Memory and Conflict, Memories in Conflict / Memoria y conflicto. Memorias en Conflicto. Bogota, Kolumbien: Professur der Lateinamerika Geschichte, Zentralinstitut Lateinamerika-Institut, Freie Universität Berlin; Researchs Group „Lugares de la memoria en Colombia" Departamento de Lenguajes y Estudios Socioculturales, Universidad de los Andes, 14.08.2012-16.08.2012.

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In recent decades, the subject of memory has become a central topic of research and a realm of intense public debate. While in Europe public and academic debates have been dominated by the memory of the Holocaust and, since the end of the Cold War, the history of the communist states in Eastern Europe, attention in Latin America has focused on how to deal with the crimes of the military dictatorships and the history of civil strife. Current debates revolve mainly around the relationship between memory on the one hand and conflict resolution on the other.

Our conference focused on the subject of memory construction and conflict. The concept behind the conference was to provide a framework for discussing the singularity of the Colombian case in the Latin American context and analyzing it in global terms. While the construction of memory has usually taken place after the conflicts in question have come to an end, in Colombia memory construction is being used as a means of conflict resolution during an ongoing conflict. The interpretation of the past here represents a particularly sensitive and contested field. The conference sought to bring together German and Colombian scholars from various academic fields, including history, political science, anthropology, and cultural studies, to discuss this issue.

The conference was jointly organized by the research group Lugares de la Memoria en Colombia (Realms of Memory in Colombia), Departamento de Lenguajes y Estudios Socioculturales, Universidad de los Andes in Bo-

gota and Lateinamerika-Institut (Institute of Latin American Studies) of Freie Universität Berlin with the support of the DFG (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) and Universidad de los Andes.

The first panel, "Memory, State, Nation and Reconciliation," moderated by Chloe Rutter Jensen (Bogota), explored the meaning of the construction of memory in historiography and in the context of transitional justice in Colombia, investigating its relationship to state and nation formation and reconciliation. STEFAN RINKE (Berlin) discussed the place of memory in the new historical discourse. In his presentation, he asked why scholars in recent decades have been concerned with the way individuals and groups deal and have dealt with their histories. Rinke argued that this concern began when philosophers and historians in the late twentieth century realized that memory grants history a meaning for the present and cultural studies pointed to history as a cultural construct with no fixed meaning. Those involved in writing history and producing meaning are forced to constantly negotiate the meaning of that history. Rinke warned that the plurality of narratives, indispensable in the architecture of memory, tends to generate conflict and disputes in society. JUAN RICARDO APARICIO (Bogota) examined the relationship between the archive and new scenarios created by territorialities after the Colombian conflict. Understanding the archive in the sense developed by Jacques Derrida in his book The Secrets of the Archive, he analyzed two case stud-

ies: the Montes de Mariá (northern coast of Colombia) and the town of Mapiripán (Meta Department, Colombia). The Colombian state has recently declared these regions places where the armed conflict has ended. These territories have become not only an archive of memory for the victims (documentaries, historical commission reports etc.) but also key regions where major projects are being consolidated in service of the new global economy, which are actually increasing social inequality. IVÁN OROZCO ABAD (Bogota) analyzed the role of the so-called "Justice and Peace Law" as a mechanism of collective memory construction in Colombia, the legal framework for a transitional process taking place in the country. The paper points out the anomalous nature of this law, which applies only to those crimes committed by non-state actors, leaving aside the responsibility of official authorities. Orozco argues that the law discloses the unrepentant confessions of perpetrators during the investigative phase, but during the judicial phase conceals structural phenomena such as social exclusion, discrimination, and exploitation. This insures that the civil war that ravages Colombia will ultimately disappear from the public stage as a political phenomenon, making it a purely criminal issue. GREGORY LOBO (Bogota) questioned how much memory is required for seeking reconciliation and peace in Colombia. The paper suggested that if Colombia really wants to continue as a nation, it might be better to forget. But if the nation feels the moral and ethical need to remember, perhaps the nation in general needs to be rethought.

In the second panel "Subjectivity and Memory", moderated by Alessandra Merlo (Bogota), TATJANA LOUIS (Bogota) discussed the role of the displaced in Colombia's history, inquiring whether displacement in Colombia is perceived as a historical phenomenon. This issue has arisen because in those places where Colombian history is transmitted – museums, for example – displacement is not included as part of the narrative. Louis suggests that the history of Colombia reveals a society that is constantly moving, but the phenomenon of displacement, which has long been a part of Colombia's history, does not yet have a place in the Colombian collective memory. JUAN PABLO ARANGUREN (Bogota) discussed how torture is treated both in the reports of Amnesty International and the Colombian public sphere by looking at a case reported by Amnesty International about the implementation of the Statute of National Security in Colombia during the presidency of César Turbay Ayala (1978–1982). The report sought to demonstrate the effective and widespread existence of torture in the country at that time. Aranguren criticized the detailed descriptions of torture in the report, because they tended to make invisible the individual that suffered. He indicated that the denunciation of torture has made it possible for some actors to request the legalization of torture with the aim of "humanizing" security policies and legitimizing torture in some way. Closing this panel, HENDRIKJE GRUNOW (Berlin) examined the silences that are part of the narrative of the internal armed conflict with the Sendero Luminoso in the city of Trujillo, Peru. Those silences are encountered at different levels, ranging from omissions on the macro level, where the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that silenced the reasons behind the escalation of violence (large differentials in terms of land distribution) to omissions on a more domestic level pertaining to the everyday lives of those involved. There is no historical narrative about the conflict among residents of the city. Scholars who have been interested in the issue have been forced to remain silent because publishers do not want to publish their results and because of threats against them. Grunow concluded that instead of there being a collective memory in Trujillo, the conflict is collectively ignored; she closed by proposing that in order to achieve true reconciliation attention will have to be paid to those who are attempting to ignore the violent past.

In the third panel "Transmission of Cultures of Memory," moderated by Zandra Pedraza (Bogota), different transmission mechanisms of memory during prolonged conflicts were presented. In this context two papers were presented on related forms of memories created by indigenous groups in response to conflict. MÓNIKA CONTRERAS SAIZ (Berlin) spoke about the strategies used by the Mapuche (an indigenous people from South Chile and Argentinean Patagonia) to preserve their collective memory during their resistance against the expansion of colonial and later national authorities in their territory. Important in the transmission of Mapuche memory were the victories against the state and the military strategies employed in those victories. Oral tradition and creating songs were required for this type of transmission of culture. Contreras highlighted how memory during conflict becomes a necessity for remembering the meaning of the conflict. She argued that the concept of ethnic memory should not be limited to indigenous peoples alone, but can serve to provide a perspective on all those zones of conflict where the populations affected preserve their memories in oral narrative, song, and in other ways. LASSE HÖLCK (Berlin) discussed the use of history to reduce complexity. Analyzing a Comcáac narrative, Hölck explained how this

very short story told to him by an old member of that ethnic group which lives in the North of Mexico reduced 200 years of history. In one single episode, Hölck found several aspects of contact between white men and the Comcáac. He further emphasized that the memory of these hunter-gatherers not only serves for their own collective identity but also can lead us to rethink our own reality, for indigenous groups remember issues pertaining to the environment and nutrition that our society has long forgotten. The last two papers on this panel conducted an analysis about the way memories of the Colombian conflict are constructed in the documentary format. RICARDO VELAZCO (Bogota) analyzed the documentary *El Salado: Rostro de una masacre* by Grupo de Memoria Histórica (Historical Memory Group), an institution created by the Colombian government responsible for coordinating and developing a memory of the Colombian armed conflict. Velazco criticized that the documentary does not present a context for the facts of violence documented, but merely focuses on the experience of the victims. This is because the legal framework of the "Justice and Peace Law" establishes a conceptual and discursive matrix that frames the production conditions of memory. ALESSANDRA MERLO (Bogota) analyzes the narrative structure of the film documentary *Falsos positivos* by Dado Carillo and Simone Bruno. Merlo suggests that remembrance feeds on the visible, transforming the visible into a memory. But what about that which cannot be displayed, such as the dead? She concluded that the documentary cannot show those who are no longer with us, but their contexts always involve a kind of subjectivity that must be recognized.

The lively discussion following each panel and the concluding round table discussion emphasized the singularity of the Colombian case and the complexity of building a memory amidst the conflict, especially because all the mechanisms that the state is implementing to build collective memory of the conflict are tending to focus on the role of the criminal acts and ignoring the structural causes of conflict. Similarly, in the new conflict zones declared "territories for peace and prosperity", land remains concentrated in a few hands and is dominated by monoculture serving global economic interests. The final discussion also stressed the difficulty of pinpointing who are the victims and who are the perpetrators under "Justice and Peace Law", as empirical studies have shown. The proposal was then made to eliminate this dichotomy of memory construction analysis of Colombia's conflict. The question remains whether the "official memory of the conflict" that is being created in Colombia is promoting a false peace that either prolongs the conflict or indeed is setting the stage for new conflicts in the future.

Conference overview:

Introduction

Alcira Saavedra and Stefan Rinke (Universidad de los Andes – Freie Universität):

Panel 1: "Memory, State, Nation and Reconciliation"
Chair: Chloe Rutter Jensen (Universidad de los Andes)

Stefan Rinke (Freie Universität): Memories of the Nation in Latin America: Transformations, Recodification and Current Uses

Juan Ricardo Aparicio (Universidad de los Andes): Among the Archive and Identity: A Problematization of Memory Studies

Iván Orozco Abad (Universidad de los Andes): The Role of Transitional Justice in the Construction of a Collective Memory in Colombia

Gregory Lobo (Universidad de los Andes): Policy of / with the Past?

Panel 2: "Subjectivity and Memory"
Chair: Alessandra Merlo (Universidad de los Andes)

Tatjana Louis (Universidad de los Andes): The Place of Displacement in Colombian Memory

Juan Pablo Aranguren (Universidad de los Andes): Torture, Subjectivity and Memory: Bodies at the Limit

Hendrikje Grunow (Freie Universität): "La historia se queda atrás" - Muted Memories of the Internal Armed Conflict with "Sendero Luminoso" in Trujillo, Peru

Panel 3: "Transmission of Cultures of Memory"
Chair: Sandra Pedraza (Universidad de los Andes)

Mónika Contreras Saiz (Freie Universität): The Role of Ethnic Memory Construction: Between Knowledge and Power. The Case of the Mapuche in Chile

Lasse Hölck (Freie Universität): Oral Tradition to Reduce Complexity. The Example of the Comcáac (Sonora, Mexico)

Ricardo Velasco (Universidad de los Andes): Audiovisual Mediations of Memory in the Documentary "El Salado: Rostro de una masacre."

Alessandra Merlo (Universidad de los Andes): Re-

membering, Telling, Filming

Final Discussion
Chairs: Tatjana Louis and Mónika Contreras Saiz

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