

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH THESIS PROPOSAL: History education and its contribution to peace building: The role of museums, literature and film as sites for a critical understanding of the violent past
DIRS DOCTORATE PROGRAMME: Human Rights: Ethical, Social and Political Challenges
HOST RESEARCH UNIT (website link): Center for Applied Ethics (CEA)
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE INTEREST OF THE RESEARCH THESIS PROPOSAL: <p>The Center for Applied Ethics offers an opportunity to develop a doctoral thesis on the topic of History Education and its Contribution to Peace Building.</p> <p>The proposed thesis project is associated to one of CEA's research teams focusing on Conflict and Cultures of Peace. The Principal Investigator (Dr. Angela Bermudez) works with a team of experienced researchers in the Basque Country and Colombia, as well as with a group of pre-doctoral researchers who are writing their thesis on issues directly or closely related to the team's research agenda. Our research integrates the fields of history and peace education in order to examine how teaching and learning history in different socio-cultural contexts foster or hinder a critical understanding of political violence in youth. This inquiry seeks to contribute to the construction of sustainable cultures of peace where individuals and communities can engage in nonviolent management of conflict.</p> <p>The team recently concluded the research project <i>"Understanding Political Violence through History Education: Comparative Study of History Textbooks and Teachers in the Basque Country, Colombia and the United States,"</i> funded by a Marie Curie Career Integration Grant (EU 7th Framework Programme 2012-2016) and a Spencer Foundation Research Grant (2013-2014). Building upon this study, the team presented a new project entitled <i>"The Role of Memory Objects and Practices in the Construction of a Critical Understanding of Violence"</i> (Vio-Memory) to the H2020 Starting Grant - 2016 call by the European Research Council. Resolution of this call is still pending. Other grant proposals will be presented to other funding agencies.</p> <p>Below is a summary of the concept and goals of the main research project within which Co-Fund candidates are invited to submit a proposal to develop their doctoral thesis.</p> <p><i>"The Role of Memory Objects and Practices in the Construction of a Critical Understanding of Violence"</i> (Vio-Memory)</p> <p>P.I. Dr. Angela Bermudez. Center for Applied Ethics. University of Deusto</p> <p>Abstract</p> <p>This qualitative study proposes to investigate the role that memory objects and memory practices pertaining to the Basque Conflict (1960's to present) and the Colombian Armed Conflict (1960's to present) play in the construction of a critical understanding of violence in youth.</p> <p>We live surrounded by historical narratives that normalize violence, leading people to take it for granted, without reflecting about its roots, causes, consequences and alternatives. A high proportion of the contents of history education across the world refer to violent events. Students are bombarded with the names, dates and sites of innumerable battles, coups d'état, and conquest enterprises. Wars and revolutions are easy turning points in memorizing history. However, violence</p>

is rarely discussed or made the object of explicit analysis. Instead, it tends to be regarded as a natural feature of human affairs, an inevitable trait of historical processes that requires no explanation. This creates a perplexing paradox: Violence appears repeatedly as a dominant motif of history education, and at the same time remains hidden to the learner. How is this possible? How is recurrent and ubiquitous violence made invisible? And alternatively, *how can history education in formal and informal scenarios foster a critical understanding of violence?*

Despite abundant scholarship on history education, we don't have enough research to answer these questions. However, this knowledge is crucial to building sustainable cultures of peace. Galtung (2002) claims that we can only break the cycles of violence and counter-violence by transforming the ways in which people understand the relation between conflict and violence. Violence is one of the ways in which people relate to each other around situations of conflict. What distinguishes a violent management of conflict is the instrumentalization of the "other" that is treated as a disposable means to achieve goals or goods that are in dispute. But, as Galtung explains, physical and intended violence ("direct violence") rests on built-in patterns of social organization and practice marked by inequality ("structural violence"), and on belief-systems and institutions such as law, religion, science, education, and language by which instrumental, destructive and unfair practices are rendered acceptable ("cultural violence").

Conventional history education tends to play an important role as a form of cultural violence, feeding the belief that in the face of conflict, violence is inevitable, necessary, justifiable, and effective. Previous research by this team has shown how school history textbook narratives make violence invisible in ways that hinder processes of peace building. Yet, school history is only one part of the wider spectrum of phenomena of what is now called "historical culture" (Carretero, Berger, & Grever, 2017). People access and reconstruct the past through historiography and formal education, but also by visiting memorials and heritage sites, watching news reports, or engaging in conversation about shared or contested memories. For this reason, it is also important to look at the narratives of the violent past that circulate outside of the classroom, and shed light on other representations of violence, for instance, as plotted in historical films, novels, or museum exhibits.

In particular, this project aims to investigate the following research questions: Do historical museums, literature and film offer alternative narratives about the violent past that can have a potentially different impact on how people understand violence? What happens if violence is made visible and turned into the object of reflective inquiry and discussion? Could that lead people to de-normalize violence and develop a critical understanding of it? This qualitative project will address these questions with the goal of generating a conceptual and methodological framework to investigate and explain basic mechanisms at play in the construction of a critical understanding of violence.

The hypothesis that guides this study is that if young people learn about the violent past of their societies through memory objects and practices that make violence visible and engage them in reflective inquiry and discussion, they can develop a critical understanding that de-normalizes violence. Empirical research (in the main project) will focus on memory objects pertaining to the Basque Conflict (1960's to present) and the Colombian Armed Conflict (1960's to present), and memory practices will take place in the Basque Country (Spain) and Colombia respectively. Three work packages (WP's) will explore different aspect of this hypothesis. WP1 uses 10 Narrative Keys to deconstruct how memory objects make violence visible or invisible. WP2 sharpens this analysis using 4 Tools of Critical Inquiry to examine how critical is the representation that memory objects make of the violent past. Finally, WP3 will facilitate and document different activities that engage young people in reflective inquiry and discussion around these objects, and, using a Cognitive/Discursive Dual Lens Model, it will examine the intellectual and social dynamics that shape inquiry and discussion in memory practices, and the transformations they generate in

peoples' understanding of violence.

EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR PROPOSED THESIS PROJECTS:

- The general goal of the proposed thesis project must be directly related to the general goal of the main project, that is, investigate the role of memory objects and/or practices of history education (in formal and informal scenarios) and its contribution to peace building.
- The specific goals of the proposed thesis project may vary based on the candidates' interest or preference. For instance, the proposal may focus on studying the role of museums, literature, or film (or a combination of them) pertaining to one episode of the violent past of any country or social context. Further, the proposal may focus on an analysis of the memory objects, or extend the analysis to include an analysis of memory practices developed around them.
- Research may be conducted pertaining to episodes of the violent past of any country provided that data and analysis is translated into Spanish and/or English in order to comply with publishing and other dissemination needs.
- A substantial portion of the proposed project must adhere to the methodology used in the main project in order to allow for cross case comparisons. That is, the candidate will be required to conduct a qualitative analysis using the three analytic models designed and employed by the Principal Investigator: a) Narrative Keys for the Representation of Violence, b) Critical Inquiry Tools, c) Socio-Cultural/Discourse Analysis. The candidate does not need to demonstrate previous experience using these models. Learning opportunities will be provided as part of the doctoral training.
- In addition to the main project methodology, the candidate may propose an additional analytic approach (questions, conceptual framework, analytic process) that responds to his/her specific interests. This is not required, but candidates who wish so are welcome to do it. Additional analytic approaches must not compromise the rigor and comprehensiveness of the main methodology of the project.

MAIN RESEARCH AIMS FOR THE PROPOSED THESIS PROJECTS:

1. Study how museums, literature and/or film pertaining to different episodes of the violent past foster or hinder processes of critical inquiry and reflective dialog about the violent past.
2. Develop research-based guidelines for the design of museum exhibits that provide youth with tools for a critical understanding of the violent past.
3. Develop research-based guideless for the collaboration between museums, schools and universities.

THESIS DIRECTOR(S):

Angela Bermudez Velez.

Researcher ID - Web of Knowledge: H-1290-2011

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Possibility of co-tutoring: The research team has partners in universities in Boston (United States) and Bogotá (Colombia), which allows for a thesis co-direction. Other suggestions of co-direction proposed by the candidate would be carefully considered.

EXCELLENCE

Main academic publications related to the topic:

- **Haste, H. & Bermudez, A. (2017).** *The power of story: Narrative, history and civic identity.* In, Carretero, M. Berger, S., & Grever, M. (Eds.) *International handbook of research in historical culture and education.* London: Palgrave MacMillan (ISBN 978-1-137-52908-4).
- **Stoskopf, A. & Bermudez, A. (2016).** *"The sounds of silence: American history textbook representations of non-violence and the Abolition Movement"*. *Journal of Peace Education*, published online on September 22, 2016.
- **Padilla, A. & Bermúdez, A. (2016).** *Normalising conflict and de-normalising violence: Challenges and possibilities in a critical teaching of the history of the Colombian Armed Conflict.* *Revista Colombiana de Educación*, (71), 187-218.
- **Bermudez, A. (2015).** *Four tools for critical inquiry in history, social studies and civic education.* *Revista de Estudios Sociales*, 52, 102-118.
- **Bermudez, A. (2014).** *Integrating cognitive and discursive approaches in the analysis of critical reflection within relational and socio-cultural contexts.* In, SAGE Cases in methodology. London: Sage Publications (ISBN: 9781446273050-<http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/978144627305014533946>). Access at: <http://srmo.sagepub.com/view/methods-case-studies-2013/n406.xml?rskey=KJCnG6&row=1&hidePageNum&print>
- **Bermudez, A. (2012).** *The discursive negotiation of cultural narratives and social identities in learning history.* In, M. Carretero, M. Asensio and M. Rodriguez Monéo (Eds.) *History education and the construction of national identities. International review of history education.* Vol. 5., pp. 203-220. Charlotte, CT: Information Age Publishers (ISBN: 978-1-61735-936-1).
- **Carretero, M., Haste, H. & Bermudez, A. (2016).** *Civic education.* In, L., Corno & E.M. Anderman (Eds.) (2016). *Handbook of Educational Psychology.* 3rd Edition, Chapter 22, pp. 295-308. London: Routledge Publishers (ISBN-13: 978-0415894821).
- **Carretero, M. & Bermudez, A. (2012).** *Constructing histories.* In, J. Valsiner (Ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Culture and Psychology.* Chapter 28, pp. 625-646. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (ISBN-13: 978-0199366200.)

Main projects developed by the directors related to the topic (especially European projects)

Project: **Understanding Political Violence and Nonviolence Through History Education: Comparative Study of History Textbooks and Teachers in País Vasco, Colombia and the United States.**

Center For Applied Ethics, Deusto University

Principal Investigator: Angela Bermudez - 2012-2016

Funding: Marie Curie Career Integration Grant. 7th Framework Programme 2012-2016

Spencer Foundation 2013-2014.

Project: Thinking Critically Together: The Intellectual and Discursive Dynamics of Controversial Conversations.

Harvard Graduate School Of Education, Cambridge, MA.

Principal Investigator Angela Bermudez - Doctoral Dissertation - 2006- 2008

Readers: Prof. Robert Selman, Prof. David Perkins, and Prof. Helen Haste

Funding: Spencer Foundation Dissertation Grant.

Project: Longitudinal Outcome Evaluation of Facing History and Ourselves Historical Understanding & Civic Learning Components

Harvard Graduate School Of Education, Cambridge, MA. - 2005-2007

Principal Investigators: Dr. Dennis Barr, Dr. Robert Selman, & Dr. Beth Gamsee.

Angela Bermudez served as Doctoral Research Associate

Project: The Development of Historical Understanding in Youth.

Pontificia Universidad Javeriana– Bogotá, Colombia

Co- Principal Investigator - 1996–2000

Funding: COLCIENCIAS, Colombian Research Agency

INTERDISCIPLINARIETY

Description of the different knowledge areas that the research proposal integrates:

The host research team and the research project are interdisciplinary at three different levels:

Team composition: The members of the international team have academic training and professional experience in different fields that are particularly relevant to the studies they conduct. These fields include: Education and pedagogy, Cognitive and socio-cultural psychology, history, political science, and peace and conflict studies.

Conceptual definition of the research problem: Our team investigates the different roles that formal and informal history education can play in the development of a critical understanding of political violence, and in fostering cultures of peace. By definition, this problem sits at the intersection of diverse bodies of scholarship on history and humanities education, peace and conflict studies, pedagogy, psychology and ethics. Within the University's research agenda, this project fits with one of four interdisciplinary research foci: Human Rights, Peace and Conflict Resolution. This research focus responds to the demand in Horizon 2020 for inclusive, innovative and reflective societies.

Methodology: The studies conducted by the team are informed by two broad theoretical approaches that inform the construction of research questions, data collection and analysis. Because of our interest in excavating the inherent social messaging embedded in historical accounts, we draw upon models of discourse analysis that shed light on the different ways in which language, narrative and discourse are used to achieve social goals such as framing the meaning of events and negotiating personal and collective identities. We also draw upon cognitive and developmental perspectives that shed light on how pedagogical processes build upon and encourage the use of disciplinary concepts and cognitive tools that are essential to critical reflection and historical understanding. This approach speaks to our interest in examining how history education resources foster or hinder a critical understanding of political violence.

Co-direction from different disciplines:

Possible in light of the interdisciplinary team composition. Other suggestions of co-direction proposed by the candidate would be carefully considered.

INTERNATIONALIZATION

Relationship with H2020 topics or ERC bottom-up initiatives:

The Principal Investigator recently submitted a research proposal to the European Research Council (ERC) Starting Grants Call of October 2016.

The research project proposed to ERC-StG-2016 is entitled: “The Role of Memory Objects and Practices in the Construction of a Critical Understanding of Violence” (Vio-Memory).” This project builds off a previous international study funded by a Marie Curie Career Integration Grant (2012-2016) (European Union 7th Framework Programme - Call: FP7-PEOPLE-2012-CIG), a Spencer Foundation Research Grant (2013-2014), and two small grants from the Basque Government, Department of Justice and Public Administration, 2012

Our research team fits well with the objectives of the Spanish Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation (EECTI) and with the H2020 Pillar 1 (Excellent Science). Our work is characterized by its interdisciplinary and innovative nature, its capacity to advance the frontiers of knowledge, and to exercises leadership in the global world. In particular, it contributes to achieve the objectives set by these two frameworks of attracting and retaining talent and fostering excellent scientific research (EECTI, p.16).

In addition, our research has a high social relevance and responds to the objective of fostering research that is oriented towards key societal challenges, as established in the European Union Horizon 2020 Framework and in the 4th objective of the Spanish Strategy. Our studies seek to contribute to the construction of sustainable cultures of peace where individuals and communities can engage in nonviolent management of conflict. In this regard, it resonates with H2020 Societal Challenge 6 that calls for research on the development of “Inclusive, innovative and reflective societies”, with EECTI’s Societal Challenge 6 (Social Change and Innovation) that calls for the social sciences and humanities to investigate processes of social change that are crucial in developing innovative, inclusive and responsible societies (EECTI, p.30), and with Challenge 8 (Protection of liberties and rights of citizens) that highlights the need of research that contributes to sustain models of coexistence that rest on principles of freedom, responsibility and justice (EECTI, p.31). Drawing upon UDEUSTO’s humanist approach, we understand this challenge as an opportunity to investigate the social and cultural aspects of security from an ethical perspective of human rights.

International mention:

The candidate will opt for the international mention. Currently, the four doctoral students associated to this team developing their dissertations under the supervision of Professor Angela Bermudez are doing academic internships in highly recognized centers in England, Northern Ireland and the Netherlands.

Partner university: The research team participates in different research networks that open various possibilities for internships.

International co-direction or international “co-tutelle”:

The research team has partners in universities in Boston (United States) and Bogotá (Colombia), which allows for a thesis co-direction. Other suggestions of co-direction proposed by the candidate would be carefully considered.

Other mechanisms different from the previous to implement the Internationalization?

The proposed thesis project is part of a larger research initiative developed by an international and interdisciplinary team. Several research activities are carried out collaboratively, and pre-doctoral researchers participate actively, both developing their own studies and serving as research

assistants in different tasks of the larger project. The composition of the team and the collaboration across sub-projects provides a rich and supportive environment and ample possibilities for interdisciplinary and international work, including participation in conferences, joint publication in different languages, and assistance in consulting and transference initiatives.

It is worth highlighting that the main project articulates a variety of case studies that investigate the general research problem as it manifests in a particular context or as it relates to a particular angle or research question. In this way, there is a strong approach towards comparative case analysis in which international contexts and disciplinary perspectives are crucial dimensions in case building.

INTERSECTORIALITY

Description of the social impact of the research:

This research team carries out a distinctive and innovative research agenda in the fields of history and peace education. Our studies integrate different disciplinary perspectives to construct original research problems that bridge between ethics and pedagogy, historical memory and peace building, theory and practice. In this way, it advances an needed interdisciplinary dialog. The results obtained with this research are likely to contribute to expand current scholarship, particularly in relation to the challenges of teaching youth about the violent past. Our work contributes a novel examination of the potential of key features of innovative history education to undermine the normalization of political violence by engaging young people in critical inquiry and reflective discussion regarding discrete episodes of political violence in their recent past.

In addition to the scientific impact, the results of our studies are likely to have an important social impact on the ongoing processes of recovering historical memory and building cultures of peaceful coexistence and respect for human rights. A high proportion of the contents included in history curricula across the world refer to violent events and processes. However, this does not mean that violence is explicitly discussed or made a subject of critical reflection. Instead, the historical narratives taught in schools tend to normalize and legitimize political violence. These narratives that normalize violence circulate through varied sociocultural channels such as schools, monuments and memorials, family conversations, or mass media. However, an alternative approach to history education could teach young people to question and transform these narratives. Considering their public nature, educational settings such as schools, universities, or museums can expose young people to different accounts and perspectives and engage them in critical inquiry and reflective discussion; something that is more difficult to do in more homogeneous environments like families, groups of friends or political organizations.

In consequence, our research agenda includes a purposeful strategy of collaboration between universities and research centers, schools, and other informal education spaces such as specialized museums. These include the Center for Applied Ethics at Deusto University (Bilbao), the Peace Museum (Guernica), Gernika Gogoratuz (Gernika), the Center for Applied Ethics at Universidad de Los Andes (Bogotá), the National Center for Historical Memory (Bogotá), the National Museum of Historical Memory (currently in construction in Bogota), and the Center for Research and Popular Education CINEP (Bogotá).

Social agent interested in the topic for thesis collaboration agreement:

Previous research has been done in collaboration with partner organizations such as those listed above. Members of the research team have worked jointly or served as advisors to these and other institutions. We anticipate that their interest will continue in the upcoming years. The research-practice collaboration will become even more salient in the new research project, since the

proposed methodology involves the scientific documentation and analysis of educational processes that take place in schools, universities and museums and other informal educational settings. At the very least, the institutions that partner with the research project will have a vested interest in the research-based knowledge developed, which can be used to guide and improve their practice.

Name of the social agent: Museo de la Paz, Gernika, Gernika Gogoratuz, (Gernika, País Vasco)
Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular, (Bogotá, Colombia)

RELATED ON-GOING PROJECT

The PhD thesis proposal will be connected with the following research projects:

“The Role of Memory Objects and Practices in the Construction of a Critical Understanding of Violence” (Vio-Memory)

P.I. Dr. Angela Bermudez.

Center for Applied Ethics. University of Deusto

Presented to the H2020 Starting Grant Call, October, 2016

EMPLOYABILITY OR FUTURE CAREER POSIBILITIES RELATED TO THE RESEARCH POSITION:

Generally speaking, a pre-doctoral researcher who conducts her/his thesis in connection with this research team and project will develop knowledge, skills and dispositions to continue in an academic career in the fields of peace education, human rights education, or history/social studies education. In addition to teaching/research positions, the graduate will also be able to work in areas such as curriculum design, development of teaching resources, and teacher professional development.