

JOSE JAVIER CAPERA FIGUEROA
University of Tolima, Colombia
caperafigueroa@gmail.com

EDUCATION FOR INTEGRAL PEACE – MEMORY, INTERCULTURALITY AND DECOLONIALITY

Review of the book written by Eduardo Andrés Sandoval Forero (2016). *Education for Integral Peace – Memory, Interculturality and Decoloniality*. Bogota: ARFO Editores e Impresores LTDA. 327 pp.

The need to reflect on the importance of studies for peace in our times is conceived as a commitment to overcome from within the structural problems that constitute the problems/gaps of modern society, is part of the strong discussion to overcome violence, poverty, environmental crisis and structural problems, which increasingly attempts to naturalize ideas such as commodifying life, territory and communal assets.

The present work written by the social and decolonial researcher Eduardo Andrés Sandoval entitled *Education for integral peace – Memory, interculturality and decoloniality* is the sample of a long-term research process, where it develops a series of theoretical, conceptual debates and methodological studies on the capacity of decolonial studies in the analysis of peace in Latin America.

The epistemological lucidity offered by the sociologist, anthropologist and Latin Americanist Eduardo Andrés Sandoval¹ Forero, a social - critical researcher committed to social causes from the trench of decolonial research, symbolizes an academic initiative with a concise political stance «*Defense and liberation of the oppressed peoples*» an idea that would be structural throughout the work, which is a product of the collection of essays, academic articles and research reflections in the field of integral peace as a subject of study in the dynamics of our times.

Indeed, Sandoval's work exposes a discussion on the complexity of conflicts, interculturalism and decolonial thinking in the analysis of peace from the perspective of critical Latin American thinking, which implies advancing in the path of understanding the importance of education as a space for the constitution of the subject for social, political, economic and cultural life within the different geographies, contexts and experiences to build «*a world where many worlds fit*» (p.14).

The logic of the book is based on three central ideas:

The first, an analysis of the multiple systematic and societal violence that constitute a way of recognizing the objectivity/ subjectivity of the colonial product denominated Latin America, for that reason, considers it necessary to advance in

the bet by a type of *«integral peace»* active, nonviolent and with a critical thought typical of the region.

The second, an extremely important aspect is to recognize the mobilizing capacity of decolonial thinking, oriented to overcome the epistemic dilemmas about the forms and strategies that exist to generate knowledge through the process of research in social phenomena. Challenge of establishing a discussion on *the new paradigm* in the study for peace, based on the experience of territories, methods, methodologies, techniques and analysis in a horizontal, critical, propositive and multicausal way.

The third is to examine the epistemological process of decolonizing *«liberal hegemonic peace, imposed and pushed from above, by a perspective from below»*, that is, constructed from school, local, communities, families and the most oppressed areas of the territories in Latin America (p.17).

Other key features of the structure of the book are its proper distribution:

The first chapter entitled *«Studies for Peace»* describes the notes on peace, the theoretical vision of integral peace and its relation to democratic processes. The author offers a conceptual and methodological discussion on the content, principles and democratic political process of the indigenous movement in the construction of a pluricultural regime as an «alternative» bet from its own praxis to construct other forms of political organization.

In this way, the analysis of the State in Latin America is aimed at overcoming the constitutional scope, the normative perspective and the deficits to incorporate in a real and pragmatic way the rights of the indigenous peoples in the political recognition on the territory, the life, the land, the organization and the community forms of political participation. What implies a propositive criticism to overcome the legal question and move to a level where communities manage to build mechanisms of participation, self-determination and educational, economic and cultural particularly on the improvement of their material, spiritual and territorial conditions.

The second chapter, entitled *«Education for integral peace and peaceful coexistence»*, the conceptual discussion developed by Sandoval, starts from a profound critique of hegemonic peace, which has been conceived by elites, large economic sectors and traditional political structures, that is, those who above command, are thinking and acting in their own interests. Thus, it is part of recognizing that the «new» paradigm of peace comprehensiveness and its decolonial base becomes a long-awaited bet, which allows us to recognize how we could re-think without ignoring the above, but aimed at transforming the processes within school, family, church, institutions and the State, in order to look at the need for education as a space for liberation of the subject in his being, to do, to be and in particular the praxis of the political sense in the public (P.91).

The logic outlined by Sandoval in this chapter, refers us to generalities about the studies of integral peace where he mentions the conditions that make peace building impossible due to the context, the scene of violence and the conjunctural obstacles that limit the process of teaching, learning and the environment of harmony in the school.

In this way, the theoretical-conceptual aim is to reflect on the different forms of violence, the causes and the consequences that they generate on the subject, their social environment and the community tissue in the territory. It is a way of

recognizing the violent realities of the Latin American region and specifically of indigenous peoples, rural communities and social organizations that are the product of epistemic, political, cultural and religious violence, among others, which have been exercised by the institutions that shape the Mexican political reality as a particular experience.

In the third chapter, entitled «*Autonomous indigenous education for peace*», it constitutes an extremely important analysis in decolonial studies, since it takes up the experience of thinking of intercultural education as a space to decolonize peace, social relations and processes of political interaction on territory, life, communal goods and communities in their form of self-government.

The critical reflection of Sandoval crosses the need to go about constructing alternative ways of conceptualizing, theorizing and, where possible, approaching, under a horizontal methodology, education for peace with justice, freedom, democracy and dignity. Here, the contributions of decoloniality are of vital importance to show another way of facing democracy in the face of its structural problems: physical, cultural, environmental, symbolic violence, territorial robbery, undue political practices, government-narcotics relations and mining megaprojects, among others.

Therefore, the analysis of interculturality from decoloniality implies a commitment to make a critique of the current of Eurocentric thinking, one that is focused on conceiving, naturalizing and modeling empirical reality through theories, concepts and methodologies which are unfamiliar with the particularities of each context, such as the Eurocentric academic discourse, which is immersed in the logic of a colonial/ modern knowledge immersed in the political interaction of the system, the capitalist world at the service of transnational corporations, that is to say, the para-entrepreneurial states (p. 40).

A central contribution of this chapter is the recognition of the types of objective and subjective violence, that are destined to generate a consistent environment with the coloniality of thinking, doing, power, feeling and nature. This phenomenon becomes a task that can be overcome from decoloniality, under the slogan of re-thinking without ignoring the other, and propose actions, elements and processes for social transformation through popular knowledge, scientific and empirical traditional wisdom, based on the proposal of an ecology of knowledge.

Likewise, the fourth chapter entitled «*Collective Memory in Education for Peace*» is founded on recognizing memory as a space to constitute, re-construct and think from the experiences of the subject with the social world, if it becomes an initiative for interrelating memory with different perspectives such as: peace, human rights, education, pedagogy and therefore the criticism of the role played by memory in post-conflict situations or armed logic. The central axis of this section is identified with the moments in which violence and human rights violations are a source that constitutes history, memory and the alive past in Latin America, giving elements to think about the re-writing of collective, oral, narrative historical memory, without leaving aside the processes of analyzing *peace for peace* from alive memory.

The theoretical dynamics that Sandoval exposes, immerses us in the base of an education for liberation, following the proposal of a Latin Americanist as was the Master Paulo Freire in the field of pedagogy as an actor of reflection product of the political relationship between the teacher and the student. The proposal that

exposes to us lies in promoting a knowledge from below based on social memory and its significance in everyday life, and from that space to consolidate the notion of a critical-analytical memory and propositional heritage from praxis of social actors.

Another of the central contributions that we can find throughout the book is the argument for recognizing collective memory as a field of opportunity that articulates the symbolic, territorial, political, cultural and economic elements, which are the basis for consolidating memory and to counteract the state's policy of forgetting, which means recognizing phenomena or profound moments such as violence, xenophobia, racism and voices excluded and silenced by the great transnational, hegemonic and Eurocentric capital of knowledge in this time.

The last chapter named «*Pacifist Empowerment for Other Possible Worlds*» is a product of the extensive discussion on pacifist empowerment and the approach to theoretically reconsider the understanding of this concept, is the sample by analyzing the different currents, schools and ways of “operationalizing” this category within the studies for peace, the epistemological difference presented by Sandoval is a product of the decolonial turn due to its critical and self-critical content that has with social research in the face of the study of themes, concepts and theories that it has submitted to the logic of a Eurocentric language.

In that same understanding, the critical interculturality has, as interest, to generate an opening of the knowledge in front of the «*other*» or the «*others*» and as this point of reference invites us to overcome the tensions of the eurocentric world to give way to discussions from the communities, indigenous peoples and organizations that seek from their praxis to construct «*alternative*» ways of conceiving power, politics, economics and societal processes.

In conclusion, Sandoval's book «*Education for Integral Peace - Memory, Interculturality and Decoloniality*» is incorporated in critical/ propositional research in a horizontal framework of knowledge, which means a theoretical, conceptual and methodological path to overcome the discussion of eurocentrated knowledge, and move to the current of a sociology of emergencies, the ecology of knowledge and the «*raison d'être*» of our America. The research carried out on decolonial studies, interculturalism and education for «*integral*» peace is the example of going beyond the processes/ results of an academic world characterized by the relation of an epistemic colonialism that excludes, denies or ignores the knowledge of the «*Another*» product of their own context, experience and everyday life over time.

In this sense, the invitation to read Sandoval's book is of utmost importance for research processes in the field of the indigenous movement, decoloniality, studies for peace and qualitative-horizontal research, a way to overcome Eurocentric knowledge and colonial period of our times by critical Latin American theory, the epistemologies of the south and the social processes of the actors coming from below are the pillar of discussion to construct theories, concepts, categories according to a praxis and transformation communities, groups and organizations that demand respect for their traditions, territory, autonomy and an alternative political proposal to conceive a «*good living*» or a «*better life*» for each family, subject and social space that can overcome the structural crisis slowly and civilizing our turbulent era.

Translated from Spanish by Dr. Kamel LAHMAR