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Colombia's Peasant University, a Reflection from the Historical Ethos[1]

La Universidad Campesina de Colombia, una Reflexión Desde el Ethos Histórico

A Universidade Camponesa da Colômbia, uma Reflexão a partir do Ethos Histórico

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Abstract

This article, the result of the research, it is proposed, in a first moment, to show the ideological tensions present in the second half of the 20th century in the world and particularly in Colombia, where the creation of a peasant university is gestated as a way of the baroque ethos that faces, from the community formation, the diverse forms of violence in the territory. In a second moment, the assumed method is clarified as a hermeneutic reading from a quadruple historical ethos in contention. In a third moment, the different transitions through which this institution has gone through are presented. Among the findings, it is worth highlighting that the peasant university is the expression of the baroque community and peasant ethos, promoter of a solidarity economy and a grassroots political culture, capable of confronting and creating fissures to the giant *realist ethos* and its violence.

Keywords: Peasant University; Historical Ethos; Higher Education; Rural Communities.

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Resumen

Este artículo resultado de investigación se propone en un primer momento, mostrar las tensiones ideológicas presentes hacia la segunda mitad del siglo XX en el mundo y particularmente en Colombia, donde se gesta la creación de una universidad campesina como un modo del ethos barroco que enfrenta desde la formación comunitaria, las diversas formas de violencia en el territorio. En un segundo momento, se clarifica el método asumido en tanto una lectura hermenéutica a partir de un cuádruple ethos histórico en contienda. En un tercer momento, se presentan las diversas transiciones por las que pasó dicha institución. Entre los hallazgos es de resaltar que, la universidad campesina es la expresión del ethos barroco comunitario y campesino impulsor de una economía solidaria y una cultura política de base, capaz de hacer frente y crear fisuras al gigante ethos realista y su violencia.

Palabras clave: Universidad Campesina; Ethos Histórico; Educación Superior; Comunidades Rurales.

Resumo

Este artigo, resultado de uma investigação, propõe-se, em primeiro lugar, mostrar as tensões ideológicas presentes na segunda metade do século XX no mundo e, particularmente, na Colômbia, onde se gesta a criação de uma universidade camponesa como uma forma do ethos barroco que enfrenta, a partir da formação comunitária, as diversas formas de violência no território. Em segundo lugar, esclarece-se o método adotado como uma leitura hermenêutica a partir de um quádruplo ethos histórico em conflito. Em terceiro lugar, apresentam-se asdiversas transições pelas quais passou essa instituição. Entre as conclusões, destaca-se que a universidade camponesa é a expressão do ethos barroco comunitário e camponês impulsionador de uma economia solidária e de uma cultura política de base, capaz de enfrentar e criar fissuras no gigante ethos realista e na sua violência.

Palavras-chave: Universidade Camponesa; Ethos Histórico; Ensino Superior; Comunidades Rurais.

Introduction

The configuration of the Peasant University is found in the heart of a convulsive nation, associated to issues of inequality, exclusion and discrimination (Pérez-Ramírez, 2019) that is not alien to the tensions between the two economic-political models that divided the world in two towards the second half of the twentieth century: capitalism and communism (Gaddis, 2006). The United States and the Soviet Union had positioned themselves as the world's military powers after World War II, which left Eastern Europe under the domination of the Soviet Union, spreading communism. Meanwhile, Western Europe, under the States United States and its Allies, continued to extend capitalism and democracy as its political platform. The so-called Cold War (1945-1989) divided countries that were torn between allies and enemies for ideological reasons throughout the world into two blocs (Gaddis, 2006).

As a result of this process of ideologization in Colombia in the mid-twentieth century, any expression outside of the two-party system, whether "subaltern movements of social demand, such as trade unionism and peasant struggle" (Malagón, 2015, p. 21) were considered targets of police intervention and dismantling by the ruling class of the time. The confrontation between the *romantic ethos* of protest that demanded social justice on the part of the popular sectors, and the *realistic ethos* of capitalist productivity, embodied the social tensions of the time, which collected the historical burden of a *nation* unrealized for centuries that silently dreamed of its pacification.

Proof of the power of the people organized in union was the demonstrated ability to stop the production of the multinational banana company *United Fruit Company* with its facilities in Colombia (Ramírez, 2012). *Romantic ethos* that checked the *realist ethos*. Proof of the colossal violence that has always torn apart the dream *nation* was the massacre of the workers that occurred there in 1928. Excess of the *realist ethos* that, without recognizing the contradiction of capitalist modernity, tore apart its own constitution. According to Malagón (2015), in addition to this tragedy, the global recession crisis of 1930 also hit the urban centers of the *dream nation*, which made the countryside, and its agrarian economy look like a place of possibilities in the midst of the crisis (Kennedy, 1999). Reforms were encouraged for the redistribution of the concentrated and unproductive land of the landowners of the time, which in turn gave rise to local conflicts for land possession between them and the peasantry whose struggle centered on the right to land ownership and the duty to work it. The non-recognition and care of the peasantry, together with the nascent, vulnerable and neglected working-class sector of the country. It was clear that the facts were showing once again that *exchange value* in the Americanization of modernity subsumed *use value* to such an extent that it reduced subjects to the condition of labor power. And this not being enough, with the Law of Capital Accumulation it monopolized surplus value with the production of misery (Harvey, 2007).

In these conditions, both the peasantry and the workers were blown by the messianic winds of the proletarian insurrection of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and China, especially the Cuban Revolution that encouraged the desperate romantic *ethos* in the midst of the accommodation of the *baroque ethos* that made life possible for them in the midst of the impossible in its extreme vulnerability and precariousness. Meanwhile, the *realist ethos* of the state project followed the march of sweeping capitalism, of American modernity with confidence in its promise of progress and development, without hesitation. Malagón (2015) points out that,

> Along with the workers and peasants there were also the crafty guilds, the indigenous movements and all those excluded sectors that sought spaces for political participation. None of them found the necessary political support from the dominant parties. The Communist Party, a historically of the workers' struggle, was totally delegitimized and without any political

> influence that would help it to attract large masses of followers, largely due to its own internal conflicts and disarticulations, but also to the fierce smear campaign undertaken by the traditional parties (p. 23).

During the twentieth century, both in Europe and in Latin America, as well as Colombia, the Church created several institutions and deployed, among others, the Catholic Social Action program that, inspired by the Social Doctrine of the Church[4], was concerned with guiding processes of basic, technical, higher and spiritual formation to the neediest sectors of rural societies, peasant and worker organizations that would enable forms of community organization and "the moderation of social protest through Christian means, created, to a greater or lesser extent, to counteract the impetuous advance of radical unionism and other extremist forms" (Malagón, 2015, p. 24). Thus, the Church serves as a key catalyst for the romantic ethos, which had long sought ways to express its dissent through revolts. It also shaped the baroque ethos by providing mechanisms of participation that enabled individuals to pursue their political objectives and influence community organization. This, in turn, pushed institutional structures toward their most social and popular periphery.

Existing experiences support this idea. For example, regional universities, such as Universidad Católica de Oriente, seek to address local needs through extension programs. One such need is the professional development of teachers in rural areas, with the goal of making a meaningful impact on local communities. As Ledesma *et al*. (2020) emphasize, "Every course created and developed for teachers must consider teachers' realities, needs, desires, as well as challenges that each context has" (p. 173). However, there remains a need to integrate external support with local efforts to foster sustainable community development.

The theoretical core lies in applying Bolívar Echeverría's framework of the quadruple ethos – realist, classical, romantic, and baroque – as a hermeneutic method for reading historical and cultural phenomena. This approach views these ethe not as rigid categories, but as dynamic perspectives shaping how individuals and societies engage with the world, particularly in relation to capitalist modernity and the tension between use value and exchange value. The *realist ethos* emphasizes pragmatism, utility, and exchange value, prioritizing efficiency and productivity within a capitalist framework. The classical ethos seeks harmony, tradition, and idealized order, valuing stability and continuity while often surrendering to the abstraction of value. In contrast, the romantic ethos prioritizes emotion, individuality, and spontaneity, resisting rigid structures and recognizing the difference between use and exchange value. The baroque ethos embraces complexity and contradiction, returning to use value and confronting capitalist modernity through integration and resistance, seeking survival

[4] According to Letelier (2017), four basic principles can be identified in the configuration of the Social Doctrine of the Church over time: the dignity of the human person, the common good, subsidiarity, and solidarity. This doctrine begins its tradition with the magisterial text *Rerum novarum* of Pope Leo XIII. Now, these principles are not principles insofar as they guide an action, they are principles in the sense that they are practical realization that in social action find their final deployment, their *telos*.

and an alternative modernity. The article posits that understanding these ethe is crucial for recognizing the historical conditions that influence thought, feeling, and action, and applies this method to analyze the genesis and evolution of the Colombian Peasant University as an expression of these competing societal responses.

Next, the reading method is presented at first, then in terms of results, the genesis of the peasant university in Colombia is discussed, its transformations, until its birth in virtue of these conflicting relationships between the four historical ethos, which is in turn, the confrontation between use value and exchange value. Finally, the conclusions derived from this analysis are presented.

The quadruple ethos as a method of reading

In a hermeneutic perspective, the reading of Bolívar Echeverría's four historical ethos is assumed. Among the techniques applied were the in-depth interview and documentary analysis. Let us see what this hermeneutic proposal of the four ethos consists of. Bolívar Echeverría, a prominent Ecuadorian philosopher, provides a unique analysis of historical and cultural expressions by identifying four different *ethos*. His framework includes the *realist, classical, romantic, and baroque ethe*, each offering distinct perspectives on how individuals and societies understand and interact with the world. These ethe are not static categories; instead, they intersect and transform across history, reflecting evolving human experiences.

The *realist ethos* is grounded in pragmatism and utility, emphasizing the tangible and the functional aspects of reality. It favors practical solutions to problems and often dismisses abstract or idealistic notions. For Echeverría (1998), this ethos is deeply connected to sacrifice now's focus for the sake of tomorrow's productivity and efficiency (p. 41), prioritizing what is observable and measurable, favoring the exchange value. "Capitalism as the only possible way to carry on the goals of production/ consumption process"[5] (Echeverría, 1998 p. 90).

On the other hand, the *classical ethos* is centered on the pursuit of harmony, proportion, and ideal beauty. This ethos values tradition, reason, and moderation, seeking to establish order and hierarchy in the world. For Echeverría the classical ethos is about maintaining an idealized structure in society, reflecting the need for stability and continuity (Castellanos, 2018), maintaining tradition as value. In this sense, Pérez (2024) states, "Classic ethos insists on the self-sacrificing attitude, which patient with its failed attempt, surrenders to the abstraction of value as an effective way to go out of its action in the world"[6] (p. 59).

[5] "La forma capitalista es la única manera posible de llevar a cabo las metas concretas naturales del proceso de producción / consumo"

[6] "Insiste en la actitud abnegada, que paciente con su intento fallido, se entrega a la abstracción del valor como salida efectiva a su actuación en el mundo"

The *romantic ethos* contrasts sharply with both realist and classic. It exalts emotions, passion, and individuality, prioritizing spontaneity and freedom. According to Echeverría (1998, p. 40), the romantic ethos seeks originality and tends to idealize nature and the past; it does not deny modernism but resists accepting it. It represents a break from rigid structures and traditions, advocating for a more fluid and expressive engagement with the modern world, recognizing that the exchange value is not the same as use value.

The *baroque ethos* embraces the complexity and contradictions of the world but going back to the use value. For Castellanos (2018), Echeverría expanded the discussion on this ethos. Echeverría's analysis of the baroque ethos points to its acceptance of the chaotic and multifaceted nature of reality. It does not seek to simplify or harmonize, but rather to delve into the richness of diversity and contradiction. The baroque ethos is often associated with periods of social upheaval but attached to the prevailing system. Baroque ethos confronts capitalist modernity, integrating into resistance and resisting in integration. Baroque ethos is not the emancipatory ethos but subsumed to the forms of modernity.

The importance of Echeverría's approach lies in identifying this different ethos. Echeverría invites us to question the prevailing norms that shape our perceptions of reality but does not show alternative ways to overcome them (Castellanos, 2028). As he argues, these ethos are not merely aesthetic categories; they are dynamic ways of engaging with the complexities of modernity and its challenges. "Understanding these ethos helps us recognize the historical conditions that shape how we think, feel, and act in the world" (Echeverría), and that's the methodology implemented to approach what we intend to study, the genesis of the peasant University.

Results and discussion

Genesis of a Colombian Peasant University

Pérez (2019) stated that there are three models of universities, Secular-Private, Public and Confessional. But in the last decades the birth of universities responding to other needs that the previous ones did not respond to, therefore new alternatives are founded by popular, indigenous and peasant communities. In relation to the Colombian Peasant University, a confessional institute for the sake of the popular, indigenous and peasant communities as described in this section.

With this historical material, the Episcopate of Colombia entrusted the Jesuit Francisco Javier Mejía with the coordination of Catholic Social Action (Malagón, 2015). The priest was recognized for his defense of the working class, cooperativism as a form of community organization, social justice, the common good, that is, he embodied the values and principles of the Social Doctrine of the Church that he had managed to materialize in the Catholic Workers Section around 1945, later converted into the Union of Colombian Workers. among other institutions of a social and cooperative

nature that united workers in the defense of their rights through democratic mechanisms. As a result of this work, the National Agrarian Federation (As in Spanish, Federación Agraria Nacional [FAN]) was achieved for the first time in the history of the *dreamed nation*, with which the recovery of some of the peasant lands was achieved through Communal Action as a form of organization of the peasantry.

A minority of the Peasant Movement went from organizing itself in small regional associations, to being part of the guerrilla forms of vandalism at the time of La Violencia. However, the bulk of the Peasant Movement followed its legal course and was consolidated by 1967 in the National Association of Peasant (As in Spanish, Asociación de Usuarios Campensinos, [ANUC]). In any case, a total unity of the movement was not achieved, which led to the segregation of the Peasant Movement and later some of its members joined the nascent Marxist-Leninist guerrillas, among them: the Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (Known as FARC), the National Liberation Army (Known as ELN), the Popular Liberation Army (Known as EPL), the April 19 Movement (Known as M-19) that sought with arms to expand the frontiers of power of the National Front (As in Spanish Frente Nacional, where two political parties took turns run the nation) that, being just one, they played as if there were two political parties, sharing the power of the State, co-opted by two of them (Archila Neira, 1997).

In these social and political conditions, a Peasant University was born. First as the Working class' University in 1961, with the purpose of stopping the Marxist doctrine of real socialism that circulated among the unions and promoted the radical and violent Revolution – not properly the Marxism of critical theory. The way to channel and reorient these historical forces eager for social justice that were among the peasants and workers, a living expression of the romantic *ethos*, was the formation in the Social Doctrine of the Church and in the incorporation of peasants from different parts of the national territory to the commencing Workers' University, capable of counteracting the wave of violence that did not stop and tore apart the dream of the *Nation* which, lost in the history of civil wars, now found itself between self-defense groups, guerrillas and the State. The idea was "to train peasant leaders for their territories, with tools for community reorganization. To train cooperative groups throughout the national territory, to confront violence with community training and social productivity, not with more violence and to break the cycle of terror" (Pavón, E; personal communication, June 7, 2018).

In 1962, the Higher Institute of Social and Economic Sciences known as the Peasant University in Hacienda La Julia was born through the support of the Diocese of Buga, the Javeriana University (A Jesuit University), the Sisters of the Presentation, a benefactor sector of businessmen in the region, professors from schools and universities in the region *ad honorem*, in addition to lay people committed to the cause, a group of Jesuits and national and regional state support. At that time in the country and especially in the rural sector there was little training for the peasants. The most fortunate in the countryside could have up to a fifth-grade primary school. This led

the Peasant University to propose an initial cycle of leveling Primary and Secondary school. Once this cycle was reached, three specialization courses were offered according to three Departments: The *Organization* Department, which trained in Community Action Committees, Association of Peasants, Agrarian Unions and other Rural Community Organizational Systems lasting eleven months.

The second, *Agrarian Cooperativism* Department, that included training in planning, management and execution of agricultural cooperatives with an emphasis on production and marketing. Finally, *the Promotion and Development* Department trained in methods and techniques for the promotion of agricultural communities. Along with this theoretical-practical and technical training, spaces were offered for the practice of the exercises of Ignatian spirituality[7] that linked the fostering of sensitive and rational interiority, belonging to the community through colloquium, exposure to it and the search for a harmonious relationship with nature. The Peasant University was "an alternative life for hundreds of peasant boys who, not finding hope in the countryside, decided to go out in search of a better-paid job in the cities or to take up a rifle and fight for guerrilla causes". (Malagón, 2015, p. 50).

However, it was not easy to sustain the Peasant University. Perhaps, prioritizing *use value over exchange value*, and not emphasizing The Law of Accumulation of Capital, and, on the contrary, recovering the creative forces that are at play in the forms of work and cooperative consumption of practical and symbolic objects by superimposing the *baroque ethos* over the *realistic* and transforming the impetus of the *Romantic ethos* with airs of revolution taming its form and content with a *Jesuit baroque* spirit that seeks to earn a living without losing the soul. Trying to recover what has been destroyed by the *realistic ethos* that only capitalist modernity sees and to try in everyday life the natural form of the social reproduction of the human by emphasizing life even in the midst of death (Echeverría, 2010).

After 12 years of operations, there were 400 young graduates who promoted a vision that created for themselves a concrete image for the world they were trying to transform. But in the same way, frustration and bewilderment, abandonment and loneliness started to emerge. A fight in which they were left alone in the dream of a *baroque* nation that could suspend the radical gesture of the *realist ethos* and moderate it until it mutates into the other *historical ethos* and with them, assuming an alternative modernity to the capitalist, American modernity, taking the baroque modernity that had been brewing simultaneously since the XVI as a survival strategy, as a way of life, as an alternative of modernity that sees in the *value of use* and its recreation, a will to form that awakens the dormant forces of history and the creative powers

7 St. Ignatius of Loyola points out that "by this name of spiritual exercises is meant every way of examining the conscience, of meditating, of contemplating, of praying vocally and mentally, and of other spiritual activities as will be said hereafter. For, just as walking, walking, and running are bodily exercises, in the same way every way of preparing and disposing the soul to remove from itself all disordered affections, and after removing them to seek and find the divine will in the disposition of its life for the health of the soul, are called spiritual exercises (2013, p. 4).

of a possible world in the human emancipation of communities and their own forms of organization. Above all, and as Malagón (2015) points out, "they started from the recognition that the foundations of strong social and community development began to be cemented in the spiritual horizons of the individual and his or her original community, the family, the basic unit of social organization" (p. 63).

Thus, the Peasant University in its second stage mutates into a productive and self-sufficient unit with "an economic recovery plan based on the adaptation of the University's infrastructure to the new productive model" (Malagón, 2015, p. 53). In addition, the Ministry of National Education at the time questioned its self-designation as a university, without issuing professional degrees per se, beyond the certifications it offered according to the specific courses. This ended up driving its transformation into a Center for Social Development. Decentralization was its mode of operation during this new stage, accompanying the communities in their own productive, technical, spiritual territories, but with a strong emphasis on prospects for economic performance. The *realist ethos* now recovered, with its subjection in the name of scarcity experienced almost to the point of disappearance, the spirit of abundance and emancipation that promises the priority return to *exchange value*. It was now the same alumni and professors, with the support of "agronomists, zootechnicians, sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists and social workers from then on who would begin to accompany the management in rural development that the Jesuits and the former students initiated" (Malagón, 2015, p. 56) who began this new stage by leading the Center for Social Development and the extension work of the itinerant Peasant University that moved to the territory.

The internal reorganization of the Peasant University into a Center for Social Promotion was adjusted to the model of five areas: *organizational*, which promoted the constitution of pre-cooperative stores and peasant markets. An *educational area* that is concerned with the profile of humanistic education and the strategies to achieve it. *Health area* that promoted methods of hygiene, first aid and food handling. *A Pastoral care area* that innovated in the manner of the *baroque ethos* of the Jesuits with the reading and interpretation of biblical texts, giving them social meaning, stimulating their adaptation and materialization in the daily community life. And finally, the *technical* area that promotes the skills development through field accompaniment to "agroecological farms, organic crops, alternative composting procedures and the proper management of solid waste. He designed the strategy to work on the economic-productive dimension of rural development" (Malagón, 2015, p. 57). At this stage, the Peasant University helped to implement the public policy of the Integrated Rural Development Program (DRI) promoted by the World Bank. Although there was progress in the redistribution of land and in the coverage of some immediate needs, especially in the territories most affected by violence, still it was not enough. In any case, and in the midst of these contradictions and dissatisfactions, Pavón insists,

> The harshness and cruelty of the war ratified the fact that we have to take side on life options, on life alternatives, ratified, I think to many of us who lived that reality, the side on which we should be and is on the side of the less favored population (Personal communication, June 7, 2018).

This accompaniment included indigenous communities such as the Nasa people in Toribio Cauca. From the Peasant University, the Pastoral Mission of Father Álvaró Ulcué Chocué, a spiritual and community leader assassinated in 1984. He established the foundations of the Educational Center for Training, Research and Integral Community Development (As in Spanish CECIDIC). The same Nasa people who, with their obstinate *baroque ethos*, materialized the project of the Indigenous Intercultural Autonomous University around 2003 (Universidad Autónoma Indígena Intercultural, 2024), making their way among the conventional universities of the dream *Nation*, would achieve, after 17 years of struggle and resistance, recognition as a public university by the Ministry of National Education (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2020).

It is clear that the pastoral care center that inspired the Peasant University, although in some way it was pacifying and sought to retain the Marxism-Leninism that encouraged the emergence of the guerrillas as indicated above, was not alien to the winds of Liberation Theology that was making its way after the transformations achieved by the Second Vatican Council, emphasizing the social character of the Church. Followed by the Episcopal Conferences of Medellín (1968) and Puebla (1979) deepened on a Gospel put into praxis, "*liberation* understood as *salvation*, not only as the eternal joy of the Kingdom of God, but as the liberation of the poor from the oppressive and dominant classes" (Malagón, 2015, p. 65) and *redemption* as faith made *praxis* in social and community action.

These coordinates made the Peasant University among certain sectors give an air of organization camouflaged as institutionality, but with revolutionary and communist ideals. However, the Peasant University was really open for people, making clear its renewing, social and reformist spirit, rather than revolutionary, that unlike the left-wing thought of the time, which did not accept modernity to the extent that it only understood it as capitalist. The Peasant University understood deep within itself that another modernity was possible, a *baroque*, like the one that the Jesuits had promoted in the sixteenth century in the lands of the promised Abya Yala, which survived with its multiple mutations, but which in the end, was sustained by its communitarian spirit and hybrid of *baroque* ethos.

Birth of the Instituto Mayor del Campesino - IMCA (*Higher Institute for Peasant Education*)

The Peasant University embarked on another path that would lead it to a more solid regional and national relationship with peasant communities, the State, companies in the region and Non-Governmental Organizations, to such an extent that it would

be at the forefront in the creation of the Latin American Consortium for Agroecology and Development (As in Spanish CLADES), a pioneer in agroecology in the country and throughout Latin America. However, at the regional, national and global level, drug trafficking was spreading and permeated all the social stances, from the lives of young people, families to political sectors. The former guerrillas found in it a refuge from the *realist ethos* that perverted the large and juicy exchange value that it obtained with the national and international drug market and vandalism as an economy parallel to the official economy. Contradictorily, it clung to forms of the *excessive baroque ethos* to combine itself in a strategy for the survival of an unviable Nation, and in general it imposed itself as a way of life that saw in community proposals the dangerous influence of a mode of productivity that could survive with the basics – utility *value* – and without pretensions to obtain luxury and overflowing accumulation in the manner *of exchange value*.

In this context, the peasant associations were trapped. They are instigated by violence exercised by guerrilla groups, paramilitarism melted with drug trafficking gangs, and the pressure of public forces, instigated by political and ideological struggles of the parties. Violence has always harassed the dreamed *Nation* in a cyclical way to such an extent that it produced massacres from colonial times, through the independence struggles, to those of the twentieth century such as the Banana Plantations, Gacheta, Ataco, Líbano, Students revolt, the trade unionists, the bipartisan ones, Trujillo, La Rochela, Patriotic Union (UP), social leaders, environmentalists, among many others and forgotten in the cemeteries on which the future of the *realist ethos* is built, forging the history of this unrealized Nation that barely remembers its dead and always operates with oblivion. Without memory, without history, all that remains is the affirmation of the present, its unhealthy tendency to deny the past in the name of progress and the hope of a better future that never comes.

Throughout the 21st century, the Peasant University, now known as the Higher Institute for Peasant Education (*Instituto Mayor Campesino* [Hereafter IMCA], 2019) in Buga, reached levels of maturity and articulation between the different social actors and various organizations with which it has achieved, for example, the Micro-Regional Labor Strategy, the Inter-institutional Committees for Municipal Development, from which it continues to accompany the territorial communities in the perspective of a solidary social thought that promotes in addition to a sustainable relationship with nature and Ignatian spirituality. All this is possible based on the capacities developed by the Community Action Boards (As in Spanish, Juntas de Acción Comunal [JAC]), the Peasant Committees and the peasant organizations, were legally constituted in Buga, Restrepo, Riofrio and throughout the Valle del Cauca. All the efforts of the Peasant University, today IMCA, have been aimed at deepening the spiritual values of the individual, in order to permeate families and with these communities to strengthen the social fabric torn apart by violence, as indicated by Malagón (2015).

The creation of the Master's program in Sustainable Development of Agricultural Systems from the 1980s, made possible by the search for alternative development models to those historically dominant in the envisioned nation (Malagón, 2015), expressed a *classic ethos* that confronted the *realist ethos* with scientific knowledge. The fact that the main requirements were that the candidates must have direct contact with local farmers and rural problematics made this program an alternative model. The result of the articulated work between the Institute of Rural Studies from the Javeriana University - Bogotá, and the Center for Research on Sustainable Agricultural Systems at the Javeriana University, a pioneer in the production of knowledge with an organizational and disciplinary emphasis capable of addressing the region's problems from a scientific perspective, as it was the case in organic coffee production.

Similarly, and according to Malagón (2015), the interest in food sovereignty, promoted through the Peasant Schools of Training for Sustainability and the Diploma in Participatory Management of Local and Regional Sustainability, which has been offered in Buga, Restrepo, Ginebra, Guacarí, Vijes, Yotoco, Riofrío, and Trujillo with an emphasis on: participatory formulation of municipal development plans; formulation, management, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of projects; participatory formulation of life plans; participatory planning and political culture; solidarity economy and political culture, are a reflection of a Peasant University whose interest in participatory development planning and its influence on the articulation in Municipal Development Plans and Territorial Ordering Plans, are part of its evangelical and social praxis. In this framework, the Referendum for water and the right to its community self-management with the National Network of Community Water Systems of Colombia RedNACC was also born. "In Colombia, over 12,000 organizations known as community water systems manage water resources. We are an ancestral heritage and cultural construction, and one of the richest expressions of participatory environmental management in our country" (RedNACC, 2017, p. 7).

These are expressions of community and peasant *Baroque ethos* that drove a solidarity economy and a grassroots political culture capable of confronting and creating cracks in the all-encompassing giant *realist ethos*, with its devastating logic of exchange value and capitalist modernity. They showcase alternative ways of life through the everyday interaction, seeking with their scorned and ridiculed *Baroque modernity* to carve a path amidst the void, uncertainty, and impossibilities of a Baroque nation that is gradually deconstructing in the rural areas, in the small visual gesture towards the capitalist modernity's dreamed-of nation, sabotaging it in the smallest, most unnoticed ways, attempting another possible world amidst the never-ending war. As Malagón (2015) states in the Epilogue of his book 'Tiempos de cosecha', the ancestral communities, as peasants, afro-Colombians and indigenous people know how to protect the natural resources thanks to their cultural practices shared from one generation to another through their narratives, what can be recognized as living memory manifested in their rituals, cultural meetings, the music, around the fire.

Community life is a central cultural heritage these ancestral groups have that are really important for their survival, binding them together as one with the environment, called Beloved Mother Land which is connected to the use value rather than the exchange value.

Conclusions

The concept of historical ethos allows us to analyze the ways in which societies reproduce humanity and respond to capitalist modernity through cultural configurations and long-lasting behaviors reflected in the different universities, Secular-Private, Public and Confessional.

The university, as a historical product of modernity, not only reproduces knowledge, but also reflects the various configurations of historical ethos. It is in constant struggle between being a reproducer of the capitalist social order (*realist ethos*) and being a space of cultural and creative emancipation (baroque or romantic ethos) that the *Instituto Mayor Campesino* emerged. In that sense, there is a growing movement of "other universities" (universidades populares, indígenas, campesinas e interculturales) as alternatives to hegemonic educational models that respond to the exchange value in education.

These emerging universities respond to the baroque ethos and seek to resist the dominant forms of capitalist modernity by promoting autonomy, innovation and cultural resistance that respond to the local needs compared to imposed educational models. These institutions, as *Instituto Mayor Campesino* aim to counteract the neoliberal, capitalist influence in higher education by focusing on local knowledge, ancestral traditions, and intercultural perspectives.

The universities, secular-private, public, confessional and popular – peasant, are a human production that reproduces, creates and reconstructs knowledge, but also reflects political, cultural and educational struggles in modernity. It is a space where different historical ethos confront each other in a struggle to define the course of humanity and the social order.

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