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Reproducing racism in police training in Peru

La reproducción del racismo en la formación policial en el Perú

A reprodução do racismo no treinamento policial no Peru

César Bazán Seminario

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Reproducing racism in police training in Peru

La reproducción del racismo en la formación policial en el Perú

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César Bazán Seminario¹

Abstract

In this paper, I will analyse how racism is reproduced in police training, particularly at the College for Peruvian National Police Officers (Escuela de oficiales de la Policía nacional del Perú). The Peruvian Constitution expressly rejects any form of discrimination and, on the contrary, favours the promotion of human rights in the training of police officers. Despite this, I argue that police training, in particular the Peruvian National Police Officers' College curriculum, approved in 2014, reproduces racist patterns and promotes discriminatory practices in police training in Peru in three ways: the use of racist literature, the omission of racism as a topic in courses and the failure to transmit indigenous knowledge about justice and security.

En este artículo analizaré cómo se reproduce el racismo en la formación policial, en particular en la Escuela de oficiales de la Policía nacional del Perú. La Constitución peruana rechaza expresamente cualquier forma de discriminación y, por el contrario, favorece la promoción de los derechos humanos en la formación de los agentes de policía. A pesar de ello, la evidencia muestra que la formación policial, en particular el plan de estudios de la Escuela de Oficiales, aprobado en 2014, reproduce patrones racistas y promueve prácticas discriminatorias en la formación policial en el Perú de tres maneras: uso de literatura racista, no abordaje del racismo en los cursos y rechazo a conocimientos indígenas sobre justicia y seguridad.

Neste artigo irei analisar como o racismo se reproduz na formação policial, em particular na Escola Nacional de Oficiais de Polícia do Peru. A Constituição peruana rejeita expressamente qualquer forma de discriminação e, pelo contrário, favorece a promoção dos direitos humanos na formação dos agentes policiais. Apesar disso, as provas mostram que a formação policial, em particular o currículo da Escola de Oficiais, aprovado em 2014, reproduz padrões racistas e promove práticas discriminatórias na formação policial no Peru de três formas: utilização de literatura racista, falha em abordar o racismo nos cursos, e rejeição dos conhecimentos indígenas sobre justiça e segurança.

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Introduction

In the 1970s, there were blatant signs of racism in police training in Peru. Eduardo Dargent and Antonio Ruiz identified the case of a lecturer at the College of Investigative Police Officers of Peru, who in 1978 made openly racist statements by showing the image, from his book titled *Peruvian Criminology*, of what he called “the indigenous inhabitant” under the subtitle “Race as a Causal Factor of Criminality”:

... it is necessary to know the indigenous person. So what is our indigenous inhabitant like? The experts answer:

- His association of ideas is of things, not ideas. His imagination is simple, elemental.

The judgment is rudimentary; it is about simplicity, about daily occupations.

- The indigenous is cruel, vengeful, greedy, lazy. (...) it is rare for an indigenous person not to beat his wife; he appreciates animals more than his children; he feels sorry for the excessive work of the *yuntas* (...) or of a donkey, but he does not feel the least bit scrupulous about making his children work who have not reached the age of 10. (...). He stops doing evil only when he cannot. He never stops stealing what comes his way.

- The feeling for the country in the indigenous inhabitant does not exist. His mentality cannot understand it.

- Political feeling is not accessible to him. In all the political events of our history, the indigenous peoples have not shown a vigilant mentality.

- He is considered innocent, but he has the same malice (...) speaks well about no one, speaks badly about everyone. Except for God, and that is because he does not know Him.

- He drinks until he is disgustingly drunk (...) all his greed is destroyed by the desire to acquire alcohol. (Olivera Díaz 1978, vol II, 133–134, quoted by Dargent and Ruiz 1997, 246) [translation by author]

While numerous relevant academic papers about racism and police have been published (Gray & Parker 2020; Kochel 2020; Koslicki et al. 2020; Wright II & Headley 2020; and Radical History Review issue 137, which includes the introduction by Chazkel, Kim and Paik 2020), and there has been intense political debate about police violence against black people in the United States, the same attention has not been paid to cases in other countries. In the case of Peru, which is the focus of this article, racist police violence is

directed against afro-Peruvians as well as against brown-skinned descendants of indigenous inhabitants.²

Racism, police education and training have not been frequently researched in Peruvian academic production. Under the broad question of how the police are trained, it is possible to delve deeper into aspects of racial discrimination. This paper aims to fill the gap and will specifically analyse how racism is reproduced in police training, particularly at the College for Peruvian National Police Officers (Escuela de oficiales de la Policía nacional del Perú).

Using official documents, I will first explain the theoretical framework of racism and police training, then the normative framework of police education and legal pluralism. The Peruvian Constitution expressly rejects any form of discrimination and, on the contrary, favours the promotion of human rights in the training of police officers. I will then show that police training, particularly the Peruvian National Police Officers' College curriculum, approved in 2014, reproduces racist patterns and promotes discriminatory practices in police training in Peru. Finally, I will raise some general reflections and propose ideas for future research.

This is a qualitative study. I will analyse normative documents, such as the Peruvian Constitution, laws and statements and will then use documentary sources provided by the Peruvian Ministry of the Interior. The documents submitted by the Ministry of the Interior of Peru, through official letter 286-2014-IN-GA of 13 June 2014, were the following: curricular plan of the Police Officers College, previous curricular plan, syllabuses of the courses that make up the curriculum, summaries of each course and a list of lecturers for each course.

²The terms brown-skinned or black-skinned are not used here to reproduce racist patterns, but on the contrary, to vindicate the struggles of brown- and black-skinned collectives against racist violence – in this case, by the Peruvian National Police. In particular, I am writing from the position of a brown-skinned person from the Global South, and I am linked to the brown groups that I study and associate with. In my doctoral research, I explain what I have called a brown and decolonial exploration (Bazán 2021). A summary in English of that topic can be seen in my paper “Between brown-skinned people: The coloniality of power and the actors of the Peruvian justice system” (Bazán 2019).

1. Racism, police and police training in Peru

Racism is pervasive in Peruvian society and has been the subject of numerous academic studies, including those of Portocarrero 1993, Callirgos 1993, Oboler 1996, Santos 2002 and Hünefeldt et al. 2014. For research on democracy and indigenous peoples, see Remy 1994. For an examination of discrimination in discotheques against people based on their skin colour, see Sasaki and Calderón 1999. Particularly impressive is the study by Espinosa et al. 2007, which shows that there is a tendency among Limeños [citizens from the Peruvian capital Lima] to consider themselves white people.

In this context, it would thus be surprising if racism were not also reproduced in the police. Racism related to the Peruvian national police force is not mainly exercised against black-skinned people, but rather against brown-skinned people, who constitute the majority in Peru. According to the results of the national census of 2017, the share of the population in Peru that perceives itself as Afro-Peruvian is only 3.6% of the total population, while brown-skinned groups make up 85.5% (mestizos 60.2%, Quechuas 22.3%, Aymaras 2.4%, native or indigenous of the Amazon 0.3%, members of other indigenous people 0.2%, Awajun 0.2% and Shipibos Konibo 0.1%) (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática 2018).

The current experience of racism on the part of the police in Peru has a precedent in the internal armed conflict of 1980–2000, which was examined by the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR). Racialised violence remained a constant threat during the fight against terrorism in Peru, in which the police played an important, though often subordinate role to the military (CVR 2003, volume II). The final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calculated that some 70,000 people died in the internal armed conflict, which involved armed actors (the Peruvian Communist Party “Sendero Luminoso”, police, military, the revolutionary movement “Túpac Amaru” and self-defence committees) and involved political and institutional actors, social organisations and the population in general. The same report indicated that 75% of the people killed or disappeared had Quechua or other indigenous languages as their mother tongue (CVR 2003, volume I, 160). In other words, violence during these years was mainly directed against a racialised population.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, several works have analysed the problem of citizen security and the Peruvian National Police (Costa & Basombrío 2004 [2005], Instituto de defensa legal 2004, Comisión especial de reestructuración de la Policía nacional del Perú 2002, Yepetz 2004, Zárata et al. 2013). However, there are still areas of research that have been less explored. Such is the case with police education and training in Peru. Research on this subject is scarce or is found as a subtopic in broader studies on citizen security or police reform. Exceptions are Novoa 2003, Ruiz 2014, Moyano 2014, Bulla and Guarín 2015, Timote 2017. Specific to Peru is De la Jara and Bazán 2018, in which the authors argue that police training fails to emphasise either human rights or community policing. There has been even less research published on the connection between police training and racism.

For my analysis of racism in police training I will use the framework of legal pluralism, which, understood in a basic way, means that in a socio-political space more than one legal system is in force. The development of the concept of legal pluralism has gone through a long debate, which has been described by Armando Guevara & Joseph Thome (1992), who reviewed authors such as Leopold Pospisil, Sally Moore and Boaventura de Sousa Santos. At the beginning of the century, Franz von Benda-Beckmann 2002 summarised the impact of legal pluralism on academia in the Global North.

The explanatory power of legal pluralism has made it possible to generate interpretations that embrace not only the cultural, and in particular the legal, diversity of the societies of the Global South but also the limitations of states established under the violent foundations of the nation-state and the state monopoly on legitimate violence. Legal pluralism allows racialised and ignored legal knowledge to be considered legally valid. Racism is expressed in denying that certain knowledge (of law and law enforcement) belongs in the category of the valid knowledge that should be transmitted and discussed in police training.

2. The legal framework: Police education, prohibition of discrimination and legal pluralism

In this section, I will discuss the regulatory framework for police education in Peru. For this purpose, I will examine the constitutional rules on police education and reveal that these rules express a clear rejection of discrimination on the basis of race. Secondly, I will describe the normative legal framework in force in 2012 regulating the curriculum of 2014, which I will use as my primary empirical source.

2.1 Peruvian Constitution: Police education, anti-racism and legal pluralism

In the Peruvian case, the Constitution (Constitución política del Perú) is, at least formally, the core normative text that regulates rights and the organisation of power by the State. Consequently, the Constitution serves as a parameter to evaluate the validity of the legal framework. For this reason, I will first briefly present the constitutional framework of the police education regime.

Police training is outlined as a task of the State. According to the Peruvian Constitution, the State's action is a priority in certain areas. This conclusion is drawn from Article 58 of the 1993 Constitution, which indicates that, although private enterprise is free, the State dominates certain branches, particularly security and education.

Article 14 of the Constitution is linked to the police educational process. The final part of this article states the following: "Education is provided at all levels in accordance with constitutional principles and for the purposes of the educational institution in question" [translation by author]. In application of this article, whether at the level of officers or non-commissioned officers (NCOs), police education must follow the constitutional principles and the aims of the educational institution. This means that police education must be based on the Constitution of Peru and its various values, including respect for human rights.

This rule is complemented by the third paragraph of Article 14 of the Constitution, which states: "Ethical and civic training and the teaching of the Constitution and human rights are obligatory throughout the civil or military educational process." While the article mentions only civilian and military education, there is no reason to exclude police

education. A systematic legal interpretation of the Constitution does not allow us to think that police education is an exception. Consequently, it must be assumed that the normative statement in Article 14 also covers the police, meaning that ethical and civic education is also compulsory in police education, as is instruction about the Constitution and human rights.

The right to non-discrimination is usually found in lists of global human rights. In the Peruvian Constitution, there is also an explicit mention of this right, in Article 2, paragraph 2: “No one may be discriminated against because of his or her origin, **race**, sex, language, religion, opinion, economic status or for any other reason” [emphasis added]. The principle of equality and the prohibition of discrimination has been reaffirmed in repeated rulings by the Peruvian Constitutional Court (Judgment STC 0045-2004-AI/TC, Judgment STC 0048-2004-PI/TC, Judgment STC 0606-2004-AA/TC, Judgment STC 0019-2005-PI/TC). Consequently, the constitutional model of police education states that it should promote respect for human rights and, therefore, serve to train police officers to respect the principles of equality and non-discrimination.

In light of the above, it is evident that Article 18 of the Constitution recognises two substantial elements of education: academic freedom³ and the rejection of intolerance. It is thus clear that the education for officers and non-commissioned officers must comply with both indications. In line with legislative decree 1151 – to be explained later – the issue at the College for Officers of the Peruvian National Police is education at the university level. For this reason, Article 18 of the Constitution should be considered, which indicates that the purposes of university education are professional training, cultural dissemination, intellectual and artistic creation, and scientific and technological research. This has been reiterated by constitutional jurisprudence in Judgment STC 2537-2002-AA/TC (Paragraph 2).

Within the Constitution, we find that only Article 168 expressly mentions police education: “The respective laws and regulations determine the organisation, duties,

³ According to the jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court, academic freedom consists of “the faculty to express, in the exercise of university teaching, the ideas or beliefs linked to the development of a subject or matter, without any type of submission to any state or private authority (whether internal or external)” (Judgment STC 4232-2004-AA/TC, Paragraph 31) [translation by the author].

areas of specialisation, training and use, and govern the discipline of the Armed Forces and National Police.” In other words, it is a mention without much content, which transfers the role of regulating this matter to the infra-constitutional norms. This should be read in conjunction with Article 16 of the Constitution, which gives the State the competence to formulate general guidelines of curricula. In addition to what is expressly stated by the Constitution, the jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court has addressed the topic of police training on some occasions. Its rulings refer to the right to due process in the face of sanctions against students (Judgment STC 2537-2002-AA/TC, Judgment STC 2181-2002-AA/TC and Judgment STC 04962-2008-PA/TC) and the right to access public information (Judgment STC 01133-2012-PHD/TC).

Several constitutions in Latin America⁴ have effectively incorporated legal pluralism by recognising the rights of indigenous people and other communities (for instance, *rondas campesinas*⁵) to exercise justice and violence accord to their legal systems. In addition to being present in the ILO Convention 169 ratified by Peru (Article 9), the concept of legal pluralism is found in Article 149 of the 1993 Constitution:

Authorities of peasant and native communities, with the support of the *rondas campesinas*, may exercise jurisdictional functions within their territory in accordance with customary law, provided they do not violate the fundamental rights of the individual. The law provides forms for the coordination of such special jurisdiction with Justices of the Peace and other bodies of the Judicial Branch.

[translation by author]

In this way, the law and legal knowledge produced by peasant and native communities and by *rondas campesinas* is part of the current legal system in Peru and should therefore be taken into account by the police and other actors in the state justice system.

⁴ For instance, in Colombia (1991), Ecuador (2008) and Bolivia (2009).

⁵ The *rondas campesinas* are grassroots organisations in rural areas of Peru that are responsible for justice and security functions in their territories.

2.2 The 2012 law of police training

In December 2012, almost thirty legislative decrees were enacted through the delegation of powers that Congress granted the Executive, through Law 29915, to legislate on issues related to the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior. Of these legislative decrees, around ten address fundamental issues of the Peruvian National Police, including police training. The latter – which is the topic of this working paper – is the subject of legislative decree 1151 Law on the Education System of the Peruvian National Police (Ley del Régimen educativo de la Policía nacional del Perú), issued on 11 December 2012. This norm was subsequently replaced in 2016. However, the 2012 law is of particular interest because it is the one that was in force during the establishment of the 2014 Officers’ College curriculum, which is an essential source of information for this study.

The 2012 law has 33 articles, four final complementary provisions and two transitory complementary provisions. Its purpose was to regulate the education, training, specialisation and professional development of police personnel and establish the structure, rules and procedures for the academic, administrative and disciplinary management of the police education system (Article 1).

Table 1: Structure of the Law on the Educational System of the National Police of Peru

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| Preliminary title. General Provisions |
| Title I. Educational regime of the National Police of Peru |
| Chapter I. Academic organisation |
| Chapter II. Training academies |
| Chapter III. Training, specialisation and updating |
| Chapter IV. Professional development |
| Title II. Academic system |
| Chapter I. Curricular system and evaluation |
| Chapter II. Degrees and titles |

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| Chapter III. Professors and students |
| Chapter IV. Grants and agreements |
| Chapter V. Academic Council of Academic Management Bodies |
| Chapter VI. Academic Complementation |
| Chapter VII. Evaluation, accreditation and certification of educational quality |
| Chapter VII. Integration of the native communities of the Andes and the Amazon |
| Title III. Single Chapter. Administrative system |
| Title IV. Single Chapter. Disciplinary system |
| Supplementary and final provisions |
| Supplementary and transitional provisions |

Own elaboration based on legislative decree 1151 Law on the Education System of the Peruvian National Police (Ley del Régimen educativo de la Policía nacional del Perú).

To prevent an overly extensive focus on legislative details, I will dwell only on a few points that I consider relevant to understanding the police educational regime. In the first place, it is the Peruvian National Police, linked to the central government, which is in charge of the training that all police officers receive. According to chapter I, title I (Educational regime of the National Police of Peru), the Executive Directorate of Education and Doctrine of the National Police of Peru is responsible for the police education system. This entity is responsible for planning, directing, coordinating, controlling and evaluating the police education system at all levels and for consolidating and disseminating policing doctrine. According to the law, the directorate is occupied by a police officer of the second highest rank (general) with a master's or doctorate degree.

Secondly, there are two types of police training academies: i) university level officer colleges, which award the rank of lieutenant and the academic degree of bachelor in Administration and Police Sciences; and ii) higher technical academies with a professional technical level, which award the student the third rank non-commissioned officer and the degree of a technician in Administrative and Police Sciences.

Thirdly, after applying to either type of police academy, the applicant must pass a public admission exam, in which his or her performance is evaluated. Of course, these abilities must be appropriate for the academy to which the candidate applies. The law defines the requirements for applying to the academies: i) to be Peruvian by birth; ii) to have no criminal or police record; iii) to be physically and psychologically fit for police service; iv) to have satisfactorily completed secondary school; and v) other requirements outlined in the regulations.

Fourthly, the following table presents the structure of academic police training.

Table 2: Structure of academic training in police schools

| | Officers' College | Non-Commissioned Officers' Academies |
|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| General training | 4 semesters | 2 semesters |
| Specialised training | 6 semesters | 4 semesters |

Own elaboration.

In the case of the Officers' College, general training lasts four semesters and is followed by six semesters of specialisation. In the case of non-commissioned officers, the law provides for two semesters of general studies and four specialisation semesters. Thus, we have curricula designed to last ten semesters for officers and six semesters for NCOs.

In title II of the law, chapter VIII deals with the "Integration of the native communities of the Andes and the Amazon". This chapter contains an article that promotes mechanisms for access to police academies by people from rural communities. That is to say, these measures promote the police as an employer that welcomes people who have been racialised and discriminated against.

3. Racism in police training

In 2014, decades after Dargent and Ruiz's finding of explicit racism by an officer school Lecturer, which I quoted at the beginning of this paper, the training of staff at Peru's National Police School still maintained certain levels of racism. The Peruvian Ministry of the Interior provided us official documents of police training, which demonstrate that eliminating racism is not a priority issue in officer training. It will further be argued that

both the language and the security and justice practices of the Quechua and other indigenous peoples or peasant groups are devalued as relevant knowledge for police officers, even though police officers will frequently be in contact with these languages and security and justice practices.

Given that racism is a latent problem in Peruvian society and, in particular, in the police, it is revealing that in the curriculum of the Officers' College, racism is not a priority subject. The following courses are taught in the first semester: Mathematics, Communication, Philosophy, Methodology for Scientific Research, Police History, and Doctrine and Physical Culture, in addition to three modules: Police Training I, Technology Applied to Police Work I and Personal Development. From the syllabus obtained, it is possible to verify that the issue of racism does not appear at all during the first semester of studies. Among the courses taught in the second semester, four could be potentially relevant to discussing racism: Human Rights, Constitutional Law, Sociology and Criminal Psychology. However, the Human Rights course is presented, according to its syllabus, as descriptive of international treaties and standards, without emphasising either those documents that highlight the right to equality and non-discrimination or any debates on equality or social inequalities. Something similar could be said about the course Constitutional Law, which completely ignores the issue of racism. In that course, the central theme is the organisation of the State; fundamental rights are not the focus.

In contrast, in the Sociology course, racism is mentioned. Unfortunately, the brief description in the syllabus does not clarify whether the course helps police students to question the racist practices of society and the police. According to the syllabus of the Sociology course, which is given for two hours a week for seventeen weeks, the main objective of the course is

to promote the knowledge of the individual–society relationship in the new national and world scenario as well as to develop the criteria of analysis on the socio-cultural, multi-ethnic, pluricultural and multilingual models and phenomena of our society, in order to consolidate the national identity. [translation by author]

Although it is difficult to draw conclusions from this brief description, it is interesting that elsewhere the syllabus expressly refers to human races. It is not possible to establish whether the syllabus assumes race as a social construction or a genetic

construction, or to extract what ideas it associates with race. The course literature also fails to clarify this point. The bibliography contains a brief list of ten books. Classic authors of the sociology and anthropology of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States of America are brought together with a group of Peruvian authors, especially anthropologists. In this list, we can see at least two titles that raise critical looks at racism, such as *Everyday Life* by Agnes Heller (1977, Spanish edition) and Manuel Marzal's *El rostro indio de Dios* (1991).⁶

The course Psychology of the Delinquent, according to its abstract, “has as its main purpose to train the student in the knowledge of the basic characteristics and psychological profiles existing in individuals with antisocial behaviour” [translation by author]. The primary bibliography shows a group of authors who seem likely to identify with critical criminology (Roberto Bergalli or Raúl Zaffaroni) or adhere to pro-indigenous positions (Reyes 1984, 111–113, 305–306), far from the racist description of the so-called “indigenous inhabitant” made by Olivera Díaz and transcribed above. However, in the abstract of this course, Olivera Díaz's 1987 book, *Peruvian Criminology*, now in its third edition, is again considered a primary source. On this occasion, reference is made only to volume I. Volume II, which contained the racist theses on the indigenous person, is not listed. Despite the racist content of Díaz's writing, the College of Officers seems to value his work, since, in the third semester, it is again included in the primary bibliography, this time in the Criminology course.

In the subsequent semesters, some courses could deal with racism yet do not, such as Ethics and Police Ethics, as well as Human Relations (third semester), National Reality (fourth semester), Terrorism and Counterterrorism (fifth semester), Management of Human Talent as well as Citizen Security (seventh semester) and Negotiation in Social Conflicts (ninth semester).

The lack of attention to the subject of racism combined with the prominence of Olivera Díaz's book indicates a lack of interest on the part of the educational institution of the police in confronting racism in the Officers' College. Unfortunately, this

⁶ However, the names of these two researchers are misspelled in the bibliography: “Heller, Agens” and “Morrazo, Manuel”. These errors raise doubt as to the seriousness with which the syllabus was prepared.

indifference is not exclusive to police training. It is also present in other police areas, as noted by the Ombudsman in its report on social conflicts (2012). The Peruvian Ombudsman refers to the internal police regulations (called the PNP Directive) on social conflicts as follows:

There are racist and ethnocentric beliefs and practices that hinder the process of consolidation of democracy and interculturality in Peru. ... The PNP Directive for operations to control, maintain and restore public order within the framework of human rights has not taken up the challenge of including an intercultural approach in police operations. Therefore, it is essential that the PNP incorporate this paradigm because there are situations of violence in social conflicts where the social actors are indigenous citizens. (Defensoría del Pueblo, 2012, 96) [translation by author]

Racist practices at the police officers' college are expressed not only in the complicit silence regarding racism as a social problem but also in the exclusion of knowledge belonging to racialised and discriminated groups.

Even though the Sociology course (planned, as I mentioned, for the second semester) claimed to value cultural diversity, it turns out that mastery of the country's official indigenous languages (Quechua, Aymara, Awajún, etc.) is not a requirement for applying to the police college and does not generate additional scores for the application. This omission is significant if we take into account the following description of the police role in Quechua-speaking areas:

[O]ne of the State bodies closest to the monolingual Quechua-speaking population is the Peruvian National Police. The police stations are located in the district capitals and localities where there are no public prosecutor's offices, courts or municipalities. Farmers turn to the police not only to make complaints but also to consult on procedures, to resolve conflicts, to seek advice or to clarify doubts, often before embarking on the uncertain march to the other public offices. The guidance provided by the police is invaluable, especially for those who do not know the law or formal procedures, and for this reason, it is essential that the police have a good command of Quechua. (Ardito and Córdova 2013, 7) [translation by author]

Ardito and Córdova's statement is even more pertinent considering that the 2017 census – referred to above – reports that 22.3% of the Peruvian population is composed of people who identify themselves as Quechua and that there are regions of Peru where this percentage is even higher, such as the province of Cotabambas in Apurímac, where 83.4% of inhabitants perceive themselves as Quechua, or the province Grau, where the share is even higher, at 95%.

This lack of interest on the part of the Officers' College in indigenous languages spoken by segments of the population that are racialised and treated as inferior, is evident not only in the college's admission process, but is reproduced throughout the five years of police training: learning Quechua is not part of the curriculum, unlike English, which is taught in nine of the ten semesters. Under the same racist logic, in the College of Officers, learning and also reflecting on the justice and security practices of *rondas campesinas* (peasant patrols), Quechuas, Aymaras, Awajún, etc. are not given particular importance with regard to the sub-disciplines of the law in force in the country (civil law, criminal law, etc.), even though these non-state practices and knowledge of justice and security are frequently related with police action.

To illustrate the constant contact between police action and non-state justice and security practices it is sufficient to recall the founding myth of the *rondas campesinas* in Cajamarca or the constant conflicts of competence between the ordinary justice system and the communal justice system. This founding myth tells the story of fruitful coordination between peasants and police: the lieutenant governor, teachers and four police officers promoted the first *ronda campesina* in a hamlet in Cuyumalca, Chota province, Cajamarca, on 29 December 1976 (Gitlitz and Rojas 1985, 124). This was the beginning of one of the most important non-state justice and security movements in the country: the official endorsement of community-based patrols to provide justice and security in under-served rural areas.

For their part, the "conflicts of competence", which are the subject of intercultural efforts by the judiciary (see, for example, the Bill for Intercultural Coordination of Justice), are situations in which members of both the communal justice system and the state justice system consider themselves legitimised (competent) to decide on a case. This leads to a conflict of competence between the actors of the two justice systems, which must somehow be resolved. At this point, it should be recalled that Article 149 of

the Peruvian Constitution recognises the peasant communities, native communities and peasant patrols as legitimate entities to administer justice, i.e., with jurisdictional functions.

At the level of non-commissioned officers, the situation is somewhat different, although no less racist. As an intersectional view suggests, racist discrimination is superimposed on other criteria for the exercise of power, such as hierarchy, so that less Quechua is spoken among officers than among non-commissioned officers (Ardito and Córdova 2013, 31–32). This last finding is consistent with Elizabeth Acha’s research, which found that the “hierarchical structure of the police reproduces the gaps and inequalities in Peruvian society between the criollo-misti population (officers) and the native-less-white population (NCO)” (2004, 153). It should be noted that at the NCO level, with the opening of police academies in Quechua regions (Cusco, Ayacucho, Huancavelica and Apurímac), there has been an increase in the number of Quechua-speaking NCOs (Ardito and Córdova 2013, 21). However, within the Apurímac academy the Quechua language continues to be invisible and its teaching is not promoted (Ardito and Córdova 2013, 27). The same authors have found that in Apurímac, indicated as a Quechua-speaking region in the 2017 census, a high number of police officers had difficulties in handling Quechua efficiently (2013, 21). This situation was particularly detrimental to monolingual women who came to report incidences of violence to the police stations and found that the female police personnel were less competent in Quechua than the men (Ardito and Córdova 2013, 25).

Conclusions

In this paper, I have argued that, on the one hand, the regulations that serve to govern police training support essential values for an education that respects human rights, including the principles of equality and non-discrimination. However, an analysis of the training design at the Peruvian National Police Officers’ College shows that police education ignores racism as a social problem and thus contributes to its normalisation. Furthermore, the police training itself reproduces racist practices by discriminating against languages other than Spanish that are widely spoken in the country and by failing

to include the justice and security practices of *rondas campesinas* and the so-called indigenous peoples. This tension between regulations and training is quite worrying.

Officers' academies are key spaces that offer an opportunity to deal with police bias. For this reason, it is worthwhile identifying at an early stage how racism is reproduced and internalised in the training of police officers, who, upon exiting the academy, will apply what they have learned: but then from another position in the structure of society and – what is more dangerous – carrying a gun.

Faced with this situation, which affects not only Peru and other countries of the Global South but also the Global North, the research-action agenda is broad. In order to understand this global problem, it is essential to have more interdisciplinary and comparative studies on how racism is reproduced in police institutions and in police practices. For this task, I believe that a decolonial or postcolonial view can be beneficial. As I suggested in my doctoral study on the Peruvian police (Bazán 2021), the police can be understood as a colonial service. Thus, following Müller, it is a matter of thinking of the police differently, in this case, from a postcolonial viewpoint (Müller 2014). A decolonial look at the law and the actors of justice and security is certainly suggestive. The question of how the coloniality of power (Quijano 1992, 2000, 2007) is reproduced in the justice system, and particularly in the police, has global dimensions. The emphasis can be placed on how the law reproduces coloniality in its patterns: racism/Eurocentrism, machismo, capitalism and human domination over nature.

On the other hand, beyond the decolonial view, different approaches can be used to analyse the exercise of police power, especially in police academies. Research is needed that shows how power networks, corruption, the transmission of values, faith and religion, civil relations, etc. work both in Peru and in other countries of the Global South and the Global North. Let us remember that the police have a relevant function in safeguarding the established order. In this sense, it would be worth asking, based on empirical analysis, what this established order is – or, in other words, which established order the police are being trained to protect.

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Declaration of interest statement

The author declares that he has no conflict of interest.

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