Decolonial perspectives on nonviolence: Building inclusive learning communities in Chile through a participatory approach

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Abstract

My thesis addresses the question of how nonviolence approaches and perspectives might equip Chilean teachers to deal with rising levels of classroom violence expressed in intolerance and discrimination towards members of marginalized communities. Nonviolence has had important historical successes in achieving social change in different cultural contexts, and yet it remained unexplored in Chile. In this thesis, I argue that the study and practice of nonviolence can provide a sustainable path to address existing direct, cultural and structural violence in Chilean classrooms. Drawing from a wide scope of non-Western and decolonial philosophical practices, ranging from Buddhism and other international wisdom traditions to intercultural perspectives influenced by cosmopolitanism, as well as the work of Western nonviolence advocates and scholars, I engaged students on a teacher training degree in studying and practicing nonviolence. A series of participatory workshops with students from two Chilean universities was conducted to explore the relationship between violence and inequality and the impact of nonviolent action to promote equality and inclusiveness in their classrooms. The research project also provided an opportunity for participants to design and attempt strategies drawing upon their understanding of nonviolence. This thesis charts their – and my own - transformative journey towards becoming nonviolent educators and embracing nonviolence as path for social justice, and how the study and practice of the theories presented supported that journey.

Acknowledgements

It is often said: "A PhD is a solitary journey". And while there are many moments of solitude, I couldn't think of a more collaborative endeavor than completing one. This section then is an attempt to acknowledge the very meaningful contributions made by so many people so I could actually complete this project.

The first of these acknowledgements is to my wife, without whose encouragement I could not have even started my doctoral studies. Her kind love, support and belief in the contributions I wanted this project to make were the key factors in each step of this journey, including her working two jobs for most of my studies to support us.

The second acknowledgement goes to my supervisors Giovanna Fassetta and Marta Moskal, whose careful guidance and kind support allowed me to grow as a student and researcher in different ways. From Giovanna I gained the theoretical foundation that supports much of my work and expanded it; from Marta, I gained the necessary concreteness and practicality that enabled me to organize and manage my PhD. Both guided me safely into the many unknowns I encountered and encouraged me to recognize the value of my own work when my self-criticism clouded this from my vision. From my conversations with both, I learned a great deal about rigor and diligence as a researcher, and how to do and present my work so others would understand it and engage with it. Importantly, they have also inspired me as a future academic to strive to do the with my own students as they have done with me.

I want to thank Katharina Glass, Katherine Keim, Husim Espinoza and Enzo Pescara from the two research sites in Chile; from the very initial contacts they not only offered their support in different ways, but shared my belief that this project could actually be of benefit for the participants and made every effort to facilitate my and the participants' work.

A heartfelt appreciation goes to each one of the participants in this project, who gave their time, effort and physical and intellectual endeavor; they spoke and shared kindly and openly, contributed in more ways I imagined possible and it is a fair assessment to say that it was their invaluable contribution that made this project what it turned out to be.

I am deeply grateful to the hundreds of scholars whose work has informed mine, and to all my spiritual teachers and nonviolence advocates who have inspired me; those who remain

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<u>Preface</u>

The thesis before you, titled *Decolonial perspectives on nonviolence: Building inclusive learning communities in Chile through a participatory approach,* has been written to fulfil the completion requirements of the doctoral program in Education at the University of Glasgow. It details my entire PhD journey, which began in January 2021.

This research project has been carried out under the supervision of Dr. Giovanna Fassetta and Dr. Marta Moskal, from the School of the Education; I am deeply grateful for their excellent guidance and support during the process of completing it.

Chapters 1 and 2 serve as background and provide context on the rationale for and location of the research; chapter 3 lays out the pedagogical and philosophical underpinnings supporting this study, while chapters 4, 5 and 6 present the theoretical framework and empirical work that form the basis for this research. Chapter 7 details the research design and methods used for data collection, as well as the ethical considerations and mitigations that were taken into account before undertaking this study. Chapter 8 gives a detailed account of the findings made, and finally chapter 9 serves as the bookend for this thesis, discussing further challenges encountered during the project and possible directions for future researchers.

Full ethics approval was obtained before data collection began.

I am aware of and understand the university's policy on plagiarism. I therefore declare that this thesis is an original report of my research, has been written by me and has not been submitted for any previous degree or qualification. The research design is entirely my own work; collaborative contributions made throughout the project have been detailed clearly and acknowledged. Due references have been provided on all supporting literatures and resources.

Part of this thesis has been presented in the following publications:

Research blog posts:

- "Decolonizing knowledge: undoing and reconstructing how we learn"- European Educational Research Association– retrieved at https://blog.eera-ecer.de/decolonizing-knowledge-undoing-and-reconstructing-how-we-learn/

- August 2021 – "An argument for the sustainability of non-violence" – Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities – retrieved at https://sgsahblog.com/2021/08/11/an-argument-for-the-sustainability-of-non-violence/

- October 2021 – "Challenging non-democracy through participation: Can the classroom be a place of resistance?" – The Post-Pandemic University Magazine - retrieved at https://postpandemicuniversity.net/2021/10/19/challenging-non-democracy-through-participation-can-the-classroom-be-a-place-of-resistance/

- October 2021 – "Social justice through non-violence- not purely an intellectual endeavour" – British Educational Research Association – retrieved at https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/social-justice-through-non-violence-not-purely-an-intellectual-endeavour

- December 2022 – "Why non-violence education matters today: the work of Norbert Elias and Judith Butler in the context of intercultural Othering" - Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities – retrieved at https://sgsahblog.com/2022/11/28/why-non-violence-education-matters-today-the-work-of-norbert-elias-and-judith-butler-in-the-context-of-inter-cultural-othering/

- June 2023 – "Using nonviolence to reconceptualize inclusive education in the Global South: insights from trainee teachers in Chile" - European Educational Research Association – retrieved at https://blog.eera-ecer.de/non-violence-inclusive-education/

Refereed journal articles

- **Bacquet, G.** (2022). Situating Norbert Elias' power differential in a critical exploration of violence in Chilean education. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal 9(12),* 371 – 379

- **Bacquet, G.** (2022), Restoring Indigenous Knowledge: can current efforts, lessons and perspectives be applied in Chile? *Lenguas Radicales 1*(3), 17- 30.

- **Bacquet, G**. (2021) – Towards the decolonization of classroom practices in Chilean higher education – A suggested framework – *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies, 9(*4), 16-25.

Furthermore, additional work within this thesis has been submitted for publication and it's currently undergoing editorial revision:

Refereed journal articles under review:

Bacquet, G. (2023). Inequality and violence in the classroom – Can nonviolence education and contemplative practices provide a path forward? *Journal of Contemplative Inquiry.*

Bacquet, G. (2023). Decolonizing nonviolence- what indigenous wisdom traditions contribute to nonviolence teacher education in Chile. *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning*

Bacquet, G. (2023). Nonviolence pedagogy as participatory action: shifting paradigms on classroom violence and power relations. *The Open Review.*

Book chapters in progress:

Nonviolence as a pedagogy of hope: Chilean pre-service teachers and their reconceptualization of inclusive classrooms (2024). In Abeglen, S., Burns, T., Madhok, R. and Singh, U. *Reimagining Education: Stories of Hope*. OEG Connect

How Cosmopolitanism and Intercultural Communication contribute to a social justice pedagogical framework: the case of Chilean trainee teachers and their international students. (2024). In Anderson, E., and Edwards, K. *Annual Review of Comparative and International Education.*

Printed name: Gaston Bacquet Quiroga

Signature:

Acronyms and abbreviations:

AR: Action Research

CPAR: Critical Participatory Action Research

MINEDUC: *Ministerio de Educación* (Spanish for "Ministry of Education")

NVC: Nonviolent Communication

PAR: Participatory Action Research

PUCV: Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UOH: Universidad de O'Higgins

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Before describing the observed problem and how this doctoral research might offer ways of addressing it, I will use this introduction to situate the reader within the conceptual and social context of this project. I will furthermore detail the research aims and objectives and present the research questions this study attempted to answer.

First, I will leave the readers with the following illustration; this tree, which shows the main concepts that will be covered in the subsequent chapters, is not a framework but rather a conceptual mind map showing the larger ideas that inform this research. Each main branch shows a larger recurring theme, and the smaller branches represent ideas connected with each theme.
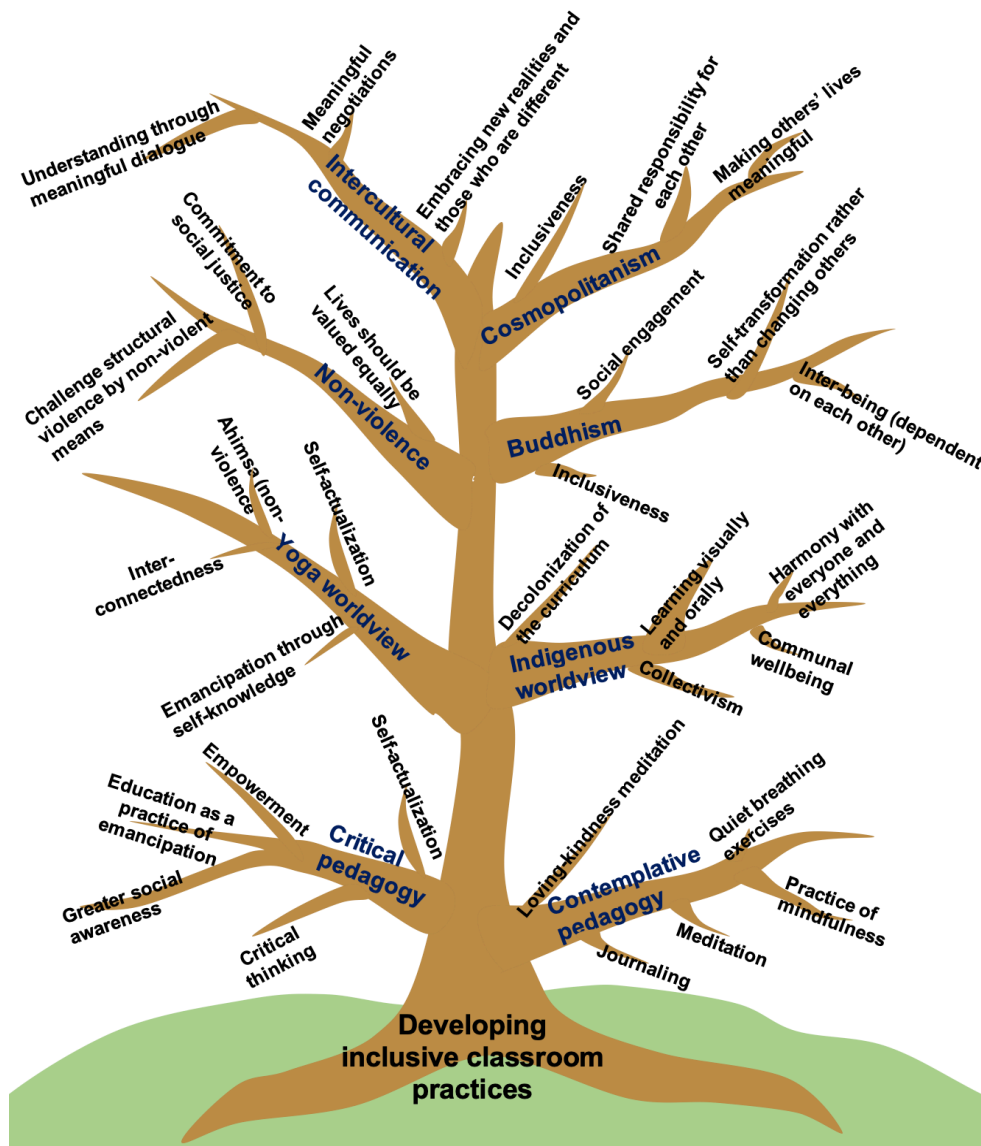
Figure 1.1: Conceptual tree with main theories and ideas informing this research

1.1 Position Statement

Holmes (2020) defines positionality as "an individual's worldview and the position they adopt about a research task and it social and political context" (p.1). Therefore, and before I present this thesis, I will briefly describe and acknowledge my position as a researcher.

This position is fundamentally informed by two things: my Buddhist spiritual beliefs and my vision of education as a practice of social transformation. Buddhism has shaped my worldview into one where we don't exist in binary terms, though me often think in such terms (male / female; good / bad; oppressed / oppressor; black / white) . As a result of my Buddhist beliefs, my view is that spousing perspectives that conceptualize things as contrasting or in opposition, such as Cartesian dualism, exacerbates binarism as well as that the social constructs we have built around issues of identity, which have served to exclude rather than include, and to divide rather than unite. While I acknowledge the profound and often painful implications generated by Western views on racial, sexual and cultural identity, my position is that tackling these issues through the recognition of both our differences and each other's shared humanity, such as through restorative justice and nonviolence efforts, is the most sustainable path towards social inclusiveness.

This in turn has guided my view of what education should be; such view, contained within the critical paradigm (Ashgar, 2013), argues for an examination of our social reality, identifying the actions that must be taken to change it and improve it, and finally providing a clear path forward of action towards necessary transformations. My position is that this examination, identification and transformative action are best approached within the framework of critical pedagogy, startting with the work of Paulo Freire (1970) but more crucially through the work of bell hooks (1994, 1998, 2003) and her writings on engaged pedagogy and critical thinking. Her perspective that "no one is born a racist" (1998, p.25) resonates with and informs my own vision that education can furnish a pathway for transforming exclusionary views into more inclusive ones; in my personal case, this inclusiveness is fundamentally guided by Buddhist thought, and particularly by the teachings of Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh (1987) best encapsulated here:

> "Seeing that harmful actions arise from anger, fear, greed, and intolerance, which
> in turn come from dualistic and discriminative thinking, I will cultivate openness,

non-discrimination, and non-attachment to views in order to transform violence, fanaticism, and dogmatism in myself and in the world" (p.5)

Buddhist thought and critical theory - and the dialogue between them - figure prominently in this thesis, particularly in chapters 3, 4 and 6. Transforming violence, dogmatism and discriminative thinking within a classroom setting by promoting dialogue, democratic participation and social awareness, is perhaps the most fundamental aspect of this project. Chapter 4, section 4.5, acknowledges the tensions that exist between critical theory and Buddhist philosophy concerning duality / nonduality. It is my position that in spite of these tensions, both of these worldviews share an approach to social justice rooted in the re-humanization of others, and in the transformation of our social world by tackling the factors and systems that oppress, and which cause suffering and marginalization. It is also my position that the spiritual aspect of critical pedagogy is both present and often unexplored in the work of two key proponents whose work I draw on, namely Paulo Freire, who was raised by a spiritualist father and a Roman Catholic mother, and bell hooks, whose work is - by her own admission - influenced by the work of Thich Nhat Hanh (hooks, 1994). This spiritual overlap is key to my decision to draw on works of these thinkers.

The methodological choices made are similarly guided by these ideas. What follows is an action research project built around a series of participatory workshops, which incorporate a range of practices, exercises and overall approach informed by my aforementioned positionality; examples of these are the research approach and methods adopted (workshops within an action research design), the use of self-enquiry practices, empathy-development exercises, reflective reading and creating the space for the collective exploration of nonviolent approaches to inequality.

1.2 Context

Since the country's return to democracy in 1990, different Chilean governments have attempted to address existing inequalities[1] in the educational system (see Cociña et al., 2017 and Larrañaga, 2016 for detailed accounts). However, the educational model

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[1] When referring to inequality in the context of this research, I will do so based on two concepts: one is Butler's (2020) idea of 'grievability': the notion that not all lives are of equal value, which leads to groups and individual to exert violence on (and not valuing) those deemed different; this translates into sexism, homophobia, classism and social segregation. The second idea that informs my definition and use of the word 'inequality' throughout this thesis is Galtung's (1969) view of structural violence, which reveals itself as inequality in the way of unequal power, and therefore, non-equal chances in life.

remains still deeply rooted in the neoliberal design instated in the 1980s during the former military government; such design is also anchored in a Western-centric educational model of knowledge creation and transmission that has in fact accentuated and deepened those inequalities (Harvey, 2005; Campos-Martinez, 2020).

Research by Barrientos-Oradini and Araya-Castillo (2018), Basso (2016), Oyarzún (2005) and Villalobos and Quaresma (2015) has further argued that higher education in Chile has been in a state of transition, a sort of impasse or what I would call a an 'educational purgatory' in which educational policies have the potential to be more inclusive; these policies, however, continue to be debated rather than fully implemented, as higher education institutions still navigate a model that mixes "market fundamentalism and …authoritarianism inherited from the military government" (Oyarzún, 2005, p.3). For example, that since Chile's return to democracy, there have been a series of roundtables organized to foster greater dialogue and participation with the intent to modify some of the dynamics that reproduce inequalities. However, the dialogue has been dictated "from above" (p.2) rather than being fully inclusive. This is confirmed by Torres-Rojas (2016) who makes a similar observation, with some added nuances: although there are more public universities and there have been changes to the way these are financed, there has also been an increase in shortened degrees, a proliferation of what he called "mid-level' majors and a curricular model designed to develop competencies that are suitable for the work force. In other words, still fulfilling a utilitarian function that suits the market, and as Campos-Martinez (2020) indicates, with a very high level of economic segregation where students from more advantaged background attend more prestigious, better funded universities, and vocational-technical colleges remain geared primarily toward less advantaged individuals. Torres-Rojas (2016) further argues that whereas higher education used to fulfil a role preparing people for social participation in a context that was devoid of today's global social and economic complexities, now that role has changed into what I earlier described as fulfilling a role within the market forces and preparing individuals to partake in them. There have been advances made in widening inclusion through the creation of regional public universities and the formulation of more inclusive college admission policies (MINEDUC, 2016b); however, public higher education institutions continue to perform a utilitarian role within the market: that of preparing people for the workforce, rather than enabling learners to think more critically or develop greater social consciousness (Giroux, 2011; Mora-Olate, 2018; Torres-Rojas, 2016).

This scenario of *structural violence* [2](Galtung, 1969) in which unequal power relations are perpetuated, educational resources are unevenly distributed, cultural and linguistic inequalities are preserved and existing socio-economic segregation persists, in turn have led to a series of demonstrations with quickly escalating levels of *direct violence*; many of these have spiraled out of control and led to brutal police repression, resulting in loss of life, damaged public infrastructure (including schools and universities) and a widening social and political divide (Larragaña et al., 2017; Olavarria and Campos-Martinez, 2020).

Even though the Ministry of Education formulated and published its "Strategies for Wellbeing and Conviviality" [3] (MINEDUC, 2022), the current state of research on Chilean education shows an absence of literature in the areas of non-violent approaches to challenge inequality, ways to improve teacher - learner relations, and manners to foster communal well-being. There is a wealth of descriptive research papers on the state of higher education in Chile and the changes it has undergone since the end of the military dictatorship (e.g. Alarcón-Lopez and Falabella, 2021; Garretón, 2011; Mora-Olate, 2018; Rivera-Polo et al., 2018; Slachevsky-Aguilera, 2015); however, there is also a lack of empirical studies that look at practical application of non-neoliberal educational principles, such as critical pedagogy; there have been efforts to decolonize the teaching curriculum as well, but these have been generally limited to specific indigenous[4] groups and their geographies.

As a result, in a country with a long and painful history of colonialism, higher education curriculum continues to be dominated by Western-centric [5]epistemologies and practices (Aman,2017; Basulto-Gallegos and Fuentealba, 2018; Cisterna et al., 2016;

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[2] Galtung describes violence as 'that which increases the difference between what could have been and what is' (p.168) and structural violence as one where there is not a single actor perpetrating it but rather as something that shows as unequal power relations that become evident through unequal chances in life, thus establishing an indelible connection with Butler's concept of inequality.

[3] Estrategia para el bienestar y la convivencia (Spanish in the original, my translation). Retrieved from https://www.mineduc.cl/estrategia-de-bienestar-y-convivencia/

[4] While it is acknowledged that Buddhism and other religions and philosophical traditions are indeed indigenous to their own geographies and people, for the purpose of this thesis I have differentiated between Eastern philosophical traditions (Buddhism, Hinduism and yoga) and those that encompass the cultures, skills, languages and understandings of local, native communities around the world, such as the First Nations in Canada, Mapuche people in Chile, or Chaga people in Tanzania, to name some of the examples I have provided throughout the thesis. This distinction is made in the effort of clarity, since both are referred to separately in current scholarship and each has specific differentiating elements (see Mistry (2009) and Mistry et al (2021)). Whenever it was possible to encompass all of them in a single concept I have used the name 'international' or 'non-Western wisdom traditions' or 'non-Western philosophical and spiritual traditions'.

[5] I use the terms 'Eurocentric' and "Western-centric' throughout this thesis as one referring to a worldview that revolves around Western civilization as we have come to learn it, the knowledge of which, though spread to other parts of the world, such as Canada, the USA and Australia, centers around Eurocentric views and has historically come from Western European thinkers (Hobson, 2012). Therefore, for the purpose of this work, the words Eurocentric and Western-centric are used interchangeably so as to avoiding repetition.

Mejía, 2015) which in my view perpetuate existing educational inequalities by neglecting other, non-Western forms of knowledge and practices. Additionally, as made evident by recent research (Barozet, 2020; Iglesias-Vasquez, 2015; Waissbluth, 2020) ongoing social changes in Chile have accentuated socio-economic and political division between different social groups, resulting not only in more separateness but also often in violent conflict.

Considering this, my study attempted to bring a series of decolonial critical perspectives that might assist in tackling these issues. Critical pedagogy, for instance, attempts to do this by focusing on teaching and learning as actions aimed at emancipation, social change and developing learning environments that foster democratic participation; through that, learners themselves can become co-creators of knowledge, rather than recipients of information within a model that seeks to prepare people for participation in the global markets (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 2011; hooks, 1994). Furthermore, Eastern philosophies bring a non-violent perspective of inter-dependency and working towards collective well-being rooted not in individualism but on a sense of inclusiveness (Iyengar, 1993; Nhat Hanh, 1987, 1994; Chödron, 2006). Finally, knowledge systems from some indigenous communities provide both an intersection with some of the ideas in Eastern philosophies – such as promoting a sense of harmony with everything and everyone around us - and valid counter-hegemonic alternatives to the existing colonial, Eurocentric educational model in use (Apaza-Huanca, 2019; Semali and Kincheloe, 1999; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012), as are learning through direct observation or using oral transmission and stories rather than written language (Ñanculef, 2016). This project attempted to bring these perspectives into the fold within the research aim and objectives detailed below.

1.3 How this project contributes to knowledge creation and meaning making

Critical pedagogy advocates for the liberation of the oppressed through the development of critical consciousness (conscientization) and most available literature focuses on the teacher's role in facilitating that process (Katz, 2014). However – and surprisingly, considering Paulo Freire's ties to Chile – scholarship seeking to research the practical applications of critical pedagogy in Chilean classrooms is scant. My own search, in fact, unearthed a descriptive study by Garcia and Duarte (2012) and an empirical study Porter in Chilean public schools (2018), nothing else as far as empirical research studies goes. Furthermore, although there are some studies available on current efforts to be inclusive of

indigenous communities and their knowledge (Mora-Olate, 2018, Quintriqueo and Arias-Ortega, 2019, 2020) as well as other minorities (MINEDUC, 2016) and to increase social justice in education (Campos-Martinez, 2010, 2013, 2016), research in Chilean context shows no evidence of empirical work done in the areas of non-violence, interconnectedness and interdependency in order to challenge the conditions that create the conditions where violence and its ensuing inequality arise in the first place.

This research was carried out with this context in mind. It adds many of these missing elements and perspectives to the academic and educational conversation, and applies them in the context of Chilean higher education, with a particular focus on teacher training. Given the nature of this project, I hoped that co-creating knowledge with teachers could have a potentially multiplier effect in their schools, both in and out of the classrooms (Crul et al., 2017): what teachers learned, the cultural capital they gained, the paradigmatic shifts they experienced, they could bring with them and pass on to their own students, peers and community. The project's theoretical framework draws from i) critical pedagogues such as bell hooks, Paulo Freire and Michel Apple; ii) non-violent philosophy and the research done in this area for over a decade by Hongyu Wang, Judith Butler, Eastern thinkers and nonviolence advocates, and iii) the perspectives of inter-dependency and inter-connectedness found in the knowledge systems of non-Western philosophical and spiritual traditions.

For instance, there has been an increased interest from North America-based researchers in bringing non-violence strategies into colleges and teacher training programs, (see Lauricella, 2019 for a study in Canada, and Wang, 2013 and 2018, for research conducted in the United States) as well as prisons (McCarthy, 2014), along with an effort to integrate contemplative practices such as meditation, breathing exercises, journaling and self-reflection into the classroom ecosystem in order to facilitate at atmosphere of collective well-being (Barbezat and Bush, 2014; Bollinger and Wang, 2013, Lin et al, 2019). These perspectives and approaches are currently missing in Chilean scholarship at a time when studies have begun to look into classroom violence and its causes (Becerra et al., 2019; Trucco and Inostroza, 2021; U. de Chile, 2022); as a consequence, there was a clear opportunity to address such instances of violence at a time when, as Lopez et al., (2021) indicate, Chilean teachers currently face the challenge of needing to be more dialogical and less punitive in their praxis, in a country where exclusionary and harsh disciplinary practices are and have historically been acceptable.

In addition to being the place where I was born and lived for half of my professional life as a teacher, I chose to do this research in Chile because of specific factors that add to the need for greater social inclusion in education: one is socio-economic segmentation (Larragaña et al., 2017), a second is racial bias (Campos-Martinez, 2010; Riedemann and Stefoni, 2015; Tijoux and Riveros-Barrios, 2019) and a third is the lack of inclusive educational policies in regard to the migrant population which, as of 2018, is nearly 500,000 (MPI, 2018). As Sandoval (2016) explains, the migratory law in Chile (Law 1094) dates from 1975, when Chile was under a military dictatorship; this law, which has remained practically unchanged since then, conceived both migrants and immigration as a threat, a notion that was passed on for generations and which has shaped social attitudes in Chile towards non-white immigrants (Mora Olate, 2018). The eradication of this bias is not helped by the lack of oversight (or willingness) on the implementation of public policies that have been formulated specifically to address this issue. The Chilean Ministry of Education has called for greater diversity and the recognition of learning spaces as a meeting point for learners regardless of their nationality, gender, socio-economic background or religion (MINEDUC, 2016). And yet, as Mora Olate (ibid) highlights, the social and cultural hegemony remains unchanged and hence the need for practices that bring these policies into action is still very much present.

1.4 Research aims and objectives

Based on above the considerations, the aim of this project was to offer Chilean trainee teachers a set of tools to explore issues of discrimination and exclusion, and to deal with tensions arising from these issues in a non-violent way. To achieve this aim, I collaborated with higher education students pursuing a teaching degree at two Chilean universities: Universidad de O'Higgins, a public regional Chilean university located in the city of Rancagua, and the Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaiso, a private, non-profit research institution. In cooperation with the research participants, this study pursued the following objectives:

a. Use the principles of critical pedagogy to facilitate a process of increased critical thinking, critical social awareness and democratic participation.
b. Collaborate in identifying and co-developing practices to address current issues relating to inclusiveness in Chilean higher education classrooms, with a focus on

behaviours, forms of expression and ways of relating to one another that might produce or reproduce inequality.

c. Achieve the above within a framework of non-violence, inter-connectedness and communal harmony, rooted in some of the principles present in non-Western spiritual and philosophical traditions, in which individualism gives way to acting for collective well-being.

d. In collaboration with the participants, document the findings and make them available as a set of guidelines for research-based classroom practices that can provide a framework of action for future trainee teachers in their own practice. These practices were, again, be co-created collaboratively with the research participants.

1.5 Research questions

The present study is guided by the overarching question of how nonviolence approaches and perspectives might equip Chilean teachers to deal with rising levels of classroom violence; this violence is often expressed in intolerance and discrimination towards members of disadvantaged communities or those who have been minoritized or Othered, such as migrant students. I addressed this question through a decolonial model of inquiry that fosters democratic participation, with an additional focus on inter-dependency and non-violence. My specific research questions were:

Main question: *To what extent can nonviolent theories and practices raise student teachers' awareness of direct, cultural and structural violence and its link to inequality?*

Sub-questions:
1. Does the use of self-enquiry practices produce any change in the way participants view themselves and their relationship with their social world?
2. To what extent can the teaching of non-violent and decolonial practices support students' awareness of discrimination and exclusion and help them develop strategies to deal with these?

3. To what extent are nonviolent and contemplative approaches and practices beneficial in dealing with the tensions that arise from violence in the context of a classroom?

Having established the context in which the study was undertaken, the next chapter presents the reader with more detailed background on the observed issues this project addresses.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND TO THIS STUDY

2.1 Observed problem: inequality and 'us' versus 'them'

This research study is, at its core, a study of the relationship between non-violence and social equality, and how this relationship might impact a small community such as a classroom. Let's begin then by shedding some light on what violence is beyond the physical act of inflicting physical pain on someone. In his influential article *"Violence, Peace and Peace Research",* Galtung defined it as: *"… the cause of the difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is. Violence is that which increases the distance between the potential and the actual, and that which impedes the decrease of this distance"* (p.168). In other words, constraints or actions upon individuals that prevent them from 'realizing their potentialities' (p.169). However, violence might not necessarily be exerted by individuals but rather, embedded into a structure such as the way income is distributed or unequal access to healthcare and education. Galtung (ibid) and Elias and Scotson (1965) further link this to an unequal distribution of power, with those in privilege determining how these structures are built and kept in place.

These unequal structures, anchored in a power imbalance that according to Fukuyama (2019) has increased in par with economic growth (particularly, but certainly not only, in industrialized countries), have historically been the focus of struggle for disadvantaged groups from a perspective of class; however, the focal point of that endeavour has shifted in the 21st century to an identity struggle for greater dignity, not only expressed in greater economic but also *social* equality; in other words, groups that have been historically disenfranchised, such as migrants, LGBTQI+, low-income groups or ethnic minorities strive for adequate and wider recognition (ibid). And yet, in this struggle, perhaps as a natural consequence of it, has also resulted in what Appiah (2018) argues against: the *separateness* - the 'us' versus 'them' - that identity politics has led to.

The root problem this research project aimed to tackle can be perhaps best described as 'violence-based inequality'; in using this term, I borrow from Judith Butler's *The Force of Non-Violence* (2020) and from Kwame Anthony Appiah's *Cosmopolitanism* (2007). Butler argues that we live in a world where some lives are more clearly valued than others, and by reasons of 'racism, xenophobia, homophobia and transphobia, misogyny and the systemic disregard for the poor and the dispossessed' (p.28), we fail to identify and empathize with those who are different, and thus neglect to acknowledge someone else's loss and grieve them as we would our own. Complementing this view while offering a distinct perspective, Appiah (2007) presents us with his concept of cosmopolitanism by identifying two strands: the first one is the recognition of our responsibility for every human being and their lives regardless of gender, religion, race or any other identity construct, and the second is to take an interest in the practices and ideas that make those lives meaningful and significant. Appiah (2018) further argues through a series of lectures exploring common threads in identity construction (race, culture, beliefs and nationality), that we are given a position within a social group that comes with certain expectations of behaviour and actions, both done by us and to us, as well as certain characteristics that theoretically answer the question of who we are. He quotes American sociologist Alvin W. Gouldner describing identity as a 'position' assigned to someone by members of their group, a position which comes with certain characteristics that answer the question "Who is he?". Next, "these observed characteristics are…interpreted in terms of a set of culturally prescribed categories: (p.13).

> "In this manner the individual is "pigeonholed"; that is, he is held to be a certain "type" of person, a teacher, Negro, boy, man, or woman. The process by which the individual is classified by others in his group, in terms of the culturally prescribed categories, can be called the assignment of a "social identity." The types or categories to which he has been assigned are his social identities. . .. Corresponding to different social identities are differing sets of expectations, differing configurations of rights and obligations" (Gouldner, in Appiah, 2018, p.13)

The difficulty arises, Appiah later contends, when we become so identified with the constructs of gender, race, faith and culture that we begin to separate from others. He argues that certain universal values (inclusiveness, non-violence, sense of community, peaceful co-existence) are choices rather than inherited legacy, and that such values should be used as a resource to live harmoniously rather than to lock ourselves into a specific, fixed identity connected with a specific social group.

The crucial problem is that - so far - studies in Chile on issues of classroom violence (Morales et al., 2022; Trucco and Inostroza, 2017) and lack of inclusiveness (Gutierrez-Pezo, 2020; Martínez and Rosas, 2022; Castillo-Armijo, 2020) have fundamentally looked at their structural causes: poverty, economic segregation and cultural differences, framed within the dualistic dichotomy of 'us' versus 'them'. However, how these dimensions of violence and exclusion impact human relations, and more specifically classrooms relations, remains largely unexplored. It is here that I believe there is a need for a different perspective. For instance, the concept of nondualism is present in different Asian spiritual traditions, such as Hinduism and different schools of Buddhism. Such concept, originating in the Sanskrit word '*advaita*' (Grimes, 1996; Kats, 2007), presents us with the notion that reality is not composed of separate objects (the "us" and "them"), but a unified whole that cannot be broken down into different truths. Zen Buddhism adds to this by promoting a sense of unity amid the existing diversity that surrounds us (Grimes, 1996), and that in fact, seeing the world from a nondualistic perspective allows us to go beyond binary considerations of reality in our engagement with others (McCagney, 1997). This view of others not as 'others' but as an intrinsic part of ourselves is not only shared by Desmond Tutu (1999) in his description of ubuntu, but also by Nonaka and Tekeuchi (1995), who described this oneness as what Japanese considered true knowledge: "(1) oneness of humanity and nature; (2) oneness of body and mind; and (3) oneness of self and other" (p.37). Thus, different non-Western traditions emphasize the importance of our direct, shared experience rather than one dictated by social constructs that separate and alienate. Othering, oppression and discrimination are part of our social reality, and one that is certainly present in Chile. However, Wang (2013) highlights that while a critical orientation in our praxis is necessary to expose the inequalities and discrimination experienced by marginalized communities, approaching this criticality from a dualistic perspective of 'majority' versus 'minority', or 'self' versus 'other' risks sowing greater discord and division rather than reaching the roots of social violence.

In light of this, I argue that a nonviolent worldview, informed by the Eastern concept of non-self can enhance one's understanding of human nature while challenging the existence of a solid self and Western rationality-based theories on identity construction. I will point out here that while these views are traditionally non-Western, they are not *exclusively* so at this point in time. Holbraad and Pedersen (2017) have also called for "questioning … the universal validity of everything, including such notions as knowledge,

truth, morality, society, culture and history" (p.12) and to question the way anthropological research has historically conceptualized Western assumptions of identity and the self.

Merican (2012) attributes the absence of nondualism and of a spiritual dimension in these Western conceptualizations as the result of centuries of secularization in the global North, and to an interpretation of research as a way to pursue a single, unique, generalizing perspective. Tuhiwai-Smith (2012) goes further and argues that European thought has tended to dehumanize forms of knowledge present in colonized territories and lands, and through this dehumanization, which can be seen throughout history in the imposition of social norms, languages and legal systems that have eradicated indigenous ones, moral assertions of superiority have been justified. De Sousa Santos (2014) further contends that the issue with Western-centric research traditions is that they "provide weak answers to strong questions, the first one of which is: if humanity is one alone, why are there so many different principles concerning human dignity and social justice, all of them presumably unique yet often contradictory?' (p.40). In other words, we must understand the world not from a Western-centric perspective but through different 'languages, points of view, "grammar and scripts" (p.8) as well the perspectives offered by movements of resistance. Not only does de Sousa Santos argues for the need to widen our worldview and epistemological plurality, but also that the problem is not in the principle of universal dignity as much as in the fact that Western-centric thought has positioned itself on a pedestal of superiority for centuries, as argued as well by Said (1978), Merican (2012) and Mignolo (2017), a view which has undermined and ignored both other sources of knowledge and ways of constructing it.

It is from that outlook that I assert non-Western philosophies offers us a point of view distinctly different. To begin with, Buddhist view on identity, for instance, spouses the transformation of the individual through the *shedding of identity aggregates* rather than solidifying them. The Sanskrit word '*svabhāva*', which literally means "own-being" or "own-becoming", is an essential part of Buddhist philosophy and it has come to reflect the concept of intrinsic nature devoid of aggregates (Robinson, 1957). Expanding on this, the key scripture in the Buddhist Mahayana tradition, the Lam Rim Chenmo, describes 'wisdom' not as something deriving from study, but as a quality that arises from continuous reflection leading to the cognizance of lack of an intrinsic self (Tsongkhapa, [1402] 2006), and to understanding the self as a "fictional or conventional entity useful for pragmatic purposes but not ultimately real" (Gowans, 2014, p. 40). So here we have a view of oneself not from the perspective of race, gender or social class but as an intrinsic entity

to which these constructs have been *added.* While it is true that these constructs have historically been used to marginalize, I am arguing, not only in line with Buddhist philosophy but also with Appiah and the proponents of the ontological turn, is that we need to begin to challenge these existing ideas of the self in order to overcome separateness and work towards the type of inclusiveness that Appiah further describes in his cosmopolitanism: the idea that we can co-exist harmoniously through our differences rather than over-identifying with them.

A second dimension where Buddhist philosophy can add a different perspective is on issues of inclusion. It is perhaps in "*Inter-Being*", a book that describes Thich Nhat Hanh's vision of socially engaged Buddhism, that we find the ideal vision of this:

"Aware of the suffering created by fanaticism and intolerance, we are determined not to be idolatrous about or bound to any doctrine, theory, or ideology, even Buddhist ones. We are committed to seeing the Buddhist teachings as a guiding means that help us learn to look deeply and develop our understanding and compassion. They are not doctrines to fight, kill, or die for. We understand that fanaticism in its many forms is the result of perceiving things in a dualistic or discriminative manner. We will train ourselves to look at everything with openness and the insight of interbeing in order to transform dogmatism and violence in ourselves and the world" (Thich Nhat Hanh, 1987, p.37)

Here, then, we have a worldview that advocates for transforming self rather than others, for strengthening inter-dependence rather than individuality and for a type of inclusiveness that understands social differences and that aims at taking action towards a universal unity regardless of class or gender. Although in his lectures Appiah does not refer to yogic or Buddhist texts, his ideas chime with them: he argues that the overidentification with the concept of 'us' separates us and creates conflict with 'them' (a concept also present social psychology – see Turner and Tajfel, 1979), while another Eastern text, the Yoga Sutras, assert that our suffering derives from our identification with external elements or aggregates, and that the remedy lies in our 'disassociation' , or more accurately, non-identification (Iyengar, 1993, p.124). In advocating for a code of conduct that 'educates us towards spiritual poise and peace and under all circumstances' (p.11), Iyengar's commentary on the sutras further argues that, in order to gain knowledge of ourselves and our consciousness, we must engage in non-attachment and renunciation, including (and here is the relevance to this research and the imbrication with over-

identification), non-attachment to fixed views; these views, often rooted in bias or self-interest, prevent us from seeing others in their purity; thus, when the bias is removed we are more able to 'gladly help all, near or far, friend or foe' (ibid, p.17).

2.2 The observed problem in the context of education.

Let us position these ideas about inequality within the field of education. A paper by Goudeau and Grozet (2017), for instance, dissects three studies looking at the impact of social class in classroom inequality, and shows how current educational practices they investigated reproduce the disparities that exist outside of education, thus continuing to build further barriers between social groups; this is particularly relevant when we begin considering the varying degrees of cultural and linguistic capital students bring with them into to a setting in which, as Bourdieu (1991) observes, there are lifelong implications in the level of social participation someone can attain determined by language factors alone, and where learners are subjected to obligatory practices regardless of their cultural and linguistic background (ibid). Finally, Baralt et al., (2020) conclude in their study of millennial classrooms, inequality is intersectional, with one dimension (in this case, social class) affecting others such as gender and race. This is particularly important as 21st-century classrooms have a broader range of diversity with subsequent over-identification due to cultural barriers between groups. The question arises: to what extent is it possible to develop classroom practices that challenge these constructs in today's world? And, more specifically, to what extent is this possible within Chilean higher education classrooms in the 21st century?

The need for inclusive pedagogical practices is particularly relevant today, at a time where issues such as race, religion, immigrant status, sexual orientation, disability and class can also further compound feelings of exclusion, marginalization or eschewed power dynamics (Crenshaw 1989; Crenshaw et al., 2013; Norton, 2013). Although there is a wealth of research available on inclusive pedagogies and social inclusion / exclusion in broader terms, such studies have been mostly carried out through a Western lens within the Global North. Examples of this are Gay's (2010) and Howard's (2018) studies on multi-cultural classrooms in the US and the impact of inter- culturalism in African-American students; Darvin (2015) explores similar issues with immigrants in Canada as do Liddicoat et al., (2003) in Australia, while Lindner et al., (2022) explore these issues within the context of students with special educational needs (SEN). Liddicoat's research goes as far

as suggesting a series of principles that, in the authors' view could enhance language learning in multi-cultural settings (i.e., active construction, making connections, social interactions, reflection and responsibility).

However, not only are these studies guided by earlier research rooted in Western philosophical lens and identity research that in my view solidifies the self by strengthening those constructs Appiah earlier described (see Norton, 1997, 2000, 2013, 2015; Norton and Da Costa, 2018; Norton and Darvin, 2015; Norton and Toohey, 2011) but they do not, as much as their work has done for identity research (especially amongst women and racial minority second-language learners) explore classroom practices that incorporate other schools of thought and in fact remain, as does subsequent identity research, distinctly Eurocentric and secular.

As I have outlined above, the observed problem is one of lack of inclusiveness rooted in social constructs that favour the construction of the self rather than inter-being, as well as social differences brought upon by an over-identification with one's social group. In narrowing this down within the scope of this research, this translates in an absence of pedagogical practices within the classroom setting that can help tackle these issues in Chilean higher education. In subsequent sections, I will expand in these points and provide both a theoretical and practical framework to develop such practices.

2.3 The observed problem in the wider socio-political context

Within the global South, South America presents us with its own unique set of educational challenges. To begin with, the neoliberal economic model in place has accentuated, perpetuated and - according to Harvey (2005) and Brathwaite (2016) - also deepened already acute social inequalities. Secondly, the educational design used in South America, which follows the European tradition of humanistic-scientific instruction followed by a university degree, has been legitimized over the centuries to the point of excluding local (indigenous) forms of knowledge considered 'inferior' (Alcoff, 2007, Aman, 2017, 2019) and of indigenous people feeling disenfranchised. Aman (2017, 2018, 2019) describes, for instance, his experience with indigenous students who had come to believe their own culture was inferior and that being indigenous equated to 'lacking' (2017, p.111).

The ubiquity of indigenous groups within Chilean society, the aforementioned economic, social and educational inequalities impacting performance in higher education (Gaentzsch and Zapata-Roman, 2020) and the historically relevant fact that the educational system and curriculum are both rooted in colonial elements and Western epistemologies to the detriment of other forms of knowledge production (Aman, 2012, 2017, 2019; Mignolo, 2009, 2018; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012;) offered this research study an opportunity to address this educational and cultural inequality from a non-Western, decolonial perspective. This project stems from the belief that there must a recognition of the existing diversities (racial, sexual orientation, gender, linguistic, economic, social and cultural) and that these diversities should translate into epistemological ones.

These choices have a *raison d'etre*. The first one concerns knowledge and the belief, as it has been widely argued by decolonial and post-colonial critical theorists (e.g., Apple, 2011, 2012, 2013; de Sousa Santos, 2001, 2014, 2018; Mignolo, 2002, 2009, 2017; Semali and Kincheloe, 1999; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012) that there is no one single source of knowledge, not one single knowledge pursuit and not one single, linear development of knowledge. For this project, this means that the approach towards the forms of knowledge that was used and that it attempted to create was one rooted in the understanding that we live in world of great diversity where what is needed is inclusiveness rather than separateness, as well as collective inter-being rather than over-identification with social constructs that drive us further apart (Appiah, 2016). Adding to the above, and in defining what has been termed 'the ontological turn' (Viveiros de Castro, 1998, 2014), Heywood (2017) points out that although we might see the world from different perspectives, the world is still the world thus questioning what we tend to call our 'cultural' or 'social' differences. Holbraad and Pedersen (2017) argue that there has been a historical tendency to attempt to encase different traditions in a series of generalizations and framing them within existing theories rather than re-imagining people, things and their relationships in a way that challenges what we know and takes us into the realm of what might be; they turn the question of how we see things into what there is to be seen: not about *seeing different* but seeing *different things* (p.6): in other words, not trying to understand the world based on our preconceived socio-cultural notions, but through an alleged 'common humanity; (Haywood, 2017, p.1) This is an important point, as this project's approach is not only to *understand* the other, but *be part of* a democratic, inclusive collective without an 'otherness'.

The second perspective has to do with our inter-connectedness (Butler, 2020; Nhat Hanh, 1987, hooks, 1992, Iyengar, 1993), a notion that, as I will detail and support further in this thesis, does not belong to any one philosophy or culture, but it has been explored, advocated, cultivated for centuries mostly by communities in every continent as well as Eastern religions and philosophies such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and yoga (Howard, 2018). Finally, the third perspective that grounds this project is the belief in engaged non-violence (Butler, 2020; Howard, 2018; King, 2009; Nhat Hanh, 1987): non-violent communication, non-violent social participation and peaceful activism to challenge inequality through non-violent action. This, I argue, should begin in the classroom and the way teachers develop their practice, and hopefully extends to their educational community and beyond.

2.4 Inequality context in Chile

It is important to situate these wider issues within the historical and social context of its intended loci (in this case, Chile). A former Spanish colony since 1536, social and economic inequality are almost as old as the country itself. Unavoidably, this inequality began the moment Spanish colonists set foot in Chile in a story that is not particularly original when examined against the backdrop of Latin America: evangelization, expropriation of indigenous land with the subsequent placement of their people into servitude and slavery and later, violent attempts at territorial conquest (Boccara, 2005). And so the history of inequality began: Spanish *conquistadors* seeking wealth, fame, glory and honorific titles punitively enslaving natives (despite them being legally considered free people by the Spanish Crown), taking away land previously occupied by indigenous communities and dividing it amongst themselves, and therefore accumulating wealth later bequeathed to their descendants, thus sparking the creation of a white, European elite and a class system that carries social and economic implications which have been perpetuated for centuries to the present day (Larrañaga, 2016; Mellafe, 1959, 1981).

An example that illustrates this is the immigration, beginning in the 18th century, of people coming from the Spanish region of Basque Country as well as France and England. Upon arriving in Chile, they started their own businesses and were, for the most part, very successful. Many of them accumulated enough wealth to enable them to buy land and properties in the emerging cities, thus joining the economic elite. Even today these Basque and foreign names are associated with a sense of upper class and privilege (Collier and

Satter, 1998, Espinoza and McGinn, 2020). This identifying, separating element in the Chilean psyche, which assigns class based on names, is compounded by a view of the class system that is deeply rooted in a racial element. Although in the early years of colonization there was a relatively small number of Spanish colonists compared to those of indigenous people (the historical estimate by Larrañaga for the 1540s is 10,000 to 277,000), 90% of the colonists were men; they fathered children with indigenous women, and those children, in turn, further mixed with the native population. According to Bauer (1975) and Vial (2009), by 1650 Chile had become not only more culturally unified due to the Spanish language and Catholicism, but also more racially and ethnically homogenous. And yet, as Vial (1965) points out, even back then Chileans tended to assign social class based in skin color: as light becomes dark, so does the social class become lower, reflection of a mindset that has perpetuated in time (Nogueira, 2008; Jordana-Contreras, 2021).

Another early factor that reflected this emerging inequality - and which persists until now - is urban socio-economic segregation by geography. In order to solve the issues of vagrancy and banditry, the Spanish government during colonial times established a policy of villages ('*poblados*' in Spanish), where unemployed field workers who roamed the country looking for work and that in their desperation and rebelliousness often resorted to robbing, looting or vandalizing could settle: they were given a small arable lot in rural areas and that way they could be kept under some sort of administrative control (Salazar, 2000). This geographical segregation can still be seen today. By way of example, the city of Santiago's landscape [6]is divided by wealth: richer districts to the East, poorer ones to the West, North and South in a sliding scale of prosperity as one moves further away from the eastern sector. The implications are varied: one of city's most prosperous districts, Vitacura, is home not only to three of the most prominent international schools and more than a dozen elite private schools, but also showcases a per-capita annual household income higher than Singapore's, the US' or the UK's ($86,000 as of 2010, IMF 2010, with a population of 85,000). In contrast, one of the poorest districts in the city, La Pintana, has no international or elite schools and no university campuses, while having an average annual household income of $23,000, and a population of 190,000, 17% of whom live below the poverty line (SINIM, 2020). The example of Santiago illustrates well the socio-economic in Chile.

[6] Santiago is Chile's capital and economic center of the country.

This brings us to how this has affected education. The first records on this date back to the 1560s, when the first Jesuit schools were founded and which catered exclusively to the ruling Spanish class, even though they later provided Bible studies for indigenous children (Espinoza and McGinn, 2020). Although land owners mixed with local women and fathered their children, Larragaña et al. (2017) document how fathers hardly ever recognized their children as such nor sent them ``to school, and instead were put to work the land; yet younger Spanish children did attend these schools for a small fee. This imbalance, according to Cociña et al. (2017) continued for centuries and it was better reflected in the demographics of elected government officials, all of whom as of 1830 were upper/middle class educated descendants of Spanish immigrants.

However, the basis for the current levels of inequality in Chilean society which, though not the highest in Latin America, is the highest amongst the OECD countries (World Bank, 2019) were truly planted during the military government that began in 1973. The period between 1973 and 1989 saw not only a liberalization of the economy with high levels of privatization under the guidance of the Chicago Boys [7] but also the emergence of a business elite that, benefitting from a deregulated (previously state-run) economy, was able to concentrate great amounts of ownership and wealth, as well as consolidate its position of privilege and economic power. A 2017 report by the United Nations reveals that 1% of Chileans hold 33% of the country's wealth, while 27% hold 0.1%, a situation that, though exacerbated now, originates in that historical moment (Cociña et al., 2017; Garate, 2012; Larrañaga, 2016).

This inequality has had a profound impact on education. Historically, Chileans could access education by three means: private wealth, governmental action and beginning in the 19th century, the Catholic church. There were free schools, subsidies on food and school uniforms and laws that made school attendance mandatory (Serrano et al., 2012). Although this access was historically determined by social class, by 1970 the government had achieved what was called 'universal coverage' (Cociña et al., 2017, p.294): the possibility for all children to attend school and free higher education, though in much lower numbers than our current day, as admission requirements were stringent; in fact, per Bernasconi and Rojas (2004) only 7% of those in college age attended university in 1967. Private schools were very few and far between. In the 1980s, however, the military government instituted a country-wide reform that gave ownership and oversight of public

[7] The Chicago Boys were a group of prominent Chilean economist educated at the University of Chicago under Milton Friedman and Arnold Harberger, who had a key role in shaping the economic policies of the military government of the time.

schools to individual districts, and private citizens could own schools as a for-profit endeavour, thus further cementing inequality: richer districts could allocate more resources to their schools, poorer ones had to make do with what they had (Cociña, ibid). Under the rationale of a free-market economy, these public schools found themselves underfunded and private schools began competing against each other for student recruitment, the latter with the advantage of being able to offer brand recognition, greater social homogeneity to people from the elite, or better sports infrastructure and under this free reign, for-profit private universities and other higher education institutions began to proliferate (Bernasconi and Rojas, 2004; Cociña et al., 2017). The book "*Unequal. Origins, changes and challenges to the social gap in Chile*" (Larrañaga et al., 2017) details at length the effect this segmentation had on people's ability to access higher education as universities began charging tuition fees, the financial burden of which landed squarely on the families and logically impacting low-income population the most, as they found themselves financially struggling to send their children to college. Additionally, those who do go to college do so with varying degrees of academic wherewithal and preparedness: a study by Levin (2011) shows that in spite of improvements made since Chile's return to democracy, its own internal assessment of student outcomes revealed deep inequalities when comparing students from rural or poorer schools to those coming from wealthier, more privileged ones. (The same study draws an interesting comparison given the distinctly different models they follow: he looked at outcomes in Chile and Cuba, with the latter surpassing the former by a very large margin). Levin's (2011) analysis of the underlying reasons for this gap reveal six factors at work, three of which specifically highlight the need for attention to teaching practices and the whole educational community. More importantly, Levin (ibid.) also suggests that advancement requires paying attention to teaching practices to support teachers and their efforts to improve them, both of which are very relevant to this project as the participants will be pre-service teachers, who will be co-developing research alongside me.

In addition to the aforementioned considerations (socio-economic and geographic segregation with academic implications), there are three additional constructs that add to the inequality present in Chilean classrooms: the dimensions of gender, race and nationality (i.e., discrimination against darker-skin migrants, like Venezuela and Colombia). Campos-Martinez (2010) argues that these constructs in Chile act as cultural filters to the detriment of these minority groups, which is in alignment with my previous contextualization of inequality. Studies by Oñate-Escobar and Alfaro-Urrutia (2021), Oyarzun et al. (2022), and Salas et al. (2017) provide illustrative examples of in-classroom

discrimination towards racial minorities, women, and people from lower socio-economic background, including migrants, regardless of gender. And here, I contend, the intersection of the social context with the profound political divide as a result of a 17-year dictatorship adds an even deeper dimension to that divide through, as I will argue, an over-identification that exacerbates this socio-cultural-economic split in an already segmented and stratified society. These are the antecedents that inform this project and its aims to co-develop pedagogical practices that can assist in challenging them.

2.5 How do different perspectives fit into this project?

2.5.1 Indigenous perspectives within this research

Let us begin by looking at how non-Western ways of knowing fit within the project. In this first section, in light with the explanation provided on page 17 (see footnote 4, continued on page 18), I will use the word 'indigenous' to refer to local communities native to a specific land, as well as their culture, knowledge and ways of knowing. One element shared by non-Western worldviews is how have been historically viewed in the West from a reductionist perspective of being not really bodies and systems of knowledge but cultural traditions (and for some, even wild and primitive at that) (Ortiz, 2007; Said, 1978; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012). In spite of these condescending views, however, they share other very relevant metaphysical and practical elements that have been historically ignored in Eurocentric, positivist literature; one of them is the element of holistic, peaceful interconnectedness between all people and things; a second one is that their creation of knowledge comes from their direct experience and their relationship with their surroundings; the third is this knowledge, unlike the West, is passed on orally from one generation to the next, and thus a tradition is formed in how knowledge is transmitted (Ortiz, 2007; Macedo, 1999, Mahuika, 2019; Neha et al., 2020; Semali and Kincheloe, 1999; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012). It is worth mentioning, for instance, that the original teachings in Buddhist philosophy were only put down in written form in the 1st century AD, 600 years after they were originally taught, pretty much in the same way that Mapuche writings began to be recorded only in the 18th century (Mapuches are the oldest and largest indigenous group in Chile). Ortiz, who conducted his research in intercultural communication within a Mapuche community in southern Chile, further argues that incorporating elements of indigenous knowledge in the curriculum not only creates a much-needed counter-hegemonic approach but that it also strengthens native students'

sense of meaningfulness when engaging in their educational practices, thus highlighting the need for curricular inclusiveness (Ortiz, 2007). Fassetta and Imperiale (2018) support this view in a think piece that attempts to identify gaps in current indigenous research; their contention is that indigenous people have useful and important knowledge that allows them to manage their natural resources and engage in their own practices for development, but these have been historically and even fairly recently side-lined in social research, which has tended to privileged Eurocentric systems of knowledge creation over those of indigenous communities. Their essay, which dissects available literature on this issue, confirms the fact that Western researchers usually understand these groups and their knowledge by applying *their own* lens, thus missing an opportunity to view the world from their perspective (Fassetta and Imperiale, 2018). I would like to point out that, although the term 'indigenous knowledge' has not been exempt of scrutiny (for a critique of the term and its uses see Horsthemke, 2004), the contention remains that the imposition of Western 'rationality', knowledge and cultural forms have had calamitous consequences in a wide range of human endeavours within indigenous communities, not the least of which has been the historical dismissal and near destruction of many of their traditions, cultural norms and cultural heritage. So whether 'knowledge' is defined as a 'knowledge that' or 'knowledge how' (Horsthemke, 2004, p.35), or whether we place their philosophical framework under that umbrella term or not, the fact remains that their approach to understanding life, nature and relationships, unfitting and incoherent as it is with the Eurocentric linear search for provable 'truths' (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012; Ortiz, 2007; Semali and Kincheloe, 1999) has been largely set aside; yet research such as the aforementioned studies have unearthed the richness and applicability of indigenous knowledge on issues of inter-connectedness, inter-dependency and peaceful co-existence.

2.5.2 A. Eastern philosophies and approaches within this research

Let us now delve into Eastern-based contemplative practices. Such practices, as described by Barbezat et al. (2013) in their book *Contemplative Practices in Higher Education*, seek to cultivate in the learners not only higher self-awareness, but also greater empathy and improved relationships with others and with the world at large, without advocating an ideology or belief system (nor negating them). Studies by Hutcherson et al., (2008) and Pace (2009), for instance, have shown the positive impact of training on and

practice of loving-kindness meditation at the level of social connection and positivity towards others.

Further to this, yoga brings an overlapping dimension into the possible application of these concepts in an educational setting; although yoga is mostly known outside of India through its physical practice ('asana' or postures), the root yogic texts, the Bhagadavita and the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, present us with a series of aphorisms addressing issues of emancipation through knowledge rather than violent activism, the eradication of violence in human relationships and the importance of individual action in collective wellbeing (Iyengar, 1993; Radhakrishnan, 1948).

These ideas of non-violence imbricate with the recent work of Judith Butler, who describes it not in passive terms but as a 'sustained commitment' (2020, p.48) that must be actively pursued and that only becomes sensible in the search for equality; in our modern world, violence can be seen from oppressors towards the oppressed, and from the oppressed towards the oppressor as a retaliatory act of self-defence. And yet, rather than being a merely pacifist act, non-violence is one that must be sustained precisely because it is aimed at stopping violence rather than perpetuating. In turn, Butler's ideas on the value of life correlate with Buddhist philosophy, which views all lives (both human and non-human) as equally valuable and, as Butler (2020) describes, worthy of being grieved.

These principles should be, in my pedagogical vision, an intrinsic part of the classroom ecosystem and they are particularly relevant in the Chilean social context; since the 2006 so called "Penguins Revolution" [8]and right up until October 2019 there were a series of student movements that have demanded educational reforms, such as eliminating school admission tests, universally free college tuition , universally free school transport and the eradication of policies that perpetuate segregation (Bellei et al., 2014). Not only have these movements garnered support from different segments of the population, but they also expanded into a series of further social demands from teachers, feminist movements and the LGBTQ+ community; in fact, in 2006, when the movements started, students were joined by teachers and parents on the streets and in October 2019, media sources reported 1.2 million demonstrating on a single day (Larsson, 2019). However, these demonstrations and movements have been marred by groups of participants that have

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[8] Note by the author: The Penguins Revolution, or March of the Penguins, was the name given by the press to a series of student protests carried out by Chilean high-school students in 2006. The name derives from the colors of the school uniform at public schools in Chile: gray pants, white shirt and navy-blue jacket.

routinely resorted to and justified violent acts, such as barricading the entrance to schools and universities, looting, burning and destroying their own premises as well public property including those that perform a public service, such as pharmacies, commuter buses, subway stations and supermarkets, (Marino, 2006; Muñoz, 2006; Ponce, 2019).

The violent acts I have described above have turn engendered further violence on the part of the government and police forces, who in full riot gear have used aggressive crowd control such as tear gas, rubber (and real) bullets, armoured trucks and engaged in violent and even deadly confrontations with casualties on both sides (Franklin, 2019; Silva and Dominguez, 2019). This is the backdrop against I argue for non-violent solutions, beginning with a non-violent, inclusive communication and approach to classroom practices that can permeate into human relations outside of it, and bring people closer together in harmony, understanding and cooperation in the overcoming of shared social obstacles.

There is the argument that imperialist and colonialist knowledge has been used to create certain false notions that perpetuate its views; drawing on a large number of sources, Tuhiwai-Smith (2012) uses these to establish the way history has been organized under a 'totalizing discourse': one that considers knowledge as fitting into one "coherent whole" (p.32) and as a way to control the narrative of history as long, unified chronology of development. Here we come to an interesting convergence of ideas: the yogic view on knowledge is that *what we know* exerts control over us by being not true knowledge, but deceptions based on perceptions; thus, the aim is to break the chains between the 'seen' (what we know), and the 'seer' (the one who knows). It is this control that influences our behaviour, and logically when the links are snapped, freedom is elevated and the individual is emancipated through true self-knowledge (Iyengar, 1993). Here, then, is a less metaphysical, more practical connection with present day: countries and people who have been colonized have studied this Eurocentric version of history that has put forth *representations* concerning science, religion, philosophy and culture; and they have been subjected to social and educational oppression (Freire, 1960, 1995; Said, 1978).

2.5.3 Criticisms to nonviolence perspectives, and counter-argument

It could be argued that incorporating these perspectives into our pedagogical practice does nothing for removing the structures that create inequality I have described in

the first place. And to that argument, there are two points I want to make: the first is that the application of mindfulness (which is a practice extracted from Buddhism – see Sharf, 2014) or yoga in Western culture have generally been aimed at reducing stress and anxiety, or for general mental and physical well-being. For example, Turner used a blend of both on what he called "dynamic mindfulness', to help young students deal with these conditions (Turner, 2019). Others, such as Berardi (2009) and Stiegler (2010, 2013), have argued that the increased interest of bringing the practice of mindfulness into educational has been an attempted remedy to deal with students having become less attentive in class; yet a third perspective, offered by O'Connell (2015) is that it has become disengaged from its spiritual roots and become more of a programmatic tool (and a lucrative one at that, I might add). What I argue for this in this project, however, is the incorporation and application of the *philosophical* principles of non-Western thought in developing an inclusive, compassionate mindset not only towards our peers but also towards our oppressors.

This brings me to the second point: that these underlying principles of non-violence, inclusiveness and communal harmony, which are not exclusive to Eastern philosophy, not only overlap with local indigenous knowledge, as I have described, but they have also informed and influenced successful peace activism in different parts of the world: the independence of India in 1948, rooted in Gandhi's 'satyagraha' which was anchored in the concept of universal love (Gandhi, 1906[2014], the Singing Revolution in the Baltic republics in the 1980s, and the Peaceful Revolution in Germany that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall.

However, one needs to look no further than the Civil Rights Movement in the late 1960s in the US to find two powerful examples in the voices of Martin Luther King and John Lewis, who set lifelong examples of peaceful non-violent activism rooted in spiritual beliefs (both were ordained ministers). Not only was the movement rooted in civil disobedience and non-violent demonstrations, inspired by both Henry David Thoreau and the Indian independence movement (Losurdo and Elliott, 2015), but more importantly it had , through its actions, an enduring impact by helping push key pieces of legislation that improved and changed dramatically the rights and social participation of African Americans and other racial minorities: the actions of the Freedom Riders in 1961 directly led the Kennedy administration to forbid segregation at bus terminals (Arsenault, 2006); the March on Washington from 1963, attended by 250,000 people, led to the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Dubrin, 2013); this law, which proscribed discrimination

based on race, nationality, color or religion affected not only the African-American and Latino communities, but as late as 2020 was used by the Supreme Court to issue opinions in three cases: Bostock v. Clayton County, Altitude Express, Inc. v. Zarda, and R.G. & G.R. Harris Funeral Homes Inc. v. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which also made it illegal to discriminate on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation[9].

Further to this, the March on Selma and the events of Bloody Sunday forced the Johnson administration to sign the Voting Rights Act of 1965 which made it illegal to prevent Black voters from casting their ballot (Issacharoff et al., 2012) and finally, the Fair Housing Act of 1968, which prohibited discrimination on the sale or renting of property based on race, religion or nationality (GPO GovInfo). [10]The Black Lives Matter movement, by contrast, though successful in helping racial minorities in areas such as sports and entertainment and raising awareness of systemic racism, has not been successful in getting federal legislation approved in areas of further civil liberties and it has sparked criticism from within the Black community itself and civil right leaders for not building consensus: a 2020 article from the New York Times[11] revealed discontent from local communities in regards to the movement, as they felt their actions did not reflect the needs of their groups and that they have not focused enough on women (Lindsey, 2015); they have also been criticized for using tactics that have led to further polarization (including occasional violence) and thus, an ensuing decline in public support (Clayton, 2018, Lilla, 2017) , while others have accused them of using violent approaches to repress academic liberties or silence dissent (Beinart, 2017; McWorther, 2020).

2.5.4 Critical pedagogy within this research.

The third important element this research draws from is critical pedagogy due to its view of education as a practice not only of teaching and learning but one of social justice and democracy (Freire, 1960; Giroux, 2007), both key to this project.

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[9] Information retrieved from a press article released by the Associated Press at
https://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2020/jun/15/justices-rule-lgbt-people-protected-job-discrimina/

[10] Information retrieved at : https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/COMPS-343/pdf/COMPS-343.pdf

[11] Articles retrieved here: https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/28/us/black-lives-matter-protest.html

Social Justice can be defined as sharing power and benefits equitably within a society (Osborn, 2006; Randolph and Johnson, 2015). An important aspect of this research was to look at ways to achieve such fair distribution within a classroom setting by attempting to shift the power balance towards the participants, or to put it more simply, to make sure learners felt valued at different stages of their interactional process, both by fellow learners and by teachers. This is important because inequality present in classrooms has a wide range of repercussions, from poor external perception and stigmatization of learners to lack of access and attainment in education (Garcia and Weiss, 2017; Caturianas et al., 2017). For example, in "*Teaching to Transgress*" (1994), bell hooks tells of her experience as a minority student in classrooms where the balance of power was heavily leaning towards the teachers and lecturers and where learners were taught obedience to existing systems and structures in a way that she perceived helped perpetuate social inequalities present both inside and outside the academic sphere. She further describes her vision of what a socially just classroom would look like: a 'communal place' of collaboration and shared responsibilities sustained by 'collective effort' (p.8) where the learners would be encouraged to develop independent, critical thought.

Empowerment in the context of classroom learning, which is what this study investigates, has a number of other dimensions. To begin with, there is the notion of educating not for accumulating knowledge, but to instil in students an independent spirit of freedom of pursuit (Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994). Following up on an early paper by Shulman et al., (1993), later studies (e.g., Frymier et al., 1996; Houser & Frymier, 2009) established three further dimensions of empowerment: to feel motivated; to feel competent about what one is doing; and to feel that our actions have an impact. Finn and Schrodt (2012) dissected and expanded on this by suggesting that empowerment can be enhanced and augmented through pedagogical practices that promote a deeper understanding between teachers and students, thus achieving greater social justice. One of these practices, for instance, and one that is particularly relevant here, is the way language is used to either perpetuate or disrupt existing power structures, such as the ones we are likely to find in classrooms because of their traditional hierarchical nature; Paulo Freire describes a 'knowledge game' he played with Chilean peasants, who were convinced he 'knew' and they didn't, because he was an educated person, and they weren't. Freire demonstrated, by having them ask him questions about machinery and their means of production, that this assertion was untrue: they knew things he didn't, and vice-versa, but they all used very specific language that was unfamiliar to the other (Freire, 1992). Although highly influential within the realm of critical pedagogy, his work "*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*"

has been criticized by some for the intricate, often obscure language in which it is written, which might seem a contradiction of his aim of education as a means of liberation, a criticism Freire himself addresses in his later work (Freire, 1992). Hence the importance of democratizing the way information, knowledge and language are generated and used so that they can help to break down existing or perceived hierarchies.

CHAPTER 3: PHILOSOPHICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF THE RESEARCH.

In this chapter I will delineate three elements that provide a philosophical underpinning to this research: the knowledge forms that are important for this project, stemming mostly from decolonial perspectives; the philosophy of non-violence and finally the pedagogical position I take as a researcher, grounded on the principles of critical pedagogy and intercultural communication.

3.1 Decolonial perspective on knowledge and knowledge forms

When K.A. Appiah, in answer to an attendee's question about cultural belonging during the lecture I mentioned earlier, suggested to avoid falling victim to the questionable idea that culture actually belongs to specific groups and if that the concept of 'Westerner' were to disappear, it needed not to be replaced with something else but that we should rather learn to relate to people in different ways, respectful of each other's differences without an excess of identification. The lecture host (an English woman), cautiously navigating from question to assertion, said in relation to Western civilization: "But what holds us all together are these things you've sort of praised: liberalism, human rights, rule of law, all those things. That gives us the right to choose, it gives us control over who we are. There are people around the world, particularly in Islamic countries, who don't have that kind of choice. And these things ARE Western" (Appiah, 2016, m.30-36).

This view that Western knowledge and culture are somehow the core of a 'universal knowledge' and yet very much 'remaining the history of the West' has, according to Tuhiwai-Smith (2012, p.66), a very long history. In fact, Smith (ibid.) explains, the colonized cultures and their forms of knowledge were historically repositioned in a way that would allow for the validation of colonial domination and authority by being labeled as 'oriental' or 'outsider' by colonial powers. Thus, it is my

argument that for this project to be true to its claims of inclusiveness it must embrace knowledge and knowledge production from the perspective that both knowledge and culture belong to everyone, and that there are communities, people and places that have been factually silenced and whose voices need to be heard. In line with this, Mitova (2020) defines the decolonization of knowledge as the necessity to undo our way of thinking about knowledge and to reconstruct it founded on a variety of epistemologies rather that those imposed on people, institutions or nations through the process of colonization (Mitova, 2020; Wiredu, 2002). This transformation, which Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1981) describes it as an ongoing process rather than a one-time isolated event, involves the restoration of 'epistemic authority' to the marginalised people and their systems, and for these to reclaim their own voice rather than continuing to exist as 'anthropological objects' (p.195).

Because Eurocentric epistemology has succeeded in creating the idea of universal knowledge, Mignolo (2009) argues against the embedded belief in the universality of knowledge, which is part of the colonial legacy, and instead open the space for other voices, other knowledges and other ways of learning. Grosfoguel (2013) additionally argues that the social theory canon in Western universities as well as those that have adopted the same model – which, as I have noted earlier, was the case in Chile - has become dominated by a few men from five countries: Italy, France, England, Germany and the USA, adding a further element to the self-arrogated intellectual domination: what Grosfoguel (2012) called epistemic racism. Certainly, I am not arguing that every social theorist part of the cannon was either of those things, but the recognition of their work should not come at the cost of the institutional eradication of other forms of knowledge that, especially since the 1980s, have begun to reshape and re-inform other intellectual traditions: feminist social epistemology, Eastern, African, Africana, Latin American and 'Continental' (for a comprehensive list of works by each tradition since 1983 see Mitova, 2020).

Further elaborating on this to position this project within an ontological and epistemological framework, I will use an example from Hamid Dabashi's "*Can non-Europeans think?"* (2015): the book begins with an illustrative phrase found in an article published by Al Jazeera: "There are many important active philosophers today". It then proceeds to give the names of eight Western philosophers (all North American or European) before concluding: "not to mention others working in Brazil, Australia and China" (Dabashi, 2015, p.57) This aptly described encapsulation is striking in that none of

the philosophers from the last three locations seems worthy of having their name mentioned. Mignolo (2009) reminds us that still for much of the Western world we are not only divided in the geo-political concepts of first, second and third world, but that there are implications of this on how each of these divisions is perceived:

> "As we know: the first world has knowledge, the third world has culture; Native Americans have wisdom, Anglo Americans have science" (Mignolo, 2009, p.160)

Of course, the issue here is not the number, quality or contributions of Eurocentric philosophers; as Dabashi elaborates, the question is not how Eurocentric Europeans are, but rather how European thinking has continued to reach a level of universality (not devoid, as he indicates, of a lingering hubris) that has come to the detriment of non-European visions. Which leads us to the question, going back to those posed by Mignolo, of who and when, how and where is knowledge generated?

Although I will expand on this more detail in the following sections, as far as this project is concerned, the main traditions it draws on are Eastern philosophy (long considered in Western circles as no more than a culture- see Merican, 2012 and Mignolo, 2009), and indigenous knowledge, especially on issues of inter-connectedness (both with others and the world around us), harmonious co-existence and ways to learn and transmit knowledge that rely less on the written language and more on oral traditions that have been neglected or ignored throughout these communities' colonial past, such as singing, storytelling or communal rather than individual learning. Furthermore, knowledge is aimed at being created socially, within and outside the classroom environment, as per the ideas of democratic education and participation laid out by Dewey (1937).

Santos et al., (2018) argue there is no global social justice without global cognitive justice as well (p.xix), and as I have stated earlier, a research project with inclusiveness as its main tenet must begin with the recognition of the immensity of our world and with the cultural diversity within it. Santos et al., (ibid) further contend that although there has been a wider recognition of diversity, it has not truly expanded to acknowledging the existing diversity of knowledge systems that 'underlie the practices of different social groups across the globe' (p.xix). It is here that this project aims at furthering a decolonizing research agenda by drawing on knowledge systems historically overlooked within Western epistemology. This epistemological diversity matters, as it is a way to counter what wa Thiong'o (1993) called the 'cultural bomb': the eradication of local knowledges,

environments, languages, heritage, unity and ultimately people themselves (p.3). Furthermore, as I explained earlier, this project arises from a perspective of wanting to give voice to knowledges that in the chosen context have been overpowered, silenced or ignored.

3.2 Non-violence as a philosophical principle

The key element that grounds this research project is non-violence. In particularly, non-violent communication, non-violent action and non-violent social engagement. I want to use this section to provide an overview of non-violence as a philosophical principle through history, connect it with our present day and link it to the practice of socially just education to integrate it to the overall ontological framework of this project.

Although the principles of non-violence have been around for thousands of years (Lynd and Lynd, 1995, Wang, 2013), the first recorded non-violent organizations in the West, according to Losurdo and Elliott (2015) were formed in the early 1800s in the United States, rooted in the principles laid out in the gospels and whose view and effort were directed at non-violent abolitionism; this is important because it illustrates that in the West, non-violence had from its inception a) a spiritual thread and b) was aimed at challenging social injustice. In fact, the first recorded document available on this is an 1812 essay titled "*War inconsistent with the Religion of Jesus Christ*" by David L. Lodge, and 1828 saw the birth of the National Non-Resistance Association, formed to oppose slavery and which aimed for perpetual peace amongst people (though ironically, as Losurdo and Elliott point out, slavery was abolished through the war, the ultimate form of violence).

This early advocacy of non-violence assumed two forms: one advocating armed rebellion as a way of eliminating violence against the oppressed, and which was seen by even the most non-resistant within non-resistance abolitionist movement as the lesser of two evils (Losurdo and Elliott, 2015), and that originating from Henry David Thoreau, who called not for a rebellion rooted in armed conflict but on what he famously called "civil disobedience" (1849). It was in fact this latter, through his writings, that inspired Gandhi as early at 1906 to shape his forming of 'satyagraha[12]', the particular form of nonviolence for which he became famous and which is further rooted in Yamas (Monier-

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[12]

Williams, 1899); the Yamas is the first limb of yoga philosophy, which describes the moral imperatives that should govern a person's existence (Gandhi, 1906), as well as for the remaining of his life; indeed, an essay from Hendrick's (1956) provides a detailed analysis of Gandhi's correspondence describing Thoreau's influence in his own political thought and non-violent stance, although it is acknowledged by Losurdo and Elliott that Thoreau did in fact philosophically settled for the aforementioned lesser of two evils in regards to rebellions by the slaves and by Mexicans during the Mexican War in the 1850s. Gandhi's views on non-violence, influenced as well by his own studies on world religions present us with a series of notions that intersect with some of the perspectives I have introduced here: universal love and non-violence towards all living beings through the practice of 'ahimsa', Sanskrit word for nonviolence as envisioned in Hinduism: causing no injury through word, thought or action (Kirkwood, 1989). We begin to see, then, a common thread of how the spiritual element, regardless of its origin or root belief system, permeated non-violence from its inception: a political action of disobedience rooted in a compassionate mindset that seeks not to exclude or separate.

Butler (2020) argues that through this kind of division, and through xenophobia, homophobia, sexism and other forms of discrimination, each opposing band places more value in the lives of its members than in those of its counterpart; and here I pose the question on how we aim at challenging inequality: through developing harmonious dialogue anchored in the non-violent principles I have described, or by burning churches and public transport? The anger at the oppression I have described in the Chilean context is in my view both justified and understandable; my argument, however, is that violence as a response to violence is unsustainable as it only engenders more violence without ever reaching the foundational problem. Thich Nhat Hanh (1992) describes a teaching by the Buddha to a group of children who had been dismembering crabs for fun: "Our love should encompass every living being on, below, within, outside, and around us" (p.321), as well as a conversation of the Buddha with one of his disciples, encouraging the development of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and non-attachment not only to be able to look at things openly and with equanimity, but also to develop a more loving, kinder mindset that can shape our relationships (Nhat Hanh, 1992). I contend that there is a definite place for this type of practice and mentality within a classroom setting: even though Hongyu Wang, who has conducted extensive research on non-violence in education and taught it extensively, acknowledges the challenges in bringing this idea into teacher education (such as what this project intends), mostly due to an ingrained individualistic and dualistic "us and them" mindset, her research with pre-service teachers in the US also

showed a positive shift in the participants' understanding of non-violence not only from a wide social perspective, but also from a more personal, relational one. Her work, which integrates philosophical elements of Buddhism and yoga as well as more modern views from Gandhi and Dr. King, involved different mindfulness practices, journaling, reading and discussion with 14 teachers in-training, who documented an increased awareness of their community and a greater sense of togetherness, which positively impacted relationships both within the group of participants and between them and their social context (Wang, 2018). She argues that it is commonality that builds connections, while 'differences are something to be overcome or resolved' (p.228).

In the Chilean case, it can be argued that the level of devastation described earlier prompted the government into action and that measures were indeed taken: the 2006 Penguins Revolution pushed the administration at the time to revise educational legislation to make it more inclusive and in fact, lower income families have benefitted from these measures to a degree (Larragaña et al., 2017). Adding to this, the demonstrations of 2019, initiated by a single student to protest a raise in train fares, led to a referendum that will effectively abolish the constitution written during the military government [13](Diaz-Moreno, 2019). However, the cost has been too high in a country in which neighbours had their businesses looted and burned and where people could not go to work nor students go to class, where people lost their lives, and where violence on one side engendered further violence on the other, thus creating a vicious cycle. My argument is that violence is not, as I have tried to exemplify in earlier sections, sustainable, as it does not address the root of the problem in human relations. In her article "*A Nonviolent approach to Social Justice Education*", Wang (2013) connects these issues while analysing critical theory and post-structuralism: while one focuses on the strength of collective identity and the other on the individual's ability to challenge unequal power structures, neither of them is inclusive by nature, and neither focuses on the sense of 'otherness'. Non-violence, on the other hand, focuses on the harmonious co-existence of everyone and everything, and rather than fostering a 'win-lose mentality' it attempts to 'evoke a feeling of inter-connectedness' (Wang, 2013, p.492) Violence does not address our over-identification with our social group, it does not create the conditions for sustained dialogue and enduring change, and it furthers division rather than integration by perpetuating a sense of otherness. There might be change, but the polarization continues. There might be change, but the unequal practices

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[13] The current constitutional process is in its second iteration, with a new constitution being written and the referendum will be held on December 17th, 2023. Source: https://www.chile.gob.cl/blog/hasta-el-29-de-julio-puedes-actualizar-tu-domicilio-electoral#:~:text=Chilenas%20y%20chilenos%20que%20residen,del%20texto%20de%20Nueva%20Constitución.

remain. To quote Martin Luther King from his well-known *"I Have a Dream"* speech: "We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical violence with soul force" (King, 1963). And it is on the ideas of the renunciation of the win-lose mentality and the strengthening of the 'soul force' that this project's ontology is anchored in.

3.3 Pedagogical positioning

The purpose of this section is to delineate the pedagogical principles that anchor this project: how it views pedagogy, the classroom, the relationships within it and what this means in the context of the attempted study. I will explore three main areas: what social justice and how it relates to classroom practices, power relations within a classroom setting and interculturalism. Let us begin by understanding what social justice is:

> "…a process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living that is considered normal in the society in which they live. It ensures that they have greater participation in decision making which affects their lives and access to their fundamental rights (Commission of the European Communities, 2003, p. 9).

In other words, social inclusion seeks to improve the conditions who have been historically excluded or more at risk of being excluded, so they are more able to participate fully in the life of the society or community they belong to. Expanding on this, I want to position this project not from the perspective of engaging in pedagogical practices done *for* the participants but, as Freire (1970) posits, *with* them; in other words, a pedagogy that aims at emancipating rather than performed under a perspective of 'generosity of the oppressor' (ibid, p.44).

This research is firstly about inclusiveness, which by its very nature is about the eradication of power imbalance. In "*The Subject of Power*" (1982), Foucault defines power as a relationship between partners in which there is a set of actions which induce further, subsequent actions following one after the other; is it this set of interconnected actions that determine influence over or submission under another. In other words, power requires action within a relationship and this is the crux of the matter: these relationships, of course

not always intentionally unequal, are also changeable and then it follows that so is the power that pervades them. Empowerment is the process by which power dynamics can change once people are equipped, both socially and motivationally, to take affirmative action in regard to the existing balance of power (Deacon and Parker,1995; Lawson, 2011).

Michael Apple (2013) takes these notions directly into the field of education, and analyses how curricular and instructional practices can be - and have been - used to legitimize certain forms of knowledge, structures and systems that preserve inequalities. In describing his own learning experience as a state teacher in New Jersey, he chronicles how his teacher training was conducted in complete disconnection from the realities of those they were going to teach, which were students from inner-city background dealing with issues of poverty, gender, and social inequality. Apple also notes how this curricular disconnect made him ask "Whose knowledge is this?" "How did it become 'official'"? (2013, p.5). In line with other critical pedagogists, Apple has called for educational practices to be aimed at creating a more critical consciousness on the learners as a way of stop the reinforcement and reproduction of unequal curricular, instructional and evaluative activities (2011, 2012), in line with a pedagogical approach not based on knowledge transfer, but rather on 'creating the possibilities for the production or construction of knowledge' (Freire, [1970] 2001, p.10).

Critics of critical pedagogy and of Freire's work have argued that such pedagogical approach focuses more heavily – for O'Dair (2003), too heavily - on the ideological element of oppressed / oppressor (Hairston, 1992); others, such as Alexander (2018) have questioned the pedagogical element of it and the stronger emphasis in social criticism, while Gabel (2002) finds the absence of focus on people with disabilities problematic. However, what I want to highlight here is the critical pedagogues focus on fostering awareness and the ability to think critically about the learning / teaching experience so inequality can be challenged (Giroux, 2007; hooks, 1994).

While I do agree that critical pedagogy might not initially provide educators with practical guidelines on how to approach the key notion of 'conscientization' or' education as a practice of freedom,' (Freire, 1970, p.15), hooks (1994) describes a series of strategies that can be applied by teachers seeking to bring these ideas into a more practical context when elaborating on what she calls 'engaged pedagogy' (p.13): firstly, by providing ample opportunities for students to openly participate in and express their ideas about the learning experience. Hooks details her experience with one student who wanted

to explore fraternity life, something hooks apparently 'abhorred' (p.16). And yet the student had complete freedom to venture into such exploration and develop his own critical views on it. Secondly, is the notion of the learning experience not as one stemming from knowledge transmission but from critically thinking about such knowledge, how it is transmitted and its origins (ibid), and something hooks herself explored later in "*Teaching Critical Thinking*" (2009) Thirdly, by collectively looking at curricular practices that bring bias and imposition into the classroom and finding ways of transforming them. And finally, through what she calls 'self-actualization' (p.13), a process of holistic self-knowledge in which teachers develop and experience the awareness of a mind/body/spirit union that is brought forth in their relationships with students. These elements, as I have and will continue to expand on throughout this thesis, intersect with several other concepts that anchor this project and give it a *raison d'etre*: rooting pedagogical practices in social justice and democracy within the classroom ecosystem, working collectively in the identification and solution of social problems and doing so under a framework of inclusiveness and non-violence.

This brings me to the last point concerning my pedagogical positioning, which is the practice of intercultural communication; before delving into its relevance to this project, I will attempt to draw a parallel between inter and multiculturalism. The issue of how a person functions within a culturally different social group is prevalent in today's world, where not only classrooms have become multilingual and multicultural, but where issues such as race, religion, immigrant status, sexual orientation and class can also further compound feelings of exclusion, marginalization or eschewed power dynamics (Crenshaw 1989, 2013; Norton, 2013). However, *multi-culturalism*, which originally advocated for a sort of hospitable co-existence stemming from demographical changes in Europe (Aman, 2017) has come under heavy scrutiny and criticism in recent years due to its Eurocentric nature and to the fact that in broader terms seeks to *accommodate* minority groups into a society that is already dominated by a religious, ethnic or national majority (Guidikova, 2014; Ladegaard, 2015; Modood and Meer, 2012)

First recorded between 1979 in Venezuela and later in Europe in 1981, the idea of *interculturalism* has come to represent those elements left out of multi-culturalism, primarily the focus on cross-cultural dialogue and understanding (Meer et al., 2016). It is here that there is room for teachers to take positive action in assisting learners deal with these issues as they come face to face with linguistic, cultural and socio-economic differences, and where, as Aman (2017) argues, it is important to move away from *multi-*

culturalism into *inter-* culturalism: an actual interaction amongst people of diverse origins, cultures, genders, religions and nationalities, and the removal of barriers preventing that interaction.

It is at this point that I would like to establish a connection between interculturalism and some of the elements of contemplative enquiry I mentioned earlier. Ting-Toomey and Dorjee (2019) define 'culture' as *"a complex frame of reference that consists of patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, symbols, and meanings that are shared to varying degrees by interacting members of an identity community"* (p.14). How does the level of interaction required in intercultural communication take place so that it is an inclusive, meaningful negotiation that considers the patterns described in the quote above? Ting-Toomey (2015b) considers the practice of mindfulness the key component in achieving this. The word 'mindfulness' has its root in the Pali[14] word 'sati', meaning 'bare attention', although the meaning has changed and evolved through centuries, and different Buddhist traditions and more modern schools of thought (such as Western psychology) define in slightly different ways; Thich Nhat Hanh defines it as the act of 'remembering to come to back to the present moment' (1997, p.64). One of the propositions of Buddhist psychology is that an individual's attention is always on something, either appropriate (such as being fully focused on a task at hand or listening intently in a conversation) or inappropriate, as when we are mentally inattentive or distracted. Hence, the practice of mindfulness is the act of remembering to bring our full attention and awareness to whatever our experience is at this moment (Nhat Hanh, 1997). Ting-Toomey and Dorjee argue that to be skilled and sensitive within the context of our intercultural exchanges requires 'mindfulness': being attentive and aware of the contrasting or diverging cultural attributes present in the different interlocutors, be it faith, gender, nationality or ethnicity (2019).

Therefore, I argue that the cultivation of intercultural communication plays a key role in developing the kind of collaboration and inclusiveness this projects seeks; in addition to the ideas mentioned above, Halualani (2018) argues that developing the ability to interact interculturally on a long-term basis rather than interactionally can, based on her researched case studies, shift the power balance in relationships that lack that element; while Piller (2012) further contends how the lack of intercultural understanding and our

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[14] Pali is an Indo-Aryan liturgical language, native to the Indian subcontinent. It is the language of what is called the "Pali canon", considered within the Theravada Buddhist tradition to be the most sacred set of Buddhist scriptures (Harvey, 1990).

inability to understand and tackle cultural differences within the context of our interactions can and in fact does reproduce patterns that perpetuate exclusion.

As I have explained in earlier sections, these perspectives are particularly relevant to the context of Chilean higher education, where research has shown evidence of a deep socio-cultural divide with wide repercussions in teaching and curricular practices (Campos-Martinez, 2013, 2016), lack of inclusive practices on the basis of ethnicity (Mora-Olate, 2018), gender (Azua-Rios et al., 2019) and a recent tendency towards violent demonstrations in attempts to challenge existing inequalities, with wide-ranging repercussions: loss of life, loss of public infrastructure, and a widened socio-political divide (Ojeda and Matus, 2019; Rodriguez, 2019; Tejeda, 2020; Waissbluth, 2020).

CHAPTER 4: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter provides an overview of different decolonial perspectives on inclusiveness and nonviolence, beginning with a look at Buddhist approaches, followed by a discussion on how intercultural perspectives contribute to the development of a nonviolent, inclusive educational practice, and finally by an analysis of how critical pedagogy and its dialogical, democratic approach to education affords further opportunities to foster inclusiveness.

4.1 The Buddhist perspective on inclusiveness and inter-connectedness

When describing her influences as a radical pedagogue, bell hooks uses Vietnamese Zen monk Thich Nhat Hanh's ideas on teaching as a cornerstone to her own pedagogical approach, mostly his emphasis on teaching in a way that 'emphasizes a wholeness, a union of mind, body and spirit" (1994, p.14). Nhat Hanh, a peace activist who travelled across the US with Martin Luther King giving peace talks during the Vietnam War, taught Buddhism at Columbia University and later created a movement called 'Engaged Buddhism' (Nhat Hanh, 1987). Although he contends that the idea actually dates back to the origin of Buddhism itself, it became known as such in the 1960s when, in an effort to bring greater social engagement in the middle of the war he founded the Order of Inter-Being ('Tiếp Hiện' in Vietnamese), bound to a set of practices aimed at bringing the monks out of monasteries and engage them with the very real problems Vietnam (and the world, for that matter) was facing in 1966; these practices were called the Fourteen

Mindfulness Trainings (Nhat Hanh, 1987), and were his response to what he saw as fanaticism and intolerance.[15] One of the main features of these trainings is how they address our seeming separateness by arguing that human beings are all interrelated and mutually dependent on each other, thus training practitioners in developing a broadly inclusive mindset, one rooted in understanding rather than a dualistic view bound to a specific "doctrine, theory or ideology" (Nhat Hanh, 1987, p.37). This notion, a core concept of Buddhist thought, overlaps with the very definition of 'yoga', which in Sanskrit means 'to harness', 'join' or 'attach' but which in the 6th century was also defined as "the oneness of one entity with another." (Vasuveda, 2004, p.235). These ideas illustrate how the views of non-separateness, oneness and union pre-date Western ideas regarding inclusiveness and have also, as in the specific aforementioned example, informed them.

Cheng (2018), for instance, elaborates on how Buddhist notions have had a positive impact within the LGBTQ+ community, especially when compared to other mainstream religions: Barnes and Meyer (2012) speak of religion being a source of discriminatory attitudes towards sexual minorities; Viau (2014) of members of the LGBTQ+ community feeling that religious disapproval and condemnation posed danger to their lives, while others point to specific religious writings prohibiting homoeroticism: Karesh and Hurvitz (2006) do so in regards to Judaism, Boisvert (2007) and Kolodny (2007) in regards to Christianity and Hammock (2009) and Kugle and Hunt (2012) concerning Islam. Cheng's study reflects that while there is a precept explicitly forbidding sexual misconduct within Buddhist scriptures, this is targeted at promiscuity and not gender, and his findings revealed an inclusive attitude towards same-sex relationships, and one that through *social* acceptance promotes, as his research shows, *self*-acceptance rather than self-rejection.

Further to this, Nhat Hanh (1992) details how from its very early days, the original communities of Buddhist monastics accepted within their practitioners people considered 'untouchable" by the Hindu casts system, as well as women. This last point is confirmed by Sirimanne (2016), who though conceding that within the Theravada [16] tradition and their scriptures there are 'deep seated patriarchal and even misogynistic elements reflected in the ambivalence towards women in the Pali Canon and bias in the socio-cultural and institutionalized practices that persist to date' (p.1), the teachings of the Buddha himself

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[15] Historians' common view is the Vietnam War was as much an armed conflict as an ideological one, and one that was representative of the harsh dualism of the times between communism and democracy representative of Cold War ideology– see Hastings (2018), Karnow (1983) and Sheehan (1988)).

[16] Note from the author: The Buddhist Theravada tradition, rooted in the Pali canon, can be found mainly in Southeast Asia: Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Sri Lanka, where except for the latter, there was a documented and evident lack of women monastics for centuries (Sirimanne, 2016).

called for the unambiguous acceptance of women as spiritually and intellectually equal to men; furthermore, because Buddhist marriage is one of a secular rather than a sacred nature, roles were of mutual obligation (Dewaraja, 1994). Sponberg (1992) argues that the existence of sexist or discriminatory elements lies not within Buddhist philosophy itself but appeared once Buddhism became institutionalized, and this is my argument as well: it is in these core, inclusive teachings and perspectives that this research project is anchored in, rather than on later interpretations that have become enmeshed with politics or socio-cultural aspects (Gross, 1993; Sirimanne, 2016).

These ideas are consistent with Buddhist philosophy, as explained by Thich Nhat Hanh in his *"Inter-Being"* (1987); in fact, the notion of inclusiveness is contained within the four principles upon which the Order of Inter-Being exists: one is non-attachment to dogmas or existing views, in line with the ontological turn of Viveiros de Castro (1998), and including, I argue, the views we hold regarding identity constructs, ways to relate to one another and ways to approach education; the second is the use of meditation in order to look into our inter-dependence, a notion not only supported by Sirimanne (2016), who contends that the personal transformations achieved through meditation is an effective (in her view, the only truly effective) remedy in dealing with ingrained sexism and other forms of discrimination and achieve knowledge of a true, genderless, classless self; it also in some ways informs the relevant work of Ting-Toomey and Dorjee in "*Communicating Across Cultures*"(2019). In their words: "it (the work) is guided by a practical theme, namely, mindfulness. Trough mindful thinking, experiencing, expressing, relating and meaningfully engaging, individuals can make a qualitative difference in their own lives and the lives of dissimilar others in different cultural terrains" (p. ix, brackets added). The third is to engage in the practice of Buddhist teachings in such way that is helpful and relevant to people in the way that is needed today (Nhat Hanh, 1987); so here is a dimension that brings relevance to the issues we are facing today, mostly in regard to the social division I explained in section 2.3 (see pages 30 to 32). Finally, the use of skilful means to guide people through 'language, images, methods and practices' (ibid, p.74), such as what this project aims at.

As a corollary, I would like to point to two factors that connect to Eastern traditions: one is what Appiah described as our tendency to over-identify with our perceived identity categories: the colour of our skin, our cultural heritage, the languages we speak, our gender or faith (Appiah, 2016). The second, as Stevens et al., (2018) argue from a neuro-scientific perspective, is that this over-identification not only creates further

separateness but inhibits empathy and compassion. This, they further contend, has had devasting historical consequences and they point to the specific example of the cruelty exerted on African Americans all the way up until the 20th century, but that is present in the entirety of the colonial experience through repression, dispossession of the land and other forms of oppression. The argument I make is that, as humans, we have tended to label, classify and identify groups in often one word or a combination of them, and even more so in binary terms such as Black - White, male-female, straight – gay, rich-poor (see Hanafi, 2016; Morgenroth et al., 2020; Schall et al., 2020) and yet ancient and indigenous forms of knowledge, such as the ones I have described in these sections (see 2.5.1 and 2.5.2) show us how this labelling has prevented our inter-connectedness through polarization and the imposition of norms from one people to another, be it for racial, sexual, geographical, linguistic or ethnic reasons. Eastern practices and knowledges advocate for the non-attachment to all of these external elements (skin colour, culture, place of origin, etc.) in order to be free from the social constructs and the separation built around them. It is this freedom, claims Iyengar (1993) in his commentary of the Yoga Sutras, that allows to be in harmony and peace with the world around us.

Although these are relevant to this project, especially because they intersect with other forms of decolonial forms of knowledge in the way we relate to one another, it is also important to note that these are not disciplines rooted in Chilean culture, especially amongst people from rural, indigenous or low-income communities. However, and going back to Appiah's lecture on rethinking identity and culture, I contend that the applications of the principles of Buddhist schools do not require one to be a devout practitioner or follower of these traditions. The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society (in Barbezat and Bush, 2014), for instance, gives a range of alternatives that can help quieten the mind and restrain fluctuations; amongst them are moments devoted to silence, journaling, walking or sitting meditation, dialogue and deep listening, as well as activities that can potentially help develop a shared communal spirit, such as vigils, marches, engagement in communal artistic activities and storytelling all within the range of possibilities and cultural appropriateness within the Chilean context.

4.2 Worldview from other non-Western wisdom traditions

The story of Ladislaus Semali, as told by himself in his book "*What is indigenous knowledge? Voices from the academy*?" (Semali and Kincheloe, 1999) illustrates the

impact of colonialism in the negation of indigenous knowledge and knowledge systems. Semali was born in Tanzania in 1946. He belonged to the Chagga people, spoke Kichagga as a native tongue and grew up in a large peasant family, working the fields and listening to his elders explaining how different plants could be used to treat certain conditions, or telling stories full of symbolism in which nature and animals were protagonists. The stories containing humans were mostly the ones about being colonized and avoiding becoming a slave (Semali and Kincheloe, 1999).

What is most telling about Semali's story, however, is his next chapter as it so adequately captures the realities of other indigenous people around the world and how their language, traditions and belief systems have become subordinate to predominantly Western epistemologies. As he started going to school, he witnessed how his native Kichagga was replaced by English as he studied Greek philosophers, Mark Twain and Dickens, and how the content he had to learn was about "drinking tea in an English garden, taking train rides, sailing in open seas, and walking the streets of town". (p.9). Innocuous as that might sound, the implications had devastating effects: whereas local people relied on the tradition of oral literacy for the transmission of knowledge on issues as diverse as inheritance rights, the laws of the land and cultural norms, and used their own language as a means to convey meaning through riddles, proverbs, tales and songs, the colonial language became the yardstick by which achievement in, intelligence of and ability with Western-based scientific and humanistic knowledge was measured.

As a result of this, Kichagga became a subject taught once a week and speaking the language beyond its allotted time a punishable offence. And over the years, as Semali summons, it was colonial knowledge the one which determined future economic prospects and political possibilities (Semali and Kincheloe, 1999). This is confirmed by Kincheloe who chronicles his field trips in Tennessee along his friend Larry, a small child well-versed in the medicinal uses of different herbs and plants but who, having been raised in an oral tradition of knowledge transmission and unfamiliar with the written language used in modern schools, struggled in that environment and was often labelled as 'unintelligent'. Although these examples are more connected to earthly subjects than to spirituality or philosophy, they speak of a world view that is essential to this project and that links inextricably with the philosophical and ontological principles upon which this research is based, and of how this world view has been neglected or outright denied, just as Eastern philosophy has (Merican, 2012; Said, 1978).

Drawing on sources ranging from personal interviews to scholarly research done in different parts of the world, Mosha (1999) distilled some common elements present in Kenyan indigenous cosmology that are relevant to this current study: the first one is the importance of furthering goodness and harmony through wholesome words, actions and thoughts. Mosha's argument is that people in these communities' view life as a holistic endeavour, in which choices should enhance communal harmony by doing what is morally and ethically right. The second is a belief in the 'forming and reforming of a person's character as fundamental' (p.212) in developing harmony, as this transformation brings out the intrinsic goodness and humanity in the individual.

A third element is the relationship between the individual and society, which is considered a mutually shaping one: society exists in the form it does due to the uniqueness of its members and how they contribute to it, and individuals are in turn defined by their societies. The final feature identified by Mosha (ibid.) is the inter-connectedness and inter-relatedness that exists amongst all living creatures and the world as a whole; it is the enhancement of these conditions that strengthens mutual harmony. It bears reiterating that although Mosha's essay mostly deals with his observations of the Chagga people, he was able to correlate his findings with other indigenous communities across the globe including North America, though not Latin America. This matters because, as Fassetta and Imperiale (2018) remind us, it is essential not to fall into the homogenization of 'indigenous' but to acknowledge the linguistic, spiritual and cultural diversity each community brings while recognizing that the colonial experience has created a common path.

In looking at Latin America specifically, we find examples that intersect with Mosha's: Mamani-Bernabé (2015), for instance, describes the Aymará [17]worldview as one strongly rooted in collective work that supports the community, such as farming and shepherding. Although she alludes to how the pervasive influence of individualism and neoliberalism has begun to creep in, thus somewhat debilitating this sense of communal labour for collective well-being, their ancient systems of mutual support are still practiced. Furthermore, and in addition to the equal, equitable social role given to men and women, their relationship with the Earth is one that Mamani-Bernabé describes as one of 'brother and sisters with nature, who care for her (p.66). Apaza Huanca (2019) tells us of the deep relationship the Aymara have with the Sacred Mother Earth (which they call *Pachamama*), with their families and their communities, and as one in which all living and not-living

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[17] Note from the author: Aymara people share a geographical area comprising northern Chile, Peru and Bolivia (the Andes altiplano).

entities are part of 'all that is' (p. 13). In other words, "nothing in the cosmos is more or less important than anything else" (Campana, 2005, p.30). Another relevant example within the Chilean context is that of the Mapuche people, who are the largest indigenous group in Chile (84%, according to the latest IWGIA report[18]). Ortiz (2007) highlight some of the very same elements in his study amongst Mapuches, who call their body of knowledge 'Kimün' (ibid, p.124). Rather than a traditional Western-based division of subjects, such as languages, science and math, Kimün is an interconnected body of knowledge that brings together the concrete and the metaphysical form a holistic whole. Mapuche's philosophy derives directly from this sense of integrity while their metaphysical worldview stems from more concrete, physical elements, Mapuche scholar Juan Ñanculef (2016) defines the word "Mapu[19]" as an everything that contains both the visible and the invisible, the earth and the skies, where we live, what we produce, In further describing Kimün, Ñanculef points to the fact that the way Mapuche people come to know is through direct observation; knowledge in itself, rather than being created, exists already within the universe and is acquired through constant observation and then passed on through metaphors, as they represent a way of 'replicate with real facts what has been observed" (p.46)[20]. So here we have a way of relating to nature, a way of approaching knowing and knowledge and a way of relating to one another and our social groups that promote a sense of union and oneness rather than separateness, all of which is not only removed from Western epistemologies but also has a distinct place within this project, which seeks to find avenues for inclusiveness.

4.3 Interculturality and inclusiveness

Interculturality and inclusiveness are deeply intertwined with two key ideas underpinning this project: nonviolence and equality in education. In Chilean classroom teachers are faced with very clear intercultural challenges due to migration, indigeneity and diversity on a scale they had not previously encountered.

Research in interculturality in Latin America is, as Aman documents, informed by decolonial scholars such as Dussel (1993), Quijano (1989, 2000) and Mignolo (2002, 2009, 2017); their work highlights that beyond cultural differences between indigenous

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[18] Report available at https://www.iwgia.org/en/chile.html
19 Mapuche is usually translated into Spanish as People of the Land (Mapu: land, Che: people). But as it can be seen here, the meaning of Mapu is far more complex than its simple translation.
[20] In Spanish in the original: "*replicar con hechos reales lo que se ve*" (translation by me)

and non-indigenous people, between the self and the other, there is a *colonial* difference, one anchored in the notions of power and otherness (Aman, 2018). This difference, as Andreotti (2016, p.313) notes, sees the self as "superior, developed, civilized, future oriented, global knowledge producers and rights and aid dispensers", and the Other as "inferior, underdeveloped, uncivilized, traditional, living in the past, and dependent on aid, knowledge, rights, and education handouts" (ibid). Such dichotomy is deeply embedded in current discourses and as Aman (ibid) and Grosfoguel (2011) sustain, it has become normalized and often unquestioned.

This is why current scholarship on interculturality has an important place in this research project; to begin with, as Aman (2018) posits, interculturality represents an effort at facilitating dialogue between people from diverse cultural backgrounds so that their understanding of each other can be broadened. It also provides a framework not only for individuals but also for groups to engage in meaningful dialogue and exchanges (Ting-Toomey and Dorjee, 2019; Jandt, 2017). Culture, or the system and patterns that shape our social behaviours, expectations and habits (Liu et al., 2015), provides a unique way of doing things according to a group's norms and beliefs; learning these patterns, Pourkalhor and Esfandiari (2017) establish, is something we do through actual engagement with a particular group seemingly different from ours. And in a world where societies have become increasingly diverse and multicultural – as it is the case in Chile – classroom diversity has also been impacted. Greater diversity (ethnic, sexual, socio-economic, etc.) in schools and classrooms means learners must acquire the ability to navigate their differences in a sensitive, competent and respectful manner, and this is where ideas rooted interculturality and intercultural communication can further inform this project.

The work of Ting-Toomey and Dorjee (2015, 2017, 2019) is useful here, in that their scholarly efforts are centred around communicating across cultures mindfully rather than mindlessly. In other words, there is a dimension that goes beyond an intellectual understanding of another group's culture and a focus that goes further than mere communicational and intercultural competence. Communicating sensitively must involve choices and decisions made with a deep level of consciousness, one that allows us to approach intercultural exchanges with an open heart, as well as an open mind. This openness is key to challenge the ethnocentrism that tends to dominate inter-group conversations, and I would further argue that engaging in those conversations must be done mindfully. Mindfulness reflects an awareness of what we are experiencing and doing in this very moment; it is not concentration and it's not a mental state, but an energy reflected in this

awareness, this consciousness of what is taking place at this exact moment (Nhat Hanh, 1999). Therefore, in Ting-Toomey and Dorjee's work, engaging in intercultural dialogue requires a precise awareness of ourselves and others; this awareness allows us to observe, experience, act and be attentive without being judgemental.

What I have described here does of course relate to the Chilean context very specifically, but more broadly also to the development of a more globally minded awareness; in *Cosmopolitanism*, Appiah (2007) sustains that, in order to live together peacefully, different groups must develop the skills to engage in dialogue, and imbue that dialogue with an understanding and acceptance of our differences. As Sen (2006) posited, a sense of identity, both individual and collective, can strengthen bonds, prompt people to do things for others in the same community and foster closer relationships. Hence, the process of identity formation excludes just as resolutely as it includes. As Sen asserts: "the adversity of exclusion can be made to go hand in hand with the gifts of inclusion" (p.26).

Sobre-Denton and Bardhan (2013) have further contended that within the disciplines of interculturality and intercultural communication, cosmopolitanism helps us interrogate the divisive boundaries we have created along identity lines in our current globalized scenario which exposes us to a large diversity of lived experiences; in the case of Chile, a significant number of migrants who have moved there in the past 3 years have done so from Venezuela and Haiti, two countries with a different cultural and ethnic landscape to the one found in Chile. A recent report produced by the National Institute of Statistics and the Department of Foreign Affairs lists Venezuelan migrants at 23% of the total foreign population, and Haitians at 14%. Within that, 14.7% are children and adolescents (INE-DEM, 2019). These numbers are important, because as Pavez-Soto et al., (2019), Novaro (2016), Johnson (2015) and Poblete (2018) highlight, unlike other countries in Latin America where schools and classrooms have facilitated cultural assimilation, Chilean schools have historically been exclusive rather than inclusive, placing high value in the "construction of a uniform and homogenous identity" (Poblete, 2018, p.52)

What the numbers above mean in practical terms is that Chilean teachers are increasingly faced with the reality of greater cultural diversity; in that context, it is important to imbue our pedagogical practice with a desire to engage with others through a more empathetic lens, and to encourage students to broaden their appreciation for those they have grown accustomed to see as strangers. The perspectives I have discussed here can have a positive impact not only in our capacity to socialize, but in promoting a mutual

understanding and acceptance of our differences. This approach has an additional note: it helps practitioners move away from the Self and tin the direction of what Sanchez-Flores called "one-in-anotherness" (2010, p.12). In other words, helping students effectively move towards the process of de-Othering. In line with this, and as the *Sage Handbook of Intercultural Competence* (2009, xiii) states, the aim of interculturality is "to better understand others' behaviors to interact effectively and appropriately with others and, ultimately, to become more interculturally competent"

Against this backdrop, intercultural practices such as mindfulness-informed interculturality and developing a cosmopolitan ethical vision, both of which promote the benefits and valuation of difference, rejection to the oppression of the Other and the value of collective work towards peace, can assist greatly in challenging the 'adversity of exclusion' and the power hierarchies that identity-driven divisions generate. Here then there is a clear link between intercultural practices and nonviolence as a practice of inclusion; one in which we begin to consider all lives as equally valuable, and to challenge the very notions that sow division on the basis of cultural differences. As I mentioned in the previous page, and as you will read from participants in chapter 8, learning to navigate these cultural differences is relevant not only to this project but in the Chilean context as teachers are faced with greater ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity.

Insofar as inclusiveness is concerned, the study and practice of interculturality fits well within this project, also because of the value placed in nonverbal communication, which is important to keep in mind as we learn to navigate cultural differences and engage in functions and patterns that allow us to manage our intercultural relationships. Nonverbal communication, as Ting-Toomey and Dorjee (2019) posit, goes beyond simple gestures: it includes silences, attitudes and expressions of emotion that can be used to convey certain ideas. Much of what I have discussed here and will continue to discuss in later chapters concerns the necessary awareness not only of what we say, but what we do in our communicational exchanges, regardless of or cultural background: listen when we need to, smile, use our body to offer comfort. These practices tie in with learning to express ourselves through our differences in order to find our commonalities. Such mindfulness can – and in my view should – be an important component of our intercultural engagement, particularly because different cultures not only use different words but different nonverbal clues.

4.4 Critical pedagogy: theory and aims

Critical pedagogy is rooted on the premise that individuals exist in a world where power and privilege are skewed, and where their freedoms have been subverted. The individual, whether cognizant of it or not, is a social participant that both creates and is created by the social world around them, of which schools and classrooms act as "a cultural terrain that promotes student empowerment and self-transformation" (p.62). Therefore, it follows, this terrain becomes the ground upon which the imbalance of power in these skewed relationships is eradicated and where society begins to be reconstructed through the achievement of social justice. McLaren further argues that such dominance is first exerted through the imposition of social practices, social forms and social structures upon those who are disadvantaged in this relationship, and lacking any form of resistance, these practices, forms and structures become legitimized. This is what have come to know as hegemony (McLaren, ibid), which he describes as 'a prison-house of language and ideas' (p.67), in which a prevailing class exerts intellectual and moral authority over another not through forceful means but rather, by gaining the often-unknowing consent of the oppressed.

This begins with the question of knowledge, what it is and how it is constructed; McLaren (ibid) contends that in the context of schools or other educational institutions knowledge is not neutral but ordered and presented in ways that perpetuate the ideological dominance of those in positions of cultural and economic power and privilege, as well as that of specific genders, classes and races. And it is Giroux (2009) who gives us an insight into what knowledge might look like from non-positivist perspective: not as something that can be measured and that teachers can use to control students; not something that can merely be analysed by numerical or statistical means, but as something that would both instruct and illuminate the oppressed in relation to their culture and their history, as well as prompt them into emancipatory action. McLaren further argues that such dominance is first exerted through the imposition of social practices, social forms and social structures upon those who are disadvantaged in this relationship, and lacking any form of resistance, these practices, forms and structures become legitimized. This is what we have come to know as hegemony (McLaren, 2009), which he describes as 'a prison-house of language and ideas' (p.67), in which a prevailing class exerts intellectual and moral authority over another not through forceful means but rather, by gaining the often-unknowing consent of the oppressed.

An element of this hegemony and reflective of these power structure, which critical pedagogy challenges, is the teacher student-student relationship. Freire (1970) best describes it as one in which the teacher acts as a someone filling a narrative with contents that are both disconnected from the students' reality and meant to be stored and filed in the students' memories; thus, the learner acts as a passive recipient of information, and knowledge as a practice of critical analysis and enquiry is nullified. Puerto Rican scholar Antonia Darder signals to further elements of oppression she witnessed coming from a colonized community, as are racism and material exploitation, both of which are reproduced by our educational system as the oppressed 'answer daily the siren call' of the elites (2012, p,2); in other words, as other critical pedagogues indicate (see Giroux (2009) and McLaren (2009)), through the silent participation to which we have, in seems, no remedy but to acquiesce.

Thus, the aim of critical pedagogy becomes the liberation from education as a practice of cultural hegemony and oppression, which, as Darder (2014) points out has further developed into a neoliberal endeavour focused on 'privatization, deregulation and free-market enterprise' (p.1), something from which Chilean education has certainly not escaped and in fact, as I have previously mentioned, embraced since the 1980s. In citing Freire's influence in her own work and shaping of her philosophical perspectives, Darder signals to what critical pedagogy envisions education to be: a means of democratically shaping society through a process of humanization and the raising of critical consciousness in a struggle that ultimately results in freedom. And although she admits that this freedom might remain unattained as a whole, she does argue that the mere notion of freedom has the potential to 'enliven our imagination, creativity, hope, and commitment to resist the forces of domination and exploitation within education and the larger society' (p.6).

How is this achieved? To begin with, as Darder notes, teacher training is known for minimizing the role of teachers to that of 'technician' (2012, p.92): they learn teaching strategies rooted in outdated ideas of a what classroom environment should be, and become dependent on a curriculum that has already been determined for them, all of which place students and teachers in predefined positions within the learning environment. Freire (1970) also points to a number of roles commonly performed by the teacher within the traditional educational model based on the assumptions on what he called 'banking education' (p.53):

(a) the teacher teaches and the students are taught;

(b) the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;

(c) the teacher thinks and the students are thought about;

(d) the teacher talks and the students listen—meekly;

(e) the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;

(f) the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;

(g) the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;

(h) the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;

(i) the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his own professional authority, which he sets   in opposition to the freedom of the students;

(Freire, 1970, p.53)

It is the works of Antonia Darder (2012, 2014) and bell hooks (1994, 2003, 2008) that we find perhaps the clearest clues on how to bring the principles of transformative education into our classroom practice, though later educators and scholars have made significant contributions by providing an expansion of the groundwork laid by them (see de Oliveira and her work with critical literacy (2014), Baral and his research on English-language curriculum in India (2016) and Safari and Pourhashemi (2012) who looked into the possible uses of critical pedagogy in Iranian bilingual classrooms). Hooks' works are particularly relevant to this research project through what she coined 'engaged pedagogy'. In *Teaching Critical Thinking* (2008), for instance, she distils thirty teaching practices that, she argues, should inform the actions of a critical teacher in building the type of relationships and learning environment conducive to social justice and more importantly, emancipation. In line with Freire's description of banking education, and while describing what she coined 'engaged pedagogy', hooks (p.19) urges teachers to engage in practices such as:

- Making sure students are acquainted with one another
- Participate in collaborative writing and reading exercises
- Not ask students to do things or participate in activities which the teachers themselves are unwilling to do.
- Foster an atmosphere of open, fearless participation even if it comes in the way of resistance or defiance.

- Nurture participation and contributions that go beyond spoken dialogue (understanding that not all students excel at speaking and that some might be better at writing or other ways of communicating)

Perhaps the most relevant of hooks' contributions as far as this project is concerned is her approach to the teacher – student relationship as one in which students and teachers engage in the practice of creating knowledge together, where the teacher's role is not one of leadership and where the classroom becomes instead an environment of cooperation and growth. Adding to this, Darder, just like Freire indicates in his *Pedagogy of Hope* (1994), makes a series of propositions regarding the way language should be used in the classroom in a way that does not reproduce inequality: her work with bicultural students revealed the need to use language in such a way that allows learners to engage with elements of their learning environment that might be foreign or new; beyond the way language is delivered and practiced, for instance through games, songs and stories, she argues for the importance of using language to participate in critical dialogues that permit the examination of 'prevailing social attitudes and biases about language differences' (p.94). This is of particular importance in the context of Chilean education, where language has a strong connotation of social class and it is a documented source of humiliation and discrimination (Yupanqui-Concha et al., 2016). Darder describes what she labels "the language of practice", or a pragmatic way of using language for day-to-day, concrete activities rather than to elaborate in more complex issues; because of the existing cultural hegemony and the way language can be and is used to assert superiority (Bourdieu, 1991), it is important for teachers to embrace the linguistic and cultural diversity while at the same introducing the "language of theory": the language needed to understand and recognize abstruse depictions of the world around us and the social issues that pervade it. It is on this point that there is a strong connection with the aims of this project: for all participants to be able to think about these issues and engage in a critical yet harmonious dialogue to challenge them.

4.5 Critical pedagogy and the Buddhist view: the dualistic versus nondualistic tension

While the intersections between these different theories are addressed in detail in chapter 6, I also want to acknowledge the tensions present when looking at each of these perspectives separately.

Perhaps the most evident of these tensions is in Paulo Freire's binary proposition of oppressed and oppressor clearly present in his earlier work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), something clearly at odds with the Buddhist concept of nondualism; as O'Brien (2019) explains in her commentary of the *Vimalakirti Sutra:*

> "Wisdom is the elimination of egoism and possessiveness. What is the elimination of egoism and possessiveness? It is freedom from dualism. What is freedom from dualism? It is the absence of involvement with either the external or the internal. ... The internal subject and the external object are not perceived dualistically." (p.1)

In other words, from a Buddhist perspective, freedom entails not looking at things as a contrasting pair, but through an understanding of interconnectedness: this is because that is, that is because this is. Freire's positioning, on the other hand, is evidently framed within the domain of critical theory; for instance, as early as 1937 Horkenheimer described not only his own work, but that of other theorists from the Frankfurt School as one of aimed at the emancipation of the oppressed class; in his words, "emancipation from slavery" (1937[1972], p.246). The idea of emancipation, or "liberation", as it is commonly found in Freire's work, permeates and lies at the root of critical social theorists, such as Habermas (1968) and Horkenheimer and Adorno (1947) but also in more recent work by Steinberg and Kincheloe (2010) and Gottardis (2014), who have reconceptualized the original notion of emancipation from exploitation (such as slavery or the exploitation of the proletariat) to one of restoring human agency and rights to marginalized communities.

Nieto et al., (2010, p.42) define oppression as the "overvaluing of some groups (and overvaluing everything associated with those groups) and the undervaluing of some groups (and undervaluing everything associated with those groups)". It is in this dualism, where one groups holds power over another which allows systems of exploitation to exist, that we find the root of oppression. And it is here that we find a key difference in approach: while Buddhist philosophy proposes the transformation of the self – *the inside world* - as a path to emancipation from this oppression, the critical pedagogy Freire proposes seeks to dismantle classroom oppression through decentering power and raising awareness of the *outside world*, a proposition placed within the framings of *us versus them / oppressor versus oppressed / in-group versus out-group* dichotomies.

While Wang (2013) notes that a critical perspective and analysis is necessary to identify oppression and expose injustice, it is my contention – as Wang herself argues - that a binary conceptualization and approach does not unearth the roots of the oppression, and that to overcome violence *against us* requires the kind of radical nonviolent compassion that Thich Nhat Hanh (2015) argues for: an inner transformation rooted in compassion. The question then arises: how do these two views coalesce? This is in itself, however, a dualistic question that cannot be answered in absolute terms.

Buddhist philosophy does not negate the fact that oppression and marginalization exist, nor does it negate atrocities committed against marginalized groups throughout history. What differs is the approach to address such oppression, and how this approach is both worded and framed. To begin with, as I have explained in pages 27 and 28, a core idea in Buddhist thought is the concept of the self as an *illusion*; the very concept of the self creates the notion of an "other" (O'Brien, 2021). And is this duality that lies at the core of exclusion by establishing difference. As Clingan (2021) and Bradshaw (2016) note, this illusory concept of *self* and *other* creates another duality, one of superiority and inferiority, that in Western societies is further fueled by the emphasis placed in the individual and the lack of weight allocated to communitarian life.

For Nhat Hanh (in Doblmeier, 2015), the Buddhist approach to dealing with exclusion lies in developing compassion towards those we have come to see as enemies or oppressors. The reason? Both oppressors and oppressed carry with them the seeds of suffering and delusion. No one is born an oppressor, but they oppress out of ignorance, their own suffering and the impact their environment has in them. He notes:

> "When you are inhabited by the energy of anger, you want to punish, you want to destroy. That is why those who are wise do not want to say anything or do anything while the anger is still in them. So you try to bring peace into yourself first. When you are calm, when you are lucid, you will see that the other person is a victim of confusion, of hate, of violence transmitted by society, by parents, by friends, by the environment. When you are able to see that, your anger is no longer there" (p.1)

It should be noted that Thich Nhat Hanh himself endured 40 years of exile, beginning at the height of the Vietnam War and was only allowed to return to Vietnam under heavy surveillance in 2005. In other words, his views are those of someone who

experienced marginalization in his own life for a prolonged period of time. And yet, as Hjersted (2017) notes, in his understanding of people and situations based on the principle of nonduality, he was able to put forth the concept of radical compassion: oppression at both ends of the spectrum is inherited, and its eradication requires us to understand that those who exert oppression are in turn victims of the same delusions as everyone else. The seeds of hate, delusions and discrimination, passed on by their environment, effectively deprive them of empathy and facilitate the process of causing harm to others.

I have mentioned and will continue to refer to the work of bell hooks (1994, 2003, 2004, 2008); it is in her writings that we find this tension of duality - as explicitly put forth by Freire – and nonduality – in the manner I have described above – navigated most successfully, in my view. Hooks draws on both Freire and Nhat Hanh to formulate a pedagogy that is imbued with love and empathy while aware of existing oppression and aimed at social transformation; it is in her view of the classroom that we find the key intersection between critical pedagogy and the Buddhist approach to oppression: re-humanization through recognition. As bell hooks states:

> "As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another's voices, in recognizing one another's presence." (1994, p.17)

Furthermore, and in spite of the duality found in Freire's writings, influenced by critical theorists and Marxist thought, the concept of love is also prominent in much of his *Pedagogy of Hope* (1992), which he himself describes as a critique to political division and religious sectarianism and where he discusses the importance of rising above political and ideological differences in order to "preserve mutual love" (p.13) and *Pedagogy of the Heart* (1997), in which he argues for "restoring the humanity of those who exploit and the weak" (p.104). This love, as Darder (2011) notes, is not a romanticized, uncritical love but one that acts as a fuel in our commitment as educators precisely to restore that humanity.

In summary, while critical pedagogy and Buddhist philosophy differ in the way they conceptualize the notion of self and hence the other, and that they offer diverging views of the nature of human relations (dualistic versus non-dualistic), they coalesce in their decolonial views, anti-oppressive work and commitment to social justice through the re-humanization of others. It is in these intersections that they make a contribution to this research study. These convergences are explored in detail in chapter 6.

CHAPTER 5: REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

This chapter draws on several empirical research studies on intercultural communication, critical pedagogy and contemplative education; this review is aimed at gaining further insight into how the observations and conclusions made by earlier researchers could inform my study.

5.1 Intercultural perspectives

As I highlighted in the earlier chapter, interculturalism has an important role within this project. First, La Barna (1997) lists out six barriers that prevent intercultural communication: anxiety, assuming similarity instead of difference, ethnocentrism, stereotypes and prejudice, nonverbal misinterpretations, and language (in Jandt, 2014, p.109). In looking over the theoretical framework I have provided, we can see that all these barriers are either present or can potentially arise within the context I have chosen to conduct research in. Given the above and because of the current lack of empirical studies that address interculturalism within higher education in Chile as of this writing, this section explores the alternatives and possibilities that intercultural studies present us by looking at two strands which I explain below.

In analysing research on the topic of interculturality, it is important to first make a distinction between interculturality and its Spanish translation, *interculturalidad,* as the latter has taken on a somewhat different connotation which is of relevance for this project. Geographically, as Aman (2015) points out, the term *interculturality* stems from the shifting demographics in Europe, where it has become a dominating element in current research and debate and has been described as 'a linguistic characteristic of union' (p.1). However, in intercultural research within Latin America, in addition to being the translation of an English term, it has come to represent the indigenous peoples' endeavor towards decolonization and it is more widely represented in current literature by its Spanish translation (Aman, 2015, 2017). Further to this, Gutierrez-Pezo (2020) points to the fact that when it comes to interculturality in Latin America we need not only to acknowledge diversity but also the colonial and racial structures that have historically subordinated indigenous people and those with African ancestry.

In fact, most intercultural studies in Latin America have attempted to integrate indigenous knowledge into the curriculum and create a deeper consciousness in regard to inclusiveness (Aman, 2019; Gutierrez-Pezo, 2020; Williamson, 2008). In Chile in particular, where there has been a documented effort from different governments since the 1990s to address issues of interculturality from the perspective described earlier by Aman, focusing on schools with over 20% of indigenous students (Gutierrez-Pezo, 2020). She further describes how these efforts have been expanded into higher education and social groups, while also acknowledging that as of 2019 most of these efforts have been limited to adding elements of indigenous culture into the school or university curriculum without really addressing the ethnocentrism present in Chilean education, and admittedly, those efforts to introduce curricular changes have not been successful. This failure could be partly attributed to the fact, as Gutierrez-Pezo (ibid) contends, that such changes have not really been aimed at *decolonizing* the curriculum but rather to bridge the achievement and access gap between indigenous and non-indigenous groups (in other words, a preservation of the existing neoliberal model) and to mitigate the long ongoing tension between indigenous communities and the government. There has been some success in the implementation of bilingual programs at elementary schools, where three specific languages are being taught to students from 1st to 4th grade: Mapuzungun (the Mapuche and Huilliche language from southern Chile), Aymara in the northern regions, and Rapa Nui in Easter Island (Nuñez, 2017). Once again is worth pointing out that these efforts have not translated into higher education.

While this perspective is indeed key to this project, Ting-Toomey and Dorjee (2019) provide us with what I find to be a more intersectional definition that crosses geographical boundaries and it is not limited to a specific location or group. In this definition, interculturality is "the symbolic exchange[21] process whereby individuals from two or more different cultural communities attempt to negotiate shared meanings in an interactive situation and in a larger sociocultural-macro environment" (p.22). The authors expand on this by exploring issues of identity construction and negotiation, developing intergroup communication rooted in mindfulness and using the increased intercultural understanding in conflict resolution (ibid). So, while I believe it is key to approach interculturality from a decolonial perspective of emancipation of the indigenous communities, it also within the nature of this research to embrace it from a wider perspective that expands beyond this, especially considering the existing challenges

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[21] They further refer to the idea of 'symbolic exchange' as the use of verbal or non-verbal cues between individuals in order to convey and understand meaning (ibid).

present in Chile, and which I have described earlier: social segmentation, sexual and ethnic discrimination, and educational segregation.

A study by Nuñez (2017) provides us with some historical background on how some Chilean universities have sought to tackle the issue of interculturality within their elementary teacher training programs by taking actions that have met with different degrees of success and longevity, beginning in 2008. For instance, the Universidad Católica de Temuco offers a degree called "Elementary Intercultural Pedagogy[22] in the Mapuche Context", and previously experimented by offering a program titled "Pedagogical Experience in Intercultural Approaches" between 1998 and 2007, geared towards increasing sociocultural Mapuche knowledge amongst graduate students in Education. The intercultural content was integrated into graduate courses, and although the number of students enrolled in the different classes varied over the years, the enrollment figures showed an increase not only on the total numbers of students but more importantly in the number of indigenous students enlisted, which increased from about 5 to more than 20 - although the exact figures vary depending on the course offered (Duran et al., 2008). The program did not continue partly due to lack of funding (something the authors highlight in their analysis and recommendations) as well as the unfeasibility of integrating this content into the mainstream curriculum offered by the university.

There are other higher education institutions that have offered or currently offer a variety of programs with some element of interculturality added to them, some aimed at graduate students (including a doctoral program on Educational Sciences at the University of Santiago) and others to the general public; some have added specific classes, such as intercultural / multicultural seminars, public policies regarding indigenous people and colonial / decolonial thought (ibid). However, as Nuñez points out, these programs and classes have been a response from and have originated within academic institutions themselves to redress the historical segregation indigenous people have experienced, and though they are in fact an attempt at redressing wrongs, their 'epistemic substance has a Western trademark' (p.85),[23] and thus they fail to fully integrate indigenous visions and knowledge systems (Nuñez, 2017). Furthermore, they have all focused exclusively on Mapuche people and have neglected other indigenous communities, such as Atacameños,

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[22] In Chile the word 'pedagogía'' is used to name all education programs offered at undergraduate levels. Thus, Elementary Education is "Pedagogía en Educación Básica".

[23]In Spanish in the original: *'el sustento epistemológico es de impronta occidental'* (translated by me)

Aymarás and Rapa-Nuis, as well as migrant communities or other minority groups, thus also falling short in their efforts towards inclusiveness.

Burman (2016) offers a somewhat similar example from his experience in Bolivia, though with different results. While conducting research within an Aymara community there, he was able to talk to a number of indigenous activists who remained deeply sceptical of Evo Morales'[24] policies in regard to decolonization and interculturality, seeing them as disguised perpetuation of the colonial mode of knowledge production that has existed in Bolivia. Although the Bolivian government did in fact found indigenous universities (something that has not happened in Chile) and introduced reforms into the national educational system, many activists distrustful of these policies, engaged in 'epistemic and ontological disobedience' (ibid, p.20): they opened their own spaces for knowledge creation, such as indigenous universities that function outside the national framework, as well as community sessions and seminars where indigenous people, including intellectuals, are invited to guide debates and deliberations regarding ways to preserve their knowledge and therefore, their social experience. These acts of disobedience are guided, according to Burman, by a defiance to three elements that in his view have become an intrinsic part of Bolivia's intellectual colonization:

> "…the subjugation of subjectivities ("Be who we want you to be!"); epistemic domination ("Know what we want you to know and in the way we want you to know; create the kind of knowledge we want you to and in the way we want you to!"); and ontological domination ("Live in the one and only world we recognize as real!").

(Burman, 2016, p. 21)

Although the creation an autonomous indigenous university is beyond the scope of this project, what Burman's research offers us is not only the perspective that there is a definite space for a historically marginalized community to have and even create their own space of social participation and knowledge creation, but also a view, in looking at the fundamentals of this defiance, that the generation of knowledge and the life experience that comes from it must be rooted outside the boundaries of the culturally hegemonic colonial models. There are certainly efforts we can learn from, such as those made in Canada and

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[24] Evo Morales, a former farmer and an Aymara person himself, was the president of Bolivia from 2006 to 2019.

Aotearoa New Zealand; for instance, having observed not only the absence of aboriginal students in higher education science programs in Canada but also how the existing curricula was heavily removed from the indigenous way of knowledge, Bartlett et al., (2012) embarked upon a project to reverse this scenario; they did so by creating an undergraduate science program they dubbed Integrative Science, rooted in Marshall's earlier notion of "Two-eyed seeing": "To see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing, and to see from the other eye with the strengths of Western ways of knowing, and to use both of these eyes together" (ibid, p. 335). In other words, it combined elements of mainstream science and indigenous knowledge systems into a series of compulsory courses, and although the course was mostly aimed at Mi'kmaw aboriginal students, it remained open to anyone wishing to enrol or take some of the classes at different stages. The program successfully graduated 27 Mi'kmaw students, many of whom went on to assume key academic and leadership position within their communities. Their findings translated into eight lessons distilled from their experience, some of which converge with the perspectives I have presented thus far regarding inclusiveness, inter-dependency and decolonization of knowledge:

1. Acknowledge that we need each other and must engage in a co-learning journey
2. Be guided by Two-Eyed Seeing
3. View "science" in an inclusive way
4. Do things (rather than "just talk") in a creative, grow forward way
5. Become able to put our values and actions and knowledges in front of us, like an object, for examination and discussion
6. Use visuals
7. Weave back and forth between our worldviews
8. Develop an advisory council of willing, knowledgeable stakeholders, drawing upon individuals both from with- in the educational institution(s) and within Aboriginal communities

(Bartlett et al., 2012, p.6)

In Aotearoa New Zealand, government efforts in relation to the local aboriginal population have translated into the creation of the Te Kākui Amokura, or "University New Zealand Committee on Maori", which aims at advancing access, achievement, job prospects and scholarship amongst Maori higher education students. A report by Education Counts, a research organization in New Zealand, details an increase in enrolment,

graduation and scholarship output by Maori students, which has raised significantly since 2010.[25] Salahshour (2020) points to four key guiding principles that are intended to ensure those from diverse origins are not only acknowledged but also involved within the national curriculum. Although these actions and statistical outcomes are positive, it is perhaps in the shortcomings revealed in recent research that lessons can also be found; for instance, Salahshour (ibid) also indicates that in spite of being immersed in a *multi*-cultural reality with not only indigenous communities but also immigrants from non-European countries, New Zealand pursues a de facto *bi*-cultural integrational policy that addresses the relationship between Maori and mostly European-derived people (a situation not unlike Chile, as I described earlier).This, she indicates, translates into the educational context as well through mostly bi-cultural curricular practices. Furthermore, she notes that the aforementioned guiding principles focused primarily in the bicultural element thus leaving out members of other minorities.

The examples I have presented here provide this research project with valuable insight to learn from, beginning with the knowledge that the challenges to intercultural communication and education have unique elements in Latin American in general and in Chile in particular; this is followed by the need to approach interculturality not from a purely bi-cultural perspective but from one that embraces the new realities being faced by Chilean society in terms of migration, indigeneity and social changes, and finally with the understanding of how different approaches to knowledge production fit within this project as a whole.

5.2 Critical pedagogy and its practicalities

Although critical pedagogy literature provides us with some examples of what a critical classroom should look like and the type of relationship that should exist between educators and learners (Freire, 1970, 1992; Giroux, 2020), there is a commonly agreed-upon notion that what it brings abundantly in theory, it tends to lack in empiricism. While acknowledging this, there have attempts to bridge the gap between theory and practice and although none of the studies presented here are recent, they do provide some helpful insight into possible applications of critical pedagogy. For example, Sadeghi (2008) brought socially taboo topics for classroom discussions in Iran and used the students' own

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[25] Information and figures available at :
    a.   https://www.universitiesnz.ac.nz/sector-research-issues-facts-and-stats/building-māori-and-pasifika-success/building-māori-success
    b.   https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/tertiary-participation

resources for knowledge creation rather than standard textbooks; Huang (2011) explored critical pedagogy by focusing on journaling and analyzing reading materials in Taiwan, and Schoorman and Zainuddin (2008) sought to implement critical pedagogy in an effort to produce curricular changes in a family literacy program in Guatemala. Having noted this, however, it is in the works of bell hooks that one finds perhaps the most empirical approach to critical pedagogy as described in "*Teaching to Transgress*" (1994)," *Teaching Community*" (2003) and "*Teaching Critical Thinking*" (2008), influential texts that address issues of teacher well-being, inclusive behaviour and instructional practices.

An example of this is hooks' approach to assessment and grading by having students self-evaluate and combining the result of that assessment with the teacher's own; although she acknowledges the challenges of teaching learners to embark on this process in a way that is both rigorous and critical, she also recognizes an increased awareness on the learners on what remained to be done in order for them to achieve their required level of success (hooks, 2008). Furthermore, she provides helpful insights on the way she dealt with students who came from disadvantaged backgrounds or who were prone to self-sabotage despite their inherent abilities through building personal relationships approached from the perspective of empowerment (ibid). A second example is the way she views and focuses on critical thinking as an essential part of the classroom experience: a democratic process in which learners are openly called to uncover the 'underlying truths' (hooks, 2008 p.18): what lies beneath the surface of their content of study rather than the superficial, more visible elements. She describes her own experience and how she herself is an active participant of the critical thinking process along with everyone else rather than simply a facilitator, trying to 'lead by example' (p.18).

Parkhouse's research (2018) on K-12 students brings also concrete, empirical elements not only to teachers' attitudes when bringing critical pedagogy into the classrooms, but also to the learners themselves. Her findings shed some further light on the challenges and possibilities for this pedagogical approach. While doing a study on 11th graders, her discoveries revealed that, although by the end of the study learners had demonstrated awareness of social issues within US history, and were certainly willing to criticize them, their consciousness was also imbued with and affected by elements of the American social psyche: neo-colonialism, capitalism and sexism. She argued that - in light of the contradictory responses for students, influenced as they were by social ideologies and perspectives - for pedagogically critical approach to bring greater emancipation, content teaching should be accompanied by indirect yet skilful ways to teach about the

issues that continue to weigh on social groups, such as civil right violations and social structures that oppress women, immigrants and racial minorities. Within the Chilean context, I would add, based on the evidence I have presented thus far, classroom practices on issues of assessment (skewed towards the written language), curriculum (still based in a Eurocentric cultural hegemony) and behaviour (teacher-centred classrooms)

Walker (2018) also brings an empirical perspective by looking into the potential of critical pedagogy within the realm of storytelling. Informed by the works of Ira Shor[26], his research project consisted of working with young adults in Nepal to create a participatory video: collaborative movie making as a way of operationalizing conscientization anchored in a participatory action research design that also incorporated personal narratives. Walker (ibid.) delivered a purposedly-designed course, in which he personally trained critical educators in the use of technology to create digital stories; these educators, in turn, trained their students in creating dialogical narratives through film, followed by interviews in which they were asked to reflect on their level of conscientization. Although a drawback of the study is that it did not aim at challenging the specific social context present in Nepal (by Walker's own admission his main objective was to elaborate a universal praxis that was not context-dependent), I have chosen to incorporate his research in this chapter because of his efforts to transfer the theoretical elements of critical pedagogy into a praxis rooted in those theories. Within Latin America, another study that attempted to bring a practical perspective within critical pedagogy was Nieto-Valdivieso's (2011), who combined the use of science-fiction stories and critical pedagogy principles. His experience in Colombian universities revealed first what he perceived to be a lack of commitment on learners and teacher alike to the practice of critical pedagogy, and second that the way texts were being taught prevented students from thinking critically about their content, as they were fully decontextualized. Thus, he set out to use stories by sci-writers known by their social commentary, such as J.G. Ballard and Ursula K. Le Guin, in order to train high-school students in the process if critical thinking and to help them identify similarities in their context, such as discrimination, teenage identity struggle and social structures that perpetuated domination (Nieto-Valdivieso, ibid)

Finally, Apple (1993, 2013, 2018), while not opposing neither a centralized curriculum nor testing in themselves, does argue for curricular and testing practices that

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[26] Ira Shor is an American scholar who works at the Graduate Center at CUNY; along with Paulo Freire he co-wrote Pedagogy of Liberation and has written extensively on critical pedagogy. Bio retrieved at: https://www.gc.cuny.edu/Page-Elements/Academics-Research-Centers-Initiatives/Doctoral-Programs/English/Faculty-by-Field/Ira-Shor

remove elements placed there as a way of perpetuating the then existing social order and the profits of the textbook market. On the first point, he gives the examples of the continued use of the expression "The Dark Ages" rather than using what in his consideration would be a more historically precise and certainly less racist term such as "the ages of African and Asian ascendancy' (1993, p.224), as well as the one common practice used to describe Rosa Parks as someone who just too tired to go to the back of the bus, rather than mentioning the fact that she was a trained civil-disobedience activist (ibid). Ms. Parks, often called "the first lady of civil rights", was an African-American civil-rights activist, was arrested in 1955 for refusing to move to the back section of the racially segregated bus when it had become too crowded and the driver asked her to vacate her rightful seat to white passengers. Her refusal to move led to her arrest, fingerprinting and prosecution, although her case was later decided favourably by a US District Court. [27] According to Apple, however, what is rarely mentioned is that she received training in organized civil disobedience in high school. Although Apple's contribution moves away from classroom practice into the more structural elements within the educational system that historically perpetuated social inequality, such as assessment and curriculum, his views on these two areas are helpful for this study, especially considering, as I mentioned earlier, that the existing structures in the Chilean system are not unlike the ones he describes in the United States.

It is interesting to note that all but one of the studies discussed above were carried in the Global North and none of them in Chile, where the absence of empirical research on the applications of critical pedagogy is evident; the Universidad de Humanismo Cristiano (Chile) issues the Paulo Freire Critical Pedagogy Journal (*Revista de Pedagogia Critica Paulo Freire),* but the most recent empirical article is from a group of Mexican researchers who were able to dissect a set of good teaching practices during the Covid-19 pandemic based on data collected in Mexican schools. It is here that, I believe, there is a definite space for bringing an empirical element of critical pedagogy into Chilean classroom, which in my view is currently missing.

5.3 Contemplative practices and non-violence in education

The incorporation of Eastern-influenced practices of contemplation rooted in non-violence in classrooms is not new. In a paper focusing on two specific contemplative practices,

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[27] More information at: https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/rosa-parks

namely meditation and introspection, Barbezat and Bush (2013), were able to document areas in which meditation had a positive impact, offering "increased concentration and attention, increased sense of physical and mental well-being, increased sense of connection and loving-kindness, greater understanding of course materials and increased creativity" (p.23). These effects can also be found in a 2011 study by Wadlinger and Isaacowitz, which showed evidence of students responding positively to emotionally challenging situations; having established a link between attentional dysfunction and negative emotions, their study sought to propose a model aimed at training an individual's attention in order to achieve greater emotional regulation[28]; such model, though interdisciplinary in its concept, highlights the effectiveness of meditative practices in improving emotional health; their research incorporated two kinds of meditation: concentration, in which an individual's attention is on a specific object (such as one's breath) and insight, which aims at developing and increasing awareness without a specific focus. Within the latter, one of the researchers' focal points was loving-kindness meditation, which they described as having enhanced the degree of social connection amongst individuals as well as the manifestation of positive emotions through daily practice. (Wadlinger and Isaacowitz, 2011).

A study by Helliwell and Putnam (2004) also point to an element that intersects with this project on an important point, also highlighted by Wang (2018): the tendency in Western students to isolate as the need for inter-connectedness becomes more necessary to tackle increasingly complex social issues. The Heiliwell and Putnam study points to a need for augmented collaboration through the cultivation of loving-kindness and regular meditation, highlighting research results conducted by the University of Wisconsin on the impact of long-term meditation in the development of a more loving, compassionate attitude (Helliwell and Putnam, 2004)

While scrutinizing the impact of introspection, which they defined as '…the careful examination by students of their internal processes, thoughts and feelings in order to gain deeper insight into themselves and the material of the course' (p.32), Barbezat and Bush (2013) also point to the fact that the uses of this practice, which is an inherent part of several religious and spiritual practices, declined as theories were produced that moved from a speculative nature to a more scientific one. And although they also admit that deep introspection requires lengthy and focused training - for learners to develop the necessary skill in developing and accessing insight, as well as the ability on the listener to skilfully

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[28] Wadlinger and Isaacowitz define emotional regulation as" maintaining desirable emotional states and terminating undesirable emotional states" (2011, p.3)

discern such insights from 'embellishment' (p.38) - they also highlight the importance of introspection in developing greater self-awareness of their inner states so they can achieve a more constant, steady state of well-being.

Bolliger and Wang (2013) provide us with two concrete examples from different contexts in the Unites States, which show how some of the philosophical elements that inform contemplative enquiry have been used in building non-violent learning environments. Bolliger, a pre-kindergarten [29]teacher who has been a yoga practitioner for almost two decades, wanted to bring these notions into her classroom in order to help learners curb aggression and reduce tantrums; through by first developing a soothing, calm demeanour herself and then by integrating simple yoga poses, establishing rest time, using gentle lighting, soft music and encouraging learners to communicate in positive terms with each other, she states that her students have shown fewer outbursts and a friendlier, more peaceful behaviour as their ability to act calmly has increased; Wang, on the other hand, teaches in higher education and has reported success in improving her students' understanding of and commitment to social justice by first integrating a series of contemplative practices (active walking meditation, quiet breathing exercises, and sitting meditation) to other activities, such as participating in social investigation projects and fostering non-violent relationships with non-human beings, such as nature.

Wang (2019) has also suggested ways in which to stimulate inter-connectedness by taking an experiential approach within the classroom: having learners write autobiographical accounts of their relationships, using different forms of literary expression and, more importantly, projects that engage learners with each other and the larger community. Although she acknowledges in a 2013 article that self-reflection can lead to individualizing the communal experience, I suggest that, in line with some of my previous arguments, this practice of self-enquiry has an impact not only in the individual but also in their ability to related to others within their social group more harmoniously. I do not argue here that self-enquiry alone can challenge the structural problems that create anxiety and stress in the first place, but I contend that self-enquiry in the forms I have described here and supported by the studies I have referenced here do have the potential to equip the individual with greater emotional and behavioural balance that can translate into enhanced relationships and greater social harmony. Wang herself in her 2013 study with pre-service teachers documents a change in perspective through the implementation of

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[29] In the North-American school system, pre-kindergarten is for children age 4 and 5.

these practices: whereas her students defined justice as 'an eye for an eye" at the beginning of her research, or and "us versus them" mentality, by the end of the study this had morphed into a moral concern for those who had been marginalized. Incorporating elements of indigenous worldview of inter-connectedness as well as readings from Desmond Tutu's book "No Future Without Forgiveness" and Gandhi's early writings on non-violence, her research focused on the implementation of non-violent approaches to shift relational dynamics through meditation, critical reflection, role-play to find alternatives to solving conflict, focusing on the needs of others while engaged in dialogue, negotiating needs without aggression and writing up agreements that could lead to more harmonious co-existence as a community; because violence, she argues, is fundamentally the collapse of human relations ,to successfully challenge social injustice it is necessary to first establish positive relations in order to then 'dissect the norm of violence and carve out compassionate understandings and commitments' (2013, p.495). And doing that, I argue, begins with the inner work of self-enquiry.

Wang's extensive research on non-violence is particularly relevant to this project, as she has focused on teacher education and the classroom experience. Although her use of psychoanalysis is beyond the scope of this research, she conducted studies linking Jungian theories with Gandhi's ideas of heart-unity [30](Wang, 2019), a concept that bears relevance with this research, as I have described in the theoretical framework, due to its roots on inclusiveness and communal dialogue for conflict resolution. What is also applicable here is the idea that addressing individual elements of the psyche can assist in nurturing harmonious relationships. As she describes, and I have argued thus far: "Focusing on the integrative power of the psyche […] also term[ed] 'the transcendent function' and of nonviolence […] we can heal the wounds of psychic and social violence while simultaneously spreading the positive energy of 'heart unity'" (ibid, p.379).

Finally, and further to this, Lauricella (2019) dissected a series of 'best practices' while teaching a undergraduate curse on non-violent communication in Canada. With a background in women studies, yoga and mindfulness practice she was asked to teach a course on conflict resolution covering the origins, results and possible approaches to resolve social problems. Combining a series of readings rooted in non-violent perspectives

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[30] Heart-unity is a key concept in Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence; it is achieved through wishing and fulfilling unity with others in spite of and because of our differences in gender, religion, worldview, wealth, etc. This idea stems from the belief that as long as there is real need, any and all problems can be solved if all parties involved so desire it. Information retrieved at: https://mettacenter.org/definitions/gloss-concepts/heart-unity/

with live discussion aimed at fostering dialogue and personal interaction, the semester-long course provided a decalogue of practices:

1. Ensure that issues associated with women and conflict are addressed.
2. Address issues associated with people of color and conflict.
3. Address historical events and figures
4. Include religious and spiritual diversity.
5. Spare students the cost of a textbook
6. Assign journal entries to emphasize personal relevance
7. Assign journal entries that can be used to inform class discussion.
8. Invite students to complete a non-violent term project
9. Experiment with non-violence in online forums
10. Illustrate intersectionality

(From Lauricella, 2019, p.104-109)

As can be noted, the ideas contained herein are directly linked to the theoretical underpinnings I have presented thus far, as they use non-violence and contemplative practices to address issues of race, religion, gender, (de)colonization of knowledge and spirituality. In practical terms, if one were to ask how these practices can challenge the structural roots of social injustice (at least those present in the classroom, which is what this study aims at researching), the Buddhist argument lies in personal transformation; in her *Socially Engaged Buddhism*, Sally King (2009) contends that if one's aim is to address social ailments such as poverty or racism (and at a classroom level we can include any other kind of discrimination) we have to look at the causes that bring them into existence, and then examine the possible actions that can help eliminate or change those ailments; in light of the concepts I have presented earlier in the theoretical section of this thesis, specifically in the section 3.2, I argue that to engage in those actions in a way that can bring about sustainable change we have to begin with self-enquiry and self-actualization that can lead to greater social harmony in order to work inter-dependently in challenging those conditions. Wang (2019) describes this as "integrating inner and outer work" (p.495): addressing social violence, she contends, must be done from a relational perspective, which is fostered by the inner work done by the individual. In other words, the "fundamental task of education is personal cultivation and self-transformation that enables social transformation, unlike a political task that aims at mobilizing mass action" (Wang, 2019, p. 195). Butler (2020) and Zembylas (2018) argue a collectively political dimension

is necessary in order to enhance the prospects of non-violence in challenging social injustice in education, through an engaged commitment to resist existing injustices. The argument Wang makes, and with which I agree, is on the need for that resistance to be rooted in self-transformation and inner peace that positively affects relational dynamics to be sustainable.

CHAPTER 6: THEORETICAL INTERSECTION – WHAT CAN THESE NONVIOLENT APPROACHES DO TOGETHER?

So far, I have outlined what I argue are the main larger issues at hand in my chosen geographical context, as are the educational inequalities stemming from a model that deepens them, resulting in social division and violence exacerbated by over-identification with one's social group. I have also provided a synopsis to suggest how this project seeks to challenge those inequalities from a perspective of non-violence, inter-dependency and interculturality that takes into consideration how different groups (including indigenous) might approach social relations and ways to express themselves. Furthermore, I have provided an overview of the theories that frame this research and which will also inform the research design the methodology. In this section, I will illustrate how these different theories intersect and what I hoped their convergence could achieve by the end of this research. More specifically, I will focus on the theoretical intersection of non-violent approaches, how these approaches attempt to tackle inequality and finally, how the different theories that inform the notion of inter-dependency might work together in shaping design and methodological choices. The last section in this chapter explores the contention between nonviolence practiced in the classroom and that found within social and political movements.

6.1 Confluence of non-violent perspectives

We find the first of these intersections in the approach to social change through non-violence; although writers from different traditions bring their own unique point of view, there certainly is a convergence of perspectives. Butler (2020), for instance, suggests that non-violence is not "simply the absence of violence…but a sustained commitment, even a way *of rerouting aggression for the purposes of affirming ideals of equality and freedom*" (p.27, my emphasis). In "*The Four Establishments of Mindfulness*" (1990), Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us that anger and fear (or any unpleasant feeling, for that matter) are not to be repressed but observed, accepted and through the practice of mindfulness,

inspected and *transformed* into a healthier energy; as he says: "if peace and joy are in our hearts, we will gradually bring more peace and joy to the world" (p.1410).

He contends that we need to not only acknowledge sexism, racial discrimination, economic inequality and social injustice so we can challenge them and improve the conditions they generate, but that we also need to observe and nurture the positive elements that exist around us; it is through this observation and cultivation that we can maintain joy and our ability to be effective in changing existing conditions. Bell hooks offers us an additional perspective on non-violence not related to education specifically, but which can nonetheless help inform educational practice and navigate the relational dynamics we find in classrooms, and which in some ways touches upon the Buddhist depiction and understanding of the roots of human suffering.

In her 2004 at the time controversial book *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity and Love,* hooks contends that rather than choosing to be violent, violent men have become so through a very early - and often traumatizing - indoctrination on what it means to be 'a man'; ironically, the male parent is far from the only one doing this indoctrination: hooks describes observed experiences of single mothers teaching their boy children "to be men" (p.70), and how these experiences shape the way men relate to other women during adulthood. Hooks' answer to male violence is not only to nurture love for another as *practice* rather than a *feeling,* but also to nurture *self*-love through self-care and spiritual and emotional growth, something she herself has been involved in through counselling and advising. So here we have complementary positions converging on three elements that not only inform the theoretical framework of this thesis, but that will also support the research design and methodology: cultivating non-violence as a sustained commitment, supporting that through the regular practice of mindfulness training and further harnessing this through classroom practices that nurture the relational aspect of classroom dynamics regardless of gender (and other) differences.

6.2 Intersecting views on equality

To begin with, I will use here Butler's concept of equality not as having equal means, opportunities or outcomes, but as a view of life having equal value no matter our social group. One of key arguments made by Butler in *The Force of Non-Violence: An Ethico-Political Bind* (2020) is the fact that non-violence needs its practitioners to have an

unwavering investment in equality; Butler delves deeply in the notion that in our world and in specific social groups some lives are clearly more valued than others and contends that the practice of non-violence must be anchored in an egalitarian vision of the world, one where *all* lives have equal value. It is important to mention here that Butler's notion of violence is not rooted on the mere idea of aggression, but it also includes inaction: e.g., abandonment of the sick or elderly, lack of access to necessities, discrimination and the "[…] systemic disregard for the poor and dispossessed" (p.28).

Buddhist teachings offer us a complementary approach to Butler's and her ideas on non-violence; I mentioned earlier the earlier historical example provided by Thich Nhat Hanh (1987) on how, from very early on, Buddhist communities were open to anyone regardless of status or class, which was particularly radical a time when Hinduism had established a strict cast system; in addition to class, Peiris (2015) and Sirinamme (2016) note that although physical gender differences are acknowledged in early teachings, there is no intellectual or spiritual difference between men and women in Buddhism, and in fact, the original Pali texts recognizes and incorporates non-binary denominations of sex and gender. Furthermore, the Buddhist idea of 'upekkha', or equanimity, refers to the ability to see "without being caught in what we see' (Fronsdal and Pandita, 2005, p.1): in other words, not get caught in preconceived ideas regarding gender, race, class or any other identity constructs but, rather, develop an inclusive view and attitude regarding all beings (including non-human) regardless of such constructs.

Bradley and Bathewara (2012) bring us a modern perspective of this with an example in Pune, India, a city, they argue, that has long suffered the inequality resulting from Brahmanism, and which manifested itself in economic, physical and psychological oppression toward the lower cast and which was particularly evident amongst the Dalits, or untouchables (and lowest cast). The Dalit leader B.R. Ambedkar saw Buddhism as an answer to this, due what he perceived to be a focus on 'social equality and moral reasoning' (p.70) without subordinating communities to the dogmas of Brahmanism. What is valuable about this example is that Ambedkar sought to extract the teachings concentrating on rationalism rather than spirituality in order to develop a concept of a classless and secular society; in fact, his main work "The Buddha and His Dhamma" was attacked by Indian Buddhists at the time and after the book's publication in 1957 for what they considered to a reduction of Buddhist philosophy to a mere social system (Verma, 2010). Bathewara and Bradley's research, conducted amongst Buddhist who follow Ambedkar's interpretation – or synthesis, rather – revealed in their interviews that the

participants' understanding and practice of Buddhist teachings revolved around helping others, and that spirituality is experienced through the achievement of human unity achieved through social change.

In concluding this section, I would like to connect the ideas I have presented concerning equality with the second research objective in this project: *"Collaborate in identifying and co-developing practices to address current issues relating to inclusiveness in Chilean higher education classrooms, with a focus on behaviours and forms of expression that might produce or reproduce inequality"*. What I intended for these different approaches to do together within the spectrum of this objective was to first provide a space for reading and discussing perspectives in inclusiveness and equality, how our experiences might shape our views on said equality and how as a group we can collaborate on developing relational dynamics and forms of expression anchored in the concept of mutual partnership, collaboration and unity in spite of the existing social constructs that currently divide social groups in my chosen context.

6.3 Views on individualism and inter-dependency

This brings me to the issue of inter-dependency to conquer individualism, a key element of this project. Butler's critique of individualism is fitting here as it paves the way for the ideas I will present afterwards. In the works of earlier philosophers, such as Hobbes, Marx and Rousseau (all men, all white and all European), the individual is introduced to us, startlingly, always as an adult, always independent and always as a man (Butler, 2020). It is a poignant fact that dependency has been erased from this portrayal and, as Butler points out in her description of this collective tale, 'He' is a self-sufficient individual in a world 'pre-emptively void of other people' (p.37). This fantasy is, of course, easily disproved by a simple examination of our social contracts: no matter how much we believe in self-sufficiency *a la* Robinson Crusoe, we do not live alone in islands and we depend and rely on each other for food, work and pretty much every human endeavour we undertake. Even Triandis (1995), in his *Individualism & Collectivism*, when defining and establishing the contrasting views of these two constructs, makes clear that individualism is just that: a view, rather than reality. Even though he describes individualism as situation-specific (different societies have different types and degrees of it) I consider his definition to be quite comprehensive:

"Individualism is a social pattern that consists of loosely linked individuals who view themselves as independent of collectives; are primarily motivated by their own preferences, needs, rights, and the contracts they have established with others; give priority to their personal goals over the goals of others; and emphasize rational analyses of the advantages and disadvantages of associating with others" (p.2).

Social approaches to communal living, by contrast, are social patterns in which the collective goals and the connectedness amongst the members of the community takes precedence over individual ones. My argument is that solving the problems I have noted in the earlier sections of this thesis requires that connectedness, as individualism and over-identification with one's specific social groups have resulted in more division and inequality in the context of Chilean education.

This leads us to the confluence of ideas regarding inter-dependency, communal harmony and overcoming individualism, which we find in Buddhist philosophy and as a way of life within indigenous communities. Hossain et al., (2011) researched the individualism / collectivism dichotomy within Navajo communities in the United States, and although they note that economic factors and industrialization have made an impact in their communal way of life, as has the increasing 'Westernization' of their populations (p.545), they also acknowledge that Navajos continue to strive for a collective approach to social life whereby the well-being of the community supersedes the individual's, and that their sense of self is inextricably linked to their community, family and relationship with their ecosystem. This is an important point, as Brewer and Chen (2007) point out that individuals *can be* collective, but it is in how much members value group harmony, duty to one's group and interpersonal relationships that differentiates one from the other; research conducted in Andean communities shows that the notion of communal life taking precedence over individual goals, building harmonious relationships not only with immediate and extended family but the larger community as a whole and developing a sustainable connection with the land is still an essential part of these groups' worldview (Apaza-Huanca, 2019; Garces and Maureira, 2018). Furthermore, Del Pino and Ferrada (2019) illustrate, through an interview with Mapuche students and teachers, how their worldview links directly to the ideas of inter-dependency I have presented thus far; while attempting to comprehend the concept of *kvme mogen,*(Mapuche word for well-being and health*)* one of the participants explained that because in Mapuche belief everything around us is alive, it is our duty as individuals to learn about each element (person, water, land, the sea, the land) so we can nourish them; as our well-being depends on each these elements,

so their depends on our actions upon them being based on our understanding of them. This links to Butler's and Buddhist's ideas of equality.

In conclusion, it is from these perspectives that I contend there are lessons to be drawn from Eastern and indigenous practices in terms of working towards a state of inter-dependency, harmony and unity in light with the second of the research objectives: *"Achieve the above within a framework of non-violence, inter-dependency and communal harmony, rooted in some of the principles present in both indigenous knowledge and Eastern philosophies, in which individualism gives way to acting for collective well-being".*

6.4 How critical pedagogy contributes to non-violence

As a final point in this section, I would like to further expand on both the convergence with and contributions of critical pedagogy to the main areas I have described here: non-violence, equality and inter-dependency. A study by Chubbuck and Zembylas (2011) sheds some light into how critical pedagogy and peace education can inform each other in the context of urban education. To begin with, they established a clear philosophical and theoretical link by connecting critical pedagogy's goal of liberating those who have been subordinated by oppressive structures with earlier ideas of Gandhi and Thomas Merton, both of whom promoted this liberation through non-violent means of resistance, such as the establishment of 'non-threatening relationships' (p.261), dialogue, developing empathy and compassionate listening. Secondly, they established a theoretical framework marrying these two approaches in what they coined termed 'critical pedagogy for non-violence' (p.262), a practice rooted in three key principles: the first is that such practice should be an integrated way of life that permeates every facet of the educational process; the second is the acknowledgement and commitment of this practice to address structural inequalities and relational power imbalance; the third is the recognition of emotion as a potential element that can help support resistance, just as Martin Luther King and Gandhi before them argued (ibid). Their paper, a case study on a novice teacher committed to both social justice and non-violence can inform this research in a couple of relevant ways; firstly, Chubbuck and Zembylas (2011) noted the challenges faced by the teacher in transmitting this perspective to the students; many of whom remained sceptical and pessimistic about the possible positive impact of non-violence. Though there were those who experienced a change in perspective and for whom non-violence became a

viable choice to challenge social violence (including that existing in the classroom), not everyone was on board.

The second aspect of their study germane to this project is the importance of approaching the possible integration of non-violence not from a 'White saviour' position, but from one that more holistically involves students / participants as thinkers and producers of knowledge. Chubbuck and Zembylas' research, a case study following a novice school teacher as she attempted to bring non-violent practices and critical pedagogy into her own teaching experience, notes that the teacher, a white woman herself, in spite of all her efforts to promote a non-violent attitude in her learners, became acutely aware of how her own more privileged backdrop and upbringing as an American middle-class white person had erected an invisible barrier between her and the students; many of her students were African-American from poor backgrounds who had regular experiences with violence, either expressing it or witnessing it first hand; these different backgrounds, and mostly their different experiences with structural violence created a certain degree of resistance in the students when they were challenged to persist with their non-violent path, which admittedly they were too quickly pushed to pursue. Finally, the researchers note the importance of emotions or, more accurately, what they termed 'critical emotional praxis' (Chubbuck and Zembylas, 2008) in the practice of critical pedagogy for non-violence: because it can uncover discomforting emotions and attitudes towards lack of privilege, structural violence or unequal social structures – what Zembylas and Papamichael (2017) termed "pedagogies of discomfort" - it becomes essential to engage in a dialogical process that challenges these emotions and seeks non-violent alternatives to cope with them.

Chubbuck and Zembylas' 2011 study presents us with valuable insights. The first of them is the importance of engaging with and reflecting on emotions as they appear, since they are likely to manifest both in teachers and students: as the social and political context challenge and places emotional demands on us, it becomes crucial to identify, understand and deal with these demands. The current socio-political context in Chile, as I have noted in chapter 1, makes this point particularly relevant as the existing inequalities and structural violence is unlikely to disappear overnight. The second significant insight concerns the question of who is to be the agent for social change, as advocated by critical pedagogy theorists (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1988; McLaren, 2009); Chubbuck and Zembylas (2011) argue that historically, the large majority of those engaged in socially just education are White, middle-class practitioners working with students from disadvantaged communities; they further argue that empowering those who have been subjected to

structural inequality is equally important as helping raising awareness in those who have experienced the privileges of their more advantageous position so they can become allies in the creation of a more egalitarian and equitable society; this was certainly an important consideration in this study, where participants came from a diverse spectrum of social groups and where my own background (white Latino of European background, educated in the UK) could have erected the invisible barrier Zembylas and Chubbuck speak of. This is something that fortunately in my observation did not happen. Yet a third observation to be drawn from the study concerns the fact that addressing racism, sexism and classism should be a core element of a socially just classroom, so it does not become a place aiming for mastery of content, but one where social issues are discussed and challenged. Hence, the choice of action research (AR) for this project, as it allows for the co-production of knowledge to emerge as a democratic, participatory process whereby social problems are identified and tackled. As I will argue and expand on in the next section, AR has the potential to provide the space to both manifest the difficult emotions I have mentioned and address them from a constructive, dialogical approach.

6.5 Critical pedagogy, equality and inter-dependency

In addition to non-violence, there is as well an important conceptual concurrence of critical pedagogy and inter-dependency; here we find a convergence that although expressed in different language it is nonetheless clear. Buddhist nun Pema Chödron, for instance, says:

"In order to have compassionate relationships, compassionate communication and compassionate social action, there has to be a fundamental change of attitude. The notion "I am the helper and you are the one who needs help" might work in a temporary way but fundamentally nothing changes because there's still one who has it and one who doesn't. That dualistic notion is not really speaking to the heart" (2004, p.113).

This is in line with the ideas put forth by Freire (1970) and many of the critical theorists who came after him (hooks, 1994; Darder, 2014; Giroux, 2009; McLaren, 2009): critical pedagogy seeks to create an awareness in students that prompts them to be active participants in the process of producing social change. As Kaufman (2017) observes in his analysis of critical pedagogy: teachers and learners are not isolated bodies who engage in

an individual pursuit but are instead a shift the way education is approached, whereby students are not empty receptacles where deposits are made, but where are involved in a reciprocal journey of learning and teaching, not only learning from each other but also supporting and reacting sensitively to one another. To do otherwise, he argues, would only perpetuate the very inequality and power imbalance critical pedagogy seeks to eradicate. Further to this, and in establishing a convergence between intersectionality and critical pedagogy, Hills Collins and Bilge (2016) note that one of the key features of the latter is the dialogical nature by which change is approached; this dialogue, they further note, is relational, democratic and participatory in nature, as teachers and learners begin to navigate the challenges of social inequality: it requires talking and listening to those who might have different perspectives, and negotiating differences in order to connect with our social context and build consensus. Lastly, Blinne (2014) attempts to create a connection between contemplative and critical pedagogy not through standard scholarly paraphrasing but rather by giving voice to her own views in a performative essay, recognizing that 'the personal is always political and performative are often pedagogical' (p.2). Her essay, which describes her experiences as a higher education teacher attempting to bring elements of contemplative pedagogy to her teaching *and* her living practice, is perhaps the clearest exemplification of how these two educational approaches not only converge but, in my view, complement each other. As she contemplates her yearning for individual and collective transformation, she describes her desire to achieve social justice:

> " I can no longer stand idly and watch, wait and feel paralyzed by the inequality and ever-present cruelty surrounding me. It's too easy to adapt and become victims of a pathological system that teaches us to embrace the status quo killing our creativity and punishing us for questioning power structures" – (p.5)

along with her teaching philosophy as contemplative pedagogy. Blinne (2014) argues that to achieve the former, educators must do so from a perspective of inter-connectedness brought forth through the practice of daily mindfulness; it is through this, she argues, that we can develop not only greater self-awareness but more importantly, an awareness of the Other not as an 'other' but as someone whose existence, well-being and suffering are directly linked to our own. In fact, she contends, to become aware of our inter-dependence is to 'think critically about the present moment' (p.6), something we should work towards rather than moving through our days both lacking awareness and lacking criticality.

Considering Chubbuck and Zembylas (2011) findings, the argument could be made that there is a risk of engaging in non-violent education from a moralising stance, or from one that seems to impose a specific worldview on the participants. However, as I will further explain in the subsequent chapter, this research study stemmed from the conviction that to challenge the unfair structures we find in education, and more specifically in the classrooms (both critical and contemplative pedagogies are primarily classroom-oriented practices) we must do so from a *collective* mindset of inter-dependency; it is the effectiveness of this collective participation and mutual reliance, and the impact of non-violence perspectives as assessed and internalized individually by each participant - rather than the participants relying solely on the researcher- that this study aimed at investigating.

6.6 Nonviolence contentions: the political and the classroom

So far, this chapter has focused on the dimensions and applications of nonviolence within the classroom setting, which is what this research study aimed to explore and where it makes its main contribution. In this section, I will discuss the relationship between classroom nonviolence and social nonviolence, and how, in my contention, they show distinct elements while also drawing from the same tenets.

The first distinct element, and something I have noted throughout this thesis (see sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3), is that classroom nonviolence has a unique relational dynamic, in which interpersonal relationships amongst students and teachers lay the foundation for how that dynamic unfolds: members of the classroom spend several hours a day together, learn together, play together and are in constant interaction with one another. Additionally, as Devries at el., (2021) note, the teacher-student relationship has been historically a violent one, particularly towards the student who is often disempowered. Therefore, tools such as Rosenberg's NVC framework (2003), empathy development, contemplative, self-inquiry practices and teacher training on nonviolent approaches and practices play a key role in helping teachers and students understand each other's differences, develop greater collective unity and work towards a more democratic classroom environment. On the other hand, as I have also noted in chapters 2 and 3, nonviolent social movements had a clear goal of expressing dissent in an effort to challenge and dismantle unjust social structures and conditions: lack of voting rights, lack of access to housing, jobs or educational opportunities, illegal occupation of their land. In other words, there is an evident goal

towards greater social justice for marginalized, oppressed communities. The relational aspect here, rather than interpersonal, is intergroup.

This different relational aspect translates into the kind of training nonviolence activists and students receive; as I note in chapter 7, for students and teachers within a classroom setting this involves gaining deeper intercultural understanding of one another, engaging in self-actualization through self-enquiry, training in non-violent communication, and engaging in the collaborative exploration of contemplation as a path to self-transformation. Conversely, as Bloch (2016) and Sharp (1973) observe, nonviolent resistance has historically relied on training and education on three key methodologies: protest and persuasion, intervention, and various modes of non-cooperation.

That is not to say that the principles, philosophy and actions that accompany a nonviolent approach to social justice are different; in fact, Bloch (2016) notes in an extensive report for the United States Institute of Peace, that education has played a key role in nonviolence resistance movements in Germany, Serbia, the Philippines and the US, and that such education is precisely informed by Gandhian and Kingsian philosophy. Harris and Morrison (2013), Morrison (2015) and Peterson (2014) further note the importance the teaching students about the history, practice and principles of nonviolence in order to engage in nonviolent dissent. For instance, if we are to glance at Martin Luther King's Six Tenets[31](King Center, n.d.), we can see that these are not confined to one (the classroom) or the other (social movements):

1. Nonviolence is a way of life
2. Nonviolence seeks to win friendship and understanding
3. Nonviolence seeks to defeat injustice or evil, not people
4. Nonviolence holds that unearned, voluntary suffering for a just cause can educate and transform people and societies.
5. Nonviolence chooses love instead of hate
6. Nonviolence believes that the Universe is on the side of justice.

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[31] https://thekingcenter.org/about-tkc/the-king-philosophy/

If we stop to consider Gandhi's satyagraha[32], for instance, Ojha (n.d.) [33]described it as "a weapon of conflict resolution", something that is applicable to the two context I have discussed here. As I will further discuss on page 212, violence is present all around us in its various manifestations: cultural, structural and direct. How these manifestations appear to us might differ, but at their root we find an unequal view of others, and a devaluing of someone else's life. Nonviolent principles inform nonviolent action, regardless of context, as a way to challenge these expressions of violence regardless of our social context.

In short, while nonviolent action in the classroom differs in its aim and approaches from nonviolent action in social movements, they are both informed by the same tenets; they both aim at greater social justice for those who have been marginalized, be it challenging unequal structures or unequal relationships, and they both rely on becoming educated and trained in nonviolence in order to engage effectively in nonviolent expressions of dissent.

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[32] Satyagraha can be defined as nonviolent resistance to evil (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2024). Its application requires the observation of nonviolence in one's own mind, and the refusal to cooperate with those exreting violence or wrongdoing upon us.

[33] Retrieved here: https://www.gandhiashramsevagram.org/gandhi-articles/relevance-of-satyagraha-as-a-weapon-of-conflict-resolution.php

CHAPTER 7: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Having established these confluences and how these convergences have informed this thesis (which I present in figure 7.1) I will now describe the research design and methods I chose for this study. This chapter begins with an overview of the research stages of the project; it outlines the ontological and epistemological paradigms that underpin it, it delineates the main characteristics of action research as a methodological framework, it describes workshops as a method, as well as the sources that were selected to collect research data and how the data was analyzed, and finally, it discusses ethical considerations that were taken into account in regards to the study.
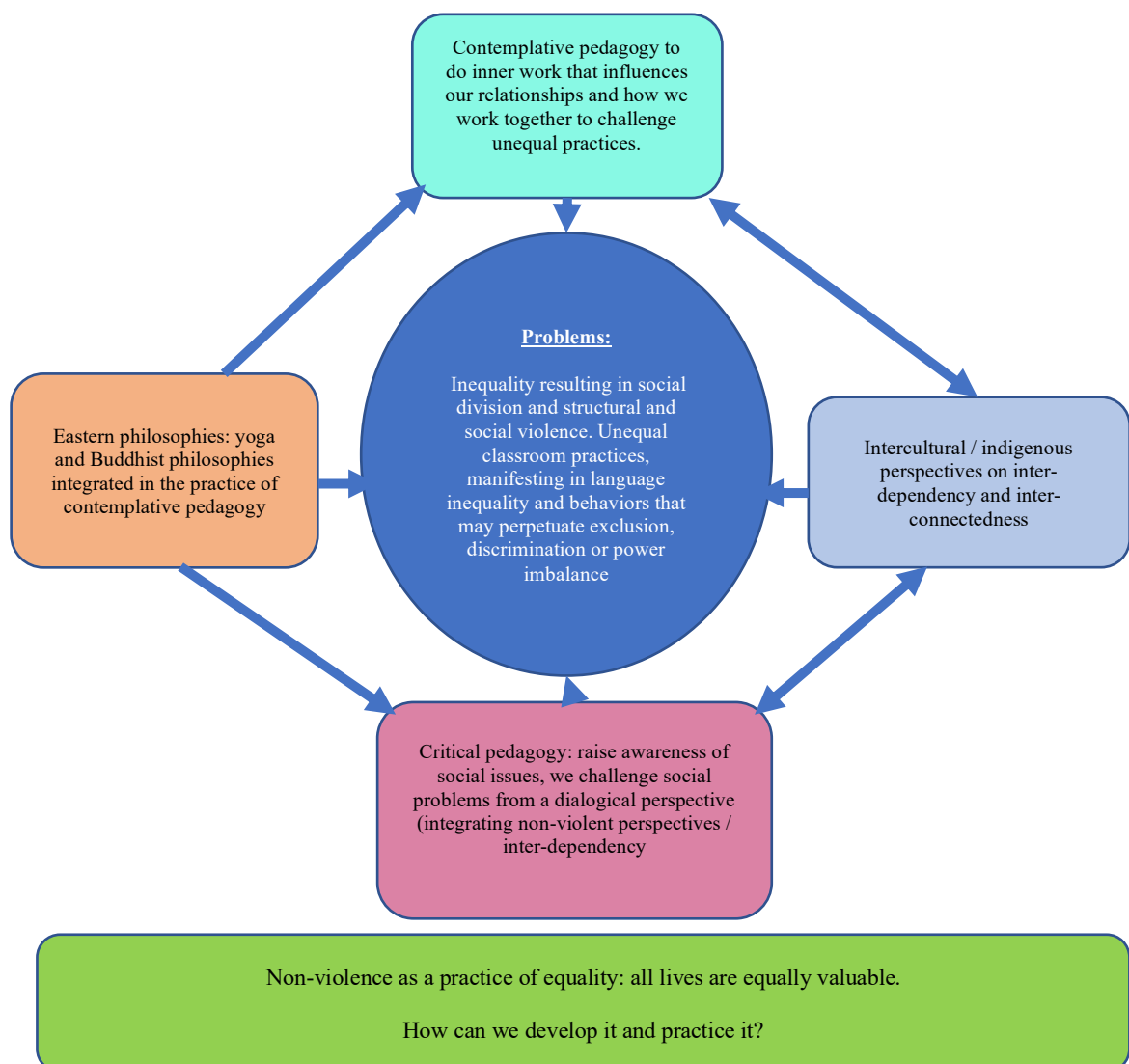
Figure 7.1: Diagram showing the different perspectives informing this project and the relationship between them.

7.1 Research Paradigm

To begin with, and to quote Johannesson and Perjons (2014), a research paradigm is "a set of commonly held beliefs and assumptions within a research community about ontological, epistemological, and methodological concerns" (p.167). These beliefs and assumptions, or what Creswell and Creswell called "a philosophical worldview" (2018, p.44) not only reveal how we see the world, but they shape our theoretical framework and the way in which we move forward in learning about individuals, the world we live in and the relationships that shape us socially. In light of this, the following table (Table 1) presents an overview of the ontological, epistemological and methodological framings that inform my own world view and ground this project, and which I will proceed to explain in this section.

Paradigm	Ontology	Epistemology	Methodology	Method
Constructivist / Interpretivist	Reality is socially constructed. Social phenomenon emerges as a result of our lived experiences,	Understanding is gained through active participation of the researcher in the process, rather than observing participants as "research objects". Meanings and purposes need to be interpreted.	Participatory approaches: action research, participatory action research,	Participant observations, open-ended questionnaires, interviews, journals, focus groups.
Critical	Reality should be challenged and changed so human beings are emancipated from oppressive experiences: the world not as it is but as it should be.	Exposes assumptions, asks questions and seeks answers that can help transform social relations.		

Table 1 - Diagram showing the research paradigm for this project[34]

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[34] *Sources:* Johannesson and Perjons (2014), Patel (2015)

7.1.1 The Constructivist / Interpretivist paradigm

The root of Interpretivism lies in the ideas of German sociologist Max Weber (1864 – 1920), who argued that the social world and our actions in it can only by understood by recognizing and interpreting the significance and aims of such actions (in Runciman, 1978). At the core of this worldview is the aspiration to grasp the subjective nature of the human experience: what people's viewpoints are, how they see the world, how they relate it to it, what they think about it and in the end, what it all means (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). However, and to paraphrase Crotty (1998), what differentiates this paradigm from others is that this meaning is not only discovered but also mutually, collectively constructed.

In his description of the critical constructivist paradigm, Kincheloe (2002) argues that this last point particularly important in education: as teacher researchers we attempt to "use our understanding of the social construction of reality to rethink and reconceptualize the types of questions we ask about the educational enterprise" (p. 58). As an adult who has lived in the Middle East, East and Southeast Asia this desire to understand and connect with others, to make sense of our world together and embark on a conjoint journey that would allow us to understand each other better simply expanded exponentially. My own personal journey as a teacher, student and a Buddhist, and - beyond that - as a human being on this planet has been shaped by this aspiration to comprehend the perspectives and social constructs that shape our world and make sense of them in order to develop positive, harmonious social relationships in a way that is mutually and socially sustainable.

In light of these experiences and conviction, the constructivist / interpretivist worldview has come to inform this research study; questions such as "how do we make sense of the world together as we occupy ourselves in it?", "how do we as a society and as a community go about generating this understanding?" and "how do we use this understanding to co-create and co-construct knowledge?" which guide this paradigm, have in turn influenced my own learning process and been instrumental in giving shape to this project.

This influence, as I have described earlier in this thesis and which I will explore in further detail in subsequent sections in this chapter, translates into the choice of methodology (action research) and underlying theories (critical and contemplative

pedagogy, indigenous knowledge and Eastern philosophies), all of which are rooted in a dialogical, democratic and socially inclusive nature that allows for knowledge to be co-created as participants engage collectively with the world.

7.1.2 The Critical paradigm

The second philosophical lens that informs this research project is the critical paradigm (de Carlo, 2018). This paradigm, informed by the works of feminist scholars, such as Patricia Hill Collins and Nancy Fraser, French social theorists Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu and early critical theorists Jürgen Habermas and Max Horkheimer, amongst others (Calhoun et al., 2007) presents us with a range of perspectives on issues of power, social change and inequality, all of which are relevant to this thesis.

To begin with, as Kincheloe describes in (2002), feminist theorists came to the realization that the positivist focus of Western science was "released of any social or ethical responsibility" (p.52). As it has been detailed so far, in pursuing the aim to equip teachers with tools that can enable them to deal with issues of discrimination and exclusion, this project attempted to tackle what I see as our responsibility as educators: to facilitate non-violent action aimed at social change.

Further to this, and in looking at issues of skewed power dynamics and inequality, it is important to consider the impact of the Human Capital theory (Sweetland, 1996) in education to establish why the critical paradigm presents, in my view, a fitting philosophical underpinning within the scope of this project. In an article detailing the Human Capital theory, Walker (2012) details how the former views education as an instrument that allows for economic growth, and the individual taking part of the educational process as someone whose skills and knowledge should be gained so they contribute to the labour market. Such structure is built upon a model that Freire (1970, p.73) called 'banking education': a model in which not only there is a distinct top-down hierarchy but in which teacher's curricular and pedagogical choices are enforced upon learners, who are regarded as objects who without questioning listen to, comply with and reproduce what is passed on to them.

Given Chile's historical association with the Human Capital approach and the neoliberal policies of Milton Friedman and the Chicago Boys, which, as I have explained

in chapter 2.4 (see page 32) have resulted in an educational system which since the 1980s has served primarily a utilitarian purpose that further perpetuates social and economic inequality and segregation, the critical paradigm offers us a necessary lens by which to approach research: Giroux (1988) calls for training and improving literacy in those who have been marginalized and Kincheloe (2002, p.56) argues for "cultivating and listening to the voices of students" in order to challenge the educational practices, structures and materials that keep learners from fully and democratically participating as equals in their education. As mentioned in the earlier section, the theories, methodology and methods this project brings are informed by this criticality; the following sections will provide a further overview of action research, as well as its advantages and their limitations.

7.2 Research approach

This research study was carried out using of a series of participatory workshops within the framework of Action Research as a methodology. Mertler (2017) defines Action Research as:

> "…any systematic inquiry conducted by teachers, administrators, counsellors, or others with a vested interest in the teaching and learning process or environment for the purpose of gathering information about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how their students learn" (p.37)

In light with the paradigms I have discussed above, this project was organized with me as an engaged participant rather than a mere facilitator, and with participants actively engaged in the research process; in practical terms, this engagement meant collaborating with each other to identify instances of violence and developing nonviolent pedagogical strategies to address those. This methodological choice is linked to Mirra et el., (2015), who point to the fact that someone involved and dealing with specific issues affecting a school makes that person an expert at "knowing what their peers need" (p.12) In other words, who better than Chilean teachers themselves to tell the stories of violence they had experienced and witnessed, be it as teachers, students or plain citizens? Who better than them to identify violence in their own social and educational context? This is also shared and accentuated by Mills (2011), who argued for teachers doing their research, acting as the architects and builders of their personal and collective knowledge, with the final aim of reshaping both

the approaches to their practice and the theories that informed them. All of these factors played a key role in choosing Action Research as a methodology.

Although the origins of Action Research are generally traced to the work of Kurt Lewin in the 1930s, AR in its participatory form has a long history in Latin America. It is historically connected to the work of anticolonial movements in the Global South, beginning with the work of Paulo Freire in the 1960s, continuing with Orlando Fals-Borda in Colombia in the 1970s and later expanding into Africa, India and other corners of Latin America; this work sought not only to improve a specific situation and gain knowledge through action, as aimed by AR, but to achieve radical social transformation through community-wide efforts, as Reason and Bradbury (2006) indicate.

While this is not a fully participatory study, I strived to draw as much as possible on methods used in Participatory Action Research (PAR) for the project, beginning with how the workshops were organized, which I describe on page 108. This was done to allow for the data to emerge from the ground up, and to provide ample opportunity for participants to identify and address issues that concerned them directly. Other participatory elements in this study can be found in Fig. 7.2 below, adapted from Kindon et al. (2007). In this specific project, several of these points became an integral part of the research: participants interviewed each other, the project had an intrinsically dialogical nature – which is how the data was produced -, there was discussion-based group work, and this in turned gave participants the opportunity to generate written pieces of work and presentations that were shared and discussed.

Shares writing and presentations	Surveys	
Dialogue	Learning by doing	Interviewing
Diagramming	Storytelling	Participant observations
Community activities	Group work and discussions	
Educational camps	Political action	
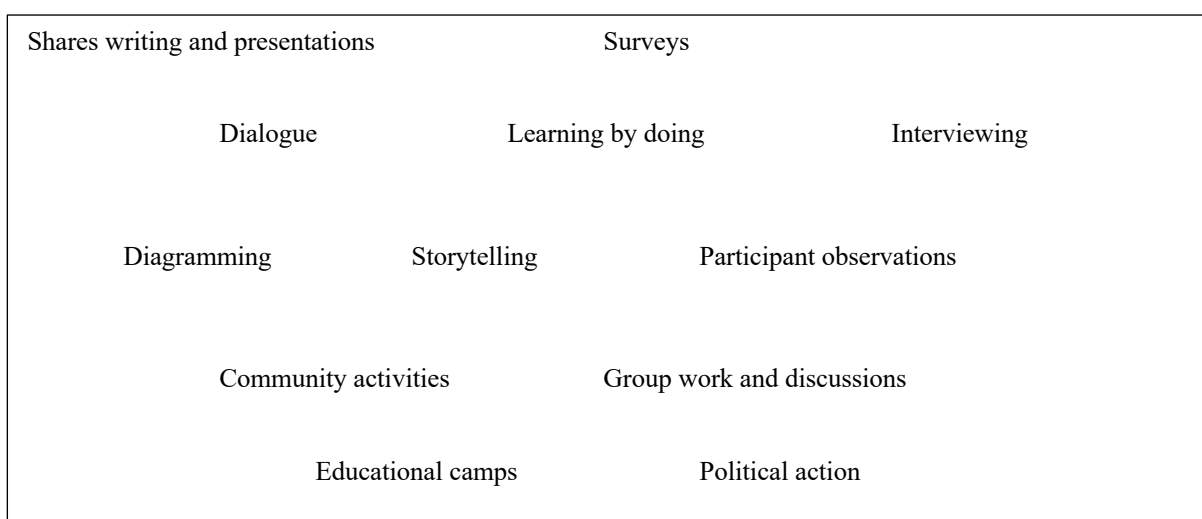
Figure 7.2 – Common methods used in PAR

(Adapted from Kindon et al., (2007), "Participatory Action Research Approaches and Methods: Connecting People, Participation and Place")

7.3 What is Action Research?

Reason and Bradbury (2007) define action research as an approach that begins with the question of how a specific situation might be improved, and where the knowledge that answers that question is gained through action. Although Reason and Bradbury (ibid) confirm that it is indeed difficult to trace the history of action research, both agree that it originated as a critique to positivist science and that there are specific elements that distinguish it from other research methodologies: the relevance of the lived experiences as well as the intellectual, philosophical and political basis that precede them, and the complex network of relationships and influences that are basis for the action researcher's practice.

In other words, it is an approach that supports practitioners in different fields to improve the quality of their practice through a close examination of their experiences and what affects them. Reason and Bradbury (ibid) further argue that the main purpose of AR is to generate functional knowledge that is helpful to the way people conduct their lives. Several researchers over the years have presented the community with converging yet slightly different views of what action research look like (see Elliot, 1991; Kemmis and McTaggart, 2000; O'Leary, 2004); Koshy dissected their shared points in the following attributes:

- Action research is a method used for improving practice. It involves action, evaluation, and critical reflection and – based on the evidence gathered – changes in practice.
- Action research is participative and collaborative; it is undertaken by individuals with a common purpose.
- It is situation-based and context specific.
- It develops reflection based on interpretations made by the participants.
- Knowledge is created through action and at the point of application.
- Action research can involve problem solving, if the solution to the problem leads to the improvement of practice.
- In action research findings will emerge as action develops, but these are not conclusive or absolute.

(Koshy, 2010, p.1)

These points are particularly relevant given the social background I have presented thus far and the paradigms that underpin this project; in fact, as I will detail in subsequent sections, this research involved exactly these very points: attempting to improve / change practice through action, reflection and evaluation; active collaboration and engagement with each other, context specificity, and the creation of knowledge through reflection, action and application.

7.3.1 Defining characteristics of action research

In their oft-cited textbook *"Becoming Critical: Knowing through Action Research"*, Carr and Kemmis (1986) identify three core elements that have come to define AR: its participatory nature, its democratic drive and the way it concurrently contributes to knowledge and practice.

The participatory element translates into the active role participants play in both the research stage and the change process; the democratic drive manifests in the way AR views participants and researcher as equals, with the latter acting in a capacity of what Koshy calls a 'facilitator for change' (2010, p.11). In practical terms this means participants are regularly consulted not only on the research process itself and how it will be assessed, but it also involves feeding incoming results back to the participants for corroboration and endorsement, all of which allows for the overall outcome of the process to have a meaningful personal connection.

Finally, in relation to AR's contribution to both knowledge and practice, what this means is acknowledging the importance of connecting personal lived experiences with the existing situation, as traditional theories might not necessarily fit with a specific scenario; what has been described in textbooks as applicable knowledge in the UK will not necessarily be suitable in Chile, and thus observation, experience and intuition become important. Meyer (2000) argues that is this connection between situation and experience that generates meaningful, contextualized knowledge.

7.3.2 The Action Research cycle

Although it is agreed in the action research literature that such approach is iterative and cyclical, different authors have offered their own version of what that cycle looks like. I

have chosen the illustration below (Fig.6.2) because it is the one more closely represents, in my view, the way I envisioned the research cycle within this very specific project:
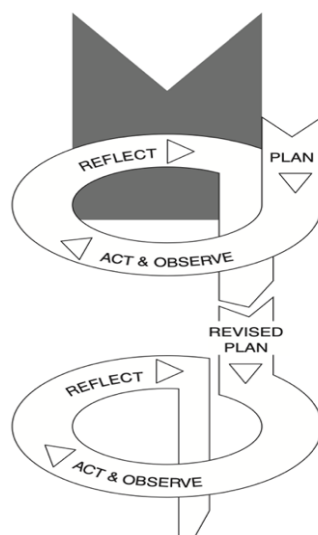
Fig. 7.3 – The Action Research Cycle

(Source: Koshy et al., 2010. Adapted from Kemmis and McTaggart, 2000)

In line with the process outlined in the previous illustration, Mertler (2017) then describes the cycle in four stages:

1. Planning
2. Acting
3. Developing
4. Reflecting

However, as Metler points out, AR is an iterative, cyclical process where those taking part in action research repeat some or all those stages. Norton (2009) cautions that although we should embark on our project in a logical manner, we should also take caution and avoid following the above cycle as a fixed template; it needs to be contemplated that unforeseen circumstances or diversions might appear, and researchers / participants need to have the flexibility to incorporate progressive refinements as the emerging evidence calls for them. Several of Norton's warnings were indeed relevant within this research: there were unforeseen circumstances that required flexibility, and a few refinements were made accordingly. In other words, while the AR cycle provided a useful template, it was not followed blindly. I will discuss these points in detail in sections 7.4 and 9.2.1 ahead.

7.4 The action research cycle within this study

As described earlier, the action research cycle begins by contemplating on how a concrete condition might be enhanced; following that inquiry, we engage in a cycle of action and reflection as shown below; although there are several versions of this cycle the chart by Pain et el., (2017) is particularly useful in that contains several of the same points of reflection the participants and I engaged in (see Fig. 7.4). This section details how action was followed by reflection, and how this reflection in turn resulted in modified action from one iteration to the other.

PHASE	ACTION
Action	Establish relationships and common agenda with all stakeholders. Collaboratively decide on issues
Reflection	On research design, ethics, knowledges and accountability
Action	Build relationships Identify roles and responsibilities Collectively design research processes and tools Discuss potential outcomes
Reflection	On research questions, design, working relationships and information required
Action	Work together to implement research and collect data Enable participation of all members Collaboratively analyse findings Collaboratively plan future actions
Reflection	On working together Has participation worked? What else do we need to do?
Action	Begin to work on feeding research back to all participants and plan for feedback on process and findings
Reflection	Evaluate both the action and reflection processes as a whole
Action	Collectively identify future research and impacts

Figure 7.4 – Phases in Action Research

Pain et al., (2017), adapted from Kindon et al., (2007), retrieved from:

http://communitylearningpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/PARtoolkit.pdf

7.4.1 Turning reflection into action

Phase One of the project presented several opportunities for reflection that turned into modified action. The first of this was in the realm of participant accountability, particularly for the online component. Due to the infrequent interaction (one bi-weekly session), the fact the university is in a different city, that I could not travel more often and the participants had their own academic obligations, establishing close working relationships that would have created a sense of mutual accountability proved challenging. They worked hard in the face-to-face sessions, collaborated well with each other and their work in the workshops themselves yielded showed a great level of insight and criticality, but they did not respond to my emails or any communication I sent through the university platform. As indicated, the number of individual reflections submitted declined from weeks 1 to 7, going from 15 the first week to 6 on week 7. Even though the workload had been agreed with the participants themselves and the university, it proved too much; I realized that my over-enthusiasm had to be reined in and would need to make choices that made participation sustainable in the future. The first of these was the amount of work I was giving participants to do, considering that they were enrolled full-time in their degree program; this placed high demands on them, and required them to submit regular assignments on their other classes. This initially heavy workload led to several students leaving the project as they could not balance their academic work and what the workshops required; participants from the second iterations were forthcoming on this point: if they had to choose between reading and reflecting on this elective course or doing work for a course with higher stakes, they would choose the latter. This experience, conversations and suggestions led me to make a different arrangement, and instead of individual reading and reflections, participants were divided into groups that engaged in the reading using a jigsaw approach, and the reflections were done as a group. This resulted in increased participation, improved collaboration and a higher rate of reflections submitted, which in the end meant each week yielded data.

The second challenge expressed by the first sample of participants was the use of meditation at the beginning of the sessions; I started this project with the intention of providing learners with basic instructions on simple mindfulness exercises, such as awareness of the breath or silent meditation. These practices, however, did not fully engage the participants; the silent meditation proved particularly difficult, and in fact, during our last meeting (which was entirely devoted to feedback), when asked which

element of the workshops they would do without, silent meditation was the only component some of the students said was not particularly useful. Their insight was that "meditation is not for everyone", "it was difficult to be still" and "it's not particularly useful". While obviously respectful of participants' views on this issue, I also attribute these views to what I personally see as a) inadequate instructions on my part b) not enough time to gain a sense of growth in the meditation practice (10-15 minutes twice in one month). These considerations notwithstanding, I decided not to do guided meditation during Phase Two, and to focus on activities that directed attention at developing empathy and that, in my view, encouraged the development of a sense of community and reflexivity. This choice was based in two factors: the first was the content of some of the reflections, participants submitted during their online phase, which showed that some of them struggled empathizing with others, while the second was the fact that this group would be working together for 10 weeks and I thought the tasks chosen might help raise their self-awareness on issues of empathy, collaboration and shared humanity.

Yet, another important point of reflection leading to changed action was the realization to how much engagement I would able to elicit from participants. I had originally envisioned a project with high level of participation and collaboration, with constant feedback and contributions from participants . This vision, however, faced several challenges: to begin with, students from the first batch did not have an interest in being an active part of the research process (as voiced in one of the sessions); although I regularly collated and shared the discussion findings with them and solicited feedback and suggested changes, there was no comment, feedback or recommendation given. I regularly asked them for ideas on future contemplative practices they might want to do, or readings / topics they might like to work with; I shared with them the results of their final feedback session asking for further contributions and none were received, and no new ideas were put forth. My conclusion on this point is three-fold: one is that action research is not common in Chile, as evidenced by the lack of studies using this approach in higher education; this in turn means that students are unfamiliar with what they are supposed to do and exactly what *participation* means, and not being used to having a voice in the research process, they are happy to be take a backseat. The second point concerns lack of training: given the time limitations I faced, there was no time to fully discuss their role as engaged participants nor to give them adequate training on what this meant. I did organize an induction session, but in retrospect they would have benefitted from further training. The final aspect concerns the involvement they themselves desired: the first cohort expressed openly they were very busy with their academic load and with no grades at stakes, they did not feel inclined to do

more work. In light of this first experience, the second cohort was asked openly how much participation they wanted to have. They very honestly expressed that since this was an elective class with fewer credits, they would prefer to focus on the work they could do in class and not having to do at-home assignments.

7.4.2 Reflection followed by action: what changed for the second iteration

Having reflected upon these factors before starting the second iteration, several things were different with the second group of participants. First, having understood that Chilean students would prioritize higher credit, mandatory classes over low-credit electives, I focused on facilitating participants' choices where they were more likely to occur; for instance, we discussed the most sustainable way to approach weekly tasks, and an agreement was reached on forming weekly reading groups rather than submitting individual assignments. We also looked at the topics that were on the schedule for discussion, and changes were made based on their input: they specifically asked, for instance, for a session devoted to LGBTQI+ inclusiveness, for one on non-violent classroom strategies and for videos as part of their study resources, all of which was done and resulted in high engagement. Taking onboard a feedback point from the first group – that there had been no opportunity to bring the workshops' ideas into their classroom - three sessions were devoted to peer teaching to give them an opportunity to put theory into practice. Participants chose their own topics to focus on, selected a contemplative practice to use at the beginning of the lesson and prepared a 30-minute lesson which they taught to their peers.

In summary, in spite of the challenges I have described there was a very high degree of collaboration, the ideas presented by the participants in their individual and shared reflections, their group posters and presentations were fully their own as were the findings made in a) existing violence in classrooms, b) strategies to deal with violence and c) how the perspectives studied might help foster non-violent learning environments. Furthermore, and in line with Pain et al., (2017) vision of AR, participants built positive relations, worked together in collaborative tasks and collaboratively decided on issues.

7.5 Data Collection process and tools

The figure below (Fig.7.4) illustrates the overall design and flow of the research project as it was planned and occurred:

Figure 7.5 – Project research design

7.5.1 Workshops

Within the framework of research methodology, Ørngreen and Levinsen (2017) describe workshops as "an arrangement where group of people learn, acquire new knowledge, perform creative problem-solving, or innovate in relation to a domain-specific issue" (p.71). I found this to be a suitable structure both within the scope of the chosen design and the research context, as participants discussed and generated ideas in order to tackle

specific social and structural issues concerning violence and inequality. Ørngreen and Levinsen (ibid) identify three strands in workshop knowledge, which have both distinct and shared features. To begin with, there is the workshop as a means, wherein participants join with the aim of achieving a specific goal; there are workshops as a practice, wherein participants partake in them and develop protocols that can be used and incorporated into future situations that need them. Finally, there are workshops as a research methodology, which have been specifically designed as part of a research task and aim at producing data that is valid and reliable. As far as this project is concerned, they each offered a distinct yet overlapping perspective with this research project's aim and objectives and as a result, all three approaches were used: they joined the project with the aim of gaining new pedagogical tools, developed protocols through the peer-teaching stage and the sessions has specific tasks that produced valid data.

Although the use of workshops as research methodology is not widespread nor is there a wealth of available literature on the subject, there a couple of examples worth mentioning; Lain (2017) conducted a series of workshops designed to teach learners reading strategies; these workshops, structured in three-stages, began with a short demo lesson followed by student reading time and ending with a teacher-led conference. Although the intended workshops in this study do not involve a demo lesson and are aimed to be peer rather than teacher led, what is useful from Lain's research is the fact that students were given a pre-session assignment, which was used to kickstart the discussion during the workshop itself. This is something this project emulated. Another example that in my view supports workshops as research methods and provides useful insights on their use is a study by Tarr et al's 2018. Their research, which used art-based workshops to explore pain communication, distilled three elements that were relevant for this project, as they correlate with its aims: one is that by using art, they gave voice to those participants for whom the use of spoken or written language is difficult; the second is their view of workshops as a 'research *process* rather than a research *product*' (p.37), and finally is the notion that workshops, if designed that way, can allow for the research to *make* something rather than simply documenting what is unfolding. Using an 'imprography' approach (p.41), they were able to get rich data and a high level of engagement from participants and facilitators alike; imprography, which combines a certain level of both improvisation and choreography, allowed them to step back and observe as the discussion unfolded naturally; at the same the general structure of the workshops time required 'choreographing', their concept for careful planning and structuring. In this project, although the workshops generally unfolded according to their original design and no structural changes were

needed, there were times when participants wanted to take the conversation in a different direction, explore a different perspective that had not been offered, try different ways to record their discussions, such as audio or video recordings of group conversations, or not engage with a particular task.

Ørngreen and Levinsen's review of workshops as research methodology further recognized a series of shared features that make workshops a well-suited research sphere within the context of this project:

- They are of limited duration (as it stands, I had 70 to 90-minute blocks with the participants)
- Participants share a 'common domain' (p.72): this could be having the same job, educational background or areas of interest. In this case, all participants were college students enrolled in an English teaching major.
- Participants were expected to make an active contribution and have an impact on the overall direction the workshops took. This expectation notwithstanding, it is also understood that this was a democratic process from which the participants had the freedom to withdraw.

The workshops were undertaken in a blended pattern, that combined a conceptual and an open format; this means there were pre-designed activities (reading assignment and reflection worksheet) while at the same time providing a space for participants and researcher to continuously negotiate format and content during the iteration of the workshop cycle; the latter allowed for changes to occur spontaneously as unforeseen elements emerged.

Workshops were structured as follows:

1. A pre-session reading assignment that varied depending on the workshop's topic. Such reading was accompanied of a reflection-type worksheet where participants were asked to record answers to specific question, which they were requested to bring to the face-to-face session for sharing and discussion.
2. The workshop itself began with 15 minutes devoted to a contemplative practice. A key element of this research was the inner work done through self-enquiry, which in turn might impact the relationship amongst participants, and this was the rationale for incorporating contemplative practices. Participants were asked if they

desired to partake in this activity, and if they did, instruction was provided for the practice chosen on that day. Examples of these practices were loving-kindness meditation, quiet breathing, silent meditation, journaling, and empathy exercises.

3. 30 minutes were devoted to share and discuss the questions from the pre-workshop reading tasks contained in the assigned worksheet.

4. The remaining of the session was spent on what Kemmis et al., (2014) define as 'communicative action':

"…(a) intersubjective agreement about the ideas and language they use among participants as a basis for (b) mutual understanding of one another's points of view in order to reach (c) unforced consensus about what to do in their particular situation." (p.35)

In other words, what was sought here was for participants to have a dialogue on the topic of the day; this dialogue, facilitated by me at the onset and then carried out by the students themselves, had as its aim to uncover the issues that needed to be addressed, and then reaching a consensus on how and if it could be addressed. While discussion was underway, each group kept a record of the conversation in their chosen format as per the diagram on page 107:

- Digital posters (through Padlet, Jamboard, Zoom whiteboard or any other platform of their choice)
- Written reports
- Oral presentation
- Group recordings
- Any other method of their choice

5. The last 10 minutes were devoted to finalize and deliver their reports by presenting them to other groups.

7.5.2 The Workshops: discussion themes

In line with the ideas presented so far, I will now detail the main themes that were addressed in each workshop. As I have indicated, they began with a contemplative practice, which was followed by a discussion based on their pre-session writing and

reflection; subsequently, participants engaged in a conversation aimed at identifying specific instances of violence and exclusion, and ways to challenge them. I designed questions that in my view might help facilitate the discussion if needed, but otherwise, participants explored the issue on their own and were free to use their own ideas. The structure below were meant only as a guideline for the discussion step; as mentioned in the explanation of 'imprography' earlier, the objective was to provide a wide, free space emerging ideas as long as they aligned with the main theme, which I did monitor.

It should be noted that insofar as the points of view presented is concerned, I aimed at providing balanced perspectives, that also, to the best of my knowledge are absent from the Chilean curriculum; this included works by bell hooks, Paulo Freire, South American and African indigenous scholars, Zen Buddhism as well as non-Western academics. It should also be mentioned that what I have provided below is a brief overview of each workshop: the main theme for each, a link to the reading materials and reflection worksheet and the contemplative exercise done on that particular day. For further details on each specific workshop please refer to appendix 2 on page 273 for the first iteration, and appendix 3 on page 278 for the second. The appendices contain the exact questions discussed and tasks done in each session of both iterations.

a. First iteration – Universidad de O'Higgins (UOH)

Workshop 1: Research training and introduction of key concepts

1. Participants discussed aims and rationale for the project, have read PLS, consent form and privacy notice. They also discussed what action research is, their role as co-creators of knowledge / discuss my role as a co-participant, and d PAR as a practice-changing practice.
2. They discussed key terms to be used during the project. They were also given an overview of the project, how the workshops would be structured and emphasized the fact that although there was a basic structure in place, the workshops were a place of self and collective expression, and that in the end, it is these that should guide the conversation.
3. Finally, they were tasked with creating a poster illustrating the violence present in their classrooms, and how they would address it.

Workshop 2

Theme: What is non-violence?

Reading / worksheet: See appendix "Week 2 Readings" retrieved here:
https://tinyurl.com/cjnczfks

Contemplative exercise: Loving-kindness meditation

Workshop 3

Theme: Interdependency

Reading / worksheet: See appendix "Week 3 Readings" retrieved here:
https://tinyurl.com/4v57vk4a

Contemplative exercise: Emergency empathy

Workshop 4

Theme: Non-violent communication

Reading / Worksheet: See appendix "Week 4 Readings" retrieved here:
https://tinyurl.com/yc3hkbxa

Contemplative exercises: Turning judgement into observation

Workshop 5

Theme: Mindfulness and Inclusiveness

Reading: / Worksheet: See appendix "Week 5 Readings" retrieved here:
https://tinyurl.com/55aen5hv

Contemplative exercises: Compassion practice

Workshop 6

Theme: Democratic education and shifting the power balance

Reading / worksheet: See appendix "Week 6 Readings" retrieved here:
https://tinyurl.com/vvb7xsrf

Contemplative exercise: Lection Divina on a text of their choice

Workshop 7

Theme: Final discussion and feedback on the workshops

Participants provided feedback on the sessions answering the following questions in groups:

1. Has the exploration of inclusive classroom practices affected the ways in which you view inequality and structural violence and how these might be addressed? Be as specific as you can.

2. To what extent have these workshops supported your awareness of discrimination and exclusion or helped you develop strategies for dealing with these? Be as specific as you can.

3. Has there been any change to the way you see yourself or your relationship with others as a result of the contemplative practices we have done? Explain in as much detail as you can.

4. What are the challenges you might face in implementing the ideas and approaches discussed throughout this workshop series?
   (For instance: contemplative pedagogy, non-violence education, interconnectedness, non-violent communication, democratic classroom practices, etc.)

Participants later discussed the following:

How can these workshops be better? Create a poster that shows your ideas for improvement in the following way:
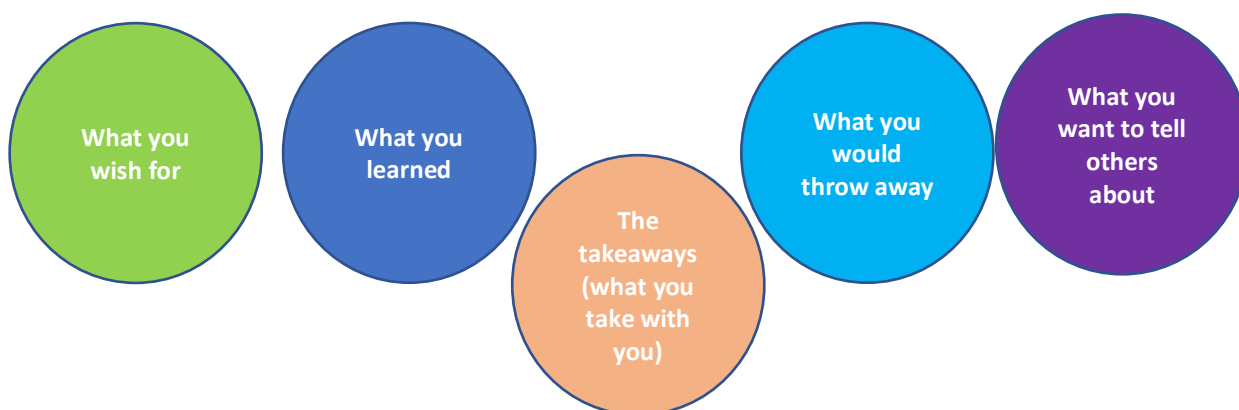
Figure 7.6 – Cohort 1 Feedback points

They were asked to present their findings in a poster that resembled the picture shown in Fig.7.6, which was shared with them. The task was to present their feedback covering the same points as the illustration, though they could choose a different diagram; some drew a tree, others drew a train and others a person, and all of them presented their ideas on each of the key points which are clearly labelled in Fig.7.5 above.

Credit: Annette Flavel

Figure 7.7 – Feedback fairy

Retrieved from https://www.emilybrysonelt.com/feedback-comes-in-many-forms-but-the-best-is-a-fairy/

b. Second iteration – Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaiso (PUCV)

As explained earlier, this second iteration consisted of a 14-week elective course, divided in two stages: 4 weeks of independent study done online and 10 weeks in person, each 70 minutes long. This was due my teaching commitments at the University of Glasgow, which ended once the Chilean academic year had already begun. The university in Chile and I came to an agreement on the best way to proceed, and thus came to this arrangement. The weekly content and themes were as follows (the links will take the reader to the reading materials and worksheet used by the participants):

Week 1: Nonviolence
https://tinyurl.com/fptkevwd

Week 2: Indigenous perspectives on nonviolence
https://tinyurl.com/wh7bcf65

Week 3: Cosmopolitanism and interculturality
https://tinyurl.com/499r2dpj

Week 4: Contemplative Pedagogy and Mindfulness

https://tinyurl.com/39pm255v

Beginning on Week 5, when the in-person stage started, each week's reading was accompanied by a series of questions inviting the participants to reflect on the weekly topic. This reflection was then submitted through the university Moodle and comments were provided. Although this was ungraded work, it was expected on my part to provide feedback as an acknowledgement to students' personal reflections.

Week 5:

This session was devoted to getting to know each other, as most participants did not know one another. The first task was to discuss the following topics with different people:

Career plans	Reason why you took this class.	Interests / hobbies
Areas of teaching you are interested in	Cool life experiences (countries you have travelled to, something unusual you've done etc.)	Things you like to learn / study about (cooking, making movies, etc.)
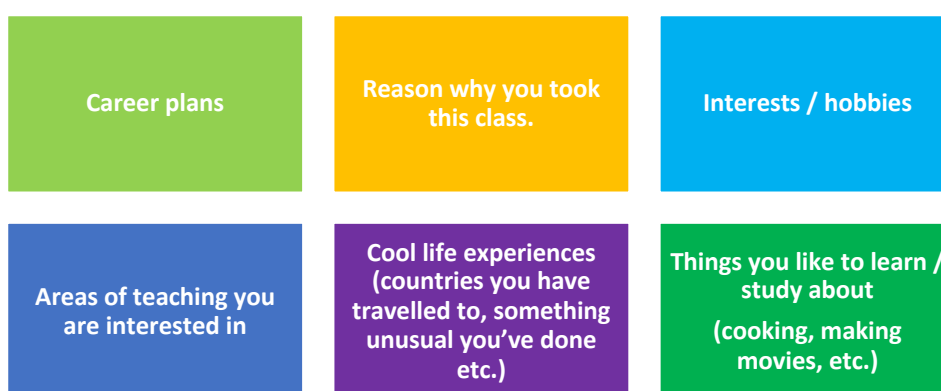
They later discussed the degree of participation they wanted to have concerning the reading lists, class activities and topics of discussion, and received general information about the course

Week 6:

Theme: Nonviolent Communication

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Pm2lkL8CFbyzvFBiOSmf11NdfKFsbEad

Contemplative exercise: Developing empathy (peer interview)

Week 7

Theme: Fostering democratic learning environments

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_FIMinofJeM_RlH7bFbOogaz9WdmvOjP

Contemplative exercise: Compassion practice

Week 8

Theme: Feminist Pedagogy

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1v2nvp24b5mYrKfyXymagz0-LTa8sx1Ch

Contemplative exercise: Not putting people into boxes

Week 9:

Theme: Gender / sexual equality and inclusiveness

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1267OJ8efnMoFIPGpD2ecbtIdu2d1HH8P

Contemplative exercise: emergency empathy

Week 10

Theme: Nonviolent strategies in education

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1rIWpUySwMc8FUR_waUPUg5-4zWSi8LjC

Contemplative exercise: High and Lows

Weeks 11, 12 and 13

These 3 weeks were devoted to peer-teaching. Participants filled out a survey expressing the theme they wanted to focus on choosing first one of the following themes:

1. Cosmopolitanism and intercultural communication
2. Indigenous knowledge and interconnectedness
3. Nonviolent communication (compassion, empathy and non-judgement)
4. Sexual and gender inclusive education

They were then put into groups according to their choice of theme, and asked to prepare a 30-minute lesson using a template designed by me (see Appendix 4).

There were six groups in total, with two groups presenting each week. The last ten minutes of each session were used for general feedback and comments from the participants to the presenting peers.

7.5.3 Additional data collection methods – participant diaries

The use of participant diaries has a long history in health and social sciences research (Jacelon and Imperio, 2005; Milligan and Bartlett, 2019). Yet the above researchers agree

on the fact that, regardless of the rich source of data they have proven to be, they have not given much prominence within qualitative research. I argue that the above notwithstanding and given the nature of this project, they might provide the level of personal insight and detail that might not be captured through researcher's observations and field notes or group reports.

From a methodological perspective, a diary is a research technique that whereby participants reflect on and record what everyone "considers relevant and important in his or her own life, for instance, events, activities, interactions, impressions or feelings. It is usually structured in some way" (Rokkan et al., 2015, p.203). Milligan and Bartlett (2015, 2019) identify two kinds of diaries: unsolicited and solicited, the first being kept voluntarily and the second whereupon participants *are asked* to reflect on and keep a record of their thoughts or/and experience surrounding a specific theme or occurrence. In the case of this project, participants used the latter of the two for two reasons: to begin with, as Jaceron and Imperio (2005) illustrate, solicited diaries are more apt when there is a research agenda. However loosely the narrative might be, the diary entries will correspond to themes constructed by the researcher rather than the writers themselves. Secondly, because the aim of the diaries is to improve our understanding of everyone's thought process and paradigm shifts if they occur, solicited entries as prompted by the researcher with a plan and aim in mind is more befitting.

The questions participants were asked to reflect on are contained within each week's worksheet and varied depending on the topic. The questions can be accessed through the links provided under each weekly workshop, in section 7.6.2 above.

There are two important considerations to keep in mind in relation to the use of diaries in this project; the first is the timing and the second is the format. Regarding timing, Milligan and Bartlett argue that keeping the entries as close to real time as possible reduces 'recall bias and retrospective censorship' (2019, p.2). Participants were asked to complete their diary entry immediately after the completion of that week's reading.

In regard to format, Jacelon and Imperio (2005) note that in order to keep written entries participants must have certain abilities, specifically literacy and physical capabilities. While it is true that I was working with trainee teachers, all of whom know how to read and write, they might not have been physically able, willing or particularly inclined to or adept at using the written language form. As I have detailed throughout this

thesis, one of the objectives of this research was to democratize the learning space, and in line with that it was important to allow participants to explore how they were most comfortable using language. Hence, they had different choices for keeping their diary entries: in writing, as a voice entry, as a diagram or illustration, as a video reflection, as a scrapbook entry, or by any other mean of their choice. This ensured that not only they were choosing a form of expression according to their own interests and inclinations, but also that anyone with a disability could select a format that suited them. In the end, none of the students had a physical disability but they appreciated the range of choices given: the submissions included individual or group audio recordings, video reflections, post-it notes, hand-written journal entries, Word documents, and Haiku poems.[35]

7.5.4 Group Reports

As detailed earlier, each group of participants was asked to keep a running record of their discussion in a format of their choosing; during the initial information session, they were presented with a range of choices – shown below - and they also had the freedom to choose their own format. For each one of the options given, participants were shown either photographs or videos that illustrated how to do each one:

- Digital posters
- Written reports
- Oral presentation
- Group recording

At the end of each session, groups of participants were given 10-15 minutes to finalise their report and share it with others. Given the limited time for each workshop, I originally believed that allocating time for the actual discussion and identification of the problem was more important than using the time to present their findings to the class, since these findings would already be documented in their running record. However, upon further reading and discussion with my supervisors, I realized that opening the space for sharing the results of their discussion, analysing data together and finding out how their findings would contribute to one another was an essential part of the research process. While we could not regularly engage in a shared analysis due to time constraints, the groups did

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[35] Haiku is a style of Japanese poem consisting of 17 syllables, divided in 3 lines of 5,7 and 5 syllabes respectively. Source: https://www.britannica.com/art/haiku

present their work and results of their conversation to each other. These came in the way of digital posters, paper posters and oral presentations.

7.6 Research site and participants

The first iteration of this project was carried out with a group of students enrolled at Universidad de O'Higgins (UOH) in Rancagua, Chile. Twenty-eight students signed up originally, but the average number of participants was 13 (the number ranged from 10 to 16 with a different number each week). The participants were 4th-year students doing a degree in English Teaching; some of them had teaching experience, either as a Teaching Assistant or because of their practicum, but in general terms their in-classroom experience was limited. There were seven female participants and nine males; most of them came from rural communities from nearby areas and attended university tuition-free due to lack of financial resources. [36] Their ages ranged from 22 to 25, and there was a single mother within the group. Several of them held part-time jobs in different industries, from grocery store and video-game store clerks to private tutors.

The choice of participants was based on two factors: the first of these was their expected English proficiency, as most of the material for the workshops was not available in Spanish and I did not have the time or resources to have them translated; fourth-year English majors in Chile are expected to have developed their language skills to a B2 level, which on paper made this choice of participants viable considering the amount of reading involved. Taking into consideration that the participants were majoring in English Teaching, the university requested that the workshops were also conducted in English to provide students with further opportunity to practice, and in fact all the work they submitted was also in English by choice. The second criterion was the fact that at this stage in their degree students are taking methodology-oriented classes and thus the workshops presented an opportunity for them to reflect on their future teaching practice and the type of classroom they want to create.

We met eight times in a period ranging from April 4th from June 28th, 2022; the first meeting was an informative session that provided an overall description of the project

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[36] As of 2021, Chilean legislation established that those individuals who belong to homes within the 60% lowest income bracket can attend university tuition-free. Source: https://portal.beneficiosestudiantiles.cl/gratuidad/lo-que-debes-saber#:~:text=En%202021%20tendrán%20derecho%20a,de%20pregrado%20con%20modalidad%20presencial.

and where students were formally asked if they wanted to join; those who did were given the information documents and signed the consent form. As mentioned before, 28 students consented to participate, with one formally dropping out and another joining the week immediately after. It should be noted that this particular cohort had never met in person; they had begun their university studies in 2019 right before the October riots in Chile; the level of damage to public infrastructure and the amount of daily marches and demonstrations were such that the government decided to move all educational activities online; this decision coincided with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, which means that since 2019 until 2022, these students had only received online classes and had never met face to face. Before beginning the project, I received a warning from the department head that this situation and the ensuing lack of human contact had led to a high level of dissatisfaction amongst the students concerning the overall quality of their higher education experience; for these students, such dissatisfaction had been expressed in letters of complaint, one of which (anonymised) was shared with me to illustrate these students were a particularly 'angry' group, in the department head's words. She had shared this letter as she had been shaken up by the aggressiveness, and said this group could perhaps benefit from a project like this.

I should note here two things: having taught online during the pandemic, having witnessed its impact as my own school closed for months and having discussed this issue with many students over the 2020-2021 period, this was not something unexpected or new and I felt I understood the students' disappointment. The second thing I will note is that although these students did not know each other in person, and that this had been their first face-to-face experience at the university, I found them eager to engage with each other, with the project itself and with me and by the end they expressed how they felt like a community. I was given seven weeks to work with these participants within a 14-week period, which meant we met every other week for the first semester; the workshops were embedded into a course called "Learning about English-speaking cultures"; this was the only arrangement I could reach with the university, who liked the project and felt it would be beneficial for the students but could not give me more time.

The second iteration of workshops was done at the Universidad Católica de Valparaiso (PUCV) between September and December 2022; unlike the first iteration, where the workshops were embedded into an existing class, this time the university asked me to use the overall theme and content of the initial workshops, turn them into a full 14-week course, and to make this part of the university's curriculum for English-teaching

majors. The class was titled "Radical Pedagogies, Non-violence and Change" (see appendix 1, page 267) and was offered as an elective for students majoring in English teaching. We organized a presentation of the course to prospective students in May 2022, after which 25 students enrolled. The final number of participants was 22. This group was composed of 14 males and 8 females, who presented a more geographically mixed cohort; while some of them came from nearby rural areas, most of them came from urban centers. There were a single mother and a single father, and two students (one male and one female) who openly identified as non-heterosexual. Several of them worked part-time as well, with a couple even having their own small businesses to support themselves: one sold candy around the university and the other made and sold his own embroidery. A key difference with the first cohort was that since this was an elective class open to anyone, not only the age range was wider (19 to 25) but also their experiences; there were first-year students who had never taught and senior-year students who were already interning at public schools and with a wealth of teaching experience. This group showed a very high level of cultural capital and political awareness in comparison to the first group; the reflections they submitted showed knowledge of Marx and Paulo Freire, the works of Chilean scientist Humberto Maturana, feminist scholars and Bourdieu, as examples, something that was not evident either on the conversations with or the reflections submitted by the earlier cohort. Unlike the first group, and because of how the course was set up, the educational experience of these students was different; while some of them had been affected by the pandemic, not all of them had, and I found the first-year students were particularly enthusiastic about being involved in a research project such as this.

Because at PUVC the course extended to 14 workshops instead of seven (albeit with shorter sessions), the design also changed; the first four weeks of the course were entirely online and the remaining 10 in person. Given that the number of reflections submitted by the first group of participants declined substantially as the project went on, and since this group met weekly rather than bi-weekly, I decided to eliminate the weekly reflections element for the in-presence part of the course. However, I did maintain the reading and reflection assignments for the online portion of the course; the reading, upon the participants' suggestion, was done in groups using a jigsaw approach. The extended schedule allowed me also to explore other dimensions that were not discussed in depth the first time but that participants had hinted at, such as inclusiveness from the perspective of sexual orientation and gender, the incorporation of feminist perspectives, and exposure to practical applications of non-violence education; all of this was added for the second iteration, as was time for short, micro-teaching sessions. These allowed participants to

focus on a specific topic we had discussed and plan a classroom activity designed to raise awareness of non-violence and inclusiveness anchored in their chosen perspective, which included non-violent communication, interculturality, compassion and humanity.

7.7 Approach and rationale to data analysis

As illustrated in chapter 1, section 1.3, one of the aims of this research study was to identify and develop practices to address lack of inclusiveness in Chilean classrooms, as well as identify behaviors, forms of expression and relational factors that might produce or reproduce inequality, such unequal power dynamics, discrimination or other forms of Othering. This aim lies squarely within values and assumptions of the qualitative paradigm, in that this research sought to interrogate current pedagogical practices, gain new understanding and generate new, contextualized knowledge (Braun and Clarke, 2022).

I chose to approach the process of data analysis through reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2022) for two reasons. The first was the variety of data sets used, as well as the sheer volume of data gathered throughout the project; the second reason for adopting reflexive TA was precisely the level of critical reflection required to make sense of the data. To illustrate this, I will note that through both iterations of the workshops, the data sets came in three different formats: written individual reflections, group discussions (many of which were recorded in video or audio format), and students' reports on their group discussions, which was usually submitted in the form of a digital or paper poster. This resulted in a total of thirty-three written and thirteen digital posters, twenty-six audio recordings which include individual audio journals, recordings of group discussions with their subsequent transcriptions; eighty-six individual written reflections – which included three Japanese haikus – and three video journal entries. Taking all the above factors into account, I deemed reflexive TA to be the most adequate approach for analyzing data.

Once all the data was collected, I proceeded to transcribe the recordings for each individual submission as well as those made during the face-to-face discussions. The transcripts themselves were coded as I looked for patterns and themes, and each entry inserted onto MAXQDA for organization and grouping. As per Braun and Clarke' (2006, 2022) suggestions, the data was re-coded and themes developed and revised through my own questioning and reflection to finally proceed to create the themes. Appendix 5 (page 284) provides examples of what a coding sheet looked like as it progressed. The first

picture in Appendix 5 shows coding of an individual written reflection submitted, while the second shows coding of a poster done by a group of participants.

Following Mihas (2023), I treated thematic analysis more as an analytical strategy than a method. Rather than containing a fix set of rules, reflexive TA of an inductive nature, such as what I used in this study, allows the researcher to intertwine different types of data to "theorize relationships between individuals, structures and processes and not simply describe a situation" (ibid, p.302). In this study, such relationships have been both theorized *and* described through an inductive perspective (Thomas, 2006). Unlike deductive analysis, which requires the researcher to corroborate if the data obtained is consistent with previously held assumptions, inductive analysis "refers to approaches that primarily use detailed readings of raw data to derive concepts, themes, or a model through interpretations made from the raw data by an evaluator or researcher" (ibid, p.2). As I have noted in section 9.1, I began this project with certain assumptions about the main themes and concepts informing it; as these assumptions shifted, I strived for interpreting the data in its raw form rather and derive what I could from it, rather than trying to fit into my own preconceived narratives.

Even though the data was collected through different modes and media, the approach to analysis itself remained the same. Each individual piece of data was examined on its own, and each serving as a springboard to identify and develop codes and themes, but the approach itself did not change. The results presented in chapter 8 have been therefore consolidated and discussed by theme rather than by mode of presentation.

7.7.1 The process of reflexive TA

Braun and Clarke (2022) streamlined the process of reflexive TA into six phases:

1. Familiarization with the data sets
2. Coding the data collected
3. Doing an initial generation of themes
4. Developing and reviewing the themes
5. Reflecting, defining and naming the themes
6. Writing up the data

In the case of this study, the large amounts of data and different kinds of data sets meant both the familiarization and coding were lengthy processes that involved a several iterations until I was able to develop, review and redefine the themes. Such development and refinement occurred as a result of a bottom-up approach (Braun and Clarke, 2017), which, as I mentioned in the earlier section, allowed me to uncover patterns and engage in meaning-making rather than fit the data into pre-existing theories. However, I will note that I originally began coding using a *top-down* approach by attempting to fit participants' data into pre-defined themes. This approached shifted, as much of the data that came in did not fit into the particular narratives set forth by these *a priori* themes. Many participants produced data that did not necessarily fit those themes but was directly related to the research questions; some of the reflections submitted were in formats that made it difficult to classify them within a specific pre-determined category, such as aforementioned example of haikus. More importantly, it became evident that I was looking at the data through my own researcher bias and previous assumptions, rather than as a body of data which needed to be made sense of in a completely raw manner. I should also note that although Braun and Clarke's work, particularly their 2022 practical guide to TA was extremely useful, the six stages they describe were challenging to implement and it took several attempts; for instance, the initial top-down deductive approach contained about four dozen codes, while the process of re-familiarization with the data using a bottom-up mode produced 715 codes.

MAXQDA was used to aid in organizing the data; specifically, its feature called "Creative coding" was utilized extensively. This feature allowed me to visualize several different codes at a glance and move them around so the ones that are more logically connected can be put together. This tool was particularly useful, as the visualization of different codes allowed me to rethink, re-develop and refine the codes and themes (see next page, figure 7.7 and 7.8 as examples).
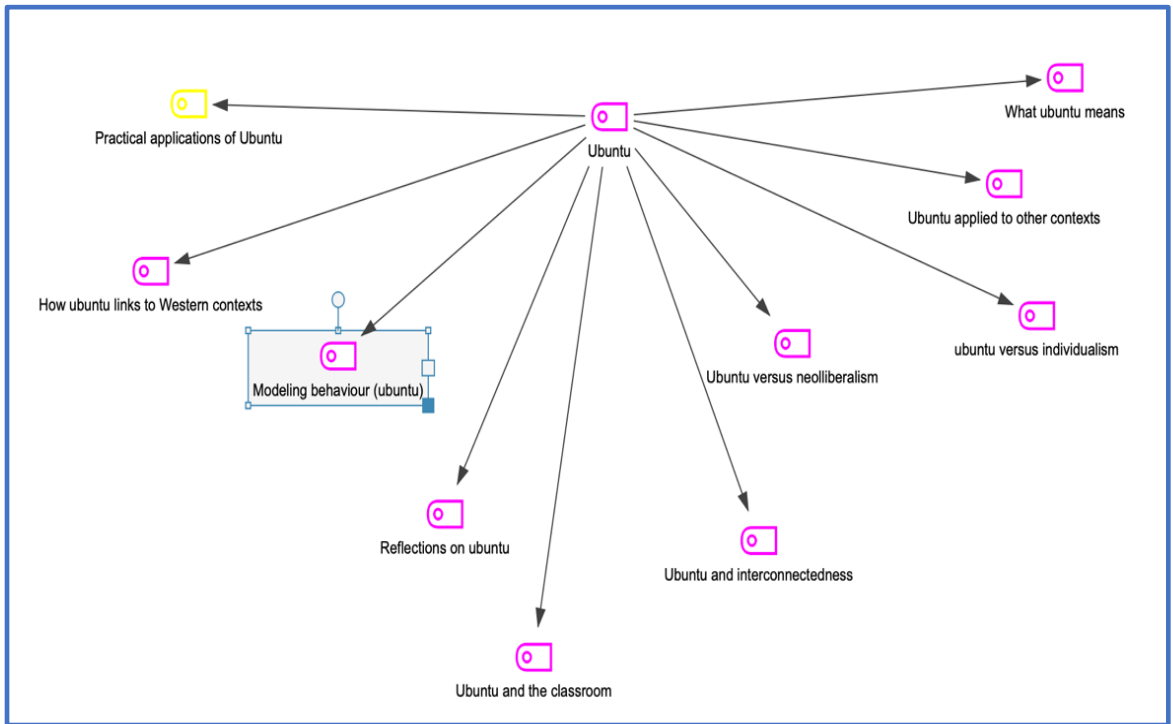
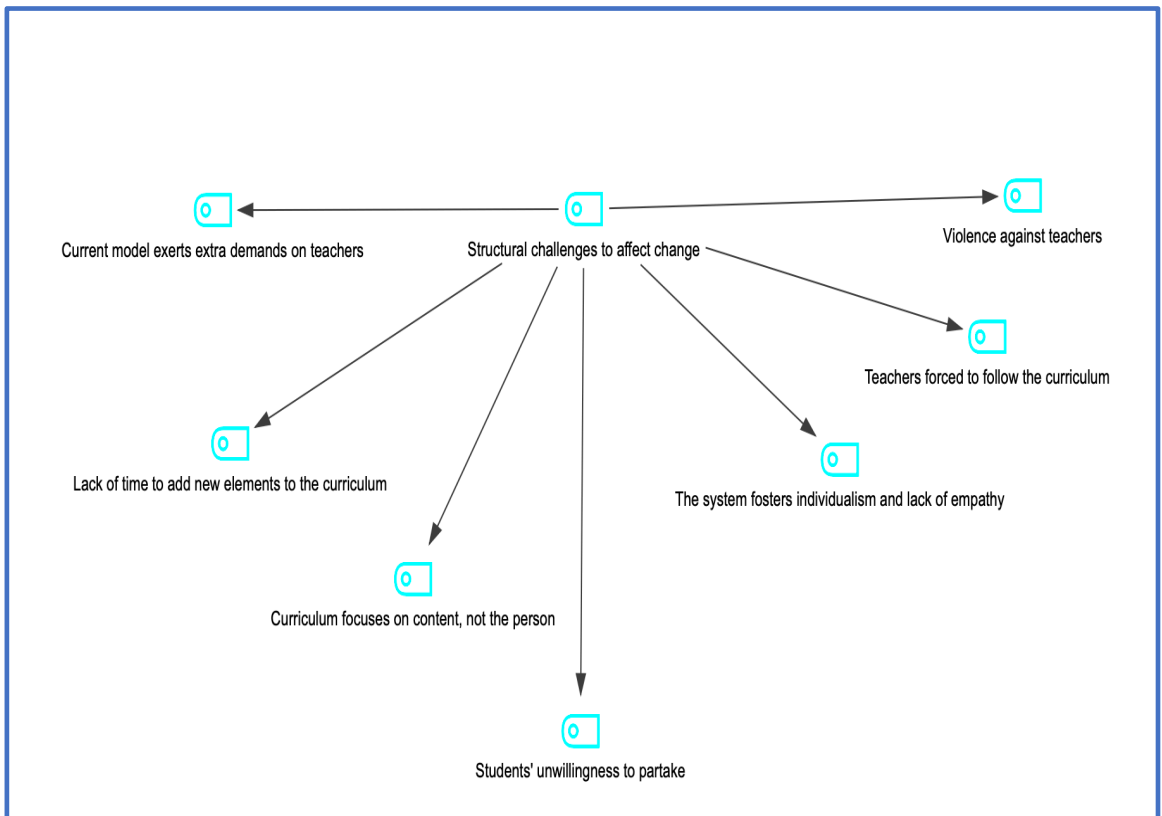**Figure 7.8– Using Creative Coding feature in MAXQDA**

Figure 7.9 – Creative Coding feature in MAXQDA - 2

Chapter 8 describes in detail the main themes and sub-themes that were developed as part of the process of conducting TA but, briefly, these were:

Themes	Sub-themes	Examples of codes included
The causes and manifestations of violence	Violence as a practice of Othering	-Violence as othering
	Cultural violence expressed through language	-Violence through cultural agreements
	Violence as a manifestation of structural inequalities	-Teachers' comparisons as discrimination
	How violence has become normalized in Chilean education	- Violence and power imbalance
Non-violent approaches and perspectives	Nonviolent communication and its applications	-Being aware of cultural differences
	Intercultural practices and approaches	-Practicing nonviolence in order to teach nonviolence
	Everything, Everywhere All at Once: developing interconnectedness	- Inclusiveness requires nonjudgement
	Challenges in the practice of nonviolence	-Compassion and attention to individual differences
		-What we do impacts other people
From theory to practice: a pedagogy of inclusiveness through non-violence	The classroom as a community	-Individualism versus collaboration in the classroom
	Education as a democratic practice	-Democratic pedagogical practices
	Contemplative education beyond the practice of mindfulness	-Democratic versus neoliberal values in education.
	Challenges to the practice of contemplative exercises	

Table 2 – Examples of themes, sub-themes and codes

These themes are not only relevant to the research questions, but they are also integrated within the main foci of this project, which are nonviolence and inclusiveness; furthermore, the analysis and discussion of the themes in chapters 8 and 9, as well as their relationship with the research question provides us with a deeper, richer understanding of each of one.

In short, I chose an inductive approach to reflective TA based on the types and volume of the data sets as well as the depth of familiarity needed with the data to derive useful discussion points. This proved to be an appropriate choice, as the themes and sub-themes developed provided rich material related to the research questions and overall aims of the project.

7.8 Ethical Considerations

This section will outline some of the important ethical considerations that were taken into account while conducting this study; I will focus on three main points: possible risks and mitigations, possible distress and retention and disposal of data.

The project used action research to explore the use non-violent approaches and practices such as journaling, meditation, and nonviolent communication in the Chilean educational context. As a consequence, the project had the wellbeing of the participants at its heart, and the risk of harm or upset to participants was thus minimized. Moreover, I am a Chilean national with in-depth knowledge and awareness of the context of higher education in Chile and thus had awareness of potential context-specific challenges and strategies to prevent or redress them. That being said, however, there was no way to anticipate the potential consequences of conversations on marginalization and discrimination could have; thus, the possible risks and mitigations that were considered at the beginning of the project are discussed below (Table 2, next page)

Risk	Mitigation
Participants feel they have to remain in the project because their attendance or grades may be affected otherwise.	Ensuring that the research process is co-constructed and that it takes on board participants' needs and suggestions; anticipating alternatives for the students to take instead of the project's workshops, should they decide to drop out of the project (and giving clear information on these on the PLS) so participation can be entirely voluntary.
Participants are upset/distressed by topics discussed.	Designing the PAR workshops with the participants' wellbeing and safety at their heart; having close links to staff at the Chilean university whom he can tun for suggestions and support; discussing access to the local university support services; identifying other specific forms of support required locally (e.g., local suicide prevention organizations) should this be needed; contacting his UofG supervisors immediately in case of concern to discuss other strategies of support.
Risk of distress to the researcher arising from any of the topics discussed during the PAR workshops	The researcher is an experienced yoga teacher and regularly practices meditation and other forms of self-care. Should he feel the need for support, however, he will be able to contact the supervisors and/or the PGR director to discuss his needs and identify other forms of support available to him.
Covid-19 restrictions prevent fieldwork in person	The researcher is employed p/t at a number of UK further and higher education institutions and is therefore experienced in the use of online tools for workshop delivery. While in person workshops are preferred, online alternatives are available.

Table 3 – Ethical considerations and mitigations

In terms of possible distress on the participants, I could foresee two possible sources; one was through the practice of self-enquiry, which can sometimes unearth emotions such as grief or anger. As a trained meditation and yoga instructor, I felt equipped to handle these if they had come through dialogue and assistance in the practice itself, or with the help of university staff (more specifically the Head of the English Department, who has shown a keen interest in the project and knows the students well). Only one of these situations arose, in which a participant expressed his anger at those who systematically and aggressively excluded people from sexual minorities (he himself

identified as gay). I approached this situation with care and took time to answer this participant as empathetically as possible, and in a manner that encouraged him to continue with the workshops, which he did. At the end of the project, he expressed how attending the workshops had helped him understand how nonviolence could help him deal with issues of discrimination in the classroom, and he admitted that by being more empathetic he felt his desire to express his anger outwardly had subsided and that he wanted to engage with these injustices through a different lens.

The second source of distress might have possibly arisen because of the topics being discussed, given the socio-political polarization that exists in Chile at the moment, and which might have translated into classroom relations. In my experience as a Chilean and as someone who worked there for nearly 15 years, discussions around social / economic / educational / political differences can be very heated. However, I thought that the way to address it here is through the research project itself: the project sought to develop ways to work more closely and in greater harmony with others, so if there had been *dis*-harmony, my first approach in the face of distress would have been to resort to dialogue and working together to overcome that to everyone's satisfaction. Having failed that, I would have resorted to the university staff for support as described earlier; universities in Chile have counsellors and social workers as well, and this could be a third solution if students need more specialized support. Fortunately, none of these situations came to pass.

Finally, in regards to retention and disposal of data, and according to the university's Code of Good Practice and Data Management Support, all research data was digitized and stored in the university's SharePoint; this eliminates the need for reformatting or migrating data onto different formats, or loss due to damage. Any paper records were stored securely in a locked cabinet until it is time for disposal. Any digital records will be permanently deleted from the cloud and laptop at the appropriate time. As far as personal data is concerned, personal data was collected in the way of consent forms and PLS; additionally, and although formally anonymized, some personal data was provided in the video recordings made by students, as well as some of the audio recordings, as participants used their first names. Furthermore, some pieces of information revealed during the workshops, group reports and journal submission inadvertently makes them identifiable. However, none of the data that makes students identifiable has been shared publicly nor it is available to anyone besides myself. All research data will be kept

for 10 years in the university digital cloud (SharePoint) and the appropriate digital repositories.

7.9 Summary

As documented by Kemmis et al., (2014), educational action research has been used in the past to redress several issues relevant to this project, most particularly the exclusion experienced by minorities or historically disadvantaged groups through either pedagogical or curricular practices: women, indigenous groups and poor students. Action research offers additional dimensions in that it enhances and amplifies the degree of collaboration between researcher(s) and participants, who share a collective responsibility for the identification of the social problem being addresses, the actions taken to redress it and the consequences of this collective effort (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005; Kemmis et al., 2014; Schatzki, 2002). I argue that, based on the antecedents provided above, this approach offered the very opportunity to create a socially inclusive, democratic and empowering ecosystem that can assist in addressing the issues I have described.

In conclusion, the pursuit of the research objectives and aims were explored through an action research approach; I chose this methodology for several reasons; to begin with, this approach fits within my own worldview and the research paradigms that encapsulate it; secondly, this research was done with the intention of democratizing participation with people that have experienced different degrees of exclusion by means of discrimination or aggression. In other words, through the exertion of any form of violence that creates a sense of 'otherness'. Action Research tackles these issues by involving participants directly, as I have delineated in section 2, by turning research into a collective endeavour of addressing common concerns while striving for flourishing as a community. And yet a third reason is that, based on the three pedagogical perspectives I have presented to support this project - critical pedagogy, non-violent approaches to education and decolonial knowledge systems such as those used by indigenous communities – this approach is the one that more closely allows for me as a researcher to offer these perspectives for analysis and for the participants to use their own collaborative findings to improve their practice in issues of inequality and inclusion.

Finally, as documented by Kemmis et al., (2014), educational action research has been used in the past to redress several issues relevant to this project, most particularly the exclusion experienced by minorities or historically disadvantaged groups through either

pedagogical or curricular practices. PAR, however, offers additional dimensions in that it enhances and amplifies the degree of collaboration between researcher(s) and participants, who share a collective responsibility for the identification of the social problem being addresses, the actions taken to redress it and the consequences of this collective effort (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005; Kemmis et al., 2014; Schatzki, 2002). Furthermore, and in a point that is at the core of my choice of research design is the way Kemmis (2009, p.463) described PAR: as more concerned with producing necessary social changes than with producing knowledge in the way it is traditionally understood within the academy.

In line with the principles of PAR, this research involved the collaborative exploration of practices that perpetuate inequality, promote / encourage social divide or in any way allow for the existence of social violence in the way of homophobia, sexism, racism or classism. As these practices revealed themselves through reflection and examination, and as participants thought about their social context, their roles and actions in it and how they relate to others within that context, they were collectively analysed, documented and shared.

CHAPTER 8: FINDINGS

8.1 Introduction

This chapter has been organized to provide a logical narrative not only to the personal and collective stories of participants, but also to how the study itself unfolded.

The chapter begins by giving a detailed account of the assumptions held by participants at the start of the project in two main areas; first I will discuss these assumptions and ensuing paradigm shifts in relation to the key issues that are part of this study: on violence, its causes and manifestations; on non-violence and inclusiveness, and on the project itself. Following that, I will discuss how these assumptions shifted to varying degrees as the project advanced. It will then analyze the data gathered according to the themes that were identified through the coding process; as Braun and Clarke (2022) point out, I have attempted to the best of my ability to identify themes that represent "an intersection of the researcher's theoretical assumptions…and the data themselves" (p.595)

These are:

a. The causes and manifestations of violence

b. Non-violent approaches and perspectives

c. From theory to practice: a pedagogy of inclusiveness through non-violence

d. Challenges to the implementation of non-violent approaches

8.2 Previous assumptions on (non)violence and inclusiveness

Let me begin with a flash-forward: at the very end of the study, as the second cohort of participants and I were getting ready to bid farewell after 14 weeks of enriching collaboration, I asked participants if there was anything they would like to comment on concerning the project. One of them asked: "Did you think we thought this would a hippie course about pacifism?" and made the peace sign with his fingers. After the collective laughter, I smiled and nodded in affirmation. This short exchange encapsulated not only the participants' but my own assumptions concerning what the study would be about and how these assumptions had transformed over the course of nearly 6 months. On one hand, as I will note in this chapter, some of the participants came into this course because they thought it was about pacifism; others were not sure, as admitted later, and I did not know if the project would elicit any participation at all, let alone data that could shed light on the research questions. These are the areas this chapter will unveil.

Prior to the beginning of the study, several participants thought of nonviolence as "non-fighting" or "avoiding violence of any form". In other words, a concept more closely associated with pacifism, which Howes (2013) describes as "the ideological assertion that war and violence should be rejected in political and personal life" (p. 427). This is clearly seen in the following comment:

> *"I thought that non-violence meant something totally different. I thought it was something like hippie-peace and love philosophy. But now I think that non-violence is a way of facing situations that we, as teachers, will face every day. Inequality will affect our students in a negative way, it will shape their behaviour and having the tools to approach in a non-violent can mark the difference for them to express and communicate what they are facing" (PUCV10)*

They were not the only one to believe that non-violence could not be 'active'. Participants PUCV9 and UOH3 shared this view as they began the course:

> *"Before I thought that non-violence was a really passive answer to problems, like just turning the other cheek"* - PUCV9

and

> *"I had a very general understanding of these concepts. For example, I thought that violence was physical and verbal aggression and that non-violence was the opposite, like not physically or verbally attack someone else"* - UOH3

Historically, however, nonviolence has involved, as participants discovered, a committed engagement in political action while refusing to take part in violent acts. This is exemplified in some of the historical events I have mentioned in earlier chapters; Gandhi's *satyagraha* (1924) for instance, which served as the ideological foundation for the Indian independence movement, calls for direct noncompliance to those exerting violence upon us through committed resistance, and in further analyzing it, Ojha (n.d.) [37]described it as "a weapon of conflict resolution". On his famous speech during the March on Washington in 1963, Civil Rights leader John Lewis highlighted that the struggle for civil rights was a non-violent revolution and that "we will take matters into our own hands and create a source of power, outside of any national structure, that could and would assure us a victory." (p.1). Lewis, who was nearly beaten to death by the police during the March on Selma, famously mentioned years later on Twitter:

> *"Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble".[38]*

Finally, renown Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh (2020) founded what he called "Engaged Buddhism" at the height of the American war in Vietnam; he expressed: "out of

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[37] Retrieved here: https://www.gandhiashramsevagram.org/gandhi-articles/relevance-of-satyagraha-as-a-weapon-of-conflict-resolution.php

[38] Retrieved here: https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2020/07/18/rep-john-lewis-most-memorable-quotes-get-good-trouble/5464148002/

love and the willingness to act selflessly, strategies, tactics, and techniques for a nonviolent struggle arise naturally" and "nonviolent action, born of the awareness of suffering and nurtured by love, is the most effective way to confront adversity" (p.1). In other words, what each of these positions share in addition to the strong spiritual element (Gandhi was Hindu, Lewis was a Christian and Thich Nhat Hanh a Buddhist monk) is the view of nonviolence as anti-oppression *collective action*. Though each of these proponents spoke to individual commitment they did so in view of the social issues of the time, which required collective action for success. This links to Butler's (2020) argument that our self-sufficiency is a fantasy and that we live in a world where, whether we abide by this sense of self-agency or not, we are bound by moral obligations of a social nature; that by overcoming our fantasy of possible self-sufficiency we can begin to imagine a "new form of civic and political life" (p.60) anchored in non-violent interdependency.

Another area where assumptions were prevalent was on the actual meaning of violence. Assumptions ranged from the notion that violence was *"just physical or psychological"* (UOH1) and *"harming someone's peace"* (UOH2) to *"imposing your beliefs, opinions and ideas on others" (*UOH4) and the general idea of "harming or injuring another", mostly from a physical or psychological perspective. An explanation of exactly how this harm or injury would manifest varied from cohort to cohort, and as each group progressed and became more familiar and engaged with the research and the materials. For instance, when asked to identify instances of violence within their classrooms or educational communities, most participants from the first cohort (UOH) noted how violence was present as gendered-based violence (lack of inclusive language, having to wear uniforms deemed sexists, lack of unisex toilets), and language / behavioral-based (teachers yelling at students, students insulting each other, bullying). See the pictures below from student's posters by way of example:
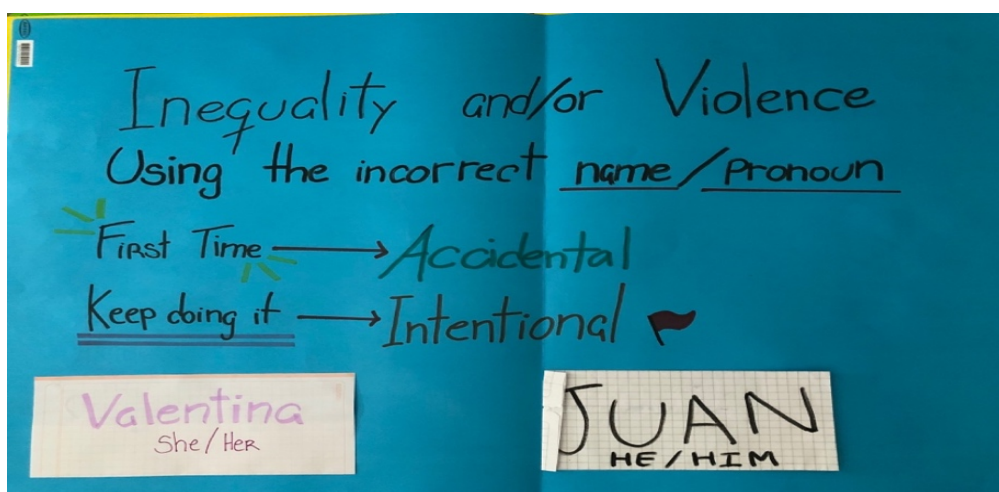

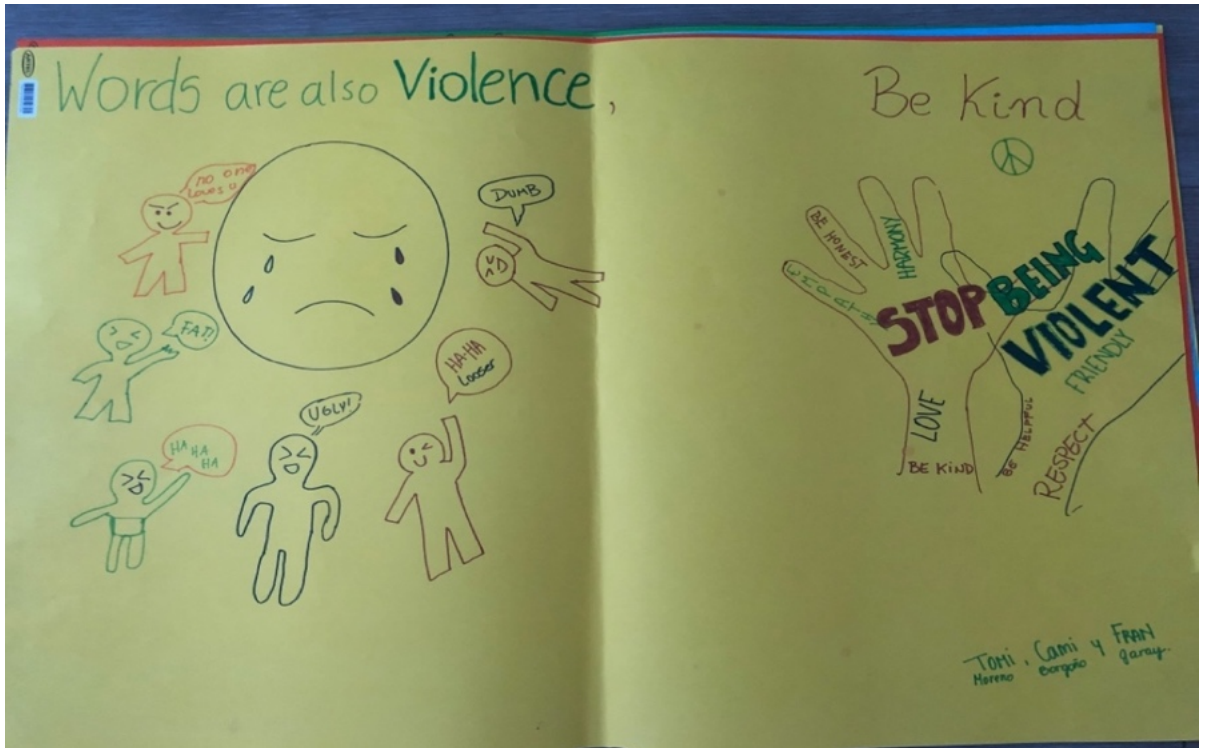**Figure 8.1 – Session 1 poster, group 1**

Figure 8.2 – Session 1 poster, group

Figure 8.3 – Session 1 poster, group 3

There are several elements in these posters worth elaborating on; the first two pictures, for instance, focus on violent uses of language, one on gendered language and the other on violent language in more general terms. There is an ongoing debate in Chile concerning the use of neutral pronouns for individuals who identify as non-binary, or for people who have transitioned as either male or female and therefore want to be addressed by a pronoun that reflects their new gender identity. Unlike English, Spanish (as other Romance languages) has gendered nouns and those on one side of the debate have asked for this linguistic feature to be eliminated; on the other side there are those who defend the current use of gendered nouns as it the way "the language exists". This debate is not always a civil one; a participant told me how a professor had refused not only to use their prefer pronoun, but also their chosen name. Hence the label of "intentional", since the participant argued that once it is pointed out and there is no change, there is an intentional act of violence.

The third picture tells us a story of sexism that has gone on for decades in Chile; girls' uniforms in public schools has historically been a skirt colloquially called 'jumper'': a sleeveless one-piece garment that is usually worn below the knee. This while male students wear pants / trousers and a jacket; most participants in our project voiced their disagreement with this old-fashioned practice, not only because it perpetuates gender identity – men and women must wear specifically gendered outfits – but as one female participant indicated, the design of the female uniform has left them vulnerable to street harassment and comments of a sexually offensive nature.

For the second cohort, awareness of how injury or harm manifested ranged from having observed none: *"Honestly and at least in my courses I cannot say I see violence and its forms present"* (PUCV9) to *"discrimination, cyberbullying, or physical violence"* (PUCV 22) and *"Sexual violence, assault, etc. are hard realities that exist in Chilean schools that are met with even more violence between students"* (PUCV5). We can see from these observations that there was a general conception of violence as something visible and tangible; in other words, the more *direct* form. This observation was something shared by both cohorts, which confirmed my initial assumption about trainee teachers generally lacking a full understanding of what violence is and how it can manifest beyond its direct expression.

One of the assignments for the first week of the project was a watching a video titled "The Triangle of Violence" [39], based on Johan Galtung's work, something both cohorts did. This video, though originally made to educate on issues of religious violence, explains in detail not only Galtung's definition of violence from his 1969 work *"Violence, Peace and Peace Research"*, but also the concepts of cultural, structural and direct violence (Galtung, 1969; 1990) He defines violence as "the cause of the difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is. Violence is that which increases the distance between the potential and the actual, and that which impedes the decrease of this distance" (p.168). In other words, if we have the means and opportunity to create greater equality and we don't, we are perpetrating violence; he illustrates this using the example of a patient with TB: were they to die today, after all the medical advances we have achieved, would be an act of violence. He further expands on the concept of violence from the direct (or physical), where there is an obvious perpetrator, to structural: "[r]esources are unevenly distributed, as when income distributions are heavily skewed, literacy/education unevenly distributed, medical services existent in some districts and for some groups only, and so on" (p.171). He further defined cultural violence as "any aspect of a culture that can be used to legitimize violence in its direct or structural form" (1990, p.291). Examples of this might be how we use language, our ideology, religious beliefs or values that allow for direct and structural violence to exist in the first place.

As participants on both cohorts began to engage with the weekly course materials, and as their understanding of the different manners in which violence can be exerted upon others, they also started to reflect on what that meant in relation to their own context; their insights showed how their original view was limited in relation to what actual violence was. For instance, participant UOH7 stated: "*I used to think violence was just physical or psychological, however, now I understand it goes far beyond that and that it can be done in many ways, such as committing it ourselves, encouraging others to commit it, and condoning it*", while participant PUCV6 noted: *"Now I know that violence can be found in every aspect of life and that it comes in different ways, not only physically or emotionally, but also in gender-based or cultural ways".*

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[39] Retrieved here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ohe0rwYYNP0

Exactly when and how these paradigms and understandings began to shift, is difficult to pinpoint. For me, who was both the guide and observer of the process, the changes did not become evident until I started to read the participants' final reflections on the last week of the workshop series. What was evident, however, is that even in cases where there had been initial resistance to the concept of non-violence, this had begun to mutate in meaning and implications. For example, participant PUCV9 noted:

> "*After this course, however, I know that it (non-violence) means to take action to resolve problems in a way that no party involved feels threatened and breaking the cycle of violence this way*", while PUCV6 stated: "*nonviolent practices have taught me how to express the way I feel in nonviolent ways such as pacific protests or the activities that we found in the readings*".

The third area I will explore in this section is participants previous views on inclusiveness. The very nature of project has inclusiveness at its core; not, as a participant rightly pointed out, as a method often and primarily focused on students with Additional Support Needs (ASN) but as a way to experience human relations rooted in an equitable view of others that certainly includes ASN learners, but is not limited to them; as the second objective of this research study states, this project aimed to *"Collaborate in identifying and co-developing practices to address current issues relating to inclusiveness in Chilean higher education classrooms, with a focus on behaviors and forms of expression that might produce or reproduce inequality."*

Previous assumptions on this issue are perhaps best summarized in the comments given during a podcast [40]created by a group of PUCV participants:

> PUCV15: *Before the readings I thought inclusiveness was only a way to adapt materials for or students, for example for SEN [41](ASN) students or creating a safer space for them. Now, I see that being inclusive is not only adapting the materials but adapting yourself to fit with them.*

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[40] These "podcasts" were not so in the strictest sense of the word. They were group discussions which students recorded in an audio format, and which they themselves called podcasts. They are not publictly available online nor have they been shared with anyone. These discussions are stored in my laptop, which is password and fingerprint protected, as well as the University of Glasgow OneDrive. Henceforth, the word podcast refers to this exact same format.

[41] SEN: Special Educational Needs

PUCV20: *I was not aware of contemplative pedagogy [42] and I never read about anything like this. I am very thankful because I never thought about putting ourselves as a 1st person rather than a 3rd person looking from the outside.*

PUCV19: *I also hadn't read these concepts before from a pedagogical point of view. I used to think about inclusiveness from a technical perspective rather than understanding what makes one person different from another, singular. There was a little bit of a shift.*

PUCV2: *My perspective hasn't changed, but I have a deeper understanding of this issue. I especially liked listening to non-Western, decolonial views on how to foster inclusiveness.*

This somewhat incomplete understanding of the full dimension of inclusiveness is hardly surprising, if one is to look at two factors. The first of is the definitions and principles of inclusive education we find in research done by Chilean scholars and Chilean government documents; for while it is true that Law 20.845 on Inclusive Education from 2016 seeks the "elimination of discrimination and the approach to diversity"[43], it is also acknowledged that these efforts have focused on and prompted by widening access primarily to people with disabilities. A report from the National Disability Agency states that inclusive education has been "driven towards the social participation of *people with disabilities*, their families and civil society, in order to implement the changes demanded by students and our society" (p.1). Research by Chilean scholars in this area (Iturra, 2019; Manghi et al., 2020; Martinez and Rosas, 2022) on the other hand, tends to use the terms "inclusive education" and "education for students with special needs" interchangeably, and in fact Manghi's report on inclusive education, published as a report by the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, shows a person in a wheelchair on the cover.

There is, as I mentioned, a second factor that shapes this view of inclusiveness: a close inspection of available research done in Chilean education reveals that it draws heavily and almost exclusively on studies and sources from the Global North on this issue, and this is problematic. In fact, a simple glance at the UNICEF website on inclusive education reveals

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[42] As noted earlier, Contemplative Pedagogy is an approach to learning and teaching that uses techniques aimed at developing greater self and others' awareness through introspection, silence, examining one's thoughts and general contemplation. Source: https://ctl.columbia.edu/resources-and-technology/resources/contemplative-pedagogy/
This project introduced students to contemplative practices such as meditation, breathing exercises and empathy and compassion development exercises, which were an integral part of the sessions.
[43] In Spanish in the original: "eliminación de la discriminación y el abordaje de la diversidad", translation by me.

that the information therein is not only exclusively about disability, but about *children* with disabilities. [44]I argue that this idea of inclusiveness is inaccurate and incomplete, since our efforts towards inclusiveness should be imbued first by a sense of our sameness (Butler's (2020) argument that *all* lives having equal worth) and second, by a sense of totality in which inclusiveness includes *everyone* who has been historically marginalized, excluded and discriminated against, and not only people with disabilities. This links to some of the ideas I have mentioned previously that draw from non-Western traditions (i.e., Buen Vivir, Buddhism and yoga) which promote a sense of a mutually bound existence regardless of our faith, gender, ethnicity, beliefs, modes of life, ability, literacy or education.

It must also be acknowledged, however, that the concept of inclusiveness in education has begun to shift in the Global North, with evidence pointing to a shifting paradigm that has begun to see inclusiveness as a social and moral dimension; Moran (2007, p.119), for instance, argues that inclusive education is "the entitlement of all children and young people to quality education, irrespective of their differences or dispositions", whereas Leijen et al., (2021) highlight how inclusive education should truly mean that it includes *everybody,* and not only students with special needs arising from a particular disability. Their study, which focuses on inclusive education in Estonia, is also quick to acknowledge the different discourses surrounding the issue of inclusiveness, while promoting it from a social perspective. In a report sponsored by the OECD, Schleicher (2014) emphasizes the need to address lack of inclusiveness from a socio-economic stance: educational inclusiveness and equity, he argues, must be accompanied by a redistribution of resources and marginalized groups as a focal point, something this project's participants also indicated. However, neither this shift nor the non-Western views on inclusiveness are, insofar as this researcher is aware, part of the ongoing debates in Chilean scholarship; it is this that makes the participants' paradigm shift especially relevant.

In reference to the non-Western philosophies I have mentioned, what they share is the notion of inter-dependence and interconnectedness: they all promote the idea that we depend on each other to flourish as a community and that we are intricately connected to one another. In other words, and from a social perspective, individuals of equal value to our group. I argued earlier that the classroom is a representative microcosms of this reality; as one participant said: "we wouldn't be teachers without our students" (PUCV9). And because these concepts were originally missing from the participants' interpretation of inclusiveness, they were exposed to these ideas early on in the project. For instance, in the

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[44] https://www.unicef.org/education/inclusive-education

early chapters of this thesis I argued that what was lacking in current approaches to inclusive and non-violent practices was a spiritual dimension to our classroom practices; one of the earliest assignments for participants was to watch a short video on the meaning of inclusiveness in education by Indian scholar Sadhguru[45]. His vision, which I share, is that inclusiveness is not "an idea or a campaign", but an individual experience of connecting to other human beings, and of bringing this connection into the whole range of activities we engage in, be it educational, economic or spiritual, in order to flourish. UOH7 explains and illustrates (see Fig. 8.4 below):

> *"I really liked what Sadhguru mentioned in his speech about inclusiveness in education, "Survival cannot happen without inclusiveness", as I think this is a point that many people tend to forget. For me, inclusiveness is about integrating different people into a group. However, this integration should not only be to include or accept a person into this group, this action also deserves to see other people as equals"*
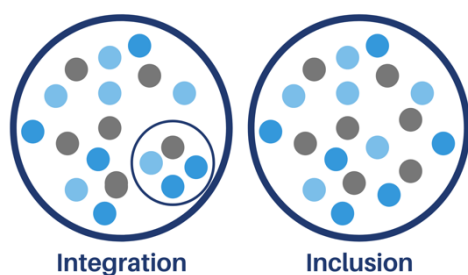
Figure 8.4 – Participant's diagram on inclusiveness (UOH7)

In conclusion, previous assumptions from participants related to two specific areas. On one hand, there was an incomplete understanding of what violence is, what it means and how it manifests; on the other, there was a somewhat limited understanding of the full dimension of inclusiveness and what it entails, not only from the perspective of disability but from a of social and intercultural scope. As the project evolved, these assumptions and understandings began to shift and the evidence I have described here points to an increased awareness not only of violence and inclusiveness, but how they interconnect.

Having discussed these previously held assumptions by participants, the next section will present an analysis of the data provided by delving into the aforementioned themes.

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[45] Retrieved here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQWufrmZOaI&t=165s

8.3 The AR cycle: ensuing transformation and paradigm shifts.

While the previous section delved into changes in participants' perspectives concerning the overall themes of the project, this chapter will discuss paradigm shifts expressed by participants that emerged as a result of the participatory and iterative nature of this research. More specifically, this section examines how elements such as collaboration, working together, reflecting and discussing impacted participants' views, and how they saw themselves and their understanding of the main themes by the end of the project.

First, it is essential to revisit the concept of 'participatory' in the context of this study. Kindon et al., (2007) define participatory research as an approach in which both participants and researchers collaborate in the exploration of specific problems to bring about change or improvement. Within this, it seeks to subvert the hierarchical and skewed power relation between researcher and participants, which often manifests in impositions rather than collaboration (ibid). Having said this, and within the possibilities of this study, my aim was to facilitate as much participation and collaboration as possible, while reducing imposition to the virtual minimum during the workshops / sessions, instead focusing on selecting the reading material, formulating the post-reading reflection question and preparing questions to jump start the in-session discussions.

This means that, within this study, participants had the freedom to make changes to content, correct findings, choose topics to analyse live and for their peer teaching, the format for submitting their reflections, how many of the given questions they wanted to answer if any at all. Although not all these freedoms were used, the knowledge generated and constructed, both in the type of violence, discrimination and exclusion found, and in the practices and strategies suggested to reduce them was entirely their own. Herein lies, in my view, the impact of participation in the project: the entirety of the data and insight gathered stems from the participants' shared effort and collaboration in examining their personal and professional experiences with each of the theories and perspectives discussed. This insight, in turn, provides an insider's view into how violence unfolds and manifests in Chilean educational communities, particularly in the classroom.

Perhaps the most significant paradigm shift that occurred throughout the project was in the participants' view on what nonviolence is, and the role it can potentially play in promoting greater inclusiveness. This shift is indeed of paramount importance, as the other

changes in perspective I detail below are intimately bound to this newly acquired understanding. In some cases, this shift brought a new awareness of how much violence has to do with our thoughts and intentions, such as in the case of UOH2:

> *"What resonated the most with me was the idea that violence is related to what we think. Our thoughts towards people. I started to think that I should not think bad things about other people because it would be excluding them in some way and it affects the way I see them. I need to start seeing them as equal without moralistic judgements. (UOH2)*

Often, paradigm shift manifested within the individuals' personal lives and experiences, as reported by participants PUCV4 and PUCV9 below:

> *"...My approach to the concept has definitely changed as a result of what we have discussed as a group throughout the lessons. If before I would talk about nonviolence as "I'm going to avoid responding to this person because otherwise I'm going to get angry with them", now it is more like "I'm going to talk to this person, calmly, about the things that seem wrong to me and that could be different or modified". And a level of respect for the other person must always be maintained, even if they get you on your nerves" – PUCV4*

> `...In the first week I was a bit unsure regarding my participation in the course as I had a lot of compulsory readings to do on my obligatory courses, so I wasn't sure if I was going to be capable of complying with everything that was required. Regardless, I decided to stay and once I began to read, I immediately found myself very interested in gaining more knowledge so I felt like I needed to continue in the course, and this was especially because at that moment I was in a very dark place and the readings were giving me a lot to think about, to reflect on, first concerning myself and then about others, to reflect on my actions and others actions and especially on my feelings and how to process them correctly. I started to put everything I was reading into practice and although the course is mainly about pedagogy and how to create non-violent environments in schools/classrooms I was unconsciously applying everything to my personal life first" – PUCV9*

This level of insight into their inner journey, ranging from thought to action, is important because, as Thich Nhat Hanh (2004) argues, the process of changing collective consciousness begins with the transformation of our *individual* consciousness. This transformed consciousness, in turn, or what Galtung (1996) described as a necessary condition of health before peace can exist, and which must infuse every aspect our lives, is what hopefully will permeate and shape a teacher's relationships and interactions with their learners. I argue, as did the participants, that in fact, this consciousness must be accompanied by what hook (1994, p.15) called self-*actualization*: a practice in which the practitioner must devote a concerted effort towards their own well-being to positively impact others. Thich Nhat Hanh says in *"Anger"* (2001)

> *"Self-love is the foundation for your capacity to love the other person. If you don't take good care of yourself, if you are not happy, if you are not peaceful, you cannot make the other person happy. You cannot help the other person; you cannot love. Your capacity for loving another person depends entirely on your capacity for loving yourself, for taking care of yourself. Healing" (p.25)*

In that sense, evidence from participants points to the fact that the practices we engaged in – contemplative activities, reading and reflecting on the cultivation of nonviolence and nonviolent action, collectively thinking about ways to address violence – did have in fact a self-actualizing effect which manifested in willingness to engage with others differently. This is well exemplified by two insights; the first emphasizes the value of self-care considering possible challenges in bringing inclusive, non-violent practices to the classroom, while the second highlights the importance of teacher self-development if we are to engage in social justice efforts:

> *"There are different things I can do for my own well-being. As a person, I think it is necessary to learn to have a healthy relationship with myself, to achieve this it is necessary to go to therapy and try to improve day by day. On the other hand, as a future teacher, I know that I will have complicated days when things don't work out. This is why it is necessary to maintain good communication with my students, and that we can all express our needs without fear"- UOH8*

> *"After reading the materials, I consider new perspectives. One of the them is the spiritual aspect of the role of teacher; whenever I thought of social justice before I never consider this before, and it's something I will try to practice. In relation to*

the inner work, we do and what we do as educators in terms of social justice, I believe that by doing these practices like self-exploration and self-understanding that dive deep into the inner self we can also promote them to our students" – *UOH14*

Changes in perspectives concerning non-violence and inclusiveness had a second, equally relevant dimension which relates to how participants saw their *own* role as teachers in promoting these values within the classrooms and amongst students:

"I learned that we as teachers can do a lot of things that will help our students to develop and participate into a healthier community. Although here in Chile the planification of classes is very restrictive, we can use the materials and our tools to teach the students through in different ways even though the school may put a stop to us" – *PUCV 20*

"I have considerably understood better what non-violence and inequality mean. It surprises me how a classroom and a school can instil in students greatly variegated values and beliefs, not only in education but also in themselves. Access to education and opportunities must be open to anyone and everyone" -*PUCV 11*

"I believe that this course has allowed me to visualize more clearly the perfect place that we, as future teachers, wish we could have when we are actually teaching. It is with this course that I have gained the new perspective that we can actually create our own idyllic classroom and, with the right tools and determination, is not so utopic. It might be hard at first and take a lot of effort, but our efforts will pay off later than never" – *PUCV5*

Setting aside the undaunted idealism of this last insight, the viewpoints offered here by pre-service teachers who, according to their own shared experiences, had been bullied at school by classmates and teachers even to the extent of physical violence being exerted upon them, provide an optimistic outlook into the possibilities of nonviolence education in their current context, and into the way they see themselves as nonviolence practitioners. In fact, I argue that what participants offer here links to and builds upon Chubbuck and Zembylas' 'critical pedagogy for non-violence' (2011). The authors' work identifies a couple of areas that bear relation with these participants' insights: nonviolence as *curriculum* and *nonviolence in the relational classroom climate*. In regard to the first of

these dimensions, Chubbuck and Zembylas (ibid.) point to the role of their teacher participant in guiding the conversation towards questioning the way violence has been historically used as a means of domination; concerning the latter dimension, they note how that teacher's approach was one filled with *consistency*. This consistency manifested in the way she remained committed to the practice of nonviolence even in the face of challenges, such as when her students expressed themselves or acted violently, and personal struggles with anxiety.

I use this as an example because both elements – the curricular and the relational - were, likewise, an intrinsic part of the project. For instance, during the peer-teaching section of the course participants were asked to think about, plan and carry out a lesson in which they facilitated discussions on inclusiveness from a range of different perspectives; at the same time, they were tasked to develop and lead a contemplative activity aimed at establishing a more empathetic and compassionate mindset amongst students. Their subsequent comments, feedback and insight – some of which can be read above and some of which are presented in later sections - shows a shift in the way participants thought about their role in regard to fostering nonviolence, notwithstanding the foreseeable challenges. These, discussed in depth in a later section of this chapter, ranged from the need to adapt materials for suitability, students' personal circumstances and / or exposure to violence, lack of support from schools or lack of a nurturing environment at home while engaging with their studies.

The last paradigm shift, I examine here concerns participants' awareness of the role of empathy in developing inclusiveness and practicing non-violence. Early conversations with participants revealed how concerned they were with how they *themselves* were treated; examples given during our discussions revolved around how others spoke to them, the things that were said to them and the actions experienced by *them*. By the end of the workshops, as evidence will show, participants were instead discussing the importance and impact of treating others compassionately, the significance and value of using language kindly and non-judgmentally, and in more general terms about the impact of contemplative practices in their overall pedagogical outlook, classroom relations and emotional awareness.

This shift has been documented through the reflections expressed by the participants of the first cohort during group discussions on the last session held as below:

Group 1:

UOH11: Yes...and that impact our relationship with others, as we start becoming more empathetic. For example, I used to think "how will I empathize with someone who is a racist?" But now I understand that perhaps that person comes a from a different generation, so I understand them and accept them. As teachers we want to change the world but it's hard.

UOH16: What helped me was that activity where we had to see each other as someone just like us. It helped me see the other person as someone who is also human, also feeling.

UOH11: Yes, we forget about our humanity...even though we are humans.

UOH12: As long as one is well, the rest doesn't matter. And this is wrong

UOH6: Of course, it's important to take care of our own wellbeing, but it's wrong to put ourselves in the center. We have to be a priority to ourselves, but it can't be like 'me me me me'.

UOH11: Exactly, it's different to be self-centered than to have self-esteem.

Group 2:

UOH7: In relation to others, maybe the fact of seeing each other and wishing them well, like "I hope this person is doing well in their studies". Most of the time I didn't always think this way and I didn't have positive thought about others, so this is also a positive change.

UOH10: In that way, I think we stopped thinking too much about ourselves and started thinking about the other, so we left some selfish thoughts behind. It was a way to see that we are all equals, all human, all deserve the same respect. Individually we all want to be happy and we should think the same about others. And for me, like the most significant thing that I learned was to empathize with other…specifically with the practice of loving- kindness we did, thinking about

someone we didn't like very much and wishing them good things, or thinking they were going through the same difficulties as us.

There are several different dimensions of interest in the extracts above. The first concerns how the participants identify the challenge of empathizing with those identified as the perpetrator, while learning to see them as 'also human, also feeling'. A study by Peterson and Cohen Silver (2017) in the United States illuminates this point in great depth; their research sought to assess to what extent empathy towards perpetrators of violence increased upon giving participants relevant background information about them. Results showed not only that empathy could be cultivated, but also that as participants learned more about those carrying out acts of violence, their empathy increased as did the support for more lenient sentences. Importantly, this research was done after extremely painful events had occurred, such as the Sandy Hook school shooting and Aurora cinema shooting in Colorado, which had a combined death toll of 36 people including children.

Our practices during the research project did not involve a direct exposure to violent social events such as the one I have described; however, the principle stands: when we only focus on the violent act being perpetrated, we have an incomplete assessment of why it was carried out. Thich Nhat Hanh (2001) argues that we see someone's anger, we need to also understand that these individuals carry with them their own suffering manifesting through their actions. Several participants acknowledged throughout the sessions; we all have our own personal stories. For example, this participant noted:

> *"In my point of view every contemplative practice really did have an impact but the one that stuck with me, I think it was the not putting people into boxes (that was the one where you said to go to the front if… right?) because most of the time we tend to classify people in some ways without knowing much about them and then when we get to know them, we get why they are the way they are" – PUCV7*

The expansion of the initially narrow circle of concern, which in my view was fundamental in cultivating inclusiveness, involved careful planning on two specific areas: one was the reading materials for each week, and the other was selecting contemplative activities that addressed the main weekly theme. For instance, for the theme of nonviolence I led a meditation on loving-kindness (Chödron, 2007), which raises practitioners' awareness of love as an all-inclusive dimension rather than limiting it to those close to us. During the week devoted to discussing interconnectedness, participants engaged in an

exercise titled "Compassion Practice", which asked them to become fully aware of the person in front of them while silently contemplating that that person was a human being just like them, with feelings and emotions just like them, and very likely who had experienced hurt, disappointment and anger, just like them.

This was a meaningful exercise for this research that aimed to foster greater inclusiveness in the first place, showing that empathy has an important role to play in achieving this within a nonviolent framework. As one participant noted:

> *"We have agreed that in order to create an inclusive classroom, certain values have to be accounted for and empathy is one of the most important due to the fact that it allows to understand the feelings and concerns of others. By being able to understand that we can respond and help others in the appropriate manner" – PUCV18*

Ryoo et al. (2008) posit the notion that love constitutes the strongest form of opposition against Othering; I argue that to generate that kind of love, the kind of love that Garvey (1923) suggested should infuse education so that it could 'soften the ills of the world' (p.17), can only be developed by learning to see others not as Others but through an empathetic lens that rehumanizes them.

8.4 The causes and manifestations of violence

As mentioned in this chapter's introduction, the first theme I will discuss and analyze is what participants viewed as the main causes and manifestations of violence within their classrooms; according to their comments and observations, many of these causes and manifestations were also often present in their educational communities as a whole. I will first discuss how othering creates the premise for violence; I will then describe how violence manifests through unfair structures and unequal distribution of resources, which will be followed by an analysis of how cultural violence is perpetrated and perpetuated in classrooms. The final section in this chapter details participants' views on how violence has become normalized, and how this normalization affects them directly.

a. Violence as a practice of Othering[46]

I argued in chapter 3, section 3.2 "On non-violence" and earlier in this chapter that two of the main problems with violence are that first, it promotes a win-lose mentality, and secondly that it seeks to Other and differentiate; the theoretical framework of this project, anchored in decoloniality – an action research study in the Global South, informed by critical pedagogy, and non-Western wisdom traditions- presents a strong critique to this by drawing from theories and perspectives that, on the contrary, pursue to include and promote view of humanity that challenges this binary view. Having said this, the first theme I identified was precisely how participants view violence as what I have described: a practice of Othering, present and observed primarily in their lived experiences of teacher-student relationship:

> *"In my case, concerning structural vio1ence…teachers tend to abuse their power in that they didn't allow us to express (ourselves), they wanted us to do whatever they wanted: if they wanted us to keep quiet or kick us out of the classroom. They have the power and this is like structural violence because it's a situation in which the teacher is above us"* – PUCV4

The practice of violence in all its dimensions as one of Othering - exclusion, marginalization and discrimination – also emerged as evidence in the following participants' comments:

> *"…I just found fascinating how true it is the way that some people tend to view their point of view, their traditions, or their ways of expression as they were the valid ones or the norm and the others are the strange ones, or the different ones"* – PUCV18

> *"…violence can be observed in the structures, culture and one's behaviors too, like the incapacity of accepting the essence and uniqueness of another"* – PUCV4

These insights describe on one level individuals' inability to accept others' cultures, attitudes and behaviors – their uniqueness -, and on the other the ensuing

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[46] When using the term Othering, I do so based on Powell and Menendian's (2016) broad definition that goes beyond the colonial other and encompasses a wider range of expressions of prejudice: "*a set of dynamics, processes, and structures that engender marginality and persistent inequality across any of the full range of human differences based on group identities*" (n.p.)

exclusion. It is important to highlight that much of the world, and certainly Chile, does not live in a monocultural, monolithic society; to coexist peacefully requires not just mere acceptance but a fuller recognition of others in this uniqueness, acknowledging as well that this is a process and that such process, as this study had demonstrated, requires social participants to become more educated and better informed. Such transformation is an important part of the decolonial framework; as Zavala (2016) argues, the decolonial project in Latin America requires this deconstruction, along with bringing to the fore those knowledges and epistemologies that have been historically silenced. The recognition of the Other as an equal is a key part of the process.

Going back to the earlier idea of exclusion resulting from the practice of Othering, this is further seen in the following comments from participants, which speak of Othering from the perspective of ethnicity, language and culture:

"...classmates making fun of those with black skin color" – UOH5

"...teachers trying to Chilenizar (Chilenize) Colombian, Venezuelan or Haitian students, thus stripping them of their cultural identity" – UOH10

"Nowadays we have Haitian children in the classroom and there are no ways for them to keep being in contact with their culture and their language. In Chilean classrooms they need to speak Spanish and there isn't a space in which they can develop their language or reflect on their culture. This is structural violence and also cultural violence because we may think this is normal, like he or she is a foreign or an immigrant and they have to speak Spanish. There isn't a law or practice in the classroom that can help this situation" – UOH8

This last comment connects with the need to provide an open space for participation for students who are racially, ethnically, culturally and/or linguistically different. Chile has seen an increase of migrants that has reached 1.5 million people in the last 5 years, most of whom are from Haiti, Colombia and Venezuela. The latter two countries speak Spanish as their official language, but each Latin American form of Spanish comes with its distinct variations in lexis and slang which can make it difficult for people to understand each other. Haitians speak Creole which is unintelligible for Spanish speakers. Furthermore, all three of those countries have many African descendants, something that is uncommon in Chile and particularly at schools; while students of indigenous background are not

uncommon, migrants from black African ethnicity are. This then creates a context where, as the above comments indicate, Othering happens. In fact, Bunch (2015) describes three types of epistemic violence, all of which are indicated in the participants' comments added above: *discriminatory,* which occurs through the dehumanization of the out-group; *testimonial*, which consists of silencing and reducing the credibility of those on the outside; finally, *distributive,* where those in the out-group find themselves lacking adequate resources compared to those already established.

b. Violence as a manifestation of structural inequalities

The second theme that emerged was that of structural inequalities as a source of violence. We have established that structural violence does not have a visible perpetrator but instead it is exerted upon individuals by institutions, frameworks and social arrangements that preclude such persons from having their basic needs met.

What participants highlighted bears a logical connection with the earlier theme of Othering. As I detailed in the introduction when describing inequality in Chile, the idea and subsequent implications of the construct of class is deeply embedded in the social mindset of Chilean society; these implications are first noticed in things such as equipment, infrastructure quality of students' meals, but on a deeper level they also manifest in exclusion and discrimination within the classroom ecosystem against those students from lower-income background. This exclusion begins with the *perception* of such difference in the collective mindset, as participant *UOH9* pointed out:

> *"Then we have structural violence that can be when society view students from public education as uneducated or inferior to those who pay for their education; or they see students who have low income as inferior just because of that"- UOH9*

What is discussed above as a matter of 'perception', however, has very real implications beginning with the challenge that is to have actual access to education in the first place, as these two participants noted:

> *"If we talk about structural violence, we can think of all the students that have limited access to education because they come from low socioeconomic status.*

Sadly, this is something very common in our country where people who have money have access to quality education" – UOH2

"Children who come from low-income background don't have access to quality education, because they don't have money. In this country, those with money have access to the best education". – UOH 14.

Income inequality as a differential determines the kind of school students can access – private or public. This difference, as I have noted in my earlier description of the Chilean educational system (see chapter 2, sections 2.2 and 2.3), is further compounded by the fact that public schools are not funded by the central government but by local districts, which means that wealthier districts can allocate more funds towards meals, textbooks, computer labs and general infrastructure; poorer districts on the other hand simply do not have the necessary funds to cover all of these needs. One of these - and of primary importance - is space, as participant UOH10 noted after their experience at an underfunded public school:

"Adding more bad stuff to the equation, we have structural violence in the classroom. In my practicum last year, we had a class where we had no space for students and they kept on arriving. The tiny room had no room for 50 people. As adults we can try to discuss and find a solution to the specific situation, we live at the high school but the truth is that boys and girls can easily get disappointment about education and simply believe that is not an important aspect of life when. They are seeing they cannot enter the class because there is no physical space". – UOH10

The same participant indicates further structural issues such as not having enough money for building repairs and, importantly, how students are not receiving decent quality meals at public schools:

"And what about this minister of education who said schools had to appeal to charity to get the roof repaired. I am of the opinion that this is a shame in itself and because of what it means: education is not important for the government…Finally, I know that students (kids specifically) are not receiving bread every day for breakfast in schools, only some days. Instead, they have to east a pear and a glass of milk; that's structural violence at the school., and such a bad combination". – UOH10

Although the process of reform that will reallocate schools under a different system of administration is underway, this will not be completed before 2025, and it could take even longer to reduce the violence that an unequal distribution of resources places on students. The new bill – law 21.040 – aims to provide an equitable, non-atomized system that will see public schools and nurseries come under the control of 70 Local Education Centers rather than under 345 districts as it exists currently (MINEDUC, 2018)[47]. This, in theory should provide a more equitable footing for some of institutions that have been historically underfunded due to geographical reasons. However, addressing the cultural norms that have been ingrained in people's minds over five centuries, and which perpetuate these situations will need, in my view, much longer.

c. Cultural violence expressed through language

I will begin this section by reminding the reader of the research context: one of the reasons for conducting it in Chile, in the first place, is the lack of practical preparation trainee teachers receive during their degree to deal with the main issues this study attempts to tackle. In the process of finding a university to do this research I familiarised myself with their curriculum for English teaching majors. Looking at the curriculum I have noticed a heavy focus on language classes (students must finish their degree with a CEFR B2), and methodology. The curriculum covers only few classes on social justice issues and no classes that might offer teachers further theoretical and practical preparation to deal with students in an inclusive, nonviolent manner such as using Rosenberg's (2003) nonviolent communication (NVC) framework of observation rather than judgement, expressing feelings, expressing needs and making requests.

With this contextual note in mind, this section delves into the next theme, which is how language becomes the manifestation of cultural violence in the classroom setting. The use of exclusionary or discriminatory language begins, participants note, with teachers. When asked to think about instances of violence they had witnessed or experienced, most of the examples recorded concerned the way teachers treated students from a language perspective.

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[47] Information retrieved here: https://www.mineduc.cl/comenzo-la-desmunicipalizacion-la-apuesta-mas-importante-la-educacion-publica-las-ultimas-decadas/ (Website in Spanish)

Beginning with teachers, these participants observe:

"I think I have seen many violent practices regarding the use of language, starting with the ways teachers interfere when a student is saying something by saying things like "shut up and sit down", or insult them by calling them imbeciles" – UOH2

"Sadly, I can remember many times when violent language was used, especially in my school days. Most of my teachers were older people. I remember sitting with a classmate (who was my best male friend) and as a joke I tried to put make up on his lips. A teacher saw us and got furious. She started to scream asking why we were doing that" – UOH10

"Sometimes the language that teachers use to communicate with their students can be violent, by not respecting them due to them being a learner or simply by using language that passes over the student in a particular manner" – PUCV14

It should be mentioned here that, as these insights show, in general terms participants spoke about violent language in more abstract than concrete terms. Perhaps because some of the things said cannot bear repeating, or perhaps because the reflection questions did not elicit more specific examples. However, they did provide some examples of what they thought of as violent language in comments they had heard teachers say:

"A teacher saying: this student does really well on the test and you should do the same" – UOH1

"When teachers refer to students as "lazy" or "noisy" – UOH4

"Telling students something like "how can you not understand? All your classmates got it, how can you not understand?" and similar phrases. I have heard teachers speak like that, and for me it sounds very rude"- UOH10

What students describe here links to an imbalance of power in the teacher-student relationship, particularly with younger learners who might not challenge the teacher's authority; in fact, the experiences students described here are all connected with schools

and not college. This is confirmed by participants themselves, who expressed the following:

> *"It was complex to put all our own and personal ideas together into this reflection, but to sum things up, we have to admit that the instances of non-violent communication fostering in our school days can be counted on the fingers of two hands"* - *PUCV 4, 15,17 and 19*

In fact, and linking to Rosenberg's (ibid) notions of NVC, the insights gathered reveal that participants see judgement at the center of violent language:

> *"The times I experienced violent communication…were characterized by judging because the situations were happening due to mistakes. I think that without judging all of these violent situations could be avoided."* – *UOH 12*

> *"Judgmental opinions about others' actions can generate accusatory and critical perceptions about how we see them in a particular situation, and a classroom is one crucially important place where we need to avoid violent acts in general and pay attention to them. If we express these same thoughts without accusing or judging, the communication between classmates, as well as teachers, does not affect the relationship between them"* – *PUCV3, 14 and 18*

Both insights not only point to prejudicial views as the root of the problem, but also to how the *lack* of such prejudice- what Rosenberg (ibid) calls turning judgement into observation - reduces violence by taking these moralistic rulings out of the equation. Research points to how training in NVC increases empathy after even a short training period (Duclos et., 2021); helps develop supportive social networks (Marlow et el., 2020); and improve interprofessional collaboration (Museux et al., 2013). However, and more importantly, the participants' responses given here suggest that the practice of NVC – which requires expressing ourselves without judgement by learning to communicate our feelings and needs – is necessary for the creation of a communicative space in which the agents in that space feel safe and valued. In fact, during their discussion on NVC, students were asked to think about strategies that might be useful in fostering a more empathetic classroom, where teachers and students can communicate in a nonviolent manner. Their recommendations can be summarized as follows:

- Raising awareness of how we communicate with one another, and the impact our communication has on other members of our community (in this case the classroom)

- Working with students in helping them recognize *thoughts* from *feelings* in order to practice expressing the latter.

- Giving students time to self-reflect about difficult situations, and to engage with others after this first step in order to reduce the possibility of conflict.

- Encourage students to express their diverse opinions in a respectful manner, and to listen deeply when others do rather than immediately challenge what is being said.

As noted, these insights did not come on their own, nor were participants familiar with Rosenberg's work prior to becoming involved in the study. This was indicated by one of the participants at the end of the first iteration, who pointed out how one thing she had learned was that it was important to learn how to communicate with others, and how we got our communication across matters, something to which several of her peers agreed. In other words, it is my assessment that the recommendations made by these participants were influenced by the materials they were exposed to, their individual reflections and subsequent group discussions. There was no indication that any of the materials on this area were deemed irrelevant or non-useful, but it was acknowledged that there are systemic limitations in place that might make it challenging for them to implement these ideas; such limitations were mostly of a cultural nature in a system that focuses primarily on academic attainment and measurable outcomes.

d. How violence has become normalized in Chilean education

An important part of the discussion on violence in general, and on classroom violence in particular, is how violence has become normalized. This links back to Galtung's notion of cultural violence (1990) or the shared beliefs and values that make violence justifiable in the first place. I would like to offer participants' insights into how, from their different perspectives, violence has become normalized, but more importantly the impact this normalization has on them. This is an important part of the wider discussion into how violence is reproduced. On a personal level, it helped me see the importance of raising awareness amongst the participants on several of the themes discussed thus far: what violence is in the first place; its impact in human relations; its resulting inequality and how, unless we begin to challenge the causes of violence through education, violence will

continue to be perpetuated. Given the complexity of these participants' current roles in education – at once students in a classroom while engaging in their teaching practicums, I believe this is an issue of considerable prominence and worthy of our attention, which I will expand on next.

Let's look at the participant *UOH5's* comment as s starting point:

> *"Regarding to the last class, one of the most concepts that resonated with me was cultural violence. We have experienced that cultural violence is so normalized that we don't even notice when we are affected by that. …Sometimes we don't even notice the conduct or behavior that we are doing but then we look in retrospective we notice that we are doing things not right. Maybe sometimes I was following the patterns of cultural violence and I didn't even notice. That makes me feel worried about my own behavior because it is difficult to notice and even though it is difficult, we have to avoid that kind of behavior so we don't hurt anyone or follow those patterns of discrimination for the people who can be affected by cultural violence" – UOH5*

This observation – which is echoed by others- on one hand confirms the importance of self-enquiry practices in developing this kind of awareness in the first place, and on the other the relevance of actual training. Both these practices, self-awareness and training – what hooks refers to as 'self-actualization' (1994) – are necessary to modify the behavioral patterns this participant describes. I would argue here that this self-actualization also requires a safe and nonviolent approach; while some teachers might be open and willing to undertake these forms of self-enquiry, some may feel questioned or put up defenses. Boler (1999) and Zembylas and Papamichael (2017) posit that teacher discomfort is an unavoidable step in the process of questioning our own beliefs, values and ideology. As noted earlier, self-enquiry practices have a wide range of possibilities that do not necessarily involve mindfulness meditation, something participants struggled with; through her work on reflective teaching, Boon (2011), for instance, suggest to self-monitor so we can become aware of critical moments, document them, and later examine them. Such self-monitoring can be done in the way of journaling or maintaining a pre-designed checklist, for instance, the content of which can be analyzed and reflected on. She also suggests engaging in this kind of reflexivity through what she calls "dialogical meditational spaces" (p.29): an instance to explore areas of interest and difficulty while being supported by a peer engaged in nonjudgmental listening. This space should be articulated in such a

manner that the person engaged in personal exploration can safely externalize their ideas, confusions and emotions without being offered suggestions or opinions.

Further to this, Nhat Hanh (2004) argues that it is impossible to transform the world's consciousness without first focusing on and achieving some degree of personal change; the collective is made up of every individual, and thus individual change adds up to collective change. For instance, this participant notes:

"I have been justifying the surrounding individualism with the violence itself. I have been assuming that everybody is just focused on their personal interests. It is normal for them to do whatever it takes to get what they want" – PUCV3

Here we have a case, in which a participant describes the way collective behavior has impacted their own and led them to justify acts of violence. This same participant observed unsanctioned oppression within academic context that went unchallenged to the point of becoming normalized within the community, while others speak of physical and psychological abuse being part of the school's 'etiquette' or violent language having become part of the culture to such a degree that people do not consider it violent anymore.

This confirms what Kim et al., (2019) describe as socialization of violence; as individuals are exposed to different manifestations of violence, whether that occurs at home, with friends or school, these manifestations can become embedded and act as a problem-solving repertoire later in life. This is exactly why nonviolence education should begin early in the students' lives, and early in teacher training programs. For the former, such training may act as a preventive measure as far as violence is concerned, whereas for the latter it has the potential, as participants have detailed, to have a transformative function. Going even further, and both in line with Hooper's and participants' suggestions, such training programs should also involve the family; there is evidence that points to the need to strengthen the relationship and collaboration between families and institutions, given the positive outcomes obtained when such collaboration exists. For example, a study by Saracostti et al., (2019), investigating this very issue in Chile, provides not only a wealth of data on the positive impact the school-family relationship has on the way students engage with their studies – more responsibly, less confrontational in the face of disagreements or difficulties - but also shows that, as of 2019, only one in three teachers feels supported by families in their educational endeavors. It bears highlighting that this research refers specifically to primary and secondary students, who are primarily the ones participant are involved with. Therefore, there is a definitive role of the school to establish

deeper bonds and strengthen existing ones with families, so they are active and willing participants in students' learning journey. It is important to note that what this involvement and participation might look like is not discussed in aforementioned studies; it should be acknowledged that parents might be struggling with personal issues, work several jobs and have commitments that keep them away from home. However, Saracostti's research (ibid) demonstrates that parental involvement has an important effect on both socioemotional development and learning outcomes.

8.5 Non-violent approaches and perspectives

Having described and analyzed how, in light of the evidence gathered, violence comes into existence and becomes part of the lived experience in classrooms, this chapter will begin to present nonviolent perspectives and approaches that in the participants' eyes might contribute to mitigate different instances of violence. The chapter will specifically focus on three areas: what nonviolence communication is and how it can be used in an educational setting, what intercultural practices and approaches contribute to a nonviolent framework and finally, the role interconnectedness play on fostering nonviolence, and how it can be nurtured.

a. Nonviolent communication and its applications

Although nonviolent communication (NVC) is perhaps best known today through the work of Marshall Rosenberg (1999, 2003), the root of this tool is found in early Buddhist teachings on nonviolence. For instance, the *Subhasita Sutta* (Saddhatissa, 1995) states:

> *"Monks, speech which has four characteristics is speech, well-spoken, blameless and not censured by the wise, namely the speech of a monk who speaks only what is **wholesome** and not what is unwholesome; only what is **just**, not what is unjust; only what is **pleasant**, not what is unpleasant; only what is **true**, not what is false. Speech endowed with these four characteristic sis well-spoken, not poorly spoken* p. 50)

So we have four components that should imbue monks' speech according to the Buddha: it should be wholesome, just, pleasant and true. Taking this further, and while explaining Right Speech in the context of Buddhist teachings, Thich Nhat Hanh (1997) provides a

long description of what this would look like and which includes being truthful, using words that inspire confidence and hope, and not uttering words that might cause division. Although Rosenberg's framework (1999, 2003) doesn't explicitly borrow from these, he himself has described it as spiritual in nature; such framework is organized around four pillars: making observations rather than judgements (stating facts rather than our assessment of them), differentiating between how we feel versus what we think, learning to express our needs according to the definitions provided by Maslow (1954) and refined by Max-Neef (1982, 1992) and, finally, striving to express our needs as requests rather than demands.

Participants from both cohorts were given the opportunity to read not only selected chapters from Rosenberg's book, but also an excerpt from Thich Nhat Hanh's book *The Art of Communicating* (2013) titled "How to communicate with others", which draws from and expands on the aforementioned description. Another component of their reading was the chapter "Conversation" from bell hooks' *Teaching Critical Thinking* (2009); as a critical teacher, hooks emphasise here how our collective endeavour as a community should aim at having conversations that give students a voice, thus becoming inclusive and democratic. Finally, participants read a section of Lee Hooper's work (2015) on bringing NVC to a secondary teachers' training program using a quality learning circle (QLC) approach (Lovett and Gilmore, 2003; Lovett and Verstappen, 2007). The QLC approach aims at providing a space where participants have an equal degree of participation in learning activities, one where tasks are characterized by discussions, gathering and sharing ideas and learning from each other, rather than being led top-down. After the readings, participants from the first cohort were asked to reflect on the following questions:

1. After these readings, what are some violent uses of language you can identify in society? In the classroom?
2. From your understanding of the readings, can you think of specific examples on how language and communication can be violent? Can you think of a time in which you experienced violent communication? How about a time when you communicated violently with someone?
3. From your perspective, what are some of the implications of the way (violently / non-violently) we communicate with one another? Can you think of the implications of this in a classroom?
4. Based on the readings, can you think of some ways in which you can personally improve the way you communicate with others?

5. Can you think of very concrete and practical ways in which you can use these readings to foster non-violent communication with your immediate community and in the classroom? Give as many examples as you can.

This reflection, which was later shared in person, was followed by a short peer-teaching lesson in the first cohort. Due to time limitations, the second cohort was first asked to individually reflect on any connection between the reading materials and their own life, and later, in groups, to think of strategies they could use to bring NVC into their classrooms, as well possible challenges and how to overcome them. Before either cohort engaged in the actual discussion, however, I had participants do two exercises: one was a peer interview aimed at fostering empathy by first uncovering what they had in common with their partners, followed by expressing interest in finding out more about other participants' interests and activities. The second exercise was a direct observation from Rosenberg's four-step framework, and required participants to reflect on instances in which they used judgement rather than observations and how they could have reframed those judgements in line with the parameters of NVC. These were summarised by the participants in the form of posters (Fig. 8.5, 8.6 and 8.7, shown below)

Figure 8.5 – How to use nonviolent communication, PUCV group 1, PUCV 1,13 and 22
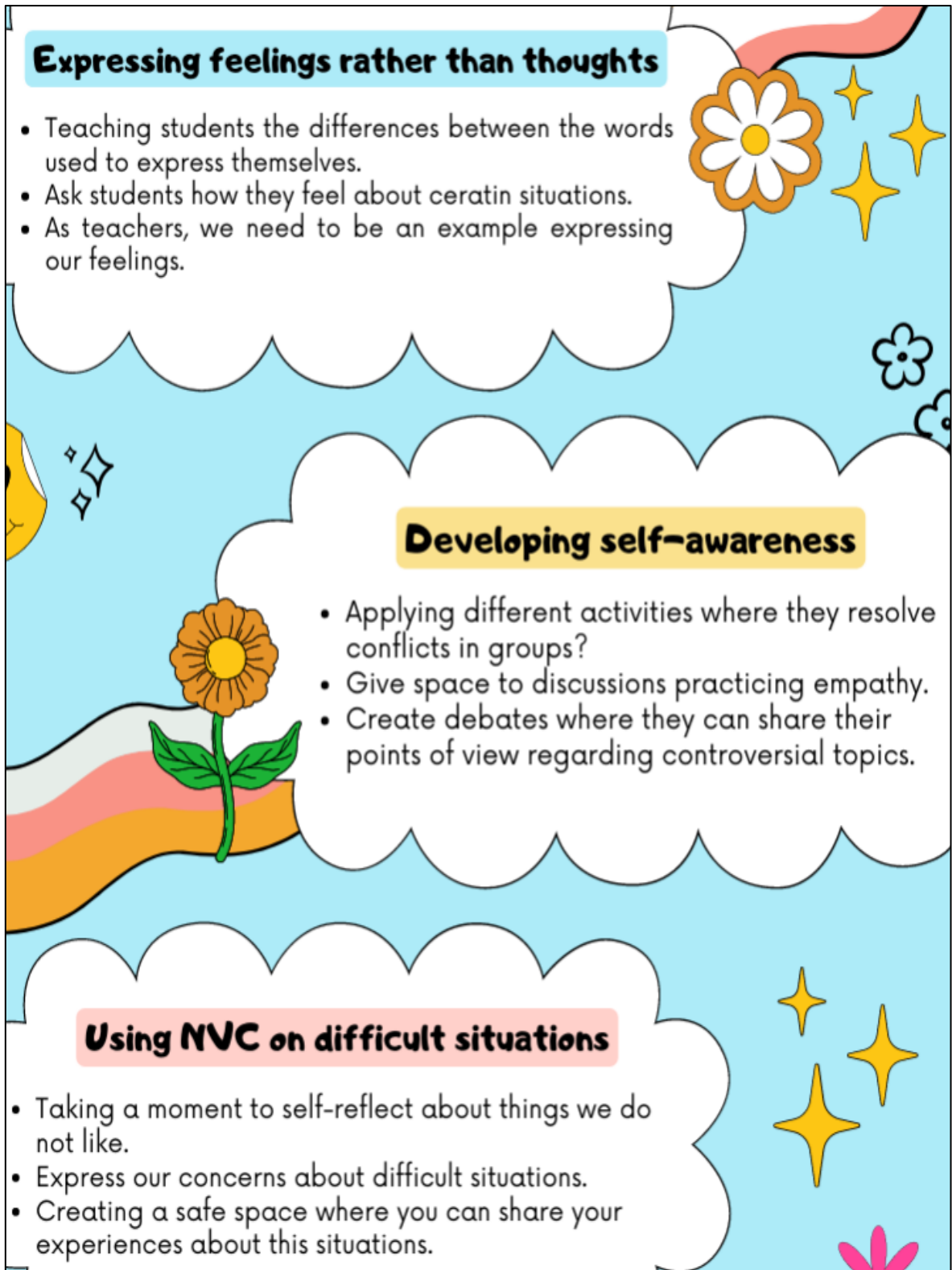
Expressing feelings rather than thoughts

- Teaching students the differences between the words used to express themselves.
- Ask students how they feel about ceratin situations.
- As teachers, we need to be an example expressing our feelings.

Developing self-awareness

- Applying different activities where they resolve conflicts in groups?
- Give space to discussions practicing empathy.
- Create debates where they can share their points of view regarding controversial topics.

Using NVC on difficult situations

- Taking a moment to self-reflect about things we do not like.
- Express our concerns about difficult situations.
- Creating a safe space where you can share your experiences about this situations.

Figure 8.6 – How to use nonviolent communication, PUCV group 2

PUCV 11,16,17 and 21

Figure 8.7 – How to use nonviolent communication, PUCV group 3

PUCV 6,7,9 and 10

What these three posters show us is how participants have thought of a series of trainable, coachable skills – such as self-reflecting, listening to others, or collectively creating a safe space where everyone has a voice that can be used to communicate about what troubles us. They all draw from the materials they read, particularly Rosenberg's and hooks' but more importantly, they speak of developing *empathy* within our social groups. Halpern's work (2014) is important here, as it sheds light on the importance and value of empathy. Her research, conducted in conflict areas, highlights the importance of repairing social relationships before real healing can occur. As she puts it: "interpersonal ruins, rather than ruined buildings and institutions, that pose the greatest challenge for rebuilding society" (p.563). Chile has undergone at least 4 years of deep polarization, damaged trust in institutions not affiliated with one's political ideology and fractured social relations leading to profound levels of social violence, as I have documented in the introductory chapter to this thesis. Against that backdrop, learning and being able to rehumanize the Other is the key task we need to engage in, and empathy plays a key role in that.

All of the different tasks mentioned by participants in the posters shows earlier require the individuals engaging in NVC to work not only on communicating how they feel or what they need, but to think about how others might receive what we have to say; as another group of participants pointed out, to be truly nonviolent in our communication it is important to ask how others feel about what we say and what we do, since communicating involves both listening and speaking. These participant's reflection, which came at the end of the work on NVC, point to that exact notion:

> *"I think often we are not being empathetic, but instead thinking about how other people should be. We have expectations with other people, especially teachers towards students who want them to be quiet, calm, and motivated. Teachers have to consider that everyone lives in a different situation. We can start practicing the NVC model, not only because we want to better teachers but also be better people; we need to look at the exact situations, others are in and request, instead of violently reacting towards a situation or a person" – UOH3*

> *"I think one way of improving my communication with others is to stop thinking about how I feel and start thinking about how the other person is feeling. Perhaps by thinking about why that person says or does such a thing, I can come to understand them and not judge them. I also think it's important to listen to what other people tell*

me. Listen, understand, and stop wanting to give my opinion on everything" –
UOH12

In addition to the strategies offered above, additional approaches were suggested by
these participants, who draw from Hooper (2015) and Azar (2016):

"Talking about strategies, methods, or metaphors to tackle all the violence issues
we have discussed, there are two that particularly caught our attention. On the one
hand, there is the "giraffe language" [48]*this one is a metaphor to nonviolent*
communication we loved as it is not that we need to compare ourselves to a giraffe,
but that we must learn to be compassionate towards people that we not necessarily
know or meet with very often. So, our compassion needs to be as big as the heart of
a giraffe. And on the other hand, there is the "quality learning circle" utilized by
Hooper (2015); we understood this one more as a practice that takes place between
teachers with the aim of pinpointing relevant issues that teachers need to focus on
and employ nonviolent communication to cope with them. Given that this strategy
is by teachers and for teachers, in contrast with the other strategy that is mainly
directed to students, we perceive it as a more meaningful strategy, but not less
important than the first one" – PUCV 4,11,14 and 17

Different scholars, literature and traditions have defined empathy and compassion
in different ways, so before analysing the above comment I will briefly explain both terms
as I use them personally and how I use them in the context of this study. Nussbaum
(1996), for instance, defines compassion as a "moral sentiment" (p.28), and as the key
connection between an individual and the community that allows us to establish a link
between our own interests and those of other people. On the other hand, my own
understanding and use of compassion matches Maull's (2021), whose concept is rooted in
the Tibetan Buddhist tradition: rather than a sentiment, it is the desire to alleviate suffering
in others, which can take the form of being willing to "suffer with the other" and provide
solace or comfort, or taking action to mitigate someone else's difficulties. Empathy, on the
other hand, is generally defined as the willingness to feel as accurately as possible as
others feel; in other words, being able to relate to and experience what others are
experiencing, which can have both positive or negative connotations, such as sadness or

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[48] In NVC, the giraffe is used metaphorically as a compassionate animal, hence giraffe language. The opposite side of that metaphor is
"jackal language", seen as the language we use to judge or criticize. Full explanation here: https://blog.krauthammer.com/try-the-
language-of-the-giraffe-nonviolent-communication-1

happiness (Nussbaum, 1998; Maull, 2021; Zembylas and Papamichael, 2017). Having explained this, I would like to highlight a key point from the participants' comment above: how compassion plays a role in developing a nonviolent mindset and therefore, in using nonviolent communication. While being interviewed by filmmaker Martin Doblmeir for a documentary on forgiveness[49], Thich Nhat Hanh highlighted the importance of nourishing compassion as an antidote to anger; compassion, he explains, allows to not only convey our feelings in a manner that is devoid of negativity and judgement, but also to listen so communication can be established. So, we begin to see a connection between the dimensions of empathy and compassion, and how they should be informing both our pedagogical practice and classroom relationships to foster and nourish inclusiveness through nonviolence. In the same vein, participant *UOH8* noted:

> *"In order to develop an inclusive mindset, it is necessary to be compassionate and gentle. On the one hand, compassion helps us to show empathy for other people, and also to take action if necessary… if I realize as a teacher that a student is having problems, I will try to help him or her in some way. On the other hand, being kind allows us to relate well with the people who are part of our community, this kindness will eventually be reciprocated by the people around us" – UOH8*

It is significant here to indicate the effect of the reading, exercises and discussion on the insights provided; in some cases, the participants expressed confirmation of how NVC can have a positive effect in human relations in general and in the classroom in particular. In other cases, this was more akin to a revelation. This participant, for example, notes (Fig. 8.8, next page):

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[49] Full interview here: https://uplift.love/thich-nhat-hanh-on-the-power-of-compassion/
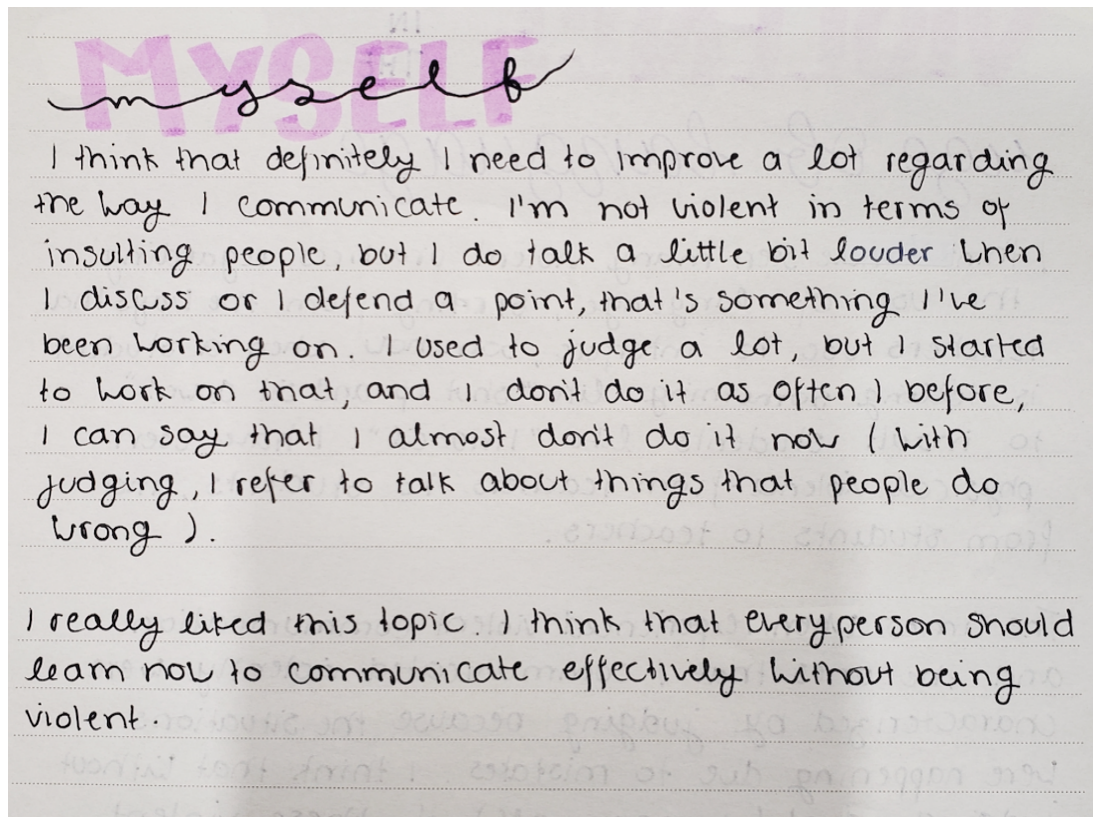
Figure 8.8 – Realization on NVC, UOH 16

This was echoed by several others whose reflections point to a similar shift in their approach:

> *"But I think that from now on I will try to use this as a mean to learn about the other person's perspective in situations that might involve me as well. I think it is always important to have a good communication in every relationship, for that reason, using nonviolent communication should be essential in those cases" – UOH16*

> *"As an overall view I find NVC essential to improve both as a teacher and socially. Our individualism allows for violent communication to happen; therefore, the perspective of connecting first with yourself and then with others is very important" – UOH11*

> *"The compassionate communication is something that I definitely want to instill in my future students, to transform this individualistic system and generate a change in the direction of non-violent communication" – UOH12*

What is also worthy of note here is how participants established a connection between violence and *individualism*; I distinctly recall one early conversation with participant UOH10, in which he highlighted that what is needed in our classrooms is solidarity, but also how such value is generally neglected in our current educational model; this, he added (and I concur) is rooted in competition and individual academic achievement where there is little room for collaboration. In fact, when thinking about strategies that might challenge violence and promote inclusiveness, participants almost unanimously agreed that a fundamental factor was community building. The key words in their responses were community, collaboration, solidarity, connection and cooperation. To achieve these, I argue, there is a definitive role for nonviolent communication strategies such as those suggested by the participants.

b. Intercultural practices and approaches

This next section will focus on what intercultural practices and approaches contribute to a nonviolent framework, according to evidence presented by participants. The discussion will center around two main areas with overlapping dimensions; the first of these is interculturality as a practice of global citizenship as advocated by cosmopolitanism, while the second area focuses more specifically on the practice of intercultural communication in educational settings.

One of the earliest findings made in this study was the existence of cultural violence in the classroom, particularly in relation to how migrant student were treated and how they were forced to assimilate to the social and linguistic practices imposed on them by teachers and classmates. To think about the implications of this, participants were required to become familiar with Kwame Appiah's work on Cosmopolitanism (2007), Stornaiuolo's adaption of his theories into an education context (2016) as well as elucidative videos created by Canvas of Learning on what cosmopolitanism is and why it matters, which are available on YouTube.[50] They were also asked to read selected chapters from "*Cultivating Cosmopolitanism for Intercultural Communication*" by Bardhan and Sobre-Denton (2013), with a specific focus on the chapter "The Role of the Imagination and Kindness to Strangers - Cosmopolitan Peoplehood". Finally, this was complemented

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[50] Videos available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYhkTngGMZs and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKESJitCmnc

by a short lecture on Intercultural Communication available on YouTube[51] by Dr. Stephen Klein from the University of Missouri.

Engagement with and understanding of someone else's culture and cultural practices requires, once again, a high degree of empathy. In fact, the work cited above shares its vision of a society in which we cease to focus on cultural others as Others and strangers, and instead, gradually develop an understanding that allows us to embrace them as different, yet not *separate* from us. It was with this in mind that the contemplative practice chosen for this specific week was one titled "Emergency Empathy", adapted from Rosenberg's "Nonviolent Communication" (2003). The practice was as follows:

- Think of a person or group that violates your values so profoundly that you find them impossible to empathize with. When you've interacted with that person or group in the past, what emotions were you feeling?
- When you think about that person or group now, what emotions come up?
- Thinking about that person or group right now, while you're not directly interacting with them, do you still find it impossible to empathize with them? What feelings or needs of theirs can you identify?
- The next time you have to interact with this person or group, how can you show *yourself* some emergency first-aid empathy?

Following this, the first cohort engaged in a live discussion to design specific strategies they could use to bring their new knowledge into their classroom practice; the second cohort, on the other hand, reflected on the following questions individually and submitted their answers online:

1. How can the practice of cosmopolitanism and intercultural communication help promote equality and the reduction of violence in our classrooms? (Remember that when we talk about violence, we also mean structural and cultural and not only direct, physical violence)
2. How can these notions and practices help promote inclusiveness and equality in education in general, but particularly in our classrooms?

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[51] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXwxg-6dUbE

3. How can you as a teacher promote the ideas of intercultural collaboration and cosmopolitanism amongst your own learners?

4. Cosmopolitanism argues that we as humankind share a set of stories: things we remember, things we forget and a commitment to a common future. How can these ideas be used to challenge the *separateness* and *difference* promoted by identity politics?

5. In light of recent migratory movement and political changes in Chile, how can the perspectives offered here help you promote the values of mutual understanding and respect? What challenges might you face in bringing these ideas into action?

6. Could you share any new insight or perspective you might have gained through this week's reading and reflection?

Although, as Hansen (2010) notes, cosmopolitanism has different dimensions that are often at odds with each other, ranging from political and economic to philosophical and ethical, what they have in common is that as a practice of global citizenship, it is rooted in the idea of interdependence, collaboration and a sense of mutual responsibility. As noted earlier, Appiah (2007) approaches this as a worldwide ethics system, in which our role as global citizens should be to understand and embrace other individuals' cultural practices in a way that promotes these values, rather than isolating in our identity differences. Sobre-Denton and Bardhan (2013) argue for this very point; as they note, our world is not the same it was once, when world travel and technological connectivity did not exist, and when migration patterns differed greatly from what they are today. And in this newish world, full of cultural strangers, cosmopolitanism argues for welcoming those strangers as no longer Others.

As it will be seen in some of the following images and charts, participants' strategies and individual reflections directly link to these ideas; they highlight collaboration, team-building exercises, reducing competition by allocating group roles of similar responsibilities, self-reflecting and considering other people's feelings when taking actions. From a cultural perspective, participants suggested allowing students to showcase aspects of their own culture and fostering respect for cultural differences. It was also acknowledged that bringing these ideas into Chilean classrooms is not an endeavour devoid of challenges, which I will comment on in a later paragraph.

Here is an example of the one of the posters the participants created, which were then used by each group to present and discuss their ideas with others (Fig. 8.9):
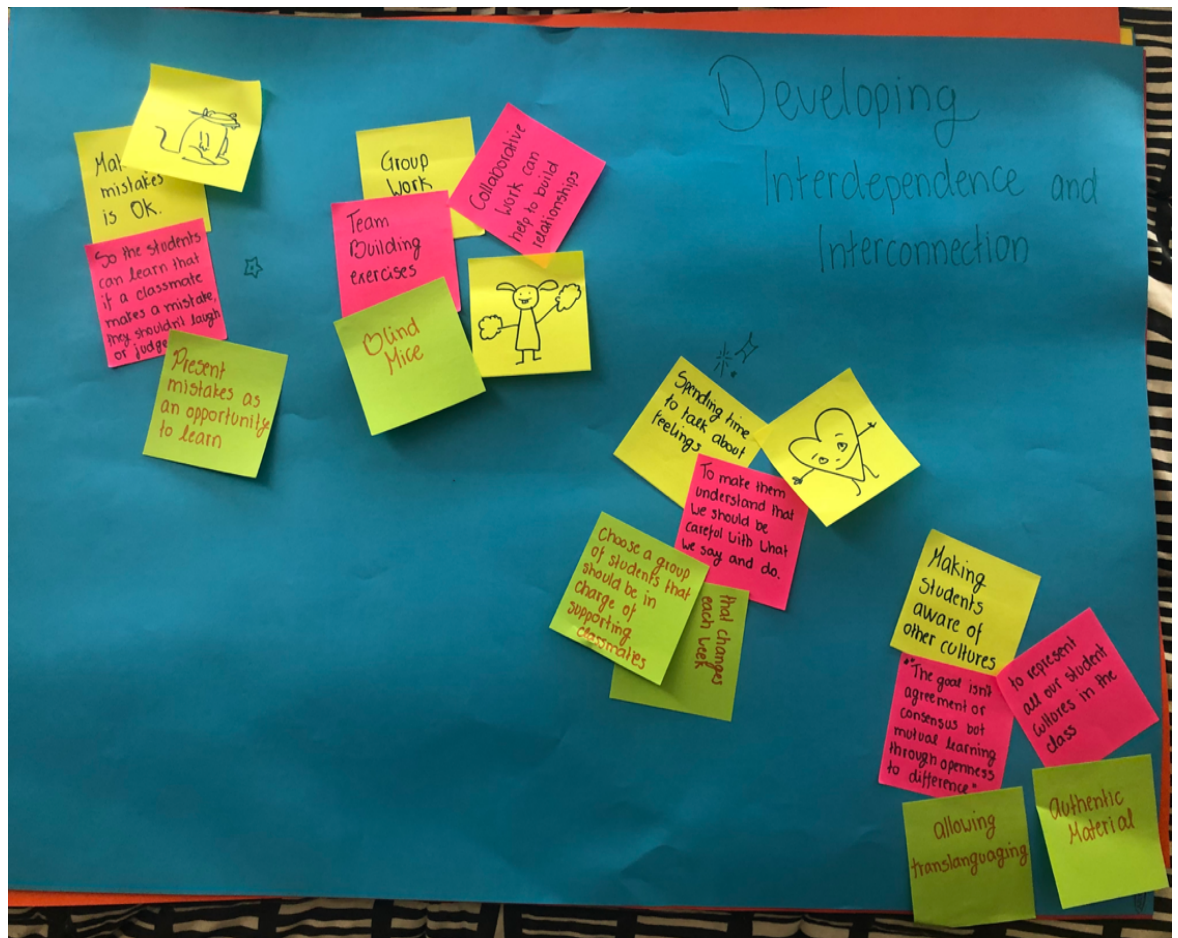
Figure 8.9 – Participants' poster – developing interdependence and interconnectedness, UOH Group 1

There are several points that should be highlighted here; first it's the clear emphasis participants placed on collaboration and community – *"collaborative work can help build relationships"*, *"to make them understand that we should be careful with what we say or do"*, *"choose a group of students that should be in charge of supporting classmates",* in line with the cosmopolitan idea of mutual responsibility and community building. Second, and key from an intercultural perspective, is raising awareness of cultural differences. This means making very clear to learners the goal of intercultural exchanges is not an unrealistic consensus or forced agreement which can potentially lead to more violence (Medaric and Ramesa., 2016), but mutual learning through openness and difference. The ideas offered by participants here show, in line with Bardhan and Sobre-Denton (2013), that our postcolonial world can often seem too focused on difference when looking at culture, nation and relations of power; reconceptualising our relationship with others as one of mutuality despite the differences, real or imagined, offers an approach that aims at rediscovering our shared humanity. This is important because it also helps us move away from a binary narrative of "us versus them", and more towards a mutually supportive

intercultural environment; one where, as Holliday and Adamasi (2017) highlight, individual differences are set aside as such and used instead in the process of intercultural negotiation and culture building.

Participants certainly noted foreseeable challenges to building interconnected, interdependent community as a path towards nonviolent, inclusive action. For them, and as indicated previously, the biggest challenge ahead in advancing this notion is ingrained individualism. As participants became more familiarized with the nonviolent perspectives being discussed, the issue of individualism as a cultural barrier and a deeply embedded value became a more prominent part of the conversation.
These particular comments illustrate this point:

"One challenge could be leaving aside this egocentric thought that I am the center of everything as an individual, thinking that I don't owe anything to anyone and I don't belong anywhere since what's most important is me.". – PUCV 11

"I believe that the central challenges originate essentially from the neoliberal capitalist culture that dominates our western culture, politics and society. Concretely I believe that the ''Pull yourself up by the bootstrap'' hyper individualistic mindsets pose a significant challenge to this objective since it makes students tend to be extremely competitive and less cooperative between them, sometimes even when it may be detrimental to them such as when a student may avoid participating in scaffolding with their classmate regardless that it may let them learn more or confirm their comprehension depending of their role". – PUCV 2

Students might lack interest with teachers that try to integrate ubuntu into the classroom because they have grown in an individualistic society who taught them to care about nothing but themselves. Teaching ubuntu is a work with students' self esteem since they have to learn they are important for society.
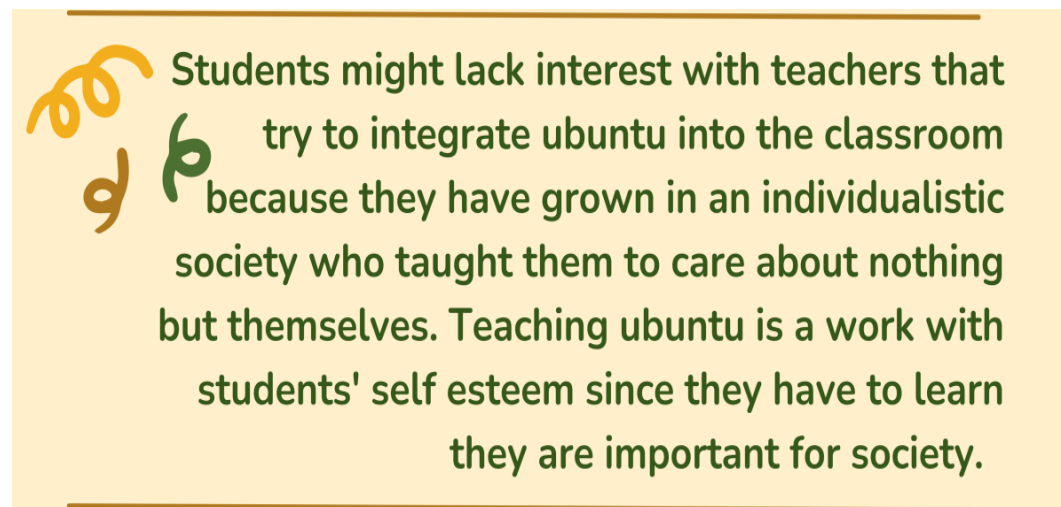
Figure 8.10 – Challenges to teaching ubuntu, PUCV 8

These perceived challenges should not come as a surprise in an educational system that for decades has favored competition and individual achievement over collaboration and community values. In fact, not unlike the system used in the US or the UK, university acceptance is tied to both high-school test results and a series of universal subject-specific tests that vary depending on the choice of major. Being accepted into university of course has a series of life-long implications: which university one is accepted into will depend on those test results, and this also impacts insertion into the labor market with certain universities being favored over others based on reputation and brand-name recognition.

What I continued to say throughout the workshop series is that what is required is perseverance, in the understanding that long-lasting changes will not happen overnight. However, as I shared with them, education once again plays a big part. I have earlier discussed my observations of their own paradigm shifts from "people need to treat *me* better" to "I need to treat people better" to "students need to treat each other better"; this change was gradual, but it took a couple of months, not a couple of years to achieve. Hence, the notion that we need to educate our learners on community building as a response and direct challenge to the prevailing individualistic mindset ties with the earlier point: the path forward lies, in my view, in gradually adding these perspectives into our educational programs in the manner participants have suggested and which I described in the earlier sections of this chapter: empathy development, team / community-building activities, nonviolent communication strategies, learning about other people's cultures and background, and slowly and gradually learning to recognize the fact of our interconnection.

c. Everything, Everywhere All at Once: developing interconnectedness

This research study is rooted in the idea that, to develop a pedagogy of inclusiveness, there needs to be an understanding of our interconnection with each other but also with the world around us. This stems from the conviction that we can only foster the kind of relationship we need to thrive as a community by appreciating our mutual connection and our connection with our surroundings. This idea of interconnectedness is present in several, different philosophical frameworks. While mostly associated with non-Western wisdom traditions, such as Buddhism or ubuntu, we also find a strong reference to it in Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations:*

"Frequently consider the connection of all things in the universe and their relation to one another. For in a manner all things are implicated with one another, and all in this way are friendly to one another; for one thing comes in order after another, and this is by virtue of the active movement and mutual conspiration and the unity of the substance" (167 AD, 6.38)

The connection of all things in the universe, as Marcus Aurelius states, is certainly present in the practices of indigenous communities in Africa, North / South America and elsewhere. I have earlier explained and elaborated on *Ubuntu* and *Buen Vivir* and how they contribute to the notion of interconnectedness, but we also encounter it deeply embedded in First Nations' philosophy. When describing indigenous ways of being in a text for First Nation students in Canada, Cull et al., (2018), for instance, emphasize the responsibility each person has in acknowledging their connection to their family, their community, and the land. This acknowledgement must be followed, they argue, by an actual commitment to community building through understanding, respect and responsibility. This view is shared by Native American communities as well; Devine (2018)[52], for example, describes the community as a circle, a place of unbroken connection where we contribute to the health of the community by establishing a sense of reciprocity.

The week devoted to the theme on interconnectedness as a vehicle towards greater inclusiveness exposed students to the concepts of *Ubuntu* and *Buen Vivir*, which I have explained at length in earlier chapters of this thesis. To do this, participants read selected sections of Desmond Tutu's *"No Future Without Forgiveness"* (1999), a series of non-academic articles and websites on the meaning and applications of *Buen Vivir*; watched explanatory videos on both *Ubuntu* and *Buen Vivir* by African and South American native indigenous people; read a chapter from Semali and Kincheloe's *"What is Indigenous Knowledge? Voices from the academy"* (1999); and, finally, they read a selected section of "*Educational Alternatives in Latin America: New Modes of Counter-Hegemonic Learning"* (2019), by Robert Aman. The latter two readings, from geographically different contexts, provided insight into African and South American indigenous people's ways of relating to each other, to their communities and to the earth, as well as useful descriptions

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[52] From her podcast "The Leadership Podcast". Link here: https://theleadershippodcast.com/tlp086-what-native-american-interconnectedness-can-teach-us-about-teamwork/?doing_wp_cron=1680102287.8985290527343750000000

of how they learn and pass on generational knowledge. After the readings, they were asked to individually reflect on the following questions:

1. How can we as teachers bring these ideas into the classroom? How can we begin to create a non-violent environment that relies on mutual dependence and collaboration?
2. What are the practical applications you see of indigenous knowledge and perspectives in non-indigenous communities? Are there specific elements you can bring into your teaching practice to promote interconnectedness?
3. What does it mean to you, in practical, concrete terms, the concept that "my humanity is inextricably linked to yours" and "I am because you are"? How can this concept impact human relationships?
4. What could be some challenges you might find in trying to cultivate 'ubuntu', considering the strong individualistic mindset of Western / Western-influenced societies and education?
5. Does the reading assignment this week give you any new awareness of the concept of human interconnection and our moral obligation towards others?

A key theme that materialized from the analysis of these reflections was the importance of developing interconnectedness amongst the different members of the community / classroom. Although in general terms participants' findings and ideas confirmed my assumptions about the value of interconnectedness, there were also many unexpected insights that ranged from political to philosophical, spiritual and pedagogical. The first of these insights concerns how participants view indigenous social philosophy as a direct challenge to individualism, the ideologies that inform it, and the cultural, structural and direct violence that ensues as a result:

> *"I became aware thanks to the concept of "Ubuntu" that the main reason why the classrooms I have been in were violent at some point is because we tend to act towards individualism (not individuality); but this is not completely the fault of the teacher or the students, it is the fault of the context in which we were nurtured. Looking back again, I remember my moments in my first and second year of high school in a class that did not fit with me, or that I did not fit with it? I have no idea. Well, that was the most violent class I have ever been in. I feel sincerely that hardly anyone cared about each other, even me. We were not feeling connected" –*
> *PUCV4*

The ideal Kantian version of individualism, if we are to agree with Sanchez-Cuenca (2019), would be one where all persons are equal and deserving of the same rights, respect and dignity. Such version is not only linked to the value of equality but also of freedom; individualism promotes agency, the right to privacy, property and self-determination. We do not live in this idealized version, however; I would argue that these rights and agency at any point in time and space have historically benefitted some "more-than-humans" over those considered "less-than-human", such as women, ethnic minorities or now refugees or asylum seekers. In line with this, and as the participant above noted, 21st-century individualism is much more likely to manifest as and represent the pursue of those rights and freedoms to the detriment of our collective well-being. Much of that, I argue, is the responsibility of the organizations and structures that allow for this to occur in the first place; though Sanchez-Cuenca (ibid) contends that violence is monopoly of the *state,* this is, in my view, an oversimplification: as one of the participants noted, neoliberalism and its ideology of consumerism and market economics - which at large promote the idea of individual achievement, the survival of the fittest, the role of competition and meritocracy and has for years informed and shaped the education industry - is much to blame for the levels of structural and cultural violence Western-influenced societies experience, and which in the Chilean case I have described in the earlier chapters (see chapter 2, sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3)

From a participants' perspective, this is confirmed by following other comments:

"Capitalism promotes individualism and profit in ways that prevent us from sharing, and the classroom is where we can start to promote a more collaborative and interconnected way of thinking" – PUCV11

"It is well-known that today students are part of an individualist society, which goes the opposite way of what we are trying to achieve with ubuntu" – PUCV14

"In my family it has always been difficult for me to find somebody that cares about others more than themselves, same as in my college environment. I have been justifying the surrounding individualism with the violence itself. I have been assuming that everybody is just focused on their personal interests. It is normal for them to do whatever it takes to get what they want" – PUCV3

"I think that one of the biggest challenges is to eradicate this sense of individualism and doing things that help myself even if this means bad thing to others, and start thinking of our society as a whole interconnected "self" in which we are part of it, and all our society and environment as well" – PUCV17

We can see here then that from these participants' lived realities and perspectives there is a clear connection between the type of unbridled individualism reflected by only caring about ourselves and the violence that ensues from lack of empathy and collaboration; although it is not readily evident if this awareness emerged as a result of the readings, what is evident is that being exposed to these materials helped them reflect on the contrast between these individualistic experiences they described and the interconnectedness that indigenous social philosophies promote. I would like to point out here that this emphasis on empathy and collaboration with other "humans" is not without its pitfalls. Participants considerations here seem limited to humans, while indigenous philosophies – particularly *Buen Vivir* – do not make this distinction; since the category of human assumes the category of non-human or not-quite-human, this also allows for the emergence of violence towards other humans, since dehumanizing is the first step in all conflict. Here perhaps the project would have benefitted from delving deeper into this aspect of interconnectedness that moves beyond this categorization by drawing upon the elements of indigenous cosmology that stress our sustainable co-existence with the world around us.

When thinking about strategies to bring these ideas into the classroom, the common thread in participants' input was promoting collaboration and community; this, they argued, must be rooted in a sense of mutual responsibility. In. other words - and going back to the earlier point made by Appiah (2007) and Bardhan and Sobre-Denton (2013) (see pages 25, 59 and 61) - they referred to an expansion of their circle of concern. The first insight provided below (fig. 8.11) links to this very notion, as well as bringing back the importance of empathy development within the classroom community (and as I mentioned above, a reference to the 'universe', which may be about including also more than human):

Figure 8.11 – Participant's Insight on interconnectedness, PUCV 13

The next two comments below connect to the ideas of challenging individualism through collaboration, teamwork and mutual dependence rather than competition; of a sense of responsibility for each other and for our surroundings, and importantly, to turn the classroom into a space that allows for this while challenging the colonial legacy in both method and content:

> *"From my perspective, group works are a good resource to promote this idea of interdependence. In a teamwork, each one fulfills a function, so each member is essential for the realization of this.*
> *Fostering this idea that we depend on our peers to learn is a big step in starting to create a non-violent environment. Stop competing, include those who have different ideas, want the success of my classmates for the good of everyone. These are ideas that the new generations will acquire and gradually reform the worldview of society"* – UOH 6

I mentioned earlier the negative impact of neoliberal policies that stress competition and meritocracy in education; the comment above goes to the heart of that critique; when we have a system in which efficiency and monetary capitalization are prioritized over moral and pedagogical values, and individual achievement over collaboration, this system is unlikely to provide the necessary social protection to those who are already at a disadvantage. Building a collective consciousness of community as part of our classroom practice then is direct challenge to that model.

Further to this, and along the same line this participant states:

"The first thing is to create spaces where these concepts can be discussed. In my experience as a student there was never a space to talk about these visions. It was all about formal contents, but I am sure that more than some of us would have been interested in the subject. Also, I think there is a lot of material with which to start generating interest. There are movies, there is literature, etc. I think we need to stop focusing on the classic western worldview and reconnect with our roots and ways of seeing the world. This goes hand in hand with decolonizing our education. They have taught us that the correct way to educate ourselves is found in science and the humanities, but other ways of learning, other ways of living in society, have been buried" – UOH3

This last point in particular – focusing on content and supporting materials that move away from Western traditions of knowledge production and transmission – connects with indigenous wisdom and worldviews in two additional manners. The first, as the participant notes, is the connection with one's roots and the way of seeing the world. Decolonial education, in a view supported by Zavala (2016), must strive for the inclusion of practices such as storytelling and reclaiming knowledges and identities that have been denied or side-lined. The second connection is the element of community-building intrinsically built in indigenous communities and that both *ubuntu* and *Buen Vivir* promote.

In line with this, the comment below offers further perspective on the notion of collaboration and the teachers' role in promoting it as a classroom value:

"I would like to create a collaborative classroom in which every student has the opportunity to participate using their strengths and look up for a classmate that might need support in what they are good at. Also, I would like to teach them to embrace mistakes and show interest for the well-being of the group, creating a language community that is aware of their strengths and weaknesses to contribute among themselves and other groups that might need it" – PUCV3

There are several ideas worth noticing here; on one hand we have the concept of providing support to those who need it, which according to Rovai (2002), strengthens group connectedness. A second important point here is the idea of *"embracing mistakes and show interest for the well-being of the group"*; I propose not only that such disposition

and openness can help individual members build more trust and improve their sense of belonging, but also that in line with research by Sidelinger et al., (2014), these values – belonging, trust, connectedness – are also linked to positive out-of-classroom positive relationships.

Further to these notions, I will add that although the concept of collaborative learning is not a novel one, and research dating back to the 1990s supports it (see, for example, Cheng et al., 2021; Echeverria et al., 2011; Higgins et al., 2012; Järvenoja et al., 2020; Scager et al., 2016) the comments I have shared here add three important dimensions to it: one is that, unlike all the studies mentioned above, considerations on the importance of interdependence and collaboration in learning come directly from the participants' own insights during the project; the studies referenced here, on the other hand, are in large part classroom experiments and observations; secondly, the fact that these participants belong to a particular demographic that is under-represented in research scholarship, as is the Chilean context; and, thirdly, that this drive for collaboration and community building emerged as a result of the participants being exposed to social perspectives previously absent from their curriculum.

I will conclude this section by highlighting the connection between three key elements - violence, othering and individualism - that are at the center of many of the participants' insights and comments, in order to make that connection clearer and perhaps more explicit. Butler (2020) notes how violence ensues as a result of a difference in the value we place on the lives of others; whereas we mourn the loss of those close to us, either by family ties or social ones, we do not equally grieve those we see as outsiders. Hence, there is a sense of *us versus them* built in in our social contracts and the structures that surround us and support us, and it is here that we have othering in action. As Rohleder (2015) explains, 'othering' concerns assigning negative distinguishing attributes to individuals or groups different from us, or who represent that which is opposite to our ideas or identity. Fukuyama (2019) expands on this by elucidating how identity politics has come to shape and inform our conversation about social inclusiveness. In the post-modern, post-colonial world, as historically marginalized groups have begun to reclaim their right to agency and self-determination, and to transform both their individual and social identity we have also began to grow further and further apart, as each group engages in their own reclamations. It should also be mentioned that as the groups with more to lose – those who long have benefitted from that status quo – resistance manifests this in increasingly virulent ways; we need to look no further than MAGA or Proud Boys in the US or

xenophobic political parties in Europe finding their way into mainstream politics, such as Movimiento Sociale Italiano or the Dansk Folkeparti (UN Report, n.d.)[53]

The act of othering then, which cannot be decoupled from having the power to impose othering in official ways and which goes back to the legitimization of violence by organizations and structures, encapsulates the very concept of violence perhaps not as visible as a physical act, but exclusionary, nonetheless. This is compounded in Western-influenced settings, Smith (2012) argues, by the existence of socio-cultural-political structures that promote and defend individual freedoms and choices above all else, and where structural inequalities are seen is individual problems that we must each deal with on our own. This is, in other words, the very opposite of inclusion through the humanization of others, and equality stemming from recognition of our shared humanity. Violence is a dimension fostered and fuelled by social and cultural constructs that aid in the process of individualization, separation and establishing difference; hence, the relevance of identifying these factors and developing strategies to counter them through a practical and theoretical nonviolent framework.

d. Challenges in the practice of nonviolence

The most common challenge identified by participants was in fact their own mindset and proclivity to react violently to life situations, either in the classroom or outside; several comments to this effect were offered:

> *"I still think I have a somewhat violent mindset towards some issues that have to do with exclusion and discrimination therefore even though this course helped me in doing some non-violent practices I still need to work on this"* – PUCV13

> *"And I must admit that, in this sense, being non-violent is quite challenging, especially when our capacity to withstand or tolerate another person reaches its maximum limit. There are the moments when violence takes utter control over our body"* – PUCV7

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[53] Retrieved here: https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/wake-xenophobia-new-racism-europe

"My point is simple. In the previous reflection I mentioned that I do not want to become a violent teacher, but that my temperament may make this goal challenging" – PUCVV4

The first thing to understand is that participants recognize here that they themselves *are not violent* but they experience life situations that turn them to violence; the first participant recognizes they still "need to work" on it and the other two express a clear desire not to be violent which is challenging under certain circumstances; this understanding of how external factors impact our own attitudes and feelings is explained by Galtung when he says *"violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations"* (1969, p.168). It is acknowledged that as human beings, we act violently when influences are exerted upon us, and that to help individuals in this process, training is necessary. This training should, in my view, have two strands: on one hand, the individual strand geared towards self-actualization: non-violent communication training, empathy development and compassion training, which I have described earlier, are some examples. The other strand concerns training on the commitment to nonviolence as anti-oppression, which requires, before said commitment, an understanding. Successful nonviolent movements, for instance, have provided general individuals with vast opportunities to learn the principles of nonviolence, from John Lewis and Martin Luther King's community centres run through the Student Nonviolent Committee (SNCC) to Gandhi's regular speeches, publications and teachings on nonviolence to the Indian population, education plays a key role in helping individuals strengthen their understanding and commitment to nonviolent action.

The role that training and education can play in self-change and the development of nonviolent practices is also highlighted by these participants, who noted:

"Regarding the challenges, the main one is related to the unlearning of the "other focused" orientation, where we tend to see our culture as the norm and therefore superior. It is necessary to fight against this mindset, especially in a society that's constantly exposed to a more diverse reality". – PUCV 20

"In my opinion, before bringing these philosophies to students, it is important to start by ourselves first. As teachers we should be practicing what we want our

students to learn. The idea is to explain to students what we are going to do and teach them how this can help them". PUCV 3

The key here is the word 'unlearning'. Cultural values that perpetuate violence, such as seeing indigenous people, migrants or other marginalized communities as lesser, or using language as an exclusionary factor must be unlearned and a new knowledge of our shared humanity must be constructed if we are to foster inclusive learning environments; however, as individuals we also need to unlearn our own violent behaviors in order to learn sustainable ways to related to each other, to our students and other members of our communities.

8.6 From theory to practice: a pedagogy of inclusiveness through nonviolence

This chapter will focus on what participants described as the methods and practices necessary to bring the ideas discussed so far into their own classrooms. I have divided these into three main areas of praxis based on participants' input: the vision of the classroom not only as a place of individual learning but as one to build community; the reimagining of classroom practice as one rooted in more democratic participation; and, finally, the participants' conception of the classroom as a space where contemplation and self-enquiry have their place. These themes and their core concepts – namely, creating community, democratic participation and contemplative practices –form what I deem to be a pedagogy of inclusiveness through nonviolence.

a. The classroom as a community

I will begin this section by providing a summary of participants' points on week 3 of the first iteration. The discussion centered around the issue of turning the classroom into a space which fosters awareness of interconnection, and strategies they might use to bring that about. The information presented by participants was handed in in the way of posters with post-it notes and has been summarized here for brevity.

The main points offered by participants concern three aspects of teaching practice, which overlap with my earlier description of results:

1. Being accepting of mistakes by creating an atmosphere where these not only acceptable, but where students are not ridiculed for making them.
2. Incorporating team-building exercises as part of our teaching practice and developing collaborative tasks that can help learners establish actual relationships with each other and their teachers. This includes setting up collaborative activities making sure each group member has a function, which creates an actual need for each person's work, eliminates competition and allows students to learn together.
3. Fostering reflexivity. This means allocating time for reflection within the students' work, which should focus on each of the team members' feelings and allowing them to express them freely. Allocate time within class for students to share aspects of their lives with the aim of allowing learners to understand that there are other realities besides their own. An additional element associated with reflexivity is to encourage students to reflect and think before acting, to think about what the other person means and to pay attention to our interlocutor's body language to understand what is really going on with them.

Further to these points, participants made reference to some of the earlier elements I have mentioned in earlier sections; for instance, creating instances that allow students to showcase aspects of their own culture such as food, traditions and spiritual practices, which connects with the idea of developing intercultural skills; ensuring learners are taught about the importance the natural world and sustainable ways to love in it, rather than the overexploitation that results from neoliberal ideologies, which related to the principles of *Buen Vivir;* finally, providing a space for students to develop a grateful and appreciative mindset, which helps recognize several things: the value of their own life and circumstances, the value of cultivating good, healthy relationships with their teachers, peers and people in general and finally, how this mutual appreciation deepens reciprocal respect.

A closer look at these ideas reveals two key common elements: community and self-enquiry. In other words, participants value the relationship between the self-regulation of emotion and attention provided by contemplative practices - which they had experienced by this point - and being able to partake in the life of the classroom as a community the way they envision it. A report by the Mind and Life Education Research

Network (2013) [54] notes that the regular use of contemplative practices, such as the ones as I have described in earlier sections of this chapter (see section 4.5.3) - but that also expand beyond that - have a considerable impact on stress reduction and emotion management, and this something participants see as an important strategy to bring into the classroom. Concerning community, participants' ideas on community building span across a wide scope of areas: material writing *("adapt stories to students' context…to allow our empathy to emerge");* learning and engaging in nonviolent communication (*"not making fun of or ridiculing students"* and *"encourage students to be respectful with each other");* developing intercultural awareness *("create instances that allow students to showcase aspects of their culture");* and more importantly, activities that create a spirit of collaboration rather than competition, such as team-building, assigning roles of equal importance and sharing personal experiences in order to develop a deeper understanding of each other. In other words, a challenge to the contention that as individuals our primary interest is pursuing our own self-designed life plan, and more along the lines of communitarian ideals. In fact, several observations made by participants highlighted this point: how growing up in a society that over the last 40 years has favored a neoliberal, Western-centric educational model has left a profound mark in individual students and their willingness and ability to collaborate. In line with this, when considering the challenges, they might face in implementing their vision in their classrooms, the most important elements were identified in lack of empathy and a non-collaborative attitude, both of which are indicative of an individualistic rather than collective mindset. It is exactly here where contemplative practices can have – and did in fact have – an impact, something I will explore in depth in section C of this chapter.

Going back to the point of individualism versus community building and the connection of Chilean students to Western values is well-captured by this participant:

> *"We are in a Western notion and idea, and I consider it essential to understand that when we are in a classroom, we are in a family part of a whole; students and teachers are part of a classroom, part of a school and part of a whole network. The point is being able to promote activities and make good use of them that can promote critical reflection on diversity and how diversity makes who we are and part of a whole. I have many classmates, and I get to know how they have constructed their beliefs, the values they have.*

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[54] Report retrieved here: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3420012/

We have a key role as teachers to promote this and to promote these questions; we are part of a world teeming with diversity. It's not easy. Post-modernism and Capitalism promote individualism and profit in ways that prevent us from sharing, and the classroom is where we can start to promote a more collaborative and interconnected way of thinking" – PUCV 8

This insight in fact brings a key issue to the fore: diversity. In addition to sexual and ethnic diversity, Chile is experiencing an important increase on the number of international students; recent figures show a 30% increase in their number from 30,000 in 2015 to over 190,000 in 2021[55]. And while it is true that the primary responsibility for the classroom lies on the teacher, the issue of managing diversity presents important challenges in developing a sense of harmonious community. As Du Plessis (2019) documents, it is not only that each learner brings their own individual needs, but there is also an intersection of their different sexual identities, different ethnicities, cultural and linguistic differences, their beliefs and value systems, and this requires skilful guidance within the classroom setting. It is here that perhaps Appiah's (2007) invitation to understand identity from a 21st-century perspective can be useful; for while humanity has always been diverse, the Western idea of identity and the constructs that accompany it are quite new, dating back to the work of Erik Erikson in the 1960s (Bamberg et al., 2021).

I would argue that although eliminating the idea of identity might seem anathema, particularly for groups who have had their culture, language, beliefs and behaviours stripped of all value through oppression, the idea of identity in itself is an oppressive construct put forth by the colonial powers and should be challenged. This does not mean negating or invalidating differences; on the contrary, the rich diversity that learners bring in different dimensions should be acknowledged. However, I have argued in the earlier chapters that a contribution Eastern philosophy can make is the affirmation that who we are – intrinsically human – is not dependent in any of the social or cultural circumstances surrounding us; it is not determined by the colour of our skin nor our sexual orientation. Certainly, there are very real implications of oppression for those who have been historically marginalized; however, as I have detailed in this chapter the mere recognition of our shared humanity, and the subsequent collective actions we take together have the potential to dismantle the idea of what we have been made to believe we are. It is here I

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[55] Information retrieved here: https://www.latercera.com/nacional/noticia/matricula-de-ninos-migrantes-llega-hasta-el-30-en-comunas-de-la-rm/VI4K46DZ6BDGHDKGFH42D7X5AA/

think the role of the teacher lies. Both identity and the individual – certainly Western notions – need to be questioned from a decolonial perspective; teachers can and should facilitate that process.

In addition to the strategies mentioned in the chart above, there were several other ideas that surfaced along the lines of building community and the practicalities involved in doing so. These are two examples offered by different groups of participants during a session:
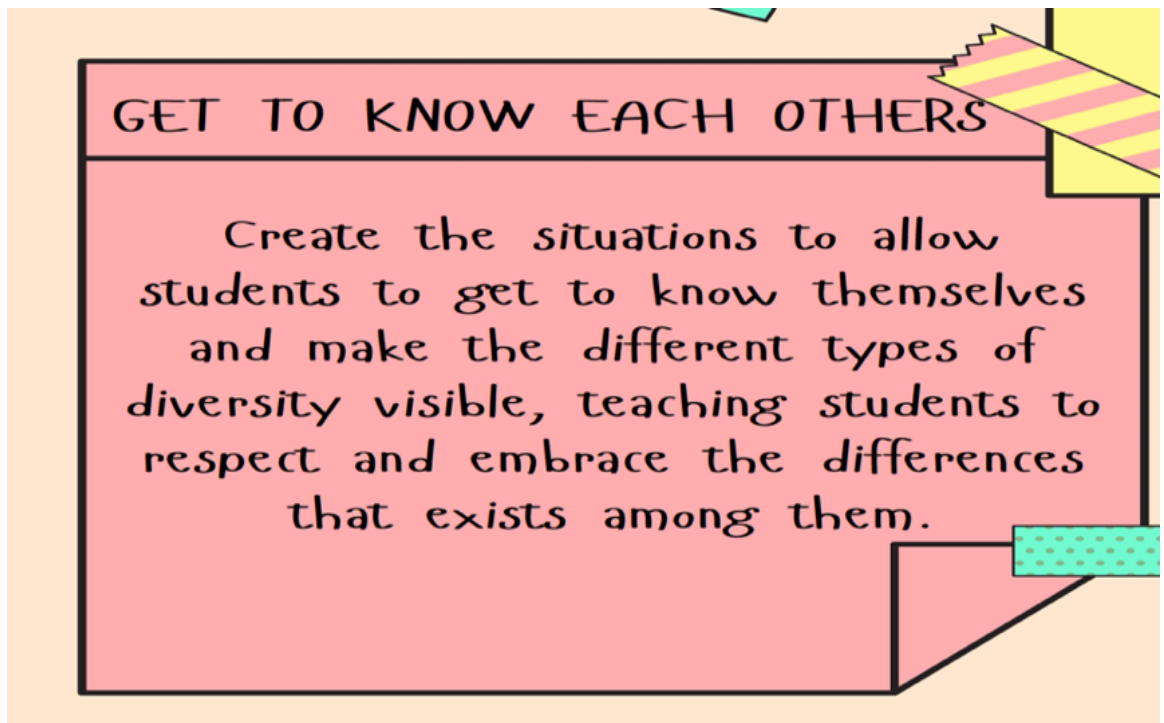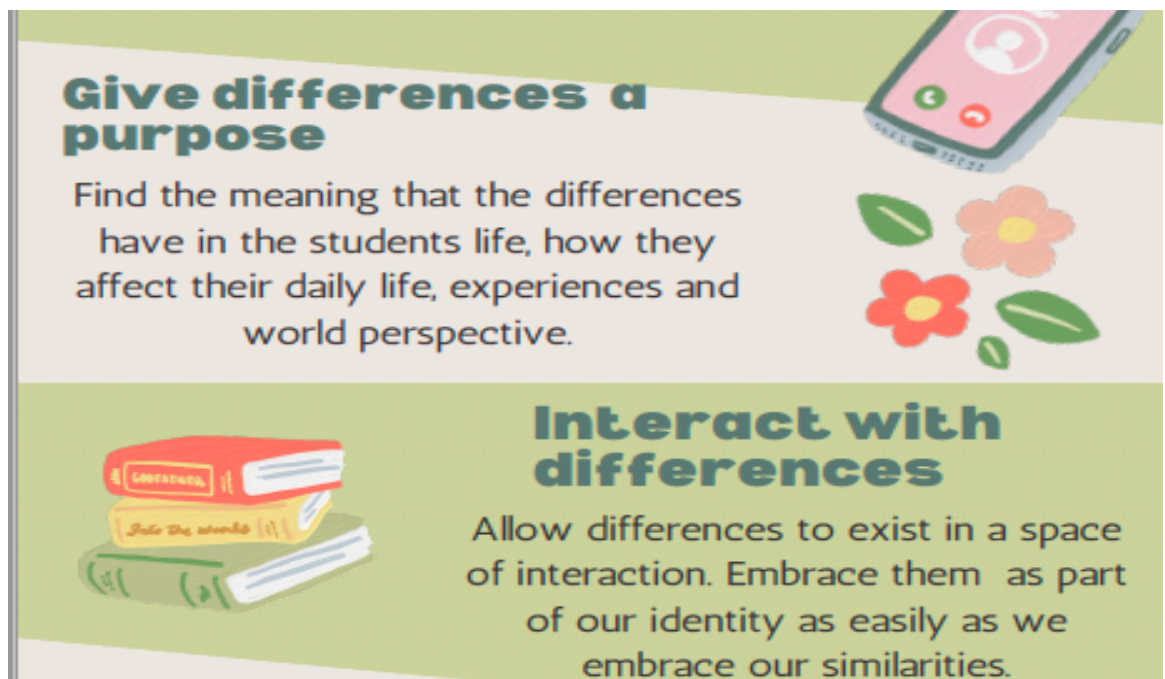

Figure 8.12 – Working collectively - PUCV 3,15 and 20

Figure 8.13 – Working with differences - PUCV1,18,19 and 23

These ideas developed during the week devoted to discussing feminist pedagogy. Shrewsbury (1987) explains feminist pedagogy as a set of theoretical guidelines that should guide our pedagogical choices; such choices, rooted in feminist philosophy, aim at empowering learners towards mutually responsible action where teacher and students engage in a communal, reflective process with the goal of moving past "sexism and racism and classism and homophobia and other destructive hatreds and to work together to enhance our knowledge" (p.6). A particular contribution of Shrewsbury's thought is her vision of the classroom as a place where participants learn to form relationships based in respect for – rather than fear or hatred of – each other's differences. Through the process of learning about each other, the classroom "becomes a model of ways for people to work together to accomplish mutual or shared goals" (p.7). Participants' comments here present a vision of the classroom aligned with this description, and it is one that is fully relevant to this project, not only because it promotes the idea of forming community through the process of mutual respect and understanding of our differences, but also because it imagines the classroom as a place of struggle against exclusion and discrimination through collective effort. This is the exact point participants' ideas refer to here when conceptualizing strategies to transfer these notions into their pedagogical practice.

b. Education as a democratic practice

I will begin this section with an observation made by the participant during the first iteration of the workshops: *"our society has never been fully democratic and neither has our school system"* (UOH8).

The view of education as a democratic engagement is in fact a key pillar in the theoretical framework of this thesis; not only does the work of Paulo Freire (1970), Henry Giroux (2011) and bell hooks (1994) inform my own practice and how I have come to see education as field of praxis, but one of the aims of this research project was to anchor it in its principles; as I state in section 4.4, teaching and learning should be actions aimed at emancipation, social change and developing learning environments that foster democratic participation. In this way, learners themselves can become co-creators of knowledge, rather than recipients of information within a model that seeks primarily to prepare people for participation in the global markets.

As the participant above noted - and as it can also be inferred from much of the data I have presented thus far - current classroom practice and much of the structure that

shapes it is not democratic in nature and, as a result, exclusive rather than inclusive. As Shore (2018) argues, lack of democracy and inequality go hand in hand. In Chile, though there is a seemingly procedural democracy in place, the freedoms and choices available are not accessible to everyone. This impacts the educational structures in place as well as the classroom ecology.

Due to the time constraints I had working with the first cohort, reading on the notion of democratic classrooms was embedded with the materials for the week themed "Pedagogical Perspectives for Social Change", which included scholarship on spiritual critical pedagogy (Ryoo et al., 2009) and different applications of contemplative pedagogy to address social injustice (Petty, 2017); the particular reading done that week was titled "Democratic Classrooms: Promises and Challenges of Student Voice and Choice" (Morrison, 2008). While planning for the second cohort, on the other hand, I made the decision to have a dedicated week for the exploration of democratic classrooms and democracy in education, since it was one of the aims of the project and we had twice the time. This cohort read Mason's analysis of Dewey's key concepts on democratic education (2017), bell hooks' ideas on teaching community and democratic education (2003) and studies which looked at Freire's work from a practical rather than theoretical view (Kelly and Sawyer, 2019; Shih, 2018).

The in-person sessions involved different tasks. The first one was to think of and identify specific educational and pedagogical practices that they had observed or experienced which are undemocratic or authoritarian. The second was to think, based on that week's reading, of practical and concrete ways to challenge or change these practices. In other words, some realistic ***non-violent actions*** they could take as a community of teachers to try to change them. Finally, they were asked to reflect on specific quotes based on their reading, how the quotes related to nonviolence and how they would teach and encourage the kind of behavior described in the quote by thinking of *concrete* ways of doing this.

When thinking about authoritarian / nondemocratic classroom practices, participants' comments focused on:

- Teachers making all decisions concerning sitting arrangements, assessment, class activities and tasks. This involves having a one-size-fits-all approach that

does not take into account individual differences in background, culture or ability.

- Students being unable to express their views or give their input concerning content and evaluations, or having their opinions readily dismissed.
- Forcing students to participant in activities that might embarrass them, such as wearing specific outfits or giving performances they might not want to do or be ready for.

On the other hand, when thinking about strategies they could implement that might challenge these situations, much of what they expressed is in line with the concept of democracy as a space for equal participation, voice and choice. These included:

- Taking time to know students and plan lessons that take students' unique characteristics and needs into consideration. Acknowledging and paying attention to what makes each individual unique was an important part of the discussion.
- Offering students a range of alternatives in areas where they can / need to make decisions, and making these alternatives fully known; a key element in this discussion was the idea of discussing test dates and late submissions openly in order to make joint decisions.
- Doing everything possible to make the classroom a safe space where students could voice their opinions without being judged, and where dialogue and discussion are possible.

It must be noted here that this project was primarily aimed at tackling and addressing lack of inclusiveness within a classroom setting; hence the ideas shown here are more within the micro-level of the in-class environment than a macro, whole-school one. Nonetheless, as Morrison (2008) argues, each of these levels offers educators scope for practices that can be brought into action; the participants' input offers a valid range of actions aimed at giving students more rights and autonomy while respecting the rights and autonomy of others within a classroom setting.

Given the participatory nature of the project, I see it is a logical development that one of the identifiable themes was the importance of approaching education as a democratic practice. There are two elements that I believe contributed to this: one is that in spite of the fact that the current Chilean educational model is constructed on the basis of

neoliberal ideology, many of the participants were familiar with Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970) and Pedagogy of Hope (1992); Freire's writing has figured prominently in the educational curriculum since as early as 2005, but his teachings to Chilean workers date as far back as the 1970s, something he himself discussed in Pedagogy of Hope. Being fairly acquainted with Freire's work, they envisioned their classrooms as a space of critical, democratic participation. Most of them, however, were unfamiliar with bell hooks and John Dewey's work, which was introduced to them as part of the project. The second element concerns the connection between the reading they did and the values promoted by a nonviolent framework, particularly equality, inclusiveness, and collective participation as advocated by some of the theories and perspectives they studied (i.e., ubuntu, communitarism, the work of Judith Butler on violence). For instance, one participant (UOH12) described how the current neoliberal educational model has, in his opinion, succeeded in creating a mindset of *"I'm going to take the maximum profit and the next generation can do the same"* rather than "*I will make this in order to take care of the next generation";* however, he argued, the teacher's role must be to help turn schools into spaces for democratic participation, where students become functional, well-formed citizens *("beings of virtue"*, in the participant's words*)* who participate in society in ways that help shape a better future.

Another participant linked living non-violently to the very notion of being part of a democratic society, including our educational setting. A point that I found particularly interesting was how she connected the values of *"respect, kindness, inclusiveness, sharing and self-improvement"* to being able to participate fully within a democracy. This is relevant on a number of dimensions; first, Freire (1970) sees education as a dialogical endeavor, where everyone involved in a community shares the same rights to speak and participate. In Freire's work, however, this dialogue is profoundly linked to engaging and participating with humility (Freire, 2000), hope (Freire, 1994), humor (Shor and Freire, 1987) and love (Freire, 2000). In other words, elements that are clearly linked to nonviolent behavior and communication.

This was echoed by a participant who noted how for them, there was a connection between doing inner work – such as cultivating love, humility, humor and hope - and facilitating a democratic learning environment. Their insight further linked to the previous participant's observation about the role of educators:
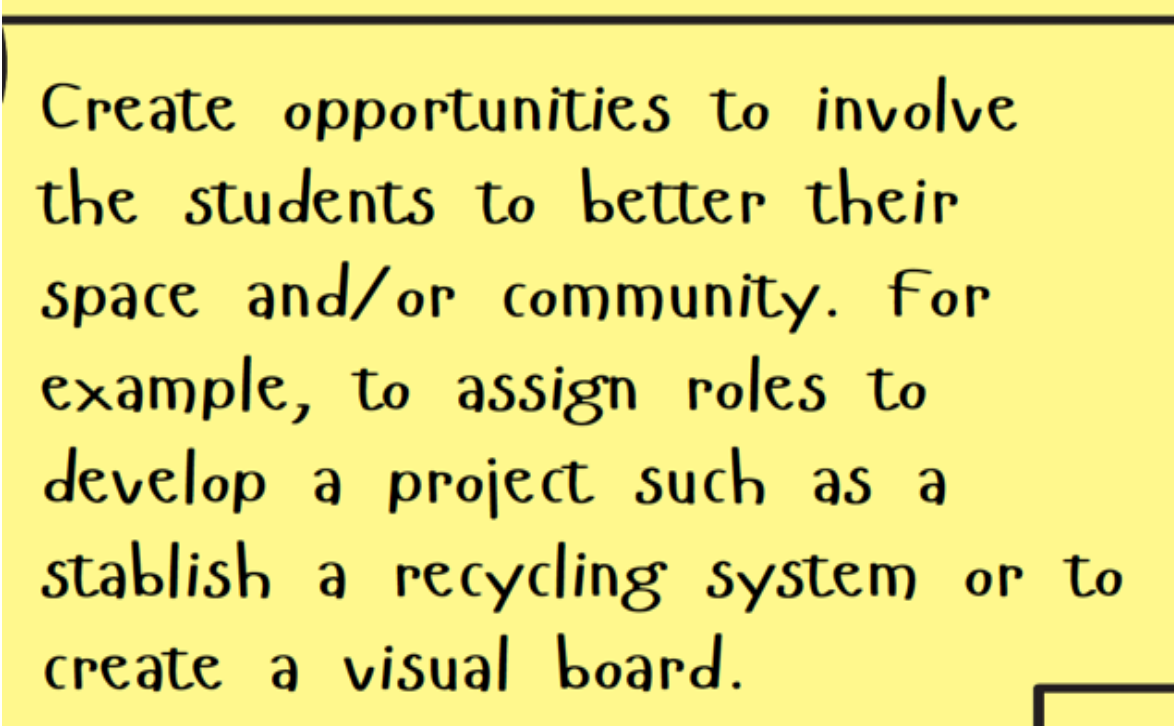
"In my view, practices such as doing inner work, facilitating democratic classrooms, among others, are likely linked to the concept of non-violence as a practice of equality. I think that they go by hand because in order to practice equality from a non-violent point of view we need to do first the inner work of knowing myself and how to engage with students, I need to think how they do so I can do my best in my role as a teacher and a provider of knowledge about different topics, especially those related to life itself, meaning the way we act in society" – UOH16

This participant also noted how the lack of democratic participation results in othering, that the concept of equality is embedded in the prospect of social participation, and that a *sine qua non* element of this participation is having a voice:

"Also, to practice activities that classes develop in a democratic way can help those students who feel othered to have an opinion, and maybe, realize that he is not the only one who thinks that; I think that it is a great way to practice equality in a non-violent way since we all have the right to express what we feel, thought, want, etc." – UOH16.

This offers insight on an important point; Novichkova (2014) contends that democracy is a system that through the allowance of voice, choice, delegated participation and freedom of expression should guarantee the right to Otherness. The student's comment above touches on this very point when they argue that as a participatory practice - be it in the political realm or the educational one - democracy needs to be imbued with a sense of mutual responsibility, and a space where the voices of everyone taking part in it are heard.

As a response to a further input concerning ways to bring the concept of democracy into their classrooms, another group of participants noted how democratic participation not only involves enacting the rights of every individual, but also providing members with shared responsibilities for the group as a way of improving their community:

Create opportunities to involve the students to better their space and/or community. For example, to assign roles to develop a project such as a stablish a recycling system or to create a visual board.

Figure 8.14 – Building community - PUCV 3,8 and 22

I would argue that such participation and shared responsibility increases individuals' sense of belonging. A report by the Centre for Public Impact (2019) for instance, describes how Canadians are much more likely to participate in public consultations when there is a stronger sense of belonging to a community. Shore (2018) further contends that to be successful in their response to social needs, democracy *needs* citizen participation. In other words, this is a two-way street that requires that reciprocity to achieve its aims, and our pedagogical practice should aim at guiding learners towards becoming more socially engaged; in the end, it is this engagement that allows for the democratic space to continue to exist.

In summary, working towards a vision of the classroom as a space of democratic participation involves, for the participants, a series of actions that overlap with some of the areas and themes explored earlier: fostering collaboration, developing empathy and a positive style of communicating, promoting dialogue, encouraging choice and developing an understanding of individual differences while encouraging self-development. These practices, in the voice of participants, not only advance democratic participation as a value but do so in a way that aligns with the nonviolent pedagogical framework this project sought to explore.

c. Contemplative education beyond the practice of mindfulness

As explained in section 2.5.2, "Eastern philosophies and approaches within this research", incorporating the practice of contemplative exercises was an important element of this project. Contemplative pedagogy and research into its application have gained traction particularly since the creation of the Contemplative Mind in Society in 1995, but Morgan (2014) traces its inclusion into educational programs in the US as far back as the 1970s. However, and as I have explained in earlier sections, though the study and practice of contemplative pedagogy is widespread in North America where several American and Canadian universities have dedicated centres and programs (e.g., UMass Amherst and Columbia University Contemplative Centers for Teaching and Learning; Montclair University's Contemplative Pedagogy Program; and Brown and Concordia Universities' Contemplative Studies Initiative) such efforts are not common in South America, and entirely absent from the Chilean higher education curriculum.

One of the aims of this study was to work collaboratively within a framework of non-violence, inter-connectedness and communal harmony, and to do this in ways that are rooted in some of the principles present in both indigenous knowledge and Eastern philosophies, in which individualism gives way to acting for collective well-being. I sustain that contemplative pedagogy and its practices offer a wide range of possibilities to explore this; in their influential book "Contemplative Practices in Higher Education", Barbezat and Bush (2013) documented the positive impact that activities of self-reflection have in creating opportunities for greater connection with others; many of these activities are aimed at finding elements of interconnectedness, such as greater compassion and empathy, thus allowing for a deeper social connection.

Exploring ways to generate the kinds of connections illustrated above was key to this project, and it was in that light that each face-to-face workshop began with a contemplative exercise that linked to that week's theme. Participant engagement and participation in these exercises, as well as the general perception of their usefulness, varied depending on the exercise, and the reactions from the first cohort were helpful in reshaping the kind of exercises I chose for the second. For instance, on the second session with the first group I led a guided meditation which aimed at raising students' awareness of themselves and their surroundings; most participants found this challenging, as they were not used to sitting still doing nothing. In a later session I led a silent meditation that

focused on following's one's breath. Most participants found this difficult to do, and one admitted that they simply couldn't do it. Amongst the challenges to meditation-oriented practices was distraction; participants' comments on this point ranged from *"I have ADHD"*(UOH7*)*, to *"everything that happens outside distracts me"* (UOH9) Lack of focused attention is a common challenge for those who are beginning to meditate, and one that requires time to overcome; further to this, one participant in particular (UOH3) expressed that meditation was not for her, as sitting still and focusing on her breath made her feel more anxious; in the final session, while preparing the feedback report, she stressed the fact that although the other contemplative practices were useful, meditation itself was not for everyone. In the end, these difficulties and the absence of adequate time to work on these challenges led me to shift the activities from guided meditation, which require regular training and practice to begin to notice changes, to something easier to approach and that had a more visible element of social connection. These included exercises done in pairs to generate compassion for others to an exercise drawing from *Lectio Divina*[56]; these were much more successful in engaging participants and feedback was more positive.

Below are some of the comments offered by participants from the first cohort on the impact of contemplative practices during the workshops. The first is an example of positive change, showing a shift from first-person to third person focus as a result of thinking about the ways to develop greater empathy:

> *"In that way, I think we stopped thinking too much about ourselves and started thinking about the other, so we left some selfish thoughts behind. It was a way to see that we are all equals, all human, all deserve the same respect. Individually we all want to be happy and we should think the same about others. And for me, like the most significant think that I learned was to empathize with other…specifically with the practice of loving- kindness we did, thinking about someone we didn't like very much and wishing them good things, or thinking they were going through the same difficulties as us" – UOH12*

This point is particularly relevant because early in the project one of the first things that struck me was that participants were mainly focused on how others treated *them* or spoke

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[56] Lectio Divina is a practice of rooted in the Christian monastic tradition of Bible reading; this practice, divided in four stages – read, meditate, pray and contemplate – is generally done communally and it has been adapted into our modern educational settings as a way of encouraging deeper reflection on the material being studied, and to share these reflections with others (Simmer-Brown, 2013; Wright, 2019)

to *them,* without showing much awareness of how *their own* actions affected others. Hence, shifting from thinking about the self to thinking about others (and beginning to consider their feelings) is of great importance here, as it allows for smoother social connection based on empathy. This is confirmed by two other participants, who stated:

> *"Last year I was thinking about the future instead of what is going on in my life right now. In that case, there has been a change in how I see myself and what is important.*
> *In relation to others, maybe the fact of seeing each other and wishing them well, like "I hope this person is doing well in their studies". Most of the time I didn't always think this way and I didn't have positive thought about others, so this is also a positive change." – UOH2*

> *"In that way, I think we stopped thinking too much about ourselves and started thinking about the other, so we left some selfish thoughts behind. It was a way to see that we are all equals, all human, all deserve the same respect. Individually we all want to be happy and we should think the same about others. And for me, like the most significant think that I learned was to empathize with other…specifically with the practice of loving- kindness we did, thinking about someone we didn't like very much and wishing them good things, or thinking they were going through the same difficulties as us" – UOH4*

Both insights point to the shift I mentioned, and to an awareness that our experiences as humans, though different in their outward characteristics, share the fact that we are equally deserving of happiness, respect and being included, and with similar experiences of joy or suffering. As these participants indicate, when we look at someone and focus on what's there, we see simply another human being. Not someone who belongs in a box based on our assumptions, but someone who is on the same journey of being a human being on this planet, with the joys and tribulations that brings.

During the key reflection moment of the action research cycle, the input from participants the first time around helped reshape and inform my decisions concerning the type of practice I chose for the second cohort, and these choices had a positive impact on the way participants viewed contemplative practices and how feasible they became for them. Challenges were certainly raised and explored, as I will outline at the of this chapter. However, these came with the recognition that there is a definitive place for contemplative

practices in Chilean classrooms, and more importantly, participants' willingness to learn about them and bring them into their own praxis.

The first insight I will share here concerns how these practices can help an individual generate a feeling of empathy and awareness of others that connects with some of the earlier findings I have discussed; this is of special relevance because a particular participant had earlier mentioned that how the anger they carried with them made it difficult to connect with others easily:

> *"Out of all the contemplative practices I would like to highlight two. On the one hand, the development of empathy through awareness of our differences has been the key factor that has illustrated to me that by acknowledging our differences as people we get to notice our similarities better and how we feel. And on the other hand, sharing highs and lows was a practice that strongly complemented the previous one I named; this second practice gives us the opportunity to know how the life, the week, the day, of a person has been going" - PUCV4*

This comment sheds light not only on this participant's shift regarding his own feelings, but also on two specific practices they found helpful. The first one they mention, "development of empathy through an awareness of difference", is an exercise adapted from the Wayfinder Project[57]; it has participants interview someone they don't know well in order to discover their differences in different areas of life, from spirituality to preferences in sports, to then have them ask questions about these areas of difference to develop a deeper understanding of each other. The second exercise mentioned here, sharing highs and lows, a practice of intentionally expressing gratitude and listening to others adapted from the original work done by Noland et al. (2017), reported positive impact of this in the overall classroom environment and students' attitudes when participating in class activities. Both contemplative exercises had the benefit of allowing for the development of empathy in a more engaged, practical manner than those requiring large levels of introspection in solitude.

I mentioned earlier that participant came into this project with certain assumptions. One of them concerned what they saw as a connection between contemplative practices

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[57] https://app.withwayfinder.com/resource?limit=16&offset=32&favorited=&delivered=&support_id=&depth=&practice=

and Eastern philosophy that were somewhat removed from classroom pedagogy. For example, one participant noted: *"I have always related them to yoga or mindfulness practices somehow far from the classroom setting"* (UOH14*).* However, after the fourteen weeks of the course, and having had experience with a range of contemplative exercises that were reflective in nature but not meditation-based, his perspective had changed:

> "*I would like to highlight how contemplative practices have changed their meaning to me*; *they indeed have become an integral part of my own teaching practice. Next time I intend to teach a certain content or ask my students to pay attention to a certain phenomenon or situation, I will absolutely include a contemplative practice that allows them to look at each other (classmates, peers, friends), and focus on our similarities and differences, and how they make our world a better place" – PUCV11*

It should be noted that the shift in viewpoint concerned not only the nature of the exercises but how they can inform one's pedagogical practice; importantly, this last point is linked to several of the findings discussed in earlier sections of this chapter: the recognition of difference, the ability to look at each member of our community and recognize our shared humanity and how self-reflection can assist in appreciating our own place within the dynamics of a community.

In regard to which practices made a contribution to participants' relational outlook, this comment provides very useful insight into the specific exercises that are potentially most impactful. When asked to reflect on the overall impact of contemplative practices on their pedagogical and personal outlook, this participant states:

> *"Particularly, "not putting people into boxes" allowed me to witness and participate in an eye-opening experience, exploring my classmates' lives and sensibilities, their frustrations and own self-perceptions. I completely appreciated the inclusion of such an instance to look at ourselves before staring into others' eyes to pronounce a judgment statement. Additionally, I found the use of "turning judgment into observations" extremely helpful. It is a practical way to deal with our own opinions and baseless thoughts towards others, including those situations when things get tough or we face differences or even arguments. It will definitely help me and my future students embrace what we feel in a more solid and considerate way, rooting for a mutual understanding instead of a hot and conflictive environment" – PUCV 15*

This participant mentions two specific practices; the first, "not putting people into boxes", was adapted from an activity created by St. John Fisher University in 2020[58] and aims at raising awareness and recognition of the fact that most of us have, regardless of our background, culture, sexual identity or education, been witnesses or participants of similar life experiences: being bullied, bullying others, experiencing heartbreak, being in love, overcoming challenges or being sick, just to name a few. The second, turning judgement into observations, is taken directly from Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication book (2001) and it helps reframe opinions and judgements as something we can actually observe ("I saw him throwing food on the ground" rather than "he's a dirty person"). Both of them constitute practical ways to approach our relational dynamics without judgement; because classroom is a particularly complex and diverse ecology, learning to relate to one another with a deeper understanding of our shared human experience as well as learning to notice and observe rather than judging are arguably key in building such approach. These are exactly the points the participant's extract above reveals: how these practices helped him – and will further help him, in his view – to deal with difficult situations through empathy and mutual understanding.

During the peer-teaching stage of the workshops (weeks 11 to 13 with the second cohort), participants prepared a 30-minute lesson which they led; these lessons began with a contemplative practice of their choice. Their preferences are, in my view, a manifestation of this: one of the groups led an activity that incorporated elements of NVC and empathy-development followed by a shared reflection; another group prepared an activity designed to help us notice our differences, followed by finding out what each participant shared in terms of the lived human experience. Yet another group chose a Tibetan practice called *Tonglen* – or what or Tibetans called "taking and giving meditation": the practice of taking in other people's suffering while wishing their suffering away.

Based on the differences in views expressed by both cohorts, I can conclude that having longer exposure to these practices as well having the time to explore them within their own teaching made a significant impact; this impact is mostly reflected by participants' view regarding the feasibility of integrating this type of activities in their pedagogical practice but also, as I have shown here, by their reconceptualization of contemplative education. This shift means viewing it no longer as something removed from the classroom experience, but as a practice that can create the conditions for the

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[58] https://projects.sjf.edu/media-and-diversity-fall-2020/2020/11/06/dont-put-people-in-boxes/

classroom as "an interconnected, living space" (Fiore, 2019, p.1)

D. Challenges to the practice of contemplative exercises

Certainly, the practice of contemplation and self-inquiry is not devoid of challenges. I noted earlier how the first group of participants had difficulty engaging in meditation-type practices due to several reasons: lack of time for adequate training, distractions and inability to concentrate. A meta-analysis by Khuory et al., (2013) on over 12,000 participants presents strong evidence that long-term meditation practice has positive effects in the physical and mental well-being of participants; however, the challenges this practice presents to the initial practitioner are also well-documented: these range from difficult emotions, to sleepiness, restlessness and doubt (Bodhi, 2005), some of which correlate to what participants in this project expressed. However, non-meditative practices presented participants with their own set of obstacles; first, the exercises done throughout this project required practitioners to interact with one another and often to make eye contact, two things that a few participants said it was hard on account of their perceived lack of social skills. Wilson (2021) notes how this, the act of being present for another, is key in the development of a contemplative mindset and in engagement with the contemplative tasks themselves; this is what Nhat Hanh (1997) describes as being mindful – a concept that in my view is often misunderstood and misrepresented in debates and conversations on this issue, where mindfulness and meditation are often used interchangeably. Being mindful is, simply put, being here now: our attention is fully devoted to this moment, and our awareness is in what is occurring at this moment. This of course includes whichever interaction we are involved in, and hence the challenge really is about that: about being as present as we can be, giving our attention to the present moment without concerning ourselves with past or future worries, like thinking about something else while engaged in a conversation with someone.

Yet, a final challenge noted by a participant is to engage in the actual use of these exercises when the situations that calls it overwhelms us. In her own contemplative teaching in Women and Gender Studies, Wilson (ibid) notes how difficult conversations about privilege, oppression, racism or homophobia can be, and how often her students experience a sense of hopelessness before arriving at feeling hopeful. This was the case with one of the participants, who for the first four weeks continued to ask me if they were doing anything wrong, as they felt an extreme sense of anger at the sexual violence they

and their partner had experienced, as well as other forms of discrimination they had witnessed. No matter how aware we are of the unsustainability of violence, being faced with oppression or injustice will present us – and in my experience this is particularly true with someone less trained – with a daunting challenge indeed, and this is fully acknowledged. Challenges notwithstanding, however, contemplative practices are tools for self-transformation; the self-transformation that took place, and which I have documented in earlier chapters, had a positive impact not only in reshaping classroom relations within the project but also in assisting participants reimagine their own classrooms as empathy-driven communities. And Wu (2023a, 2023b) posits, this journey of self-transformation – not a short one, certainly - anchored in the values of concern for others, empathy and love can provide a stronger foundation when engaging in social justice efforts.

Based on the differences in views expressed by both cohorts, I can conclude that having longer exposure to these practices as well having the time to explore them within their own practice made a significant impact; this impact is mostly reflected on participants' view regarding the feasibility of integrating this type of activities in their pedagogical practice but also, as I have shown here, in their reconceptualization of contemplative education. This shift means viewing it no longer as something removed from the classroom experience, but as a practice that can create the conditions for the classroom as "an interconnected, living space" (Fiore, 2019, p.1)

In summary, this section has discussed three areas that were identified as key in developing a nonviolent praxis: ways to build a classroom community, adopting a pedagogical approach that fosters democratic participation in the classroom environment, and using contemplative exercises and practices as a tool to develop empathy, compassion and friendlier relations with peers. Participant input on each of these areas point not only to the connection between them and a nonviolent, inclusive pedagogical framework but are indicative of paradigm shifts that arose as a result of the theoretical and practical elements of the project.

CHAPTER 9: DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS IN LIGHT OF FINDINGS

This section discusses how the findings detailed in the earlier chapter relate to each of the research questions; it further discusses the degree to which each research question was answered, and how these answers connect with existing research literature.

a. **<u>Main research question:</u>** *"To what extent can nonviolent theories and practices raise student teachers' awareness of direct, cultural and structural violence and its link to inequality?"*

This study evidenced that the theories and practices we engaged with succeeded in deepening participants' understanding of what violence is, its relationship to inequality, and to large degree what they can do as teachers to, in their words, "manage" it. While it could be argued that given the history of humankind, eradicating violence altogether may be an impossible task, mitigating it might not. For instance, a participant stated that their understanding of the relationship between violence and inequality morphed into a more comprehensive one as a result of the readings and discussions. Other participants acknowledged how embedded behaviors and cultural values perpetuate unequal treatment of those deemed "different", and thus continue to reproduce cultural violence. As I have detailed in the findings chapter, though several participants were already keenly aware of existing inequalities they had not linked those to the perpetration of violence, partly because their understanding of violence itself was mostly circumscribed to direct physical violence; several other participants expressed that, in their view, the best course of action to deal with the instances and manifestations of violence they were able to identify was to engage in nonviolent action, from avoiding aggressive responses to engaging in nonviolent communication.

These insights show both a change in view and an awareness of the tools that can be used. Though using means such as nonviolent communication and empathy might not seem tools that could dismantle the unequal power structures that perpetrate violence, Nagler (2014) highlights how nonviolence is fundamentally an energy rooted in empathy and care – even for those perceived as opponent – and these elements, challenges notwithstanding, can be powerful agents of change. In her research into nonviolence education as a path to social justice, Wang (2013) notes, just as participants frequently observed, that violence stems from a place of difference and a binary notion of human

relations resting on the "us versus them" dichotomy. The tools I have described in earlier chapters of this thesis– nonviolent communication, expressing feelings rather than thoughts, approaching relationships from a non-judgmental perspective, empathetic listening – on the other hand, represent avenues to address prejudice, bias and negative emotions by building a more deeply interconnected and collaborative state of classroom relationships.

Because violence succeeds in creating a situation in which the only outcome is win or lose, it also succeeds in presenting a visible perpetrator as the problem. However, nonviolent advocates from Gandhi to King, and to even more recent efforts such as the work done by Dr. Clarence B. Jones and Jonathan D. Greenberg at Institute for Nonviolence and Social Justice at the University of San Francisco [59]continue to uphold the premise that is the problem itself that needs to attack, and not the people. As Gandhi (1948) states: "liquidate antagonism, not the antagonist" (p.221). Therefore, engaging in nonviolent practices becomes key in reducing direct violence and creating a sense of collective unity that could allow the community to engage in nonviolent efforts against the actual problems, such as forced cultural assimilation, racism, violent language and Othering. From a participant perspective this engagement consists mostly of two approaches: training in and using nonviolent communication and engaging in contemplative exercises.

Rosenberg's (2003) nonviolent communication model has shown success in a range of fields, including education; the latter has included whole-school and classroom-based experiments, and the findings are consistent with those from this research study. Koopman and Seliga (2021), for instance, conducted a study that investigated the effectiveness of NVC within a K-12 setting, such as the one our participants have worked and will work in upon graduation. Their work also draws from Gandhi's satyagraha and shows that even without much training, teachers and students were able to engage in peaceful discussions of controversial topics while at the same time delving into the strength – or lack thereof – of violent actions. This in fact correlates to my own conclusions, in that participant who at the beginning of the project advocated for violent protests or for violence as retaliation expressed, after continuous engagement in NVC, that while protests were a valid measure to engage against oppression these protests would be more effective if they were nonviolent.

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[59] For an. Overview of the research being done by the Institute, see here: https://www.usfca.edu/institute-nonviolence-social-justice

I would in fact argue that this last point is of the utmost importance; as Morrison (2015) notes, nonviolence education links to a number of things that are of relevance in this specific study as are democratic engagement in educational practice and participating in nonviolent dissent. While Apple (1990, 2011, 2013) has long argued that schools tend to have a hidden curriculum designed to teach students norms and regulations, my own experience and observation with this project's participants was that they were extremely open and willing to engage in debates and discuss seemingly controversial topics while dissenting with one another. Hence the importance of learning to do this through the lens of empathy that NVC promotes, and the relevance of Chilean teachers having access to these theories and practices, which as noted earlier, are currently absent from the university curriculum.

To conclude, and as I have established in earlier sections of this thesis, if there is one element, we find in every manifestation of violence is that of *dehumanization.* In the end, the process of establishing difference through the marginalization of the Other is one of making the other less human and less valuable, and therein lies the link to inequality. Therefore, the practice of nonviolence through the different articulations I have detailed in previous chapters is one of *humanizing.* Developing empathy, compassion, love and a sense of interconnectedness are the means to learn to see others as equally human, equally worthy of respect and equally sharing in the whole of our human experience with its joys and tribulations, and this is exactly what the work of Bollinger and Wang (2013), Nagler (2004), Lauricella (2019) and Wang (2018) strives for in their pursuit of nonviolence as a path to greater social justice. Building and developing a nonviolent framework of praxis requires this understanding and it is what one the things this study attempted to bring by presenting practitioners with alternatives that might equip them to challenge the embedded cultural and structural elements that produce and perpetuate violence in the first place.

b. **Sub-question 1:** *"Does the use of self-enquiry practices produce any change in the ways student-teachers view themselves and their relationship with their social world?"*

When reflecting upon the potential impact of contemplative practices in the way student teachers saw themselves and their relationship with the world around them, several participants acknowledged how a systematic approach to non-judgement, not labeling and fostering a deeper mutual understanding was not something they had been equipped with.

The same reflections, shared by the time we had reached the end of the workshops also revealed how self-inquiry practices helped participants look at themselves first and the actions they could take to reduce violence rather than trying to change other people's behavior or passing judgement on others. To different degrees, these practices provided them with a practical approach to stop reproducing the cycle of violence; several participants spoke of a broader perspective regarding human relations, and a shift in how they saw others under a more compassionate lens. What this confirms, in my view, is how inner change helps us see others and the world around us differently; what Wu (2023b) describes as "the world being a mirror of our consciousness" (p.2); it also points to how these different contemplative practices helped participants experience a sense of mutuality in our shared human experience, rather than one lived in isolation or imagined self-sufficiency. On a larger, and for me even more important point, these insights point to human beings growing in their awareness of others not as separate from each other but as part of the same human fabric, and therefore more able to connect and work harmoniously with others.

As Lin et al., (2019) explain, contemplative practices have been around for thousands of years: yoga, meditation, Tai Chi and even journaling in different manners came into existence long before we started researching their impact in Western educational settings. My rationale for choosing to incorporate these practices into this study has been explained at length in earlier chapters, and it boils down to two main factors: one is the fact that there is positive evidence of the impact of these practices on fostering a classroom atmosphere of collective well-being (Barbezat and Bush, 2014; Bollinger and Wang, 2014), social connection and positivity towards others (Hutcherson et al., 2008; Pace, 2009) and intercultural understanding (Ting-Toomey and Dorjee, 2019). The second aspect lies in their decoloniality; they are in fact, practices of anti-Othering in their very nature, and therefore, practices of anti-oppression. Both considerations were key to this project in their innate connection with developing a nonviolent mindset.

Further to these considerations, the evidence available from former studies on the impact of contemplative pedagogy from a relational standpoint concurs with what Chilean participants expressed; Bagshaw (2014) describes a sense of connection amongst peers and with instructors; Zajonk (2013) speaks of greater empathy and improved attention while Dorais et al. (2022) report improved relational well-being after interventions with counselling trainees. This later study sheds light on an important point; although their study was of a primarily quantitative nature measuring outcomes over time, one of their

findings is key for us: there needs to be time built into a practitioner's life to develop such traits as mentioned here. Participants acknowledged that much when describing prospective challenges, as they feel both the university curriculum with them as students and the school curriculum with them as teachers does not provide them with time to engage in these practices on a regular basis; however, as I noted earlier, participants from the second cohort, who did in fact have more time to engage in self-enquiry exercises, expressed themselves on a more positive light concerning ways to bring these practices into their classrooms.

Another result stemming from the use of contemplative practices throughout the project was a greater sense of oneness and sameness, which challenges the oppressive, differentiating nature of power and lack thereof. This is well illustrated by several of the participants' comments, who spoke of newly gained insights into how regular contemplative exercises can equip practitioners to better deal with inequality and discrimination, as they assist in developing a greater capacity for self-awareness and emotional self-regulation, and with that the capacity to establish more harmonious relationships. These insights are important in that they shed light on the fact that self-inquiry can in fact be a form of resistance and inform social justice efforts.

When we think of resistance, we might conjure images of visible collective struggles, such as the social uprising in Chile in 2019 which I detailed in the introduction. We might also consider resistance as individual acts of defiance against the dominance power structures exert upon us. And yet, as Wu (2023a) notes, because overcoming human suffering requires more than altering our material circumstances, spiritual pursuits that seek the transformation of the self-present us with perfectly valid, sustainable path towards resistance and greater social justice. Marx (1867) described the alienation of the individual from the material world around them, and this is an argument that remains deeply embedded both in Marxist ideology and in Western individualism. Eastern spiritual traditions, which to a very large extent inform contemplative pedagogies, on the other hand, postulate the oneness of the individual and the universe; one cannot be without the other.

Throughout his writings, Foucault (1978, 1997, 2000, 2005) upheld the view that resistance must take form through creating and shaping an autonomous self not as societies wants us to be and which current systems impose on us, but as one where our own creativity and imagination help us create a new mode of existence; one where the "care of

the self" (2000, p.278) leads to the transformation of the self. The participants' comments in fact encapsulate this exact idea: their insight points to contemplation leading to new perspective on resistance, and how the care of the self these practices embody led to some degree of self-transformation. This process of self-transformation should not be dismissed as passive or removed; as Wu (2023b) posits, social advocacy is not just about endeavoring to better our world externally, but also about embarking on a path of change within; how can we possibly affect change outside when our own selves have not undergone the necessary transformations in consciousness within? Challenges and initial resistance notwithstanding, (see pages 201-202) what these exercises did do, as manifested here, was to create consciousness about seeking social justice while engaging with the world in a more compassionate, conscious manner.

c. **Sub-question 2:** *"To what extent can the teaching of non-violent and decolonial practices support students' awareness of discrimination and exclusion and help them develop strategies to deal with these?"*

Discussion of this specific research question must begin with the fact that in most cases, participants were clearly aware of existing discrimination and exclusion. However, there is also clear evidence from statements made by participants themselves that they were not aware of how nonviolence was a decolonial practice, nor how it could be strategized into their own pedagogical praxis to deal with said exclusion.

Mignolo and Walsh (2018) explain coloniality as a dimension that implies a manner of being, knowing and doing that started with the colonial experience and which remains as its legacy. This manner of being, knowing and doing seeks to and continues to perpetuate existing power structures and hierarchies that are constitutive of Western political and economic models. Thus, decoloniality constitutes a direct challenge to that in a manner that Albán (2008) calls re-existing:

"The mechanisms that human groups implement as a strategy of questioning and making visible the practices of racialization, exclusion and marginalization, procuring the redefining and re-signifying of life in conditions of dignity and self-determination, while at the same time confronting the bio-politic that controls, dominates, and commodifies subjects and nature" (p.85)

Part of this re-existing is well reflected in Maldonado-Torres (2017) description of decolonial thinking; through it, he argues, "the colonized emerges as someone who poses questions, who identifies problems and who considers her lived experience and knowledge as relevant in the process of elucidating and seeking to respond to such problems" (p.800). This decolonial approach concerning knowledge production, the consideration for lived experiences and approach to problem solving is something I endeavoured to do throughout the project; this was done by facilitating a space where it was the participants themselves the one who co-created knowledge, identified the problems and elucidated responses considering their lived experiences, something that to a large degree we succeeded in doing. As I have noted at several points throughout this thesis, and despite the efforts made, however, there were things that did not go according to plan; this was particularly evident in the classroom hierarchy and power structure, which remained largely with me as the leader and participants as followers. Furthermore, and in hindsight, I consider it problematic not to have provided more reading materials in Spanish, which was the participants' first language. Although it is true that I did not have the resources to have all the reading materials translated and that not all this material was available in Spanish, a more concerted effort could and should have been made to address this.

As I mentioned in the earlier section and as I have noted throughout this thesis, nonviolence in fact questions and challenges these aforementioned practices of exclusion from a decolonial standpoint; from a classroom perspective, for instance, it promotes a sense of oneness within the community rather than discriminating individuals on the basis of race, sex, gender identity, social class or any other othering and exclusionary dimension; teaching educators how to communicate, how not to judge or how to develop empathy and compassion it helps us see others in all their dignity without seeking to undermine them. From this perspective, and according to the insights and comments from participants I have presented thus far, the project did support participants' awareness of discrimination and exclusion, while collectively working in developing strategies to deal with these. This support came in different ways and in different degrees of analytical depth; for instance, one participant noted how they had become aware of the importance of using the right pronouns when addressing students. Another group of participants observed how certain cultural practices perpetuated violence and its manifestation as an exclusionary act. Yet another group highlighted how sexism manifests in ways that perpetuate gender stereotypes. This shows first that participants felt the workshops helped them understand violence not only in its direct, physical way but as an exclusionary manifestation. This

exclusion can be seen in the way teachers and students themselves address treat others differently based on perceived talent or skill level, gender or ethnicity.

A key component of decolonial thought is that is not circumscribed by Western ideas and models; rather, it acknowledges the colonized as a sustainable and valid creator of knowledge while seeking to liberate the colonizer from the limitations and the damage the modernist mindset has done to other humans and those more than human. When looking at how the awareness I have described helped participants develop strategies that might assist them deal with these tensions, their suggestions reveal that were able to draw upon a range of perspectives, experiences and cultures that although perhaps shaped by Western epistemologies are not imprisoned by it. Examples provided by participants throughout the project, for instance, draw from feminist pedagogy by encouraging teachers to consider gender perspectives when teaching due to what they have observed as the unfair differences in the way they see boys and girls being treated. This links to Shrewsbury's (1987) work on feminist pedagogy and its aim of helping learners develop a vision and understanding of individuals that sees them as whole, integral human beings in close interconnection with others. Their suggestions expand to diversifying instructional materials, so they are more representative of our ethnic, sexual, cultural, intellectual and religious diversity. Importantly, and in line with recent critiques to neoliberal hegemony on curricular practices (Gyamera and Burke, 2018; Hakala et al., 2015; Huang, 2011; Sayer, 2019), participants' proposed strategies aim at decentralizing the classroom – much in the manner originally advocated by Freire (1970) – by repositioning the role of the teacher and that of the students in a more concentric manner, each contributing in as equal measure as possible; the suggested strategies also aim at using a non-competitive, equitable evaluation and assessment systems that consider a person's whole experience rather than only test results as measure of competence.

Additionally, there is strong evidence that reading about different indigenous wisdom traditions – which presented them with nonviolent, decolonial ways of being - helped inform participants' awareness of how to build inclusive, sustainable relationships; this ranged from drawing upon the traditions of different indigenous traditions on community building to a community-based pedagogy rooted in our relationship with and need to care for the environment as well as each other, which links directly to research by Delgado-Rivera (2018) and Stromquist (2019) on bringing the paradigms of 'Buen Vivir' into the educational context, and Wang's work on ubuntu in Western contexts. While Brown and McCowan (2018) acknowledge that in our current education context, dominated by a

modernist discourse, these perspectives present their own set of challenges – namely ideological and structural -, they also, as participants noted, bring a different awareness of issues of human and non-human interconnectedness and communal living.

The concept of community building is fundamental in a decolonial framework; as Quijano (2000) posits and Dutta (2018) confirms, hierarchical relations that perpetuate models of domination and exploitation are not only a key embedded element in colonial models but in being so, also allow for the continuation of structural violence. Therefore, creating egalitarian, equitable communities go directly to the heart of this issue. Furthermore, creating classroom communities rooted in interdependence defy the traditional classroom hierarchies, and though it can certainly be argued that the teacher – student relationship is always hierarchical facilitating the process of community building within the classroom can go a long way in dismantling it. I would also add that the first step in affecting change is developing an awareness of both the problem and possible solutions, and evidence here in the way of insights gained and recommendations made points to how decolonial, nonviolent perspectives assisted participants in deepening that awareness. For instance, a participant noted that they had not considered how gender or racial inequalities can be seen on differentiated opportunity and access, but after the workshops they had felt better equipped to tackle these as an educator. Another one pointed out that although their perspective on inequality had not changed, their awareness of how to address it through nonviolent action had deepened, particularly on how nonviolence can be used as a tool to dismantle power structures through civil disobedience. They also indicated how the knowledge present in indigenous wisdom traditions, particularly their view on the interconnected dimension of life, had helped them reconsidered their approach to human relations. I acknowledge that what is almost entirely missing from these insights is the more-than-human element present in which as Kerr and Andreotti (2018) point out, needs to be a greater component of our decolonial practice as we build towards a more socially just future. I attribute this to my own initial lack of awareness and knowledge of ecocritical scholarship; this shortcoming prevented me from offering participants a wider range of materials and discussion points concerning the inextricable union between the human and the more-than human, and how this union is an important element of decolonial work.

I will use this final point to discuss what are some of the perceived usefulness of the approaches and practices I have analyzed so far. Along with discussing these practices' perceived usefulness, I will engage in a discussion of the practical challenges concerning feasibility and implementation.

A close inspection of participant data reveals that when thinking of usefulness or possible positive impact of contemplative practices, two elements that were most often mentioned: the first is how the regular engagement in these activities helped participants develop a sense of empathy; this was expressed in different wordings, from being more willing to listen to others, being open to explore each other's differences, and being willing to hear and understand other people's points of view. The second point often mentioned was the importance of avoiding hurting others by judging them or labeling them; as we can see here, both notions, which I will explore separately below, not only overlap but they also circle back to the application of nonviolent communication, which I have analyzed in detail in chapter 8.4, section A (see page 151).

When thinking about usefulness or perceived advantages, and going back to my earlier point, the most salient element mentioned by participants was that, in their eyes, nonviolent practices help them relate to people on a deeper level, which allows them to develop empathy and communicate their needs and feelings from a more empathetic perspective. Many of the insights offered speak of being able to listen to others more compassionately, making others feel understood, being able to create a safe space and to improve as a person, both professionally and socially, all of which impact the environment in positive ways. When moving beyond the individual practice into the classroom environment, it is not difficult to see how the regular engagement with this practice could have positive effects on a macro-relational level and in fact, participants did express how learning about and practicing NVC with each other had helped them re-examine some of their work and family relations outside the classroom. For instance, one participant noted how prior to familiarizing themselves with nonviolent communication strategies they used to raise their voice and be more judgmental when engaging with people who thought differently, and how these attitudes had changed over the course of the project. Another one noted how they would often refute what people said, which extended to conversations with parents, their partner and people at school. They observed that through the readings

on nonviolence and the practice of contemplative exercises there was a willingness to engage with others in a friendlier manner, such as saying hello, smiling at others and listening more attentively; in their words, they discovered "there is a Buddha inside all of us" (UOH3)

On a deeper level, however, I argue that at a time of deep polarization and where identity politics have come to dominate much of our debates on social justice and reparations, the practice of nonviolence – and I include nonviolent contemplative pedagogies here – provides us with a sustainable ethical framework that can positively guide our behavior. In *"Ethics for Our Times",* Nadkarni (2011) explores in great depth how Gandhian perspectives and approaches offer a range of alternatives to current political and economic models. Though many of his examples are situated in India, which might be challenging to transport to a non-Indian context, the more profound, philosophical aspects of his discussion are rooted precisely on Gandhi's satyagraha; though this is commonly understood as his nonviolent approach to political resistance it embraced in fact every aspect of a person's individual and social life. The word itself is a compound of 'satya', truth, and 'agraha', or insistence; therefore, satyagraha has come to mean 'holding firmly onto the truth'.[60] The pursuit of that truth goes beyond not being dishonest; Nadkarni (ibid) argues that this truth is a positive concept that "involves love, compassion and empathy" (p.66). In other words, the same values that participants have expressed repeatedly over the course of this project. What this tells us is that they saw in the practice of nonviolent communication, in the establishment of more loving and empathetic relationships, that very pursuit of truth. This is in my view the greatest advantage of contemplative practices: that without being dogmatic or openly adhering to a specific religious principle, they permeate labels and allow practitioners to embrace them simply because they help develop a truer manner to engage with others, human and more-than-human.

I mentioned at the beginning of this section that the other important perceived benefit of these practices was the capacity to engage with others without judging or labeling; it is on this latter point that I will focus now. As mentioned in chapter 2.1, section A, one of the key observations made by participants was the recognition that violence is fundamentally a practice of Othering, that othering is a form of justifying and condoning violence, and that labeling is a pervasive symptom of this; however, as Appiah (2007, 2018) highlights, there is the other side of that equation which is our own labeling of ourselves, often leading to an

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[60] Full definition from the Encyclopaedia Britannica here: https://www.britannica.com/topic/satyagraha-philosophy

over-identification with our social groups to the exclusion of others. This is an important point; as Powell and Menendian (2016) point out, othering is rooted in the notion of group identities, the dynamics of which proceed to create and perpetuate marginalization based exclusively on difference. Now, I do not mean to conflate the notions of Othering as a colonial practice of dehumanization and oppression with the general concept of othering as a result of group identification. The key differentiating factors here is the power differential present in the former and not in the latter, and the *resistance to oppression* in the latter and not in the former. However, my argument here is that both forms of othering result in violence with the ensuing devaluing of those who do not belong, thus justifying violence in the first place. Therefore, they both need to part of our nonviolent discourse.

Therefore, exercises that lead to the recognition of our similarities were – and are – useful in mitigating this. A key exercise was one posted by the New Hope Church, titled "Don't people into boxes"[61]. The exercise begins with a group of a diverse make-up in age, ethnicity, body shapes, etc.; the facilitator asks questions such "How many of you were the class clown?" or "Who has a tattoo?", and those who answered positively move to the wall. As the exercise progresses, the questions become more personal: "Who has bullied another?" or "Who has beat cancer?". Watching this was a powerful experience for me personally, but leading it with the participants was certainly moving for them; their insights and comments speak of the impact this exercise had in helping them see that beyond outward appearances and real or imagined differences, and to notice that we all share in the process of our experience on this planet: we all undergo suffering, difficulties and dissatisfaction, we all become ill at some point in our lives, we all have loved and been loved, and unloved. What participants noted was how quickly we jump to conclusions without knowing much about people, how easy this is to reproduce as a habit and a practice in our relationships and the positive effect of not doing that in the relationships they were able to build throughout the project.

What can be summed up from these points – developing empathy, being more open to others and mitigate actions and language that exclude – is that contemplative practices promote a sense of belonging. I have noted throughout this thesis, and more specifically in chapter 2.3, section A, how important community building is the development of a nonviolent mindset. In the end, these practices, in the participants own testimony which correlates to recent research in this area (Epinat-Duclos et al., 2021; Kim, 2022; Romano,

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[61] Full video and description here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRwt25M5nGw

2022) help practitioners expand their circle of concern to others around them, and to feel that they belong not only to a specific social group but to the very fabric of our society and our planet.

CHAPTER 10 – CONCLUSIONS

As an encapsulation, the main aim of this research project was to identify instances of inequality and discrimination in the classroom, and to challenge these through practical and theoretical knowledge on nonviolent approaches to inclusiveness in a manner that was dialogical and participatory. The study further aimed at achieving this by drawing from different non-Western philosophical and wisdom traditions, and to build a collaborative, collective learning and working environment in the process.

In general terms, and as I have noted in chapter 8, the findings are consistent and broadly in harmony with previous research on: the meaning and manifestations of violence (Galtung, 1969, 1990, 1996); the ethics of nonviolence (Butler, 2020); intercultural perspectives on inclusiveness (Appiah, 2007, 2018; Aman, 2012, 2015, 2017; Bardhan and Sobre-Denton, 2013); decolonial approaches to nonviolence linked to spiritual traditions (Tutu, 1999); the practice of contemplative pedagogy (Barbezat and Bush, 2014; Ling et al., 2019); and, finally, how nonviolence education might contribute to a social justice framework (Wang, 2013, 2018, 2019). Consistency with previous research notwithstanding, this study also offers valuable new insights in the Chilean context. As I have noted in chapters 1 and 2 (see pages 17,18 and 32)), there is a wealth of research from Chilean scholars in a range of educational issues such as: HE policy (e.g., Alarcón-Lopez and Falabella, 2021; Garretón et al., 2011; Mora-Olate, 2018; Rivera-Polo et al., 2018; Slachevsky-Aguilera, 2015); school and university curriculum (e.g., Basulto-Gallegos and Fuentealba, 2018; Cisterna et al., 2016; Mejía, 2015); or inclusive education (e.g., Gutierrez-Pezo, 2020; Martínez and Rosas, 2022; Caastillo-Armijo, 2020). However, this body of research does not focus on the use of nonviolent approaches to education or non-Western knowledge systems to address exclusion and discrimination, even when evidence points to a need for changing pedagogical practices towards nonviolent ones, as Lopez et al., (2021) have argued. It is here that this project makes its contribution, offering practical suggestions on how to deal with linguistic and cultural exclusion of migrant students, how to improve inclusiveness in teaching materials and pedagogical practices so marginalized communities are actually represented, and how to develop a greater collective spirit through community-building endeavors. It further offers a critical view of the current state

of Chilean education from a social, cultural and structural viewpoint; alongside that, it presents us with the participants' vision of what this educational context should look like and how what they learned throughout the project can potentially help them realize that vision.

Potentialities aside, this study also makes very concrete contributions to theoretical and practical knowledge in several areas; for instance, participants gained a solid understanding of violence not only in its direct, physical form but as an expression present in unequal structures and exclusionary cultural values. Participants' insights also revealed their comprehension of the role of violence in producing and perpetuating inequality; this was knowledge that they recognized not to have had previously. They also showed a strong grasp of nonviolence as an engaged, active practice, while their previous understanding of nonviolence was limited to pacifism and non-action. The findings show that the theories and practices implemented throughout the project had a transformative effect in the way the participants saw themselves, their students, their peers and their interpersonal relationships; this shift was reflected in a more empathetic and compassionate view of others; a willingness to engage with the world around them in a nonviolent manner; and an explicit desire to learn more about nonviolence, contemplative pedagogy and nonviolent action as a means to social justice. In relation to this, there are specific philosophical, theoretical and practical areas where this project added missing perspectives: feminist and contemplative pedagogies, ubuntu, NVC, case studies from Africa and Asia and Cosmopolitanism were either little known or completely unfamiliar to the large majority of participants; by the end of the project, they had become an important part of their decision-making process. Although there were limitations to this project, which I will discuss in a later section, this research succeeded in creating a collaborative space where participants were able to openly discuss their views on each of the themes presented, and more importantly, where they were capable of collectively strategizing ways to deal with educational inequalities. It is in this participatory effort, in the themes studied and in the practices we engaged in as a collective that this project contributes the most in a context where nonviolent approaches within classroom settings were absent.

An additional contribution this project makes concerns the practical application of critical pedagogy. Although Freire's work and critical pedagogy have been deeply influential within Western education, as evidenced in the writings of Darder (2012, 2014), hooks (1994, 2003, 2008),), Giroux (1988, 2007, 2009) and McLaren (1995, 2008, 2022), amongst others, it has also come under criticism over the years for its perceived lack of

practicality and concrete suggestions for practice, given that it is fundamentally classroom-based pedagogy (see Alexander, 2018; Gabel, 2002; Giguere, 2016 and Wheeler-Bell, 2020 for in-depth critical analysis). The experience in this project showed some of the most relevant concepts of critical pedagogy at work, and successfully so: learning occurred dialogically and was collectively constructed; it largely succeeded in shifting decision making towards the students – not at the early stages of the research design, but definitely in the findings and proposed strategies - and it presented participants with tools to challenge the cultural hegemony present in the Chilean curriculum. Furthermore, this project managed to bring several of bell hooks' (2010) ideas into the classroom dynamics. In line with Freire's description of banking education, and while describing what she coined 'engaged pedagogy', hooks (ibid) urges teachers to engage in practices such as fostering an atmosphere of "open, fearless participation even if comes in the way of resistance or defiance" (p.19) and nurturing participation and contributions that go beyond spoken dialogue, understanding that not all students excel at speaking and that some might be better at writing or other ways of communicating. There is evidence that both of these were achieved.

Finally, learning and using contemplative practices had a positive impact in helping participants feel more empathetic and compassionate towards one another; while the challenges of meditation were acknowledged and the feasibility of this specific practice questioned, other practices, such as journaling, NVC, and empathy and compassion development were well received and positively commented upon. Once again, these practices and exercises had previously been absent from the participants' curriculum as HE student teachers and remain largely absent from classroom practices in Chilean schools.

At the very beginning of this thesis, I introduced the original mind map – what I called the conceptual tree– which illustrated the main theories and ideas informing this project. That tree originated at the very beginning of this research in order to have a sense of direction of which perspectives would inform my research. Now that you have patiently come to the end of this thesis, I present once again here (Fig. 9.1); from all the main strands of knowledge represented in the larger branches, only yoga philosophy was not integral part of the project. Participants in both cohorts were exposed to the notion of ahimsa, or non-harming; however, and as I have noted, participants also requested less theoretical input in light of their other academic commitments. The other dimensions I expected yoga philosophy to bring to the table – i.e., self-actualization, an inter-connected vision of the world and emancipation through self-knowledge – were, from different

perspectives, already present in several of the readings given to them and I made the decision to make yoga less prominent than I had originally intended.
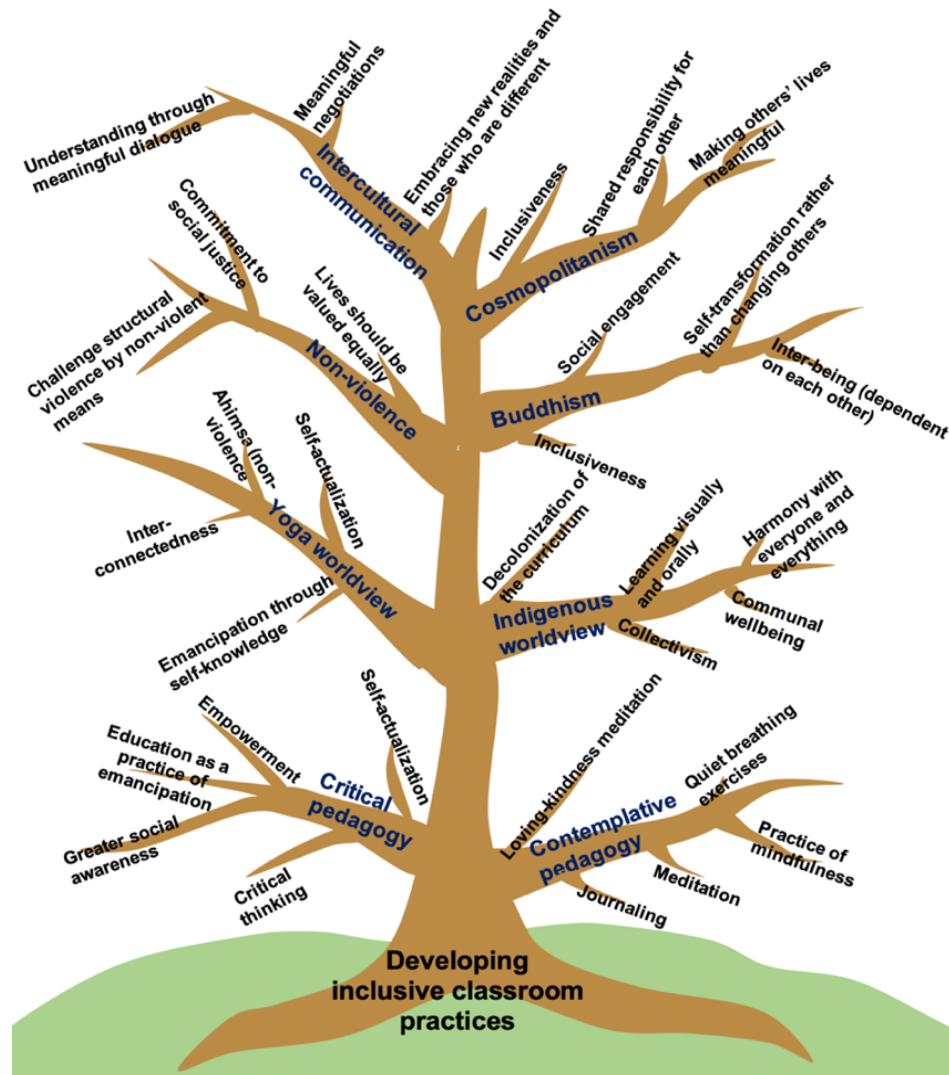

Figure 9.1 – Conceptual Tree

Having provided a general summary of this research and the contributions it has made to the main areas and themes that informed it – namely, nonviolence education, educational inclusiveness and interculturality - this concluding chapter will engage in a discussion of three areas: the first is an account of my own initial assumptions and preconceptions, how they impacted some of my choices as a researcher and how they shifted throughout the project. The second discusses the main challenges, limitations and opportunities this research study presents, while the third section presents what I see are possible directions for future research in light of what was found, including recommendations for both policy and practice in light of the contributions I have discussed.

10.1 Dealing with my own assumptions and preconceptions

Perhaps the most significant of my early preconceptions was my own concept of non-violence. I was exposed to a great deal of social and domestic violence growing up, and my personal search was for a path away from the violence I witnessed and experienced. This eventually led me to the study and practice of yoga and Buddhism; however, as I came to discover, this practice was rooted in a personal journey trying to set an example of a non-violent person rather than a socially engaged practitioner using non-violence to *address* violence. As Sally King puts it in "Socially Engaged Buddhism" (2009):

> "The Engaged Buddhists often emphasize this practicality of the Buddha's teachings. While the usefulness of the teaching of dependent origination has traditionally been applied to personal spiritual transformation, the Engaged Buddhists see no reason not to apply it to societal transformation as well. Thus, if there is something unwholesome from which one wants to free the world (for example, war, poverty, racism), then one should look to the causes and conditions that bring that reality into being and see what action can be brought to bear to eliminate or alter those causes or conditions. The Engaged Buddhists often take this approach in their work" (p.14)

What this quote offers, in other words, is the view that our spiritual practice plays an important role in guiding our engagement with the social issues of our time. For several years, I had been struggling to balance these two aspects, the spiritual and the social, in a manner that could inform my work, which has primarily been classroom-based. This was an important part of my own learning journey. Further to this, my original view of non-violence changed gradually as I became exposed to different perspectives during the formulation and design of the original research proposal, all of which promoted non-violent *action* in education and almost none of them from a spiritual perspective but from a social justice one. On this latter point, of particular importance was the work of Judith Butler (2020) and M. Zembylas (2011) which added to the educationally engaged non-violent pedagogy of Hongyu Wang (2013, 2018) and Jean Ryoo (2009). However, and of critical consequence, my vision and ideas of what non-violence was shifted as I researched the weekly readings for each group and read the participants reflections and experiences. This means that after almost one year of reading, researching and preparing each week's material, and after 8 months of conversations, discussions and reading participants insights

my understanding of both violence and non-violence had been deepened while my commitment to non-violent action had been strengthened.

This new understanding extended to specific groups experiencing exclusion and discrimination I had not originally given sufficient consideration, particularly LGBTQI+ persons, while those I had assumed would be an important part of the conversation were not, which is the case of indigenous people. This latter group was mentioned only tangentially by a couple of participants. Although I did not ask explicitly about the reasons for this omission and students did not offer any, our conversations over the course of 6 months lead me to two conclusions; the first is that as far these specific groups of participants are concerned, indigeneity is not conspicuously present in their classrooms; this means teachers are not regularly exposed to this issue nor have to deal with its implications. On this point it should first noted that the latest report on indigenous groups in Chile revealed that only 12.8% identify as indigenous; secondly, 10.5% [62]of them are members of the Mapuche group, most of whom live in southern Chile, away from where the participants live and work. However, and even with these two considerations in mind, this certainly raises questions about the extent to which indigenous people and their knowledge have been excluded and supplanted by the colonizer. Considering the fact that Chile was colonized by Europeans, and that the lack of indigenous representation was evident both in the university classrooms where I did this research and, according to participants, in their own schools, the question must be asked: why was this not more of an issue for participants? It is certainly puzzling that there is no greater awareness, questioning and reflecting on the country's colonial past in higher education contexts and more in general. This is something that could be interrogated and investigated further.

The second conclusion is that those affected by sexual or gender discrimination are a large group within their educational communities, and that this type of discrimination is an issue that has gained greater visibility due to the degree of direct violence sexual minorities have experienced. Part of my learning experience during this project involved the realization of how relevant this concern was for them, which became evident for me particularly while working with the second cohort; on our first meeting they were asked which specific areas of inclusiveness and exclusion they wanted to explore and almost unanimously they agreed on sexual and gender inclusiveness and LGBTQI+ issues. Later, when asked to choose a topic to focus on during the peer-teaching stage, half the cohort

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[62] Report by IWGIA (2022), retrieved at https://www.iwgia.org/en/chile.html

chose to focus on gender and sexual inclusiveness as an area to educate others on. In short, this aspect of inclusiveness was one I had not considered in its full dimension; my initial assumptions, which I have detailed here, lacked the insight provided by participants in relations to their own lived experiences.

The final aspect I will discuss in this section is the somewhat idealized expectation I had concerning the level of engagement of this project. My visualization of this, prior to the commencement of the project, looked like a common engagement in collective self-inquiry potentially and hopefully leading to changed, improved practices once instances of violence had been identified. This visualization also included participants actively engaged in the research process, making suggestions and changes, and proposing new avenues and directions while maintaining the original course of the intended research and its aims.

Although participants provided a wealth of immensely rich data and engagement was generally high, the degree of participation I have described above was not fully realized. The first limitation I was able to conclude is that both Action Research and participatory methods such as workshops are, as I have rationalized previously, generally absent from Chilean higher education classrooms. Therefore, students are neither familiar with nor accustomed to have a non-hierarchical relation with their teachers, lecturers or researchers in which their voice is valued just the same as everyone else's. Even at the end of the two iterations (though more visible after the first) participants kept saying "I hope my answers help you in *your* project", 'your' being the operating word. It was, in their eyes, more my project than it was theirs. My learning point as a researcher here can perhaps be found in Cornish et al., (2023), who argue that even before engaging in a research of a participatory nature there must be time to build relationships amongst all participants; it is these relationships that provide the building block for the subsequent stages of the project, and what in their view creates the necessary sense of belonging that can help break down existing hierarchies. Therefore, the lesson lies in ensuring future participatory projects have time built in to foster these relationships first, even before engaging in the research stages. As they note: "relationships first, research second" (ibid, p.3)

I began this project driven by several factors: the most fundamental one was that I wanted to do a research project that *did something for someone;* as someone who is beginning his journey as a researcher, my worldview is deeply influenced by the work of scholars who see educational practice as one of liberation and empowerment. The writings of Enrique Dussel and his philosophy of liberation (1985), Freire and both Pedagogy of the

Oppressed and Pedagogy of Hope (1970, 1992) have been influential in shaping that worldview, as is the work of Thich Nhat Hanh who views Buddhist practice as a constant engagement, not as something removed from our social life. Judging by the feedback received and the evidence gathered, I am convinced that despite the methodological shortcomings, this project provided trainee teachers with more tools, both theoretical and practical, to think about and engage with inclusiveness through a nonviolent approach. I deem participation to have been highly successful in the actual sessions; in them, participants actively discussed the readings, collectively identified instances of violence, suggested strategies to tackle these and presented their work to each other, all of this without any intervention on my part. Their level of input and insight was in fact beyond my expectations and feedback on the project itself, particularly from the second cohort was highly positive. The key learning point we can take from this is that, given the participants' receptivity to ideas that were new to them, there is a space to integrate these different approaches, methodologies and worldviews in contexts where they might not be generally part of the conversation. Future research could build on this by further using and refining the different aspects of PAR and involving teachers as co-researchers, as well incorporating theoretical perspectives that draw from a wider range of decolonial scholarship such as feminism, Eastern and Africana, to name some examples.

10.2   Challenges, limitations and opportunities

I have mentioned at different points throughout this thesis some of the challenges and limitations encountered during the research stage. This section provides an overview of these as well as the actions taken to mitigate them.

10.2.1 Challenges

I have identified two specific challenges which I will discuss in detail below:

i)   Keeping participants from the first cohort engaged in spite of the low / complete lack of credit for their work.

ii)   Establishing a close relationship with participants, a challenge that was particularly applicable to the first cohort.

Concerning the first two points, this was a warning I received from my very first contact with Chilean universities while looking for a research site; unanimously I was told that given the non-credit, voluntary nature of the project I would likely start with 30 and finish with 5 participants. While this was fortunately not the case, there was indeed a drop in the first cohort, from 28 to 16, though average attendance ranged from 10 to 12 participants. The reasons given for this were what I found to be true once I started the project, and which I have detailed in section 6.11: many of these students have outside commitments, such as work or parenting, and they avoid engaging in anything that might add weight to their academic load and the pressure they are under. Although they initially agreed to two weekly hours of independent study for this project, they commented on week 2 that the reading was too much and asked me to reduce it.

I was given access to the university virtual learning environment, which I used to share materials, ask questions, elicit participant input on workshop content and finally share the data I collated from each session; however, and although I made every effort to stay connected with participants using that platform, online engagement and input was nearly zero. I tried mitigating this by sending weekly reminders of our sessions and their content, using encouraging language about their work and regularly asking for input in things they might want to add or change; the number of responses to these was almost always nil. For instance, early in the project I shared *"Contemplative Practices in Higher Education"* by Barbezat and Bush (2014) which contains a wide range of self-inquiry practices written in accessible language; I encouraged participants to look through it and suggest which activities therein they would like to try. Their answer was that they preferred that I chose and were perfectly happy with me doing that.

As the project evolved, I came to understand that what I described above is what should be expected of any university class, and it seems – though it did occur to me when I designed the project – that students were somehow 'captive participants' as the power dynamics were always at play, something that in my experience as a university lecturer is extremely difficult to eradicate. There are two key learning points that I take from this going forward: the first is that a different setting might prove more suitable if we are to think about greater participation in the different stages of the research, such as a community center or an outdoor setting, where participants are free from the constraining structures of a university. The second point concerns participants' lack of engagement online; while inconvenient at the time, however, in retrospect I see this as an expression of their freedom of choice, as well as part of the voluntary aspect of the project. As I

described in the ethical considerations in chapter 8: participants were free to leave, and the lack of online engagement certainly can be interpreted as 'leaving', at least certain parts of the project.

This 'leaving' can be further seen in their weekly reflections, which dwindled from the initial 20 submissions on week 2, I received 5 on week 6. This lack of communication, and the fact that we met every two weeks and not every student attended regularly, made it difficult to form a deeper personal relationship with this group of participants. I attempted to mitigate this by arriving early every time we had a session and engaging in information conversations with the participants, asking them about their lives and sharing about mine to foster rapport and closeness. In my observation and experience during this initial iteration, and despite the lack of online engagement I found participants to be friendly, warm, humorous and open to share personal experiences.

With all of the above in mind, face-to-face participation was always committed; unlike the initial warnings about this group's proclivity to express themselves violently I found them to be a friendly if motley collection of personalities that got along well, were supportive and respectful of each other and who openly expressed how they had actually become community in the course of 7 weeks. It should be noted that given the different structure of the project with the second cohort, I did not have this challenge. On the contrary, I was able to spend more time at the university, I often found the students on campus and we engaged in random discussions and conversations while not in class, which helped develop a closer relationship; this, in my observation, was a crucial factor in how the project evolved. Cornish et el. (2023) posit that a researcher should be able to assuage communities' concerns about trustworthiness as well as show prior indications of solidarity to the participants' causes. Being able to spend regular time with the second cohort, both in and out of the classroom, provided an opportunity for me to do that to a larger extent as they knew me better but, importantly, was also a chance for them to learn about and trust each other more. This is an important aspect to learn from, both for me and for future researchers seeking to engage in this type of project: the need to take into consideration how to incorporate this time for 'community building' into the research project.

10.2.2 Limitations

I will now discuss the factors that in my view limited or hampered the project in some manner. The limitations I have identified are two:

i) Insufficient engagement with the work done by Chilean indigenous scholars

ii) Although transformative on an individual and relational level, this project remains limited in how effectively can tackle the dismantling of violent culture and structures.

The lack of exposure to the work done by Chilean indigenous scholars matters, as it could have grounded the project even more in the Chilean context. Although participants did read the work of Mapuche scholar Juan Ñanculef and his book *Tayiñ mapuche kimün* (2016), as well as the work of Aymará scholars – Aymará people live both in Bolivia and Chile - their exposure to Chilean indigenous scholars from other traditions was nonexistent. This would have been useful, because one key issue in current Chilean scholarship on *interculturalidad* is the under-representation of smaller indigenous communities and the overwhelming over-representation of Mapuche scholars, which in my view perpetuates an epistemic imbalance that has existed for decades on issues of indigeneity in Chile; for instance, recent work on interculturalidad focuses exclusively on Mapuche people: Figueroa at el., (2018), Ibañez-Salgado (2015), Le Bonniec (2021), Quilaqueo et al., (2010) and Rosales-Malhue (2013) are all works from the last decade where other indigenous communities are overlooked in intercultural research. There is an important lesson here going forward, and part of my learning journey into discovering what decoloniality truly is; while I am certain, based on the evidence presented throughout this thesis, that the work done we did as a community helped raise critical consciousness about the participants' social context, future research efforts might benefit also from engaging with local scholars to ensure local knowledges are brought into the forefront of the discussion.

The last limitation I will discuss concerns the extent to which this project succeeded in terms of effectively dismantling cultural and structural violence beyond the classroom. I have noted that this project makes significant contributions to the theory and practice of nonviolence education; however, it presents limitations in terms of how it can affect policy. For instance, one participant noted how he observed the evident lack of

resources at a public school, with meager meals being served, lack of sitting space and a leaky roof; this of course in stark contrast with the realities of private schools, and it speaks of structural violence and the ensuing inequality; although this project raised awareness on this type of violence and there was a space for participants to think about nonviolent actions they could take, these actions were directly primarily at classroom practices that might result in greater inclusiveness and do not address issues like this. Having said this, I am certainly hopeful, based on participants' insights and reflection, that the collective effort this project contributed to can translate into deeper change.

Finally, this research study is somewhat constrained in terms of changes to underlying and more widely-spread cultural beliefs; as we have discussed, there are embedded cultural values in Chilean society and educational communities that make discrimination and exclusion possible in the first place. Although classroom culture was tackled in this study – and evidence certainly points to clear paradigm shifts in the way participants began to engage with the main themes of this study - the existence of values and ideas that might perpetuate these exclusionary dimensions will remain in place unless there are institution-wide efforts to reduce them in and through education. I am hopeful, however, that the changes I have documented here can have a ripple effect and expand beyond the classroom into the participants' wider social context.

In the following section I discuss opportunities, and there certainly is an opportunity here to explore this project's themes and practices beyond a single group or single classroom experience.

10.2.3 Replicability and research dissemination

This section will discuss opportunities I have identified concerning replicability and dissemination.

In regards to replicability, this research presents us with an excellent opportunity to use a similar format with some of the adaptations I have discussed in the previous section in this chapter; for instance, during the first iteration and after the second session, I was asked by a department head to run seminars on contemplative pedagogy for students and staff; I could not commit to doing this at that point in time, but the interest to replicate this specific element of the study was there. A couple of participants mentioned they had joined

mindfulness classes and others requested to have the content on Nonviolent Communication (NVC) incorporated into their regular classes. This speaks of content and activities that garnered interest in participants and the institution itself. For the second iteration, I was first asked by the university to share the class content with them so they could continue teaching the course in the future. It was always the aim of the project to leave either the full content or a summary of findings for the university to use, sharing the actual course demonstrates two things: one, that it can be taught be anyone – the only requirement is familiarity with contemplative practices so they can lead them with the class, but even these can be learned individually. The second point it demonstrates is that beyond the individual interest from participants, there was institutional concern to continue with this work; this is key because if the institutions are willing to bring these ideas into the curriculum we are already on the way of challenging and dismantling inequality – and the ideology behind it – through nonviolent approaches. In fact, there is an agreement in place for me to continue teaching the course in March 2024. In other words, what I want to stress here is this: that there was a clear aim, since this project's inception, to leave something that both the students and the host institutions would consider of value; individual insights as well as the universities' responses and expressed desire for my engagement to continue confirms this goal was achieved.

Further to replicability, there is a second opportunity this project presents us with: dissemination. I have strived to share each stage of this project since as early as 2021 during the pandemic through online conferences; since then, this research study has yielded eight conference presentations, each focusing on different aspects of the project: decoloniality, social justice, nonviolence, indigenous perspectives and sociological perspectives on nonviolence, to name some of them. It has also led to eight published posts in the research blogs for the British Educational Research Association (BERA) and the European Educational Research Association (EERA). It has finally led to the publishing of three papers, with three more under review in addition to two book chapters currently under revision. What this shows, and what my experience submitting this work has confirmed, is that there is strong interest towards several aspects of the study: the fact that it was carried out in the Global South, that it attempted, with a good degree of success, to use participatory methods, the additional elements of decoloniality, interculturality and inequality, and more importantly, how nonviolence informs each of those dimensions. I mention these dissemination efforts as evidence that since the very beginning there has been a strong interest from the academic community in what this study adds to the ongoing debates and conversation on the overarching themes informing this research. This can

further inform the work of other researchers who might have an interest in the continuing exploration of these areas. This leads me to the last section in this chapter, in which I will discuss what I consider to be the implications of this study in future research.

10.3 Implication for future research

When looking at possible directions for future research, I have identified three main areas: the first is methodological, the second is pedagogical and the third is curricular. What I mean more precisely is this: on one hand, and from a methodological perspective, there needs to be first a further commitment to engage in research that both decolonizes and democratizes. On the other hand, from a pedagogical standpoint, there is evidence indicating that the practice of contemplative pedagogies brought tangible benefits to participants; this comes to support earlier work in this area but also presents researchers with new avenues to explore, as this as currently an area of praxis that is under-developed in the Chilean context. Finally, when thinking about an inclusive curriculum, there should be a more concerted effort to integrate perspectives that deal with inclusiveness from a holistic, wide-ranging perspective rather than one guided only by early Global North narratives, as well as further investigation into how nonviolence can provide a path towards social justice. Looking at these dimensions, there are examples we can look at, which I have presented at different points in this thesis , as well as participants' insights that can guide us in the future work we do. I will now discuss each of these points separately.

10.3.1 Potential methodological directions

From a methodological perspective, it should be noted that research in Chile is highly institutionalized and dictated top-down, either from universities themselves or through government organizations, which leaves little if any room for self-determined research agendas. Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) notes as much in relation to indigenous research, and this is a situation that helps perpetuate what Quijano (2000) referred to as coloniality of power. That being the case, however, evidence from this project has shown that there is both the wherewithal and willingness from institutions to facilitate the use of action research and participatory methods; even during the time when I was making initial contact with Chilean universities there was a strong sense of enthusiasm and openness towards this approach and specifically on the theme of nonviolence. Kumar (2023) notes that action

research - and I might add that this involves any of its articulations, such as CPAR or PAR – represents not only a sustainable alternative to existing models, but also an opportunity for practitioners to identify problems and context-specific solutions in an autonomous manner; Kumar's collaborative research with teachers was carried out in the Maldives, Nepal and Afghanistan, places, she indicates, which are low in economic resources for research but where engagement and collaboration were high; this mirrors my own experience in Chile, where research was conducted in regional universities with many low-income students who attend for free, where no external funds were used, where participants were not asked at any point to disburse their own money and where the greatest commitment required was time.

Navigating the participation I had envisioned, however, and making the classroom a truly democratic research environment is a dimension that requires work and in particular, robust participant training. The teacher-student relationship still retains its hierarchical roots and shifting the classroom dynamics – specifically in relation to research, which is seen as a stratified endeavor - necessitates a sustained, long-term effort that can help shift this relational paradigm and can allow for participants to ease into their role as co-researchers. As Scher et al.,(2023) and O'Brien et al., (2021) note, action research requires rigorous and constant reflection on the power differentials that exist amongst the stakeholders; such reflection, and embarking upon the shifts it must necessarily undergo necessitates time: time to train participants, to understand what is required of each and to build the necessary trust for participation to take place.

Let us not forget that the hierarchization of knowledge in Latin America that collaborative research attempts to challenge continues to exist today; therefore, we need to generate instances for collaborative and democratic problem solving if we are to one day dismantle the colonial power structures that still exist in the field of education. There are several current research efforts that focus on decolonization of education in Chile, such as Fuenzalida-Rodríguez' work on the politics of 'interculturalidad' (2014), Moses (2020) and her insights into how to decolonize school curriculum, and Ocampo-Gonzalez (2023) and his decolonial discourse analysis on inclusive education. Given this scenario, I believe, as does Brooks (2020), that there is a real opportunity in Chile to expand these efforts into the methodological sphere as well: participatory methods aims at empowering communities themselves (in this case the classroom) to find their own narratives and trajectories; not under the tutelage of someone seen or perceived as hierarchically superior through the embedded colonial discourse, but in collaboration and through

democratization. Based on those initial conversations with Chilean universities but mostly through the work done by his project's participants, I can conclude that there is great potential for community-based, participatory research and that this should occupy a critical place in researchers' future efforts. Here we can learn from the work done by Ap Sion et al., (2023) in Welsh schools, Chen (2022) with adult education practitioners in England and Malmström (2023) in Sweden and their collaborative project with teachers as co-researchers; their efforts converge in attempting to democratize research by increasing competencies, eliciting equitable contributions and focusing on research as a generative activity that draws from this collaboration. Chilean trainee teachers are already involved in small-scale Action Research studies as part of their graduation requirements for Education majors on a teaching pathway; therefore, expanding AR into PAR and CPAR would be, in my view a logical, coherent expansion and development.

10.3.2 Potential pedagogical directions

The practice of contemplative pedagogies is the second area of praxis where further empirical research can be undertaken. The earlier sections in this chapter explored in detail the impact these practices had on individual participants, the perceived benefits and advantages of bringing such practices into our classroom pedagogy and the challenges we might encounter in doing so. Rather than retreading these dimensions, I would like to focus on recent empirical studies and how they might inform additional research in the Chilean context.

For instance, there is ample evidence of universities successfully integrating contemplative pedagogy either within specific academic programs or as a course of study in itself, such the MEd on Contemplative Inquiry at Simon Fraser University in Canada; this program originated as a consequence of years of data gathering on the impact of contemplative practices on different fields, from K-12 (Schonert-Reichl and Lawlor, 2010), healthcare (Chiesa and Serretti, 2010), social work (Hick and Bien, 2008) and business (Gardiner, 2012). Using this evidence, Anderson et al. (2019) put together a master's program in contemplative education that combines a series of teaching and learning objectives with the aim of achieving personal transformation; in other words, the program offers an integrated approach to bring together what in Western education is seen as separate dimensions: the intellect, the affect, and the body. Their work shows positive feedback from students who have completed the program, particularly in their ability to

self-reflect on their practice, develop stronger bonds with students and peers and a deeper understanding on how to communicate with others more effectively.

Research by Patricia Morgan (2023) in Australia offers what I believe to be an interesting combination of art and contemplation. Her work aims to combine different artistic expressions (drawing, photography and painting) as a way of delving into individual consciousness in order to engage in learning activities more deeply, but also as a way of helping learners develop greater self-awareness and navigate their interpersonal relationships more successfully. While evidence in this project shows a positive impact on how participants view the latter, art as a research method was not explored and it represents what I believe to be an excellent opportunity to add new dimensions to contemplative, self-enquiry practices. Not only has art-based research been used successfully in a wide range of settings as a participatory method that is both evocative and engaging (see Nathan et al., 2023, for an in-depth review) but it has also been utilized by scholars to strengthen a person's engagement with contemplative practices through visual and written artistic expressions (Walsh et al., 2015) as well as music (Leavy, 2020). I will go even further and point out that in addition to this more recent research, Zen traditions have a long history of using calligraphy, music and painting as artistic manifestations of the inner world (MET, 2002). Furthermore, art represents a way of communicating as an alternative to written language and as Perry (2021) puts it, it challenges its universality thus providing a valid form of inquiry anchored in decoloniality.

My 6-month experience with Chilean teachers showed me that both at an institutional and individual practitioner level there was openness and receptivity to explore these types of practices, a recognition of their usefulness and evidence of a shift in the way participants saw themselves and the world around them as a result of their engagement with them. While it is true that there was some resistance to meditation specifically, this was not aimed at contemplative pedagogy as a whole and even in the most reluctant of cases there was an acknowledgement of their positive impact. So, while the cultural and contextual differences between Chile and other locations need to be taken into consideration, there is, in my view, an opportunity here to further explore methods and approaches such as what I have described above.

10.3.3 Potential curricular directions

I will now turn to how future research with a curricular focus could benefit Chilean higher education More specifically, I will focus on how I believe nonviolence education should have a more prominent role in the training of teachers.

I have noted throughout this thesis how participants' view on inclusiveness shifted towards one that considers the whole of our human experience rather than one that has been, on a practical level, a method focused almost entirely on disability or specific learning needs. There are some signs in Chile that this has begun to shift and that scholars have begun to think about inclusiveness from a broader perspective, and this is something which can hopefully be built upon: Gonzalez and Vega (2022), for instance, highlight the need for greater inclusion from a socio-economic perspective - something I mentioned in section 2.4 (see page 32-36) – as well as current efforts being made in this regard, particularly concerning how the public education system is funded and the positive repercussions it has had in improving educational access. Ocampo-Gonzalez (2023), on the other hand, situates inclusive education within the overall framework of decoloniality on a political and epistemic level. His work does establish a difference between what he calls 'education for special needs' ("educación especial" in Spanish) and 'inclusive education' and constitutes an invitation to look at how the former has generally been more prominent in ongoing debates about who should be included and how, and to how inclusive education should "remake its ontological network by rediscovering the multiplicity of existential modes in every human being" (p.243)[63].

I mentioned Ocampo-Gonzalez (ibid) idea of 'remaking'. What does this look like in our imagination? In my view, it begins with the recognition that, as participants noted, their own understanding of inclusiveness was incomplete and not one that considered their lived experiences in classrooms; as of 2023 such experiences include teaching and working with indigenous students, migrants from non-Spanish speaking countries, a more sexually diverse cohort that might not conform to heteronormative views and a more ethnically diverse student body now includes people from African descent. Secondly, and in line with my previous point about decolonizing research and with participants' own suggestions,

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[63] In Spanish in the original: "La educación inclusiva necesita rehacer su red ontológica a partir del redescubrimiento de la multiplicidad de modos existenciales de cada ser humano" (my translation)

there is ample room for participatory curriculum development (Taylor, 2003) which can potentially amplify the voices of trainee teachers. Originally devised by Taylor in his own design of training courses, this approach to curriculum design is rooted in participatory research and has been used in different areas. Strandley et al., (2020), for instance, implemented Taylor's ideas in their work, which saw people with disabilities actively participating in the development of a curriculum that helped them develop healthy habits and independent living skills. Further to this, a group of researchers from the University of Minnesota and members of rural communities used this approach to develop a curriculum participants could use to improve their self-management skills, particularly on issues of healthy living and quality of life[64].

What the approach described above offers is that it allows students themselves to identify topics of interest, develop their own content and learning objectives, implement these ideas and find the most effective ways to evaluate evidence of learning (Taylor, 2003; Strandley et al., 2020). In other words, it is an approach that further assists in and is consistent with the process of democratization of education, very much in line with Freire's (1970) focus on dialogical action and a rearrangement of hierarchies and authority. While it is understood that this is a radical change to the current model dictated by the Chilean Ministry of Education, its implementation needn't be as radical as designing the whole 4-year curriculum; it could begin with a single class on any of the aforementioned areas.

In addition to the above, there are specific content areas that can be explored further. The first of these are nonviolent perspectives in education and particularly how they relate to social justice; the second is the contributions non-Western knowledge and philosophical traditions can make towards creating more inclusive learning environments, and the third concerns what intercultural perspectives can afford current teachers in their dealings with more culturally diverse student cohorts.

If there is one thing nonviolent advocates and researchers agree on throughout their work is that nonviolent action requires *training;* such was the approach taken by Gandhi and King, but it is also how nonviolence projects operate. The Non-Violence Project Foundation, for instance, provides training for both youth ages 7 to 18 and adults over 18; their training programs, offered in different communities, are rooted on the core principles

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[64] http://rtc.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/www/wp-content/uploads/NARRTC_PCD_4.5.17_final_to-share.pdf

of social emotional learning (2020, 2021)[65] and has a strong focus on experiential learning. In her analysis of global efforts towards nonviolence and peaceful living, Tandon (2014) notes how important the role of teachers has been in promoting the values of nonviolence while working in conflict areas under very difficult conditions; her work, which has involved working with female teachers in Afghanistan and the Peace School for children in Burundi is informative because it highlights how in areas where violence was the usual response to conflict, those regularly engaged in nonviolence education succeeded in creating learning environments with the same core values this project's participants also identified as important: positive attitudes towards differences, greater harmony and solidarity, and a deeper intercultural understanding, all factors that impact the degree of inclusiveness present in a community.

Throughout this thesis I have regularly mentioned the work of Hongyu Wang with higher education students in Oklahoma (2013, 2018, 2019a, 2019b), Wang and Bollinger and their development of a pedagogy of nonviolence (2013), Lauricella's efforts in teaching nonviolent communication to undergraduate students and Chubbuck and Zembylas' work with urban school students (2011). In addition to this, the work of Michael Nagler (2004, 2014, 2020) provides what I argue are further avenues to educate not only on nonviolent philosophy, but in compassionate nonviolent action. There are elements of Nagler's work that, in my view, can be key in informing further research in Chilean higher education; the first of these is how he draws from historical movements and their emphasis on attacking the oppressive systems and not the system's agents. Exactly what these systems are and how they can be challenged through nonviolence remains under-researched in Chile and can provide a fruitful area for future studies. Secondly, through his Roadmap Model (fig. 9.2, next page), Nagler (2020) highlights the importance of inner work before we can engage in social transformations, something I have already discussed in the earlier chapter. Such inner transformation requires education and guidance. Furthermore, the circles of his Roadmap Model show a path to nonviolent action where, in addition to our human relations, environmental care and climate protection play an important role.

Chilean higher education curriculum – and educational curricula in general, as participants noted - lack these perspectives and training. The evidence presented and

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[65] For a full description of social emotional learning (SEL), see here: https://www.edutopia.org/social-emotional-learning-history and here: https://www.cfchildren.org/what-is-social-emotional-learning/

discussed here show us that trainee teachers can benefit from learning ways to achieve inner transformation as they strive towards outer, social changes, but also how what they learn can be passed on to their own students and thus create a multiplying effect.

Fig. 9.2, The Roadmap Model (Nagler, 2020)

The second curricular component that should be explored further through future research endeavors is how non-Western knowledge traditions can inform current higher education practices. My personal experience in the research sites revealed that at Universidad de O'Higgins, English teaching majors take one course titled. "Intercultural Competence" in year 1, the reading list for which is composed of 100% European scholars, in addition to a course on year 4 titled "Learning about English-Speaking cultures", which has a strong focus on intercultural communication, but which also remains – in spite of the inclusion of

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Macedo's "*Decolonizing Foreign Language Education*" (2019) – deeply Eurocentric. This is problematic for two reasons; the first is that, as Ting-Toomey and Dorjee (2019) note, the English-speaking world has become incredibly diverse through shifting migration and travel patterns, and understanding American culture, for instance – their research focuses specifically on the cultural diversity of California - necessitates a wider range of perspectives.

The second reason why this Eurocentrism in the current curriculum is problematic is that to engage in true decolonization of power and knowledge, there needs to be a wider space for forms of knowledge that do not continue to reproduce the very ones that created the issues we face in the first place. Here I don't mean simply indigenous knowledges, but generally speaking any non-Western educational practices. I have noted here how Chilean scholarships has suffered on one hand from continuing to fall in cultural and epistemological ethnocentrism, where Global North narratives and methods dominate scholarly debates, and on the other hand from challenging this ethnocentrism – so far – from a theoretical rather than a practical perspective. Future research on curriculum should then focus on identifying knowledge traditions that can make a contribution to epistemic diversity, such feminist, Eastern, indigenous and Latin and South American epistemologies, all of which were included in this project and which an overall positive impact in re-informing participants' views on issues of diversity, equality and intercultural understanding.

Concluding remarks

I will end this thesis by stating that, challenges and limitations notwithstanding, this study succeeded in raising critical awareness amongst its participants concerning the different manifestations of violence and their link to inequality. This project of inquiry, carried out with two cohorts of Chilean trainee teachers, has made contributions to knowledge in the following ways: first, by incorporating contemplative practices, non-Western philosophical perspectives and a range of nonviolent approaches to deal with tensions arising from discrimination and exclusion in classroom settings. Secondly, by doing so within a Global South location where nonviolent approaches are under-represented in current scholarship. Finally, it succeeded in informing what inclusive education could look like from a holistic point of view. The project makes additional contributions concerning practical applications of critical pedagogy as both a dialogical

and a democratizing approach to classroom relations within the Chilean context. Finally, and perhaps more importantly, it succeeded not only in raising awareness on the impact of empathy and compassion as building blocks of inclusive educational practices, but in assisting this project's participants in reshaping their view of their pedagogy and their relationship with their social world through the lens of nonviolence. As Thich Nhat Hanh says in his Five Mindfulness Trainings:

> "Seeing that harmful actions arise from anger, fear, greed, and intolerance, which in turn come from dualistic and discriminative thinking, I will cultivate openness, non-discrimination, and non-attachment to views in order to transform violence, fanaticism, and dogmatism in myself and in the world" (1987, p.113)

I am hopeful that as a result of this project, participants, and in turn their own students, will engage with their educational communities and the world at large in this spirit.

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Appendix 1

I.   COURSE PROGRAM – Radical Pedagogies, Nonviolence and Change

Name of the course	Radical pedagogy, non-violence and change
Credits	2
Duration	2 pedagogical hours a week (70 minutes total) 36 pedagogical hours x semester
Semester	--
Prerequisites	--
Contact hours	2 hours x week
TA hours	0
Lab hours	0
Horas Taller	0
Self study required	6 weekly hours 108 hours per semester
Curricular area	Didactics
N° and year of study program decree	DRA 73/2014 DRA 49/2021
Type of class	Elective
Maximum number of students	30

II. DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE COURSE WITHIN THE CURRICULUM

Drawing on a wide range of decolonial, non-Western perspectives, this course seeks to support trainee teachers in the last stages of their degree in English Language Teaching, especially those who are engaged in their final or mid-degree practicum. The aim of the course is offering strategies so trainee teachers can explore issues of discrimination and exclusion in their classrooms and deal with the tensions arising from these in an inclusive, nonviolent manner. This course is organized as a series of participatory workshops, where instructor and students will work together in identifying instances of social injustice within their context and develop nonviolent strategies to correct them.

These workshops are practical in nature and require the active participation of students enrolled in the course. Each session is preceded by independent study, which allows students to familiarize themselves with the key concepts and ideas to de used in the live sessions. These live sessions are structured as follows: the first section is devoted to the practice of contemplative exercises (meditation, journaling, reflection, etc.); this is followed by group discussion, where insights from their independent study are shared.

Finally, participants work in groups to identify areas that require attention within their context, brainstorm ideas and generate nonviolent strategies to address them. This is carried within an open / explanatory methodology, where personal and professional experiences contribute to a framework of empathetic and compassionate collaboration.

III. LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students should:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of educational approaches anchored in the concepts of contemplative pedagogy.
- Are able to explain and critique nonviolent theories and concepts related to education, and determine their applicability to their own context.
- Are able to analyse the impact of nonviolence education and contemplative pedagogical approaches in current education, and use the results of this analysis in their own professional context.
- Use the principles of critical pedagogy in the development of their own critical framework but also in their process of developing critical social awareness and the role of education in creating social change.
- Collaborate in the identification of issues related to lack of inclusivity in their classrooms, and the behaviours and cultural frameworks that produce them and perpetuate them.
- Are able to utilize a decolonial framework rooted in the principles of nonviolence, interdependency and collective harmony present in different forms indigenous knowledge (Ubuntu, Buen Vivir) and non-Western philosophical traditions (Buddhism, yoga, *Satyagraha*), to foster learning environment where collective wellbeing and inclusiveness are of primary importance..

IV. CONTENT

Title	Content
Unit 1 **Philosophical perspectives on non-violence**	- Meaning of "ahimsa" - Political nonviolent movements - Buen Vivir and Ubuntu - Nonviolence as activism - Relationship between nonviolence and equality
Unit 2 **What is interdependence?**	- Indigenous perspectives in interdependence - Cosmopolitanism - What is Indigenous Knowledge - Nonviolence as a practice of community
Unit 3 **Nonviolent communication strategies**	- What is Non-Violent Communication? - Effective ways to communicate based in Buddhism and other Eastern philosophies. - Nonviolent communication strategies in Education

Unit 4 Midfulness, awareness of the other and inclusive education	• What mindfulness is and it affects our ability to develop loving-kindness • Relationship between mindfulness and inclusiveness • The practice of mindfulness
Unit 5 Towards a democratic learning environment: shifting the power balance	• Introduction to critical pedagogy as a process of liberation • Democracy in the classtoom: strastegies to give students their voice back • Strategies to democratize the educational community
Unit 6 Pedagogical perspectives for social change	• Indigenous perspectives in interdependency and interconnectedness • Feminist Pedagogy • Spirituality in Higher Education • Inclusive curricular practices • Working with indigenous students.

V. LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Independent study supported by guiding worksheets
- Workshops
- Interactive group work, face-to-face and remote
- Developing group recordings
- Creating a personal portfolio

VI. ASSESSMENT

Title	Weight	Type of assessment
Commitment and participation, shown by the completion of the individual assignments given for weeks 1 to 4	40%	Individual
Contribution to group portfolio	60%	Individual
This is an elective course that does not have a final examination		

VII. READING LIST AND RESOURCES

1. Resources

The resources to be used during the course are:

a) Video recordings
b) Reading materials
c) Worksheets
d) Websites, online resources and podcasts.

2. Mandatory Reading:

1. Barbezat, D.& Bush, M. (2014). *Contemplative Practices in Higher Education: Powerful Methods to Transform Teaching and Learning*. Jossey-Bass.

2. hooks, b. (2013). *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*. Routledge

3. Hooper, L. (2015). An Exploratory Study: Non-violent Communication Strategies for Secondary Teachers using a Quality Learning Circle Approach. Doctoral dissertation submitted at the University of Canterbury. Retrieved at: https://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10092/11839/Hooper,%20Lee%20_Master's%20Thesis.pdf?sequence=1

4. Morrison, K. (2008). Democratic Classrooms: Promises and Challenges of Student Voice and Choice, Part One. *Educational Horizons, 87*(1), 50-60

5. Semali, L. & Kincheloe, J., (1999). *What is Indigenous Knowledge: Voices from the Academy?* Routledge

6. Wang, H. (2018). Non-violence as teacher education: a qualitative study on challenges and possibilities. *Journal of Peace Education, 15*(3), 1-22.

7. Martin, J.L., Nickels, A., Sharp-Grier, M. (2017). *Feminist Pedagogy, Practice, and Activism: Improving Lives for Girls and Women*. Chapter 4: "Defying Cultural Norms Launching Women's Studies in the High School Setting"

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3. Complementary Reading

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Zembylas, M., Chubbuck, S. (2011). Toward a critical pedagogy for nonviolence in urban school contexts. *Journal of Peace Education 8*(3), 259-275.

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4. Websites and online resources:

Ahimsa and Non-Violence
https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/jainism/living/ahimsa_1.shtml

https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/nonviolence

https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20210207-buen-vivir-colombias-philosophy-for-good-living

Non-violence and equality
https://www.niwrc.org/sites/default/files/images/resource/niwrc_equality_wheel.pdf
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ohe0rwYYNP0

Ubuntu
https://1000wordphilosophy.com/2019/09/08/the-african-ethic-of-ubuntu/
https://www.ttbook.org/interview/i-am-because-we-are-african-philosophy-ubuntu
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIpgrZ8yS
https://www.aeinstein.org/nonviolentaction/198-methods-of-nonviolent-action/

Mindfulness:
1. What is Mindfulness
 https://www.mindful.org/what-is-mindfulness/

2. Mindfulness and Loving Kindness
http://www.ahandfulofleaves.org/documents/Articles/Mindfulness%20and%20loving-kindness_CB_Salzberg_2011.pdf

3. Mindfulness, Inclusivity and Social Progress
https://www.mindfulschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Mindfulness-Inclusivity-and-Social-Progress.pdf

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/mindfulness/definition#what-is-mindfulness.

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/mindfulness/definition#why-practice-mindfulness

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/mindfulness/definition#how-cultivate-mindfulness

4.Inclusiveness in Education
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQWufrmZOaI

Sexually inclusive pedagogies:

https://www.oru.se/english/about-us/centre-for-academic-development/perspectives/gender-and-gender-equality-in-education/

Developing LGBTQI+ inclusive resources:
https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/GLSEN_LGBTQ_Inclusive_Curriculum_Resource_2019_0.pdf

https://www.highspeedtraining.co.uk/hub/lgbtq-education-in-schools/

https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Teaching-Tolerance-LGBT-Best-Practices-2017-WEB-Oct2017.pdf

Podcast on improving gender balance and equality:
https://sway.office.com/gh1FOdC1sLYgdgXh?ref=Link

Resources for the classroom:
https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/improving-gender-balance-3-18

Instructor responsible for the creation of the course: Gastón Bacquet
Date: February 2022
Intructor responsible for changes to the program: Gastón Bacquet

<u>**Appendix 2 – Workshops' details**</u>

<u>**First Iteration 1 – UOH**</u>

<u>**Workshop 1: Research training and introduction of key concepts**</u>

1. Discussed the research aims and rationale for the project, have read PLS, consent form and privacy notice.
2. Discussed what participatory action research is, their role as co-creators of knowledge / discuss my role as a co-participant, and ensure they understand PAR as a practice-changing practice.
3. Presented key concepts: *structural violence, inequality, nonviolence, interdependence, decolonization, exclusion, contemplative enquiry, critical pedagogy, knowledge.*
4. Presented an overview of the project, how the workshops would be structured and emphasized the fact that although there was a basic structure in place, the workshops were a place of self and collective expression, and that in the end, it is these that should guide the conversation.
5. Discussion: What are some of the social elements that divide societies and individuals? What are some of the social elements that unite us? What are some ways in which groups challenge the social inequalities they face? Can you think of specific historic examples in Chile or other parts of the world?
6. Task: Can you create a poster / chart of a classroom you are a part of? Can you include any form of inequality and/or violence or inequality present in it?
7. Now think about: if there is anything you could change in the classroom to make it more inclusive / democratic / harmonious, what would you change / keep / do? How do you envision a socially just and inclusive classroom?

<u>**Workshop 2**</u>
<u>**Theme: What is non-violence?**</u>

Group work:
1. Think about concrete, specific examples of violence in classrooms you are a part of (direct, structural, cultural). Be as specific as you can. How is this violence reproduced / perpetuated? How does this violence produce inequality?

2. According to the equality wheel, violence and inequality go hand in hand. Think back to this week's reading and your own reflection; how can you as teachers foster a non-violent, egalitarian mindset in your classrooms? Think about specific things you can do.

3. Think about your reading this week and your discussions; come up with 3-4 strategies you can use in your classroom to deal with arising violence through non-violence.

Group analysis:

Look at other groups' posters and ideas and take notes:

1. Can you identify any common themes or ideas around:

- Violence?

- Inequality?

- How these are perpetuated / reproduced?

- How teachers can tackle these?

2. Have you identified any common strategies?

Workshop 3

Theme: Interdependency

Reading / worksheet: See appendix "Week 3 Readings" retrieved here: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1rCnjE4uDM4OhZwTHecRpXrcUM9Kswa_q?usp=sharing

Contemplative exercise: Emergency empathy

Group work:

Think of the following:

1. Four or five strategies you could use to help your learners work towards and develop an interdependent and interconnected mindset, using the ideas from last week's readings and videos. For example, how can you strategize an interest in their classmates' languages and cultures? Or how can you strategize developing a sense of responsibility for each other?

2. The challenges you might face implementing those strategies, and how you might overcome them.

3. Share findings

4. Discussion: what did you learn from others today?

Workshop 4

Theme: Non-violent communication

Reading / Worksheet: See appendix "Week 4 Readings" retrieved here:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1UC0g_GcmI1HoXwWvBFN0qxHn_-M_yRC5?usp=sharing

Contemplative exercises: Turning judgement into observation

Group work:

Option 1: Microteaching

Plan a 10 minute-lesson. The aim of the lesson is to create 1 or 2 *activities* that can teach a group of students some the key notions you have learned about non-violent communication: for instance, how it arises, its roots causes, how to avoid it, how to reframe it so it is not violent, etc.

The activity should be fun and engaging, not a lecture ☺

Option 2: Presenting nonviolent communication through an art form

What exactly is non-violent communication? What are its long-term implications? How can it benefit us? What is the root reason for communicating violently?

Show this through an **art form of your choosing**: a dance, a performance, drawings / posters, a short story, a poem, a video, a narrated story, an IG post on Canva, a Jamboard digital poster or any other art form you would like to explore.

Workshop 5

Theme: Mindfulness and Inclusiveness

Reading: / Worksheet: See appendix "Week 5 Readings" retrieved here:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1K5VWSPwyN1kb-1KYewFU6Vu3vJ3Wxw5R?usp=sharing

Contemplative exercises: Compassion practice

Group work:

Part 1: Reflection on self-actualization

Think back at the chapter "Engaged Pedagogy" in bell hooks' Teaching to Transgress, which describes the teacher as a healer / therapist.

What specific actions can you take to work towards your own well-being and self-actualization? Think about 4-5 specific actions you can realistically take. Write them down and share them with your group.

Part 2: Reflection on inclusiveness

"I enter the classroom with the assumption that we must build "community" in order to create a climate of openness and intellectual rigor. Rather than focusing on issues of safety, I think that a feeling of community creates a sense that there is shared commitment and a common good that binds us. What we all ideally share is the desire to learn-to receive actively knowledge that enhances our intellectual development and our capacity to live more fully in the world" – bell hooks, Teaching to Transgress (1994)

"If you bring inclusiveness in a conscious manner, it will find expression in the world" – Sadhguru, 2017

Task:

Using those two quotes as a reference, create a poster, drawing, slide or any format of your choice to show your vision of:

- Teachers building an inclusive community and facilitating openness while facilitating intellectual development.
- What such classroom looks like

Share your work with others.

Workshop 6

Theme: Democratic education and shifting the power balance

Reading / worksheet: See appendix "Week 6 Readings" retrieved here: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1aNY5jtHyerEgzclAjWMyUOqHyhJBuVC8?usp=sharing

Contemplative exercise: Lection Divina on a text of their choice

Steps:

1. **Lectio**

   Choose any chapter / section from the book *"Contemplative Practices in Higher Education".*

   Read your chosen section, but do it carefully and slowly, reflecting on the meaning of the text as you go and taking notes if you need to.

   Time for reading: 10 mins

2. **Meditatio**

   What is your understanding of the text? What does it make you think about

   What are the author's main points?

Were there any difficulties or emotional responses to the text?

<u>Time for reflection:</u> 5 minutes

3. **Oratio**

   Share the results of your reflection with a partner. How do you think you can integrate the meaning of this text into your own life, as a teacher, educator or simply as an individual?

   <u>Time for sharing:</u> 5 mins

4. **Contemplatio**

   Individually and in silence, reflect on the overall experience of this exercise.

   <u>Time for contemplation:</u> 5 mins

Group work:

<u>Part 1</u>

Think of and identify specific educational and pedagogical practices that you have observed or experienced which are undemocratic or authoritarian.

<u>Part 2</u>

Based on this week' readings, think of practical and concrete ways to challenge or change these practices. In other words, what are some realistic ***non-violent actions*** you can take as a community of teachers to try to change them?

<u>Part 3</u>

Think about the following quote:

"In other words, an individual's autonomy is delimited by others' rights to dignity, respect, safety, and the search for truth and meaning to everyone's lives; if person A decides to do something that somehow

infringes on person B's rights, then person A is prohibited from taking that action and encouraged to find actions that can both express his or her autonomy and honor the rights of others".

   a. How does that idea relate to non-violence?
   b. How would you teach and encourage the kind of behaviour described in the quote? Think of *specific, concrete* ways of doing this.

<u>Part 4</u>

Present your reflections and ideas to other groups

Appendix 3 – Workshops' details

Second iteration – Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaiso (PUCV)

Week 1: **Nonviolence**

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1OjpjYKcvPBKBVL8DP2K55h-6QgsnlGG_

Week 2: **Indigenous perspectives on nonviolence**

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1uNMWwVceAJTy_cj5a9nfj3bNe4w1bDUK

Week 3: **Cosmopolitanism and interculturality**

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1uZvD6X-l9_2I0MXmZFFv3G0-GxD6s0Fp

Week 4: **Contemplative Pedagogy and Mindfulness**

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1yh1iQKRNEYZ5D7aDJa4rp3Rq1Pnz56Iw

Week 5: This session was devoted to:

1. Get to know each other, as most participants did not know each other. The first task was to discuss the following topics with different people:

Career plans	Reason why you took this class.	Interests / hobbies
Areas of teaching you are interested in	Cool life experiences (countries you have travelled to, something unusual you've done etc.)	Things you like to learn / study about (cooking, making movies, etc.)
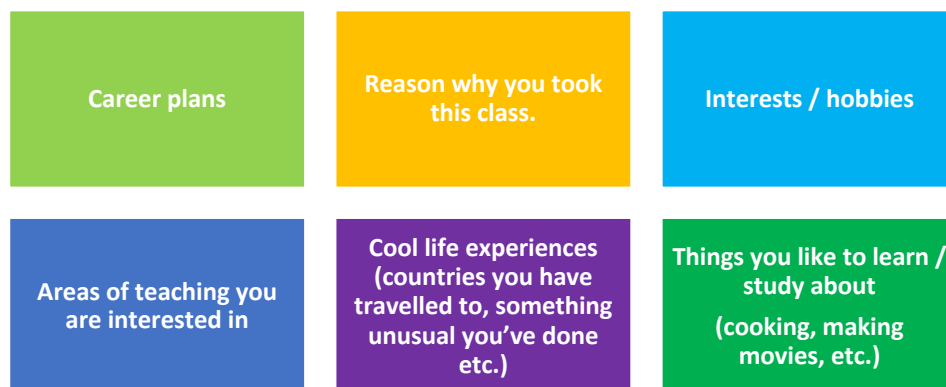
2. Discuss the degree of participation they wanted to have. We watched the following video:

   https://participatoryactionresearch.sites.carleton.edu/about-par/

   Which was followed up by the following talking points:

   A. Question: How much participation do you want to have:

1. In the reading lists?

2. In the activities we do?
3. In the topics we choose?

Remember that the main theme is ***non-violence as a practice of equality and inclusion***. Whatever choices you make need to be framed within that.

    B. <u>With this in mind:</u>
        1. Are there scholars / writings / topics / materials you would like to study as part of this course?
        2. Are there activities you would like to do as part of this course?
        3. Are there specific problems or questions you want to address in this course concerning issues of classroom inclusiveness and discrimination?

    C. General information about the workshops and their structure.

Week 6:
Theme: Nonviolent Communication

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Pm2lkL8CFbyzvFBiOSmf11NdfKFsbEad

Contemplative exercise: Developing empathy (peer interview)

Group work:
1. Nonviolent communication exercise: Turning judgement into observations
2. Bringing this idea into the classroom:

    Work in groups. Using any interactive format of your choice, create a poster / infographics / group audio recording / video that discusses:

    Your vision of a classroom where you and the learners use empathy and non-judgement in your (and their) interactions. What does that classroom look like?

Week 7
Theme: Fostering democratic learning environments

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_FIMinofJeM_RlH7bFbOogaz9WdmvOjP

Contemplative exercise: Compassion practice

Group work:

Point 1: "Forging a learning community that values wholeness over division, disassociation, splitting, the democratic educator works to create closeness" – bell hooks, 2003, "*Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*"

Point 2: "The school must be a genuine form of active community life, instead of a place set apart in which to learn lessons" – John Dewey, 1916, "*Democracy and Education*"

Both quotes concern our role as educators in bringing a sense of community, close collaboration and wholeness to our educational settings.

Work in groups. Think of *four specific strategies* to bring these ideas into your teaching practice. Put these ideas into a format of your choice and share them with other groups.

Week 8

Theme: Feminist Pedagogy

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1v2nvp24b5mYrKfyXymagz0-LTa8sx1Ch

Contemplative exercise: Not putting people into boxes

Group work:

Consider the following points:

1. In "Towards a Pedagogy of Consensus", Betty Sasaki argues that often the discourse on consensus promotes "a patronizing etiquette of tolerance", while at the same time denying difference.

2. "A classroom characterized as persons connected in a net of relationships with people who care about each other's learning as well as their own is very different from a classroom that is seen as comprised of teacher and students. One goal of the liberatory classroom is that members learn to respect each other's differences rather than fear them. Such a perspective is ecological and holistic" (Shrewsbury, p.6)

Discussion points:

1. How can then we move beyond this mere "tolerance" towards a *true acceptance* of difference within our classroom / teaching practice?

2. How can Shrewsbury's ideas of "respect of difference rather than fear of them" and caring about each other help us in that journey?

Think of four / five different ways to promote this.

Put your ideas into a format of your choice and share them with the class. **Take detailed notes as you go.**

Week 9:

Theme: Gender / sexual equality and inclusiveness

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1267OJ8efnMoFIPGpD2ecbtIdu2d1HH8P

Contemplative exercise: emergency empathy

Group work:

Task 1:

Create a class activity that promotes sexual and gender inclusiveness / awareness. Drawing from the reading and theories you have read on non-violence and inclusiveness, from the resources you read this week and your reflection, create an activity for English-language students that raises awareness of LGBTQI+.

Your activity should have a clear *content / communicative* focus for a group of 40-45 secondary students to be done in 20 minutes.

Task 2:

Give a detailed explanation of your activity to a small group of students and get feedback on it.

Week 10

Theme: Nonviolent strategies in education

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1rIWpUySwMc8FUR_waUPUg5-4zWSi8LjC

Contemplative exercise: High and Lows

Follow-up: Discuss your personal experience during the exercise, both while sharing and while listening.

Then discuss the challenges AND the opportunities present in bringing this practice into our classroom. What are some possible benefits for learners?

Task 1:

Illustrate how you can bring the following ideas into the classroom:
- Teaching learners to express feelings rather than thoughts (*I feel sad because*…versus *I think you are*…)

- Raising awareness amongst learners about using non-violence communication (NVC) to resolve conflict or express their ideas. How can they be taught to develop this self-awareness?
- You yourself using NVC in dealing with difficult situations within your educational community.

<u>Task 2:</u>

Now think about concrete, specific challenges you might find in doing the above, and how you might deal with them.

Weeks 11, 12 and 13

These 3 weeks were devoted to peer-teaching. Participants filled out a survey expressing the theme they wanted to focus on choosing first one of the following themes:

11   Cosmopolitanism and intercultural communication

12   Indigenous knowledge and interconnectedness

13   Nonviolent communication (compassion, empathy and non-judgement)

14   Sexual and gender inclusive education

They were then put into groups according to their choice of theme, and asked to prepare a 30-minute lesson using a template designed by me (see Appendix 1).

There were six groups in total, with two groups presenting each week. The last ten minutes of each session were used for general feedback and comments from the participants to the presenting peers.

Appendix 4 – Lesson plan template

Lesson plan template

Use the following template to help you with your lesson plan and submit this by email before you teach it. This template follows a backward design, which means you will need to think about what you want your students to understand by the end of the lesson, and plan backwards from there: how would you help your learners achieve that aim? Your activity needs to help them get there.

Names:	
Topic:	
Aim of the lesson (what would you like your students to know / understand better by the end of the lesson)	
1. Contemplative practice (5 – 10 minutes)	
Name of the activity:	
Rationale for choosing it **(20-30 words)**	
General description of the activity **(50 words)**	
2. Main activity Topic:	
Rationale for creating this activity **(20-30 words)**	
General description of the activity **(50-70 words)**	
Key references that you have used to support your lesson plan (4-5)	

Appendix 5 – Coding sheets in progress