COWARDS DON'T MAKE HISTORY

ORLANDO FALS BORDA AND THE ORIGINS OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

Joanne Rappaport

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A la memoria de Ulianov Chalarka

All comics pages are reprinted with the permission of the Fundación del Sinú, the organization that replaced the Fundación del Caribe, the research collective that authored the graphic histories I analyze. Fals Borda's photographs are reprinted with the permission of the Centro de Documentación Regional "Orlando Fals Borda," Banco de la República, Montería.

The following individuals and organizations appear and reappear throughout the pages of this book. They are the protagonists of my narrative.

La Rosca de Investigación y Acción Social

La Rosca de Investigación y Acción Social [Circle of Research and Social Action] was a national network of action researchers founded in 1971 by Orlando Fals Borda and a group of co-thinkers, many of them connected to the Presbyterian Church. La Rosca's mission was to forge horizontal and participatory research relationships with popular sectors with the aim of contributing to their struggles (Bonilla et al. 1971, 1972; Rosca 1974). The network coordinated the activities of its various regional chapters, procured funding for their projects and publications, and participated on the editorial board and as columnists in the leftist weekly *Alternativa*.

Víctor Daniel Bonilla: Journalist and ethnographer based in the city of Cali, who worked with CRIC, the Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca [Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca], the first modern Colombian indigenous organization, representing the major Native groups of the southwestern highlands in the department of Cauca. Bonilla introduced the strategy of preparing *mapas parlantes* [speaking maps] that situated major events in indigenous history in maps depicting the regional and national landscapes (Bonilla 1977, 1982).

Gonzalo Castillo Cárdenas: Sociologist originally from Barranquilla, whose activism was focused on the indigenous communities of the department of Tolima, to the west of Bogotá. Castillo edited a 1939 treatise by Manuel Quintín Lame (1971), a Nasa leader in the first half of the twentieth century, which became one of the foundational documents of the Colombian indigenous movement. At the time of the founding of La Rosca, Castillo was a Presbyterian pastor.

Orlando Fals Borda: Barranquilla-born Colombian sociologist, founder of the Sociology Faculty of the National University of Colombia. Fals conducted

pathbreaking ethnographic research in the 1950s on peasant economies in the Colombian highlands (Fals Borda 1955, 1957) and participated in an advisory capacity in the Colombian agrarian reform in the 1960s. He was a supporting actor in the rise of the radical wing of ANUC, the Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos-Línea Sincelejo [National Association of Peasant Users-Sincelejo Line], developing his approach to action research at the regional level, and later at the national and international levels. Fals's personal archive is one of the major sources of evidence in this book. For a listing of his publications, see the bibliography.

Augusto Libreros: Economist and Presbyterian pastor whose friendship with Gonzalo Castillo and Orlando Fals Borda dated to their religious connections in Barranquilla. Libreros's work in La Rosca focused on Afrocolombian communities on the Pacific coast and in the Cauca Valley.

Sociologists Gilberto Aristizábal, Darío Fajardo, Alfredo Molano, William Ramírez, and Alejandro Reyes Posada, as well as economist Ernesto Parra Escobar and Swedish development scholar Anders Rudqvist, collaborated with Fals Borda by undertaking evaluations of action research on the Caribbean coast; see the bibliography for their publications.

La Fundación del Caribe

The Fundación del Caribe [Caribbean Foundation], founded in late 1972, was a chapter of the regional network established in Barranquilla, Montería, and Sincelejo by participatory action researchers working on the Caribbean coast. Its members were young aspiring researchers and activists, most of whom had grown up in coastal cities.

Ulianov Chalarka: A painter and caricaturist living in the working-class barrio of La Granja, Montería. He also went by the pseudonym Iván Tejada. Chalarka's family, originally from the highland city of Pereira, migrated to Montería when he was a teen. Chalarka drew all of the Fundación's historical comics (Chalarka 1985; Sociedad de Jóvenes Cristianos 1973).

Néstor Herrera: A development professional in Sincelejo, who in his youth in the early 1970s collaborated with ANUC's organizing efforts in the department of Sucre. Herrera was one of the key actors in the research that culminated in *Felicita Campos*, one of the Fundación's historical comics.

Víctor Negrete: Trained as a science teacher at the Universidad Libre in Bogotá, Negrete was the president of the Fundación and, along with Fals Borda,

the only other researcher who worked full-time on the team from 1972 to 1974. Native to Montería, Negrete is now a professor at the Universidad del Sinú and one of the most active promoters of participatory action research on the Caribbean coast. Negrete's multiple publications are listed in the bibliography.

David Sánchez Juliao: A Lorica-born creative writer whose work in the Fundación largely centered on the production of testimonial literature recorded on cassette tapes for peasant audiences and subsequently published by the Fundación del Caribe and by national presses (1975, 1999 [1974]). In the 1980s he authored television screenplays and was ambassador to India and Egypt.

Franklin Sibaja: A Montería-based community activist, instrumental in generating rural and urban contacts for the Fundación. Sibaja discovered Ulianov Chalarka, bringing him on board as the artist of the Fundación's series of historical comics.

Other collaborators with the Fundación del Caribe who appear briefly in the coming pages include children's author Leopoldo Berdella, university student Matilde Eljach, Cereté activist José Galeano, musician Máximo Jiménez, sociologist Raúl Paniagua, folklorist Benjamín Puche, sociologist María Josefina Yance, and the regional agrarian prosecutor, Roberto Yance.

Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos (ANUC-Línea Sincelejo)

ANUC, the Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos [National Association of Peasant Users], was originally a government-sponsored peasant organization established as one of the national partners in the Colombian agrarian reform of the 1960s. In 1972, as peasants became disillusioned with official efforts at land redistribution, a substantial sector of the association took agrarian reform into their own hands by organizing land occupations; they separated from the national association, founding ANUC-Línea Sincelejo [ANUC-Sincelejo Line] at a congress held in the city of Sincelejo. ANUC-Córdoba adhered to the Sincelejo Line. Several of its leaders, especially those in the municipal chapter of Montería, participated actively in the Fundación del Caribe through a partner organization called the Centro Popular de Estudios.

Moisés Banquett: A municipal leader of ANUC in Montería, serving in various capacities on its executive committee, Banquett was a central actor in the organization of the *baluartes de autogestión campesina* [bastions of peasant self-management] in the lands occupied by ANUC in 1972, as well as being a key ally

of Fals and of the Fundación. His unpublished memoir can be found in Fals Borda's personal papers in Montería (CDRBR/M, 1041–1058).

Clovis Flórez: A schoolteacher and union activist who served as president of the municipal chapter of ANUC in Montería, Flórez was an important ally of the Fundación del Caribe from 1972 to 1975. He was assassinated on 15 September 2000.

Juana Julia Guzmán: Originally from Corozal, Sucre, Guzmán was a founder of the Sociedad de Obreros y Artesanos de Montería [Society of Workers and Artisans of Montería] (1918) and the Sociedad de Obreras Redención de la Mujer [Society of Women Workers Redemption of Women] (1919), two associations of artisans, workers, and peasants that led the struggle against the *matrícula* [debt-peonage system] and a leader of the Baluarte Rojo of Lomagrande, an autonomous peasant community set up on public lands on the outskirts of Montería, ultimately serving as its administrator. Her narration of the history of socialist organizing in early twentieth-century Córdoba furnished a major source for the graphic histories produced by the Fundación del Caribe and inspired ANUC-Córdoba to found baluartes on the occupied lands of La Antioqueña in 1972. She is depicted as the narrator of *El Boche* and is a major character in *Lomagrande*, two of the Fundación's graphic histories.

Florentino Montero: Peasant leader in Sucre, and a collaborator in the research that culminated in the *Felicita Campos* graphic history.

Alfonso Salgado Martínez: Originally from Canalete, Córdoba, Salgado was one of the leaders of the municipal chapter of ANUC in Montería and an active participant in the Fundación's publication projects, authoring a primer on political economy for a peasant readership under the pseudonym Alsal Martínez (1973).

Major Figures in the Fundación del Caribe's Graphic Histories

Vicente Adamo: Italian socialist organizer, originally from Reggio Calabria, who, together with Juana Julia Guzmán, founded the Sociedad de Obreros y Artesanos de Montería and established the baluarte of Lomagrande. Along with Guzmán, Adamo was jailed for thirty months after a 1921 massacre of activists at Lomagrande and was subsequently deported.

José Santos Cabrera: Owner of the hacienda Río Ciego in San Bernardo del Viento, Córdoba, and opponent of the peasant activists of Cañogrande whose story is depicted in the graphic history, *Tinajones*.

Felicita Campos: An early twentieth-century Afrocolombian leader in San Onofre, Sucre, and the central protagonist of the Fundación's eponymous graphic history.

Juana Julia Guzmán: See above, ANUC.

Manuel Hernández, "El Boche": A peasant laborer reputed to have murdered numerous people at the hacienda Misiguay, including one of its owners, in the early twentieth century. There is scant evidence for the details of his transgressions, which have evolved into a legend that has been embellished by numerous local authors. The Fundación del Caribe produced a graphic history, *El Boche*, depicting Hernández as an early fighter against the matrícula.

Alejandro Lacharme: Scion of the Lacharme family, owners of the hacienda Misiguay and various other holdings in the Sinú Valley, assassinated by Manuel Hernández, as depicted in the graphic history, *El Boche*.

Víctor Licona: Peasant activist in San Bernardo del Viento in the 1960s and the narrator of *Tinajones*.

Bárbaro Ramírez: An elderly peasant who narrated his experience of the matrícula at workshops and in an interview with Fals Borda, Bárbaro Ramírez is cited as an oral source in *Lomagrande*.

Wilberto Rivero: ANUC leader from Martinica, Córdoba, and the narrator of *Lomagrande*.

Ignacio Silgado "El Mello": Peasant activist in San Onofre, Sucre, and the narrator of *Tinajones*.

Workshops

ACIN, Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca Çxab Wala Kiwe [Association of Indigenous Councils of Northern Cauca Çxab Wala Kiwe], Tejido de Educación [Education Program]: Zonal indigenous organization based in Santander de Quilichao, Cauca, affiliated with CRIC, the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca [Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca]. The workshop was attended by indigenous educational activists and nonindigenous collaborators with ACIN.

Centro de Documentación Regional "Orlando Fals Borda," Banco de la República, Montería: Regional library and home of Orlando Fals Borda's personal papers. Participants in the workshop included surviving Fundación del Caribe

activists, ANUC members, Afrocolombian educators, faculty and students from the Universidad de Córdoba (Montería) and the Universidad del Norte (Barranquilla).

CINEP, Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular [Center of Research and Popular Education]: Jesuit research institute in Bogotá. Workshop participants included CINEP researchers, members of the institute's communications team, and visiting graduate students.

Corporación Con-Vivamos: A community organization in the Comuna 1 on the hills overlooking Medellín. Barrio residents and activists were joined by members of other nongovernmental organizations and academics at this workshop.

Escuela Nacional Orlando Fals Borda: A training seminar in Bogotá attended by young activists belonging to chapters in different Colombian cities, all affiliated with the Congreso de los Pueblos, a network of leftist organizations.

IAPES, Instituto de Investigación-Acción en Procesos Educativos y Sociales "Simón Rodríguez": A chapter of the organization sponsoring the Escuela Nacional Orlando Fals Borda. The workshop was held at UAIIN, the Universidad Autónoma Indígena Intercultural [Autonomous Indigenous Intercultural University] on the outskirts of Popayán, Cauca, attracting IAPES members, UAIIN faculty, faculty from the Universidad del Cauca, and CRIC members.

Institución Educativa Técnica Agroindustrial de San Pablo: A high school in San Pablo, María la Baja (Bolívar), an Afrocolombian community. Participants were mainly students in the upper grades, as well as some indigenous Zenú activists.

RedSaludPaz: Held at the Veterinary Faculty of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, this workshop included health professionals and educators organized into a network dedicated to building a new health system in Colombia.

Universidad Nacional de Colombia-Sede Medellín: Jointly sponsored by the Laboratorio de Fuentes Históricas [Laboratory of Historical Sources], the Corporación Cultural Estanislao Zuleta, and Con-Vivamos, this Medellín-based workshop brought together academics and members of nongovernmental organizations.

Cowards Don't Make History examines the early history of what has come to be known as participatory action research (PAR). A widely used methodology that is claimed and disputed by grassroots social movements and nongovernmental organizations, as well as corporations, bureaucracies, and international development organizations, PAR traces its origins to relationships forged between social movements and politically progressive intellectuals in the Third World and the margins of the developed world in the 1960s and 1970s. Working in numerous locations, including Brazil, Colombia, India, Tanzania, and the Appalachian region of the United States, participatory researchers constructed a methodology that would foster horizontal relationships, erasing distinctions between researchers and "the researched," encouraging a dialogue between academic and people's knowledge, and transforming research into a tool of consciousness-raising and political organizing.

As Australian participatory researcher Robin McTaggart explains, "Authentic participation in research means sharing in the way research is conceptualized, practiced, and brought to bear on the life-world. It means ownership, that is, responsible agency in the production of knowledge and improvement of practice" (1997: 28). Responsible agency is made possible by grassroots participation in setting the research agenda, collecting the data, and controlling the ways in which the information is used (McTaggart 1997: 29). It also involves alternating research with practice, so that the work of consciousness-raising feeds into the work of organizing and mobilization, which, in turn, supplies new research questions (Gaventa 1988; Vío Grossi 1981).

Paulo Freire insists in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* that such a combination of research with activism stimulates a profound and politically effective critical awareness of reality (which he calls "praxis"):

> The insistence that the oppressed engage in reflection on their concrete situation is not a call to armchair revolution. On the contrary, reflection—true reflection—leads to action. On the other hand, when the situation calls for action, that action will constitute an authentic praxis only if its consequences become the object of critical reflection. In this sense, the

> praxis is the new *raison d'être* of the oppressed; and the revolution, which inaugurates the historical moment of this *raison d'être*, is not viable apart from their concomitant conscious involvement. Otherwise, action is pure activism. (2005 [1970]: 66)

In the early years of PAR, the political action that practitioners called for was revolutionary. While it was intimately local, based in grassroots communities, the intention of participatory research was to transform the broader social system. Today, we don't use the same radical language as Freire did in the 1960s and 1970s, but PAR practitioners—at least, those involved with critical variants of PAR, those who work within popular movements and grassroots communities—continue to orient small-scale and intense research relationships toward the transformation of institutions, values, and behaviors in order to create a just society (Fine 2017). As Carlos Rodrigues Brandão puts it, the contribution made by participatory research is not so much to establish a rigorous set of research practices or analyses as it is to promote "the collective search for knowledge that will make human beings not only more educated and wise, but also more fair, free, critical, creative, participatory, coresponsible, and expressing solidarity" (2005: 45).

There is no rule book for PAR; in fact, some prefer to call it an "epistemology" (Fine 2017: 80) or "a series of commitments to observe and problematise through practice the principles for conducting social enquiry" (McTaggart 1994: 315), as opposed to a "methodology." Its lack of a concrete recipe derives from the fact that each PAR playbook evolves over time out of a dialectical relationship between the community and external researchers, as well as between theory and practice (Hall 1982, 1992). That is to say, as a participatory project unfolds, a dialogue is established between local knowledge and the knowledge that external researchers bring to the relationship, lending a specificity that is unique to the circumstances of each collaborative endeavor. In this sense, both the objectives of the investigation and the techniques researchers use grow out of the context itself, combining approaches as diverse as feminist theory (Dyrness 2008), ethnography (Fals Borda and Brandão 1986: 41–42), even quantitative methods (Fine 2017: chap. 5), with autochthonous methods of collecting information and local conceptual vehicles for making sense of reality (Archila Neira 2015; Casa de Pensamiento n.d.).

Participatory research has accumulated over time a particularly rich experience in Latin America, germinating in the social movements of the last quarter of the twentieth century among peasants, indigenous peoples and Afrodescendants, shantytown dwellers and industrial workers. Fruitful collaboration

between researchers and popular movements blossomed since the 1970s, more often than not at the margins of the university or sometimes entirely outside of it in popular education collectives, grassroots organizations, barrios, and rural villages. It would be too simple, however, to state that a project is participatory merely because local people engage in some way in it, since conventional ethnographers have for decades enlisted the participation of their informants. In contrast, PAR, as it has developed in Latin America, is also participatory because the researchers themselves espouse the aspirations of the organization with which they are collaborating, both by placing people's knowledge on an equal footing with academic knowledge and by embracing the political objectives of the groups with which they are working (Brandão 2005: 56).

One of the early experimenters in participatory methodologies was the Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals Borda (1925–2008). From 1972 to 1974 he entered into a collaboration with the National Association of Peasant Users (ANUC) in the department of Córdoba on Colombia's Caribbean coast. His work involved fostering the participation of peasant cadres in conducting interviews with leaders of agrarian movements of the first part of the twentieth century. They engaged in co-analyses of their circumstances at training workshops; their stories were narrated in comics format—all with the intention that these lessons would contribute to the creation of political strategies in the present. Fals Borda called his approach "action research" (not to be confused with the action research practiced at the time in North America). Although he wrote about his experience, which was also evaluated by numerous social scientists in the decades after the project ended, there is only scant analysis of the activities in which he, his associates, and ANUC leaders engaged. Most publications highlight the theory behind this innovative attempt at redefining research and the products that emerged from it—training workshops, graphic histories, historical texts accessible to readers with minimal schooling, testimonial literature and chronicles [*crónicas*]—but neglect to depict the process that underlaid these achievements, despite the fact that process, and not product, was what was (and still is) at the heart of participatory action research (Reason and Bradbury 2008).

Cowards Don't Make History takes advantage of the abundant archival materials that Fals Borda left behind, reading his papers through the lens of a dialogue with many of the activists themselves, as well as with some of today's PAR practitioners. In this book, I try to make sense of what the authors of this methodology thought research was and how they organized the fusion of peasant knowledge and academic inquiry into a participatory endeavor. I probe the ways that the knowledge emanating from this extended conversation

contributed to activism, particularly to ANUC's strategy of occupying large landholdings and administering them in novel ways.

When I began this project, I was not completely convinced that participatory action research held the promise that had been touted by so many. I had several decades of collaborative ethnographic research under my belt in conjunction with indigenous intellectuals from the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca (CRIC), an indigenous organization founded in the early 1970s that was initially part of ANUC and was inspired by many of the same methodological approaches that Fals Borda employed in Córdoba. We formulated conceptual models for analyzing indigenous politics in southern Colombia at the turn of the millennium, making the results available for use by the organization's bilingual education program, some of whose activists were members of the research team. I was convinced that collaborative ethnography was superior to participatory action research, which had become a mainstay of conventional applied social science; like many academic anthropologists, I was keen to distinguish my research from that of my applied colleagues. I now know that I was blinded by the use of participatory methods by international development organizations like USAID (United States Agency for International Development) to further their own objectives, as well as by the fact that many nongovernmental organizations have appropriated techniques from PAR without paying heed to its founding principles. I neglected to recognize that many of the nonindigenous activists I met in CRIC, from whom I had imbibed collaborative research philosophies and methods, had originally begun their work inspired by Fals Borda; I worked with CRIC's educational activists without recognizing their quite obvious appropriations of his methodology. I listened to the criticisms of social scientists—that Fals Borda was paternalistic and dependent on academic models, that he never effectively reached the peasant rank and file—and lost sight of how profoundly he turned social science and activism on their heads. With the passing years, as my understanding of Fals Borda's project in Córdoba deepened through visits to the archives, conversations with his associates, and contact with PAR practitioners, I came to appreciate how unique and innovative these first attempts at participatory action research really were, even as, with hindsight, I came to identify the fissures that emerged during this early methodological experiment—frailties that I will not obscure in the following pages.

I am an ethnographer. I examine everyday practices and meanings to flesh them out in interpretations that are at once analytic and descriptive. I have conducted ethnographic research in indigenous communities where, as a participant observer, I experienced the flow of everyday life as an eyewitness, sub-

sequently creating ethnographic scenarios in which I probed the significance of my observations. In a sense, I do the same thing in this book, only the experiences I am observing come to me secondhand from archives and interviews, information I flesh out with the help of my imagination. As I will describe in the coming pages, Fals Borda advocated an interpretive technique he called "imputation," by means of which he seized hold of historical information and gave it body through his empirically informed imagination. Imputation was not only something he availed himself of in his scholarly writings, but was for him a fundamental feature of the interstices between research and action: it was only by inhabiting the past that one could imagine the future, whether one was a sociologist or a peasant activist.

I hope that for some readers this book will expand their appreciation of how daring and transformative the social science of the global South really is. Fals Borda saw his contributions as inherently Latin American, a situated response to the social science he had learned at the University of Minnesota during his master's training and his doctoral studies at the University of Florida. The models he learned in the United States, as well as the methods he was taught to gather and analyze empirical data, did not fit the Colombian reality he lived, because these conceptual schemes were fashioned out of North American and European experience. Realizing their unsuitability, Fals Borda was forced to explore new ways of approaching the society in which he lived. *Cowards Don't Make History* documents a brief sliver of his intellectual life, when his politics blended most intimately with his identity as a Colombian and his mission as an intellectual.

The ethnographic detail I uncover comes from a process of triangulating archival materials with what I learned from interviews and my analysis of a series of graphic histories that Fals Borda and his associates produced between 1972 and 1974, drawn by a local artist, Ulianov Chalarka. I am by no means an expert at analyzing the visual language of comics. Instead, I attempt to read these graphic histories as traces of an activist research methodology. For some readers, this peek into the political use of Latin American graphic narrative may stimulate them to make deeper forays into an intellectually provocative artistic movement that is committed to social transformation and justice.

Finally, it is my hope that PAR practitioners will approach *Cowards Don't Make History* as an example of what participatory methods could and could not achieve at a particular moment in time and a specific location. That is to say, Fals Borda's experience does not afford us a model of which techniques activist researchers should adopt in the twenty-first century. Instead, it must be mined for its big ideas: What does it mean to create relationships of equality

in research? What can social movements learn from history, and how can historical investigation be used to promote a more just society? How can serious research be coupled with progressive political objectives? How should social science be used to resolve violent conflict? How can the history of social science become more than an academic exercise? At the end of this book, I ask these questions of a series of teams engaged in participatory research in different parts of Colombia, bringing Fals Borda's past of the 1970s into my readers' present.

I have many institutions and individuals to thank for accompanying me on a journey that took more than a decade. My research was made possible by the generous support of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of Georgetown University, which provided me with a 2009 grant-in-aid to visit the archives in Montería and a Senior Faculty Fellowship in the fall semester of 2018; the latter allowed me to extend to three semesters my sabbatical leave, funded by a 2017–2018 fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies. I am enormously grateful to both ACLS and Georgetown for providing me with the wherewithal to conduct research and the uninterrupted time to write this book.

The staff of the Centro de Documentación Regional "Orlando Fals Borda," of the Banco de la República in Montería, collaborated with my research in many ways. Not only did they make Fals Borda's personal papers available to me on my annual trips since 2008, but they also opened their facilities to the numerous workshops I facilitated, permitting me to discuss the significance of the archive with local activists and students; on various occasions the Banco also funded my trips to Colombia and to Montería. I am especially grateful to the Centro's staff—Diana Carmona Nobles, Ana María Espinosa Baena, María Angélica Herrera, Emerson Sierra, and Rita Díaz Sibaja—as well as to Claudia Marcela Bernal, the manager of the Banco de la República in Montería. Gabriel Escalante, the curator of Fals Borda's papers at the Archivo Central e Histórico of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, was equally attentive to my research needs and as devoted to preserving Fals's intellectual legacy as are his colleagues in Montería. My work with the ANUC archives of the Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular (CINEP), which had been lost some years before in a flood, was first made possible when Alex Pereira gave me scanned copies of some of the documents it contained; later, Leon Zamosc

sent me the entire archive in digital form. Mónica Moreno shared with me the documentation she collected at the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia. Without access to these archival holdings, this book would not have been possible.

I have been privileged to participate in a series of lively conversations taking place in a network of young scholars who are studying Fals Borda's archives: Zoraida Arcila Aristizábal, Juan Mario Díaz, Mónica Moreno, and Jafte Robles Lomeli are forging new paths in the history of social science in Latin America. Jafte, along with Nohora Arrieta, Valentina Pernett, Alfredo Poggi, and Douglas McRae, participated in a 2014 seminar I taught at Georgetown, in which we read *Historia doble de la Costa*, the Fundación del Caribe's and La Rosca's publications for peasant readerships, and worked with Fals Borda's archives, ultimately resulting in a special issue of *Tábula Rasa*, shepherded by its indefatigable editor, Leonardo Montenegro. I have been gratified to witness the recent expansion of this group with a new crop of dissertation writers, including Juanita Rodríguez and Julián Gómez Delgado. Other colleagues who have studied Fals Borda, were close to him, or have themselves engaged in politically committed research have been important sounding boards for me, including José María Rojas, Myriam Jimeno Santoyo, Elías Sevilla Casas, and Normando Suárez. My ongoing collaboration with researchers affiliated with CINEP, the Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca, and the Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca have kept me grounded in the real-world applications of my research; my thanks to Marcela Amador, Mauricio Archila, Graciela Bolaños, Martha Cecilia García, Diana Granados, Vicente Otero Chate, Libia Tattay, Pablo Tattay, and Rosalba Velasco.

Orlando and Utamaro Chalarca opened Ulianov Chalarka's artistic world to me. They have been gracious and compassionate guides. I dedicate this book to the memory of Ulianov, Orlando's brother and Utamaro's uncle. I never had the privilege of meeting him, but he has occupied—some would say, monopolized—my attention over the past decade.

When I first visited Montería, I was extremely fortunate to meet Víctor Negrete, one of the founders of the Fundación del Caribe and a tireless promoter of participatory research on the Caribbean coast. He has served over the past decade as my mentor. Víctor continues to remind me that the archival material I am studying was produced by activists intent on making Córdoba and Colombia a better place. Víctor and his wife, Liuber Bravo, made my visits to Montería welcoming with their hospitality, conversation, and their willingness to introduce me to other activists. Carmen Ortega Otero also opened the

academic and artistic worlds of Montería, and became a close friend to me, for which I am deeply grateful.

I thank all of Fals Borda's associates, who, without exception, agreed to allow me to interview them. Their names are included in the bibliography. Orlando Fals Borda graciously invited me into his home, although he was ailing and would die a few weeks later. I met with him at the beginning of this project, when I was still unsure what to ask and in what direction my work would be going. I am thankful for his patience and *buena voluntad*. I also voice my appreciation to the following colleagues for organizing the 2018 workshops that form the basis for chapter 7 of this book: Cesar Abadía, Marcela Amador, Mauricio Archila, Eduardo Bloom, Nohora Caballero, Diana Carmona Nobles, Oscar Calvo Isaza, Martha Cecilia García, Castriela Hernández, Yamilé Nene, Laura Soto, and Libia Tattay. Pablo Guerra, Camilo Aguirre, Henry Díaz, and Diana Ojeda opened up the world of Colombian comics to me, helping me to see Ulianov Chalarka's drawings through knowledgeable eyes. Luis Pérez Rossi, the current secretary of ANUC-Córdoba, and educator María Yovadis Londoño of the *palenque* of San José de Uré in southern Córdoba, organized extremely valuable workshops with local communities in 2019, as did Víctor Negrete and Diana Carmona in Montería. The 2019 workshops were conducted with a future graphic history in mind; I am particularly grateful to Pablo Guerra for inspiring me to embark on this new project and for participating in the workshops.

My thanks to my wonderful research assistants at Georgetown University: Oscar Amaya participated in weekly sessions with Mónica Moreno and me, in which we read Fals Borda's Córdoba field notes; Verónica Zacipa went through his Saucío papers; Luis Daniel González Chavez, Diana Gumbar, Martha Lucía Jaramillo, and Edgar Ulloa transcribed many of the interviews.

It has been a great privilege to count among my friends a group of colleagues and students who have read all or parts of my manuscript. Some of them I have already mentioned, but their collaboration and my deep appreciation merit repeating. Mauricio Archila, Nohora Arrieta, Nancy van Deusen, Martha Cecilia García, Donny Meertens, and Mubbashir Rizvi read and commented on selected chapters. Mónica Moreno, who was writing her doctoral dissertation on Fals Borda's earlier research in the Colombian highlands as I traveled back and forth to the archives in Montería, was a particularly insightful interlocutor and reader. I am especially grateful to Alex Pereira, who recently returned to the academic world as a doctoral student at Georgetown, and whose perceptive readings of my manuscript caused me to deepen my analysis at many points during the writing process. My thinking was in-

calculably enriched by my conversations with Jafte Robles Lomeli, who just defended her magnificent doctoral dissertation on *Historia doble de la Costa*. My thanks also to the very perceptive commentaries of the two no-longer-anonymous reviewers for Duke University Press, Catherine LeGrand and Karin Rosemblatt.

Gisela Fosado of Duke University Press and Juan Felipe Córdoba of the Editorial Universidad del Rosario have collaborated with me as editors of several of my earlier books. I am indebted to them for shepherding this book to a simultaneous publication in English and in Spanish. Santiago Paredes has, once again, done an exemplary job of translating my prose into Spanish. My thanks to Bill Nelson for drawing the map and to Mark Mastromarino for preparing the index for the English edition. Cristo Hoyos granted me permission to use one of the paintings of his triptych, *Cuadros vivos*, as the cover of this book. Cristo's arresting canvas depicts coastal peasants displaced by violence over the past two decades. The fact that so many of the displaced are the children and grandchildren of the campesinos who joined ANUC in the 1970s led me to select it for the cover. I also acknowledge the permissions given me by the Fundación del Sinú to reproduce Ulianov Chalarka's comics panels and the Centro de Documentación Regional of the Banco de la República in Montería to include images from Orlando Fals Borda's photographic collection.

Portions of this book derive from, correct, and expand on earlier publications in which I made my first forays into analyzing Orlando Fals Borda's papers. They include: "'El cobarde no hace historia': Orlando Fals Borda y la doble historia de la Costa del Caribe," in Mabel Moraña and José Manuel Valenzuela, eds., *Precariedades, exclusiones, emergencias: Necropolítica y sociedad civil en América Latina*, 175–198 (México: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana/Gedisa, 2017); "La Rosca de Investigación y Acción Social: Reimagining History as Collaborative Exchange in 1970s Colombia," in Peter Lambert and Björn Weiler, eds., *How the Past Was Used: Historical Cultures, c. 750–2000*, 231–258 (London: Proceedings of the British Academy, 2017); "Rethinking the Meaning of Research in Collaborative Relationships," *Collaborative Anthropologies* 9 (2018) 1–2: 1–31; "Visualidad y escritura como acción: La IAP en la Costa del Caribe colombiano," *Revista Colombiana de Sociología* 41 (2018) 1: 133–156; and, coauthored with Jafte Robles Lomeli, "Imagining Latin American Social Science from the Global South: Orlando Fals Borda and Participatory Research," *Latin American Research Review* 53 (2018) 3: 597–611.

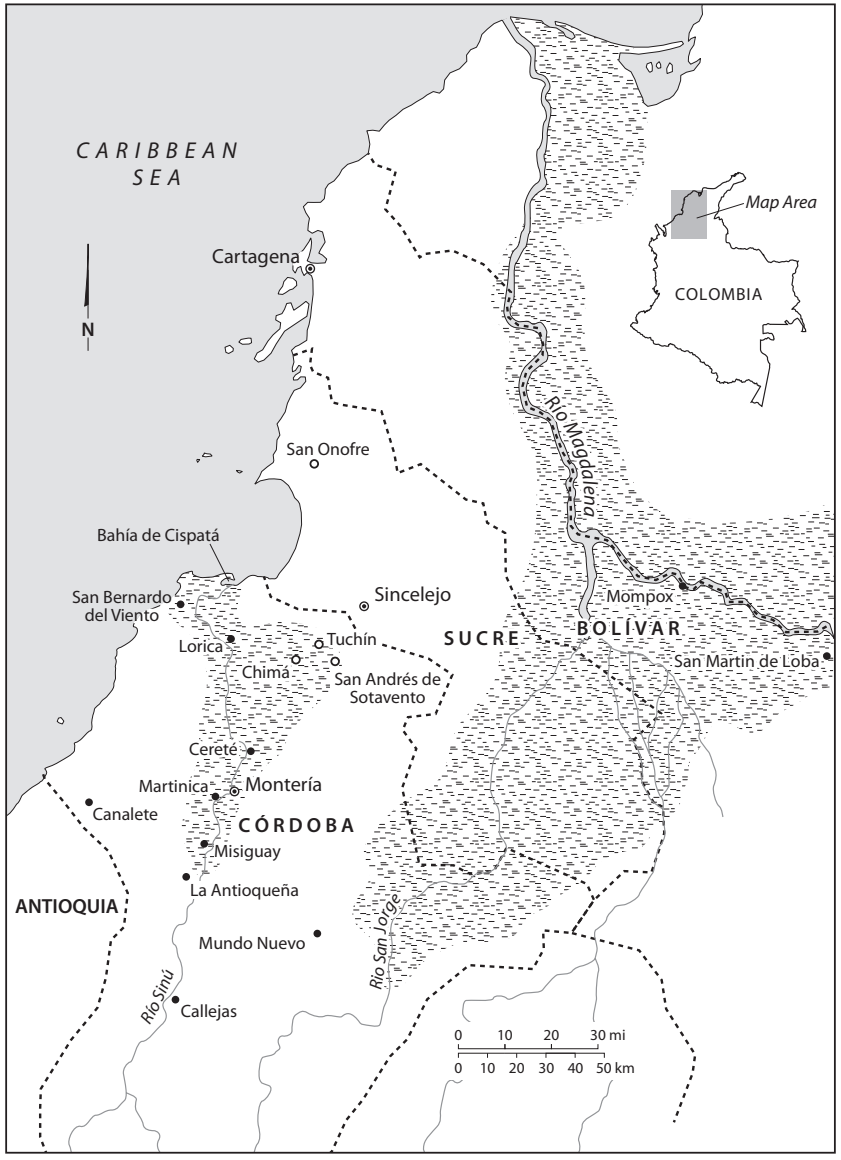
For the past ten years, David Gow has put up with my obsession with Orlando Fals Borda and Ulianov Chalarka. His personal library supplied me with

first editions of some of Fals Borda's reflections on action research. He has politely listened to my never-ending discourses on comics and has obliged me by reading some of my favorites. He went over my manuscript several times, offering me pointed and always relevant commentary. Afterward, he could invite me to set Fals Borda aside and enjoy a glass or two of wine and some of the exquisite cheese he hunts for on sale each week. I am a very fortunate person to be sharing my life with him.

"Cowards don't make history." So declared Juana Julia Guzmán (fig. I.1), a peasant agitator who inspired rural laborers, sharecroppers, and smallholders in the Colombian departments of Córdoba and Sucre to organize as a mass movement on the Caribbean coast during the early 1970s (*Alternativa del Pueblo* [henceforth, AP] 31: 30). In her youth in the 1920s, she led a coalition of urban artisans, workers, and peasants whose objective was to bring an end to the *matrícula*, the system of debt-peonage that bound coastal peasant sharecroppers to haciendas. At the end of Juana Julia's life, her personal reminiscences inspired ANUC, the Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos [National Association of Peasant Users], in its drive to occupy estates that were consolidated over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by large landowners and dedicated to cattle raising.[1] Juana Julia's story was recorded by Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals Borda and recast in comic-book form by Ulianov Chalarka, a local artist in Montería, the capital of Córdoba (figs. I.1 and I.2). Chalarka was a member of the Fundación del Caribe [the Caribbean Foundation] (henceforth, the Fundación), the activist collective that Orlando Fals Borda founded to produce research useful to ANUC's leadership.[2] The graphic adaptation of Juana Julia's autobiography was used as a pedagogical tool to instill in *campesinos*—Spanish for "peasants"—the need to organize themselves in the face of the transformation of their landscape during the second half of the twentieth century, when agrarian modernization forced them to abandon their plots to work as day laborers or move to coastal cities.

Figure I.1 Juana Julia Guzmán, in top panel, stating that "cowards don't make history" (Chalarka 1985: 22. Comic reprinted with permission of the Fundación del Sinú)

Figure I.2 Orlando Fals Borda in Córdoba, 1973 (CDRBR/M, CF, 2283. Photo reprinted with permission of the Centro de Documentación Regional "Orlando Fals Borda," Banco de la República, Montería)



Map I.1 Córdoba and surrounding departments (map by Bill Nelson)

Figure I.3 Sinú River near Tinajones, 1972 (CDRBR/M, CF, 2151. Photo reprinted with permission of the Centro de Documentación Regional "Orlando Fals Borda," Banco de la República, Montería)

My story of the collaboration of Juana Julia Guzmán, Orlando Fals Borda, and Ulianov Chalarka unfolds in the department of Córdoba, located in the northwestern corner of the Colombian Atlantic coast, some six hours by road south of Cartagena (map I.1). Córdoba is a region rimmed by coastal mangrove swamps, a savanna leading northeast into the department of Sucre, and numerous river valleys with lush vegetation and extensive riverine wildlife (fig. I.3), the most important waterway being the Sinú River, which flows into the Caribbean. Until the mid-twentieth century the Sinú furnished the principal mode of transportation for the region (Striffler 1990? [1875]).

Fals called the peasantry of this region "amphibious" in *Historia doble de la Costa* [*Double History of the Coast*], the four-volume masterwork he published between 1979 and 1986, which narrates the agrarian history of the Colombian coastal plain and recounts in considerable detail the research methodology he used in Córdoba from 1972 to 1974 (Fals Borda 1979b: parts 1A and 1B).[3] *Amphibious* is a metaphor that conveys how the region's rural denizens live, fish, and farm on the riverbanks of the Sinú and smaller waterways. Today, many of the wetlands have been drained to make way for cattle pastures; few boats ply the waters of the Sinú, thanks to the construction of roads that link the cities and villages to one another and to Cartagena, Medellín, and beyond. Many of the

children and grandchildren of Fals Borda's amphibious peasants now dwell in the working-class barrios of Montería, Sincelejo (the capital of the neighboring department of Sucre), and as far as Caracas, Venezuela, pushed out of their lands by capitalist expansion, poverty, and violence.

Córdoba in the 1970s was one of the centers of militant political action in Colombia, spearheaded by ANUC. It was also one of the places in which alternative approaches to research gestated, evolving out of a partnership forged between radical Latin American social scientists and the leaders of rural social movements. Fals Borda and ANUC formed a crucial node in a network that was emerging in the global South to transform the role of social scientists in society by incorporating popular sectors into the research process. In a sense, they all became "amphibious researchers," moving fluidly between what Fals called "people's knowledge" [*conocimiento popular*] or "people's science" [*ciencia popular*] and scholarly research, and between political action and investigative rigor.

From Reformist to Radical Scholar

It took several decades for Orlando Fals Borda to evolve into a radical scholar. His professional life began as a reformist, with a conventional functionalist research project in the highlands near Bogotá studying peasant economies (Fals Borda 1955), from whence he developed a commitment to agrarian reform following a liberal model that promoted change within the limits set by the Colombian state (Fals Borda 1959; Karl 2017: chap. 5; Moreno Moreno 2017b; Pereira Fernández 2008). He also dedicated himself to building public institutions, founding the Faculty of Sociology of the National University and attracting international funding to establish sociology as a discipline based on empirical research that followed the trends of scholarship in the global North (Arcila Aristizábal 2017; Jaramillo Jimenez 2017; Rojas Guerra 2014).

By the mid-1960s, Fals began to rethink the place of a social scientist in Colombian society. During this period, he weathered a deluge of negative public reaction to his work on La Violencia, the mid-century wave of violence that upended Colombia, taking some two hundred thousand lives from 1948 to 1958. The two-volume study, drawing on a massive archive assembled by an earlier commission made up of representatives of the Liberal and Conservative Parties, the Catholic Church, and the military, was authored by Msgr. Germán Guzmán Campos, Fals, and jurist Eduardo Umaña Luna (1980 [1962]). It flew in the face of previous literature because it offered a sociological analysis of the impunity inherent to the Colombian two-party system, investigating the so-

cial context of violence and pointing out its aftereffects. As Jefferson Jaramillo Marín notes, the book "shows the implications of reconstructing the memory and history of the war in the very midst of the war" (2012: 48). Some readers saw it as unfairly condemning the Conservative Party for the atrocities (Jaramillo Jiménez 2017: 320–331).

At the time, Fals's closest colleague at the National University, sociologist and Catholic priest Camilo Torres Restrepo, was building a popular protest movement that provoked his dismissal from his university post; he ultimately joined the guerrillas and was killed in action in 1966. As Fals mourned the loss of his friend, he also confronted a restructuring of the National University that wrested autonomy from the Sociology Faculty and weathered condemnation by a strident student movement for having obtained international funding to build sociology as an academic discipline (Jaramillo Jiménez 2017: chap. 5). He abandoned the National University in the late 1960s, taking up a temporary United Nations posting in Geneva, from whence he corresponded with other scholars in search of new forms of supporting popular movements (ACHUNC/B, caja 49, carpeta 1, fols. 3–22) and penned a theoretical meditation on Latin American social science and political commitment (Fals Borda 1987b [1970]).[4] These are the roots of Fals's radicalization.

Scholarly Research and People's Knowledge

Juana Julia Guzmán and Orlando Fals Borda are representative of the two groups that came together to engage in an unprecedented experiment in what has come to be known as participatory action research (PAR), but which in the early 1970s Fals called "action research." External researchers joined forces with social movements to harness social investigation for political ends by building an intellectual relationship between equals, what Fals termed a symbiosis between "people's knowledge" and "scientific knowledge." Juana Julia, the campesina leader, exemplifies people's knowledge, while urban intellectual Fals Borda epitomizes scientific inquiry.

Action research sought to erase the subject-object distinction that characterized the social science of the period by resignifying research as a dialogue between equals, recognizing that people's knowledge had as much to contribute analytically as did scientific inquiry. Fals argued that theory and practice exist in a dialectical relationship. On the one hand, action researchers must engage in a continuous process of reflection, thereby simultaneously occupying the roles of subject and object. On the other hand, the results of their investigations would nourish political practice while, simultaneously, activism

would influence their research agendas (Fals Borda 1987b [1970]; 1978, summarized and translated into English in 1979c; 1991; 2001; 2007, translated into English in 2008a). Researcher and researched would interact as interconnected, self-conscious social agents whose political practice and analyses entered into a dialectical relationship. In the process, a dynamic synergy would evolve between the act of investigation and that of using its results to transform existing social relationships. Rigorous empirical research would contribute to the development of new political strategies, while the political agency of the coresearchers would lead them to establish novel investigative agendas.

Readers may note that I continuously appeal, not to Fals Borda as a unique figure, but to groups of researcher activists. Fals is a towering figure in Latin American social science, but the methodology he conceived could only be achieved through the work of heterogeneous research collectives in which each of the members made a particular contribution. Fals proposed a *participatory* project, not simply because campesinos had a say in the research agenda and functioned as crucial interlocutors while the inquiry unfolded, but because its objectives could not be achieved by a single researcher unconnected to a mass movement. Carlos Rodrigues Brandão, one of Fals Borda's Brazilian interlocutors, argues that participation is best understood as the simultaneous insertion of a research team into a broader social movement and the intervention of the popular organization in the research project itself (Fals Borda and Brandão 1985). In other words, participation involves more than simply inviting peasants to collect information in the service of research: it is a reciprocal process in which popular and scientific knowledge are intertwined with a political goal in mind.

Brandão's assertion brings up a further question. For several years, the Fundación del Caribe played a highly influential role in educating ANUC cadres by placing popular and scientific knowledge in a sustained conversation. How did they achieve this? The answer has a great deal to do with the heterogeneity of the Fundación's team itself, which was made up of local intellectuals, many of them of peasant or working-class origin, only a few of them with university training. This is where Ulianov Chalarka comes in as a key player. His roots were in La Granja, a barrio of Montería populated by peasants dislodged from rural estates in the 1950s and 1960s, but his political positioning was as an urban activist affiliated with the Fundación. He served as a kind of mediator between campesino knowledge and the knowledge of the urban researchers. Much of his mediation was not explicit; it emerged in his ability to capture peasant ideas in vivid visual images that could be articulated into a historical metanarrative of capitalist expansion and peasant resistance. His drawings bridged the gulf between scientific and people's knowledge.

Action Research and Historical Investigation

Action research as it was promoted by Fals and his colleagues combined political activism in support of ANUC with rigorous empirical investigation in archives and with oral narrators. Their objective was to unearth the forgotten histories of popular struggles in order to resignify them as organizing tools for social movements. Other activist intellectuals, whom I will mention in the coming pages, did not make history the center of their research: it was a particular feature of the work of Fals and his associates; it owes in part to Fals's own trajectory as a scholar, as well as the antecedents of his allies, like Víctor Daniel Bonilla (1972 [1968]), whom I will introduce in the coming pages. In his previous research among highland peasants, Fals consulted archives to lend historical depth to his analysis of rural economies (Fals Borda 1955, 1979a [1957]). Later, he consulted historical materials in his study of La Violencia (Guzmán Campos, Fals Borda, and Umaña Luna 1980 [1962]). He penned a history of subversive ideas in Colombia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including the rise of the Liberal Party and of socialism, respectively (Fals Borda 1969). His writings were informed by the work of C. Wright Mills, the North American sociologist whose pathbreaking *The Sociological Imagination* (1959) fused sociological and historical analysis. By the late 1960s, like many of his Latin American colleagues, Fals had ranged far beyond his functionalist pedigree, acquired during graduate training at the University of Minnesota and the University of Florida, to engage historical materialism as one of his fundamental theoretical supports. Fals's Marxist turn further cemented his need to engage in historical research as a fount for building class consciousness, which is how the Fundación del Caribe proposed to harness history to ANUC's struggle.

Indeed, Juana Julia's statement that "cowards don't make history" lay at the heart of the Fundación's experiment. As Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995: chap. 1) observes, history is at once a lived experience and a narrative about that process. Juana Julia made history in the first sense, by fighting the matrícula in the 1920s. In the 1970s she made history in Trouillot's second sense, when she recounted her story to a new generation of ANUC activists. Inspired by her experience, her peasant audience would make history by redrawing the agrarian landscape through the occupation of haciendas and their efforts to imagine the peasantry as a class capable of asserting its place in the Caribbean political landscape. Similarly, the story of Fals Borda's collaboration with ANUC exemplifies the double movement of history, because he and his colleagues studied the past and produced historical narratives for campesino readers in order to

transform their present. History stood at the center of the Fundación del Caribe's project.

The Purpose of This Book

History also lies at the center of my interests. This book is an attempt at recovering the experiences, research process, and lessons of the Fundación del Caribe. While the research techniques and the political and intellectual consequences of the Fundación's work have been summarized and evaluated by numerous scholars, including Fals himself (Fals Borda 1985, 1978; Parra Escobar 1983; Rudqvist 1986; Zamosc 1986a), a thorough inquiry into the everyday practice and the dynamics of the Fundación as a team—how they conducted their research, how and to what purposes they disseminated it—sheds significant light on what was so innovative about their proposal and why it is still useful today as a tool to confront major social, political, and economic challenges in Latin America and beyond.

I made my first visit in 2008 to the archives of the National University in Bogotá (ACHUNC/B) where Fals donated most of his papers, which had or were being consulted by a number of graduate students (Arcila Aristizábal 2017; Díaz Arévalo 2017, 2018a; Moreno Moreno 2017b; and Pereira Fernández 2005, 2008, 2008–2009) and other scholars (Jaramillo Jiménez 2017). The following year I traveled to Montería to consult the Orlando Fals Borda Center for Regional Documentation (CDRBR/M), where he deposited his research notes from the Atlantic coast. Fals's Montería papers had only recently been catalogued and I was among the first researchers to work with them; I invited a number of my graduate students to make forays into this largely unexplored resource (Arrieta Fernández 2015; McRae 2015; Pernett 2015; Poggi 2015; Robles Lomeli 2015, 2019) and organized workshops for Montería researchers to introduce them to the archive. At the outset I thought my archival excursions would be the first step in a multi-sited ethnographic study of several collaborative research teams in Latin America through which I would analyze their dynamics, inspired by my own work with indigenous organizations in the southwestern department of Cauca (Rappaport 2005, 2008). I hoped to observe how other scholars navigated the complexities of collaborating with nonacademic researchers whose objectives and methodologies did not always mesh with those of academics.

Fals Borda is recognized as an important forebear of the recent wave of collaborative research in Latin America (Leyva Solano and Speed 2015: 453–454; Santos 2018: 255–257); for this reason, I chose to look into his activities while I continued to pursue the feasibility of conducting ethnographic research in

Argentina, Bolivia, and Mexico, where important experiments in collaboration have taken place (Briones et al. 2007; RACCACH 2010; Rivera Cusicanqui 2004). I assumed my archival visits would be perfunctory, furnishing material for an early chapter in a volume whose thrust would be ethnographic. The present book attests to my abandonment of that goal. As I perused Fals Borda's papers, I grew increasingly captivated by the novelty and insightfulness of his work on the Caribbean coast. I also began to realize that the Fundación's objectives differed from those of the more recent collaborative ethnography that had been my starting point. Although collaborative researchers also seek to establish horizontal research relationships, train local researchers, deliver crucial research materials to communities, and tackle key questions of how to interweave distinct (but not entirely incommensurate) epistemologies into a single project, much collaborative ethnography is intended, from the start, to result in academic or quasi-academic publications of one sort or another.[5] Moreover, while collaborative ethnography may support direct action, collaborative researchers are not necessarily activists. In contrast, Fals and the Fundación intimately fused research with activism. As I came to comprehend the nuances of the Fundación's work, I decided to limit my attention to this project and to abandon my ethnographic plans.

My focus on the Fundación del Caribe is particularly important today, when Colombians are navigating a peace process that the national government is intent on derailing. Participatory action research is one of the tools that grassroots, ethnic, and human rights organizations have at their disposal. Many practitioners acknowledge their genealogical relationship with Fals Borda, but much of what they recognize as his legacy are specific techniques for collecting information, not the broader objectives and the underlying philosophy of the Fundación's project. An ethnographic history of the Fundación fills in this gap. In particular, I want to probe what *participation* meant to this pioneering research team, how its members attempted to create a horizontal and politically fruitful relationship between external researchers and peasant activists, and how they implemented its guiding principles on the political stage of the Caribbean coast in the early 1970s. My purpose here is not purely academic; I hope that it will inspire participatory-action practitioners to take a second look at the contributions that Fals Borda made to their methodology.

A Critical Moment in Latin American Social Science

The story of Fals Borda on the Colombian Caribbean coast can be read as a microcosm of broader intellectual developments in Latin America in the late

1960s and 1970s. In response to a hardening of the effects of capitalist development, United States foreign policy, and the success of the Cuban Revolution, many prominent Latin American thinkers inspired by Marxism developed methodologies that fused activism with empirical research and effectively detached the locus of research from its traditional academic home. While many members of this intellectual vanguard continued to interact productively with northern academic institutions and to engage in dialogue with northern scholars, they self-consciously created innovative theoretical and methodological vehicles whose origins were in the global South (Rosemblatt 2014). Fals himself acknowledged a debt to North American varieties of action research, particularly those of Kurt Lewin and Sol Tax (Fals Borda 2001: 29), although as his interlocutor Carlos Rodrigues Brandão (2005) asserts, Latin American methodologies were different: inspired by Marxist analyses of economic inequality, they were self-consciously emancipatory, promoting radical change through political collaboration with popular movements, as opposed to Lewin's and Tax's fostering of participation by individuals in localized and more apolitical contexts (a notable exception to this distinction being the Highlander Folk School/Research and Education Center [Horton and Freire 1990]).

While a great deal of the work I draw on in this introduction originated in Latin America, it would be a mistake to focus exclusively on the intellectual geopolitics of that continent to the exclusion of the South-South and North-South dialogues that were also taking place at the time. The social scientists and activists involved in this wave of theory creation were linked into expansive networks dedicated to the propagation of alternative methodologies that extended from Chile, Colombia, and Brazil to Bangladesh, Canada, India, Tanzania, and the United States. Fals came into contact in the mid-1970s with a series of participatory researchers working on other continents as well as in neighboring countries, including Marja-Liisa Swantz and Budd Hall in Tanzania (Hall 1992; Swantz 1982), Francisco Vío Grossi in Chile and Venezuela (Vío Grossi 1981), and Rajesh Tandon in India (Tandon 1988). They and many other activist researchers came together in 1977 at an international symposium on participatory research that Fals organized in the Caribbean city of Cartagena (Simposio Mundial de Cartagena 1978). The approaches being adopted in Latin America were gestating in other parts of the Third World (McTaggart 1994), where practitioners energized by Fals's approach found that it brought together in an innovative way precisely those organizing principles they were pursuing (Rajesh Tandon, personal communication).

In the late 1960s and the 1970s, Latin American intellectuals elaborated a critique of positivist social science emanating from the global North, which,

they argued, presented models that were not applicable to Latin America or other regions of the global South because they paid scant attention to the structural obstacles faced by its inhabitants. Southern social scientists had already begun to recognize that northern theories emerged out of an analysis of social realities different from their own (Cardoso and Weffort 1973). The approaches they pioneered were also different because they were not predicated on particular academic disciplines but instead incorporated anthropology, education, history, law, political science, and sociology. Social science departments were relatively new to Latin American universities (Cataño 1986), and scholars divided their attention between the academy and the public sphere (Restrepo 2002), opening the space to engage in an experiment in which academic researchers and grassroots activists operated on an equal footing, transcending the geopolitical, disciplinary, and institutional borders that were recognized by most social scientists of the period.

The materials these researchers produced went beyond scholarly writings to experiment with other modes of exposition intended for use in movements promoting radical social change. Perhaps most renowned was Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, whose methodology of *conscientização* [critical consciousness] was elucidated in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire 2005 [1970]). Freire sought to transform the political and social consciousness of working-class people through emancipatory dialogue. In contrast to official literacy textbooks that trained adult learners through a series of generic texts organized according to the difficulty of their syllabic content, Freire advocated a program of grassroots research in which peasants and workers would collaborate to identify the relations of oppression under which they were forced to live and begin to formulate authentic, autonomous courses of action to transform the status quo, an approach in which literacy meant much more than learning to decipher print.[6] Similar initiatives at promoting horizontal relationships between researchers and the grass roots in the service of popular political action were taking place in cinema, where Andean indigenous communities collaborated in the production of films reenacting their historical struggles (Sanjinés and Grupo Ukamao 1979), and in theater, where drama workshops introduced working-class urbanites and rural villagers to socially critical theatrical methodologies for analyzing their social conditions (Boal 1985 [1974]). Participatory analysis by working-class people and peasants was undertaken in the Christian base communities that arose out of liberation theology (Gutiérrez 2012 [1971]). A new literary genre called testimonial literature created a communicative space in which a member of the oppressed class presented his or her personal story to an editor, who then shaped it for a broad readership (Achugar 1992; Barnet and Montejo 2016 [1966]; Randall 1992).

Such activist proposals resonated with Latin American academics intent on elaborating radical critiques of their disciplines. They rejected the positivist and functionalist models fashionable in North America, adopting Marxism and dependency theory as theoretical guides (González Casanova 1969), paying close attention to social class and forging relationships with organized popular sectors of society, particularly with indigenous communities and the agrarian and urban proletariat (Bartolomé et al. 1971; Stavenhagen 1971; Warman et al. 1970). The work of these academics intersected on multiple levels with figures in adult education, liberation theology, and the arts. This was a wide-ranging, pervasive body of thought in Latin America.

Fals Borda was well aware of these developments on the continental level. He was familiar with the work of the Grupo Ukamao well before embarking on his project in Córdoba (Fals Borda 1987b [1970]: 114) and, according to Víctor Negrete, had read Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in manuscript form. He celebrated the independence of Latin American scholarship: "I believe, precisely, that what was attractive about our work was that we felt no need to appeal to any authority in the tradition called 'the Western academy' in order to achieve our approach to our own reality" (Fals Borda and Brandão 1986: 17).

Fals eventually came in contact with many of the Colombian protagonists of the democratization of research. Freire's writings had been appropriated as a guide for rethinking popular adult education in the marginal barrios of Bogotá, leading in the late 1970s to the creation of a Freirian pedagogical current spearheaded by Lola Cendales (Ortega Valencia and Torres Carrillo 2011) that explicitly engaged participatory methodologies (de Schutter 1985). CINEP, the Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular [Center of Popular Research and Education], a Jesuit research institute, sought opportunities to connect with popular classes, which they saw as a revolutionary subject with whom they could collaborate both intellectually and politically. They envisioned rigorous historical research as culminating in popular political decision-making, and their religious and lay researchers set up projects in marginal barrios in Bogotá. CINEP also worked closely with ANUC before Fals Borda arrived in Córdoba, ultimately amassing with the collaboration of sociologist Leon Zamosc an extensive archive of oral testimonies of peasant struggle (to which I will refer in the coming chapters as CINEP/B). Their researchers employed a version of action research as one of several methodologies they engaged (Archila Neira 1973, 2013, 2015).

Radical theater groups took root in Colombia's major cities, an artistic movement that a cosmopolitan intellectual like Fals could not have ignored, even if the sectarian sentiments of the time may have precluded him from developing close relationships with the most prominent of the directors

(S. García 1979; Parra Salazar 2015). Marta Rodríguez, for a brief time a student of sociology at the National University, began in the 1970s to pioneer collaborative cinema with indigenous organizations as a vehicle for recuperating their oral memory (Bedoya Ortiz 2011). Fals Borda's colleague at the National University of Colombia, the revolutionary Catholic priest Camilo Torres Restrepo, was a strong proponent of liberation theology (Torres Restrepo 1985). Fals was brought up Presbyterian and was deeply inspired by his pastor in Barranquilla, the Protestant liberation theologian Richard Shaull (1967), who was an active participant in the World Council of Churches and was familiar with Freire's writings (Díaz Arévalo 2017; Pereira Fernández 2005). Indeed, there existed a vast Latin American intellectual movement that nourished Fals Borda's aspirations.

La Rosca: Critical Recovery and Systematic Devolution

It was in this fertile terrain that Fals founded a network of Colombian activist researchers. Their umbrella organization, which also functioned as a publishing house, was called La Rosca de Investigación y Acción Social [Circle of Research and Social Action] (henceforth, La Rosca); *rosca* means "in-group" in Colombian Spanish and a kind of circle or spiral in Catalán. La Rosca came into being at a meeting in Geneva in 1970, where Fals was then working for the United Nations on a study of cooperatives and social development (Fals Borda 1971), although it was preceded by conversations with numerous colleagues and the drafting of tentative proposals (ACHUNC/B, caja 49, carpeta 1, fols. 9–11). In addition to Fals, its founding members included sociologist Gonzalo Castillo, economist Augusto Libreros, and journalist/ethnographer Víctor Daniel Bonilla (Jorge Ucrós, another founding member of La Rosca, was tragically killed in an automobile accident shortly after the collective came into existence).

La Rosca established study groups across Colombia between 1972 and 1974. Bonilla collaborated with the nascent Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca, or CRIC [Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca], to reintroduce into the Nasa communal memory the history of eighteenth-century hereditary lords who acquired land titles for Native communities (Bonilla 1977). Castillo, working with indigenous groups in neighboring Tolima, edited and published a treatise he found in the community archives by Manuel Quintín Lame, an indigenous leader of the early twentieth century (Lame 1971 [1939]); Lame's book would become an inspirational voice in the indigenous movement. Libreros worked in the shantytowns of the Pacific Coast and the Cauca Valley. Born to

a middle-class family in the coastal city of Barranquilla, Fals returned to his roots, so to speak, when he began to collaborate in early 1972 with ANUC on the Caribbean coast, accompanying peasant activists to occupations of haciendas and collecting oral and documentary histories of land struggles.

In its time, La Rosca was a somewhat unusual organization. Its members, who shared Marxism as a guiding philosophy, were never affiliated with the small leftist parties that populated the Colombian political landscape. Three of them—Castillo, Fals Borda, and Libreros—were practicing Presbyterians, an affiliation that enabled them to acquire considerable funding from the Presbyterian Church in the United States.[7] These characteristics of the research collective left its members open to biting criticism by the organized left, which was deeply mistrustful of the insertion of politically independent Protestants into the peasant and indigenous movements whose loyalties it, too, was intent on winning. It was precisely its Presbyterian funding that enabled La Rosca's projects to flourish with minimal external supervision, allowing for a full-time insertion into the social movements that the researchers had committed to supporting.

La Rosca's research philosophy guided the work of the Fundación del Caribe in Montería. Central to their approach was an objective they called *recuperación crítica* [critical recovery], which paid "special attention to those elements or institutions that have been useful in the past to confront the enemies of the exploited classes. Once those elements are determined, they are reactivated with the aim of using them in a similar manner in current class struggles" (Bonilla et al. 1972: 51–52). One of the best examples of this principle is the revival of autonomous indigenous political institutions through the reinvigoration of the councils [*cabildos*] that governed indigenous reservations [*resguardos*], an effort that was historically substantiated through archival research. As I will describe in detail in coming chapters, with the collaboration of Juana Julia Guzmán, the Fundación unearthed the story of socialist collectives in the 1920s that furnished organizing models for ANUC. Critical recovery laid the conceptual foundations for the insertion of Fundación del Caribe's historical research into ANUC's agenda, thereby transforming action research into a political process, rather than simply a research project.

The fruits of critical recovery were disseminated through what La Rosca called *devolución sistemática* [systematic devolution], whereby research results were returned to the organizational leadership and its rank and file "in an ordered fashion, adjusted to the levels of political and educational development of the grassroots groups that use the information or with whom insertion as researchers or experts has been executed, not according to the

intellectual level of cadres, who are generally more advanced" (Fals Borda 1987b [1970]: 113). In the indigenous southwestern highlands, La Rosca began to investigate the possibilities of encoding the critical recovery of history in maps that would serve as props for community reflection. This ultimately culminated—several years after the demise of the La Rosca network in 1975—in a series of picture-maps called *mapas parlantes* [speaking maps] that replicate the topographical modes of remembering the indigenous past (Bonilla 1982; ACHUNC/B, caja 49, carpeta 3, fols. 61–70; see also Barragán León 2016). Since these maps were purely pictorial, they permitted viewers to discuss them collectively in their own language, to embellish on and correct what the cartographies depicted—in short, to reflect on history according to their own uses and customs. Ulianov Chalarka's historical comics fulfilled similar goals on the Caribbean coast.

Systematic devolution ensured that the products of research would have a life beyond the bookshelves, in activist practice. These materials were never meant to be final products, as occurs in academic (even much collaborative) research, as an unidentified speaker emphasized at a 1982 workshop, whose transcript I discovered in Fals's Bogotá archive:

> The mapa [parlante] is not a research result; while it is the result of a single stage of the research, the research continues afterward; when certain cases are examined, [participants] must identify other elements, and they must consider them or remember them, or stow them away, or someone told them, or that the map is a particular moment, a material basis, something they can see and touch, and they arrive at knowledge through this material basis. (ACHUNC/B, caja 49, carpeta 3, fol. 129)

La Rosca conceptualized research as a continuous activity that evolved out of the sedimentation of progressive stages of memory retrieval and interpretation, enabling grassroots information sharing and analysis. In a sense, the word *devolution* does not do justice to the scope of devolución sistemática, because it involved much more than "returning" research results to communities.

The two principles of critical recovery and systematic devolution were grounded in the conviction that external researchers were not mere observers, nor were the members of popular organizations unsophisticated informants whose words and activities would be recorded by the researchers. As Fals Borda argues, "One and the other work together, all are thinking and acting subjects in the work of investigation. One would not exploit the other as an 'object' of research, above all because the knowledge is generated and returned in circumstances controlled by the group itself" (1987b [1970]: 91). Both external

and internal researchers would enjoy the same level of responsibility in a project; both would have a voice in setting the agenda and in carrying out the research. This transforms the very meaning of *objectivity* into a bi- or multidirectional process. In effect, La Rosca anticipated by decades scholars who have reconceptualized objectivity as the synthesis of multiple perspectives, as opposed to the observations of a single (white male) academic writing from the global North (Haraway 1991; Santos 2018).

Reconceptualizing Research

Augusto Libreros and Fals Borda authored a 1974 manual for would-be action researchers titled "Cuestiones de metodología aplicada a las ciencias sociales" ["Questions of Methodology Applied to the Social Sciences"], which was distributed in mimeographed form (ACHUNC/B, caja 49, carpeta 3, fols. 177–268; Fals Borda 1978: 48). In an almost messianic passage, reminiscent of their shared Protestant heritage, they lay out a dialectic in which the validity of knowledge generated by action researchers can only be proven through political activity: "Knowledge takes on a prophetic character and political praxis becomes a criterion for validating knowledge oriented toward action. Political praxis causes prophecy to become reality. For this reason, social knowledge is associated more and more with political aims" (ACHUNC/B, caja 49, carpeta 3, fol. 183). For La Rosca, knowledge would be generated and analyzed collectively in order to identify the social contradictions that propel popular struggle (ACHUNC/B, caja 49, carpeta 3, fol. 190). In the process, external researchers would articulate—but never entirely blend in—with the rank and file. Fals places participatory researchers in the Gramscian category of organic intellectuals, capable of "articulat[ing] between regional specificity and general or national theory, to produce a totalizing and integral vision of the knowledge that has been acquired" (Fals Borda 2010b: 189–190).

Consequently, if we limit our definition of research to the collection and analysis of information by trained professionals, we lose sight of the innovative character of La Rosca's project. Their experiences provide an alternative notion of what research is, one that does not negate the significance of academic rigor but, instead, places the work of experts in dialogue with other modes of inquiry. Luis Guillermo Vasco argues that the collective analysis of social reality at workshops and assemblies of the Colombian indigenous movement must be understood as a form of research (Vasco Uribe 2002: 461). He is seconded by Pilar Riaño-Alcalá (2009), who notes, in a handbook she

produced for local memory workshops for victims of conflict, that although results of such encounters are ultimately summarized in published reports, the meetings themselves constitute the primary spaces in which collaborative research *among*—as opposed to *about*—victims of violence takes place. Andrea Dyrness, working with Latina mothers at a community school in California, argues that the research process provided the women with a space to share and analyze their experiences and critiques of educational reform "in light of broader patterns" (Dyrness 2008: 31). In other words, Dyrness, Riaño, and Vasco visualize collaborative forms of research as a process of thinking through ideas, not exclusively of systematically collecting data that is then subjected to analysis by the external observer to ultimately emerge as a final product.

This is a profoundly political activity that moves research away from the desk of the scholar and into the meeting venues that activists frequent, the spaces in which issues are aired and decisions are made (Hale and Stephen 2014). Of course, we academic scholars continue to collect data, because that is what we are trained to do and because we are dealing with unfamiliar social or cultural contexts that we can only come to know by studying them. Our ability to systematize new knowledge is undeniably what we have to contribute to the collaborative relationship. Insiders, in contrast, tend to engage in a more intuitive process, so that research for them is a sustained public reflection on what they and their peers carry in their personal memories and a search for where those reminiscences will lead them in the future. Consequently, collaboration between external and internal researchers evolves as a dialogue between two differently positioned participants who have distinct skill sets and conceptual frameworks.[8]

Fals Borda conceptualized research in this way in some of his reflections on his experiences in Córdoba. In 1978, with the Fundación del Caribe already in the rearview mirror, he argued that although external researchers were concerned with the collection of information, campesinos interpreted this data and inserted it into their political practice in a continuous movement between observation and theory, reflection and action (Fals Borda 1978: 34–35). In other words, he envisioned a dialogue punctuated by activism, in which participation involved using information garnered through research to make collective decisions concerning political action. In this sense, the work of the Fundación was deeply participatory in ways that are not always readily observable in retrospect.

Imputation

As I came to understand Fals Borda's particular brand of action research, I realized that what set it apart was its profound creativity. Critical recovery, systematic devolution, and the innovative techniques the Fundación del Caribe used to collect information were generated out of a deeply original impulse. Exceptional research is, of course, always creative, but it is usually produced by an individual or a small group of experts. Action research, in contrast, required not only the imaginative capacities of researchers like Fals Borda, but also the simultaneous stimulation of creative thinking among peasant participants. If ANUC was to make and rewrite history, it would take a collective effort to reimagine the past outside of the confines of conventional history and to envision how that past could be harnessed to impact the future. Action research was, in effect, a collective work of the imagination that envisaged scenarios for local history, crafted historical narratives out of stored objects and oral reminiscences, rooted peasants in the footsteps of their forebears, and constructed alternative epistemologies that could be used to build new institutions and practices. If the only creative impulses to be harnessed had been Fals Borda's, the participatory dimension of the project would have had little meaning. At all stages of the process, the peasant imagination had to be nurtured as an integral component of the methodology.

As I struggled to make sense of Fals Borda's personal archives and the reminiscences I gathered from his collaborators, I turned to *Historia doble de la Costa*, his four-volume historical narrative of the expansion of agrarian capitalism on the Atlantic coast, in which he reflects retrospectively on his methodology (Fals Borda 1979b, 1981, 1984, 1986). His text helped me to navigate the complex constellation of documents in his field notes and assisted me in generating new research questions. Each volume of *Historia doble* is framed by a semi-mythic persona originating in discussions with local narrators (CDRBR/M, 0750, fol. 4228; 0757, fol. 4246; 1108, fol. 6375).[9] For example, in the third volume, *Resistencia en el San Jorge* [Resistance in the San Jorge], Fals employs the motif of the "turtle-man" [*hombre-hicotea*], whose tremendous powers of endurance stem from his ability to bury himself below the riverbed and hibernate during the dry season, emerging with the rains to eat and reproduce; Costeño peasants exhibit similar capacities to withstand poverty, displacement, and exploitation (1984: introducción).

Fals also introduces into *Historia doble* passages in which he paints verbal portraits of the landscape and crafts imaginary dialogues attributed to his historical protagonists. He renders peasant narratives in lyric prose, sometimes

combining several narrators into a single voice. For example, *El Presidente Nieto* [President Nieto], the second volume of *Historia doble*, moves between a narration of the civil wars that beset Colombia in the nineteenth century, reflected in the writings and achievements of Juan José Nieto, a mulatto from the Atlantic coast who was briefly named president of Colombia between 1865 and 1866—a presidency that was only formally recognized by the Colombian state in 2018—and the experiences of Costeño peasants during the same period (Fals Borda 1981). The peasant voice is personified by a single narrator, Adolfo Mier (also called *tatarabuelo* or great-grandfather Mier), whose long tale of suffering and displacement is recounted using peculiarly Costeño turns of phrase. But when the reader tallies the years that Fals purports Mier to have lived, the time span transcends that of a normal human being, suggesting that the tatarabuelo is a composite character (Robles Lomeli 2015, 2019).

Fals calls this strategy "imputation." At first, I assumed that his use of the techniques of literary nonfiction was solely aimed at bringing to life historical facts. Certainly, he was aware of the possibilities of the genre, given his friendship with Gabriel García Márquez, whose *Story of a Shipwrecked Sailor* [*Relato de un naúfrago*] is a luminous example of Latin American journalism (García Márquez 1986 [1970]). Fals worked side by side with testimonial author David Sánchez Juliao and was close to Alfredo Molano, who began to adopt such literary techniques at the same time Fals did (Molano 1998b). All of these writers craft scenarios out of the details of the past, with the objective of drawing emotional associations between the reader and the characters, something that occurs routinely in the writing of historical novels, whose authors use the present "to create . . . emotional resonances with a theoretical past, through the reactions of . . . characters to the present," in this way fostering "a sense of the past as real and tangible" (Polack 2014: 529). In *El Presidente Nieto*, the campesino narrator recollects events from the nineteenth century as though he were an eyewitness to them, but he is portrayed in conversation with Fals, a historical impossibility.

Imputation is an accepted methodology used by quantitative social scientists to identify missing values in a data set (Rässler et al. 2003). Perhaps this was Fals's original source, although he expands upon it to such a great extent that it resembles less the work of his quantitative colleagues and more the craft of the historical novelist, where credibility trumps proof and accuracy (Polack 2014: 540).[10] Nonetheless, his appeal to experimental formats constitutes much more than a literary vehicle, because it allows "those who provided the information on the working classes to recognize it as their own" (Fals Borda 1981: 55B). That is to say, imputation is, for Fals, a politically effective strategy.

Fals writes that he employed imputation in his work with ANUC (Fals Borda 1985: 59), although he never explicitly called it that while he was in Córdoba. Some of the techniques he used to revive popular memory are good examples of how imputation became a political strategy: community meetings where elders narrated their experiences, the founding of study groups among local activists, the introduction of sociodramas through which peasants reenacted their past, and the collective perusal of objects of memory and photos stored in peasant homes. All of these techniques invoked the communal analysis of the past with an eye to immediately incorporating its lessons into the political actions of the present. In fact, if we trace an alternative genealogy of action research, not back to Lewin or Tax, but to the early twentieth-century Viennese researcher J. L. Moreno, who invented the term *sociodrama* in his work with prostitutes (Altricher and Gstettner 1997; McTaggart 1994: 316), we begin to see how peasants could become coresearchers through such exercises.

Of particular importance are Ulianov Chalarka's graphic histories, which draw on nonverbal memories and compel readers to exercise their imaginative faculties (Sousanis 2015: chap. 3). Take, for instance, Chalarka's depiction of bullfighting festivals [*corralejas*] in one of his later comics, *El Boche* (Chalarka 1985: 57). The authors of the graphic history argue that the corraleja was introduced on the Caribbean coast to placate disruptive peasants poised to confront the debt-peonage system. The comics panel is historically accurate, depicting early twentieth-century peasants in the ring confronting the bulls, while large landholders identified by their names gaze at their skirmishes from the safety of their private stalls. Two bulls wait in the pens, straining to be let loose on the crowd of campesinos. They carry names: Barraquete and Machín. Barraquete was a famously strong-willed bull from the 1950s; I learned in a 2019 workshop with University of Sinú faculty that by the 1960s, both monikers had become the titles of well-known *porros*, a musical genre typical of the plains of Córdoba and Sucre. Images from the present of Chalarka's peasant readers effectively anchor them in the past represented by the comics panels. Similarly, novelist Toni Morrison observes that her work, frequently based in the past, begins with a series of images culled from her experience of places and things, which she eventually fashions into a literary text (Morrison 1995), just as the Fundación del Caribe's vivid images of history were frequently drawn from the present. But while they depicted the past, they looked toward the future, eventually fashioned into an activist agenda.

The Organization of This Book

Cowards Don't Make History is organized according to the guiding concepts of La Rosca, which shepherded the Fundación del Caribe in its collaboration with ANUC: participation, critical recovery, and systematic devolution. I explain how to recognize them in the Fundación's practice, how Fals wrote about them, and how they are relevant to today's participatory action researchers. Numerous analysts have critiqued Orlando Fals Borda's approach to action research, pointing out his inability to discard traditional research techniques and the overwhelming attention paid by the Fundación del Caribe to schooled cadres instead of to the rank and file (Rivera Cusicanqui 2004; Vasco Uribe 2002, 2011). Notwithstanding the significance of these assessments—which I refer to in the course of my narrative—I feel compelled to underscore my conviction that it is facile to construct in hindsight a broad-brush critique, more than four decades after Fals and his associates conducted their work in Córdoba, particularly given that Fals's critics had only limited access to the details of the Fundación's activities. Certainly, Fals and the Fundación's project had obvious shortcomings of which any collaborative or participatory research must be aware. However, my fundamental objective is not to disparage, but to delve into how their methodology was conceived and executed on Caribbean soil in the early 1970s, always keeping in mind that they were pioneers who were unable to take advantage of the hindsight we enjoy today. Without a close examination of what the Fundación did on the ground—without paying attention to their process—criticisms of Fals Borda may pose significant questions but they do not provide us with answers. Fals's experience demonstrates, moreover, that alternative forms of collaborative research are "good to think," even for academics who are not activists, expanding the constellation of ideas that we have at our disposal at a time when an ever-increasing layer of those who were the traditional objects of research have become researchers in their own right (Hale 2006).

I begin this book with the historical context of the Caribbean coast in the twentieth century, detailing the various moments at which peasant organizing disrupted the spread of capitalism. Here, I return to Juana Julia Guzmán and her associates in the 1920s, tracing the linkages between her early efforts at overturning the debt-peonage system and ANUC's eruption into the political scene a half century later. Chapter 1 also introduces readers to the work of the Fundación del Caribe between 1972 and 1974, when its collaboration with ANUC ended. From there, I turn in chapter 2 to how Fals organized his personal archives, especially his field notes from the Caribbean coast between

1972 and 1974. I do not intend for this chapter to be a mere academic exercise, however. Fals classified his field notes in such a way that they enabled or supported activism, as opposed to cataloguing substantiating evidence for his academic writing. This is apparent in the categories he employed, which highlight the names of peasant leaders whose narratives were decisive in the utilization of historical information to craft ANUC strategies or underscore particular moments in the peasant struggle and the institutions that supported it. The fact that Fals's brand of action research privileged action over dispassionate research, and advocated the adoption of popular forms of narration and interpretation as opposed to hewing to standard academic formulas, is evident in how the contents of Fals's categories are assembled. Instead of proceeding from research questions to information collection and scholarly analysis, Fals's archival classification facilitated the process by which peasant forms of knowledge were brought to bear in the composition and diffusion of educational materials. This was a working archive, assembled and consulted by a group of researcher activists, with the aim of provoking political action born of historical reflection. While in subsequent chapters I draw on the archive's contents, chapter 2 explores how its form reflects the innovative methodology with which Fals and the Fundación were experimenting, providing a first look at how peasant epistemologies entered into dialogue with scientific knowledge.

Chapter 3 inquires into how the Fundación del Caribe resignified participation and research. What did Fals intend when he proposed to undertake a participatory research project in a region whose peasants were largely illiterate, living hand-to-mouth, many of them so isolated that they had never even visited nearby Montería? To what extent was the Fundación able to inspire their participation? How can we conceptualize their activities as research?

I use the process of the production of the Fundación's four graphic histories as an ethnographic scenario in which to visualize the dynamics of the Fundación's participatory methodology, examining various phases of their work: the establishment of a research agenda; the collection of eyewitness testimonies whose highlights were captured in Ulianov Chalarka's drawings; the crafting of comics panels by the Fundación collective; and the evaluation and dissemination of the educational materials. I describe how participation involved the intervention of different groups of people at various points in the process, each contributing his or her particular skill, but all collaborating in the analysis of the material. This process redefined the meanings attached to research.

The activities involved in the making of the Fundación's graphic histories were guided by the collective's goal of critically recovering the history of

institutions and practices that might contribute to building a popular movement. In chapter 4, I take a second look at the Fundación's graphic histories, this time inquiring into two examples of critical recovery in Córdoba. First, the 1972 introduction of *baluartes*—communal landholdings modeled after socialist collectives of the early twentieth century—on occupied haciendas. The first of the graphic histories, *Lomagrande*, which centers on the founding of the first baluarte by Juana Julia Guzmán and her associates in the 1920s, provides an excellent platform from which to analyze the challenges and the pitfalls of critical recovery as a narrative strategy and a political tool, given that ANUC's base never entirely warmed to the concept of the baluarte, which they only imperfectly understood. Chalarka's second pamphlet, *Tinajones*, presents an alternative scenario, in which the visual dimension of the comic effectively conveys the "amphibious" nature of the river-dwelling peasant settlers, who in the 1920s constructed raised fields in the coastal mangroves to enable rice cultivation. In this instance, the Fundación effectively recuperated values from the past that continued to be central to the peasant psyche.

One of my greatest challenges has been that of visualizing a research practice whose everyday details are no longer accessible in the memory of its protagonists. My respondents remembered guiding principles, procedures, techniques, and important disputes within the Fundación, between the Fundación and ANUC, and with leftist parties. But I found it impossible to evoke more specific reminiscences, such as memories of how differences were aired as the team put together *Lomagrande*, or the constructive debates that might have preceded the creation of a workshop agenda. However, facets of the Fundación's labors can be identified using techniques other than oral testimony. Chapter 5 examines the process of systematic devolution with an eye to fleshing out the activities that accompanied the dissemination of adult education materials among the ANUC rank and file. In particular, I look at practices that might have triggered peasant participation in workshops. Following Fals's lead of using imputation as an interpretive tool, I mine Ulianov Chalarka's comics panels for clues as to how they might have influenced their readers, leading them to think along certain avenues, steering them toward specific interlocutors and particular discussion topics.

In 1975, Fals Borda began research in the neighboring department of Bolívar, which ultimately led to the publication of *Historia doble de la Costa*. That four-volume experimental history bears the imprints of action research: the forging of horizontal relationships between researchers and the researched, the search for usable historical referents, a dialogue between theory

and practice, epistemological heterogeneity. The central arguments of *Historia doble* were first drafted for a leftist weekly, *Alternativa*, drawing on discussions and lectures that took place at workshops. In other words, *Historia doble* is a logical extension of the work of an activist researcher, not a purely academic contribution to the literature. In chapter 6, I look at its last volume, *Retorno a la tierra* [Return to the Land] (Fals Borda 1986), teasing out how Fals recycles the educational materials and instructional agendas of the Fundación del Caribe as intertexts in his historical narrative, showing how *Historia doble* is not only an interpretation of the contents of Fals Borda's archive, but a narrative that reenacts his activist project. Readers who are not interested in how Fals transformed his experience of action research into scholarly writing should feel free to skip this chapter.

While I hope that this book will prompt academics to pay more heed to the unique contributions to social research by Latin Americans, I am also concerned with deepening Fals Borda's legacy among PAR practitioners, only some of whom are familiar with the founding principles of La Rosca. My concluding chapter takes the results of my research to a diverse group of Colombian participatory action researchers through a series of workshops to determine what has survived of the Fundación's legacy, what is no longer applicable in the twenty-first century, and what can serve as a stimulus to further reflection at this crucial moment in Colombian history, when the signing of a peace accord with the largest guerrilla organization is threatened by renewed violence by ultrarightist factions and an intransigent national government.

I have engaged for decades in collaborative ethnography, but I do not mean for my research for this book to be taken as an example of participatory action research, since I established the research agenda on my own and did not engage in a research process in collaboration with a social movement. Nonetheless, my choice of airing my research results in conversation with Colombian activists was a political decision to engage in a process of critical recovery of the guiding principles developed by Fals and his associates in Córdoba. During the decade in which I worked in Fals's archives, I continued my collaboration with the indigenous movement in the southwestern highlands, not as a researcher but as a facilitator of research by Native activists and their allies. In the process, I became aware of the significance to indigenous researchers of Fals Borda's contribution to Colombian activism, and I began to more consciously situate my own research in this larger political framework. I made it a point to share the results of my research on Fals with indigenous organizations through presentations to groups of activists

and publications in their periodicals (Rappaport 2015), which ultimately led to the workshops I later held with participatory research groups in various parts of the country. Today's participatory researchers receive sustenance from Fals Borda's work—as a teacher, writer, activist, or often, as an icon—even if they labor under political, social, economic, and ideological circumstances unlike those encountered by the Fundación del Caribe in the early 1970s. They take Fals's methodology in directions that he could not have foreseen.

Introduction

1 ANUC was established as a government-sponsored initiative in the 1960s. As I will detail in the next chapter, peasants became increasingly aware of the failures of the agrarian reform, and in 1972, a significant portion of the ANUC membership split off to form a parallel organization that advocated direct action to reclaim large landholdings. Fals and his associates collaborated with this radical wing of the peasant movement.

2 When Fals Borda writes about Juana Julia, he refers to her by using her first and middle names (Fals Borda 1986). I have decided to adopt this more intimate usage as a way of underscoring her centrality to the Fundación's project. Following Spanish usage, individuals are sometimes identified by a combination of their patronymic (Fals) and matronymic (Borda), and at other times only by their patronymic; I employ the combined form in citations and in the bibliography. Thus, Orlando Fals Borda will sometimes be called "Fals Borda" and sometimes "Fals." The main protagonists of my narrative are listed in the Cast of Characters that opens this book.

3 *Historia doble* is a two-channeled book: the left-hand pages narrate the history of the coast, while the right-hand pages contextualize the narrative. My references to parts, chapters, or pages indicate whether they are located in channel A or channel B.

4 All ACHUNC/B documents cited are from the La Rosca series of the Fals Borda collection, identified by their box, folder, and folio numbers.

5 I return to this point in more detail in chapter 7, where I point out some of the fundamental differences between collaborative research in Latin America and in North America and Europe.

6 Freire was forced to leave Brazil by the military dictatorship and spent his exile at Harvard. While in the United States, he came into close contact with Myles Horton, the founder of the Highlander Center, a famous laboratory of activist research in Appalachia (Horton and Freire 1990).

7 Fals requested US $386,740 over three years from the National Committee on the Self-Development of People of the Worldwide Ministries of the Presbyterian Church, receiving approximately $75,000 a year from 1971 to 1973. This was an enormous amount of money at that time. See Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia (henceforth, PHS/P), Worldwide Ministries, Self-Development of People, Correspondence, Reports on International Projects, 1970–88, box 2: "A

Self-Development Program for Colombian Destitute Groups" submitted by the Rosca de Investigación y Acción Social with the sponsorship of Church and Society in Latin America (ISAL), Colombia, 1970. They also received US $90,000 in 1975 (Gittings 1993: 69). Díaz Arévalo (2017), Moreno Moreno (2017b), and Pereira Fernández (2005) have examined Fals's ties to the Presbyterian Church.

8 Of course, things have changed since those days. As I will elaborate in chapter 7, many of today's "insiders" also have advanced training and are able to combine introspection with the systematic collection of information.

9 The index of Fals's papers at the Centro de Documentación Regional Orlando Fals Borda in Montería (henceforth, CDRBR/M) identifies documents by their item number—the box and folder numbers can be traced through the catalogue—and folio, although when a bound set of materials (such as a notebook) is numbered as a single folio, I also identify page numbers. CDRBR/M, CF is the abbreviation I employ for Fals's photographic collection in Montería, whose items are numbered, and CDRBR/M, CG for his digitized reel-to-reel tapes, also numbered.

10 As Fals observed in a dialogue with Colombian anthropologists, his use of imputation in his writings was profoundly personal, something that could not be replicated verbatim by other writers or researchers (ACHUNC/B, caja 50, carpeta 3).

Chapter 1. The Fundación del Caribe in Córdoba

1 Interviews with Negrete, 10 July 2016, Montería, and Sánchez Juliao, 4 August 2009, Bogotá. Composer and musician Máximo Jiménez worked closely with Sánchez Juliao on "protest vallenatos," using the popular Costeño ballad genre, which he performed to motivate peasants during land occupations (interview with Jiménez, 10 July 2019, Montería). The lyrics of the title song of Jiménez's recording "El indio del Sinú" (Jiménez 1975) were written by Sánchez Juliao. See also Zabaleta Bolaños (2017).

2 Members of the Fundación, their campesino contacts, and other intellectuals who worked with them are listed in the Cast of Characters at the beginning of this book. Beyond the innermost circle, other collaborators included José Galeano, a high schooler in Cereté who went on to become a leader of the student movement before he began to work with Víctor Negrete in the late seventies (interview with Galeano, 15 July 2016, Montería). Leopoldo Berdella, a founder of the Grupo "El Túnel" that in the mid-seventies brought together Córdoba's creative writers and artists, was also from Cereté; he later became a university professor in the southwestern city of Cali and an author of children's books. Matilde Eljach, who would become a faculty member at the Universidad del Cauca in Popayán, worked with the Fundación while she was a university student in Barranquilla. Prominent Costeño intellectuals frequently collaborated as facilitators of training workshops for ANUC leaders (CDRBR/M, 1922, 2177, 2180, 2183, 2185–2187, 2190, 2195, 2197). Among the most notable of the workshop facilitators were Cartagena-based folklorist Benjamín Puche, sociologist María Josefina Yance (who went on to direct the regional planning office and manage the Banco de la República), Roberto Yance (the regional *procurador agrario*, or agrarian prosecutor), and sociologist Raúl Pa-

6 The workshops are listed in the bibliography. With the exception of the San Pablo workshop, made up largely of high school students, the participants were adults engaged in some form or other of research combined with activism. No external funds were solicited for these workshops; the only expenditures were for the lunches served at some of the meetings, using the resources of the organizations themselves.

7 I didn't attempt this agenda with the high schoolers of San Pablo, who spent the workshop reading pages of Chalarka's graphic histories and thinking about the topics they would cover if they could write a comic book about the problems of their community.

8 The same could be said of UAIIN, but only a handful of its members were able to attend the workshop, due to conflicting obligations, and the workshop was facilitated by the younger and less experienced IAPES activists.

9 ACIN is engaged in a similar muralistic project (Segunda Minga Muralista del Pueblo Nasa 2016).