legitimized to exert power and violence against the colonial other (ego conquiro) (Dussel, 2008). Modern philosophy reproduces this hierarchical binary as reproduction of its own subjectivity, while negating and concealing the difference of the conquered (Dussel, 1994). Immanuel Kant for example bases his ethics on the causal combination of ‘Vernunft’

(Reason) with 'Mündigkeit' (Maturity) ((1781) 2016). This is conceptualized as the capacity to individually and autonomously use reason and first and foremost speak⁸ for oneself. In its given eurocentrism a question arises even before: "*Can non-European think and sense?*" According to Immanuel Kant, the answer is no, as he stated in *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime (1764)*" (Mignolo, 2021, p. 532). Emancipation in this sense is to be achieved from a status of self-inflicted 'Unmündigkeit' (immaturity), which is formally achievable by every-body that has a 'free will' and reason (*sapere aude*) ((1784) 2009). The philosophers concept influenced political theory and practice by portraying subjects that are both able to construct and exert political rights. In the context of coloniality, the modern subject constructed as individual self, able of rationality and exertion of freedom, is superiorly opposed to the colonized object constructed as collective other, driven by emotionality and in need of domination for their own good. This can be observed in the development of disenfranchisements and marginalizations before modern law and political participation based on gender, sexuality, race, religion, social status, education level, wealth, citizenship, ability and age in modern(izing) (democratic) nation states (Burman, 2016)⁹.

The constitutional differentiation mechanism of modernity is conclusively relational as it constructs what being modern is by excluding what it is not – in dichotomies. This is contained in an assumed monological position ('I (self) think, therefore I am (human)'). Coloniality proves to be the mechanism of hierarchized differentiation in dialogue: the modern self is defined in difference 'from' a heterogeneity of experiences and productions of contemporaneity, which constitutively implies the construction, judgement and domination 'of' and 'about' a homogenized other on the basis of rationality as strategy of legitimization ('I (self) think, – the other cannot – therefore I am (a human and the other is not).'). This ontology of modernity/coloniality constitutes 'the west and the rest' (Hall, 1992) and many other dualisms. Some of which are summarized in the following table.

⁸ Mund – mouth, mündig – mature, able and/or allowed to speak

⁹ E.g. Debates on sexual rights, water and ecological justice, migration etc. indicate at least a narrative basis on the differentiation of who is to be treated as subject or object, capable of rationality or not.

Modern self	modern other	mechanisms
(hu)man	nature, animal	Anthropocentrism (Nimmo, 2011)
(hu)man - reason	not human (lesser human) - drive	anthropocentrism (Nimmo, 2011) (ego conquiro) (Dussel, 1994, 2008)
self	other	(Cartesian dualism) (Nimmo, 2011)
subject	object	
Mind (soul)/consciousness – idea	Body/matter – territory	
rationality (rational – thinking)	emotionality (emotional – feeling/sensing)	see chapter ‘The rational man of modernity vs. the ‘SER sentipensante’ in pluriversality – concluding notes and projections
Mündigkeit (maturity)	Unmündigkeit (immaturity)	coloniality of power (Kant, 2009, 2016; Quijano, 2000)
individuality	collectivity	coloniality of being (Maldonado-Torres, 2007)
Man - male	Woman - female	patriarchy, gender, androcentrism (Lugones, 2008)
Sanity - health	insanity - illness	(Foucault, 1976, 1984)
culture	nature	anthropocen(Nimmo, 2011)
civilization - civilized	barberie – primitive	coloniality of being (Maldonado-Torres, 2007)
white	non-white	Racism (Fanon, 1967; Quijano, 2001, 2007)
western	non-western/rest	eurocentrism (Hall, 1992; Mignolo, 2011)
centre	periphery	coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000, 2007; Wallerstein, 1982)
art	artisanry, folklore	coloniality of knowledge (Lander & Castro-Gómez, 2000; Mignolo, 2002)
progress - development	stagnation – subdevelopment	Capitalism, modernization, developmentalism(Escobar, 2010, 2014)
First world	Third world	
urbanity	rurality	
industrialization	primitivity	
technology	tool	
science (truth) – scientific	belief – popular	coloniality of knowledge (Lander & Castro-Gómez, 2000; W. D. Mignolo, 2002)D. Mignolo, 2002)
Complexity (of societal organization)	Simplicity (of social organization)	This category is a result of the reflection in this chapter (Luhmann, 2012, 2013)

Table 1 – fundamental dualisms of modernity and legitimization mechanisms

The review of modernity/coloniality and its constituent process of differentiation in two varieties – system differentiation and anthropocentrism – has demonstrated that the configuration as well as interpretation of the modern world, society and subjects is reliant of a monological hierarchizing locus of enunciation legitimized by rationality in principle and effect. The monological position is consolidated by the omittance of difference in dichotomies of (modern) self and (non-modern) other(s). Furthermore,

differentiation as ‘outdifferentiation’ of modern social systems (Luhmann), based on the principle of system rationality focuses on functionality and a separation between system and environment, that omits the relationality and permeability of various social realities, which dominates the unilateral conception of the world. Another conclusion of the discussion is the centrality of the human subject for the (self)constitution of modernity, which facilitates the assumption that to deconstruct the conception of (hu)man of a certain discourse means to gain insight into the architecture of the discourse itself (Alvear Moreno, 2020; Berger, 1971; Foucault, 1971, 1980; Nimmo, 2011).

Modernity’s conceptions of (rational) man

Resulting from the derivation of qualities and capabilities for the modern self and the non-modern other the dichotomies produced by modernity are reproduced on the levels of human body and behaviour. Modern conceptions of man, implicate not only a characterization but the embodiment of descriptive (how man is) and normative (how he should be) assumptions for individual and humanity’s social behaviour and its’ interpretation (Zichy, 2019, pp. 26–32). This, as exposed in the previous discussion, leads to formulations and reproductions in all social stocks of knowledge and discourses involving human subjects as well as their interactions with (the objects in) their environment. In other words, as modernity is produced and reproduces itself, its subjects – modern humans – produce and reproduce themselves according to the same principles¹⁰. Among other, conceptions of man have been discussed in their normative constitutive function and transcendental influence over education (Winger, 2014), ethics (Zichy, 2019), economy and politics. Many socio-historic periods (e.g. conception of man in antiquity) and diverse phenomena (e.g. Christianity, postmodern literature) have been analysed according to their conception of man by emphasizing an anthropological interest. From this point of view, citizenship in modern nation-states can also be reviewed in terms of its anthropological assumptions. Some of the most influential conceptions in public and political discourse include the homo socialis, the homo oeconomicus, the homo oecologicus, the one-dimensional man (Marcuse et al., 2004) and the new soviet man (Soboleva, 2017). Furthermore, by defining conceptions of man as “*more or less coherent set of assumptions about what are considered important human characteristics in general.*” (own translation, Zichy, 2019,

¹⁰ How exactly this equivalence arises is argued upon in the following section on man, modernity and discourse.

p. 15), most conceptions that stem from the allocation of general characteristics of man as subject of modern (social) phenomena can also be identified as sub-conceptions of modern man (e.g. punk subculture and urban youth (Feixa, 2021), homo consumens (Bauman & Magatti, 2007)). Because of the presumed system differentiation, the concepts may appear to focus on system specific values and logics as, for example, the homo oeconomicus of economic theory or the homo socialis of the social sciences. In the conflict over which theory bears more scientific or empirical ‘truth’ for the description of human behaviour in society the concepts can even appear contradictory or individualistic (Zichy, 2019). Nevertheless, all conceptions of (hu)man are in its fundamentals a derivative of the rationality principle of modernity:

*“The homo oeconomicus of economics - although controversial - represents the prototype of such a reduced view of man, which is limited to two explicit assumptions that are important for methodological reasons: **man is rational**, and he is benefit-orientated. “ (own translation and emphasis, Zichy, 2019, p. 15).*

Even the dualistic conception of man in social thought, which is constructed on the division and ambiguous unity of natural/physiological body and cultural/social/pragmatic mind, centres on the assumption of the capability of reason in being, thinking and acting rationally. It is therefore concluded that the most fundamental conception of man of modernity/coloniality is that of the rational man.

In this context Orlando Fals Bordas’ demand for a ‘new Latin American man’ ((1970) 1981) becomes an interesting point of departure for the analysis of alternative conceptions of man and world. Why is a new man needed? How should such a new (hu)man be formed? What does it entail to be a new Latin American (hu)man? What are the ontological foundations, epistemological formations as well as social and political power effects of such a concept? In what way do the epistemological and ontological fundamentals translate into everyday praxis? How have the conception and resulting practices developed through time and space? In what way does it relate to modernity?

The relational perspective outlined in the earlier discussion provides a first framing approach in recognizing the locus of enunciation, speaker position of the author. Geographically and culturally, his statement is located in Latin America. Socio-historically it is situated in a moment of crisis of modernity, post-modern critique and political

turmoil between establishment and New Left on a global and local scale. It is also the statement of an intellectual in public discourse, between academia and politics. This preliminary description ¹¹ places the demand in dialogue both within modernity as well as outside modernity. This questions if this multidimensional demand could correspond to one of many relational conceptions of man for the construction of trans-modernity in a pluriverse:

“From the Exteriority of Modernity, the essential constitutive Other of Modernity (but as exploited, dominated, ignored creator of wealth, culture, etc.) becomes the subject of innovative praxis (a kind of global, humble, fragile, rationally ethical Übermensch: radical transformation of the Nietzschean intuition)” (own translation, Dussel, 2007, p 18).

Focussing the particularity of the surrounding Latin American and Colombian Left(s) on the concept is the approach of this exploration, that moreover can give insight about the ordering effect of resulting practices of world-production.

¹¹ The detailed contextualization as well as analysis will follow in the subsequent chapters.

1.2 Man, modernity and discourse

The concept ‘discourse’ has been applied in social theories as well as methodological approaches from various disciplinary perspectives: in linguistics (interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz, 1972)), semiotics (critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995)), cultural studies (Encoding /decoding model in reception theory (Hall, 1973)), anthropology (anthropology of modernity (Escobar, 2019a)) and lastly sociology (SKAD Keller (2011, 2018)).¹² By the 1970s the influence of the idea to study discourse and language as constituent of culture, identity, social practice and ‘the social’ (order) in general had manifested its importance in the linguistic/communication turn of the social sciences and humanities. As theoretical and analytical concept it represents one of the most widely received notions in contemporary social theory and was broadly recognized with the success of Foucault’s poststructuralist discourse theory. Shortly after, various thought schools within the discipline of sociology started to undergo a communicational turn with pathbreaking contributions ranging from functional-structuralist systems theory in Niklas Luhmann’s ‘Theory of society’ (Luhmann, 2012 [1987], 2013 [1987]) to phenomenologist critical thinker Jürgen Habermas’ ‘Theory of communicative action’ (1988b, 1988a), and the knowledge sociology based and phenomenology influenced understanding of language in discourse as constitutive mechanism of the social construction of reality in Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann’s eponymous book (Berger and Luckmann, 1971).

As planted in the introduction, the object of analysis ‘el hombre sentipensante’ in the academic knowledge production and political practice of the Left(s) in Colombia is based on several theoretical and methodological presuppositions about the discursive construction of reality from a sociological position. Therefore, this next section focuses on the theoretical bases for the working thesis. The ensuing section addresses the methodological implementation and necessary delimitations adapted to the topic and data set.

¹² This list is not exhaustive and only serves to illustrate the impact the concept had on the analytical and methodological developments of the humanities and social sciences.

1.2.1 The notion of discourse in Foucauldian thought – the fundament of a research field

Michel Foucault is known as one of the most influential thinkers of the poststructuralist and – although he rejected to be categorized by himself – of the postmodern thought tradition. Arguably, his most impactful contribution is the introduction of ‘discourse’ as central concept of a theoretical framework for the review of the discursive constitution of knowledge and its structuration through power dynamics. Reiner Keller summarizes the Foucauldian notion as follows: “*Discourses are considered as historically situated ‘real’ social practices, not representing external objects but constituting them.*” (2011, p. 46). Crucially, this constitutes a perspective contrary to the until then common Kantian derivation of knowledge production as consecutive sequence or line of ideas or arguments. Foucault’s further developed research framework – discourse analysis – introduces “*more explicitly ideas of power and mechanisms of the ‘inner structuration’ of discourses (as the “commentary” which, for example, differentiates between important statements and the rest)*” (Keller, 2011, p. 47) (own translation, Blades, 197). Furthermore he “*addresses discourses as battle fields, as power struggles around the legitimate definition of phenomena.*” (2011, p. 47), in his later publication on the Pierre Rivière case (Foucault, 1982). Most important to emphasize from this conceptualization is the characterization of discourse as produced by and simultaneous producing a certain knowledge structure, which constitute both material and immaterial objects. The praxis of discourse analysis therefore “*implies looking at concrete data—oral and written texts, articles, books, discussions, institutions, disciplines—in order to analyse ‘bottom up’ how discourses are structured and how they are structuring knowledge domains* (Keller, 2011, p. 47).”.

Man as dispositif of modernity – Foucault’s doublet

The analytical notion of ‘dispositif’ (Foucault 1980), which has been translated as ‘apparatus’ or ‘device’ pointing out specific institutional, physical, or administrative mechanisms and knowledge structures that fulfil the purpose of maintaining or focusing the performance of power within social interactions (Keller, 2011, p. 47), is the methodological starting point to approximate the inquiry into a structuring concept or infrastructure of discursive entanglement of the academic and political system in the Colombian Left(s). Given the identification of modernity’s conception of rational man as produced and reproduced by itself according to the same principles as modernity, a

justification is provided in Foucault's reflection on Kantian anthropocentrism. To the traditional trilogy of philosophy and their guiding questions; 'What can I do?' – metaphysics, 'What must I do?' – ethics, and 'What am I permitted to do?' – religion; Kant adds anthropology as overarching pre-suppositive discipline: 'What is the human?' He argues that all other questions refer to the latter, meaning that *"man as an anthropological presupposition of all scientific and philosophical discourses, and the unfolding of a transcendental tradition of thought [...] produces a unified episteme [: man]"* (Luisetti, 2012, p. 122). Transcendentalism for Foucault is one mechanism for Western modernity as *dispositif* to assure its reproduction through transformations and re-affirmations of itself based on man as its doublet: *"For the threshold of our modernity is situated not by the attempt to apply objective methods to the study of man, but rather by the constitution of an empirical-transcendental doublet which was called man"* (Foucault, 1970, p. 319). It acts as a functional equivalent to the *dispositif* modernity and its' inherent differentiation mechanism: *"Modern subjects are socialized and disciplined into living in a world organized around such lines of differentiation, which they also reproduce"* (Maldonado-Torres, 2018, p. 111). As a result, it is assumed as working thesis, that the question as to how man is in the discourse of the (Colombian) Left(s) reveals how the performers of the latter produce and reproduce its' epistemological and ontological knowledge to interpret the world.

1.2.2 The notion of knowledge and social construction of reality in Berger and Luckmanns' sociology of knowledge

Only a few years prior and independent to Foucaults 'The Archeology of Knowledge' (Foucault, 2013, first published in French 1969), Peter B. Berger and Thomas Luckmanns' published 'The Social Construction of Reality – A treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge' (Berger, 1971, first published in 1966) in which they introduced another language based, but specifically sociologically anchored model of the social construction of knowledge and social structure. Berger and Luckmanns dialectical approach to the constitution of the objective reality and the realization of knowledges' structuring potential into subjective reality. They explain the differentiation as necessary to understand the constitutive mechanisms of knowledge structures and their effects on social interaction. Objective reality is constructed by general typificatory schemes in intersubjective interactions, that increase expectability in the latter and with their (social) environment. They become detached from the experience of individual interactions through the mechanism of institutionalization and are maintained as historical objectivations through strategies of legitimation. The concept of subjective reality contains the internalization processes of previously objectified patterns of knowledge into the subjective level of agency through socialization. Language is assigned a fundamental role in this theory, as condition and resource for both objectivation and internalization of knowledge/meaning. 'Knowledge' in the construction of social reality means *"all kinds of types (signs and meaning/reference) and incorporated ways of action people use in general and particular ordering of situations"* (Keller, 2018, p. 24).

Institutionalization processes and legitimization strategies in everyday life

Taking into account that the Foucauldian dispositif called (hu)man, as object of inquiry, is a specific knowledge structure or complex of knowledge patterns about itself and the other in society, its institutionalization process and legitimization strategies are of interest for the study of the emergence, maintenance and transformation of the ordering concept and its constructive effect on specific societal structures: *"Knowledge about society is [...] a realization in the double sense of the word, in the sense of apprehending the objectivated social reality, and in the sense of ongoingly producing this reality"* (Keller, 2018, p. 24). Fundamental for this comprehension of reality construction are the focus on Schutzian 'Lebenswelt' (everyday life world) and the assumption that: *"Man's specific humanity and his sociality are inextricably*

intertwined. Homo sapiens is always, and in the same measure, homo socius.” (Berger, 1971, p. 69)¹³. Or in other words: “*While it is possible to say that man has a nature, it is more significant to say that man constructs his own nature, or more simply, that man produces himself*” (1971, p. 67). Reality is constructed in the everyday life world as a common space of intersubjectivity, necessary for *the “complex interplay between body, mind and signs [... called] the constitution of the world in the individual embodied consciousness”* (Keller, 2018, p. 22). Therefore, it constitutes the sublime common reality over all other sub-universes of meaning, where social stocks of knowledge are commonly constructed. Institutionalization, in this presupposed frame “occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors” (Berger, 1971, p. 72).

The typifications proposed here correspond to sets of knowledge (signs and correspondent meaning), which imply and communicate historicity through commonly shared socio-cultural history and control through patterns of conduct¹⁴, that finitize the contingency of an institutions performers actions. The maintenance of the so constructed objective reality and its ordering knowledge stocks is functionally realised through strategies of legitimization. This includes epistemological and ontological explanations and justifications, which are provided through the simple usage of particular vocabularies, theoretical postulates, explicit legitimization theories, and elaborate symbolic subuniverses supported by various forms of social organization (Berger, 1971, p. 10; Keller, 2011, p. 45). Furthermore, the continuous process of legitimization facilitates the integration of new circumstances and transformations of institutionalized objective knowledge according to the most fundamental rules of reproduction of the latter. Applied to the case of modernity/coloniality discussed earlier, as one social reality of many, the principles of differentiation, anthropocentrism, universality and rationality can be identified to provide the legitimization strategies for the integration of critique and transformations¹⁵. Despite this, other forms of knowledge and action, such as in pluriversal transmodernity, can institutionalize as well.

¹³ This conclusion is based on anthropological presuppositions inspired from early Marx and the biological implications in Helmuth Plessner and Arnold Gehlens conceptions of man (Berger, 1971, p. 67).

¹⁴ E.g. roles, model practices.

¹⁵ Giddens (Late modernity) and Bauman (liquid modernity) describe such transformations from early modern society to ‘high modernity’ and current modernity.

1.2.3 Deciphering (inter)actions in worldmaking practices between knowledge production and political practice – some methodological considerations

The sociology of knowledge approach to discourse as research agenda for the analysis of discursive and social worldmaking practices

The sociology of knowledge approach to discourse is a relatively young methodology having established itself shortly after the turn of the century. It differentiates itself from other discursive approaches, that focus on core linguistic issues or discursive critiques of ideology, by introducing a specifically sociological fundament in its' theoretical conception and range of methodological tools. Thereby arguing for a “*legitimate social science and humanities space for research into questions of the social (discursive) making of realities*” (Hornidge et al., 2018, p. 1). In other words, the development of the approach originated from the perceived necessity of a methodology able to grasp the complexity of the context in which specific social and cultural phenomena develop: an increasingly interdependent world. Starting in the 1990s, first propositions and applications were developed within German sociology around Reiner Keller. It later spread to other disciplines and gathered international interest, which initiated transnational implementations around the mid-2010s (Hornidge et al., 2018). In the introduction to the reader ‘The Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse: Investigating the Politics of Knowledge and Meaning making.’ (2018) Keller reflects that the approach is more of a methodological frame or research agenda rather than a theory or specific method, keeping open a door for the application, innovation and further development of methodological tools, research questions, as well as thematic, disciplinary, geographical and socio-cultural contexts.

The objects of inquiry are processes of institutionalization and transformation of symbolic orderings by combining Foucault’s constitutive understanding of discourse and Berger and Luckman’s perspective on knowledge as theoretical fundament. In giving prevalence to the latter authors theory of social structuration, SKAD adopts the dialectical relationship between objective and subjective reality proposed by them. In the case of this investigation, the emphasis of the methodology on the discursive construction of objective reality, meaning the “*(institutional) processes and structures in social relations of knowledge*” (Keller, 2011, p.46), proves fruitful because of the inclusion of all kinds of (common) knowledges necessary for an analysis grounded in the empirical data at hand. More specific than Foucault’s concept, discourses are

“[...] understood as historically established, identifiable ensembles of symbolic and normative devices, all of which are context- and case-specific in nature. They are performed through social actors’ (often competing or conflictual) discursive practices, with high impacts on the reality of the world we encounter, see, and feel.” (Keller, 2018, p. 4).

Indicating that the deconstruction and interpretation of material and immaterial practices, as well as artefacts allows to qualitatively explore discursive world/meaning making, knowing and reproducing (2018, p. 31) in the dimensions of knowledge configuration, discourse production and power effects (2011, pp. 57–60). The following paragraphs aim to outline the concrete methodological approach by relating the analytical dimensions, categories and research methods to the resulting sub-foci of the main research questions.

As previously elaborated, modernity as well as its counter proposals are understood as discursive formations partaking in the discursive battle around the definition of past, contemporaneity and future of global societal organization. These discourse formations, which ‘internally’ follow the same formation rules, are embedded in social relations of knowledge. The Latin American Left(s) are theoretically framed as such a counterproposal in dialogue from inside and outside modernity in the last section of this chapter. The focus for the theoretical chapter therefore lays on the hermeneutical review on what the power/knowledge effects of modernity and its alternative discourses are, specifically the Left(s) in Latin America, as they relate to fields of social practice and ‘modern’ discursive arenas (Academia and Politics), everyday life, social action and interpretation represented in the normative and reproductive function of conceptions of men. While the case of modernity has been extensively analysed, the (de)colonial context of Latin America proposes some particularities for the Left, which are explored in view of the case study.

Based on the empirical observations made along the pursuit of the researchers interest in Latin American sociological thought and its entanglement with contemporary political practices, as well as the immersive field study into that complex during the fall/winter of 2023, the research question for the analysis of the case study situates the methodological operationalization in the discursive-interpretative paradigm of sociology: *‘In what way can the conception of a “new Latin American man” explain the*

entanglement of discursive actors and practices of the academic/intellectual and the political Left(s)?. For this purpose, entanglement is understood as discursive interaction between at least two social actors (individual actors, groups, organisations) or institutions, that consist of reciprocal references to respective others discursive, institutional, organisational and individual immaterial knowledge patterns and material practices. This interaction in turn crystalizes both material and immaterial consequences for the own practice and structures of knowledge of the respective other. This is because: “Discourses crystallize and constitute themes in a particular form as social interpretation and action issues” (Keller, 2011, p. 52). Therefore, the contextualization of the specific discursive arenas and events surrounding the emergence and success of the ‘hombre sentipensante’ subsequently include: the identification of social actors, their social positioning, key events, societal effects and general knowledge configurations in the interpretative repertoire¹⁶ of the Left(s) in Colombia. This is approached in a deconstructivist hermeneutic analysis of relevant academic literature and participative observations, while attempting a reconstruction of the institutionalization and transformation of the latter in a relational narration of differentiation and entanglement. The specific discursive statements¹⁷ are analysed in a mixed methods approach, by combining the analytical categories of the SKAD for the discourse analysis and Close Reading for the chosen statements¹⁸, while applying an anthropological focus. This latter delimitation of the explorative approach is reflected in the question ‘*How is the (hu)man in the sociological manifesto of Orlando Fals Borda and the government program of the Pacto Histórico?*’, which is derived from Rafael Alvear’s outline of a sociological anthropology (2020). He reverses the philosophical anthropology’s guiding question ‘What is the (hu)man?’ to ‘How is the (hu)man in sociological theory?’. Furthermore, the cultural dimension of the physiological-pragmatic dualism, proposed by Kant, is replaced by a social one. This results in a fruitful distinction of a ‘raw human’ and a ‘subject’, which informs the review of corresponding competences, characteristics and values in the process of cognitive-epistemic and social

¹⁶ The interpretative repertoire consists of classifications (formalized forms of social typification), phenomenal structures (configuration of discursive attributions of problematizations, subject positions, model-practices, i.a.), interpretative schemes (frames, that convey meaning and action-generating schemata) and narrative structures. (Keller, 2021)

¹⁷ “[A] ‘statement’ refers to what could be called the typical core element of knowledge configuration processed by a given discourse.” (Keller, 2021, p. 43)

¹⁸ Of interest are the textual and the visual Close Reading as interpretative methodology that focusses on the particularities and positionality of a text or image in its specific context (Bal, 2006; The Editors, 2009).

institutionalization¹⁹. By means of comparison, the transformation of the conception of man as dispositif, its institutionalization of knowledge configurations, legitimization strategies through time and space as well as effects are reconstructed. For this purpose, Foucaults notion of dispositif is operationalized as *“both the institutional foundation – the sum total of all the material, practical, personal, cognitive, and normative infrastructures of discourse production – and also the infrastructures of implementation that emerge out of discursively configured problematizations of fields of practice”* (Keller, 2021, p. 42).

¹⁹ Following Richard Whitleys and Peter Weingart, a scientific discipline develops a cognitive dimension of institutionalization in a “minimum of consensus on [a] low level of knowledge”(Whitley, 1974, p. 73). “[T]he creation and maintenance of formal structures which demarcate members of a cognitive structure” (Whitley 1974: 75) informs the social dimension.

1.3 Modernity and Latin Americas multiple Left(s)

The notion of the Left as political position was coined during the French Revolution, which amongst other historical events is recognized as starting point of classical modernity²⁰. The Left initially represents the seating location of the liberal republicans in contrast to the conservative monarchists on the right in the National Assembly. The conflation of the spatial descriptor with a particular categorization of political theories or ideology has undergone consistent transformations: from including socialist and social democratic tendencies in the liberal political framework, to a displacement of the latter to the centre and the success of Marxism as fundament of the radical political Left in modern societies (Bauman, 1995[1983]). This consideration of the notion's origin alone indicates the constitutive relationship of the Left with(in) modernity. Furthermore, the Left constitutes itself in relation to the Right²¹: *“They are antithetical and exclusive but mutually necessary terms, for one cannot exist without the other. Of course, the political spectrum admits many shades in between, but it is the antithetical extremes that define it (Archila, 2008)”* (Aldrighi et al., 2015, p. 10). For the present inquiry the Left is understood as a competing discursive formation in the battle for meaning making of past, contemporaneity and future of societal organization, which includes a variety of social actors, theories and narrative strategies. In other words, the Left is a counter-discourse to and of modernity. This perspective is founded on Zygmunt Bauman's essay 'The Left as the Counterculture of modernity' (1995[1983]) in which he deconstructs the transformation of 'what the Left is opposing' as interpretative scheme for the meaning making practice and guidance of actions performed within the social movement, that had been in crisis. The approach is developed from his conception of culture as praxis, which resounds with the interactionist construction of meaning, knowledge and action and will here be equated as discursive structure. Moreover,

“[...] being left' is more a cultural notion, a structure of feeling as Raymond Williams put it, than an ideological precision or even a political praxis. [...] the term 'left' is a signifying system (comprising specific signs and signals) through which a social order is questioned

²⁰ Early (start 16th to end 18th century), classical (great revolutionary wave around 1890s to end 19th century) and late modernity (20th century) (Berman, 1983).

²¹ This conclusion is based upon the critical reflection of Hobsbawm (1994) and (Bobbio, 1995).

and the ways in which it is communicated, reproduced, experienced.” (Archila Niera, 2020, p. 27 quoted in; Pozzi, 2018, p. 6)

Bauman (1995 [1983]) states that the Left originated as one of many oppositions to capitalism and was characterized by the moral and rational critique of the capitalist administration of social production and its’ failure to deliver its own modern promises: Liberty, Equality and Brotherhood. Nevertheless, it is not capitalism that the social movement is opposed to in its core. Instead of attaching the *raison d’être* to capitalisms failed promises, the author suggests that the Left has the potential of reconstituting itself as the counterculture of modernity, which would be based on the defence of the modern values democracy and autonomy. In his essay from 1983 he anticipates the increasing decoupling of neoliberalist politics from democracy that Slavoj Žižek and others will analyse at the beginning of the 21st century (Žižek, 2018). The result of the reorientation is a Left that is constitutionally left without a historical carrier group, which opens to the integration of and dialogue with many forms of modernity critique, as long as they pursue to defend the same values.

In relation to Latin America, this optimistic and hopeful proposition is relevant in two dimensions. On one hand, Bauman’s argument, that the Left is constituted by the same values and principles of rationality, progress, liberty, equality and the logic of capital, by ‘taking them seriously’, proves that the Left as social movement and as discourse are a critique from within modernity only oriented towards one of its reproductive mechanisms: capitalism. This conclusion corresponds to the critique by some decolonial scholars like Walter Mignolo (2011). From the decolonial perspective, because of its un-reflected positionality, the European-Marxist Left fails to recognize the modern/colonial matrix and the mechanism of coloniality on which the capitalist world system is built. On the other hand, the Left’s inherited universality claim can – under the deconstruction of modernity/coloniality as its origin and reconstruction as epistemological problem – develop into a creative and dialogical pursuit of a *“liminal space for developing knowledge from our various loci of enunciation”* (Coronil, 2008, p. 406) Especially when focussing on autonomy and democracy. The Left’s discourse in Latin America developed on a spectrum between these two poles. Chronical-historian approaches to the review of its evolution have focussed on the events encompassing the institutionalization of parties, workers unions and social movements into the political system since the 19th century. Even though the development of these

organizational forms differs on the national level, transnational comparisons have shown that the ideas and practices are in constant dialogue beyond state borders (Castro, 2005). This is due to the similarities in the societal²² organization after colonization and the global, political and economic interdependence the continent faces since its invention (O’Gorman, 2006). The socio-historic conditions of the region²³ in the global and local context manifested partly in the dogmatic adaptation of Leftist theories, concepts and practices from the European centre and partly in the creative, ‘realist’ and pragmatic appropriation of the latter and evolution of own genealogies. This has led to a spectrum of trajectories and a multiplicity of social actors, organizational forms, subjects/objects of change, concepts and theories, methods (how to achieve social change/a revolution), and practices. Furthermore, a functional differentiation within the discursive formation into the Luhmannian social subsystems is observable according to the discursive function and related practices: The intellectual/academic Left concerns itself with the adaptation of (Marxist) theories to the socio-cultural environment, the development of own epistemologies and methodologies as well as the (self-)reflection of the praxis in other social sub-systems. This function is performed from within the scientific system and according to its particular practice of knowledge production. The political strand is concerned with the realization of the latter’s knowledge in the political system’s praxis, which appears delayed. Whereas the armed-revolutionary Left can be considered a displaced praxis of resistance. Both, delay and displacement, are consequences of the repression and exclusion of most leftist actors and organizations from the formal political system during much of the 20th century. As the aim of this investigation is to review the entanglements between the systemically differentiated discourse arenas, it will be refrained from applying conceptual categorizations such as reformist-radical, legal-revolutionary, traditional-progressive. These serve merely as timely and spatially bound descriptive distinctions of strategic practices of how to achieve the socialist revolution in the political system. Ultimately, the chronical perspective leads to the categorization of periods, ‘waves’, crisis and ‘turns’ of the political power or governments towards the Left whenever parties gain or lose presidential elections and legislative majorities, social mass movements gain

²² Based on the reproduction and intensification of the colonial order by the then new political elites after the independence of most states in the 19th century.

²³ One of which is the relative instability of democratic systems (Booth & Heras-Gómez, 2015).

or lose visibility and influence or (popular) revolutions claim political power (Castro, 2005).

Much to the interest of the social sciences and global economic as well as political observers the most recent turn to the Left (Pink tide) during the first years of the 21st century seems to portray a Left in reconstitution. Walter Mignolo classifies the regional trajectories as dewesternization, decolonial option or re-westernization from the decolonial perspective (Mignolo, 2011). For Nils Castro the centrality of the practical question ‘How to achieve the revolution?’ is being shifted to the ideological-theoretical question ‘What should be achieved?’, which encompasses the central values on the national (autonomy and sovereignty), social (equality, fraternity and justice) and democratic level (participation and representation of all people). The result would be new Latin American Left organizations, that are less avant-gardist and more linked to the plurality of local demands and movements (Castro, 2005). Particularly the study of the leftist governments and organizations in relation to contentious social movements provide a basis of reference for the current transformation of the discursive formation, through the concepts of autonomy (confrontation) and co-optation (e.g.: Prevost et al., 2012). In ‘La izquierda lationamericana contra sus pueblos’ Pierre Gaussens argues that the characteristics of the new movements are:

”1) the construction of new territorialities, 2) the search for autonomy, 3) the revalorisation of culture and the affirmation of identity, 4) the capacity to form one’s own intellectuals, 5) the central role of women, 6) the re-organization of labour and its relationship with nature, and 7) new practices of resistance and struggle” (own translation, Gaussens, 2018, p. 93).

Many of these features are incorporated into the programs and strategies of the Left²⁴ expanding the scope of issues beyond labour and class. This process is indicative of the re-orientation of the Left as counterculture of modernity as proposed by Baumann and entails a transformation of objectives, practices, theories and social actors (Stoessel, 2014) beyond the ideals of equality or liberty and towards autonomy as right to difference and democracy as participation.

²⁴ See chapter 3 on the electoral manifesto of the Pacto Histórico during the 2022 presidential and legislative elections in Colombia.

While the focus of political science on the Left has been on the review of case studies of (economic and social) policies, performance evaluations of governments, organizational forms and the analysis of narratives and strategies in relation to electoral behaviour, more recently and in the context of the decolonial turn in the humanities and social sciences, the cultural, social, intellectual and theoretical projects of the Latin American Left are gaining relevance (Aldrighi et al., 2015; Pachón Soto & Torres Tafúr, 2023; Torres, 2018). Especially those originating in the decades of the 1960s and 70s or before World War 2, as these were the most active and impactful on their contemporary and ensuing evolution of the Left(s) in the region. The present investigation falls into this category by reviewing the theoretical-epistemological production of the 1970s in relationship to the practices of the contemporary Left in Colombia. An interesting perspective for the review of its' discourse is that of Mauricio Archila, historian from the Universidad Nacional de Colombia. In the book 'Una historia inconclusa: izquierdas políticas y sociales en Colombia' (2009) he and his co-authors develop the conception of the Left as both a political as well as social phenomenon. This enables an analysis that reflects on the points of entanglement and alienation of the Lefts organizational forms and practices beyond the political system. Furthermore, with Enzo Traverso's concept of 'melancholy of the Left' (2018), Mauricio Archila argues that the Left finds itself in a status of 'reflective grief '(duelo reflexivo) that does not inhibit action (2020, p. 24). The result is a Left that has adopted an axis of equi-liberty (own translation from Spanish 'equilibertad', Callinicos & Alborés, 2003) and acknowledges difference in the secondary axis of intersectionality²⁵ (Archila Niera, 2020, p. 23). The constitutional distinction from the right therefore is *"that the latter claims the homogenising universalisation of a particular experience - national, religious or racial, for example - against policies of respect for the different other that imply social heterogeneity and radical plurality"* (Archila, 2020, p. 40).

To conclude, the Left is understood as dynamic, conflictive and relational counterculture of modernity according to its spatial-temporal context (Aldrighi et al., 2015; Bauman, 1995). Moreover, it will further be referred to as multiple Left(s) due to the heterogeneity of (competing) social actors and organizational forms involved in the discursive formation of the Left in Latin America, as well as the entangled discursive

²⁵ Difference in ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or generations.

arenas (politics, academia, culture²⁶, education, public opinion, religion, etc.) with their specific speaker positions, action issues and knowledge alliances (e.g. postcolonialism, postmodernism, popular knowledge).

²⁶ E.g.: the public engagement of the Boom's intellectuals during the 1960s and their relation to Marxism (Abdiu, 2022) or the politization and reception of anarchist theories in local punk rock scenes (Gómez, 2022, p. 113)

2 Reading the Left(s) of Colombia: between entanglement and differentiation

Equipped with the definition of the Left(s) as counterculture/discourse, a relational perspective on the experiences, actors and events of its' multiple trajectories beyond the political system is possible. To this end, the interpretative schemes of violence, revolution and peace are presented in relation to the social actors and their discursive practices and positions. The emphasis lays on mapping instances of systemic differentiation and discursive entanglement in the various practices. Above all those in the intellectual and political discursive arenas are focussed on. This attempt makes no claim of exhaustiveness as the topic has already inspired a great number of publications in various fields that point out the complexities and contradictions of the Colombian Left(s) history. This is due to its relevance for the conflictive national evolution of the modern Colombian state and society during the 20th century and onwards. Some scholars have reviewed the electoral, organizational or ideological development of leftist parties since 1958 (Archila & Cote, 2015; Archila N., 2009; Basset, 2008; Bergquist, 2017; Clavijo Santos, 2019; Restrepo Echavarría et al., 2021). Another focus has been the analysis of leftist organizations in the internal armed conflict, subsequent peace efforts and collective memory (González Jácome, 2016; Harnecker, 1989; Molano Camargo, 2004; Ríos Sierra, 2023; Torres, 2018). Most recently, the political and social capacity of social movements and other leftist actors, like intellectuals, have captured the attention of social scientists, historians and cultural anthropologists (S. Jaramillo Restrepo, 2021). For an overview of the historic development Mauricio Archilas and Jorge Cotes 'Historia de las izquierdas colombianas entre 1958 y 2010' (2015) is chosen as starting point. The Colombian historians apply three factors for their classification of cohesive phases in the evolution of the political Left: the trajectories of leftist organizations, the political evolution of the country, and the history of the Latin American and global Left. With a focus on the first they identify the following periods, which serve as an overview for the analysis of the discursive categories of violence, revolution and peace:

- 1919-1958 Antecedents
- 1959-1969 'New Lefts'
- 1970-1981 The Revolution around the corner?
- 1982-1990 Meeting with the country

- 1991-1999 Crisis of the Left
- 2000-2010 Towards a reconstruction

2.1 Violence as symptom and condition of social crisis

While first ideological claims were made by radical liberalist intellectuals since the mid-19th century, the relative slow economic development of the country, the political closure within the conservative power hegemony since 1886 and an existent anti-socialist ideology (Molina, 2021) led to a comparatively late formation of organized practices and institutions. A first socialist conference was held in 1919 in Bogotá, which by 1925 had developed under local ‘criollo’ adaptations of anarchism and communism²⁷ to form the Confederación Obrera Nacional (CON) and culminated in the foundation of the Partido Socialista Revolucionario (PSR) in 1926 (Archila & Cote, 2015). A remarkable role was held by one of the co-founders of this party, the syndicalist leader María Cano (Archila Neira, 1980). The autodidact intellectual and other leaders of the party organized tours through the nation, as novel propaganda strategy, and the first major strikes in the petroleum (October 1927) and banana (November-December 1928) industries. Both were violently repressed by the conservative state forces. The second coming to tragic recognition as the Banana massacre in Ciénagas. Rather than inspiring a revolution as experienced in Russia the decade earlier, some leaders of the Liberal party achieved to institutionalize the growing labour conflict of the developing (mostly urban) social class - the proletariat –and the agrarian workers – the ‘campesinato’/peasantry – into their own political repertoire²⁸ as the country’s economy opened towards international markets and grew. Contrary to regional authoritarian tendencies Colombia maintained democratic rule until the political and social conflict of ‘La Violencia’ (1948-1958) escalated between the traditional conservative party on

²⁷ Before the events of the Russian Revolution and World War 1, which would hold a strong influence on Latin Americas Left(s) for the rest of the 20th century, Marxism had already spread in the region (‘The capital’ was first translated to Spanish quite early in 1886, one year earlier than the English translation (Tarcus, 2017)) and was being in times dogmatically, in others critically reviewed. Pioneer thinkers and political activists like José Martí or José Carlos Mariátegui started to dialogue with, adapt and re-interpret the ‘imported’ Marxist theory to the empirical reality of Latin America around the turn of the 19th to the beginning 20th century. This was also encouraged by the adopted ‘united front’ strategy inspired in the communist international.

²⁸ Other forms of organization in the spectrum of social movements during that period were peasant and indigenous leagues as well as the first student movement. The liberal-left oriented trade union Confederación de Trabajadores de Colombia (CTC) was founded in 1935 (Sánchez, 1995, p. 24).

one hand and the liberal as well as the communist party on the other²⁹. Centred around the economic agrarian question³⁰, the tensions burst after the assassination of the populist presidential candidate Jorge Eliecer Gaitán³¹ on April 9th, 1948. Whereas the urban popular uprising, the ‘bogotazo’ is largely recognized as the start of violent actions, the decadelong armed conflict was fought mainly in the rural areas. There, liberal and communist supporters started to organize ‘repúblicas independientes’ and ‘autodefensas campesinas comunistas’ as form of resistance, which would become the predecessors for the later formation of leftist guerrilla organizations³². In the context of popular polarization, these were supported by the PCC and leftist trade unions. In consequence, these began to favour the abandonment of the moderate popular front adapted throughout the 1940s (Medina & Buenaventura, 1980). Under the military dictatorship of Gustavo Rojas Pinilla (1953-1958) the persecution of the PCC³³ was officialised and forced the organization into illegality. The CTC was prohibited before. Leaving intellectual, social leaders and militants before the option of incarceration, exile or clandestinity if surviving the violence. A choice that would confront social actors of the Left(s) repeatedly throughout the rest of the century. *“Although after the Rojas Pinilla dictatorship, and unlike most Latin American countries, it did not experience any de facto military regime, the establishment of the National Front (1958-1974) fuelled a high degree of political and social exclusion of forces not committed to the two-party system (Hartlyn, 1993)”* (own translation, Archila & Cote, 2015, p. 88).³⁴

The exertion of violence up until the end of the Violencia period had presented as legitimate form of self-defence and strategy of resistance against the economically and politically motivated repression. With the surge of the guerrillas in the 1960s and 70s

²⁹ The two opposing parties and their supporters did not build a coalition and even fought against each other. The conflict would cost the life of 113.000 to 300.000 Colombians (the majority of which were civilian) and lead to the forced displacement of nearly a fifth of the country’s population from rural areas to the urban centres (Rueda Bedoya, 2000).

³⁰ In addition, the political claim to maintaining power by the conservative party and the religious anti-atheist, anti-masonic and anti-communist attitude contributed to the confrontations (Fals Borda et al., 1962).

³¹ Gaitán, a radical populist liberal, had briefly founded his own party before returning to the Liberals, the Unión de Izquierda Revolucionaria (UNIR), that resembled Peruvian Haya de la Torres’ aprismo (Archila & Cote, 2015).

³² “With the doors closed to all expectations of reform, this led to a guerrilla movement which, through different conceptions and leaderships, is still going on 55 years later.” (Castro 2005, p. 36)

³³ The PCC conformed the predominant representation of the left during that time by incorporating most workers movements and dissident groups into its organization.

³⁴ The continent had seen a majority of the countries under one form or another of (military) dictatorship after World War 2 and the mid-1980s. Many of which were supported by the US-government and followed the anti-communist doctrine of national security.

this perceived legitimation transformed into a justification for violence as means to an end for achieving a socialist revolution. The resulting Colombian internal armed conflict evolved into a multi-actor war in which the Left, as all other involved parties³⁵, committed acts of violence against each other and crimes against humanity. This left approximately 220 000 Colombians dead, 5 million displaced and at least 15 percent of the country's population as victims of the conflict between 1964 and 2013 (i BASTA YA! Colombia: Memorias de Guerra y Dignidad. Informe General Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 2013). Biggest victims of all dimensions of the conflict were the very subjects for which a revolution was supposed to create a more just and equal society: the popular classes³⁶ in civil society (more than 90% of the conflicts victims (Colombia. Comisión de la Verdad, 2022)). For the public and internal discourse of the Left(s) this meant a transition from violence as condition for a social crisis that needs resolution to a symptom of a persisting entrenched social crisis in the country. In other words, violence went from an expression of politics for life (as defence) to one of necropolitics³⁷.

2.2 Revolution as goal

“For Hebert Marcuse (1969:142) a revolution is the overthrow of a legally established government and constitution by a social class or movement whose aim is to change the social and political structure.” (Aponte Sánchez, 2003, p. 1). For the Marxist Left this means a socialist revolution towards a classless society as object of political and social action. With the consolidation of the USSR in the 1930s the marxist-leninist interpretation became predominant for the Left on an international level. This is also the case of the political Left(s) in Colombia. Not surprisingly, the question of how to achieve such a revolution would shape the strategic and ideological orientation of its' political organizations.

The experiences prior to and during the 'Violencia' had created the conditions³⁸ and subjects sufficient for the goal of a revolution. The fights in rural areas had solidified a

³⁵ See “Hay futuro si hay verdad: Informe Final de la Comisión para el Esclarecimiento de la Verdad, la Convivencia y la No Repetición” by Colombia. Comisión de la Verdad (2022) for the role of the State (Armed Forces), AUC (Paramilitary autodefensas unidas de Colombia) and narco-criminal groups.

³⁶ Notion developed by Camilo Torres, guerrillero, priest and sociologist (Herrera Farfán, 2023)

³⁷ Used in the sense of Mbembe (2019).

³⁸ Before, “[t]he so-called ‘objective conditions’ of the socialist revolution were not present: the capitalist economy had not developed to any great extent, there was no capitalist bourgeoisie ‘patron of the national economy’, and there was no working class with sufficient socio-economic and cultural

resisting group that would be the carrier group of change: the peasants and popular classes. The objective was an agrarian reform to the benefit of the peasantry. Additionally, a revolution was to install a democratic alternative to the limiting two-party system, that guaranteed the hegemonic power of conservatives and liberals under the Frente Nacional (1958-1974)³⁹. The political and oligarchic elite represented those who oppressed and at the same time those who had economically modernized the country in the capitalist tradition of modernization. All to the disadvantage of rural-agrarian communities and the growing urban proletariat.

The Cuban Revolution of 1958 and Ernesto Che Guevara's foquismo theory fomented an armed guerrilla option for the realization of a socialist revolution adapted to the Latin American circumstances. This resounded with the diverse leftist and inclined indigenous and campesino groups that had systematically been excluded from political representation in Latin America. Several armed revolution attempts characterized the leftist practice across the region throughout the 1950s, 60s and 70s with varying success and duration (Castro, 2005). In Colombia the discussion of a praxis of 'a combination of all forms of struggle' created armed wings of the established parties and independent emerging organizations⁴⁰. Beyond these, the devastating attack on the former 'independent republic of Marquetalia' led to the foundation of the FARC in 1964. These armed groups developed a military guerrilla approach⁴¹ to the revolution whereas the parties and organizations would lead the struggle on the legal front. The division of the Left(s) was one of strategic orientation. Therefore, armed praxis can be understood as an expression resulting of a displaced political praxis. The relationship between the legal and armed strands with the revolution in mind would until the 1980s stay in support of each other. Over time this led to a diminishing legitimation in public opinion. Another significant global development marked the pluralisation of communist interpretations (Maoism, Trotskyism, traditional Marxist-Leninism): the Sino-

presence. In the framework presided over by traditional society and the enclaves of colonialist capitalism, there was no integrated nation, but a superposition of socio-economic fractions, aggregated along a historical sequence different from those which European theorists had described" (own translation, Castro, 2005, p. 23).

³⁹ This was a government coalition between the liberal and conservative party that alternated presidents and shared ministerial positions. Even after its dissolution in 1974 the political sphere was dominated by the two parties until the Constitution of 1991, that opened the electoral system towards other options.

⁴⁰ E.g. the Movimiento Obrero Estudiantil y Campesino- 7 de Enero (MOEC-7E), Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN), Ejército Popular de Liberación (EPL).

⁴¹ Inspired by the tactics of the liberal and communist guerrilla during the Violencia or the foquismo approach.

soviet rupture in the first years of the 1960s. This was reflected in the foundation of the New Lefts first movement-parties like the Movimiento Obrero Independiente y Revolucionario (MOIR) in 1969 and smaller parties. Additionally, the organization of united fronts like the Frente Unido de Acción Revolucionaria (FUAR) in 1962 or the Frente Unido (FU) in 1965 became a common political strategy to combat the partisan fragmentation and increase electoral incidence in the following decades⁴².

On the global level the developing New Left was influenced by emerging social movements in the global West (student uprisings in France, Germany, and the USA in 1968), the dissidences in the Soviet Block in search of a socialism with human face (Prague Spring 1968) and the antiimperialist independence movements of the western European colonies in Asia and Africa. During this time Marxism spread in the universities and impacted the institutionalization of the social sciences into the academic system. Exemplary for the Latin American case are the editorial orientation of the publishing house Siglo XXI (Monsiváis, 1993) and the foundation of graduate programs, faculties and research institutes (Sorá & Blanco, 2018). Similar to the Critical theorists of the Frankfurt school who initially asked themselves why the socialist revolution had not occurred in Germany, the Latin American intellectuals seemed to ask for whom, what kind of revolution should be achieved by whom and through which means and medium according to their own circumstances. Within this process the critical Latin American thought of Martí, Mariátegui and others was recovered, and the critical lecture of Marxism favoured the formulation of own theories and concepts for the historical development (dependency theory, popular classes) as well as research and education methodologies⁴³ which would bear fruits later⁴⁴. Furthermore, the involved scholars entered a dialogue with the Christian-Marxist liberation theology. *“All this speaks of a theoretical renewal in this part of the world, which was nourished by the advances of Western Marxism, but within its own moulds (Harnecker, 2000, pp. 26–30).”* (Archila & Cote, 2015, p. 87). This is certainly the case for Colombia where Orlando Fals Borda and Camilo Torres founded the first sociological faculty⁴⁵ of the region and the programs of the increasing number of university institutions heavily

⁴² Unión Nacional de Oposición (UNO) in 1974, Frente Unido del Pueblo (FUP) i, Unión de Izquierda Obrera y Socialista (UNIOS). The three blocks were by 1978 divided by their ideological orientation.

⁴³ Participative Action Research by Orlando Fals Borda and popular education by Paulo Freire.

⁴⁴ The example of Fals Bordas sociological theory is discussed as case study in chapter 3 of this investigation.

⁴⁵ It was founded in 1959

featured the study of Marxism (Robledo Ruiz & Beltrán Villegas, 2008; Zapata & Díaz Aldana, 2023).

During the 1970s a revolution in Colombia seemed around the corner. The economic growth after the capitalistic model of modernization reached its limits and most Latin American countries faced a crisis of democracy. During this decade the country experienced its' highest number of social protests. "*Some thought that the mass insurrection was around the corner and others did the impossible to suffocate it (Medina, 2014, p. 89)*" (own translation, Archila & Cote, 2015, p. 94). On one hand, the increasing number of newly politicized actors found resonance in the democratic options of the Left. On the other, the disappointment of the supposedly fraudulent 1970 elections⁴⁶, the ensuing political repression against parties, organizations and the criminalization of social protest, especially under the César Turbay's Statute of Security (1978-1982), renewed the justification for the guerrilla war. With the urban guerrilla the Movimiento 19 de Abril (M19) in 1974 also new media and public opinion-oriented strategies emerged. "*Among the objectives of this movement was to place arms at the service of political rebellion, orienting its actions towards the achievement of popular democracy, translated in terms of achieving a better life for the Colombian people*" (own translation, Caro Pulido, 2020, p. 7). This was a novelty for the discourse of the guerrillas that focussed on changing the economic system of the country, rather than renovating the political system.

2.3 Peace as end and beginning

During the 1980s and 90s, the Left(s) were internationally challenged by the rise of neoliberalism, globalization and the decay and ultimate fall of the Soviet Union after that of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The apparent success of liberalism and the perceived failure of the anti-capitalist alternative in a linear interpretation of societal evolution prompted Francis Fukuyama to declare 'the end of history' that same year (Fukuyama, 1989). The global Left was in crisis. Apart from the historical changes on the global level, the region itself began a political transformation away from authoritarian military regimes towards democracies under civil rule. This change was facilitated by the expression of critique by emerging social movements. Problematized were the growing

⁴⁶ The former dictator Pinilla ran for election with his Alianza Nacional Popular (ANAPO), which in addition to conservatives, liberals and nationalists also united a socialist wing and has been labelled as left-wing party.

inequality under neoliberalism and the Latin American debt crisis experienced by middle and poorer classes (Gasparini & Cruces, 2021), as well as the grievances related to the massive violent repression of civil society and human right violations. In this context, the re-institutionalization of leftist organizations into the opening democratic systems in the 1980s became not only noticeable but celebrated first successes towards the end of the 1990s. Archila and Cote (2015) characterize the 1980s as moment of rapprochement to the people for the Colombian Left(s):

“[S]ome of the left groupings described surprising trajectories, in which they moved away from old dogmatisms and international alignments towards the people of flesh and blood. It was a creative way of responding to the growing crisis of the global left” (Archila & Cote, 2015, p. 96).

New cycles of social movements grew in impact during the second half of the decade and a tendency towards unionization became apparent in the creation of the Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia (ONIC), in 1982, the Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT), in 1986, and the regrouping of peasant organizations like the Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos (ANUC) ((Múnera R., 1998, pp. 458–469; Archila Niera, 2020).

Under the presidency of Belisario Betancur (1982-1986) peace negotiations began with the FARC, M19 and EPL which besides the socio-economic demands included the formal representation into the legal political system in return for the demobilization of the movements. These failed after the incompliance of the accorded ceasefire by both negotiating sides and ended intensifying the conflict anew. During this time new insurgent actors – paramilitary and narco-criminal organizations – entered the scenario and the multilateral conflict grew more complex. This incited a new wave of violence, leaving both civil society and the actors of the Left with some of the most traumatic individual and collective memories of the recent national history. The M19 realized the siege of the Palace of Justice in retaliation for the incompliance of the truce by the Betancur government in 1985. They claimed it was disregarding the people’s wish for peace.

The Union Patriótica (UP)⁴⁷ and other social and leftist activists⁴⁸ suffered a high human cost under the ‘guerra sucia’ - strategy of the civil, military and paramilitary right. It became apparent that the socialist revolution as goal and legitimation for violence was not viable anymore as political strategy – in public opinion and for the own bases. The demand for a constituent assembly and participation in the latter, by the M19 and subsequent support of the idea by social movements⁴⁹ and sectors of the legal political Left proved fruitful in 1991. In consequence, the guerrilla group demobilized and founded the Alianza Democrática (AD-M19). Smaller groups like the ELP and the indigenist Movimiento Armado Quintín Lame (MAQL) followed with their own movements. Despite this development towards democracy the country and the Left(s) remained in a state of limbo between peace and war. Under these circumstances the Colombian Left(s) entered the decade of the 1990s and experienced a fundamental crisis.

“In this period, Colombia inaugurated a new constitution - issued in 1991 - which was not free of contradictions, for while it formally enshrined the social rule of law and cultural and ethnic pluralism, it opened the doors to neoliberalism, and definitely did not stop a war that has escalated in intensity as it degrades, to the point of provoking a humanitarian crisis unparalleled in the continent“ (own translation, Archila & Cote, 2015, p. 99).

In the legal-democratic sphere the electoral potential suffered under the ideological fragmentation of its parties, the stigmatization of its’ past support of the armed option and the apparent failure of socialism. The hope of finding a revolution in democracy seemed lost and was thereby solely fought for by the guerrilla groups that appeared to alienate themselves from the libertarian values they proclaimed as ideals of the latter. Peace in this context can be interpreted as a failure of revolution, meaning an end of socialist history.

Nevertheless, other social movements with no direct affiliation to the Marxist ideology and diverse identities, that did not fit the class paradigm, fronted the resistance against neoliberalism. These new social actors also extended their opposition towards other topics within the critique of modernity: the West, the Judaeo-Christian tradition

⁴⁷ The political party was created in 1987 by the FARC in the frame of the peace negotiations and the opening of the electoral system on the municipal level.

⁴⁸ Including the assassination of progressive presidential candidates Jaime Pardo Leal in 1987, Luis Carlos Galán in 1989, Bernardo Jaramillo Ossa and Carlos Pizarro both in 1990.

⁴⁹ Predominantly the student movement, that achieved the realization of a plebiscite on the question.

(Hobsbawm, 1994), patriarchy and environmental destruction. Particularly indigenous, afro descendant, environmentalist and feminist groups as well as victims of the conflict and their organizations began to feature speaker positions with their demands of social and political change, especially in terms of autonomy. Conclusively, for them peace became the condition for social change and its' consequence. The increasingly political space they occupied contributed towards a reconstruction of the Left(s) since the beginning of the 21st century. The characteristics of this reorientation have been discussed in the section 'Modernity and Latin Americas multiple Left(s)' of this investigation as oriented by equi-liberty and intersectionality (Archila, 2020). Beyond the incorporation of issues and demands the now more and more progressive Left also adopted parts of the social movements protest repertoire: specifically, the reclaiming of public space through mass mobilizations (Olano Duque, 2022) and internet activism (Guarín Vargas, 2022). This development is consistent with the general region's development. Nevertheless, research on the national trajectories of the Left(s) have focussed on the following questions: 'Why have the new democratic Left(s) not achieved the same results as its' regional counterparts during the first wave of the Pink Tide?' and 'How have they been successful under the marginalizing national context?'

The first question indicates that the national context had been significantly different to that of the other Latin American countries. Under the two consecutive right-wing presidencies of Álvaro Uribe Vélez (2002-2012)⁵⁰ the discourse of 'seguridad democrática' (democratic security) and the 'Plan Colombia' invoked strong handed military policies against active guerrilla and narco-criminal organizations, whereas the paramilitary was granted amnesty for demobilization. This left not only the political and economic structures intact, but also concealed the extent of responsibility for the humanitarian crisis of the armed conflict. Attempts of peace negotiations from the ELN and FARC failed under his policies and his approach did neither end the armed conflict by military means nor did it prove sufficiently successful against the profitable drug crime. The second question refers to the steady institutionalization of the left as oppositional and government option. While most of the country supported Uribe's conservative course of action, the social and political Left(s) united as alternative electoral option against the right in the Polo Democrático Alternativo (PDA). First major

⁵⁰ His government was also strongly allied to the George W. Bush administration and their approach to anti-insurgency and terrorism.

successes were celebrated with the election for the mayor's office of Bogotá in 2003, 2007 and 2011. At the presidential elections of 2006 Carlos Gaviria of the same party obtained 22% of votes and came in second after re-elected Uribe. Since then, ideological and personal differences produced new electoral movements such as the Colombia Humana of current president Gustavo Petro. Despite this renewed fragmentation, the peace negotiations between FARC and the government of Juan Manuel Santos opened the political field for actors from the social sphere (Clavijo Santos, 2019) and the polarized presidential elections of 2018 shifted the discourse of the Left(s) towards a pro-peace position (Saffon Sanín & Güiza Gómez, 2019). This focus on the realization of the peace treaty from 2016 repeated in the 2022 presidential and legislative elections, enforced by the programmatic inclusion of social demands voiced in the 2019/20 and 2021 national strikes by the Pacto Histórico (PH) under Gustavo Petro (Álvarez-Rodríguez, 2022; Berrio Pacheco & Quintero Castellanos, 2022; Guarín Vargas, 2022; Olano Duque, 2022; Ramírez-Vallejo & Santamaría-Velasco, 2022). What was proposed earlier as shift from an expression of politics for life (as defence) to one of neopolitics, has developed into a discourse of politics of life in peaceful resistance in the political program of the current New Left in government⁵¹. Thereby reinterpreting peace as goal and new beginning for the Left(s). One contributing aspect to this shift on the epistemological-cognitive level – the conception of a 'new Latin American man' – will be further analysed in the next chapter of this investigation.

⁵¹ This categorization is not absolute. The three frames and legitimization strategies exist at the same time.

2.4 Differentiation and instances of entanglement

Archila and Cote describe an overlap of actors and political strategies between organizations of the legal-political, the armed-political and the social Left⁵². This is reflected, for example, in the MOIR, whose Maoist discourse and political practices did not clearly differentiate between being a political or a syndicalist organization in its first years of existence, or the electoral coalitions of social movements, political parties and trade unions⁵³ (e.g. AD-M19, PDA, PH) (Archila & Cote, 2015). The differentiation between those two arenas of the Left can be traced back to the social sub-systems in which their discursive practices materialize: for the political Left it is the political sub-system, for the social one the economic, educational and cultural system (Archila, 2019). Apart from these discursive arenas the cultural and scientific systems and its academic discursive arena reveal to be significant for the evolution of the Left(s). Indications can be found in the speaker position leftist intellectuals have taken since its emergence: as pioneers founding and leading first socialist and communist organizations, influencing the browderist orientation of the PCC as Partido Socialista Democrático (PSD) during the 1930s and 40s, as adaptors and propagators of Marxist theory according to the Colombian circumstances during the 1960s and 70s, as politicians in the party Firmes (1978-1986) and PDA, and as public figures in the discourse surrounding the peace agreements and processes (Redacción Paz, 2016). According to Sandra Jaramillo (2021) the research on the role of intellectuals in the Left(s) has been scarce. Her own work focusses on their practices (2021), intellectual projects (2021) and the biographies of some of its representants (2023). In this study the role of the social sciences and sociology as specialized scientific-academic discursive area are of particular interest. As emphasised in the delimitations of the research the discipline takes the role of an observer and producer of modern society. Within this function the social sciences are first institutionalized into the academic system by Orlando Fals Borda and Camilo Torres with the foundation of the sociological faculty at the National University in 1959. Their theoretical and methodological orientation was close to Marxism as methodology (Parra Sandoval, 1985; Rojas Guerra, 2021). Both went on to feature important roles in the public and political sphere: Camilo Torres as sociologist of the popular classes, martyred politician in the Frente Unido, priest of the

⁵² Meaning trade unions, social movements and agrarian and indigenous leagues.

⁵³ With the 1991 Constitution social movements could enter the political system via electoral representation in municipal governments and national parliament.

liberation theology and lastly guerrillero of the ELN. Orlando Fals Borda stood out for the sociological work on the reality of the Colombian peasantry and La Violencia period, the attempt of intervention at Martquetalía before the bombardment, his role of dean of the department of social sciences and his participation in the 1991 Constitutional Assembly⁵⁴. His contribution to the rediscovery and development of an own genealogy of Latin American and Colombian critical thought is recently gaining increased recognition in the social sciences⁵⁵. The manifest entanglement of the social sciences and politics in its institutional beginnings disappeared towards the end of the 1970s in a phase of autonomization of the academic social sciences from the political and social reality (Torres, 2018). Marxism under the new dean Dario Mesa became one of the classic theories of sociology rather than a methodology of social change (Parra Sandoval, 1985). This development speaks for a systemic outdifferentiation. Nevertheless, a latent entanglement of the academic system with the social Left(s) through the student movement, shared investigation projects⁵⁶, or positions as trade union assessors, and with the political Left(s) as space of recruitment of its intellectual elite, militants and leaders⁵⁷, is observable until today. Moreover, the with the realization of the peace agreements since 2016, the increased political influence of social movements and the participatory processes initiated by the current leftist government under Gustavo Petro and the Pacto Histórico the intellectual legacy of Orlando Fals Borda– the Participative Action Research (PAR-IAP) methodology – has been adopted as approach to peace, community, planification of public resources and policy construction (Suárez, 2024; Suárez et al., 2021). It therefore represents, as discussed earlier in the theoretical approach, an entanglement of practices of the theoretical knowledge production of the Left in the academic system with its political practice in the political system. Conclusively it is observable that the highest phases of manifest

⁵⁴ Fals Bordas intellectual oeuvre and the impact in the social sciences it had is the object of investigation in the following section.

⁵⁵ This is observable in the acknowledgement of his methodology the IAP on the international level, the dedication of various conferences (XIV Congreso Nacional de Sociología in 2023 in homage to the sen-tipensante scholars Orlando Fals Borda and Alfredo Correa de Andrés and the CLACSO project ‘La construcción colaborativa del conocimiento en las Ciencias Humanas: Orlando Fals Borda y la IAP. Homenaje en el centenario de su nacimiento’ in context of the 10th Conferencia Latinoamérica y del Caribe de Clacso to be realized in Bogotá in 2025), also publications (‘Orlando Fals Borda, Una sociología sen-tipensante para América Latina (antología)’, 2009; Rappaport & Paredes Cisneros, 2021; Robles Lomeli & Rappaport, 2018; Rojas Guerra, 2021; Roy Grégoire, 2022)

⁵⁶ E.g.: the shared research project on the communities and territories of the Atlantic coast between Fals Borda, the Rosca foundation and the ANUC. Between 1972 and 1974 (Rojas Guerra, 2021).

⁵⁷ The M19 consisted mainly of former student leaders (Archila, 2019, Caro Pulido, 2020). Currently, former leaders of the student movement take an active role in parliament and government organizations (Fuquen, 2023; Prieto et al., 2024).

entanglements in public discursive arenas⁵⁸ are those of societal crisis and realignment. For the case of Colombia's Left(s) those periods of convergence are the 1960s and 70s centred around the experienced violence and perceived need of a revolution and since 1990 around the construction of peace. Both historical objectives require methodologies of realization in all societal spheres. The functions attributed to the social sciences is similar in both moments: On one hand, it is the systematic societal self-reflection of the socio-historical conditions for violence. On the other, it is the scientific development of theoretical and methodological approaches to revolution and/as peace for the future. Fals Borda and his colleagues started this societal self-reflection and methodological approach to peace with the book *La Violencia* (1962) and *Participative Action Research (PAR-IAP)*⁵⁹. The next chapter examines if the 'hombre sentipensante' of Orlando Fals Borda captures a dispositif that structures these functions of reality production in the cognitive-epistemological and social dimension.

⁵⁸ “[P]ublic discourses involve heterogenous actors and statements which are not related to each other by a discipline or religious world view but by the performance of particular definitions of a situation” (Keller 2018).

⁵⁹ To differentiate from other action research strands the abbreviation PAR-IAP will be used for its initials in Spanish Investigación Acción Participativa (IAP) in the following.

3 Analysing the emergence and transformation of a new Latin American man – the ‘hombre sentipensante’

With the first revolutionary communist state building process of Latin America in Cuba during the 1960s the question arose as to how citizens were to build the political and social revolution: “*In order to build communism, simultaneously with the material basis, it is necessary to construct the new man*” (Guevara, 2011, p. 8). In his 1965 essay ‘El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba’ (2011) Ernesto Che Guevara conceptualizes a new man which in parts resembles that of the new soviet man (Soboleva, 2017). He describes a rational man morally committed to the communist revolution through labour and guerrilla struggle (Guevara, 2011). Whereas the revolutionary guerrilla movements in the rest of Latin America and, specifically Colombia, might have adopted his proposition like they did with his foquismo theory, those actors of the legal political, social and intellectual Left(s) initiated a questioning of whether the dogmatic interpretation of ‘how to achieve a revolution’ and ‘what this revolution should look like’ is adequate to the social reality of the presupposed subjects of change. The resulting adequations also include implicit visions of how a new man should act for and in a new world. Identified previously as moment of convergence in the case of Colombia, the 1960s and 70s as well as the decades following the 1990s until today share this inquiry and shift towards an orientation and adaptation of Marxism to the own socio-cultural reality. Due to the functions of the social sciences as systematic self-reflection of (modern) society and scientific developer of methodological approaches to change, it can be assumed that the shift within the Left(s) was initially performed by leftist intellectuals in the social sciences of the academic system. In consequence, their praxis of knowledge production influenced the contemporary political and social discursive arenas of the Left(s) through the explicitly developed theoretical insights and methodologically entangled practices as well as their implicitly action-structuring conception of man.

One of the most prolific representants of the Colombians Left(s) intellectual production during the 1960s and onwards is the sociologist Orlando Fals Borda with his project of a committed and sentipensante sociology. As pointed out in the previous chapter he, as social actor of the Left(s), participated both passively and actively in the political and social discursive arenas of the Left and those of the general public throughout

his life. His sociological legacy the PAR-IAP represents a specific case of systemic entanglement. To gain a deeper insight into the cognitive-epistemological dimension of this interaction the statement;

„To gain the political self-determination and intellectual self-realisation that will allow our region to articulate itself as a whole before the world, a new Latin American man needs to be formed. “ (own translation, Fals Borda, 1970, p. 45),

uttered in his intellectual manifesto ‘La crisis, el compromiso y la ciencia’ is taken as starting point for the review of the conception of man in Fals Bordas thought. After the utterance of the above stated necessity the sociologist never explicitly describes how such a man should be formed in his work. Nevertheless, in his effort to empirically truthfully analyse the reality of the regions societies he developed an implicit conception of man and modernity coadjacent to the conceptualization of ‘compromiso’⁶⁰ (commitment). Moreover, the political manifesto of the Pacto Histórico as contemporary example of the Left’s political discourse is compared to examine potential transformations since the initial approximations towards the end of the 1960s. This is done following the same guiding question: ‘How is the human in the discourse and the specific discursive statement?’. Lastly, a series of observations recollected during the fieldwork to this investigation are focused on regarding practices, (im-)material discursive artifacts and the characteristics identified by means of the guiding question.

3.1 The Fals Bordian man from subversion to commitment

While many approaches to the categorization of his intellectual oeuvre focus on topical collections, Colombian historian Alexander Pereira-Fernández (2009) and sociologist José María Rojas Guerra (2021) coincide in a perspective that links the development of his scientific and political imagination to biographic experiences and the social and political issues of his time and location. They describe the sociologists first creative period between 1949 and 1959 as tied to the positivist method in structural functionalism on the academic level and, “[c]onsequently, politically, he was committed to the developmentalist model of capitalist modernisation being promoted by the Latin American states of the time” (own translation, Fernández, 2008, p. 379).

⁶⁰ Based on ‘engagement’ by Sartre (Sartre, 1960).

Nevertheless, the participative quasi ethnological investigation of the rural peasantry⁶¹ and the project of institutionalizing the sociology as scientific discipline grounded in the social reality of the country (and region)⁶² influenced a creative shift towards an appropriation of Marxism as methodological tool for the socio-historic analysis of the latter (Rojas Guerra, 2021). This transition is observable starting with the publication of ‘La Violencia’ (Fals Borda et al., 1962). In the book the sociologist and his co-authors develop a synchronic analysis of the socio-economic conditions, events and responsibilities for the decadelong armed conflict, alternative to the official discourse of the ‘Frente Nacional’. While the main cause is found in the agrarian question as space of conflict of a society in transition from colonial to modern structuration, the direction, quality and agents of change (modernity and oligarchic elites) are put into question as instigators of and during the conflict. Through this, the category of violence is represented in his work as symptom of a society in transition. In ‘La subversión en Colombia: visión del cambio social en la historia’⁶³ (1967) and ‘Las revoluciones inconclusas en América Latina (1809-1968)’ (1968) Fals Borda starts to build a theoretical frame of social change around the dialectic between subversion and (bourgeois) social order and their respective ethos. In this context, “*Subversion is defined as a condition or situation that reflects the internal incongruities of a social order discovered by members of that order in a given historical period, in the light of new goals (utopia) that a society wants to achieve.*” (own translation, Fals Borda, 2008, p. 11). Given the socio-historic approach, the experiences of field work with the marginalized rural communities of his country, those with the student movement and the general revolutionary radicalization of certain societal groups during the decade of the 1960s he finds empirical evidence for the moment of societal transition and alternative agents of change: the subversive subjects (1967) and the anti-elites (1968).

“As in times past, when there were similar ideological shifts, [the] effort to rebuild society in depth is painful, contradictory, violent and revolutionary; it is also contouring and forging on its anvil the new

⁶¹ The reference group that would accompany him for the rest of his life as seen in his research of the peasantry in the Andes (Fals Borda, 1957, 1961) and the Atlantic coast (Fals Bord, 1986; Fals Borda, 1979, 1986a, 1986b).

⁶² During this time, he develops concepts such as vecindario (vicinity), ethos, utopia, telos, region, community, autonomy and transition.

⁶³ The book was published only a year after the death of the co-founder and his friend Camilo Torres which according to Rojas Guerra (2021) has fundamentally influenced the conception of the agent of positive subversion.

people and the new man. The new man will be a rebel at heart, and his attitudes will revolve around rebellion” (*own translation, Fals Borda, 1968, pp. 11–12*).

With his description of a subject, that is critical of the status quo (“thinking and doubting”), acts out of altruist motivations and sacrifices himself for the group, the author attempts to change the negative valuation of the subversive subject by society towards a positive one. This is because on a moral level the rebel is aiming to build a new and more just social order which makes his vision justified (Fals Borda, 2008, Rojas Guerra, 2021). He therefore is a carrier of a utopia and a subversive awareness when walking “*along new paths he had not previously envisaged*” (*own translation, Fals Borda, 1968, pp. 11–12*). This awareness is not only a personal experience but that of an awakening collectivity “*that leads everyone to an unusual existential adventure*” (*own translation, Fals Borda, 1968, pp. 11–12*), meaning a project of autonomous world-making. In his dialectic of societal transformation this justified subversive collectivity is represented and led by the anti-elites, which oppose the traditional elites interested in the maintenance of the current social order, with the creative realization of anti-values, contra-norms, rebellious (disorganous) social organization and technical innovations⁶⁴ in subversion as social action (Fals Borda, 1968). In other words, the anti-elites aim to form a counterculture or counter-society from and in relation to the incongruency of the traditional direction and goals of social development. This can happen on a generational basis as well as an ideological one. The first being far more susceptible to capture⁶⁵, which following Fals Borda is the main reason for the frustration of revolutions in Latin America.

Throughout his later field studies and independent investigations, it becomes clear that the dogmatic adoption of political and academic Marxism also corresponds to a capture of anti-elites by a colonial-Eurocentric domination apparatus⁶⁶, which leads to the belief that only a praxis grounded in the popular experience of reality can achieve truly revolutionary changes (Rojas Guerra, 2021). He thereby finds an

⁶⁴ Values, norms, (organic) social organization, techniques and generally tradition are attributed to the elites of a society.

⁶⁵ “Incorporation of most subversive leaders into the political domination apparatus of the existing social order” (*own translation, Rojas Guerra, 2021, p. 88*)

⁶⁶ This goes hand in hand with the decolonial critique of the Eurocentric Marxist Left cited earlier. Moreover, the critique is founded in the discussion of differences between militant and action research as committed praxis during his work associated with the Fundación Rosca de Investigación y Acción Social (Rojas Guerra, 2021).

approximation to the same question the Frankfurt School had initially posed for the German/European context – ‘Why was the (socialist) revolution not successful?’ – without falling into purely economic or political analysis. Revolution according to the sociologist is not necessarily communist or socialist out of the reasons the simplified linear evolution of class conflicts in a dogmatic reading of Marxism suggests. The rebellious aspirations at the time and arguably the present in Latin American and Colombia have a tendency towards the political Left(s) because their anti-values, anti-norms and technological innovations bear similarities with the forms of being, acting and organizing collectively (in resistance to the oppressive forms of modernization) of several of the marginalized (ethnic) groups of the region and the social effects of colonialism and globalization. Throughout his intellectual and political career Fals Borda further develops this idea as ‘socialismo raizal’⁶⁷. Moreover, in his dialectic analysis the author’s approaches a first romantic critique of modernity, capitalism, and colonialism as tradition (Fernández, 2008), while attributing to the Left(s)’ and decolonial collective of subversive actors the ability and telos to create an alternative to modernity with differing qualities and directions of social change. Consequently, he also develops a societal theory in which the social order cyclically transforms through the tensions and conflict between tradition and subversion based on differing utopia as ideal and topos as pragmatic social compromise⁶⁸. In sum, the subversive man and the social group of anti-elites emerge from a critical socio-historic reflection of the social changes in the Colombian and Latin American societies. For Fals Borda two continuative questions arise out of the inquiry into why most revolutions in Latin America have failed or have been left inconclusive⁶⁹. On one hand, he questions who and how the Latin Americans can re-conceptualize and articulate the goals valued by the new man in words and ideas. On the other, he questions how those words can be translated into (sustainable⁷⁰) collective action and integral social change on the moral, political, economic and even spiritual level.

He finds an answer in the consideration of the ideological anti-elites. According to Fals Borda their role in articulating the values and goals of a collective utopia goes further into accompanying the realization of the latter through the processes of compulsion

⁶⁷ In an attempt of translation ‘regionally rooted socialism’ might come nearest to the concept.

⁶⁸ This concept is based on the elaborations of the German anarchist Gustav Landauer about the evolution of a revolution (Landauer, 1961).

⁶⁹ This is also the case for the first attempt of a socialist revolution during the 1920s (Fals Borda, 1968).

⁷⁰ Meaning lasting more than one generation.

and adjustment in confrontation with the elites of the traditional order into a topia. In a later study on the peasantry of the coastal areas of Colombia he noted that the members of the ideological anti-elites as “*relatively young intellectuals of good fame and social standing, i.e. belonging to dominant or distinguished families*” (Fals Borda, 1986a, pp. 99B-101B).

According to Rojas Guerra (2021) and Fernández (2008) the role of his colleague and friend Camillo Torres, his students as well as his own position as intellectual, with a commitment towards a more just and above all peaceful society for all Colombians, initiated a methodologically and theoretically creative reflection of the societal position and role of sociology and researcher, but also the manner of investigating the reality. This marks the conclusive critique of bourgeois (colonial/modern) sociology and the constitution of an own (popular) science and knowledge in his thought. He publishes the first edition of the book ‘Ciencia propia y colonialismo intelectual’ in 1970 in Geneva, three years after leaving the National University, at which he had founded and directed the faculty of sociology, while working on a transnational project on experiences of cooperation and change for the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD). It is considered his intellectual manifesto directed at the universities and students of Latin America (Rojas Guerra, 2021). According to Jeanne Demers this form of statement’s⁷¹, “‘explicit function is precisely to question the system,’ and ‘crisis’ is its ‘raison d’être’” (Yanoshevsky, 2009, p. 263, Demers, 1980, p.6). This is recognizable in the texts essayistic form, the partially polemic rhetoric (e.g.: the repeated use of the words ‘lucha inevitable’ against the ‘explotación inicua’) and the programmatic function (he designs a sociological methodology) with an appeal of action applied by Fals Borda. The text of most concern for the construction of a conception of man is the fourth essay in this first well-known edition⁷²: ‘La crisis, el compromiso y la ciencia’ (Fals Borda, 1970). In accordance with his earlier conceptualization of a society in conflict as transition towards a new social order he diagnoses the Latin American societies as in a moment of crisis, in which “*the [social] structures themselves have come to pose contradictions or suffer incongruities of such a*

⁷¹ The form of statement unites polemical discourse, political writing, theoretical and programmatic styles (Yanoshevsky, 2009).

⁷² It gained large interest in the region in the general atmosphere of change and intellectual proximity to L.A. Costa Pinto, Cardoso, Florestan Fernández, and Paulo Freire’s teachings in Brasil, Pablo González Casanova’s in Mexico and Torcuato Di Tella’s in Argentina, who all worked on the idea of a Latin American sociology of liberation (Rojas Guerra, 2021).

magnitude that they cannot be resolved without essentially modifying their own forms and contents." (1970, p. 41). He argues that this violent crisis is a result of the inadequate and inauthentic values, norms and objectives of the modern, capitalist, colonial ('dominación bastarda' and 'inicua explotación') and Eurocentric social order enforced on the diverse Latin American societies (1970, pp. 42–43). This is represented in the intellectual colonialism in the dimension of knowledge and the modernist economic dependency in that of (socio-economic) power through the instrumentalized concepts of rationality, as rationalizing quantification of the social, and 'artificial' objectivity. In this analysis the sociologist anticipated later considerations of Aníbal Quijano and other decolonial thinkers regarding the power effects of coloniality and the subsequent coadjacency of capitalism and modernity (Goldentul, 2012). He critiques the Latin American sociology (and social sciences) to this date as bound to 'intellectual servility' by a "*quasi blind adoption of theoretical models and concepts that are ill-adapted to our circumstances, but which have their referents in Europe and the United States*" (Fals Borda, 1970, p. 45). In view of the identified necessity of change the author argues that the discipline of sociology as 'scientific self-science' of modern societies also enters into crisis and its members – the intellectuals and researchers – consequently can partake actively and consciously in the search for the bases and the creation of change grounded in their own present and future reality. The function of such a committed sociology is, on one hand, the accumulation of scientific knowledge inherent to its scientific character and, on the other, the contribution to the social, moral and political practices of confrontation, and the restructuring of the society in a new social order. Although not named as such explicitly, he envisages the conception of a 'committed man' as subject of his methodological proposition. The norms, methods and values that form the basis of the later development of the PAR-IAP method require a specific vision on how a researcher interacts and structures his committed investigative work. Through the discussion of ideology and objectivity in science he introduces the problem of the intellectual's motivations:

"The task of such researchers is not aimed at scientific publication or the recognition of academic titles, guidelines that determine for Merton the behaviour of scientists, but 'to create a series of political facts that lead to a radical transformation of our society' (*Fals Borda, [Ciencia propia y colonialismo intelectual] 1987*), in such a way that

he questions the monopoly of scientists in the production of knowledge and, on the other hand, affirms the possibility of producing it from other logics, other motivations, another ethos” (*own translation, Pereira-García, 2016, p.55*).

The characteristics of the subversive man are reiterated: the capacity to think and doubt – the human rationality – is applied to reflect on the own positionality and environment throughout the process of investigation. This, according to Fals Borda, assures the scientific objectivity of the process. Furthermore, the method of participative observation, envisioned as point of departure and medium of validation of the methodologically open and interdisciplinary perspective⁷³, presupposes a (hu)man able of empathy, solidarity, creativity and world-openness towards the perspectives, necessities and objectives of the researched. These social capacities are the basis of the commitment the sociologist conceptualized inspired in Sartre’s ‘engagement’ (Fernández, 2008; Pereira-García, 2016; Rojas Guerra, 2021), meaning that the resulting disorganous⁷⁴ intellectual puts his knowledge and capacities to the service of the given reference group. Regarding these key groups another remarkable innovation of the scholar’s approach is the goal to rupture the subject-object relationship of power between the researcher and the research objects. The committed (hu)man enters an equal dialogue with co-investigators of their own reality, in which they collectively attempt to critically recuperate the socio-historic knowledge, comprehend their present situation and create an own utopia and transformation-oriented actions. This would lead to the participation of the previously invisibilized and excluded subjects of change (the peasantry, the indigenous, the afro-descendant, the proletariat and women as the identified marginalized and oppressed of the traditional social order) form the anti-elites and the process of subversion in the (modern) political and scientific system. Fals Borda thereby challenges the preceding formation of anti-elites prone to capture by further developing the PAR-IAP around the methodological pillars of class analysis of the reference groups, the generation of knowledge through participative methodologies, the critical recuperation of collective history and the systematic return of

⁷³ “At critical moments, more than at other times, problems and decisions accumulate on such a global scale that no single science can articulate satisfactory answers. There is thus an urgency to synthesise and combine sciences, which leads to interdisciplinary work. The crisis seems to call for an ‘integral science of man’, with no artificial or accommodating boundaries between related disciplines.”(own translation, Fals Borda, 1970, p. 51).

⁷⁴ Fals Bordas idea of an intellectual can be understood by comparing to Gramsci’s intellectual (organic) figure (1984) (Fernández, 2008).

knowledge in medium and style most adequate to the co-investigative communities⁷⁵ (Rojas Guerra, 2021).

Orlando Fals Bordas new man as ‘hombre sentipensante’

After the publication of the discussed book the sociologist focussed mainly on the further development and propagation of the PAR-IAP methodology through practical fieldwork. During the 1970s he organized the first international congress, participated in the activities of the peasant organization ANUC and started his extensive research on the peasantry of the Atlantic Coast, which he published in four volumes as ‘Doble historia de la Costa’ in the 1980s (Fals Bord, 1979, 1986, 1986a, 1986b). Through this fieldwork he identifies four historically and economically important carrier groups of social change in Colombia and attributes them specific values: solidarity and reciprocity of the indigenous, the freedom of the afro-descendants, the dignity of the peasantry and artisans, and the autonomy of the ‘colonos internos’ (internal settlers of European descent) (Rojas Guerra, 2021). As argued earlier these now anti-values are similar to those of socialism as counterculture of modernity. Unexpectedly, he also finds a validation of his own theoretical and methodological concepts of social transformation, societal transition and commitment in the words of a fisherman (Rojas Guerra, 2021).

“In the culture of the Colombian Caribbean, and more specifically of the culture along the Grande de la Magdalena river that flows into the Atlantic sea, the man-hicotea⁷⁶ who knows how to be enduring in order to face the setbacks of life and to overcome them, who, in adversity, is enclosed in order to return to existence with the same energy as before, is also the sentipensante [feeling-thinking] man who combines reason and love, body and heart, to get rid of all the (bad) formations that dismember this harmony and to be able to speak the truth, as Eduardo Galeano says in ‘Libro de los Abrazos’ , paying homage to the fishermen of the Colombian coast.” (Moncayo, 2015, p. 10)

⁷⁵ This includes the translation of the achieved insight into songs, graphic novels, theatre pieces, pamphlets, etc. (Rojas Guerra, 2021).

⁷⁶ Hicotea is a type of turtle, that buries itself in the mud during the dry periods of the year to survive the heat.

With the introduction of the quasi-mystical vocabulary into the academic discourse he achieves to classify a form of perceiving and acting in the world that includes both the scientific-modern rationality described earlier, as well as the values, norms and capacities derived from the diverse and plural popular knowledge, which are accumulated and put into service of the reference groups through a committed praxis. In other words, the partial action of feeling or sensing, associated with emotions and the imagery of a heart (in Spanish corazón), become a form of empirical co-reason (co-razón).

Furthermore, the notion allows to represent the equal dialogue Fals Borda promotes. This is recognizable in the double form of knowledge accumulation (e.g.: participative action of investigator and co-investigator) and divulgence (e.g.: dialectic between popular knowledge in canal A narration and ‘illustrated’/scientific knowledge in canal B (the conceptualization)) in ‘La historia doble de la Costa’ (1979, 1986, 1986a, 1986b), as well as the south-south and global dialogue around the IAP (Rojas Guerra, 2021)).

With this concept of a ‘hombre sentipensante’ as product and producer of a utopia named ‘socialismo raizal’ Fals Borda bids farewell within his last publication:

*“Such is at least the hope of those of us on the radical democratic left in all these countries who have wanted to sow the seeds of understanding and tolerance, participation and direct democracy, mutual respect and respect for life and nature, affection for our ancestors and the recovery of the forgotten history of the peoples. Because for us, **being a leftist means understanding and loving**“ (own emphasis, Epilogue to La subversion en Colombia, Fals Borda, 2008, p. 275).*

3.2 The 'Pacto Histórico' – The new political Left in contemporary Colombia and the 'hombre sentipensante'

This analysis presents a 'close reading' examination of the government programme of current Colombian president Gustavo Petro and vice-president Francia Márquez for the 2022-2026 mandate. While the document shows a clear focus on the topics of territory, women and peace the focus of the following analysis lays in the visual discourse reproduced in the cover and other visualizations of the programmatic statement.

The background of the documents pages is white, reveals motifs in vertical columns with low contrast and textured like paper with signs of light use. The front cover shows a different texture: wallpaper made of shavings or calcified walls. Both can be read as references to the humble everyday life of Colombians in their cities, villages and homes. The short borders of each page display a design of empty lozenges, triangles, and dots in the form of a zigzag line reminiscent of designs indigenous to the region, referring to life or woman. For the written content pages, the choice has been made to keep these borders in grey. In contrast, the top edge of the cover uses the colours of the Colombian flag in the following configuration: yellow, blue, red. With the focus on this first page of the document, it is possible to comment on the visual composition. The centre is highlighted



Figure 2 - cover of the Pacto Históricos government program

by a photograph of the presidential candidate (Gustavo Petro) on the right and the vice-presidential candidate (Francia Márquez) on the left. Above the heads of the two political figures, the election campaign slogan can be read in three lines: 1. "Colombia", 2. "POTENCIA MUNDIAL (WORLD POWER)", 3. "DE LA VIDA (OF LIFE)". The font size becomes larger with each line of the slogan and is written in capital letters, reinforcing the striking effect of the red colour of the font. In this way, the central concepts of the government's programme are also given a central importance: Colombia as a decolonial project that seeks equality of power and a place of enunciation in the global

world. And, building on this, Colombia as a project with the aim of achieving 'el buen vivir' (good living). Below the inserted photograph is positioned the title of the document "PROGRAMA DE GOBIERNO" reversing the contrast applied to the slogan: a rectangular vignette in the same red tone forms the background for the white letters. Next to it and superimposed on the previous one is another rectangular vignette on a light grey background with the mandate data in red: "2022 [horizontal line] 2026". In the centre of the last part of the bottom of the page are the political offices or titles and the names of the respective candidates. These positions, in capital letters and in blue, are positioned above the names, repeatedly in capital letters, but multi-coloured. In contrast to the positioning of the characters in the photograph, which places the current vice-president Francia Márquez on the left, that of the names is oriented in the hierarchy of the position, placing the presidential candidate first in the western reading direction.

This first description allows for some preliminary interpretations of the cover. First, several references to the central notions of the Pacto Histórico campaign and government proposals can be found: The integration of traditionally marginalised populations, such as indigenous, rural and Afro-descendant populations, is clearly represented in the use of indigenous motifs referring to land, life and mountains. They are even more visible in the framing of Francia Márquez, who in addition to being a woman of Afro-Latino descent wears jewellery and clothing typically produced by the indigenous and coastal communities of the country (a black and yellow bracelet of woven pearls, a bracelet with seashells and a necklace of seed-like objects such as beans or corn). Her blouse, in yellow pastel with balloon sleeves in dark fabric and designs reminiscent of Afro culture. Francia's position to the left of Gustavo Petro also visualises the centrality of women as leaders in the movement's governmental proposal. She holds her hand in a fist, lending itself to the interpretation of a communist visual narrative that proposes the seizure of power by marginalised groups and classes. The image creates a juxtaposition of the feminine in the man, Gustavo Petro - pointing to a heart with his hands, and the masculine in the woman - the demand for power. The two candidates as a whole present a simultaneous juxtaposition and symbiosis as formulated in the sentipensante concept, not only visually inclined to equal teamwork. Gustavo Petro shows his closeness to the people by the way he dresses without jewellery, without brand names and in a casual style (dark suit, light white and blue shirt, first buttons of the shirt open). The last two central themes are included with

pictograms using the blank space of the following words. 'Colombia' hides a leaf referring to proposals for saving the environment. The white dove with a heart in its beak highlights the continuing importance of peace in the post-conflict context of Colombian society.

The imagery used in the visual discourse shows clear references to the 'hombre sentipensante' although not obvious at first sight. Both political representants from part of the anti-elites described by Fals Borda: Petro as former militant of the M-19 guerrilla and intellectual politician, and Márquez as feminist, social leader and environmental activist. They promote a political and social agenda that focusses on a transformation towards a participative democracy, as projected in the 1991 constitution, and peace, as projected in the peace agreements from 2016 (Rojas Guerra, 2021; Pacto Histórico, 2022; González Vides, 2023). Moreover, the process of formulation of the program and the subsequent 'Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2022-2026: Colombia, Potencia Mundial de La Vida (2023) was similar to the participative method of the IAP (Suárez, 2024; Suárez et al., 2021). As basis of such a transformative undertaking the conception of the 'hombre sentipensante' including that of the committed intellectuals appear implicit to structure and realize the integration of social movements demands, imageries and concepts (e.g buenvivir in the electoral manifesto or intersectional/decolonial feminism in the realization of a feminist foreign policy of the elected government (The Gender Security Project, 2024)), especially after the protests in 2019 and 2021 (Guarín Vargas, 2022; Ramírez-Vallejo & Santamaría-Velasco, 2022).

3.3 Observations on the ‘hombre sentipensante’ in practice

In the earlier theoretical discussion of modernity’s conception of a rational man and the potential of a counterproposal – the ‘hombre sentipensante’ – two questions arose:

1. In what way do the epistemological and ontological fundamentals translate into everyday praxis?
2. How have the conception and resulting practices developed through time and space?

Regarding the first question the discussion of Fals Bordas intellectual oeuvre has shown that humility, respect, reflection, empathy, loving-understanding and solidarity constitute the qualities projected onto the ‘hombre sentipensante’. Furthermore, the analysis of the visual discourse of the Pacto Historico in its’ electoral manifesto indicated that both values (social justice, democracy and peace) and principles (participation, autonomy, equiberty and commitment), structure a practice of relational dialogue. While these (im-)material artifacts of discourse point to the entanglement of academia and politics through a shared discursive repertoire, which is based on the values, norms and principles bound in the conception of the ‘hombre sentipensante’, they only imply model practices (like the IAP-PAR methodology) for the translation into everyday practices. Therefore, some observations and recollected material during the fieldwork to this master’s thesis will be focussed on followingly by taking a closer look at the self-conception and implicit code of conduct of scholars, researchers and students observed during the 2023 ‘XIV Congreso nacional de Sociología’. Regarding the material artifacts, a closer look will be taken on the collection of illustrated leaflets ‘Historia Gráfica de la Lucha por la Tierra en la Costa Atlántica’ (Chalarka Grijales, 1985) as well as the façade of the ‘Auditorio León de Greiff’ and the Orlando Fals Borda building of the Universidad Nacional. The second question is approached by reviewing the evolution of imagery and usage of space of the latter two examples.

The fieldwork itself took place mainly in Bogotá, Colombia between October and December 2023. During this time, on October 29th, 2023, the Colombian regional and municipal elections were held. The general discourse on the elections and specifically those in the capital, was marked by the issues of mobility and urban security in the metropolitan centres. These elections were seen as a barometer of opinion on the work of the government after approximately one year in office. Bogotá gave a very

interesting picture of the country's political climate as the capital's population constitutes approximately 20 percent of the country's entire population and the mayor's position is viewed as the second most important mandate in the country. The electoral campaigns and mass media displayed a traditionally demonizing discourse towards the Left(s), which seemed in tune with the predominantly conservative media landscape of the country. The results were generally interpreted as a 'punishment of the national government at the ballot box' by political analysts, citing that public opinion reflected the unfruitful intents of social and political transformation (Jiménez Valencia, 2023; Rodríguez Rey, 2023), as proposed by the 'gobierno del cambio' (government of change – slogan of the government). In this context of perceived evaluation of the governments first year in office, and specifically the aspirations of political and economic change towards social justice and peace, the 'XIV Congreso nacional de Sociología' was held between December 4th to 7th 2023 in Valledupar and Barranquilla under the theme "Balances, retos y perspectivas sobre el cambio" (Balances, challenges and perspectives on change).

XIV Congreso nacional de Sociología

Under the guiding theme the countrywide gathering of scholars displayed a re-evaluation and renovation of the self-conception and societal role of the discipline after the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2019/20 and 2021 social unrests, mass immigration from Venezuela, and peacebuilding in the post-conflict society. Especially in the attended panels on 'sociological theories', 'sociology of intellectual work and the sociological profession', 'political sociology' and 'sociology of Latin America and the Caribbean' it became observable, that a latent concern for the societal role and responsibility of the discipline became observable. The corresponding critical retrospective on the latter's own development focussed on revisiting the work and influence of Orlando Fals Borda and another sociologist politically active in his time, Alfredo Correa de Andreis. Several panel discussions paid tribute to the two scholars and their 'sentipensante' practice of the social sciences⁷⁷. Furthermore, forms of self-criticism of the discipline⁷⁸ and the reinforcement of 'social change' as a collectively stated goal were observed.

⁷⁷ E.g.: "Re-visiones sobre poder, democracia y abigarramiento. - Epistemologías y metodologías sentipensantes para cuidar la vida y cimentar la paz profunda" by Aura Elizabeth Quiñones Toro.

⁷⁸ E.g.: "El oficio sociológico en Colombia, 1960 -2010. La voz de sus protagonistas" by Jefferson Jaramillo, Juan C Zuluaga, Nelson Gomez and Julian Gomez Delgado, and "Los Congresos Nacionales de Sociología en los 80: perspectivas sobre la investigación y el canon de enseñanza" by Natalia Niño Silva.

Particularly striking are the focus of presentations and studies on the roles the youth⁷⁹, women⁸⁰ and rural populations in social movements, peace production and participative democratization practices.

As expected, the congress was mainly a space of knowledge transfer and networking between established scholars and researchers. Nevertheless, the four-day event was perceived as quite different to the experience of similar events attended in Europe. The program⁸¹ included a ceremony for the ‘healing of the territory’ right after the inauguration of the event and the first panel held at the Universidad Popular del Cesar invited Indigenous leaders to speak of their positions and experiences around the historically marginalized territories. This acknowledgement of different speaker positions, knowledges, and socio-political activism other than practiced in Eurocentric academic spheres about the challenges and perspectives on peace building and societal change in post-conflict Colombia shows the commitment and loving understanding proposed in the conception of the ‘hombre sentipensante’. Another distinctive observation in comparison to other academic exchange gatherings attended in Europe is the space given by the organizers (Asociación Colombiana de Sociología) and taken by speakers to articulate political positions and declare grievances. On day two, by the end of the first panel ‘Evaluation and analysis of 16 months of the first left-wing government in Colombia’ (own translation) the speakers took the opportunity to denounce the Israeli reaction in



Figure 5 - protest on stage (own photography taken on 5.12.2023)

Gaza⁸² as genocide. This was mainly promoted by Aura Elizabeth Quiñones Toro, who apart from being a sociologist is a representant of the government allied ‘Coordinadora Nacional por el Cambio - La Red Quynza’ (formerly Comité del Paro) and feminist activist (visible in the violet scarf worn throughout the events). In addition, many contributions (presentations, panels and discussion) display a relatively positive and hopeful view of the newly elected government, especially towards the peace building

⁷⁹ E.g.: “Protesto luego existo. Un análisis de la movilización política juvenil en Colombia (2019-2021)” by Cristhian José Uribe Mendoza, and ‘Juventud, como sujeto y actor fundamental en la vida política, social y cultural de su contexto’ by Sarah Sofia Montánchez Tez.

⁸⁰ E.g.: ‘De la indignación a la política feminista disruptiva durante el estallido social de Colombia (2021)’ by Maria Eugenia Ibarra Melo.

⁸¹ <https://acs-sociologia.org.co/congresos/>

⁸² This position is in accordance with the progressive government’s official stance (‘Genocide’, *Colombia Says as Latin American States Condemn Israel over Gaza* | *Israel-Palestine Conflict News* | *Al Jazeera*, 2023).

initiatives and those related to social and ecological justice. This also ties statements on a regional level in. For instance, the memory and juridic processing of forced disappearances and political victims during the prolonged conflict were addressed in a banner



Figure 8 - banner on display (own photography taken on 6.12.2023)

ner visible on the third day from the entrance to the Universidad Simón Bolívar. The demand to remember and utter the names of the disappeared can be interpreted as petition for justice for civil society in the complex peacebuilding process. As sentipensante researchers and individuals the related statements can be interpreted as grounded on the qualities of empathy and solidarity as well as the general goals of social justice and first and foremost peace and defence of life. Generally, the four-day congress displayed a usage of the academic space and format for party-independent political statements by the participating debaters and presenters.

Apart from participating presenters (scholars and students) another group of attendants took an interesting speaker position in and around the congress: the organisation and taking of the floor and space by student participants (speakers and hearing attendees). They organised an independent meeting on the second day of the congress, in a room provided by the congress organisers (at request of the student-volunteers of the host Universidad del Atlántico). There, the formal organizational and political critique of the congress was discussed in an assembly format and the demand for more political and social commitment and positioning of the discipline on all levels was formed. This was realized in an open letter to the organizers in a second sit-in meeting in the Parque los Fundadores, Barranquilla. These gatherings were explicitly based on equal and respectful dialogue, empathy and solidarity in the form of discussion and democratic participation and autonomy by form of vote. The political demand was realized by means of the disruption of a panel during the last day of activities in which the students spoke of their petition. Surprisingly, established professors, who were former students of Orlando Fals Borda in the 1960s, expressed solidarity and approval of the demands for social commitment and political positioning of the discipline towards the challenges of the country. In addition, the following questions were discussed: 'What is the state of health of the student representation and movement in your programme and university?'. Most of the participants affirmed the 'cease' of the student movement during the Covid-19 pandemic due to the lack of platforms and

meeting spaces, as well as the impact of 'having to survive' the social, financial and mental consequences of the restrictions. Many of the students shared the perception of a disconnection from generations of students that also weakens collective organisation and knowledge sharing. Although there seem to be vast differences between students from public and private universities, they share this observation. 'What changes have there been in your programme and how does it affect you?'. Programme and timetable changes seem to weaken contact, exchange and solidarity between students from different cohorts, but especially between undergraduate and postgraduate students. Additionally, a lack of funding for field trips and participation in congresses at public universities was declared, which affects students and professors, as well as research in general. 'How do we want to organise ourselves in the future?'. The desire to revive the national congress of sociology students and to organise an exchange network (including shared formats of publication) culminated in a vote in favour to start the realization of the first point. The three observations link the question of the future of the discipline to a latent evaluation of the self-image of social scientists beyond their formal discipline, which corresponds to the earlier discussed reflection of Archila Niera to understand 'being left' as a structure of feeling (2020) by employing and evaluating the sentipensante practices of the IAP-PAR methodology, reinforcing the values of social justice, equiliberty and peace as goals of social change, and offering space to political utterances of commitment around and within the format of an academic congress.

Material artifacts

Apart from the above recounted anecdotes, the congress offered a space of gathering contacts and material artifacts for the research. One of the latter is the collection of illustrated leaflets ‘Historia Gráfica de la Lucha por la Tierra en la Costa Atlántica’ (Chalarka Grijales, 1985), which was mentioned during the panel on Fals Bordas creative periods and a newly started collection of unknown materials. In the style of graphic novels, the results of a research collaboration (1972 – 1974) between the sociologist, the researchers of the ROSCA foundation, social leaders and the ANUC on rural communities of the Atlantic coast and their forms of resistance were translated in a manner the researched communities could understand and use or their own struggles. Other forms of returning the gained knowledge were film projections, cassette programs, storytelling, theatre, and puppet shows. This innovative research project is recognized as the first implementation of the Bordian IAP methodology in practice and the product of the loving understanding capacities of the illustrator Ulianov Chalarka Grijales.



Figure 11 - extract from 'Lomagrande - El Baluarte del Sinú' in 'Historia Gráfica de la Lucha por la Tierra en la Costa Atlántica' (1985)

Another group of material artifacts originating from the same decades of Fals Bordas initial drafts of a conception of man are two architectural complexes on the Bogotá campus of the National University: the main square referred to as plaza Che with the eponymous mural of the revolution leader on the façade of the ‘Auditorio León de Greiff’, and the ‘Edificio Orlando Fals Borda’ housing the sociological faculty. In a first visit of the campus of the country’s largest public university in the capital Bogotá in 2014 the political atmosphere of the space was surprising in comparison to the mostly neutral and slightly sterile look of educational facilities and universities in Europe – particularly in respect to leftist-revolutionary imageries. Furthermore, the organization of political participation and actions by students and professorate was perceived as significantly higher, more visible and independent from disciplinary affiliations than in Germany and the Netherlands. This speaks for a physical and immaterial space

in which the outdifferentiation of the social systems politics and science according to system rationality is not applicable.

Among the multitude of changing graffiti with political messages on the white walled modernist buildings, constructed during the first half of the 20th century, the façade of the auditorium holds the most iconic mural and holds historical significance for the student movement throughout the past seven decades. In October 1976, only three years after the inauguration of the building the brothers Alfredo and Humberto Sanjuán Arévalo portrayed the revolution leader Ernesto ‘Ché’ Guevara on the white walls facing the central square formerly known as ‘Plaza Santander’, thereby changing the name to ‘Plaza Ché’ (Chacón Orduz, 2023; Skinner, 2023). Throughout the years the mural was removed⁸³, painted anew and other figures of historical and political importance, like Camilo Torres Restrepo and Jaime Garzón⁸⁴, have joined the display. Between the latest removal in July 2023 and the visit to the campus in December of the same year, the revolutionary had resurfaced with the slogan ‘con autonomía y sin permiso’ (with autonomy and without permission). As reported and photographed by the student activist Valentina Andrade in a post on her X-account (formerly Twitter) on April 9th, 2024:



Figure 14 - In front of the Auditorio León de Greiff with Prof. Dr. Gómez de Mantilla (own photography taken on 11.12.2023)

“For four days and four nights the students of the UNAL Bogotá campus were building the mural in the Plaza Ché, as part of the camps for university democracy and the National Day of Memory and Solidarity with the Victims of the Armed Conflict” (own translation).

⁸³ Removed by the administration of the university in 2005 and July 2023, and ideologically opposed students in 2016.

⁸⁴ Journalist, comedian and peace activist assassinated by right-wing paramilitary members in 1999.

The history of removal and repainting speaks for a practice of memory and resistance of Bordian anti-norms and anti-values against the oppressive status quo. The original painters themselves fell victim to a series of forced disappearances in 1982 (Prensa Territorio, 2021). Part of the discursive repertoire of the Left(s) represented on campus are therefore rituals of commemoration of the fallen militants and heroes of the anti-elite. Currently represented on display are Jaime Garzón, Policarpa Salavarrieta, Ernesto ‘Ché’ Guevara, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán and Beatriz Eugenia Sandoval Sáenz (from left to right). While the three men are well known in their contributions and historic influence in the region, the two women have only recently been added to the visual repertoire of the Left(s). Salvarrieta Policarpa ‘La Pola’ was an independence fighter



Figure 17 - newly painted mural on the facade of the Auditorio León de Greiff (photography taken by @ValenVolandoVa/X)

during the 19th century and has, beyond her lifetime, been a symbol of women’s participation in the pursuit of liberty and the democratic project of her homeland. Eugenia Sandoval Sáenz was a student and anarchist militant at the university, which died under suspicions of police brutality during the 1991 commemoration of the 16th of May 1984 student protest (Archila Neira & Roncancio, 2021). Hers is also a symbol of resistance and the violent repression of the latter. The new man is joined by the new committed, subversive and revolutionary woman manifesting the intersectionality of the contemporary Left(s). On the mural Policarpa raises a broken sword as symbol of ended conflict and the formation of peace as goal in the hands of these new women. Gaitán’s fist breaks the roman-catholic insignia of the crozier (also called pastoral staff) in form of a shepherd’s crook, indicating not only the rejection of military secular, but also clerical colonial power. The principle of autonomy is clearly represented in the first part of the accompanying slogan, whereas the second ‘sin permiso’ (without permission) reveals the positive subversiveness of the anti-elites, anti-norms and values.

A decade earlier than the iconic mural another space was inaugurated: the Orlando Fals Borda Building. Named in tribute to the co-founder of the sociological department one year after his death in 2008 the structure was built by the architect Reinaldo Valencia between 1962 and 1964 to house the ‘national centre for training in community action’ and the faculty of sociology, which it does until today. On the exterior two murals are visible: To the left is a depiction of Camillo Torres Restrepo on a black and red background, a colour combination reminiscent of banners and flags of the Left(s) political spectrum (Antifa-Flag in red and black or party colours of communist parties around the world). To the right a white rectangle containing the black stencilled portraits of influential sociologists (men and women) is noticeable. According to the anecdotes of Dr. Luz Teresa Gómez de Mantilla⁸⁵ (conversation on 11.12.2023 in Ciudad Universitaria Bogotá, Colombia), who was a former student and family friend of the then dean, the structure was designed to promote the centrality of interaction in dialogue beyond roles, hierarchies and in community. This is reflected in the atrium and gallery at the centre from which classrooms and two wings containing offices extend. Thus, creating a central access point and open space for the encounter and communal use by the new investigators. Dr. Gómez de Mantilla recounted that the central forum is used for communal activities, parties, academic and political assemblies, planning meetings since its inauguration until today, but also offered manifestants shelter from partly violent repression during various student protests in the past 60 years. The walls around this forum are covered in



Figure 20 - 'Edificio Orlando Fals Borda' and 'parque Freud' (own photography taken on 11.12.2023)

The walls around this forum are covered in



Figure 23 - interior atrium of the Edificio Orlando Fals Borda (series of own photographs taken on 11.12.2023)

⁸⁵ Dr. Gómez de Mantilla is a Full Professor at the Department of Sociology of the Faculty of Human Sciences of the National University of Colombia, Bogotá, where she has been Academic Vice-Dean (1988-1990; 1992) and Dean (2000-2002), Director of the Interdisciplinary Programme for Community Support (PRIAC), as well as vice-rector for research (2019).

murals with clear references to organizations of the Left (Juventud Comunista Colombiana), indigenous imageries and history (depiction of an amazonian tribesperson and a garland of pre-Columbian stone statues), broader Latin American culture (garland in style of the Mexican maya-codices on the balustrade of the gallery) and popular storytelling inspired in the multi-ethnic composition of the territories (depiction of the hungry tiger attacking the helping cow found in Hindu mythology and folktales in the Caribbean). Consequently, the principles of participation, relationality in dialogue, justice, solidarity, equity and commitment are reflected in the design, decoration and functionality of the building itself. The idea behind this seemed to have effectively shaped the everyday experience of teaching, studying and practicing sociology, and has as such shaped the objective (social transformation), as well as the means of realization and reproduction (principles of participation and commitment, sentipensante self-conduct and self-image of discipline and scientist as subject of [political] action). This is clearly represented in the slogan painted on one of the staircases walls to the second floor:

***“La sociología como ciencia es | Sociology as a science is
Capaz de entender nuestras | Able to understand our
Condiciones y realidades. | Conditions and realities.
La sociología como practica es capaz de | Sociology as a practice is able to
Llevarnos a transformarlas. | Lead us to transform them.”***
(own translation, unknown author).

3.4 Continuities and relational potential of the ‘hombre sentipensante’

What makes the new Latin American man, new and specifically Latin American? The newness of the conception lays in the inclusion of *sentir* (feeling or sensing). This addition, as argued earlier, goes beyond the exclusionary rationality of the modern project, which combines the values and norms of the concept commitment (empathy, solidarity, loving-understanding, humility, reflexivity, creativity and world-openness with the difference, plurality and participation of various experiences of world in dialogue) with those attributed to the modern concept of rationality and science. Through this perspective, the Latin American man transforms from a backwards, unfinished, primitive modern other, a result of his underdeveloped conditions, to a transmodern being in an equal dialogue with his modern counterparts. Furthermore, and as visible in the programmatic discourse of the Pacto Histórico, the conception of man does not necessarily translate in the adoption of specific methods, but into the adoption of the abovementioned values and concepts. These result in the adaptation of the societal roles of anti-elites and model practices like the PAR-IAP in the social sciences, education and public as well as political planification. Lastly, the focus on women and their societal role in the propositions made by the current government is striking. In comparison to Fals Borda, who has written about their capacity of resistance and explicitly promoted the formation by and of female intellectuals during his time as dean (Virginia Gutiérrez de Pineda and Marái Cristina Salázar as professors, Magdalena León, Ruby Mercado and Alaya Pérez as first generation graduates) (Rojas Guerra, 2021), women as social group appear next to the urban and rural youth as carrier group of change with more organizational capacity and rebellious consciousness than ever before (Berrio Pacheco & Quintero Castellanos, 2022; Muñoz Tamayo & Ponce Lara, 2019). This has also been visible in the appearance and representation of female figures in the material and immaterial discursive repertoire of the Left(s) during the described congress and in the reviewed material artifacts.

The rational man of modernity vs. the ‘SER sentipensante’ in pluriversality – concluding notes and projections

The initial question ‘To what extent can the conception of a new Latin American man explain the overlapping discursive actors and practices of the academic/intellectual left and the political left(s)?’ can be answered by concluding in the words of Orlando Fals Borda, that since the 1960s the ideological Left(s) of the region and especially Colombia have developed a conception of anti-elites and with them anti-values, contra norms and a general subversive ethos which guides the interpretation and actions oriented towards the creation of reality through a (neo)socialist utopia. This conception of man and subsequent world is ‘sentipensante’ – feeling-thinking and, therefore, relational. This leads to the second question in regard to the relationship towards modernity and pluriversality: ‘If and to what extent the Colombian and Latin American Left constitutes another modernity or an alternative worldmaking conception different to the Eurocentric model, based on their reality and through ‘sentipensante’ (decolonial, feminist, antiracist, anti-capitalist) (discursive) practices of knowledge production and consequent political and social practices?’. The theoretical exploration around the rational man of modernity and the transformations on Fals Borda’s ‘hombre sentipensante’ open the possibility to discuss several aspects of how this latter dispositif of the Colombian intellectual Left(s) in fact influences the constitution of an alternative world construction. Firstly, it combines two thought traditions opposing the modern culture, the Left(s) and the decolonial countercultures, by anticipating the decolonial critique of both modernity (coloniality) (Goldentul, 2012) and Marxism (inadequacy of dogmatism) (Rojas Guerra, 2021).

“The other of totality is the poor, the oppressed, the one who, by being located outside the system, becomes the only source of spiritual renewal. There, in the exterior of the system, in the ethos of oppressed societies, people have values that are very different from those that prevail in the center. [...] With this, Dussel creates a second reduction: that of converting the poor in some kind of transcendent subject, through which Latin American history will find its meaning. This is the opposite side of postmodernity, because Dussel attempts not to

de-centralize the Enlightened subject, but to replace it by another absolute subject” (own translation, Castro-Gómez, 1996, pp. 39-40).

Secondly, the ‘hombre sentipensante’ offers a world open, tolerant and restorative structuration of society and knowledge, which coincides with the objectives and conditions to create a ‘new world of multiple worlds’ uttered in respect to the pluriverse:

“Many words are walked in the world. Many worlds are made. Many worlds make us. There are words and worlds that are lies and injustices. There are words and worlds that are truthful and true. In the world of the powerful there is room only for the big and their helpers. In the world we want, everybody fits. The world we want is a world in which many worlds fit. — ejército zapatista de liberación nacional, “Fourth Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle” (our translation)” (de la Cadena, 2018, Chapter Introduction p. 1).

This connection is further proved with the remarkable references in the acknowledgements, footnotes and bibliographies on Fals Bordas oeuvre of decolonial scholars such as Walter Dignolo and Santiago Castro-Gómez as well as the prefaces and epilogues the sociologist himself wrote for Arturo Escobar (2014, 2019b, 2019a). In December 2023 the ‘XIV Congreso Nacional de Sociología’ was held in homage to his intellectual, political and social contributions as sentipensante sociologist. So will be the 2025 CLACSO congress in Bogotá, recognizing the academic impact of his thought ex post facto. Lastly, the anthropocentric differentiation categories derived from the dichotomy between human and nature are subverted by the simultaneous juxtaposition and symbiosis through dialogue of the semantic invention ‘sentipensante’. Particularly the dualisms rationality (thinking)/emotionality (feeling), mind/body, mind/territory, male/female seem to dissolve under the dialogical creation of dynamic co-rationalities (co-razón⁸⁶). Consequently, the ontology of monological differentiation, which creates the universe, develops into a (de)-ontology of dialogical/relational multiplicities (with/in the Rest(s) and the West(s)), which creates a pluriverse. The androcentric implication, which is still inherent to the notion ‘**hombre** sentipensante’ (feeling-thinking man) is to criticise. In this context, I propose to challenge the common vocabulary and use the notion ‘**ser** sentipensante’ (feeling-thinking being).

⁸⁶ See Orlando Fals Bordas new man as ‘hombre sentipensante’.

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