



Repercussions of the civil wars in Colombia on the public education system, 19th century¹

Repercusiones de las guerras civiles en Colombia en el sistema de instrucción pública, siglo XIX

Repercussões das guerras civis na Colômbia no sistema de ensino público, século 19

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to examine the impact of nineteenth-century civil wars on schools and colleges in Colombia through the destruction of classrooms and the occupation of troops, political repression and the military recruitment of students and teachers, and, likewise, to deepen the analysis of the repercussions on the interruption of school work and on the pace of learning, in addition to the marked fluctuations in coverage levels. The intention is to fill a historiographic void since the few studies on education in Colombia in the 19th century have focused on demonstrating the advances of this sector in times of peace. More than describing the ravages of war, this work has also recorded the efforts and sacrifices to keep educational services active even in the midst of political turmoil and military confrontation. In this sense, it is worth highlighting the initiative to help some teachers, the contribution of some public employees, the mobilization of the clergy at the parish level and the joint efforts of the different instances of the national, provincial and local government with a view to securing some resources in middle of the state of widespread devastation.

Keywords: Civil wars. Colombia. Colleges Education. Schools. XIX century.

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Resumo

O objetivo deste artigo é examinar o impacto das guerras civis do século XIX em escolas primárias e escolas secundárias na Colômbia através da destruição de salas de aula e ocupação de tropas, repressão política e recrutamento militar de alunos e professores, e, da mesma forma, aprofundar a análise das repercussões na interrupção do trabalho escolar e no ritmo de aprendizagem, além das oscilações marcantes nos níveis de cobertura. A intenção é preencher uma lacuna historiográfica, já que os poucos estudos sobre educação na Colômbia no século XIX se concentraram em demonstrar os avanços do setor em tempos de paz. Mais do que descrever as devastações da guerra, este trabalho também registrou os esforços e sacrifícios para manter os serviços educacionais ativos, mesmo em meio à turbulência política e confronto militar. Neste sentido, importa destacar a iniciativa de apoio a alguns professores, o contributo de alguns funcionários públicos, a mobilização do clero a nível paroquial e o esforço conjunto das diferentes instâncias do governo nacional, provincial e local com vista para garantir alguns recursos no meio do estado de devastação generalizada.

Palavras-chave: Colômbia. Escolas primárias. Escolas secundárias. Guerras civis. Século XIX.

Resumen

El propósito de este artículo consiste en examinar el impacto de las guerras civiles decimonónicas en las escuelas y colegios de Colombia a través de la destrucción de las aulas y la ocupación de las tropas, la represión política y el reclutamiento militar de alumnos y profesores y, asimismo, profundizar en el análisis de las repercusiones en la interrupción de las labores escolares y en el ritmo de aprendizaje, además de las marcadas fluctuaciones en los niveles de cobertura. La intención es llenar un vacío historiográfico por cuanto los escasos estudios sobre la educación en Colombia en el siglo XIX se han concentrado en demostrar los avances de este sector en tiempos de paz. Más que describir los estragos de la guerra, este trabajo ha dejado constancia también de los esfuerzos y sacrificios por mantener activos los servicios educativos aun en medio del ambiente de agitación política y de la confrontación militar. En ese sentido, cabe resaltar la iniciativa de ayuda de algunos profesores, el aporte de algunos empleados públicos, la movilización del clero a escala parroquial y los esfuerzos conjuntos de las diferentes instancias del gobierno nacional, provincial y local con miras a asegurar algunos recursos en medio del estado de devastación generalizada.

Palabras clave: Colegios. Colombia. Educación. Escuelas. Guerras Civiles. Siglo XIX.

Introduction

During the times of Hispanic rule between the 16th century and the beginning of the 19th century, in reality the scope and coverage of primary and secondary education in the former territory of the Republic of Colombia was very limited. Private initiatives and the ecclesiastical establishment largely compensated for the deficiencies left by the Spanish colonial state in these basic levels of training. The influence of the Church was also very evident both in the educational structure and in the learning contents (GARCÍA, 2005, pp. 217-238).

In the second decade of the 19th century, the period of Independence meant a transition between the colonial regime and the formation of an independent nation. It was during this juncture of dispute between the republican forces and the Spanish army that the educational system first suffered the deleterious effects of the war.

Not long after beginning his republican life, the country was plunged into a high degree of political and military confrontation evidenced by the outbreak of several civil wars. Among them, the ones with the greatest impact were the following: the Guerra de los Conventos of 1840, the war of 1876-1877, the war of 1884-1885, the war of 1895 and, at the end of the century and the beginning of the 20th, the Guerra de los Mil Días. Apart from these warlike conflicts, other smaller scale ones arose, mainly of local and regional character, which did not get to cause a generalized destabilization.

In the midst of these wars that periodically interrupted the daily life and public tranquility of Colombians, education was one of the issues that generated the greatest concern and debate, from discussions about the centralist character to the government's attempts to undermine the power exercised by the Church since the colonial period (BUSHNELL, 2020, p. 202). The tendencies of pedagogical models were also involved in this atmosphere of extreme political and ideological polarization.

The first civil war, called Guerra de los Conventos, began in mid-1839 as a result of the official decision to close four of the smaller convents that existed in the province of Pasto, whose assets were destined for public education. This sparked a regional uprising considering that measure as an attack against religion.

In 1853, under the presidential mandate of José Hilario López, a new Constitution was promulgated that expanded individual freedoms and advocated for the division of powers between the Church and the State. Regarding education, freedom of education was authorized and private initiative was stimulated, thereby limiting the economic support that the central government provided to provincial educational establishments.

With the Constitution of Rionegro of 1863, the federalist regime was consolidated with the creation of nine sovereign states². Under the protection of this radical liberal regime, the executive was authorized to exercise civil control and a public education of a utilitarian and enlightened nature was promoted, which provoked a frontal campaign on the part of the Church and the conservative current.

During this period, one of the main novelties in education was the Instructionist Reform enacted on November 1, 1870, through which the government assumed the leadership of this sector in all federal states, for which they were urged to enact laws that promoted the education in their respective territories. This was an innovative normative heritage in an attempt to organize the educational system in order to promote free discussion, rational decision-making and the adaptation of teaching to the experimental sciences and the enlightened ideas of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries under the influence of the pestalozziano thought. The obligatory nature of elementary education and the decrease in the level of interference of the Church in education were the two central axes of the reform. In administrative matters, the

² Antioquia, Bolívar, Boyacá, Cauca, Cundinamarca, Magdalena, Panamá, Santander and Tolima.

General Directorate of Public Instruction attached to the Ministry of the Interior was established and the field was opened for the creation of Public Instruction Departments in each State (JARAMILLO, 1980, pp. 2-47).

A few years later, the country suffered the effects of the war of 1876-1877, also called the Guerra de las Escuelas, which occurred due to the divergence of criteria around the issues of religious freedom and education³. This time it originated in the State of Cauca and spread through Antioquia (TRUJILLO, 1877, p. 5) and Tolima, whose conservative governments rose up against the radical regime of the President of the Republic Don Aquileo Parra in their attempt to consolidate the secular education in Colombia. Gradually, the anti-clerical protest movement expanded to the states of Cundinamarca, Boyacá and Santander but finally they were unable to defeat the government troops (GONZÁLEZ, 2002, pp. 234-235).

Between the month of August 1884 and November 1885 a new warlike conflict developed as a result of the demonstrations of protest by radical liberals against the centralist policies applied by President Rafael Núñez, a liberal from the moderate wing supported by the conservative party. This contest meant the beginning of the culmination of the federal period with a liberal tint and paved the way for the consolidation of a centralist system inspired by the ideas of the period of the Regeneration and conservative hegemony (ORTIZ, 2002, p. 84).

Under this new political regime, a new Constitution was promulgated in 1886 that declared Colombia as a unitary Republic and the Catholic Church as the only religion and, in addition to this, turned the States into Departments. A centralized national education system was designed with government supervision (ZAPATA, 2019, p. 65). It was stipulated that education should be in accordance with Catholic precepts and it was established that religion should be a compulsory subject in the curriculum of all public educational establishments, also conferring on the Church the power to inspect that these norms were fully comply. The concordat signed the following year with the Holy See gave this establishment much more power over the course and operation of education.

The twilight of the 19th century was marked by a new and larger military conflict. It is about the Guerra de los Mil Días that began in October 1899 and lasted until 1902, caused by the nonconformity of the liberal party, feeling politically excluded by the conservatives who were in charge of power, having raised serious disagreements around the principles enshrined in the 1886 Constitution (GONZÁLEZ, 2001, pp. 107-111).

Based on this historical context, the purpose of this article is to examine the impact of nineteenth-century civil wars on Colombian schools and colleges through the destruction of classrooms and the occupation of troops, political repression, and student and teachers recruitment, likewise, deepen the analysis of the repercussions on academic life. The intention is to fill a historiographic void since the few studies on education in Colombia in the nineteenth century (LOAIZA, 2007, p. 140) have concentrated on demonstrating the progress made by this sector in peacetime or have been reduced to the development of pedagogical conceptions, sometimes with a certain political bias or to accumulate a series of data devoid of context (GONZÁLEZ, 1979, p. 6). But very little has been addressed the functioning of this sector in the midst of the vicissitudes of the wars that devastated the country, about which there have been more than all short and fragmentary allusions, and at other times anecdotal, that warn an generalized way, the negative effects of those warlike confrontations but that are insufficient to build a global vision of this problem, based on hard facts and figures.

Methodologically this research falls within the current of the social history of education (GUICHOT, 2006, pp. 38-40)⁴. The work was elaborated from the qualitative

³ On the debate around this confrontation of ideas, see: (OVIEDO, 2014, pp. 2.003-2.013).

⁴ In the 1970s and 1980s a special interest in the study of the history of education in the 19th century was sparked with works such as those of Aline Helg, Frank Safford, Yvon Lebot, Ingrid Müller and Jane M. Rausch. It was

and descriptive analysis of primary and secondary sources. The primary sources of information included the review of official reports, the regulatory framework, newspapers and chronicles of the time. As a complement to this repertoire of primary sources, a series of secondary sources were examined that served as the basis for configuring the historical context of the 19th century and it was key that the consultation of some articles and books specifically referred to analyze the issue of educational development in those first decades of republican life. The comparative examination is also present in this article when considering the ruptures and continuities observed in the educational system throughout the conjunctures of civil wars in Colombia.

It is important to recognize that in the development of this research there was a methodological difficulty in the information gathering process because during the war years, on certain occasions, the reports and budgets that by law had to be presented periodically were not produced. This is why, for the time frames that are the object of this study, some gaps and fragmentary data are noted in the figures and statistical series.

Destruction of classrooms and occupation of troops

One of the main damages suffered by the public education system in the framework of the nineteenth-century civil wars was the destruction of the headquarters of the schools and colleges due to the repeated occupation of the troops and the military attacks. The damage was especially noticeable in schools, which generally had a very good infrastructure and housed innumerable study items, some of them of high value as was the case with laboratory implements. The immense challenge for the political authorities and educational directives was how the reconstruction process was undertaken in the midst of the deficit of resources, for which some innovative solidarity aid initiatives emerged as alternative solutions.

In the civil war of 1854, aroused as a reaction to the coup d'état orchestrated by General José María Melo, the headquarters of the Boyacá school was invaded by combatant troops and academic work had to be interrupted for a period of one year. As a result of the civil war of 1860-1861, the campus was closed for five years (OCAMPO, 2003, pp. 22-23). A decade later, in the war of 1876, the premises of the Normal schools for boys in this State suffered considerable deterioration, as did their furniture (MENDOZA, 1904, p. 442).

Under the framework of absolute freedom of education, promulgated in 1849 by President José Hilario López, Don Victoriano de Diego Paredes organized in 1856 the private high school Paredes e Hijos in the town of Piedecuesta in the State of Santander under the guidance of liberal guidelines. After three years, the religious problem managed to stoke the ideological confrontation with the conservative party and, in this context, the bishop of Pamplona accused Don Victoriano of “[...] taking over the youth in order to pervert it under the pretext of illustrate it, in addition to which it prohibits Catholic families from placing their children in that school and orders that those found there be immediately removed” (CACUA, 1997, p. 170).

In October of the following year, the troops commanded by Obdulio Esteves invaded the school and transformed its facilities into barracks while the principal and his children and eight students were taken prisoner to Bucaramanga and then to Bogotá where they were placed at the disposal to the judge of the District of Cundinamarca. The same story of Don Victoriano gives an account of the destruction of the educational establishment in which he had deposited all his investments and efforts:

also clear a greater emphasis on the analysis of the influence of social and political conditions on the educational system (SOLER, 2010, p. 163).

A magnificent printing house (from which only a few lithography drawers escaped and that which had been moved elsewhere), the binding office with all its supplies, almost the entire chemical laboratory, which was of considerable value, as well as those corresponding to telegraphy and that of drawing, painting, mineralogy and music; most of what was in the lithography and photography office. Most of the high school library which consisted of 3,500 volume, more than 400 reams of printing, drawing and calligraphy paper, almost all of the math drawing supplies, all of which had cost more than 25,000 forts and a warehouse that contained more than 23 texts that were being printed, of which a part had been completed and ready to bind, others were about to end or had begun to be printed. These warehouse was completely razed for different uses of the troops (CACUA, 1997, p. 171).

As soon as the rages of the war subsided, Don Victoriano tried to reopen the school but his efforts were in vain and, in the end, he had no choice but to sell part of some supplies that were saved from that wave of violence:

Drawing and painting: our collection consists of 750 models, containing from the first rudiments to the laborious works of painting heads, landscapes with figures, flowers, animals, etc. Architecture: an assortment of R rules, triangles, paper for architectural drawing, rule squad, level, plumb bobs, trowels of various kinds, chisels and floors, compass worth \$ 100 pesos. Music: an English piano, two fine violins and an ordinary one, a guitar, a cello, both first class, a flute, methods for piano, guitar, singing and elementary and classical pieces for the same instruments. This can be worth \$ 800 (CACUA, 1997, pp. 171-172).

During the war of 1876, the activities and facilities of the educational sector were a military target of the contending political parties, given that the subject of public instruction was one of the most controversial. The effects of this military confrontation affected the results obtained during the first years of the Educational Reform of 1870 (González, 2005, p. 140). In the city of Ocaña, a private high school run by two priests had been adapted as a barracks and, in addition, the public model school for boys was set up as the provisional headquarters of the garrison battalion of this square (RUIZ, 1877, p. 90). In this year, the Secretary of Government of Santander denounced how the school staff had been attacked with "inhuman ferocity" (RAUSH, 1993, p. 175).

During the commotions derived from this same war, the Santa Librada high school in the city of Cali had to close its doors when it was invaded by the troops. This was the bleak report rendered on May 1, 1878 by the then rector Evaristo García:

The place was left in ruins as was natural, in a building that served as a barracks for a year and which was, including the chapel, battlefield, entire sections of the cloisters destroyed, the ceilings and walls in poor condition, broken doors and windows, without locks of any kind, the only room that seems to have not been occupied by the troops was the Library, where some geographic

charts, part of the furniture and few teaching tools were saved (Cited in RECIO, 2010, p. 388).

Laboratory items imported from Europe were destroyed and a large quantity of furniture, books, minutes, globes and geographic charts, among other items, lay piled up and in disorder. Once the war and the state of barracks were over, the rector received a 500 peso loan to the respective repairs, after which he was able to grant new enrollments for 18 students and the institution thus added a total of 95 enrolled. The library also resumed its services with more than 4,000 volumes (RECIO, 2010, p. 389).

With a view also to begin the reconstruction process, by decree issued on January 6, 1879, the national treasury granted the San Simón high school in the city of Ibagué a total of 340 pesos to compensate for the damage caused by the war (CLAVIJO, 2016, p. 218).

In the balance prepared in 1878 by Eustorgio Salgar, Secretary of the Interior, it was pointed out how the war had caused the abandonment of a considerable number of educational establishments, many of their buildings being converted into barracks or war offices. After reflecting on these dire consequences, the high official was able to really realize how this "branch cannot be stimulated or live except under the beneficial protection of peace" (1878, p. 25). The following year, the national government, through its Secretary of the Interior, Pablo Arosemena, recognized the high costs involved in the process of rebuilding public education in the midst of so many national needs of all kinds (1879, p. 8).

Since December 1884, the Santa Librada high school in the city of Neiva closed its doors and served as a barracks headquarters during the war that occurred during those days. Even in September 1885, the trustee reported that the campus remained occupied and that its structure required further repairs, in addition to the fact that a good part of the furniture and supplies had been razed or were useless. A reliable proof of this extraordinary situation could easily be detected in the school budget for the year 1887, where an income item of 800 pesos appeared for the leasing of the facilities to the public force during the previous two years (RAMÍREZ, 1995, pp. 275, 284).

Due to its duration and devastating repercussions, the Guerra de los Mil Días managed to affect a greater number of educational institutions. Since November 1899, La Merced high school in Bogotá had allocated its facilities to establish a military hospital there. By 1903 the governor of Cundinamarca, Joaquín María Buenaventura, insisted on claiming before the Ministry of War the value of the lease that in justice had to be paid during these years in which the campus had been occupied. These resources were urgently awaited to organize its reopening and to have an alternative to pay for the scholarship of some young ladies at the Emma F. de Quijano high school while that school was opening. On the other hand, the governor also came to the aid of the Departmental Assembly for the transfer of official resources essential for this restoration process (BUENAVENTURA, 1903, p. L).

It was denounced how before the Department of Cundinamarca had enough supplies for its schools but because of the war most of it was lost or almost completely destroyed, despite the orders that were issued to be safe, according to the Circular letter addressed to the inspectors on November 8, 1899. It was still due to the Casa de Hachette y Cía. from Paris the sum of 16,414 francs for the shipment of supplies dispatched in 1896 to equip the schools of the Department (BUENAVENTURA, 1903, pp. XLV-XLIX).

During this same war the building of the Boyacá high school was reconditioned as a barracks and the troops built trenches with library books and laboratory instruments brought from Europe. Most of the old library was lost and, as a result of such a series of disturbances, the financial statements of the institution showed negative figures (OCAMPO, 2003, pp. 22-23). In turn, the Jesús, María y José high school in the town of Chiquinquirá was occupied for 13 days by the revolutionary forces after the outbreak of war and weeks later it was invaded by

the government. The Departmental Secretary of Instruction Adriano Márquez exhorted the national government to compensate for the damages caused to the physical plant and to recognize as lease the time that State agents used it as the headquarters of their military operations (MENDOZA, 1904, p. 44).

In Ibagué, the San Simón high school was also occupied by the troops and was converted into a barracks, this due to the fact that it was the strongest building and with a strategic position in the city. The Marist Fathers, who ran the institution during that time, were forced to take refuge on the second floor of the headquarters and, being cornered there, they had to suffer the inconveniences of military life and the incessant movement of government troops. According to the stories of Father Jesús M. Padilla, some benches at the school were adapted to form trenches in the side streets near the institution. For some months the locations were also used as a military hospital while Father Félix Rougier, rector of the campus, was called in an extraordinary way as a military chaplain. The college chapel stopped attending to its usual collegiate parishioners and became a propitious setting for fulfilling the social function of imparting sacraments to the ladies and poor people of the city. At the end of the war, the devastation was evident in the provision of the library and laboratories, the dormitories of the boarding school and the bathrooms of the classrooms (CLAVIJO, 2016, pp. 267-268).

In the northeastern region of the country, in the city of San Gil the San José de Guanentá high school had also been conditioned as a barracks, as it had happened years ago during the war of 1885, when the presbyter rector Manuel Silva Baños assumed the reconstruction work. As reported in his 1907 report the Secretary of Public Instruction of the Department of Galán, the building was once again in a state of ruin and the only capital available was 1,000 pesos in devalued paper money. Much of the archives, the implements of the physics and chemistry laboratories, the botany and mineralogy collection, and the map collection had become “part of the booty of the belligerent armies” (ARIAS, 1943, p. 62). At the end of the war, the building became the headquarters of public offices and government palace while the high school was improvisedly moved to the houses of the Sociedad de San Vicente de Paúl. The work undertaken to rebuild this educational institution was possible thanks to the “patriotic” support of the local community.

During this agitated situation of transition towards the 20th century, the San José de Pamplona high school had already been suffering from a budget deficit of considerable proportions. Due to the war, the furniture, the lamps, the cabinets with various instruments of physics and chemistry, the library of more than a thousand volumes and the reference books and many more belongings had disappeared or were destroyed. According to the accounts, when the military struggle broke out, the rector did not have time to secure the assets that were inside the high school and, even though the trustee Jerónimo Jaimes had locked everything up, the public force occupied the educational facilities to condition them as barracks, the doors were forced and a looting of everything that was deposited there was consummated. The building was also in a terrible state and only until mid-1906 were reconstruction tasks undertaken, but due to the general lack of funds, some entities were resorted to for the temporary loan of labor force with a view to advancing those works. This is how the Cazadores battalion and the penitentiary provided some expert sappers, masons and carpenters from their staff (RIOS, 1966, pp. 61-62).

The official visitor, appointed after the war to assess the state of the campus, reported that some of the high school's assets now rested distributed in various public offices: the headquarters of the telegraph service, the municipal mayor's office, the circuit court, the jail, the Hunters battalion and the Syndicate. The piano was located in a private house while the printing press was found in good condition.

In Antioquia, the Secretary of Public Instruction, Camilo Botero Guerra, in his report rendered in March 1903, highlighted the lack of premises for schools in this Department, since several of those sites had been occupied by the public force and to date they had not been returned despite repeated calls. The facilities were in a state of ruin and their hygienic conditions were deplorable. Some premises had been repaired up to two times but the problem was that after a few days they were again occupied by the troops. Such a situation motivated the official to demand that the Nation and the Department assume the burdensome repair expenses since the coffers of the municipalities were exhausted (1903, pp. 3-4).

In relation to the impact of the war on the Caribbean Coast, this was the revealing report of the Governor of the Department of Magdalena, presented in 1904: "The last revolution, the origin of all misfortunes, destroyed everything that existed: the chairs and even the cytologia and the Abacus; from the rough blackboard on which the helpless son of the people began to draw the first characters to the luxurious notebook that later served him to practice writing" (VERGARA, 1904, p. 60).

As reported by the Minister of Public Instruction Antonio José Uribe in June 1904, the war had destroyed almost all the books and school supplies. Although the entity under his charge had ordered an equitable distribution of the books, maps and other supplies that existed in storage, this was insufficient. Therefore, a call was made to the Departments to try to allocate resource from their meager budgets for the acquisition of these elements (1904, p. X).

Teachers and students recruited

During the civil wars of the 19th century in Colombia, it was not strange to find teachers who, under the impulse of political passions, left behind their pedagogical tasks to take up arms. It was also customary in the governments of the day to issue decrees that ordered the incorporation of public employees into the defense forces, among which teachers and officials from the education sector were included. Forced conscription was another way used by the contending sides to swell their war squads.

In the civil war of 1854, the rector of the Boyacá high school, José Santos Acosta, left his post to lead the liberal guerrillas in Lengupá and the Tenza Valley. On the other hand, the murder of former rector José Narciso Gómez Valdés was reported, who fell in combat in the battle of Zipaquirá (MENDOZA, 1904, p. 442).

In the war of the schools of 1876, the departmental head of Ocaña Don Francisco Ruiz Stero reported the assassination of three recently graduated teachers who had begun their pedagogical work in primary schools in Ocaña, El Carmen and Convención. The first of them, Luis Vargas, fell in combat in Salazar de las Palmas as a result of the serious injuries received in the assault on San Pedro. Antonio Guerrero was killed in La Cruz when he commanded the first battalion "Dodino" and Ángel María del Busto was discharged right there at a time when he was leading a company of the same battalion. The departmental head spared no words to exalt the sacrifice of those teachers: "[...] these self-sacrificing apostles of popular education, and faithful supporters of our primary institutions, deserve a distinguished memory that will make their memory imperishable" (1877, p. 90).

The conscription also included the students, which became a matter of deep concern due to the tender age of these new recruits. Already in times of the wars of Independence, the nascent republican government through Vice President Francisco de Paula Santander had issued orders for the students to receive military education and some officers proceeded to recruit young schoolboys in their ranks, a situation that raised sharp controversies, resistance and opposition from parents (PITA, 2017, pp. 115-117). In subsequent decades, the heroic stories of children and young people enlisted in the wars that occurred in Europe and other parts of the world were taken as a reference (REINA,

2012, p. 60). The students easily allowed themselves to be imbued by the atmosphere of war and by all the paraphernalia that revolved around it.

During wartime it was common to see how the educational centers were divided into two camps that corresponded to the two political parties in dispute. In the chronicles of the time, several episodes can be found that compromised the students in the atmosphere of sectarianism and war. An example of this was the young Temístocles Cerreño who along with other schoolboys planned to make a joke in 1876, just as the Guerra de las Escuelas began. They simulated a military assault, but the army immediately reacted and captured them, and later they proceeded to recruit Themistocles (NIETO, 1968, p. 20).

During this Guerra de las Escuelas in Pasto, one of the most critical scenes of the war, some priests used the pulpit to attack teachers and students who received classes in “red” schools, that is, those that followed the liberal ideology and He even issued several excommunications (GUERRERO, 1999, p. 256). The atmosphere in this city was also agitated during the Guerra de los Mil Días amid massive recruitment of militia squads and the occupation of the school headquarters by government troops. This state of anxiety also affected the public high school of this town: “The students began to express themselves uneasy despite the admonitions of the professors; There were heated discussions in the classes, fights in the playground, shouts of cheers and shouts; in a word, discipline collapsed”(ORTIZ, 1956, p. 204).

The truth is that children and young people were welcome in the recruitment days because their support in the logistics of the combats was appreciated, in addition to their agility, obedience and courage. Eventually, the life of the weapons could be a means of escape from the suffocating economic situation and the harsh conditions experienced inside their homes (JARAMILLO, 2007, pp. 235-241). In general, the most optioned were those who were idle who were not integrated into the educational system, but many times the military incorporation operations included the children and young people enrolled. Uncertain was the fate of these recruited students, which often implied the definitive abandonment of school activities.

In the report presented in 1877 by Carlos Nicolás Rodríguez, Secretary of the Interior, it was reported that many students who were of age took up arms on behalf of the government and joined civic bodies in defense of the institutions, several of whom lost their lives in the midst of military operations (1877, pp. 71-72).

The great demand of fighters that the Guerra de los Mil Días implied prompted the military leaders of both sides to incorporate children and young people into their ranks. Of course, the quota of sacrifices was high⁵, such as the battalion led by General Vargas in the Department of Norte de Santander, whose members who were between 15 and 17 years old offered their lives in the battle of Palonegro. The same occurred on the southern sides of the Republic with the Caloto Civic Corps made up of 30 children under 15 years of age (JARAMILLO, 2007, p. 242).

As soon as this war broke out, in 1899, the Secretary of Public Instruction Don Enrique Caycedo Albán appeared at the San Simón high school in Ibagué and immediately gave order for the students to be assembled and urged the adults to take up arms in defense of the homeland. According to the accounts, a few hours later, one of the liberal leaders appeared on campus and exhorted the sympathetic students to defend this political cause. Finally, the campus leadership decided to close its doors and, although an attempt was made to reopen it, it was only possible for a few days and with 45 students between 7 and 15 years of age, as the older ones had swelled the ranks of the armies in contention (CLAVIJO, 2016, pp. 266-279). Among those incorporated into the battalions was Martín Pomala, as he himself testifies in his autobiographical account (PARDO, 2007, p. 50).

⁵ It is estimated that the death toll in this three-year war amounted to 80,000 individuals, which represented 2% of the total population (MARTÍNEZ, 1999, p. 211).

In the city of Pasto, the public high school closed its doors in July 1900. The older youth of this institution dropped out of classes and enlisted in the side of their choice, some followed the road north and others crossed the border and they fought in Ecuador. Among those summoned to arms, it is worth mentioning Diógenes Rosero, Temístocles Apráez, Mario Santander, Pedro Antonio Uscátegui and Rubén Sañudo, among others (ORTIZ, 1956, p. 204).

In the province of Antioquia, the San Ignacio high school in the city of Medellín continued to function during the war but several of its young students were recruited and participated in the battle of Palonegro: Eliseo Restrepo, Carlos E. Gómez, Luis F. Ospina and others. Meanwhile, some fathers and chaplains joined the troops of General Pedro Nel Ospina and from Medellín they undertook a long journey that would lead them to fight in the Departments of Tolima, Cundinamarca and Bolívar (LA COMPAÑÍA, 1910, p. 52).

Effects on academic life

As soon as a civil war broke out, one of the first preventive measures taken both by the directives of the schools and high school, as well as by the government authorities, was to close these establishments. All this in order to preserve the life and integrity of the children and young people who were in the formative process. Of course, this impact depended on the intensity level of the war ravages were in each province, and for this reason, in some schools, it was decided to operate intermittently according to the development of the conflict itself.

In the end, the vicissitudes of the war were felt in many other aspects, such as, for example, the delay in academic activities, the increase in school dropout rates and the interruption of control and surveillance procedures.

The available figures are a clear indication of how the usual rhythm of school life was disrupted and how coverage levels fluctuated in both urban and rural areas. In the Guerra de los Conventos, in the province of Antioquia there were a total of 97 public schools in 1840 but the following year, after the consequences of the military confrontation, only 52 were functioning (AHERN, 1991, p. 44).

Without a doubt, the greatest difficulties were experienced during the so-called Guerra de las Escuelas and the Guerra de los Mil Días. The war of 1876 truncated the momentum that had been registering primary education with a 30% increase in the number of students registered between 1870 and 1874 (BUSHNELL, 1994, p. 180). After the start of this warlike confrontation, the national executive power found it necessary to issue a decree by means of which the expenses of the education sector which sent to the provinces were suspended. With this measure placing the General Directorate of Public Instruction and the boy's schools in recess and only the women's schools were active "whose support was compatible with the distressing situation of the Treasury" (SALGAR, 1878, p. 40). Such provisions extended their validity until August 6, 1877, at a time when the fury of the war had already subsided. Additionally, it was decided to temporarily assign the functions of the General Directorate to 2nd Section of the Ministry of the Interior.

For a more detailed analysis of the effects of this Guerra de las Escuelas, it is pertinent to refer specifically to what happened in each of the regions. In the State of Boyacá, where the ravages of the conflict had been protruding, the Normal School for men had to be closed in 1877 shortly after having managed to get up successfully. The same fate suffered most of the primary schools since, of 195 that operated with more than 9,000 students before the disturbances of public order, by 1878 there were only 49 with an attenuated attendance of 2,000 schoolchildren. In Cundinamarca, out of 16,000 students enrolled in schools, there had registered a decrease, although, despite the constant alarms caused by the threat of the guerrillas, all the schools were still standing without altering the calendar and the development of the usual school tasks. In Cauca, even with the

persistent hostility of the clergy to the liberal system of public instruction, the sectional government made the greatest efforts to keep the schools active, although there was an interruption during the time that the capital, Popayán, was occupied by the Rebel forces, but she was soon liberated, normalcy was restored and the school year exams could still be verified "under the noise and alarms of the fighting" (SALGAR, 1878 p. 44).

The Caribbean Coast region was one of the most convulsed scenes of the war and of course this was reflected in the education sector. In Magdalena, of all the schools destined for official education in this State, only the School Attached to the Normal for Men of the city of Santa Marta could be kept in operation, thanks to the "patriotism" of its tutor Joaquín Abello who, even when he did not have any remuneration, he decided to continue his pedagogical mission until he achieved an average attendance of 76 students, although by 1878 everything had returned to its normal development (SALGAR, 1878 p. 44).

By resolution of Francisco J. Palacio, governor of the province of Barranquilla, the public schools for boys were closed since January 1, 1877 due to the public order shock and also order was given in a preventive manner to close the girls' schools. This official emphasized the importance of promoting education and sparing no effort for its reactivation in order to avoid the dire consequences derived from the war:

Our people have not yet realized that they need to educate themselves to be sovereign and to command; If now that there is no shortage of those who try to fanaticize it so that it lives in the dark and only obeys, our governments do not redouble their efforts to uproot them from ignorance, the results will necessarily have to be detrimental to «any system of order and progress» (PALACIO, 1877, p. 11).

Manuel A. Tatis, president of the Sovereign State of Bolívar, in his report of August 31, 1877, reported that, despite the increasing allocation of resources for the war, an immense effort had been made to leave open some educational establishments, including some how many dedicated to the instruction of girls. Preference was given to the normal operation of the Cartagena-based Girls' Academy, an institution that continued to work in an environment of political disturbance. The 62 students who were part of this campus received their usual lessons in reading, writing, Spanish, English, French, arithmetic, metric system, universal and Colombian geography, morals, urbanity, home economics, religious instruction, sewing, vocal music and instrumental and piano. Likewise, all the staff kept their work uninterruptedly, from the director Teresa Torres de Lemaitre to the deputy director and the four hired professors.

In this Sovereign State, there were two girls' schools in Cartagena with 100 registered students. There were also girls' schools in Mahates (41 students), two in Barranquilla with 88 students, one in Santo Tomás with 50 students, one in Soledad with 62 students, one in Sabanalarga with 50 students, and one more in El Carmen with 30 students. Likewise, several private schools for both girls and boys were in operation (TATIS, 1877, pp. 45-47).

In the State of Panama, although the government of the Union had decided to close the normal and annexed schools, the sectional government chose to keep them open, for which the employees of the national payroll, in a laudable act of solidarity with the situation of internal commotion, they decided to give in favor of the State's income, part of their wages. Some even renounced this remuneration entirely (ARDILA, 1877, p. 13).

In the northeastern region, the Normal School for Boys in the city of Socorro had been affected by the cessation of all spending on educational establishments paid for by the Nation. A few days later it was decided to fuse the three primary schools attached to

this Normal School. The president of the State of Santander, Marco A. Estrada, confessed to having made all the efforts that were within his reach in order not to restrict the appropriate income for education. However, the pressing circumstances of the war forced him to close some primary schools due to the escalation of military operations carried out by the National Government forces and the appearance of some guerrillas in the Department of Relief that prevented the normal course of the classes. Additionally, it was essential to have huge resources to organize some defense forces in response to the requirements raised by the Government of the Union. Thus, from November 16, 1876, the activities of primary schools and the steps taken by the Public Instruction Inspection of the Department of Relief were temporarily suspended, and a month later the same measure was adopted for the entire Sovereign State. On January 15 of the following year the measure sheltered the University College.

In the first days of 1877, the Normal School of male teachers paid for by the Nation had to forcibly suspend its functions after the military occupation of the city of Bucaramanga by the rebel forces under the command of the caudillo Antonio Valderrama.

Due to these political and military events, the University College had to advance its end-of-year exams for November 28, 29 and 30. On the other hand, it was decided to dispense with the academic events that were traditionally made during these dates and in addition it was decided to advance the date of the award ceremony for the most outstanding students was held. By resolution of October 4, the funds of the College were transferred to the General Treasury.

On April 6, 1877, when it was learned that the Rebel Army of Antioquia and the government of that State were subject to constitutional order by the Army of the South, an order was given to reopen the primary schools of both sexes and gradually the rest of educational institutions. For the month of August, the Normal School of female teachers in Bucaramanga developed its classes without any setback according to the report of the visit made by Professor Alberto Blume (ESTRADA, 1877, pp. 22-29).

In Tolima, the main problem was that the three times that the national government had designated a candidate for the position of Director of Public Instruction in that State, none of the applicants had accepted. However, under the active intervention of the Ministry of Public Instruction, by 1878 the Normal School of male that was operating in Ibagué had been reestablished (SALGAR, 1878 p. 45).

In Panama, the Normal School for Men, financed with national funds, was able to carry out its work during the war thanks to the generosity and philanthropy of the Director of Public Instruction who performed his duties free of charge and the generous willingness of the professors to teach their classes with the half of ordinary salary allowances.

Towards the middle of 1877, the heat of the war was diminishing in intensity and efforts were undertaken with a view to reopening educational services throughout the country. In July the central government forced the rebels of the State of Antioquia to ratify the Organic Decree of 1870 and in September 1878 the Directorates of Public Instruction were reestablished in each of the States (RAUSH, 1993, p. 175).

At the time of reviewing the global figures to assess the impact of this war throughout the territory of the Republic, it can be seen how the number of schools between 1876 and 1880 had experienced the closure of 251 establishments with a substantial reduction of 7,622 students (RAUSH, 1993, p. 179).

In 1878, when preparing a summary of the state of the educational sector, the Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Eustorgio Salgar, concluded that it never reached the extreme of seeing academic activities completely paralyzed but that as far as possible they had managed to overcome the obstacles inherent to the state of war, which was for the national government a confirmation of the "fervent" sentiment and "enthusiasm" of the people. In this year the statistics

showed 1,159 normal, elementary and higher schools throughout the country with a total of 70,800 enrolled students (p. 38).

In that same report it was emphasized that some of the official press destined to the promotion of popular education, a valuable element for the promotion of this sector, were suspended because of the war and even at the beginning of 1878 it had not been reestablished. Given this circumstance, the recent editorial project called "La Patria", founded by Adriano Páez, had somewhat compensated for this void by dedicating some of its columns to that educational mission, a work that was praised by the national executive (SALGAR, 1878 p 47). On the other hand, the reopening of the "Normal School" publication was reported (RAUSH, 1993, p. 175).

Although after the war of 1776 there had been an attempt by the presidential governments of Julián Trujillo and Rafael Núñez to reactivate education, in reality a series of adverse factors converged, such as the economic crisis, the lack of teaching materials and the lack of diligence of some officials of the sector. Given this, education experienced in this interregnum of the decline of the federalist period a stagnation reflected in the contraction of the number of schools that went from 1,395 in the year 1880 to 1,297 in 1883 (RAUSH, 1993, p. 185). During the war of 1885 there was a total suspension of classes in schools and colleges of the Sovereign State of Tolima. At the end of this conflict, one of the first actions directed by the governor of the newly created Department, General Manuel Casabianca, was to open the schools in January 1886 and appoint 29 teachers, but despite these efforts there were only 55 schools within the total of 67 towns. The government of Regeneration placed special emphasis on female education and especially on the teaching of arts and crafts as an alternative to alleviate the poverty that had deepened because of the war.

On the other hand, the educational work of the Santa Librada high school in the city of Neiva was reactivated, which had not functioned for several years. The appointment of the new directives of this institution reflected the primacy of the conservative party that had emerged triumphant in that war as the presbyter Leonidas Medina was appointed as vice-rector, a close relative of General Olegario Rivera, one of the most prominent officers who had fought the liberal regime. The objective was to revive the schools with the new ideological orientation imposed by the conservative hegemony and the influence of the Church, but several impasses had to be faced, such as the lack of funds, the deterioration of the premises, the inadequate management of public resources dedicated to the education sector, the shortage of suitable teachers, the lack of textbooks, the weak inspection work and the apathy of parents still involved in the environment of political polarization (RAMÍREZ, 1996, pp. 16-34; RAMÍREZ, 1998, pp. 321-325).

The outbreak of the Guerra de los Mil Días in the last months of the 19th century caused the greatest interruption of academic activities due to the long duration and intensity of this conflict. Even before the first violent actions occurred, several Normal Schools were closed at the provincial level. After the war, the Minister of Public Instruction Antonio José Uribe made efforts to reactivate them and by mid-1904 those of Antioquia, Bolívar, Boyacá and Cundinamarca were already in operation (URIBE, 1904, p. X).

The Governor of Cundinamarca in his 1903 report related how before the start of this war, in 1899, there were 346 schools in good order in the Department. Because of the revolution, in 1900, public education was practically paralyzed throughout this territorial framework. The following year, thanks to the management of General Aristides Fernández, Secretary of War, a decree was issued on January 26, which ordered the opening of schools and repealed the rule that ordered the application of educational funds to the expenses of war. In this year 1901, 74 schools reopened in those places that were not occupied by the revolutionaries, although in any case it was a small number when compared to those that existed before the start of the war. By 1902 the number of schools

increased to 110 and by the following year more than 200 were in operation, with the need to open more, although the lack of resources did not allow it at that time. Meanwhile, the Boys 'Normal School was interrupted while the girls' had operated with some regularity despite the inconveniences generated by the military confrontation. In this girls' school, however, a slowdown in enrollment rates was reported since, from 70 boarding students in 1899, it went to 40 in 1900 and 26 in 1902. By 1903, when the winds of peace were already on the horizon, the number of students increased to 40, half sponsored by the Ministry of Public Instruction and the other half by the Department. The shortage of official coffers and the economic complication experienced by parents when trying to pay alimony were the main factors attributed to the considerable decrease in the number of female students (BUENAVENTURA, 1903, pp. XLV-XLIX).

The surveillance work was also affected by the fact that the number of School Sections of the Department was reduced to three, which meant that the inspectors could not visit the schools with the same assiduity as before.

According to the report of the governor of Cundinamarca, for the year 1903 when the fury of the war began to subside, the resources were still incipient. Monthly, a total of 87,789 pesos were received within the income earmarked for education, of which 30,000 came from the revenue from the cattle slaughter tax, 40,000 for liquor rental and 17,790 for nominal rent and leases. At least 100,000 pesos was required to be raised if all the Department's schools were to be revived (BUENAVENTURA, 1903, pp. LI-LV).

In the Department of Tolima, the notorious influence reached by the Church through the appointment of priest Jesús María Restrepo, Vicar General of the diocese, as Secretary of Public Instruction, had been felt during the last years of the 19th century. On the other hand, the Marist Fathers had come to administer the high schools of San Simón in Ibagué and Santa Librada in Neiva. During the war at the end of this century, all the schools stopped operating except for the San Luis Gonzaga high school and some schools run by the Sisters of Charity. Appeased the roar of arms, the bishop of the diocese, Monsignor Esteban Rojas Tobar, put all his efforts into promoting the plan of "Reconstruction of the school", for which he gave instructions to the parish priests of each municipality to work around the formation of local boards in charge of coordinating the collection of funds, the procurement of materials and the formation of groups of workers chosen from among the townspeople to undertake reconstruction works. The result of this project was the fact that in 1905, in the newly created Department of Huila, there were already 67 official schools in operation (RAMÍREZ (a) 1996, pp. 35-42).

After the start of this war, the direction of the San Simón high school decided to paralyze their academic work and sent the students home due to a shooting carried out by the revolutionary forces at their entrance to the city. On June 1, 1901, it was opened again but in less than a month they had to close again due to the latent threat represented by the arrival of an army of 2,000 revolutionaries to Ibagué, whereupon a new contingent of 250 men from government service forces temporarily seized the campus (CLAVIJO, 2016, pp. 268, 279).

The high college finally opened its doors in 1904 amid a critical financial situation and with few students willing to start classes. At this juncture, under the government of President Rafael Reyes, the possibility of restoring it as a secular and republican institution was considered, although the option of transforming it into an Industrial and artistic high school was also contemplated. According to the report presented in 1905 by the rector Manuel Antonio Botero, the institution had twelve scholarship holders and at least the institution's facilities had been fixed and its library had 370 titles to date (CLAVIJO, 2016, pp. 279 -285).

The Public School of Pasto was only able to reopen in 1903, although with many setbacks, since the public coffers were exhausted and the effects of the almost total devaluation of the

national banknote were felt. The income of the campus was meager due to the lack of collection and payments in these three years of cessation of activities (ORTIZ, 1956, p. 204-205).

In the Department of Antioquia, as a result of the war, the Ministry of Public Instruction was abolished and, by decree of December 21, 1900, it became dependent on the Secretary of Government and was only reestablished in 1902. In 1901, a total of 318 elementary schools of the Department resumed their usual assignments in March, that is, two months later than usual, but the upheavals of the war forced their closure after their facilities were occupied by government troops. Although 25,506 students were enrolled, attendance was not more than 20,000. The provincial inspectorates, whose work was essential to exercise greater controls in the face of the growing politicization of teachers, did not work either during these months. The shortages of the official coffers made the reconstruction slower although by 1903 there was a slight increase in the Department schools, whose number rose to 386 with a total of 36,502 children enrolled (GARCÍA, 1924, p. 134).

As stated by the departmental secretary of Public Instruction in his 1903 report, the situation in the field was very critical due to the lack of teaching tools and the unsuitability of school directors since the most competent were not willing to hire themselves for such low wages. It was denounced that many of the children of the marginalized sectors left the classrooms due to the extreme situation of poverty that pushed them to seek some lucrative occupation. For reasons of public order, it was necessary to also suspend the night school for adult workers who habitually received classes at the Society of San Vicente de Paúl thanks to the financial support provided by the Department and the government of the city of Medellín (BOTERO, 1903, pp. 3-12).

After the effects of the war in the region of the Caribbean Coast, the governor of Magdalena, Francisco Vergara Barrios, reported that the few available teachers had left the region and very few were willing to come from other places due to the high costs of support due to the prevailing famine and inflation.

In October 1899, the Department had 60 active establishments at the primary level: 27 schools for boys in the urban area, 26 urban schools for girls, 3 rural schools for boys, 3 rural schools for girls, and a school with alternation. In 1904, once public order was restored on this eastern side of the Caribbean region, all efforts were made with a view to reestablishing some schools and appointing teachers, having to date a total of 36 schools: 18 boys' schools in the urban area, 15 girls' schools and 3 rural schools (VERGARA, 1904, pp. 60-66). Meanwhile, the Departmental Normal School had not yet been able to resume its classes.

The municipalities had responsibility to cover some expenses for primary public education but because of the war they were dejected and insolvent. Authorization for them to impose a new tax or to assign them a departmental income for that purpose was then proposed as a formula to help local governments. In April 1904, the national government had ordered the Barranquilla Customs to send resources to serve as a relief to the situation of the Normal School, but as of the date of the report, this measure had not been complied with (VERGARA, 1904, p. 67).

Conclusions

The civil wars of the 19th century in Colombia had a profound impact on the public education system. The great issues and debates that gave rise to these warlike contests had a direct influence on education, either in the ideological confrontation around the center-region territorial power or the controversy between those who supported a formation with strong influence of the Church and those who defended the secular system of instruction. Thus then,

the educational system was immersed in the game of forces and confrontation between political power, ecclesiastical power and military power.

At the time of drawing a general balance, it can be observed how these wars affected public establishments to a greater extent, since one of the issues of confrontation was precisely the dispute between the central government and the autonomy of the governments of the Federal states. However, there are reports that also reveal some consequences in private establishments.

On the other hand, it can be noted that the damage was greater in the educational establishments for boys since many of the students were engaged in the military struggle. In some sense, schools and colleges for girls and young people were less affected, although the gap was still a long way from closing the gap in terms of quality and educational access on gender.

The repercussions of the civil wars could also be evidenced in an increase in the levels of school absenteeism that was aggravated by the difficulty in finding young people who met the requirements, especially in access to Normal Schools. Many were the economic losses that parents experienced to financially support their children in the educational system.

Notorious was the interruption of school work and the pace of learning due to this succession of warfare. In addition to this, it should be noted the decrease in the quality of teaching indexes and the closure of other cultural activities linked to the educational system such as public libraries, theaters and concerts. Of course, the impact of the war also affected the academic dynamics of higher education institutions, where the level of military recruitment of students was higher and the political and ideological confrontation much more critical (SILVA, 2016, pp. 6-9).

In particular, the influence of the military establishment during those war years was evident in all areas of society and education was no exception. The students had to deal with this factor of disturbance of public order in their daily lives and in their formative stage, with which they inevitably had a closeness to the complex reality and the environment of tension that the country was experiencing.

More than describing the vicissitudes and excesses of war, this work has also recorded the efforts and sacrifices to keep educational services active even in the midst of so many pitfalls. In this sense, it is worth highlighting the effort of some teachers who offered to teach classes without remuneration in order not to further affect the educational development of the students. In the same way, it should be noted the solidarity efforts of the different national, provincial and local government instances with a view to securing some resources in the midst of the generalized state of devastation, as well as the solidarity mobilization of the clergy at the parish level and the contribution of some employees in supplying free labor in the reconstruction work of the destroyed educational buildings.

Somehow, the intervals of peace between the civil wars meant a respite and a propitious space for the reactivation of academic work in schools and colleges. These interstices were key to implement actions and logistical, administrative and financial devices aimed at avoiding the collapse of the educational system.

On balance, the vicissitudes of the war, bipartisan political rivalries, and lack of resources were factors that influenced the slow growth of the education sector in Colombia in the 19th century, with marked regional differences in coverage and quality. The available figures allow us to measure the behavior of this sector from before the start of the first civil war until the end of the Guerra de los Mil Días. In the case of public schools for boys, it went from 1,052 in 1837 (MONTENEGRO, 1984, p. 233) to 1,800 around 1903, which reflects an increase of 59% (RAMÍREZ & TÉLLEZ, 2006, p. 19). Regarding the level of secondary education, by 1836 there were twenty high schools for boys, two high school for women and six houses of education (AHERN, 1991, pp. 61-62) while by 1903, once the cycle of civil wars had ended, there were they counted 180 high schools

with a total of 14,000 enrolled. If we contrast the national statistics in the Latin American context, it can be seen for 1900 a percentage of 3.5% of enrolled in primary schools and 0.5% of enrolled in high schools within the total population, figures that are lower compared to what is verified in other countries such as Argentina, Costa Rica and Chile (RAMÍREZ & TÉLLEZ, 2006, pp. 6-24).

Even though in the decades after the Guerra de los Mil Días, peace could be reestablished in much of the national territory, the situation of vulnerability of school spaces during the nineteenth-century wars unfortunately experienced some continuity since the mid-twentieth century, particularly with the strong bipartisan confrontation in the period known as La Violencia and the subsequent guerrilla conflicts, drug trafficking and irregular warfare that the country has experienced. Armed attacks on the educational infrastructure, the use of schools to disseminate violent speeches, attacks and intimidation against teachers, planting of antipersonnel mines near schools, forced displacement and the recruitment of children and young people (ROMERO, 2013, p. 62)⁶, they have been common circumstances in the most recent wars that in a spiral manner have not ceased to be affect to Colombian education.

However, the most paradoxical of all is that this persistent interference of the public order in the national territory was not an obstacle to at least slow growth in coverage and quality in the public education system during the twentieth century (URIBE, 2006).

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⁶ See also: (VERGARA, 2007, pp. 577-590).

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