

## Teachers and Violence in Córdoba, Colombia: A Look at Human Capabilities

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### SUMMARY

Colombian teachers are targets of victimizing acts that threaten fundamental rights and the development of human capabilities. This research sought to understand the impact on these rights and capabilities from the perspective of teachers who are victims of violence, specifically regarding protection, affection, identity, participation, leisure, recreation, and freedom in the department of Córdoba, Colombia. A qualitative methodology was adopted, based on a hermeneutic phenomenological design. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten teachers from different locations in this region of the country. The results reveal serious impacts on the personal, family, and social spheres, which act as limitations on achieving optimal levels of satisfaction of axiological needs. These impacts include unsafe environments, deteriorated social relationships, fragmented family ties, a tendency to retreat into silence, and limited participation due to fear of disagreement and/or retaliation; restrictions on enjoyment, recreation, and healthy coexistence. It is concluded that, despite the emotional, psychological and family effects suffered, it is essential to recognize their memories as part of a strategy for building peace from the school in territories affected by violence in this country.

**Keywords:** teachers, human development, human capabilities, violence

### INTRODUCTION

The ideal of living in a free society, stripped of all elements that impede the full exercise of fundamental rights and the satisfaction of human needs, is one of the pillars championed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2011) to defend education as a weapon against social discord and in support of the values enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This is because, while significant progress has been made in recent decades, it is also evident that schools continue to be targets of armed conflict, with teachers among those most affected, carrying out their work amidst silence, fear, and threats.

The importance of investigating this issue lies in understanding not only the different forms of violence suffered by schools, education, and the educational community, but

essentially the violation of rights, such as the right to life, integrity, and freedom of teachers, according to the categorization suggested by the Colombian Federation of Education Workers - Fecode - (2019) for the case of Colombia.

Globally, there are important studies that enrich the comprehensive view of this problem; according to Páez (2018), for example, the cases of teachers in Rwanda, Spain, Israel, Chile, and Argentina stand out, revealing the profound impacts suffered on the political subjectivity and memory of these actors, transforming their role from transmitters to agents of resistance and social reconstruction, through ethical-political strategies for teaching, resistance, and collective healing, generally through the teaching of history and the construction of memories in the classroom, fostering ethical reflection, critical thinking, and democracy for the non-repetition of the horror of violence and the healing of the wounds caused by it.

An examination of this reality in Colombia, and in Córdoba in particular, reveals that teachers in this department, along with those in Antioquia and Chocó, are among the most vulnerable and affected sectors in territories with the greatest presence of illegal armed groups in the country (Romero, 2011; Romero, 2013). However, the study by Bautista and González (2019), It shows the adversities in which rural teachers work as a result of the armed conflict and the structural violence exercised by both the State and the Ministry of Education and the Territorial Education Secretariats by not providing them with appropriate working conditions, based on the analysis of the training and retention conditions of the teaching staff and managers of fifteen rural areas affected by the armed conflict and multidimensional poverty, proposing strategies to solve them through the educational and governmental bodies that should be involved in such a process.

Likewise, the Ministry of National Education (2018) indicates that between 2013 and 2015, 65 schools were directly affected by the armed conflict, describing how they were targeted and used as “barracks, trenches, torture centers, proselytizing sites, and recruitment grounds for young people.” Similarly, Fecode (2019) reports that a large number of Colombian teachers face threats, harassment, arbitrary detention, torture, kidnapping, attacks, and even close encounters with death. This organization reported approximately 6,119 violations of the right to life, liberty, and personal integrity of unionized teachers between 1986 and 2016, noting that 3,170 of these were classified as threats.

While some of these studies focus on revealing the psychological damage caused to teachers and students, and others on describing the deterioration of the community fabric and the destruction of school infrastructure (Lizarralde, 2015; National Center for Historical Memory, 2017; Cuesta and Cabra, 2021), the place given to the conditions for the satisfaction of axiological needs: protection, affection, identity, participation, leisure and recreation as guarantors of a healthy life in full freedom that contribute to strategies for building peace, has been little relevant, which, according to Max-Neef, Elizalde and Hopenhayn (2010), are inherent aspects of human development.

From this perspective, the everyday world is experienced differently when one not only seeks to satisfy basic needs, but also seeks the articulation of human beings with each other and with the social environment; hence, when the subject has the privilege of actively participating in their life trajectories and has real opportunities, they will have greater possibilities to develop.

In this sense, recovering the memory of the Colombian teacher is an important exercise in shaping new approaches to human development; because weaving them together reveals interconnected stories that represent a group that has suffered and continues to suffer the consequences of the armed conflict, which has left deep marks on the teaching community, whose impacts can be seen in their ways of being, having, feeling, and living together.

On this point, De Castro (2015) invites us to examine unknown memories, those forgotten stories that tell many unfinished tales, or even those never told at all. Among these are the experiences of teachers who have worked or are working in territories of armed conflict, where different powers and interests have silenced thousands of them. Thus, the need to recognize this shared reality, which throughout history has affected the full development of the human capacities of a great number of educators, becomes crucial.

Addressing the link between teachers and violence within the framework of human development in complex territories like the department of Córdoba in Colombia is increasingly urgent. This region ranks second on the Caribbean coast in multidimensional poverty figures, at 34.7%, with extreme poverty at 11.1%, and is considered one of the most significant epicenters of the armed conflict, which displaced approximately 342,364 people between 1984 and 2018 (National Administrative Department of Statistics - DANE, 2020). Furthermore, it is categorized as one of the areas with the highest levels of violence stemming from the armed conflict, which, according to the Center for Research and Popular Education - CINEP (2016), is linked to the limited presence of the State, geographical characteristics conducive to the operation of illegal drug trafficking routes, and land tenure disputes.

On this matter, the Association of Teachers and Education Workers in Córdoba (Ademacor) denounces the murder of 17 teachers between 2010 and 2019; and 65 threats during 2018 and 2019, with the coastal area and the south of the department being the territories most affected.

Therefore, this study proposes the following objective: to understand the changes perceived by the teacher affected by violence in Córdoba with respect to opportunities for: protection, affection, identity, participation, leisure, recreation, and freedom.

## METHODOLOGY

The study opted for a qualitative methodology given the nature of the research problem, which focused on understanding in depth the changes perceived by threatened teachers regarding opportunities for protection, affection, identity, participation, and leisure. A hermeneutic phenomenological design was employed, which, according to Fuster (2019), begins with a preliminary stage or clarification of assumptions to gather lived experience. This involves obtaining data perceived by the subjects from diverse sources and in various ways, reflecting on this experience, and writing and writing about it.

The sampling strategy was based on non-probabilistic convenience criteria and took into consideration the rigorous, ethical, pragmatic and strategic parameters suggested by Hernández and Mendoza (2018), regarding the installed capacity to collect and analyze the number of cases according to the available resources, the number of participants with the ability to answer the questions, the ability to suspend the inclusion of cases when no

new information is being contributed to the process and the accessibility of the participants.

The selection criteria for participants were : being teachers in public schools in the department of Córdoba (Colombia), having received threats, harassment or any other expression of violence from any group outside the law, and not having any physical or psychological limitations that prevent them from answering the questions.

As a conceptual tool to identify human needs and the forms of satisfaction and/or impact, the Human Scale Development matrix of Max-Neef and Hopenhayn (1994) was adopted, because it crosses nine fundamental human needs (subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, leisure, creation, identity, freedom) with four existential categories (being, having, doing, being/interacting), through satisfiers (actions, objects, relationships) in different cultural contexts (Table 1)

Table 1. Axiological and existential needs

Axiological needs (human values)	Existential needs			Forms, places and times of the effects
	Be	Have	Do	
Protection	Self-care, confidence, emotions	Safety, health,	Interact, cooperate	Workplace, environment, home, transport, mobility
Keen	Self-esteem, respect, emotions	Time, space and resources	Human relations	School, community, family, home
Stake	Inclusion, commitment, solidarity, emotions	Time, space and resources	Social and/or community activities	School, community, guilds, association
Leisure	Tranquility, rest, reflection, emotions	Time, space and resource	Sport, game	Holidays, types of games and recreation
Creation	Innovation, imagination	Means and working conditions	Reforms, standard designs, practices, elements, pedagogical strategies	Pedagogical practice, techniques, teaching and learning methods
Identity	vocation, habits, roles and customs, responsibility, differences	Resources	Works, social, school and community events	School, community, institution

Freedom	Autonomy, will	To have goods, elements, material conditions	Social practice, freedom of thought, professorship	School, Community, Family, Institution
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*Note.* Adapted from Max, M. *Human Scale Development . Development Dialogue* , 1994, pp. 9–93.

### **Vertical Axis: Axiological Needs (Human Values)**

Among the data collection and analysis techniques, semi-structured interviews and social mapping were prioritized. The interview guides were reviewed by three experts and tested in a field to confirm their understanding of the phenomenon.

Each teacher was scheduled for a home visit to be informed of the study's purpose. If the response was positive, the informed consent form was read aloud, outlining the participant's right to answer or not answer the questions, to remain in the study for as long as they wished, or to withdraw from the process if they experienced any kind of social or psychological pressure. Once the teacher indicated their agreement with these terms, they signed the document.

Regarding bias control, the principal investigator personally carried out the fieldwork and visited each of the participants at their home, in order to discuss the questionnaire, explaining the questions in detail and clearing up any doubts; as well as arranging spaces and times to ensure that the participant felt comfortable with the process.

The systematization process comprised three moments, following the guidelines of Bardin (2002), which are: i) the pre-analysis phase, with in-depth readings of the social representations constructed through workshops and focus groups, which allowed the selection of the most significant fragments; ii) the exploratory phase, which yielded the identification of categories and subcategories, which were then transformed into conceptual and contextual units; iii) finally, the interpretation was developed based on the a priori theoretical elements and those of an emergent nature that facilitated the comprehensive understanding of the proposed analytical axis.

The research was submitted for evaluation by the competent collegiate body designated by the University of Córdoba, Colombia, for this type of study. This body assessed potential biases and issued recommendations to ensure confidentiality, the handling of primary data, and the processing of information. Accordingly, strategies were developed to control these biases, including the principal investigator assigning a pseudonym to each professor and the removal of personal data throughout the entire process.

## RESULTS

The teachers participating in this study were victims of threats between 2011 and 2019 in the municipalities of Tierralta (Upper Sinú subregion), Puerto Escondido (Coastal subregion), Montería (Central subregion), and San Pelayo (Middle Sinú subregion). They also share some sociodemographic characteristics, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Sociodemographic distribution of the study subjects**

<b>SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHERS</b>
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Teachers	Age	Region	Municipality	Area	Type of violence	Armed group
Sofía Llorente	30 years	Middle Sinú	Saint Pelayo	Rural	Harassment Threat	A stranger
Victoria Petro	27 years old	Stop but	Tierralta	Rural	Threat	Guerrilla Paramilitaries
Carolina Burgos	27 years old	Center	Montería	Rural	Threat	paramilitaries
July Mountains	29 years old	Center	Montería	Rural	Threat	Paramilitaries
Mauricio Lora	28 years old	Waterfront	Puerto Escondido	Rural	Arbitrary detention Threat	Paramilitaries
Martín González	39 years old	Waterfront	Puerto Escondido	Rural	Arbitrary detention Threat	Paramilitaries
Manuel Álvarez	41 years old	waterfront	Puerto Escondido	Rural	Threat	Paramilitaries
Peter Negretes	45 years old	Waterfront	Puerto Escondido	Rural	Arbitrary detention Threat	Paramilitaries
Laura Rosso	29 years old	Waterfront	Puerto Escondido	Rural	Arbitrary detention Threat	Paramilitaries
Rafael Suarez	26 years old	Center	Montería	Rural	Threat	Paramilitaries

*Note.* Taken from Enamorado Gutiérrez, Angélica. *Implications of the armed conflict on the development of the human needs of threatened teachers in the Department of Córdoba*. Master's Thesis, University of Córdoba, 2022, [repositorio.unicordoba.edu.co/server/api/core/bitstreams/1c24b77c-1a34-482a-8dbf-46f1fe326eeb/content](https://repositorio.unicordoba.edu.co/server/api/core/bitstreams/1c24b77c-1a34-482a-8dbf-46f1fe326eeb/content)

The results obtained were organized according to the categories of protection, affection, identity, participation and leisure, as follows:

#### **Protection: without shelter in an environment of anxiety and fear**

The participants recognized their work environment as limiting in satisfying their need for protection when simply *being there* becomes a source of anxiety and constant fear. Thus, the school context transforms into an unsafe place that stifles opportunities for human development by experiencing threatening situations, feelings of persecution, and stress; feelings that transcend the school walls and become part of the teacher's daily life. Some of their accounts confirm this:

*"In my social environment I felt unprotected, I felt threatened, I wasn't able to go out on the street, I didn't dare get on a motorcycle with a stranger, and that lasted for a long time, Sofia."*

*"I still can't go out without my sunglasses (tears in her eyes). I swear, I always try to hide behind them. I can't go to Cereté. When I pass through Cereté, I get a feeling of emptiness here in my throat, like a fright, Victoria."*

The teacher's life changed abruptly, impacting both their *actions* and their *being*, because the feeling of helplessness forces them to take self-protective measures and always feel insecure:

*"I didn't answer calls from any number I didn't recognize. When I left the house, I was very discreet. I always went out with my husband; I never went out alone. I always tried to be in places where there were a lot of people." Sofia"*

The social constructs developed by the participants, based on their experience of living in an environment that undermines their opportunities for development, reveal the school and community spaces as targets of criminal activity by illegal armed groups. Sometimes, the perpetrator enters the school community and assumes a dominant role. The experiences of teachers reveal an interruption in their personal growth process, as armed actors commit acts of violence against them, jeopardizing their security. In this sense, the main changes are reflected in the configuration of their daily, family, and social lives, hindering their ability to effectively enjoy their rights and feel protected.

### **Affection: new environments of isolation and mistrust**

The need for affection transforms, and distrust of those surrounding the teacher increases. Teachers begin to cultivate feelings of fear and isolation, feeling stigmatized for being the person with problems who is often left alone in these environments. This generates other changes in the teachers' lives regarding how they relate to their surroundings, such as becoming more cautious, inhibiting themselves from expressing ideas, and avoiding involvement in the social problems of their educational environment. Their narratives reflect this:

*"You hold back from expressing your ideas, suddenly you arrive somewhere and they stigmatize you because they think: she's been threatened from somewhere, and if she's been threatened, she's a revolutionary, she's the one with the problem, Laura."*

Regarding family relationships, these change as the feeling of worry about the loss of life becomes constant, and the enjoyment of different spaces for social interaction is limited

due to either distancing or overprotection. Relationships with friends and coworkers are often affected as some question the credibility of the events. Some of their narratives express this as follows:

*“When you get home, it’s impossible to think about anything else, it’s impossible not to mix your family life with your work life, but it really reaches the personal level; emotionally, no one understands it until they go through that process. Then some people tell you you’re exaggerating, others worry a lot, like, for example, my mom cried a lot during that time, **Laura**.”*

Consequently, an involuntary distancing occurs, since it is the same situation, the fear and the forced isolation, that contribute to keeping educators away from their friends and some of their family members for a long time.

### **Identity and participation: “They silence you or they take away your fear”**

The need for identity, expressed in habits, roles, and customs, is ultimately affected when teachers change their working methods. Similarly, the fulfillment of the need for participation, such as responsibilities, obligations, and duties, is affected when teachers cease to perform a significant part of their work, such as community engagement. Some of their narratives express this as follows:

*“I have a different way of working, so to speak; I’m not as attached to people as I used to be. I simply go and do my job, always giving my best, that’s for sure, but I’m not the way I used to be. It’s something that’s no longer in me, I can’t change it, that distrust I feel towards people. I relate to the students in a similar way, but not the same. It’s not like before, not anymore. I’m not as involved with social issues as I used to be, **Rafael**.”*

Another aspect perceived by educators that affects their identity concerns their image as teachers. Many feel that this image may have been damaged by misunderstandings and false rumors circulating within the communities where the incidents occurred, directly impacting their good name and reputation. This is compounded by the generalizations that have been made about teachers who are threatened, portraying them as confrontational or, conversely, as threatening themselves to obtain a transfer.

These labels affect the educator's identity; satisfactions derived from *having*, expressed in their values, norms, roles, and historical memory, are subject to social questioning. And from the perspective of *being*, satisfactions such as relevance and difference are distorted, as the teacher is framed within a misleading imaginary that misrepresents their realities and experiences. Some of their narratives express this as follows:

*“Wherever I was, I’m recognized for that. Among the teaching staff and the parents, they know me as the teacher who was threatened, as the teacher who had the problem with that man. Here, where I am now, I arrived with that image of being outspoken, someone who says everything. But no, I’ve tried to present myself as someone who isn’t confrontational, someone who is on the border, yes, but not confrontational, **Carolina**.”*

Regarding the changes experienced in the need for identity and participation from *doing* and *being*, the following stand out as satisfiers: The ability to participate in spaces of

interaction and belonging, such as associations and communities, to propose, share, disagree, dialogue, and express opinions. The results of this study show contrasting perceptions among teachers, with some experiencing these experiences negatively and others positively. Regarding the negative aspects, some teachers stopped actively participating in their schools and at the union level for fear of being observed or persecuted. Some of their narratives express this:

*“At school, I do participate, for example, in an event or something like that, but it's something specific to the school, but I don't participate in community events. You always know that when teachers meet, there are always people watching who's there and things like that. I don't participate in the **Victoria marches.**”*

Regarding the positive changes, some educators express that having gone through this experience strengthened some of their convictions, such as their sense of justice and a greater awareness of the country's social problems related to the effects of the armed conflict on the civilian population. This new way of seeing and feeling leads the teachers, despite the harm they suffered, to consider their experience something for which they feel not regret, but rather indignation.

At this point, some educators experienced personal growth, *such* as improved self-esteem, greater confidence in their convictions, and increased motivation to fight for their ideals. This, in turn, has motivated them to participate more actively in union activities and within their schools and communities. This was evident in some of their accounts:

*“I feel more confident and stronger. My personality has strengthened me, boosted my self-esteem, and strengthened my confidence. I don't feel insecure about speaking up or making demands. In that respect, it gave me a certain sense of security. I'm starting to be more active in the union. After that, thanks to their support, I'm truly grateful, and I'm more active now. And at the institution where I work, I also try to be more active in things, ” **Carolina said.***

### **Leisure and recreation: present and future impacts**

Among the changes experienced in the need for leisure and recreation, teachers highlight satisfactions such as tranquility, humor, and a carefree attitude. However, when experiencing a threat, they report that these satisfactions have been disrupted, generating feelings such as anxiety, unease, and constant fear. This has led to consequences such as sleep disturbances and difficulty spending time with friends and family, seriously affecting their peace of mind. Some of their narratives express this as follows:

*“It gave me depression, anxiety, and a lot of insomnia. I'm not one to go out much, but I used to go to the park with the girls, and I really like to do sports, walk, and things like that from time to time. But now, I do very few outdoor activities; I'm mostly stuck at home, always at home, **Sofia.**”*

Regarding the changes experienced in the need for leisure and recreation—from *having*, *doing*, and *being*—satisfactors such as relaxing, having fun, playing, being in social spaces, and having free time stand out. However, following a threat, these were affected as routines changed. Some suspended leisure activities such as playing sports or going to the gym for a long time or even permanently. Recreational and leisure activities involving

family members were also affected, as fear led some teachers to refrain from visiting or interacting with other family members and friends outside their homes. This is reflected in their narratives:

*"I like sports, so I tried not to go to sports practices for fear of being seen alone and getting hurt. I still do it, I still take care of myself, **Manuel.**"*

*"I always played soccer with friends, and I stopped doing that in **Julio.**"*

### **Freedom: fears that chain us**

When teachers experience a threat, certain limitations arise, such as the ability to express themselves freely. Some teachers report feeling inhibited from expressing emotions, opinions, and ideas, feeling restricted from discussing certain topics. Their narratives corroborate this:

*"It greatly affects prudence; you don't know if you're being prudent, but you're always questioning whether what you say might please people or not, even if you say it, you're always questioning that inside, **Laura**."*

*"It did affect me, because I stopped going to certain places, because sometimes they say that these outlaw groups here in Córdoba are in different parts, so I wouldn't go anymore. I want to go to such and such a place, to a beach, I couldn't go because one has to avoid those things, **Martín.**"*

Regarding the changes experienced in the need for freedom, both in terms of *having* and *being*, satisfiers such as the ability to possess and access certain rights like other people are distinguished. Teachers express limitations not only in their ability to express themselves but also in their freedom of movement, thereby affecting satisfiers of *being*. Some teachers report avoiding certain places, such as those where the events occurred, those with a strong presence of illegal armed groups, or simply places they used to frequent for leisure activities.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The central purpose of the study was to understand the changes perceived by teachers affected by violence in relation to opportunities for satisfying their needs for protection, affection, identity, participation, leisure, recreation, and freedom. Within this framework, the first analytical category, *"Protection: without shelter in an environment of anxiety and fear,"* marked a trajectory of defenselessness, fear, and transformations in the teacher's daily habits and routines. The fact that they travel along paths marked by violence, many of them serving as a single route to and from schools, encapsulates the teaching profession in scenarios where teachers encounter death daily.

These initial findings are analogous to Solano and Trujillo (2021), who identified situations of rights violations among Mexican teachers on drug trafficking routes that threaten the enjoyment of protective scenarios suitable for human development, and to the results of Sánchez and Quintero (2020), when they warn of the capacity of fear to

expand into other geographical and symbolic spaces that reaffirm the image of terror that pursues them along paths, trails or highways.

Authors such as Sen (2000), Max-Neef (1994), and Nussbaum (2000) make significant contributions to this discussion because they have dedicated a large part of their academic life to addressing human development from a subject-centered perspective; although they present disagreements regarding the use of terms such as capabilities instead of needs among other aspects, the interest is to motivate the study of those aspects of great value to people such as feeling protected, for example, being consistent with the findings of this study.

The need for affection among teachers affected by violence translates into *new environments of isolation and distrust* when they perceive a change in this dimension of their lives. Social relationships are woven from new logics after the threatened individual is labeled as a "conflictive" being who must be kept isolated from the rest of the group to avoid provoking a violent reaction from the perpetrators; living in a state of emotional numbness limits the capacity for participation when the passion and will required to question the problems of the school environment are minimized (Max-Neef, 1994) , or in the case of Amarilla (2020) , many of these teachers do not register the production of new ideas to avoid being singled out.

The findings in the affect category are also linked to the ideas of Max-Neef, Elizalde, and Hopenhayn (1986), who explain that when an individual experiences a threat, their family and social life is affected . This can occur because it creates an atmosphere of worry and fear within the family, because the emotional burden of work is brought home to create unpleasant environments, or because the situation itself forces them to distance themselves from some family members, friends, or coworkers. Regarding this, the authors National Institute of Mental Health (2020) indicate that the effects of violence on the individual may include stress, feelings of fear, anxiety, and depression.

Another aspect consulted dealt with the need for identity and participation, labeled under the category: *"they silence you or they take away your fear,"* From this, it was established that the changes perceived by the teacher occur in terms of receptiveness, commitment, passion, and willingness when they abandon expressions of spontaneity, familiarity, and participation. All of this limits the teacher's ability to fulfill their role in creating spaces for learning and interaction.

Teachers who are victims of violence are silenced, and their role as active agents in constructing cross-cutting interpretations of school reality is curtailed. On this point, Echavarría et al. (2020) consider that one of the best strategies for safeguarding one's life is silence after recognizing danger when constructing narratives that diverge from the plans of illegal armed groups. In this sense, Sánchez (2018) observes a shift in teachers' daily practices, where expressions of resistance and participation are fueled by the underlying desires in projective memories based on hope for a better future.

In this context, questions were raised about the need for leisure and recreation: *" present and future impacts"*, It has been found that teachers who are victims of armed conflict

transform their perspective on the enjoyment and appreciation of this vital dimension for human development. Authors such as Sen, Max, and Nussbaum agree with the thesis that links leisure activities with the possibility of achieving a dignified life (Álzate & García, 2016). However, being in a situation of constant threat produces feelings of persecution that persist over time and limit the development of recreational or leisure activities (Amarilla, 2020).

The analytical category "*Freedom: fears that chain us down*," This translates the changes perceived by teachers affected by the armed conflict into the enjoyment of moving freely without fear of being prosecuted, persecuted, or intimidated. According to Sen (2000), human development is a process linked to the capacity to decide on the life one aspires to or desires within the framework of achieving freedoms. Therefore, when this principle is curtailed, the guarantees for accessing this right are limited. Along these lines, Max-Neef, Elizalde, and Hopenhayn (1993) state that freedom is one of the fundamental existential needs of every human being.

Thinking of freedom in terms of being able to express opinions and feelings and to enhance the capacity for autonomy is to aspire to one of the highest ideals of the individual. From this perspective, being free is a way of opening up alternatives to new narratives of conflict, but the lack of this freedom privileges fear by chaining together various forms of suffering that reduce one's capacity to work and manage emotions (Agbor, 2022), as expressed by Echavarría et al (2020), after stating that suffering resides in the soul and becomes complicit with pain as a mechanism to silence the voice of the teacher who struggles daily to regain meaning in their life.

Understanding the study's findings reveals a set of collective memories, as their construction does not occur in isolated individuals, but rather within networks of social relationships, groups, institutions, and cultures (Jelin, 2002). To this extent, each educator's memory reflects a collective memory imbued with experiences that have profoundly impacted their quality of life. These educators have faced threatening situations in complex territories such as Córdoba, where armed conflict is a significant factor.

Their voices allow us to understand the scope and trajectories that teachers have faced in their work within violent contexts. Their memoirs thus become a valuable research tool for understanding their experiences, not only as the narrators but also as individuals with a critical perspective on this reality, which is embedded in historical and political moments in the country's history (Páez, 2018). Understanding their perspectives, feelings, the impact they have had, and their experiences in general broadens the scope of research to delve deeper into this problem affecting numerous educational institutions located in territories marked by violence and armed conflict.

Likewise, the evidence presented highlights the importance of meeting the needs of individuals, especially those populations such as teachers who have been victims of armed conflict. The inability to do so leads to the failure of life projects, causing personal harm such as resentment, apathy, changes in their ways of being, seeing, and feeling, and even the loss of their self-esteem (Max, 1994). Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen

educational policies in conflict-affected territories to mitigate the impact on the teaching population (Salif, 2024), through the adaptation of educational content and materials that promote an understanding of tolerance and the reconstruction of the social fabric ( Muthanna et al., 2022).

Among the final considerations, several aspects stand out. On the one hand, new development perspectives focused on human beings highlight the real needs of people, especially those susceptible to becoming victims of scourges such as armed violence in complex social contexts. This development does not clearly depend on physical goods, but rather underlies the very nature of being able to enjoy social developments such as: having safe environments where being free implies being able to express ideas, participate in relevant spaces, have access to safety mechanisms and networks, enjoy good health, and be able to interact with those around them without fear, among other aspects of human-scale development proposed by authors such as Manfred Max-Neef.

Furthermore, the armed conflict permeates educational, community, social, and family environments, as various narratives confirm. The teachers' voices thus become living memories that reflect how every aspect inherent to human development has been seriously affected for the rest of their lives. Likewise, their memories represent the feelings and needs of an entire community that yearns for the collective creation of peaceful environments that will allow them to expand their freedoms and opportunities.

Hence, the need to continue investigating other unknown memories that this study did not manage to investigate, such as the impact on the quality of education and local regional development caused by armed conflict in those teachers who work in conflict territories, under the assumption that teachers not only teach, but that their role as peace and social fabric managers transforms them into actors with political identity and deep community commitment, developing pedagogical creativity and technological innovation, adapting teaching to challenging contexts, using available resources and mobilizing families and students through the articulation of the school with the community.

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