

## PSYCHOSOCIAL ACTION WITH WOMEN VICTIMS OF SOCIOPOLITICAL VIOLENCE IN COLOMBIA

### ACCIÓN PSICOSOCIAL CON MUJERES VÍCTIMAS DE VIOLENCIA SOCIOPOLÍTICA EN COLOMBIA

### AÇÃO PSICOSSOCIAL COM MULHERES VÍTIMAS DE VIOLÊNCIA SOCIOPOLÍTICA NA COLÔMBIA

Ángela María MARTÍNEZ CHAPARRO  
Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia

Received date: 10.VI.2016

Reviewed date: 12.XII.2016

Accepted date: 17.I.2017

#### KEY WORDS:

psychosocial action  
women  
victims  
sociopolitical  
violence  
community  
psychology

**ABSTRACT:** Psychosocial action with women in contexts of sociopolitical violence in Colombia is a challenge for institutions and academia, it constitutes a source of reflection for social action located. This possibility of thinking about the task from a critical perspective calls for the inescapable need to systematize the experiences to learn from them (Ghiso, 1998), to return to praxis to build new knowledge and new ways of acting. The reflection on the experience during the process of psychosocial accompaniment constitutes a source of knowledge and reflective practices oriented to the construction of theoretical-methodological models from the praxis itself. From there, the systematization of experiences of psychosocial accompaniment with victims of sociopolitical violence in the city of Medellín was raised as a research interest, with the intention of understanding the emerging dimensions, from the characterization and analysis of its contents, events, components and changes.

The approach of inquiry was placed in a socio-critical proposal of qualitative research, assuming an ontological and epistemological conception of a subject agent and constructor of reality. From the case study it was sought to recover the axiological, theoretical and methodological dimensions, emerging from the participants' narratives (community and professionals) of a community action process with victims of sociopolitical violence in the city of Medellín. The results of the study raise the need to promote narratives of agency, solidarity and community clinic practices that facilitate individual, group and community empowerment in the processes of psychosocial action with, for and from a gender perspective.

CONTACT WITH THE AUTHORS: Ángela María Martínez Chaparro. [Angela.Martinez@campusucc.edu.co](mailto:Angela.Martinez@campusucc.edu.co) Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia.

<p><b>PALABRAS CLAVE:</b> acción psicosocial mujeres víctimas violencia sociopolítica psicología comunitaria</p>	<p><b>RESUMEN:</b> La acción psicosocial con mujeres en contextos de violencia sociopolítica en Colombia es un reto para las instituciones y la academia, se constituye en fuente de reflexión para la acción social situada. Esta posibilidad de pensar sobre el quehacer desde una mirada crítica convoca a la ineludible necesidad de sistematizar las experiencias para aprender de ellas (Ghiso, 1998), de volver sobre la praxis para construir nuevos conocimientos y nuevas formas de actuación. La reflexión sobre la experiencia durante el proceso de acompañamiento psicosocial se constituye en una fuente constructora de conocimientos y prácticas reflexivas orientadas a la construcción de modelos teórico -metodológicos desde la praxis misma. Desde ahí se planteó como interés investigativo la sistematización de experiencias de acompañamiento psicosocial con víctimas de la violencia sociopolítica en la ciudad de Medellín, con la intención de comprender las dimensiones emergentes, desde la caracterización y el análisis de sus contenidos, acontecimientos, componentes y cambios suscitados.</p> <p>El enfoque de indagación se situó en una propuesta socio crítica de la investigación cualitativa, asumiendo una concepción ontológica y epistemológica de un sujeto agente y constructor de realidad. Desde el estudio de caso se buscó recuperar las dimensiones axiológicas, teóricas y metodológicas, emergentes en narrativas de los participantes (comunidad y profesionales) de un proceso de acción comunitaria con víctimas de la violencia sociopolítica en la ciudad de Medellín. Los resultados del estudio plantean la necesidad de fomentar narrativas de agenciamiento, solidaridad y prácticas en clínica comunitaria que faciliten el empoderamiento individual, grupal y comunitario en los procesos de acción psicosocial con, para y desde un enfoque de género.</p>
<p><b>PALAVRAS-CHAVE:</b> ação psicossocial mulheres vítimas violência sociopolítica psicologia comunitária</p>	<p><b>RESUMO:</b> A ação psicossocial com mulheres em contextos de violência sociopolítica na Colômbia é um desafio para as instituições e a academia, e constitui-se em fonte de reflexão para a ação social situada. Esta possibilidade de pensar sobre a tarefa desde uma visão crítica, convoca a inadiável necessidade de sistematizar as experiências para aprender delas (Ghiso, 1998), de voltar sobre a práxis para construir novos conhecimentos e novas formas de atuação. A reflexão sobre a experiência durante o processo de acompanhamento psicossocial se constitui em uma fonte construtora de conhecimentos e práticas reflexivas orientadas à construção de modelos teórico-metodológicos desde a práxis em si. Desde então se propôs como interesse investigativo a sistematização de experiências de acompanhamento psicossocial com vítimas da violência sociopolítica na cidade de Medellín, com a intenção de compreender as dimensões emergentes, desde a caracterização e a análise dos seus conteúdos, acontecimentos, componentes e mudanças suscitadas.</p> <p>O enfoque de indagação foi situado numa proposta sócio crítica da pesquisa qualitativa, assumindo uma concepção ontológica e epistemológica de um sujeito agente e construtor de realidade. Desde o estudo de caso, procurou-se recuperar as dimensões axiológicas, teóricas e metodológicas, emergentes em narrativas dos participantes (comunidade e profissionais) de um processo de ação comunitária com vítimas da violência sociopolítica na cidade de Medellín. Os resultados do estudo propõem a necessidade de fomentar narrativas de agenciamento, solidariedade e em clínica comunitária que facilitem a empoderamento individual, grupal e comunitário nos processos de ação psicossocial com, para e desde um enfoque de gênero.</p>

## 1. Introduction

The contemporary world, liable to multicultural tensions, seems to need models of psychosocial action linked to the contexts, problems and community resources present in the specific sociocultural settings where the subjects live and develop themselves. “The scientific standards that fit a culture, do not necessarily respond efficiently to the problems that arise elsewhere” (Alveano & Farías, 2011, p. 1), in this sense, it is necessary in the social action, the construction of models of approach constituted from a situated knowledge perspective, that rescues the particularities of the environment, social, economic, political and historical conditions in which the problems and the own resources for their approach emerge (Pujol & Montenegro, 2003).

Reflecting on professional practices becomes an imperative in the knowledge construction and the generation of emancipating community actions, actions that must start from the experiences that professionals and communities acquire in this dialogical relationship and that are developed through participation and involvement from themselves in the processes, as proposed by the Latin American movement that from popular education and action-participatory research promotes spaces for reflection on socio-educational projects from an episteme of action and in the horizon of a critical pedagogy (Messina & Osorio, 2016; Corona & Kaltmeier, 2012). The learning that emerges in this interrelation between professionals and community becomes the source of the scientific and applied development of a discipline. In this sense, the research group “Educación y Desarrollo” from

the Psychology Faculty of the Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia has been conducting research aimed at reviewing experiences in the community field, specifically in relation to the accompaniment of victims of sociopolitical violence as an input for reflection on the implications of psychosocial action in contexts of conflict and post-conflict, a topic that other research indicated as imperative in the reconstruction of the social fabric and the construction of peaceful environments (Alvarán, García, Gil, Caballer & Flores, 2011).

During the last decades a multiplicity of proposals for “psychosocial intervention” with victims of socio-political violence have been presented in the city of Medellín-Colombia, each one with a particular nuance according to the entity that leads the development of it. Within these proposals are found and designed different strategies of psychosocial approach oriented to the reconstruction of the social fabric and the emotional recovery of the victims. (Morales, Hincapié, & Martínez, 2008). The possibility of experience during the process of psychosocial accompaniment is a source of knowledge and reflective practice subject of research that allows progress in the construction and redefinition of theoretical-methodological models from the praxis itself. From there, the current study considers the emerging dimensions in processes of psychosocial accompaniment with women victims of sociopolitical violence, with the objective of characterizing the approaches and components of community action constructed in this practice.

In Colombia, gender violence is a violence rooted in the hegemonic discourse of a patriarchal and androcentric culture that subordinates women and establishes various forms of domination, marginalization and naturalization of exclusionary practices against women (Bluter, 2007; Linares & Sierra, 2014). “In the context of Colombian violence, in addition to suffering the macho and patriarchal intimidation of daily life, like children, the main victims of war” (Cadavid, 2014, p. 304).

Women have been one of the population groups most affected by the armed conflict in Colombia, according to the number of the Unified Victims Registry (RUV, 2016), there are currently 3,958,997 women registered in the official register of victims of the armed conflict. According to government reports until 2013, they were documented 2,420,887 cases of forced displacement, 1,431 cases of sexual violence, 2,601 cases of forced disappearance, 12,624 cases of homicide, 592 cases of antipersonnel mines; 1,697 of illicit recruitment and 5,873 of kidnapping. (National Center for Historical Memory, 2013, p. 305); However, other social organizations warn that the figures are higher

due to fear, intimidation, silencing and normalization of violent acts against women that hinder effective registration and documentation (Pacific Women’s Route, 2013; Cadavid, 2014).

Forced displacement, is one of the crimes with greater female victimization in Colombia, becomes a complex event that significantly alters the existence and life projects of each family member, being an experience that involves several simultaneous losses and transformations: economic and property losses, of places and social and affective relationships. (Gonzales, 2012). This phenomenon makes women in many cases as the responsible for their children, and the older members of their family. Being stripped, exiled, with a fracture of its social support network, she is exposed to a radical change in her vital environment, as well as to the loss of material, educational and spiritual resources that it previously enjoyed as building elements of her well-being and her family (Churruga & Meertens, 2010; Alvarán, García, Gil, Caballer & Flores, 2011).

Displacement is the first strategy that allows them to preserve life, but it is only the first of many challenges for the reconfiguration of the vital project. Many of the women in displacement condition in Colombia, enter the new places, the reception spaces with enormous disadvantages: low levels of schooling, knowledge linked to socially devalued work in the cities; they are also deeply affected by the brutality of the violence, by their abrupt and untimely departures, and disoriented by the strangeness of the neighborhoods where they arrive. These circumstances condemn them to maintain or exacerbate their conditions of poverty and they are a clear manifestation of the violence that is exerted against them (Churruga & Meertens, 2010; Meertens, 2000).

In addition to forced displacement, women in Colombia have been victims of sexual violence as a war crime, armed groups have used sexual abuse as a form of intimidation, repression and weapon. Sexual violence in Colombia has become one of the weapons of war, its use lies in turning it into an instrument of collective and individual terror, representing a means to achieve, directly or indirectly, the objectives and interests of armed groups through intimidation, humiliation and use of the female body as spoils of war (Wood, 2012).

Rape also causes strong emotional impacts to witnesses, to sons and daughters of raped women, or to their younger brothers and sisters, who witnessed the rape or heard the verbal offenses of the rapists, as well as the shouting and the pleas of the victims. In the case of women, after the abuse, they must face difficult situations such as abandonment of the couple, family rejection

and precarious living conditions, which resulted in abrupt and negative life changes (Churruca & Meertens, 2010; Wilches, 2010).

The consequences on women victims of the armed conflict go through the intentional effects of terror and mourning. The life of the victims is tied to the past of traumatic experiences that break the sense of continuity of their lives. The destruction, the uprooting, the exile, the breaking of the bonds of support, the losses are the ravages of the war that women in Colombia must face, however, in the middle of desolation, anguish, impotence, rage, there are resilience factors that allow women to move from ignominy, silencing, community fear to peaceful resistance and the constitution of a political subject, as studies in this topic have shown (Matthew, 2013, Villa, 2013, Velásquez, 2011).

The majority of studies on women in Latin America have been the product of various social events, such as the development of feminist approaches, situations of armed conflict, the struggle for civil rights, union struggles, peasant resistance, the promotion of the processes of international cooperation in contexts of socio-economic vulnerability, among others (Bonilla & Rodríguez, 1992; Estrada, 1997; Cortés, 2012; Ibarra, 2008; Gurza & Isunza, 2010; Meertens, 1995 and Rodríguez & Ibarra, 2013; León, 2007).

In relation to the lines of inquiry into gender, there are studies on women, violence and collective action, mostly linked to qualitative traditions of knowledge, with an emerging interest in the development of processes of systematization of experiences that reveal the scope and intentionalities of the developments of the social organization of women victims of violence, as well as a marked interest in recent years to make visible the processes of female resistance. (Ibarra, 2008, Mateo, 2013, Sánchez, 2013, Parra, 2014).

These studies have been oriented to reflect on unconventional ways of doing politics in the context of war contexts, putting the accent on social organizations, networks and the women's movement. The mobilization of Colombian women has been studied, from the analysis of their symbolic and civil actions, their processes of social mobilization and the achievements of the demands of the feminist movements in recent years (Ibarra, 2007, Ibarra, 2008; Ibarra & Victoria, 2010, Gómez & Zuñiga, 2006).

On the other hand, the studies are focused on reflection on the effects of sociopolitical violence on community development and on the subjectivity of women (Alvarán, García, Gil, Caballer & Flores, 2011; Ochoa & Orjuela, 2013; Pareja & lanez, 2014; Villa, 2013). Investigations that have

allowed to see the magnitude of the affectations of the conflict in the daily plot of the subjects and the communities.

## 2. Methodology

The project takes the socio-critical approach of qualitative research as a guiding paradigm of the process, and the systematization of experiences as a method that implies a situated understanding of the processes, trying to understand and interpret the event, from an ordering and reconstruction of what has happened (Jara, 1999). For the collection of the information, documentary analysis tools and interactive techniques were used, assumed as devices that activate the expression of people, making it easier to see, to speak, to recover, to recreate (García, Gonzáles, Quiroz, & Velásquez, 2002).

Now, the word systematization usually and under certain approaches refers to classifying, cataloging, ordering data and information, to "put them in a system", however, from the approaches of popular education, qualitative social research and critical perspectives., the term is assumed not as the data organization procedure, but refers to a process of critical review of experiences (Jara, 2001).

The systematization of experiences enables the reflection of the practice as a source for the generation of knowledge, rediscovering and revealing those discourses, narratives and emergencies of the process, in this perspective, the systematization is configured as a:

Heuristic procedure that, appealing to the reflection of experience as a source of knowledge on contextualized practices, discovers the pieces of discourses and actions that had been silenced, allowing to open the gates that repressed and concentrated information on decisions and operations, letting sprout what is possible to understand, communicate, do and feel (Ghiso, 1998, p. 5).

The purpose of the systematization of experiences is that the subject participate in a practical process where he recovers his relationship with the action, organizing what he/she knows of his/her practice to make it known to others. From there systematization not only becomes a research possibility derived from the action, but it becomes an imperative for those who, in the middle of a society of speed, information, and immediacy, try to stop and reconstruct the knowledge from emerging experiences, contributing not only to qualify the particular professional practice but contributing to the construction of theoretical and methodological knowledge in the area of community psychology.

The population universe was constituted by the female population victim of the sociopolitical violence in the city of Medellín (COL) linked to the single registry of victims (RUV) implemented by the Colombian government; For the study, a non-probabilistic and intentional sampling by snowball was used, in this type of sample “the choice of the elements does not depend on the probability, but on the research characteristics” (Hernández, Fernández and Baptista, 2006, p. 249).

Taking into account the characteristics of the study, the team defined inclusion and exclusion criteria, guided by the protection and voluntariness of the participants, thus forming a group of 45 women victims of sociopolitical violence belonging to different organized groups of the city of Medellín and a team of 15 professionals participating in a psychosocial care process.

Primary and secondary sources were used for the collection of the information, using participative interview (EP) described by Montero (2006) and focus groups, as well as the development of interactive techniques, within which the photo word and the cartography were selected, facilitating the expression of the participants. The instruments (the interview script, the script for a focus group and the interactive techniques planning sheet) were submitted to content validation by expert judgment and a pilot test was applied to guarantee the validity and reliability of the same.

The organization and analysis of the data was carried out using the content analysis strategy of a categorical or thematic type, seeking to highlight the most important topics and the emerging or hidden narratives in the texts produced. The information analysis plan includes the steps of the categorical content analysis procedure in the sense proposed by Montero (2006, p. 279):

- Preparation of the obtained material: Systematic elaboration of the narrations and stories from the repeated readings of the transcription made after having listened several times to the recordings, videos and reviewed the graphic products elaborated in the different techniques.
- Preparation and ordering of topics: Preparation of the material and archives of the information recollected on the various aspects that contribute to the critical reconstruction of the experience according to the research objectives.
- Selection of analysis unit: Choice of paragraphs, phrases, graphics taken from the material obtained that account for the emergence of key elements to recover the network experience.

- Codification of units of analysis: this refers to the attribution of a code for phrases, words, texts or graphic elements that refer to the same topic or fact. The coding process “tries to express the data and the phenomena in the form of concepts, to this end, the data is first unraveled, then the expressions are classified by their units of meaning (individual words, short word sequences) to assign them annotations and the most important, concepts and codes” (Flich, 2004, p.193).
- Construction and definition of emerging categories: Grouping of all the codes that are related to each other by configuring a topic or sub-topic treated in the narrative. Coding and categorization take the organization of content into themes, stages or sections. In this sense they are part of the content analysis of the narratives obtained.
- Preparation of analysis matrices: that allow to highlight the predominant emergent aspects, and the emerging trends on the experience.

After reviewing, organizing, ordering and coding the information in the categorial system, the interpretative phase was continued, which allowed to account for the emerging thematic nuclei in the discourse of the participants based on the shared experience. The analysis of the information was made with the support of the Atlas software. Ti. Version 6.2.

The analytical categories that guided the interpretation of information focused on the **systematization** dimension, assumed as a critical reflection of the experience lived in the process of psychosocial accompaniment with women victims of sociopolitical violence, this dimension covers three analytical categories in this study: *The psychosocial*, that is, from what theoretical-methodological bets the approach of accompaniment is assumed in, from and with this population group, on the other hand the *experience* category that comes from the Latin *experiri*, which means to prove, the experience is an encounter or a relationship with something that is proven, “is what happens to us, what comes to us” (Larrosa, 2003, p 168). Larrosa argues that experience is not limited to what happens, to the specific fact, but implies a process of internalization of what happens.

And finally, the *praxis* category, assumed as “a reflective practice conducive to theory” (Montero, 2004, p.293), intentional practices that guide the community’s work and the transformation of reality by allowing not only to approach but it will guide it to what it should be, to blur the systems of marginalization and asymmetry existing between grassroots communities and the social groups that

hold power, in terms of Fals Borda (1985) cited by Baró (1986, p. 230). praxis should be oriented towards a participatory intervention “only when participating “occurs <<the voluntary and experiential breakdown of the asymmetric relationship of submission and dependence, implicit in the subject / object binomial”.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. About the psychosocial accompaniment approaches with women victims of the armed conflict in Colombia

Following the postulates of Liz Arevalo (2009, p. 106) “the psychosocial is irreverent against psychological attention processes and focused on individuals and invites actions to integrate the emotional and relational with an understanding from the context”. The *psychosocial perspective* favors the understanding of the particularity of the population, victim of sociopolitical violence and the recognition of its multiple social, cultural and political contexts as areas in which identity and the emotional world are constructed and deconstructed, therefore, from where it acts to transform.

We march, we walk to tell the violent ... look here we are! ..... is what we as a group bet and we keep betting .... it is an interest in rejecting violence and, above all, that we say to the state, to the violent ones, here horrible things happen, no more (Camila, female participant, P3: 32).

In reference to the emerging results, a series of tendencies is found in the participants' discourse and the documentary analysis in front of the accompaniment approaches, these tendencies show three possible perspectives of psychosocial action in the framework of collective work of social organization:

- Clinical-community approach: It is situated in the generation of individual and / or group therapeutic spaces oriented towards the attention of the psychic and psychosocial-type effects emerging in the significance of adverse experience, as well as the restitution of the socializing link. This clinical approach in the experience with victims of violence is inscribed from an interactive, preventive and participatory perspective, aimed at the development of strategies to contain the effects of suffering and strengthen the possibilities of the population social inclusion. Likewise, there it is evident of a trend in the implementation of narrative, artistic and cultural intervention

strategies in the processes of emotional recovery of victims of sociopolitical violence in the city of Medellín (Villa, 2013).

It is accompanied from the legal, but also the human side, people need to be heard, that it can say all that anger, the pain of so many years of silence about what happened in this war (Mary, female participant, P15: 48).

In the participants' narratives, this need for spaces of emotional restraint is mentioned, which makes possible a relational approach, located in the meanings and affects that emerge in naturalized violence practices, silenced and hidden during years of armed conflict.

- Community social approach: This focus emphasizes the reconstruction of the social fabric, the invigoration and community participation, its interest is centered “on the collective relationships that the person builds and in which he or she registers, for example: family, group and social networks”. The purpose of this approach is to rebuild networks and social organizations. This focus on accompanying victims of sociopolitical violence has been oriented to the strengthen of mobilization processes and victims' social participation in local and national settings. It is important to clarify that the clinical-community approach is incorporated into the socio-community approach complementing it “as a strategy of restitution of the socializing link through the therapeutic relationship. It means: in the interaction of the therapeutic space the particularities of the link are redefined”. Naranjo, G, González, A, Restrepo, A, Giraldo, C & Pineda, A (2003). As a victim I am now also a manager, the manager is a person who is always very active, who receives information and shares it with the community. It is a person who struggles because participation and community life will be alive, we all collaborate with the difficulties (Ofelia, female participant, P20: 23).
- Rights Approach: Psychosocial attention from this perspective is based on the protection and / or reparation of the violated rights in those affected. This component implies a development of empowerment of rights from a participatory perspective and development of social organization. This implies, according to Gloria Naranjo (2003) that in the psychosocial intervention, the community organization is necessary for the population to participate in the decisions that affect their rights, and also for the decisions to be consensual and effective. From this approach, psychosocial

accompaniment seeks to empower social actors, citizens who develop within the framework of affordability, promotion, restitution and guarantee of their rights and duties. Castaño, B., Jaramillo, L., & Summerfield, D. (1998). Prioritizing actions for treatment and attention from a gender differential approach that allows the recovery of victims from a gender reading, where the particularities of women and the effects of war on them in the restoration of violated rights are recognized, similarly this emphasis seeks to question the conditions of oppression of women in the context of patriarchal societies, the problematization of women in the conflict and peace processes, as well as the struggle for the decolonization of the female body and sexuality, agency processes of recognition of women not as victims of the conflict but as a fundamental social actor in the negotiation of the cessation of war, the reinsertion of ex-combatants, the construction of peace and the demilitarization of everyday life.

A characteristic of us and that now more than ever we want to show the effects that this war has brought on us women, to show those traces in our body, in our same sexuality, that for the war they have seen, because for example, many of us carry shame in our bodies and can say the rights violated (Ana, female participant, P22: 34).

The claim against the violation of rights becomes an incentive in psychosocial action with women in the midst of war, their narrative is placed in social denunciation as an emancipatory and reconstructive practice of new links and even processes of subjectivation of the violent experience on their own body.

### **3.2. About the components of a psychosocial assistance experience with women, victims of violence**

For community psychology, social transformation appears as a central interest in their work, involves a constant search to promote and build “a socially sensitive social psychology” that meant, transform many things: “the habitat, the way of life, the conception of themselves, as people living in a society and forming part of a community, and the community itself, then, in transforming it, also the transformers became others” (Montero, 2010, p. 51).

“For community psychology, both in Latin America and in other parts of the world, it is very important that, in pursuing a transformation in a

community, this occurs through the participation and commitment of organized groups and interested people in a community” (Montero, 2010 p. 53), it means, the transformation goes through the invigoration of participation and organizational as a fundamental aspect for the construction of self-management practices, in these experiences the key aspects of this dialogical accompaniment emerge as following components:

Generation of group therapeutic spaces: Mental health more than a purely clinical practice, psychosocial accompaniment must be an empowerment practice, which stimulates resilient factors and allows the establishment of actions or processes of coping, creative and affirmative aimed at comprehensive well-being. From this perspective, the possibility of perceived emotional support in the constitution as a collective became a therapeutic tool in the construction of new vital meanings and in the same subjectification of violent experience.

What cure? The release of pain ..... that's ..... and I do not need a professional to come here to give me the cure or the psychological treatment ... the group itself with the love, the help between us frees you (Paula, female participant, P7: 54).

From the evidenced in the narratives of the practitioners, the therapeutic alludes to a discursive form related to the possibility of support and emotional transformation that supposes the belonging to spaces of self-help and feminine association, there it is assumed the denomination “therapeutic” as an allusion to the “healing” and re-signification burden of the painful experience that is instituted in the speakers linguistic practices, in no way is it linked to a biomedical, organic and individualistic view associated with mental health, quite the opposite evokes the “healing” from the community resources of containment, listening and identification.

Generation of productive projects: the formulation, establishment and training of women for economic self-sustainability, constitutes another fundamental aspect of the accompaniment praxis, leaving aside the installed competence, this aspect is oriented to the construction of productive projects that allow strengthen the women agency capacity. During the process, the participants have been trained in productive activities of their interest (confections, beauty, baking) complemented the training with advice on the formulation of work cooperatives and seed capital management consultancy. Currently, women are organized into three income-generating groups that meet the

subsistence needs in decent conditions and support the development of their communities.

*Strengthening of social support networks:* Social networks constitute a real community force, these organizations become collective, complement each other, nourish each other, thus stimulating the capacity to respond. This component proposes the articulation of social networks in order to empower the victims of sociopolitical violence, rooted in a substrate that encourages the deployment of their potential, that facilitates the protection of some minimums for life, that extends the coordinates of the inhabited territories, that multiplies the processes of exchange and confers them routes of citizen participation.

I no longer go out to march for myself, I already understood that this is up to us all, to feel the pain of the other is our own, it is to help from the accompaniment to women who lived directly and be in solidarity with them (Clara, female participant, P3: 23)

The natural social networks that women configured, constitute a true community force, these forms of organization become collective, they complement each other, nourish each other, thus stimulating the ability to respond. This action supposes a component of the recognition of the other, from the solidarity, from the mutual support as guarantor of the processes of collective action and identity transformation.

Assuming that the human being naturally tends to seek the company of others for their welfare and adjustment to environmental conditions, this trend emerges more clearly in coping processes in situations of social vulnerability and adversity, given that social support can reduce the uncertainty and anxiety about them. In this way, sharing the experience with other women victims is configured as a social network in the sense of producing a continuous exchange of ideas, services, objects in order to satisfy a collective need. (Madariaga, Abello, & Sierra, 2003). Organized women become a support network in the face of the need for survival in an adverse socio-economic environment, the re-meaning of the painful experience, the need to affirm their identity and adaptation to unfavorable means.

*Strengthening the institutional response capacity (institutional networks):* It is important not to lose sight of the strengthening of the human resource response capacity of the institution, especially when social realities are essentially complex and dynamic. The interaction with excluded populations in the local context imposes the challenge of a constant updating of the theoretical foundations and the methodologies that underlie the praxis.

*Strengthening organizational capacity from the rights perspective:* This component seeks to empower the organization by providing them with tools to assume their citizenship building process, developing within the framework of affordability, promotion, restitution and guarantee of their rights and duties. A self-management approach based on political and citizen participation.

The forms of social organization of women narrated in these experiences emerge as collective actions of emotional support and civil resistance, in an interest to build spaces of sense and meaning, shared in the face of individual and community experiences of sociopolitical violence. The organizations emerge as a possibility of action transformed into the framework of war, a commitment to the anti-militarization of everyday life in urban spaces and the commitment to a negotiated and peaceful solution to the conflict, as well as the denunciation of the atrocities suffered by the women in the Colombian conflict. There the psychosocial professions act as catalysts and companions of the processes of political advocacy, emotional containment and articulators of strategic alliances with national and international networks and platforms, causing the subjectification of violent experience to be transfigured into resistance actions and the construction of political subjectivities.

The social community organization consists of women victims of different types of socio-political violence (forced disappearance of relatives, displacement, massacres, threats, sexual abuse and intimidation) and by various armed actors. These women, during the process of psychosocial accompaniment, decide to organize themselves and build a series of collective actions to mitigate the subjective and intersubjective impact of the experience but also to become a leading actor in local decision-making regarding the care of the victim population.

#### 4. Discussion

In relation to the interpretive nuclei, the emergence of key components for the psychosocial accompaniment of victims of sociopolitical violence from the logic of participation and social organization as an element and tool of transformation is evidenced in the categorial interrelation:

The need to promote *narratives of agency* is to elaborate a narrative of the “agency”, which assumes that the subject deploys and develops its capacity for control and reconstruction and thus not fall into the processes of “victimization” derived of directed models of psychosocial intervention (Montenegro, 2001). The capacity of agency does not refer only to the one-dimensional idea



of 'doing' or 'acting', but also that of 'being', in the same sense in which Amartya Sen (Blanco, 2007) refers to the concept of quality of life in terms of expansion of potentialities and performances. The above leads to include subjective experience (identities, feelings of belonging, views on "the other" as an essential dimension to understand the potential of people in the process of reconstructing their life projects, that is, an intervention that turn his gaze to the development of popular virtues, as proposed by Martín Baró, I. (1990).

An approach related to the emergence of a *community-clinic*, this perspective implies a questioning about the forms of therapy in contexts of vulnerability, problematizing the making of a clinical psychology that must occur not only in the community, but also with the community as a mental health promotion and social support agent. This emerging approach in practice points to the positive role of social networks present in the community as a tool for reconstruction of life projects. The emergence of a community clinic (Montero, 2010; Rodríguez, 2011) imply in the context of sociopolitical violence to assume a participatory and interactive view of the subject in the therapeutic spaces, it is to go beyond the treatment in the community, to arrive at treatment with and for the community: integration and social support together with psychotherapy, in which the community and interested people within it, will actively contribute. It is the community as a co-therapist and collective body that provides knowledge that must be explored and incorporated, forms of popular knowledge that can contribute to the maintenance of health.

These resources used by speakers imply a conception of health / illness in the context of social interaction, this implies a turn in the biomedical view to promote an integrative approach, focused on community potential, as well as the resources of mutual support and solidarity to the time to read health, disease and health care.

From this reading that the vast majority of participants do, traditional conceptions of health linked to the absence of disorders, pathologies and to the proper functioning of the human organism are problematized. This type of considerations based on the traditional medical model (organic and individualistic coping with problems related to health) leave the subject itself and focuses on understanding the disease and not the network of relational configurations where the behaviors are framed in health, the problem of these conceptions points out (Martín-Baró, 1990)

"It lies in a poor conception of the human being, reduced to an individual organism whose functioning could be understood based on its own

characteristics and features, and not as a historical being whose existence is elaborated and realized in the web of social relations". From an ontological and epistemological conception of the human being as a historical, social, political and cultural subject, health is assumed in the same community discourses as a basic aspect of human relationships and not as an exclusively organic substratum.

From the reflexivity, women's discourses show how they recognize that health-related behavior occurs and takes place in a social context, so a purely individual psychological approach, probably only offers a limited and alienating challenge to overcoming and transformation of pain. This aspect assumes a perspective on health linked to the field of interpersonal experience and interexperience, where from the exchange of meanings, resources and affects are woven therapeutic processes that configure the processes of subjectification of violent experience and constitute elements to give it sense to the actions undertaken to rebuild their life project (Arango, 2003).

*The recovery of solidarities* (Caballada, 2008), psychosocial action involves the reconstruction of the social fabric in front of a fragmented social fabric, practices oriented to the development of self-management capacity through mutual help, cooperation, collaboration and the construction of a sense of solidarity that allows us to face the tensions, the adversities and the challenges imposed by the changes in this population group, as recent studies on the role of collective memory in the recovery of victims warn (Villa, 2013).

Female solidarity persists as a resource for overcoming unsatisfied basic needs and the construction of mutually supportive scenarios that facilitate the emotional recovery of victims of socio-political and urban violence, overcoming health care approaches and understanding of the effects of conflict in the subjectivities. Hence, the association and more specifically the collective actions of symbolic resistance should be considered as a reading and analysis tool that allows us to move from a perspective that "psychologizes" and / or reduces health problems to merely individual determinants, in order to expand the spectrum to community, non-professional and mutual support practices that facilitate processes of emotional recovery and overcoming adversity.

For the group is essential, solidarity, and the need for change: all raising our voice to end the silence that makes us victims and accomplices at the same time of this absurd war which we do not want to participate in and demonstrate that it is never too late to react in solidarity with the victims of violence. (Gladys, female participant, P10: 25).

This implies, that studies and psychosocial support in the field of conflict victims care, observed in this research should focus and turn their gaze on the influence of social support in maintaining health, the establishment of social relations of support, collaboration and mutual help, meanwhile, those have a significant effect on the individual and groups well-being, their presence reduces anxiety and helps reduce stress, on the contrary, their absence maintains or increases stress and anxiety. Epidemiological studies, in this line have already warned and have raised how social support has a positive effect on psychological and physical health. (Herrero, 2004), however, in the operationalization of health practices, the traditional biomedical model is perpetuated, with its corresponding conventional actions that make certain alternative and socio-community practices invisible.

## 5. Conclusions

Reviewing an experience from contextualized practice becomes an element to rethink the scenarios of psychosocial accompaniment to victims of social and political violence that transcend traditional clinical attention and psychologizing perspectives, especially when situations of social catastrophe generate not only changes in the individual order but impacts on the basis of social relations: as Martí Baró points out, “the most deleterious effect of the war on the mental health of the people must be sought in the undermining of social relations, which is the scaffolding where we build ourselves historically as persons and as a human community” (Martín Baró, 1990, p. 508). From this approach and the results observed in the speeches of the participants, the processes of accompanying victims of violence should be placed in relation to the effects on the foundations of social coexistence and psychosocial processes; and from there, to build strategies and practices that allow to recognize key issues for the reconstruction of the social fabric and the emotional recovery of the victims. This implies an approach that manages to recognize the collective construction of psychosocial processes and facilitates reflection processes on the effects of sociopolitical violence in the daily life of the communities, as well as on the particular ways of intervening in these contexts.

The results allow to show from the experience and the community life, the approaches and practices emerging in the process of psychosocial accompaniment with victims of violence. In this way, it is pointed out that psychosocial work, born from the recognition of victims as protagonists in the processes of social transformation, being solidarity a key tool in the reconstruction of vital and community projects, this perspective allows us to overcome the relationship between care and dependency link with the professionals that appear in various processes of “psychosocial intervention” implemented and advance in a model of strengthening the capacities, resources and the agency of rights with violence victim population. However, the limitations of this research, especially regarding the difficulties of accessing areas to information gathering, the distribution and size of the sample, as well as the descriptive scope of the data, could be overcome in future investigations.

The reflection on the processes of psychosocial intervention with victims of violence becomes an imperative for the same possibility of accompaniment, from the opportunity it offers to recognize and identify some ways through which professional activity can be channeled (redefining actions), and from these approaches to praxis, develop appropriate strategies to problematize the peculiarity of social issues. This demands in the formation in community psychology and in the same task of the psychology in Colombia several challenges that Martín Baró already named a few years ago but that in the case of the Colombian psychology are updated: to know more closely the social reality of our contexts, review the professional practices and from this reflexivity contribute with the professional knowledge to the construction of fair and inclusive societies. (Martín Baró, 1990). What is observed in the research points to the need to foster a critical and reflective stance on psychosocial action within the framework of protracted armed conflicts, where social links and interaction are reaffirmed as the pillars of subjectivity and intersubjectivity and therefore of the proposals for individual, group and community care, overcoming the pathogenic vision of accompaniment processes with victims of sociopolitical violence.

## References

- Arango, C. (2003). Los vínculos afectivos y la estructura social. Una reflexión sobre la convivencia desde la red de promoción del buen trato. *Investigación y desarrollo*, 11(1), 70-103.
- Arévalo, L. (2009). Acompañamiento psicosocial en el contexto de la violencia sociopolítica: Una mirada desde Colombia. En Markez Alonso, I.; Fernández Liria, A.; Pérez-Sales, P. (Eds.). *Violencia y salud mental. Salud mental y violencias institucional, estructural, social y colectiva*. (pp. 105-118). Madrid: Asociación Española de Neuropsiquiatría.
- Alveano, J., & Farías, V. (2011). *Psicocomunidad: Modalidad integradora de intervención psicosocial*. Saarbrücken: Editorial academia española.
- Alvarán, S., García, M., Gil, J., Caballer, A., & Flores, R. (2011). Daños y transformaciones en el proyecto de vida de mujeres desplazadas en Colombia. *Fòrum de Recerca*, 16, 681-698
- Butler, J. (2007). *El género en disputa. El feminismo y la subversión de la identidad*. Barcelona: Paidós
- Blanco, A., & Rodríguez, J. (2007). *Intervención Psicosocial*. Madrid: Pearson.
- Bonilla, E., & Rodríguez, R. (1992). *Fuera del cerco. Mujeres, estructura y cambio social en Colombia*. Bogotá: Presencia.
- Carballeda, A. (2008). *La intervención en lo social: exclusión e integración en los nuevos escenarios sociales*. Buenos Aires: Paidós.
- Castaño, B., Jaramillo, L., & Summerfield, D. (1998). *Violencia política y trabajo psicosocial*. Bogotá: Corporación AVRE.
- Cadavid, M. (2014). Mujer: blanco del conflicto armado en Colombia. *Analecta política*, 5(7), 301-318
- Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica (2013). *Informe General de Memoria y Conflicto*. Retrieved from <http://www.centrodehistoriahistorica.gov.co/>
- Corona, S., & Kaltmeier, O. (2012). *En diálogo. Metodologías horizontales en ciencias sociales y culturales*. Barcelona: Gedisa.
- Cortés, J. (Agosto de 2012). "Ni guerra que nos mate ni paz que nos oprima" Estructuras organizativas y representación. Estudio de los casos: ruta pacífica, Organización femenina popular e iniciativas de mujeres por la paz. Tesis de maestría. México: FLACSO México.
- Churruca, C., & Meertens, D. (2010). *Desplazamiento en Colombia. Prevenir, asistir, transformar, cooperación internacional e iniciativas locales*. Medellín: La Carreta editores.
- Estrada, A. (1997). Los estudios de género en Colombia. Entre los límites y las posibilidades. *Nomadas*, 6, 1-19.
- Fals Borda, O. (1985). *Conocimiento y poder popular. Lecciones con campesinos de Nicaragua, México y Bogotá*. Bogotá: Siglo XXI.
- Flick, U. (2004). *Introducción a la investigación cualitativa*. Madrid: Ediciones Morata
- Gómez, R., & Zuñiga, M. (2006). *Mujeres Paz-íficas: la paz escrita en cuerpo de mujer*. Cali: Universidad del Valle.
- González, A. (2012). Mujeres, conflicto y desplazamiento forzoso: acción, resistencia y lucha por el reconocimiento y la inclusión. *Dilemata*, 10, 119-149
- Gurza, A., & Isunza, E. (2010). *La innovación democrática en América Latina. Tramas y nudos de la representación, la participación y el control social*. México: Publicaciones de la casa chata.
- Ghiso, A. (1998). De la práctica singular al diálogo con lo plural. Aproximaciones a otros tránsitos y sentidos de la sistematización en épocas de globalización. . . Retrieved from [http://www.alforja.or.cr/sistem/cgi-bin/blosxom/cgi/reflexion\\_teorica/](http://www.alforja.or.cr/sistem/cgi-bin/blosxom/cgi/reflexion_teorica/)
- Hernández, R., Fernández, C., & Baptista, P. (2010). *Metodología de la investigación cualitativa*. México: McGraw Hill.
- Herrero, J. (2004). Redes sociales y apoyo social. En G. Musitu, J. Herrero, L. Cantera, & M. Montenegro, *Introducción a la psicología comunitaria* (pp.116-139). Barcelona: UCO.
- Ibarra, M. (2007). *Transformaciones identitarias de las mujeres como resultado de su participación en política, en las guerrillas y en las acciones colectivas*. Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid.
- Ibarra, M. (2008). Guerrilleras y activistas por la paz en Colombia: incursión política y rupturas identitarias. *Pensamiento Psicológico*, 4(11), 65-84.
- Ibarra, M., & Victoria, M. (2010). Movilizaciones de mujeres en contra de la violencia de género en Colombia. *Perspectivas Internacionales*, 6(1), 247-273.
- Jara, O. (2001). Dilemas y desafíos de la sistematización de experiencias. Ponencia en el Seminario ASOCAM: Agricultura Sostenible Campesina de Montaña. Intercooperation. Cochabamba, Bolivia. Abril
- Larrosa, J. (2003). *Entre las lenguas. Lenguaje y educación después de Babel*. Barcelona: Laertes.
- León, M. (2007). Tensiones presentes en los estudios de género. En L. Arango, & Y. Puyana, *Género, mujeres y saberes en América Latina. Entre el movimiento social, la academia y el Estado* (pp. 23-46). Bogotá: UNAL.
- Linares, K., & Sierra, A. (2014). Mujeres transgresoras: formación política y organizativa frente a la violencia sexual contra las mujeres en los Montes de María. *Ciencia Política*, 9 (18), 157-180
- Martín Baró, I. (1986). Hacia una psicología de la liberación. *Boletín de Psicología*, (22), 219-231.
- Martín-Baró, I. (1990). *Psicología social de la guerra*. San Salvador: UCA editores.

- Mateo, R. (2013). *De Madres de Soacha a sujetas políticas: capacidad de agencia ante la impunidad en Colombia Reconstrucción de un caso desde una mirada feminista para un litigio estratégico*. Barcelona: Institut Català Internacional per la Pau.
- Messina, G., & Osorio, J. (2016). Sistematizar como ejercicio eco-reflexivo: la fuerza del relato en los procesos de sistematización de experiencias educativas. *Revista e-Curriculum*, 14 (02), 602 - 624
- Montenegro, M. (2001). Conocimientos, agentes y articulaciones. Una mirada situada a la intervención social. *Athenea Digital*. Retrieved from <http://antalya.uab.es/athenea/numo/tesis-marisela.htm>
- Montero, M (2006) *Hacer para transformar*. Buenos Aires: Paidós
- Montero, M. (2010). Fortalecimiento de la Ciudadanía y Transformación Social: Área de Encuentro entre la Psicología Política y la Psicología Comunitaria. *Psykhé*, 19(2), 51-63
- Montero, M. (2010). Para una psicología clínica comunitaria: antecedentes, objeto de estudio y acción. En A. Hincapié y otros. *Sujetos Políticos y acción comunitaria*. Medellín: Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, 197-219
- Montero, M., & Rodríguez, P. (2010). Hacia una clínica comunitaria. En A. Hincapié, *Sujetos políticos y acción comunitaria*. Medellín: Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, 73-90
- Morales, M., Hincapié, A., & Martínez, A. (2008). Teoría y praxis sobre los efectos psicosociales del desplazamiento forzado en Colombia: Un estado crítico del arte. *Memorias XII Jornadas de Investigación*, 22-29.
- Meertens, D. (1995). *Mujer y violencia en los conflictos rurales*. Bogotá: IEPRI.
- Meertens, D. (2000). El futuro nostálgico: desplazamiento, terror y género. *Revista Colombiana de Antropología*, 36, 112-134
- Naranjo, G; González, A; Restrepo, A; Giraldo, C; y Pineda, A. (2003). *Sistematización de experiencias de atención psicosocial en Antioquia*. Medellín: Organización Panamericana de la salud- servicio seccional de salud Antioquia.
- Ochoa, D., & Orjuela, M. (2013), El desplazamiento forzado y la pobreza de la mujer colombiana. *Entramado*, 9 (1), 66-83.
- Pareja, A. & lañez, A. (2014). Violencia contra la mujer y desplazamiento forzado. Análisis de las estrategias de vida de jefas de hogar en Medellín. *Acta sociológica*, 65, 151-171.
- Parra, L. (2014). Prácticas y experiencias colectivas ante la guerra y para la construcción de paz: iniciativas sociales de paz en Colombia. *El Ágora USB*, 14(2), 377-395.
- Pujol, J., & Montenegro, M. (2003). Conocimiento Situado: Un Forcejeo entre el Relativismo Construccionalista y la Necesidad de Fundamentar la Acción. *Revista Interamericana de Psicología*, 37 (2), 295-307.
- Rodríguez, G. & Gil., J. (1996). *Metodología de la investigación cualitativa*. Ediciones Aljibe.
- Rodríguez, A., & Ibarra, M. (2013). Los estudios de género en Colombia. *Sociedad y Economía*, (24), 15-46.
- RUV (2016). Registro Único de Víctimas de la Republica de Colombia. Retrieved from <http://rni.unidadvictimas.gov.co/RUV>
- Ruta pacífica de mujeres (2013). *La verdad de las mujeres víctimas del conflicto armado en Colombia*. Bogotá: Ruta pacífica de Mujeres
- Sánchez, E. (2013) Las disputas por la memoria. Las víctimas y su irrupción en la esfera pública. Medellín 2004-2010. *Estudios políticos*, 42, 61-84.
- Sandoval. C. (1996). *Enfoques y modalidades de investigación cualitativa: rasgos básicos. Programa de especialización en teoría, métodos y técnicas de investigación social*. Bogotá: ICFES.
- Wilches, I. (2010). Lo que hemos aprendido sobre la atención a mujeres víctimas de violencia sexual en el conflicto armado colombiano. *Revista de estudios sociales*, 36, 86-94.
- Wood, E. (2012). Variación en la violencia sexual en tiempos de guerra: la violación en la guerra no es inevitable. *Estudios Socio-Jurídicos*, 14(1), 19-57.
- Velásquez, E. (2011). Que cante la gallina no sólo el gallo: Memoria mujeres y tierra. *Revista Trabajo Social*, 13, 43-59.
- Villa, J. (2013). Horizontalidad, expresión y saberes compartidos enfoque psicosocial en procesos de acompañamiento a víctimas de la violencia sociopolítica en Colombia. *Agora*, 13 (1), 61-89
- Villa, J. (2013). The role of collective memory in emotional recovery of political violence in Colombia. *International Journal of psychological research*, 6(2): 37-49.
- Villa, J. (2014). Memoria, historias de vida y papel de la escucha en la transformación subjetiva de víctimas / sobrevivientes del conflicto armado colombiano. *El Ágora*, 14 (1), 37-60.

## HOW TO CITE THE ARTICLE

Martínez, A.M. (2018). Acción psicosocial con mujeres víctimas de violencia sociopolítica en Colombia, *Pedagogía Social. Revista Interuniversitaria*, 31, 135-147. DOI: 10.7179/PSRI\_2018.31.11

## AUTHOR'S ADDRESS

**Ángela María Martínez Chaparro.** Correo electrónico: [angela.martinez@campusucc.edu.co](mailto:angela.martinez@campusucc.edu.co). Dirección de trabajo: Calle 50 A # 41 - 20, Bloque A, piso 4-Sala de docentes (Medellín-Colombia) Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia

## ACADEMIC PROFILE

**Ángela María Martínez Chaparro.** Magíster en psicología social, especialista en psicología social aplicada y psicóloga de la Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana. Docente de la Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia y líder del grupo de investigación educación y desarrollo. Acompaña los cursos en psicología social y el semillero en tendencias críticas de la psicología, actualmente es coordinadora del nodo académico de la red interuniversitaria Buen Comienzo. Experiencia y publicaciones en el área de formación en psicología social. Intervención comunitaria y acción psicosocial.

