

The notion of Governance and alternative literate practices: the challenge of epistemic justice thinking with the '*Pueblos del centro*'

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Abstract

This article seeks to construct a conceptual proposal on governance from the perspective of the Pueblos del Centro (Colombia). Based on collaborative research tools, the aim is to recognize which are the main significant values for sovereignty and epistemic, cultural and political self-determination of 'other' knowledge.

Keywords: *Governance; epistemic justice; alternative literate practices; Pueblos del Centro; Colombia*

Introduction

The region of La Chorrera (Amazonas, Colombia) is inhabited by four indigenous peoples: Uitoto (m̄n̄fka), Okaina (f̄buza), Bora and Muinane (Gaigom̄fjo). Between them they are identified as the *Pueblos del Centro* [Peoples of the Center]: children of tobacco, coca and sweet cassava. In recent years, these peoples have built their Life Plan around the process of weaving the basket of abundance, based on the wisdom of tobacco and the word of coca, trying to maintain their sovereignty as peoples and to revitalize and communicate their forms of knowledge

After the violence, slavery and ethnocide to which they were subjected during the rubber plantation era at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, their populations were decimated and, in many cases, their inhabitants were forced to migrate. In spite of the violence exercised against these peoples during the rubber industry era, the abandonment by the state and missionary evangelization since the 1930s, the *Pueblos del Centro* have continued to develop their knowledge and cultural traditions in a sovereign and autonomous way.

One of the major milestones regarding the possibility of self-government occurred on April 6, 1988, when the peoples managed to kick out the missionaries and obtained the title of the Predio Putumayo reservation. Since then, they have been shaping their Life Plan, strengthened through the creation of the Zonal Association of Councils and Territorial Authorities of La Chorrera (AZICATCH).

The Life Plan of the *Pueblos del Centro* was formally drafted in 2006 (AZICATCH 2006), with the main objective of remaining culturally differentiated peoples, guaranteeing self-government, defense of the land and natural resources, food sovereignty, self-education, self-justice, and the right to live a healthy life.

In this context, the process of weaving the basket of abundance based on the respect for the Law of Life (a notion proper to the well-known 'good living') is related to leaving behind the basket of suffering and building a present and a future of self-determination, sovereignty and dignity. Always from the need to '*endulzar la palabra*' [sweeten the word]ⁱ.

As a result of a process of joint formulation, some researchers of the Universidad Javeriana and some others from AZICATCH get together to think and propose collectively and interdisciplinarily through collaborative research tools, from the Life Plan of Children of Tobacco, Coca and Sweet Cassava. From this starting point, this article aims to focus the theoretical discussion around the conditions of Governance and epistemic justice through alternative literate practices. In order to build a conceptual proposal that facilitates the processes of revalorization of the culture, knowledge and history of the Pueblos del Centro, it looks to support the process of construction of forms of self-government in an intersectional scenario in which different cosmologies co-exist.

Methodology

To confront the intersectional needs (Bey 2005) present in the multiple subalternities that this work faces, in the recognition of the importance of its own structures and the generation of other epistemologies and literate practices, emerges the need to think a methodology of analysis for the construction of the different bridges that allow overcoming the problems of dialogue and translation not only between knowledge, but also between structural dimensions.

In the first place, the methodology aims at the emergence of dialogue based on consultations with the *Pueblos del Centro*, through participatory research exercises such as epistemic consultations, the critical recovery of history (FalsBorda 2009) and the social-communal construction of the problem. Several methodological forms exist in Latin America for the recovery of knowledge and collective memory as sensory or inexperienced memory. There

are interesting cases, such as the Andean Oral History Workshops (Lehm and Rivera 1988), in which the critical recovery of history (FalsBorda 2009), based on the testimonies of the peoples themselves, is established as a central resource. Moreover, it constitutes a tensioning element between lived and inexperienced memory, present and absent in the logics of modern historiography and in the generation of their own identities based on the domination-massacre-rebellion scheme (Rivera 2010).

This article includes some of the tools proposed by the THOA, as well as bases the methodological construction to a large extent on the contributions of collaborative research methodology (Rappaport 2008), precisely because they constitute some of the most important elements that make possible the horizontal construction of knowledge based on the co-creation by university researchers, as well as researchers from the *Pueblos del Centro*.

The collaborative research fieldwork (Rappaport 2008) on which this text is based was carried out after two visits to La Chorrera (Amazonas, Colombia), in September 2018 and June 2021. During the first one, we accompany during fifteen days a strong ethnographic fieldwork oriented by a dialogue of knowledge with members of the four indigenous peoples, including life stories and intersectional dialogue (known as '*mambear*'). During the latter, we held five meetings -of one day each- between five researchers from Pontificia Universidad Javeriana (Colombia) and more than fifty co-researchers from the Pueblos del Centro, representatives of each of the peoples and cabildos- which were called 'gathering knowledge' during fifteen more days. These meetings focused on the following themes: documentation and archives, image and

memory, social museology, sacred plants and linguistic revitalization, some of the topics that were identified during the first visit.

During these meetings, we used tools related to learning through research or the post-made curriculum (Ferreira 2003), social museology (Pérez 2020) and the recovery of the archive of foundational documents and specific bibliography, to revalorize the forms of knowledge construction of the *Pueblos del Centro*. These research exercises were preceded by the absence of ontological or epistemological enclosures, something that is usually present in the participatory assumption of the institutions of power and that can help to identify and constitute the epistemic marks and boundaries that arise from the tension of ontologies, knowledge, and structures.

The documentation of these meetings was done collaboratively by the Pueblos' own researchers, based on the knowledge acquired in the first documentation workshop. Free, light and easy software tools -pads like Tupale- were used, with the aim of building mechanisms for the sovereignty of knowledge, also in digital environments, as well as the safeguarding of the memory itself.

It was also necessary to include situated knowledge, based on the adoption of forms of organization and cyclical ontology, in continuous connection with the leaders of the communities in the participating management of the proposals included in the Life Plan. In this sense, part of the methodology of this work will emerge *a posteriori*, in the critical return to the community that is part of its analysis once the text is published, the *Pueblos del Centro*, so that they can make a critical reading of the results issued and be able to continue with the co-construction of the proposal from a necessary dialogue of knowledge.

Some researchers also undertook to record the documentation and work commitments through audios and videos, after technical training by university researchers, resulting in a large part of the knowledge that was discussed during the meetings.

As cognitive resources, the work intends to use both the written archive, as well as other forms of registration, through *oralituras* and oralities (Rocha 2018), repertoires of action, routines and corporealities (Rivera 2010; De Certeau 1986). All of them present and inscribed in the testimonies collected by the work and the documents revealed, suppose amplified elements in the construction of the tensions between the colonial archive and the subaltern archive, which in their generation will speak of the constitutive elements of their own epistemologies.

However, in the final fulfillment of this analytical scheme it will be possible to outline, at least, the intersectional needs of the resistances to the domination of the dominant epistemologies in the mobility associated with the subaltern social structures themselves and the construction of mechanisms for the sovereignty of knowledge.

These can be found, in the first place, around the fulfillment of the needs of cognitive justice and the rupture with the schemes of internal colonialism present in our variegated social formations, both from a structural and discursive level. Secondly, in the apparent reflection of those atonal forms of academic knowledge and systematized by the colonial archive, as well as in the recognition of its intersectional necessity with other forms of knowledge and the configuration of such knowledge.

Based on the needs identified during the meetings, and the commitment acquired during the discussions with the *Pueblos del Centro*, the question arose: how to support the construction of forms of self-government that strengthen the processes of building their own knowledge?

Taking into account its own conceptualization, which emerged from the dialogues and meetings, as well as all the input provided by the knowledge co-constructed during those meetings, this article seeks to construct a conceptual proposal on governance from the perspective of the *Pueblos del Centro* (Colombia).

Therefore, we decided to start in this text from the discussion about the epistemic injustice around the alternative literate practices, in order to enunciate a notion of Governance as an emancipating element of alternative literate practices and the emancipation of a knowledge-power to the extent that it empowers a knowledge-situated, a relationship that implies an advance in the scope of epistemic justice (Kidd, Medina & Pohlhaus 2017).

Epistemic injustice. Short genealogy of modernity as a rhetoric of epistemic borders

Taking as a reference the analysis of the work carried out within the framework of the Modernity/Coloniality - Decoloniality research program (Escobar 2003), with colonialism, in addition to the imposition of political, religious, economic and vital structures, an epistemic set was also implanted, which was imposed as the only possible one in the legitimization of knowledge considered as valid for the construction of society.

The result was a society founded on a hierarchical organization that, at the time of the construction of the nation states in Latin America, placed at its summit the Spaniards, their descendants, their ways of life and the modern and colonial *epistemes* on which they rested.

The different subalternities, far from having managed to forge their own discourse around the multiplicity of everyday resistances, have historically suffered from a systematic lack of voice in the deepening of abysmal differences (Sousa and Meneses 2014) that necessarily refers us to re-state our question beyond the discursive exercise (Trigo 2014), but from a perspective closer to the political economy of knowledge (Rivera 2010) that configures the conditions for the extension of epistemic injustice (Kidd, Medina & Pohlhaus 2017; Anderson 2012).

Thus coexisted, on the one hand, the modern rhetoric of equality and emancipation that was publicized as the foundation and objective of the new organizations, while on the other hand, the colonial structures of subordination that had allowed the modern rhetoric to be instituted as hegemonic remained hidden but effective. Meanwhile, the inhabitants of the American territories, as well as the Africans who were kidnapped and taken to the American continent as slaves, were attributed the lowest level of this hierarchy, subjecting them to an irredeemable condemnation to this day.

Related to the described structure, the process of classifying people added other criteria, such as racial, patriarchal, sexual, class, etc., all of them equally persistent today. With the conviction and justification that such structure and classification were valid, the epistemic perspective, the social organization and

the political institutions that were implemented corresponded exclusively to the worldview of those who placed themselves at the top of the hierarchy in a self-referential manner.

The consequence is the legitimization of the colonial matrix of power (Mignolo 2014) through moral, epistemological, political and legal normative orders that reaffirmed the aforementioned classification - the colonial difference (Mignolo 2008) - and that served, and still serve, to preserve and protect it from any decolonizing hope.

The corresponding genealogy is much longer and deeper. But to make a long story short and get to the matter, with the "independences" of the early 19th century, Latin American countries produced political and military decolonization as they cut their ties with the metropolis. However, the *criollo* elites (Spaniards or their descendants) were the only actors in the cutting of legal and political ties with Spain, while maintaining their privileged hierarchical position, they oversaw keeping intact the colonial pattern of power established during the conquest and the colony.

Consequently, they built the nascent States based on the colonial praxis of disqualification of the other (the native peoples inhabiting the American territory) on the one hand, while on the other hand, they adopted the promising institutional models of the European Enlightenment that, exclusively and excludingly, aimed at improving the lives of the *criollo* elites.

The aim was not only the elevation of these elites in this hierarchical order, but also the culmination of the blood purification policies generated in the colonial

period, which tended to eliminate any form of organization, economy, and knowledge different from the one that at that time was self-proclaimed as the valid one. In this way, the pattern of power that condemned to disappearance any other form of life that was different was kept intact.

The literate city (Rama 1984) is the metaphor to show the operability of the described matrix, revealing the way in which epistemic borders were erected, impossible to cross for those who were ignored from the hierarchical and central summit of the literate city and its pedagogical and administrative practices, installed as the only language in the exercise of power (the "scientific" languages of Modernity served as symbolic parapets of the exclusive exclusivity of the colonial social classification). However, these parapets have been jumped, crossed, and intervened through other alternative literacy practices, those that were located in their interstices and that allowed a kind of hybridization not yet sufficiently analyzed.

Alternative literate practices and the possibilities for sovereignty

From a counter-hegemonic construction, the different cultural and cosmopolitical resistances (Tible 2010) have assumed a central role as a mobilizing element of socio-political awareness against the powers established by the institutionality managing the public space, beyond the formal organization of its structures, in the construction of intersections, inter-zones or temporarily autonomous zones (Bey 2005) that take advantage of interstitial spaces to develop epistemologies with a clear emancipatory vocation.

Such reflection is inscribed, however, not only in an excluding past, but also in a scenario as identifiable as the present one, in which one of the great issues

present in the social and political construction in Latin America has to do, as Gayatri Spivak (2012) assumed in the now distant 1980s, with the great problem of representation, thought of as a form of political-identitarian construction in the complex societies of a global South parasitized by external forms of knowledge, organization and mediation, but always treated as an object in tension, from its structural form and in the shaping of meaning.

The institutionality imposed by the State-form (Negri 2003) counted among its structures with the repressive presence of what, from postcolonial contexts, was called colonial archive (Fanon 2009; Spivak 2012), understood as the set of knowledge that gave life to the recognition of Eurocentric epistemology as unique and unquestionable.

Opposite to these closed structures, Latin America lived, and lives, tensions that arise from its polysemic identity from the bases of the present dialectic between forms assumed and not assumed by the present institutionality. From the dynamics of these parallel tensions, arises the recognition of the importance of the dialogue of knowledge as a structure of synchronic mediation, a space of conversation from its political and cultural forms, to give voice, language and critical thought to the multiple space-time and cosmological realities that, in their multidialogical process, manifest themselves and seek to build, together with the manifest structures, other ways of thinking ourselves culturally and politically.

In this sense, there is an urgent need for cognitive justice, fundamental for the current *sentipensante* development of peoples, communities, and societies, especially recognizable within the territories and territorialities of the Global

South. Closely linked and in tension with the debate recognizable in the European critical academy on the expansion and recognition of other fundamental rights, always critical of the positivist sense in the misunderstanding of many of the strands of legal pluralism of structural mutation and the right to difference (Segato 2011), cognitive justice provides elements of distinction, recognition and emergencies that are identity and subjective basis of the multiplicities present and generated in the struggles, but without the elements of misunderstanding of the concept of subalternities by the British critical historiography (Spivak 2012).

The capitalism-colonialism-patriarchy triad has effectively and efficiently assumed, in economic-political terms, the subsumption of decolonizing elements in societies politically emancipated from the metropolis, even when most of its constitutive elements follow, more than ever, the presence and actual development of the colony. The very concept and analysis of internal colonialism, and even beyond, of its dialectics (Tapia 2014), recognizes the multiple facets of coloniality and its materialism.

A political economy of knowledge (Rivera 2010) from the priority study of everyday life, is necessary to demonstrate the absences and emergencies of such cognitive justice. Moreover, considering the little concern of governments and liberal institutions for its elements and abysmal differences (Sousa Santos 2006), inscribed in the mechanisms of development of a cognitive capitalism that parasitizes knowledge from the South to the North and returns it converted into manufactures and consumable products.

If we consider that to this end, the state is determined by an incomprehensible and ambivalent nature between its democratic discursive pretension and its adherence to the neoliberal project as a single front of exploitation of the territory (Segato 2011), from the colonial-modern exteriority (Quijano 2000; Mignolo 2010), the need for such justice has to be vindicated from the subalternities in its *Ch'ixi* consideration (Rivera 2010), in its dialectic as *mestizaje* and intersectionality, as tension and as contradiction.

The appropriation of the literate practices of the elites by the 'disregarded', as well as the intersectionality between them and what we distinguish here as others, urge us to think about how their coexistence better describes our cultural pluriversity, while allowing us to focus our attention on the possible not referenced in the colonial-literate matrix of power, as the generation of the social beyond the hierarchies arising in that matrix.

To think about this intersectional coexistence, the text will appeal to the notion of Governance, defined in this case as the ideal mechanism for the vindication of the ontological resistance of those who were inferiorized at the behest of the literate. Subsequently, the collaborative dialogue established with the *Pueblos del Centro* of La Chorrera (Colombian Amazon), will reveal some of the possibilities offered by a Governance of the literate from the exercise of '*endulzar la palabra*' (*Sweeten the Word*).

Governance for epistemic justice

Historically, the construction of hegemonic and restrictive forms of knowledge construction have generated societies in which the absence of certain knowledge constitutes a barrier to emancipation. On the other hand, Latin America has also

been propitious to alternative literate practices, as forms of confrontation and search for other forms of social and political organization of knowledge. From this confrontation arises the need to elaborate proposals that deepen these possibilities, which go through the construction of a scheme that recognizes and is recognized by all the actors involved: governance for epistemic justice. Nowadays, the term Governance is usually used in an erratic way, since, depending on the field in which it is used, both its meaning and its scope are different. Far from claiming that such ambiguous use is problematic, we argue that this lack of definition favors the common and widespread impulse to review the modern modes of social organization that are currently in crisis.

The following are the reasons why we can explain the use of this term (of recent and scarce use in Latin America) instead of those of government or governability. Given that in Latin America the concept of Governance has been appropriated in a restricted manner by a certain sector of society, largely of a private nature, or in the case of the relations that States maintain with multilateral organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, we include below a critical explanation of this use, as well as a prospective tending to show one more case of appropriation by the 'disregarded'.

Beyond entering into the semantic discussions that this issue may generate, the term Governance is chosen over the one mostly used in our environment of governability, to differentiate it from the latter which, in general, denotes a measure of the capacity of States and their governments to respond to the needs and demands of society (Camou 2001).

Some authors argue that the term governability was the intellectual response to the crisis of the state's response to the increase in demands from civil society. On the one hand, the excess of citizens' demands and, on the other hand, the growing inability of the state, political system or formal framework to satisfy them (Closa 2003) would have led to the development of this category to improve the responsiveness of government institutions to citizens' demands. However, the above refers to the phenomenon of governability from the perspective of the internal sphere of States. When we speak of their relations with multilateral organizations, governability has been reduced to the measurement of the capacity of States to comply with the demands imposed by these entities, conditioning the consequent qualifications and cooperation. This, then, is the generalized use attributed to governability in academic texts as well as in the media and social organizations.

Subsequently, the term governance was replaced by Governance, on the understanding that the actions of the State could not be sufficient to respond to the crisis and, instead, the empowerment of other actors such as companies, associations and collectives could better manage the problems that arose in their contexts.

Therefore, we include this brief review of the different uses of the term according to the different areas in which it is used, usually involved in the process of social construction at various levels. Thus, depending on the field in which the term is used, Governance is defined according to the interests that characterize each field. In the academic field, for example, it has been the social sciences, particularly political science, which has mainly theorized the concept of Governance. In this area, the debate oscillates between those who understand

Governance as a measure that serves to identify the capacity of political institutions to legitimately and effectively meet the needs of civil society; and those who understand it as the exercise and effect of governing.

In the field of multilateral organizations, such as the UN, the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund, the European Union or others, the use, as mentioned above, is closer to that of governability, since Governance is understood as the measure by which these organizations calculate the capacity of the States to comply with the demands made by them, that is, the capacity of the States to adopt the measures that tend to a homogenization that favors a certain mode of social organization, usually defined from the planetary centers of power that are at the head of these organizations. States generally adhere to this notion of Governance insofar as they must subordinate themselves to the directives of multilateral organizations in order to be well qualified and thus belong to the planetary ideal of "totality" conceived by them (Modern/Colonial World-System). It is in this sense that the European Union operates in the accession procedures of the countries belonging to Eastern Europe.

Furthermore, we find the position of the various organizations (non-governmental organizations, social movements, minorities, etc.) that emerge from the political societyⁱⁱ (Mignolo 2014), for whom Governance aims at increasing and improving the mechanisms of participation of its members in the processes of conception of the ideal of life. Such participation depends on the degree of flexibility and responsiveness of government institutions, not only to be attentive and responsive to demands, but also on their capacity to motivate and promote such actions. This last meaning is close to that proposed by the authors of the genetic approach to Reflexive Governance (Maesschalck 2001;

Lenoble & Maesschalck 2009), whose contributions support our conceptual choice.

We propose then that, with the notion of Governance, it is possible to change the understanding of power reduced to domination, to expand its action towards potentiality, that is, in its sense of action, as creator of a space suitable for living-together.

In this regard we evoke the analyses made by Santiago Castro-Gómez in his book 'History of Governmentality. Reason of State, liberalism and neo-liberalism in Michel Foucault' (2014). On the one hand, such insight establishes the reasons why these two understandings have been installed in the aforementioned spheres. On the other hand, it explains how the passage from Governmentality operates, passing through government and governability, to Governance.

Castro-Gómez (2014) shows how for the French philosopher the issue of power has two different faces. The first, which he calls the war model of power, insofar as it assumes the form of subjugation and subsequent domination, a case in which reference is made to the different technologies that such power employs to subjugate, by those who pretend to govern, those they reduce to the situation of the governed insofar as it installs them on the passive side of a relation of subjugation that implies their impossibility of being free and their inability to decide on their way of life. The second, insofar as power adopts the juridical model which, in their opinion, assumes the forms of law, prohibition and institutionality.

This modeling of power, according to Foucault, leads to an impasse since, once the conflict is over, the legal model perpetuates violence by reinstating it in the set of rules imposed by the victor:

[...] It would be wrong to believe, according to the traditional scheme, that the general war, exhausting itself in its own contradictions, ends by renouncing violence and accepts to suppress itself in the laws of civil peace. The rule is the calculated pleasure of overkill, the promised blood. It allows the game of domination to be ceaselessly relaunched [...] Humanity does not progress slowly from combat to combat towards a universal reciprocity, in which rules will replace war forever; it installs each of these violences in a system of rules, and thus goes from domination to domination [...]. (Foucault 2004, p. 39-40)

Confronted with this impasse, Foucault (2004) proposes as a way out the distinction between power relations and states of domination. His intention is to show how the previously referenced models (model of war power and model of juridical power) fall short to explain the phenomenon of power in a present time where liberalism is installed as an ideal way of life. Thus, through his notions of practice, rationality and technology, he leads us to an analytic of power that focuses attention on power relations rather than on states of domination. It is a pragmatic turn through which it is sought to overcome the schematism imposed by the war and legal models of power, producing an epistemological displacement tending to make action prevail over the naturalization of the two referenced models of power, since both lead to domination. This is how Foucault (1994, p. 728) proposes his analysis of Governmentality, understanding the latter as follows:

[...] With the notion of governmentality, I am referring to the set of practices by means of which it is possible to constitute, define, organize and instrumentalize the strategies that individuals, in their freedom, may have towards each other. It is about free individuals who try to control, determine, delimit the freedom of others and, to this end, have certain instruments to govern them.ⁱⁱⁱ

From this perspective, power is reduced to the relationships that, within a "supposed" sphere of freedom, individuals establish in order to maintain control, direct behavior and limit the freedom of others. There, the space of freedom promoted by liberalism implies an adaptation, on the part of the controlled individuals, of their desires, interests and vital objectives, to schemes of conduct previously established by those who exercise power (Foucault 1994). The fact that political power is identified with the State is the result of a rationality that tends to naturalize situations generated in practices, in the action of individuals, some controlling, determining and leading others, who in turn adapt their interests to those pre-established by the former. The modern State would be the result of such a naturalization, and consequently, an exercise, at times of the juridical model of power, at others of the war model, reproducing the mechanism that leads to domination.

Bringing to this argument the notion of Governmentality, and the epistemological shift operated in the analytics of power proposed by Foucault^{iv}, is the beginning of the conception of the notion of Governance proposed below. But in the same way, the approaches proposed by Foucault to solve the impasse produced by the two models of power evoked, highlight the need to make an epistemological transition tending to overcome the reduction of power to the war and legal paradigms, a task that constitutes the guide and point of arrival of

the genetic approach of reflexive Governance. With this theorization, then we support the need to operate the transition from governmentality to Governance.

The first displacement can be verified in the insistence on highlighting the fact that it is not individual actions that determine and are involved in power relations. On the contrary, having as its fundamental objective to theorize on the conditions of possibility of a collective action endowed with the driving force to operate social transformation, the genetic approach of reflexive Governance bets on underlining a reality usually omitted in the theorizations of power (which remain attached to an individualistic paradigm of power), namely, that it is collective participation, the interaction of individuals who share or confront interests, who (today more than ever), are the origin of the practices that allow us to think of a real transformation.

The second shift consists in revealing that the reduction of power relations to the use of various devices and technologies aimed at controlling the behavior and limiting the freedom of some by others, even though it is a current occurrence, prevents us from seeing in these relations another type of approach to power. As long as we insist on assuming power in these terms, any relationship will be reduced to the paradigm of power as domination, a position from which we intend to move away.

Conceiving power as a possibility, on the other hand, is the gesture we are committed to for our proposed notion of Governance, avoiding identifying it, reducing it or subsuming it into one more of the naturalized, ontologized states of domination.

Thus, the theoretical framework of the genetic approach to reflexive governance involves the transition from power as domination to a conception of power as action. No longer the action of one or several individuals seeking the control and subjugation of others, but the possibility and capacity of individuals to transform themselves and become groups, through their self-empowerment and development of skills.

Power is then referred to the possibility that the actors have of obtaining an identity, by no means fixed or perennial, but sufficient to identify themselves and the interests that bring them together as a social group. The capacity to operate in such a way, and the lessons learned from it, are the result of assuming a conception of power that is verified in two dimensions of power: a reconstructive power-doing of identity with respect to the past that allows the generation of a representation of oneself and of the interests of the group; and a power-doing with projection to the future of the identity generation that is established as a possible destiny. In these two dimensions the genetic component of this particular approach to Governance is concretized, which relies on the creative capacity of those who participate in the collective actions that generate new (other) forms of life.

Against the background of the above reconstruction of the understandings of power, we return to the course of the exposition of the notion of Governance mobilized in this paper. Considering the situation of dispersion of meanings, what is really problematic is the absence of intersections between all these fields, which in general reproduce the totalizing gesture by enclosing themselves and forging their conception of Governance, while omitting in their work, whether theoretical or practical, the possibility of another type of

conception and the reasons of meaning that for its bearers it possesses. Once again, it is a matter of the logic of confrontation and exclusion, concretized in the consideration that any other type of meaning is antagonistic to one's own and, therefore, ignored.

Thus, the notion of Governance mobilized here has the advantage of incorporating in the course of its theorization, different elements that are better adjusted to the transformations of assiduous occurrence in current societies, questioning the hegemony of economy and law as discourses suitable to establish an order to solve social issues.

The emphasis of Governance theorization is on the social interaction of a diverse set of actors on a horizontal, non-hierarchical plane. This leads, in political and social theory, to a major paradigm shift, as it shifts the focus from what is usually understood as government. That is, institutions of government, the authority (power) attributed to them, the norms created by them that legitimize both the institutions themselves and the aforementioned authority, and the procedures by means of which these institutions act to apply these norms. In other words, the recent model of democracy embraces the transition from governmentality to Governance.

In terms of Governance, for example, the concept of institution is not reduced to the state entity with established power and functions, operating vertically, from its own heart towards its subjects. Instead, the concept of institution is extended to the behavior, whether systematic or not, of the various actors, with or without state authority, organized in collective action and seeking the transformation of the established order in pursuit of greater participation in the creation of the

rules that regulate their quotidian life and in the resolution of the conflicts produced in the course of the application of these rules.

For the above reasons, the proposed notion of Governance brings together all the various means by which actors (individual or collective) and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It includes both the institutions and official regimes endowed with enforcement powers, as well as the friendly arrangements that citizens and institutions, by common agreement or intuitively, deem appropriate to carry out by extending the field of their actions towards knowledge and practices not taken into account either in the political spheres (local or global) or in the literate academies.

It also implies openness to the possibilities not included in the pre-established schemes of the models of governmentality and governance or, in general, in the models of power based on Western rationality and domination. In the same way, this notion allows the intersection between all the spheres of interrelation mentioned at the beginning of this section, thus preventing the establishment of frontiers based on the logic of inclusion/exclusion.

This notion of Governance produces the restitution for all actors of their political, epistemological and even ontological capacity, that is, the capacity to participate in the conception and application of a "really" universal ideal and, consequently, their right to participate in the elaboration, adoption and application of the normative sets that will regulate the events of their lives. In addition, and also in terms of vindication, the Actor category involved moves away from the paradigm of modern rationality that refers to an individual subjectivity constructed in a self-referential manner, and instead refers to a

subjectivity aware that its process of identity construction is produced at the instance of permanent interaction. It is worth reiterating at this point, how the imprint of the ethical work of this approach on Governance emphasizes the dimension of interaction, no longer from the individual subject, but in the identity construction of groups organized around a collective action called to participate in the processes of normative creation with the vocation of transforming their vital contexts.

Elements of Governance in the literate practices of the *Pueblos del Centro*.

Intersectionality and variegation

According to Mariátegui (1929), Zavaleta (1986), FalsBorda (2009), Bolívar Echeverría (2008), Raúl Zibechi (2008), and so many other Latin American authors, the recognition of the tension arising from the capacity of self-representation of the neglected subject is present in concepts such as 'variegated society', in the superposition of economic periods -which supports the critique of Eurocentric temporalities, of 'historical time' as a univocal element-, in the 'baroque ethos' as an element of material-cultural hybridization, in the 'ch'ixi' perspective (Rivera 2010), intersectional or in subaltern miscegenation.

From this shared point of view, the conflictive scenarios of mediation are faced, the problem of translation from the place of the *mestizo* (and *mestizo* societies) as a place of conflict, but at the same time of future enunciation, as an element of political and epistemic resistance.

Moreover, as products of such manifest tension - of capital interest for the recognition of identities and struggles and resistances in the face of epistemic injustices (Kidd, Medina & Pohlhaus 2017) -, it can be found in figures such as

Fausto Reynaga (2013) and schools of Indianist thought - in the combination of decolonizing elements and decolonial perspectives, even without assuming themselves as such - the effective generation of an ecology of knowledge that evidences the absences and emergencies present in the drives of a (de)colonial society.

Latin America has been for this, and on numerous occasions, centrality in its periphery, thinking and generating intense debates on the reality of a lived epistemology, in the ahistorical and decentralized questioning of the colonial cognitive bases, of the coloniality of knowledge and power, in constant tension with the institutional forms of a State imposed by the colony that for centuries tried to extirpate the materiality of colonialities to the point of considering it as a mere folkloric and apolitical element, assuring through the monopoly of knowledge the monopoly of power.

The experiences carried out around the Life Plan of the Children of Tobacco, Coca and Sweet Cassava in Chorrera, share this intersectional and "variegated" perspective, highlighting the need for a true dialogue of knowledge and the constitution of other forms of knowledge construction that support, in a situated manner, the overcoming of demands and problems assumed from their own considerations.

During the aforementioned meetings, these elements became evident when reconstructing a complex and polysemic identity, insofar as it includes elements that allude to each and every one of the areas present in the Life Plan.

Thus, in the moment dedicated to select the forms of documentation of the meetings, certain FOSS digital tools of collaborative writing, were identified as

'digital baskets', to the extent that forms of sovereignty over knowledge and the structure by which non-colonial and own archives constitutions were identified. Furthermore, from the selection made during the meeting on images and memory, the different Peoples constructed, based on elements such as traditional traps, the *chagra*, the fruit dance or the *bejuco*, possibilities of epistemic sovereignty, cultural identity, political and economic organization.

For the meeting on sacred plants, a previous consultation was carried out among the *abuelos* [grandparents] or leaders of the four villages, to the extent that it was considered necessary to deliberate about the knowledge that should be shared outside the members of the Life Plan, revaluing and instituting in an intersectional way forms of self-government and organizational structures. The final selections (*milpeso* palm, basil, *achote* and *uito* tree) are, as well as an eco-ethnological condition (Monje 2015), the very constitution of the subject as a rooted element and the possibility of memories and non-human intelligences interconnecting the territory.

The possibilities and challenges constituted from the discussion on linguistic and cultural revalorization, mapped as main problems before epistemic justice the rubber genocide as an instituting condition, followed by evangelization, a hegemonic and vulgarizing interculturality that blurs the interest in own knowledge, and formal education plans, which do not take into account the importance of educating in the mother tongue. As a result, the possibility of autonomously instituting educational processes in their own institutions (starting with the *maloka*) was identified as a mechanism for the revalorization of their own knowledge and the construction of a knowledge-power.

Conclusions

From the meetings and the co-theorization carried out together with the researchers of the *Pueblos del Centro*, it is demonstrated how the revalorization of experiences of self-education, self-government or self-justice allude to a type of Governance that restores the political capacity of other modernities, contributing from other literate practices to epistemic justice and, paradoxically, also to the strengthening of such Governance.

The work carried out collaboratively, far from reproducing other forms of historical and cultural knowledge already recognized by the hegemonic structures, led to the construction of its own knowledge. This new corpus, that had been made invisible by the institutions of epistemic power, gave more reliable evidence of the needs and social problems of the *Pueblos del Centro*. In the awareness of the need to have forms that guarantee sovereignty over how the Peoples want to be counted, the search for a scheme of self-government arose.

This article gives some clues as to how the governance scheme for epistemic justice can provide the possibilities for such sovereignty, always starting from the needs of each of the *Pueblos* and the intersectionalities arising from their multiple identities.

The *Pueblos del Centro*, as well as all of Latin America, lived and live tensions that arise from their polysemic identity from the bases of the present dialectic between forms assumed and not assumed by the present institutionality. From the dynamics of these parallel tensions, arises the recognition of the importance of the dialogue of knowledge as a structure of synchronic mediation, a space of

conversation from its political and cultural forms, to share voice, language and critical thinking in conditions of justice with the multiple epistemic and cosmological realities that, in their multidialogical process, are manifested and seek to build, along with the manifest structures, other ways of thinking about ourselves.

The generation of meaning in the social sphere is not exclusively due to a universal consciousness that rests in all human beings and that transcends through reason in the form of rules endowed with the capacity to direct and transform reality, even when these are "literate practices", as understood from the mentalistic and schematic point of view. On the contrary, the generation of meaning assumed from the Governance proposal is the result of a reversible process that takes place between, on the one hand, the justification of the judgment, and on the other hand, its application to the reality it intends to intervene or transform, in both cases, in terms of doing-power and being able to do together; this objective, then, of a commitment to collaborative research and the epistemic value of co-theorization.

Under these assumptions, it is the contexts that are called to operate the prompting of thinking of doing-power with, since a literate practice obtains its pertinence, not from a pretended universality, but from the need of those who carry out the operation of pertinent application of the judgment according to their own situation, that is to say, according to the context of application. The context then becomes a reflexive operator, an inciter of the reflexive operation in conditions of intersectionality.

In order to achieve all this, the real and decisive construction of an epistemic justice becomes fundamental for the current *sentipensante* development of peoples, communities and societies, especially recognizable within the territories and territorialities of the Global South.

Epistemic justice provides elements of distinction, recognition and emergencies that are the identity and subjective basis of the multiplicities present and generated in the struggles and other literate practices in conditions of Governance.

Therefore, while Governance can help to establish conditions for the improvement of the conditions of epistemic justice, it can deepen, in turn, the exercise of Governance, as both elements become co-constitutive of the possibility of autonomy of so many subjects ignored throughout our history.

Notes

ⁱHomeomorphic reference (Guerrero, 2015) that could correspond to dialogue in conditions of serenity and willingness to listen.

ⁱⁱA diferencia de la noción de sociedad civil, con sociedad política se abre el espectro a favor de aquellos sujetos que la colonialidad condenó a no ser actores de la decisión política. Así entonces, Sociedad política conlleva al desplazamiento de la atención a su compleja articulación racial, sexual, económica, religiosa, epistémica, histórica, subjetiva y ética [Unlike the notion of civil society, with political society the spectrum is opened in favor of those subjects that coloniality condemned not to be actors of political decision. Thus, Political Society leads to the displacement of attention to its complex racial, sexual, economic, religious, epistemic, historical, subjective and ethical articulation.]

ⁱⁱⁱ[...] *dans la notion de gouvernementalité, je vise l'ensemble des pratiques par lesquelles on peut constituer, définir, organiser, instrumentaliser les stratégies que les individus, dans leur liberté, peuvent avoir les uns à l'égard des autres. Ce sont des individus libres qui essaient de contrôler, de déterminer, de délimiter la liberté des autres et, pour ce faire, ils disposent de certains instruments pour gouverner les autres.*

^{iv}Consisting of concentrating the analysis of power on practices, that is, on the relationships that individuals establish and on the actions, they carry out, but not on their naturalization.

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